

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS FEBRUARY 2023

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari chaired the 10th meeting of the Group of Infrastructure Committee in New Delhi to address existing inter-Ministerial issues concerning the implementation of various infrastructure projects.
- ❖ This year 'Aero India 2023' will be organised in Bengaluru.
- ❖ The National Stock Exchange of India has again emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange in 2022.
 - This is the fourth consecutive year when the exchange earned the top spot.
- ❖ As per the Union Finance minister statement, the average processing time for income tax returns has been reduced from 93 to 16 days in 2023.
- ❖ PVR Cinemas launches India's first multiplex in an airport complex in Chennai
- ❖ The first G20 International Financial Architecture Working Group meeting under the G20 Indian Presidency held in Chandigarh.
- ❖ The Gujarat tableau at the 74th Republic Day parade has bagged the top rank in the 'People's Choice' category.
- ❖ Gautam Adani's group will deploy hydrogen fuel cell operated trucks for mining logistics and transportation for the first time in Asia as part of its decarbonisation plan.
- ❖ The month-long Khadi Fest - 2023 was inaugurated in Mumbai.
- ❖ Luminous Power Technologies planned to build the country's first green energy-based solar panel manufacturing facility in Uttarakhand.
- ❖ A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carried 51 Starlink satellites into low-Earth orbit in a launch from the California coast in USA.
- ❖ British economist Meghnad Desai Authored a New Book titled "The Poverty of Political Economics".
- ❖ The Adani Group acquired the strategic Israeli port of Haifa for USD 1.2 billion.
 - The Port of Haifa is the second largest port in Israel in terms of shipping containers and the biggest in shipping tourist cruise ships.
- ❖ Assam hosted the first Youth20 (Y20) Inception Meeting 2023 in Guwahati.
- ❖ Gujarat hosted the inaugural meeting of the G20 Tourism Working Group (TWG) in the Rann of Kutch.
- ❖ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology conducted the G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill for more than 400 domestic and international participants under India's G20 presidency.



- ❖ The Union Public Service Commission has recommended the name of Dr Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi as the new Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).
- ❖ Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur and the LG of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha launched the third Khelo India Winter Games mascot, theme song and jersey.
- ❖ Secretary to the CM of Odisha, VK Pandian was honoured with the FIH President's Award 2023 for his outstanding contribution to hockey.
- ❖ The G20 member countries participating in the first Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting in Bengaluru have agreed on collective efforts in priority areas to achieve energy security and diversified supply chains of new energy sources.
- ❖ PM recently launched the first industrial corridor of the scheme called Tumakuru Industrial Township.
 - This is the First industrial corridor in South India.
- ❖ The government has appointed a 16-member committee of union secretaries, law experts, and industry stakeholders under Manoj Govil, to draft within three months the Digital Competition Act after studying anticompetitive practices.
- ❖ Telangana government announced Telangana Mobility Valley (TMV) with four mega clusters in and around Hyderabad to further accelerate sustainable transportation systems in India.
 - It is India's first Mobility Valley (TMV).
- ❖ Recently, the Foundation stone was laid for India's fifth nano urea plant in Jharkhand.
- ❖ Kerala wins inaugural championship title of National Beach Soccer Championships.
- ❖ The government will become the single largest shareholder in Vi (Vodafone Idea) with its 33.44% shareholding.
- ❖ India spinner R Ashwin became the fastest Indian bowler to pick up the 450th wicket in the 89th Test match by overtaking Kumble (93 Match).
- ❖ The eighth edition of ICC Women's T20 Cricket World Cup tournament is currently being held in South Africa.
- ❖ Skye Air, a Gurugram-based drone solutions provider, launched traffic management system for drones in India.
- ❖ MobiKwik becomes the first fintech app to support RuPay Credit Card on UPI.
- ❖ Salman Rushdie released a new novel "Victory City" – a fictionalized story of the Vijayanagara Kingdom.
- ❖ Veteran Journalist Dr. A.B.K. Prasad has been chosen for the prestigious "Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Award" for excellence in Journalism-2020 for his outstanding contribution towards journalism.



- ❖ Tata Consultancy Services has been named to FORTUNE magazine's list of the World's Most Admired Companies.
- ❖ Pakistan captain Babar Azam bagged the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year 2022 after being named the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year.
- ❖ Former Supreme Court's Judge Abdul Nazeer was appointed as the Andhra Pradesh Governor.
- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the 246-km Sohna-Dausa-Lalsot stretch of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.
 - It is the first in the Asian continent to include safe corridors for the movement of wildlife.
- ❖ Titas Sadhu, a member of the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup, won the 'Emerging Hero' award at the Sportstar East Sports Conclave 2023 in Kolkata.
- ❖ As part of India's Presidency of the G20, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) hosted the first Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) meeting in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Culture is going to organised a Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav-2023 at Azad Maidan in Mumbai.
- ❖ India's first air-conditioned double-decker electric bus was inducted into the fleet of Mumbai.
- ❖ Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the IFFCO Nano Urea Liquid Plants at Aonla and Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The philanthropic foundation of PEPSICO and CARE joined together and launched the "She Feeds the World" program in India.
 - The program is to empower women in the agriculture sector.
- ❖ Neal Mohan, an Indian American has been appointed as the new chief executive officer of YouTube.
- ❖ India's aviation safety oversight ranking has jumped to the 55th position from 112th place.
 - According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), it is a ranking by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the new campus of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Arabic Academy at Marol, Mumbai.
 - It is the principal educational institute of the Dawoodi Bohra Community.
- ❖ The 23rd edition of the India International Seafood Show (IISS-2023) held in Kolkata.



- ❖ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs recently conducted a two-day Smart city CEO conference at Panaji, Goa.
- ❖ Union Tourism Ministry will organise 1st Global 'Tourism Investors' Summit in New Delhi to showcase opportunities in the Tourism and hospitality sector.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India hosted the 2nd International Conference on the theme 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity' in New Delhi.
- ❖ The 393rd birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was organised in the Diwan-e-Aam premises of the Agra Fort.
- ❖ Actor Ayushmann Khurrana has been appointed as National Ambassador of UNICEF India.
- ❖ The Former Union Commerce Secretary and retired civil servant B.V.R. Subrahmanyam as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Niti Aayog.
- ❖ The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari laid the Foundation Stone of the world's largest and unique Divyang Park - Anubhuti Inclusive Park in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The joint venture between Vedanta and Foxconn is setting up the India's 1st semiconductor and display manufacturing facility in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ❖ The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar inaugurated the Divya Kala Mela 2023 in Mumbai.
- ❖ Philips Domestic Appliances has announced the change of its company name to Versuni.
- ❖ Indore hosted the first Agriculture Deputies Meeting (ADM) of the agriculture working group under India's G20 Presidency.
- ❖ The World Health Organisation will be setting up mRNA (messenger ribonucleic acid) vaccine hub in Telangana.
- ❖ The first G20 Working Group meeting of Culture was held at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under the G20 Indian Presidency held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ❖ 1st G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) Meeting 2023 held in Bengaluru.
- ❖ Coal India Limited has successfully transformed 30 abandoned mining areas into eco-parks and eco-tourism destinations.
- ❖ Delhi Metro will soon launch India's first virtual shopping app called Momentum 2.0 for metro commuters.
 - It is to purchase products, book services and collect orders at the destination stations.



- ❖ Indian educationist and social worker for the promotion of indigenous languages in Odisha Dr. Mahendra Kumr Mishra was conferred the International Mother Language Award by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.
 - He became the first India to receive this award.
- ❖ The United Arab Emirates is set to host the first vice-ministerial meeting of the I2U2 in Abu Dhabi this week.
 - It will be attended by India, Israel, the United States and the UAE.
- ❖ The Indian Navy carried out a biennial tri-services amphibious exercise AMPHEX 2023 near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The 'Ops Alert' exercise was conducted by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the Indo-Pak Border from Sir Creek to Rann of Kutch in Gujarat and Barmer district of Rajasthan.

TAMIL NADU

Compulsory Tamil for All State Government Jobs

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a Bill that makes a Tamil language paper compulsory for recruitment to the State government services.
- ❖ It sought to include a fresh provision in the Tamil Nadu Government Servants (Conditions of Service) Act, 2016, to give effect to this mandate.
- ❖ It got retrospective effect from December 1, 2021.

Period of port city Poompuhar

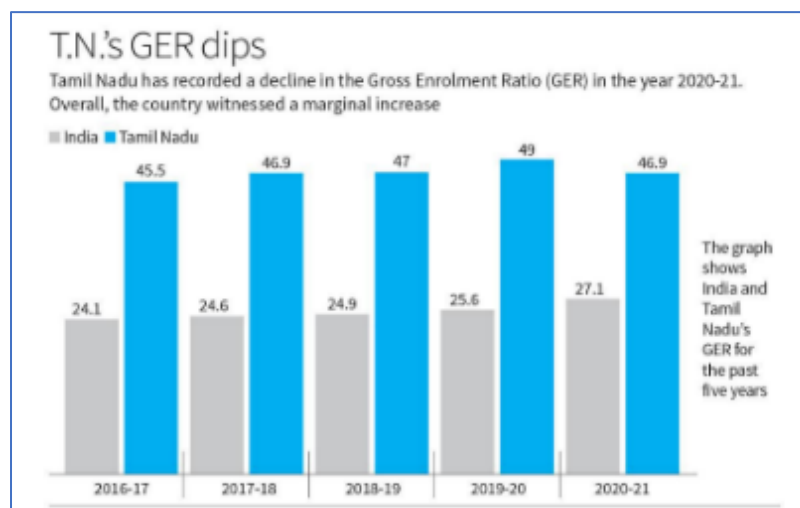
- ❖ Poompuhar, the submerged ancient port city, is situated in modern-day Mayiladuthurai district in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Earlier studies had established that Poompuhar, also called as Kaveri poompattinam, had maritime trade links with South East Asia and Egypt, before it disappeared from the maritime map around 1,000 years ago.
- ❖ Initially it was believed that the port city that gained prominence during the Chola dynasty was around 2,500 years old.
- ❖ The latest study based on offshore explorations and geological features interpreted on the sea floor estimates it was at least 15,000 years old.



PhD graduates in the state

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has once again produced the highest number of PhD holders in the country.
- ❖ The state has produced 3,206 PhD doctorates in the academic year 2020-21.
- ❖ In that 1,493 are female and 1,713 are male research scholars.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh comes second in the list by awarding 2,217 PhD degrees.
- ❖ Karnataka and Delhi stand in the third and fourth position by producing 2,125 and 2,055 PhD graduates respectively.
- ❖ As per AISHE report 2019-2020, Tamil Nadu produced 5,324 PhD students.

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education



- ❖ Tamil Nadu's Gross Enrolment Ratio dropped by 2.1 percentage points to 46.9% in 2020-21 from the year before.

- ❖ India recorded a marginal increase in GER from 25.6% to 27.3%.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu was among very few States that recorded a decline.
- ❖ This was the first time the State recorded a decline in the past five years.
- ❖ Despite the decline, Tamil Nadu continued to have the highest GER among major States.
- ❖ TN followed by Uttarakhand (45.7%) and Kerala (43.2%).
- ❖ Chandigarh, Puducherry and Delhi have the highest of 66.1%, 60.8% and 47.6%, respectively.

Best medical college hospitals

- ❖ The Directorate of Medical Education released a ranking list based on the performance of medical college hospitals.
- ❖ The Chennai Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) in Chennai took the top place from April to October 2022 in the rank.
- ❖ The government medical college hospitals in Salem and Coimbatore took the second and third positions respectively.



Five new judges Madras High Court

- ❖ The President appointed five additional judges to the Madras High Court.
- ❖ With the appointment of five new judges, the working strength of the High Court had increased from 52 to 57.
- ❖ The sanctioned strength of the Madras High Court is 75.

- ❖ The number of women judges in the court also increased to an all-time high of 14 after the induction of the three new women judges.
- ❖ One of the new judges (Ms. Victoria Gowri) appointment was opposed by a group of advocates from Chennai on the ground of having delivered “hate speeches” against religious minorities.
- ❖ But the apex court dismissed the cases, on merits, minutes after she completed taking oath.



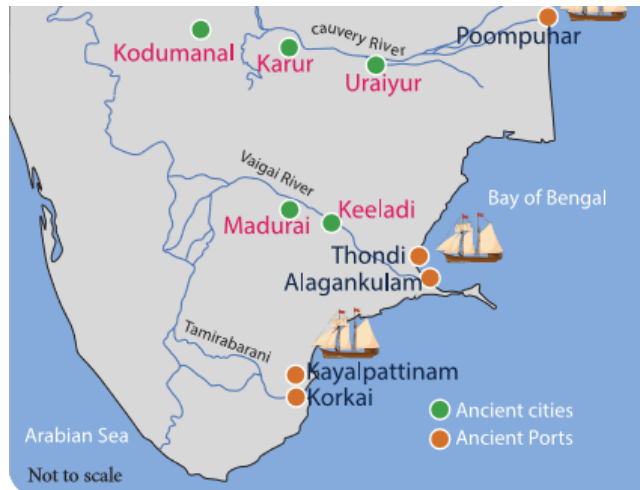
2nd phase of ‘Pudhumai Penn’

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin kick-started the second phase of Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance scheme.
- ❖ The scheme was named ‘Pudhumai Penn’.
- ❖ It is implemented by the social welfare and women empowerment department.
- ❖ The scheme is aimed at providing financial assistance worth Rs 1,000 per month to girl students who had studied classes VI to XII at government schools.
- ❖ The CM kick-started the first phase of the scheme in September and it has been benefitting 1.16 lakh students.



Sangam Age as 800 BCE

- ❖ In the latest development, the Sangam age has been pushed to 800 BCE based on the archaeological findings.
- ❖ K. Amarnath Ramakrishna, who discovered the first two seasons of Keeladi excavations between 2014 and 2016, submitted his 982-page report to ASI Director General V. Vidyavathi recently.
- ❖ Based on the results of stratigraphy of the cultural deposits found in the first two phases, the period of the Sangam era archaeological site has been placed between 8th century BCE to 3rd century CE.
- ❖ Sangam age was believed to be between 300 BCE to 300 CE.
- ❖ The new report repositions the Sangam age between 800 BCE and 300 CE.
- ❖ Even this period of history has been classified into three periods.
 - The pre-early historic period between 800 BCE to 500 BCE,
 - Mature early history between 500 BCE to the end of 1st century BCE and
 - Post early history from 1st century BCE to 300 CE
- ❖ Keeladi is a hamlet located near Madurai city in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It is along the banks of River Vaigai.



11th century Tamil inscription

- ❖ Two epigraphists have discovered inscriptions referring to a collapsed temple dating back to the Chola era near Lalgudi in Trichy district.
- ❖ It refers to an ancient temple which probably existed during the Chola period.
- ❖ They estimated that the period of the lost temple to be 11th century.

- ❖ The inscription states that the village administrative body met at the courtyard of Thiru Ayotthiyalvar temple during the rule of Kulotthunga I Chola to carry out administrative activities.



New e-vehicles policy

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Electric Vehicles Policy, 2023, was released by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.
- ❖ It provides a capital subsidy for public and private charging stations and battery swapping stations.
- ❖ It lists special demand-side incentives for retrofitting and re-manufacture.
- ❖ Government shall develop a road map to electrify public and institutional fleets operating in the State in phases.



- ❖ The State shall endeavour to increase the share of electric buses to 30% of the fleet [operated by State Transport Undertakings] by 2030.”

- ❖ The 2019 policy provided for waiver of road tax, registration charges and permit fees till December 31, 2022.
- ❖ But the latest policy extends them by three years and further provides for special demand- side incentives till March 31, 2026.
- ❖ However, these incentives would be applicable to vehicles manufactured, sold and registered in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ As on April 30, 2022, over 1.15 lakh EVs have been registered in Tamil Nadu, of which 93% were non-commercial vehicles.

Hero stones in Thenpennai banks

- ❖ Researchers from the Tiruvannamalai district Historical Research Centre (TDHRC) dug out two hero stones from the banks of Thenpennai near Alambadi.
- ❖ They found the two stones from the Vediappan temple near Alambadi.
- ❖ The stones were rare 'Aanirai' stones of a tribal leader who died in the war.
- ❖ The inscriptions indicate that it was erected during the rule of Pallava king Singa Vishnu during his 11th year of rule.
- ❖ They could belong to 6th century AD.
- ❖ The inscriptions show that the warriors died during a war attempting to rescue cows which were robbed by enemies of the tribe.



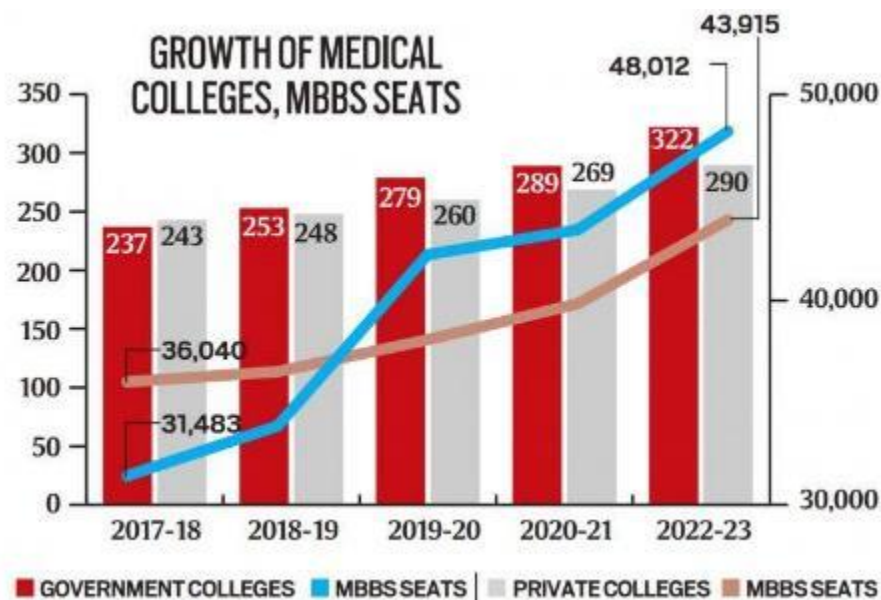
World's biggest EV hub

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ola Electric Mobility Pvt. Ltd.
- ❖ Ola will set up the world's largest EV hub with integrated two-wheeler, car and lithium cell giga factories in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The project also, comprises an electric vehicle cell plant and an electric four-wheeler plant is to be set up on the SIPCOT premises in Bargur, Krishnagiri.



Highest number of MBBS seats

- ❖ Tamil Nadu is at the top of the list with the highest number of 11,275 MBBS seats.
- ❖ It is followed by Karnataka having 10,995 seats.
- ❖ Maharashtra was ranked 3rd rank with 10,295 and Uttar Pradesh was at 4th with 9,203 MBBS seats.
- ❖ Altogether, 1,00,163 MBBS seats are available at present in over 655 medical colleges in the country.
- ❖ As per the Health Ministry's statement, a total of 65,335 PG medical seats are available at present.
- ❖ The maximum number of seats in the state of Karnataka with 6,006 seats, and is followed by Maharashtra with 5,765 and Tamil Nadu with 4,935 seats.



Best police station in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has declared the Musiri Police Station in Tiruchi district as the best police station in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Home Ministry visited many police stations across the country in August-September last year to assess their performance.
- ❖ Based on the assessment, the Aska police station in the Ganjam district of Odisha bagged the first position in the country.



NATIONAL

Monuments under private sector

- ❖ About 1,000 monuments under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India will be taken over by the private sector.
- ❖ It is the part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.
- ❖ The amenities in those monuments will be revamped by the private sector under Monument Mitra Scheme.
- ❖ The Monument Mitra scheme entails adopting a heritage site and maintaining it.

India's First Model G – 20 Summit

- ❖ Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership recently conducted the Model G – 20 Summit.
- ❖ This is the first of its kind.
- ❖ The Indian Sherpa of G – 20 Amitabh Kant inaugurated the summit.
- ❖ It was conducted at the Mumbai campus of IIDL.
- ❖ The G – 20 summit is highly important for India and other members as the group constitutes 85% of the world GDP.
- ❖ India is hosting the summit in 2023.



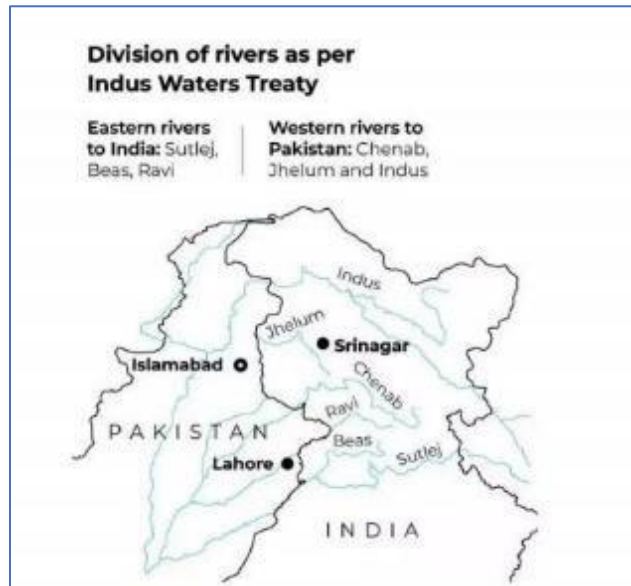
G-20 Startup Engagement Group

- ❖ Recently, the Startup Engagement Group of G – 20 held its inception meeting in Hyderabad.
- ❖ As the name suggests the startup 20 Engagement group has representatives from leading startups in the G-20 countries.
- ❖ Startup 20 focuses on innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.
- ❖ It will aim to bridge the gaps between the startups of the G-20 members and the other emerging economies in the world.
- ❖ Apart from the G20 members, nine special invitees also attended the meet
- ❖ India is to host the G-20 summit to be held in 2023.
- ❖ To make the summit a success, several engagement groups are being formed.
- ❖ The group comprises representatives from Non – Government organizations.

Indus Water Treaty modification notice

- ❖ India mentions the issues of the Rattle hydroelectric project and Kishenganga disputes as the reason for sending the notice.

- ❖ The Indus Water Treaty was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan in 1960.
- ❖ According to the treaty, the waters of Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej are controlled by India, and the waters of Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab are controlled by Pakistan.
- ❖ India has 20% access to the water system and Pakistan has 80% access.
- ❖ According to India, Pakistan has been “Intransigence” over the treaty.
- ❖ It means refusing to agree upon the treaty.
- ❖ For this reason, India has sent a notice to Pakistan to modify the treaty.
- ❖ The Rattle power project is located in the Chenab River.
- ❖ In 2013, the then PM Manmohan Singh laid the foundation stone.
- ❖ The project started in 2018 after World Bank allowed India to move ahead with the project despite Pakistan raising concerns.



Economic Survey 2022-2023 highlights

- ❖ India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled in parliament the Economic Survey 2022-2023 on 31st January.
- ❖ It reviews how the economy performed in this fiscal year and the road ahead for the next year.
- ❖ India is to remain the fastest growing major economy in the world.
- ❖ India's GDP growth is expected to remain robust in FY23 at 7 per cent (in real terms).
- ❖ Retail inflation is back within RBI's target range in November 2022.

- ❖ An Enhanced Employment generation was seen in the declining urban unemployment rate and in the faster net registration in Employee Provident Fund.
- ❖ The unemployment rates are falling from 5.8 percent in 2018-19 to 4.2 per cent in 2020-21.
- ❖ Private investment in agriculture increases to 9.3% in 2020-21.
- ❖ The services sector is expected to grow at 9.1% in FY23, as against 8.4% (YoY) in FY22.
- ❖ India is the largest recipient of remittances in the world receiving US\$ 100 bn in 2022.



- ❖ Remittances are the second largest major source of external financing after service export.
- ❖ The credit growth to the MSME sector was over 30.6 per cent on average during Jan-Nov 2022.
- ❖ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into the Pharma Industry has risen four times, from US \$180 million in FY19 to US \$699 million in FY22.

- ❖ As of December 2022, Forex Reserves stood at US\$ 563 bn covering 9.3 months of imports.
- ❖ As of end-November 2022, India is the sixth largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world.
- ❖ UPI-based transactions grew in value (121 per cent) and volume (115 per cent) terms, between 2019-22, paving the way for its international adoption.
- ❖ Total telephone subscriber base in India stands at 117.8 crore (as of Sept,22), with 44.3 per cent of subscribers in rural India.
- ❖ Prasar Bharati (India's autonomous public service broadcaster) broadcasts in 23 languages, 179 dialects from 479 stations.
- ❖ It reaches 92 per cent of the area and 99.1 per cent of the total population.

Tableau of Uttarakhand

- ❖ Central Government announced the award of the tableaux of the states involved in the Republic Day Parade 2023.
- ❖ Uttarakhand's tableau Manaskhand got first place in the country.
- ❖ It had displayed tableaux on the theme of wildlife and religious places of the state.
- ❖ 23 tableaux were displayed in the Republic Day parade.
- ❖ 17 tableaux were displayed by States and Union Territories and 6 from Ministries and Departments.



National Child Science Congress

- ❖ The National Council for Science and Technology operating recently organized the National Child Science Congress-2023.

- ❖ The congress was hosted by the Gujarat Council of Science City.
- ❖ It was held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ❖ The theme of the event was “Understanding Eco System for Health and Wellbeing”.
- ❖ The National Child Science Congress is being held in the country since 1993.



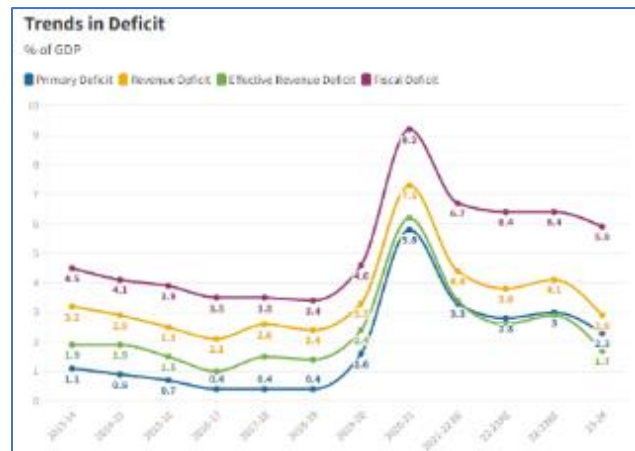
Budget 2023 7 priorities



- ❖ Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman listed seven key priorities of the Union Budget 2023.
- ❖ They complement each other and act as the Saptarishi guiding the government through the Amrit Kaal.

- ❖ Amrit Kaal is the term coined by the government to mark the 25-year period till 2047, when India will celebrate a century of freedom.
- ❖ It is the government's roadmap for the next 25 years.
- ❖ The seven priorities are
 - Inclusive development
 - Reaching the last mile
 - Infrastructure and investment
 - Unleashing the potential
 - Green growth
 - Youth power
 - Financial sector

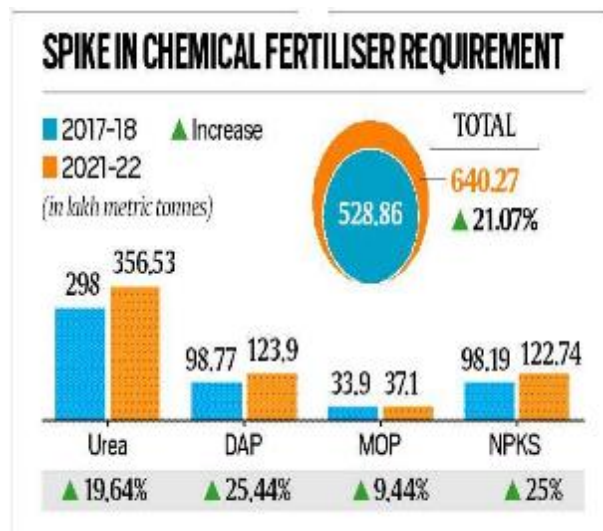
Union Budget 2023-24 Highlights



- ❖ The finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2023-24.
- ❖ The rebate limit for paying income taxes is increased to Rs 7 lakh/annum.
- ❖ The income slabs under the new personal income tax regime have been revised from six to five.
- ❖ The tax exemption limit has been increased to Rs 3 lakh.
- ❖ The budget increased the capital outlay for railways to its highest ever at ₹2.40 lakh crore.
- ❖ The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 5.9% of the GDP in FY 2023-24.
- ❖ Net borrowings to finance the fiscal deficit is estimated to be Rs 11.8 lakh crore.
- ❖ The capital investment outlay increased for the third year in a row by 33% to ₹10 lakh crore.

- ❖ This accounts for 3.3% of the GDP.
- ❖ Agriculture credit target would be raised to ₹20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry and fisheries.
- ❖ Setting up an Agriculture Accelerator Fund to encourage Agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- ❖ PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS): The first-of-its-kind package assistance endeavours to improve the quality of, scale and reach of the products made by traditional artisans and crafts people.
- ❖ The budget provided ₹35,000 crore for priority capital investments towards achieving energy transition and net-zero objectives as well as energy security.
- ❖ A Financial assistance will be given for sustainable micro irrigation in drought-prone regions of Karnataka.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will be launched, and more teachers will be recruited for 740 Eklavya Model Residential schools.

PM-PRANAM Scheme



- ❖ The Indian Government launched the PM-PRANAM Scheme.
- ❖ It stands for PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment, and Amelioration of Mother Earth.
- ❖ This scheme was launched under the GOBAR Dhan scheme.
- ❖ Under the scheme, the Government of India is planning to promote alternatives to fertilizers.
- ❖ Also, it aims to promote the balanced use of chemicals.
- ❖ The main objective of the scheme is to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers.

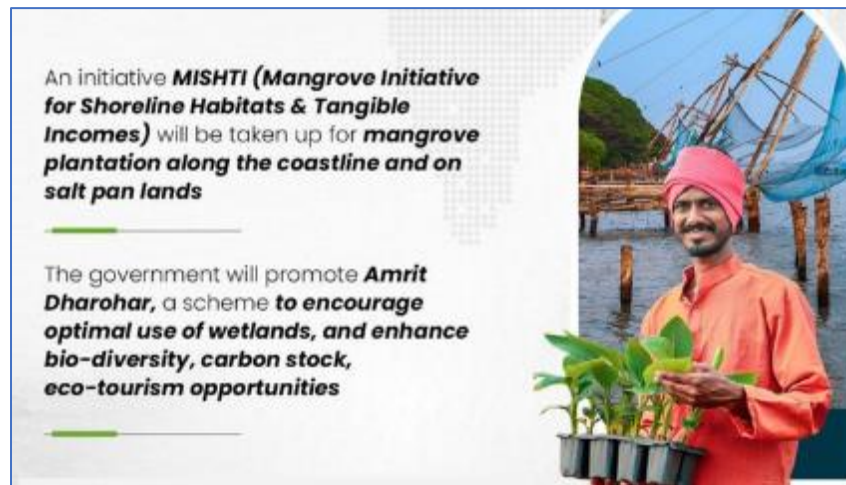
Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia

- ❖ Finance Minister announced her government's plan to launch a mission to eliminate sickle cell anaemia by 2047.
- ❖ A mission to eliminate sickle cell anaemia by 2047 will be launched.
- ❖ It will entail awareness creation, universal screening of seven crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas.
- ❖ The primary function of RBC is to carry oxygen to different parts of the body.
- ❖ In a person with sickle cell anaemia, the oxygen-carrying capacity of RBCs is affected.
- ❖ Sickle cells are those cells that form a C – shape, just like the shape of a sickle.
- ❖ They deform themselves.

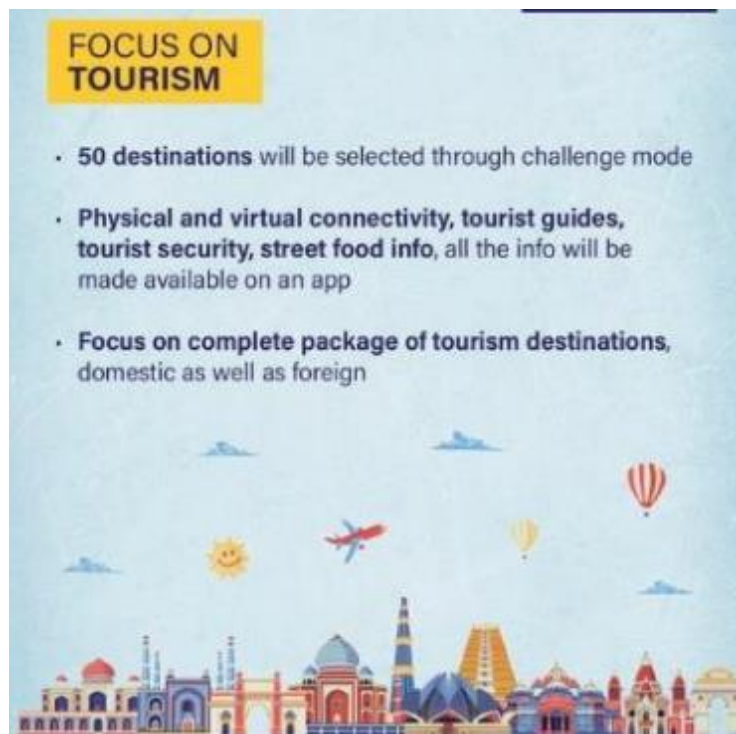


Amrit Dharohar Scheme

- ❖ To increase the optimal use of wetlands in the cities and to improve their biodiversity the government launched the Amrit Dharohar Scheme.
- ❖ The scheme aims to achieve sustainable ecosystem development with the help of local communities.
- ❖ It falls under 'Green Growth', one of the seven priorities of the budget.
- ❖ The scheme is to be implemented in the next three years
- ❖ The scheme will increase eco-tourism, and carbon stock, and also will help the local communities in their income generations.



Complete package of tourism 2023



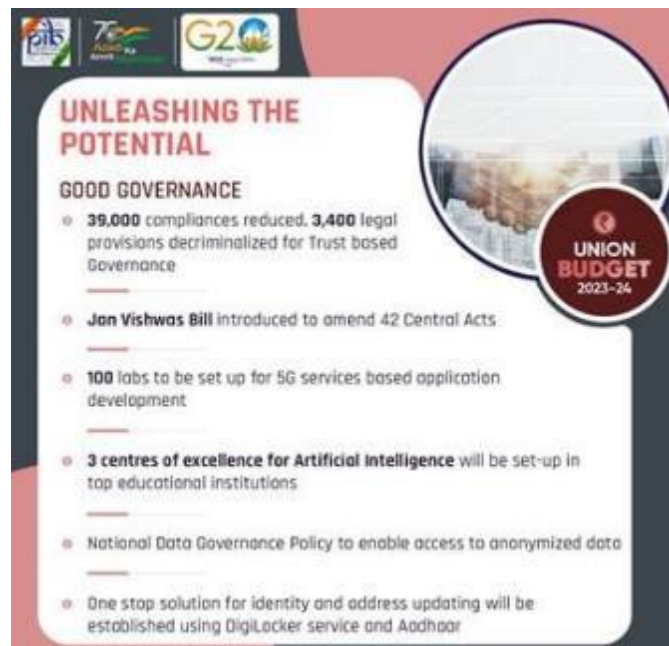
- ❖ At least 50 destinations will be selected and developed as a complete package of tourism.
- ❖ These destinations will be selected through challenge mode using an integrated and innovative approach.
- ❖ The focus of development of tourism would be on domestic as well as foreign tourists.
- ❖ Initiatives will be taken to set up tourism at border villages.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0

- ❖ Union Finance Minister announced the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 to skill lakhs of youth within the next three years.
- ❖ The scheme will emphasize On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses with the needs of the industry.
- ❖ This scheme will also cover new-age courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.



National Data Governance Policy



- ❖ Government of India is to launch National Governance Policy.
- ❖ The policy will create an Indian Data Management Office.
- ❖ The main aim of the policy is to make the data secure and make it available to startups in the country.
- ❖ The National Data Governance Policy is the first step to towards Digital Government.
- ❖ With the policy, the Government can increase its decision-making authority.
- ❖ Data privacy standards can be increased.
- ❖ Data protection standards shall be improved.

Atma nirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme

- ❖ An Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program will be launched to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops.
- ❖ A clean plant means the plant has been tested for several things before planting.
- ❖ First, the plants are checked for pathogens.
- ❖ Second, actively growing ones are identified.
- ❖ Then tissue samples are collected from these actively growing plants.
- ❖ These tissues are fused with other plants to increase their productivity as well.



MISHTI Scheme for Mangrove plantations

- ❖ Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes', MISHTI, will be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands.
- ❖ The main aim of the scheme is to take up mangrove plantations along the coastline.
- ❖ The main objective of the MISHTI Scheme is to “preserve Mangrove forests”.
- ❖ MISHTI is to be implemented by converging Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority Fund, MGNREGS, and other sources.



Agriculture Accelerator Fund



- ❖ An Agriculture Accelerator Fund will be set up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- ❖ The fund will aim at bringing innovative and affordable solutions for challenges faced by farmers.
- ❖ It will also bring in modern technologies to transform agricultural practices, and increase productivity and profitability.
- ❖ Digital public infrastructure for agriculture will be built as an open-source, open-standard and interoperable platform for public good.

PAN as common identifier

- ❖ Permanent Account Number (PAN) will be used for common identifier for all digital systems of specified government agencies.
- ❖ The move would help in further promoting ease of doing business in the country.
- ❖ PAN is a 10-digit alphanumeric number allotted by the income tax department to a person, firm or entity.



Income Tax Slab Revamp

Income Tax Slabs: At A Glance					
New tax Regime [Revised ^a]		New tax Regime [Previous]		Old tax Regime	
Income	Tax Rate %	Income	Tax Rate %	Income	Tax Rate %
0-3 Lakh	NIL	0-2.5 Lakh	NIL	0-2.5 Lakh	NIL
3-6 Lakh	5%	2.5-5 Lakh	5%	2.5-5 Lakh	5%
6-9 Lakh	10%	5-7.5 Lakh	10%	5-10 Lakh	20%
9-12 Lakh	15%	7.5-10 Lakh	15%	Above 10 Lakh	30%
12-15 Lakh	20%	10-12.5 Lakh	20%		
Above 15 Lakh	30%	12.5-5 Lakh	25%		
		Above 15 Lakh	30%		

- ❖ During the Union Budget announced that people earning up to Rs 7 lakhs need not pay taxes.
- ❖ Tax surcharges of the taxpayers in the highest tax bracket were reduced from 37% to 25%.
- ❖ The bottom line, the new income tax slab benefits taxpayers in the highest and lowest tax brackets.

Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman

- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman is announced during the Budget presentation.
- ❖ It will enable the country's artisans to improve the quality, scale, and reach of their products, integrating them with the Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSME) value chain.
- ❖ It aims to unlock the potential of thousands of artists and craftspeople around the nation, through the provision of skills training, technology, and the opening of credit lines to them.



Mahila Samman Bachat Patra

- ❖ Mahila Samman Savings Certificate is a new small savings scheme introduced in the Budget presentation.

- ❖ The scheme is exclusively for women and girls and offers a deposit facility of up to INR 2 lakhs with an interest rate of 7.5%.
- ❖ The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate offers a 7.5% interest rate, compared to 7% offered by the National Savings Certificate scheme.
- ❖ It offers partial withdrawal options, making it a flexible investment option.



Har Ghar Dhyam Campaign

- ❖ The Ministry of Culture launched Har Ghar Dhyam Campaign.
- ❖ The campaign will spread the importance of meditation to the public.
- ❖ The Ministry of Culture is conducting the campaign along with the Art of Living Foundation.
- ❖ During the campaign, the teachers from the organization will conduct meditation classes.
- ❖ The main objective is to empower the youth.

Visit India Year 2023 Campaign

- ❖ Union Tourism Ministry launched the Visit India Year 2023 campaign.
- ❖ It aims to encourage inbound travel to the country which is currently chairing the G20.
- ❖ The minister also launched a logo of the campaign that draws inspiration from visual representation of 'namaste'.
- ❖ The logo represents a "microcosm of the countless stories India holds".

20 Point Program Progress Report

- ❖ The National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on 20 Point Program Progress.
- ❖ The performance of the program has been poor in recent times.
- ❖ As per the report, only 41% of the fixed target was completed in 2022-23.
- ❖ NSO says that the performance of TPP was poor in all schemes.
- ❖ In 2016, TPP achieved only 96% of its target.
- ❖ In 2019, the scheme completed only 13% of its target.
- ❖ The Indian Government launched the 20 Point Program in 1975.
- ❖ It has been revised twice since its launch, once in 1982 and then in 1986.
- ❖ The main objective of the program is to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of rural people using 20 points.
- ❖ During the 2022-23 budget, the union government increased the budget for the program by 36%.

• **The Twenty Point Programme (TPP)** was launched by the Government of India in **1975**. The Programme was first revised in **1982** and again in **1986**.

National Logistics Portal – Marine

- ❖ Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the National Logistics Portal (marine) in New Delhi.
- ❖ The National Logistic Portal (marine) (NLP) is a project of national importance.
- ❖ It aims to use IT to connect all logistics community stakeholders, to improve efficiency and transparency by reducing costs and time delays and achieving easier, faster, and more competitive service offerings.
- ❖ It will serve as a single point of contact for all logistics trade processes across the country, including all modes of transportation via waterways, roads, and airways.

Beating Retreat Ceremony 2023

- ❖ The Beating Retreat ceremony, which marks the formal end of the Republic Day celebrations, held at Vijay Chowk.
- ❖ The Beating Retreat ceremony was graced by the presence of the United Nations General Assembly president Csaba Korosi.

- ❖ For the first time, a 3-D anamorphic projection was done on the facade of North Block and South Block during the grand event at Vijay Chowk.
- ❖ It also witnessed the country's biggest drone show, comprising 3,500 indigenous drones.
- ❖ The day marks a centuries-old military tradition.
- ❖ Such a ceremony is also held by Armed Forces in the UK, US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and others.



NAMASTE scheme

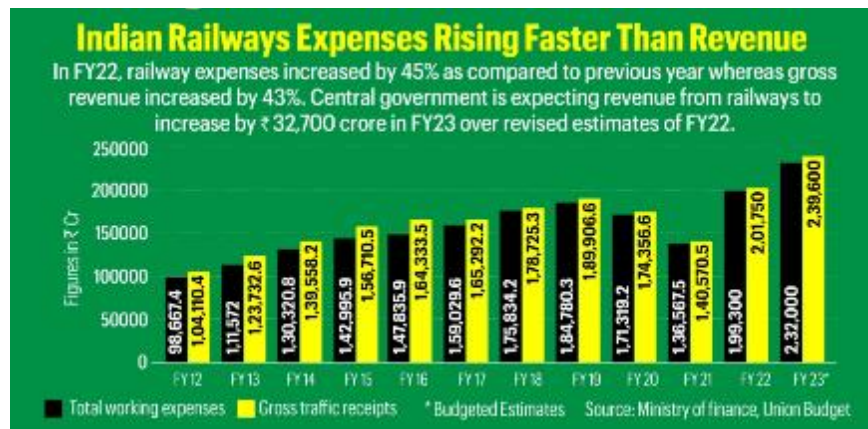


- ❖ The Government of India allocated Rs 100 crores for the NAMASTE scheme in budget 2023.

- ❖ NAMASTE stands for 'National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Eco system'.
- ❖ The scheme aims to provide an alternate livelihood to sanitation workers.
- ❖ In addition, NAMASTE will strive to bring behavioural changes to them.

Railway Budget 2023

- ❖ The capital outlay for the railways has been increased to the highest-ever Rs 2.40 lakh crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24.
- ❖ It is nine times higher amount than provided in 2013-2014.
- ❖ The government proposed to manufacture 35 hydrogen fuel-based trains.



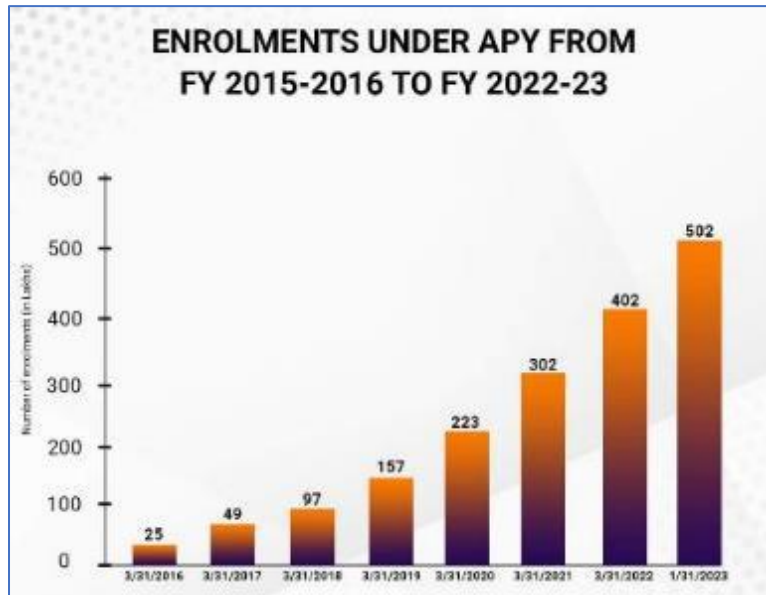
First Employment Working Group Meeting

- ❖ India's first Employment Working Group meeting began in Jodhpur.
- ❖ The panel held discussions focussed on developing a collaborative road map for global skills under India's G20 presidency.
- ❖ The panellists shared insights and ideas on the priority area - 'Addressing Global Skills Gaps'.

5 crore Enrollments on APY

- ❖ Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has recently crossed the landmark of 5 crore enrolments.
- ❖ APY is the flagship social security scheme of the Government of India was launched on 9th May 2015.
- ❖ The Government of India sets yearly targets for the banks under the Atal Pension Yojana.

- ❖ In 2022, 29 banks achieved the target.
- ❖ It aims to provide old age income security to the people working in the unorganised sectors.
- ❖ From 1st October of 2022 any income tax payer is not permitted to open new APY account.



Microsoft's Project ELLORA

- ❖ To bring 'rare' Indian languages online, Microsoft launched project ELLORA or Enabling Low Resource Languages in 2015.
- ❖ Under the project, researchers are building digital resources of the languages.
- ❖ Microsoft's Project ELLORA is helping small languages like Gondi, Mundari become eloquent for the digital world.
- ❖ The researchers are mapping out resources, including printed literature, to create a dataset to train their AI model.
- ❖ There are around 1.2 billion people, which is 20% of the world's population, can't use their language to navigate the digital world.

Contesting two seats in one poll

- ❖ The Supreme Court refused to remove a provision in the election law which allows candidates to contest polls from two constituencies simultaneously.
- ❖ The filed petition had sought the court to declare Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act invalid and ultra vires.

- ❖ But the court chose to leave the issue to the wisdom of the Parliament.
- ❖ The Election Commission had, in an affidavit in 2018, supported the petition.
- ❖ It had informed the Supreme Court that it had proposed an amendment to Section 33(7) in July 2004.

WHAT THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT SAYS

SECTION 8(1) A person convicted for promoting enmity between different groups, rape, terrorist acts, insulting national flag etc stands disqualified for six years on mere conviction.

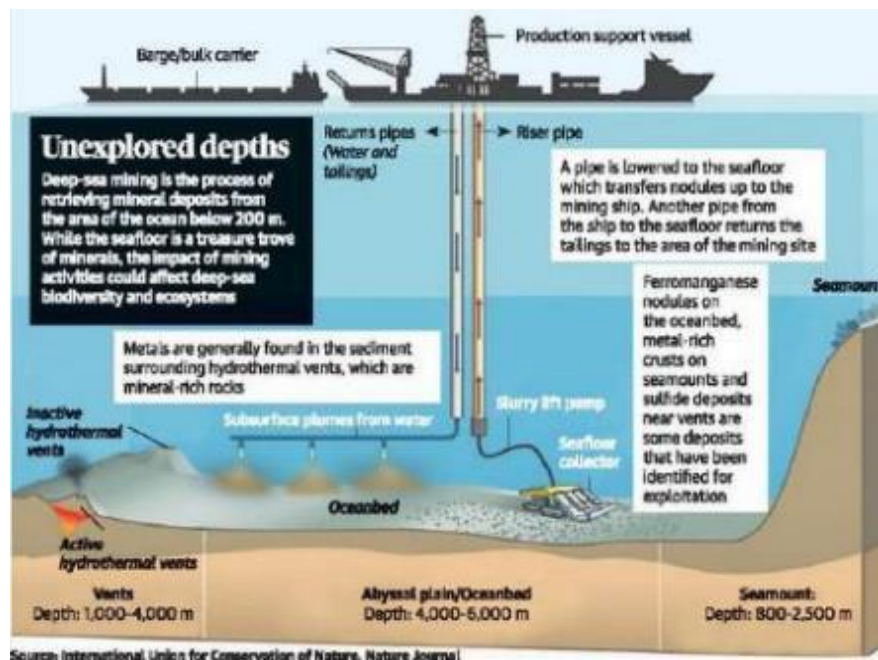
SECTION 8(2) A person convicted for hoarding, dowry offences etc. incurs disqualification if he is sentenced to at least six months for the offences. The bar continues for six years after release from jail.

SECTION 8(3) A person con-

victed of any other offence incurs disqualification if he is sentenced to an imprisonment of not less than two years. The disqualification continues till six years after release.

SECTION 8(4) Protects sitting MPs and MLAs from being disqualification under the above provisions. If they file an appeal within three months, they can continue as a member of the House till the completion of the term or till the decision on appeal, whichever is earlier.

India as a “Pioneer Investor”



- ❖ The International Seabed Authority has officially designated India as a “Pioneer Investor”.

- ❖ Pioneer Investor refers that an early investment made in any new sector or technology. E.g., Polymetallic nodules at the ocean bed.
- ❖ Recently, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the Ministry of Earth Sciences also exchanged Polymetallic Nodules exploration extension contract.

Operation Sadbhavana

- ❖ The Indian Army is organising "Operation Sadbhavana" in the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- ❖ It includes multiple welfare activities, such as running schools and infrastructure development projects.
- ❖ The activities are aimed at helping children living in remote areas of Ladakh.
- ❖ To improve the standard of education and to provide them with quality education, the army is currently running seven Army Goodwill Schools.
- ❖ In addition, training classes for women are also being organised for various activities such as Pashmina shawl weaving, wool knitting etc.



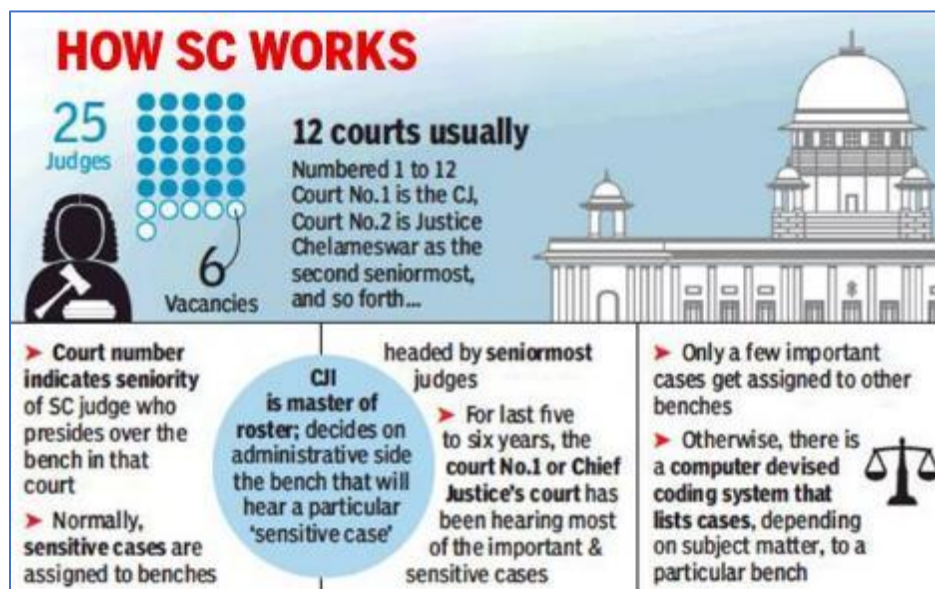
India Energy Week 2023

- ❖ The 'India Energy Week 2023' held in Bengaluru from February 6 to 8.
- ❖ The Prime Minister launched the uniforms under the 'Unbottled' initiative of Indian Oil.
- ❖ These uniforms are made of recycled PET bottles.
- ❖ Prime Minister also launched E20 fuel at 84 retail outlets of Oil Marketing Companies in 11 States/UTs along the lines of the ethanol blending roadmap.



73rd foundation day of Supreme Court of India

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India hosted the 73rd anniversary of its establishment.
- ❖ This year's event saw Singapore's Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, who is of Indian origin, as the chief guest.
- ❖ On January 28, 1950, two days after India became the Sovereign Democratic Republic, the Supreme Court of India came into being.
- ❖ The inauguration took place in the Chamber of Princes in Parliament building which also housed India's Parliament.
- ❖ The original Constitution of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and seven puisne judges and leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.
- ❖ Parliament increased the number of Judges from eight in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009 and 34 in 2019 (current strength).



No War, No Peace Scenario


- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) made public a revised doctrine.
- ❖ In which it laid out the role of air power in the “no war, no peace scenario”.
- ❖ The doctrine highlighted the use of air power as part of a joint military strategy involving the two other forces.
- ❖ The doctrine also emphasised that defensive and offensive counter-operations are linked.
- ❖ The IAF first published a doctrine in 1995, which was revised in 2007.
- ❖ In 2012, a revised and unclassified basic doctrine was published.
- ❖ The latest doctrine revises the 2012 document.



Hydrogen train India

HOW A HYDROGEN TRAIN WORKS

These trains carry pure hydrogen in rooftop tanks and take oxygen from air to produce electricity in their fuel cells. The electrical energy is stored in batteries to power the motors because fuel cells cannot suddenly increase their output for acceleration. During braking, energy from the wheels is returned to the battery to increase mileage.




The UK, which intends to phase out all its diesel railway engines by 2040, is using dual-mode technology called **HydroFlex** (photo left). The trains will switch from hydrogen to catenary power wherever it is available

France, too, has ordered dual-mode hydrogen trains from Alstom that can also run on catenary power wherever it is available

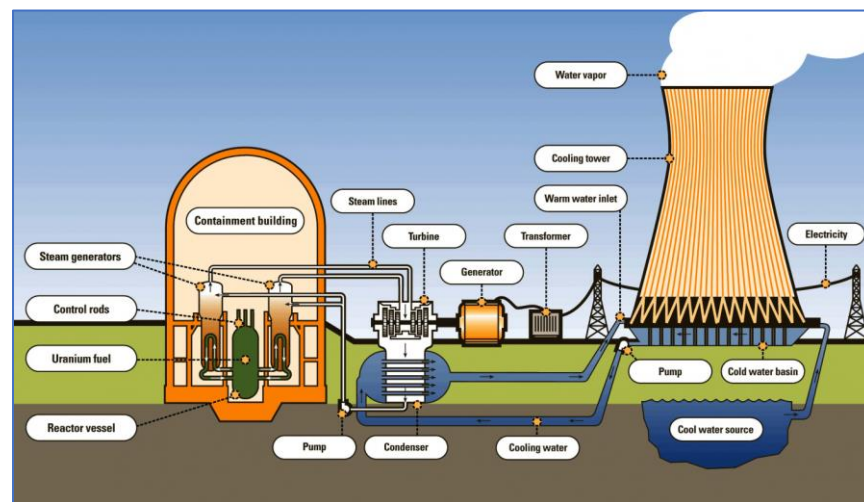
German firm Siemens' hydrogen trains have a range of 600km and a top speed of 160kmph

Alstom's **Coradia iLint** trains used in Lower Saxony have a top speed of 140kmph and a maximum range of 1,000km. The tanks on top of each train unit carry 130kg of hydrogen that can be filled in 15 minutes



- ❖ Railway Minister announced that India will have its first hydrogen train ready by December this year.
- ❖ The hydrogen train will initially run on heritage circuits like Kalka to Shimla.
- ❖ Hydrogen trains, as the name suggests, run on hydrogen fuel cells.
- ❖ These are much more environmentally friendly than traditional diesel engines.
- ❖ Hydrogen fuel cells convert hydrogen and oxygen which then produces the electricity that is used to power the train's motors.
- ❖ These trains use clean energy transition fuel that does not emit any air pollutants.

Supply of nuclear turbine parts



- ❖ Hyderabad-based Azad Engineering Private Limited has been approved as the first Indian company to supply critical rotating parts for nuclear turbines.
- ❖ The company has delivered its first set of critical parts.
- ❖ These will now be assembled on nuclear turbines manufactured in Belfort, France.

Enhancing Circularity and Sustainability Project

- ❖ Indian Government in collaboration with UNEP is implementing a project called 'Enhancing Circularity and Sustainability' in India.
- ❖ It is a "Waste to Wealth" scheme.
- ❖ The main objective of the project is to reduce the negative impacts of the textile sector on the environment.
- ❖ This includes reducing the use of synthetic materials like polyester.

- ❖ Polyester will not decompose.
- ❖ The scheme was also launched to promote the recycling and reusing of textiles.
- ❖ Textile waste from India accounts for 8.5% of global textile waste.
- ❖ Over 7800-kilo tonnes of textiles wastes are accumulated in India annually.



Primary Agricultural Credit Societies role

- ❖ The Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) will soon start providing services like the one offered by Common Service Centres (CSC).
- ❖ The PACS will now be able to undertake 20 different activities including water distribution, storage, Bank Mitra.
- ❖ More than 300 services can be made available to the rural population including 13 crore farmer members of PACS.
- ❖ It will increase the business activities of PACS and help them to become self-sustaining economic entities



Zoop food delivery facility

- ❖ Indian Railways has launched a new service, “Zoop”.
- ❖ It is a WhatsApp-based food delivery facility for train passengers.
- ❖ The service will be available on the popular messaging platform, allowing passengers to place food orders from the comfort of their seats.



New Judges to Supreme Court



- ❖ By accepting the recommendations made by the collegium, the Centre notified the appointment of 5 Judges to the Supreme Court.
- ❖ The panel of judges known as the collegium, which makes the recommendations, had in December sent for elevation to the Supreme Court.
- ❖ Now the total strength of judges in the top court to 32.
- ❖ Currently, the Supreme Court of India has a sanctioned strength of thirty-four Judges

India's Milk production

- ❖ India is the highest milk producer in the world contributing twenty-four per cent of global milk production in the year 2021-22.

- ❖ This is according to production data of Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT).
- ❖ India has registered a fifty-one per cent increase during the last eight years-during the year 2014-15 and 2021-22.
- ❖ It is increased to twenty-two crore tonne in the year 2021-22.
- ❖ The National Programme for Dairy Development was launched in February 2014 by merging three existing schemes
 - Intensive Dairy Development Programme
 - Strengthening Infrastructure for Quality and Clean Milk Production and
 - Assistance to Cooperatives.



Yuva Sangam Registration Portal

			
Significance of EBSB Yuva Sangam Student Exchange	How to apply	Eligibility and General Guidelines for delegates	Paired Institution (for the pilot tour)

Yuva Sangam (युवा संगम) *under* Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat
Registration form

Degree / Qualification level (Select One)

• UG Student • PG Student • Off Campus Youth

- ❖ The Yuva Sangam is an initiative to build close ties between the youth of the North East Region and rest of India.
- ❖ The portal was launched under the spirit of “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat”.

- ❖ Under the initiative over 20 thousand youth will travel across the country and gain a unique opportunity of cross-cultural learning.

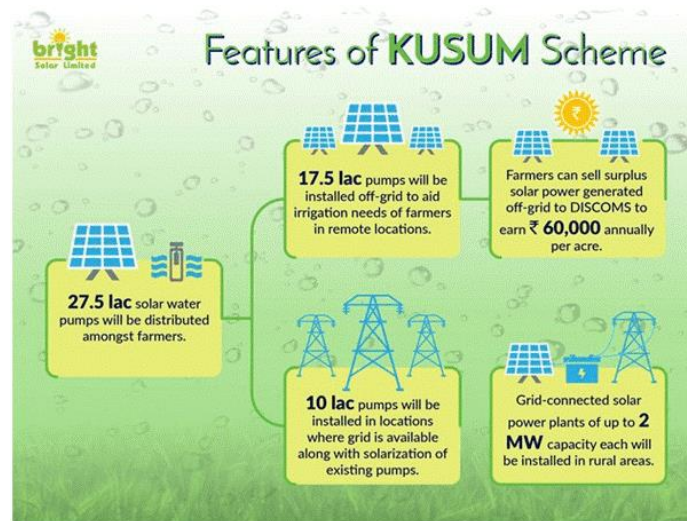
Digital Skills Program in India

- ❖ Reliance Jio and GSMA are proud to announce the national roll-out of their Digital Skills Program.
- ❖ It is a joint initiative under the broader GSMA Connected Women Commitment initiative.
- ❖ The program aims to provide need-based training to rural women and individuals from marginalized / low-income groups to help them make meaningful use of digital access.
- ❖ As per the GSMA's Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022, women in India are 41% less likely than men to use mobile internet.
- ❖ A total of 330 million women in India still do not use mobile internet, compared to 248 million men.



Rooftop Solar Programme

- ❖ The government has extended PM-KUSUM scheme till March 2026.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Launched in 2019.
- ❖ It aims to adding solar capacity of 30,800 MW by 2022.
- ❖ The scheme consists of three components:
 - Component A is for installation of 10,000 MW of solar capacity by installing small power plants of capacity up to 2 MW
 - Component B aims at installation of 20 lakh standalone solar-powered agriculture pumps and
 - Component C is for solarisation of 15 lakh grid-connected agriculture pumps.



Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23

- ❖ Rural Development and Panchayati Raj ministry launched the Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23.
- ❖ It aims to assess the outcome of various development schemes in rural areas.
- ❖ A portal and a mobile application linked to the survey was also launched.
- ❖ The survey aims to lend support to the process of participatory planning for the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- ❖ It will improve service delivery, enhance citizenship, create pace for an alliance of people's institutions and groups, and improve governance at the local level.



Global International Biofuel Alliance

- ❖ India launched the Global Biofuel Alliance in India Energy Week 2023 event.
- ❖ It aims to create a favourable ecosystem for promoting biofuels with key stakeholders including the US, Brazil, EU, IEA etc.
- ❖ The alliance would look to develop an ecosystem for fuel standards and engines and collaboration on technology for faster adoption.



Supreme Court with full strength



- ❖ India's Supreme Court is now back to its full strength of 34, with the elevation of two High Court Chief Justices to the apex court.
- ❖ The last time the apex court was at its full strength was in September-November 2019.
- ❖ The Parliament enacted the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 and has amended to fix the maximum ceiling for the number of judges.
- ❖ In 1956, the number was raised to 11 in addition to a Chief Justice.
- ❖ It was further amended to 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986 31 in 2009 and 33 in 2019.

World's first living heritage university

- ❖ Visva-Bharati University will soon get the 'heritage' tag from UNESCO to become the world's first living heritage university.
- ❖ It was founded in 1921 by Rabindranath Tagore at in Shantiniketan, West Bengal.
- ❖ Visva-Bharati is a public research central university and an Institution of National Importance.



India's most accessible app for PWDs

- ❖ The report named "Making the Digital Ecosystem Disabled Friendly" was released recently.
- ❖ WhatsApp is India's most accessible app for persons with disabilities via its easy-to-use digital products and services.
- ❖ The organization evaluated applications in different categories such as e-commerce, online payments, transport, food delivery, etc.
- ❖ The think tank also audited other apps such as PhonePe, Paytm, Swiggy, Zomato, Amazon, Flipkart, Telegram, Uber and Ola.



QR Code-based Coin Vending Machine

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India will start a pilot project to launch QR code-based coin vending machines.
- ❖ These vending machines will dispense coins against debit to the customer's account.
- ❖ This will enhance the ease of accessibility to coins.
- ❖ The machine is to be launched in 12 cities in the first phase.



India's First Glass Igloo Restaurant

- ❖ India's first glass igloo restaurant in Gulmarg has become a popular destination for tourists.
- ❖ This glass-wall restaurant was built in the middle of snow by the Kolahoi Green Heights hotel of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.
- ❖ In 2021, the same hotel built a snow igloo in Gulmarg which was the biggest snow igloo in Asia.



Aero India 2023



- ❖ Aero India 2023, Asia's largest aero show, was inaugurated in Bengaluru by Prime Minister.
- ❖ The five-day event will see the participation of 809 companies and delegates from nearly 98 countries.
- ❖ The 14th edition of Aero India is showcasing the country as an emerging hub for manufacturing military aircraft, helicopters, military equipment, and new-age avionics.

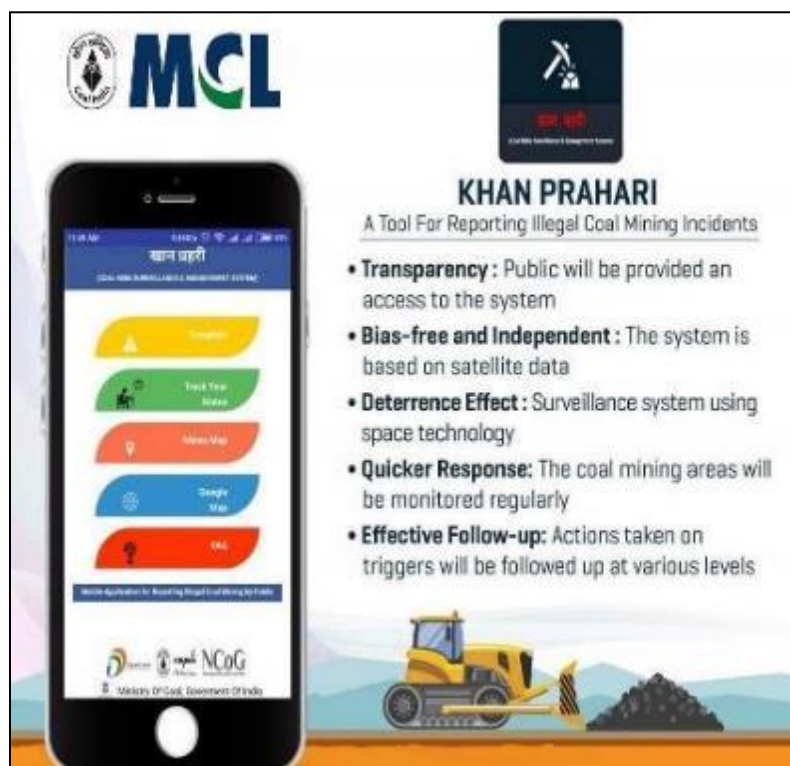
13 New governors



- ❖ As many as 12 states and Union Territory Ladakh got new governors on February 12, 2023.
- ❖ Article 157 and Article 158 of the Constitution of India specify eligibility requirements for the post of governor.

- ❖ He is the part of federal system of Indian polity and acts as a bridge between union and state governments.
- ❖ The governor acts in 'Dual Capacity' as the Constitutional head of the state and as the representative.
- ❖ He is the constitutional head of the state, bound by the advice of his council of ministers.
- ❖ He functions as a vital link between the Union Government and the State Government.

Khanan Prahari Application



- ❖ The government has launched a mobile app namely 'Khanan Prahari' and a CMSMS web portal.
- ❖ CMSMS stands for Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System.
- ❖ It allows reporting unauthorized coal mining activities.
- ❖ The illegal mining of minor minerals is common in states like AP, Telangana, and TN.
- ❖ Illegal mining of major minerals like coal is common in north eastern states like Assam and Meghalaya.
- ❖ India ranks topmost in illegal sand mining.

Definition of broadband

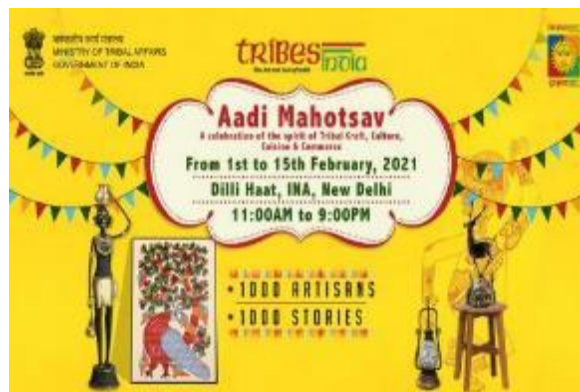
- ❖ The definition of broadband now requires a minimum speed of 2 Mbps from telecom operators.
- ❖ This is previously requiring a fourth of that bandwidth, 512 Kbps, since 2013.
- ❖ There were 825.38 million broadband users in India in November 2022.
- ❖ The National Telecom Policy 2012 had set a goal of updating the definition of broadband to 2 Mbps by 2015.

Annual Meeting of Members of the River Cities Alliance

- ❖ The annual meeting of the members of the River Cities Alliance (RCA) was organised in Pune.
- ❖ It was organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
- ❖ DHARA which stands for Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers.
- ❖ River Cities Alliance was launched in 2021.
- ❖ It is a dedicated platform for river cities of India for discussion and exchange of information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
- ❖ It was started with 30 cities in 2021 and currently has 95 cities as members across India.

TRIFED Aadi Mahotsav Festival

- ❖ The Tribal Affairs ministry recently launched the Aadi Mahotsav festival in New Delhi.
- ❖ The main objective of the Aadi Mahotsav festival is to promote tribal products.
- ❖ TRIFED is hosting the festival on behalf of the tribal ministry.
- ❖ The theme of the event is “A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine, and Commerce”.



Bima Sugam Portal



- ❖ The Government of India recently launched the Bima Sugam Portal.
- ❖ It is an electronic platform to sell insurance.
- ❖ We can find all the insurance companies in the market and we can buy insurance schemes here.
- ❖ The portal is accessible to insurance buyers, and sellers.

Indian Rice Congress 2023

- ❖ The second edition of the Indian Rice Congress was recently inaugurated at National Rice Research Institute at Cuttack, Odisha.
- ❖ The theme of the 2023 congress is “Transforming Rice Research”.
- ❖ The congress focused on the global food crisis and the recent scientific developments that will help in increasing the production and yield of paddy crops.



AMRITPEX 2023

- ❖ The India Post organized the National Philatelic Exhibition, titled ‘Amritpex 2023’ in New Delhi.

- ❖ It includes 1,400 frames, showcasing over one lakh stamps collected by 300 participants.
- ❖ The exhibits use stamps and photographic collections to highlight India's history, culture, art, and heritage through the years.



Jal Jan Abhiyan



- ❖ The Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Brahma Kumari's organization will implement the Jal Jan Abhiyan.
- ❖ The main objective of the campaign is water conservation.
- ❖ During the eight-month campaign, the volunteers from the organization will conduct public awareness campaign on preserving water.

- ❖ They will focus on building new water bodies and also on preserving more than 5,000 water bodies.
- ❖ The target of the campaign is to reach at least ten crore people and organize 10,000 programs.

Digital Suraksha campaign

- ❖ Meta has announced its partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology commonly known as MeitY for the G20 Stay Safe Online Campaign.
- ❖ In association with the ministry, Meta has launched the #DigitalSuraksha campaign.
- ❖ Meta will create and share resources in multiple Indian languages about how to stay safe online through this Campaign.
- ❖ It aims to raise awareness about how to be safe in the digital world.



Kavach 2023



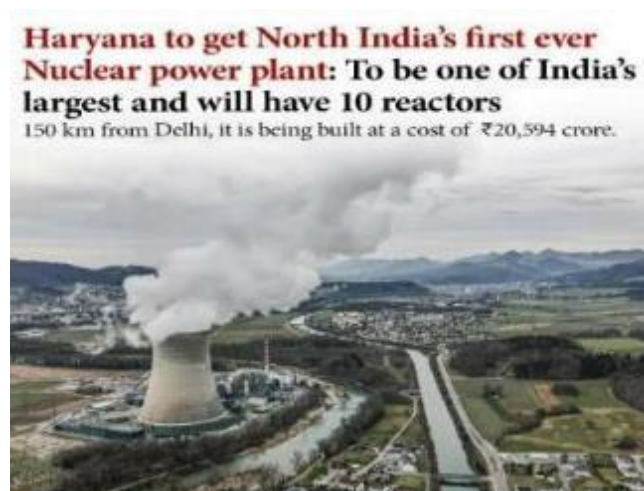
- ❖ The ministries of home affairs and education, along with the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), launched Kavach 2023.
- ❖ It is a national level hackathon on cybersecurity.
- ❖ Kavach is being launched to identify innovative concepts and technology solutions for addressing cybersecurity challenges faced by Indian intelligence agencies.

2nd Global Hackathon “HARBINGER 2023”



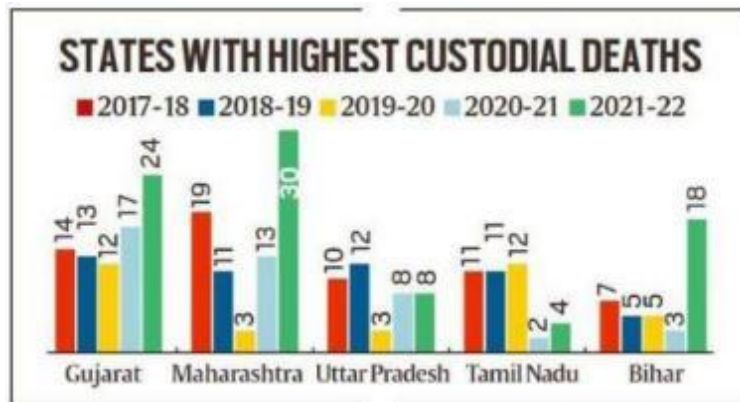
- ❖ The Reserve Bank announced its second global hackathon - 'HARBINGER 2023 - Innovation for Transformation'.
- ❖ Theme of this is 'Inclusive Digital Services'.
- ❖ The first hackathon was announced in November 2021 and results were declared in June 2022.

North India's first nuclear plant



- ❖ North India's first nuclear power plant is coming up in Gorakhpur, Haryana.
- ❖ It will generate 2800 MW.
- ❖ Currently they confined mostly to the southern states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh or in the west in Maharashtra.

Custodial deaths data



- ❖ In the last five years, the highest number of custodial deaths have been reported in Gujarat at 80.
- ❖ This is followed by Maharashtra (76), Uttar Pradesh (41), Tamil Nadu (40) and Bihar (38).
- ❖ Among the nine Union Territories, the highest incidents of custodial deaths were reported from Delhi at 29 in the last five years.
- ❖ This is followed by Jammu and Kashmir at four.
- ❖ 146 cases of death in police custody were reported during 2017-2018, 136 in 2018-2019, 112 in 2019-2021, 100 in 2020-2021 and 175 in 2021-2022.

12 cheetahs to Kuno National Park



- ❖ Twelve cheetahs arrived in Madhya Pradesh from South Africa.
- ❖ They were released into the quarantine enclosures at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Sheopur district.
- ❖ With the addition of these 12 members, the count of cheetahs at the KNP has gone up to 20.

- ❖ They came Five months after the first batch of eight of these fastest land animals were brought there from Namibia.
- ❖ The country's last cheetah died in Koriya district of present-day Chhattisgarh in 1947 and the species was declared extinct in 1952.
- ❖ This National Park is situated on the northern side of Vindhyaachal mountains and is spread across more than 700 square km.

World's Highest Weather Station

- ❖ The world's highest altitude weather station was destroyed due to hurricane-force winds on Mount Everest.
- ❖ This weather station located at an altitude of 8,810 metres (28,904 ft); just 39 metres (128 ft) below Everest's summit.
- ❖ This one got place on Guinness World Records.
- ❖ Previously, the weather station was located on Everest's Balcony, around 400 metres lower than the new one.
- ❖ Notably, it was the first-ever terrestrial weather station that was placed above 8,000 metres.



Ban on terrorist organizations

- ❖ The Centre banned two groups and declared an individual a terrorist for their subversive and anti-India activities.
- ❖ The two groups are the Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF) and the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF).
- ❖ The JKGF draws its cadres from various proscribed terrorist organisations, such as the Lashker-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami and others.
- ❖ The KTF came into existence in 2011.

- ❖ It is an offshoot of the Babbar Khalsa International, a proscribed terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).
- ❖ The JKGF is the 43rd and KTF 44th terror group to be declared outlawed under the anti-terror law.
- ❖ Punjab-resident Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda was declared a terrorist.
- ❖ He is the 54th individual to be designated as a terrorist by the government.



mPassport Police App



- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) introduced the 'mPassport Police app'.
- ❖ The application attempts to simplify and accelerate the police verification procedure for passport issuance.
- ❖ It aims to speed up this critical procedure even further.
- ❖ This app will allow quick monitoring and issuance of passports to citizens.

27K active tech startups



- ❖ India added more than 1,300 active tech startups in 2022.
- ❖ Now the total number of active tech startups to 25,000-27,000.
- ❖ India maintains its position as the world's third-largest tech startup ecosystem after the US and China.
- ❖ In 2022, India added the second-largest number of unicorns globally, with over 23 added.
- ❖ The total funding to Indian startups was decreased by 24% in 2022-23.

Vibrant Villages Program

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the 'Vibrant Village Programme' for financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26.
- ❖ This is the centrally-sponsored scheme.
- ❖ The programme will cover 662 villages in the first phase.
- ❖ Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats.
- ❖ New job opportunities will be created to curb migration of local population and sustainable economic activities will be encouraged.



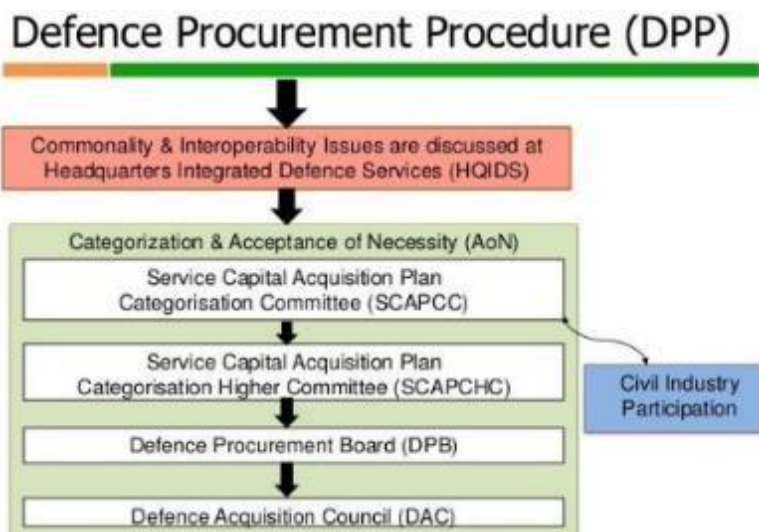
High Domestic air travel

- ❖ The aviation sector is bringing people closer and boosting national progress with more airports and better connectivity.
- ❖ The domestic air passenger nearly 4.45 lakh on February 19.
- ❖ This is the highest movement after Covid.
- ❖ The average daily domestic air passenger number pre-Covid was below 4 lakh-mark.
- ❖ At present, as many as 147 airports are operational in the country.



Defense procurement from local industries

- ❖ India will spend 75 per cent of its defence capital in 2023-24 on procurement from the domestic industry.
- ❖ The same stood 68 per cent in 2022-23.
- ❖ The overall Defence budget earmarked for 2023-24 is Rs 5.94 lakh crore
- ❖ Of this, the capital outlay has been earmarked at Rs1.63 lakh crore.

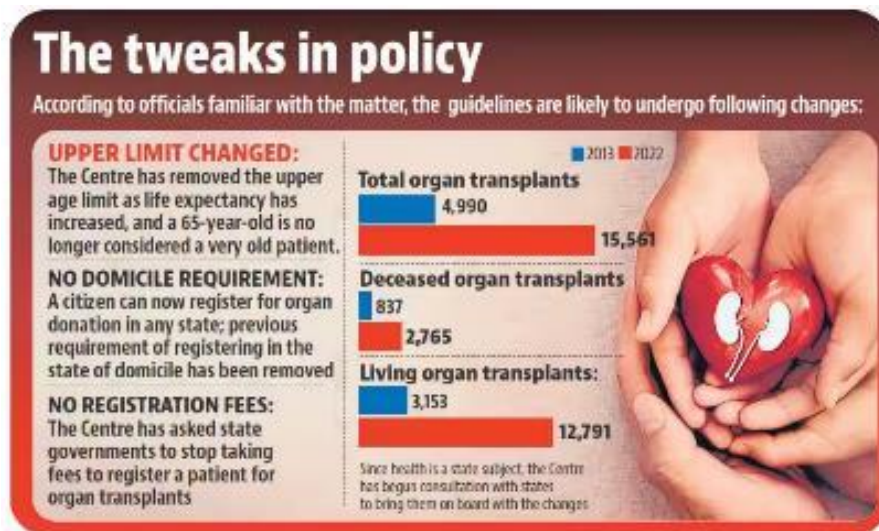


Startup 20 Engagement Group



- ❖ Startup 20 Engagement Group was set up under India's G20 presidency.
- ❖ It deliberates on policy recommendations on entrepreneurship and innovation during its meeting.
- ❖ The meeting aims at creating a global narrative for supporting startups and fostering synergies between startups, corporates, investors, innovation agencies, and other stakeholders.
- ❖ The Startup20 has three taskforces - foundation and alliances; Finance; and inclusion and sustainability.

Changes in Organ transplant rules

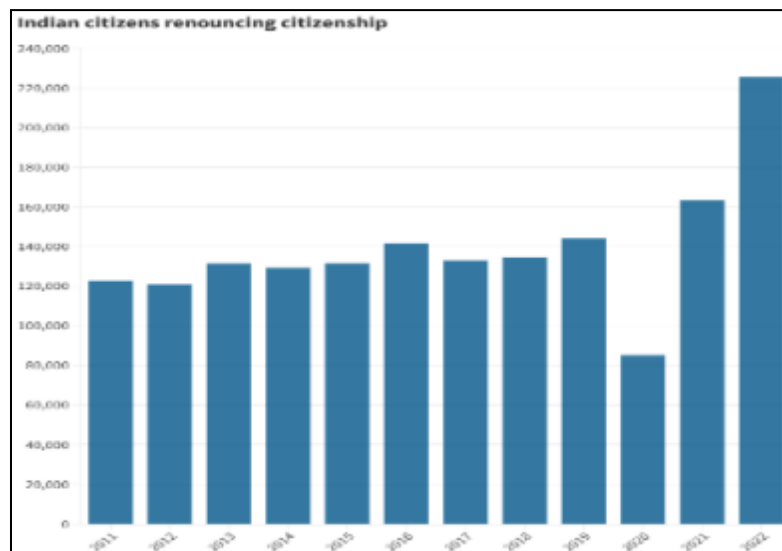


- ❖ New rules remove the 65-year age cap for recipients.
- ❖ The removal of domicile-related restrictions is another much-needed move to make organs accessible for timely transplants.
- ❖ This is the move towards one nation one waiting list for cadaver organs.
- ❖ Current rules require prospective organ recipients to register for organs only in the state in which they reside.

- ❖ Another important change is that we are doing away with the registration fee that states used to charge for this purpose.
- ❖ India conducts the third highest number of transplants in the world every year.

Renouncing citizenship of Indians

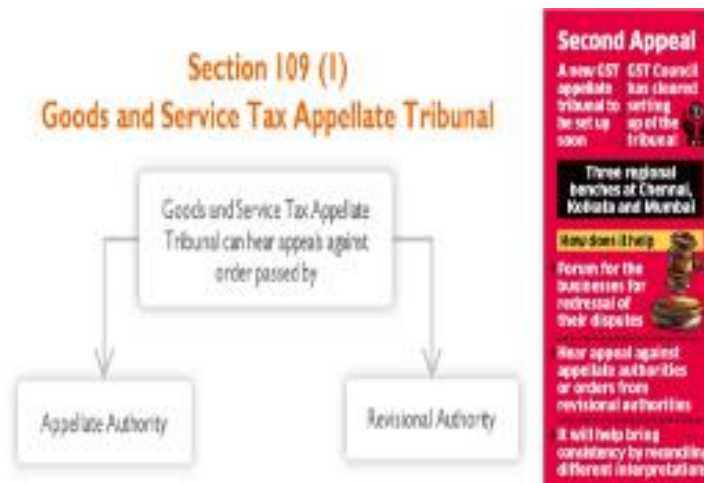
- ❖ In 2022, over 2.25 lakh Indians renounced Indian citizenship.
- ❖ This is the highest ever since 2011.
- ❖ The data reflects how Indians, especially high net worth individuals (HNIs) are moving westward with new passports, in search of better opportunities, healthcare, quality of life, and education, among several other factors.
- ❖ HNIs are those who have wealth of over \$1 million or ₹8.2 crore.
- ❖ According to the Henley Global Citizens Report, there were 3.47 lakh such people in India in December 2021.
- ❖ Of these, 1.49 lakh HNIs were found in just nine cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Gurgaon, and Ahmedabad.
- ❖ India ranked fourth in the world in terms of privately-held wealth, after the U.S., China, and Japan.



GST Appellate Tribunal setup

- ❖ The Goods and Services Tax Council has decided to set up a national GST appellate tribunal with a primary bench in Delhi and benches in other states.
- ❖ The number of benches in a state will be decided by the state government based on the requirements of its population.

- ❖ The appellate body will be headed by a judge from the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a high court.
- ❖ A single-member bench is likely to be authorised to hear cases of tax dispute below Rs 50 lakh.
- ❖ For cases involving amounts more than Rs 50 lakh, it would have to be heard by a double member bench.



SWARM Drone System

- ❖ The Indian Army has started taking delivery of its first heterogeneous swarm Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) system for use on the battlefield.
- ❖ This is the world's first operational high density swarming UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) induction for military applications.
- ❖ They are Supplied by an Indian start up – Bengaluru based NewSpace Research & Technologies.
- ❖ The swarm of 100 drones is capable of hitting targets at least 50 kms away into enemy territory.
- ❖ They using advanced autonomy, computing, communication and AI protocols to execute various mission objectives with minimal human intervention.



New pilgrim center for PRASHAD Scheme

- ❖ The Union government has identified four pilgrim centres for development under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme.
- ❖ The 4 new centres are
 - Chamundeshwari temple in Mysuru,
 - Sri Madhwa Vana in Kunjaragiri in Udupi district,
 - Papnash temple in Bidar district and
 - Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple in Saundatti in Belagavi district
- ❖ The heritage sites of Hampi and Mysuru have already been selected under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- ❖ PRASAD Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15.
- ❖ The name of the scheme was changed from PRASAD to PRASHAD in October 2017.



Shiv Sena name and symbol

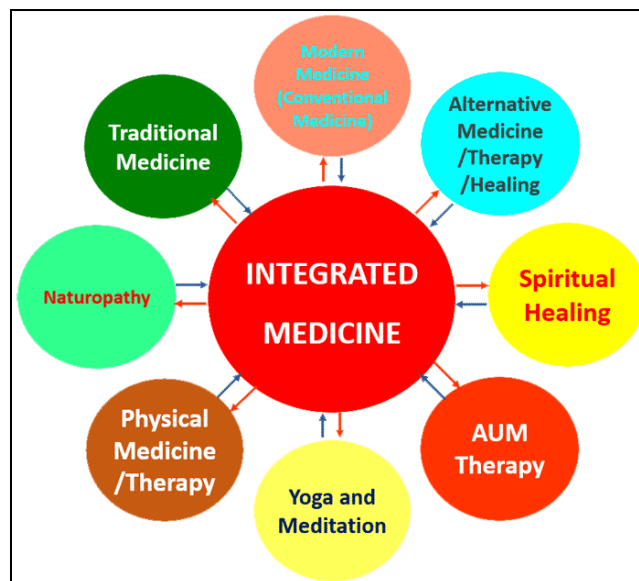
- ❖ The Election Commission of India allotted the name 'Shiv Sena' and the party's bow and arrow symbol to the Eknath Shinde bloc.
- ❖ This effect was recognising it as the original party founded by Balasaheb Thackeray.
- ❖ The Commission had decided this based on a "test on majority".
- ❖ The group of MLAs supporting the Eknath Shinde group had got nearly 76% of the votes and the Uddhav Thackeray faction got only 23.5% of votes.

- ❖ Eknath Shinde's faction has claimed the support of 40 of the Shiv Sena's 56 MLAs and 13 of the 18 Members of the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ The Shiv Sena party have 56 MLAs, who won the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly Elections.
- ❖ The two factions have been locked in a fight over the party's name and symbol since last June.



Integrative Medicine Centres

- ❖ The Centre has decided to open Integrative Medicine Centres at all government medical establishments in the country especially at AIIMS.
- ❖ The Opening such centres will help in harmonising the Indian and modern systems of medicine and providing joint multidisciplinary care to patients.
- ❖ Integrative medicine is aimed at harnessing the potential of India's rich heritage and medical knowledge, along with using modern advancements in allopathy.



Jaadui Pitara

- ❖ Union education minister, Dharmendra Pradhan launched the “Jaadui Pitara” for learning and teaching for the foundational stage.
- ❖ It is a play-based learning material for children between the age of 3 to 8 years.
- ❖ It is available in 13 different Indian languages.
- ❖ It was developed under the National Curriculum Framework.



SADUN initiative

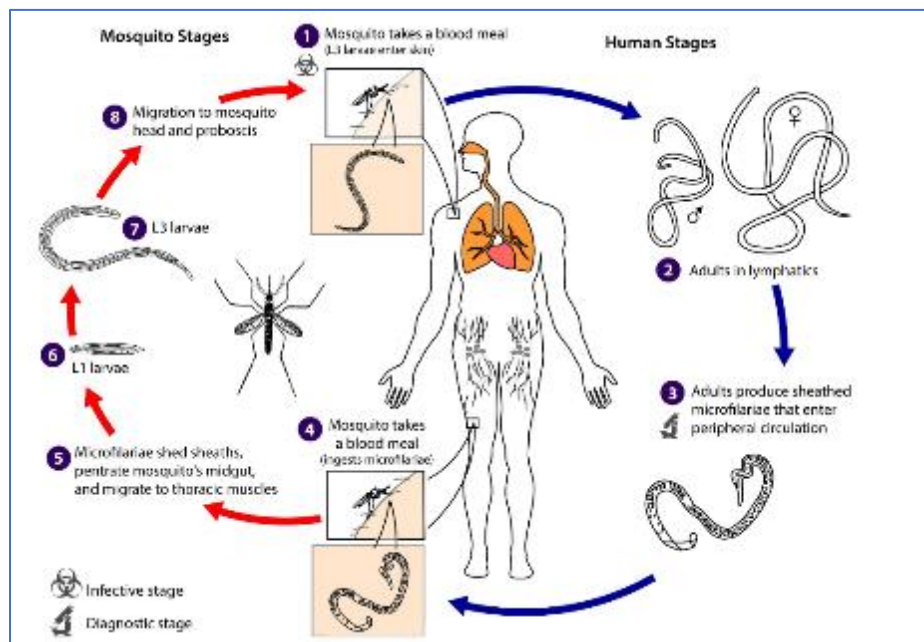
- ❖ India has launched the South Asia Distribution Utility Network (SADUN).
- ❖ It aims to modernise distribution of utilities in South Asia via knowledge sharing among the region's discoms.
- ❖ SADUN is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Power, USAID and Power Finance Corp.

She Feeds the World program

- ❖ The 'She Feeds the World' program has been launched by PepsiCo and CARE in India.
- ❖ The program will be initially implemented in Coochbehar and Alipurduar districts of West Bengal.
- ❖ It aims to improve the status of over 48,000 women.
- ❖ More than 1.5 million people of West Bengal will benefit from this program.
- ❖ It focuses on increase crop yield, increase income of women of BPL families, ensure access to healthy and balanced diet as well as provide training to women on sustainable agriculture.

Campaign to combat filariasis

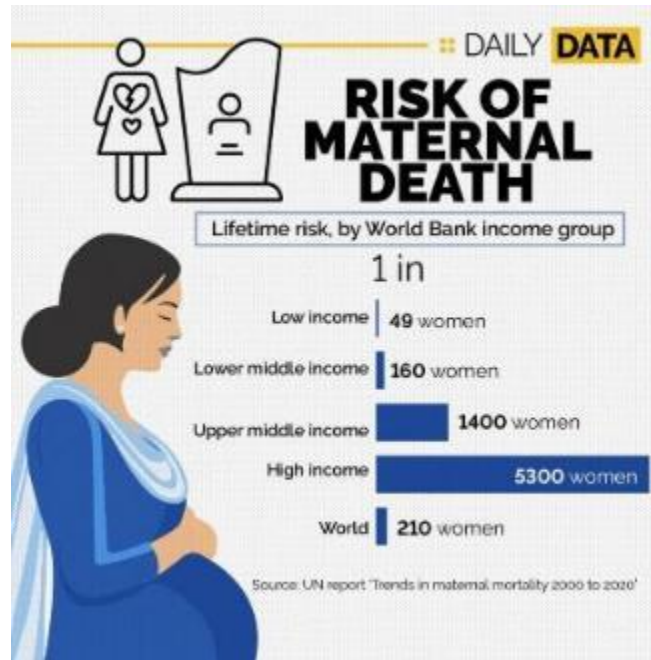
- ❖ The Union Health Ministry has launched a nationwide mass drug administration (MDA) campaign.
- ❖ It was aimed at ending filariasis disease transmission through door-to-door administration of anti-filarial drugs, especially in 10 affected States.
- ❖ High-burden districts in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh jointly launched the campaign.
- ❖ Union Health Ministry aimed to eliminate filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target.
- ❖ Lymphatic filariasis (LF) is a vector-borne disease caused by culex mosquitoes that leads to disabilities.



Maternal mortality Rate - 2000 to 2020

- ❖ India recorded the second highest number of maternal deaths in 2020.
- ❖ It was coming second at 24,000 to only Nigeria which saw 82,000 maternal deaths in the pandemic year.
- ❖ However, there has been an overall reduction of 73.5 per cent in maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in India.
- ❖ In 2020, India's MMR stood at 103, a vast improvement from 384 at the turn of the century.

- ❖ Other developing countries like Argentina (45 MMR in 2020), Bhutan (60), Brazil (72), Kyrgyzstan (50) and Philippines (78) have performed better than India.
- ❖ Globally, there were an estimated 287,000 maternal deaths in 2020.
- ❖ Maternal deaths remained concentrated in poor countries and conflict zones, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 70 per cent of all maternal deaths in 2020.
- ❖ Moreover, countries rife with conflict recorded a MMR of 551, compared to the world average of 223.



FSSAI Millet Standard

- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has specified a comprehensive group standard for millets vide Food Safety and Standards, Second Amendment Regulations, 2023.
- ❖ This will be enforced from September 1 onwards.
- ❖ Currently, individual standards for only a few are prescribed in the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011.
- ❖ The FSSAI has now framed a comprehensive group standard for 15 types of millets.
- ❖ They specifying 8 quality parameters like maximum limits for moisture content, uric acid content, extraneous matter, other edible grains, defects, weevilled grains, and immature and shrivelled grains.

**FSSAI FRAMES COMPREHENSIVE GROUP STANDARDS FOR 15
TYPES OF MILLETS SPECIFYING 8 QUALITY PARAMETERS**

- **Quality Parameters Include Max Limits For Moisture Content, Uric Acid Content, & Other Edible Grains**
- **FSSAI Says Standards Prescribed To Ensure Good Quality Millets In Domestic And Global Markets**
- **Standards To Be Enforced From September 1, 2023**

INTERNATIONAL

Country Partner for BioAsia 2023

- ❖ The Union Government, and several other international organizations organize the BIO ASIA forum in the Genome Valley, Hyderabad.
- ❖ The United Kingdom has been named Country Partner for BioAsia 2023.
- ❖ The forum is an opportunistic platform for biotech leaders to learn about the latest technological advancements in the field.
- ❖ This year, the forum is to focus on the MSME sector.



China dam near Indian border

- ❖ China is constructing a new dam on the Mabja Zangbo river in Tibet, close to the India, China and Nepal tri-junction.
- ❖ The new dam is located around 16 km north of the tri-junction and is opposite the Kalapani area of Uttarakhand.

- ❖ Mabja Zangbo originates in Nagari county of Tibet.
- ❖ It flows through Nepal into the Ghaghara River before joining the Ganga in India.



Representative to fight Islamophobia



- ❖ Canada appointed its first special representative on combatting Islamophobia.
- ❖ This position created following several recent attacks on Muslims in the country.
- ❖ Journalist and activist Amira Elghawaby will fill the post to "serve as a champion, advisor, expert and representative.
- ❖ She will support and enhance the federal government's efforts in the fight against Islamophobia, systemic racism, racial discrimination and religious intolerance.

Remove British Monarchy from Banknotes

- ❖ Australia has announced that its new \$5 notes will not feature an image of King Charles III.
- ❖ Its new \$5 bill would feature an Indigenous design rather than an image of King Charles III.

- ❖ But the king is still expected to appear on coins that currently bear the image of the late Queen Elizabeth II.
- ❖ The move would honour “the culture and history of the First Australians.”
- ❖ The British monarch remains Australia’s head of state, although these days that role is largely symbolic.



Uganda’s First Oil Drilling Program

- ❖ Uganda launched the drilling of its first oil well.
- ❖ It is a key milestone as the country races to meet its target of first oil output in 2025.
- ❖ This site is operated by China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) near Lake Albert in Kikuube district.
- ❖ The development comes 17 years after the discovery of commercial oil deposits in the east African country.
- ❖ Uganda's reserves are estimated 6.5 billion barrels of crude, of which about 1.4 billion are considered recoverable.



Congo in International Solar Alliance

- ❖ India has welcomed Congo to International Solar Alliance.
- ❖ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies.
- ❖ The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being set up in Gurugram.
- ❖ A total of 107 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
- ❖ Out of 107 nations, 86 have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement.
- ❖ All member states of the United Nations are eligible to join the ISA.



Madrid International Book Fair

- ❖ The theme of the 2025 Madrid International Book Fair will be India.
- ❖ The Madrid Book Fair is being organized in Spain since 1993.
- ❖ Spain was the theme of the International Book Fair held in Kolkata in January 2023.

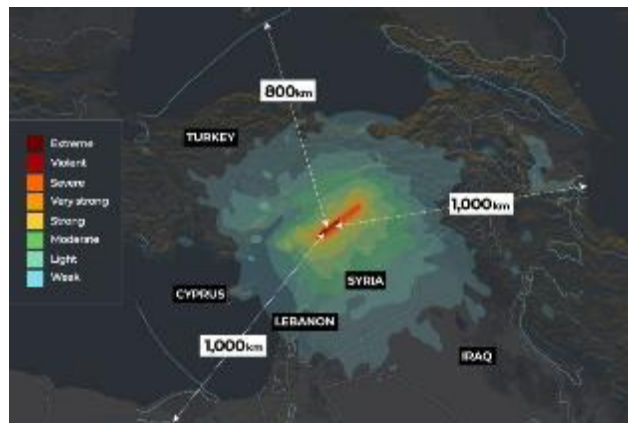


Green Deal Industrial Plan



- ❖ The of EU proposal involves building a simpler regulatory framework, providing faster access to funds, enhancing skills and improving the EU's trade network.
- ❖ The move has come just a few months after the United States announced its Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
- ❖ contains billions of dollars of tax cuts for clean energy and climate change programs with incentives for US-based manufacturing.

Major Earthquake struck Turkey and Syria



- ❖ A major earthquake struck Turkey and Syria on February 6, killing more than 3,800 people and flattening thousands of buildings.
- ❖ The first earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale struck was centred in the Pazarcik district of Turkey's Kahramanmaraş province.
- ❖ Less than 12 hours later, a second magnitude 7.6 tremor struck the same region.
- ❖ Magnitude 7 earthquakes are considered major.
- ❖ Turkey is in one of the world's most active earthquake zones.

- ❖ The country's last 7.8-magnitude tremor was in 1939, when 33,000 died in the eastern Erzincan province.
- ❖ The Turkish region of Duzce suffered a 7.4-magnitude earthquake in 1999, when more than 17,000 people died.

Gaziantep Castle

- ❖ The powerful earthquakes in south-eastern Turkey also caused the destruction of a 2,200-year-old Roman monument, the Gaziantep Castle.
- ❖ The hilltop Gaziantep Castle is situated in the centre of the city, Gaziantep in Turkey.
- ❖ It was built in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries as a watchtower in the Roman period.
- ❖ During the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian in 527-565 C.E., it was further developed and it took its current form.
- ❖ It also saw changes made during the reign of the Ayyubids in the 12th and 13th Centuries, as well as the Ottoman Empire.
- ❖ It played an important role during Turkey's war of independence of the early 20th Century.
- ❖ It was a symbol of the defence of the city against the French forces after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.



Global Climate Resilience Fund

- ❖ Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attended the 50th-anniversary celebration of SEWA in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ❖ During the event, she announced a USD 50 million Global Climate Resilience Fund for women to combat climate change.
- ❖ The fund will empower women and communities to fight climate change and help provide new livelihood resources and education.

- ❖ SEWA is Self Employed Women Association.
- ❖ It was founded by the late activist Ela Bhatt in 1972.



India-South Korea diplomatic relations



- ❖ The year 2023 marks 50 years (from 1973) of the establishment of full diplomatic relations between India and Qatar as well as India-South Korea.
- ❖ From India, Buddhism reached the Korean peninsula in the 3rd century during the three kingdoms period.
- ❖ India played an important and positive role in Korean affairs after Korea's independence in 1945.
- ❖ Mr. K P S Menon of India was the Chairman of the 9-member UN Commission set up in 1947 to hold elections in Korea.
- ❖ During the Korean War (1950- 53), both the warring sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India.
- ❖ From that, the ceasefire was declared on 27 July 1953.
- ❖ 1962 saw the establishment of bilateral consular ties, which were elevated to ambassadorial status in 1973.

- ❖ Agreement on Trade Promotion and Economic and Technological Co-operation was signed in 1974.
- ❖ Former President APJ Abdul Kalam visited South Korea in 2006.
- ❖ It resulted in the formation of a Joint Task Force, operationalized in 2010.
- ❖ The then President Lee made a visit to India, as Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations in 2010.
- ❖ India and South Korea launched an initiative 'Korea Plus' in 2016 to promote and facilitate Korean Investments in India.
- ❖ South Korea participated in the Defence Expo India and Maritime India Summit in 2016.
- ❖ Bilateral relationship upgraded to a special-strategic partnership in 2018.
- ❖ In 2022, trade between the two nations reached an all-time high at USD 27.8 bn.

India, UAE, France - Trilateral Initiative

- ❖ India, France, and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to form a partnership to work together in the fields of nuclear and solar energy.
- ❖ They will also cooperate in tackling climate change and preserving biodiversity.
- ❖ The trilateral was first discussed when the three Ministers met on the side lines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2022.

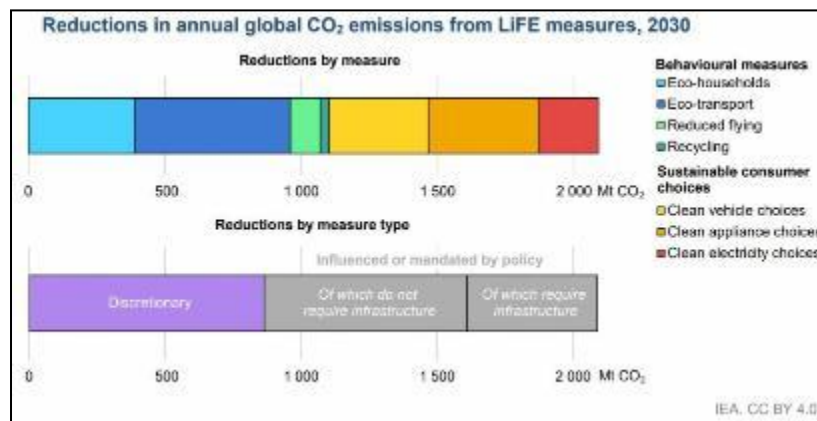


12th World Hindi Conference

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs, in partnership with the Government of Fiji, organised the 12th World Hindi Conference in Fiji.
- ❖ The 11th World Hindi Conference was held in Mauritius in 2018.
- ❖ The first World Hindi Conference was inaugurated on 10 January 1975 by the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi.

IEA Report on India LiFE Initiative

- ❖ The International Energy Agency recently launched a report on the LiFE Initiative.
- ❖ The LiFE Initiative aims to involve the common public in the conservation of the Environment.
- ❖ According to the report, the mission can save more than 440 billion USD by 2030.
- ❖ In developed economies, the emissions made by rich people are seven times the emissions created by the poor.
- ❖ The per-capita emissions of advanced economies are four times that of the developing economies.
- ❖ The efficiency of the Indian Economy is 10% more than the global.
- ❖ Today India is the third largest market for renewable energy. Electric vehicle sales in the country increased by 5% in 2022 as compared to 2021.
- ❖ Currently, the maximum energy is consumed by North America.
- ❖ Followed by this region, Russia and Central Asia are the second largest consumers of energy.
- ❖ Middle East is the third largest consumer of energy.
- ❖ Africa consumes one-third of the world's energy.
- ❖ India consumes 35% of world energy.



Operation Dost

- ❖ Team of Indian responders and medical staff deployed in quake-hit Turkey under Operation Dost.
- ❖ As of now, the deadly earthquake has killed more number of people in Turkey and Syria.

- ❖ In 2021, when India was highly affected by COVID, Turkey sent two aircraft full of COVID medicines.



Russian Arms Supplies to India

MAKE RUSSIAN IN INDIA			
Status	Weapons system	Quantity	Cost (\$bn)
Firm	Kamov 226T helicopters	200 + 111	3
	AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles	750,000	1
	Krivak-III frigates	4	3
	BrahMos missiles for warships	15 ships	2.6
	Igla-SVSHORADS	800	1.5
	Sukhoi-30MKI fighters	18	1.15
	Total		12.3
Up for grabs	Project 75-I submarines	6	7
	Medium fighters for IAF and navy	114 + 57	18-25
	Total		25-32

- ❖ Russian supplied India with around \$13 billion of arms during the past five years.
- ❖ India is the world's biggest buyer of Russian arms.
- ❖ It is accounting for around 20% of Moscow's current order book.

TROPEX – 23

- ❖ The 2023 edition of Indian Navy's major maritime exercise TROPEX, is currently underway in the Indian Ocean Region.

- ❖ This operational level exercise is conducted biennially and witnesses' participation by all Indian Navy units, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard assets.
- ❖ The exercise is being conducted over a duration of three months, from January to March.



Saudi Arabia's First woman to space

- ❖ Saudi Arabia will send its first ever woman astronaut on a space mission later this year.
- ❖ Rayyana Barnawi will join fellow Saudi male astronaut Ali Al-Qarni on a mission to the International Space Station.
- ❖ The astronauts "will join the crew of the AX-2 space mission" and the space flight will "launch from the USA."
- ❖ In 2019, United Arab Emirates became the first Arab country to send one of its citizens into space.



US Bill on Arunachal Pradesh LAC

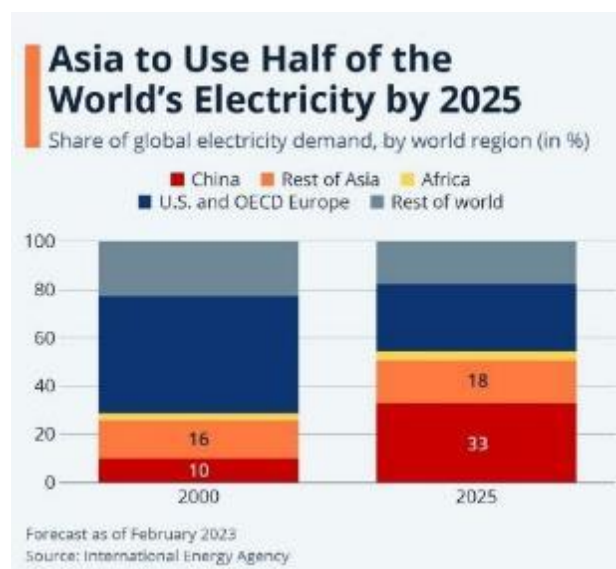
- ❖ A resolution was passed in the US Senate "reaffirming" the country's recognition of Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India and not a disputed territory.
- ❖ It also condemned "China's military aggression to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)".

- ❖ It reaffirmed that the US recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The line was agreed to by Britain and Tibet as part of the 1914 Shimla Accord.



Global electricity demand

- ❖ Asia will for the first time use half of the world's electricity by 2025.
- ❖ Even, Africa continues to consume far less than its share of the global population.
- ❖ This forecast was released by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- ❖ Much of Asia's electricity use will be in China.
- ❖ More than 70 percent of the growth in global electricity demand is set to come from developing economies, led by China, India and Southeast Asia.
- ❖ India's electricity demand grew at a much faster rate than China's in 2022.
- ❖ The demand in the China and India represented about 70 percent of the region's total electricity consumption.



Unidentified objects in US



- ❖ The US military is unsure what three flying objects it shot out of the skies over North America.
- ❖ As it was travelling at 20,000 ft (6,100m), it could have interfered with commercial air traffic.
- ❖ The last object which shot down was cylindrical in shape and 200 feet tall.
- ❖ The payload of this object was more than 1000 pounds.
- ❖ Earlier, the US Air Force used its F-22 fighter jets to shoot a Chinese surveillance balloon near the South Carolina coast.
- ❖ The next day it shot another object near Alaska Air Space.
- ❖ Yet another unidentified object was shot over northern Canada.
- ❖ This fourth shooting was done in Lake Huron.

22nd President of Bangladesh

- ❖ Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu, a former judge and freedom fighter will be Bangladesh's new President.
- ❖ He became 22nd President by default as there was no rival candidate.
- ❖ The incumbent President Hamid is the longest-serving president of Bangladesh with 2nd term.
- ❖ According to their Constitution, he cannot hold a third term.

18th World Security Congress

- ❖ The 18th World Security Congress 2023 held in Jaipur.

- ❖ The three-day conclave is being held jointly by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF).
- ❖ Theme of the event is "Railway Safety Strategy: Responses and Vision for the Future".
- ❖ Earlier, in 2006 and 2015, India hosted the International UIC World Security Congress in New Delhi.
- ❖ International Union of Railways is headquartered in Paris, France.
- ❖ It is a professional association which has been in existence since 1922.
- ❖ It represents the railway sector and promotes rail transport around the world.



Asia Economic Dialogue 2023

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs recently hosted the Asia Economic Dialogue in Pune.
- ❖ Theme of the event is "Asia and the Emerging World Order".
- ❖ The dialogue also focused on the metaverse, the role of the global south in shaping the G20 agenda, meeting climate targets, etc.

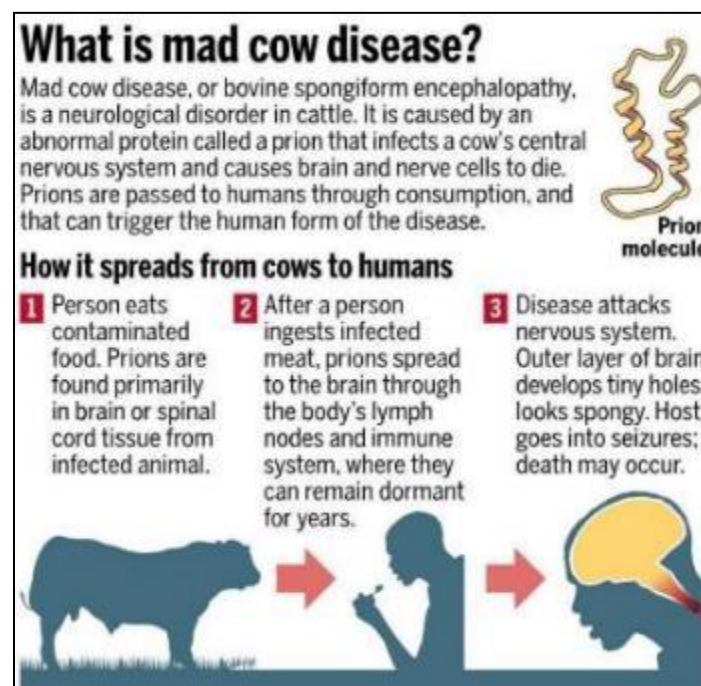
Air services agreement

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the signing of an air services agreement between India and Guyana.
- ❖ It will pave the way for flight services between the two countries.
- ❖ The signing of an air services agreement with Guyana will enable a framework for provision of air services between the two countries

- ❖ As per the 2012 census, Indians have a sizeable presence in Guyana and are the largest ethnic group comprising about 40% of the population.
- ❖ India and Guyana are signatories to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention 1944).
- ❖ Currently, India has air services agreements with around 110 countries.



Mad Cow Disease case

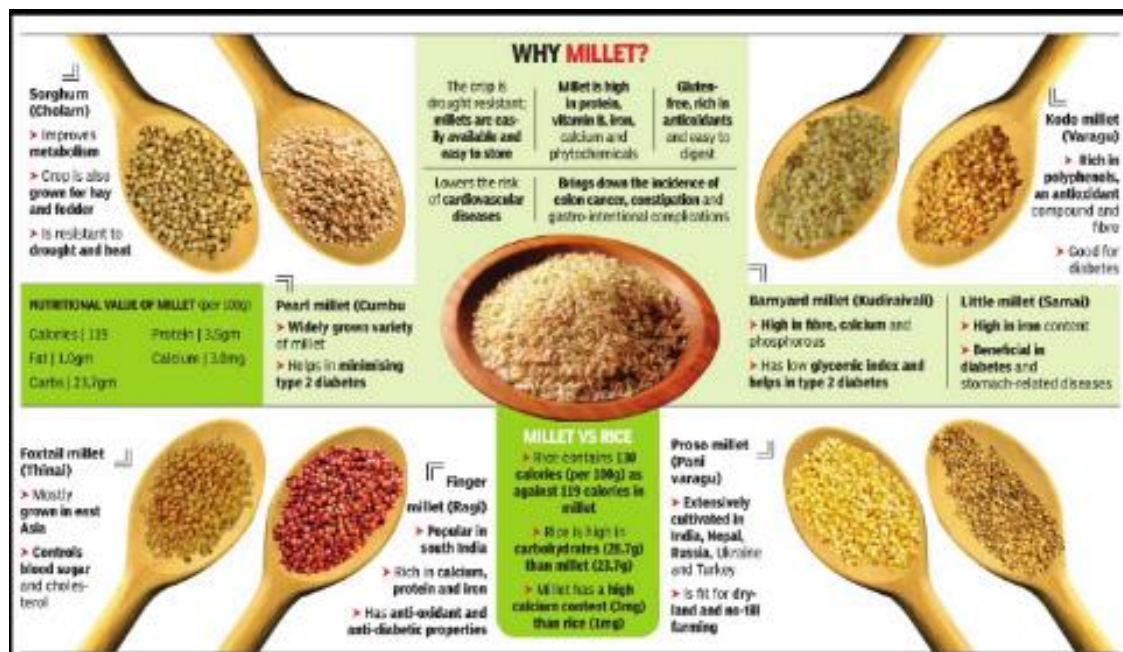


- ❖ Brazil has halted its beef exports to China after a case of mad cow disease was confirmed in the northern state of Para.

- ❖ The disease is also called Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy.
- ❖ It is a transmissible, slowly progressive, degenerative, and fatal disease.
- ❖ It affects the central nervous system of adult cattle.
- ❖ The incurable disease occurs due to an infection in a protein called a prion.
- ❖ The outbreak of the disease occurred in the US, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, Chile, UAE, etc.
- ❖ Brazil is the largest beef exporter in the world.

Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness

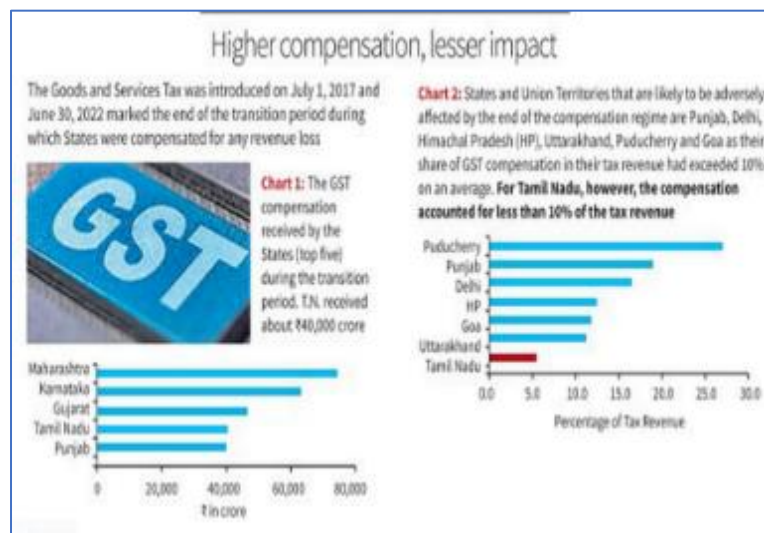
- ❖ India is planning to propose the launch of a global initiative to encourage the consumption and production of millets.
- ❖ It aims to connect the millet research organisations across the world while also supporting research on millet crops.
- ❖ India will contribute the “seed money” while each G20 member will later have to contribute to its budget in the form of a membership fee.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Millet Research located in Hyderabad will provide technical support to the initiative.
- ❖ With India’s insistence, the UN declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.



ECONOMY

Top five States receiving GST compensation

- ❖ Tamil Nadu was among the top five GST compensation receiving States during the five-year transition period from July 2017 to June 2022.
- ❖ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced on July 1, 2017.
- ❖ June 30, 2022 marked the end of the transition period during which the States were compensated for any loss in revenue due to the implementation of the new tax regime.
- ❖ It is calculated as the difference between the projected revenue based on a 14% annual growth with 2015-16 as the base year and the actual GST revenue.
- ❖ The compensation to the States was being met through the levy of a GST compensation cess on specified goods and services.
- ❖ According to the data shared in the report, Tamil Nadu received a GST compensation of about ₹40,000 crore during the transition period.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu was the fourth highest compensation receiving State, after Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat.
- ❖ Punjab stood fifth in this.



Top buyer of MSME Goods in 2022

- ❖ The Ministry of Defence was the top procuring ministry of goods and services from MSME sellers in the calendar year 2022.
- ❖ The Government e-Marketplace was launched in 2016.

- ❖ It is an online platform used for procuring goods and services online.
- ❖ The ministry has purchased products and services worth Rs 16,747 crore in 2022 from the portal.
- ❖ This is 250 per cent higher than the previous year.



Export of Aviation Gas

- ❖ In a first, national oil marketer Indian Oil Corporation has started exports of aviation gasoline.
- ❖ This is the fuel that fires unmanned aerial vehicles and small planes.
- ❖ The indigenous production of the gas was named AV gas 100 LL.
- ❖ This export was turning a chapter in the nation's fuel history from being a net importer to an exporter.
- ❖ The first consignment of 80 barrels of aviation gas was shipped to Papua New Guinea.

Additional Surveillance Mechanism

- ❖ The National Stock Exchange (NSE) placed Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports, and Ambuja Cements under the additional surveillance mechanism (ASM).
- ❖ This means trading in their shares will require a 100% margin.
- ❖ It is aimed at curbing speculation and short selling.
- ❖ The ASM was introduced on March 26, 2018 with the intention to protect investors from market volatility and unusual changes in share price.



Reliance accepts CBDC

- ❖ Reliance Retail has recently announced that it has started accepting retail payments via the RBI's Digital Rupee.
- ❖ Thus, it becomes the first Indian retailer to accept Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India launched the first pilot of its retail Digital Rupee on December 1, 2022.
- ❖ This currency is available in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender.
- ❖ The Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) has also been issued in the same denominations that paper currency and coins.
- ❖ The CBDC is the digital version of fiat money that will co-exist with hard cash.

RBI Monetary Policy 2023

- ❖ The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India has hiked the key policy rate, the Repo rate.
- ❖ This is the rate at which the RBI lends funds to banks.
- ❖ It is hiked by 25 basis points to 6.50 per cent in a bid to rein in retail inflation.
- ❖ A basis point is one-hundredth of one percentage point.
- ❖ The RBI has also projected a GDP growth for the next fiscal at 6.4 per cent.
- ❖ Retail inflation is expected to be 5.3 per cent in FY24.

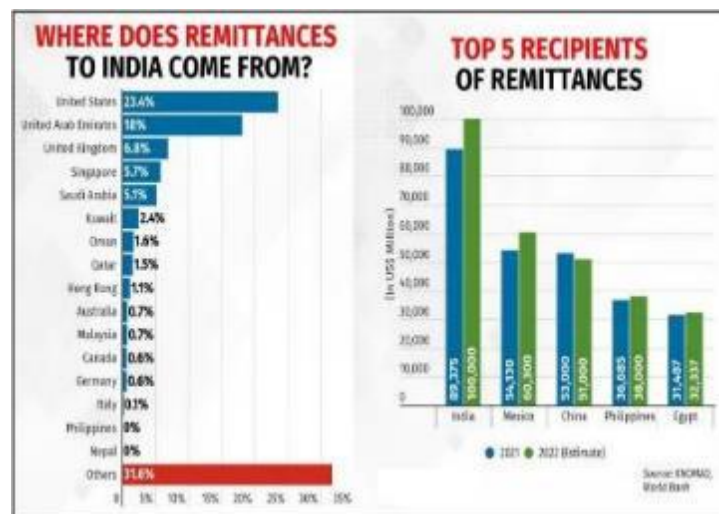
- ❖ Due to this EMIs on vehicles, home and personal loans will rise.



Cross-border UPI payments

- ❖ PhonePe launched support for 'UPI international' payments.
- ❖ The feature will allow Indian users travelling abroad to pay foreign merchants using UPI.
- ❖ The current launch supports international merchant outlets in UAE, Singapore, Mauritius, Nepal, and Bhutan that have local QR codes.
- ❖ PhonePe is the first fintech app to launch this feature in India.

Highest Remittances in 2021-22



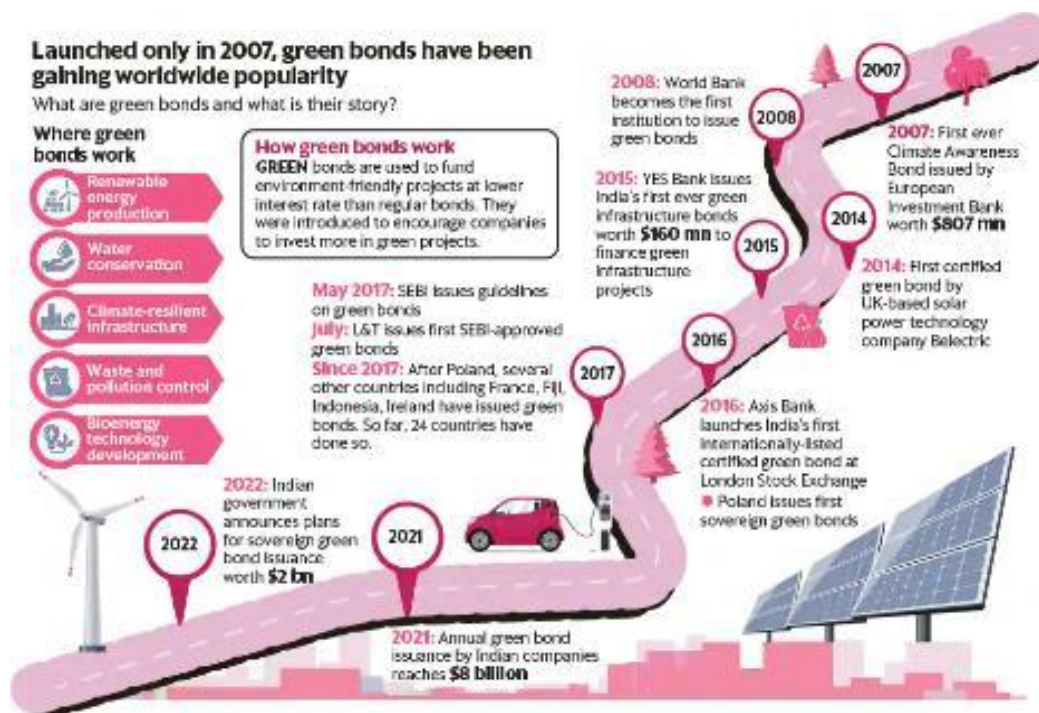
- ❖ India received foreign inward remittances of USD 89,127 million in 2021-22.
- ❖ It was the highest ever received in a single year.
- ❖ The top 3 Source Countries are United States, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

Digital Silver

- ❖ MMTC-PAMP India announced the launch of digital silver.
- ❖ MMTC is a Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation.
- ❖ It is an Indian Public Sector Undertakings.
- ❖ MMTC is a Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation, a company based in Switzerland.
- ❖ Digital silver is one of the safest ways to buy expensive metals.
- ❖ This digital asset provides all the benefits of silver, with added benefits of transparency, 24/7 accessibility, assured purity, and low entry point to silver investments, with no making charges involved.



Maiden Tranche of Sovereign Green Bonds



- ❖ The first tranche of India's debut sovereign green bonds worth ₹80 were auctioned recently.

- ❖ These bonds that bring in resources to implement such climate-related projects are called Sovereign Green Bonds.
- ❖ They are similar to government securities.
- ❖ The Sovereign Green Bonds were launched by the Reserve Bank of India.
- ❖ Two different types of bonds have been launched.
- ❖ The one Bond maturing in 2028 and the another maturing in 2033.

Direct Tax Collections of FY 2022-23



- ❖ Direct Tax collections up to February 10 showed that gross collections are at ₹15.67 lakh crore.
- ❖ It is 24.09 per cent higher than the gross collections for the corresponding period of last year.
- ❖ Direct Tax collection, net of refunds, stands at ₹12.98 lakh crore.
- ❖ It is 18.40 per cent higher than the net collections for the corresponding period of last year.
- ❖ This collection is 91.39 per cent of the total Budget Estimates of Direct Taxes for F.Y. 2022-23 and 78.65 per cent of the Revised Estimates of Direct Taxes for FY 2022-23.
- ❖ The budget estimates of the direct tax revenues were Rs 14.2 lakh crores.

Hello Ujjivan app



- ❖ Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched Hello Ujjivan, India's first mobile banking application with 3 V's – voice, visual, vernacular-enabled features.
- ❖ It aims to provide banking access to individuals who have limited reading and writing skills.
- ❖ The app is designed to instil banking habits in Micro Banking and Rural customers who are digitally challenged.
- ❖ Hello Ujjivan, co-created with Navana AI, is accessible by voice in eight regional languages.

India's mega Airbus deal

- ❖ Tata Group-owned Air India (AI) placed two mega orders which adding up to a staggering 470 aircraft.
- ❖ These orders finalized for 250 planes with Europe's Airbus consortium, and 220 with Boeing of the United States.
- ❖ This is the largest order placed by an airline in one go anywhere in the world.
- ❖ It is beating the 2011 order by American Airlines for a combined 460 aircraft.
- ❖ The biggest order by an Indian carrier before this was IndiGo's 300-aircraft order in 2019.

WHICH PLANES, HOW MANY			
Model	Order Size (nos)	Avg List Price (\$mn)	Total List Price (\$mn)
737 Max*	190	128.25	24,367.5
787-9	20	292.5	5,850
777-9	10	442.2	4,422
TOTAL (BOEING)*	220		34,639.5
A320neo	140	110.6	15,484
A321neo	70	129.5	9,065
A350-1000	34	366.5	12,461
A350-900	6	317.4	1,904.4
TOTAL (AIRBUS)**	250		38,914.4
GRAND TOTAL	470		\$73.55 billion**

49th meeting of the GST Council

- ❖ The 49th meeting of the GST Council was held at Delhi under the chairpersonship of the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- ❖ Council has reduced the GST rate on rab or liquid jaggery from 18% to 5% if sold pre-packaged and labelled and nil if sold otherwise.
- ❖ Rates on pencil sharpeners has been cut to 12 percent from 18 percent earlier.
- ❖ Rates on tax trackers has been cut to 12 percent from 18 percent but that is subject to conditions.
- ❖ Services provided by courts will be charged at Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM).

Top Performer in Terms of Loan Growth

- ❖ The Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the best performer among state-owned lenders in terms of loan growth percentage during the third quarter of 2022-23.
- ❖ The lender saw year-over-year growth in gross advances of 21.67%.
- ❖ Union Bank of India, which experienced growth of 19.80%, came in second to BoM.
- ❖ State Bank of India (SBI) took fourth place with a 16.91% increase in advances.

UPI tie-up with Singapore



- ❖ India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's Pay Now were officially connected for a "real-time payment linkage".
- ❖ Singapore has now become the first country with which cross-border Person to Person (P2P) payment facilities have been launched.

- ❖ This will help the Indian diaspora in Singapore, especially migrant workers/students and bring the benefits of digitalisation.

Seafood export target



- ❖ The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel recently inaugurated the India International Seafood Show in Kolkata.
- ❖ India's seafood industry altering its strategy to attain the ambitious export target of \$14 billion by 2025.
- ❖ In 2021-22, the seafood exports of the country were 7.76 billion USD.
- ❖ This was 17% of the total agricultural goods exports.
- ❖ India is now exporting safe seafood to more than 100 countries.
- ❖ US accounted for 43 percent of India's seafood exports worth \$7.76 billion in FY22.

Sixth-largest equity market



- ❖ The UK has surpassed India as the world's sixth-largest equity market for the first time.

- ❖ The combined market capitalization of primary listings in the UK with some exceptions reached about \$3.11 trillion.
- ❖ According to data compiled by Bloomberg, this is \$5.1 billion higher than their Indian equivalents.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2023

- ❖ West Bengal reported the highest number of species followed by Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2023 across 35 States and Union Territories.
- ❖ Kerala, on the other hand, recorded the highest number of checklists of birds.
- ❖ BCI (Bird Count India) is an informal partnership of organisations and groups working together to increase collective knowledge about bird distributions and populations.
- ❖ India was among 190 countries that participated in GBBC 2023.
- ❖ West Bengal reported 489 species, the most among the 35 participating States and Union Territories.
- ❖ Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka followed with 426, 407, 397 and 371 species respectively.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu and Kerala took the eighth and ninth spots with 349 and 325 species.
- ❖ Kerala, however, took the top spot in the checklist category by uploading 9,768 lists of birds.
- ❖ Maharashtra with 7,414 lists and Tamil Nadu with 6,098 were placed second and third.
- ❖ The GBBC was launched in 1998.
- ❖ Bird Count India organises the GBBC in the country.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

iNCOVACC

- ❖ India launched its first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine named Incovacc.
- ❖ It is manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech.
- ❖ The vaccine has been approved for use as a primary as well as a heterologous (mix-and-match) booster dose in India.
- ❖ It can be used for easy and painless immunisation against coronavirus.



Generic version of breast cancer drug

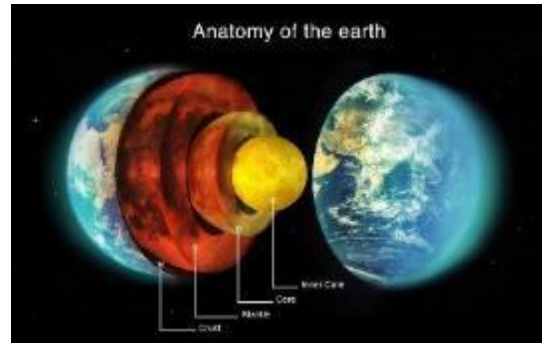
- ❖ MSN Group has launched a generic version of breast cancer drug Palbociclib in tablet form under the brand name Palborest.
- ❖ There are a few other firms that have also launched Palbociclib in capsule dosage form.
- ❖ It is more affordable and bioequivalent to innovator tablet.



Earth's core spinning

- ❖ Earth's inner core has stopped spinning faster than the planet's surface.
- ❖ Earth's iron core is suspended in the molten liquid outer core and spins independently.

- ❖ The latest research suggests that the inner core, relative to the Earth's surface, swings back and forth like a swing.
- ❖ From 2009 onwards, a negative trend has been noticed with the inner core rotating slower than the surface.



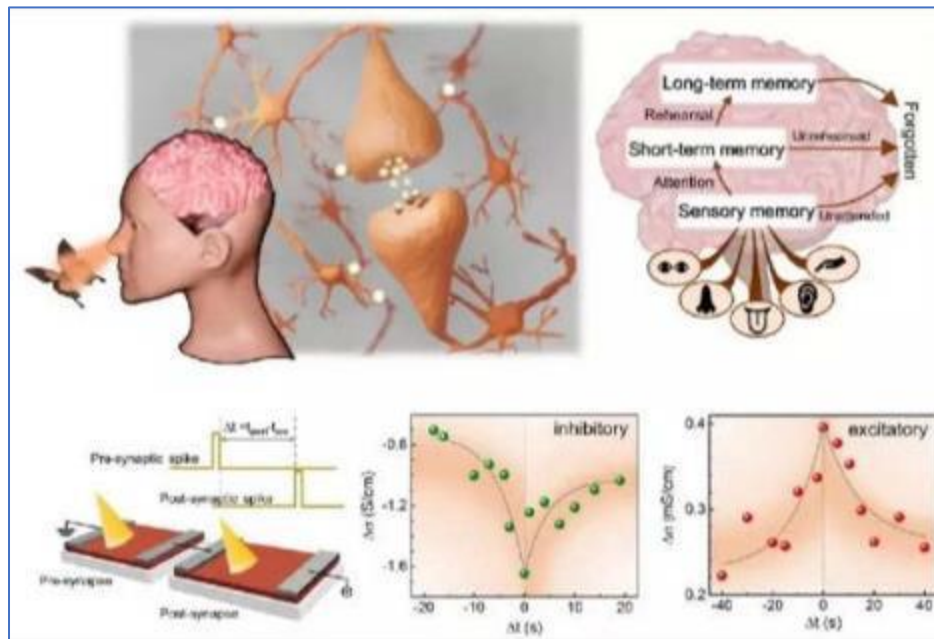
Green comet after 50,000 years



- ❖ A recently discovered green comet will soon zip by Earth for the first time in 50,000 years.
- ❖ It was last visible in the night sky during the Stone Age.
- ❖ It will make its closest approach to Earth since the age of the Neanderthals.
- ❖ The comet named C/2022 E3 (ZTF) will come within 26 million miles (42 million kilometres) of Earth.
- ❖ The comet has been brightening the night sky since January and will pass between the orbits of Mars and Earth.
- ❖ It will travel at a speed of 128,500 mph (207,000 km/h).

Artificial Synapse for Brain-Like Computing

- ❖ A team of scientists from Bengaluru's Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have developed a low energy consuming, high-speed tech that has brain-like computing capability.
- ❖ For this, they used scandium nitride, a semiconducting material with supreme stability to develop brain-like computing.
- ❖ Traditional computers have physically separated memory storage and processing units.
- ❖ They take enormous energy and time to transfer data between these units during an operation.
- ❖ In contrast, the synapse (the junction between two neurons) in the human brain serves as both a processor and a memory storage device.
- ❖ This was making it a superior biological computer that is both smaller and more effective.



Nuclear Fission powered Spacecraft

- ❖ NASA and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), have unveiled plans to test nuclear-powered rockets that would fly humans to Mars.
- ❖ DARPA will develop the nuclear reactor and engine for this nuclear rocket.
- ❖ NASA hope to fly in an in-space demonstration as early as 2027.
- ❖ This mission is called as DRACO-Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations.

- ❖ DRACO is to run on nuclear fission reaction.
- ❖ The USA began testing the technology in 1955, and this project stalled Due to a lack of funds.
- ❖ Nuclear fission-powered rockets will help scientists reduce traveling time greatly.



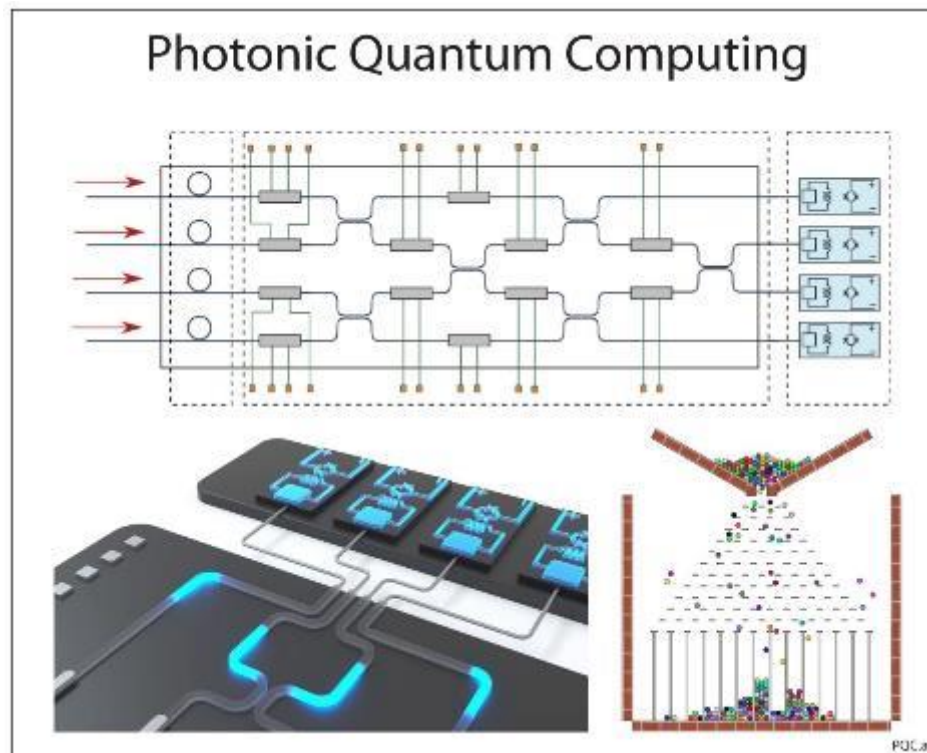
Meteorite in Antarctica

- ❖ An international team of researchers discovered five new meteorites, including one of the largest ever found on the continent.
- ❖ The rare meteorite is about the size of a cantaloupe but weighs a hefty 17 pounds (7.7 kilograms).
- ❖ Roughly 45,000 meteorites retrieved from Antarctica over the past century.



World's First Photonic-based Quantum Computer

- ❖ Canada announced a new federal investment to build and commercialise the world's first photonic-based, fault-tolerant quantum computer.
- ❖ They will develop the quantum computer which will have the potential to provide world leading capabilities to help solve complex data problems.
- ❖ It could be used in a variety of sectors such as finance, transportation, environmental modelling, and health.



Major ransomware network Hive

- ❖ The United States has seized the website of a major ransomware network, Hive.
- ❖ It is an international ransomware network responsible for extorting and attempting to extort hundreds of millions of dollars from victims.
- ❖ Victims included India's Tata Power, German retail giant Media Markt, Costa Rica's public health service, etc.
- ❖ Hive functioned as a ransomware service.
- ❖ It let anybody use its software and other services to break into, lock down, and accept payments for a target's IT systems.



New plateau in Maharashtra



- ❖ Researchers have discovered a rare low-altitude basalt plateau in the Western Ghats that could offer new insights into surviving climate change.
- ❖ The plateau has a widespread flora with 76 species of plants and shrubs from 24 different families discovered so far.
- ❖ The plateau was discovered in Manjare village of Maharashtra's Thane district and is the fourth type of plateau to be identified in the region.
- ❖ The previous three are laterites at high and low altitudes and basalt at high altitudes.

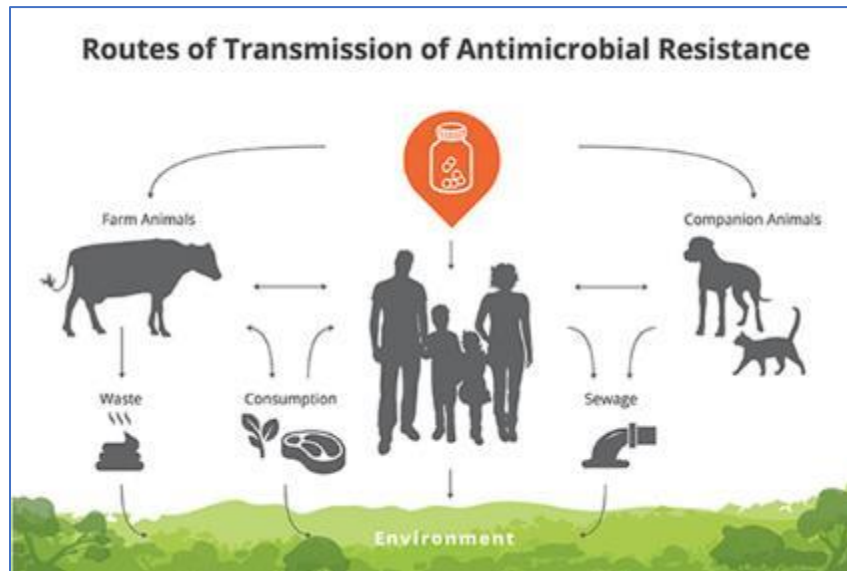
First Gamma-Ray Eclipses



- ❖ Scientists have discovered the first gamma-ray eclipses from a special type of binary star system using data from NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope.
- ❖ These so-called spider systems each contain a pulsar and rapidly rotating remains of a star that exploded in a supernova – that slowly erodes its companion.
- ❖ Spider systems develop because one star in a binary evolves more swiftly than its partner.

- ❖ A binary system is one in which two stars orbit around a common centre of mass, that is they are gravitationally bound to each other.
- ❖ Pulsars are rapidly spinning neutron stars.
- ❖ They are extremely dense stars composed almost entirely of neutrons and having a diameter of only 20 km (12 miles) or less.
- ❖ They emit concentrated streams of radiation far across the space.

Study on Veterinary Antimicrobial use



- ❖ The study's paper was published in the journal PLoS Global Public Health.
- ❖ Scientists developed antimicrobial drugs to fight infections in people and animals.
- ❖ But by 2019, "73% of all antimicrobials sold on Earth [were] used in animals raised for food.
- ❖ India's antimicrobial usage (AMU) intensity was estimated to be 43% higher than the global average in 2020 itself.
- ❖ It is expected to be 40% more than the average in 2030.
- ❖ Within the country, the researchers identified 'hotspots' in east and south India.
- ❖ Many farm-owners here use second-generation antibiotics called ciprofloxacin and enrofloxacin to shorten harvest time by a week.
- ❖ In 2017, India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare floated a 'National Action Plan' to contain antimicrobial resistance.
- ❖ Two years later, the government banned the use of colistin in all food-producing animals.

Baidu chatbot 'Ernie'

- ❖ Chinese tech-giant Baidu said it would finish internal testing of its own ChatGPT-style AI chatbot called 'Ernie Bot'.
- ❖ Ernie, meaning "Enhanced Representation through Knowledge Integration,"
- ❖ It is a large AI-powered language model introduced in 2019.

Google chatbot 'Bard'



- ❖ Google is all set to launch 'Bard', a new conversational AI chatbot.
- ❖ It aimed at challenging OpenAI's ChatGPT, backed by Microsoft.
- ❖ Two years ago, Google unveiled next-generation language and conversation capabilities powered by our 'Language Model for Dialogue Applications (LaMDA)'.

SSLV D2

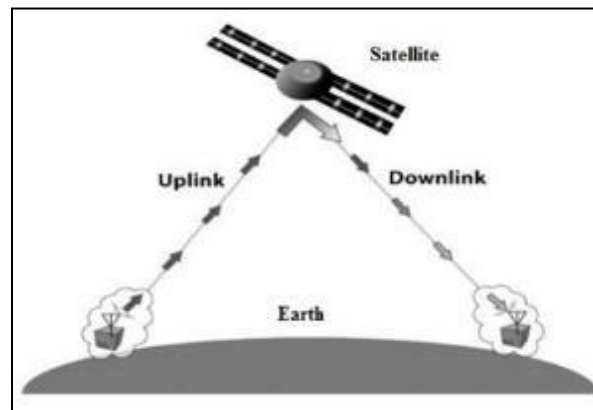


- ❖ ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) placed three satellites, including earth observation satellite EOS-07, in intended orbits.

- ❖ EOS-07, weighing 156.3kg, has a mission life of one year.
- ❖ SSLV is capable of launching mini-micro or nano satellites (10 to 500kg mass) into 500km planar orbits.
- ❖ SSLV is a three-stage vehicle with all solid propulsion stages.
- ❖ Design drivers of SSLV are low cost, low turn-around time, flexibility in accommodating multiple satellites and minimal launch infrastructure requirements.

Satellite based two-way messaging system

- ❖ Qualcomm Technologies, Inc has introduced the world's first satellite-based two-way messaging solution for premium smartphones.
- ❖ It is called snapdragon Satellite.
- ❖ It is powered by Snapdragon 5G Modem-RF Systems.
- ❖ Snapdragon Satellite can be expanded to other devices such as tablets, vehicles, laptops and IoT.
- ❖ The Satellite system us developed to support 5G Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN).



Medium-density amorphous ice

- ❖ Scientists discovered a new form of ice that more closely resembles liquid water than any other.
- ❖ The new form of ice is amorphous.
- ❖ In the ordinary crystalline ice, the molecules arrange themselves in a regular pattern.
- ❖ But in amorphous ice, the molecules are in a disorganized form that resembles a liquid.
- ❖ Though it is named as ice, its molecular structure is close to water.

- ❖ Amorphous means no clear state.
- ❖ It is neither water nor ice and hence amorphous ice.
- ❖ While warmed and then recrystallized, amorphous ice releases an extraordinary amount of heat.
- ❖ The heat energy released is very high that it may cause ice quakes.
- ❖ Ice quakes are common in planets like Saturn and Jupiter.



Ring around Quaoar



- ❖ Scientists have detected a ring encircling Quaoar dwarf planet akin to the one around the planet Saturn.
- ❖ Quaoar is little less than half the diameter of Pluto and about one-third of the diameter of Earth's moon.
- ❖ It orbits the sun in the Kuiper belt, a region of frozen debris beyond Neptune that includes Pluto.
- ❖ But the one around Quaoar defies the current understanding of where such rings can form - located much further away from it than current scientific understanding would allow.
- ❖ Discovered in 2002, Quaoar is currently defined as a minor planet and is proposed as a dwarf planet.

- ❖ In 2013, astronomers discovered a couple of rings around Chariklo, a body known as a centaur that orbits the sun between Saturn and Uranus.
- ❖ In 2017, a ring was discovered around another Kuiper belt object, Haumea, also from dimming during a stellar occultation.

First waste-to-hydrogen plant

- ❖ The country's first solid waste-to-hydrogen plant will be set up in Pune.
- ❖ The plant will be built by a private company Green Billion Limited.
- ❖ It will produce 10 tons of hydrogen daily from 350 tons of solid waste.
- ❖ The fuel from waste will be used to generate hydrogen using plasma gasification technology.



First Super Magnets for testing

- ❖ UK's Tokamak Energy has built the world-first set of new-generation high-temperature superconducting (HTS) magnets.
- ❖ This will be assembled and tested in fusion power plant-relevant scenarios.
- ❖ Tokamak's new Demo4 facility will consist of 44 individual magnetic coils.
- ❖ Demo4 will have a magnetic field strength of over 18 Tesla, nearly a million times stronger than the Earth's magnetic field.



Planet with most moons



- ❖ Jupiter recently became the planet with the most moons, after a dozen new lunar worlds were discovered lurking around it.
- ❖ The planet has surpassed Saturn with its list of 92 moons in all.
- ❖ Saturn, the one-time leader, comes in a close second with 83 confirmed moons.
- ❖ They were discovered using telescopes in Hawaii and Chile in 2021 and 2022, and their orbits were confirmed with follow-up observations.
- ❖ Jupiter and Saturn are loaded with small moons.
- ❖ For the record, Uranus has 27 confirmed moons, Neptune 14, Mars two and Earth one.
- ❖ Venus and Mercury have no moons.

Diyodar Meteorite

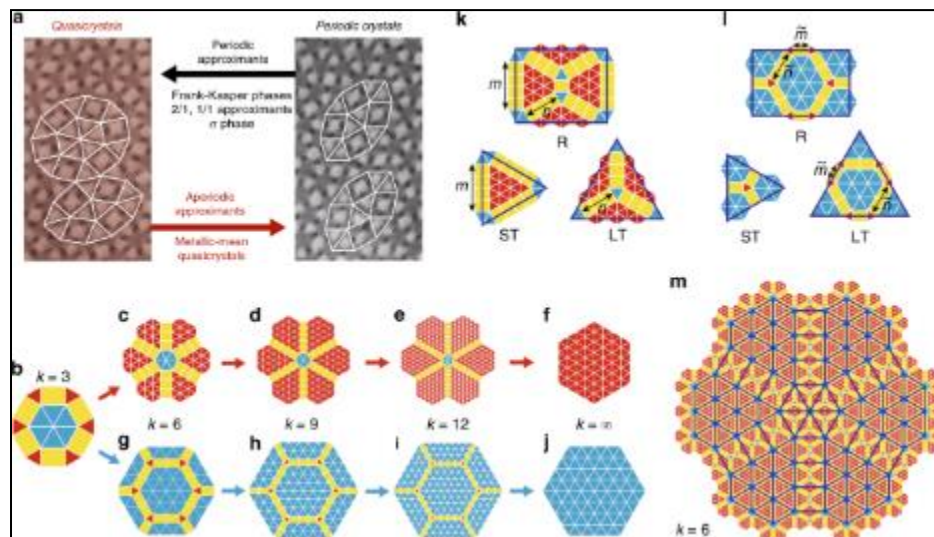
- ❖ Researchers have confirmed that a meteorite that crashed in two villages of Gujarat is a rare aubrite.
- ❖ The pieces that fell in the two villages have been dubbed the Diyodar meteorite.
- ❖ Aubrite meteorite is a coarse-grained igneous rock that formed in oxygen-poor conditions and contains exotic minerals not found on Earth.
- ❖ India has seen hundreds of meteorite crashes, but this is only the second recorded crash of an aubrite.
- ❖ The First one was on December 2, 1852, in Basti, Uttar Pradesh.

- ❖ Worldwide, aubrites have crashed in at least 12 locations since 1836, including three in Africa and six in the U.S.
- ❖ Meteors are pieces of some solid object in space that broke away, descended onto a planet or moon, and managed to reach the surface.
- ❖ Once they reached surface, they are called meteorites.



New quasicrystal

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a new type of quasicrystal, one with 12-fold symmetry, in the Sand Hills of north central Nebraska, USA.
- ❖ This quasicrystal was formed during an accidental electrical discharge, possibly by a lightning strike or a downed power line in a dune.
- ❖ Quasicrystal is essentially a crystal-like substance.
- ❖ In crystal, atoms are arranged in a repeating pattern.
- ❖ a quasicrystal consists of atoms that are arranged in a pattern that doesn't repeat itself regularly.



Marburg virus disease outbreak

- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed the first-ever outbreak of Marburg disease in Equatorial Guinea.
- ❖ Marburg is highly infectious.
- ❖ Both the Marburg virus and Ebola virus belong to the same Filoviridae family but are caused by different viruses.
- ❖ This virus leads to haemorrhagic fever in humans with a high fatality ratio of up to 88%.
- ❖ It was first detected in 1967 after simultaneous outbreaks in Marburg and Frankfurt in Germany.

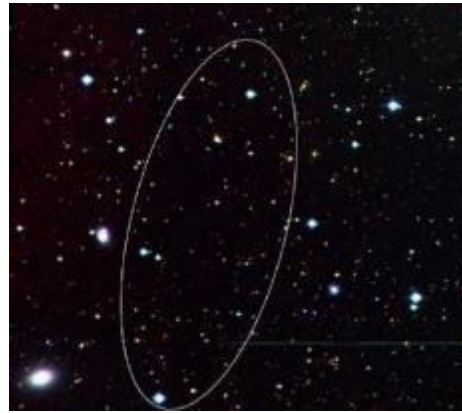
Outbreaks of Marburg virus disease, 1967-2023

Outbreaks of Marburg virus disease
Equatorial Guinea Cameroon Historical outbreaks



Invisible Galaxy

- ❖ Italian researchers have discovered a Black Galaxy or Invisible Galaxy using ALMA.
- ❖ The young, star-forming galaxy is filled with dust and gas, and formed 2 billion years after the Big Bang.
- ❖ The galaxy is termed invisible because the light emitted couldn't be seen from the earth.
- ❖ However, the presence of the galaxy has been discovered using the gravitational lensing technique.
- ❖ ALMA Stands for Atacama Large Millimetre Array.



Sniffing robots

- ❖ Scientists from Israel have developed a sniffing robot which is equipped with a biological sensor.
- ❖ The robot uses the antennae of a locust to diagnose disease and improve security checks.
- ❖ Locusts smell with their antennae.
- ❖ The bot can detect even the tiniest particle or an organism in its surrounding.
- ❖ This sniffer can be used to detect drugs and explosives.



First hydrogen-powered heavy-duty truck

- ❖ India's first Hydrogen Internal Combustion Engine (H₂-ICE) powered Heavy Duty truck was unveiled recently.
- ❖ The Ashok Leyland's new H₂-ICE heavy-duty truck range is powered by Hydrogen fuel and is based on its conventional diesel-based combustion engine.
- ❖ It was developed by Reliance in partnership with Ashok Leyland.
- ❖ This would help quicker migration to cleaner energy sources at a relatively lower cost delta.

- ❖ The H₂-ICE produces nitrogen oxides only if atmospheric hydrogen is used.
- ❖ India includes nitrogen oxides in its pollutant list.
- ❖ There are no sulphur oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, or Hydrocarbons emissions in H₂-ICE.



India's first hybrid rocket

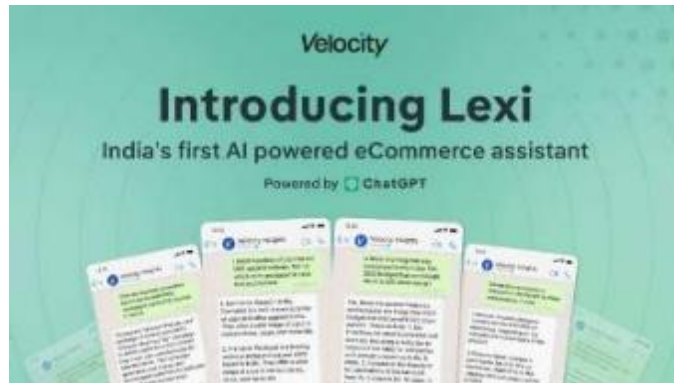
- ❖ India's first hybrid sounding rocket by private players was launched from Pattipulam village, Chengalpattu.
- ❖ Martin Foundation, in association with Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and Space Zone India, launched the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission - 2023.
- ❖ The rocket can be used for research in weather, atmospheric conditions and radiations.



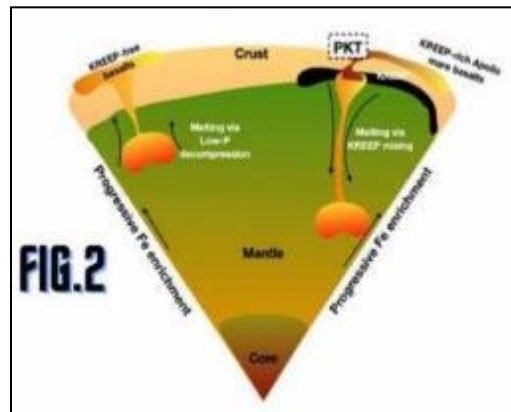
Lexi ChatGPT

- ❖ India has got its first ChatGPT called "Lexi"- launched by financial technology company Velocity.
- ❖ This chatbot helps e-Commerce founders by providing them with business insights in a simplified way.

- ❖ ChatGPT was made available to the public in November 2022.



Origin of basalts on Moon



- ❖ Moon's dark regions that are visible to the naked eye, known as the 'mare'.
- ❖ They are remnants of a violent history of the Solar System.
- ❖ There are no records, though, of these frenzied events on Earth.
- ❖ The large mare regions on the near side of the Moon, that can be seen from Earth, mainly consists of basalts comprising volcanic rocks.
- ❖ These regions hold the key to how the Moon cooled and evolved.
- ❖ They also providing information on what were the sources of heat that melted and crystallised the material to the present-day rocks.
- ❖ The Apollo, Luna, and Chang'E-5 missions have brought to Earth an extensive collection of mare basalts.
- ❖ Apollo mare basalts date back to the age of 3.8–3.3 Ga (Ga is one billion years).
- ❖ ISRO stated the calculations show that these basalts must be a result of low-pressure melting in the Moon.

- ❖ Further, they also reveal that these basalts originated from a cool, shallow, and compositionally distinct part of the lunar interior.
- ❖ The Moon's interior melted in the form of basalt magmatism from as early as 4.3 - 3.9 Ga globally.
- ❖ The potassium, rare earth elements, and phosphorous rich zone of moon known as Procellarum KREEP Terrane (PKT). This PKT region formed as later as 3.8-3.0 Ga.

Moon Venus Jupiter Conjunction

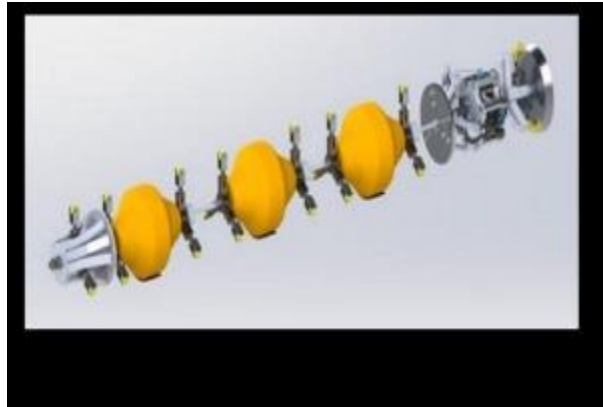
- ❖ The Moon, Venus, and Jupiter came together in a synchronized celestial dance in the skies across the world.
- ❖ The three heavenly bodies formed a triangle-like shape in the night sky as they came closer to each other.
- ❖ The conjunction was, however, short-lived as the Earth rotated on its axis.
- ❖ currently Venus is the 3rd-brightest natural body in the sky, after the sun and moon.
- ❖ It is so dazzlingly bright that at times it can even be spotted in daylight.



Cargo hyperloop

- ❖ IIT Kanpur has developed an energy-efficient compressed air-based pipeline system for transporting coal and minerals.
- ❖ The cargo-based hyperloop system will address challenges such as material loss, uncertainty in delivery time and air pollution.
- ❖ The system is designed to transport coal or slurry from one point to another with compressed air as its energy source.
- ❖ The robot travels at around 120 km an hour and can transport the loaded block to the designated receiving or unloading sub-section continuously.

- ❖ The system also has an accurate, reliable, and continuous vehicle/robot positioning system.



LORA Ballistic Missile

- ❖ Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) has signed an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for domestic manufacture and supply of its LORA Weapon System for the Indian Tri-services.
- ❖ The state-of-the-art strategic weapon system weapon will be manufactured by BEL.
- ❖ LORA is a sea-to-ground and ground-to-ground system which comprises a long-range ballistic missile.
- ❖ It is a unique launcher, a command-and-control system, and a ground/marine support system.
- ❖ The LORA system provides ballistic assault capabilities for multiple ranges with a precision level of 10 meters circular error probability.



World's First Cloud-Built Demo Satellite

- ❖ JANUS-1 satellite that rode on Isro's new mini-rocket SSLV-D2 and reached its orbit successfully.
- ❖ It is the world's first satellite fully conceived, designed and manufactured using an Indian company's end-to-end cloud platform.
- ❖ It is a software defined 6U technology demonstration satellite designed and built using the Antaris cloud software platform and SatOS software.
- ❖ JANUS-1 was designed and built in just 10 months at a cost saving of 75% over comparable satellite missions.



Vertiplane X3 drone

- ❖ A Vertiplane X3 drone was used to deliver 2kg package of anti-tubercular drugs to a district hospital in Tehri Garhwal of Uttarakhand during the trial.
- ❖ The aerial distance of nearly 40 kilometres between the helipad at AIIMS and the hospital was covered in 30 minutes.
- ❖ The project will calculate the cost of effectiveness of delivering not only medicines but sputum samples to laboratories to support the country's programme to eliminate TB by 2025.
- ❖ This is not the first time a drone has been used to transport medical supplies.
- ❖ Another pilot was carried out by a Bangalore based startup in Arunachal Pradesh to deliver medicines.
- ❖ Other than that, there are e-pharmacies that have also introduced drone delivery.



Solar-powered drone SURAJ

- ❖ Garuda Aerospace unveiled SURAJ, a solar-powered unmanned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aerial J-Glider at the Aero India 2023.
- ❖ It is a high-altitude drone designed specifically for surveillance operations, providing real-time information to the high command, and protecting jawans on the ground.
- ❖ The drone would carry a payload of 10 kg.
- ❖ It has an endurance of 12 hours and can fly at an altitude of 3,000 ft.



Vayulink' platform

- ❖ The Indian Air Force has come out with an innovative solution that would help pilots to deal with bad weather.
- ❖ It also provides them jammer-proof uninterrupted communication with the base station.
- ❖ It is Known as 'Vayulink', the data link communication uses the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).
- ❖ Vayulink is an ad-hoc data link communication system.
- ❖ When it was installed in an aircraft, it gives position of other aircrafts close by, encrypted traffic data over secured channel.

LLaMA model

- ❖ After OpenAI's ChatGPT brought about a revolution, Google unveiled its BARD, and several others followed suit.
- ❖ Now, the Meta has publicly released its Large Language Model Meta AI (LLaMA).

- ❖ LLaMA is a state-of-the-art foundational language model developed to assist researchers in their work in the subfield of AI.
- ❖ This would be Meta's third LLM after Glactica and Blender Bot 3 that were shut down immediately following incorrect results.
- ❖ According to Meta, LLaMA is not essentially a chatbot; it is a research tool that will likely solve issues concerning AI language models.



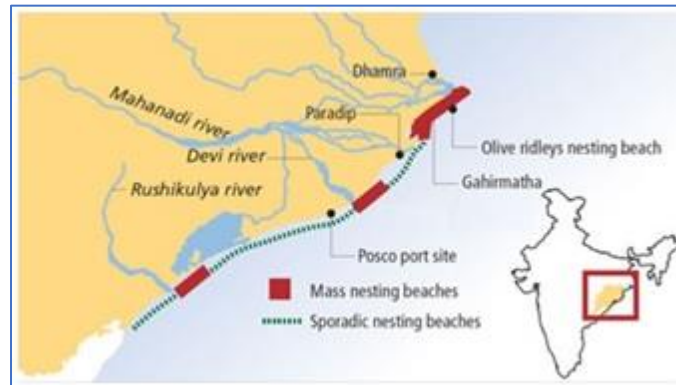
ENVIRONMENT

More Cheetahs transfer from South Africa

- ❖ India and South Africa have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to get over 100 cheetahs from South Africa over the next decade.
- ❖ This was confirmed through a press release by the South African country.
- ❖ As of now, the agreement has been signed with South Africa to translocate 12 cheetahs to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Seven male and five female cheetahs are expected to reach Kuno by February 15.
- ❖ Cheetah is the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India due to over-hunting and habitat loss.
- ❖ The last cheetah died in Koriya district of present-day Chhattisgarh in 1947 and the species was declared extinct in 1952.

SEVEN MALE & FIVE FEMALE CHEETAHS TO LAND IN INDIA FROM SOUTH AFRICA											
 <p>1. Sex: Male Age: Around 4.5 years old Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>2. Sex: Female Age: Around 3 years and 10 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>3. Sex: Male Age: 7 years and 10 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>4. Sex: Male Age: 8 years and 1 month Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>5. Sex: Female Age: 2 years 3 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>6. Sex: Female Age: Around 2 years 5 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>7. Sex: Male Age: Around 4 years old Chip number: 470000170 Origin: Modibane River, Limpopo, South Africa</p>	<p>8. Sex: Male Age: Around 4 years old Chip number: 9803200087033 Origin: Modibane River, Limpopo, South Africa</p>	<p>9. Sex: Male Age: Around 4 years old Chip number: 9803200087033 Origin: Modibane River, Limpopo, South Africa</p>	<p>10. Sex: Female Age: Around 3 years 5 months Chip number: 470000170 (To be imported) Origin: Modibane River, Limpopo, South Africa</p>	<p>11. Sex: Male Age: Around 2 years 5 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>12. Sex: Female Age: Around 2 years 5 months Chip number: 9803200087033 (To be imported) Origin: Tsodilo Private Game Reserve, Northern Cape, South Africa</p>

Mass mortality of Olive Ridley turtles



- ❖ Hundreds of vulnerable Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have washed ashore along the coastline.
- ❖ The breeding grounds - Sakshinetipalli, Malikipuram, Mamidikuduru and Allavaram - have been witnessing the mass mortality of the turtles.
- ❖ The Olive Ridley Turtles are also known as the Pacific Ridley Turtles.
- ❖ The IUCN categorizes these turtles as “Vulnerable”.
- ❖ They are found in the Indian Ocean, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans.
- ❖ In India, the turtles’ nest is in the Gahirmatha beach in Odisha.
- ❖ The beach is one of the largest nesting sites of the Olive Ridley Turtles in the world.

Soliga ecarinata



- ❖ The scientific community has named a new genus of wasp after Soliga — who are the indigenous community of Biligiri Rangan Hills, Karnataka.
- ❖ This is the recognition of their conservation of forests and biodiversity.
- ❖ Additional specimens of the same species were collected from the secondary wet forest habitat of Nagaland.
- ❖ This new wasp belongs to the subfamily Metopiinae of Darwin wasps’ family Ichneumonidae.

- ❖ The subfamily Metopiinae has 862 species in 27 genera.
- ❖ This is the second genus of this subfamily reported from India and the first from South India.

Bar-headed goose

- ❖ This is the first time since 2010 that a bar-headed goose has been spotted at Pallikaranai, Chennai.
- ❖ It is considered one of the world's highest-flying birds.
- ❖ It is native to Central Asia, and known to migrate over the Himalayas to spend the winter in South Asia, from Assam to as far as Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ In earlier rare occurrences, a few were spotted at the Andhra Pradesh end of the Pulicat Lake, two in Kancheepuram and five over the Kelambakkam creek in 2018.
- ❖ Nearly 193 species of birds have been spotted at the Pallikaranai marshland since 2010.



Plan to eradicate invasive plant

- ❖ The Nodal Centre for Biological Invasions (NCBI) at the Kerala Forest Research Institute has come out with a management plan to eradicate *Senna spectabilis*.
- ❖ It is the exotic invasive plant that is posing a severe threat to the State's wildlife habitat.
- ❖ *Senna spectabilis* is a deciduous tree native to tropical areas of America.
- ❖ It grows up to 15 to 20 metres in a short period of time and distributes thousands of seeds after flowering.
- ❖ The thick foliage of the tree arrests the growth of other indigenous tree and grass species.
- ❖ Thus, it causes food shortage for the wildlife population, especially herbivores.
- ❖ It also adversely affects the germination and growth of the native species.
- ❖ It is categorised as 'Least Concern' under IUCN Red List.



New Swallowtail Butterfly

- ❖ A swallowtail butterfly, Noble's Helen (*Papilio noblei*) is disappearing from its previously known ranges from Myanmar and southern China to Vietnam.
- ❖ Now it has been recorded for the first time in Namdapha National Park of Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- ❖ The Noble's Helen, closest to the *Papilio antonio* from the Philippines, is characterised by a much large dorsal white spot.
- ❖ It was once common in the montane forest at moderate elevations in northern Thailand.
- ❖ Butterflies are considered vital indicators representing the state of biodiversity and key ecosystem functions.



Asian Waterbird census 2023

- ❖ The International Waterbird Census is a monitoring programme operating in 143 countries to collect information on the numbers of waterbirds at wetland sites.
- ❖ India is also a part of this monitoring programme under the Asian water bird census, held mid-winter every year.

- ❖ It is a citizen-science program supporting conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds worldwide.
- ❖ The observations were recorded on the eBird app.
- ❖ It shows the populations of some migratory waterbirds, especially duck species visiting the Alappuzha region of Kerala, are falling.
- ❖ The duck species like Northern Shoveler, Common teal and Eurasian wigeon, sighted in the previous surveys, were totally missing this time around.



Ancient 'marine crocodile' fossil

- ❖ Palaeontologists have uncovered a new Thalattosuchian, an ancient “cousin” of modern-day crocodile.
- ❖ It dates back to the early Jurassic, Pliensbachian period, which was about 185 million years ago.
- ❖ It could be the oldest of its kind ever discovered.
- ❖ Thalattosuchians are referred to colloquially as ‘marine crocodiles’ or ‘sea crocodiles’.
- ❖ But they are not the members of Crocodylia.



IqAir Air Quality Index

- ❖ Mumbai has overtaken Delhi to become the world’s second-most polluted city in terms of the global Air Quality Index (AQI).
- ❖ This is According to Switzerland-based air quality monitoring tech company IqAir data.

- ❖ Sarajevo in Bosnia has been ranked as the world's most polluted city for the period between January 29 and February 8.
- ❖ Lahore from Pakistan is in the third position.
- ❖ Delhi is in the sixth spot and Kolkata is in the 17th position.
- ❖ IQAir has joined hands with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Greenpeace to measure the air quality in India.
- ❖ Its studies are based on data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Top 10 most-polluted cities worldwide:

- 1 Lahore (Pakistan)
- 2 Mumbai (India)
- 3 Kabul (Afghanistan)
- 4 Kaohsiung (Taiwan)
- 5 Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)
- 6 Accra (Ghana)
- 7 Krakow (Poland)
- 8 Doha (Qatar)
- 9 Astana (Kazakhstan)
- 10 Santiago (Chile)

First bird festival in Sundarbans



- ❖ The first-ever festival was organised by the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR) division of the West Bengal Forest Department.
- ❖ The Bird Festival provides baseline data on Sundarbans' bird species diversity.
- ❖ As much as 145 different bird species were sighted during the first Bird Festival.
- ❖ The species recorded during the Bird Festival included 78 forest birds and 42 species of waders, raptors etc.

- ❖ The total number of birds spotted during the exercise was 5,065.
- ❖ The Sundarbans is located on the delta of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers in the Bay of Bengal.

Sea lions' death in Peru

- ❖ Around 585 sea lions and 55,000 wild birds have died of the H5N1 bird flu virus in recent weeks in Peru.
- ❖ The dead birds included pelicans, various types of gulls, and penguins, the Sernanp.
- ❖ In November, the country declared a 180-day health alert after finding three cases of highly contagious H5N1 in pelicans.
- ❖ It is rare that bird flu jumps over into mammals, and rarer still that humans catch the potentially deadly virus.
- ❖ But the virus has recently been found in foxes and otters in Britain, a cat in France, and grizzly bears in Montana.



Rhododendrons carpet

- ❖ Rhododendron, meaning rose tree in Greek, is considered an indicator species for climate change.
- ❖ Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas are home to more than one-third of all types of rhododendrons found in India.
- ❖ The Botanical Survey of India's new publication titled 'Rhododendrons of Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalaya - An Illustrated Account' lists 45 taxa of rhododendrons.
- ❖ There are 132 taxa (80 species, 25 subspecies and 27 varieties) of rhododendrons found in India.

- ❖ Of the 45 taxa recorded in the publication, 24 are found in the Darjeeling Himalayas and 44 in the Sikkim Himalayas.
- ❖ They are native to the temperate regions of Asia, North America, and Europe, as well as to the tropical regions of southeast Asia and northern Australia.
- ❖ Rhododendrons were first recorded by Captain Hardwick in Jammu and Kashmir in 1776.
- ❖ It is the national flower of Nepal and the state tree of the state of Uttarakhand in India.



Omorgus Khandesh

- ❖ A new beetle species has been discovered in India.
- ❖ The beetle is important for forensic science as it helps detect the time of death of an animal or human.
- ❖ Omorgus Khandesh is necrophagous and is, therefore, also called a keratin beetle.
- ❖ The new species belongs to the Trogidae family.
- ❖ With the addition of this new species, now there are a total of 14 extant species of this family in India.
- ❖ The beetles of this group are sometimes called hide beetles as they tend to cover their body under the soil and hide.



Climate Smart Wheat Variety



- ❖ IARI (Indian Agricultural Research Institute) developed the third Wheat Variety-HD-3385, with the same yields as HD-3410, plant height of just 95 cm and strong stems.
- ❖ It is least lodging-prone and most amenable for early sowing.
- ❖ IARI has registered HD-3385 with the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA).
- ❖ This new variety of wheat has been specifically designed to withstand the high temperatures that are prevalent in many parts of India.
- ❖ Earlier ICAR's New Delhi-based Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) scientists have developed two varieties.
- ❖ The first, HDCSW-18, was released and officially notified in 2016.
- ❖ It was having a potential wheat yield of over 7 tonnes per hectare.
- ❖ But due to the plant heights it prone to lodging or bending over when their ear heads were heavy with well-filled grains.
- ❖ The second variety HD-3410 was released in 2022.
- ❖ It has higher yield potential (7.5 tonnes/hectare) with lower plant height (100-105 cm).

Save Wetlands Campaign

- ❖ Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Save Wetlands Campaign' in Goa.
- ❖ This campaign is structured on a "whole of society" approach for wetlands conservation.
- ❖ It was enabling affirmative actions for wetlands conservation at all levels of the society and involving all strata of the society.
- ❖ This campaign over next one year will include sensitizing people of the value of wetlands, increasing the coverage of wetland mitras and building citizen partnerships for wetlands conservation.



Wetland Ex-Situ Conservation Establishment

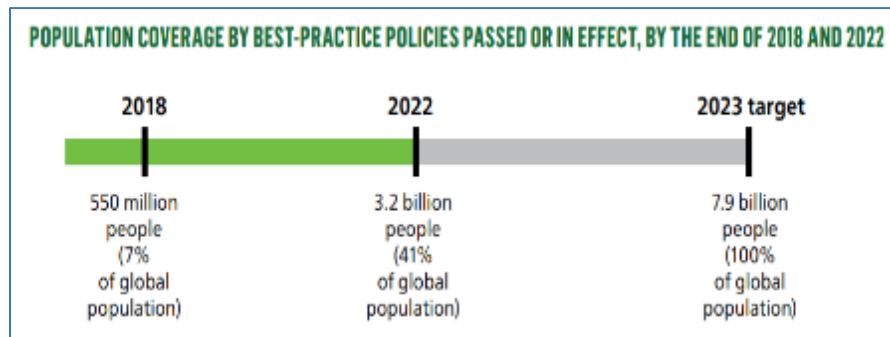
- ❖ The Rajasthan state Forest Department has proposed to construct a zoo inside Keoladeo National Park.
- ❖ The purpose of this zoo is called Wetland ex-situ Conservation Establishment (WESCE).
- ❖ The zoo will display dolphins, crocodiles, water buffaloes, and other exotic species.
- ❖ The major attraction will be the wetland species to be put in the zoo.
- ❖ A breeding and re-introduction centre for locally extinct species, such as otters, fishing cats, blackbucks, hog deer, etc. also part of this plan.



REPORTS AND INDICES

Report “Countdown to 2023”

- ❖ The World Health Organization released a 4th annual status report ‘Countdown to 2023 WHO Report on global trans-fat elimination 2022’.
- ❖ It stated that 5 billion people globally remain unprotected from harmful trans-fatty acids (TFA) resulting in increasing their risk of heart disease and death.
- ❖ WHO first called for the global elimination of industrially produced trans fats in 2018.
- ❖ It also set an elimination target year as 2023.
- ❖ 43 countries have implemented best-practice policies for tackling trans-fat in food.



World Economic Situation and Prospectus 2023



- ❖ The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched the “World Economic Situation and Prospects” report.

- ❖ It is also known as World Economy Report.
- ❖ The report says that the economic growth of the world is slowing down.
- ❖ It is to reach 1.9% in 2023 from 3% in 2022.
- ❖ Global Inflation is to remain at 6.5% in 2023.
- ❖ Countries will face recession as they enter 2024.
- ❖ India's economic growth rate as predicted by the report is 5.8% in 2023 and 6.7% in 2024

Annual Death Penalty Report, 2022

- ❖ In 2022, Sessions Courts in India imposed 165 death sentence penalties.
- ❖ It is the highest number in a single year in two decades.
- ❖ This rise in figure can be attributed to the “extraordinary sentencing of 38 persons to death in Ahmedabad in a single bomb blast case.
- ❖ It was representing the largest number of persons sentenced to death in a single case since 2016.
- ❖ The report went on note that as on December 31, 2022 there were 539 prisoners on the death row.
- ❖ This making it the highest-ever number since 2016 when only 400 prisoners were facing the death sentence.
- ❖ The 2022 representing a 40% increase in the population since 2015.
- ❖ This information is part of the ‘Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics 2022’ report.
- ❖ It is released by Project 39A, an advocacy group with the National Law University, Delhi.



MBA Ranking 2023

- ❖ The Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) has released the top business and management schools of 2023 in India.
- ❖ IIM) Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru and IIM Kolkata are the top 3 business schools in India.
- ❖ Top 3 Private Business Schools:
 - Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand
 - Management Development Institute, Gurugram, Haryana
 - Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune.
- ❖ Top 3 Business Schools in the world:
 - London Business School, UK
 - Wharton- University of Pennsylvania, USA
 - Harvard Business School, USA.

CITES Database on red sanders smuggling

The potential and the problem



1,000 metric tonnes

The annual market demand for Red Sanders

Rs 50 lakh - 1 cr

The price commanded by a tonne of this timber in international markets

50-80%

The population decline in this species over the last 3 generations

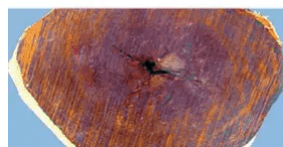


1,000 sq km

The area of occupancy by Red Sanders that's endemic to the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh

117

Smuggling cases of Red Sandalwood registered in 2011



60-100 years

For Red Sanders to reach good harvestable width

- ❖ The CITES trade database has recorded 28 incidents of Red Sanders confiscation, seizure, and specimen from the wild being exported from India.

- ❖ These consignments were exported to China (53.5%), Hong Kong (25.0%), Singapore (17.8%) and the United States of America (3.5%) from 2016 to 2020.
- ❖ Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus*, or red sandalwood, is an endemic tree species with distribution restricted to the Eastern Ghats of India.
- ❖ The report titled “RED SANDERS: Factsheet on India’s Red Sanders in illegal wildlife trade” was released recently.
- ❖ As per the report, China remains the largest importer with more than 13,618 tonnes of the products, followed by Hong Kong (5,215 tonnes) and Singapore (216 tonnes).
- ❖ The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments.
- ❖ Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimen of wild animals and plants, does not threaten the survival of the species.

Global Quality Infrastructure Index 2021

- ❖ India has been ranked as the fifth-best country in the world when it comes to its accreditation system according to recently released Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021.
- ❖ The ranking is based on the 184 economies’ infrastructure quality.
- ❖ The country’s overall ranking is still 10th in the GQII index.
- ❖ In terms of metrology and standardization, India was ranked 21st and 9th, respectively, in the world.
- ❖ According to the report, the top 25 countries in the world are mainly located in Asia-Pacific, North America, and Europe.
- ❖ Germany topped this list.
- ❖ It was followed by China, the US, the UK and Japan in the second, third, fourth, and fifth positions respectively.



Global Minority report

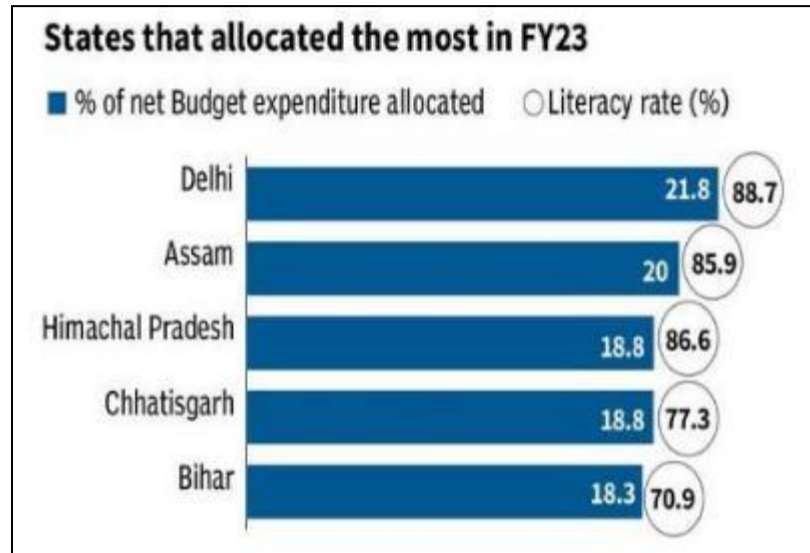
- ❖ The Patna-based research institute Centre for Policy Analysis released the “Global Minority Report”.
- ❖ India placed at the top of the index.
- ❖ It is followed by South Korea, Japan, and the US.
- ❖ Maldives, Afghanistan, and Somalia are at the bottom of the list
- ❖ UK and the UAE coming in at positions 54 and 61, respectively.



States allocation towards education

- ❖ Among the big States in the country, Chhattisgarh and Bihar allocated the most proportion of their budget towards education in FY23.
- ❖ Chhattisgarh allocated 18.82 per cent of the State’s estimated net budget expenditure to education, Bihar allocated 18.3 per cent.
- ❖ The literacy rate in Chhattisgarh is 77.9 per cent, while the rate for Bihar is 70.9 per cent, one of the lowest in the country.
- ❖ The States that have spent a higher portion of their budget expenditure on education are Delhi, Assam, and Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ They allocated 22 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively.
- ❖ At 96.2 per cent, Kerala has the highest literacy rate in the country, while it is 82.9 per cent in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The national average of the allocation to education in the net budget expenditure in FY23 was 15.4 per cent.
- ❖ The other States that have allocated a comparatively smaller proportion of their net expenditure to education include Andhra Pradesh (12.7 %), Karnataka (12.73 %), Uttar Pradesh (12.89 %), and Punjab (13.05 %).

- ❖ The overall observation says that Tamilnadu is planning on increasing its literacy rates further though it is already higher.
- ❖ The Central Government allocated Rs 44,094 crores on education, that is, 16.51% of the total budget.
- ❖ This is 8% higher than the previous year.



TomTom Traffic Index report



- ❖ The 12th edition of the report found the traffic trend across 389 cities in 56 countries throughout 2022.
- ❖ Bengaluru is the second slowest place to drive through in the world in 2022.
- ❖ New York city topped in the list.
- ❖ The assessment is not only limited to the loss of time while driving, and also focuses on other factors like money, environmental impact, etc.
- ❖ Bengaluru's rush hour traffic has led to the loss of as much as 129 hours last year.
- ❖ Ireland's Dublin lost as much as 140 hours due to traffic jams.
- ❖ Bengaluru ranked fifth in terms of CO₂ emissions per driven mile during rush hour.
- ❖ London is the major emitter of CO₂ in terms of CO₂ emissions per driven mile.

Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI)

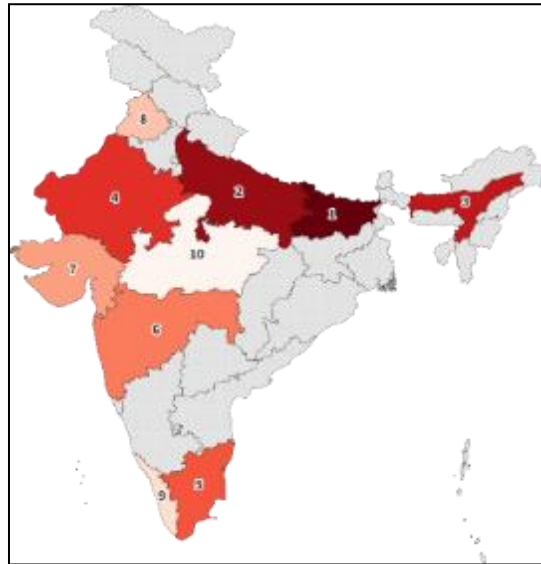
- ❖ India stood at 47th position in Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) for the year 2022.
- ❖ This survey was conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- ❖ Due to Russia-Ukraine war, Russia slipped to 48th position in the index.
- ❖ The STRI indices takes into consideration the government policies in several sectors that define the ease of trading in those sectors and industries.
- ❖ As per the index, zero shows least restriction and one show no restriction.
- ❖ The database also records details based on a Most Favoured Nation basis.



Gross Domestic Climate Risk Report

- ❖ The report was released by the Cross Dependency Initiative (XDI).
- ❖ Nine out of 50 regions in the world facing high climate risk to a fragile physical infrastructure fall in India.

- ❖ Bihar (22nd spot), Uttar Pradesh (25th), Assam (28th), Rajasthan (32nd), Tamil Nadu (36th), Maharashtra (38th), Gujarat (48th), Punjab (50th) and Kerala (52nd) are among the most vulnerable in the country.
- ❖ India is followed by China with the highest number of states in climate risk to the built environment.
- ❖ Overall, India, China and the U.S. are home to 80% of the most vulnerable cities and centres of economic activity around the world.
- ❖ U.S. has 18 regions in the top 100 list.



Global Labour Resilience Index 2023

- ❖ The White Shield released the Global Labour Resilience Index during the World Government Summit.
- ❖ The index measures the capacity of the economy to withstand employment fluctuations and the ability to fight back.
- ❖ The first of its kind report ranked 136 countries based on parameters such as technological disruptions, pandemics, green economy transition, etc.
- ❖ Denmark was ranked first in the index followed by Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, Singapore, and Sweden.
- ❖ India was ranked 65th place in the report.
- ❖ All the other countries in South Asia are ranked below 80.
- ❖ Pakistan secured 97th place.
- ❖ More than one-third of the countries (49 countries out of 136) score less than 50 out of 100 on labour market resilience.



World's Top Independent Power Producer

- ❖ S&P Global Commodity Insights' Top 250 Global Energy Company Rankings-2022 released recently.
- ❖ State-run NTPC Limited has been ranked top independent power producers and energy traders globally.
- ❖ These rankings are based on four key metrics- asset worth, revenues, profits and return on investment.
- ❖ NTPC currently contributes 24 per cent of the total electricity produced in India.
- ❖ By 2050, the corporation will contribute 50% of the total power production in the country.



Countries ready for crypto adoption

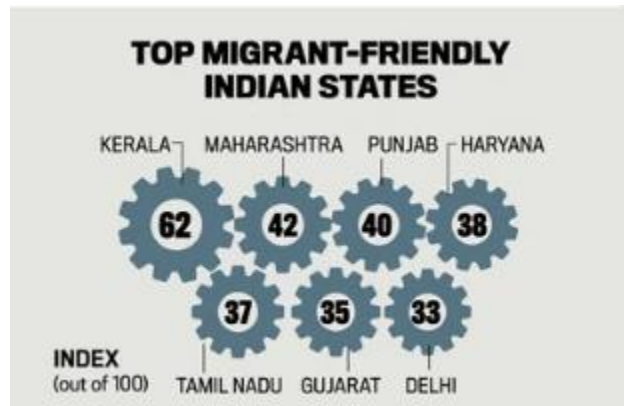
Rank	Country	Crypto adoption rate (%)	Crypto ATMs	Increase in google searches since 2020 (%)	Crypto ready score
1	Australia	18	240	196	7.37
2	USA	18	33,539	166	7.07
3	Brazil	24	25	355	6.81
4	United Arab Emirates	34	8	261	6.41
5	Hong Kong	18	146	236	6.4
6	Taiwan	14	40	276	6.3
7	India	25	2	316	6.12
8	Canada	14	2,640	165	6.1
9	Turkey	40	14	125	6.07
10	Singapore	25	0	234	6.02

- ❖ Australia is the biggest country when it comes to the adoption of cryptocurrency in 2023.
- ❖ The sale of cryptocurrency and other digital assets is legal and regulated in Australia.
- ❖ Following this, USA ranks as the second biggest country in crypto adoption.
- ❖ Ranking wise, Brazil comes third place.
- ❖ India emerged as 7th biggest nation ready to adopt crypto in 2023.

STATES

Jharkhand's First Survey of Migrants

- ❖ The State Government of Jharkhand started the State and Responsible Migration Initiative in 2021.
- ❖ It aims to creating a robust database of the migrants in the state is a part of this initiative.
- ❖ The survey will also help the State in identifying the cause of migration.
- ❖ The survey outputs will be used to create a state-level policy.
- ❖ Around 8.5 lakh migrants returned to their home state, Jharkhand, during the COVID crisis.



Nagaland Orange Festival

- ❖ Nagaland is celebrating the Orange Festival for two days.
- ❖ Nagaland Fruit Festival is being organized in the state to praise the hard work of orange growers.
- ❖ The 2023 Nagaland Fruit festival is the third edition.
- ❖ The Nagaland Fruit festival was organized by the Rusoma Village council.
- ❖ Revenue from oranges in the state almost doubled recently.



New capital of Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that the state capital will be shifted to Visakhapatnam.
- ❖ The previous government in 2015 declared Amaravati as the state capital and acquired lands to build the new capital city.
- ❖ In 2019, Reddy first proposed the idea of “decentralised development” and advocated for the establishment of three capitals in the state and repealed later.



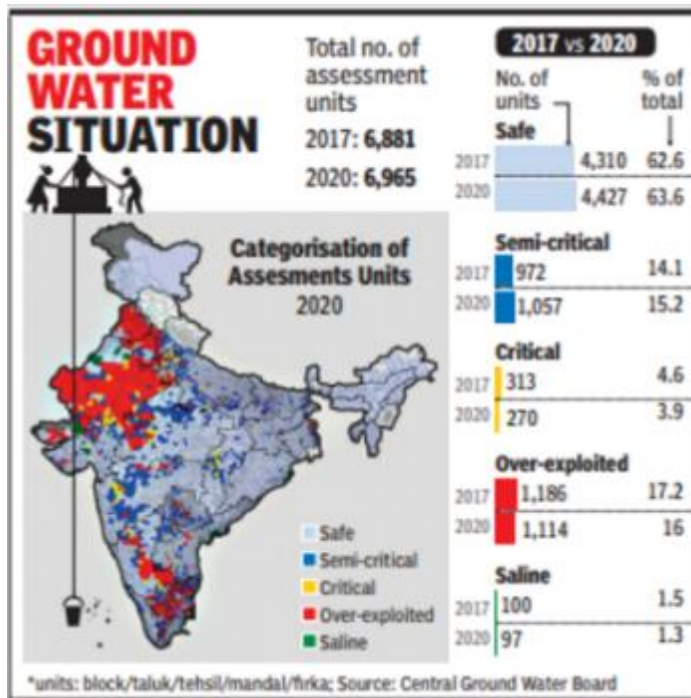
First District to register 10,000 new MSMEs

- ❖ Ernakulam has become the first district in the state to register more than ten thousand new MSMEs.
- ❖ The other districts such as Thrissur and Malappuram are also moving close to the number.
- ❖ The Kerala Government launched the Enterprises Campaign during its 2022-23 budget.
- ❖ Also, the state government declared the financial year 2022-23 as the Year of Enterprises.
- ❖ This was done to boost the development of the MSME sector in the state.



Punjab Policy on Groundwater Usage

- ❖ The Punjab Water Regulation and Development Authority (PWRDA) has notified Punjab Groundwater Extraction and Conservation Directions, 2023.
- ❖ The Punjab government will start levying charges for extracting groundwater from the state on all non-exempted users from February 1.
- ❖ The new directions, however, do not cover groundwater use for agriculture, drinking and domestic purposes.
- ❖ An exemption has also been provided for all users who extract groundwater less than 300 cubic metres per month.
- ❖ The blocks of Punjab have been categorised into three zones (green, yellow and orange) based on the extent of annual groundwater extraction.



Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site

- ❖ Yaya Tso Lake was declared Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site under the Biological Diversity Act.
- ❖ Lake Yaya Tso is known as a bird's paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh.
- ❖ It is a nesting habitat for a large number of birds and animals, such as the bar-headed goose, black-necked crane and Brahminy duck
- ❖ It is also one of the highest breeding sites of the black-necked crane in India.



India's largest chopper plant

- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility at Tumakuru in Karnataka.
- ❖ PM laid the foundation stone for the unit in 2016.
- ❖ The choppers play a vital role in the defence force, providing close air support to ground forces and taking out enemy air defence.



Asia's first floating festival

- ❖ Gandhisagar Floating Festival, touted as Asia's first floating festival held at Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh.

- ❖ The festival is being organised to offer a unique glamping and adventure activities experience to tourists visiting Mandsaur in MP.
- ❖ The first-of-its-kind floating festival will have land, air, and water-based adventure.

FAME Scheme Rank

- ❖ Maharashtra leads the way in total sales of electric cars that have taken advantage of the FAME II subsidy.
- ❖ It is followed by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Rajasthan.
- ❖ The top five states combined account for more than 56% of the 0.85 million electric vehicles purchased via the plan.
- ❖ According to available FAME II subsidy statistics, the six states dominate sales, accounting for 93% of the 6,397 electric four wheelers sold in the country.

THE PECKING ORDER				
State	Total EV sales where FAME II was availed		Two-wheeler EV sales based on FAME II subsidy	Motor vehicle registration share as on March 19 (%)
Maharashtra	143,986	(16.8)	139,109	12
Karnataka	120,070	(14.05)*	112,997	7.1
Tamil Nadu	82,955	(9.71)	80,784	10.2
Gujarat	72,302	(8.46)	70,778	8.5
Rajasthan	60,584	(7.09)	58,185	5.9
Uttar Pradesh	39,572	(4.6)	11,707	11
Kerala	39,379	(4.6)	36,313	4.4

Crackdown of child marriage

WHAT LAW SAYS

> The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 aims to eradicate child marriage

> The centre enacted the Act by replacing the earlier legislation of Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929

PUNISHMENT

> If a person performs, conducts, directs or abets any child marriage, he shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for 2 years or with fine which may extend to Rs1lakh or both

WHEN MARRIAGE IS NULL AND VOID

> Where a minor is taken or enticed out of

the custody of legal guardian

> When a minor is compelled by any deceitful means to go from any place

> If a minor is sold for purpose of marriage and go through a form of marriage

> If a minor is married after which the minor is sold off or trafficked or used for immoral purpose

- ❖ Over the last few days, Assam has arrested over 2,000 men in a state-wide crackdown on child marriages.
- ❖ Those arrested have been booked under the provisions of the stringent POCSO Act and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act.
- ❖ Cases under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 will be registered against those who have married girls in the age group of 14-18 years.

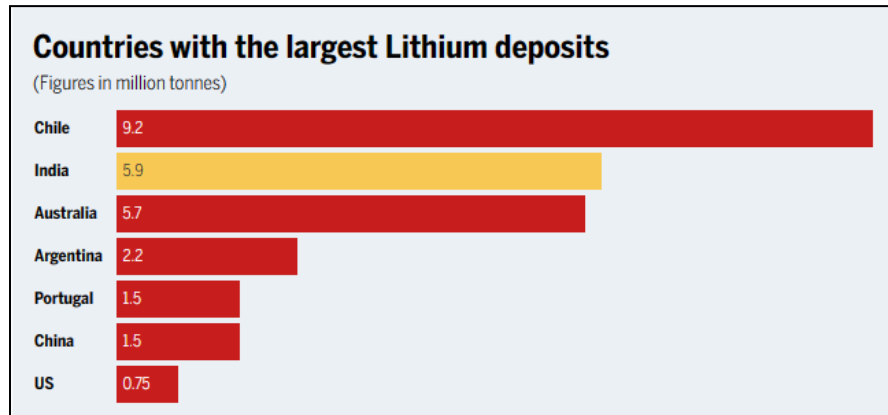
Sculpture Park

- ❖ Rajasthan Chief Secretary Usha Sharma inaugurated a Sculpture Park at Bikaner House, Delhi.
- ❖ The sculpture park has a glimpse of modern and contemporary art and culture.
- ❖ The first edition of the sculpture park, sculptures/idols of renowned sculptures from India and abroad along with emerging artists have been displayed.



Lithium Reserves in Jammu and Kashmir

- ❖ Lithium reserves have been found for the first time in the country in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ 5.9 million tonnes reserves have been found in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and is one of the key components in EV batteries.
- ❖ Currently, India is import-dependent for many minerals like lithium, nickel and cobalt.
- ❖ Totally, 51 mineral blocks including Lithium and Gold were handed over to various state governments.
- ❖ Out of these 51 mineral blocks, 5 blocks pertain to gold and other blocks pertain to commodities like potash, molybdenum, base metals etc.



Indore Municipal green bonds

Response to Indore Municipal Corporation's Green Bonds Issue							
Category	Issue Size		Bonds Subscribed		Amount Oversubscribed		No. of Times Oversubscribed
	(₹Billion)	(~\$ Billion)	(₹Billion)	(~\$ Billion)	(₹Billion)	(~\$ Billion)	
Institution	0.61	0.007	1.074	0.013	-0.464	-0.006	1.76
Corporate	0.61	0.007	1.218	0.015	-0.608	-0.007	2
HNI	0.61	0.007	0.020	0.000	0.590	0.007	0.03
Retail	0.61	0.007	0.718	0.009	-0.108	-0.001	1.18

- ❖ Indore Municipal Corporation's (IMC) green bond of Rs 244 crore was oversubscribed within three hours of the opening.
- ❖ IMC became the first civic body in the country to launch an IPO (Initial Public Offering).
- ❖ With this, the local civic body will install a 60-megawatt captive solar power plant on 100 acres of land in Khargone to reduce its electricity expenses.

First National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre



- ❖ In New Delhi, the creation of the first National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre is underway.

- ❖ National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre will demonstrate the expansion of the metro networks and transit systems in numerous cities across India.
- ❖ The building is intended to serve as a hub for information and innovation for the Indian Metro train networks.
- ❖ It will give all parties involved a platform for dialogue and collaboration.

Portal for 'One Family, One ID'

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the portal for creation of 'Family ID - One Family One Identity'.
- ❖ It aims to identify families as a unit for implementing the 'one job per family' proposal.
- ❖ Those families are not eligible for the National Food Security Scheme will be able to avail the ID.
- ❖ While the ration card ID of the families having it will be considered as their family ID.



India's first frozen-lake marathon



- ❖ India's first "frozen-lake marathon" held at Ladakh's Pangong Tso lake.



- ❖ The 21-kilometre marathon, with Lukung as its starting point, will end at Maan village.
- ❖ Seventy-five selected athletes from India and abroad are participating in the run.
- ❖ It was giving them an opportunity to make a bid for a Guinness world record for the world's highest "frozen-lake marathon."

International Craft Summit

- ❖ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated an 'International Craft Summit' in Jajpur.
- ❖ This is the first-of-its-kind craft summit featuring a confluence of pioneering craftspeople, culture, and art enthusiasts.
- ❖ Four UN agencies and five UNESCO Creative Cities have partnered with the district to realize this ambitious and forward-looking event on behalf of the State Government.

First-ever Train Control & Supervision System

- ❖ An indigenously developed signalling technology was launched for operations on the Red Line of the Delhi Metro.
- ❖ This is the India's first-ever Indigenous Automatic Train Supervision System (i-ATS).
- ❖ It has been developed by a joint team of DMRC and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

High court orders in Malayalam

- ❖ Two judgments of the Kerala High Court were recently translated into Malayalam and published on the court website.
- ❖ This was making the court the first such in the country to publish its orders in a regional language.
- ❖ The Supreme Court also had been campaigning for making court orders available in regional languages.

B20 conference

- ❖ The State of Manipur hosted the Business 20 (B20) conference.
- ❖ This is the official G20 dialogue forum for the global business community.
- ❖ The theme of the conference was 'Sustainable Growth and Development'.

India's first Agri chatbot

- ❖ India's first AI chatbot for the agriculture sector - Ama Krush AI launched at the farewell session of 'Krushi Odisha 2023'.
- ❖ This chatbot will help farmers with the best agronomic practices, government schemes and loan products from more than 40 commercial and cooperative banks.
- ❖ It has been built using the recently launched ChatGPT system and Bhashini, a language interpretation platform developed by IIT Madras.

Marine Spatial Planning Framework

- ❖ Puducherry has launched the country's first Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework.
- ❖ It is a part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative.
- ❖ It aims to balance growth alongside sustainable management of ocean resources and coastal environment preservation.

Robotic Manhole cleaners



bandicoot™
World's 1st Robotic Scavenger designed to eradicate manual scavenging

PORTABLE
Easy to mobilise into any street and city

EFFICIENCY
10x efficient than manual scavenging

SENSOR BASED VISUALIZATION
Vision 3rd eye for better understanding about the environment

COMPATIBILITY
Allows working at constrained spaces

POISONOUS GAS SENSORS
Alert about gas toxicity levels.

RESPECT AND DIGNITY
Transforming lives - Bringing smiles

WIDELY RECOGNIZED AND PROMOTED BY

MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROBOTIC ARM
Able to shovel - grab or pick

SIMPLE USER-INTERFACE
Easy to operate by specifically trained sanitation workers

"Let's Change Manholes to Roboholes"

- ❖ The Kerala government launched robotic scavenger, Bandicoot to clean sewages in this temple town.



- ❖ Thus, it was becoming the first state in the country to use robotic technology to clean all its commissioned manholes.
- ❖ Bandicoot is the world's first robotic scavenger.
- ❖ Bandicoot, developed by Kerala-based Genrobotics, had recently bagged 'Kerala Pride' award at the Huddle Global 2022.
- ❖ Bandicoot robots are currently deployed in few towns across 17 states in India and three Union Territories.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Krishi Mahotsav

- ❖ The two-day mega Krishi Mahotsav - Exhibition and Training programme concluded in Kota, Rajasthan.
- ❖ It was organized by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ❖ The farmers were trained in the Horticulture, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Organic Farming program.
- ❖ A special workshop was held on Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.

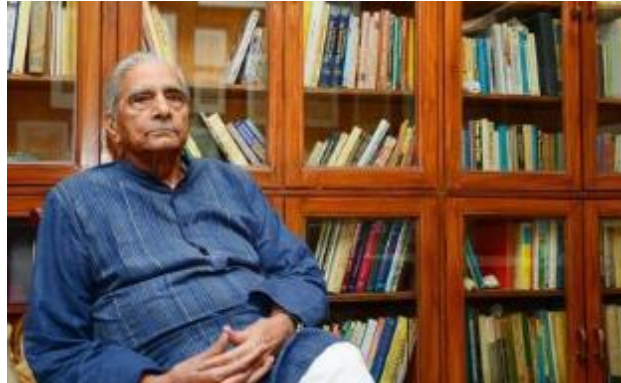
India-UK Achievers Honor

- ❖ Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour.
- ❖ This is awarded by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life.
- ❖ To mark 75 years of India's independence, the first-ever India UK Achievers Honours covered 75 high achievers and some key Outstanding Achievers.

Former Law Minister Shanti Bhushan

- ❖ Former Union law minister and eminent jurist Shanti Bhushan passed away recently.
- ❖ He represented politician Raj Narain in the historic case that led to the annulment of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi's election in 1975.

- ❖ In the historic Raj Narain vs Indira Nehru Gandhi case, the Allahabad High Court in June 1975 had disqualified Gandhi for a period of six years from contesting elections.
- ❖ Bhushan served as the law minister from 1977 to 1979 in the Morarji Desai cabinet.
- ❖ As the law minister, he introduced Forty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution in 1978.



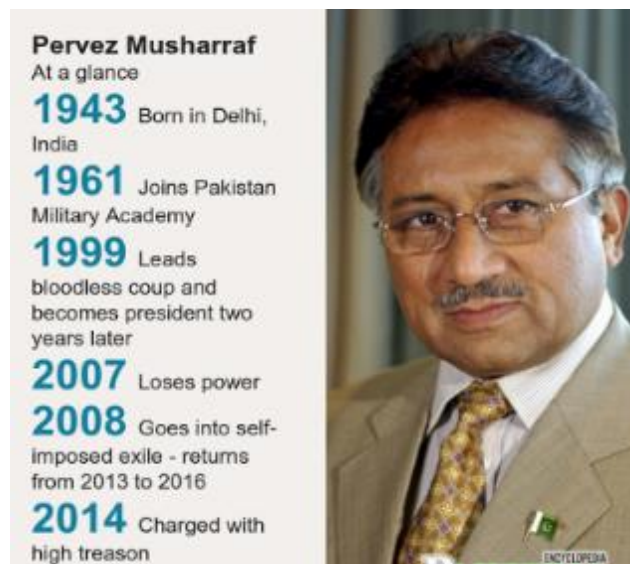
Vani Jayaram

- ❖ Veteran playback singer Vani Jairam (77) who sang over 10,000 songs in several languages passed away recently.
- ❖ She was recently awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award.
- ❖ She was a part of the film industry for five decades.
- ❖ She received the National Best Playback Singer award thrice.
- ❖ She also got state awards in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Odisha.



Pervez Musharraf

- ❖ Former President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf (79, Retd), passed away recently.
- ❖ He was the tenth president of Pakistan after a successful bloodless military coup in 1999.
- ❖ He served as the 10th Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan from 1998 to 2001 and the 7th top general from 1998 to 2007.
- ❖ He was known as the architect of the Kargil war, the man who ordered his soldiers to enter India to cut off Leh from Srinagar.
- ❖ It was as President that Pervez Musharraf came to India in July 2001.
- ❖ Gen. Musharraf had left for Dubai in March 2016 for medical treatment and never returned to Pakistan.
- ❖ In December 2019, a special court in Pakistani sentenced General Pervez Musharraf in absentia to death for suspending Pakistan's constitution in 2007.
- ❖ Mr Musharraf challenged the order and in January 2020.
- ❖ The Lahore High Court annulled the death sentence and held the earlier trial to be unconstitutional.



Grammy Award 2023

- ❖ India's Ricky Kej won the Grammy this year for his album Divine Tides.
- ❖ His album was nominated in the Best Immersive Audio Album category.
- ❖ Kej has become the only Indian to hold three Grammy Awards and only the fourth Indian to do so.

Surajkund Mela 2023

- ❖ The Surajkund International Crafts Mela is being conducted at Surajkund, Faridabad.
- ❖ The Mela is conducted by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with the Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- ❖ The finest craftsperson's from all over India come to participate in the Crafts Mela.
- ❖ Surajkund International Crafts Mela is a highly acclaimed world's biggest crafts fair.

"World's brightest" students list

- ❖ Indian-American schoolgirl Natasha Perianayagam from Chennai was named in the "world's brightest" students list for the second consecutive year.
- ❖ The 13 year old Natasha is a student at Florence M Gaudineer Middle School, in New Jersey.
- ❖ This list is released by the U.S.-based Johns Hopkins Centre For Talented Youth.
- ❖ It is based on the results of above-grade-level tests of over 15,000 students across 76 countries.
- ❖ In her latest attempt, Perianayagam scored the highest grades among all candidates.



Golden Book Awards - 2023

- ❖ The "Golden Book Awards" is announced its winner for 2023.
- ❖ This prestigious event recognizes and celebrates the best book in literature.
- ❖ Golden Book Awards recognizes the exceptional literary works that have made a significant impact.
- ❖ This year 76000+ books were published in India.

- ❖ The book 'Agaligai' by Jayaprakash is one of the winners of this award.



GOLDEN BOOK AWARD WINNERS 2023



ATD Best Awards 2023



- ❖ NTPC Limited, has been honoured with 'ATD Best Awards 2023' by the Association for Talent Development (ATD), USA.
- ❖ This is the sixth time that NTPC Limited has won this award.
- ❖ This is awarded for demonstrating enterprise success in the field of talent development.
- ❖ The award is testimony to NTPC's contemporary HR practices.

- ❖ The ATD Best Awards recognises organisations that demonstrate enterprise through talent development.
- ❖ The award includes small and large private, public, and not-for-profit organizations from across the globe.

New Governor from Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The Central Government appointed senior BJP leader from Tamil Nadu C.P. Radhakrishnan has been appointed as the new Governor of Jharkhand.
- ❖ He was twice elected to the Lok Sabha from Coimbatore.
- ❖ He was Chairman of the All India Coir Board from 2016 to 2019.
- ❖ He will replace the present Governor of the state, Ramesh Bais.
- ❖ The number of persons from Tamil Nadu who have been appointed as Governors since 2014 has increased to five.

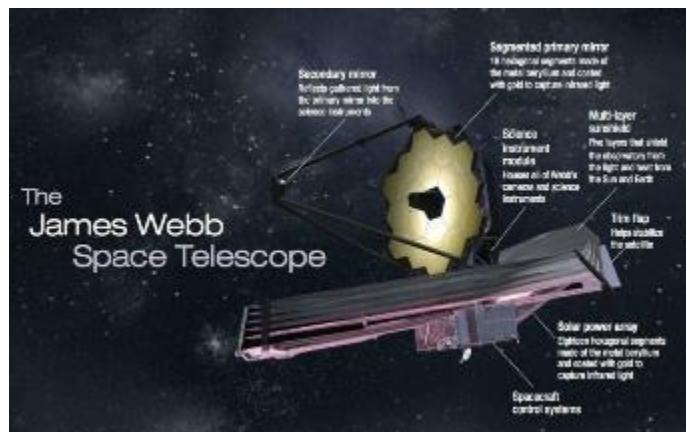


200th birth anniversary of Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

- ❖ Dayanand Saraswati was born on 12th February 1824.
- ❖ He is a social reformer who founded Arya Samaj in 1875 to counter social inequities prevalent during the times.
- ❖ This was a monotheistic Hindu order that rejected the ritualistic excesses and social doctrines of orthodox Hinduism and promoted a united Hindu society on the basis of Vedic teachings.
- ❖ Arya Samaj has played a crucial role in the cultural and social awakening of the country through its emphasis on social reforms and education.
- ❖ His magnum work, Satyarth Prakash (1875), emphasised the “return to Vedic principles”.
- ❖ He supported the idea of shuddhi, to bring back Islamic or Christian converts into Hinduism.



Prestigious Space Foundation



- ❖ The James Webb Telescope recently received the Space Foundation Award.
- ❖ This is an infrared space telescope orbits the sun.
- ❖ The telescope was jointly developed by European Space Agency, NASA, and Canadian Space Agency.
- ❖ It is the successor of the Hubble telescope.
- ❖ This award is a prestigious award and it recognizes individuals and organizations that make breakthroughs in the space field.
- ❖ The James Webb telescope's first photo was of the SMACS 0723 galaxy cluster.

Shoichiro Toyoda - Japan

- ❖ Toyota's honorary chairman and the company founder's son Shoichiro Toyoda has passed away.

- ❖ He is often revered as the force behind taking Toyota towards global growth.
- ❖ He became president in 1982 and helped direct the company's growth in international markets.
- ❖ He was inducted into the U.S. Automotive Hall of Fame in 2007.



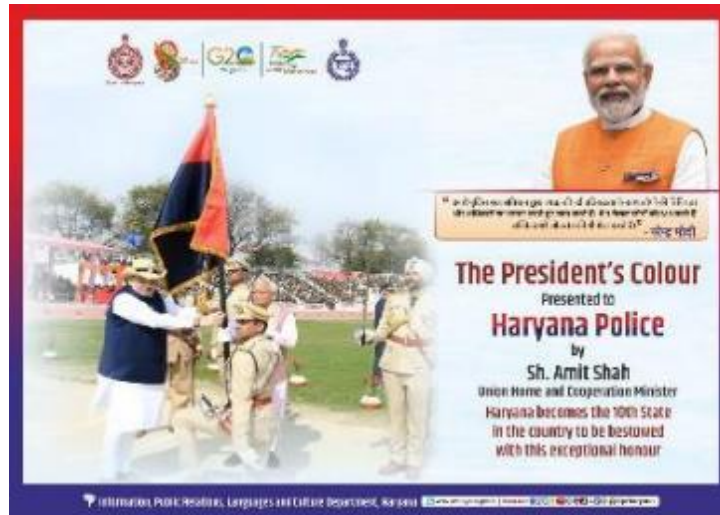
Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar



- ❖ The award is presented by Sangeet Natak Akademi to artists in the field of dance, music, and drama.
- ❖ 19 artists from North East India won the award.
- ❖ The awards were presented for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

- ❖ It is presented annually to artists below the age of 40.
- ❖ Every year, more than 33 artists are presented with the award.
- ❖ The Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar is being presented since 2006.
- ❖ The awards were presented by the Union Minister of Culture and Tourism.

President's Colour award - Haryana



- ❖ The union home minister presented the award on behalf of the President.
- ❖ President's Colour award was given to the Haryana Police in recognition of its exceptional service.
- ❖ The President's Colour is a special flag given to a military, paramilitary or police unit as a mark of recognition for its services to the nation.

Dadasaheb Phalke Awards



- ❖ Rishab Shetty, the actor-filmmaker of film Kantara, earned the award for the Most Promising Actor at the Dadasaheb Phalke Awards.
- ❖ Dulquer Salmaan won the award for Best Actor in a Negative Role, for his performance in the 'Chup: Revenge of the Artist'.
- ❖ SS Rajamouli's RRR won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the Film of The Year.

Annual Pictures of The Year awards

- ❖ Indian-Origin Engineer cum hobbyist Photographer Karthik Subramaniam's photo has topped National Geographic's 'Photo of the Year' Contest 2023.
- ❖ His photo titled "Dance of the Eagles", was captured at the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve in Alaska.
- ❖ Nine other photographers also received the honourable mentions for their photographs, which were taken worldwide.



India's 80th Grandmaster

- ❖ India's chess player Vignesh NR of Chennai has become India's 80th Grandmaster.
- ❖ He won the 24th NordWest Cup 2023 at Bad Zwischenahn in Germany.
- ❖ Vignesh's elder brother Visakh NR had also become India's 59th GM in 2019.
- ❖ Thus, Visakh and Vignesh become India's first brothers who are Grandmasters.



International Khajuraho Dance Festival 2023



- ❖ The 49th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2023 inaugurated at the world-famous tourist destination Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ It is the country's premier festival focusing on Indian classical dance forms, which is renowned nationally and internationally.
- ❖ Khajuraho Dance Festival was started in 1975.

ELECRAMA 2023

- ❖ The 15th edition of ELECRAMA 2023 inaugurated at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.
- ❖ It aims to showcase innovation in the power sector such as Smart Meters, Smart Feeder Management Systems, Methanol production etc
- ❖ Theme of the event is 'Re-imagining the Future: Metamorphosis of the Power Sector in India'.

Sansad Ratna Awards – 2023

- ❖ The 13th edition of the award ceremony is set to be held this year on March 25 in New Delhi.
- ❖ 13 MPs, 2 Parliamentary Committees and 1 Lifetime Achievement honour will be awarded during the 13th edition.

- ❖ They seek to recognise and felicitate the top-performing MPs on the basis of their work in the apex legislative body.
- ❖ The Sansad Ratna Awards were instituted in 2010, inspired by the teachings of former President APJ Abdul Kalam.
- ❖ The Awards are given by the Prime Point Foundation with support from IIT Madras.



Global Best M-GOV Awards

- ❖ Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore, won AED 1 million (UAE) by winning the gold medal at the World Government Summit in Dubai in the UAE (United Arab Emirates).
- ❖ Niyati Totala and Neel Kalpeshkumar Parikh of IIT Indore, were awarded the prestigious medal by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.
- ❖ These students were the creators of the 'Blockbill' app.
- ❖ Blockbill is a blockchain-based receipt generation app that generates digital receipts for all of its users' transactions.
- ❖ The “M-Gov Award” and the “GovTech Award” are annual awards organized by the UAE government as part of the World Government Summit.

External Auditor of ILO

- ❖ Indian Comptroller and Auditor General, Girish Chandra Murmu has been selected as External Auditor of the International Labour Organization in Geneva.
- ❖ He will serve for a four-year term from 2024 to 2027.
- ❖ It is a recognition of its standing among the international community as well as its professionalism, high standards, global audit experience and strong national credentials.
- ❖ CAG will take over from the incumbent External Auditor of ILO, Supreme Audit Institution of Philippines.



EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2022

- ❖ Chairman and managing director of JSW Group Sajjan Jindal won the EY (Ernst & Young) Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2022.
- ❖ This is awarded his exceptional entrepreneurial journey in scaling the global conglomerate with presence in steel, cement, infrastructure, energy, and paints.
- ❖ Earning the sobriquet of 'Man of Steel', Sajjan Jindal was the first representative from India to serve as the chairman of the World Steel Association.
- ❖ Awards were also announced for nine other categories with the winners representing both mature industries and young entrepreneurs from startups.



SPORTS

National Ice Hockey Championship

- ❖ The 12th edition of the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) National Ice Hockey Championship for men - 2023 organized in Leh, Ladakh.
- ❖ ITBP wins the Championship for the third consecutive time
- ❖ The ITBP is a pioneer in the adventure sports in the country
- ❖ And it possesses an unparalleled record of mountaineering and allied sports in the country.

5th Khelo India Youth Games

- ❖ In the fifth Khelo India Youth Games, Maharashtra ranks first in the medal table with 90 medals including 31 gold.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh is second with 59 medals including 25 gold medals and Haryana is third with 23 gold medals.

MEDAL TALLY					
RANK	STATE	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1	Maharashtra	31	31	28	90
2	Madhya Pradesh	25	13	21	59
3	Haryana	23	18	18	59
4	Rajasthan	12	7	11	30
5	Odisha	9	5	9	23
6	Tamil Nadu	8	10	10	28
7	West Bengal	8	7	10	25
8	Uttar Pradesh	6	10	10	26
9	Delhi	5	8	10	23
10	Punjab	5	4	7	16

Khelo India Winter Games 2023 (KIWG)

- ❖ The third edition of the grassroot-level competition concluded on February 14 in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The five-day meet featured over 1,500 athletes from 32 states, Union Territories of India, and other teams competing in 11 sports.
- ❖ The state or Union Territory with the highest number of gold medals at the end of the meet was declared the winner.

- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir topped the KIWG 2023 medal table with 26 golds, 25 silvers and 25 bronze.
- ❖ Maharashtra finished second with 13 gold medals, eight silvers and six bronze.

KIWG medal winners					
Rank	Team	Gold medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total medals
1	Jammu and Kashmir	26	25	25	76
2	Maharashtra	13	8	6	27
3	Himachal Pradesh	10	14	7	31
4	Army	10	10	9	29
5	Haryana	8	10	13	31
6	Ladakh	7	3	7	17
7	Uttarakhand	6	6	4	16
8	Tamil Nadu	6	5	3	14
9	Karnataka	5	2	7	14
10	Gujarat	4	1	1	6

India Open Badminton Championship 2023



- ❖ In India Open Badminton Championship, Korean An Seyoung wins Women's singles in New Delhi.
- ❖ She defeated the World No. 1 Japanese Akane Yamaguchi in the final.
- ❖ Axelsen has earlier won the India Open in 2017 and 2019.
- ❖ Kunlavut Vitidsarn won India Open 2023 Male Singles title in badminton championship.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Coast Guard Day - February 01

- ❖ Indian Coast Guard was originally established on February 1, 1977.
- ❖ It aims to prevent the sea-borne smuggling of goods that hampered India's domestic economy.
- ❖ On August 18, 1978, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Day was officially established by the Parliament to be celebrated on February 1.

World Interfaith Harmony Week

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) designated the first seven days of February as World Interfaith Harmony Week in 2010.
- ❖ These celebrations focus on creating mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue to promote harmony between people regardless of their faith.



World Wetlands Day - February 02

- ❖ It aims to raise global awareness about the crucial role of wetlands for people and the planet.
- ❖ This day marks the date of the adoption of the convention on wetlands on February 2, 1971, in Ramsar, a city in Iran.
- ❖ The first world wetlands day was celebrated in 2021.
- ❖ The theme of World Wetlands Day 2023 is "It's Time for Wetlands Restoration,".





International Day of Human Fraternity - February 04

- ❖ It aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance.
- ❖ It also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- ❖ The motto of the observance is “harmony in difference.”

World Cancer Day - February 04

- ❖ World Cancer Day is observed on the 4th of February each year.
- ❖ It aims to save millions of lives each year through education, raising awareness and pressing governments and individuals worldwide to take action.
- ❖ The official colours of World Cancer Day are blue and orange.
- ❖ The first Cancer Day was celebrated in Geneva, Switzerland in the year 1933.
- ❖ It is an initiative taken by the World Health Organisation.
- ❖ The theme for the last three years 2022, 2023 and 2024 is "Close the Care Gap".

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

- ❖ For this, WHO in 1997 issued a joint statement together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- ❖ The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting was initiated by UNFPA and UNICEF in 2007 to accelerate the abandonment of the practice.
- ❖ This day spread awareness about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
- ❖ The theme for 2023 is “Partnership with Men and Boys to transform Social and gender Norms to End FGM”.
- ❖ It is performed mainly in Africa, particularly in North-Eastern, Eastern and Western Africa.

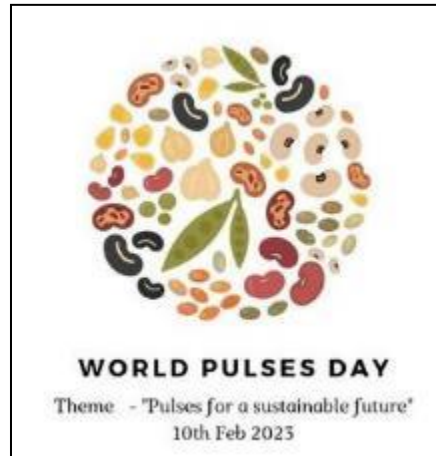
Safer Internet Day - February 07

- ❖ It is an EU-wide initiative to promote a safer Internet for all users, mainly children, and young people.
- ❖ This year marks the 19th edition of Safer Internet Day.
- ❖ This year's theme for Safer Internet Day is "Together for a better internet".



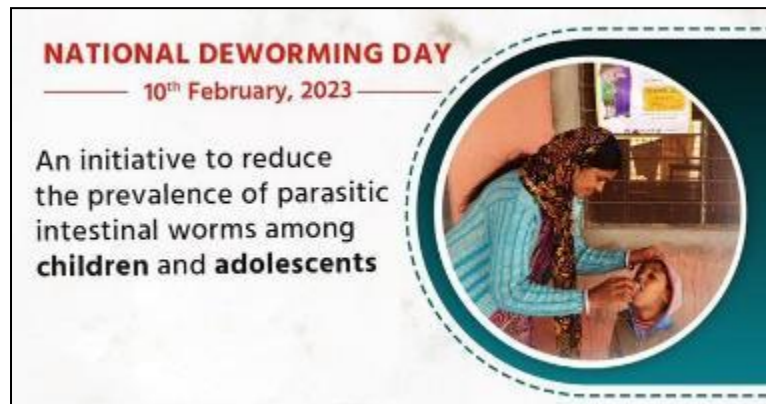
World Pulses Day - February 10

- ❖ World Pulses Day is a designated United Nations global event to recognize the importance of pulses as a global food.
- ❖ It has been proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 20, 2018.
- ❖ The theme of World Pulses Day 2023 is "Pulses for Sustainable Future".

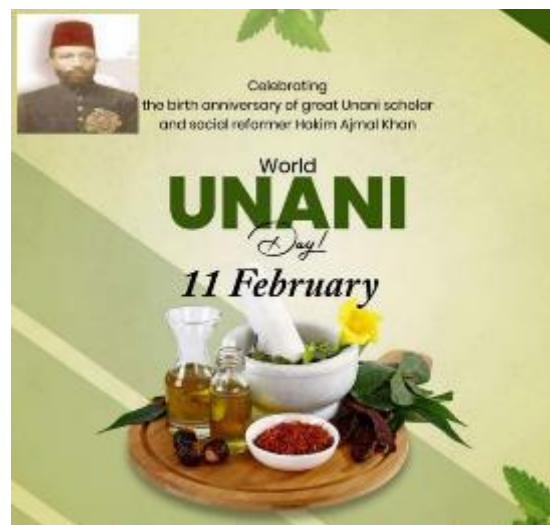


National Deworming Day - February 10

- ❖ The National Deworming Day is observed on February 10 every year.
- ❖ It is an initiative taken by the Government of India to deworm all the children across the nation in the age group of 1 to 19.
- ❖ Worms are parasites, which live in human intestines for food and survival.
- ❖ The worms consume nutrients meant for the human body and cause blood loss, poor nutrition and stunt growth.



World Unani Day - February 11



- ❖ The day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of social reformer and Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan.
- ❖ He worked hard and contributed several advancements to the field of Unani medicine.
- ❖ He founded three Unani institutions such as the Central College of Delhi, Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College, and Hindustani Dawakhna.
- ❖ The theme of 2023 is 'Unani Medicine for Public Health'.

World Day of the Sick - February 11

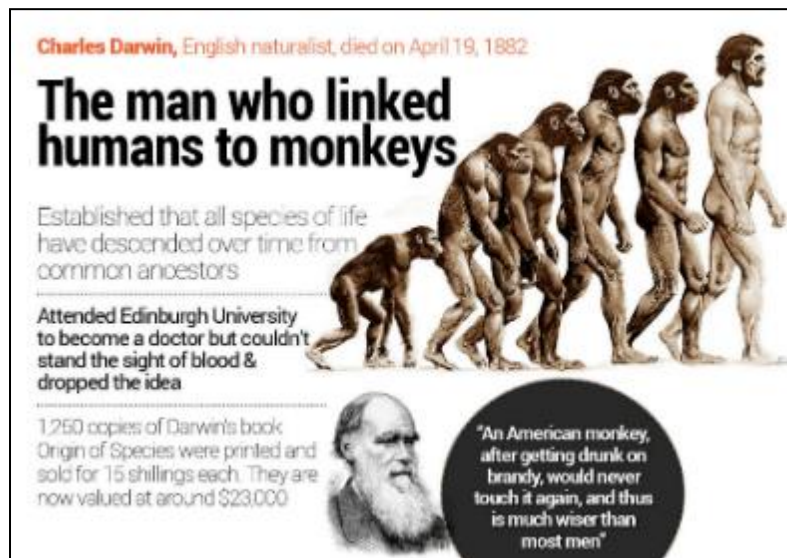
- ❖ The day was established to encourage Catholic Christians to pray for those who are sick and suffering.
- ❖ The day was established to give hope to them.

- ❖ The World Day of the Sick was created in 1992 by Pope John Paul II.
- ❖ The head of the Catholic Church had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) a year earlier.
- ❖ But Pope John Paul II and the Vatican Church had managed to keep it under wrap for nearly 12 years.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science - February 11

- ❖ It aims to promote the full and equal access and participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.
- ❖ It will be the eighth International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- ❖ The theme for 2023 is “Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance (IDEA): Bringing communities Forward for sustainable and equitable development.”

International Darwin Day - February 12



- ❖ Charles Darwin was an English naturalist.
- ❖ His scientific theory of evolution by natural selection formed the foundation of modern evolutionary studies.
- ❖ Every year on 12 February Darwin Day is observed to commemorate the birthday of Charles Darwin.
- ❖ The day focuses on the contribution of Charles Darwin to science and also to promote science in general.
- ❖ On 24 November 1859, he published his theory on the Species by Means of Natural Selection.



National Productivity Day - February 12

- ❖ India celebrates National Productivity Day every year on February 12 to mark the foundation day of the National Productivity Council (NPC).
- ❖ The NPC's mission is to promote awareness towards increasing the productivity of the country.
- ❖ The day is celebrated as part of National Productivity Week, which is observed from February 12 to 18.
- ❖ The theme for National Productivity Day for this year is "A chance to set goals".
- ❖ The NPC is an autonomous organisation which was established in 1958 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

World Radio Day - February 13

- ❖ On Nov 3, 2011, UNESCO declared February 13 as World Radio Day.
- ❖ On this day United Nations Radio was first established in 1946.
- ❖ It is observed to preserve the importance of radio as well as to encourage decision makers to provide access to information through radio.
- ❖ The theme for World Radio Day 2023 is 'Radio and Peace'.
- ❖ The first ever radio broadcast in India happened in June 1923 by Radio Club of Bombay.
- ❖ India has around 479 radio stations making All India Radio one of the biggest broadcasters in the world.
- ❖ It covers around 99.19% of the Indian population.

National Women's Day - February 13

- ❖ This day commemorates the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu popularly known as the nightingale of India.
- ❖ This Day celebrates the unparalleled contribution made by Sarojini Naidu for establishing women's rights in the patriarchal Indian society.
- ❖ It recognizes the cultural, political, and economic contribution.
- ❖ Apart from politics, Sarojini Naidu is recognized globally as one of the finest poetesses in the history of Indian literature.
- ❖ In 1925, she became the first woman to lead the Indian National Congress as the party President.
- ❖ The British government lauded Sarojini Naidu with the 'Kaisar-i-Hind' Medal for her service during the plague epidemic in India.



International Epilepsy Day - February 13

- ❖ It is celebrated on the second Monday of February every year.
- ❖ It aims to increase awareness of the disease and to identify the symptoms at early stages.
- ❖ Epilepsy is a nervous disorder which affects brain activity.
- ❖ The disease is identified late among children.
- ❖ If identified at early stages, it can be cured easily.
- ❖ Around 50 million people in the world suffer from epilepsy.
- ❖ 80% of them are living in low and middle-income countries.

APEDA Foundation Day - February 13



- ❖ Agricultural Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) celebrated its 37th Foundation Day this year.
- ❖ It exports agricultural and processed food products more than USD 0.6 billion in 2000-2001 to USD 24,77 billion in 2021-22.
- ❖ A Farmer Connect Portal has also been set up by APEDA.
- ❖ APEDA was established by the Government under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985.
- ❖ It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

International Childhood Cancer Day - February 15

- ❖ The Childhood Cancer International, a federation of numerous parent-founded child cancer support groups, was established that day.
- ❖ In 1994, Childhood Cancer International was founded.
- ❖ The goal of the day is to bring attention to and express support for young people with cancer.
- ❖ The International Childhood Cancer Day campaign will run for three years (2021-2023).
- ❖ “Better Survival” is the slogan for the three-year initiative.



Financial Literacy Week - February 13/17

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been conducting this event every year since 2016.
- ❖ It aims to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme among members of public across the country.
- ❖ Financial literacy is the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills.
- ❖ The theme for this year is “Good Financial Behaviour, Your Saviour”.



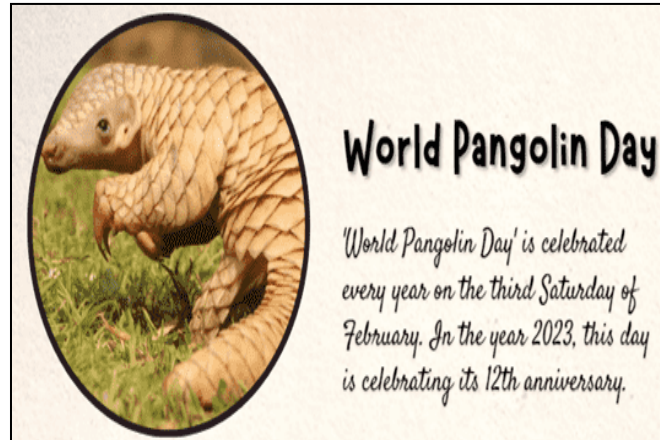
Global tourism resilience day - February 17

- ❖ On 06th February 2023, to underline the importance of tourism resilience, the United Nations designated this day.
- ❖ Aim of Global tourism resilience day (GTRD) is to create greater consciousness about tourism resilience.
- ❖ The first GTRD observed on 17 February this year.
- ❖ Tourism resilience refers to the ability of a tourist destination to cope with such crises and to quickly recover from them.
- ❖ In 2019, tourism employed 333 million people worldwide.
- ❖ In 2020, tourism and hospitality sector contribute 6.8% to India's GDP and gave 8% of the total jobs.

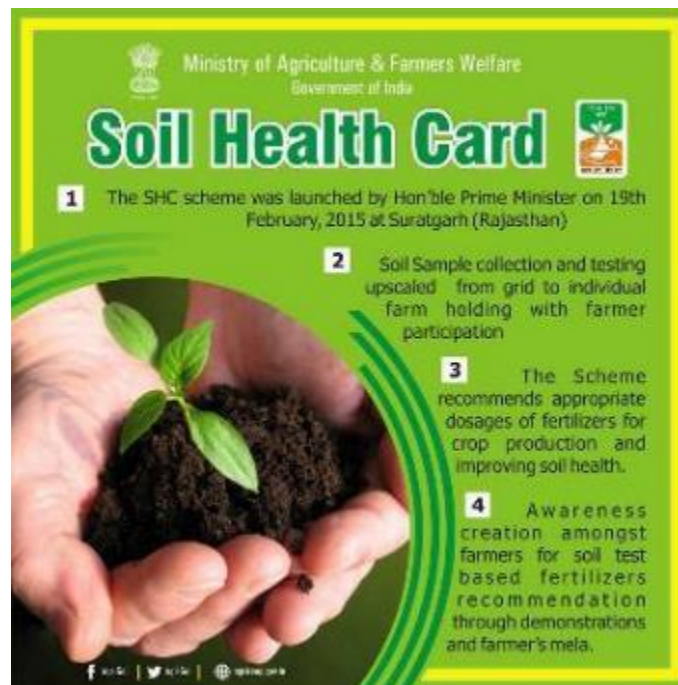
World Pangolin Day - February 18

- ❖ World Pangolin Day is observed annually on the third Saturday in February and takes place on February 18 this year.
- ❖ The day aims to celebrate pangolins, raise awareness and recommit international N.G.O.s to the fight against the global capturing of pangolins in Africa and Asia.
- ❖ The main reason for its population decline is their medicinal value.
- ❖ Pangolin scales have several medicinal properties.

- ❖ In India, Odisha had the highest seizures of pangolins.
- ❖ Maharashtra has the second-highest seizure incidents.
- ❖ Pangolins are categorized as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red list.



8th Soil Health Card Day - February 19

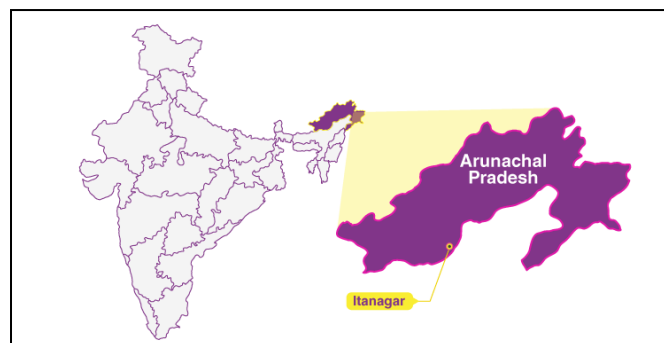


- ❖ Soil Health Card Day was launched on February 19, 2020.
- ❖ It raises awareness about the importance of maintaining healthy soil and encourages farmers to adopt practices that promote soil health.
- ❖ The Soil Health Card Scheme was launched on February 19, 2015.
- ❖ It was introduced to issue soil health cards every two years.

- ❖ The aim of the scheme is to promote soil test in order to promote nutrient management.
- ❖ This led to decrease in use of fertilizer application by 8 to 10% and the overall yield of crops increased by 5%.

Arunachal Pradesh Statehood Day - February 20

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh was formally constituted as a state on February 20, 1987.
- ❖ Until 1972, it was known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).
- ❖ It became a Union Territory on January 20, 1972, and its name was changed to Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The first general election for the Assembly was held in February 1978.
- ❖ The 55th Amendment of Constitution provided certain special privileges to the state of Arunachal Pradesh.



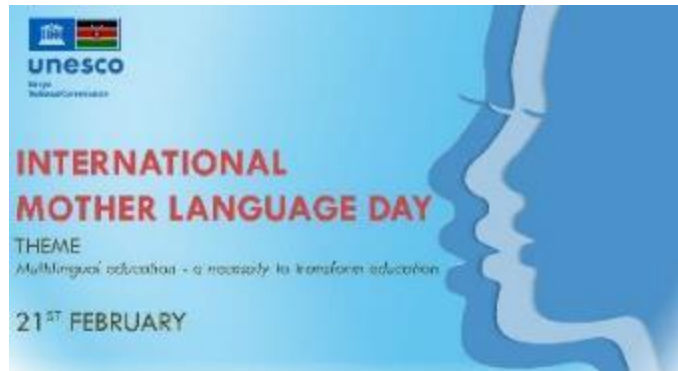
World Day of Social Justice - February 20

- ❖ This day is marked to raise voices against social injustice and remove barriers regarding gender, race, inequality, religious discrimination, etc.
- ❖ It also highlights the social injustice done throughout the world and looks into the solutions and improvements.
- ❖ Theme of 2023 is “Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice”.

International Mother Language Day - February 21

- ❖ It aims to promote linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as multilingualism.
- ❖ In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) approved the idea of celebrating this day.
- ❖ The day was established on the initiative of Bangladesh and has been observed worldwide since 1999.

- ❖ This year's theme is "Multilingual education – a necessity to transform education".



World Scout Day - February 22



- ❖ It commemorates the birth anniversary of the founder of the Boy Scouts Movement, Lord Robert Baden-Powell.
- ❖ Scouting's inception dates back to over a century ago, in 1907 in United Kingdom.
- ❖ In 1908, 'Scouting for Boys' was published by Baden Powell for the first time.
- ❖ The first Boy Scout camp was organised by Lord Baden-Powell back then with a ragtag group of 20 youngsters.
- ❖ As of 2022, the Scout Movement is spread across 172 National Scout Organisations with 57 million members.
- ❖ The 2023 theme is "Our World: Our Equal Future: The Environment and Gender Equality".

World Thinking Day - February 22

- ❖ The World Organization of girl Guides and girl Scouts (WAGGGS) observes World Thinking Day.
- ❖ On World Thinking Day, female scouts are also encouraged to build enduring bonds with one another that prioritise loyalty and respect.

- ❖ This day celebrates sisterhood, solidarity, and women's empowerment.
- ❖ At the fourth female scout international conference in 1926, the need for World Thinking Day was brought up.
- ❖ "Our Planet, Our Peaceful Future," is the theme of World Thinking Day 2023.



Central Excise Day - February 24

- ❖ This day commemorates the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1944.
- ❖ The act was enacted to regulate the manufacture and production of salt and excise duty on various goods produced or manufactured in India.
- ❖ The Central Board of Excise and Customs, which is responsible for administering indirect taxes in India.

World NGO Day - February 27

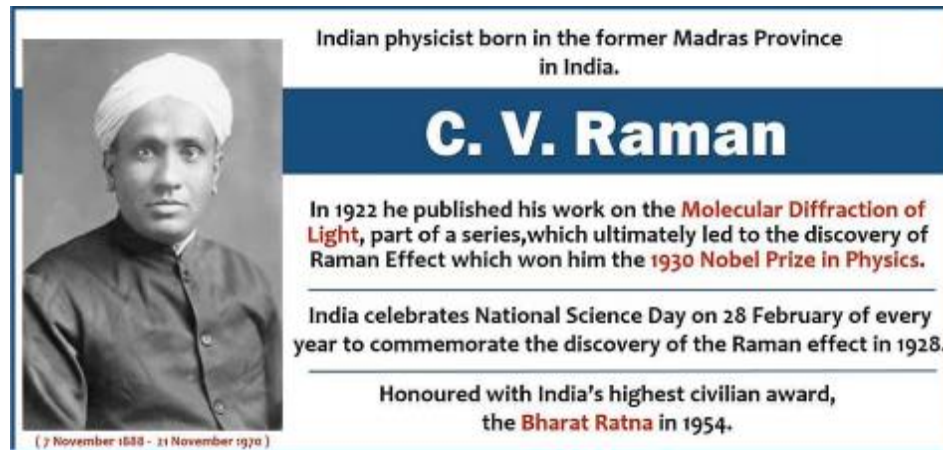
- ❖ This day is observed across the globe to make the celebrations for the work and contribution done by various NGOs.
- ❖ This day celebrates and honours every non-governmental organization that comes forward and makes efforts to curb societal problems.
- ❖ World NGO Day was first proposed in 2010 by the Baltic Sea NGO Forum.
- ❖ In 2014 only it started being observed across all countries.

Marathi Language Day - February 27

- ❖ This day honours the birth anniversary of renowned Marathi poet Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar.
- ❖ Shirwadkar was popularly known as 'Kusumagraj'.
- ❖ He was an eminent Marathi poet, playwright, novelist, short story writer, and humanist.
- ❖ He was the recipient of several state awards and national awards including the 1974 Sahitya Akademi Award in Marathi for Natsamrat, Padma Bhushan in 1991 and the Jnanpith Award in 1987.

National Science Day - February 28

- ❖ This day commemorates the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' by the scientist Sir C.V. Raman in 1928.
- ❖ He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930 for the discovery.
- ❖ The Government of India designated this National Science Day in 1986.
- ❖ The theme for this year is 'Global Science for Global Wellbeing'.



MISCELLANEOUS

Mandatory Minimum Sentences

- ❖ A CJI Chandrachud-led bench has decided to examine a petition challenging mandatory minimum sentencing in case of gangrape of a minor below the age of 12.
- ❖ Mandatory minimum sentencing refers to "a sentence which must be imposed without leaving any discretion to the court."
- ❖ It prescribes a 'minimum mandatory sentence' of life imprisonment for the remainder of the convict's life and even death.
- ❖ This concept comes primarily from the Canadian and American legal systems.
- ❖ In India, such sentences are prescribed for all sexual offenses under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act except the offense of sexual harassment.

- ❖ Under Section 8 of the POCSO Act, a punishment of 3-5 years has been prescribed for offenses under Section 7 which deals with offenses of sexual assault against children.
- ❖ The Criminal Law Amendment Act Of 1983 was the first instance of 'mandatory minimum punishment' being prescribed.
- ❖ It says seven years for general rapes and ten years for aggravated cases which could include rapes of minors below 12 years, and pregnant women.
- ❖ While the maximum punishment or life imprisonment for both was stipulated as 14 years.
- ❖ The 2013 reforms also updated the definition of 'life imprisonment' to mean the entire remainder of the convict's life and introduced a minimum sentence of 20 years for gang rape.



Highest loss-making airports

- ❖ Chennai airport suffered a loss of ₹189.85 crore during the year 2021-22.
- ❖ This has the highest loss among airports operated by Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- ❖ Dehradun airport came second with a loss of ₹98.02 crore.
- ❖ It was followed by Agartala airport that faced a loss of ₹80.67 crore during the same period.



Astronaut training module

- ❖ IIT Madras plans to develop a training module for the Indian Spaceflight Program.
- ❖ This training module will be created on the basis of Augmented Reality (AR)/ Virtual Reality (VR) / Mixed Reality (MR).
- ❖ ISRO and IIT Madras inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together on this Program.



Asian Rhino Range Countries Meeting

- ❖ The 2nd meeting of Asian Rhino Range Countries took place in New Delhi Recently.
- ❖ It was organized by the Union Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), and IUCN, Asian Rhino Specialist Group along with World Wildlife Fund-India (WWF), International Rhino Foundation and Aaranyak, an NGO.
- ❖ The meeting is a catalyst for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration on key issues impacting rhinos such as poaching, illegal wildlife trade, habitat loss and fragmentation of populations.
- ❖ There are three species of rhino in Asia - greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran.
- ❖ Javan and Sumatran Rhino are critically endangered but the greater one-horned (or Indian) rhino vulnerable.
- ❖ 1st Asian Rhino Range States meeting was held at Bandar Lampung, Indonesia in October 2013.
- ❖ Asian Rhino Range Countries include Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nepal.

BBC documentary on Muziris

- ❖ BBC recently released a video titled “Muziris: The first emporium of India lost for 700 years”.
- ❖ Muziris was a major ancient port city for the spice trade.
- ❖ It was also known as Murachipattanam in the present-day Kerala.
- ❖ Sangam literature describes Roman ships coming to Muziris laden with gold to be exchanged for pepper.
- ❖ Around 1341, the profile of the water bodies in the Periyar River basin underwent a major transformation and Muziris dropped off the map due to flood and earthquake.
- ❖ The Muziris Heritage Project is one of the biggest conservation projects in India.

