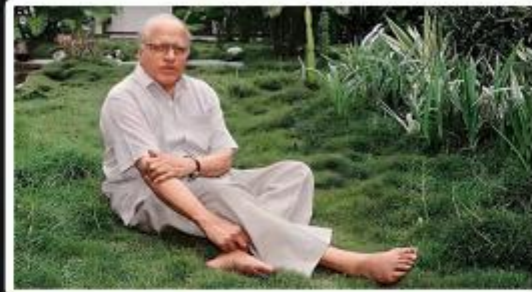


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CONTENTS

TNPSC BITS	10
TAMIL NADU	19
Cadaver donations record in Tamil Nadu	19
'Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril' Scheme	20
Madras High Court on Temple entry	20
18th wildlife sanctuary – Tamilnadu	21
'No Caste, No Religion' certificate	22
Enrollment Ratio in Tamil Nadu 2021-22	22
Share of central taxes in 2023/24	23
Cervical cancer in Tamil Nadu in 2023	24
First robotic elephant	24
Kariyachalli island Restoration	25
Check dam in Ponnai river	26
Tamil Nadu synchronized bird estimate	26
South India's first cinema Theatre	27
AI-based early Railway crossing warning system.....	27
Road accidents Trends	28
Land Pooling Area Development Scheme Rules, 2024.....	29
TN Assembly resolution 2024	30
Groundwater seepage at Konthagai	30
10 achievements of Tamilnadu government	30
New members to TNPSC	31
First Mini TIDEL Park	32
State Election Commission Tenure – Tamilnadu.....	32
One-Stop Centers for Disabled Persons – Tamilnadu	33
Mahavir Statue in Tamil Nadu	33
Kotravai sculpture.....	34
Minority Welfare measures in Tamilnadu 2024.....	34
Tamil Nadu's 2024 Budget.....	35
Rhodamine-B	37
Agriculture Budget 2024	38
Tamil Nadu State Policy for Women 2024.....	40



Chennai Corporation Budget 2024	40
Powers to refuse permission to factories	41
‘Tholkudi’ scheme	42
TN Umagine 2024.....	43
Endangered Species Conservation Fund	43
Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Amendment) Act, 2024	43
India’s first 360-degree immersive dome theatre.....	44
Nemmeli Desalination Plant	44
Resignation of MLA - Vijayadharani.....	45
VinFast’s electric car unit	45
Power to transfer case.....	45
Kalaignar’s memorial	46
TN Great Backyard Bird Count 2024.....	46
National Centre for Ageing	47
Model plot for TN grassland restoration project.....	47
Kodungaiyur biomining project	48
NATIONAL	48
75th anniversary of Supreme Court.....	48
Best electoral practices award 2023	49
Interim Budget 2024	49
National Initiative to Rehabilitate Beggars	52
Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2024	52
Members of 16th Finance Commission	53
Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi Commission	53
Maratha Military Landscapes of India.....	54
Advocate-on-record (AoR) 2024	54
Indian Army’s New Fitness Policy.....	55
Cervical cancer vaccination	56
Health cover under AYUSH.....	56
UGC’s Draft De-Reservation Guidelines	57
Cervical Cancer Among Indian Women	57
RoSCTL Scheme extension	58
Hamara Samvidhan Hamara Samman	59
1st Survey Vessel - INS Sandhayak.....	59



Highest ever Gender Budget – 2024	60
India Energy Week 2024	61
UGC - Equal opportunities in higher education	61
Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund	62
GHAR Portal	62
Employee Rating Survey	62
Law Commission Report on Public Property Damage	63
The Law of Criminal Defamation Report	63
Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar program	64
Tribal Affairs Amendment Bill 2024	65
Guidelines for Green Hydrogen in Steel Sector	65
Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024	66
Bharat Ratna 2024	67
India's Oil demand 2030	68
Amendment Bills for Jammu and Kashmir	69
Kilkari Programme	70
Annual Death Penalty Report 2023	70
Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana	71
Sitting days of 17th Lok Sabha	72
Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024	73
Electoral Bonds Struck Down	74
PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana	75
Renaming of saving schemes	76
ASI 2020-21 and ASI 2021-22	76
Global Digitalization Milestone	77
NeSDA Way Forward Annual Report 2023	78
India's Most Welcoming Region in 2024	79
Scheme to Boost Pulses Output	79
Definition of Forest - Supreme Court	80
World's Highest Railway Bridge	81
Fair and Remunerative Price 2024-25	81
National Livestock Mission extension	82
100 percent FDI for space sector	83
Financial assistance for rubber sector	84



Cybercrime Report	85
‘Safety of Women’ 2025-26	85
Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP) 2025-26	85
Raisina Dialogue Conference 2024	86
Selina John’s case	86
Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana	87
INTERNATIONAL	87
G77 + China third south summit 2024	87
Malaysia’s 17th king	88
World’s First Malaria Vaccine Program for Children	88
Coltan Deposits in Kenya	89
Eliminating Industrially Produced Trans Fats	90
Lake Retba crisis	90
UNRWA Funding suspension	91
West African bloc ECOWAS	92
‘Widow Year’ in China	92
UN Regular Budget	93
Free visa for Indians by Iran	93
Fence on Indo-Myanmar Border	94
Fentanyl Crisis in Mexico	95
Protocol on Nuclear Reactors Agreement	95
BAPS Hindu Mandir	96
IEA’s 2024 ministerial meeting	96
Right to Disconnect – Australia	97
Weimar triangle	98
World's fourth-largest economy	99
Aspides Mission	99
IBSA Fund	100
Pakistan’s New Prime Minister	101
Maritime Transport 2023	101
37th African Union Summit, 2024	102
5-Year Multiple Entry Visa	102
Guinea Worm Disease Eradication	102
ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment	103



ECONOMY	104
‘Indian Economy – A Review’	104
1 trillion Exports Target.....	104
Switzerland-India Free Trade Agreement	105
Direct Tax-to-GDP Ratio in 2023	105
Revised Eligibility Norms for UCBs Inclusion.....	106
Guidelines on State Guarantees on Borrowings	106
Tata Group Milestone	107
New Payment Aggregator Approval	108
White Paper on Indian Economy.....	109
Household Consumption Expenditure Survey	110
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.....	110
Ingenuity Mars Helicopter	110
Big ring	111
Laser Communication with Chandrayaan-3 Lander.....	111
Neuralink trails First Human.....	112
Lab-Grown Fish	113
eROSITA Data	113
PHANGS Project	114
INSAT-3DS Satellite	114
TOI-715b.....	115
Cygnus X-1.....	115
Magnetic Anomaly under Lake Rotorua	116
Lunar Nuclear Fission Reactor.....	117
GRAPES-3 experiment.....	117
India's first smart bullets	118
Future Circular Collider	118
India’s first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility.....	119
PACE Mission	119
Imaging of Cold Atoms	120
High Altitude Pseudo Satellite Vehicle	121
High-Energy Particle “Amaterasu”.....	121
Frozen Smoke Discovery	122
Sound-Based Anti-Drone System	123



INSAT-3DS Mission.....	123
Water on asteroid.....	124
World's 1st Pigeonpea speed breeding protocol.....	124
Indigenous Laser Weapon DURGA-2.....	125
Assert AI – Pratham.....	125
Laser cooling of Positronium.....	126
ENVIRONMENT.....	127
Lab-made White Rhinoceros.....	127
Laughing gull in India.....	127
New Ramsar wetlands sites in India.....	128
Two new mammalis in Kaziranga.....	129
New kangaroo lizard.....	129
Two New Eel Species.....	130
Status Report of Snow Leopards in India.....	130
Tigers in Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary.....	131
Underwater Canyon Near Cyprus.....	132
Nagoya Protocol – Cameroon.....	132
Qinling Station For Antarctic Study.....	133
GRI Biodiversity Standard.....	134
Hottest 12 Months Ever.....	134
Mahmudia wetland in Romania.....	135
2024 Climate and Catastrophe Insight Report.....	136
Cuscuta dodder weed.....	136
Gupteswar Forest.....	137
Terai Arc Landscape.....	137
Mushroom growing on a frog.....	138
Purple Frog.....	138
STAR Metric.....	139
Two New Species of ‘Green Anacondas’.....	140
REPORTS AND INDICES.....	140
Corruption Perceptions Index 2023.....	140
Electricity 2024 Report.....	141
TomTom Traffic Index.....	142
The Economics of The Food System Transformation Report.....	142



Henley Passport Index 2024	143
Global Resources Outlook Report	144
STATES	145
Caste census in Andhra Pradesh	145
4 th National Chilika Bird Festival.....	145
Sadak Surakhya Force	145
India Ageing Report 2023: Jammu Kashmir's Life Expectancy	146
Rehabilitation of Jadung Village	146
Modified PKC-ERCP Link Project.....	147
Patna Declaration.....	148
Subika Painting crisis - Manipur.....	148
Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code Bill	149
Kerala's Environment Budget	149
Tadoba Kawal conservation reserve	150
Maa Kamakhya Divya Pariyojana.....	151
Assam's State Fruit	152
Hori Habba	152
Smart Gram Panchayat	152
New Iron Ore Deposits.....	153
Statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan	154
Chandigarh Mayor Election	154
New Maratha Reservation Bill.....	155
Sammakka Saralamma Jatara	156
Paruveta Festival	156
PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS	157
Dr Nitya Anand.....	157
UK's Blavatnik Awards.....	157
Surajkund Mela 2024	157
SC Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.....	157
Quaide Milleth Award for Probity in Political/Public Life.....	158
Grammy Awards 2024	159
Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2024.....	159
Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2024	159
National Film Awards 2024	160



Jnanpith Award 2023	161
Khajuraho Dance Festival.....	161
Fali S Nariman	161
Alexei Navalny.....	162
Financial Literacy Week 2024	162
SPORTS.....	163
Khelo India youth games 2024	163
Australian Open 2024.....	163
ISSF World Cup 2024	164
Sportstar Aces Awards 2024	164
Khelo India University Games 2024	165
Frozen Lake Marathon.....	165
IMPORTANT DAYS.....	166
Indian Coast Guard Day 2024 - February 01	166
World Wetlands Day 2024 - February 02	167
RA Awareness Day 2024 - February 02	167
World Interfaith Harmony Week 2024	168
World Cancer Day 2024 - February 04	168
International Day of Human Fraternity 2024 - February 04.....	169
International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2024 - February 06.....	169
International Day of the Arabian Leopard 2024 - February 10	169
National Deworming Day 2024 - February 10.....	169
World Pulses Day 2024 - February 10	170
World Day of the Sick 2024 - February 11	170
International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2024 - February 11	170
Darwin Day 2024 - February 12	171
World Unani Day 2024 - February 11	171
National Productivity Day 2024 - February 12.....	171
World Radio Day 2024 - February 13	172
International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism 2024 - February 12	172
International Epilepsy Day 2024 - February 12	172
International Childhood Cancer Day 2024 - February 15	172
World Anthropology Day 2024 - February 15	173



World Hippo Day 2024 - February 15.....	173
World Pangolin Day 2024 - February 17.....	174
Global Tourism Resilience Day 2024 - February 17.....	174
World Whale Day 2024 - February 18.....	174
Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day 2024 - February 20	175
Mizoram Statehood Day 2024 - February 20.....	175
World Day of Social Justice 2024 - February 20	176
International Mother Language Day 2024 - February 21	176
World Thinking Day 2024 - February 22	177
World Scout Day 2024 - February 22	177
World peace and understanding day 2024 - February 23.....	177
Central Excise Day 2024 - February 24.....	178
World NGO Day 2024 - February 27	178
World Protein Day – February 27	179
National Science Day 2024 - February 28	179
Rare Disease Day 2024 - February 29	180
MISCELLANEOUS	180
Madhika Language.....	180
Serum – CEPI partnership	181
390-year-old Deepasthambam	181
Oldest ever frog fossil.....	182
200th Birth Anniversary of Dayanand Saraswati.....	182
200th anniversary of Rani Chennamma’s rebellion.....	183
Badami Chalukyas inscriptions	184



TNPSC BITS

- ❖ India's first pilot technology project to make jet fuel from alcohol was inaugurated in Pune.
- ❖ The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in Delhi have thwarted attempts to smuggle gold and silver from Hong Kong under Operation Black Gold.
- ❖ The 4th edition of the two-day Organic Orange Festival was held in Rüsoma Village, Nagaland.
- ❖ World neglected tropical diseases day is observed annually on 30th January since 2020.
 - o 'Unite. Act. Eliminate' is the theme of 2024 observation.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu government announced a Kalaingar sports kit scheme to provide free sports kits to students in all the 12,000 village panchayats.
- ❖ The President of India nominated India's leading educationists Satnam Singh Sandhu to Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ The mascot and logo for the 2024 Khelo India Winter Games (to be held at Ladakh and Gulmarg of Kashmir) were unveiled recently.
 - o A snow leopard named 'Sheen-e She' or Shan has been declared the official mascot.
- ❖ Carter Dallas, A two-year-old from Scotland, has become the youngest to person to reach Mount Everest base camp by his father's back.
- ❖ The inaugural India-Saudi Arabia joint military exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ' had commenced in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The Netherlands team has won the inaugural Hockey 5s Women's World Cup, held at Oman, by defeating India.
- ❖ The Central Government launches the 'Anuvadini' app, an Artificial Intelligence-driven platform, to provide digital study materials in Indian languages.
- ❖ Air India launched its maiden scheduled commercial flight of the Airbus A350-900 from Bengaluru to Mumbai.
- ❖ The 5th International and 44th All India Criminology Conference was held at the National Forensic Science University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ❖ Indian marathon runner Man Singh won the gold medal with his own top time of 2 hours, 14 minutes, and 19 seconds at the Asian Marathon Championships 2024, Hong Kong.
 - o He is the second Indian man to clinch a gold medal at the event after Gopi Thonakal (2017).



- ❖ Tamil Nadu continues to have maximum number of Ramsar Sites (16 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).
- ❖ The 'Mother of Democracy, a tableau of the Ministry of Culture, has secured the first prize at the Republic Day Parade 2024.
- ❖ The Odisha Government announced to establish a melanistic tiger safari at Simlipal Tiger Reserve — a first of its kind in the world.
 - The Simlipal Tiger Reserve is the only home for melanistic tigers in wild in the world.
- ❖ Havildar Preeti Rajak, a champion trap shooter, has become the first woman to hold the rank of Subedar in the Indian Army.
- ❖ The 84th All India Presiding Officers' Conference was held in Mumbai.
- ❖ Former Railway Board chairman and CEO Anil Kumar Lahoti has been appointed as the chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
- ❖ India, France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) carried out a mega air exercise over the Arabian Sea named 'Desert Knight'.
- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology Madras will introduce sports quota seats in its undergraduate programmes from the next academic year.
 - This is the first of such initiatives among the IITs in the country, the 'Sports excellence admission' (SEA) is open to Indian nationals only.
- ❖ Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Champai Soren took oath as the twelfth Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- ❖ Timetooth, Bengaluru based Engineering Company, has launched India's first-ever aircraft passenger seat at Wings India 2024.20
- ❖ The Two-time Asian Games medallist Naorem Roshibina Devi was named the International Wushu Federation's (IWUF) female athlete of the year in the sanda category.
 - She was conferred with the Arjuna Award this year.
- ❖ BCCI secretary Jay Shah's term as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has been unanimously extended for a third term.
- ❖ The 2nd State Mining Ministers' Conference was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Government of India declared Gujarat's Surat airport as an international airport.
- ❖ Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications (MoC), unveiled the "Bharat 5G Portal- an integrated portal" during the 'Bharat Telecom 2024 expo'.
- ❖ NITI Aayog, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have jointly launched the 'Investment Forum for Advancing Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems' in India.



- ❖ Japanese automaker Toyota sold more than 11 million vehicles in 2023, and became the world's top-selling automaker in the world.
- ❖ THDC India Limited, inaugurated the country's largest green hydrogen pilot project at Rishikesh, Uttarakhand.
- ❖ India's first beachside startup festival, Emerge-2024, is to be held at Tannirbhavi Beach in Mangaluru.
- ❖ Lal Krishna Advani will be honoured with Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India.
- ❖ France will become the first European country to issue digital Schengen visas to visitors for the upcoming Paris Olympics.
- ❖ S Rukmini Palanivel Rajan was appointed the new chairperson of the board of trustees of Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple of Madurai.
- ❖ The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) convened its 7th session at Kochi, Kerala.
- ❖ The 63rd Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ A Russian cosmonaut, Oleg Kononenko, has set a world record for the most time spent in space, after logging more than 878 days or nearly two-and-a-half years.
- ❖ The EU launched a "European Ports Alliance" to harmonise methods in the fight against drug smuggling and to combat the hubs' infiltration by criminal groups.
- ❖ Former Indian wicket-keeper Farokh Engineer and all-rounder Mr Ravi Shastri were bestowed with the Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Awards.
- ❖ India's woman robot astronaut Vyommitra space travel is scheduled for the third quarter of this year.
- ❖ The Indian Navy has declared 2024 as 'Year of Naval Civilians' to improve administration, efficiency and well-being of Naval Civilians.
- ❖ Dr. Bina Modi, Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, was honoured with the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year - 2023' Award.
- ❖ Mukesh Ambani has been ranked first among all the Indians and second globally in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024 compiled by Brand Finance.
- ❖ The first yoga and naturopathy hospital in the northeast is to be setup in Assam's Dibrugarh district.
- ❖ The Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions clocked a new high in value in January by touching Rs 18.41 trillion.
- ❖ The US State Department has approved a potential sale of 31 armed MQ-9B Sky Guardian drones, missiles and supporting equipment to India.
- ❖ Canada observed International Development Week (IDW) is commemorated every year during the first full week of February.



- ❖ The Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference (CASGC) 2024 was held in New Delhi.
 - The theme of the event is “Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery”.
- ❖ India’s first Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra has been selected as a torchbearer for the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympic.
- ❖ The Eiffel Tower now stands as the first site in Europe to accept UPI payments, making France the first-ever country on the continent to embrace this digital payment mechanism.
- ❖ The government will soon launch retail sales of Bharat Rice at ₹29 per kg from to provide relief to consumers.
- ❖ Central PSU, REC Limited received the 2024 Best Green Bond-Corporate Award at ‘The Asset Triple A Awards for Sustainable Finance’.
- ❖ India recently successfully flight-tested the indigenously developed high-speed expendable aerial target, Abhyas.
- ❖ Bengaluru hosted the 42nd meeting of the Astronomical Society of India.
- ❖ Hyderabad has been selected as the venue to host the FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers match between India and Kuwait.
- ❖ The Safer Internet Day has been observed on February 8th annually.
 - Theme for 2024 is “Inspiring Change. Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online”.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India has posted IAS officer Shankar Lal Kumawat as the Additional Chief Electoral Officer in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill, 2024, thus completing the exercise for passage of the interim budget 2024-25.
- ❖ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) organized Divya Kala Mela 2024 in Agartala, Tripura.
- ❖ The Delhi government announced that bus service for transgender persons will be free in the city along the lines of that for women.
- ❖ Pyarelal Sharma, the iconic music composer, has been honoured with the Lakshminarayana International Award for his contribution to art.
- ❖ The National Conference on Promotion of Seaweed Cultivation was held in Kutch, Gujarat.
- ❖ Tata Trusts is set to launch India’s first state-of-the-art Small Animal Hospital in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai.
- ❖ The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi has launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform - iOncology.ai, to the early detection of breast and ovarian cancer.



- ❖ IRCTC launches Ramayana circuit tourist train to boost tourism.
 - The 18 days journey start from Delhi and would cover Ayodhya, Janakpur (Nepal), Sitamarhi, Varanasi, Nashik, Rameshwaram among others.
- ❖ India has been ranked 38 out of 139 countries according to the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index Report (2023).
 - India's rank has improved by six places from 44 in 2018 and sixteen places from 54 in 2014.
- ❖ Sikkim announced the reinstatement of the Old Pension scheme (OPS) for state government employees appointed on or after April 1, 2006.
 - It becomes the first state in the Northeast to implement this decision.
- ❖ Google has rebranding its AI chatbot Bard as Gemini.
- ❖ Dubai hosted the 2024 World Governments Summit themed 'Shaping Future Governments'.
 - It has designated India, Türkiye, and Qatar as guests of honour.
- ❖ Norway's Telenor opened the world's southernmost mobile phone base station in Antarctica.
 - This is bringing regular cell phone services to a corner of the frozen continent for the first time.
- ❖ India and Bangladesh were declared as the joint winners of the SAFF U19 Women's football series, held at Bangladesh.
- ❖ Sindhu Ganapathy (37) has emerged as the first transwoman Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) of Southern Railway (gets posted in Dindigul).
- ❖ The President of India inaugurated the Aadi Mahotsav 2024, an annual national tribal festival, in New Delhi.
- ❖ 23rd Edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) based barrier less free flow tolling was implemented pilot project on access-Controlled 10-lane Mysuru-Bengaluru Expressway (Highway).
- ❖ Australia lifted their fourth title at the Under -19 cricket World Cup by defeating India in the final of the ICC U-19 World Cup final 2024, held at South Africa.
- ❖ The Indian fast bowler, Jasprit Bumrah, became the first Indian pacer to top the ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings.
- ❖ The Telangana Cabinet has decided to adopt 'TG' instead of the present 'TS', indicating the name of the state, on vehicle registration number plates.
- ❖ The Lebanese Judge Nawaf Salam was elected as the new president of the International Court of Justice, for a term of 3 years.



- ❖ The country's first digital National Museum of Epigraphy is all set to be established in one of the wings of Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad.
- ❖ The headquarters of the Confederation of International Small Tea Holders (CITS) will be shifted to India from China.
- ❖ Chinese Grand Master Wei Yi emerged triumphant in the 2024 Tata Steel Chess Tournament, held at the Netherlands.
- ❖ India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services were rolled out in Sri Lanka and Mauritius.
- ❖ The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference was held in Perth, Australia.
 - The theme of this event is "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".
- ❖ V. Sripathy, 23-year-old woman from the Malayali tribe in Yelagiri Hills, Tirupattur district, has scripted history by becoming the first civil judge from her community.
- ❖ Bargur Cattle Research Station was awarded third place in the large ruminant category (institutions) by ICAR - National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) for conservation of the Bargur breed.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu legislative assembly adopted two resolutions opposing the scheduled delimitation exercise for redrawing of poll constituencies in 2026 and the Centre's proposed "one nation and one election" policy.
- ❖ Noida has been honoured as a "water warrior" city by the Union water ministry for outstanding efforts in wastewater treatment and reuse.
- ❖ Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin became the second Indian bowler after former skipper Anil Kumble to take 500 Test wickets.
- ❖ India's top-ranked men's singles tennis player Sumit Nagal secured the 98th spot in ATP's top 100 rankings after his Chennai Open Challenger victory.
 - Only 10 Indian men have ever reached the top 100 since the introduction of ATP rankings in 1973.
- ❖ The Telangana Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution for undertaking a comprehensive household caste survey across the state.
 - It is the third state to follow the footsteps of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh has achieved a historic milestone of connecting 98 per cent of households with potable tap water under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
 - It is the first north east state to achieve this.
- ❖ India's first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) will be started from Uttarakhand.
 - It will be sent anywhere within a radius of 150 km to airlift anyone who has met with an accident to the medical facility.



- ❖ Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) has signed a MoU with BPCL for setting up a green hydrogen plant in the premises of Cochin Airport.
 - This will be the world's first green hydrogen plant and fuelling station located within an airport.
- ❖ The Current marathon world record holder Kelvin Kiptum and his coach Gervais Hakizimana died recently at Kenya.
- ❖ Dubai is going to create the world's first citywide network of electric air taxis and vertiports by 2026.
- ❖ India has secured the prestigious 9th GovTech Prize for its pioneering endeavours in AI-powered government services, at the World Government Summit 2024, held at Dubai.
- ❖ Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) became the first Indian company to achieve a market capitalisation of ₹20 lakh crore.
- ❖ The first-ever Digital India Future Skills Summit was held in Guwahati, Assam.
- ❖ India's oldest living Test cricketer Dattajirao Gaekwad, who played 11 Tests for India between 1951 and 1962, passed away recently at Baroda, Gujarat.
- ❖ India's first prototype driverless metro train will conduct trial runs in Bengaluru.
- ❖ The World Peace Summit was held in Thiruvananthapuram as part of the United Nations Religious Harmony Week.
 - Theme of the Summit is 'Unity, Power of Peace and Redefining Sustainable Development of Humanity'.
- ❖ The Haryana Police has become the first police force in India to use drones (DRISHYAA drone) to launch tear gas devices.
 - This drone-based tear smoke launcher was developed by the Tear Smoke Unit (TSU) of the Border Security Force (BSF) in 2022
- ❖ India's Permanent Representative to UN, Ruchira Kamboj chaired the 62nd Session of the Commission for Social Development.
- ❖ Japan has been eclipsed by Germany as the world's third-biggest economy and has slipped into recession.
- ❖ A Qatar court has released eight former Indian naval officers previously on death row for unspecified charges.
- ❖ The Chess Olympiad torch was handed off by India to the 2024 host Hungary.
- ❖ Greece has become the first Orthodox Christian country to legalise same-sex marriage.
- ❖ Arsenale Group and Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) recently announced a partnership to build the first luxury train that will cross the Kingdom at the end of 2025.



- Dubbed as the Dream of the Desert, the train will be made entirely in Italy with a design inspired by Saudi style and tradition.
- ❖ Saudi hosted the second World Défense Show in Riyadh.
 - India's participation was represented by Tri-Service women's.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India has instructed CCTV camera surveillance in recreational clubs, star hotels, and Tasmac bars ahead of the parliamentary elections.
- ❖ Serum Institute of India tops the list of most valuable unlisted companies in the country.
 - It is followed by National Stock Exchange of India and the Megha Engineering and Infrastructure,
- ❖ 100-year-old Iranian diver Taghi Askari performed an exhibition dive at the 2024 World Aquatics Championships, Doha.
 - He won a silver and bronze medal at the first-ever Asian Games in 1951.
- ❖ Milan 2024, the Indian Navy's biggest multilateral naval exercise, is being held in Vizag, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Neem Summit & Global Neem Trade fair is being organized by collaboration with ICAR-Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi in New Delhi.
- ❖ The 60th Munich Security Conference (MSC) was held in Munich, Germany.
 - It aims to build trust and contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts by sustaining a continuous, curated, and informal dialogue within the international security community.
- ❖ India is setting up a warehouse facility, named 'Bharat Mart', in the United Arab Emirates covering an area of over 100,000 square meters.
- ❖ The 11th International Puppet Festival was kicked off at Tagore Theatre in Chandigarh.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force showcased its offensive capabilities by day and night at the Pokhran range in Rajasthan under Exercise Vayu Shakti-24.
- ❖ President of India has conferred the 'Jeevan Raksha Padak' to Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) constable Shashikant Kumar for the year 2023.
- ❖ The 'Dand Patta' or gauntlet sword, reportedly used by Chhatrapati Shivaji, was declared as the state weapon of Maharashtra.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu assembly introduced a bill to omit clause (j) of sub-section (1) of section 66 of the HR and CE Act of 1959.
 - It says, "A person shall be disqualified for being appointed as and for being a trustee of any religious institution if he is suffering from leprosy".

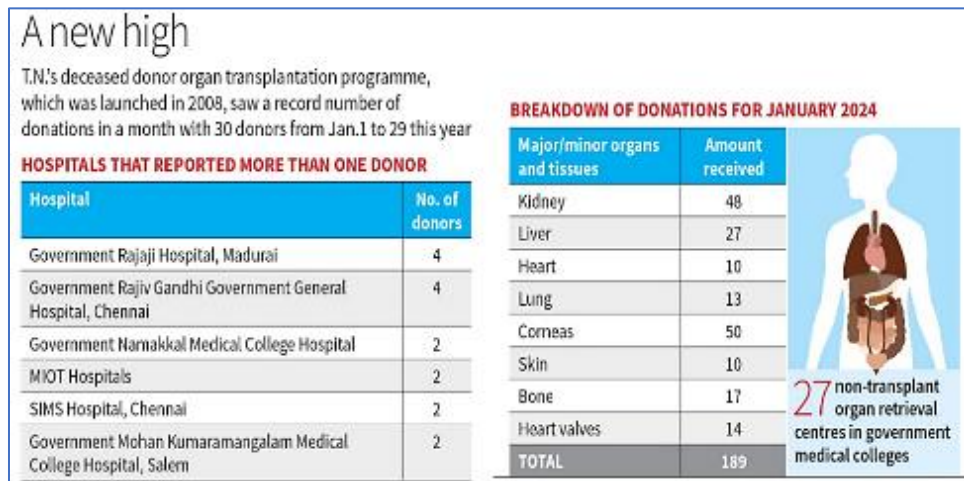


- ❖ Shashi Tharoor, author and politician of Congress, was conferred France's highest civilian honour “Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur” recently.
- ❖ The Misinformation Combat Alliance (MCA) and Meta, announced plans to launch a dedicated fact-checking helpline on WhatsApp.
- ❖ India's first Skill India Centre was inaugurated in Sambalpur, Odisha.
- ❖ The Madhya Pradesh government has announced 'bag less school' day once a week for students in classes 1 to 12 from 2024-25 academic year.
- ❖ The forest department in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda is planning to establish a turtle conservation reserve in the Sarju River, known for its rich turtle diversity.
- ❖ First-of-its-kind in north India, the 'Pizza ATM' prepares pizzas in just three minutes, was installed by the Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation near Sukhna Lake.
- ❖ Digital payments provider Mswipe Technologies has been granted a payment aggregator (PA) licence by the Reserve Bank of India.
- ❖ India recently hosted Pulses 24, the global pulses convention at New Delhi after 18 years.
- ❖ Swedish photographer Alex Dawson has been named as Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024 for his image 'Whale Bones'.
- ❖ International Solar Alliance (ISA) recently announced Malta as the 119th country to join the grouping.
- ❖ Multinational military exercise - 'Shanti Prayas IV' - kicked off in Nepal with the participation of 19 countries, including India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- ❖ Pakistan batter Babar Azam has become the fastest to reach 10,000 T20 runs in 271 innings in Cricket.
- ❖ Union Minister for Finance chaired the 28th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) in New Delhi.
- ❖ Coast guard personnel from India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have participated on a four-day trilateral exercise 'DOSTI-16' at Maldives.
- ❖ Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which owns the 'Amul' brand, celebrated its golden jubilee (50 year).
- ❖ A delegation from the World Bank has arrived in Goa for talks with state govt to set up what is going to be the first sub-national climate resilient green fund.
- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G) has launched India's largest Drone Pilot Training Organization.
- ❖ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports revealed the logo for the upcoming 7th North East Youth Festival 2024.
 - Phayre's leaf monkey was declared the mascot for the festival.

- ❖ India has hosted the India-Nordic-Baltic meeting on the sidelines of the ongoing Raisina Dialogue 2024.
 - The Foreign Ministers of five countries, viz. Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and representatives of Norway, Iceland and Lithuania took part in the meeting.
- ❖ Jacintha Kalyan has carved her name in the sports history as the country's first female pitch curator of cricket.
- ❖ The country's first 'Gati Shakti Research Chair' will be established at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong, Meghalaya.
- ❖ MS Dhoni was selected as the leader of IPL's all-time greatest team which was picked to celebrate the success of the world's most-popular T20 league which was launched in 2008.
- ❖ Japan and the US are planning to launch the world's first wooden satellite, the LignoSat probe, into space this summer.

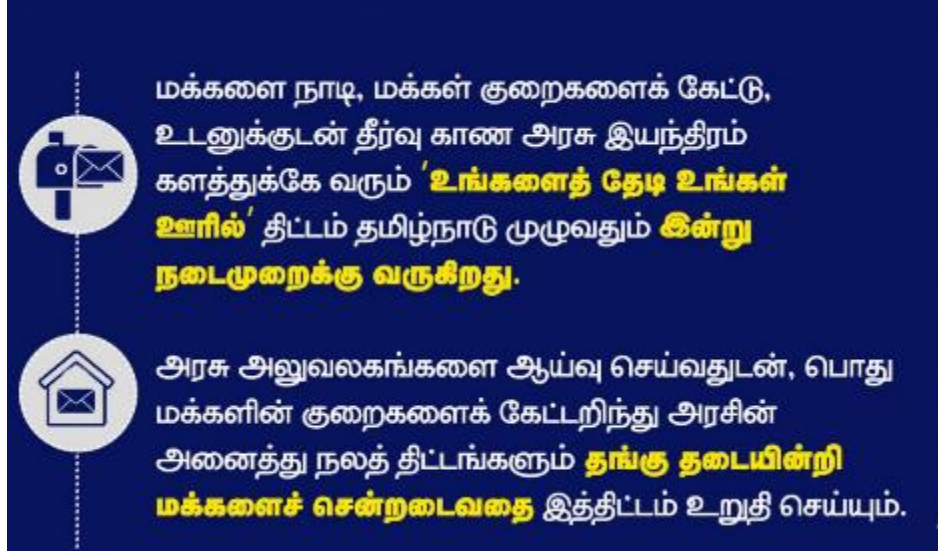
TAMIL NADU

Cadaver donations record in Tamil Nadu



- ❖ Organ donations have reached a new high in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The State recorded its all-time high number of cadaver donations in a month with 30 donors from January 1 to 29, 2024.
- ❖ This was the highest number of donations in a month since 2008 when the cadaver transplantation programme took off.

'Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril' Scheme



மக்களை நாடி, மக்கள் குறைகளைக் கேட்டு, உடனுக்குடன் தீர்வு காண அரசு இயந்திரம் களத்துக்கே வரும் **உங்களைத் தேடி உங்கள் ஊரில்** திட்டம் தமிழ்நாடு முழுவதும் **கின்று நடைமுறைக்கு வருகிறது.**

அரசு அலுவலகங்களை ஆய்வு செய்வதுடன், பொது மக்களின் குறைகளைக் கேட்டறிந்து அரசின் அனைத்து நலத் திட்டங்களும் **தங்கு தடையின்றி மக்களைச் சென்றடைவதை** இத்திட்டம் உறுதி செய்யும்.

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has released guidelines for the 'Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril' scheme.
- ❖ It aims to improve the delivery of various services and expedite implementation of schemes.
- ❖ Collectors and senior district-level officials will spend 24 hours (9 a.m. to 9 a.m.) in one taluk on the fourth Wednesday of every month.
- ❖ They will review the functioning of various projects, inspect infrastructure and receive representations from the public.
- ❖ The officials will spend the forenoon inspecting primary health centres, ration shops, cooperative societies, schools, and government offices, among others.
- ❖ A review meeting will be conducted between 2.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. to discuss feedback from the visit.
- ❖ The one-and-half hour window from 4.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. will be used for interactions with the public and receiving representations from them.
- ❖ They will spend the evening, from 6 p.m., visiting facilities run by the Social Welfare Department, bus stands and public toilets, among others.
- ❖ Next morning, officials will review basic civic amenities by inspecting different villages and review the implementation of the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme.

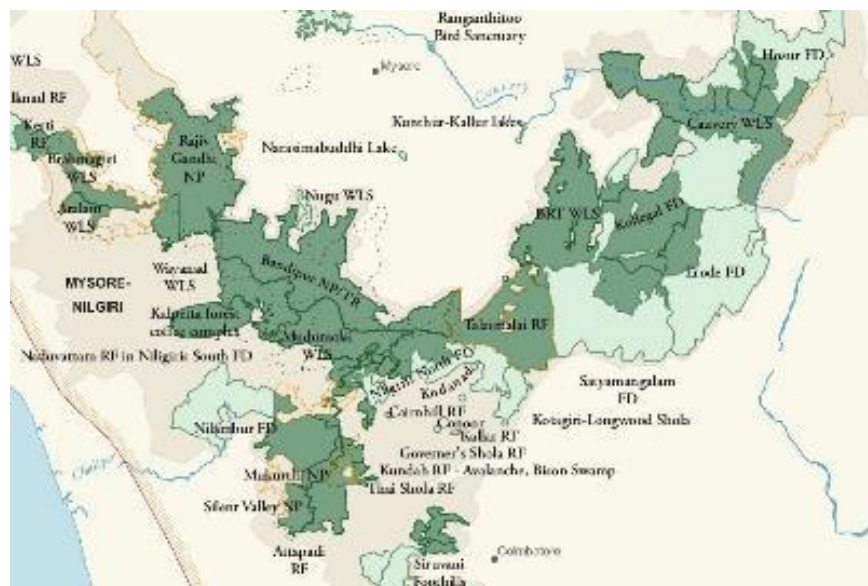
Madras High Court on Temple entry

- ❖ The Madras High Court has directed the State government to install boards at the entrance of temples, near the Kodimaram, indicating that non-Hindus were not allowed beyond the Kodimaram of the temples.

- ❖ If a non-Hindu seeks to visit a particular deity in a temple, the authorities shall obtain an undertaking from the individual that he/she has faith in the deity, and would follow the customs and practices of Hinduism and of the temple.
- ❖ Whenever a non-Hindu is allowed entry based on such an undertaking, the same shall be recorded in a register maintained by the temple.
- ❖ It directed to authorities not to allow non-Hindus who do not believe in the religion beyond the Kodimaram.



18th wildlife sanctuary – Tamilnadu



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has declared 80,114.80 hectares of reserve forests in Bargur Hills in Erode district, as the Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.

- ❖ This stretch of protected forests links the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve with Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ This has been notified as the 18th wildlife sanctuary in the State.
- ❖ It is one of the tiger corridors identified by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, and is home to a number of tigers.

‘No Caste, No Religion’ certificate

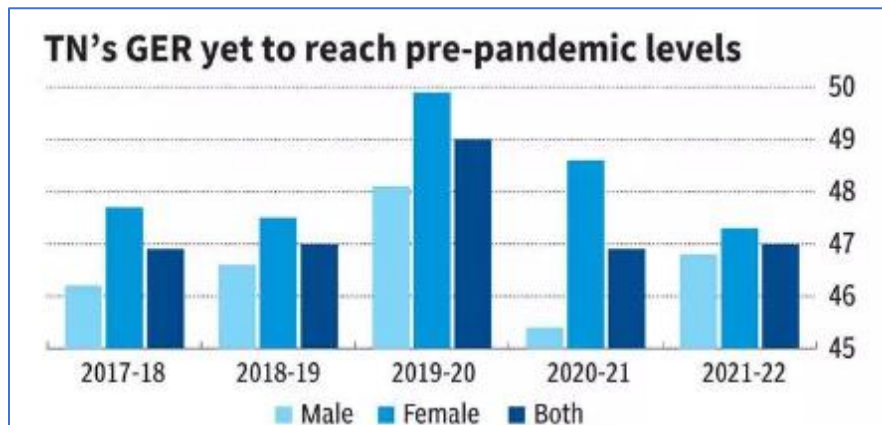


- ❖ The Madras High Court has stated that, the revenue officials could not issue a ‘No Caste, No Religion’ certificate.
- ❖ They have any power conferred on them to issue such a certificate.
- ❖ Also, such a certificate would have serious implications especially in relation to the application of personal laws on issues related to inheritance of property, and of reservation in education and public employment.
- ❖ The 1973 Government Order only permits a person to not mention his/her caste or religion in school certificates.
- ❖ The 1973 G.O. had been reiterated by way of another G.O. issued on July 13, 2000.
- ❖ And they both permit a person to leave the columns related to caste and religion blank while securing admission in a school.
- ❖ It also allows to obtain a transfer certificate without mentioning caste and religion.

Enrollment Ratio in Tamil Nadu 2021-22

- ❖ Among India’s large states, Tamil Nadu consistently maintains the highest Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education (colleges and universities) for five academic years between 2017-18 and 2021-22.
- ❖ According to the recently released All India Survey on Higher Education by the Ministry of Education, Tamil Nadu’s GER was 47 per cent.

- ❖ GER refers to the number of students enrolled in higher education as a percentage of the eligible population aged 18 to 23 years.
- ❖ The all-India average GER was 28.4 per cent in the 2021-22 period.
- ❖ Among all the states and Union Territories, Chandigarh has the highest GER of 64.8 per cent.
- ❖ It is followed by Puducherry with 61.5 per cent and Delhi with 49 per cent.
- ❖ The other states that did well are Himachal Pradesh (43.1 per cent), Uttarakhand (41.8 per cent), Kerala (41.3 per cent) and Telangana (40 per cent).



Share of central taxes in 2023/24



- ❖ Tamil Nadu would get ₹44,760.83 crore as its share of Central taxes as per the revised Union Budget estimates for 2023-24.

- ❖ This is about 7.4% higher than the ₹41,664.86 crore projected in the initial estimates.
- ❖ In the interim Budget estimates for 2024-25, Tamil Nadu's share of Central taxes is estimated to be ₹49,754.95 crore.
- ❖ This is about 11.2% higher than the revised estimates for 2023-24.
- ❖ The actual devolution of Central taxes to Tamil Nadu for 2022-23 stood at ₹38,685.47 crore, as per Union Budget documents.

Cervical cancer in Tamil Nadu in 2023



- ❖ There were 8,534 estimated cases of cervical cancer (incidence) in Tamil Nadu in 2023.
- ❖ According to the National Cancer Registry Programme Report, the estimated prevalence of cervical cancer cases in the State in 2023 was 36,014.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh's estimated prevalence of cases was 45,682, Maharashtra 30,414 and West Bengal 25,822.
- ❖ Chennai's age-adjusted incidence rate (per 1,00,000) of cervical cancer was 14.8.

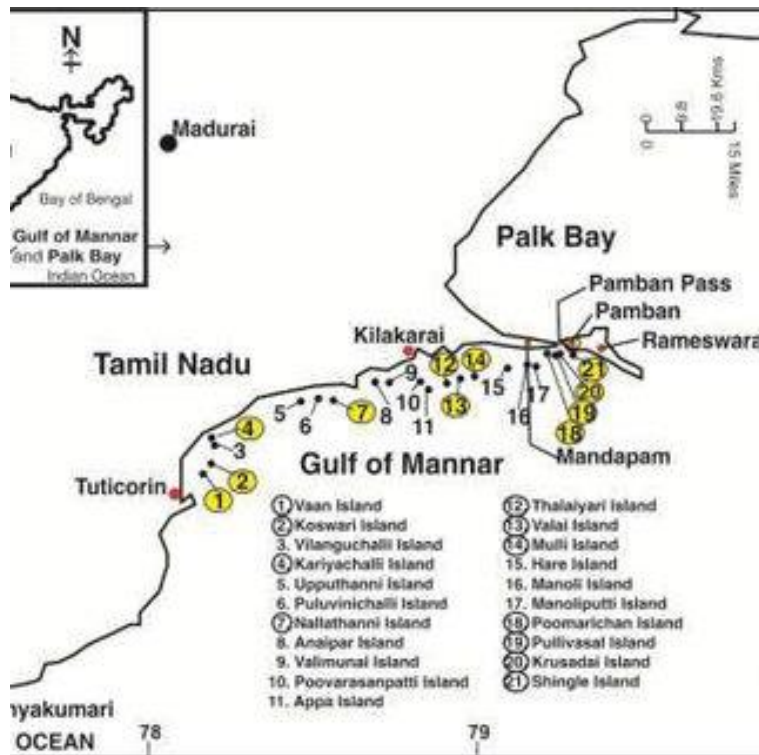
First robotic elephant

- ❖ A robotic elephant was handed over to the Shivan Temple in Devarshola in Gudalur in Ooty by an NGO, Voices for Asian Elephants.
- ❖ These robotic elephants already have been donated to temples across Kerala, to end the often-criticised practice of maintaining the elephants in captivity at temples, often in unhealthy, inhumane conditions.

- ❖ This is the first such “elephant” to be given to a temple in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ There are 25 captive elephants in Kerala died in 2023 alone, and three have died already in 2024.
- ❖ The robotic elephants will ensure that the culture of the country is still maintained, while also not tormenting elephants by keeping them in captivity.



Kariyachalli island Restoration



- ❖ The government has passed an order to restore Kariyachalli as part of the Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission.
- ❖ The island, used to be 16 hectares, but has shrunk to 5.97 hectares.

- ❖ Without intervention, both the Kariyachalli and Kasuwari Islands will sink by 2035.
- ❖ The Gulf of Mannar has a chain of 21 low-lying uninhabited coral-reef islands.
- ❖ Over 4,300 species of flora and fauna have been recorded so far.
- ❖ Among them are 132 coral species.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has already saved Vaan Island with the help of over 10,000 artificial reef modules.

Check dam in Ponnai river

- ❖ Work to construct the first check dam along Tamil Nadu - Andhra Pradesh border across Poonai River, in Vellore was commenced recently.
- ❖ Poonai River, also known as thenpennai, is a tributary of Palar.
- ❖ It originates in the Nandi Hills in the Chikkaballapura district of Karnataka.
- ❖ This is the second longest river in Tamil Nadu, with a length of 497 km.
- ❖ It can discharge 61,000 cusecs of excess water into the river.
- ❖ The new check dam will be the second such facility across Poonai River.



Tamil Nadu synchronized bird estimate

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu synchronised bird estimation was conducted by the state Forest Department.
- ❖ Nearly 79 per cent of a total bird count of 6,80,028 are being water birds.

- ❖ About 21 per cent are terrestrial birds.
- ❖ The estimation has covered 894 vantage points at wetlands/water bodies/bird sanctuaries including 179 in forest areas, 555 in rural areas and 170 in urban areas.
- ❖ A total of 6,80,028 birds covering 389 bird species were found in the estimation.
- ❖ Out of these 120 species are found to be water birds and the remaining 269 are terrestrial bird species.



South India's first cinema Theatre

- ❖ South India's first cinema hall – Delite Theatre – on Variety Hall Road in Coimbatore was demolished.
- ❖ Originally known as the 'Variety Hall' cinema, it was established in 1914 by Samikannu Vincent.
- ❖ It was the first theatre to give out printed movie tickets using a pedal printing machine in the 1930s.
- ❖ The name of Variety Hall was changed to Delite Theatre in the late 1950s.
- ❖ The last movie screening was in June 2023 – the 1980s Manidhan.

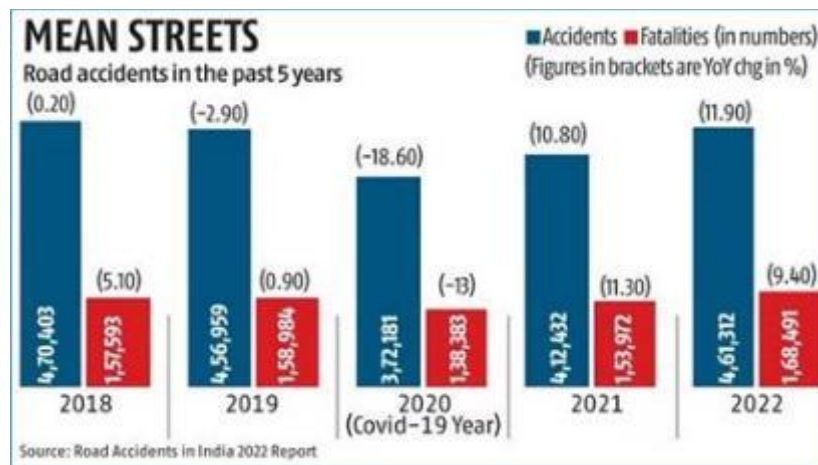
AI-based early Railway crossing warning system

- ❖ An artificial intelligence (AI) based early warning system was launched to save wild elephants from getting hit by moving trains.
- ❖ It was launched by the Tamilnadu Forest department.
- ❖ The AI-based and machine learning enabled system will detect movement of wild elephants that come near the twin single line or cross the tracks and generate alerts.
- ❖ It is first of its kind in the country, covering a "highly vulnerable area" of about 7 km.

- ❖ The system is in force in Coimbatore division.
- ❖ Around 130 trains pass via the A and B railway lines per day and nearly 1,000 elephant crossings are reported on these tracks every year.



Road accidents Trends



- ❖ Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents on its network of National Highways in 2022 with 64,105 accidents.
- ❖ The State saw 17,884 fatalities due to road accidents.
- ❖ In the entire country, a total number of 4,61,312 road accidents have been reported during the calendar year 2022.
- ❖ It is claiming 1,68,491 lives and causing injuries to 4,43,366 persons.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's 64,105 accidents form 13.9% of all accidents that happened in the country last year.

- ❖ It was followed by Madhya Pradesh with 54,432 accidents.
- ❖ The State retained its top position in 2022 for the fifth consecutive year.
- ❖ There were 22,961 accidents on National Highways in 2018, 21,489 accidents in 2019, 18,372 accidents in 2020, 16,869 accidents in 2021 and 18,972 accidents in 2022.

Land Pooling Area Development Scheme Rules, 2024



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has recently notified the Tamil Nadu Land Pooling Area Development Scheme Rules, 2024.
- ❖ The scheme enabled planned development of new areas, provides basic amenities and mobilises land for trunk infrastructure proposals.
- ❖ The scheme, as defined in the Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning (Third Amendment) Amendment Act, 2023, provides for pooling together land owned by individual/individuals and developing it by the appropriate planning authority.
- ❖ A part of such developed land is transferred to the original owner, and the remaining portion is used to establish common facilities and amenities, or, for sale.
- ❖ The land pooling ownership certificate is to be issued by the authority to land-owners within 60 days of the publication of the final scheme.



- ❖ In 2018, the then government amended the Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 to introduce the 'land pooling area development scheme', and eventually notified the draft rules in 2020.

TN Assembly resolution 2024

- ❖ The Governor of Tamil Nadu made inaugural customary address for 2024.
- ❖ And he shortened his speech and the remarks citing reasons for his refusal to read the entire speech.
- ❖ But the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to take on record only the speech prepared by the State government, not the shortened speech.
- ❖ The resolution was moved to requesting to relax Rule 17 of the Assembly.
- ❖ It deals with observance of order by members of the House during Governor's address under article 175 or 176 of the Constitution.


Groundwater seepage at Konthagai

- ❖ Konthagai excavation site in Sivagangai district, part of Keeladi cluster was found submerged in water due to seepage into the excavation sites from below.
- ❖ The site is situated less than a couple of kilometres away from Keeladi site.
- ❖ Two burial urns were unearthed in 2022.
- ❖ With one of them is containing 20 offering vessels, including shallow bowls, miniature pots and a ring stand, which were things buried along with the dead.
- ❖ An iron sword measuring 40 centimetres was also found at the site in 2022.
- ❖ And it is believed to be a part of 'grave goods'.

10 achievements of Tamilnadu government

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister listed 10 achievements of the current government.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's nine per cent contribution to the Indian economy -- this showcased the State's economic growth.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has secured the second place when it comes to contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation.
- ❖ The state's growth rate has become 8.19 per cent while the country's growth rate is 7.24 per cent.
- ❖ The state had controlled inflation, which had fallen to 5.97 per cent while the national figure was 6.65 per cent.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has topped the list of the Export Preparedness Index in the country, and this is the fifth achievement.
- ❖ Tamilnadu is ranking first in the export of electronic goods.
- ❖ Government had created a conducive climate for industrial investment and this had helped Tamil Nadu reach the third position, up from the 14th position, in the country.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu was elevated to the second place in the field of education.
- ❖ The State has also secured the first place in innovative industries.
- ❖ The 10th achievement of the government is improvement of status of that women, young people, persons with disabilities, and persons on the margins and the oppressed.



Leading the way: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin says his government has made some historic achievements.

- A contribution of **9%** to the **Indian economy**
- Secured the **second place** in contribution to the Gross Domestic Product of the nation
- Logging a **growth rate of 8.19%**, when that of the country was 7.24%
- Registered a decline in **inflation to 5.97%**, against the national average of 6.65%
- Topped the **Export Preparedness Index** in

the country

- First in the export of **electronic goods**
- Created a conducive climate for **industrial investment**
- Second place in the field of **education**
- First in **Innovative Industries**
- **Im-**proved the **status** of women, persons with disabilities, youth, and the oppressed

New members to TNPSC

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government named five new members to the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC).
- ❖ Retired IAS officer M.P. Sivanarul, R. Saravanakumar, IRS, A. Thavamani, Usha Sukumar and R. Premkumar are the new members of the commission.
- ❖ They will have a tenure of six years or until they attain 62 years of age.

First Mini TIDEL Park

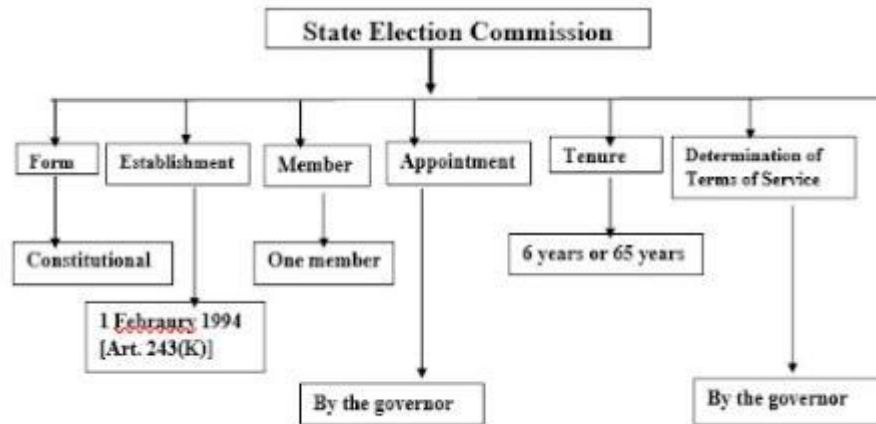
- ❖ Chief Minister inaugurated Tamil Nadu's first Mini-TIDEL Park in Villupuram.
- ❖ This project is situated on a built-up area of 63,000 sq ft spread across a five-acre land parcel at Thiruchitrambalam village, Vanur Taluk.
- ❖ To promote growth of IT and ITeS sectors in Tier II cities of the state, the government is setting up 7 Neo-TIDEL parks across the State as per the Tamil Nadu budget 2023-2024.
- ❖ Mini-TIDEL parks are being established in Tier II and Tier III towns, with eight other such parks already in development in Thanjavur, Salem, Thoothukudi, Vellore, Karaikudi, Namakkal, Tirupur and Ooty.



State Election Commission Tenure – Tamilnadu

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a Bill to further amend the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994.
- ❖ It aims to fixing the tenure of the State Election Commissioner to “five/six years or sixty-five years of age, whichever is earlier, without any provision for extension.”
- ❖ In most of the States, the tenure of the State Election Commissioners was five years or until they reached the age of sixty-five, whichever was earlier.

- ❖ According to the existing clause (b) of sub-section (2) of sub-section 239 of the 1994 Act, the term of office of the State Election Commissioner was two years and he/she was eligible for two successive terms.



One-Stop Centers for Disabled Persons – Tamilnadu

- ❖ The state differently-abled welfare department will soon establish 39 one-stop centres (OSCs) at the sub-divisional level.
- ❖ This is held under the World Bank-funded RIGHTS project.
- ❖ They are expected to reduce the distance travelled by the persons with disabilities (PwD).
- ❖ The centres will have nine experts including a psychologist, physiotherapist, speech audiologist, occupational therapist and special educators.
- ❖ RIGHTS stands for Rehabilitation Initiative for True Human Advancement Support.

Mahavir Statue in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ 1,000-year-old stone statue of Thirthagara Mahavir was found at Manavarayanendal near Thiruchuli in Virudhunagar district.
- ❖ Based on the sculpture technique, it is assumed that the statue might belong to the 11th century AD.
- ❖ The statue is made of granite and is intricately carved with fine details.
- ❖ It depicts Mahavir sitting on a throne with makara-toranas (arches with mythical creatures) on both sides.
- ❖ There is a triple umbrella above his head, which has creepers carved on it.



Kotravai sculpture

- ❖ Archaeological researchers have discovered an eighth-century Kotravai sculpture near Ulundurpet.
- ❖ They confirmed that it is 1,200 years old and was used for worship.
- ❖ The idol is depicted with eight hands, indicating its origin in the eighth century during the Pallava period.
- ❖ The sculpture's crown has uniqueness compared to other eighth-century Kotravai sculptures found in the area.

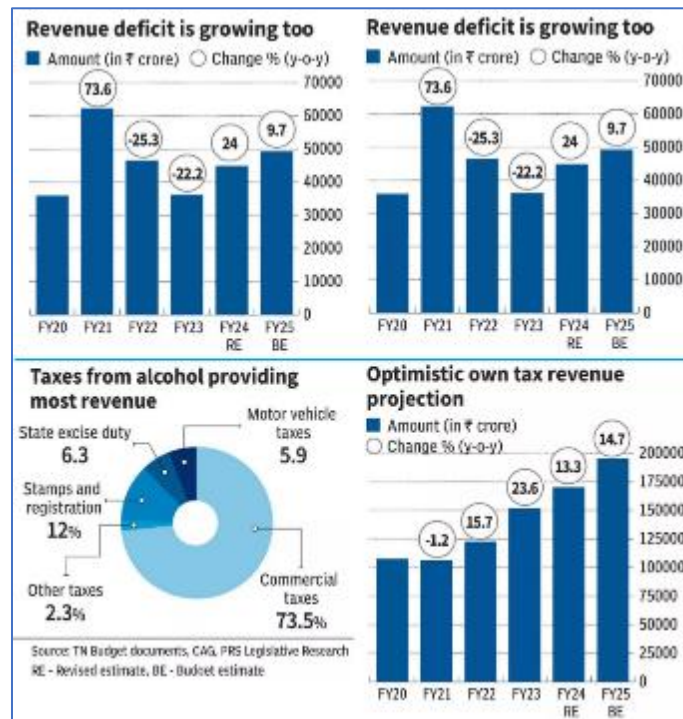


Minority Welfare measures in Tamilnadu 2024

- ❖ Chief Minister unveils a series of measures, including potential reservations and increased education loans, aimed at empowering religious minorities.
- ❖ The State govt would provide financial assistance under pre-matric (class I to VIII) scholarship scheme for Muslim girl students facilitated through the Waqf board.
- ❖ Education loan for minority students given by Tamil Nadu Minorities Economic Development Corporation through cooperative banks would be increased to 5 lakhs.

- ❖ Girls studying in govt-aided minority schools from sixth to twelfth standard in Tamil medium would be included under 'Pudhumani Penn' scheme under which Rs 1,000 is given per month for students.
- ❖ In the appointment of teachers, the existing age of 53, the maximum age for appointment of teachers in the general category and 58 for other communities in government schools, would also be extended to minority educational institutions.
- ❖ There would be no expiry date mentioned in religious minority certificates.
- ❖ Permanent recognition would be given for minority educational institutions.
- ❖ The order for extending the free morning breakfast scheme for students of standard one to five, studying in govt-aided minority schools in rural areas, would be issued soon.
- ❖ Action would be taken to issue the legal heir certificates to the second wife, who was married under Islamic law, and their sons and daughters.
- ❖ The government will grant permission to the Wakf Board to give its lands, on a lease for 30 years, for the purpose of promoting educational, medical and social goals.
- ❖ The government will also get permission from the High Court to set up a tribunal in Madurai to deal with cases released to Wakf Board properties on the lines of the tribunal now functioning in Chennai.

Tamil Nadu's 2024 Budget





- ❖ The Budget has presented with the theme 'Crossing obstacles and marching towards growth'.
- ❖ The budget focused on Grand 7 Tamil dream - social justice, welfare of marginalized, transforming Tamil youth as global achievers, knowledge-based economy, equality focused on welfare of women, sustainable future and Tamil language and culture.
- ❖ The total revenue receipts, including Central Transfers, are estimated at Rs.2,99,009.98 crore, marking a modest increase over the previous year.
- ❖ The State's Own Tax Revenue is pegged at Rs.1,95,172.99 crore, indicating healthy growth.
- ❖ Meanwhile, revenue expenditure is expected to rise to Rs.3,48,288.72 crore, with significant allocations for salaries, pensions, and welfare schemes.
- ❖ Despite challenges, the fiscal deficit is contained at 3.44% of GSDP, in line with fiscal consolidation goals.
- ❖ Chief Minister's Thayumanuvar Poverty eradication scheme will identify five lakh families living in poverty and provide welfare assistance.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government unveils a new payroll subsidy initiative aimed at boosting high-paying jobs in Global Capability Centres (GCCs).
- ❖ Under the scheme, a subsidy of 30% will be provided in the first year, followed by 20% in the second year, and 10% in the third year for positions offering a monthly salary exceeding Rs 1 lakh.
- ❖ The Government allocates Rs 2 crore to promote Tamil literature globally.
- ❖ It announced free higher education for transgender individuals.
- ❖ This initiative aims to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities in higher education for the transgender community.
- ❖ Rs 1,000 crore allocated for government school infrastructure development, including the installation of smart classrooms in all 23,000 primary schools.
- ❖ It planned to upgrade 45 Polytechnic Colleges to Industry 4.0 standards, aiming to align technical education with contemporary industry needs.
- ❖ Government plans to construct three new Thozhi hostels for working women.
- ❖ New IT Park will be set up in Coimbatore, spanning over two million square feet.
- ❖ The Government plans to establish a new IT park in Thanjavur, with the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT).
- ❖ Rs 120 crore has been allocated for the Annal Ambedkar Business Champions Scheme.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is set to launch the Tamil Nadu Artificial Intelligence Mission.



- ❖ It is aimed at fostering the development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies across various sectors within the state.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is gearing up to host the World Startup Summit in January 2025.
- ❖ The Government is set to introduce the 'Tamil Pudhalvan' scheme, aimed at incentivizing government school students to pursue higher education.
- ❖ Under this initiative, students will receive a monthly allowance of Rs 1,000 to support their educational endeavours, fostering greater participation in higher educational institutions.
- ❖ Government intends to set up new industry skilling centres in 100 government arts, science, and engineering colleges.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu government is to create four Olympic academies.
- ❖ Rope car facility is to come up at Tiruparankundram and Thiruneermalai.
- ❖ Budget of ₹2 crore has been allocated for ethnographic documentation of Sourashtra and Paduga languages and languages of tribals including Thodas, Kothar, Cholakar, Kaani and Narikuravar.
- ❖ An open-air museum would be constructed at the Keeladi excavation site.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu government announces setting up of the 'Tamil Nadu State Highways Authority.
- ❖ The Govt announced a mission for a 'Hut-free Tamil Nadu' by 2030.
- ❖ 'Kalaigharin Kanavu Illam' is to be implemented at ₹3,500 crore to provide housing facilities to the poor.
- ❖ The property tax reimbursement scheme would be expanded to all ex-servicemen.
- ❖ It unveiled TN-SHORE (Neithal Meetchi Iyakkam), a scheme to restore coastal resources across 14 districts of the State.
- ❖ State of the art film city will be established in Poonamallee at the cost of Rs 500 crore.

Rhodamine-B

- ❖ Tamil Nadu recently banned the sale and production of cotton candy – also known as candy floss.
- ❖ This step was taken by the state government after a lab test confirmed the presence of cancer-causing chemicals.
- ❖ The test was conducted by the Food Analysis Laboratory found Rhodamine-B as an artificial colouring agent.
- ❖ Rhodamine-B is giving blue, pink cotton and green which is unsafe and substandard for consumption.

- ❖ Rhodamine-B or RhB is a chemical commonly used for dyeing in the textile, paper, leather, and paints industry as a colouring agent.



Agriculture Budget 2024



- ❖ Mr. Panneerselvam presented the State Agriculture Budget 2024-25 in the Legislative Assembly, a day after the Tamil Nadu Budget 2024-25 was unveiled.
- ❖ He announced the launch of a new programme, the Chief Minister's Mannuyir Kaathu Mannuyir Kappom Scheme (CM MK MKS).



- ❖ It is aimed at improving soil quality, and moving towards the sustainable and chemical-free agricultural practices for the well-being of society.
- ❖ It also announced steps to reduce chemical fertilizers in paddy crops.
- ❖ 'One Village, One Crop' scheme was presented in Tamil Nadu Agriculture budget 2024.
- ❖ Several measures to nurture villages is to help them tackle climate change.
- ❖ To help the farmers recovering from loss of income due to unforeseen natural calamities, Crop Insurance Scheme is being implemented.
- ❖ Kalaigharin All Village Integrated Agriculture Development Programme was launched.
- ❖ It aims to transform every village into a model of self-sufficiency by focusing on the development of agriculture as the primary occupation and by converting fallow lands into cultivable lands to increase the net cultivable area.
- ❖ Special climate-smart villages will be developed to demonstrate climate change mitigation technologies to farmers and stakeholders, besides spreading the awareness.
- ❖ To facilitate the easy access of quality agricultural produce and value-added products, to urban consumers, 100 Uzhavar Angadis are to be established along the lines of Uzhavar Sandhais at an outlay of Rs 5 crore from the state fund.
- ❖ Under the State Agriculture Development Scheme, the government will provide maximum assistance of Rs 1 lakh to 100 graduates who establish any agri-based business by availing bank loans.
- ❖ Subsidy is to be granted for the installation of automated irrigation systems.
- ❖ To promote the cultivation of neem trees, 10 lakh neem tree saplings are to be distributed to farmers at no cost.
- ❖ To ensure that agriculture is supplied with enough electricity, 50,000 electricity connections have been provided in the current year.
- ❖ Special schemes for mukhani (mango, banana, jackfruit) development, new horticulture farms and parks like Mullai Garden (In Kanniyakumari), Marutham Park (In Thanjavur), Sun Garden (In Kanniyakumari), Hibiscus Nursery Garden (In Chengalpattu), State Horticulture Farm (In Tenkasi) are to be established.
- ❖ To create a link between the private agricultural machinery owners and the farmers, 'Private Agricultural Machinery Custom Hiring Mobile App' is to be developed.
- ❖ Geographical Indication (GI) tag is to be obtained for 10 agricultural products.
- ❖ Agri-tech-based startups are to be identified and provided with subsidies based on their objectives, sustainability, and business plans.



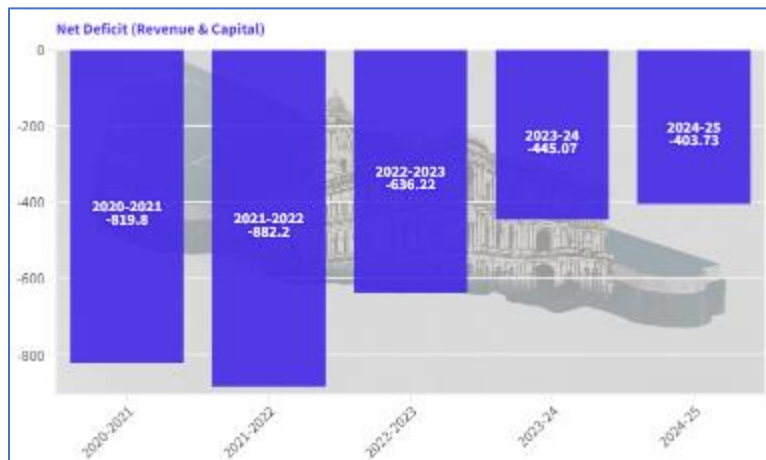
Tamil Nadu State Policy for Women 2024

- ❖ Chief Minister unveiled the Tamil Nadu State Policy for Women 2024.
- ❖ It aims to ensure social justice for all and provide women access to their rightful entitlements.
- ❖ It will be enabling them to lead a harmonious and peaceful life with equitable opportunities to realise their true potential and aspirations for a sustainable tomorrow.
- ❖ The policy will be implemented over a period of ten years.
- ❖ The state envisages to raise the status of women through awareness, education, gainful employment and capacity building initiatives.
- ❖ The objective of the policy framework is to
 - Enable access to services such as health, education and employment,
 - Enabling conducive conditions that restructure gender norms and behaviour linked changes,
 - Zero tolerance against any kind of discrimination, abuse and violence against women,
 - Empower them to break gender stereotyping and
 - Enable them to excel in every sector.
- ❖ The policy would improve health and nutrition status of adolescent girls and women, besides increasing their participation in the workplace.
- ❖ By promoting digital literacy to bridge the digital gender gap and support women for remunerative placements, the policy also encourages active participation of women in politics.
- ❖ The policy would cover women-headed households (single women, widows, and deserted women), women from oppressed communities, women engaged in vulnerable occupations, differently-abled women, and women in informal and formal sector.
- ❖ A high-level women empowerment committee headed by the Chief Secretary including all the line department shall meet once in six months to review the implementation of the policy and suggest mid-term course corrections.
- ❖ Similarly, the district level monitoring committee headed by the district collector shall overview the implementation once in two months.
- ❖ The policy shall be reviewed after five years.

Chennai Corporation Budget 2024

- ❖ The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) presented its budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, with the lowest deficit in five years.

- ❖ Although revenue receipts are at their highest now over the past five years at ₹4,464.60 crore, capital receipts this fiscal are marginally lower, at ₹3,455 crore.
- ❖ The last year's budget estimate was ₹3,554.5 crore.
- ❖ Students studying in classes from LKG to 12 in 419 primary, middle, high school and higher secondary schools in the city will receive two sets of uniforms.
- ❖ Considering the safety of the students, four CCTV cameras each to be installed in 255 schools.
- ❖ For the first time, a pair of shoes and two sets of socks will be provided to 64,022 students of classes LKG to 5 studying in 208 primary and 130 middle schools.
- ❖ Child Protection Committees under the chairmanship of councillors to be set up in all primary, middle schools in the city.
- ❖ A high-risk mother's call centre will be set up in the city.
- ❖ Four buses will be procured by the civic body for the students of corporation schools.
- ❖ An exclusive gym for women, EmpowHER, will be set up at all 200 wards in the city.



Powers to refuse permission to factories

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a Bill that sought to clip the powers of village panchayats and panchayat unions.
- ❖ They were earlier able to set apart specified areas for industrial purposes or to refuse permission for industries.
- ❖ The Bill was aimed at promoting the ease of doing business.
- ❖ The Bill, tabled by him sought to amend the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 aims to replace the 'Panchayat Union Council' with 'Inspector' as the authority for granting and renewal of licences and permissions.

- ❖ It also sought to remove the wordings “offensive or dangerous trade” for imposing penalty on violators.

(2) Rules made under clause (c) of sub-section (1) may empower the panchayat union council in panchayat villages and panchayat unions to set apart specified areas for industrial purposes and provide for the refusal of permissions under section 160 in respect of any factory, workshop, workplace or premises outside such areas and also, subject to the sanction of the prescribed authority for the removal to such areas, of any factory, workshop or workplace which has been already established at any place, or any machinery which has already been installed in any premises, situated outside such areas:

Provided that no such rule shall authorise the removal of any factory, workshop or workplace or machinery installed in any premises, in the occupation or under the control of the Central or the State Government or of a market committee established under the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act, 1987.

‘Tholkudi’ scheme



- ❖ 1,000 crores have been allocated for a new scheme ‘Tholkudi’ for development of tribals that would be implemented over the next four years.
- ❖ Under the scheme, basic amenities such as road facilities, potable water streetlights and permanent houses would be provided in tribal areas.
- ❖ Dedicated programmes would also be implemented to improve the livelihood of members of the tribal communities as part of this initiative.

TN Uagine 2024

- ❖ Australia is an Innovation Partner Country for Uagine 2024.
- ❖ It is being hosted by the Tamil Nadu government's Information Technology and Digital Services Department.
- ❖ Western Australia will also be a State partner at the Uagine summit.

Endangered Species Conservation Fund



- ❖ Tamil Nadu government created a dedicated "Tamil Nadu Endangered Species Conservation Fund".
- ❖ It will be a rolling pool with a corpus of Rs 50 crore, to recover some of the biodiversity that is on the verge of extinction.
- ❖ Union Ministry of Environment and Forests gazette notified a list of 23 plant and 16 animal species that are on verge of extinction in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The ministry even prohibited collection of samples from these notified species without the approval of Tamil Nadu State Biodiversity Board for scientific research or otherwise.

Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Amendment) Act, 2024

- ❖ TN assembly introduced two separate bills to amend Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act of 1994.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Fourth Amendment) Act, 2024, includes detailed measures to regulate the operation and movement of the lorries or any other vehicles used for decanting of septic tanks.
- ❖ It also covers transportation of faecal sludge and septage to ensure their safe disposal in village panchayat areas.
- ❖ A new section said, “No person shall collect, transport or dispose faecal sludge or septage from any building, whether used for residential or commercial or institutional purposes, within the panchayat limits, without a valid licence granted under the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Act, 1998.
- ❖ But no such licence is necessary for the collection, transportation and disposal of sludge or septage by any local authority or statutory board of the government.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Fifth Amendment) Act, 2024 is saying, “it shall be the duty of panchayat to manage the solid waste so as to keep the public places clean by adopting a system of collection of segregated waste at source and its transportation, processing and disposal of solid waste scientifically in a place specifically allotted for this purpose.”

India’s first 360-degree immersive dome theatre



- ❖ India’s first 360-degree super immersive dome theatre was opened at the Kelambakkam Road in Chennai.
- ❖ Audiences can watch shows like Aladdin, Peter Pan, Saving Tinkerbell and Moby Dick, among others. Each screening will be about 20-30 minutes each.
- ❖ As the first of its kind in the country, the dome theatre sets a precedent for future ventures in the realm of storytelling and audience engagement.

Nemmeli Desalination Plant

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated the Nemmeli desalination plant.
- ❖ It has a capacity of 150 million litres per day (mld), to supply drinking water to 9 lakh residents in various parts of Chennai.



- ❖ This is the third desalination plant in the city after the 100 MLD plant in Minjur and 110 MLD plant in Nemmeli.
- ❖ In India, Chennai will be the first city to produce 750MLD water from desalination plants.
- ❖ These include 100 MLD desalination plants in Nemmeli and Minjur each, 150 MLD plant in Nemmeli, ongoing 400 MLD plant in Perur, near Nemmeli.

Resignation of MLA - Vijayadharani

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker Appavu has announced that the resignation of Vilavancode MLA S. Vijayadharani has been accepted.
- ❖ According to rule 21 (F) of the Tamil Nadu assembly, an MLA while resigning should fill up a form and should answer all the questions along with the date of resignation.
- ❖ She was first elected from the Vilavancode assembly constituency in 2011 and romped home the winner in 2016 and 2021 elections.
- ❖ She changed the party from Congress to BJP recently.

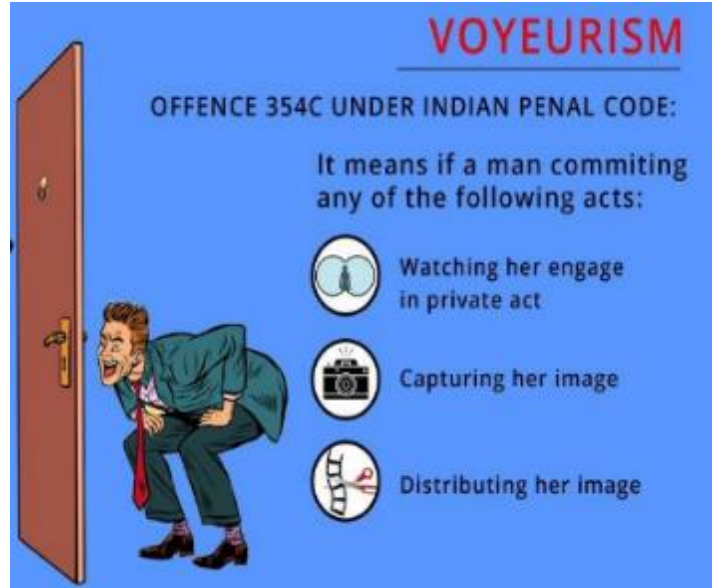
VinFast's electric car unit

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for Vietnam-headquartered VinFast Auto Limited's electric car manufacturing in Thoothukudi.
- ❖ With this venture, Thoothukudi has become the third auto hub of Tamil Nadu after Chennai and Hosur.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is the only State in India to have three auto hubs.

Power to transfer case

- ❖ The Director General of Police (DGP) is not empowered to transfer the investigation of a case from one agency to another after the first agency had completed the investigation and filed a final report before the court concerned.
- ❖ This was held by Madras High Court while dealing with a case booked under Section 354C (voyeurism) of the Indian Penal Code.
- ❖ The police had registered a First Information Report under Section 354C of IPC, Section 4 of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Woman Act and Section 66E of the Information Technology Act in 2019.
- ❖ After completion of investigation, the police filed a charge sheet and it was taken cognisance by a judicial magistrate.

- ❖ But, the then DGP transferred the case from the city police to the Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID).
- ❖ The court also pointed out that the law does not permit either the Magistrate or the DGP to order a de novo investigation in any case.



Kalaignar's memorial

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated the new memorial of former state chief minister late M Karunanidhi at Marina Beach in Chennai.
- ❖ It has several attractive features, including an underground state-of-the-art digital museum.
- ❖ The museum, christened 'Kalaignar Ulagam', showcases the life and achievements of the Dravidian icon.
- ❖ Karunanidhi, who has been the chief minister of Tamil Nadu on five occasions, died on August 7, 2018.

TN Great Backyard Bird Count 2024

- ❖ Over 350 species of birds having been recorded from Tamil Nadu during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) India 2024.
- ❖ 355 bird species were observed from 37 districts across the State.
- ❖ Coimbatore had recorded the highest number of species (268) followed by Salem (203), Chengalpattu (172), and Erode (147).
- ❖ Tamil Nadu stood 7th among 37 states in India with 348 species and 3,804 checklists.

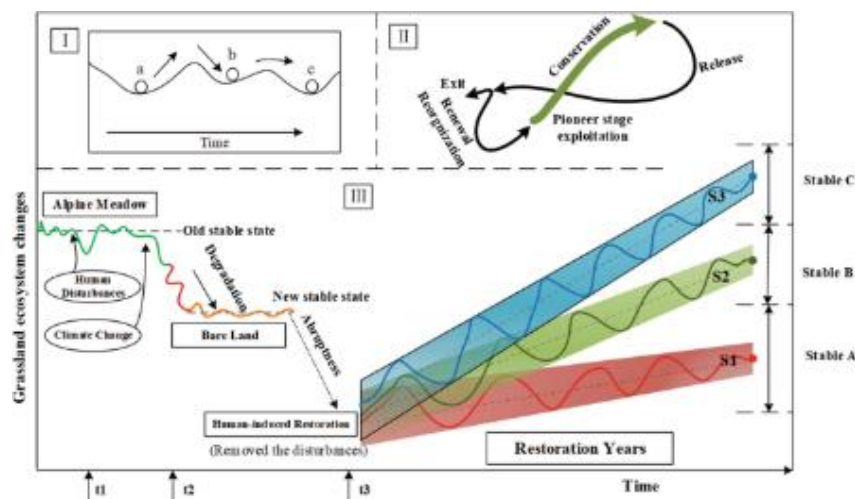


National Centre for Ageing

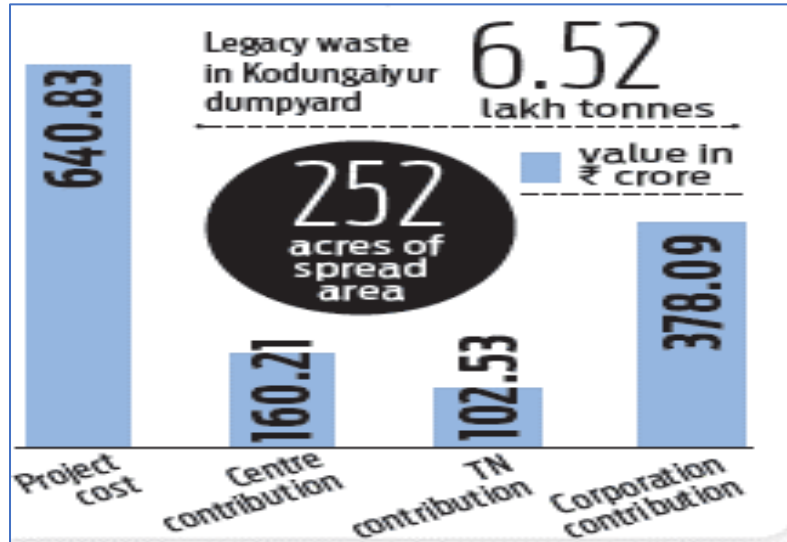
- ❖ India’s first National Centre of Ageing commissioned at Guindy in Chennai.
- ❖ Ayush and Siddha medicines are also set up at the Centre.
- ❖ It also has orthopaedic care, ENT, geriatric care and rehabilitation rooms, including separate rooms for all the patients above 60 years.

Model plot for TN grassland restoration project

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Forest Department in collaboration with the Forest College and Research Institute (FCRI), Mettupalayam, has launched works for setting up a model grass restoration plot in Sirumugai forest range in Coimbatore district.
- ❖ The FCRI team has identified one hectare land in Pethikuttai reserve forest a dry-deciduous forest area of Sirumugai range for this purpose.
- ❖ It will be converted into the model grass restoration plot.
- ❖ It will serve as the model plot for the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project for Climate Change Response (TBGPCCR) for its Meipulam project.



Kodungaiyur biomining project



- ❖ Greater Chennai Corporation has awarded tenders to three firms to biomine the 50-year-old Kodungaiyur dump yard.
- ❖ The state and union governments will contribute 41% of the project cost, the corporation will bear the remaining expenses.
- ❖ Currently, 100% segregation is aimed at for 2030 and that's far away.
- ❖ Bio-mining is a technically assisted and economically managed extraction of recyclables and other revenue-generating fractions from waste materials.

NATIONAL

75th anniversary of Supreme Court

- ❖ Supreme Court of India observed the Diamond Jubilee celebration in Delhi.
- ❖ During the event, Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), Digital Courts 2.0, and a new bilingual website for the Supreme Court were launched.
- ❖ Digital Courts 2.0, under the e-Courts project, focuses on providing electronic court records to district court judges, incorporating AI for real-time transcription.
- ❖ The Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), which has 36,308 cases of the apex court, dating back from 1950, accessible to the public in the digital format.
- ❖ The SC came into existence on 26 January 1950 with the coming into force of the Constitution.



- ❖ It initially functioned from the old Parliament building where the Federal Court of India sat for 12 years from 1937 to 1950.
- ❖ It moved to the present building in New Delhi in 1958.

Best electoral practices award 2023

- ❖ A total 16 individuals and organisations were conferred the Election Commission's 'Best Electoral Practices Awards' for 2023.
- ❖ Chhattisgarh chief electoral officer Reena Babasaheb Kangale won the 'best-performing state award' for the overall conduct of free and fair polls in the state last year.
- ❖ Radio Mirchi, Bengaluru, was awarded in the media category for its voter awareness campaign during last year's Karnataka poll.
- ❖ Dantewada collector Vinit Nandanwar was honoured for the highest rise in turnout in the Naxal-hit district.
- ❖ SP of Tripura's Dhalai district Ramesh Chand for ensuring zero poll violence during state polls last year.
- ❖ Chitradurga DEO Divya Prabhu was conferred the award for electoral roll management in the 2023 Karnataka polls.
- ❖ Rajasthan's Sriganganagar collector Ansh Deep was awarded in the IT initiatives category for his 'election buddy' app.
- ❖ Nagpur DEO Vipin Itankar was honoured for enhancing poll participation.
- ❖ ASP of Champai of Mizoram, Vineet Kumar and SP of Dhalai of Tripura, Ramesh Chand were awarded for poll security management.
- ❖ Commissioner of commercial taxes, Karnataka Shikha C won the award for poll management (expenditure).

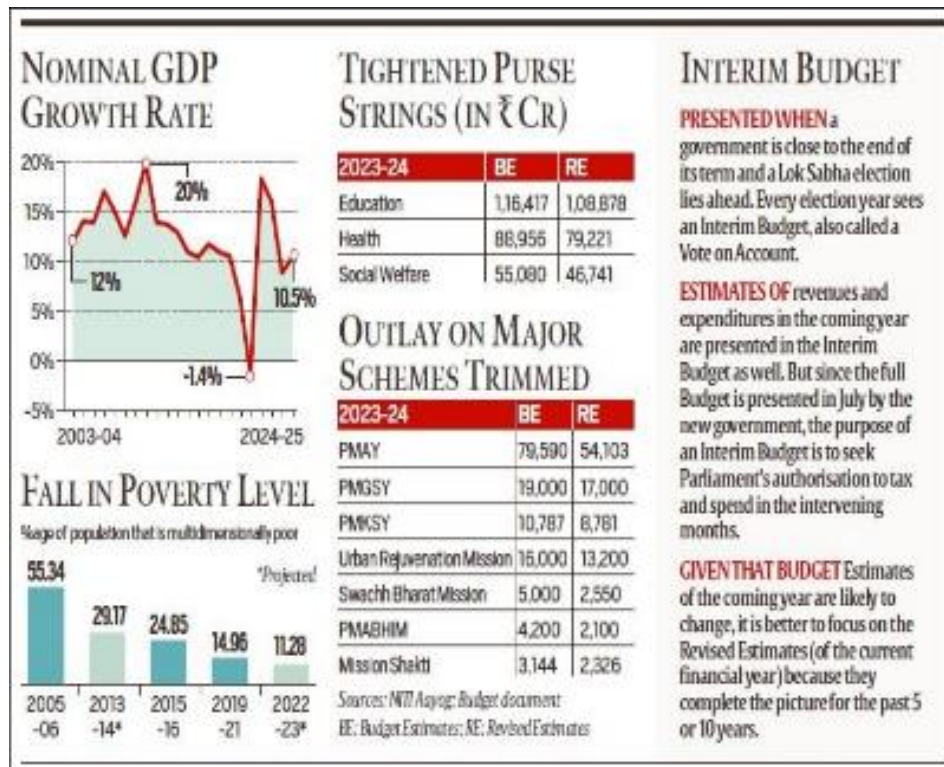
Interim Budget 2024

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

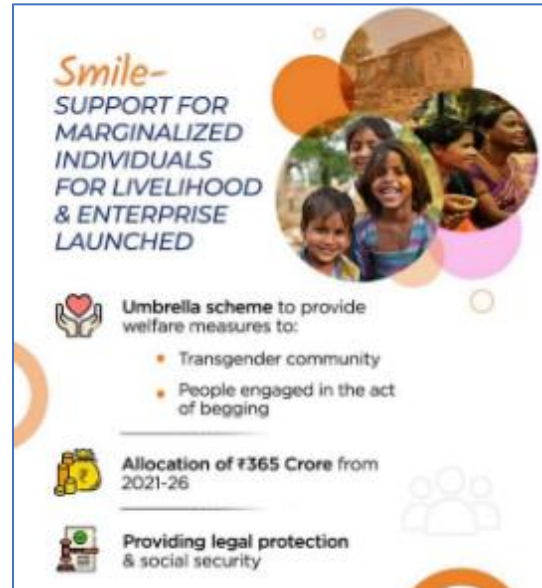


- ❖ The Government proposed to maintain the same tax rates for direct and indirect taxes, including import duties.
- ❖ The Government borrowings on a gross and net basis for 2024-25, at Rs. 14.13 lakh crore and Rs. 11.75 lakh crore, respectively were lower than 2023-24.
- ❖ Spends on capital expenditure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

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



National Initiative to Rehabilitate Beggars



- ❖ The government targets 30 cities for a nationwide survey and rehabilitation effort to eliminate beggary, emphasizing adults, women, and children.
- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment collaborates with local authorities, aiming to create beggar-free zones by 2026.
- ❖ The initiative is the part of the 'Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprises' sub-scheme (SMILE).
- ❖ It includes a national portal and mobile app for real-time updates.

Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2024

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

Members of 16th Finance Commission



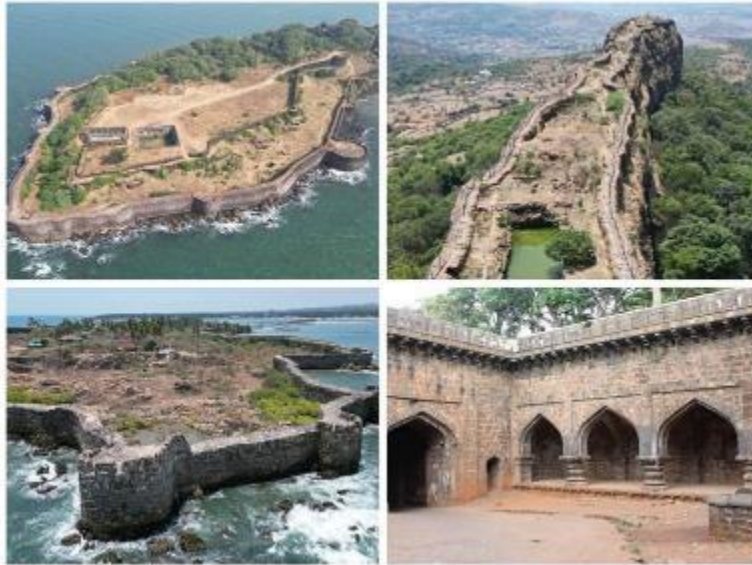
- ❖ Recently, the union government appointed Arvind Panagariya as Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission.
- ❖ Now it announced the appointment of three full-time members and one part-time member of the Commission.
- ❖ Former Finance and Expenditure Secretary Ajay Narayan Jha, who was also the member of 15th Finance Commission, has been appointed as full-time member.
- ❖ Along with Annie George Mathew and Niranjan Rajadhyaksha was also appointed as full-time member.
- ❖ Soumya Kanti Ghosh has been appointed as a part-time member in the Commission.
- ❖ Jha also served as Member Secretary of 14th Finance Commission.
- ❖ The 16th Finance Commission is expected to submit its recommendations by October 31, 2025.
- ❖ It is covering an award period of five years beginning April 1, 2026.

Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi Commission

- ❖ The Commission, headed by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, is in the process of finalizing the report and is to submit soon.
- ❖ This Commission is tasked to examine the issues plaguing NRI marriages and strengthen the legal framework concerning international public law and private laws.

- ❖ The Commission has suggested stringent measures to address grave issues such as abandonment of children and wives, impounding of passports, extradition, custody of children, and ill-treatment of wives in NRI marriages.
- ❖ The Commission also examined the 2019 bill on the registration of marriages of NRIs and the Foreign Marriage Act.

Maratha Military Landscapes of India



- ❖ The Ministry of Culture has put forward the 'Maratha Military Landscape' for consideration in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the 2024-25 cycle.
- ❖ It is encompassing a total of 12 components in this submission.
- ❖ These includes the very iconic forts such as Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohagad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The inception of Maratha military ideology dates back to the 17th century during the reign of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji in 1670 and continued through subsequent rules until Peshwa rule until 1818.
- ❖ Currently, India is home to 42 World Heritage Sites, with 34 being cultural sites, seven natural sites, and one mixed site.


Advocate-on-record (AoR) 2024

- ❖ The Supreme Court has designated 56 lawyers and advocate-on-record (AoR) as senior advocates.
- ❖ These 56 includes the 11 women and 34 first-generation lawyers.

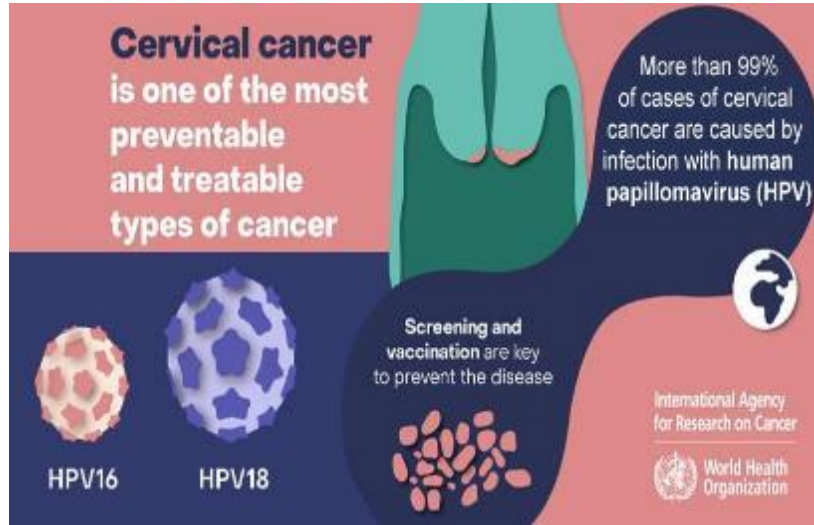
- ❖ The Supreme Court had until now given Senior Advocate status to only 14 women - including two retired judges.
- ❖ Besides this, the top court also gets 198 new AoRs.
- ❖ According to the rules framed by the Supreme Court under Article 145 of the Constitution, only advocates designated as advocate-on-record can file cases in the top court.
- ❖ Supreme Court conducts AoR examinations twice a year.
- ❖ The first female lawyer to be made a Senior Advocate by the Supreme Court was Justice Indu Malhotra.

Indian Army's New Fitness Policy

- ❖ The Indian army has brought a new fitness policy in view of the “declining physical standards among officers”.
- ❖ The new policy is aimed at bringing consistency in the testing procedure and addressing issues of officers being physically unfit or obese amid the rising threat of lifestyle diseases.
- ❖ The rules at present require quarterly conducting of Battle Physical Efficiency Test (BPET) and Physical Proficiency Test (PPT).
- ❖ If the tests are failed after the improvement period, then punitive actions under Army Regulation (AR) 15 and Army Act 22 will be taken against the personnel.

THE NEW RULES				
Age group: 28 to 32 years				
Height	Weight			
	Min	Ideal	Max	
170	55.8	62.0	68.2	
172	57.2	63.5	69.9	
174	59.0	65.5	72.1	
176	60.3	67.0	73.7	
178	61.7	68.5	75.4	
180	63.5	70.5	77.6	
				
Age group: 33 to 37 years				
Height	Weight			
	Min	Ideal	Max	
170	57.6	64	70.4	
172	59	65.5	72	
174	61	67.5	74	
176	62.1	69	76	
178	63.5	70.5	78	
180	65.3	72.5	80	
Age group: 43 to 47 years				
Height	Weight			
	Min	Ideal	Max	
170	59	65	71.5	
172	60	66.5	73.2	
174	62	68.5	75.4	
176	63	70	77	
178	65	72	79.2	
180	66.6	74	81.4	
Age group: 38 to 42 years				
Height	Weight			
	Min	Ideal	Max	
170	58.1	64.5	71	
172	59.4	66	72.6	
174	61.2	68	74.8	
176	62.6	69.5	76.6	
178	64	71.5	78.7	
180	66	73	80.3	
Age group: 48 and above				
Height	Weight			
	Min	Ideal	Max	
170	59	65.5	72.1	
172	60.8	67.5	74.3	
174	62.1	69	75.9	
176	63.9	71	78.1	
178	65.3	72.5	79.8	
180	67.1	74.5	82	

Cervical cancer vaccination



- ❖ Interim budget announced the government's initiative to promote cervical cancer vaccination among girls aged 9 to 14.
- ❖ This will involve the administration of the HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccine.
- ❖ This vaccine is designed to offer protection against specific strains of cervical cancer.
- ❖ Indian population of 511.4 million women aged 15 years and older who are potentially susceptible to the disease.
- ❖ Every year 1,23,907 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 77,348 die from the disease.
- ❖ Cervical cancer ranks as the second most frequent cancer among women in India.

Health cover under AYUSH



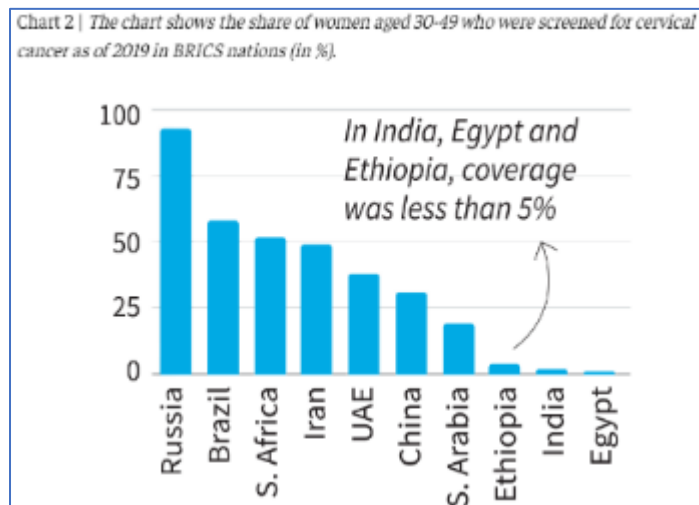
- ❖ Insurance regulator IRDAI has set April 1 as deadline for insurers to include the AYUSH treatment under health covers.

- ❖ The insurance regulator has asked general insurers to put Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) at par with other medical treatments in their health insurance policies.
- ❖ The guidelines must include quality standards and procedure for enrolling AYUSH hospitals or day care centres as network providers for cashless treatment.

UGC's Draft De-Reservation Guidelines

- ❖ The University Grants Commission's (UGC) recent draft guidelines suggests that reserved posts could be de reserved in "exceptional cases".
- ❖ The chapter states that while there is a general ban on the dereservation of reserved faculty vacancies in the case of direct recruitment, in exceptional circumstances, it can be done if a university can provide adequate justification.
- ❖ In this context, direct recruitment means the process of appointing teachers by inviting applications after publicly advertising the posts.
- ❖ Dereservation, on the other hand, means opening up faculty positions that were originally reserved for specific categories (SC, ST, OBC, EWS candidates) to applicants belonging to the general category if those positions remain vacant despite efforts to fill them.
- ❖ The University Grants Commission already has guidelines for implementing reservations, issued in 2006.

Cervical Cancer Among Indian Women



- ❖ Breast, oral and cervical cancer accounted for 32 per cent of the new cases in India.
- ❖ India reported over 14.13 lakh new cancer cases and 9.16 lakh deaths in 2022.



- ❖ Cancer cases in women marginally outnumbered those in men with 7,22,138, of them affected compared to 6,91,178 men.
- ❖ The top five cancers among Indian women were found to be those of breast, cervix, ovary, mouth and colorectum.
- ❖ The top five cancers among men were those of the oral cavity, lung, oesophagus, colorectum and stomach.
- ❖ Only 1% of women are being screened for cervical cancer in India.
- ❖ Many southern States and select States in the Northeast have shown initiative in testing more women.
- ❖ In Tamil Nadu, for instance, 7% of women said that they were screened for cervical cancer and 3.8% for breast cancer.
- ❖ This was the highest among the two types across States.
- ❖ Kerala, Mizoram, Manipur and Maharashtra also crossed the 1% mark under these two types.
- ❖ In Andhra Pradesh, 5% of women said that they were screened for oral cancer, the highest for this type of cancer across States.
- ❖ On the other hand, only 0.1% of women were screened for any type of cancer in West Bengal, the lowest in India.
- ❖ Gujarat too performed poorly with 0.2%.
- ❖ Altogether in India, the share of women screened for cervical, breast, and oral cancer stood at 1.2%, 0.6% and 0.7%, respectively, as of 2019-21.
- ❖ In contrast, the share of women screened for cervical cancer in advanced economies such as Sweden, Ireland, the U.S. and the U.K. was more than 70%.
- ❖ Russia led the list with 93%, followed by 58% in Brazil, and 52% in South Africa.
- ❖ In India, Egypt and Ethiopia, coverage was less than 5%.

RoSCTL Scheme extension

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) for export of Apparel/Garments and Made ups up to 31st March 2026.
- ❖ It will make the textile sector competitive by rebating all taxes/levies which are currently not being rebated under any other mechanism.
- ❖ RoSCTL was offered for embedded state and central duties and taxes that are not refunded through Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- ❖ It was available only for garments and made ups.
- ❖ It was introduced by the Ministry of Textiles.

List of state taxes and levies that will be refunded	List of Central taxes and levies that will be refunded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAT on transportation fuel. • Captive Power. • Mandi Tax. • Electricity Duty. • Stamp Duty on all the Export Documents. • SGST levied on inputs of production of cotton (raw) like fertilizers, pesticides. • Any other kind of product purchases made from unregistered dealers. • The material used for the transport sector. • The Coal used for production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central excise duty on fuel used in transportation • Embedded CGST paid on inputs like pesticides, fertilizers. • Any other material purchases from unregistered dealers. • Inputs for the transport sector and • CGST and compensation Cess on Coal used in the production of electricity

Hamara Samvidhan Hamara Samman

- ❖ Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar will inaugurate a yearlong pan India campaign 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman'.
- ❖ The campaign aims to reaffirm India's collective commitment to the principles enshrined in the Constitution and celebrate the shared values that bind the nation.
- ❖ This nationwide initiative envisages to instil a sense of pride and responsibility to uphold the ideals outlined in the constitutional framework.

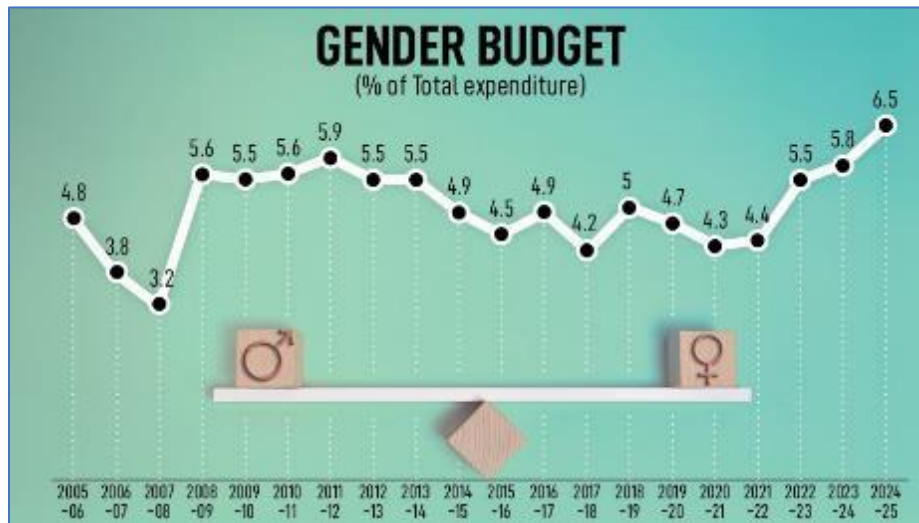
1st Survey Vessel - INS Sandhayak



- ❖ The Indian Navy commissioned its latest survey vessel, Sandhayak.
- ❖ It is the first in a series of four Survey Vessel (Large) ships.

- ❖ The primary purpose of the ship is to conduct comprehensive coastal and deep-water Hydrographic Surveys for Port and Harbour approaches, as well as determining navigational channels and routes.
- ❖ The vessel is also equipped to gather oceanographic and geophysical data, serving both defence and civil applications.
- ❖ This ship is re-incarnated in its present avatar from erstwhile Sandhayak, which was decommissioned in 2021.

Highest ever Gender Budget – 2024



- ❖ A separate statement of the Union budget provides an estimate of budgetary allocations and expenditure targeted towards women and girls.
- ❖ The practice of issuing an annual gender budgeting statement (GBS) as part of the Union budget began in 2005-06.
- ❖ A charter on gender budget cells (GBCs) to be set up across the various ministries was issued in 2007.
- ❖ This year, the total allocation under the gender budget stands at ₹three lakh crores, which is almost 6.5% of the total expenditure.
- ❖ This is an increase of almost 40% over the gender budget for the previous year, and the highest increase in the last decade.
- ❖ 87% of this increase in Gender Budget over last year is owing to increased allocations for women and girls by 7 Ministries/Departments.
- ❖ Nearly 35% of the total gender budget, or ₹one lakh crore, has been allocated towards the MGNREGA.
- ❖ The second biggest contribution of nearly ₹40,000 crore, or close to 13% of the gender budget comes from the Ministry of Education.

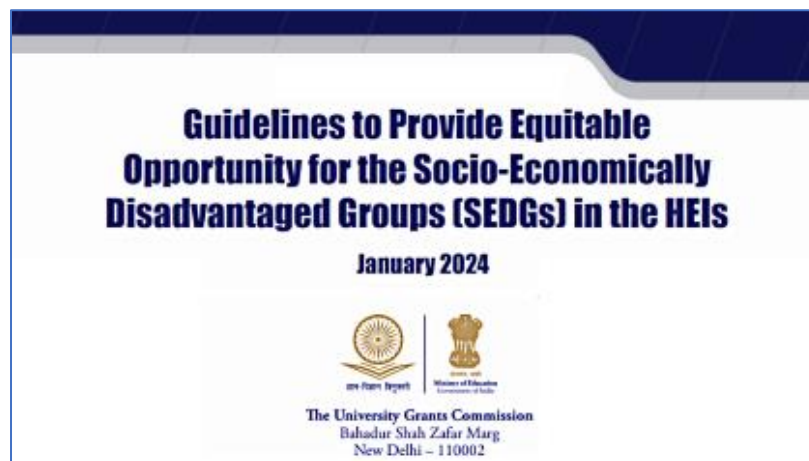
- ❖ The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation's Jal Jeevan Scheme's allocation at ₹36,000 crore.
- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's schemes at about ₹35,000 crores.
- ❖ Both make up a further 11%-12% each of the gender budget.
- ❖ The PM Awas Yojana (Urban)'s allocation of about ₹26,000 crore makes up a further 8.5% of the gender budget.
- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development will be receiving 6.6% of the gender budget.

India Energy Week 2024

- ❖ The second edition of India Energy Week was held in Goa.
- ❖ It is the India's largest and only all-encompassing energy exhibition and conference, bringing together the entire energy value chain, and serves as a catalyst for India's energy transition goals.
- ❖ Saudi Aramco, one of the largest energy majors, is a sponsor for the event.

UGC - Equal opportunities in higher education

- ❖ University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued guidelines for Higher Education Institutions.
- ❖ It aims to provide 'Equitable Opportunities to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in Higher Education Institutions.



- ❖ Some key steps are:
 - Flexibility for learning and earning
 - Identify on-campus part-time work
 - Promote Earn while Learn



- Transparent selection process
- Collaboration for funding
- Weightage in assessment and accreditation.
- ❖ Dedicated SEDGs cells shall be set up in all to ensure that students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) have access to inclusive, equal, and quality higher education.

Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) for another three years till FY2025-26.
- ❖ AHIDF will be implemented under the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) with an outlay of ₹29,610.25 crores.
- ❖ The scheme aims to incentivise investments in dairy processing, meat processing, product diversification, animal feed plants, breed multiplication farms, animal waste to wealth management (agri-waste management), veterinary vaccines and drug production facilities.
- ❖ The government will provide a 3% interest subvention for eight years, including two years of moratorium for a loan up to 90% from the scheduled bank and NCDC, NABARD and NDDB.

GHAR Portal

- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed the “Track Child Portal”.
- ❖ It enables tracking of the missing and found children in all States/UTs including Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, North Eastern States and Jharkhand.
- ❖ Further, a portal namely GHAR - GO Home and Re-Unite (Portal for Restoration and Repatriation of Child) has been developed and launched by NCPCR.
- ❖ Digital tracking and monitoring of children is used for who are in the Juvenile Justice system and have to be repatriated to another Country/State/District.

Employee Rating Survey

- ❖ The Employee's Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has begun sending a survey on mobile devices in India.
- ❖ The survey is being sent via SMS, WhatsApp and even e-mails.
- ❖ The survey includes a questionnaire which has questions about the recipients' workplaces and support they provide to female workers.

- ❖ The survey also asks the recipients to rate their workplaces and asks about facilities such as late-night transportation, internal committee for handling sexual harassment complaints, childcare centres and more.
- ❖ “The employers’ rating survey aims to help us gauge the progress and efforts of employers based on specific facilities.

Law Commission Report on Public Property Damage

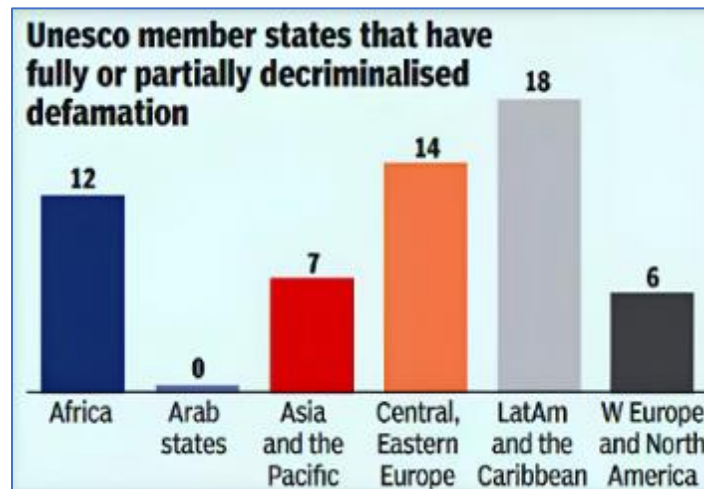


- ❖ The law panel, headed by retired Justice Rituraj Awasthi, proposed stringent bail provisions for those involved in damaging public property.
- ❖ It recommended that people involved in damaging public property should get bail only after depositing money equivalent to the loss caused by them.
- ❖ The Commission recommended amendments to the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984.
- ❖ It also recommended a separate law to tackle the issue of prolonged wilful obstruction of public property.

The Law of Criminal Defamation Report

- ❖ The 22nd Law Commission of India has submitted its Report No. 285 titled “The Law of Criminal Defamation” to the Government.
- ❖ It has recommended that criminal defamation should be retained within the scheme of criminal laws in India.
- ❖ The right to reputation is derived from Article 21 of the Constitution that guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.
- ❖ The whole jurisprudence around the law on criminal defamation has the essence of protecting one’s reputation and its facets.

- ❖ Noting that it could be argued that criminal prosecution for defamatory statements stands opposed to the freedom of speech and expression.
- ❖ Speech ought to be illegal only where it is meant to do substantial harm and when such harm materialises.
- ❖ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 has added a provision of community service as an additional punishment.



Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar program

- ❖ The Centre announces a new project aimed at highlighting the cultural richness of villages across the nation.
- ❖ The initiative, known as "Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar", seeks to explore the life, history, and ethos of Indian villages.
- ❖ As a crucial component of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping, the project reflects the central government's commitment to document and map the cultural diversity inherent in villages across the country.



Tribal Affairs Amendment Bill 2024

BOOST FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS
▶ 4 of 13 PVTGs in state – Pauri Bhuyan, Chuktia Bhunjia, Bondo and Mankidia – who did not find place in the ST list, will be included now. The rest 9 groups are already in the ST list
▶ As per the Bill, Muka Dora, Mooka Dora, Nuka Dora, Nooka Dora in Koraput, Nabarangapur, Rayagada and Malkangiri districts will be declared the 63rd community in the state ST list
▶ Konda Reddy, Konda Reddi will form a separate 64th community in the ST list
▶ Tamadia and Tamudia, listed as SCs, will be shifted to the ST list. They will be considered a sub-group of Bhumij

- ❖ Rajya Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order Amendment Bill, 2024 and Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order Amendment Bill, 2024.
- ❖ It cleared the way for the addition of several new communities to the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha.
- ❖ It also helps to inclusion of synonyms and phonetic variations of existing tribes in the ST lists of both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- ❖ Among the additions were notably seven Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) (a subset of STs) - four in Odisha and three in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ In Odisha, the PVTG communities added are
 - Pauri Bhuyan and Paudi Bhuyan as synonyms of the Bhuyan tribe;
 - The Chuktia Bhunjia as a synonym of the Bhunjia tribe;
 - The Bondo as a sub-tribe of the Bondo Poraja tribe; and
 - The Mankidia as a synonym for the Mankirdia tribe.
- ❖ In Andhra Pradesh, the PVTG communities included were
 - Bondo Porja and Khond Porja as synonyms of the Porja tribe and
 - The Konda Savaras as a synonym for the Savaras tribe.

Guidelines for Green Hydrogen in Steel Sector

- ❖ These guidelines are named Scheme Guidelines for implementation of Pilot projects for use of Green Hydrogen in the Steel Sector.
- ❖ Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) will implement pilot projects in the Steel Sector.

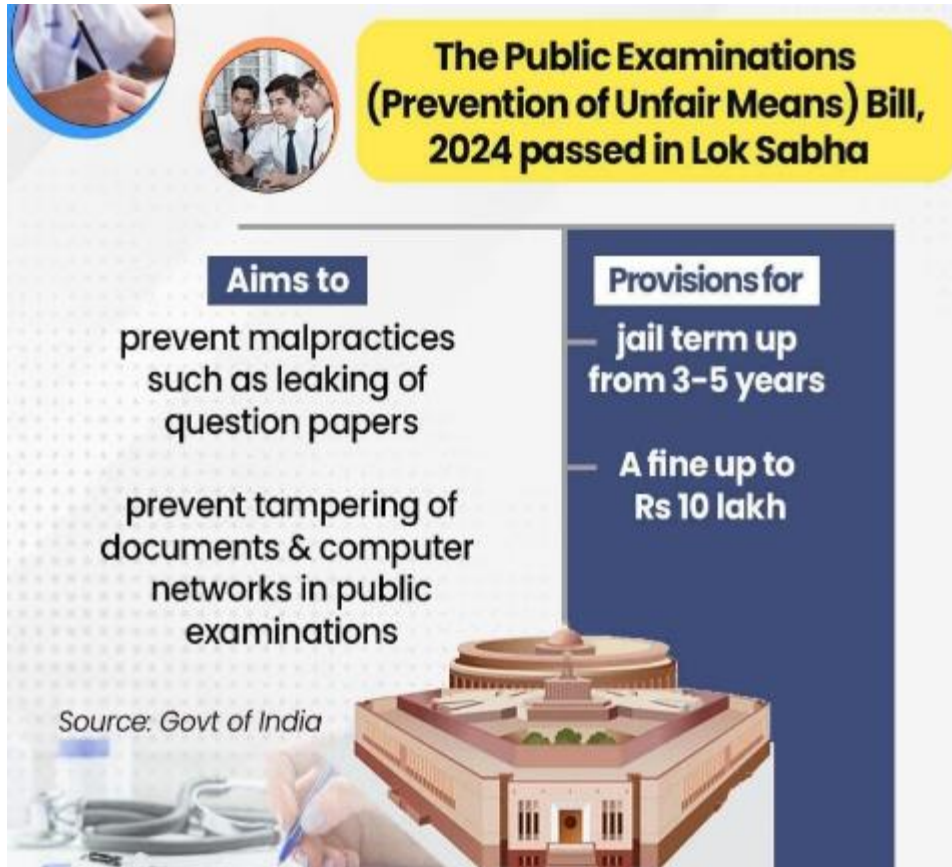
- ❖ It aims to replace fossil fuels and fossil fuel-based feedstock with Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.
- ❖ These pilot projects will be implemented through the Ministry of Steel and the Implementing Agencies nominated under this Scheme.
- ❖ Three areas have been identified as thrust areas for the pilot projects in the steel sector.
- ❖ They are
 - Use of Hydrogen in Direct Reduced Ironmaking process;
 - Use of Hydrogen in Blast Furnace; and
 - Substitution of fossil fuels with Green Hydrogen in a gradual manner.
- ❖ The scheme will also support pilot projects involving any other innovative use of hydrogen for reducing carbon emissions in iron and steel production.



Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024

- ❖ The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, was introduced in Lok Sabha.
- ❖ The Bill aims to prevent “unfair means” in order to “bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examinations system”.
- ❖ Section 3 of the Bill lists at least 15 actions that amount to using unfair means in public examinations “for monetary or wrongful gain”.
- ❖ These acts include:
 - Leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof” and colluding in such leakage;
 - Accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority”;

- Tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets”;
- Providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorised person during a public examination”, and
- Directly or indirectly assisting the candidate” in a public examination.
- ❖ Section 9 of the Bill states that all offences shall be cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable.
- ❖ Punishment for “any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences” can be three to five years in prison, and a fine up to Rs 10 lakh.



The infographic features a yellow header with the title "The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 passed in Lok Sabha". Below this, it is divided into two main sections: "Aims to" and "Provisions for". The "Aims to" section lists two points: "prevent malpractices such as leaking of question papers" and "prevent tampering of documents & computer networks in public examinations". The "Provisions for" section lists two points: "jail term up from 3-5 years" and "A fine up to Rs 10 lakh". The infographic also includes a source citation "Source: Govt of India" and a small illustration of the Indian Parliament building at the bottom.

Bharat Ratna 2024

- ❖ Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, alongside agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan, will be conferred the Bharat Ratna.
- ❖ Earlier, former Bihar chief minister Karpoori Thakur, and former deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani were announced to be conferred with India's highest civilian honour.

- ❖ This year's five recipients surpass the four awarded in 1999, marking the highest number of Bharat Ratnas awarded in a single year.
- ❖ Advani served as both the home minister and deputy Prime Minister under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee from 1999 to 2004.
- ❖ PV Narasimha Rao, a Telugu leader, served a full five-year term as prime minister from 1991 to 1996.
- ❖ He is widely lauded for his pivotal role in introducing economic reforms.
- ❖ Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan is known for his significant contributions to agriculture and the welfare of farmers.



India's Oil demand 2030

- ❖ India's crude oil demand growth is expected to overtake China's by 2027.
- ❖ India's oil demand is expected to grow at a remarkable 3.7% average annual rate through 2030.
- ❖ It is significantly surpassing the global average of 1.1%.

- ❖ Its domestic production is projected to decrease by 22 per cent.
- ❖ But its oil demand increases of almost 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) between 2023 and 2030.
- ❖ India currently has a strategic crude oil reserve capacity of 5.33 million tonnes spread across three locations.



Amendment Bills for Jammu and Kashmir



- ❖ The Parliament approved the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024.
- ❖ The Bill aims at empowering Pahari Ethnic Group, Padari Tribes, Koli and Gadda Brahmin by providing the Scheduled Tribe status.
- ❖ The Upper House has also cleared the Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024.
- ❖ The Local Bodies Bill-2024 seeks to provide reservation to Other Backward Classes in panchayats and municipalities in Jammu and Kashmir.

- ❖ It also brings consistency in the local body laws of the Union territory with the provisions of the Constitution.
- ❖ Currently, there is no provision for reservation of seats for OBCs in panchayats and municipalities in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The Scheduled Castes Order Amendment Bill, adds Valmiki community as a synonym of Chura, Balmiki, Bhangi, and Mehtar communities in the list of Scheduled Castes in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The bill seeks to amend the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order of 1956.

Kilkari Programme

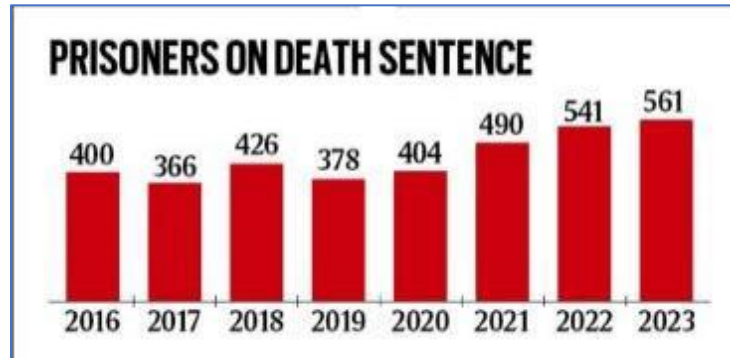


- ❖ The Kilkari programme, a Mobile Health (m-health) initiative, was recently launched for beneficiaries in local content in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- ❖ 'Kilkari' (meaning 'a baby's gurgle'), is a centralized interactive voice response (IVR) based mobile health service.
- ❖ It delivers free, weekly, time appropriate 72 AV messages about pregnancy, child birth, childcare to the mobile phones of beneficiaries.
- ❖ Currently Kilkari is under implementation in 18 states/UTs.

Annual Death Penalty Report 2023

- ❖ The report titled, 'Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics 2023', was released by Project 39A, an advocacy group.
- ❖ Only one death sentence was confirmed by a High Court in 2023, marking the lowest rate by the appellate courts since 2000.
- ❖ The Karnataka High Court confirmed a death sentence in a murder simpliciter case.
- ❖ 2023 also saw the Supreme Court not confirming any death sentences, only the second time since 2021.

- ❖ Notably, there has been a 15% decrease in the rate of disposal of death penalty confirmation proceedings at the High Courts in 2023.
- ❖ 57 death penalty cases are disposed in 2023, compared with 68 cases in 2022.
- ❖ There was a 45.71% increase in the number of prisoners under death sentence by the end of December 2023, from that in 2016.
- ❖ Similar to the last five years, the majority of death penalty cases in trial courts are involved crimes related to the sexual offences.



Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana

Cabinet Decisions: 09 February 2024

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)

- ◆ Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana for formalization of fisheries sector and supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises
- ◆ Investment of over **Rs. 6,000 crores** over next 4 years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 in all States/Union Territories

Benefits

- ◆ Creation of National Fisheries Digital Platform to provide **40 lakh small and micro-enterprises** work based identities
- ◆ Support to **6.4 lakh micro-enterprises** and **5,500 fisheries cooperatives**, providing access to institutional credit

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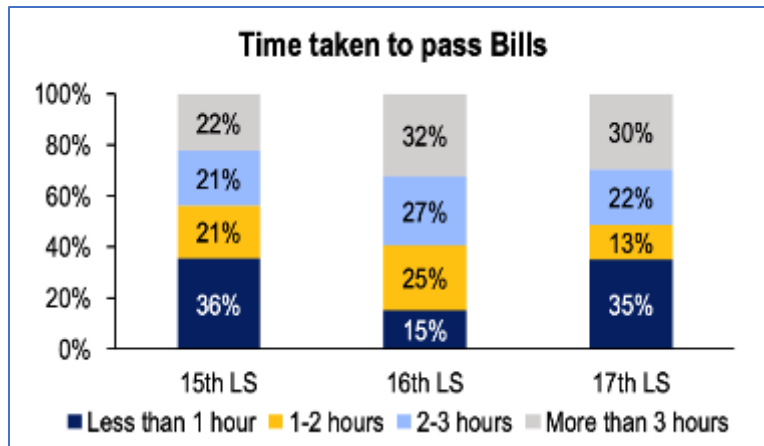


- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)".
- ❖ It is a Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada scheme.
- ❖ It will aid the formalization of the fisheries sector and supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises.
- ❖ India's total fish output stood at 174 lakh tonnes in 2022-23.
- ❖ India is the third largest fish producer in the world, contributing 8% to total global fish production.

Sitting days of 17th Lok Sabha

- ❖ The 17th Lok Sabha held its sessions between June 2019 and February 2024.
- ❖ In these five years, Lok Sabha functioned for 88% of its scheduled time, while Rajya Sabha worked for 73%.
- ❖ The 17th Lok Sabha held 274 sittings.
- ❖ Only four previous Lok Sabhas have had fewer sittings.
- ❖ All of which were dissolved before completing the five-year term.
- ❖ The fewest sittings in this Lok Sabha were held in 2020 (33 days), amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ 11 out of the 15 sessions held during this Lok Sabha were adjourned early.
- ❖ As a result, 40 scheduled sittings did not take place (13% of scheduled sittings).
- ❖ During the 17th Lok Sabha, MPs were suspended on 206 instances, across both Houses of Parliament.
- ❖ In Winter Session 2023, 146 MPs were suspended for serious misconduct in the House.
- ❖ 179 Bills (excluding Finance and Appropriation Bills) were passed.
- ❖ The Ministries of Finance and Home Affairs piloted the highest number of Bills (15% each), followed by Law and Justice (9%), and Health and Family Welfare (9%).
- ❖ 16% of Bills were referred to Committees for detailed scrutiny.
- ❖ This is lower than corresponding figures for the previous three Lok Sabhas.
- ❖ Four Bills are set to lapse with the dissolution of this Lok Sabha.
- ❖ This is the lowest number among all Lok Sabhas so far.
- ❖ 729 Private Members' Bills (PMBs) were introduced in the 17th Lok Sabha, which is higher than all previous Lok Sabhas, except the 16th.

- ❖ However, only two PMBs were discussed.
- ❖ During the same period, 705 PMBs were introduced in Rajya Sabha, and 14 were discussed.
- ❖ Till date, only 14 PMBs have been passed and received assent.
- ❖ None have been passed in both Houses since 1970.
- ❖ No adjournment motions were taken up either in the 16th or the 17th Lok Sabha.
- ❖ Two such motions were discussed in the 15th and seven in the 14th Lok Sabha.



Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024



- ❖ The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 proposing changes to the Act was moved and cleared in both houses of the Parliament within a span of 72 hours.
- ❖ The legislation weakens the original Act that came into force 50 years ago.

- ❖ Central and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) are based on the 1974 Act.
- ❖ The amended version of the Act will currently apply to Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Union territories.
- ❖ The original Act, passed in 1974, is applicable in 25 States.
- ❖ The most important change is that it removes the provisions of imprisonment for several violations, deemed “minor”, and replaces them with fines, to the tune of ₹10,000 extending up to ₹15 lakh.
- ❖ The amendments also give the Centre greater authority to over-ride SPCB in some instances.
- ❖ Operating or establishing an industrial unit without SPCB consent can still land you in jail for six years along with a fine.
- ❖ The Bill also adds that the Centre may issue guidelines for the grant, refusal, or cancellation of consent granted by the SPCB.
- ❖ It also penalises tampering with monitoring devices used in determining whether any industry or treatment plant can be set up.

Electoral Bonds Struck Down

Pulling the plug

Major takeaways from the Supreme Court verdict striking down the electoral bonds scheme:

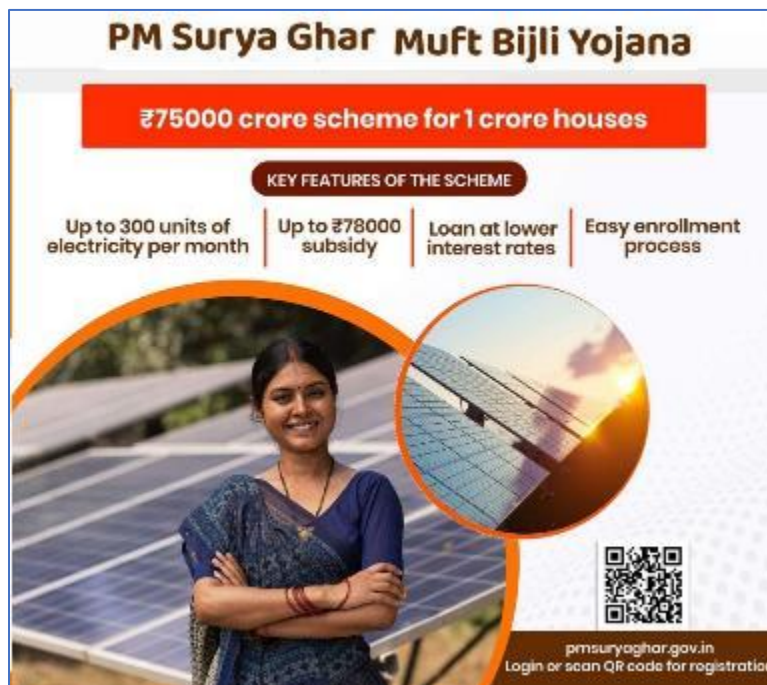
- Issuance of electoral bonds to be stopped
- SBI to submit full details of bonds purchased by donors and subsequently encashed by political parties since April 12, 2019 to the Election Commission of India by March 6
- ECI to publish the entire information given by SBI on its website by March 13



- ❖ The Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds scheme - on grounds it violated citizens' right to information, was unconstitutional.
- ❖ It may also lead to quid pro quo arrangements between the political parties and donors.
- ❖ The court ordered the State Bank of India to stop issuing bonds and provide details of donations made to the Election Commission.

- ❖ The scheme was launched in 2018.
- ❖ It is allowed political parties to not disclose contributions received via this route, meaning companies could make unlimited fund transfers.
- ❖ According to the Election Commission data, 28,030 electoral bonds worth ₹ 16,437.63 crore were sold between 2016 and 2022.
- ❖ The BJP got ₹210 crore in 2017-2018 at the start of the scheme and raked in ₹1,294.14 crore in 2022-23.
- ❖ The Indian National Congress is far below at ₹171.02 crore while the All-India Trinamool Congress (AITC) received ₹325 crore and the DMK received ₹185 crore in 2022-2023.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana



The poster for the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana features a woman standing in front of solar panels. The text on the poster includes: "PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana", "₹75000 crore scheme for 1 crore houses", "KEY FEATURES OF THE SCHEME", "Up to 300 units of electricity per month", "Up to ₹78000 subsidy", "Loan at lower interest rates", "Easy enrollment process", a QR code, and the website "pmsuryaghar.gov.in" with the instruction "Login or scan QR code for registration".

- ❖ The Union govt announced the launching the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.
- ❖ This project will be with an investment of over Rs. 75,000 crores.
- ❖ It aims to light up 1 crore households by providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month.
- ❖ For solar panels with capacities up to 2 kW, households can avail of a subsidy of Rs. 30,000 per kilowatt, and Rs 18,000 per kW for additional capacity up to 3 kW.

Renaming of saving schemes

- ❖ The central government renamed the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana to Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, 2024, and the Post Office Time Deposit Scheme to the National Savings Time Deposit Scheme with revised interest rates.
- ❖ This Scheme may be called the Sukanya Samriddhi Account (Amendment) Scheme, 2024. It shall be deemed to have come into force on January 1, 2024.
- ❖ The deposits made in the account on or after the 1st day of January 2024 shall earn interest at the rate of 8.2 per cent.



Sukanya Samriddhi Account (SSA) Scheme

Main features:

- (i) Account can be opened with a minimum amount of Rs 250.
- (ii) Account can be opened by a parent/guardian of a girl child up to the age of 10 years. Only one account is permissible for a girl child and not more than 2 accounts in a family.
- (iii) Minimum of Rs 250 and maximum Rs 1.5 lakh can be deposited in a year.
- (iv) The account stands for 21 years.
- (v) An Amount up to 50% of the balance can be withdrawn by the girl child after attaining the age of 18 years.
- (vi) The rate of interest in this scheme is very attractive
- (vii) The account can be transferred anywhere in India and also from Bank to Post Office and Post Office to Bank.

Contact your nearest Post Office to open Sukanya Samriddhi Account.

ASI 2020-21 and ASI 2021-22

- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the results for the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- ❖ These surveys cover factories employing 10 or more workers using power and those employing 20 or more workers without power.
- ❖ At the aggregate level, gross value added grew by 8.8 per cent in 2020-21 (in current prices), after registering a fall the year before.
- ❖ Growth in value added was driven by a sharper fall in input (at 4.07 per cent) than output (which fell by 1.9 per cent).
- ❖ In 2021-22, as the economy rebounded, value added grew by 26.6 per cent, with output growing at 35.4 per cent.

- ❖ In both these years, the registered organised manufacturing sector grew at a faster pace than the unorganised sector.
- ❖ The industries that drove growth during 2021-22 were manufacture of basic metal, coke and refined petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles, and chemicals.
- ❖ The value added by these industries grew by 34.4 per cent.
- ❖ The estimates of employment show that during the first year of the pandemic, total persons engaged fell marginally by 3.2 per cent.

ANNUAL SURVEY OF INDUSTRIES 2020-21 & 2021-22				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	CAGR For 2021-22
Number Of Factories	2,46,504	2,50,454	2,49,987	0.7
Number Of Workers	1,30,58,156	1,25,94,563	1,36,09,931	2.1
Number Of Employees	1,65,68,526	1,60,25,118	1,71,51,172	1.7
FINANCIALS				
Wages To Workers	2,28,90,520	2,22,61,548	2,64,55,930	7.5
Total Emoluments	4,91,72,897	4,83,89,031	5,60,82,801	6.8
Net Fixed Capital Formation	1,43,61,795	32,25,819	30,42,540	-54.0
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	4,16,71,537	3,13,61,805	3,30,07,225	-11.0
Profits	4,69,47,269	6,14,05,752	9,50,71,368	42.3
<i>Value figures in Rs lakh</i>				
<i>Source: MoSPI</i>				

- ❖ It was from 1.66 crore in 2019-20 to 1.6 crore in 2020-21.
- ❖ Employment picked up thereafter, with total persons engaged rising to 1.7 crore in 2021-22 — an increase of 7 per cent.
- ❖ Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, while the labour force participation rate (15 years and above) saw a steady increase, rising from 49.8 per cent to 57.9 per cent.
- ❖ The share of workers that were self-employed rose from 52.2 per cent in 2017-18 to 57.3 per cent in 2022-23.
- ❖ Over the same period, the share of workers in manufacturing declined from 12.1 per cent to 11.4 per cent.

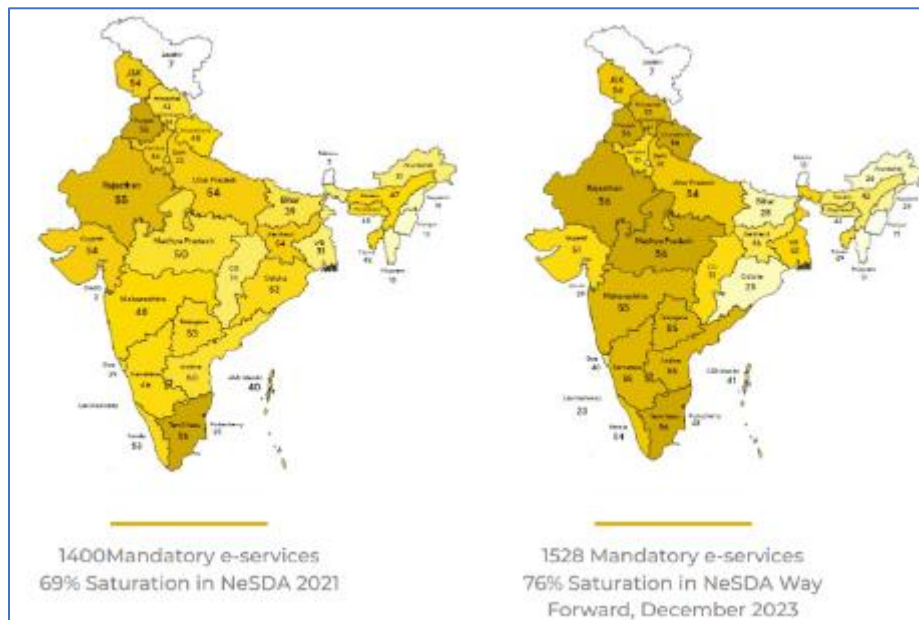
Global Digitalization Milestone

- ❖ The "State of India's Digital Economy Report, 2024," was unveiled by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), a renowned Delhi-based think tank.
- ❖ As per the findings, India has cemented its position as the third-largest digitalized nation in the world.

- ❖ It stands only behind the technological powerhouses of the United States of America (USA) and China.

Top 5 countries in terms of digitalisation of economy		Digitalisation in large states (Top 5)	
Country	CHIPS score	State	CHIPS score
US	65.1	Karnataka	58.7
China	62.3	Maharashtra	52.6
India	39.1	Telangana	50.8
UK	28.8	Gujarat	49.7
Germany	23.8	Haryana	48.6

NeSDA Way Forward Annual Report 2023



- ❖ The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has released the annual NeSDA Way Forward Report 2023.
- ❖ The report highlights the significant progress made by the states and UTs during the year under mandatory e-Services and total e-Services under the NeSDA framework.
- ❖ 76% of mandatory e-services are available, a significant increase from 48% under NeSDA 2019.
- ❖ As per the latest figures, the states and UTs are providing a total of 16,487 e-Services in December, 2023 as against 11,614 in April, 2023.

- ❖ The UT of Jammu and Kashmir tops the list of States/ UTs with maximum numbers 1,117 e-Services.
- ❖ The states of Kerala, Assam and Odisha, besides UT of Jammu and Kashmir, are providing hundred per cent e-Services through their respective unified portals.
- ❖ The tourism sector has the highest saturation for the provision of all mandatory e-services in 23 out of 36 States/UTs.

India's Most Welcoming Region in 2024

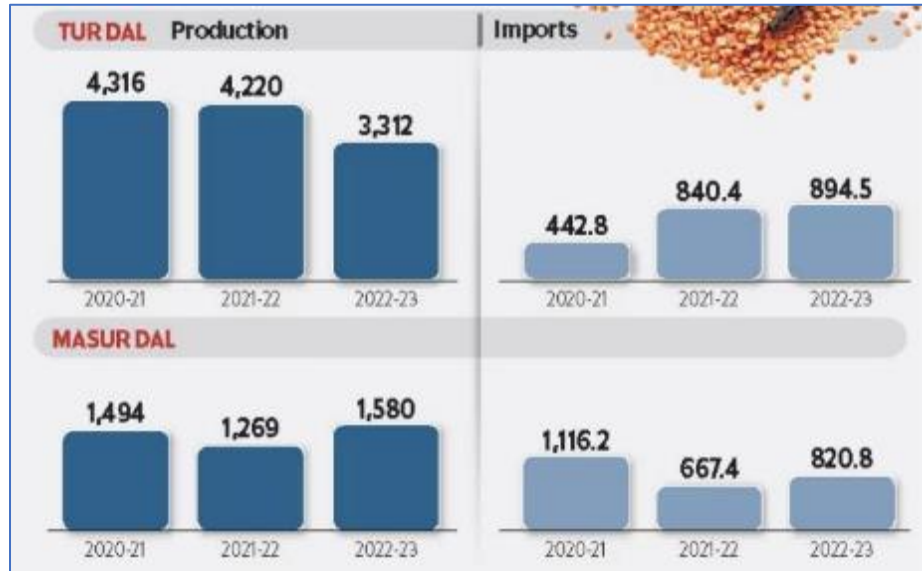


- ❖ The Popular online travel agency Booking.com unveiled its 12th Annual Traveller Review Awards 2024.
- ❖ It highlights the Most Welcoming Regions and Cities in India.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh secured the top spot of the 'Most Welcoming Region in India' category.
- ❖ It is followed by Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand.
- ❖ Mararikulam (Kerala) topped in the list of the ten 'Most Welcoming Cities in India.'
- ❖ It is followed by Jaisalmer (Rajasthan), Bir (Maharashtra) and Leh (Jammu & Kashmir).

Scheme to Boost Pulses Output

- ❖ Union has formulated a new policy to promote domestic cultivation of pulses like lentils and encourage farmers to grow them instead of traditional crops.
- ❖ It aims to boost India's pulses output to attain self-sufficiency and reduce huge annual imports.
- ❖ The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) and National Cooperative Consumers Federation (NCCF) will sign 5-year contracts with farmer to assure procurement at pre-fixed Minimum Support Prices (MSP).

- ❖ A roadmap for self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027 is also revealed.



Definition of Forest - Supreme Court

Verdict on woods

Some of the observations made by the SC over the pleas challenging the 2023 amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

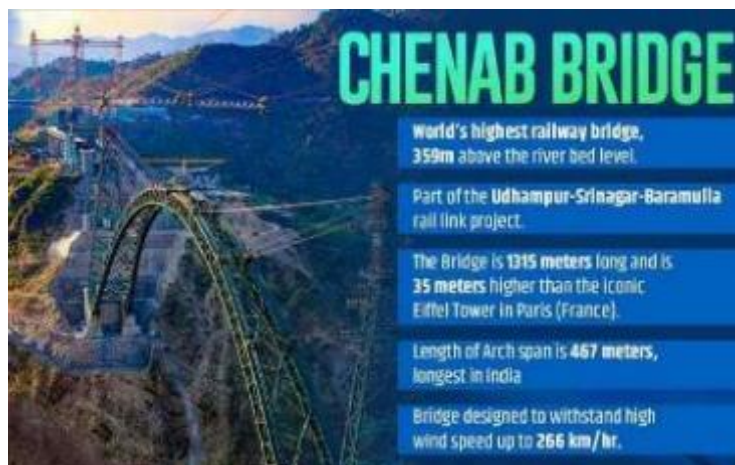


- The “all-encompassing” dictionary meaning will continue to hold field until the States and Union Territories prepare a consolidated record of forest lands
- Environment Ministry should issue a circular in this regard to the States and Union Territories
- Establishment of “zoos or safaris” must have the final approval of the top court

- ❖ The Supreme Court directed that the expression ‘forest’ will continue to have a “broad and all-encompassing” meaning for the time being, and include 1.97 lakh square km of undeclared forest lands.
- ❖ This is held on petitions challenging the amendments introduced in 2023 to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- ❖ Section 1A introduced through the amended Act had “circumscribed or substantially diluted” the definition of forest to two categories — declared forests and lands recorded as forests in ‘government records’ after 1980.

- ❖ The court directed the government for clarity's sake to revert to the “dictionary meaning” of ‘forest’ as upheld in a 1996 Supreme Court decision in the T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad case.
- ❖ The term ‘forest’ had been given a broad meaning by the court then to preserve these green expanses, irrespective of their nature, classification or ownership.
- ❖ It is clarified that the expression ‘forest’ will cover but not be confined to lands recorded as forests in the government records.
- ❖ The Bench further directed that the establishment of “zoos or safaris” by any government or authority should not be consented to without the final approval of the apex court.

World's Highest Railway Bridge



- ❖ The world's highest single-arch railway bridge - Chenab bridge was inaugurated recently.
- ❖ The arch bridge runs between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ It forms a crucial link from Katra to Banihal.
- ❖ It stands at the height of 1,178 feet above the riverbed, making it 35 metres taller than Paris' Eiffel Tower.

Fair and Remunerative Price 2024-25

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, approved ₹340/quintal as the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for sugar season 2024-25 at sugar recovery rate of 10.25%.
- ❖ This is about 8% higher than FRP of sugarcane for the current season 2023-24.
- ❖ The revised FRP will be applicable from October 1, 2024.

- ❖ The payment of FRP across the country is governed by the Sugarcane Control Order, 1966.

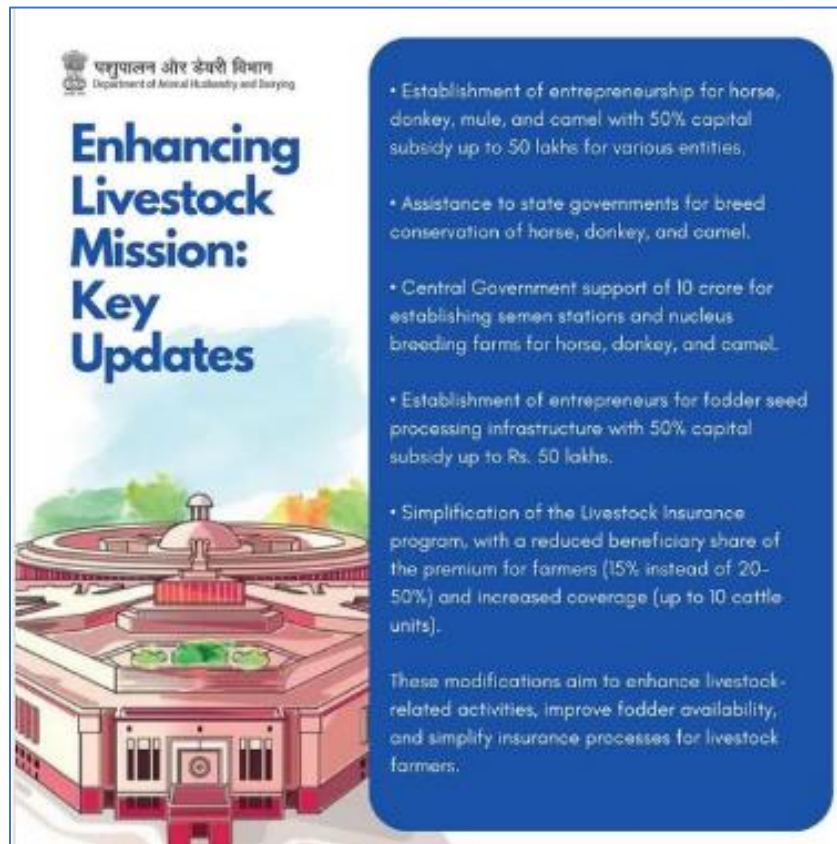


**Sweet Victory
FOR FARMERS**

Fair & Remunerative Price of sugarcane payable by sugar factories for Sugar Season 2024-25

- **FRP fixed at Rs. 340 per quintal** for a basic recovery rate of 10.25%
- **8% higher FRP for 2024-25** than current season
- Benefit **5 crore+ sugarcane farmers** and their families

National Livestock Mission extension



पशुपालन और डेयरी विभाग
Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying

Enhancing Livestock Mission: Key Updates

- Establishment of entrepreneurship for horse, donkey, mule, and camel with 50% capital subsidy up to 50 lakhs for various entities.
- Assistance to state governments for breed conservation of horse, donkey, and camel.
- Central Government support of 10 crore for establishing semen stations and nucleus breeding farms for horse, donkey, and camel.
- Establishment of entrepreneurs for fodder seed processing infrastructure with 50% capital subsidy up to Rs. 50 lakhs.
- Simplification of the Livestock Insurance program, with a reduced beneficiary share of the premium for farmers (15% instead of 20-50%) and increased coverage (up to 10 cattle units).

These modifications aim to enhance livestock-related activities, improve fodder availability, and simplify insurance processes for livestock farmers.

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved further modifications to the National Livestock Mission (NLM), incorporating additional activities to bolster the livestock sector.

- ❖ Individuals, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), Farmer Cooperative Organizations (FCOs), and Section 8 companies can now receive a 50% capital subsidy, up to Rs. 50 lakhs, for establishing entrepreneurship ventures related to horses, donkeys, mules, and camels.
- ❖ State governments will be supported for the conservation of horse, donkey, and camel breeds.
- ❖ The central government will allocate Rs 10 crore for the establishment of semen stations and nucleus breeding farms dedicated to horses, donkeys, and camels.
- ❖ Private companies, startups, SHGs, FPOs, FCOs, JLGs, Farmers Cooperative Societies (FCOs), and Section 8 companies involved in Fodder seed processing infrastructure can avail a 50% capital subsidy.
- ❖ The Livestock Insurance programme has been streamlined, reducing the beneficiary's share of the premium for farmers to 15%.
- ❖ The current rates are 20%, 30%, 40%, and 50%.
- ❖ The remaining premium amount will be shared by the Centre and the State at a ratio of 60:40 for all states and 90:10 in the case of Union Territories.
- ❖ The number of animals eligible for insurance has been increased to 10 cattle units for cattle, sheep, and goats.

100 percent FDI for space sector



Taking Off
EXECUTIVES SAY...

LATEST FDI announcements to accelerate momentum in the satellite sector	ALLOWING 100% automatic FDI in the space sector will further augmented the ecosystem in India
PERMITTING UP to 49% FDI for launch vehicles reflects balancing foreign investment with national security	49% cap for launch vehicles reflects a cautious yet optimistic opening

THIS WILL make the Indian space sector an even more attractive destination for foreign investments

- ❖ The central government approved up to 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) for some activities in the space sector.
- ❖ The FDI in the space sector has been classified into three categories.
- ❖ The first category allows up to 74% FDI under automatic route in satellite manufacturing and operation, satellite data products and ground segment and user segment.

- ❖ In this category, beyond 74% FDI would be cleared via the government route.
- ❖ In the second category, FDI not more than 49% will be allowed through automatic route for launch vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, creation of spaceports for launching and receiving spacecraft.
- ❖ In this category, beyond 49% FDI, these activities would come under government route.
- ❖ In the third category, the cabinet has approved up to 100% in the third category.
- ❖ Available Under automatic route for manufacturing of components and systems or sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user-segment.

Financial assistance for rubber sector



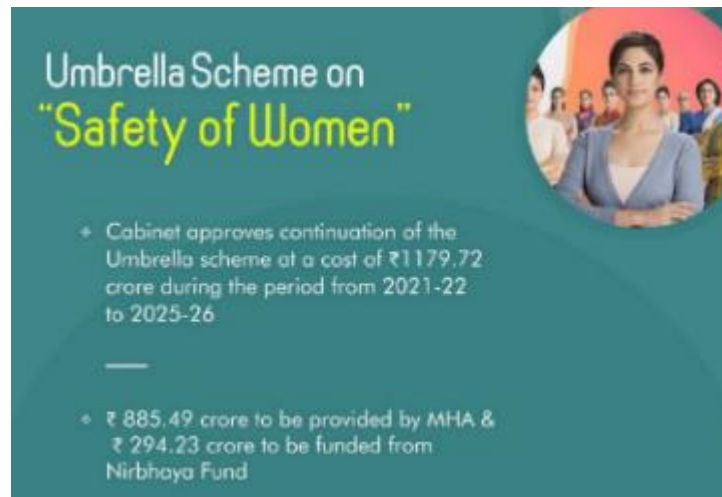
- ❖ The financial assistance for the Rubber sector has been increased by 23% from Rs 576.41 crore to Rs 708.69 crore.
- ❖ This is available for the next 2 financial years (2024-25 and 2025-26).
- ❖ This is held under the 'Sustainable & Inclusive Development of Natural Rubber Sector' scheme.
- ❖ Planting of rubber will be undertaken on 12,000 hectares in traditional areas during 2024-25 and 2025-26 with an outlay of ₹43.50 crore.
- ❖ For this, the rate of assistance has been increased to ₹40,000 per hectare from the earlier ₹25,000 per hectare.

Cybercrime Report

- ❖ India was placed on the 80th position in a report focusing on local threats in the year 2023.
- ❖ Additionally, nearly 34% of users in India were targeted by local threats, amounting to some 74,385,324 local incidents.
- ❖ India's cybersecurity market reached USD 6.06 billion in 2023.

'Safety of Women' 2025-26

- ❖ The Centre has decided to continue its flagship scheme for women safety till 2025-26.
- ❖ According to the latest record of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a total of 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were registered across India in 2022 -- almost 51 FIRs every hour on an average.
- ❖ The figure was 4,28,278 in 2021 and 3,71,503 in 2020.
- ❖ More than 13.13 lakh young girls and women went missing in the country in three years from 2019 to 2021.
- ❖ The highest number of such incidents was reported from Madhya Pradesh, followed by West Bengal.



Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP) 2025-26

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the proposal continuation of the "Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)".
- ❖ It aims to address critical aspects of flood control and anti-erosion measures, for the period spanning 2021-2026.
- ❖ The FMBAP comprises two key components of Flood Management Programme (FMP) and River Management and Border Areas (RMBA).



**CABINET APPROVES
FLOOD MANAGEMENT &
BORDER AREAS PROGRAMME**

Outlay of Rs. 4,100 crore
for 5 years (2021-22 to 2025-26)

COMPONENTS

1. Flood Management Programme:
Outlay of **Rs. 2,940 crore** as Central assistance to states

2. River Management and Border Areas:
Outlay of **Rs. 1,160 crore** for flood control & anti-erosion works on rivers bordering with neighbouring countries

Raisina Dialogue Conference 2024

- ❖ The ninth edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis joined the inauguration session as the chief guest.
- ❖ The Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics.
- ❖ It aims to address the most challenging issues faced by the world.
- ❖ The theme of the 2024 edition is "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create."

Selina John's case

- ❖ The Supreme Court had observed that the rules which penalise women employees for getting married are unconstitutional.
- ❖ It also directed the Union Government to pay Ms. John ₹60 lakh in compensation within eight weeks.
- ❖ A permanent commissioned officer former Lt Selina John of military nursing service (MNS) was removed from service by the army in August 1988.
- ❖ The release order said her job was terminated on the grounds that she got married in April that year and she had obtained a low grade in the annual confidential report (ACR).
- ❖ The rule included in the 1977 army provided that "Termination of appointment in MNS" could be done on three grounds – on the opinion of the medical board to be unfit for service, on getting married, and for misconduct.

Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana

- ❖ It is specially designed for the beneficiaries of PM SVANidhi Yojana.
- ❖ This unique National Entrepreneurship Development Project underlines the government's firm commitment to promote employers across the country.
- ❖ It aims to equip individuals with comprehensive entrepreneurship training, creating job providers rather than job seekers.
- ❖ Under the pilot program, street vendors of 10 big cities of the country will be given a stipend along with training to expand their businesses.



INTERNATIONAL

G77 + China third south summit 2024

- ❖ The 3rd South Summit ended in Kampala, Uganda.
- ❖ It gathered high-level representatives from nearly 100 countries and heads of United Nations agencies.
- ❖ The event held under the theme "Leaving No One Behind".
- ❖ The summit aims to promote South-South cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, sustainable development, climate change, poverty elimination and digital economy.
- ❖ The South Summit is the supreme decision-making body of the Group of 77 (G77).
- ❖ It was established in June 1964.

- ❖ Since the 1990s, China has been coordinating and cooperating with the G77 through the "G77 and China".
- ❖ Although it maintains its identity as G77+China, the forum is currently made up of 134 member countries.

Malaysia's 17th king

- ❖ Billionaire Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar of the southern state of Johor was installed as Malaysia's 17th king.
- ❖ He took the reins from Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of Pahang state.
- ❖ He replaces Al-Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, who will return to lead his home state of Pahang at the end of his five-year tenure as king.
- ❖ The king of Malaysia plays a largely ceremonial role, as administrative power is left to the prime minister and parliament.
- ❖ The monarch is the nominal head of the government and the armed forces, and is held up as the protector of Islam and Malay tradition.



World's First Malaria Vaccine Program for Children

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



Coltan Deposits in Kenya



- ❖ Kenya has confirmed the discovery of its first coltan deposits.
- ❖ Coltan, short for columbite-tantalite, is a valuable mineral that is used in various industries.
- ❖ Tantalum, derived from coltan, is used in the production of capacitors.
- ❖ The global demand for coltan is rapidly increasing, and its price, averaging \$48 per kg, depends on the tantalum content.
- ❖ The Democratic Republic of Congo holds more than 70% of the world's coltan reserves.

Eliminating Industrially Produced Trans Fats

- ❖ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has awarded certificates for progress in eliminating industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFA) to five countries.
- ❖ The recipients were Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.
- ❖ WHO's ambitious goal to entirely eliminate iTFA from the global food supply by the end of 2023 was not fully achieved.
- ❖ In 2023 alone, seven countries – Egypt, Mexico, Moldova, Nigeria, North Macedonia, the Philippines and Ukraine – implemented new best-practice policies to eliminate iTFA.
- ❖ As of now, 53 countries have effective best practice policies to address iTFA in food.
- ❖ These policies are estimated to save approximately 183,000 lives annually.

AN ACTION PACKAGE TO ELIMINATE INDUSTRIALLY-PRODUCED TRANS-FATTY ACIDS					
REPLACE					
REVIEW	PROMOTE	LEGISLATE	ASSESS	CREATE	ENFORCE
dietary sources of industrially-produced trans fats and the landscape for required policy change	the replacement of industrially-produced trans fats with healthier fats and oils	or enact regulatory actions to eliminate industrially-produced trans fats	and monitor trans fat content in the food supply and changes in trans fat consumption in the population	awareness of the negative health impact of TFA among policy-makers, producers, suppliers, and the public	compliance with policies and regulations

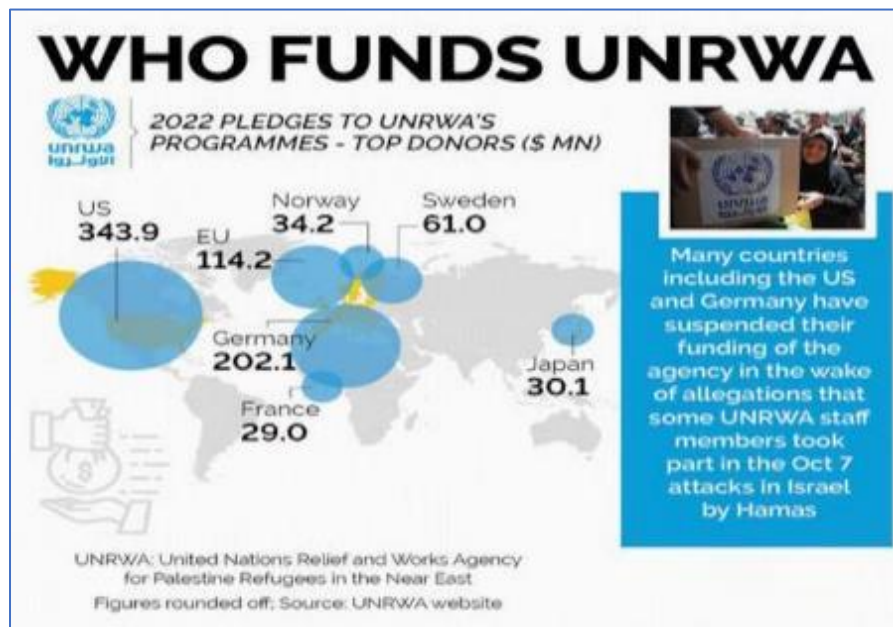
Lake Retba crisis

- ❖ This lake's waters are virtually devoid of life, with the exception of a few microscopic algae and bacteria.
- ❖ Lake Retba, better known as Lac Rose (the Pink Lake), is located around 35km from the city of Dakar, Senegal, Africa.
- ❖ It sits in a depression with a shoreline 6.5 metres below sea level.
- ❖ The lake is isolated from the sea by about 1km of sand dunes.
- ❖ Its fresh water comes from the seasonal water table in the dunes, which are higher than the lake.
- ❖ Thus, the sea provides most of the lake's water and all of its salt.

- ❖ The Pink Lake is one of the main tourist destinations in the Dakar region, primarily because of the pink colour of its waters.



UNRWA Funding suspension



- ❖ The US and eight other Western countries, have decided to pause funding for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).
- ❖ There are two million Palestinians in Gaza are dependent on UNRWA services.
- ❖ The US and eight other Western countries, which together provided more than half of UNRWA's 2022 budget.

- ❖ UNRWA was founded in 1949 to provide aid to about 700,000 Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes in what is now Israel during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.
- ❖ UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions by donor states like the US.
- ❖ It also gets a limited subsidy from the UN, which is used only for administrative costs.

West African bloc ECOWAS



- ❖ The military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS.
- ❖ ECOWAS stands for Economic Community of West African States.
- ❖ All three were suspended from ECOWAS with Niger and Mali facing heavy sanctions.
- ❖ A French military withdrawal from the Sahel has heightened concerns over the conflicts spreading southward to Gulf of Guinea states Ghana, Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast.
- ❖ The military leaders of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger recently united under the banner of the Alliance of Sahel States.

'Widow Year' in China

- ❖ In Chinese culture, the upcoming Year is known as the year of the Dragon, also known as a "Widow Year".
- ❖ A Widow Year in China is a lunar year that does not contain the traditional start of spring, known as Lichun.

- ❖ Lichun is one of the 24 solar terms that divide up the lunar year, marking the coming of the spring season.
- ❖ According Chinese superstitions, Lichun is a time of yang (masculine) energy, and a year without Lichun is a year without yang energy.



UN Regular Budget

- ❖ India has paid USD 32.89 million to the United Nations Regular Budget for 2024.
- ❖ It is joining the "honour roll" of 36 Member States who have paid their regular budget dues in full to the UN on time.
- ❖ India has consistently been among the countries to pay its contributions to the UN budget on time and in full.

Monthly statistical information concerning the number of Member States which paid in full

As at month end	Number of Member States																							
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
January	35	35	41	25	35	34	25	25	25	25	20	23	26	25	26	21	26	31	41	34	37	40	42	39
February		59	65	85	67	69	67	89	87	50	45	47	40	47	53	44	61	50	50	51	45	56	50	54
March		66	81	80	77	79	73	73	87	67	61	56	59	57	65	55	77	55	77	67	59	69	83	84
April		97	96	96	87	89	88	92	79	84	79	76	69	83	73	76	81	75	83	71	75	76	70	59
May		114	104	100	92	107	107	107	85	94	93	90	96	97	85	81	90	79	87	75	87	85	79	85
June		121	109	112	101	105	107	110	43	107	107	103	100	108	93	94	90	85	94	88	89	91	87	92
July		126	113	117	107	109	114	116	46	108	109	113	111	111	107	100	105	90	107	97	97	97	88	107
August		123	120	124	117	118	125	124	125	115	114	122	114	118	107	105	116	97	104	110	94	107	95	112
September		127	123	130	124	127	143	124	126	128	129	134	128	131	119	115	124	112	112	125	105	109	104	122
October		127	125	135	131	134	146	127	134	138	131	127	134	137	125	126	129	123	117	130	117	120	112	126
November		129	127	138	135	138	149	143	138	139	135	140	125	127	130	128	132	130	122	130	118	125	115	130
December		142	146	155	144	145	152	145	145	142	144	156	142	143	138	139	146	140	139	140	127	127	117	135

Free visa for Indians by Iran

- ❖ Iran announced the initiation of a 15-day visa-free policy for Indian tourists visiting the country.
- ❖ Indian citizens would be allowed to enter Iran with ordinary passports once every six months and with a maximum stay of 15 days which will not be extended.
- ❖ Earlier, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka have also eased visa rules for Indian tourists.

- ❖ Sri Lanka has also allowed visa-free entry to visitors from seven countries, including India, China and Russia.

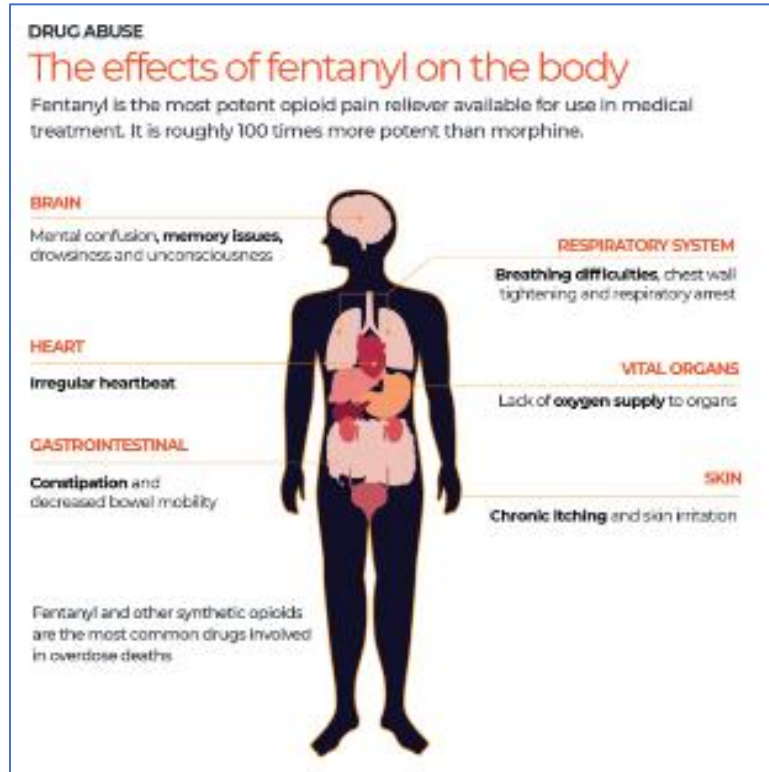


Fence on Indo-Myanmar Border

- ❖ India will fence the entire 1,643-km-long border with Myanmar and build a patrolling track next to the fence.
- ❖ Out of the total border length, a 10-km stretch in Moreh, Manipur, has already been fenced.
- ❖ Furthermore, two pilot projects of fencing through a hybrid surveillance system are under execution.
- ❖ They will fence a stretch of 1-km each in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- ❖ Additionally, fence works covering approximately 20 km in Manipur have also been approved.
- ❖ India and Myanmar share an unfenced border.
- ❖ The people on either side have familial and ethnic ties which prompted the arrangement in the 1970s.
- ❖ Recently Free movement regime (FMR) was abolished by India.



Fentanyl Crisis in Mexico



- ❖ The Mexican border cities in the grip of a full-blown drug epidemic.
- ❖ Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid is 100 times more potent than morphine and almost 50 times more potent than heroin.
- ❖ It is a drug that a doctor can prescribe to alleviate severe pain.
- ❖ However, as little as 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal.
- ❖ There is an estimated 70,000 people died of overdoses last year.

Protocol on Nuclear Reactors Agreement

- ❖ India and Russia have signed a protocol on amendments to the 2008 inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in construction of additional nuclear reactors in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site and in construction of Russia-designed nuclear power plants at new sites in India.
- ❖ The Russian nuclear energy agency has built 2 X 1,000 MWe VVER nuclear reactors and is constructing four more reactors with similar capacity.
- ❖ India's largest nuclear power project Kudankulam is meant to have six 1,000-Megawatt Power plants, with a total installed capacity of 6,000 Megawatts.
- ❖ Of this, the first plant was operationalised in 2013 and the second was operationalised in 2016.

- ❖ The four remaining plants are in various stages of construction.
- ❖ All of these reactors are of the VVER-1000 class.
- ❖ It is a Water-Water Energetic reactor design developed in the erstwhile Soviet Union.

BAPS Hindu Mandir



- ❖ The BAPS Hindu Mandir, first Hindu stone temple in UAE, was inaugurated recently.
- ❖ Abu Dhabi's first Hindu temple has been made in the Nagara style of architecture.
- ❖ It has been built using ancient architectural methods clubbed with scientific techniques.
- ❖ The BAPS Hindu Mandir has been built with over 300 high-tech sensors to measure temperature and monitor seismic activity.
- ❖ No metal has been used in the construction of the temple.
- ❖ The land for the temple was donated by the UAE government.
- ❖ The UAE has three other Hindu temples that are located in Dubai.

IEA's 2024 ministerial meeting

- ❖ Member states of the International Energy Agency (IEA), agreed to begin discussions on the Indian government's request to become a full member of the body.
- ❖ India joined the IEA as an associate member in 2017 and sent a formal request for full membership in October 2023.
- ❖ IEA is an inter-governmental organisation comprising 31 industrialised countries.

- ❖ Four countries are seeking accession to full membership, Chile, Colombia, Israel and Lithuania.
- ❖ The 31 member states and 13 associate members represent 75% of global energy demand.
- ❖ For a country to become a full member of the IEA, it must be a member country of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- ❖ IEA also mandates its member nations to hold crude oil and/or product reserves (strategic oil reserves) equivalent to 90 days of the previous year's net imports.
- ❖ India's current strategic oil reserves equal 9.5 days of its requirement.
- ❖ And together with storage at refineries and depots, it maintains a stockpile equivalent of 66 days requirement.
- ❖ IEA members coordinate emergency response measures to a significant global oil supply disruption.



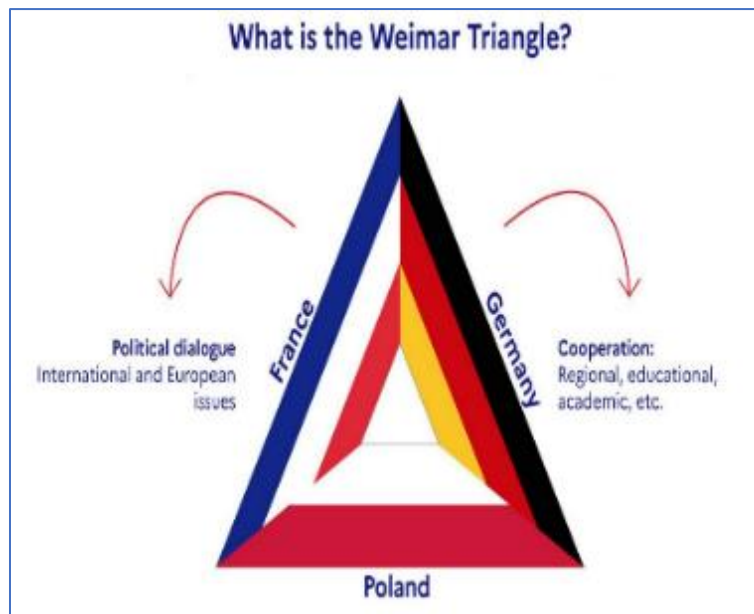
Right to Disconnect – Australia

- ❖ The government of Australia is looking to pass a law on "Right to Disconnect".
- ❖ It aims to regulate timings for when bosses are allowed to contact employees beyond their working hours via phone calls, messages or emails.
- ❖ Under the Bill, the employees have the right to refuse to engage with employer communications outside of their designated working hours, unless deemed unreasonable.
- ❖ Similar laws have already been passed in France, Italy, and Belgium.
- ❖ The concept of the 'Right to Disconnect' stems from the recognition that modern technology blurs the boundaries between work and personal life.

- ❖ In India, the Right to Disconnect Bill of 2018 was drafted by Baramati MP Supriya Sule.
- ❖ It aimed to empower the employees to negotiate the terms for out-of-work communications.



Weimar triangle



- ❖ The governments of Poland, France and Germany vowed to make Europe a security and defence power with a greater ability to back Ukraine.



- ❖ They discussed for reviving the so-called Weimar Triangle.
- ❖ It is a long-dormant regional grouping that was designed to promote cooperation between France, Germany and Poland.
- ❖ The Weimar Triangle was created in 1991 as Poland was emerging from decades of communism as a platform for political cooperation among the three nations.

World's fourth-largest economy

- ❖ Japan slips to the world's fourth-largest economy, behind the US, China and now Germany.
- ❖ Japan's nominal GDP totalled \$4.2 trillion last year, or about 591 trillion yen.
- ❖ Germany's, was \$4.4 trillion, or \$4.5 trillion, depending on the currency conversion.
- ❖ The Japanese economy has gradually lost its competitiveness and productivity while the population shrinks as Japanese people age and have fewer children.
- ❖ Japan fell from the second-ranked economy behind the U.S. to the third-largest in 2010 as China's economy grew.
- ❖ The gap between developed countries and emerging nations is shrinking, with India certain to overtake Japan in nominal GDP in a few years.

Top 10 Largest Economies		
Rank/ Country	GDP (\$ billion)	GDP Per Capita (\$ thousand)
1. USA	27,974	83.06
2. China	18,566	13.16
3. Germany	4,730	56.04
4. Japan	4,291	34.55
5. India	4,112	2.85
6. UK	3,592	52.43
7. France	3,182	48.22
8. Italy	2,280	38.93
9. Brazil	2,272	11.03
10. Canada	2,242	55.53

Aspides Mission

- ❖ The European Union launched a naval mission to protect Red Sea shipping from Yemen's Houthi rebels.

- ❖ Several countries have expressed their intention to participate in this mission, called Aspides (“shield” in ancient Greek)
- ❖ This will have orders to fire on the Houthis only if they attack first and will not be authorised to shoot pre-emptively.
- ❖ Since November, the Houthis have been attacking commercial and military shipping in the busy Red Sea, across which 12 percent of global trade travels.



IBSA Fund

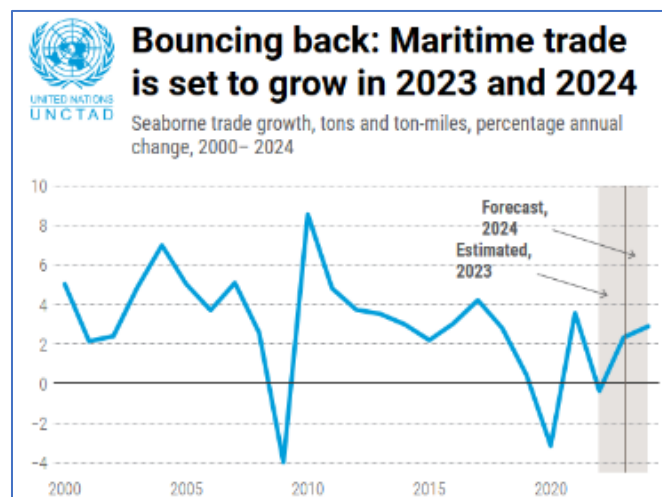
- ❖ India's contribution to the IBSA Fund has cumulatively exceeded \$18 million since the Fund was established in 2004 and became operational in 2006.
- ❖ UNOSSC serves as the Fund Manager and Secretariat of the IBSA Fund.
- ❖ The IBSA countries - India, Brazil and South Africa - each contribute one million dollars annually to the Fund.
- ❖ The IBSA Fund supports projects that are concrete expressions of solidarity.
- ❖ Their objectives range from promoting food security, and addressing HIV/AIDS, to extending access to safe drinking water.
- ❖ The IBSA Fund has allocated \$50.6 million to date, supporting 45 projects across 37 countries of the global South.

Pakistan's New Prime Minister

- ❖ Shehbaz Sharif is all set to return as the Prime Minister and Asif Ali Zardari as the President of Pakistan after a power-sharing agreement.
- ❖ He was the Prime Minister of Pakistan till August 2023, when the National Assembly was dissolved for fresh elections.
- ❖ Before that, he served as the Chief Minister of Punjab thrice — from 1997-1999.
- ❖ Sharif, 72, is the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif, the three-time former PM of Pakistan.

Maritime Transport 2023

- ❖ The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released the Review of Maritime Transport 2023.
- ❖ Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping were 20% higher in 2023 compared to a decade ago.
- ❖ The shipping industry contributes to over 80% of the world's trade volume and nearly 3% of global GHG emissions.
- ❖ 8% of the global fleet uses conventional fuels like heavy fuel oil, light fuel oil, and diesel/gas oil.
- ❖ Only 1.2% are using alternative fuels, mainly LNG, LPG, methanol, and to a lesser extent, battery/hybrid.
- ❖ Containerized trade is expected to grow by 1.2% in 2023 and further by 3% between 2024-2028.
- ❖ Oil and gas trade volumes showed vigorous growth in 2022.
- ❖ Early in January 2023, commercial ships were on average 22.2 years old and more than half of the world's fleet was over 15 years old.



37th African Union Summit, 2024

- ❖ The 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) concluded recently in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.
- ❖ It was held under the AU's theme of the year for 2024, "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality and relevant learning in Africa."
- ❖ It adopted the second 10-year (2024-2033) implementation plan of Agenda 2063, also known as the decade of acceleration.
- ❖ The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states.
- ❖ In 1963, the Organization of African Unity was founded by the independent states of Africa.
- ❖ In 2002, the Organization of African Unity was succeeded by the African Union.

5-Year Multiple Entry Visa



Opens Door Wider

Dubai welcomed **2.4 m** visitors from India between Jan-Dec 2023

Through this 'significant' initiative, tourists can now leverage multiple entries and exits: **Dubai Tourism Dept**

This offer will provide operational flexibility for business engagements & leisure travel

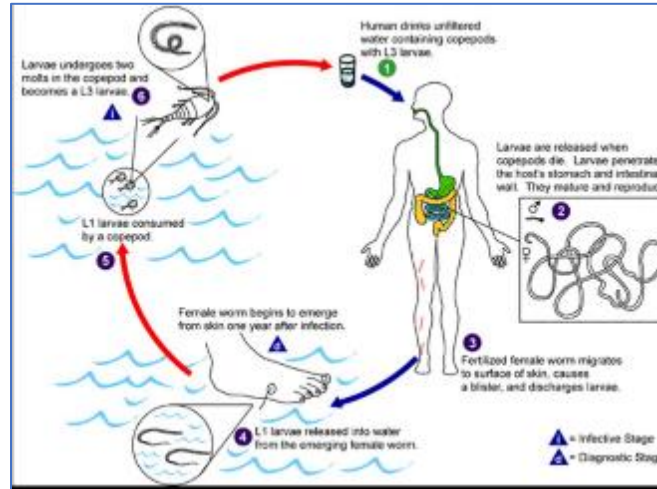
This initiative signifies a strategic step towards deepening our already existing ties with India: **DET exec**

- ❖ Dubai introduces 5-year multiple-entry visa for Indians, to leverage multiple entries/exits, providing operational flexibility for business, leisure travel etc.
- ❖ In 2023, Dubai welcomed 2.46 million overnight visitors from India, which is a 25 per cent increase from the pre-pandemic era.
- ❖ In the year-ago period, the city hosted 1.84 million tourists from India, while in 2019, it welcomed 1.97 million visitors.

Guinea Worm Disease Eradication

- ❖ The world closes on eradicating Guinea worm disease.
- ❖ There were more than 3.5 million cases of this disease in the 1980s.
- ❖ According to the WHO's weekly epidemiological report, they dwindled to 14 cases in 2021, 13 in 2022, and just six in 2023.

- ❖ Guinea worm disease, also called dracunculiasis, is the work of the Guinea worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*).
- ❖ More than 90% of Guinea worm infections manifest in the legs and feet.
- ❖ India eliminated Guinea worm disease in the late 1990s and received Guinea worm disease-free certification status from the WHO in 2000.



ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment



- ❖ Philippines becomes first Asian Country to ratify the ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment.
- ❖ This ratification of Convention No. 190 marks an important step to preventing and eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work.
- ❖ With this ratification, the Philippines joins 37 other nations in standing against workplace violence and harassment.

ECONOMY

'Indian Economy – A Review'

Chart 18: India's External Debt Position and Vulnerability Indicators



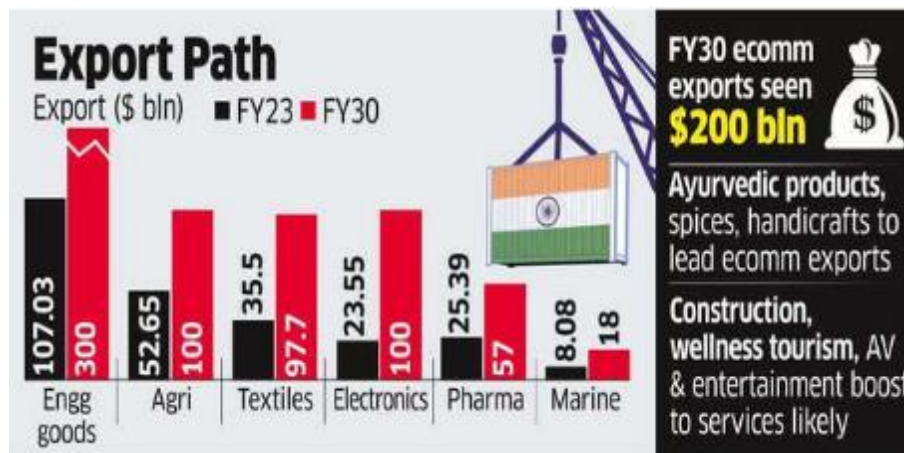
Source: RBI; Note: PR - Partially Revised, P - Provisional; ED - external debt, FER - foreign exchange reserves, TED - total external debt

- ❖ "The Indian Economy: A Review," the 74-page document authored by V Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser to the government, was released.
- ❖ India will mark the fourth year after the COVID-19 pandemic that the country's economy will have grown at or over 7%.
- ❖ India is to grow at 8–9% when the world economy is growing at 4%.
- ❖ 51 crore bank accounts are under the Jan Dhan Yojana, which now have total deposits of over ₹2.1 lakh crore, including over 55% by women.
- ❖ In December 2019, household financial assets were 86.2% of GDP; liabilities were 33.4% of GDP.
- ❖ Also, in March 2023, these numbers were 103.1% and 37.6%, respectively.
- ❖ The net financial assets of households were 52.8% of GDP in December 2019, and by March 2023, it had improved to 65.5% of GDP.
- ❖ Female Labor Force Participation Rate rose from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 37 per cent in 2022-23.

1 trillion Exports Target

- ❖ The country's total merchandise exports in FY2022–2023 are estimated to be \$447 billion.
- ❖ This is the highest ever achieved as compared to \$422 billion in the previous fiscal.

- ❖ India has identified electronics, engineering goods, textiles, marine & agriculture, toys and pharmaceuticals as the six sectors that could help the country achieve almost 70% of its \$1-trillion goods export target by FY30.
- ❖ These sectors have the potential to reach \$670 billion in exports by FY2030, compared to India's total goods exports of \$451 billion in FY2023.
- ❖ Engineering Goods expected to grow from \$107 billion in FY2023 to \$300 billion in exports by FY2030.
- ❖ Pharma exports could rise from \$25 billion presently to \$57 billion by FY2030.
- ❖ Electronics exports are estimated to reach \$100 billion.
- ❖ Textiles sector is expected to touch \$97.7 billion.
- ❖ Marine and Agri product exports are estimated to reach \$118 billion by FY2030.



Switzerland-India Free Trade Agreement

- ❖ Switzerland and India have reached consensus on a free-trade agreement after 16 years of negotiations.
- ❖ Switzerland has large historical accumulations of gold and it primarily refines imported gold.
- ❖ In 2022-23, India's imports from Switzerland stood at \$15.79 billion, in stark contrast to its exports of \$1.34 billion
- ❖ It was leading to a substantial trade deficit of \$14.45 billion.

Direct Tax-to-GDP Ratio in 2023

- ❖ India's direct tax-to-GDP ratio hit a 15-year high of 6.11 percent in 2022-23.
- ❖ It is hovering near its peak of 6.3 percent reached in 2007-08.
- ❖ It majorly comprises corporate tax and personal income tax.

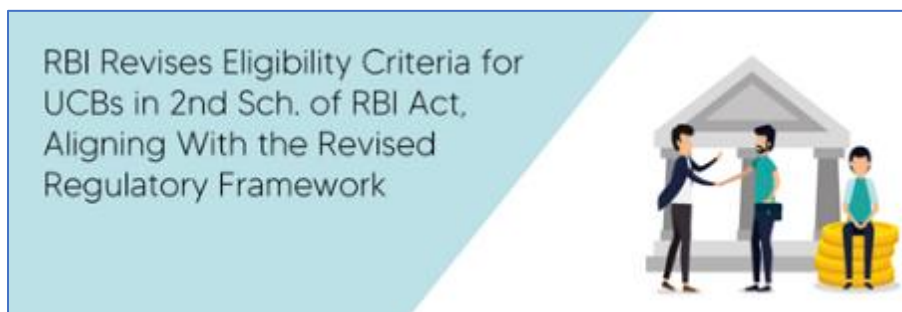
- ❖ In 2022-23, direct taxes made up 54.62 percent of the government's total tax revenue.
- ❖ This is up from 52.27 percent in 2021-22 and 46.84 percent in 2020-21 – the lowest in 15 years.

DIRECT TAX COLLECTIONS						TAX BUOYANCY		
(in ₹ Rs Cr)								
Financial Year	Corporate Tax	Personal Income Tax*	Other Direct Tax	Total	YoY growth	Financial Year	Direct tax-GDP ratio	Buoyancy factor
2018-19	6,63,572	4,73,179	967	11,37,718	13.5%	2018-19	6.02%	1.29
2019-20	5,56,876	4,92,717	1,088	10,50,681	-7.7%	2019-20	5.23%	-1.21
2020-21	4,57,719	4,87,560	1,897	9,47,176	-9.9%	2020-21	4.78%	-*
2021-22	7,12,037	6,96,604	3,781	14,12,422	49.1%	2021-22	5.97%	2.52
2022-23	8,25,834	8,33,307	4,545	16,63,686**	17.8%	2022-23	6.11%	1.18

*Includes Securities Transaction Tax **Provisional
Source: CBDT

*As both GDP growth rate were negative, tax buoyancy has not been computed for FY 2020-21

Revised Eligibility Norms for UCBs Inclusion

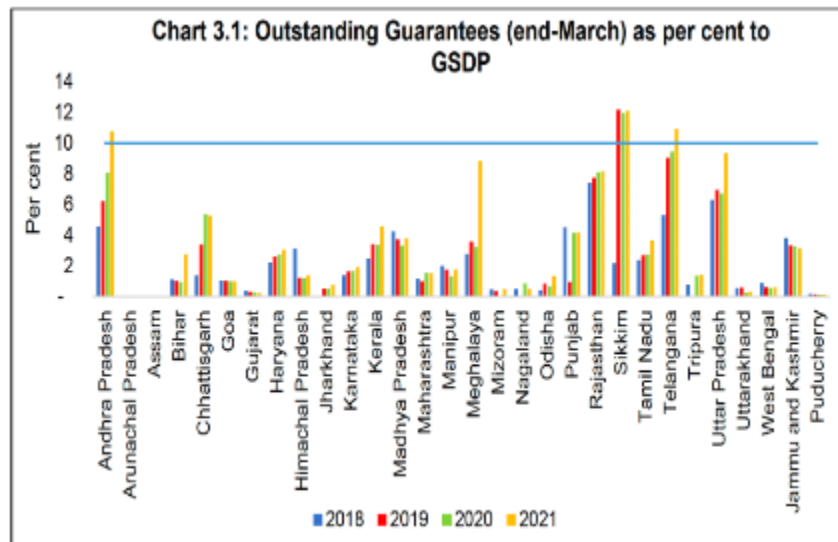


- ❖ RBI has recently revised the eligibility norms for the inclusion of Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- ❖ Eligible UCBs must maintain a Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of at least 3% more than the minimum requirement applicable to UCBs.
- ❖ Additionally, they should have no major regulatory and supervisory concerns.

Guidelines on State Guarantees on Borrowings

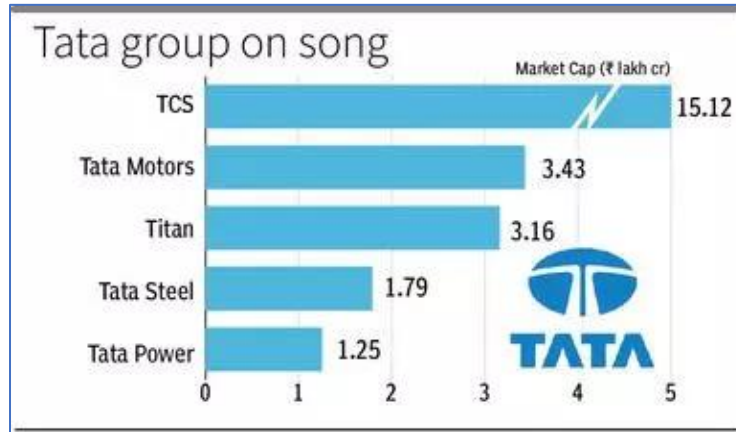
- ❖ A working group constituted by the RBI has made certain recommendations to address issues relating to guarantees extended by the state governments.
- ❖ It prescribed a uniform reporting framework for the guarantees extended (by State governments) and a uniform guarantee ceiling.

- ❖ As per RBI, the implementation is “expected to facilitate better fiscal management by State governments.”
- ❖ A ‘guarantee’ is a legal obligation for a State to make payments and protect an investor/lender from the risk of default by a borrower.
- ❖ Per the Indian Contracts Act (1872), it is a contract to “perform the promise, or discharge the liability, of a third person in case of his default.”
- ❖ Primarily, guarantees are resorted to in three scenarios at the State level:
 - First, where a sovereign guarantee is a precondition for concessional loans from bilateral or multilateral agencies (to public sector enterprises);
 - Second, to improve viability of projects or activities with the potential to provide significant social and economic benefits; and
 - Lastly, to enable public sector enterprises to raise resources at lower interest charges or on more favourable terms.



Tata Group Milestone

- ❖ Tata Group's combined market capitalisation soared past ₹30 lakh crore, marking a historic moment for Indian business.
- ❖ TCS stock reached a new high surging over 4 percent to a market cap of ₹15 lakh crore.
- ❖ According to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) website, at least eight companies have a market cap of more than ₹6 lakh crore.
- ❖ Reliance Industries has the highest market cap of ₹19.32 lakh crore, followed by TCS (₹15.12 lakh crore) and HDFC Bank (₹10.96 lakh crore).



New Payment Aggregator Approval

- ❖ RBI has authorized payment aggregator license to Zoho and fintech companies Juspay and Decentro.
- ❖ Earlier Stripe, Zomato, and Tata Pay received approval in January 2023.
- ❖ Major fintech players like Razorpay and Cashfree received the license in 2022.
- ❖ Till now, a total of 8 companies have got the payments aggregator license from the RBI.
- ❖ The license allows companies to offer payment services to online businesses and e-commerce companies.
- ❖ They will accept payments from customers on behalf of merchants and pool the funds before transferring them to merchants after a set period of time.



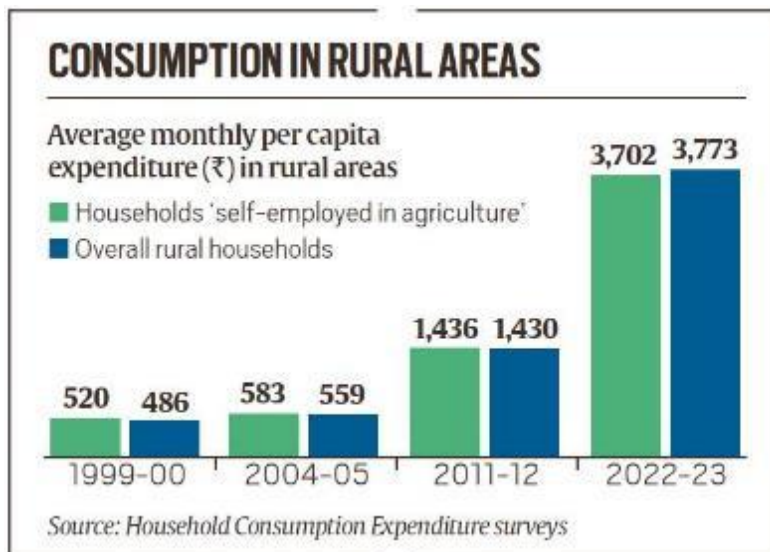
White Paper on Indian Economy

- ❖ The Union Finance Minister presented a “White Paper” on the Indian economy in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ It was prepared by the Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ It compares the economic performance of 10 years of the Congress-led UPA govt with that of 10 years of the NDA govt.
- ❖ It seeks to inform every one of the nature and extent of governance, economic and fiscal crises that the NDA government had when it assumed office in 2014.
- ❖ It informs about the policies and measures that the (NDA) government took to restore the health of the economy since 2014.
- ❖ It has three main parts.
 - First discusses the macroeconomic situation during the 10 years of UPA rule.
 - Second provides the current status of the various corruption scams of the UPA government.
 - Third part shows how the NDA turned the economy around.
- ❖ The Capital expenditure as a percent of total expenditure (excluding interest payments) was halved from 31% in FY04 to 16% in FY14 (this ratio stands at 28% in the current year).
- ❖ Forex reserves were just enough to finance a little over 6 months of imports in 2013, down from 17 months in end-March 2004.
- ❖ As of January 2024, Forex reserves were sufficient for 10.6 months of imports.

UPA AND NDA YEARS: WHAT SOME CRUCIAL NUMBERS SAY							
Financial Year	Nominal GDP growth rate (%)	Real GDP growth rate (%)	Fiscal Deficit*	Financial Year	Nominal GDP growth rate (%)	Real GDP growth rate (%)	Fiscal Deficit*
2004-05	14.10	7.92	3.95	2014-15	10.99	7.41	4.10
2005-06	13.99	7.92	4.03	2015-16	10.46	8	3.87
2006-07	17.14	8.06	3.35	2016-17	11.76	8.26	3.48
2007-08	15.14	7.66	2.59	2017-18	11.03	6.8	3.46
2008-09	12.56	3.09	6.11	2018-19	10.59	6.45	3.44
2009-10	15.46	7.86	6.57	2019-20	6.37	3.87	4.64
2010-11	19.92	8.5	4.89	2020-21	-1.36	-5.83	9.17
2011-12	14.43	5.24	5.91	2021-22	18.36	9.05	6.75
2012-13	13.82	5.46	4.93	2022-23	16.06	7.24	6.38
2013-14	12.97	6.39	4.48	2023-24	8.87	7.32	5.85
AVERAGE OF UPA YEARS				AVERAGE OF NDA YEARS			
2004-2014	14.95	6.80	4.7	2014-2024	10.31	5.9	5.1

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey

- ❖ The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation conducted Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES).
- ❖ The per capita monthly household expenditure was more than doubled in 2022-23 as compared to 2011-12.
- ❖ The average MPCE at current prices (without imputation) was more than doubled to ₹6,459 in urban areas in 2022-23 from ₹2,630 in 2011-12.
- ❖ Similarly in rural areas, it jumped to ₹3,773 from ₹1,430 at current prices.
- ❖ The average MPCE at 2011-12 prices (without imputation) also increased to ₹3,510 in 2022-23 from ₹2,630 in 2011-12 in urban areas.
- ❖ Similarly, it rose to ₹2,008 from ₹1,430 in rural areas at 2011-12 prices.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ingenuity Mars Helicopter

- ❖ Nasa's Mars robot helicopter Ingenuity, the first vehicle to achieve powered, was controlled flight on another world.
- ❖ Ingenuity ultimately buzzed over the Martian terrain 14 times farther than originally planned.
- ❖ It was covering a distance of 10.5 miles (17 km) through all 72 flights.
- ❖ Its peak altitude was measured at 78.7 feet (24 meters).



Big ring



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

Laser Communication with Chandrayaan-3 Lander

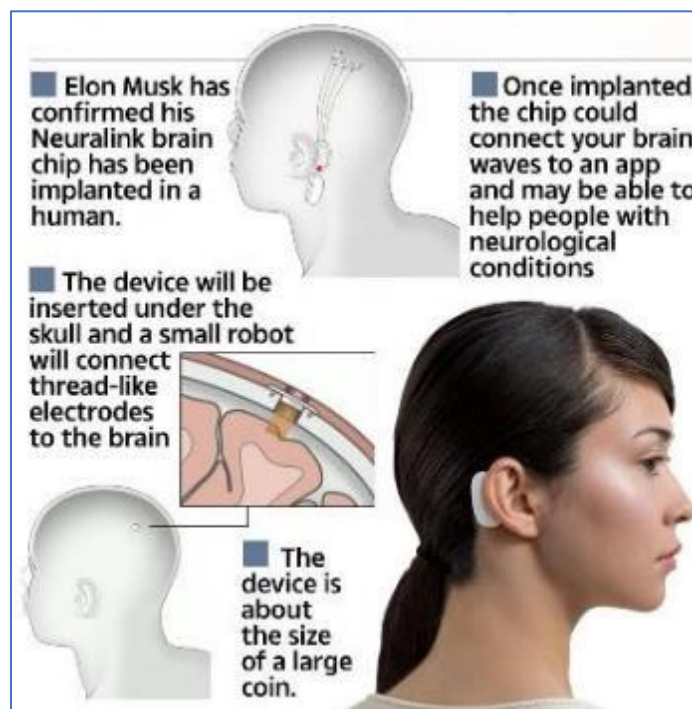
- ❖ A NASA spacecraft has successfully pinged India's Chandrayaan-3 lander on the moon.
- ❖ A laser beam was transmitted and reflected between its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) and the Vikram lander for the first time on the lunar surface.

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



Neuralink trails First Human

- ❖ Neuralink startup had installed a brain implant in its first human patient with "promising" initial results.
- ❖ The neurotechnology company co-founded by Musk in 2016 aims to build direct communication channels between the brain and computers.

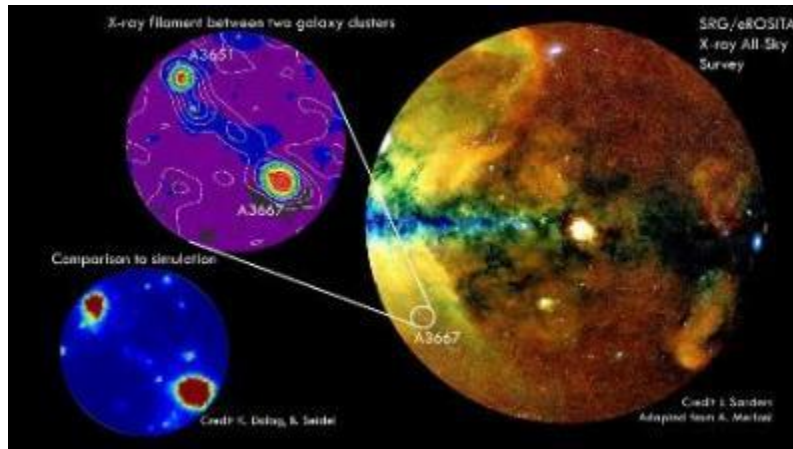


- ❖ An implant called the "Link" is a device about the size of five stacked coins that is to be placed inside the human brain through invasive surgery.

Lab-Grown Fish

- ❖ The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has entered into a collaborative research agreement to grow fish meat in the laboratory.
- ❖ It is merely a type of lab-grown - or cultivated/ cultured meat.
- ❖ Seafood without the sea is 'grown' in the same way as other cultivated meats are grown.
- ❖ So, it was without the need to raise a and kill an animal.
- ❖ Cultivated fish meat is produced by isolating specific cells from fish and growing them in a laboratory setting using media that is free of animal components.
- ❖ The final product is expected to replicate the flavour, texture, and nutritional qualities of 'real' fish meat.
- ❖ The Dutch pharmacologist Mark Post was the first to present a proof of concept for cultured meat in 2013.
- ❖ In June 2023, the US Department of Agriculture cleared the sale of lab grown chicken meat in the country.

eROSITA Data



- ❖ Scientists have unveiled the largest ever X-ray map of the universe and found over 9,00,000 high-energy cosmic sources.
- ❖ The German "eROSITA" consortium published the data collected by the eROSITA X-ray telescope on board the Russian-German satellite Spektrum-RG.
- ❖ The first eROSITA All-Sky Survey Catalogue (eRASS1) is the largest collection of X-ray sources ever published.

- ❖ Around 7,10,000 supermassive black holes are in distant galaxies.
- ❖ The high-energy cosmic sources (more than 900,000) also comprised 180,000 stars that emitted X-rays.
- ❖ In addition to this, 12,000 clusters of galaxies and a number of X-ray emitting celestial objects are from other exotic classes.

PHANGS Project

- ❖ James Webb Space Telescope recently observed 19 nearby face-on spiral galaxies as part of its contributions to the PHANGS program.
- ❖ PHANGS ALMA survey focuses on the molecular gas disks in 90 nearby galaxies that are typical of star-forming massive galaxies in the nearby universe.
- ❖ PHANGS project is a large, long-standing initiative supported by more than 150 astronomers worldwide.
- ❖ PHANGS stands for Physics at High Angular resolution in Nearby GalaxieS.
- ❖ The project aims to understand the interplay of the small-scale physics of gas and star formation.



INSAT-3DS Satellite

- ❖ India is set to enhance its meteorological monitoring capabilities with the launch of INSAT-3DS by using GSLV-F14 rocket.
- ❖ The satellite is designed for enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning.

- ❖ It will provide continuity of services to the existing in-orbit INSAT-3D and 3DR satellites.
- ❖ It aiming to provide uninterrupted services and significantly improve the overall capabilities of the INSAT system.



TOI-715b

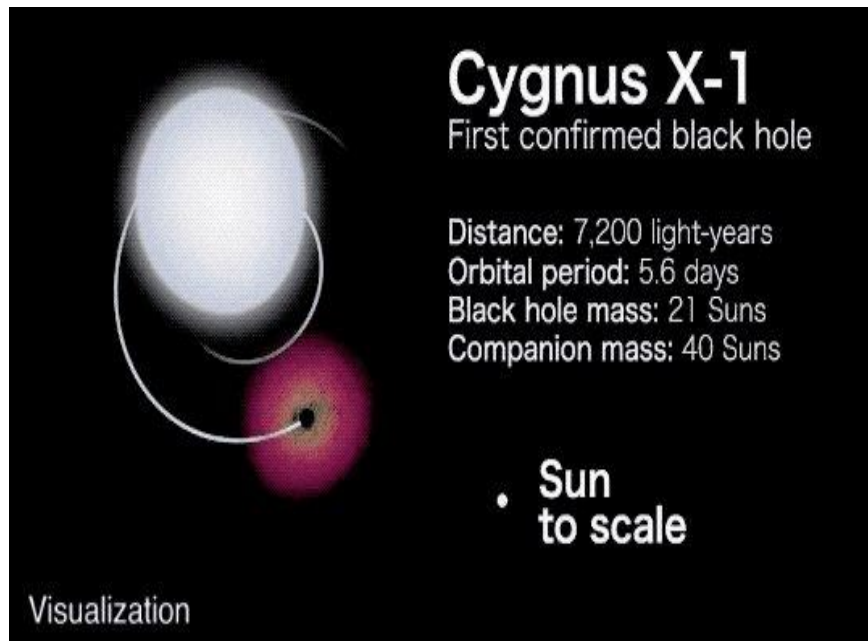


- ❖ NASA have found a 'super-Earth,' a planet that could potentially support life.
- ❖ This planet, called TOI-715 b, is 137 light-years away from us and is about one and a half times as wide as Earth.
- ❖ It revolves around its parent star in the conservative habitable zone.
- ❖ TOI-715 b's parent star is a red dwarf, which is smaller and colder than the Sun.

Cygnus X-1

- ❖ Astro Sat measured the X-ray polarisation of the Cygnus X-1 black hole system from data collected over the last eight years of operation.
- ❖ Astro Sat is the India's first, dedicated multi-wavelength astronomy mission.

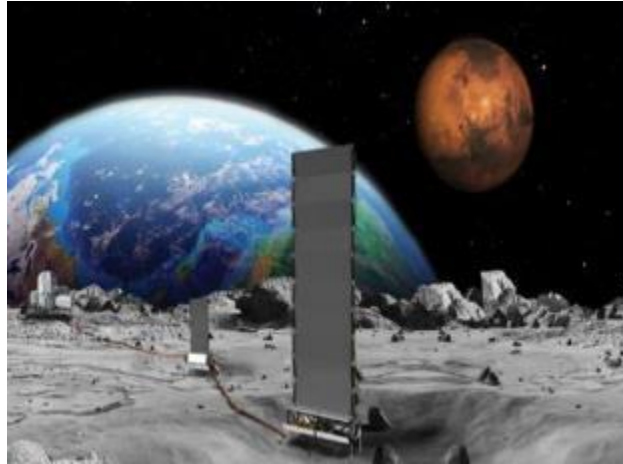
- ❖ Discovered over four decades ago, Cygnus X-1 is one of the first confirmed black hole systems in our galaxy.
- ❖ It is located at a distance of 400 million times the distance between the Sun and Earth.
- ❖ The black hole in Cygnus X-1 is 20 times heavier than the Sun, and has a companion - a heavy supergiant star (40 times more massive than the Sun) in a binary system.



Magnetic Anomaly under Lake Rotorua

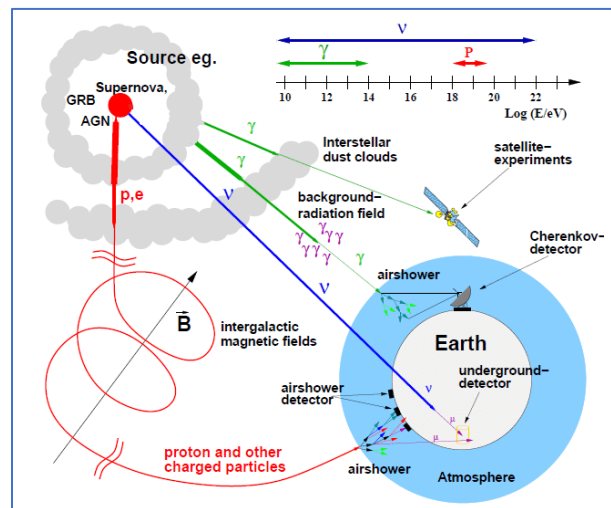
- ❖ Scientists have unveiled a hidden hydrothermal system beneath the waters of Lake Rotorua.
- ❖ This site steeped in Maori legend and situated atop a dormant volcanic crater on New Zealand's North Island.
- ❖ Lake Rotorua was formed around 200,000 years ago by a volcanic eruption, and it is still home to hydrothermal activity today.
- ❖ The lake itself is shallow, with an average depth of about 10 meters, and is part of the Taupo Volcanic Zone.
- ❖ Volcanic rocks exhibit strong positive magnetic responses due to the presence of magnetite.
- ❖ However, the anomaly detected suggests that hydrothermal fluids have altered the magnetite into pyrite.
- ❖ It is resulting in a significantly reduced magnetic signal.

Lunar Nuclear Fission Reactor



- ❖ NASA is wrapping up the initial phase of its ambitious plan to build a small electricity-generating nuclear reactor on the Moon.
- ❖ The Fission Surface Power Project aims to develop safe, clean and reliable energy sources on the moon.
- ❖ Solar power has its limitations on the Moon because night on Earth's lone satellite lasts for the equivalent of 14 Earth days.
- ❖ If one nuclear reactor, even placed in permanently shadowed areas, it could generate power continuously without any dependence on weather and other conditions.

GRAPES-3 experiment



- ❖ GRAPES-3 experiment researchers have identified a new characteristic in the cosmic-ray proton spectrum at an energy level of around 166 tera-electron-volt (TeV).

- ❖ This is a finding that spans a measurement range from 50 TeV to just over one peta-electron-volt (PeV).
- ❖ This observation introduces a potential shift in our understanding of cosmic ray origins, their acceleration processes, and how they move within the Milky Way.
- ❖ Cosmic rays, discovered over a century ago, represent the universe's most energetic particles.

India's first smart bullets

- ❖ IIT Madras has joined hands with Munitions India (MIL) to develop India's first indigenous 155mm guided smart ammunition.
- ❖ This collaboration aims to enhance the accuracy and range of the existing shells used in artillery guns.
- ❖ Additionally, the project aims to increase the impact and lethality when the ammunition hits the target.



Future Circular Collider



- ❖ CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, plans to build the three-times bigger (and faster) Future Circular Collider (FCC).
- ❖ FCC is a particle accelerator that will be within a 91-kilometre ring, which will give it three times the circumference of the Large Hadron Collider.
- ❖ FCC would only be operational by 2045 by the very earliest.
- ❖ The goal of the FCC is to push energy and intensity frontiers of particle colliders, with the aim of reaching collision energies of 100 tera electron Volts.

India's first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) has successfully built and tested India's first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility.
- ❖ The facility is capable of generating flight speeds ranging from 3 to 10 km/s, simulating hypersonic conditions.
- ❖ It is crucial for various applications such as atmospheric entry of vehicles, asteroid entry, scramjet flights, and ballistic missiles.
- ❖ The facility called S2 is nicknamed "Jigarthanda".



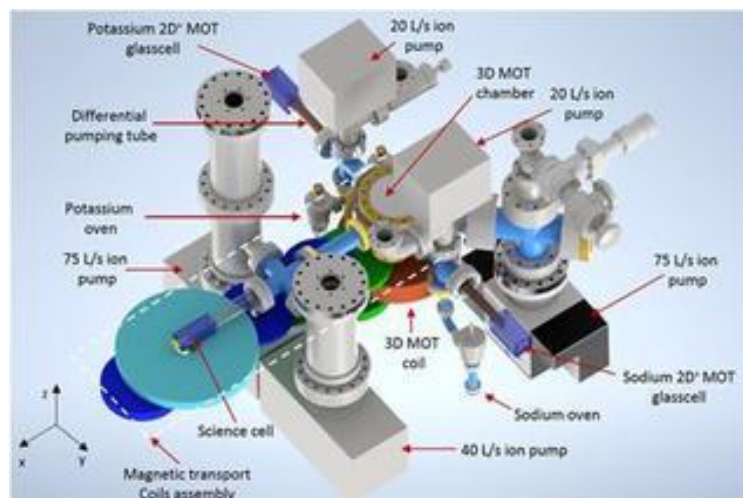
PACE Mission

- ❖ Nasa's Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE) mission soared into orbit by SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.
- ❖ The Pace mission is a step forward in the study of Earth's oceans, air quality, and climate change.
- ❖ Pace is equipped with advanced instruments designed to observe the minutiae of our planet's ecosystems.
- ❖ This data is vital for forecasting the health of fisheries, tracking harmful algal blooms, and detecting marine environmental changes.



Imaging of Cold Atoms

- ❖ The Indian scientists at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) of Bengaluru have designed a new image-correction algorithm.
- ❖ It significantly enhances the study of ultracold atoms.
- ❖ It improves the clarity of images captured during experiments with cold atoms, or atoms at temperatures near absolute zero.
- ❖ The new algorithm effectively reduces interference fringes—unwanted dark and bright patterns that can obscure critical data—by 50 percent.
- ❖ These fringes can lead to inaccuracies when determining key atomic parameters such as number, temperature, and dynamics on short timescales.
- ❖ To study these ultracold atoms, researchers typically use magneto-optical traps and high-power laser cooling techniques.



High Altitude Pseudo Satellite Vehicle

- ❖ The National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) of Bengaluru has successfully flown a prototype of a new-generation unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).
- ❖ This one can fly at great heights, about 20 km from ground, runs entirely on solar power, and can remain in the air for months on end.
- ❖ Such UAVs belong to a class of flying objects called HAPS, or high-altitude pseudo-satellite vehicles, or HALE, that is high-altitude long-endurance vehicles.



MEET HAPS — INDIA'S VERY OWN UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE

- Can fly 20 km high
- Can float for months
- Solar-powered "pseudo satellite"
- Increases surveillance and monitoring capabilities
- Cost significantly lower than satellites
- 23-kg prototype with a 12-metre wingspan
- Tested for 8.5 hours reaching 3 km altitude
- Aiming for 24-hour flight test to evaluate power generation
- Deployment target by 2027
- Useful for continuous surveillance of border areas
- Can aid in disaster situations and provide mobile communications networks
- Developed by National Aerospace Laboratories, Bengaluru
- Aims to enhance India's high-endurance, high-altitude capabilities
- Potential for industrial production post further development milestones

1st test flight of a prototype was conducted last week

High-Energy Particle “Amaterasu”

- ❖ Scientists have detected an extremely powerful particle with ultra-high energy.
- ❖ They believed that it has travelled to Earth from beyond the Milky Way galaxy.

- ❖ It has been named the "sun goddess" (Amaterasu in Japanese) particle and is extraordinary.
- ❖ This particle has an energy level one million times greater than what can be generated in most powerful particle accelerators.
- ❖ It rivals the single most energetic cosmic ray ever observed, the "Oh-My-God" particle that was detected in 1991.



Frozen Smoke Discovery

- ❖ Researchers have developed sensors made from highly porous materials known as 'frozen smoke' (aerogels).
- ❖ By precisely engineering the shape of the holes in the aerogels, the sensors were able to detect the fingerprint of formaldehyde at room temperature.
- ❖ Formaldehyde is a common indoor air pollutant.
- ❖ It uses artificial intelligence techniques to detect formaldehyde in real time at concentrations as low as eight parts per billion.
- ❖ It is far beyond the sensitivity of most indoor air quality sensors.



Sound-Based Anti-Drone System

- ❖ The IIT Jammu professor has developed a groundbreaking anti-drone system that utilizes sound technology.
- ❖ The system, known as sound-based detection, is a first-of-its-kind technology that detects the unique sound emitted by drones.
- ❖ By comparing this sound signature with a database, the system is able to accurately identify drones.
- ❖ This system is capable of detecting drones, aircraft, multiple drones, or birds within a range of 300 meters based on their sound.

INSAT-3DS Mission

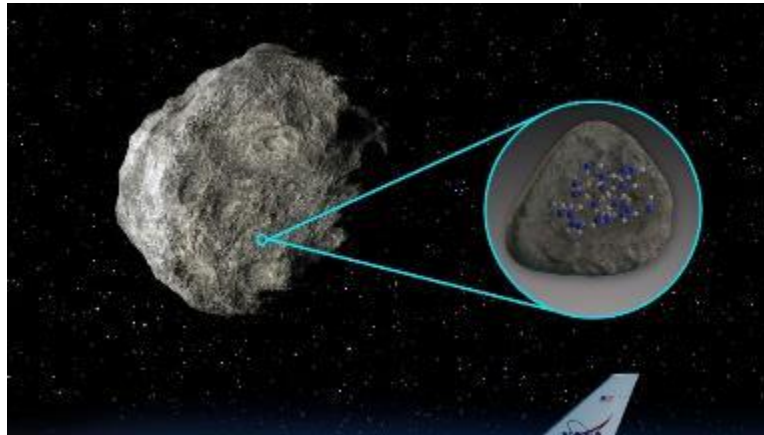


- ❖ The GSLV-F14, carrying INSAT-3D meteorological satellite, was successfully launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- ❖ The INSAT-3DS satellite is a follow-on mission of the third-generation meteorological satellite from geostationary orbit.
- ❖ This satellite is an exclusive mission designed for enhanced meteorological observations, monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting, and disaster warning.
- ❖ The INSAT-3DS satellite will augment meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR in-orbit satellites.
- ❖ This was the 16th mission of the heavy-lift vehicle GSLV-MkII, which has been operational since 2001.
- ❖ Out of its 15 previous missions, 11 have been successful.

- ❖ The GSLV was termed the “naughty boy” of Indian space due to its repeated failures in the past.

Water on asteroid

- ❖ Researchers for the first time, detected the presence of water molecules on the surface of an asteroid Iris and Massalia.
- ❖ The discovery is based on the analysis of data gathered by Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA).
- ❖ Both Iris and Malissa are rich in silicates.
- ❖ Iris (with a diametre of 199 km) and Massalia (with a diametre of 135 km) have similar orbits, travelling an average distance of 2.39 astronomical units (AU)



World's 1st Pigeonpea speed breeding protocol



- ❖ The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has announced the world's first Pigeonpea Speed Breeding Protocol'.
- ❖ These new lines of pigeon pea will be crucial in bringing food security in the drylands of Asia and Africa.
- ❖ The breeding cycle that takes around seven years, can be reduced to two-four years.
- ❖ Pigeonpea is basically a six-nine months crop.
- ❖ The scientists have successfully restricted vegetative growth and triggered early flowering.
- ❖ Pigeonpea has low glycaemic index
- ❖ It is rich in thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6, folate, vitamin A, calcium, zinc, iron, magnesium and phosphorus.

Indigenous Laser Weapon DURGA-2

- ❖ DRDO is preparing to test a real prototype of its indigenous laser weapon system, DURGA-2.
- ❖ DURGA stands for Directionally Unrestricted Ray Gun Array.
- ❖ The present generation of anti-aircraft or anti-missile systems are not considered fool-proof.
- ❖ But the laser weapon promises to have 100 percent kill probability.



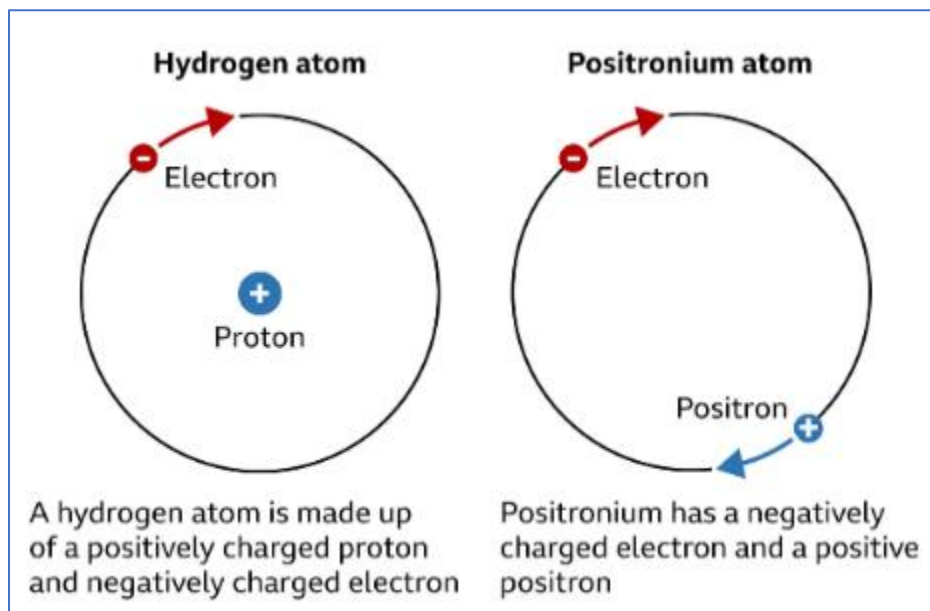
Assert AI – Pratham

- ❖ Assert AI announces the launch of Pratham, a groundbreaking platform that is patented for its innovative approach to democratizing computer vision and artificial intelligence.
- ❖ Users can unlock the potential of Vision AI technology without the need for coding or AI expertise.

- ❖ Pratham translates to “first” in Hindi.
- ❖ It employs an innovative framework that places the power of computer vision directly into the hands of users, allowing them to analyze and utilize video data effortlessly.

Laser cooling of Positronium

- ❖ In a first, an international team of physicist’s collaboration has achieved a breakthrough by demonstrating the laser cooling of Positronium.
- ❖ This development will allow high-precision measurements of the properties and gravitational behaviour of this exotic but simple matter–antimatter system
- ❖ Positronium, comprising a bound electron (e^-) and positron (e^+), is a fundamental atomic system.
- ❖ Due to its very short life, it annihilates with a half-life of 142 nano-seconds.
- ❖ Its mass is twice the electron mass and enjoys the unique distinction of being a pure leptonic atom.
- ❖ This hydrogen-like system, with halved frequencies for excitation, makes it a great contender for attempting laser cooling.
- ❖ The experiment was performed at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, more popularly known as CERN, in Geneva.



ENVIRONMENT

Lab-made White Rhinoceros

- ❖ The scientists announced the first-ever rhino pregnancy achieved by transferring a lab-made rhino embryo into a surrogate mother.
- ❖ In 2009, four northern white rhinos were brought from a zoo in the Czech Republic to a conservancy in Kenya.
- ❖ The death of the last male in 2018 made the extinction of the northern white rhino.
- ❖ Breakthroughs in IVF or stem cell technologies can in theory produce northern white rhino calves long after the species is extinct.
- ❖ One rhino is poached every 16 hours on average in Africa.
- ❖ While the southern whites form the largest surviving rhino species, there are fewer than 7,000 black rhinos in Africa.
- ❖ Only 4,000 one-horned rhinos in Asia.
- ❖ Populations of the other two rhino species — the Javan and the Sumatran — are down to fewer than 100 each.



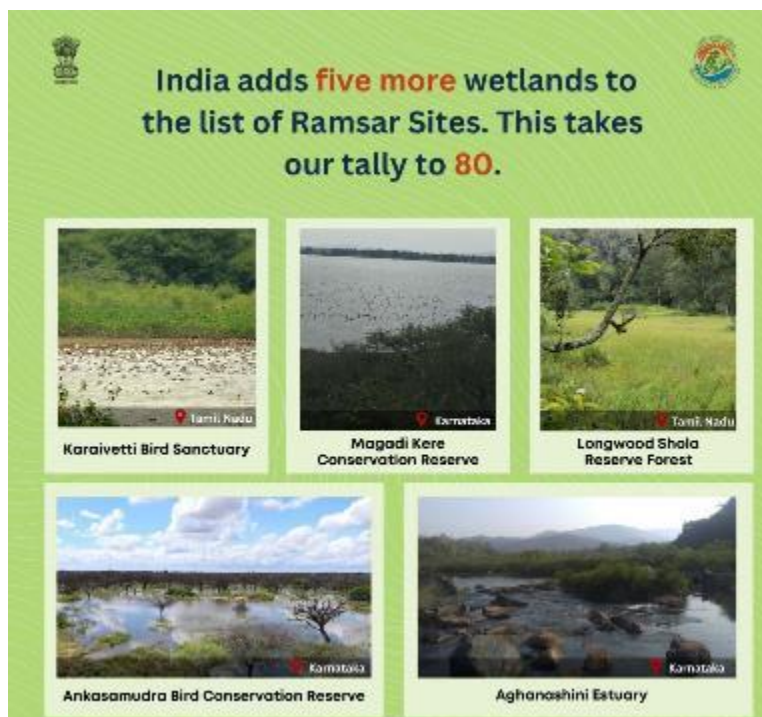
Laughing gull in India

- ❖ Laughing gull is a migratory bird from North America.
- ❖ It has been sighted for the first time in the country at the Chittari estuary in Kasaragod district of Kerala.
- ❖ It was smaller than the brown-headed gull.
- ❖ This discovery elevates the total number of bird species found in India to 1,367.
- ❖ Kasaragod district is contributing 400 species to the State's overall count of 554.



New Ramsar wetlands sites in India

- ❖ Five more Indian wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- ❖ It is taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country to 80.
- ❖ The five wetlands added to the Ramsar list are
 - Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve - Karnataka
 - Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve - Karnataka
 - Aghanashini Estuary - Karnataka
 - Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary - Tamil Nadu.
 - Longwood Shola Reserve Forest - Tamil Nadu.



- ❖ With the 2 news sites, Tamil Nadu is solidifying its position with a total of 16 Ramsar sites, the highest in the country.
- ❖ The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- ❖ It is named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea, where the treaty was signed on February 2, 1971.

Two new mammals in Kaziranga

- ❖ Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in Assam revealed two new mammalian species, the Binturong and the small-clawed otter.
- ❖ The Binturong, the largest civet in India, was spotted during a migratory bird count.
- ❖ Small-clawed otter is the smallest otter species in the world.
- ❖ This mammal has a wide distribution range extending through India eastwards to Southeast Asia and southern China.
- ❖ In India, it is found mostly in the protected areas of West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and some parts of Kerala in the Western Ghats region.
- ❖ The park now hosts 37 mammalian species, enriching its biodiversity.



New kangaroo lizard

- ❖ The Researchers have found a new species of tiny lizards
- ❖ It was described as a “diminutive dragon in Western Ghats”.
- ❖ Agasthyagama edge or the northern kangaroo lizard belongs to the Agamidae family.
- ❖ It has been named after the Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) programme of the Zoological Society of London.

- ❖ The species is the second one of the *Agasthyagama* genus after *A. beddomii* or Indian kangaroo lizard
- ❖ *A. beddomii* has been previously reported from Sivagiri hills in Tamil Nadu.



Two New Eel Species

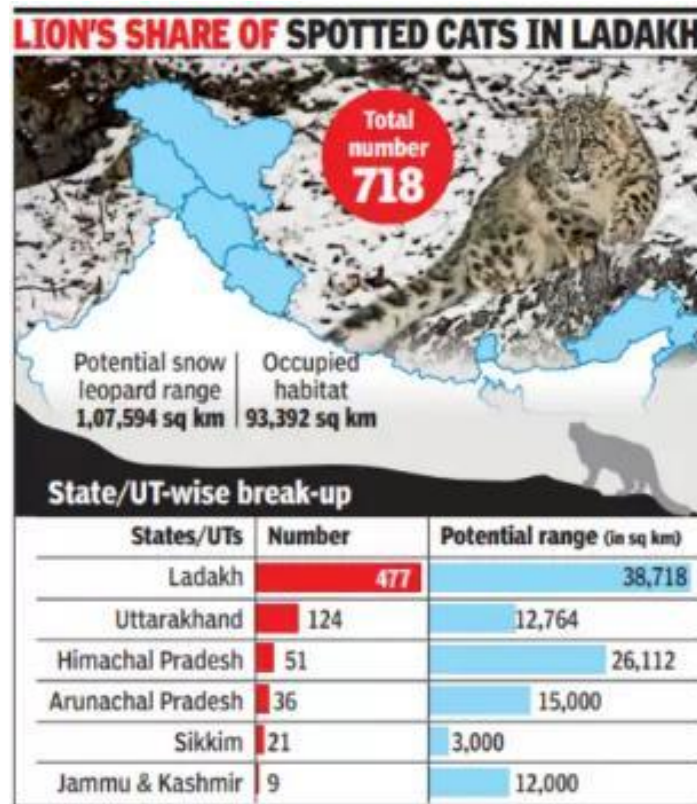


- ❖ Researchers have discovered two eel species, one each from the coasts of Gulf of Mannar in Ramanathapuram and Kochi in Kerala.
- ❖ The newly discovered Congrid eels belong to genus *Ariosoma*.
- ❖ The species collected from the Gulf of Mannar, has been named '*Ariosoma kannani*'.
- ❖ The species from Kerala coast has been named '*Ariosoma gracile*' in accordance with its morphological characters.
- ❖ With the new discovery, National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources is credited for exploring 12 eel species, six each from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Status Report of Snow Leopards in India

- ❖ A first-ever national survey recently determined that, India has an estimated 718 snow leopards.

- ❖ Now, the country is home to around 10-15% of its global population.
- ❖ Earlier estimates of the animal ranged from 400 to 700 in the country.
- ❖ The estimated population in different states is as follows: Ladakh 477, Uttarakhand 124, Himachal Pradesh 51, Arunachal Pradesh 36, Sikkim 21, and Jammu and Kashmir 9.
- ❖ IUCN has the snow leopard under its vulnerable category.



Tigers in Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary



- ❖ After nearly 50 years, two tigers were recorded in camera traps in reserve forests of Jawalagiri range in the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary, Hosur.
- ❖ Jawalagiri range is adjacent to the recently notified Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ The Sanctuary comes under the Melagiri hill range wildlife corridor located in the confluence of Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats.
- ❖ The habitat is viable to accommodate spill over tiger population from Bannerghatta National Park in Karnataka and nearby protected areas.

Underwater Canyon Near Cyprus

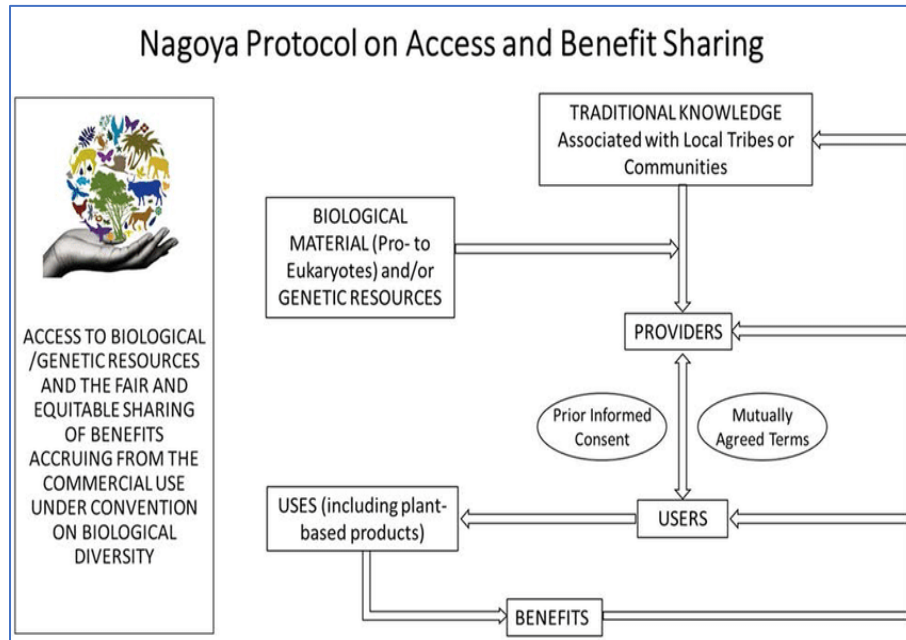
- ❖ Israeli scientists uncovered a never before known about underwater canyon near Cyprus.
- ❖ The canyon is known as Eratosthenes for the underwater mountain it is near.
- ❖ It dates back to the Messinian Event that transpired about 5.5 million years ago.
- ❖ The canyon is about 10 km wide and 500 m deep and was buried at the beginning of the Messinian period before the deposition of the salt layer.
- ❖ The Eratosthenes canyon was created when the Mediterranean Sea level decreased during the Messinian period, causing a rise in the salinity of the water.



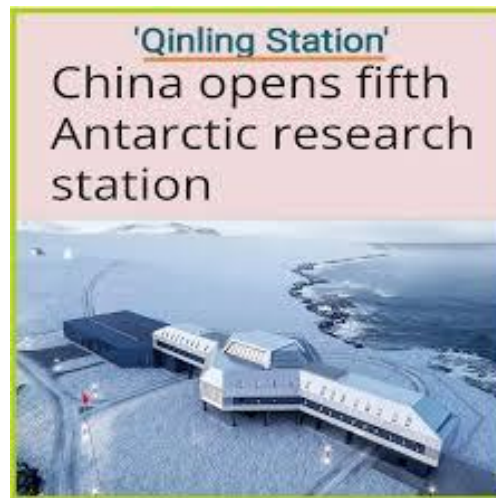
Nagoya Protocol – Cameroon

- ❖ Cameroon in central Africa has now adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.
- ❖ It is an international agreement that aims to ensure that the benefits of using genetic resources and traditional knowledge are shared in a fair and equitable way.
- ❖ The Nagoya Protocol is an offshoot of the Convention on Biological Diversity that addresses fair and equitable benefit sharing in the context of biodiversity access.

- ❖ Cameroon is a biodiversity hotspot, with an estimated 11,000 plant, animal, and microorganism species.
- ❖ Nagoya Protocol was adopted by the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010 and entered into force in 2014.



Qinling Station For Antarctic Study



- ❖ China's fifth scientific outpost in the Antarctic, was officially named as Qinling Station.
- ❖ It is the third Chinese research base in Antarctica and will be operational all year.
- ❖ China already built four other research stations – Zhongshan, Taishan, Kunlun, and Great Wall – in the Antarctic from 1985 to 2014.

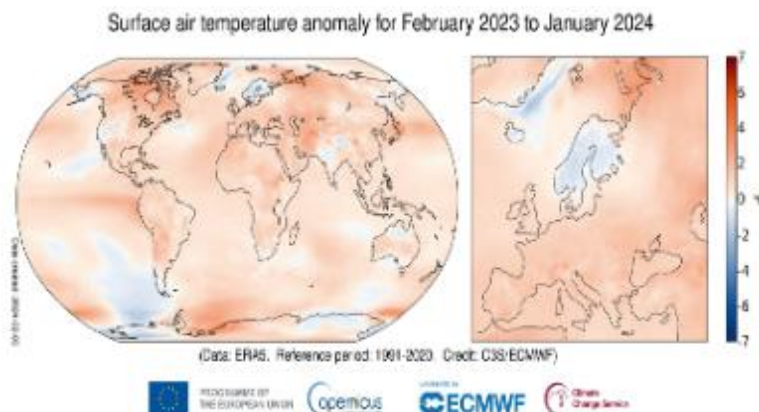
GRI Biodiversity Standard

- ❖ The Global Reporting Initiative Biodiversity Standard was developed by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).
- ❖ The aim is to understand the impacts as nature faces extreme pressures, with over one million plant and animal species being pushed towards extinction.
- ❖ The new standards are aimed at enabling companies to meet the growing demands sought by multiple stakeholders for information on biodiversity impacts.
- ❖ It demands disclosures on direct drivers of biodiversity loss, such as land use, pollution, invasive species and climate change.



Hottest 12 Months Ever

- ❖ The global mean temperature for the past 12 months (February 2023-January 2024) was the highest on record.
- ❖ It is 1.52° Celsius above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average.



- ❖ In 2015, countries agreed in Paris to limit the average temperature rise to well below 2° Celsius, and preferably to 1.5° Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels (1850-1900).
- ❖ To achieve this goal, countries together need to cut down the emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane by 43% by 2030.

Mahmudia wetland in Romania

- ❖ World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has urged the Romanian government to classify Mahmudia wetland as a 'national interest ecological restoration area'.
- ❖ It aims to protect its natural progress and foster community prosperity.
- ❖ A significant portion of the naturally regenerated wetlands within the Romanian Danube Delta faces the possibility of reversion to agricultural land.
- ❖ In June 2023, the Danube River's high waters has breached the dyke enclosing a marshland in Mahmudia.
- ❖ The ensuing flood submerged 1,000 hectares of farmland, converting them into a typical delta ecosystem.



2024 Climate and Catastrophe Insight Report

- ❖ The 2024 Climate and Catastrophe Insight report was released by risk-mitigation service provider Aon PLC.
- ❖ The year 2023 saw 398 natural disasters that caused \$380 billion in damages worldwide.
- ❖ This is more than the \$355 billion economic loss estimated in 2022.
- ❖ Weather-related factors were responsible for 95 per cent of the 66 natural disasters in 2023 that resulted in damages of at least \$1 billion.
- ❖ In 2023, insurance only covered 40 per cent of losses caused by weather and climate change.
- ❖ Insurance was only paid out \$118 billion, or 31 per cent, of the total damages incurred.
- ❖ Much of the flood losses in 2023 occurred in South and Southeastern Asia, where the insurance penetration remains very low.
- ❖ This includes India, where the seasonal floods caused economic losses of around \$300 million.
- ❖ Floods in India killed at least 2,653 people in 2023.

Region	Per cent of global economic loss in 2023	Per cent of global insured loss in 2023	Per cent of protection gap
US	30	67	50 (gap in 2023 decreased from 21st-century average of 47 per cent)
Americas (non-US)	12	5	87 (gap in 2023 above 21st-century average of 85 per cent)
Europe, Middle East and Africa	41	23	85 (gap in 2023 was above the 21st-century average of 71 per cent)
Asia and Pacific	17	5	91 (gap in 2023 was above the 21st-century average of 90 per cent)

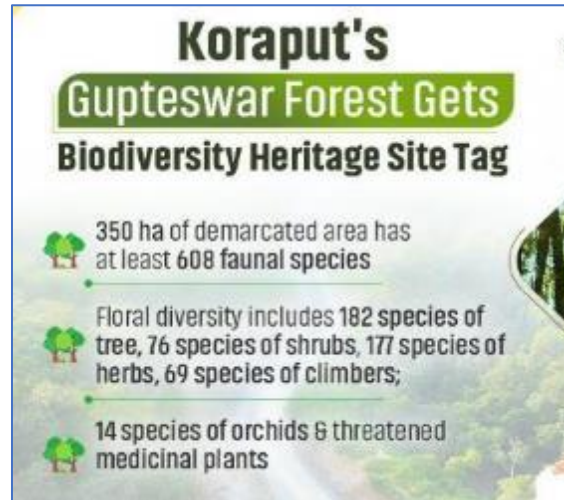
Cuscuta dodder weed

- ❖ An invasive weed, is slowly choking the Chengalpattu forests and Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.
- ❖ It is threatening the local vegetation, ecology and habitat of migratory birds.
- ❖ Cuscuta dodder, a parasitic vine without roots, is native to North America.

- ❖ Legislation in 25 countries has listed the dodder as a ‘declared noxious weed’ with seeds and plant material denied entrance.
- ❖ In United States, it is the only weed seed whose movement is prohibited in every state.

Gupteswar Forest

- ❖ The Gupteswar Forest in Odisha’s Koraput district has been declared as the fourth Biodiversity-Heritage Site (BHS) of the state.
- ❖ The site is spread over 350 hectares of demarcated area.
- ❖ Along with its sacred grooves traditionally worshipped by the local community.
- ❖ The limestone caves of Gupteswar are adorned with eight species of bats out of the total 16 species found in southern Odisha.



Terai Arc Landscape



- ❖ Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) initiative receives global recognition from the U.N. as one of seven World Restoration Flagships.
- ❖ It was launched in 2004 and aimed at restoring ecosystems and creating space for tigers.
- ❖ This initiative restored 66,800 hectares (165,000 acres) of forest and significantly increased the Bengal tiger population in the region.

Mushroom growing on a frog

- ❖ The Scientists discovered a mushroom growing out of the side of the frog in the foothills of the Western Ghats in India.
- ❖ This is the first time that a mushroom has been observed growing out of a living being.
- ❖ It is discovered on "Rao's Golden-backed frogs" in a rainwater-fed pond in the foothills of the Kudremukha ranges at Mala, Karkala, in Karnataka.
- ❖ The mushroom identified as the Bonnet mushroom, which usually grows on dead and rotting wood.
- ❖ There are also some that are parasitic and can cause infections like mucormycosis, more commonly known as "black fungus".



Purple Frog

- ❖ A rare frog, having a bloated body, pointed snout and stout limbs covered under the TN Endangered Species Conservation Fund.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is home to two types of Purple Frog: *Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis* and *Nasikabatrachus bhupathi*.
- ❖ It is believed to have co-existed with dinosaurs.
- ❖ The Purple Frog is often dubbed as a 'living fossil', as it has similarities to the Sooglossidae family of frogs in Seychelles.
- ❖ It is supporting the Gondwana landmass hypothesis.

- ❖ The amphibian was in the 'Endangered' category on the Red List of the IUCN in 2004 based on early assessments.
- ❖ It was moved to the 'Near Threatened' category in 2020.



STAR Metric



- ❖ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has introduced the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric.
- ❖ It aims to quantify actions aimed at halting biodiversity loss in oceans.
- ❖ It was first unveiled in 2021 for use in terrestrial areas.
- ❖ STAR helps measure progress towards global biodiversity targets and supports decision-making by governments, businesses, and organizations in conservation efforts.



Two New Species of 'Green Anacondas'

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a previously unknown species of the green anaconda, the largest and heaviest snake species on Earth.
- ❖ The green anaconda has long been considered one of the Amazon's most formidable and mysterious animals.
- ❖ Green anacondas are the world's heaviest snakes, and among the longest.
- ❖ They Predominantly found in rivers and wetlands in South America.
- ❖ Historically, four anaconda species have been recognised, including green anacondas (also known as giant anacondas).
- ❖ The first is the known species, *Eunectes murinus*, which lives in Perú, Bolivia, French Guiana and Brazil.
- ❖ They are known in the common name "southern green anaconda".
- ❖ The second and newly identified species is *Eunectes akayima* or "northern green anaconda".
- ❖ It is found in Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

REPORTS AND INDICES

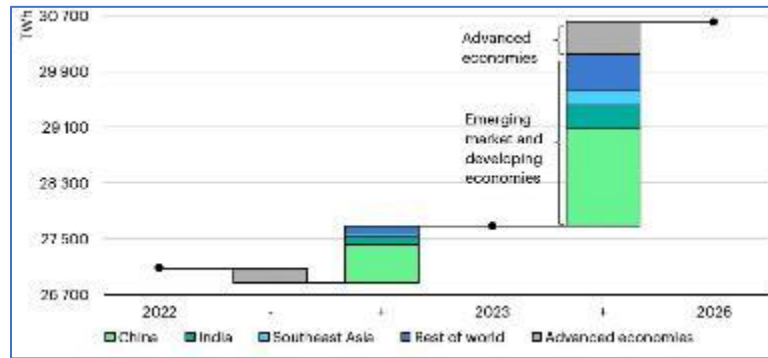
Corruption Perceptions Index 2023

- ❖ India ranked 93 out of 180 countries on the corruption perceptions index for 2023.
- ❖ Its overall score remained largely unchanged, according to a Transparency International report.
- ❖ Denmark topped the index for the sixth consecutive year.
- ❖ Finland and New Zealand were ranked second and third, respectively.
- ❖ Somalia with a score of 11, Venezuela (13), Syria (13), South Sudan (13), and Yemen (16) took the bottom spots in the 2023.
- ❖ In South Asia, Myanmar (162), Bangladesh (149), Pakistan (133) and Sri Lanka (115) are ranked behind India.



Electricity 2024 Report

- ❖ The International Energy Agency's (IEA) released a report named "Electricity 2024".
- ❖ The report forecasts a robust global surge in electricity demand, growing at an average rate of 3.4% from 2024 through 2026.
- ❖ China, India, and Southeast Asian countries are set to be at the forefront of this demand surge.
- ❖ By 2026, nearly half of the world's electricity is expected to be generated by low-emission sources, including renewables and nuclear power.
- ❖ India's annual average electricity demand growth is pegged at 6.5% over 2024-2026.
- ❖ Electricity use per capita in India and Southeast Asia is rapidly rising.
- ❖ It has been effectively stagnant in Africa for more than three decades.
- ❖ Electricity demand in the European Union declined for the second consecutive year in 2023.
- ❖ Global CO2 emissions from electricity generation are expected to fall by more than 2% in 2024 after increasing by 1% in 2023.
- ❖ Extreme weather events triggered major power outages in 2023 in the United States and India.



TomTom Traffic Index

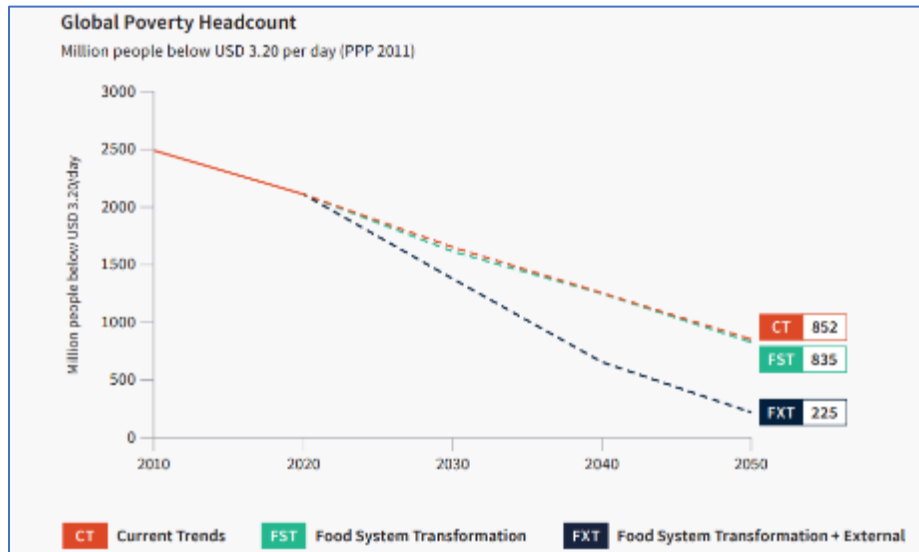
- ❖ Two Indian cities, Bengaluru (6th) and Pune(7th), found themselves on the list of the ten worst traffic-hit cities globally in 2023.
- ❖ London continues to lead the chart as the worst traffic-hit city.
- ❖ The ‘worst day’ for travelling in the Silicon City in 2023 was Wednesday, September 27.
- ❖ Delhi secured the 44th position and Mumbai followed closely at 52nd place.

Rank by filter	World rank	City	Average travel time per 10 km	Change from 2022	Congestion level %	Time lost per year at rush hours	Average speed in rush hour
1	6	Bengaluru India	28 min 10 s	-1 min	63	132 hours	18 km/h
2	7	Pune India	27 min 50 s	+30 s	57	128 hours	19 km/h
3	44	New Delhi India	21 min 40 s	-30 s	48	81 hours	24 km/h
4	54	Mumbai India	21 min 20 s	+10 s	43	92 hours	23 km/h

The Economics of The Food System Transformation Report

- ❖ The Food System Economics Commission has published a report titled - The Economics of the Food System Transformation.
- ❖ A sustainable transformation of existing food systems is urgently required at an estimated total cost of \$500 billion per year.
- ❖ This cost is equivalent to only 0.2–0.4 per cent of global GDP and is small relative to the multi-trillion dollar benefits it could bring.

- ❖ The annual environmental cost of the current food systems was \$3 trillion, and the additional costs to health was at least \$11 trillion.
- ❖ The Current trends showed that by 2050, the food insecurity will still leave 640 million people (including 121 million children) underweight in some parts of the world, while obesity will increase by 70 per cent globally.
- ❖ The food system transformation can reduce diet-related mortality from 12 million deaths per year attributable to poor diets in 2020 to 7.7 million in 2050 by decreasing rates of diet-related diseases.



Henley Passport Index 2024

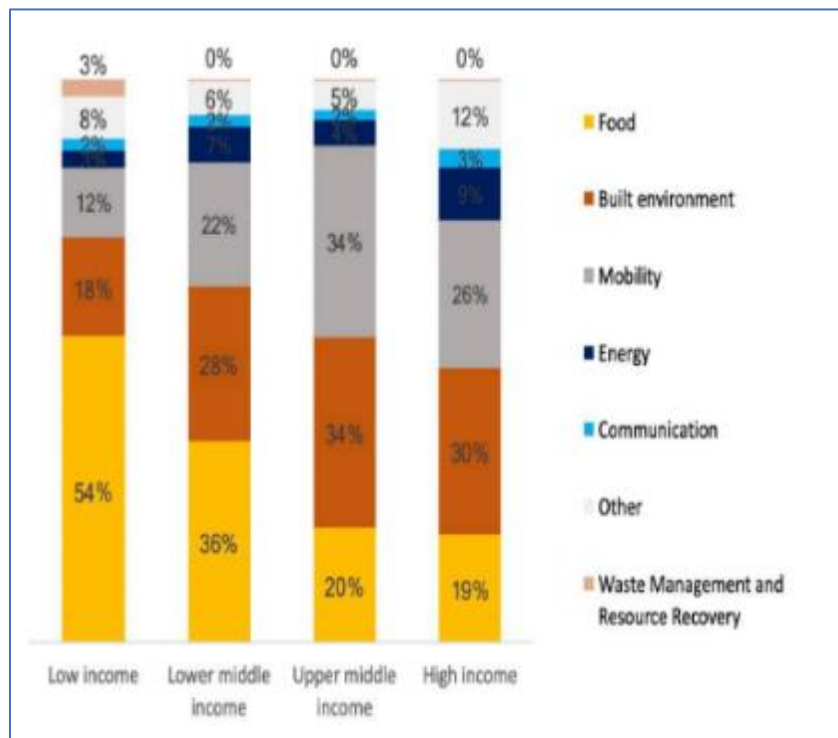
PASSPORT	RANK IN 2024	ACCESS
 France	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Germany	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Italy	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Japan	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Singapore	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Spain	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>

- ❖ France leads the list, with its passport granting visa-free access to 194 countries.
- ❖ India's passport ranking has slipped one place from last year, moving from 84th to 85th position.

- ❖ Last year Indian passport holders could travel visa-free to 60 countries, this year that number has increased to 62.
- ❖ Besides, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain have also occupied top positions, allowing visa-free entry to 194 global destinations.
- ❖ Pakistan maintains its position at 106th place, similar to last year, while Bangladesh has slipped from 101st to 102nd position.

Global Resources Outlook Report


- ❖ The United Nations Environment Programme’s Global Resources Outlook.
- ❖ It highlights that, the consumption of natural resources globally is set to rise by 60 percent by 2060.
- ❖ Natural resource extraction has soared by almost 400% since 1970 due to industrialisation, urbanisation and population growth.
- ❖ The stripping of Earth’s natural materials is already responsible for 60% of global heating impacts.
- ❖ It is including land use change, 40% of air pollution impact, and more than 90% of global water stress and land-related biodiversity loss.
- ❖ The Electric vehicles use almost 10 times more “critical raw materials” than conventional cars.



STATES

Caste census in Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh launched a comprehensive caste census on Friday to enumerate all the castes in the state.
- ❖ A special phone app has been designed by the government to conduct the census.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh has become the second state in the country, after Bihar, to launch such a caste census.

20K STAFFERS TO BE DEPLOYED		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Entire process will be done through online (mobile) including taking biometrics of people ➤ Village/ward volunteer of the respective locality will lead the teams ➤ There are 15 questions in section-1 mostly about family details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The questions include name, village/mandal/district, total number of family members, & relationship with the family head ➤ They will also enter information about the type of house (thatched/RCC/duplex/flat) and whether its own or rented ➤ They will also collect information whether the household owns a LPG 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Anyone of the family members can authenticate the survey by using the following options 1) Biometric 2) IRIS 3) Facial 4) OTP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Question 9 in section 2 is about the caste of the individual household ➤ The caste column has a list of about 726 castes one of which the volunteer will select 	

4th National Chilika Bird Festival

- ❖ The 4th National Chilika Bird Festival was held in Mangalajodi, Odisha.
- ❖ The festival celebrates the 10 lakh winged visitors of 200 species that visit Mangalajodi during the winter.
- ❖ Chilika lies in the Central Asian Flyway for birds.
- ❖ It is a major stopover for migratory birds from the arctic and sub-arctic during their onward and return migration along the east coast.
- ❖ Mangalajodi, situated in the North Eastern Part of Chilika, the largest brackish water lake of Asia, is known as the "Birds Paradise of Asia".

Sadak Surakhya Force

- ❖ Punjab flagged off 129 hi-tech vehicles of the country's first-of-its-kind 'Sadak Surakhya Force (SSF)'.
- ❖ With a 1,300-strong special force, it aims to streamline movement and check the loss to life and property due to accidents, often due to drunk driving.

- ❖ It would be covering 5,500 km of state and national highways, and was expected to save 3,000 lives every year.
- ❖ It will also provide medical help to passengers in case of accidents or vehicle breakdown.

India Ageing Report 2023: Jammu Kashmir's Life Expectancy



- ❖ This is jointly conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences and the United Nations Population Fund.
- ❖ Jammu Kashmir emerges as a region with remarkable resilience against elderly poverty.
- ❖ It has mere 4.2 percent of its aged population falling below the poverty line.
- ❖ Jammu Kashmir stands out with the highest life expectancy after the age of 60.
- ❖ Males exhibit a life expectancy of 20.3 percent, and females, 23.0 percent, making it the leader in this demographic indicator between 2015-19.

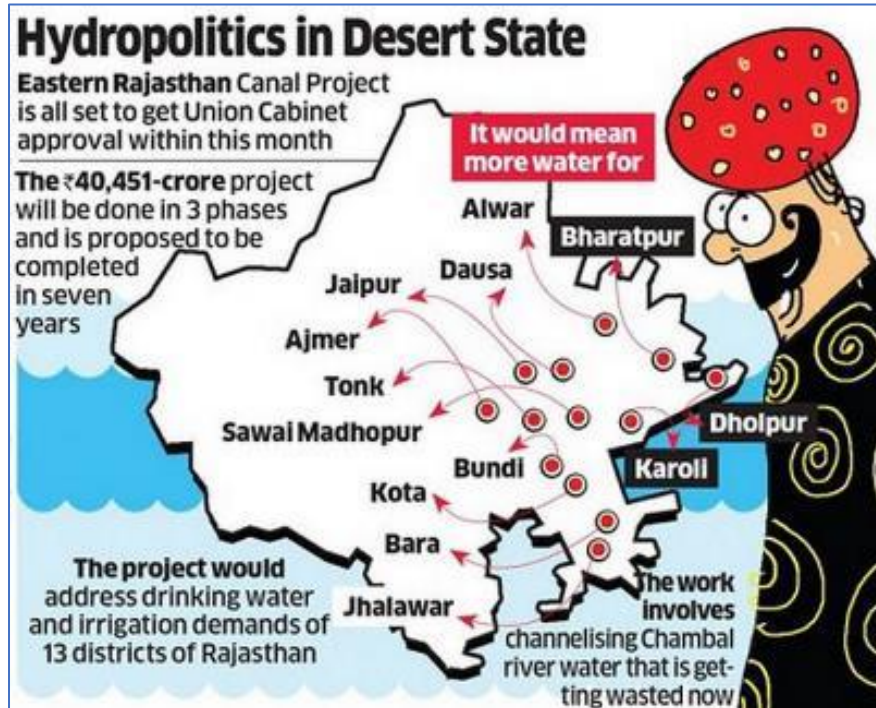
Rehabilitation of Jadung Village

- ❖ In a “first-of-its-kind” initiative, the Uttarakhand government has decided to rebuild and rehabilitate Jadung village in Uttarkashi district.
- ❖ It was abandoned by the residents since the 1962 Indo-China war.
- ❖ The village has been under the control of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) since then.

- ❖ The locality — a cold desert area like Ladakh — has proper road connectivity, making it a potential tourist destination.
- ❖ It is situated at an elevation of approximately 3,800 metres above sea level.

Modified PKC-ERCP Link Project

- ❖ Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh signed a MoU with the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti to implement the Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP (Modified PKC-ERCP) Link Project.
- ❖ The project envisages integration of the long-pending PKC river link project with the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project.
- ❖ The Modified PKC-ERCP is an inter-state river linking project.
- ❖ The Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) is aimed at intra-basin transfer of water within the Chambal basin.
- ❖ It will be utilising surplus monsoon water available in Kalisindh, Parvati, Mej and Chakan subbasins and diverting it into water deficit sub-basins of Banas, Gambhiri, Banganga and Parbati.
- ❖ This will provide drinking and industrial water to 13 districts of eastern Rajasthan.



Patna Declaration

- ❖ A three-day international workshop was held in the Bihar capital recently.
- ❖ It aims to check Illegal hunting of wild and migratory birds and suggest measures to strengthen their conservation efforts in countries falling in the Central Asian Flyway (CAF).
- ❖ Bihar government brought out the 'Patna declaration' at this workshop.
- ❖ The declaration talks about the state's action plan for conserving the birds with respect to CAF.
- ❖ It also aims to developing strategies and concerted actions for curbing illegal hunting, taking and trade of birds in the CAF Region.

Subika Painting crisis - Manipur

- ❖ The Subika painting style is intricately linked to the Meitei community's cultural history through its six surviving manuscripts.
- ❖ They are Subika, Subika Achouba, Subika Laishaba, Subika Choudit, Subika Cheithil and Thengrakhel Subika.
- ❖ Unfortunately, the awareness about this unique art form has dwindled over the years, leading to its near extinction.
- ❖ Subika Laishaba represents a direct and authentic continuation of the Meitei cultural tradition depicted through visual images.
- ❖ They have visual language from the elements such as lines, shapes, forms, colours, and patterns.
- ❖ The visual images found in this manuscript are painted on handmade paper.
- ❖ It is also found that the materials of manuscripts are prepared indigenously either handmade paper or barks of trees.



Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code Bill

HERCULEAN TASK: MAKING OF THE UCC

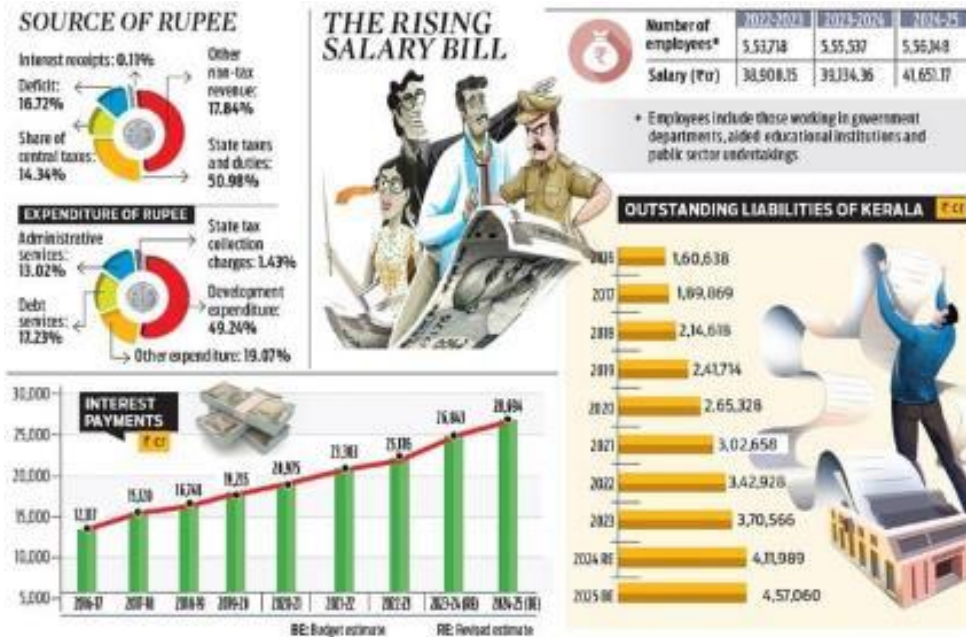
<p>Feb 12, 2022 UCC plan announced by CM Dhami</p> <p>May 27, 2022 5-member panel formed to create draft</p> <p>Aug 22, 2022 2 sub-panels formed to assist committee</p> <p>Sept 8, 2022 Portal launched to receive suggestions formed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Panel conducted 43 meetings with stakeholders > 2.33 lakh suggestions from people from across state > 61,000 through portal; 36,000 via post; 1.1 lakh in person, and 24,000 by email > Points taken from similar laws enacted in Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Indonesia, France, Nepal, Germany, Japan, Canada, Azerbaijan 	 <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">CM Pushkar Singh Dhami addresses the media after the passage of the UCC bill</p>	<p>Feb 2, 2024 UCC bill draft submitted to govt</p> <p>Feb 4, 2024 Dhami-led cabinet clears draft</p> <p>Feb 6, 2024 Govt tables bill in state assembly</p> <p>Feb 7, 2024 Bill passed. To be law after Prez, Guv nod</p>
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- ❖ Uttarakhand has become the first state to pass the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill.
- ❖ UCC refers to a common set of laws that are applicable to all Indian citizens, and is not based on religion in dealing with marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, among other personal matters.
- ❖ The bill excludes population control measures and the Scheduled Tribes, constituting 3 per cent of Uttarakhand's population.
- ❖ The distinction between the Ancestral Property and Self-Acquired Property was abolished.
- ❖ In cases of intestate succession, the property will pass on to Class-1 heirs, who include the children, the widow and parents among a long list of others.
- ❖ In the absence of Class-1 heirs, the property will pass on to Class-2 heirs, who include siblings, nieces, nephews and grandparents, among others.
- ❖ The Bill has provisions for equal rights for women in inheritance in ancestral properties, equal rights to adopt, divorce.
- ❖ The practices of bigamy or polygamy are outlawed.
- ❖ It provides the mandatory registration/self-declaration for live-in relationships, mandatory registration of marriage of marriages and divorce.
- ❖ UCC brings the minimum age of marriage to 18 and 21 for Muslim women and men.

Kerala's Environment Budget

- ❖ In a first, the Kerala government has introduced an Environment Budget as a separate document along with the State Budget.

- ❖ It is evaluating environmental impacts of budgetary and fiscal policies and integrating environmental concerns into the policies and programmes of the State.
- ❖ The document highlights 81 schemes in nine sectors and their Budget allocations in environment-related areas.
- ❖ The sectors selected for the first Environment Budget are agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forests and wildlife, environment, water resources, cooperation, soil survey, and the energy sector.
- ❖ The total outlay for environment-related schemes in the Budget allocations for these sectors is approximately ₹668.88 crore for 2024-25.



Tadoba Kawal conservation reserve



- ❖ The Telangana State declared the corridor area between Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Kawal Tiger Reserve as a conservation reserve.
- ❖ Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is located in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Conservation and community reserves are two more protected areas appended to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- ❖ As per the Section 36(A) of the Act, the State government may declare any areas owned by it.

Maa Kamakhya Divya Pariyojana

- ❖ The foundation stone of Maa Kamakhya Divya Pariyojana (Maa Kamakhya Access Corridor) laying ceremony was held recently.
- ❖ This project was executed under the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North Eastern Region (PM-DevINE) scheme.
- ❖ The significant pilgrimage centre Kamakhya temple is located on the Nilachal hills in Guwahati, Assam.



Assam's State Fruit

- ❖ Assam's unique lemon variety, Kaji Nemu (Assam lemon), was declared as the state fruit.
- ❖ It is known for its aroma, flavour and health benefits.
- ❖ Kaji Nemu has already got the GI tag.
- ❖ It is one of the best-known fruits that have medicinal properties and special aroma which is not grown in any other state or country.
- ❖ It's proven that Kaji Nemu boosts immunity, reduces cholesterol levels in the human body and makes it stress free.



Hori Habba

- ❖ The bull racing is a popular event that is organised after Diwali in Karnataka.
- ❖ It is hosted as part of Hori Habba in Karnataka's rural areas.
- ❖ Hori Habba is also known as Hatti Habba.
- ❖ Trained and decorated draught cattle and bulls are forced into running through huge cheering crowds.
- ❖ Copra, cash and gifts are tied to these bovines and people try to catch them and snatch these items from them.
- ❖ Hori Habba is quite similar to Jallikattu, a sport mostly practised in Tamil Nadu.

Smart Gram Panchayat

- ❖ The pilot project 'Smart Gram Panchayat: Revolution towards Digitization of Gram Panchayat' was launched recently.
- ❖ The aim of the project is to extend PM-WANI (Prime Minister's WiFi Access Network Interface) service in all gram panchayats across Begusarai district in Bihar.
- ❖ Begusarai has now become the first district in Bihar to equip all gram panchayats with WiFi services under PM-WANI.

PM-WANI

(Wi-Fi Access Network Interface)

TOWARDS WI-FI ACCESS FOR ALL

Modi government approves PM-WANI scheme that aims to proliferate public Wi-Fi availability across the length and breadth of India.

Features

- 📶 Public Wi-Fi networks would be set up by Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) to provide public Wi-Fi hotspots through Public Data Offices (PDOs).
- 📶 An App provider will register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
- 📶 There will be no license fee.

New Iron Ore Deposits



- ❖ The Rajasthan Mines Department has discovered over 840 million tonnes of iron ore in Khoda, Dadaroli, Todupura, and Liloti near Hindon, Karauli.
- ❖ Initial exploration indications of both magnetite and hematite of iron ore have been found.
- ❖ Iron ore deposits have been found in 462.3 hectares at Khoda of Karauli, 754.38 hectares at Dadaroli, 260.71 hectares at Todupura and 410.94 hectares at Liloti.

Statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan

- ❖ The 125 feet statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan at Lahdoigarh, Hologapar in Jorhat of Assam will be unveiled in March.
- ❖ He is known for his leadership in the 1671 Battle of Saraighat where he thwarted the Mughal invasion.
- ❖ This statue symbolizes the valour and spirit of the Assamese people.



Chandigarh Mayor Election

Results 'patently illegal', says top court

A look at how SC held that the results of Chandigarh mayoral polls were illegal

The election process

'Defacement' of ballots: The bench physically inspected the ballots and found that barring the writing on it made by the presiding officer (Anil Masih), votes were in favour of the AAP candidate.

Plea to conduct poll again: Solicitor general representing Chandigarh admin and advocate for the BJP candidate suggested fresh elections, but SC rejected this.

ON PRESIDING OFFICER

The court blasted Anil Masih and ordered proceedings be initiated against him for "deliberately defacing" ballots and then making false statements. "By his conduct he has unlawfully altered course of mayoral election. And in making a solemn statement on Monday, the presiding officer has expressed patent falsehood for which he needs to be held accountable," the bench said.

Votes counted afresh: Instead, the top court opted to count the votes and added the 8 "nulled" votes to the tally of 12 votes secured by AAP's Kuldeep Kumar.

20 for AAP TO 16 for BJP
The final vote tally according to the SC.

"We come to the conclusion that the result declared by presiding officer is patently illegal and is set aside," SC said.



- ❖ The Supreme Court has quashed the result of the election for the Mayor of Chandigarh.
- ❖ It is finding that presiding officer Anil Masih had deliberately invalidated eight ballots cast.
- ❖ The court used its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to do "complete justice" and protect the sanctity of electoral democracy.

- ❖ Although the corporation has a five-year term, the mayor is elected for only one year.
- ❖ The post is reserved for a woman candidate in the first and fourth year of each corporation.
- ❖ The last election to the corporation was held in 2021.

New Maratha Reservation Bill

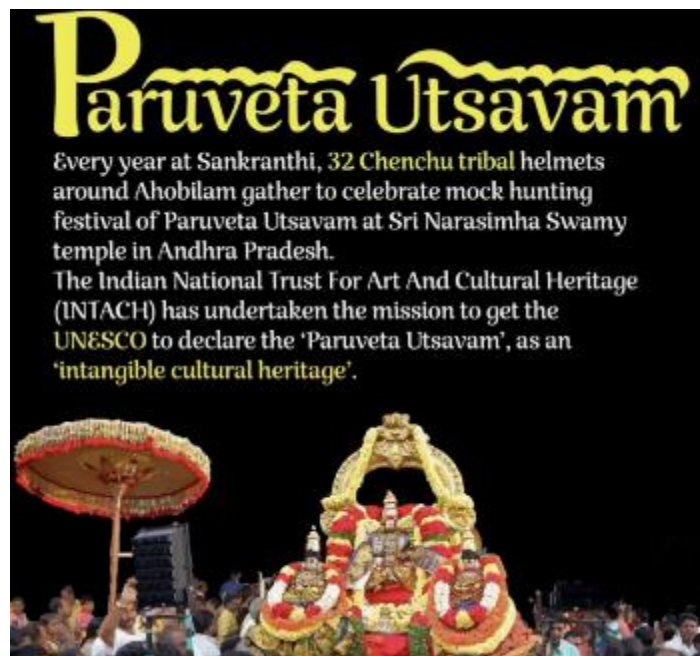


- ❖ The Maharashtra Assembly passed a Maratha reservation bill, granting a 10 per cent quota in education and government jobs to the Maratha community.
- ❖ This marks the third time in a decade that the Maratha quota bill has been passed by the state government.
- ❖ Its previous bill was nullified by the Supreme Court on May 5, 2021.
- ❖ The Supreme Court's decision highlighted the absence of valid grounds to breach the 50 per cent reservation while granting the Maratha quota.
- ❖ The reservation is based on a report submitted to the state government by the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC).
- ❖ The report stated that the Marathas account for 28% of Maharashtra's population, and are in an "exceptional circumstances and extraordinary condition" of backwardness.
- ❖ To justify the attempt to breach the 50% cap, the bill has cited the case of 69% reservation in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Apart from Tamil Nadu, there's 67% in Haryana, 69% in Bihar, 55% in West Bengal, 59% in Gujarat.

Sammakka Saralamma Jatara

- ❖ Every two years, millions of worshippers gather from across India to celebrate the grand Sammakka Saralamma Jatara festival in Medarm, Mulugu District of Telangana.
- ❖ It lasts for four days and is the India's largest tribal festival.
- ❖ Approximately 15 million tribal attendees from states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- ❖ The tribal fair honors Sammakka and her daughter Saralamma, revered as deities, on the full-moon day of Magha.
- ❖ They are remembered for fighting the Kakatiya dynasty's oppression and defending their tribal community and culture by sacrificing their own lives.

Paruveta Festival



- ❖ This festival, also known as the 'mock hunting festival,' is celebrated at the Sri Narasimha Swamy temple in the town of Ahobilam, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The unique aspect of this festival is that it is celebrated by all sections of people, irrespective of their caste.
- ❖ It is a festival of communal harmony, as devotees from other religious communities, including Muslims.
- ❖ The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is working to secure UNESCO certification for the festival.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Dr Nitya Anand

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

UK's Blavatnik Awards

- ❖ The UK has named nine scientists, including three researchers of Indian descent, as recipients of a prestigious award for young scientists who are advancing science and improving the world.
- ❖ UK's Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists honour research in three categories- Chief Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Life Sciences.
- ❖ The recipients, including Professors Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, and Tanmay Bharat, will be honoured in London.


Surajkund Mela 2024

- ❖ President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2024 in Haryana's Surajkund.
- ❖ The 37th edition of festival brings the artisans and craftsmen from across the country under one venue.
- ❖ Tanzania is the partner nation for this year's Surajkund International Crafts Mela, while Gujarat is the theme state.

SC Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

- ❖ 60 Parachute Field Hospital of Uttar Pradesh has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Disaster Management Award-2024.
- ❖ This award is given by the Central Government for outstanding work in disaster management.

- ❖ The 60 Parachute Field Hospital was established in 1942.
- ❖ It is the only air-medical establishment of the Indian Armed Forces.
- ❖ It is recognized for its exceptional service in global crises.



SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AAPDA PRABANDHAN PURASKAR-2024

60 PARACHUTE FIELD HOSPITAL, UTTAR PRADESH SELECTED FOR THE YEAR 2024.

ABOUT 60 PARACHUTE FIELD HOSPITAL :

- Established in 1942.
- Sole airborne medical establishment of the Indian Armed Forces, recognized for its exceptional service in various global crisis.
- The primary mission includes Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADRL) operations during natural calamities, nationally and internationally, both in time of peace and war.
- Provided medical assistance during the Uttarakhand floods (2013), Nepal Earthquake under the operation name 'Maitri' (2015) and Indonesian Tsunami as part of operation Samudra Maitri (2018).
- In response to the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Turkey and Syria in February 2023, the unit rapidly assembled a 99-member team and established India's pioneering level-2 medical facility in Turkey overcoming resource constraints and language barrier to set up a 30 bed hospital in Hatay province's school building.
- The unit provided a wide range of medical services, including rescue, triage, surgery, dental treatment, X Ray and lab facilities and offered care to 3600 patients during a 12 day period as a part of 'Operation Dost'.

Quaide Milleth Award for Probity in Political/Public Life

- ❖ Senior journalist N. Ram and renowned economist Abusaleh Shariff have been declared the winners of the Quaide Milleth Award for Probity in Political/Public Life for the year 2023.
- ❖ Shariff has been awarded for his role in the preparation of the Sachar Committee report.
- ❖ Earlier, The Wire and K. Veeramani were awarded the same for the year 2022.
- ❖ The award was instituted in 2015 after Quaide Milleth Mohamed Ismail Saheb, a popular South Indian leader.
- ❖ He exercised tremendous influence in the formative years of Independent India, as the opposition leader in Madras Presidency.
- ❖ He is also a Member of the Constituent Assembly, Member of Rajya Sabha (1952-58), and was elected to Lok Sabha thrice.



Grammy Awards 2024

- ❖ The 66th Annual Grammy Awards 2024 were held in Los Angeles, USA.
- ❖ Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band 'Shakti' bagged the Grammy's award for 'Best Global Music Album'.
- ❖ Zakir Hussain also secured the 'Best Global Music Performance' Grammy for his contribution to 'Pashto'.
- ❖ The top Grammy Awards
 - Album of the year - Taylor Swift, *Midnights*
 - Record of the year - Miley Cyrus, *Flowers*
 - Song of the year - Billie Eilish, *What Was I Made For?*
 - Best new artist - Victoria Monét
- ❖ Taylor Swift becomes the first performer to win the prize for album of the year four times.
- ❖ South African singer Tyla made history by picking up the first ever award for best African performance.

Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2024

- ❖ The 25th edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav, India's premier theatre festival is being organised in 13 cities across the country.
- ❖ It's a 21-day cultural event featuring over 150 plays, along with workshops and discussions.
- ❖ The ambassador for the festival, known as 'Rangdhoot' this year, is actor Pankaj Tripathi and actor Paresh Rawal.
- ❖ There will be folk plays, street plays, modern dramas, and plays from Bangladesh, Nepal, Russia, and Italy.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2024

- ❖ An image of a polar bear sleeping on a small iceberg has bagged the 2023 Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.
- ❖ The photo was captured by Nima Sarikhani of British in Norway's Svalbard archipelago.
- ❖ Each year, this photography competition is organised by the Natural History Museum.



National Film Awards 2024

- ❖ The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) has dropped the names of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and late actor Nargis Dutt from the National Film Awards.
- ❖ The 'Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a director' will now be simply called 'Best Debut Film of a Director'.
- ❖ Indira's name became associated with the award during the 28th National Film Awards, 1980.
- ❖ The 'Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration' has become the 'Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values'.
- ❖ Nargis's name came to be associated with the National Film Awards in 1965, during the 13th edition of the awards, for best feature film category.
- ❖ The National films awards were first presented in 1954 by the Government of India.
- ❖ It aims "to honour films made across India, on a national scale, to encourage the furthering of Indian art and culture".





Jnanpith Award 2023

- ❖ The Urdu poet and Bollywood writer and director Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya have been selected for the Jnanpith award 2023.
- ❖ Gulzar or Sampooran Singh Kalra is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of his generation and is a top director and writer of Hindi cinema.
- ❖ Rambhadracharya is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books and texts, including four epics.
- ❖ He is also the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Gulzar has received the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, and the Padma Bhushan in 2004.
- ❖ He also won, at least five National Film awards for his work.
- ❖ This is the 58th edition of the Jnanpith Award given annually for outstanding contributions to Indian literature since 1965.
- ❖ It is presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, which was established in 1944.

Khajuraho Dance Festival

- ❖ The 50th Khajuraho Dance Festival kickstarts at the Khajuraho, in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district.
- ❖ The festival was started in 1975.
- ❖ It is organised every year in Khajuraho by the Culture Department through Ustad Alauddin's Music and Art Academy, Bhopal
- ❖ During the Kathak Kumbh, Khajuraho entered the Guinness World Records.
- ❖ A staggering 1484 participants simultaneously presented their talent amidst the ancient temples of Khajuraho.
- ❖ It is surpassing the previous record of 1204 participants.

Fali S Nariman

- ❖ Eminent jurist and senior Supreme Court advocate Fali Nariman died recently at New Delhi.
- ❖ He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1991 and Padma Vibhushan in 2007.
- ❖ He was appointed the Solicitor General of India in 1972, but he resigned in 1975.
- ❖ He was also the President of the Bar Association from 1991 to 2010.
- ❖ During his time, he left an imprint on the law and the legal profession in a vast array of landmark cases.

- The Second Judges Case: Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India.
- National Judicial Appointments Commission case
- Parliament cannot curtail fundamental rights: I.C. Golak Nath v. State of Punjab
- Bhopal gas tragedy: Union Carbide Corporation v. Union of India (1989)
- Governor to act only upon the aid and advice of the council of ministers, chief minister: Nabam Rebia, and Bamang Felix v. Deputy Speaker
- Cauvery Water Dispute: State of Karnataka v State of Tamil Nadu.



Alexei Navalny

- ❖ Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny has died in the Arctic penal colony where he was serving a 19-year sentence.
- ❖ His Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) made detailed claims about the official corruption.
- ❖ In 2011, he would lead large street protests against President Putin.
- ❖ In 2017, he was barred from standing in the general election.
- ❖ At the time, he was widely regarded as the only candidate with a chance of challenging Russian President.

Financial Literacy Week 2024

- ❖ RBI has been observing this event during February 26 – March 01, 2024.
- ❖ It aims to propagate financial education messages to public at large to empower them to engage in responsible financial behaviour and take informed financial decisions.
- ❖ The theme for this year is "Make a Right Start: Become Financially Smart".

SPORTS

Khelo India youth games 2024

- ❖ The sixth edition of the flagship event under the Indian government's Khelo India initiative, concluded recently.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu hosted the KIYG 2024 in four cities - Chennai, Madurai, Trichy and Coimbatore.
- ❖ Maharashtra defended their Khelo India Youth Games title after topping the medals tally with 57 gold medals, 48 silver and 53 bronze.
- ❖ It was their fourth KIYG title.
- ❖ Host state Tamil Nadu finished second with 38 gold, 21 silver and 39 bronze for their best-ever finish.
- ❖ Haryana, who have won two KIYG titles, came third with 35 gold, 22 silver and 46 bronze medals.
- ❖ A total of 926 medals - 278 gold, 278 silver and 370 bronze - were on offer across 26 sports at KIYG 2024 Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Squash made its KIYG debut this year while Silambam, a form of indigenous martial arts, featured as a demonstration sport.
- ❖ Swimmer Vritti Agarwal of Telangana won five individual gold medals by claiming the top spots.

Rank	State	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total medals
1	Maharashtra	57	48	53	158
2	Tamil Nadu	38	21	39	98
3	Haryana	35	22	46	103
4	Delhi	13	18	25	56
5	Rajasthan	13	17	17	47
6	Telangana	13	4	7	24
7	Uttar Pradesh	11	13	18	42
8	Punjab	11	13	15	39
9	Kerala	11	9	15	35
10	Manipur	10	11	10	31

Australian Open 2024

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



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

ISSF World Cup 2024

- ❖ Rhythm Sangwan and Ujjawal Malik won the mixed air pistol gold medal in Cairo, Egypt.
- ❖ Divyansh Singh Panwar won gold medal in men's 10m air rifle.
- ❖ Sonam Uttam Maskar won silver medal in women's 10m air rifle
- ❖ Arjun Babuta/Sonam Uttam Maskar got silver medal in 10m air pistol mixed team.
- ❖ Anuradha Devi adjusted with silver medal in the women's 10m air pistol.
- ❖ Akhil Sheoran got bronze medal in men's 50m rifle 3 positions.

Sportstar Aces Awards 2024

- ❖ India cricketer Mohammed Shami and chess Grandmaster R. Vaishali won the 'Sportsman of the year (Team Sports)' and 'Sportswoman of the year (Individual)' awards respectively.
- ❖ The Amul International Icon award was presented to Muttiah Muralitharan.
- ❖ Other winners
 - Sportsman of the year (parasports): Sumit antil
 - Sportswoman of the year (parasports): Thulasimathi Murugesan
 - Coach of the Year: Rahul Dravid.
 - Sportstar of the year (Male): Neeraj Chopra
 - Sportstar of the year (Female): Sheetal Devi
 - Best State for The Promotion of Sport: Tamil Nadu
 - Best University for The Promotion of Sport: SRM Institute of Science And Technology
 - Ace of Aces Award: Rohan Bopanna

Khelo India University Games 2024

Rank	University	Gold medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total medals
1	Jain University, Karnataka	8	6	5	19
2	Chandigarh University	6	8	10	24
3	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	6	2	2	10
4	University of Kerala	5	1	2	8
5	Savitribai Phule Pune University	4	6	9	19
6	Adamas University	4	2	0	6
7	Utkal University	4	1	1	6
8	University of Mumbai	3	3	5	11
9	Savitribai Institute of Medical & Technical Sciences	3	0	0	3
10	University of Madras	2	5	4	11

- ❖ Over 200 Indian universities are competing for the KIUG 2024 title.
- ❖ Around 4,500 athletes are vying for 822 medals - 245 gold, 245 silver and 332 bronze - in 20 sports.
- ❖ Nagaland hosts the 4th edition of the Khelo India University Games at Kohima.
- ❖ This is the first time that the KIUG is being held in northeast India.
- ❖ Of the three KIUG editions so far, Chandigarh's Panjab University have won two and are also the defending champions.
- ❖ Karnataka's Jain University is the other winner.

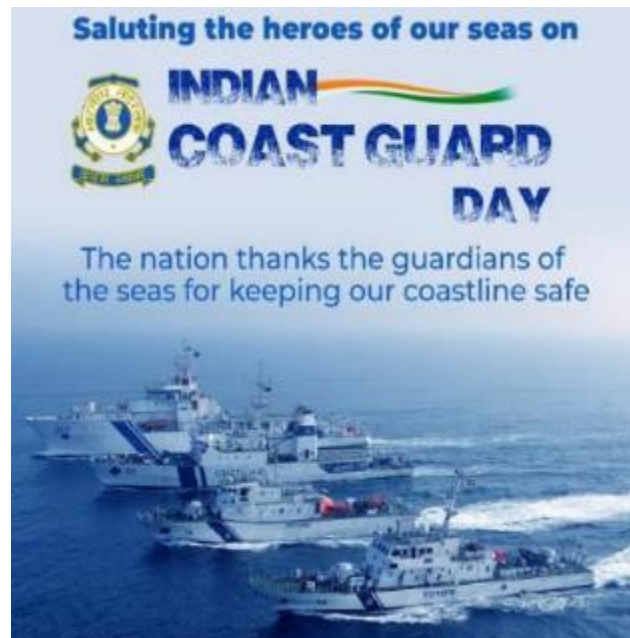
Frozen Lake Marathon

- ❖ Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024 was held in Leh-Ladakh.
- ❖ Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana from Bhopal have joined the select group of athletes after completing the Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon.
- ❖ The second edition of the Ladakh's Pangong frozen lake marathon is known as the 'World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon'.
- ❖ The run was conducted amid heavy snowfall at an altitude of 18,680 feet, with temperatures dropping to -15°C.
- ❖ Bhagwan is also the first mountaineer from Madhya Pradesh to scale the world's highest peak, Mount Everest.



IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Coast Guard Day 2024 - February 01

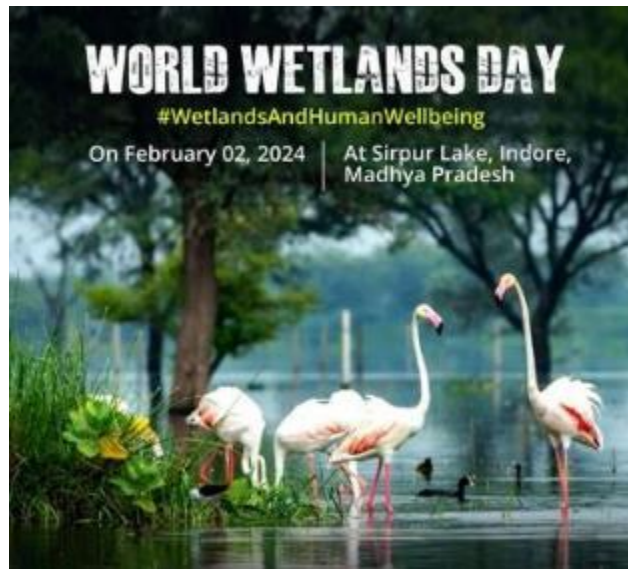


- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard was established on February 1, 1977.
- ❖ It aims to prevent the sea-borne smuggling of goods that hampered the economy.
- ❖ The responsibilities of the Coast Guard include offshore security, marine safety, and coastal security as well as safeguarding India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- ❖ On August 18, 1978, the Parliament announced that the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Day would be celebrated on February 1.

- ❖ The ICG department is ranked as the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world.
- ❖ It is a maritime armed force operating under the Ministry of Defence.

World Wetlands Day 2024 - February 02

- ❖ It aims to raise awareness for the importance of wetlands for human lives and the planet.
- ❖ Wetlands can be both freshwater or marine or coastal, consisting of swamps, wet grasslands, marshes, coral reefs and mangroves.
- ❖ Wetlands cover only six percent of the earth, but more than forty percent of animal and plant species live and breed in wetlands.
- ❖ The Ramsar Convention, named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, was an international treaty for the conservation of wetlands.
- ❖ The treaty was signed on February 2, 1971.
- ❖ This year's theme is - Wetlands and human wellbeing.



RA Awareness Day 2024 - February 02

- ❖ Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) causes inflammation around the body with pain persisting in the joints.
- ❖ It is an autoimmune condition in which the body believes the linings of the joints are foreign tissue, and so attacks and damages them, resulting in inflammation and pain.
- ❖ This day was established by the Rheumatoid Patient Foundation in an effort to increase worldwide understanding of the disease.

What is Rheumatoid Disease?

also known as Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

- RA is a progressive, destructive disease frequently leading to disability. It affects 1% of the population.
- Immune cells attack joints & organs, including heart & lungs.
- Symptoms like fatigue, joint pain, stiffness, swelling, & fever may be constant or flaring.
- Almost 2/3 of patients have a 20% response or less to treatments. No cure is known.
- U.S. spends a fraction on RA research of what is spent on rarer diseases with similar mortality rates.

World Interfaith Harmony Week 2024

- ❖ World Interfaith Harmony Week is celebrated annually in the first week of February.
- ❖ The week transforms into a global platform for fostering peace and understanding.
- ❖ It serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of dialogue, respect, and collaboration across different faiths.

World Cancer Day 2024 - February 04

- ❖ The day aims to promote awareness about cancer.
- ❖ It also helps to strengthen actions that strive to improve cancer care, detection, preventive measures and treatment.
- ❖ It refers to the abnormal growth of cells that divide uncontrollably.
- ❖ Cancer has the ability to spread from one body part/ organ/ tissue to another.
- ❖ There were 19.3 million incident cancer cases worldwide for the year 2020.
- ❖ Lung and breast cancers were the leading sites of cancer in males and females, respectively.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is 'Close the care gap: Everyone deserves access to cancer care.'



International Day of Human Fraternity 2024 - February 04

- ❖ This day aims to celebrate the importance of unity in diversity and the significance of people coming together to live in harmony.
- ❖ On February 4, 2019, the historic document - Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together – was signed by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and Pope Francis.
- ❖ This day was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21st, 2020.

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2024 - February 06

- ❖ In 1997, World Health Organisation with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) issued a joint statement together against female genital mutilation.
- ❖ In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the resolution for elimination of female genital mutilation.
- ❖ This was the practice for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women.
- ❖ The theme for this year is – Her voice. Her future.

International Day of the Arabian Leopard 2024 - February 10

- ❖ It is one of the smallest leopard subspecies.
- ❖ They spread on small isolated pockets in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ As per estimation, fewer than 200 individuals remaining in the wild.
- ❖ It is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

National Deworming Day 2024 - February 10

- ❖ The National Deworming Day was established in February 2015 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ❖ It aims to deworm all children (both enrolled and unenrolled) from 1 to 19 years of age.
- ❖ It also aims to target almost 240 million children that are at risk of acquiring soil-transmitted helminths in India.



- ❖ The first round is conducted on February 10.
- ❖ It is followed up by second round on August 10 every year.
- ❖ The three types of worms that infect people are roundworms (*Ascaris lumbricoides*), whipworms (*Trichuris trichiura*), and hookworms (*Necator americanus* and *Ancylostoma duodenale*).

World Pulses Day 2024 - February 10

- ❖ This day is dedicated to highlighting the importance of pulses and their nutritional benefits.
- ❖ Pulses are a class of foods that includes dry peas, beans, lentils, lupins, and chickpeas.
- ❖ They are rich in protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- ❖ They are low in fat and sugar.
- ❖ The theme for year is ‘#Pulses: nourishing soils and people’.

World Day of the Sick 2024 - February 11

- ❖ The day is dedicated to those suffering from illnesses and to raise awareness about the importance of healthcare and the need for compassion and support for the sick.
- ❖ This day was first established by Pope John Paul II in 1992 in response to his neuro-degenerative condition.
- ❖ It is also the Memorial Day of Our Lady of Lourdes.



International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2024 - February 11

- ❖ This day is observed to honour and acknowledge the achievements and contributions of females in the field of science.
- ❖ It promotes full and equal access and participation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.
- ❖ The main theme for 2024 is: “Women and Girls in Science Leadership, a New Era for Sustainability”.

- ❖ The subtheme is “Think Science ... Think Peace”.



Darwin Day 2024 - February 12

- ❖ This day commemorates the birthday of Charles Darwin on February 12, 1809.
- ❖ Charles Darwin was a British naturalist, geologist, and biologist who is widely recognized as the father of evolutionary biology.
- ❖ This day highlights his contributions to science and to draw inspiration to promote scientific developments in general.
- ❖ In 1859, Darwin published his seminal work, “On the Origin of Species”.
- ❖ It outlined his theory in detail and presented compelling evidence to support it.

World Unani Day 2024 - February 11

- ❖ This day honours a famous Indian Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan marking his birth anniversary.
- ❖ He is also the catalyst behind the modernization of the Unani system of medicine in India.
- ❖ The Unani system of medicine, also known as Greco-Arab medicine, has its roots in the teachings of Greek physicians such as Hippocrates and Galen.

National Productivity Day 2024 - February 12

- ❖ This day commemorates the founding of the National Productivity Council (NPC).
- ❖ The goal of the NPC is to raise national awareness of the need to boost the productivity.
- ❖ The Indian Productivity Week is observed from February 12 to February 18.
- ❖ This year's theme is “Artificial Intelligence (AI)- Productivity Engine for Economic Growth.”



World Radio Day 2024 - February 13

- ❖ UNESCO established this day to highlighting the pivotal role of radio.
- ❖ Radio was invented in 1895 by an Italian physicist and inventor named Guglielmo Marconi.
- ❖ He is credited for being the first to develop a practical and successful system of wireless communication.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is 'Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating'.

International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism 2024 - February 12

- ❖ This day aims to raise awareness about the dangers of violent extremism and promote international cooperation in tackling this complex issue.
- ❖ This day was established by UNGA in 2015.
- ❖ This year's theme was "Living Together: Fostering the Community Resilience to Prevent Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism".

International Epilepsy Day 2024 - February 12

- ❖ This has been observed on the second Monday of February every year since 2015.
- ❖ The day provides a platform to educate and create awareness among people.
- ❖ The epilepsy is a non-communicable neurological disease.
- ❖ It affects around 50 million people across the world.
- ❖ Epilepsy is a non-communicable disease.
- ❖ Different factors lead to or cause epilepsy.
- ❖ These categories include structural, genetic, infectious, metabolic, immune, and unknown.

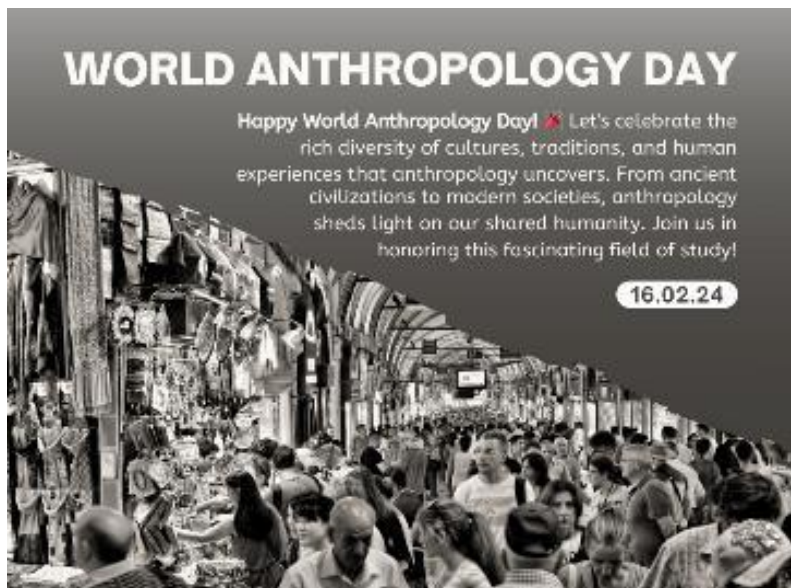
International Childhood Cancer Day 2024 - February 15

- ❖ This day is observed to highlight the challenges related to childhood cancer and the need to support children, adolescents and their families to battle this dreaded disease.
- ❖ It was established in 2002 by Childhood Cancer International.
- ❖ Over 4 lakh children around the world develop cancer every year but only half of them are diagnosed.
- ❖ 70% of low and middle-income countries, and 20% of children in high-income countries are not cured.

- ❖ Every year, an estimated 4,00,000 children and adolescents between the age 0-19 years, develop cancer.

World Anthropology Day 2024 - February 15

- ❖ This day was held on the third Thursday in February.
- ❖ It aims to promote the field of anthropology and raise awareness about its significance in understanding human diversity, cultures and societies worldwide.
- ❖ This Day was established by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in 2015.
- ❖ This day was initially called National Anthropology Day in 2016 it was changed to World Anthropology Day.



World Hippo Day 2024 - February 15

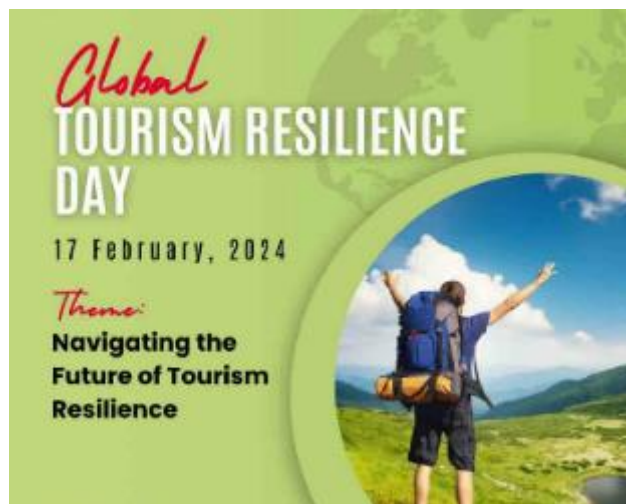
- ❖ This day was dedicated to raising awareness about the conservation, protection, and appreciation of the hippopotamus.
- ❖ The day was officially established to coincide with the anniversary of the opening of the Turgwe Hippo Trust in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ Hippos are semiaquatic mammals, native to sub-Saharan Africa, and weigh up to 2,000 kg.
- ❖ It is the third-largest land mammal after elephants and rhinos.
- ❖ Today, the hippo population is estimated to be between 115,000 and 130,000.

World Pangolin Day 2024 - February 17

- ❖ The day serves as an opportunity to raise awareness about this lesser-known endangered and one of the world's most trafficked mammal.
- ❖ Nearly 6,000 pangolins were poached in India between 2009 and 2017.
- ❖ In India, two of the nine pangolin species are found - the Indian pangolin (endangered) and the Chinese pangolin (critically endangered).

Global Tourism Resilience Day 2024 - February 17

- ❖ The day was designated by the United Nations in 2023.
- ❖ It aims to highlight the need for tourism development to be more resilient to shocks and emergencies.
- ❖ The initiative focuses on bolstering the tourism sector against various challenges, supporting sustainable development, and promoting economic stability, particularly in developing nations.



World Whale Day 2024 - February 18

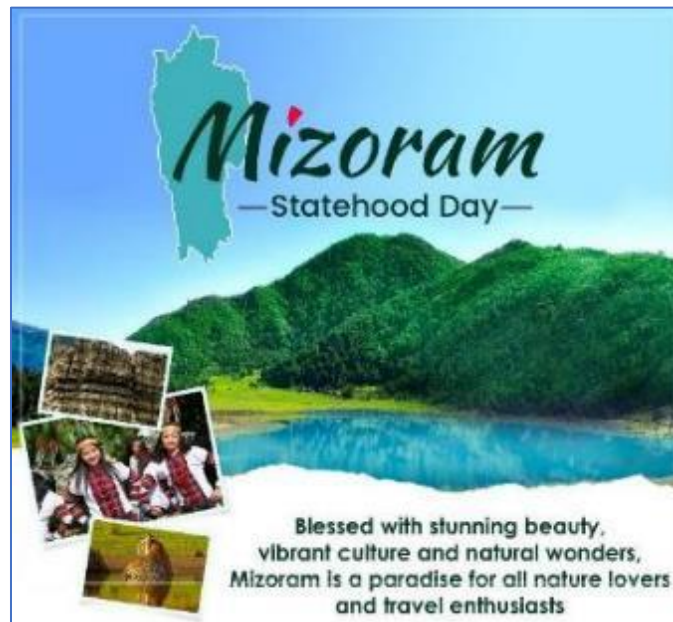
- ❖ This day observed annually on the third Sunday of February.
- ❖ It serves as a crucial platform to raise awareness about the threats faced by whale species.
- ❖ This day originated in 1980 through the efforts of Greg Kauffman and the Pacific Whale Foundation.
- ❖ India's Arabian Sea coast has become a notable habitat for blue whales, the planet's largest beings.
- ❖ Killer whales, also known as orcas, belong to the dolphin family and serve as the ocean's top predators.



Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day 2024 - February 20

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987.
- ❖ Till 1972, it was known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).
- ❖ It has gained Union Territory status on January 20, 1972 and was renamed Arunachal Pradesh.

Mizoram Statehood Day 2024 - February 20



- ❖ The Mizo Hills area became the Lushai Hills district within Assam at the time of independence.
- ❖ Further, in 1954 it was renamed the Mizo Hills District of Assam.
- ❖ Mizoram was granted the status of a Union Territory in 1972 after signing an accord with the moderates of the Mizo National Front (MNF).

- ❖ The UT of Mizoram was conferred the status of a full state in 1986 after the signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord between the Central government and the MNF.
- ❖ The creation of Mizoram State took place on 20th February 1987 after the 53rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution, 1986.
- ❖ Mizoram has been designated as a "tribal area" under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (Article 244(2)).

World Day of Social Justice 2024 - February 20

- ❖ This day highlights the importance of promoting social justice by addressing issues such as unemployment, poverty, exclusion, gender inequality, human rights and social protection.
- ❖ On November 16, 2007, the UNGA declared this day starting from the 63rd session of the General Assembly.
- ❖ On June 10, 2008, the International Labour Organization (ILO) unanimously endorsed the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.
- ❖ The theme of 2024 is "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances".

International Mother Language Day 2024 - February 21

- ❖ This day aims to recognise and promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.
- ❖ The idea to celebrate this day was the initiative of Bangladesh and was approved in 1999 at UNESCO General Conference.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is "Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learning".

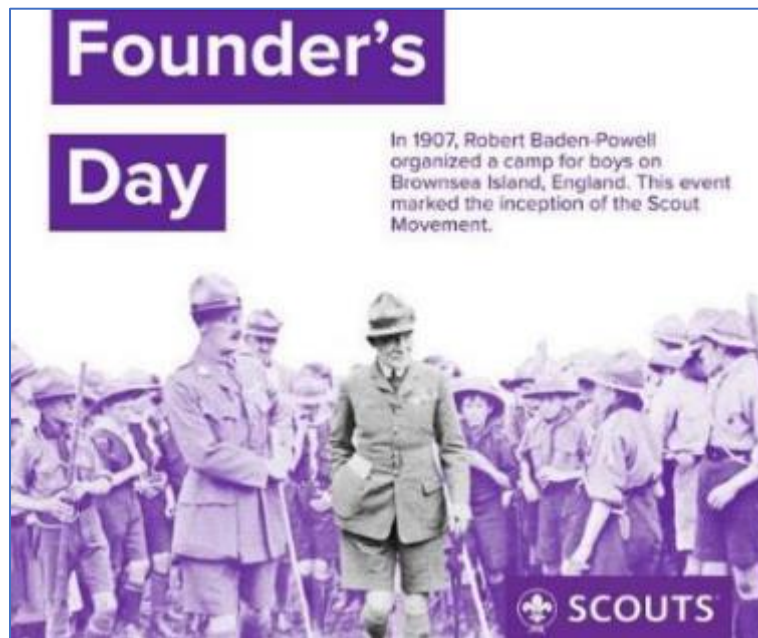


World Thinking Day 2024 - February 22

- ❖ The day celebrates the friendship, sisterhood, and empowerment of girls and young women all over the world.
- ❖ It aims to strengthen the bond shared by young women and explore ways to empower them.
- ❖ The theme of 2024 is 'Our World, Our Thriving Future.'

World Scout Day 2024 - February 22

- ❖ This day commemorates the birth anniversary of Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts movement.
- ❖ The day is also popularly known as the Founder's Day.
- ❖ The Scout Movement is now spread across 172 National Scout Organisations with 57 million members.
- ❖ The theme of 2024 is 'Scouts for a Better World'.



World peace and understanding day 2024 - February 23

- ❖ The day commemorates the first meeting of Rotary International that took place in Chicago, USA in 1905.
- ❖ It is an NGO dedicated to humanitarian service, peace, and goodwill across the world.
- ❖ In 1910, the first Rotary Clubs in America were formed, mainly in San Francisco, Seattle, Oakland, and in Los Angeles.

- ❖ Rotary International's goal is global peacebuilding and positive resolution.



Central Excise Day 2024 - February 24

- ❖ The day commemorates the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act, which came into effect in 1944.
- ❖ This day, also honour the contributions of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to the Indian economy.
- ❖ The Act was a combination of 11 Acts concerning excise duties and was passed to make changes in the law related to salt and central duties.
- ❖ Later, in 1966, the name of this Act was changed to The Central Excise Act, 1944.



World NGO Day 2024 - February 27

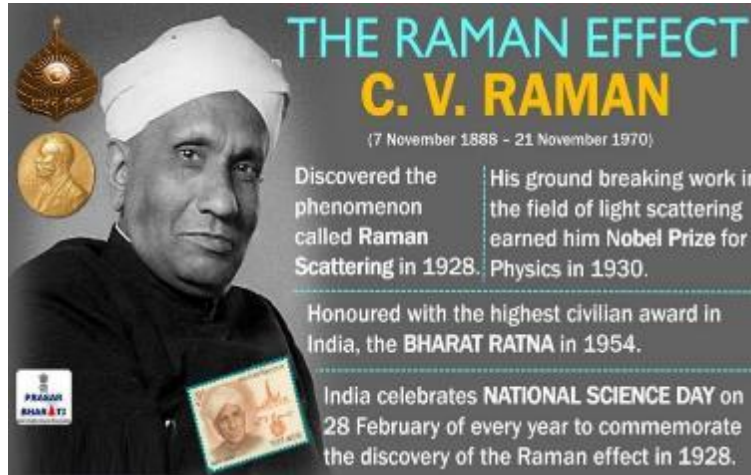
- ❖ This day was first proposed in 2010 by the Baltic Sea NGO Forum.
- ❖ The first World NGO Day was observed in 2014.

- ❖ It aims to recognize and celebrate the vital role that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play in making a positive impact on society.
- ❖ NGOs are typically independent, non-profit organisations that operate at a local, national, or international level to address a range of social, environmental, and humanitarian issues.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is “Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”

World Protein Day – February 27

- ❖ It was established in 2020.
- ❖ 2024 is the 5th National Protein Day in India.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is “Solve with Protein”.
- ❖ Protein is the main building block of the human body.
- ❖ For most people, a daily dose of around 0.8-1g of protein per 1kg of body weight is recommended.

National Science Day 2024 - February 28



- ❖ This day honours the discovery of a phenomenon of the scattering of photons by Indian scientist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman in 1928.
- ❖ The discovery was later named as 'Raman Effect' after his name.
- ❖ Mr Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize for science in 1930 for the remarkable discovery.
- ❖ The first National Science Day was celebrated on February 28, 1987.
- ❖ The theme for this year is 'Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat'.

Rare Disease Day 2024 - February 29



- ❖ This day is observed every year on 28 February (or 29 in leap years) —the rarest day of the year.
- ❖ The basis of a rare disease can be identified with its epidemiology.
- ❖ The frequency of any rare disease should be less than 6.5-10 per 10,000 people.
- ❖ 72% of the diseases are genetic and almost 1 out of 5 cancers is rare.
- ❖ Organization for Rare Diseases India (ORDI) has listed 263 rare diseases in India.

MISCELLANEOUS

Madhika Language

- ❖ Madhika is a language spoken by the Chakaliya community that migrated from Karnataka centuries ago.
- ❖ It is fast becoming extinct with the younger generation opting for Malayalam.
- ❖ There are only two people left, who are the last fluent speakers of Madhika.
- ❖ Madhika is a language with no script and is a blend of Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam.
- ❖ Despite sounding similar to Kannada, it can bewilder listeners due to its diverse linguistic influences.
- ❖ Madhika is largely influenced by Havyaka Kannada, an old form of Kannada.



Serum – CEPI partnership

- ❖ The Serum Institute of India (SII) will join a growing CEPI network of vaccine producers in the Global South.
- ❖ It aims to support more rapid, agile, and equitable responses to future disease outbreaks.
- ❖ Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) is an innovative global partnership working to accelerate the development of vaccines and other biologic countermeasures against epidemic and pandemic threats.
- ❖ CEPI has articulated an aspirational goal: vaccines should be ready for initial authorisation and manufacturing at scale within 100 days of recognition of a pandemic pathogen, when appropriate.
- ❖ This alliance will be a significant boost to vaccine production efforts in Global South regions, and take it a step closer to achieving the 100 Days Mission.

390-year-old Deepasthambham

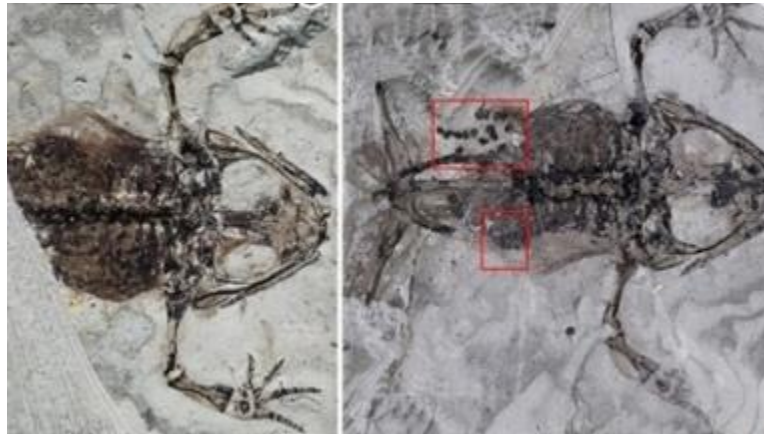


- ❖ A 390-year-old towering lamppost with an inscription dedicated to Kasi Viswanatha was found in Nalgonda district of Telangana.

- ❖ The inscription, on a 20-foot-tall lamppost with hollows for lamps, is a mix of Telugu and Tamil languages dated to 1635 C.E.
- ❖ The inscription begins with obeisance to the god Kasi Viswanatha and records the erection of a pillar for the god Kasi Visvanatha by Polinedu, son of Vali Munulayya.
- ❖ This lamp post (20ft long pillar) might have been the geographical indicator for traders and ships passing through this town.

Oldest ever frog fossil

- ❖ A 100-million-year-old fossil of an ancient frog - the oldest ever found - has been unearthed in China.
- ❖ The frog was found with a rare biological feature: a belly consisting of numerous tiny eggs.
- ❖ The fossil formation occurred roughly between 145 million to 100.5 million years ago during the Lower Cretaceous era.
- ❖ This ancient frog belonged to the *Gansubatrachus qilianensis* species.



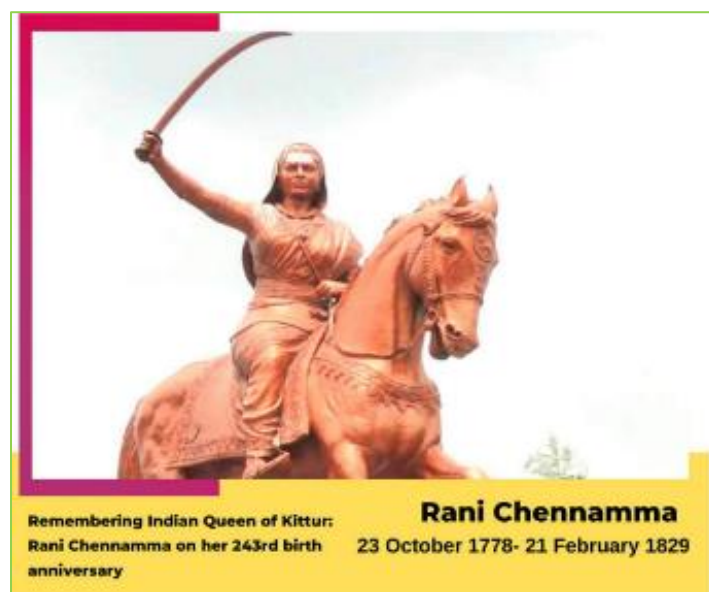
200th Birth Anniversary of Dayanand Saraswati

- ❖ Swami Dayanand Saraswati was born as Mool Shankar Tiwari on 12th February 1824 in Gujarat.
- ❖ He was renowned for his seminal work 'Satyarth Prakash'.
- ❖ He founded Arya Samaj in 1875 to counter then-prevalent social inequities.
- ❖ Arya Samaj played a key role in the cultural and social awakening of the country through its emphasis on social reforms and education.



200th anniversary of Rani Chennamma's rebellion

- ❖ A fleet of 20,000 British soldiers was positioned on the foothills of the Kittur fort as they attempted to invade the former princely state of Karnataka.
- ❖ But the Queen of Kittur, Rani Chennamma, retaliated and killed a British official to protect and safeguard her homeland.
- ❖ This came to be known as the Kittur revolt of 1824.
- ❖ Kittur ruler before his death in 1824, adopted a child, Shivalingappa, as the successor.
- ❖ However, the British East India Company refused to recognise Shivalingappa as the successor of the kingdom under the 'doctrine of lapse'.



Badami Chalukyas inscriptions

- ❖ Two Badami Chalukya temples at least 1,300-1,500 years old and a 1,200-year-old label inscription were recently discovered in Mudimanikyam village, Nalgonda District, Telangana.
- ❖ The two temples date back to between 543 AD and 750 AD.
- ❖ The inscription dates to 8th or 9th century AD, corresponding to the rule of the Badami Chalukyas.
- ❖ These temples are exceptional as they are in Kadamba Nagara style in the Rekha Nagara format.
- ❖ This is the only example of such architecture evident today in Telangana.
- ❖ The label inscription reads as 'Gandaloranru' and is inscribed on a pillar of a group of five temples in the village.

