

SSC BANKING MANTHAN

Current Affairs Supplement

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Preface

Dear Readers,

The “Current Affairs” section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the month for the upcoming exams like Banking, Insurance, CLAT, MBA etc. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

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CONTENTS

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE	4
National.....	4
International.....	22
ECONOMY AND FINANCE	38
Economy News	38
Banks in News.....	45
Firms in News.....	49
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.....	56
Inventions/Discoveries/Health	64
ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT.....	68
SPORTS.....	71
Sports Personalities in News.....	71
Sport Events.....	73
AWARDS.....	75
PERSONS IN NEWS	79
MISCELLANEOUS	81
IMPORTANT DAYS	85
QUESTIONS	89
ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION.....	110

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Over 60 products from across India earn GI tags

- Over 60 products from across India, including the famous Banaras Thandai, have been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This is the first time such a large number of GI tags have been given at a go. He also said that more States were coming forward and filing applications to get a GI tag for some of their traditional and historic products. Six traditional crafts from Assam — Asharikandi terracotta craft, Pani Meteka craft, Sarthebari metal craft, Jaapi (bamboo headgear of rural Assam), Mishing handloom products, and the Bihu dhol — have bagged the GI tag.
- Thirteen other products from Assam: Bodo Dokhona, the traditional attire of Bodo women; and Bodo Eri silk, referred to as the fabric of peace or ahimsa (non-violence), which comes from the silkworm *Samia ricini* that feeds mostly on the leaves of the castor plant (*Ricinus communis*), and cassava. Bodo Jwmgra (a traditional scarf), Bodo Gamsa (traditional dress of Bodo men), Bodo Thorkha (a musical instrument), and Bodo Sifung (a long flute) are also, on the list.
- Tripura: It has secured GI tags for Pachra-Rignai, a traditional dress, and Matabari Peda, a sweet delicacy, marking the state's presence on the cultural map of India.
- Meghalaya: Four products of Meghalaya — its famed Lakadong turmeric, considered to be one of the best varieties of turmeric in the world with its high curcumin content, Garo Dakmanda textile, Lyrnai pottery and Garo tribe's home brewed rice wine, 'chubitchi', received GI tags.

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement as: "Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin." The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005. The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.

SC collegium recommends appointment of 5 additional judges of Karnataka HC as permanent judges

- On 03-04-2024, the Supreme Court Collegium comprising of Dr Justice DY Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of India, Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice BR Gavai, resolved to recommend the appointment of 5 Permanent Judges and 1 Additional Judge for fresh term of 1 year. The instant Resolution was signed by two members of the Collegium as Justice B R Gavai was travelling out of Delhi. However, Justice Gavai verbally conveyed

his agreement with the afore-stated proposal. The Collegium directed the proposal to be processed without waiting for the written consent Justice since the term of one of the Additional Judges is going to expire on 16-04-2024. The Collegium clarified that Justice Gavai's written consent would be placed on the record in due course of time.

- The collegium also recommended that **Justice Gurusiddaiah Basavaraja be appointed as an additional judge of the Karnataka High Court for a fresh term of one year** with effect from August 16, 2024. As per an April 3 resolution of the apex court collegium, which also includes **Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai, the high court collegium had unanimously recommended that five additional judges be appointed as permanent judges** and the term of additional judge Basavaraja be extended for a further period of one year. Additional Judges recommended to be appointed as Permanent Judges: Justice Cheppudira Monnappa Poonacha, Justice Anil Bheemsen Katti, Justice Chandrashekhar Mrutyunjaya Joshi, Justice Umesh Manjunathbhat Adiga, Justice Talkad Girigowda Shivashankare Gowda.

The High Courts of India are the highest courts of appellate jurisdiction in each state and union territory of India. The work of most high courts primarily consists of appeals **from lower courts and writ petitions in terms of Articles 226 and 227 of the constitution**. Writ jurisdiction is also an original jurisdiction of a high court. **The First High Court in India is the Calcutta High Court. It was established on 01 July 1862**, following the enactment of the Indian High Courts Act of 1861. The High Court of Calcutta was followed by the High Courts of Bombay and Madras in 1862 and 1864, respectively. **There are 25 high courts in India. The Andhra Pradesh High Court is the 25th High Court in India. It is established on 1st January 2019**, under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014. Earlier, this court was established on 05 December 1956, under the State Recognition Act 1956 which led to the formation of the Andhra Pradesh state by merging the Telugu-speaking areas of the erstwhile state of Madras with the state of Hyderabad. **However, due to the bifurcation of the state into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, a separate High Court for Andhra Pradesh was established in 2019. There are 6 common high courts in India viz.,** Bombay high court, Madras high court, Kerala high court, Punjab and Haryana high court, Kolkata high court, and Guwahati high court.

One Vehicle, One FASTag implemented

- **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has enforced the 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' rule since April 1, 2024. This directive prohibits the use of a single FASTag across multiple vehicles or the association of several FASTags with one vehicle.** To facilitate a smooth transition, NHAI extended the compliance deadline to the end of March, particularly accommodating Paytm FASTag users who encountered issues. The 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' concept **aims to deter the practice of using a single FASTag for multiple vehicles or associating multiple FASTags with one vehicle.**
- NHAI had previously **extended the compliance deadline for the 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' initiative to the end of March, considering the challenges encountered by Paytm FASTag users. The principle of 'One Vehicle One FASTag' ensures that each vehicle is associated with a single active FASTag. If a vehicle has multiple FASTags, all but the most recently acquired one will be deactivated.** This measure prevents the ownership of several FASTags for one vehicle. Importantly, vehicle owners are at liberty to recharge their FASTag through any bank or via various payment methods, including BBPS, UPI, and net banking. This approach introduces a level of flexibility in managing FASTag accounts. NHAI has taken this initiative after the recent reports of multiple FASTags being issued for a particular vehicle and FASTags being issued without KYC in violation of RBI's mandate. Apart from this, FASTags are sometimes deliberately not fixed on the windscreen of the vehicle, resulting in unnecessary delays at the toll plazas and causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users.

The National Highways Authority of India or NHAI is an autonomous agency of the Government of India, set up in 1995 (Act 1988) and is responsible for management of a road network of over 50,000 km of National highways out of 1,32,499 km in India. It is a nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH). NHAI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for satellite mapping of highways. **FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India, operated by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). It employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it or directly toll owner.**

India's Defence Exports Cross Rs. 21,000 Crore-Mark for First Time

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the country's defence exports have scaled to “unprecedented heights” and crossed Rs. 21,000 crore-mark for the “first time” in the history of Independent India. The Union minister also said that India's defence exports have reached to the level of Rs. 21,083 crore in the financial year 2023-24 which is a “spectacular growth” of 32.5 per cent over the previous fiscal.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defences are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. A military department was created by the supreme government of the British East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776. Rajnath Singh is currently serving as the Defence Minister of India. He has been Member of parliament, Lok Sabha two times from Lucknow (Lok Sabha constituency) and once from Ghaziabad (Lok Sabha constituency).

Plans under way to make Mumbai first tri-service common defence station

- The Armed Forces are planning to turn Mumbai into the first “tri-service common defence station” in the country for the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF) — a step aimed at achieving jointness among the three services ahead of the creation of integrated theatre commands. Discussions to this effect are under way in the top military hierarchy and a decision is likely to be taken soon. **Currently, there are no common defence stations in India. The Andaman and Nicobar command is a full-fledged command raised as a tri-service command in 2001.** Other efforts to bring in jointness among the services—such as inter-service postings—were brought in last year.
- A common defence station would mean that all facilities of the Army, Navy, IAF will be combined — including logistics, infrastructure, repair and maintenance as well as stores and supplies— so that they could be optimised and brought under a common lead service. In the case of Mumbai, the Navy will be the lead service given that it has the largest presence there. At present, wings of the three services are spread across Mumbai and its suburbs and operate separately. Under the plan, logistics, infrastructure and administration will be brought under a common chain.

The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and its professional head is the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. Two officers have been conferred with the rank of field marshal, a five-star rank, which is a ceremonial position of great honour. Sam Manekshaw was the first field marshal of India, and was conferred the rank on 1 January 1973. The second was Kodandera M. Cariappa, who was conferred the rank on 15 January 1986. The Indian Army was formed in 1895 alongside the long established presidency armies of the East India Company, which too were absorbed into it in 1903. General Manoj Pande is an Indian Army General serving as the 29th and the current Chief of the Army Staff. He is the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to become the Army Chief. General Anil Chauhan is a four-star general of the Indian Army, who is the current and 2nd Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces, since 30 September 2022. He succeeded General Bipin Rawat, the inaugural holder of the post, who had died nine months earlier in a helicopter crash in December 2021.

Coastal security exercise ‘Sagar Kavach’ conducted off Lakshadweep Islands

- A two-day coastal security exercise called Sagar Kavach 01/24 was conducted off the Lakshadweep Islands from April 1-2, 2024. The exercise involved the participation of all maritime security agencies, including the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police, Fisheries, Customs, and other security agencies.
- A two-day exercise involving all maritime security agencies of the country was conducted off the Lakshadweep Islands. During the exercise, validation of the effectiveness of coastal security mechanisms while dealing with asymmetric threats emanating from the sea was undertaken. **Assets of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Police, fisheries, customs and other security agencies were engaged in the coastal security exercise – Sagar Kavach.**

Lakshadweep is a union territory of India. It is an archipelago of 36 islands divided into three island subgroups: the Laccadive Islands in the middle with the Amindivi Islands in the north separated roughly by the 11th parallel north and the atoll of Minicoy to the south separated by the Nine Degree Channel along the 9th parallel north. The islands are sandwiched between the Arabian Sea to the west and the Laccadive Sea to the east with the islands located about 220–440 km (140–270 mi) off the Malabar Coast of mainland India. Kavaratti is the capital of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in India.

President Droupadi Murmu dedicated CAR-T Cell Therapy to Nation at IIT Bombay

- **The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu launched India's first home-grown anti-Cancer CAR-T cell therapy and dedicated it to the Nation** in the presence of the Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Ramesh Bais at the Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) Bombay in Mumbai. Also present on the occasion were Director, IIT Bombay, Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri and Director, Tata Memorial Centre, Prof. Sudeep Gupta along with the key contributors including Prof. Rahul Purwar, Department of Bioscience and Bioengineering, IIT Bombay, and Dr. Hasmukh Jain and Dr. (Surg Cdr) Gaurav Narula from the Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai.
- **The CAR-T Cell Therapy product has been developed as a collaborative effort between IIT Bombay and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC).** Designed and developed at IIT Bombay, the therapy has undergone integrative process development and manufacturing at ImmunoACT. Clinical investigations and translational studies were conducted by teams at TMH. The CAR-T Cell Therapy product is expected to save many lives at much lower cost compared to the cost of such products available outside India.

CAR T-cell therapy is a type of treatment in which a patient's T cells (a type of immune system cell) are changed in the laboratory so they will attack cancer cells. T cells are taken from a patient's blood. Then the gene for a special receptor that binds to a certain protein on the patient's cancer cells is added to the T cells in the laboratory. The special receptor is called a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR). Large numbers of the CAR T cells are grown in the laboratory and given to the patient by infusion. CAR T-cell therapy is used to treat certain blood cancers, and it is being studied in the treatment of other types of cancer. Also called chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy.

Health Ministry Launches MyCGHS App for IOS Devices

- **Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Apurva Chandra launched the myCGHS app for the iOS ecosystem of devices in New Delhi.** The app is designed to enhance access to Electronic Health Records, information, and resources for Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) beneficiaries. The App was already available for the Android system.
- **The myCGHS app facilitates a wide range of services, including booking and cancellation of online appointments, accessing lab reports from CGHS labs,** checking medicine history, checking medical reimbursement claim status, accessing referral details, locating nearby wellness centres and empanelled hospitals among others. **About the concerns expressed on the issue linking ABHA Id with CHGS Cards,** the Union Health Secretary also clarified that there is no question of discontinuation of the CGHS scheme. ABHA Ayushman Bharat Health Account- ABHA is the national digital identity for health which is part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission. More than 55 crore ABHA Cards have been created.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, also known by its abbreviation MoHFW, is an Indian government ministry charged with health policy in India. It is **also responsible for all government programs relating to family planning in India.** The Minister of Health and Family Welfare holds cabinet rank as a member of the Council of Ministers. **The current Union minister is Mansukh L. Mandaviya,** while the current Minister of State for health (MOS: assistant to Minister i.e. currently assistant to Mansukh L. Mandaviya) are Dr Bharati Pawar and S. P. Singh Baghel. **He is also a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat.**

DY Patil deemed-to-be university hosted the prestigious 3rd AIU national moot court competition

- **The School of Law at DY Patil Deemed to be University** is proud to announce its role as the host of the 3rd Association of Indian Universities (AIU) National Moot Court Competition, which took place. This esteemed event, organised under the auspices of the AIU, underscores a commitment to advancing legal education and fostering academic excellence.

The Association of Indian Universities is an Apex Advisory Body on Higher Education mandated by the Ministry of Education, to determine the equivalence of foreign degrees and conduct Youth Affairs & Sports Activities in Higher Education Sector in India. At present, AIU has about 985 member universities (central, Institute of National Importance, state and private universities), including 16 overseas universities, and is serving the Higher Education Sector for the last 97 years.

Thenmala is recognised as India's first planned ecotourism destination

- Nestled in the picturesque foothills of the Western Ghats in Kerala, **Thenmala stands as a shining example of sustainable tourism and conservation efforts. Recognised as India's first planned ecotourism destination**, Thenmala offers visitors a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and eco-friendly experiences. **Thenmala is recognised as India's first planned ecotourism destination**, Thenmala offers visitors a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and eco-friendly experiences. Thenmala is located in the Kollam district of Kerala, and translates to Honey Hill in the local language, reflecting the region's abundant natural bounty.

Government notifies plan to delist 18 centrally protected monuments

- **The Ministry of Culture**, in a notification issued on March 8, **declared its intention to delist 18 protected monuments as they have "ceased to be of national importance."** The government has evoked **Section 35 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act)**, which gives it the **power to delist ancient and historical monuments or archaeological sites and remains** which were earlier declared to be of national importance. The government has notified a period of two months for the public to register objections or suggestions.

Sitars, tanpuras made in Maharashtra's Miraj town get GI tags

- **The sitars and tanpuras of Miraj, a small town in Maharashtra's Sangli district known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments**, have been awarded the coveted **Geographical Indication tags**. These instruments made in Miraj are much in demand among some of the prominent artistes, including those renowned in the field of classical music as well as film industry, the makers claim. **The GI tag denotes the product comes from a particular geographical area**, and often enhances its commercial value. The tradition of making sitars and tanpuras in Miraj goes back more than 300 years, with over seven generations of craftsmen having worked towards making these string instruments.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan chairs maiden 'Parivartan Chintan'

- **Parivartan Chintan, a pioneering Tri-Service Conference aimed at generating new and fresh ideas, initiatives and reforms to propel Jointness and Integration efforts, is being held in New Delhi.** A day long discussions will be chaired by Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan.
- With the Indian Armed Forces having embarked on a major transformative change in their quest to be ready for the envisaged future wars, initiatives are being undertaken to promote Jointness and Integration as structures are modified to enable Tri- Service multi domain operations. **The 'Chintan' was the first ever conference of the Heads of all Tri- Services Institutions, the Department of Military Affairs, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and the three Services, with officers from varied service brackets, through their diverse understanding and experience, recommending measures to achieve the desired "Joint and Integrated" end state with celerity.**

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is the principal military authority and senior-most appointment of the Indian Armed Forces. Deemed the overall professional head of India's three armed services, namely, the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force, **the CDS is the highest-ranking military officer in service, responsible for overseeing inter-service jointness across all disciplines related to military functioning.** Primarily, the office operates on a status of primus inter pares i.e., first among equals with the chiefs of the three services, **and functions as the Permanent-Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) – the inter-service syndicate responsible for ensuring the establishment-cum-preservation of military integration.** Statutorily, **the CDS is the presiding secretary of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA),** the foremost civil-cum-military entity responsible for fostering professional coordination between the services, and by extension, is also the principal military advisor to the nation's civilian leadership i.e., the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on affairs privy to inter-service integration.

Right against adverse effects of climate change part of rights to life, equality: SC

- The Supreme Court has expanded the scope of Articles 14 and 21 to include the “right against the adverse effects of climate change”. “Article 48A of the Constitution provides that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- Clause (g) of Article 51A stipulates that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures. Although these are not justiciable provisions of the Constitution, they are indications that the Constitution recognises the importance of the natural world,” a three-judge bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud has said.
- “The importance of the environment, as indicated by these provisions, becomes a right in other parts of the Constitution. Article 21 recognises the right to life and personal liberty while Article 14 indicates that all persons shall have equality before law and the equal protection of laws. These Articles are important sources of the right to a clean environment and the right against the adverse effects of climate change”.
- These Articles are important sources of the right to a clean environment and the right against the adverse effects of climate change. Despite governmental policy and rules and regulations recognising the adverse effects of climate change and seeking to combat it, there is no single or umbrella legislation in India which relates to climate change and the attendant concerns.
- The bench was hearing a plea to protect the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) from losing its habitat due to power transmission lines. The April 2021 order of the SC imposed restrictions on setting up of overhead transmission lines in certain areas of Rajasthan for conservation of GIB.

Important SC Judgements of Constitutionalising Environmental Problems: MC Mehta v. Kamal Nath, 1996: The Supreme Court made it clear that any disturbance of basic environmental elements namely air, water and soil which are necessary for life would be hazardous to life and can't be polluted. Virendra Gaur vs State Haryana (1995): The Supreme Court emphasized that Article 21 protects the right to life, extending it to sanitation for the enjoyment of life with dignity.

Kathiya wheat from Uttar Pradesh's Bundelkhand gets Geographical Indication (GI) tag

- Kathiya Gehu (wheat) from the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh has received the first Geographical Indication (GI) tag for a farm produce in the area. Bundelkhand wheat variety gets GI tag. Kathiya wheat, also known as Durum wheat, is indigenous to the region and is rich in nutrition. Additionally, it is gluten-free, making it a healthier option for consumers.
- The GI tag will help in promoting Kathiya wheat as an indigenous brand. Its unique qualities, including its ability to thrive in harsh climatic conditions with minimal water requirement, will enhance its brand value and contribute to the prosperity of farmers in the region.
- Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a leader in acquiring GI tags, becoming the first state to achieve a remarkable 69 GI tags. These tags highlight India's rich cultural diversity and agricultural heritage. The process for GI certification of Kathiya Gehu was initiated by the Khatiya Wheat Bangra Producer Company Limited, a local Farmer Producer Organization (FPO), with support from entities like NABARD in January 2022. After a two-year journey, the GI tag, bearing certificate number 585, was officially awarded on March 30, 2024.

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement as: “Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin.” The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005. The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.

Indian Railways on course to 100 per cent electrification, becoming world's largest green network

- Railways will achieve 100 per cent electrification of its broad gauge network in the next few months, much before the end of this fiscal. The interim budget has allocated Rs. 6,500 crore for further electrification projects. With 100 per cent electrification, Indian Railways will become the largest green railways of the world. Already many regions in India are 100 per cent electrified.
- The Railways electrified 7,188 kilometres of rail network in 2023-24. Routes that were electrified last year include Ahmedabad-Rajkot-Okha (499 km), Bengaluru-Talguppa (371 km), and Bhatinda-Firozpur-Jalandhar (301 km). The shift to electric traction is likely to cut 24 per cent carbon emissions by 2027-28. Since 2014-15, Railways have electrified over 40,000 route km on the broad gauge network compared to only 21,80 km in all the years before 2014.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Ashwini Vaishnaw is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. In June 2019, he became a member of the Parliament of India representing Odisha State in the Rajya Sabha. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.

Pamban Bridge: India's first vertical lift bridge over sea in Rameswaram faces 'curve' test

- A sharp curve in the upcoming Pamban railway bridge, India's first vertical-lift bridge connecting the country's mainland with Rameswaram island, has become an additional challenge for the Railways besides its mechanical peculiarity and a rough sea.
- The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), which is constructing this 2.08-km-long bridge, is facing a huge challenge in moving a lift span, which is 72.5-m-long, 16-m-wide and weighs 550 tonne, from the Rameshwaram end to 450 m in the sea to fix it to the bridge. This lift span can be lifted up automatically up to 17 m for ships to pass. It will take 5 minutes to go up and the same time to come down and will be scheduled in such a way so that train services shouldn't be disrupted. The train services between Mandapam in the mainland and Rameswaram Island were suspended on December 23, 2022 after the existing rail bridge, which was built in 1913, was declared non-operational from the safety point of view. Presently, trains terminate at Mandapam and road routes are used to reach Rameswaram.

Delhi becomes the first state in India to offer these services on WhatsApp

- WhatsApp has introduced a new QR-based ticketing service for DTC commuters across the Delhi NCR region. This ticketing system aims to simplify the transit experience for commuters, enabling them to book and purchase tickets from anywhere. The ticketing service will be available within a chatbot of the Meta-owned instant messaging platform.
- It is also important to note that DTC is the first state bus network in India that has implemented this solution for riders across the region. WhatsApp introduces QR-based ticketing for DTC commuters in Delhi NCR within Meta chatbot. DTC is the first in India with this solution. Riders can access English, Hindi options and use Quick purchase with UPI payment.

Delhi officially the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, is a city and a union territory of India containing New Delhi, the capital of India. Straddling the Yamuna river, primarily its western or right bank, Delhi shares borders with the state of Uttar Pradesh in the east and with the state of Haryana in the remaining directions. Delhi's urban agglomeration, which includes the satellite cities Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurgaon and Noida in an area known as the National Capital Region (NCR), has an estimated population of over 28 million, making it the largest metropolitan area in India and the second-largest in the world (after Tokyo). In 1911, New Delhi, a southern region within Delhi, became the capital of the British Indian Empire. Vinai Kumar Saxena is the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi since 26 May 2022. Arvind Kejriwal is an Indian politician, former bureaucrat and activist who is serving as the 7th and current Chief Minister of Delhi since 2015.

Navy Chief inaugurates new facilities at Karwar naval base

- Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar inaugurated a 350m long major pier for Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) and a residential accommodation at Naval Base Karwar. These infrastructure developments are part of the ongoing Phase IIA of Project Seabird, which will accommodate 32 ships and submarines, 23 yardcraft, a dual-use Naval Air Station, a full-fledged naval dockyard, four covered dry berths and logistics for ships and aircraft.
- “The Pier 3 OPV Pier is 350m long, capable of berthing OPVs, large survey vessels and mine counter measure vessels. The pier would also provide various shore-based services, such as electrical power, potable water, chilled water for air conditioning, 30 tonnes mobile crane and other domestic services to the ships.”

The Indian Navy is the maritime branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, commands the navy. As a blue-water navy, it operates significantly in the Persian Gulf Region, the Horn of Africa, the Strait of Malacca, and routinely conducts anti-piracy operations and partners with other navies in the region. Admiral Radhakrishnan Hari Kumar is the current Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). General Anil Chauhan is a four-star general of the Indian Army, who is the current and 2nd Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces.

India among 12 nations responsible for 60 pc of world’s mismanaged plastic waste: Report

- According to a recent report of Switzerland’s nonprofit group EA Earth Action, India is among the top twelve countries in the world responsible for 60 percent of the planet’s mismanaged plastic waste. The report Plastic Overshoot Day was released by EA Earth Action on 12 April 2024. Eritrea topped the Mismanaged Waste Index while Bermuda was at the bottom. The higher the rank of the country in the Index means greater waste mismanagement in the country. Mismanaged plastic waste refers to plastic that is not properly recycled, incinerated, or kept in sealed landfills. It is mainly thrown in the open, polluting soil, land, water or air.
- India is among the twelve countries responsible for 60 percent of the planet’s mismanaged plastic waste though the fast-developing South Asian nation’s per capita plastic waste production is among the lowest in the world, according to a new report. The Plastic Overshoot Day report by Swiss non-profit EA Earth Action also said global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021.
- The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. The report comes ahead of the fourth meeting of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in Ottawa, Canada, as the world leaders attempt to develop a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.
- “Twelve countries are responsible for 60 per cent of the world’s mismanaged plastic waste: China, India, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Vietnam, Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, the United States and Turkey,” it said. Though the report classifies India as a “low-waste-producing” polluter due to its low per capita plastic waste production (8 kg per capita per year), it said the country’s expected mismanaged waste in 2024 will be 7.4 million tons, which is “very high”. Belgium is the top generator of per capita plastic waste in the world, with a yearly waste production of 147.7 kg per person. Oman topped the list of countries having the highest per capita mismanaged plastic waste. Oman’s per capita mismanaged plastic waste in 2024 is expected to be 111 kg.

Plastic Overshoot Day refers to the expected Day when the volume of plastic waste generated will be more than the waste management system can manage. According to the report, the world is likely to overshoot the plastic waste management on 5th September 2024 this year. The report said that almost half of the world’s population will be living in areas where plastic waste has already exceeded the capacity to manage it, by April 2024. India is expected to reach its Plastic Overshoot Day on April 23.

3 IIMs, JNU among 69 Indian universities in top 500 QS rankings

- Indian universities have made significant progress in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world university rankings by subject, with 69 institutions featured in the top 500 list, a 19.4% increase from the previous year’s entries. Among the standout performers, the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, and Calcutta ranked among the top 50 globally for business and management studies.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University also made its debut in development studies, securing the 20th spot worldwide. Ranked entries refer to the number of times a university appears in any of the 55 subject rankings. For example, if

a university is ranked in 10 different subject areas, it would have 10 ranked entries. The 69 institutions refer to universities that are included in the rankings --- in other words, these are institutions that are included somewhere in the rankings, either in the overall rankings, subject rankings, or faculty area rankings.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi set to become first PM after Indira Gandhi to feature on Newsweek cover

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to become the first Prime Minister of India to feature on the cover of Newsweek after Indira Gandhi.** Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi featured on the cover of Newsweek's April 1966 issue. The New York-based magazine has interviewed PM Modi who addressed Newsweek's written questions and followed up with a 90-minute conversation.

India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000: Global Forest Watch

- **India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period,** according to the latest data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project. The Global Forest Watch, which tracks forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources, said the country lost 4,14,000 hectares of humid primary forest (4.1 per cent) from 2002 to 2023, making up 18 per cent of its total tree cover loss in the same period.
- Between 2001 and 2022, it said, **forests in India emitted 51 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent a year and removed 141 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent a year.** This represents a net carbon sink of 89.9 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. An average of 51.0 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year was released into the atmosphere as a result of tree cover loss in India. **In total, 1.12 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent was emitted during this period.** Forests are both a sink and a source for carbon, removing carbon dioxide from the air when standing or regrowing and emitting it when cleared or degraded. Loss of forests, thus, accelerates climate change.
- **Tree cover loss is not always deforestation, which typically refers to human-caused, permanent removal of natural forest cover.** It includes both human-caused loss and natural disturbances, and loss that is permanent or temporary. Examples of tree cover loss that may not meet the definition of deforestation include loss from logging, fire, disease or storm damage. The data showed that 95 per cent of the tree cover loss in India from 2013 to 2023 occurred within natural forests. The maximum tree cover loss of 189,000 hectares occurred in 2017. The country lost 175,000 hectares of tree cover in 2016 and 144,000 hectares in 2023, the highest in the last six years.
- **The GFW data showed that five states accounted for 60 per cent of all tree cover loss between 2001 and 2023. Assam had the maximum tree cover loss at 324,000 hectares compared to an average of 66,600 hectares.** Mizoram lost 312,000 hectares of tree cover, Arunachal Pradesh 262,000 hectares, Nagaland 259,000 hectares, and Manipur 240,000 hectares.
- **The tree cover loss data featured on the Global Forest Watch represents the best available spatial figures on how forests are changing around the world.** However, changes have occurred to the data over time due to algorithm adjustments and improved satellite data. Therefore, the GFW cautions users against comparing old and new data, especially before/after 2015.
- According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, **the rate of deforestation in India was 668,000 hectares per year between 2015 and 2020, the second highest worldwide.** The data showed India lost 35,900 hectares of tree cover due to fires from 2002 to 2022, with 2008 recording the maximum tree cover loss due to fires (3,000 hectares). From 2001 to 2022, Odisha had the highest rate of tree cover loss due to fires with an average of 238 hectares lost per year. Arunachal Pradesh lost 198 hectares, Nagaland 195 hectares, Assam 116 hectares, and Meghalaya 97 hectares.
- **The Global Forest Watch refers to tree cover when talking about forest extent, loss and gain.** Tree cover is a convenient metric for monitoring forest change because it is easily measurable from space using freely available, medium-resolution satellite imagery. **This means that tree cover can be monitored frequently, at low cost, and over large geographic scales.** However, the existence of tree cover does not always make a forest, tree cover loss does not always imply forest loss or deforestation, and tree cover gain does not always imply forest gain or restoration. Measuring these variables directly poses technical challenges, since most definitions of forest involve a combination of tree cover and land use. The latter is much more difficult, if not impossible in some cases, to monitor using satellite imagery, the GFW says.

World Designing Forum to set up handloom cluster and apparel designing hub in Agra

- The World Designing Forum, one of the world’s largest global fashion community, has announced the setting up of India’s first Handloom Cluster and Apparel Designing Park in Agra. This initiative is poised to redefine the landscape of fashion by showcasing designer garments made from handlooms across India, particularly targeting the influx of foreign tourists visiting Agra each year. The World Designing Forum said that a World Couture League has been formed to promote handloom on an international scale. It will organize annual competitions in handloom designing among 20 Indian states.

Govt directs e-commerce firms to remove drinks, beverages from ‘health drinks’ category

- The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the health drinks category from their portals. “National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body constituted under section (3) of the Commission of Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act 2005 after its inquiry under Section 14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no ‘health drink’ defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt Ltd,” the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in an advisory to all e-commerce companies.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has noted that instances of food products licensed under ‘Proprietary Food’ with the nearest category Dairy-Based Beverage Mix or Cereal-Based Beverage Mix or Malt-Based Beverage being sold on e-commerce websites under the category Health Drink, Energy Drink, etc, it added.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India. FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety. The FSSAI is headed by a non-executive chairperson, appointed by the Central Government, either holding or has held the position of not below the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. The FSSAI has its headquarters at New Delhi. The authority also has 6 regional offices located in Delhi, Guwahati, Mumbai, Kolkata, Cochin, and Chennai.

Forests a national asset and a major contributor to financial wealth, says Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a national asset and a major contributor to the nation’s financial wealth. “It is the spirit of the forest that moves the earth,” a Bench headed by Justice M.M. Sundresh observed in a judgment based on an appeal filed by the State of Telangana against a High Court decision “graciously gifting” forest land to a private person.
- The State’s forest officials, expected to preserve the forest, had made matters worse by filing conflicting affidavits in court about the nature of the land. The apex court ordered ₹5 lakh in costs from both the State government and the private persons. The State was asked to open an enquiry against its own forest officials.
- The judgment has come at a pivotal time when the controversial Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2023 or the FCAA has attracted widespread criticism. The FCAA is accused of giving a free hand to States to regularise encroachments in protected forests and determine diversions of forestlands. The Act has been criticised for paving the way for the commercial exploitation of forests, besides exempting infrastructural projects from environmental clearance.

The Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania. Originally, the Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges; leaving it to parliament to increase this number. At present, SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges. The motto of the Supreme Court is ‘Yato Dharmastato Jayah’, means “whence law (dharma), thence victory”. It is also referred to – as the wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity. The Chief Justice of India is the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of India as well as the highest-ranking officer of the Indian Judiciary. The Constitution of India grants power to the president of India to appoint, in consultation with the outgoing chief justice, the next chief justice, who will serve until they reach the age of sixty-five or are removed by impeachment. As per convention,

the name suggested by the incumbent chief justice is almost always the next senior most judge in the Supreme Court. However this convention has been broken twice. In 1973, Justice A. N. Ray was appointed superseding 3 senior judges. Also, in 1977 Justice Mirza Hameedullah Beg was appointed as the chief justice superseding Justice Hans Raj Khanna.

Lac bangles from Hyderabad secure GI tag

- **The lac bangles of Hyderabad have been registered with the Registrar of Geographical Indications, Chennai.** This is the second GI tag for a Hyderabad product after haleem. “This is a good development and it will boost our industry. Currently 4,000-odd families live on this as a source of income. Now that will expand due to the label of identity. There was an air of anticipation and happiness in the Laad Bazaar area as the businesses and households involved in lac bangle industry can now charge a premium for their product. The GI tag gives the identity as provenance and gives the lac bangles an edge over similar products manufactured in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement as: “Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin.” The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005. The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.

With 954 hectares, MP leads in tree plantation under ‘green credit’ plan

- **Madhya Pradesh has taken lead in implementing the Centre’s Green Credit Programme (GCP) which got over 500 land parcels spanning 4,980 hectares across 10 states approved for tree plantation** in the past two months. These states, along with three others, have together identified more than 10,000 hectares of land for the programme.
- **Madhya Pradesh has, so far, reported the highest 954 hectares of approved degraded forest land for plantation/greening exercises followed by Telangana (845 hectares), Chhattisgarh (713 hectares), Gujarat (595 hectares) and Assam (454 hectares).** Other five states where such land parcels have been approved by the administrator - Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) - are Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Odisha. As many as 14 public sector undertaking (PSUs) and other entities have been registered to do plantations on degraded forest land and eventually earn green credits. Individuals, industries and other public/private entities, including philanthropies and local bodies, can voluntarily participate in the GCP.

Green Credit Program (GCP) is an innovative market-based mechanism designed to incentivize voluntary environmental actions across diverse sectors, by various stakeholders like individuals, communities, private sector industries, and companies. **It is designed to foster a sustainable lifestyle and environmental conservation as part of the ‘LiFE’ initiative announced by the Prime Minister in United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26).** The GCP is part of India’s efforts to adhere to international commitments, such as those made during COP26. **It complements the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme introduced by the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022,** and broadens the scope of tradable credits beyond CO₂ reductions to include a range of sustainable practices. **The GCP aligns with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030),** which emphasises the scaling up of restoration efforts.

CDP-SURAKSHA, govt’s new digital platform to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers

- **The government has come up with a new platform to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP) — the Centre’s initiative to promote horticulture crops. The platform is known as CDP-SURAKSHA.** The move seeks to **push the growth of India’s horticulture sector,** which contributes nearly one-third to the agriculture gross value addition (GVA), making a substantial contribution to the Indian economy.

- The total production of horticulture crops has also spiked in recent years. While in 2010-11, it stood at 240.53 million tonnes, the number rose to 334.60 million tonnes in 2020-21. **The CDP-SURAKSHA is essentially a digital platform. SURAKSHA stands for “System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance.”**
- The platform will allow an instant disbursement of subsidies to farmers in their bank account by utilising the e-RUPI voucher (more on this later) from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). **The CDP-SURAKSHA has features such as database integration with PM-KISAN, cloud-based server space from NIC, UIDAI validation, eRUPI integration, local government directory (LGD), content management system, geotagging, and geo-fencing.**

Horticulture Cluster Development Programme is a central sector programme aimed at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive. Horticulture cluster is a regional/geographical concentration of targeted horticulture crops. It is implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare. The CDP aims to improve exports of targeted crops by about 20% and create cluster-specific brands to enhance the competitiveness of cluster crops.

Indian Army Contingent Departs For India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK

- **The Indian Army contingent departed to take part in the fifth edition of India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK. The exercise conducted from 15th to 28th of this month at Termez in Uzbekistan.** According to the Defence Ministry, the Indian Armed Forces contingent comprises 60 personnel while 100 personnel participated from the Uzbekistan side. The exercise is aimed at fostering military cooperation and enhancing combined capabilities to execute joint operations in mountainous as well as semi urban terrain.
- **Focus will be laid on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special arms skills during the DUSTLIK exercise.** The exercise will enable the two sides to share their best practices and facilitate inter-operability. **Exercise DUSTLIK is a yearly event conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan. Last edition was conducted at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand in February last year.**

Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked country located in Central Asia. It is surrounded by five landlocked countries: Kazakhstan to the north; Kyrgyzstan to the northeast; Tajikistan to the southeast; Afghanistan to the south; and Turkmenistan to the southwest. Its capital and largest city is Tashkent. The sum is the official currency of Uzbekistan. Shavkat Mirziyoyev has been serving as President of Uzbekistan.

General Manoj Pande Inaugurates High-Tech IT Lab at Academy Of Armed Forces in Uzbekistan

- **Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande inaugurated a high-tech IT Laboratory, at the Academy of Armed Forces in Uzbekistan.** The Lab has been established with Indian assistance. The development is in accordance with the commitment made by India and Uzbekistan to build an IT laboratory, during the Defense Ministers meeting in September 2018.
- **The Lab, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, is expected to enrich the training resources available to Uzbek armed forces and foster a deeper understanding and cooperation between India and Uzbekistan.** General Pande visited the Armed Forces Museum, Tashkent, which displays Military exhibits belonging to different historical epochs of Uzbekistan.

The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and its professional head is the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. Two officers have been conferred with the rank of field marshal, a five-star rank, which is a ceremonial position of great honour. Sam Manekshaw was the first field marshal of India, and was conferred the rank on 1 January 1973. The second was Kodandera M. Cariappa, who was conferred the rank on 15 January 1986. The Indian Army was formed in 1895 alongside the long established presidency armies of the East India Company, which too were absorbed into it in 1903. General Manoj Pande is an Indian Army General serving as the 29th and the current Chief of the Army Staff. He is the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to become the Army Chief.

Vice-Admiral Dinesh Tripathi appointed next Navy Chief

- **Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed the next Chief of Naval Staff.** He is currently the Vice-Chief of the Navy, and will take over on superannuation of the current chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar on April 30. “The Government has appointed Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi presently serving as Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) as the next Chief of the Naval Staff with effect from the afternoon of 30th April, 2024”. Born on May 15, 1964, Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi was commissioned into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy on July 01, 1985. A Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist, he has had a long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years. Prior to taking over as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, he had served as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command.

The Indian Navy is the maritime branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, commands the navy. As a blue-water navy, it operates significantly in the Persian Gulf Region, the Horn of Africa, the Strait of Malacca, and routinely conducts anti-piracy operations and partners with other navies in the region. **Admiral Radhakrishnan Hari Kumar is the current Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS).** **General Anil Chauhan** is a four-star general of the Indian Army, who is the current and 2nd Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces.

Uttar Pradesh Gets Its First Glass Skywalk Bridge in Chitrakoot

- In a remarkable feat of engineering and tourism development, **the state of Uttar Pradesh has unveiled its first-ever glass skywalk bridge, located at the enchanting Tulsī (Shabari) Waterfall in Chitrakoot.** This innovative and visually stunning structure, shaped like Lord Ram’s bow and arrow, is poised to become a premier eco-tourism destination for visitors to the region. The entire area in the vicinity of the waterfall has been developed as ‘Kodand Van’. It is said that the inspiration for the project has come from Bihar’s skywalk glass bridge in Rajgir. **The construction of the glass skywalk bridge was undertaken by the Pawan Sut Construction Company of Ghazipur,** under the supervision of the Forest and Tourism Department.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed **Uttar Pradesh in 1950,** giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. **On 9 November 2000,** a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state’s Himalayan hill region. **The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges.** **The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.** **Anandiben Mafatbhai Patel is serving as the current Governor of Uttar Pradesh.** She also served as Governor of Madhya Pradesh. **She has served as the first female Chief Minister of Gujarat.** **Yogi Adityanath is serving as the current Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.**

Following Supreme Court directive, Centre sets up panel to address queer community concerns

- **The Centre has constituted a six-member committee to examine and recommend on various issues affecting queer community.** This is in keeping with the Supreme Court’s judgement in which it examined the **issue of same sex marriages.** The top court had asked the government to form a committee to address the concerns of the queer community. **The Centre had given an undertaking to create a committee to set out the rights which will be available to queer couples in unions, when the Supreme Court agreed with the centre’s position and declined to grant legal recognition to same-sex marriages.**
- On October 17, a **five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud declined to recognise the right to marry as a fundamental right for same-sex couples.** However, in a minority opinion, the SC **ruled in favor of civil unions,** stopping short of marriage, to grant legal rights to same-sex couples.
- The order notified in the gazette by the law and justice ministry lays out a detailed mandate for the committee to make way for measures to ensure queer persons do not face any discrimination, threat of violence and involuntary medical treatment among other concerns. **While the Union cabinet secretary will be chairperson of this committee, the secretary of the ministry of social justice and empowerment will be the convener.** Secretaries of ministries of home affairs, women and child development, health and family welfare and legislative department of law and justice will be members.

Centre asks FSSAI to ‘initiate appropriate action’ against Nestle

- **Taking cognizance of reports on Nestle selling baby products with higher sugar content in India, the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to “initiate appropriate action” against the company.** Public Eye, an investigation agency based in Switzerland has published a report highlighting concerning findings about Nestle’s manufacturing practices in India. According to the report, **Nestle Company has been alleged to add 2.7g of sugar per serving to Nestle Cerelac baby cereals sold in India while refraining from such practices in other countries such as Germany, Switzerland, France & UK.”**

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India. FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety. The FSSAI is headed by a non-executive chairperson, appointed by the Central Government, either holding or has held the position of not below the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. The FSSAI has its headquarters at New Delhi. The authority also has 6 regional offices located in Delhi, Guwahati, Mumbai, Kolkata, Cochin, and Chennai.

‘Poorvi Leher’: Indian Navy conducts mega exercise along east coast to test preparedness

- **The Indian Navy carried out an extensive exercise along the East Coast as part of efforts to check its preparedness to meet any maritime security challenges. The exercise ‘Poorvi Leher’ witnessed participation of ships, submarines, aircraft and special naval forces. “The Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the Operational Control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command”.** The exercise was conducted in multiple phases, including combat training in a realistic scenario during the tactical phase and successful conduct of various firings during the weapon phase, towards reaffirming the Indian Navy’s capability to deliver ordnance on target.

India, EU Launch Initiative for EV Start-Ups

- **The European Union (EU) and India launched an Expression of Interest (EoI) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs) for a matchmaking event.** The matchmaking aims to enhance the cooperation between European and Indian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and startups in the clean and green technologies sector. The intended exchange of knowledge and expertise will be instrumental in advancing the circularity of rare materials and transitioning towards carbon neutrality in both India and the EU.
- **This initiative takes place under the India-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC), announced by India and the European Commission in New Delhi on 25th April 2022.** This event is also part of a broader effort to promote a sustainable agenda, foster innovation, and forge stronger economic relations between the European Union and India. Twelve innovators, six each from India and the EU will be selected and get a pitching opportunity during the Matchmaking Event, scheduled for June 2024. Six finalists (three from the EU and three from India) will be selected following their pitching presentations and awarded the possibility to visit India and the EU, respectively.

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. A monetary union was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 member states which use the euro currency. The union and EU citizenship were established when the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993. The EU traces its origins to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), established, respectively, by the 1951 Treaty of Paris and 1957 Treaty of Rome. The original member states of what came to be known as the European Communities were the Inner Six: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The United Kingdom became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been President of the European Commission since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as President of the European Council.

Tripura's traditional attire 'Risa' gets GI tag

- In a significant cultural milestone, Tripura's traditional attire, 'Risa,' has been officially granted the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) registration, commonly known as the GI tag. This recognition not only celebrates the rich heritage of Tripura but also highlights the efforts of the Chief Minister in preserving and promoting the unique cultural identity of the state. The GI tag for 'Risa' not only safeguards the traditional craftsmanship and authenticity of the attire but also opens doors for economic opportunities and increased visibility on the national and international stage.

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement as: "Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin." The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005. The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.

Peru-based top potato research centre to set up India wing

- Seven Years after China got a regional centre of Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP), the premier research-for-development organisation with focus on potato and sweetpotato, India is set to get a similar centre. The CIP-South Asia Regional Centre (CIP-SARC) is expected to come up in Agra.
- The centre will serve farmers not only in potato-belt states of India such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal but also in other South Asian countries. The proposal to establish the CIP-SARC is on the 100-day agenda of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, which is being prepared for the new government to be sworn in after June 4. India is the second-largest potato producer and consumer in the world after China. Both countries accounted for over one-third of the global potato production Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar were the top three potato producers in 2020-21.
- This will be India's second major international agricultural research institute, after the Philippines-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Varanasi, which was established in 2017. The CIP-SARC is proposed to be developed on the pattern of IRRI-SARC. The CIP-SARC will focus on the development of new varieties of potato and sweet potato, which are climate resilient, disease-free and suitable for processing. It will offer global science expertise, an extensive global innovation network and global genetic resources.

The International Potato Center (CIP) was founded in 1971 as a research-for-development organisation with a focus on potato, sweetpotato and Andean roots and tubers. It delivers innovative science-based solutions to enhance access to affordable nutritious food, foster inclusive sustainable business and employment growth, and drive the climate resilience of root and tuber agri-food systems. Headquartered in Lima, Peru, CIP has a research presence in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It had set up its first Asia centre - China Center for Asia Pacific (CCCAP) in Yanqing, China. It serves the entire East Asia and the Pacific region. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous body responsible for co-ordinating agricultural education and research in India. The Union Minister of Agriculture serves as its president. It is the largest network of agricultural research and education institutes in the world. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Nagaland's first all-female polling station for world's largest democratic exercise

- The Northern Angami constituency in Nagaland witnessed history as Government Middle School transformed into the state's first polling station managed entirely by women officers. Despite facing a minor setback with a malfunctioning voting machine, the atmosphere remained serene and orderly at the polling station in Chedema village. People patiently queued up to exercise their democratic right, acknowledging the significance of this historic moment. The initiative, spearheaded by Kumar Ramnikant, the administrative head of Kohima district, aimed to challenge societal norms and promote equal participation in governance.

Nagaland is a state in northeastern India. It is bordered by the state of Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Assam to the west, Manipur to the south and the Sagaing Region of Myanmar to the east. Its capital city is Kohima and its largest city is Dimapur. Nagaland became the 16th state of India on 1 December 1963. It has experienced insurgency and inter-ethnic conflict since the 1950s, limiting its economic development. Neiphiu Rio is the current Chief Minister of Nagaland. The current Governor of Nagaland is La Ganesan. Nagaland was the only state which has recorded a negative population growth in 2011 census. The decadal growth was -0.58%.

6th Edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure held in New Delhi

- The 6th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has begun in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said it is important to invest in resilient infrastructure for a better tomorrow. Prime Minister Modi highlighted that while disasters are often measured in monetary terms, their true toll is felt by individuals, families, and communities. He stressed the need for resilience to be incorporated into both new infrastructure projects and post-disaster reconstruction efforts. In a world where the impact of disasters transcends borders, Prime Minister Modi urged the necessity for collective resilience among nations.

The “Apex Body for Disaster Management” in India is the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The Chairman of the NDMA is the Prime Minister. The responsibility of managing disasters in India is that of the State Government. The ‘Nodal Ministry’ in the central government for management of natural disasters is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). When ‘calamities of severe nature’ occur, the Central Government is responsible for providing aid and assistance to the affected state, including deploying, at the State’s request, of Armed Forces, Central Paramilitary Forces, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and such communication, air and other assets, as are available and needed. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is an Indian specialized force constituted “for the purpose of special response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster” under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

India’s first semiconductor fabrication unit chips in

- Nearly 35 years after a mysterious fire destroyed its facilities at the 51-acre campus at Mohali in Punjab, Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) is fighting back to extinguish old memories and earn its place in the sun. That’s courtesy a generous Rs. 10,000 crore modernisation plan drawn up by the ministry of electronics and IT (Meity), which wants India’s original semiconductor fabrication unit to not only continue its operations in the 180 nanometer (nm) technology fab, but upgrade to 28 nm.
- It’s an irony that SCL first started manufacturing in 1984, three years before Taiwan’s Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), which eventually became a global chip leader, set up shop. But the fire and slow decision-making, typical of a government-owned company, stopped SCL in its tracks as it took nearly a decade to resume operations in 1995.
- When the US-based Micron rolls out the first chip from its assembly, test, marking, and packaging (ATMP) facility at Sanand, Gujarat, part of the credit will go to SCL, which has not only provided the first-level training to the professionals working on Micron’s project, but is busy doing the same for other such projects in the pipeline. SCL has two fabrication lines — for 6 inch and 8 inch wafers — an ATMP unit, and a compound semiconductor unit. For building the new fab unit, SCL is scouting for land near its existing facility.

Semiconductors are materials which have a conductivity between conductors and insulators. They can be pure elements, silicon or germanium or compounds, gallium, arsenide or cadmium selenide. They are the basic building blocks that serve as the heart and brain of all modern electronics and information and communications technology products. These chips are now an integral part of contemporary automobiles, household gadgets and essential medical devices such as ECG machines. In December 2021, the centre govt sanctioned Rs. 76,000 crore under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to encourage the manufacturing of various semiconductor goods within India.

Second Global IP Leadership Summit and Awards Organized by ASSOCHAM

- The second Global IP Leadership Summit and Awards organized by ASSOCHAM was held in New Delhi. The summit aims to bring together industry leaders to share insights, best practices, and strategies for innovation and sustainability across the globe.

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in New Delhi, India. The organisation represents the interests of trade and commerce in India, and acts as an interface between issues and initiatives. The goal of this organisation is to promote both domestic and international trade, and reduce trade barriers while fostering conducive environment for the growth of trade and industry of India.

Italian PM Meloni invites PM Narendra Modi to G7 Summit Outreach Session

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received an invitation from his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni to attend the G7 Summit Outreach Session in Italy in June. Modi spoke to Italian Prime Minister Meloni and thanked her for the invite to the G7 Summit Outreach Sessions to be held in Italy's Puglia.
- Officials said Meloni's invitation to Prime Minister Modi for the G7 Summit in Italy's Puglia in June after the elections reiterates this confidence. During their conversation, the two leaders also discussed taking forward the important outcomes from India's G20 Presidency, especially those that support the Global South, at the G7 Summit under Italy's Presidency. The two world leaders also exchanged views on regional and global developments of mutual interest, and reaffirmed their commitment to continue to strengthen the bilateral strategic partnership between India and Italy.

Italy is a country that consists of a peninsula delimited by the Alps and several islands surrounding it. Italy is located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, in Southern Europe. A unitary parliamentary republic with Rome as its capital. Euro is the currency of it. Sergio Mattarella is the current President of Italy. Giorgia Meloni has been serving as the Prime Minister of Italy since 22 October 2022, the first woman to hold this position.

The Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit. The Group of Eight (G8) was an inter-governmental political forum from 1997 until 2014. It had formed from incorporating the country of Russia into the Group of Seven, or G7, and returned to its previous name after Russia was disinvited in 2014. The forum originated with a 1975 summit hosted by France that brought together representatives of six governments: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, thus leading to the name Group of Six or G6. The summit came to be known as the Group of Seven, in 1976 with the addition of Canada. Russia was added to the political forum from 1997, which the following year became known as the G8. In March 2014, Russia was suspended indefinitely following the annexation of Crimea, whereupon the political forum name reverted to G7.

India's 4th largest military spender in 2023, global defence spending up by 7%

- India became the fourth largest military spender globally in 2023 with a spending of \$83.6 billion — 4.2 per cent higher than that made in 2022, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said. Global military expenditure grew 7 per cent to \$2.43 trillion in 2023, the steepest annual rise since 2009 as international peace and security deteriorated.
- United States, China and Russia were the top spenders in 2023. China, the world's second largest military spender, allocated an estimated \$296 billion to the military in 2023, an increase of 6.0 per cent from that in 2022. This was the 29th consecutive year-on-year rise in China's military expenditure. China accounted for half of total military spending across the Asia and Oceania region.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is an international institute based in Stockholm. It was founded in 1966 in Stockholm, Sweden and provides data, analysis and recommendations for armed conflict, military expenditure and arms trade as well as disarmament and arms control. The research is based on open sources and is directed to decision-makers, researchers, media and the interested public.

India's public redress system recognised as the best in Commonwealth

- India's centralised public grievance redressal system has been recognised as best in practice across the Commonwealth following a meeting of top civil servants from the 56 member countries. The Centralised

Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) was highlighted in the outcome statement of the Third Biennial Pan-Commonwealth Commonwealth Heads of Public Service meeting held at the Commonwealth Secretariat Marlborough House headquarters in London. The meeting was themed as “Institutionalisation of Smart Government to enhance public service delivery” under which the government of India’s administrative department made a presentation.

- **The Commonwealth of Nations, often simply referred to as the Commonwealth, is an international association of 56 member states, the vast majority of which are former territories of the British Empire from which it developed. The head of the Commonwealth is Charles III.**

In A First in India, Around 80,000 School Teachers to Get AI Training in Kerala

- **For the first time in the country, around 80,000 secondary school teachers in Kerala are all set to get hands-on training in AI.** The three-day training, being conducted by Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), **aims to empower 80,000 teachers in Classes 8 to 12.** It is envisaged to provide them with the necessary AI expertise by August 2024. The AI training focuses on summarisation techniques to simplify complex documents in PDFs, images, and videos and to generate concise summaries that retain crucial information and even create new content using AI tools.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is intelligence—perceiving, synthesizing, and inferring information—demonstrated by machines, as opposed to intelligence displayed by humans or by other animals. John McCarthy was one of the founders of the discipline of artificial intelligence. Alan Turing was an English mathematician, computer scientist, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher, and theoretical biologist. He is widely considered to be the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence. Deep Blue versus Garry Kasparov was a pair of six-game chess matches between the world chess champion Garry Kasparov and an IBM supercomputer called Deep Blue. On May 11, 1997, an IBM computer called IBM ‘Deep Blue’ beat the world chess champion after a six-game match: two wins for IBM, one for the champion and three draws. The match lasted several days and received massive media coverage around the world. It was the classic plot line of man vs. machine. The Emperor’s New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and The Laws of Physics is a 1989 book by the mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose. He won the Nobel Prize in Physics for 2020. The Supreme Court of India launched its first Artificial Intelligence portal SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency) in April 2021. The idea is to leverage machine learning to deal with huge chunks of case data. LaMDA, which stands for Language Model for Dialogue Applications, is a family of conversational neural language models developed by Google. In June 2022, LaMDA gained widespread attention when Google engineer Blake Lemoine made claims that the chatbot had become sentient.

International



Bulgaria and Romania partially join Europe's Schengen area

- After a 13-year wait, **Bulgaria and Romania have partially joined Europe's Schengen area of free movement.** The two countries reached an agreement late last year to **join the continent's free-travel area by air and sea after Austria opposed full membership, including land crossings, saying Romania and Bulgaria needed to do more to prevent irregular migration.**
- **Created in 1985, the Schengen area allows more than 400 million people in the European Union to travel freely without internal border controls.** As partial members, **the Schengen zone now comprises 29 members – 25 of the 27 EU member states as well as Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.**

The Schengen Area is an area encompassing 29 European countries that have officially abolished border controls at their mutual borders. Being an element within the wider area of freedom, security and justice policy of the European Union (EU), it mostly functions as a single jurisdiction under a common visa policy for international travel purposes. The area is named after the 1985 Schengen Agreement and the 1990 Schengen Convention, both signed in Schengen, Luxembourg. Of the 27 EU member states, 25 are part of the Schengen Area. Bulgaria and Romania, the newest members having joined on 31 March 2024, only have air and maritime borders open, with land border controls remaining in place pending agreement to lift them. The only EU member states that are not part of the Schengen Area are Cyprus and Ireland. Cyprus is legally obliged to join in the future, while Ireland maintains an opt-out and operates its own visa policy.

Philippines to hold joint naval drills with US, Japan, Australia

- **Japan joined the United States, Australia and the Philippines for joint naval and air drills in the disputed South China Sea, as China announced its own exercises in the strategic waterway.** “The Armed Forces of the Philippines, United States Indo-Pacific Command, Australian Defence Force and Japan Self-Defense Forces successfully conducted the first Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity in the West Philippine Sea.”
- The statement said that the **joint exercise involved naval vessels and aircraft and had taken place in an area within the Philippine's exclusive economic zone in the strategic waterway.** The drills — which included the Maritime Self-Defense Force's Akebono destroyer — included a communication exercise, division tactics and a photo exercise. “These activities were designed to enhance the different forces' abilities to work together effectively in maritime scenarios,” the statement added. **After joint drills were held for the first time last year, - ‘Ironclad’ - The exercise and summit follow repeated confrontations between Chinese and Philippine vessels near disputed reefs off the Southeast Asian country in recent months.**

Abu Dhabi to build the World's first eSports Island to rival Saudi Arabia

- **Abu Dhabi, the thriving emirate renowned for its splendor and inventive spirit, is set to revolutionize the international gaming landscape.** In an effort to compete with Saudi Arabia's ambitious ventures into esports, Abu Dhabi is initiating an unprecedented project: **the creation of the world's inaugural eSports island.**
- Envisioned as a vast 500,000 square meter district, **this groundbreaking initiative aims to establish an unparalleled gaming paradise.** Led by True Gamers, a renowned esports lounge network, the \$280 million development pledges to reshape the gaming scene in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Stringent new hate crime law comes into force in Scotland

- A stringent new law to crack down on hate crimes came into force in Scotland with critics warning that the act can be misused by sections of society. The devolved Scottish government said the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act will provide greater protection for victims and communities.
- It introduces new offences for threatening or abusive behaviour which is intended to stir up hatred based on prejudice towards characteristics including age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. The Scottish National Party (SNP) led local government said the legislation, which was passed by a majority of members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) in the Scottish Parliament in 2021, was subject to extensive consultation and engagement throughout, including with communities affected by hate crime.

Scotland is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. Humza Yousaf is the current First Minister of Scotland.

Democratic Republic Of Congo Appoints Judith Suminwa Tuluka As African Nation's First Woman Prime Minister

- The Democratic Republic of Congo appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the African nation's first woman Prime Minister. President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo made the appointment. He fulfilled a campaign promise and took an important step towards the formation of a new government after being re-elected late last year. The authorities face a raft of challenges including a worsening conflict and humanitarian crisis in eastern regions and the management of Congo's considerable mineral wealth.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), also known as Congo-Kinshasa and formerly known as Zaire is a country in Central Africa. Kinshasa is the capital city of the DRC. The Congolese franc is the currency of the DRC. Felix Tshisekedi is the current President.

Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi Takes Oath As Egypt's President For 3rd Term

- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was sworn in for his third term as President. Sisi had won the Presidential election with 89.6 percent of the vote in December last year. He is set to remain president until 2030. Sisi vowed to remain faithful to the interest of the people of the country. As Egypt has battled a deep economic crisis with the help of billions in overseas loans and investments, he pledged to build a modern and democratic state.

World first mosque for transgenders opens in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh has opened what can be called the world's first exclusive mosque for transgender people, also called the third gender. The mosque called the Dakshin Char Kalibari Masjid is located in Mymensingh.

Senegal inaugurates youngest president Bassirou Diomaye Faye

- Former tax inspector Bassirou Diomaye Faye was sworn in as Senegal's president. Faye defeated Amadou Ba, who was supported by outgoing President Macky Sall's ruling coalition. Popular opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, who was also behind Faye's victory, was announced as the new prime minister of Senegal.

Cambodia's ex-leader Hun Sen becomes senate president

- Former Cambodian leader Hun Sen was promoted to senate president, taking over a key ceremonial role less than a year after handing power to his son. Hun Sen stepped down in August after nearly four decades of iron-fisted rule, passing the baton to his eldest son Hun Manet following a landslide win in national polls held without any significant opposition parties.

Kuwait opposition keeps Parliament majority after vote

- Opposition lawmakers maintained a majority in Kuwait's parliament, results showed on after the Gulf state's third parliamentary vote in as many years held just months into the new emir's reign. Opposition candidates won 29 seats in the 50-member Assembly, matching the outcome of last year's election.

Iceland's Prime Minister Resigns, will run for president

- **Icelandic Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir announced that she will resign from her post and run for president.** It was not immediately clear who would succeed Jakobsdottir as prime minister, a job she has held since 2017. Iceland will hold a presidential election on June 1 to elect its new head of state, a largely ceremonial post with no public policy-making role.

Iceland is a Nordic island country between the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans, on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge between North America and Europe. Its capital and largest city is Reykjavík. The krona is the currency of Iceland. Guoni Thorlacius Jóhannesson is serving as the current President of Iceland.

Nuclear fusion power plant plan reaches 'major milestone'

- **First Light Fusion, in Yarnton, Oxfordshire, has increased the distance a projectile is fired into the fuel by more than ten times.** The company says the development is crucial to its design for a commercial power plant. Mila Fitzgerald, a scientist at the company, called it an "exciting step".
- **Nuclear fusion works by heating and forcing tiny particles together to make a heavier one which releases useful energy.** First Light is pursuing a new form of fusion by compressing a target containing fusion fuel, using a projectile travelling at high speed. The challenge is to be able to launch a projectile accurately, while keeping it in a solid state when it hits the fusion fuel - which is a crucial part of Fusion Light's power plant design.

South Korea launches its 2nd military spy satellite amid animosities with North Korea

- **South Korea has launched its second military spy satellite into space, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.** The Koreas each launched their first spy satellites last year – North Korea in November and South Korea in December — amid heightened animosities. They said their satellites would boost their abilities to monitor each other and enhance their own missile attack capabilities. South Korea's second spy satellite was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

South Korea is a country in East Asia, constituting the southern part of the Korean Peninsula and sharing a land border with North Korea. Its western border is formed by the Yellow Sea, while its eastern border is defined by the Sea of Japan. The South Korean won is the official currency of South Korea. Yoon Suk-Yeol is the current President of South Korea. 38th parallel, popular name given to latitude 38° N that in East Asia roughly demarcates North Korea and South Korea.

Kuwait's prime minister submits cabinet resignation to emir

- **Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah submitted his cabinet's resignation as expected to the Kuwaiti emir.** The move comes after a new parliament was elected and is a procedural one as the current government has to submit its resignation before the legislature's inauguration.
- **Kuwait's new Emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah will now either reappoint the same prime minister or a new one who will be tasked with forming a new cabinet.** The OPEC producer, which bans political parties, has one of the most open political systems in the Gulf, though the emir has the final say in state matters. Feuding between appointed governments and the elected parliament has often led to political paralysis.

Kuwait is a country in Western Asia. It is situated in the northern edge of Eastern Arabia at the tip of the Persian Gulf, bordering Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south. Kuwait also shares maritime borders with Iran. Most of the country's population resides in the urban agglomeration of the capital city Kuwait City. As of 2021, Kuwait has a population of 4.67 million people where 1.45 million are Kuwaitis and 3.2 million are foreign nationals. The Kuwaiti dinar is the currency of Kuwait. Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is the Emir of Kuwait.

Zimbabwe's new ZiG currency starts trading, credibility doubts linger

- **Zimbabwe's new gold-backed currency started trading amid doubts that the country's third such re-launch in a decade will have any more success in ending repeated, crippling bouts of high inflation.** The Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) was announced by the central bank with an initial rate of 13.56 to \$1, replacing the

Real Time Gross Settlement Dollar (RTGS), which had lost about 80% of its value this year and had been trading at 28,720 to \$1 before the change.

- **The RTGS, also known as the Zimdollar, was launched in 2019 after a decade of dollarisation**, which included so-called bond coins and bond notes, notionally pegged to the U.S. dollar and introduced in 2014 and 2016 respectively. **The Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) has been the official currency of Zimbabwe since 8 April 2024, backed by US\$575 million worth of hard assets: foreign currencies, gold, and other precious metals.** It replaced the Zimbabwean dollar, which suffered from rapid depreciation, with the official exchange rate surpassing 30,000 Zimbabwean dollars per U.S. dollar on 5 April 2024, whilst the parallel market rate reached 40,000 per U.S. dollar. Annual inflation in Zimbabwe hit 55.3% in March 2024.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in Southeast Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers. The capital and largest city is Harare. The Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) dollar or RTG (Zimdollar or zollar, now abbreviated as ZWL or ZWL\$) was the official currency in Zimbabwe from June 2019 to April 2024. The Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) has been the official currency of Zimbabwe since 8 April 2024, backed by US\$575 million worth of hard assets: foreign currencies, gold, and other precious metals. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa is serving as President of Zimbabwe since 24 November 2017.

Peter Pellegrini to be Slovakia's President as ex-Foreign Minister Ivan Korčok concedes defeat

- **A close ally of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico beat a pro-Western career diplomat to become Slovakia's new President, and succeed Zuzana Caputova, the country's first female head of State.** Parliamentary Speaker Peter Pellegrini received 53.85% of the vote with the ballots from over 98% polling stations counted by the Statistics Office in runoff election, topping former Foreign Minister Ivan Korčok who had 46.14%.

Slovakia is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It is bordered by Poland to the north, Ukraine to the east, Hungary to the south, Austria to the southwest, and the Czech Republic to the northwest. The capital and largest city is Bratislava and currency is Euro. Robert Fico is a Slovak politician currently serving as the Prime Minister of Slovakia since 2023, having served previously from 2006 to 2010 and from 2012 to 2018.

US, UK, Australia consider Japan's cooperation in AUKUS security pact

- **Britain, the U.S. and Australia are considering working with Japan through their AUKUS security pact, despite U.S. export-control restrictions that challenge the existing partners' efforts to counter China's power in the Indo-Pacific region.**
- **Britain said consultations on future cooperation between the three AUKUS partners and other nations including Japan were set to begin this year. AUKUS, formed by the three countries in 2021, is part of efforts to push back against China's growing influence.**
- **coercion”.**

AUKUS is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, announced on 15 September 2021 for the Indo-Pacific region. Under the pact, the US and the UK will help Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The pact also includes cooperation on “cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and additional undersea capabilities”. The pact will focus on military capability, separating it from the **Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance that also includes New Zealand and Canada.** On 17 September 2021, France, which is an ally of the three countries, recalled its ambassadors from **Australia and the US;** French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called the pact a “stab in the back” following **Australia's cancellation of a French–Australian submarine deal worth €56 billion (A\$90 billion) without notice, ending efforts to develop a deeper strategic partnership between France and Australia.**

China conducts military drills in South China Sea

- **China conducted military “combat patrols” in the disputed South China Sea, the same day as joint drills by the Philippines, the United States, Japan and Australia.** The announcement comes one day after defence chiefs from four countries including the Philippines which have been engaged in several contentious maritime disputes with Beijing said they would conduct joint drills in the area.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line. China and India are the two neighbouring countries in Asia. India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. The Belt and Road Initiative, known in Chinese and formerly in English as One Belt One Road or OBOR for short, is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) to organise Clean Economy Investor Forum in Singapore

- The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) was launched in May 2022 and currently includes 14 partners – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.
- It provides a platform for countries in the region to collaborate on advancing resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, and aims to contribute to cooperation, stability and prosperity in the region. The IPEF comprises four pillars of cooperation namely: Trade, Supply Chain, Clean Economy and Fair Economy.
- The IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum is one of the initiatives under the IPEF. It brings together the region's top investors, philanthropies, financial institutions, innovative companies, start-ups and entrepreneurs. The Forum aims to mobilize investments into sustainable infrastructure, climate technology and renewable energy projects.
- The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) is an economic initiative launched by U.S. President Joe Biden on May 23, 2022. The framework launched with fourteen participating founding member nations in the Indo-Pacific region with an open invitation for other countries to join.

Pakistan's ex-PM and PPP leader Gillani becomes Senate chairman

- Senior Pakistan People's Party leader and former Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani was elected unopposed as chairman of the Senate amidst protest from lawmakers from jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party. Saisal Khan Nasir of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was elected as the deputy chairman. The Senate is the upper house of Pakistan's bicameral Parliament. The senators are elected for six-and-a-half-year with half of the house up for election every three years. They are elected by the provincial and National Assemblies.

Simon Harris elected new Irish Prime Minister

- Simon Harris became Ireland's youngest ever prime minister pledging to bring new ideas and energy to the less than 12 months he has boost the coalition government's bid to halt a first electoral victory by left-wing Sinn Fein. The 37-year-old former health and higher education minister, best known for helping steer the initial response to COVID-19, was elected unopposed as leader of Fine Gael, all but assuring he would succeed Leo Varadkar as the 16th person to lead the country following his predecessor's shock exit.

Ireland is an island in the North Atlantic. It is separated from Great Britain to its east by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St George's Channel. Ireland is the second-largest island of the British Isles, the third-largest in Europe, and the twentieth-largest on Earth. The capital and largest city is Dublin. Simon Harris has served as Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael since 2024. Ireland currency is euro.

Iceland picks Bjarni Benediktsson as next Prime Minister

- Bjarni Benediktsson will become the Iceland's next prime minister. Benediktsson, head of the pro-business, right-wing Independence Party, now serves as foreign minister in a broad three-party coalition and was previously prime minister in a short-lived government from January to November of 2017.

- **He takes the helm at a time of uncertainty in Iceland after recent volcanic eruptions triggered the indefinite evacuation of thousands of people**, adding to pressures on an economy already facing high inflation and soaring interest rates. Benediktsson's tenure as prime minister in 2017 was cut short after less than a year when a coalition partner quit the government, triggering a snap election.

In a first, India to send military attaches to African states, Armenia, Philippines

- **Africa is a focus area in a move by India to bolster and rationalise its military diplomacy in key regions across the world**, with defence attachés being sent for the first time to Mozambique, the Ivory Coast and the Philippines. As part of this move, India will also post defence attachés for the first time to Poland, whose importance as a security partner in Europe has increased in recent years, and to Armenia, with which the Indian side recently concluded a big-ticket arms deal, the people said on the condition of anonymity.
- After a gap of several decades, India will also post a defence attaché in Ethiopia. **India had a military officer at the mission in Addis Ababa during the term of Mengistu Haile Mariam**, who came to power in the mid-1970s. A new military attaché is also being posted to Djibouti and will be only the second officer to hold the post.

South Korea opposition wins landslide parliamentary vote in resounding blow to Yoon

- **South Korea's liberal opposition parties scored a landslide victory in a parliamentary election held, dealing a resounding blow to President Yoon Suk Yeol and his conservative party but likely falling just short of a super majority.** The Democratic Party (DP) was projected to take more than 170 of the 300 seats in the new legislature, data by the National Election Commission and network broadcasters showed with more than 99% of the votes counted.

Vietnam property tycoon sentenced to death in multi-billion dollar fraud case

- **A top Vietnamese property tycoon was sentenced to death in one of the biggest corruption cases in history, with an estimated \$27 billion in damages.** A panel of three hand-picked jurors and two judges rejected all defence arguments by Truong My Lan, chair of major developer Van Thinh Phat, who was found guilty of swindling cash from Saigon Commercial Bank (SCB) over a decade.

Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. **Hanoi is the capital** of Vietnam. The dong has been the currency of Vietnam since May 3, 1978.

UK appoints its first woman high commissioner to India

- **Lindy Cameron, the former CEO of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, will take over as the country's first-ever woman high commissioner to India.** Cameron's appointment comes 70 years after India appointed Vijaylakshmi Pandit as its high commissioner in London in 1954.
- **The sister of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Pandit served in that capacity until 1961.** Cameron, a graduate of Oxford University, has previously served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and held senior positions in the UK's international development department, including director general for country programmes. **India is the UK's 12th-largest trade partner.** Trade has increased even as the two countries negotiate a free-trade agreement that could be signed this year.

The top 10 largest economies in the world in 2024

- **The United States of America, China, Germany, Japan, and India are the largest economies in the world in 2024, as per their GDP data.** GDP serves as a key metric for assessing the magnitude of a nation's economy. The conventional approach for gauging a country's GDP involves the expenditure method, wherein the total is derived by aggregating expenditure on fresh consumer goods, new investments, government outlays, and the net value of exports. The United States upholds its status as the major global economy and richest country, steadfastly preserving its pinnacle position from 1960 to 2023. Its economy boasts remarkable diversity, propelled by important sectors, including services, manufacturing, finance, and technology.
- **The United States enjoys a substantial consumer market, fosters innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, possesses resilient infrastructure,** and experiences advantageous business conditions. India is ranked 5th in world's GDP rankings in 2024. India's economy boasts diversity and swift growth, fuelled by key sectors such as

information technology, services, agriculture, and manufacturing. The nation capitalises on its broad domestic market, a youthful and technologically adept labour force, and an expanding middle class.

Russia test-launches an intercontinental ballistic missile

- **The Russian military reported a successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.** Russia's Defence Ministry launch took place at the Kapustin Yar testing range in the south of the country as part of "state testing of prospective missile systems, as well as confirmation of the stability of missiles in service". The test launched achieved its results "in full", and confirmed "high reliability of Russian missiles to ensure (Russia's) strategic security". Russia regularly carries out test launches of ICBMs and other missiles as it seeks to modernise its weapons.

IMF confirms Kristalina Georgieva for second 5-year term

- **The IMF executive board confirmed that it had reappointed Kristalina Georgieva to serve for a second five-year term running the international financial institution.** The decision means that Ms. Georgieva, who was the sole candidate to lead the International Monetary Fund, will continue in office when her current term ends on September 30, 2024.
- The decision was taken by consensus. **Under a controversial, decades-old agreement between Europe and the United States, the International Monetary Fund has historically been led by a European, and the World Bank by a U.S. citizen.** This arrangement was reaffirmed last year when the Biden administration nominated Ajay Banga, an Indian-born, naturalized U.S. citizen, to run the World Bank, which sits just across the street from the IMF in Washington.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 190 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 190 countries that make up its near-global membership. Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, from Bulgaria, is Managing Director and Chairman of the Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) from October 1, 2019. Prominent Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath is the first woman to occupy the post of chief economist of the International Monetary Fund. The latest currency that was added to the basket of currencies by the International Monetary Fund to determine the value of XDR is the Chinese renminbi in 2016. The other international currencies in the basket of currencies are British Pound, Japanese Yen, US Dollar, and Euro. XDR is the currency code of Special Drawing Rights. Andorra has joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to become its 190th member.

India delivers first batch of BrahMos to Philippines

- **India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to Philippines.** In January 2022, Philippines concluded a \$375-million deal with India for three batteries of shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia.
- **The first batch was delivered onboard transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force which landed in Philippines.** Specifics of the delivery made were not immediately available. Philippines is acquiring the systems under the Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Programme.

The Philippines is an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia. Manila is the national capital, while the largest city is Quezon City. The Philippine peso is the official currency of the Philippines. Bongbong Marcos is the current President of the Philippines.

Maldives Court Overturns Former President Abdulla Yameen's 11-Year Prison Sentence; Orders Retrial

- **Maldives High Court has overturned former President Abdulla Yameen's 11-year prison sentence on money laundering and bribery charges and ordered a retrial.** The development comes two days ahead of parliamentary elections in this Indian Ocean archipelago nation.

- The judges cited errors in the trial and highlighted Yameen’s deprivation of trial rights. They emphasized that the prosecution failed to prove the offense pillars outlined in the indictment. **In December of 2022, Maldives’ Criminal Court, had sentenced former President Abdulla Yameen to 11 years in prison after being found guilty of money laundering and bribery. He was accused of abusing his position and taking a 1 million USD bribe to facilitate the sale of Aarah for resort development to Yoosuf Naeem, a former parliamentary representative for Felidhoo constituency, and laundering the money.**

Maldives is a South Asian country, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. Male is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives. Mohamed Muizzu is the President of the Maldives. The Maldives rejoined the Commonwealth on 1 February 2020 after showing evidence of functioning democratic processes and popular support.

Singapore PM Lee to step down on May 15, hands over power to deputy Lawrence Wong

- Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will step down on May 15 after two decades at the helm, and hand power to his deputy Lawrence Wong.** Mr. Lee will formally advise the city-state’s president to appoint Mr. Wong, who is currently deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, to succeed him. Mr. Wong, who has the unanimous support of lawmakers in the long-ruling People’s Action Party, will be sworn in at the national palace.

Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lee Hsien Loong is the current Prime Minister of Singapore. Halimah binti Yacob served as the first female President in the country’s history. Tharman Shanmugaratnam has been serving as the current President of Singapore since 2023.

Bankman-Fried appeals FTX fraud conviction, 25-year sentence

- Sam Bankman-Fried, facing the prospect of spending much of his adult life behind bars, appealed his conviction and 25-year prison sentence for stealing \$8 billion from customers of the now-bankrupt FTX cryptocurrency exchange he founded.** Defence lawyer Marc Mukasey had announced plans for the appeal to the Manhattan-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals during Bankman-Fried’s March 28 sentencing hearing. The 32-year-old former billionaire crypto wunderkind was convicted in November on seven counts of fraud and conspiracy in what federal prosecutors have called one of the biggest financial frauds in U.S. history.

Samuel Bankman-Fried also known by his initials SBF, is an American entrepreneur, investor, and former billionaire. Bankman-Fried was the founder and CEO of the cryptocurrency exchange FTX and cryptocurrency trading firm Alameda Research. FTX experienced a crisis in late 2022, which led to a collapse in FTX’s native cryptocurrency, FTT. Amid the crisis, Bankman-Fried announced he would wind down operations at Alameda Research and resigned as CEO of FTX, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Donald Trump faces criminal trial, a historic first for a former president

- Donald Trump became the first former U.S. president to stand criminal trial when he appeared in a Manhattan court to face charges stemming from a hush-money payment** that could complicate his bid to win back the White House. Trump, the 2024 Republican candidate for president, is required to attend the trial, which is expected to last through May. The selection of 12 jurors and six alternates from a pool of Manhattan residents is expected to take about a week, followed by witness testimony.

Donald John Trump is an American politician, media personality, and businessman who served as the 45th president of the United States from 2017 to 2021. Trump’s political positions have been described as populist, protectionist, isolationist, and nationalist. He won the 2016 U.S. presidential election as the Republican nominee against Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton despite losing the national popular vote. He became the first U.S. president with no prior military or government service. **Trump is the only American president to have been impeached twice.** In March of that year, a Manhattan grand jury indicted Trump on 34 felony counts of fraud, making him the first former president to face criminal charges; he pleaded not guilty to all counts.

Pictures reveal scale of world's first floating theme park on Saudi oil rig

- **The Rig, the world's first floating theme park off the coast of Saudi Arabia, has revealed more about its true scale. Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as one of the world's leading tourist hotspots – and The Rig is the next step in that journey. Sitting 25 miles off the coast, near Al Juraid Island and the Berri oilfield, it's located atop a decommissioned oil rig.**

Armenia asks World Court to pursue ethnic cleansing case against Azerbaijan

- **Armenia urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to hold Azerbaijan responsible for what it said was the ethnic cleansing of Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The case is part of the fallout from decades of confrontation between the South Caucasus neighbours, most explosively over the disputed region in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's armed forces recaptured the mountainous region in September after years of ethnic Armenian control, prompting most ethnic Armenians to flee to Armenia. In a case first filed at the ICJ in 2021, Armenia accused Azerbaijan of glorifying racism against Armenians, allowing hate speech against Armenians and destroying Armenian cultural sites.**

Armenia is a landlocked country in the Armenian Highlands of West Asia. It is a part of the Caucasus region and is bordered by Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north and Azerbaijan to the east, and Iran and the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan to the south. Yerevan is the capital, largest city and financial center. The Armenian dram is the currency of the Republic of Armenia. Vahagn Garniki Khachaturyan is the 5th and current President of Armenia. Nikol Pashinyan is serving as the Prime Minister of Armenia since 8 May 2018. Nagorno-Karabakh is a disputed territory, internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, although most of its territory was governed by ethnic Armenians under the breakaway Republic of Artsakh—also known as the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR)—from the end of the first Nagorno-Karabakh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994 to the announcement of the pending dissolution of the republic in September 2023.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: the United Kingdom becomes the 183rd State to join UNESCO's Convention

- **Created in 2003, UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognizes traditional craftsmanship, oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe.**
- **The United Kingdom is thus committed to an increased inventory of the country's traditions, including practices inspired by diaspora communities, and to better safeguarding of the most at-risk. To this end, the Government of the United Kingdom launched a public consultation in January 2024 on the creation of a new register onto which communities across the country could "nominate their most cherished local traditions".**
- **Over the past seven years, the number of ratifications of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by Member States has accelerated with 11 additional countries joining the Convention: Angola, Kiribati, Libya, Malta, San Marino, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Suriname, Tuvalu, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

Lebanese newspaper launches the world's first AI President

- **Lebanese newspaper Annahar has introduced the world's first AI designed to perform presidential duties for Lebanon. The nation hasn't had a sitting President for the last two years. Following thirteen failed attempts of the Lebanese parliament to elect one, AnNahar Newspaper in Lebanon built and launched an AI version. The new AI President of Lebanon has been created by training Large Language Models on 90 years of "impartial journalism" from AnNahar since the 1930s.**

World's First "Miss AI" Contest to Judge Winner on Beauty and Social Media Clout

- **Models and influencers generated through artificial intelligence will compete in a "Miss AI" beauty pageant with prize money of \$20,000. According to Forbes, this is the world's first AI beauty pageant and the contestants will be judged based on their looks, the heft they command online and the technical skill that went into creating them.**

- The AI influencers' social clout will be assessed based on their engagement numbers with fans, rate of growth of audience and utilisation of platforms, the outlet further said citing a release from World AI Creator Awards (WAICA). The pageant will see AI-generated ladies go head-to-head in front of a panel of judges, including two AI influencers. This is the first time such a contest is being organised, and more are planned on fashion, diversity and computer-generated men.

Belarus' parliament votes to leave Europe's conventional forces treaty already abandoned by Russia

- The Belarusian parliament voted to suspend the country's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty that once was a key security doctrine for the continent, a 1990 agreement that was abandoned last year by Russia. The bill, introduced by authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko earlier this month, could pave the way for Belarus — Russia's ally in the war in Ukraine — to expand its military. Belarus lawmakers unanimously approved the bill calling for the treaty's suspension; Lukashenko now needs to sign the bill for it to become law.
- The treaty, signed in 1990, places limits on tanks, combat vehicles, warplanes and heavy artillery that can be deployed in Europe. It aimed at keeping a military balance between the West and the countries that were part of the Cold War-era Warsaw Pact.

Croatia's ruling conservatives win parliamentary vote, but cannot rule alone

- Croatia's governing conservatives convincingly won a highly contested parliamentary election, but will still need support from far-right groups to stay in power. The election followed a campaign that centered on a bitter rivalry between the country's President and Prime Minister.
- The ballot pitted the ruling conservative Croatian Democratic Union, or HDZ, led by Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, against an alliance of centrist and left-wing parties informally led by populist President Zoran Milanovic and his Social Democratic Party, or SDP.

Croatia is a country at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe. Its capital and largest city is Zagreb. The kuna is the currency of Croatia. Zoran Milanovic is serving as President of Croatia since 19 February 2020. Andrej Plenkovic has been serving as the Prime Minister of Croatia.

Scotland ditches 2030 climate target to cut emissions by 75%

- Scotland scrapped its target of cutting climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, but said it still intends to meet a 2045 net zero target. The move came in response to a critical report published last month by the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC), which said Scotland was so far behind what was needed to meet the 2030 target that it was no longer credible.
- "We accept the CCC's recent re-articulation that this parliament's interim 2030 target is out of reach," Mairi McAllan, the Net Zero Secretary for Scotland's devolved government. Scotland's semi-autonomous government has control over some elements of climate and environmental policy, but others – most notably, almost all energy policy – remain under the control of the British government in London.

Scotland is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. Humza Haroon Yousaf is the current First Minister of Scotland.

Hainan Free Trade Port construction has gained momentum

- Amidst ongoing tensions in the South China Sea, Liu Xiaoming, Governor of Hainan province — the southernmost and the only tropical island province of China in the South China Sea — said that the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) has taken shape and gained momentum, six years after Chinese President Xi Jinping's announcement of establishing FTP. Hainan, a lush tropical island, is not very far from the Philippines and there have been tensions between both countries over the disputed South China Sea.

Abu Dhabi set to build World's first eSports island

- True Gamers, a United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based eSports network, has unveiled plans to build the world's first eSports island in Abu Dhabi. The project's initial investment cost is estimated to be 280 million dollars, with the cost expected to increase to 1 billion dollars upon completion.

- The “esports Island” project is proposed to be located between Al Bandar and Al Dana developments in Al Raha Beach. The island will feature a luxurious resort, tournament venues, and training facilities upon completion. It would also feature The Digital Tower, a hub for meetings, start-up accelerators, animation studios, TG Arena for esports tournaments, computer club, simulation racing, and console gaming.

Sweden becomes 38th country to join Artemis Accords

- NASA welcomed Sweden as the 38th country to sign the Artemis Accords. The accords are a series of non-binding arrangements aimed at setting down norms to be followed in outer space. **The Artemis Accords were initially announced by NASA and the US Department of State in 2020 and it now has 38 signatories, including India and Japan.**
- It provides for the implementation of key obligations from the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and reinforces commitment to the Registration Convention, the Rescue and Return Agreement and also best practices of responsible behaviour, including the public release of scientific data.

The Artemis Accords are a series of non-binding multilateral agreements between the United States government and other world governments participating in the Artemis Program, an American-led effort to return humans to the Moon by 2025, with the ultimate goal of expanding space exploration to Mars and beyond. As of December 2022, 23 countries and one territory have signed the accords, including eight in Europe, seven in Asia, three in North America, two in Oceania, two in Africa, and two in South America. Drafted by NASA and the U.S. Department of State, the Accords establish a framework for cooperation in the civil exploration and peaceful use of the Moon, Mars, and other astronomical objects.

Norway’s ‘world-first’ ship tunnel gets technical advisor

- Dubbed the ‘world’s first ship tunnel’, the Stad Ship Tunnel in Vestland county, Norway, was greenlit in 2021 with an allocation of NOK2.7 billion (US\$245 million). The possibility of a tunnel through the mountains of the Stad peninsula has been debated for decades, but a construction plan was first included in Norway’s National Transport Plan in 2013.
- The Stad Ship Tunnel, located at the western tip of Norway, will offer haven to ships navigating the most exposed stretch of sea on the country’s coast. The surrounding waters, the Stadhavet Sea, is said to be the most windswept part of the nation’s coastline with storms approximately 100 days of the year, which leads to ships waiting days to pass. Currents created by the meeting point of the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea also complicate navigation. **The tunnel will create a canal bypass near Kjøde on the east end, and, on the west end, the tunnel will open between Eide and Berstad.** The proposed tunnel will be 1.7-km long, 50-m high and 36-m wide, which is large enough for coastal cruise ships to navigate.

Norway is a Nordic country in Northern Europe, the mainland territory of which comprises the western and northernmost portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula. The remote Arctic island of Jan Mayen and the archipelago of Svalbard also form part of Norway. The capital and largest city in Norway is Oslo. Jonas Gahr Store has been serving as current Prime Minister of Norway since 2021. Masud Gharakhani has been serving as the President of the Norway since 2021. The krone is the currency of the Kingdom of Norway (including overseas territories and dependencies).

Saudi Arabia is making a high-risk \$1 trillion bet on tourism

- The mother-daughter trip represents the promise and challenge of the Saudi government’s plan to spend almost \$1 trillion to transform a country long wary of outsiders into a haven for visitors—not only for the religious pilgrims who’ve been traveling here to Mecca and Medina for centuries. Saudi Arabia is investing heavily to transform into a top tourist destination, with projects like the Red Sea Project and Neom. The country aims to attract millions of international visitors by 2030, competing with the UAE in tourism and expatriate living. Mei Wang marveled at the sandstone vistas, lush palm trees, ancient tombs and five-star resorts. These images beckoned to the 30-year-old entrepreneur as she watched Divas Hit the Road, a Chinese travel show.
- So she set out with her mother, flying from Guangzhou to the ancient oasis town of AlUla in Saudi Arabia. In Arabic, AlUla means “glory,” and the kingdom -envision a lot for this historical region, which is the size of New Jersey. It will become one of the world’s great tourist attractions—in the words of Melanie de Souza, a destination for “luxe seekers, wanderlust nomads, intrepid voyagers and silver foxes.”

Saudi Arabia is a country on the Arabian Peninsula in Western Asia. It is bordered by the Red Sea to the west; Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north; the Persian Gulf, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to the east; Oman to the southeast; and Yemen to the south. Bahrain is an island country off the east coast. Its capital and largest city is Riyadh. The Saudi riyal is the currency of Saudi Arabia. Mohammed bin Salman is the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is King of Saudi Arabia, reigning since 2015. Petroleum was discovered in 1938 and followed up by several other finds in the Eastern Province. Saudi Arabia has since become the world's second-largest oil producer (behind the US) and the world's largest oil exporter, controlling the world's second-largest oil reserves and the fourth-largest gas reserves.

India, UK closer to pact on electric propulsion system for warships

- **The Centre and the UK government are discussing the possibility of an agreement to develop an electric propulsion system in India to power domestic warships.** Indian warships are currently powered by diesel engines, gas turbines or steam turbines.
- **The electric propulsion capability is meant to power larger warships with a displacement of over 6,000 tonnes.** The UK sent a letter of intent to the government last month on developing the capability in India through a government-to-government agreement.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK) or Britain is a sovereign country in Europe, off the north-western coast of the continental mainland. It comprises England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands within the British Isles. The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. The capital and largest city is London, a global city and financial centre with a metropolitan area population of over 14 million. Sterling is the official currency of the United Kingdom and its associated territories. Charles III (Charles Philip Arthur George) is King of the United Kingdom and the 14 other Commonwealth realms. He was the longest-serving heir apparent and Prince of Wales and, at age 73, became the oldest person to accede to the British throne upon the death of his mother, Elizabeth II, on 8 September 2022. Rishi Sunak is the current Prime Minister.

Xi Jinping calls for China's biggest military reorganization since 2015

- **As cyber warfare between China and the United States intensifies, Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered what is being touted as the biggest reorganization of the nation's military since 2015.** With an intention to expand its military capabilities, China terminated the Strategic Support Force and in turn created a new branch called the Information Support Force.
- **This provides China with the ability to bolster its capabilities in several areas including cyber warfare.** China's defence ministry maintained that the aerospace and cyber units previously under the Strategic Support Force will now be organizationally parallel to the newly created Information Support Force. The aerospace unit is expected to improve China's capability to use space and step up the management of space crises.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line. China and India are the two neighbouring countries in Asia. India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. The Belt and Road Initiative, known in Chinese and formerly in English as One Belt One Road or OBOR for short, is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.

Russia-India signs agreement to operate large research hub in New Delhi

- The Higher School of Economics, located in Russia, and the University of Delhi signed an agreement on strategic cooperation and joint actions, and a large research hub will begin operating at the partner university. New Delhi hosted the Indo-Russian Education Summit, becoming the largest event of its kind in the history of India-Russia bilateral relations. About 60 Russian universities arrived in the national capital from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Siberia, Crimea, the Urals and other regions.

Russia or the Russian Federation is a transcontinental country spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is the largest country in the world; covering over 17,125,191 square kilometres (6,612,073 sq mi), consisting of more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area, extending to eleven time zones, and has bordering sixteen sovereign nations, the most of any country in the world. Vladimir Putin is serving as the current President of Russia since 2012, previously being in the office from 1999 until 2008. He was also Prime Minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russian Federation. Mikhail Mishustin is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020.

World's first 'zero-waste' restaurant without a single bin

- Every year, one-third of the food produced for human consumption across the world is wasted. But a restaurant in London, UK, is trying to tackle the issue by aiming to produce no waste for the landfill. As part of its zero waste mission, Silo uses a nose to tail and root to tip approach to cooking out of respect for nature. **Silo is the world's first Zero Waste restaurant, based in Hackney Wick, East London.**

Kuwait launches first-ever Hindi language radio programme

- **Kuwait started its first ever Hindi language radio broadcast.** The Hindi programme will be available on Kuwait radio on frequencies FM 93.3 and AM 96.3. **The Indian community in Kuwait, is around one million strong and is the largest expatriate community in the nation.**
- According to the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, **it is also regarded as the community of first preference among the expatriate communities.** Furthermore, as per the report, the Indian Business Community in Kuwait has carved a niche in the Kuwaiti market in retail and distributorship.

Kuwait is a country in Western Asia. It is situated in the northern edge of Eastern Arabia at the tip of the Persian Gulf, bordering Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south. Kuwait also shares maritime borders with Iran. Most of the country's population resides in the urban agglomeration of the capital city Kuwait City. As of 2021, Kuwait has a population of 4.67 million people where 1.45 million are Kuwaitis and 3.2 million are foreign nationals. The Kuwaiti dinar is the currency of Kuwait. Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is the Crown Prince of Kuwait.

Papua New Guinea appoints first defence adviser to India

- In an important step in taking forward defence cooperation between India and Papua New Guinea (PNG), **PNG appointed its first defence adviser to India. Col Edison Napyo, who will serve as the defence adviser was given a farewell by the PNG's acting Chief of Defence Force Commodore Philip Polewara.**
- In May 2023, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited PNG and attended the third summit of the Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) where he spoke in favour of free and open Indo-Pacific region and focused on India's commitment to assist the development goals of the member countries of FIPIC.**

Papua New Guinea is a country in Oceania that comprises the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and its offshore islands in Melanesia (a region of the southwestern Pacific Ocean north of Australia). Officially the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, it shares its only land border with Indonesia to the west and it is directly adjacent to Australia to the south and the Solomon Islands to the east. Its capital, located along its southeastern coast, is Port Moresby. The country is the world's third largest island country. The Kina is the currency of Papua New Guinea. James Marape has served as the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea since May 2019.

Italy adopts the “world’s first” AI law package

- **Italy adopts the “world’s first” AI law package.** The Council of Ministers approved a set of new rules to regulate the misuse of artificial intelligence. The Italian government has greenlit a series of new norms intended to help the country navigate the age of artificial intelligence. The bill contains measures to boost Italy’s industry and punish those who leverage AI to cause harm. Subject to parliamentary approval, they are designed to make Italians’ digital lives ready for the impacts of AI – from the danger of deep fakes to fostering development in the sector.

Joe Biden signs bill to ban TikTok in US unless it is sold

- **US President Joe Biden has signed into law measures that would ban Chinese-owned TikTok unless it is sold to any US company within a year.** The law is mainly aimed at providing aid to Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan. Biden has just signed the legislation bill into law after the responses from two branches of the country, the House and the Senate. The Senate adopted the plan in its bi-partisan 79–18 vote.

Indonesia declares Prabowo Subianto president-elect after court rejects rivals’ appeal

- **Indonesia’s electoral commission formally declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony after the country’s highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory** lodged by two losing presidential candidates. Mr. Subianto, who is currently defence minister, won the election with 58.6% of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by either of the other two candidates. But his rivals alleged that his victory had depended on large-scale fraud and widespread state interference.

Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia and Oceania between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It consists of over 17,000 islands, including Sumatra, Sulawesi, Java, and parts of Borneo and New Guinea. **Indonesia is the world’s largest island country and the 14th-largest country by area.** With about 270 million people, **Indonesia is the world’s fourth-most populous country and the most populous Muslim-majority country.** Java, the world’s most populous island, is home to more than half of the country’s population. The rupiah (Rp) is the official currency of Indonesia.

In the world’s first Venice to trial day tickets

- **Venice will begin charging day trippers for entry, a world first aimed at easing pressure on the Italian city drowning under the weight of mass tourism.** A public holiday in Italy—day visitors will for the first time have to buy a five-euro (\$5.3) ticket, monitored by inspectors carrying out spot checks at key points in the UNESCO world heritage site. Venice is one of the world’s top tourist destinations, with 3.2 million visitors staying overnight in the historic centre in 2022—dwarfing the resident population of just 50,000.

Britain PM Rishi Sunak appoints Gen. Gwyn Jenkins as new National Security Adviser

- **U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has appointed a new National Security Adviser (NSA), General Gwyn Jenkins, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.** Tim Barrow, the outgoing NSA, is reportedly going to be appointed Britain’s next Ambassador to the U.S. The U.K. Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) which did not confirm the appointment, which, if made, would reportedly come into effect in December or January when there will likely be a new government in the U.K. Polls point to the Opposition Labour Party winning the next general election and this could impact the chances of Mr Barrow going to Washington, if he is appointed.

Dubai begins work on ‘world’s largest’ airport terminal

- **Dubai announced the commencement of construction on a new terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport.** The ruler of the Gulf emirate said that it will become “the world’s largest” terminal, with an **estimated cost of nearly \$35 billion.** Once the new terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport is fully operational, it will be able to handle up to 260 million passengers each year. Sheikh Mohammed described it as having “the world’s largest capacity” and “five times larger than the current Dubai International Airport,” one of the busiest air hubs globally.

Head of Vietnam’s parliament resigns amid corruption probe

- **The head of Vietnam’s Parliament, Vuong Dinh Hue, has resigned.** He is the latest member of senior government to leave office amid an ongoing anti-corruption campaign. Hue’s resignation takes place four

days after his assistant Pham Thai Ha was arrested on charges of abusing his position and power for personal gain. Former President Vo Van Thuong resigned in late March in similar circumstances.

UAE planning second nuclear power plant

- **The United Arab Emirates will tender shortly for the construction of a new nuclear power plant that would double the number of the small Gulf state’s nuclear reactors. The UAE, a U.S. security partner, became the first Arab state to operate a nuclear power plant when in 2021 it opened in the South Korean-built Barakah facility in Abu Dhabi.**
- **The UAE plans to seek bids this year, potentially within the next few months, to build four new reactors, requesting anonymity to discuss details that are still private.** The UAE aims to award the tender and start construction as soon as this year so that the new plant would be operational by 2032 in order to meet projected energy needs.

President Muizzu’s party secures big win in Maldives parliamentary polls

- **The ruling People’s National Congress (PNC) of the Maldives secured a big win in the parliamentary elections giving President Mohamed Muizzu significant control over the legislature, six months after he rose to the country’s top office.**
- **The leader, who wanted Indian military out of the island nation, has pledged to elevate strategic ties with China.** Early leads swiftly translated to a decisive majority for the PNC fragmented race that six political parties and several independent groups fought, fielding 368 candidates for the 93 seats in Parliament or the People’s Majlis. The PNC, according to local media, was headed for a “super majority” in Parliament, with a likely win in nearly 60 out of the 93 seats.

Maldives is a South Asian country, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. Male is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives. Mohamed Muizzu is the President of the Maldives. The Maldives rejoined the Commonwealth on 1 February 2020 after showing evidence of functioning democratic processes and popular support.

Princess Elisabeth Island will be the first artificial energy island in the world

- **Princess Elisabeth Island will be the first artificial energy island in the world to combine both direct current (HVDC) and alternating current (HVAC).** The high-voltage infrastructure on the island will bundle together the electricity cables from the wind farms in the Princess Elisabeth Zone.
- **Princess Elisabeth Island will be an electricity grid at sea that will connect offshore wind farms to the Belgian mainland and also serve as a hub for future interconnectors with the UK and Denmark.** Belgian electricity transmission system operator Elia is the project’s developer.

Pakistan PM Sharif to attend World Economic Forum at Saudi Arabia

- **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would travel to Saudi Arabia to attend the World Economic Forum and also hold bilateral meetings with world leaders.** The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Special Meeting on ‘Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy’ will be held on April 28 and 29 in Riyadh in the Gulf nation. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar would accompany the prime minister to a key moot, for which they had been invited by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and WEF founder and Chief Executive Professor Klaus Schwab.

Geneva-based UN-related body to review India’s human rights accreditation status

- **The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is preparing to defend the government’s human rights processes at a meeting in Geneva, where a decision on whether India’s human rights body will retain its “A status” is expected to be made.**
- **The NHRC’s ratings were put on hold in 2023 over concerns on its composition procedure, the presence of police personnel in human rights investigations, and the lack of gender and minority representation, and the decision over whether the NHRC is given an A rating or a B rating would affect its ability to vote at the UN Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies.** The meeting of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the UN-recognised Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) worldwide will be held, as

part of the five-year peer review for each member of the 114-member alliance. **While NHRC Chairperson, retired Supreme Court judge Justice Arun Kumar Mishra had travelled to Geneva last year for the GANHRI SCA meeting on India, this year, the NHRC is expected to attend the review meeting.**

The National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) is a statutory body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA). The NHRC is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the act as “Rights Relating To Life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in the international covenants and enforceable by courts in India”. Arun Kumar Mishra is the eighth and current chairperson of National Human Rights Commission of India. He is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India.



Career
Launcher

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

Fincare merges with AU Small Finance Bank

- **AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) amalgamated Fincare Small Finance Bank (Fincare SFB), marking the first such consolidation in the sector.** In an all-stock merger deal first announced on October 29, 2023, where the shareholders of Fincare SFB received 579 equity shares in AU SFB for every 2,000 equity shares held in Fincare SFB, the merger received final approval from RBI on March 4, 2024, with the effective date of April 1, 2024.
- **The merger is also expected to provide AU SFB with enhanced access to South India,** significantly expanding its distribution network. This increased presence will facilitate the distribution of the bank's diverse range of products and services to a wider customer base, strengthening its market position in the region.

AU Small Finance Bank Limited is an Indian small finance bank, based in Jaipur. It was founded as vehicle finance company AU Financiers (India) Ltd in 1996 and converted to a small finance bank on 19 April 2017. AU Small Finance Bank serves low and middle income individuals and micro and small businesses that have limited or no access to formal banking and finance channels. The Bank offers loans, deposits and payment products and services. **Small finance banks (SFB) are a type of niche banks in India. Banks with a SFB license can provide basic banking service of acceptance of deposits and lending. The aim behind these is to provide financial inclusion to sections of the economy not being served by other banks, such as small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.**

Change in IT Act yet to benefit MSMEs

- An intervention introduced in the Union budget last year to ensure timely payments to micro and small-scale units in the manufacturing and service sectors is also hurting a section of the industry. **Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act says payments due to UDYAN-registered micro and small-scale industries would be allowed as deduction only if the actual payment was made within the time stipulated in the MSME Act.**
- Otherwise, the payment would be treated as income and taxed accordingly. **If a micro or small-scale unit had a written agreement with a medium or large scale industry for supply of components, spares, or any other product or service, the payment should be made by the buyer within 45 days.** If there was no agreement, the payment should be made within 15 days.

SEBI Launches New & More User-Friendly Version Of Complaint Redress System – SCORES 2.0

- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India – SEBI has launched a new and more user friendly version of its complaint redress system – SCORES 2.0.** The new version of SCORES will make the process more efficient through auto-routing, auto-escalation, monitoring by the designated bodies and reduction of timelines.
- According to SEBI, the timeline for redressal of complaints in SCORES 2.0 has been reduced to 21 calendar days. Besides, there will be two levels of review, **first by the 'Designated Body' and if the investor is dissatisfied, SEBI will undertake a second review.** The market regulator has enabled integration with the KYC Registration Agency database for easy registration of the investor on SCORES.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is the regulatory body for securities and commodity market in India under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It was established on 12 April 1988 and given Statutory Powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992. SEBI has its headquarters at the business district of Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai. Madhabi Puri Buch took charge of chairman on 1 March 2022, replacing Ajay Tyagi, whose term ended on 28 February 2022. Madhabi Puri Buch is the first woman chairperson of SEBI.

Waaree Energies secures 220 MW solar module supply order from Sprng Energy

- Waaree Energies said it has secured an order from Sprng Energy to supply 220 MW of solar modules. It will supply the modules for Sprng Energy's upcoming project in Gujarat, Waaree Energies.
- "This collaboration stands as an opportunity for Waaree to take on a crucial role in advancing India's green energy sector, aligning with our dedication to national sustainability objectives," Hitesh Chimanlal Doshi, Chairman & Managing Director of Waaree Group, said. Waaree Energies is among India's largest manufacturers of solar PV modules with an aggregate installed capacity of 12 GW.

India to build first commercial crude oil strategic storage

- India, the world's third biggest oil consumer and importer, plans to build its first commercial crude oil strategic storage as part of efforts to shore up stockpiles as insurance against any supply disruption.
- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL), a special purpose vehicle created by the government for building and operating strategic petroleum reserves in the country, has invited bids for constructing 2.5 million tonnes of underground storage at Padur in Karnataka.

India Approves Highest-Ever Export Quota for Essential Commodities to Maldives under Bilateral Mechanism

- As India approved highest ever export quota for essential commodities to Maldives under a bilateral mechanism. This is a gesture which signifies the longstanding friendship, and the strong commitment to further expand bilateral trade and commerce between the two countries. The approved quantities are said to be highest since 1981 when the mechanism was put in place.

HZL chairperson Priya Hebbar named among WEF's 2024 class of Young Global Leaders

- Priya Agarwal Hebbar, Chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Ltd. & Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Ltd., has been selected as one of the five Indians to join the Young Global Leaders Class of 2024 by the World Economic Forum, a group of nearly 90 people who are "making a change."
- Established by the World Economic Forum in 2004, the Young Global Leaders Forum represents leaders under 40 from various fields, including politics, business, civil society, the arts, and academia, all dedicated to creating a lasting impact on their communities and beyond.

TRAI Releases Consultation Paper On Inputs For Formulation Of National Broadcasting Policy-2024

- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a Consultation Paper on inputs for formulation of National Broadcasting Policy-2024. The broadcasting sector is a sunrise sector having huge potential to contribute towards the growth of the Indian economy.
- The Ministry said that the inputs for formulation of policy aim at stipulating the vision, objectives and strategies for the planned development and growth of the broadcasting sector in the era of new and emerging technologies. The Consultation Paper highlights pertinent issues prevalent in the broadcasting sector with an objective of making India a Global Content Hub.
- The paper also discusses on strengthening the public service broadcasting, issues on various segments of media and entertainment sector, combating piracy and ensuring content security. This Consultation Paper on Inputs for formulation of National Broadcasting Policy-2024 has been prepared for seeking comments from stakeholders has been placed on TRAI's website.

ITC Infotech's deep-tech platform aims to enhance income of 10 mn farmers by 2030

- ITC Infotech, the tech arm of ITC Group, said it was chasing an ambitious plan of empowering and enhancing the incomes of 10 million farmers who are part of more than 4,000 FPOs (farmer-producing organisations) across India by 2030.
- Through its ITC Metamarket for Advanced Agriculture and Rural Services (ITCMAARS), the company has so far brought more than 1.5 million farmers and 1,500 FPOs from across 10 states on this platform. ITCMAARS is an artificial intelligence and machine learning-driven platform that offers a gamut of farmer-empowerment services.

India third-most improved business destination in the world

- Greece, Qatar and India have improved the most globally in providing the best environment to businesses in the past one year, according to a report by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). India came third on the list of most improved countries as a result of its youthful demographic, which promises strong demand and availability of good labour. "India is the only single-country market that offers a potential scale comparable to that of China". The EIU said it expects strong economic growth between 2024 and 2028 with more foreign direct investments coming into India as companies look for manufacturing destinations other than China.

Laos and Brunei join Asian cross-border payments initiative

- Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) and Bank of the Lao PDR (BOL) have officially joined the Regional Payment Connectivity (RPC) after previously expressing their interest in joining the initiative. BDCB signed the second supplemental pages of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Regional Payment Connectivity (MOU RPC).
- Meanwhile BOL signed the third supplemental pages of MOU RPC, at the sidelines of the 11th ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. The inclusion of BDCB and BOL bring the RPC group to a total of eight ASEAN central banks. Pioneered by the central banks of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand in late 2022, later joined by Vietnam in August 2023 and now Brunei Darussalam and Lao PDR, the RPC initiative is expected to be extended to other ASEAN countries and beyond.

Manoj Panda is new member of the XVI Finance Commission

- The Centre has notified the appointment of economist Manoj Panda as a full-time member of the Sixteenth Finance Commission, tasked with formulating recommendations on the revenue sharing formula between the Centre and States for the five-year period beginning April 2026.
- The Government had constituted the Commission on December 31, and named former Niti Aayog vice chairman and Columbia University professor Arvind Panagariya as its chairman. Other members of the Commission — Ajay Narayan Jha, Annie George Mathew, Niranjan Rajadhyaksha and Soumya Kanti Ghosh.

The Finance Commissions are commissions periodically constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to define the financial relations between the central government of India and the individual state governments. The First Commission was established in 1951 under The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951. Fifteen Finance Commissions have been constituted since the promulgation of Indian Constitution in 1950. Individual commissions operate under the terms of reference which are different for every commission, and they define the terms of qualification, appointment and disqualification, the term, eligibility and powers of the Finance Commission. As per the constitution, the commission is appointed every five years and consists of a chairman and four other members. The Finance Commission was established in 1951 by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the then-incumbent law minister, to address these imbalances. The First FC was constituted in 1951 with Shri Kshitish Chandra Neogy as the Chairman; it submitted its reports in 1953. The 15th Finance Commission constituted in 2017 and is chaired by N. K. Singh.

India market cap hits Rs. 400 lakh crore for first time

- On a day when both the Sensex and Nifty scaled fresh all-time peaks, the combined market capitalisation of all listed stocks on BSE hit the Rs. 400 lakh crore milestones for the first time ever. With retail investors shifting

their savings from traditional investment avenues, BSE's m-cap has seen a growth of Rs. 100 lakh crore in just 9 months. The Rs. 300 lakh crore mark was touched on 5 July 2023 when Nifty was at 19,400-level. Since then the index is up over 16% and scaled a fresh peak of 22,623.90. The rally has been much sharper in smaller stocks with hundreds of small and midcap stocks giving multibagger returns.

Citroen becomes the first multinational carmaker to export EVs from India

- **French carmaker Citroen became the first multinational car manufacturer in India to export domestically made electric vehicles to the international market.** The company announced the commencement of exports of locally manufactured e-C3.
- **Initial shipment of 500 units of the Made-in-India Citroen e-C3 to Indonesia was ceremonially flagged from Kamarajar Port.** The move aligned with Citroën's global ambitions of democratising electric mobility to increase the adoption of sustainable and clean modes of transportation.

India, Mauritius sign protocol to amend tax treaty; principal purpose test introduced

- **India and Mauritius have signed a protocol to amend the double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA), which included a principal purpose test (PPT) to decide whether a foreign investor is eligible to claim treaty benefits.** Tax experts said a new article has been added to the protocol "Article 27B Entitlement to Benefits".
- The amended protocol was signed on March 7 and made public now. **The introduction of the PPT aims to curtail tax avoidance by ensuring that treaty benefits are only granted for transactions with a bona fide purpose.** The amendment represents a move by India to align with global efforts against treaty abuse, particularly under the BEPS Action 6 framework.

A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) is a bilateral agreement between two countries aimed at eliminating the possibility of double taxation on the same income or financial transaction. Such agreements are crucial for promoting international trade and investment by ensuring that individuals and businesses do not face excessive tax burdens when conducting cross-border activities. DTAA typically outlines the rules for allocating taxing rights between the two countries involved, along with mechanisms for resolving disputes and exchanging information to prevent tax evasion. These agreements provide clarity and certainty for taxpayers, encouraging economic cooperation and facilitating the flow of capital across borders. In the era of globalization, where investors operate across borders, **the objective of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) is to prevent the occurrence of double taxation.** Double taxation arises when the same income or profit is taxed by two or more countries, leading to financial disincentives and unfairness.

IndiGo becomes world's 3rd most valuable airline by market cap

- **IndiGo Airlines, run by Interglobe Aviation, became the world's third most valuable airline as its market capitalisation surpassed that of Southwest Airlines.** The domestic airline is currently valued at Rs. 1,762 crore. While Delta Air Lines stands as the second most valued airline at Rs. 3,044 crore, the Irish company Ryan Air stands firmly as the world's no. 1 in terms of market capitalisation at Rs. 3,375 crore. IndiGo Airlines, one of India's leading airlines, has demonstrated resilience and growth in the market despite challenges.

India-UAE to work on IME Economic Corridor protocols

- Notwithstanding the war in Gaza and its fall-out in Middle-East, **India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have begun work on the first stage of the pathbreaking India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC).** The IMEEC links India, UAE, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Israel with Europe and US through trade and merchandise exports with ports in Europe being the final destination.
- The IMEEC has full support of the Biden administration and is designed to integrate the markets of these countries. **The IMEEC will not only link India with Europe via the Middle-East but also increase the bilateral trade with UAE, which is currently pegged at USD 85 billion and growing by the day.**

CoinGames Builds World's First Fully Decentralized Gambling Platform

- **CoinGames, the first fully Licensed decentralized gambling platform, has launched and is offering users a safe, secure, and streamlined online casino service powered by the latest in blockchain and smart contract technology.**

- **The CoinGames web3 casino allows for instant withdrawals, access to daily promotions, and 24/7 live support for their 10,000+ offered games.** Through the implementation of these technologies, players are able to enjoy an easy-to-access platform that is built with optimization, transparency, and entertainment at its core. Coingames addresses the largest challenge facing the online casino industry, which is conversion rate.
- **As the only true Web3 casino, players do not need to deposit funds to play because the whole game session is handled through the smart contract, removing a major barrier to participation.** This innovative approach has led to a 380% improvement in conversion rates and a 200% increase in customer Lifetime Value (LTV).

India ranks number 10 in cybercrime, Russia tops list followed by Ukraine

- **India ranked number 10 in cybercrime**, with frauds involving people to make advance fee payment being the most common type, according to a new research that surveyed cybercrime experts around the world. An international team of researchers has compiled the 'World Cybercrime Index' that ranks roughly 100 countries and identifies key hotspots according to various categories of cybercrime, including ransomware, credit card theft and scams.
- **Russia topped the list, and was followed by Ukraine, China, the US, Nigeria and Romania.** North Korea was at the seventh position, while the UK and Brazil were at the eighth and ninth positions, respectively.

Moody's maintains stable outlook for India

- **Rating agency Moody's maintained outlook for the government of India to be stable. The long-term and short-term ratings of the government of India is pegged at Baa3 and P-3, respectively.** The stable outlook incorporates the likelihood that India's fiscal metrics will continue to gradually improve amid robust growth prospects compared with peers.
- **Maintaining stable outlook, Moody's noted India balances its large and diversified economy with high growth potential, a relatively sound external position, and a stable domestic financing base for government debt against high general government debt, weak debt affordability and low per capita income.**

A credit rating agency (CRA) assesses an entity's (group, company, government, etc.) creditworthiness in general terms or relating to particular debt or financial obligation. These agencies help lenders and investors determine the potential risk involved in lending money to a particular borrowing entity and gauge the entity's repayment ability based on its past credit behaviour. SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) authorizes and regulates all credit rating agencies in India as per SEBI Regulations, 1999 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. There are seven credit rating agencies in India including CRISIL, ICRA, CARE, India Ratings and Research Pvt Ltd, Acuite Ratings & Research, Brickwork Ratings India Pvt. Ltd. and Infomerics Valuation and Rating Pvt. Ltd. that are authorised by SEBI to assess credit ratings.

Govt asks all gas-based plants to be operational From May 1 to June 30

- **The Centre has directed all gas-based power generating stations to operationalise their plants from May 1 to June 30 in view of rise in electricity demand due to an early onset of the heat wave this summer.** As a consequence, gas-based units with **combined capacity of 25 gigawatt** are likely to be functional during May-June.
- **These units are grappling with high operational costs, and the operations could result in losses.** A Power Ministry statement was silent on whether tariff adjustments would be made for the units to avoid losses. Earlier, the Power Ministry had issued a similar fiat to imported coal based plants, asking them run at full capacity till October 15.
- **The weather department had warned of more-than-usual instances of heat waves and above-normal maximum temperature during the current summer.** While the demand for electricity has been rising at a fast pace in recent quarters, peak demand is expected to reach a record 250 GW in the summer months.

Delhi airport among world's top 10 busiest airports: ACI

- **Delhi airport has been named among the world's top 10 busiest airports for 2023 in a list topped by Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.** The Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital is ranked tenth while Dubai and Dallas airports are at the second and third positions, respectively, according to the Airports Council International (ACI) World.

- Releasing the list the ACI also said the **global total passenger forecast for 2023 stands close to 8.5 billion (850 crore), reflecting a remarkable recovery of 93.8 per cent from pre-pandemic levels and 27.2 per cent higher than 2022.**

Indian real estate market to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2034: Knight Frank

- **The Indian real estate market is expected to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2034, contributing 10.5% to economic output,** according to a joint study by Knight Frank India and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The report titled ‘Indian Real Estate: A Decade from Now’ has projected that the value of the Indian realty market would reach an estimated 1.5 trillion by 2034, constituting 10.5% of the total economic output of the country by then.

India’s First Metaverse Experience Center Launches in Noida

- **India is embarking on a revolutionary journey into the future of technology with the inauguration of its First Metaverse Experience Center in Noida.** This pioneering initiative marks a significant leap forward in India’s technological landscape, introducing the concept of the Immersive (XR) Technologies. **The Metaverse Experience Center aims to foster a vibrant community of seekers, creators and innovators.**
- **Situated in the bustling city of Noida, the Metaverse Experience Center (MEC), a visionary project spearheaded by Metaverse911 team, aims to redefine the way Industry leaders learn and explore XR technologies.** Equipped with Immersive (XR) technology, the Center offers visitors an immersive platform to delve into a multitude of virtual realms, from futuristic cities to Manufacturing floors. MEC plans to host Industry focussed workshops on a monthly basis.

Raja Infra bags 700 MWp solar project from Greenko

- **Amara Raja Infra Pvt. Ltd. (ARIPL) has secured a solar balance of system (BoS) project of 700 MWp from Greenko.** A part of Greenko’s integrated renewable energy project, the scope encompasses engineering, procurement and construction of the entire BoS for the solar component spanning across a 2,200-acre site near Uyyalavada Town in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

World’s Best Airports: Singapore’s Changi airport loses the crown to a new king; just 5 Indian airports in top 100 airports list

- **Doha’s Hamad International Airport has dethroned Singapore’s Changi Airport, which had won the Skytrax World Airport Awards for the 12th year in 2023.** Seoul Incheon Airport secured third place and is named the most family-friendly airport. Dubai Airport and Hong Kong Airport saw significant improvements in their rankings. Just 5 Indian airports made it to the list of world’s best 100 airports.
- **Hamad International Airport, the main airport for the city of Doha, is said to be about a third of the size of Qatar’s capital city.** It is spread over 600,000 square metre that is equal to 75 football fields. While Hamad International Airport secured the second rank last year, it was described as the most architecturally significant terminal complex in the world and also the most luxurious one at that. **Seoul Incheon Airport secured third place in the rankings. It was also named the most family-friendly airport of 2024.** Tokyo’s Haneda and Narita airports came in fourth and fifth place.

NSE set to launch derivative contracts on Nifty Next 50

- **The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is set to introduce derivative contracts on the Nifty Next 50 index.** This came following an approval received from markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). **The Nifty Next 50 index represents 50 companies from Nifty 100 after excluding the Nifty 50 companies.**
- Under the derivative contract, the exchange would offer three serial monthly index futures and index options contract cycles. The introduction of derivatives on the Nifty Next 50 index would complement the existing index derivatives product suite. **The Nifty Next 50 index would represent the space between the Nifty 50 index comprising the top large & liquid stocks and the Nifty Midcap Select index comprising the top large & liquid mid-capitalised stocks.**

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is the leading stock exchange in India located in Mumbai and the fourth largest in the world by equity trading volume in 2015, according to World Federation of Exchanges (WFE). It began operations in 1994 and is ranked as the largest stock exchange in India in terms of total and average daily turnover for equity shares every year since 1995, based on annual reports of SEBI. NSE launched electronic screen-based trading in 1994, derivatives trading (in the form of index futures) and internet trading in 2000, which were each the first of its kind in India. Ashishkumar Chauhan is the current managing director and chief executive officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Groww gets Sebi nod for India's first Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund

- Financial services firm Groww has got Sebi approval to launch Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund through new fund offering (NFO). This will be India's first non-cyclical index fund and will be launched by Groww Mutual Fund, Groww's AMC business. It will be an open-ended scheme tracking the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index–TRI. The scheme will be benchmarked against the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index (Total Return Index).
- The investment goal of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund is to generate long-term capital growth by investing in securities of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index (TRI) in the same proportion/weightage to offer returns before expenses that track the total return of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index, subject to tracking errors.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is the regulatory body for securities and commodity market in India under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It was established on 12 April 1988 and given Statutory Powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992. SEBI has its headquarters at the business district of Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai. Madhabi Puri Buch is the current chairman of SEBI.

India's first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project inaugurated

- India's first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project at 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Himachal's Jhakri was inaugurated. SJVN Chairman and Managing Director Geeta Kapur inaugurated a 20 Nm³/hr electrolyzer and 25 kW fuel cell capacity-based green hydrogen pilot project.
- The project is the nation's first multi-purpose (combined heat and power) green hydrogen generation plant with the capability to cater to the high-velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) coating facility of NJHPS to meet its combustion fuel requirements, in addition to generating electricity through its 25 kW capacity fuel cell.
- It will produce hydrogen gas by splitting hydrogen and oxygen from water with the help of an alkaline electrolyzer of 20 Nm³/hr capacity by utilising renewable energy supplied from the 1.31 MW solar power plant of SJVN located in Wadhwal, Himachal Pradesh.

Banks in News

SFBs should be worth Rs. 1,000 cr to become universal banks, says RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said small finance banks (SFBs) should have a minimum net worth of Rs. 1,000 crore to become universal banks in accordance with the on-tap licensing norms. SFBs aspiring to become a universal bank need to have scheduled status with a satisfactory track record of performance for a minimum period of five years. Also, the shares of the bank should have been listed on a recognised stock exchange. Further, these SFBs also need to have a net profit in the last two financial years besides having gross non-performing assets (GNPA) and net non-performing assets (NNPA) of less than or equal to three per cent and one per cent, respectively in the last two financial years.

SFBs are specialized banks that are licensed by RBI to provide financial services and products to low-income individuals and underserved communities, including microfinance and micro-enterprise services, as well as other basic banking services. SFBs are granted the scheduled bank status after being operational and are deemed suitable under section 42 of the RBI Act, 1934. To provide financial inclusion to these segments of the population who are often excluded from the traditional banking system. SFBs help them to have access to financial products such as small loans, savings, insurance, and other basic banking services. Resident individuals/professionals (Indian citizens), singly or jointly, each having at least 10 years of experience in banking and finance at a senior level are eligible for SFBs. Companies and Societies in the private sector, that is owned and controlled by residents and having successful track record of running their businesses for at least a period of five years. Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio: They are required to maintain a minimum CRAR of 15%. Priority Sector Lending: They are required to extend 75% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit to Priority Sector Lending. SFBs are required to open at least 25% of their total branches in unbanked rural areas. Required paid up capital: The minimum paid-up voting equity capital for small finance banks shall be Rs. 200 crore.

RBI deputy governor T Rabi Sankar's term extended for one year

- The government has extended the term of RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar for a period of one year. He was appointed as the RBI Deputy Governor in May, 2021 for a period of three years. He had joined the RBI in 1990 and worked in various positions at the central bank.

The deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India is the second most senior executive of the Reserve Bank of India after its governor. The term of office typically runs for three years and can, in some cases, be extended for another two years. The inaugural officeholder was James Braid Taylor, while K J Udeshi holds the unique distinction of becoming the first female deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Currently there are four incumbent deputy governors of the Reserve Bank of India.

RBI releases draft guidelines for web aggregators of loan products

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a draft guideline for development of a regulatory framework for electronic platforms that enable borrowers to compare loan options by multiple lenders. As per the draft circular released by the RBI the new regulation would strive to bring transparency in aggregation of loan products from multiple lenders. The central bank has invited comments and feedback from public and other stakeholders on draft regulation by May 31.
- The draft regulation is based on the recommendation of a working group on digital lending chaired by RBI's executive director Jayant Kumar Dash. Web-aggregators of loan products entail aggregation of loan offers from multiple lenders on an electronic platform which enables the borrowers to compare and choose the best available option to avail loan from one of the available lenders.

RBI defers exchange traded currency derivatives norms

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deferred the implementation of its new norms for exchange traded currency derivatives (ETCD) market to May 3 from April 5. This comes after market participants raised concerns over participation in the ETCD market and the run up to the April 5 deadline saw a sharp rise in volatility in the forex market.

- The RBI released a new framework for hedging of foreign exchange risks, which was to be implemented from April 5, 2024. The new norm allowed users to take positions (long or short) in foreign exchange derivatives market, without having to establish existence of underlying exposure, up to a single limit of \$100 million equivalent across all currency pairs involving the rupee, put together, and combined across all recognised stock exchanges.
- The RBI said the regulatory framework for participation in ETCDs involving the rupee (INR) is guided by the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 and regulations framed thereunder which mandate that currency derivative contracts involving the rupee — both over-the-counter (OTC) and exchange traded — are permitted only for the purpose of hedging of exposure to foreign exchange rate risks.

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled “The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution” and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton–Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi’s return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shaktikanta Das is the current Governor of RBI.

Around 50 Lakh Users In The Country Are Using Central Bank Digital Currency, Says RBI

- Reserve Bank of India has said that currently around 50 lakh users in the country are using Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). Out of which 46 lakh are retail customers while 4 lakh are Merchants. On Cumulative basis 2.2 crore transactions have been completed on CBDC. Under which a certain amount in the form of CBDC has been transferred to a farmer who can use it only for the purchasing of agriculture related products.

ADB Announces ASEAN Climate Finance Policy Platform to Spearhead Regional Climate Action

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is set to establish a pioneering ASEAN Climate Finance Policy Platform aimed at bolstering the fight against climate change in Southeast Asia. Announced by ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa, the initiative seeks to empower finance ministry leaders within the ASEAN region to enhance collective climate action efforts.
- Designed to foster cooperation and knowledge exchange among finance ministries, the platform aims to facilitate the sharing of experiences, enhancement of capacities, and development of evidence-based policy measures against the backdrop of climate adversity. The initiative will benefit from technical support provided by the ADB.
- Through this endeavor, the ADB reiterates its commitment to fostering a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia-Pacific region, while continuing its longstanding mission to eliminate extreme poverty. The bank, established in 1966 and comprising 68 members, with 49 from within the region, continues to be at the forefront of addressing the pressing challenges facing Asia and the Pacific.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. The bank also maintains 31 field offices around the world to promote social and economic development in Asia. The bank admits the members of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, formerly the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East or ECAFE) and non-regional developed countries. From 31 members at its establishment, ADB now has 68 members. The ADB was modeled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members’ capital subscriptions. As of 31 December 2020, Japan and the United States each holds the largest proportion of shares at 15.571%. China holds 6.429%, India holds 6.317%, and Australia holds 5.773%. The current president of ADB is Masatsugu Asakawa.

World Bank projects Indian economy to grow at 7.5% in 2024

- The Indian economy is projected to grow at 7.5 per cent in 2024, the World Bank has said, revising its earlier projections for the same period by 1.2 per cent. Overall, growth in South Asia is expected to be strong at 6.0 per cent in 2024, driven mainly by robust growth in India and recoveries in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the World Bank said in its latest South Asia Development Update.

R Games, world's first AI and gaming token is set to launch on Top Exchanges

- R Games is marking a significant milestone in the gaming world with the launch of its RGAME token. This major step for R Games will launch on platforms like DAOMaker, Poolz Finance, Finceptor, and Paragen, followed by listings on top exchanges such as Gate.io, MEXC Global, PancakeSwap, Raydium, and BingX.
- R Games is a highly tailored platform offering a diverse range of gaming modes, aimed at creating the largest blockchain-based racing ecosystem. R Games team comes from a successful studio venture Gyros Studios LCC Formerly Known as Fabwelt Studios LLC built numerous successful Blockchain Games.

Rakesh Mohan on the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel

- President Emeritus and Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), Rakesh Mohan has been appointed by the World Bank Group to serve on the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel.
- Ajay Banga, World Bank President invited Rakesh Mohan to join the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel. The panel will support the World Bank Group by focusing on the strategic issues for the Group, regarding their objectives, research agenda and actions.

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The World Bank Group comprises five institutions managed by their member countries. It was established in 1944, the World Bank Group is headquartered in Washington, Ajay Banga is an Indian-born American business executive. He is currently the President of the World Bank Group, and vice chairman at General Atlantic. He was executive chairman of Mastercard, after having previously served as president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the company from July 2010 until December 31, 2020. Together, IBRD and IDA form the World Bank, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries. The International Development Association (IDA) is a multinational financial institution providing aid to poor countries in the form of loans. It is also referred to as soft loan window of the World Bank. IBRD and IDA have 189 and 174 member countries, respectively. The U.S., Japan, China, Germany and the U.K. have the most voting power.

NBFCs' co-lending book set to touch Rs. 1 lakh crore'

- Five years after the launch, the co-lending book of non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) is expected to reach Rs. one lakh crore by June 2024 in the wake of interest from partner banks and the benefit of access to funding and diversification, according to CRISIL Ratings.
- Over the medium term, growth momentum is seen healthy at 35-40 per cent annually, amidst rising interests of partners – NBFCs as well as banks, it said. The partners, however, may increase their focus on other asset classes such as loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and home loans given higher risk weights for personal loans.
- Crisil said a study of 100 NBFCs, accounting for over 90 per cent of the sector's AUM, indicates these trends. Interestingly, only about a third of these have active co-lending books at present

NBFC is a company incorporated as per the Companies Act, 2013, or any other previous act. NBFC is governed by both the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the RBI. Though NBFC provides financial services, it is different from Banks in many ways. It cannot accept public deposits by allowing people to open savings/current accounts with it. However, NBFCs can receive deposits under any arrangement or scheme in one lump sum or regular contributions or some similar method. An NBFC, also, cannot issue cheques and drafts, drawn on itself. NBFCs

provide credit and loans at the micro-level. That is mainly to small, medium scale enterprises, to help them overcome their liquidity cash insufficiency. Through its Personalized Customer Services, Implementation of Advance technology, and Customized Loan Product, NBFC helps in providing finance to the economically weaker section of the society.

Sanjay Shukla appointed as Managing Director of National Housing Bank

- **Sanjay Shukla will be the Managing Director (MD) of the National Housing Bank (NHB).** The decision comes after an evaluation process conducted by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau, which scrutinised 16 candidates for the post.
- **NHB intends to garner up to Rs. 3,000 crore through bonds with a unique maturity period of three years, two months, and twenty days. The bonds, with a base issue size of Rs.1,000 crore and a greenshoe option of Rs. 2,000 crore, are set to undergo bidding, facilitated by the electronic bidding platform of the National Stock Exchange of India.**

National Housing Bank (NHB) is the apex regulatory body for overall regulation and licensing of housing finance companies in India. It is under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It was set up on 9 July 1988 under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987. NHB is the apex financial institution for housing. NHB has been established with an objective to operate as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and to provide financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith. The Finance Act, 2019 has amended the National Housing Bank Act, 1987. The amendment confers the powers of regulation of Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) to the Reserve Bank of India.

Pakistan has highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25% inflation rate: ADB

- **Pakistan has the highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25 per cent inflation rate and its economy may grow at the fourth lowest pace of 1.9 per cent in the region,** according to a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report. The Asian Development Outlook also painted a gloomy picture for the next fiscal year as well, projecting a 15 per cent inflation rate for the next fiscal year — **again the highest among 46 countries and a 2.8 per cent growth rate — the fifth lowest for FY 2024-25.**
- **The Manila-based lending agency stated that the inflation rate in Pakistan is expected to be 25 per cent in the current fiscal year — the highest in all of Asia.** This makes Pakistan the most expensive nation in Asia. Earlier, the cost of living in Pakistan used to be the highest in South Asia.

HDFC first private bank to open branch in Lakshadweep

- **HDFC Bank has recently established a branch in Kavaratti Island in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. This has made HDFC the only private sector bank with a branch in the region.** HDFC bank aims to upgrade the banking infrastructure in the UT by offering a wide range of services, with a focus on personal and digital banking. With the opening of a branch in Lakshadweep, HDFC Bank has now established its branches in all corners of the country. HDFC Bank has established branches in the cold regions of Kashmir, the southern tip of Kanyakumari and now in Lakshadweep. All these are known as major tourist destinations.

HDFC Bank Limited (also known as HDB) is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai. HDFC Bank was incorporated in 1994 as a subsidiary of the Housing Development Finance Corporation, with its registered office in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. It is India's largest private sector bank by assets and world's 4th largest bank by market capitalisation as of July 2023 after its reverse takeover of its parent HDFC. It is the second largest company by market capitalisation of \$172 billion on the Indian stock exchanges. It is also the sixteenth largest employer in India with nearly 1.77 lakh employees. Atanu Chakraborty is currently the Chairperson of HDFC Bank, India's largest lender by market capitalization. Sashidhar Jagdishan is the current MD and CEO of HDFC Bank.

Firms in News

ONGC plans June drilling for India's first geothermal project in Ladakh

- **Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) is planning to mount a fresh drilling campaign in June for India's first geothermal project** after suffering a setback two years ago. If successful, the project could open a source for emission-free electricity, space heating, and irrigation in the cold and harsh terrains of Ladakh.

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is an Indian central public sector undertaking under the ownership of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. It is headquartered in Dehradun. ONGC was founded on 14 August 1956 by the Government of India. It is the largest government-owned-oil and gas explorer and producer in the country, and produces around 70% of India's crude oil (equivalent to around 57% of the country's total demand) and around 84% of its natural gas. In November 2010, the Government of India conferred the Maharatna status to ONGC.

Satya Nadella pulls off \$1.5 bn, OpenAI-type deal with G42 to cement Microsoft's AI lead

- **Nadella has gone ahead and pulled off another amazing deal** and this one he managed despite the humongous hurdles it had presented. He has signed a \$1.5 bn deal with Abu Dhabi-based firm G42, which has been linked to OpenAI and its chip-making plans.
- **The problem was the company's close ties with China and some companies there including the much-proscribed Huawei.** So, it can be imagined how tough the going must have been when he must have broached the subject with the US administration.

Satya Narayana Nadella is an Indian-American business executive. He is the executive chairman and CEO of Microsoft, succeeding Steve Ballmer in 2014 as CEO and John W. Thompson in 2021 as chairman. Before becoming CEO, he was the executive vice president of Microsoft's cloud and enterprise group, responsible for building and running the company's computing platforms.

RIL becomes first Indian company to cross Rs. 1 lakh crore pre-tax profit threshold

- **Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became the first Indian company to cross the Rs. 1 lakh crore mark in annual pre-tax profit.** Net profit for the fiscal year rose by 7 percent to Rs. 79,020 crore from a year earlier. Further, the company reported a record annual consolidated revenue of over Rs. 10 lakh crore, driven by continued growth momentum in consumer businesses and upstream business. EBITDA rose 16.1 percent to Rs. 1.79 lakh crore in the year ended March 31.

Reliance Industries Limited is an Indian multinational conglomerate company, headquartered in Mumbai. It has diverse businesses including energy, petrochemicals, natural gas, retail, telecommunications, mass media, and textiles. Reliance is one of the most profitable companies in India, the largest publicly traded company in India by market capitalisation, and the largest company in India as measured by revenue. RIL has a market capitalisation of US\$243 billion as of March 31, 2022. The company was co-founded by Dhirubhai Ambani and Champaklal Damani in 1960's as Reliance Commercial Corporation. Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani is an Indian business magnate and chairman, managing director, and the largest shareholder of RIL.

BharatPe launches all-in-one payment device BharatPe One

- **Indian fintech major BharatPe launched BharatPe One, an all-in-one payment product that integrates POS (point of sale), QR code, and speaker into one device.** The company in a statement said it plans to launch the product in about 100 cities in the first phase. It will further scale it to around 450 cities over the course of the next 6 months. "Equipped with a high-definition touchscreen display, 4G and Wi-Fi connectivity, and powered by the latest Android operating system, BharatPe One delivers enhanced performance and security. **BharatPe One is designed to streamline transactions for merchants, offering versatile payment acceptance options including dynamic and static QR code, tap-and-pay and traditional card payment options, across a wide range of debit and credit cards.**

National Fertilizers Gets Navratna Status

- **National Fertilizers Ltd made a significant announcement, revealing that it has achieved “Navratna” status**, as granted by the Department of Public Enterprise. This designation is reserved for top-performing Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and grants them enhanced autonomy and financial powers.
- The granting of this status underscores the company’s outstanding performance and its contribution to the national economy. Despite this notable achievement, **National Fertilizers Ltd reported a substantial 73% drop in its consolidated net profit amounting to ₹150.9 crore. Additionally, the company witnessed a significant decline in revenue, which fell by 25.2% year-on-year to ₹7,581 crore** during the same period. These financial results indicate some challenges faced by the company amidst market conditions and operational factors.

Navratna status is a recognition given by the Indian government to select public sector enterprises (PSEs) that have financial and operational autonomy. The grant of Navratna status to RVNL provides it with more operational freedom, financial autonomy, and enhanced delegation of powers. **This status enables PSEs to invest up to Rs. 1000 crore without any approval from the central government, giving them more flexibility in decision making, personnel management, and joint ventures.** The CPSEs which are Miniratna I, Schedule ‘A’ and have obtained ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ MOU rating in three of the last five years and having composite score of 60 or above in following six selected performance indicators are eligible to be considered for grant of Navratna status.

Power Grid Corporation board approves plan to raise Rs. 12,000 crore via bonds

- **State-owned Power Grid Corporation of India board on approved a proposal to rise up to Rs. 12,000 crore through the issuance of bonds in one or more tranches in 2024-25.** Committee of Directors for Bonds in their meeting has approved the raising of Bonds as Unsecured, Non-convertible, Non-cumulative, Redeemable, Taxable Powergrid Bonds Issue(s) during FY 2024-25 in one or more tranches/series up to Rs. 12,000 crore. Power Grid Corporation is the country’s largest electric power transmission utility.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited is an Indian central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Power, Government of India. It is engaged mainly in transmission of bulk power across different states of India. It is headquartered in Gurugram. **Power Grid transmits about 50% of the total power generated in India on its transmission network.** It was conferred with the status of “Navratna” by the Government of India in May 2008 and “Maharatna” status in October 2019.

Reliance tops India Involved Ranking 2023

- **Reliance Industries has topped the India Involved Ranking 2023 that measures how India Inc is committed to Vikasit Bharat.** The ranking and the index has been put together by Skoch, a leading Indian think-tank dealing with socio-economic issues and focusing on inclusive growth, after a six month-long study, analyzing a number of companies across 231 indicators to rank the top-20 corporates on comprehensive ‘India Involved Ranking’.
- **It is followed by Hindustan Unilever and Adani Group. Jio Platforms Limited topped the ‘India Involved Ranking in Digital Transformation’.** It is followed by Lupin and Heritage Foods. Hindustan Unilever topped India Involved Ranking in ESG, followed by Adani Group and Britannia. Bank of India topped India Involved Ranking in Corporate Excellence, followed by HDFC Life Insurance and Aditya Birla Health Insurance.

Azim Premji’s PremjiInvest bets on AI to prop \$10 billion fund

- **Premji Invest, the largest Indian family office that manages over \$10 billion for software tycoon Azim Premji, will invest more money into artificial intelligence companies while fine-tuning its proprietary AI investment tools.** Investment firms worldwide, including BlackRock Inc. and SoftBank Group Corp, are relying on AI to analyze data streams in real-time to glean market intelligence and are looking to invest further in the sector.

Zomato Introduces India’s First “Large Order Fleet” For Group Catering

- **Zomato announced the launch of a “large fleet order”, a first in India.** The new fleet will handle group or party events for a gathering of up to 50 people. The feature will have “an all electric fleet.” This is an all electric fleet, designed specifically to serve orders for a gathering of upto 50 people.” Zomato announced the launch of the “Pure Veg Mode” service for customers who have a 100 per cent vegetarian dietary preference.

Zomato is an Indian multinational restaurant aggregator and food delivery company. It was founded by Deepinder Goyal and Pankaj Chaddah in 2008. Zomato provides information, menus and user-reviews of restaurants as well as food delivery options from partner restaurants.

NPCI arm, SBI introduce NCMC recharge on Bharat BillPay

- NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), in association with State Bank of India (SBI), has onboarded SBI National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) on its Bharat BillPay platform for the convenience of travellers.
- The category is already live with SBI NCMC cards for Noida Metro, Nagpur Metro, MMRDA Line 2A & 7, Chennai Metro, Kanpur Metro, and Parliament Canteen via the bank's Bharat BillPay-enabled application, SBI Unipay, and more platforms will go live with the service soon.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. Founded in 2008, the NPCI is a not-for-profit organisation registered under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013, established by Reserve Bank of India & IBA. It is headquartered in Mumbai.

Vi to raise Rs. 18,000 cr via India's largest ever FPO

- Vodafone Idea, which has been struggling financially for a long time and trying to raise funds to stay afloat, it plans to raise up to `18,000 crore through share sale in India's biggest follow-on public offer till date. The company's shares will be issued, under the FPO, in a price band of Rs. 10-11 apiece against closing price of Rs. 12.96 on the BSE.
- The higher end of the price band of Rs. 11, is at a discount of 26% compared to recently approved preferential issue price to the promoter entity at Rs. 14.87. Vodafone Idea, which is the country's third-largest telecom service provider, said in a stock exchange filing.

Vi or Vodafone Idea Limited is an Indian telecom operator with its headquarters based in Mumbai and Gandhinagar. It is a pan-India integrated GSM operator offering 2G, 3G, 4G, 4G+, VoLTE, and VoWiFi services. As of 31 October 2021, Vi has a subscriber base of 269.03 million, making it third largest mobile telecommunications network in India and 10th largest mobile telecommunications network in the world. Ravinder Takkar, Ex-CEO of Vodafone Romania is the current CEO of the company. On 7 September 2020, Vodafone Idea unveiled its new brand identity, 'Vi' which involves the integration of the company's erstwhile separate brands 'Vodafone' and 'Idea' into one unified brand. Vodafone Idea reappoints Kumar Mangalam Birla non-executive director.

NTPC launches new edition of Girl Empowerment Mission

- NTPC Limited, India's largest integrated power company, is gearing up to launch the latest edition of Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. The program aligns with the Government of India's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative and aims to tackle gender inequality by nurturing girls' imaginations and fostering their ability to explore opportunities.
- GEM does this through a 1-month workshop for young girls during summer holidays, by offering them a platform for their all-round upliftment and development. Starting from April 2024, the new edition of GEM will add nearly 3,000 meritorious children belonging to underprivileged sections of the society at 42 identified locations of the power sector PSU. With this, the total number of children benefiting from the Mission will cross 10,000.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian public sector undertaking which is engaged in generation of electricity and allied activities. The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi. NTPC's core function is the generation and distribution of electricity to State Electricity Boards in India. The body also undertakes consultancy and turnkey project contracts that involve engineering, project management, construction management, and operation and management of power plants. In May 2010, NTPC was conferred Maharatna status, one of only four companies to be awarded this status.

Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port gets ministry nod to run India's first transshipment operations

- **The Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port has received the shipping ministry's approval for operating as India's first transshipment port.** The recommendation for declaring it a customs-notified port was made, according to people aware of the details.
- Current regulations require the shipping ministry's nod to prevent competing projects from being permitted before capacity at operational ports is saturated. **"This approval paves the way for customs to set up an office at Vizhinjam port. It will be India's first full-fledged deepwater transshipment port.**

Number of unicorns in India declines for first time in four years

- **The number of unicorns -- companies worth over \$1 billion -- in the country has declined for the first time in four years to 67.** The country, however, maintained the tag of being the third biggest hub for unicorns across the world, according to the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024.
- Food delivery platform Swiggy and fantasy sports-focused Dream11 are the most valuable unicorns from India valued at \$8 billion each, and are followed by Razorpay at \$7.5 billion. **The unicorn list was led by 2012-founded Bytedance, owner of Tiktok, with a valuation of \$220 billion, and was followed by billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX at \$180 billion and Microsoft-backed OpenAI worth \$100 billion.**

In business, a unicorn is a privately held startup company valued at over \$1 billion. The term was first popularised in 2013 by venture capitalist Aileen Lee, choosing the mythical animal to represent the statistical rarity of such successful ventures. According to CB Insights, there are more than 803 unicorns as of August 2021. **The largest unicorns included ByteDance, SpaceX and Stripe.**

Sanjay Nayar takes over as Assocham president

- **Sorin Investment Fund Chairman Sanjay Nayar has taken over as Assocham president for 2024-25.** He succeeds SpiceJet Chairman and managing director Ajay Singh, who completed his tenure as the chamber's president.

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in New Delhi, India. The organisation represents the interests of trade and commerce in India, and acts as an interface between issues and initiatives. The goal of this organisation is to promote both domestic and international trade, and reduce trade barriers while fostering conducive environment for the growth of trade and industry of India. **ASSOCHAM was established in 1920 by a group of chambers of commerce led by the Calcutta Traders Association. The Association's head office is located in New Delhi.**

India's richest women: Savitri Jindal tops Forbes' list with \$35.5 billion net worth

- **India's business landscape is witnessing a remarkable shift as women entrepreneurs and business leaders rise to prominence.** Among them, Savitri Jindal shines as one of the richest Indian women, with a staggering net worth of \$35.5 billion. Her success story exemplifies not just personal achievement but also a broader trend of women's empowerment in India's business world. Alongside Savitri Jindal, other Indian women are making significant strides in the business world.
- **Rekha Jhunjhunwala, widow of India's Warren Buffett Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, inherited a valuable stock portfolio from her husband, known for his investment acumen. Vinod Rai Gupta has found success through her holdings in Havells India, a leading company known for its electrical and home appliances.**
- **Renuka Jagtiani is the chairperson and CEO of the Landmark Group, a multinational consumer conglomerate in Dubai.** Smita Crishna-Godrej of the Godrej family holds a significant stake in the family's assets, controlling the Godrej Group, a consumer-goods conglomerate.

NSE to introduce 4 new indices in capital, F&O segments

- **The National Stock Exchange (NSE) of India will launch four new indices in the cash and futures and options segments.** The exchange has proposed online dissemination of indices namely, Nifty Tata Group 25% Cap, Nifty500 Multicap India Manufacturing 50:30:20, Nifty500 Multicap Infrastructure 50:30:20, and Nifty MidSmall Healthcare, according to a circular issued by NSE earlier.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is the leading stock exchange in India located in Mumbai and the fourth largest in the world by equity trading volume in 2015, according to World Federation of Exchanges (WFE). It began operations in 1994 and is ranked as the largest stock exchange in India in terms of total and average daily turnover for equity shares every year since 1995, based on annual reports of SEBI. NSE launched electronic screen-based trading in 1994, derivatives trading (in the form of index futures) and internet trading in 2000, which were each the first of its kind in India. Ashishkumar Chauhan is the current managing director and chief executive officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Adani Green Energy becomes India's 1st 'das hazari' in renewables sector with over 10,000 MW portfolio

- **Adani Green Energy Ltd. has commissioned 2,000 MW of solar capacity at the giant Khavda solar park in Gujarat that has made it the first company in India with over 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity.** The company now has an operating portfolio of 10,934 MW, largest in India. It has brought 2,848 MW renewable capacity on stream in FY24. AGEL's operational portfolio consists of 7,393 MW solar, 1,401 MW wind and 2,140 MW wind-solar hybrid capacities.

Gautam Shantilal Adani is an Indian billionaire industrialist. He is the chairman and founder of Adani Group, an Ahmedabad-based multinational conglomerate involved in port development and operations in India. Adani is also the president of Adani Foundation, which is primarily led by his wife, Priti Adani. As of 7 September 2022, according to Forbes, with a net worth of US\$148.4 billion, he is the richest person in India and Asia, and the fourth richest person in the world. In November 2022, it reached \$280 billion (INR 24 trillion) surpassing Tata Group. Adani subsequently lost more than \$104 billion of market capitalization after fraud and market manipulation allegations by short-seller firm Hindenburg Research.

Shashwat Goenka to join World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders Class of 2024

- **The vice chairman of Kolkata-based RPSG Group Shashwat Goenka is joining the 2024 Class of Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum.** RPSG Group owns power utility CESC and Spencer's Retail amongst other businesses. Other class members from India Inc for this year include FSN E-Commerce Ventures (NYKAA) CEO Adwaita Nayar, Jubilant Group director Arjun Bhartia and Vedanta Limited non-executive director Priya Agarwal Hebbbar. There are Indian members in other fields such as social entrepreneur and acting. The class of 2024 includes a group of nearly 90 changemakers across nations.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international non-governmental and lobbying organisation based in Cologne, canton of Geneva, Switzerland. It was founded on 24 January 1971 by German engineer and economist Klaus Schwab. The foundation, which is mostly funded by its 1,000 member companies – typically global enterprises with more than five billion US dollars in turnover – as well as public subsidies, views its own mission as “improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas”. The WEF is mostly known for its annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, a mountain resort in the eastern Alps region of Switzerland.

NTPC inks pact with RINL for supply of limestone

- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between NTPC Limited and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), for the supply of 9 lakh metric tonnes of limestone (lime chips, a by-product of the RINL, for the NTPC units across the country for five years.**
- **Limestone is a raw material for the flue-gas desulphurisation system which is being installed at the coal-based thermal plants of the NTPC for reduction of sulphur dioxide emission. This MoU will cater to the needs of various plants of the NTPC.**

REC wins SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in Renewable Energy Financing Category

- **REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been bestowed with the SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in the 'Renewable Energy Financing' category.** The award underscores REC's dedication to sustainable financing, paving the way for a greener future and accelerating the transition to renewable energy.

- **REC has emerged as a significant player in India’s clean energy transition**, actively contributing to the nation’s sustainable future. Through various initiatives and achievements, REC has committed to numerous sustainable projects and signed various MOUs for green projects. Furthermore, REC has engaged in one-on-one discussions with various developers of green projects, spanning sectors such as solar, wind, Pumped Storage Projects, E-mobility, RE manufacturing, green ammonia and green hydrogen, and battery storage.
- Looking ahead, REC anticipates a significant expansion in its renewable energy portfolio, with projections indicating growth to **10 times its present value, reaching more than Rs. 3 lakh crores by 2030, representing approximately 30% of its Assets Under Management.**
- **The SKOCH ESG Awards recognize organizations that demonstrate outstanding performance in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. The SKOCH ESG Award and Assessment serve as an important benchmark for evaluating organizations’ commitment to India 2047.** It focuses on the interplay between sustainable investments and processes in shaping a sustainable and growing business future.

Thomas Cook launches eco-friendly forex corporate card

- **India is now a US \$30 billion business travel market and is expected to triple by 2030 (KPMG).** Thomas Cook’s forex prepaid card data reiterates that the corporate/business traveller is its fastest-growing segment with over 50% share.
- In a strategy to rapidly grow its market share while supporting corporates in reducing their carbon footprint, **Thomas Cook (India) Limited, India’s leading omnichannel forex services company, has launched EnterpriseFx – a pioneering, environment-friendly prepaid forex corporate card.** In partnership with Visa and Mastercard, the innovative product has been thoughtfully designed, offering a range of premium benefits to empower business travellers across India Inc., multinationals, and SMEs.

Forbes world’s billionaires

- **Forbes released its annual list of the world’s billionaires which showed 141 more billionaires in the world than last year, with 2,781 in total.** The combined worth of all billionaires is \$14.2 trillion which is up by \$2 trillion in 2023. There are also 26 new billionaires on the list and their combined net worth up by \$1.1 trillion.
- **Bernard Arnault and his family are at number one with a net worth of \$233 billion. Bernard Arnault is head of LVMH and is followed by Elon Musk with a net worth of \$195 billion.** Coming in at No. 3 is Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who has a net worth of \$195 billion followed by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who is worth \$177 billion.

Forbes Richest List 2024

- In a recent update from Forbes, **Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries, has secured the top spot as the wealthiest individual in both Asia and India.** According to the latest ‘2024 list of Billionaires’ by Forbes, Ambani’s wealth has skyrocketed to \$116 billion from \$83 billion, placing him as the sole Asian member of the prestigious \$100 billion club.
- **Forbes’ report also highlights a significant increase in the number of Indian billionaires featured this year, with a total of 200 individuals making the list, up from 169 the previous year.** The combined wealth of these Indian billionaires surged to \$954 billion, marking a notable 41 percent increase from the previous year’s total of \$675 billion. Following Ambani, Gautam Adani secures the second position as the wealthiest Indian, with an impressive net worth of \$84 billion. His wealth saw a remarkable boost of \$36.8 billion, propelling him to the 17th spot on the global billionaire list. Savitri Jindal, recognized as India’s wealthiest woman, maintains her prominent position and has ascended to become India’s fourth-richest individual, with a net worth of \$33.5 billion.

Forbes is an American business magazine owned by Integrated Whale Media Investments and the Forbes family. Published eight times a year, it features articles on finance, industry, investing, and marketing topics. Forbes also reports on related subjects such as technology, communications, science, politics, and law. **Its headquarters is located in Jersey City, New Jersey. Primary competitors in the national business magazine category include Fortune and Bloomberg BusinessWeek.** The magazine is well known for its lists and rankings, including of the richest Americans (the Forbes 400), of the America’s Wealthiest Celebrities, of the world’s top companies (the Forbes Global 2000), Forbes list of The World’s Most Powerful People, and The World’s

Billionaires. The motto of Forbes magazine is “Change the World”. Its chair and editor-in-chief is Steve Forbes, and its CEO is Mike Federle.

Tata Steel becomes First-in-India to integrate transgender employees in mine

- In celebration of International Transgender Day of Visibility, Tata Steel’s West Bokaro Division welcomed a new group of 14 transgender employees as Heavy Earth Moving Machinery (HEMM) Operator Trainees during a ceremony at West Bokaro.
- This onboarding initiative marks a significant step in the Company’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) journey, increasing the Company’s total transgender workforce to 120, according to a media statement. For decades, Tata Steel has championed diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.
- The Company’s DE&I initiatives focus on creating a welcoming, respectful, and supportive environment for all employees regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other factor. This is reflected in various programmes and policies, including unconscious bias training, employee resource groups, and inclusive benefits packages.

Tata Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate headquartered in Mumbai. Founded in 1868 by Jamshedji Tata, the group gained international recognition after purchasing several global companies. It is one of the biggest and oldest industrial groups in India. Each Tata company operates independently under the guidance and supervision of its own board of directors and shareholders. **In 1991, Ratan Tata became chairman of Tata Group. This was also the year of economic liberalization in India,** opening up the market to foreign competitors. **Natarajan Chandrasekaran became the first non-Parsi and professional executive to head the Tata Group. Significant Tata affiliates include Air India, Tata Chemicals, Tata Communications, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Consumer Products, Tata Elxsi, Tata Motors, Tata Power, Tata Steel, Jamshedpur FC, Tanishq, Voltas, Tata Cliq, Tata Projects Limited, Tata Capital, Titan, Trent, Indian Hotels Company Limited, TajAir, Cromā, and Tata Starbucks, etc.**

OpenAI hires first India-based official Pragya Misra

- **OpenAI has hired Pragya Misra, its first official in India,** in order to handle government relations, reported Bloomberg. Bloomberg reported that she would serve as the government relations head and is slated to begin her duties towards the end of April.

CIFDAQ launches innovative blockchain ecosystem in India

- **CIFDAQ, a new-age fintech company that offers integrated solutions spanning the blockchain layer 1, native coin, exchange services, MPC Wallet, DeFi, NFT, gaming, and other products, has launched its India operations. The fintech firm is headquartered in Mumbai and has offices in Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata.** CIFDAQ prioritises transparency, security, scalability and synergy with centralised economies. It aims to empower businesses and individuals with enhanced security and efficiency, driving growth and innovation across various sectors.

Meta to set up its first data center in India at Reliance Industries campus in Chennai

- **Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is reportedly setting up its first data center in India at the Reliance Industries campus in Chennai.** The new data center will allow Meta to process data for Indian users locally instead of its Singapore center, expected to result in faster data processing, improved user experience, and reduced costs.
- The Chennai campus, a joint venture of Brookfield Asset Management, Reliance Industries, and Digital Realty, spans 10 acres and is designed to support a 100-Megawatt IT load capacity. **The local data center will support AI-driven applications, including Meta’s Llama series of large language models, enhancing the development and fine-tuning of AI applications within India.**

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Next-gen lunar rover successfully tested in California's Mojave Desert

- **Venturi Astrolab Inc, a Los Angeles-based startup founded by a veteran spaceflight robotics engineer, has unveiled a groundbreaking prototype of a lunar rover, the Flexible Logistics and Exploration (FLEX) vehicle.** During a successful field test near Death Valley National Park in California, the FLEX rover demonstrated its agility over rugged terrain, showcasing its potential for future lunar missions.
- **Retired Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield and MIT aerospace graduate student Michelle Lin piloted the FLEX rover** during a recent field test in California's Mojave Desert. Hadfield expressed his excitement about driving the FLEX rover, indicating its potential for supporting human missions beyond Earth.
- **Designed for NASA's Artemis program, which aims to send humans back to the moon by 2025** and establish a sustainable lunar base, FLEX represents a new era of lunar exploration. The rover, comparable in size to a car, offers enhanced capabilities over previous moon buggies and Mars rovers. It is a versatile all-purpose vehicle that can be operated by astronauts or remotely controlled, thanks to its modular payload system.

World's most powerful MRI scans first images of human brain

- **The world's most powerful MRI scanner has delivered its first images of human brains,** reaching a new level of precision that is hoped will shed more light on our mysterious minds – and the illnesses that haunt them. Researchers at France's Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) first used the machine to scan a pumpkin back in 2021. But health authorities recently gave them the green light to scan humans.
- **Over the past few months, around 20 healthy volunteers have become the first to enter the maw of the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, which is located in the Plateau de Saclay area south of Paris,** home to many technology companies and universities.

IIM Indore partners with Land Port Authority of India

- **IIM Indore has inked a three-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) to advance educational collaboration** and foster excellence in land port management. This agreement aims to bolster learning and development initiatives in land port management and operations, not only within India but also extending to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

White House directs NASA to create time standard for the moon

- **The White House directed NASA to establish a unified standard of time for the moon and other celestial bodies,** as the United States aims to set international norms in space amid a growing lunar race among nations and private companies.
- **The head of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), instructed the space agency to work with other parts of the U.S. Government to devise a plan by the end of 2026 for setting what it called a Coordinated Lunar Time (LTC).**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** established NASA in 1958. **Bill Nelson** was sworn in as the 14th NASA administrator on May 3, 2021, tasked with carrying out the Biden-Harris administration's vision for the agency.

NASA picks 3 companies to develop next Moon buggy for Artemis missions

- **The Lunar Roving Vehicle** was a battery-powered vehicle used on the Moon by astronauts of the Apollo 15, 16 and 17 missions. But you most likely know it by its endearing nickname of “Moon buggy.” NASA said that it selected three companies — Intuitive Machines, Lunar Outpost, and Venturi Astrolab — to develop technologies for a Lunar Terrain Vehicle (LTV), the successor to the iconic buggy.
- “We look forward to the development of the Artemis generation lunar exploration vehicle to help us advance what we learn at the Moon. This vehicle will greatly increase our astronauts’ ability to explore and conduct science on the lunar surface while also serving as a science platform between crewed missions”. **NASA plans to use LTV for the Artemis 5 mission, and it will have to be able to handle the extreme conditions at the Moon’s South Pole. It will also need to have advanced technologies for autonomous driving, and power management along with state-of-the-art communications and navigation systems.**

The Artemis Accords are a series of non-binding multilateral agreements between the United States government and other world governments participating in the Artemis Program, an American-led effort to return humans to the Moon by 2025, with the ultimate goal of expanding space exploration to Mars and beyond. As of December 2022, 23 countries and one territory have signed the accords, including eight in Europe, seven in Asia, three in North America, two in Oceania, two in Africa, and two in South America. Drafted by NASA and the U.S. Department of State, the Accords establish a framework for cooperation in the civil exploration and peaceful use of the Moon, Mars, and other astronomical objects.

IBM unveil the world’s first IBM Quantum System One on a university campus

- **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and IBM officially unveiled the world’s first-ever IBM quantum computer on a university campus.** Building on RPI’s bicentennial celebration of 200 years of firsts, IBM Quantum System One will significantly enhance educational and research opportunities for the university, as well as with other academic institutions and organizations across the New York region that wish to partner with RPI.
- **Faculty, researchers, students, and collaborators accessing the system will aim to advance quantum computing research, including the search for quantum algorithms that could lead to quantum advantage,** while also actively building the next generation of the quantum workforce alongside IBM.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is intelligence—perceiving, synthesizing, and inferring information—demonstrated by machines, as opposed to intelligence displayed by humans or by other animals. **John McCarthy was one of the founders of the discipline of artificial intelligence. Alan Turing was an English mathematician, computer scientist, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher, and theoretical biologist.** He is widely considered to be the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence. **Deep Blue versus Garry Kasparov was a pair of six-game chess matches between the world chess champion Garry Kasparov and an IBM supercomputer called Deep Blue. On May 11, 1997, an IBM computer called IBM ‘Deep Blue’ beat the world chess champion after a six-game match: two wins for IBM, one for the champion and three draws.** The match lasted several days and received massive media coverage around the world. It was the classic plot line of man vs. machine. **The Emperor’s New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and The Laws of Physics is a 1989 book by the mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose. He won the Nobel Prize in Physics for 2020. The Supreme Court of India launched its first Artificial Intelligence portal SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency) in April 2021.** The idea is to leverage machine learning to deal with huge chunks of case data. **LaMDA, which stands for Language Model for Dialogue Applications,** is a family of conversational neural language models developed by Google. In June 2022, LaMDA gained widespread attention when Google engineer Blake Lemoine made claims that the chatbot had become sentient.

New generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime successfully flight-tested

- **The new generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime was successfully flight-tested by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) along with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.**
- The launch aligns with India’s strategic goals, as part of its ‘Mission Divyastra’ program, further solidifying its position among nations with formidable strategic capabilities. It is lighter than all the earlier Agni series of missiles. It is equipped with the **Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology.**

- **Agni-P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system, according to DRDO. It has a range of 1,000-2,000 km and was tested for the first time in June 2021. It is lighter than all the earlier Agni series of missiles.**

Agni class of missiles are the mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability, which also includes the Prithvi short-range ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft. Agni missiles are long range, nuclear weapons capable surface to surface ballistic missile. The first missile of the series, Agni-I was developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) and tested in 1989. After its success, Agni missile program was separated from the IGMDP upon realizing its strategic importance. **Agni-P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system. It has a range of up to 2000 km. It is a canisterised surface-to-surface ballistic missile. Agni I: It is a Medium Range Ballistic Missile with a Range of 700-800 km. Agni II: It is also a Medium Range Ballistic Missile with a Range more than 2000 km. Agni III: It is also an Inter-Medium Range Ballistic Missile with Range of more than 2,500 Km. Agni IV: It is also an Inter-Medium Range Ballistic Missile with Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road mobile launcher. Agni-V: The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km. Agni- VI: The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of ICBM 11,000–12,000 km (Under development).**

India Gets Its First AI Engineer 'Devika'

- Following buzz around 'Devin', the world's first AI engineer created by a US-based company, India has emerged as a competitor with its own contender 'Devika'. This open-source project, a passion project by Mufeed VH (Hamzakutty) of Lyminal and Stition.AI, aims to rival Devin's capabilities.
- Devika, much like Devin, leverages machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP) to understand human instructions. However, Devika focuses on taking those instructions and breaking them down into actionable tasks. It then conducts its own research and autonomously writes code to achieve the set goals. Devika translates instructions into code, aids developers, and aims for advanced capabilities like website generation and internet interaction, fostering collaboration and innovation.

Russia launched Angara rocket for first time from Vostochny Cosmodrome

- The Russian space agency Roscosmos conducted a successful orbital test launch of its new Angara A5 heavy-lift rocket, helping to open a new chapter of spaceflight for the nation. The Angara A5 lifted off April 11 on its fourth orbital test launch, and its first from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East. The 179-foot-tall (54.5 meters) rocket is produced entirely from Russian components and uses a more environmentally friendly fuel than the nation's previous heavy-lift rocket, the Proton-M.
- The first launch of the Angara A5 space rocket from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome took place, in what could be a milestone for President Vladimir Putin's space ambitions. This marks the fourth time Roscosmos has launched the Angara A5. Its first test flight took place in 2014, and its second in 2020. In 2021, Russia's space agency launched the rocket on its third test mission, but it missed its intended orbit when its second stage experienced an anomaly.

Scientists await huge star explosion in constellation Corona Borealis

- Sometime between now and September, a massive explosion 3,000 light years from Earth will flare up in the night sky, giving amateur astronomers a once-in-a-lifetime chance to witness this space oddity. The binary star system in the constellation Corona Borealis -- "northern crown" -- is normally too dim to see with the naked eye. But every 80 years or so, exchanges between its two stars, which are locked in a deadly embrace, spark a runaway nuclear explosion. The light from the blast travels through the cosmos and makes it appear as if a new star -- as bright as the North Star, according to NASA -- has suddenly just popped up in our night sky for a few days.
- It will be at least the third time that humans have witnessed this event, which was first discovered by Irish polymath John Birmingham in 1866, then reappeared in 1946. The appropriately named Sumner Starrfield, an astronomer at Arizona State University, told AFP he was very excited to see the nova's "outburst". After all, he has worked on T Coronae Borealis -- also known as the "Blaze Star" -- on and off since the 1960s. Starrfield is currently rushing to finish a scientific paper predicting what astronomers will find out about the recurring nova whenever it shows up in the next five months.

Indian Army gets portable Igla-S Air defence system

- **The Indian Army has received the first batch of 24 Russia-made Igla-S Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), along with 100 missiles, as part of a larger deal that includes domestic production in India.**
- **The Igla-S system is being acquired to enhance the Indian Army's Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) capabilities.** This procurement is a significant one, as opposed to the smaller emergency purchase made in 2021. The Igla-S is a hand-held defence system that can be operated by an individual or crew. It is designed to bring down low-flying aircraft and can also identify and neutralise air targets such as cruise missiles and drones.

Tata co launches India's 1st privately-built sub-metre resolution surveillance satellite

- **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons that specializes in aerospace and defense solutions, in collaboration with Satellogic, a leading provider of high-resolution satellite imagery in the world, announced the successful launch and deployment in low-earth orbit of India's first private sector-built sub-metre resolution earth observation or surveillance satellite, TSAT-1A.**
- **TSAT-1A, assembled at TASL's Vemagal facility in Karnataka, will deliver high-resolution optical satellite images with increased collection capacity and low-latency delivery through its multispectral and hyperspectral capabilities.** The Indian armed forces are expected to be one of its major customers in the near future.

Gopichand Thotakura, the 2nd Indian citizen in space after Rakesh Sharma

- **Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' space company Blue Origin has announced that Indian national Gopichand Thotakura will be part of a six-member crew that will blast off into space on the next New Shepard mission.** A successful launch will make the US-based wellness entrepreneur and pilot the second Indian citizen in space after wing commander Rakesh Sharma in 1984 and the country's first civilian astronaut.
- **Astronauts Kalpana Chawla, Sunita Williams, Raja Chari and Sirisha Bandla were US citizens of Indian origin.** The date of the launch of the NS-25 suborbital mission has not been announced but is likely to take place within the next few weeks. **NS-25 will be Blue Origin's first crewed launch after the failure of the uncrewed NS-23 in September 2022.**
- **The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had grounded all Blue Origin launches until an investigation into the failure was completed.** It recommended 21 corrective actions, including redesigning certain engine components. NS-24, the first mission since the failure, was launched successfully in December 2023. Until now, Blue Origin has flown six astronaut missions, taking 31 humans above the Kármán line. That's the boundary between earth and space and is between 80 and 100 km above sea level. Blue Origin's pitch for the flight is simple: "On your 11-minute flight, you'll travel over 3x the speed of sound to pass the Kármán Line at 100 km, float weightless for several minutes, and witness life-changing views of earth before descending gently under parachutes."

India, US to reactivate observation system for Indian Ocean

- **India and the US have decided to reactivate the Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS), a network of 36 moored buoys in the high seas to collect high-resolution ocean and atmospheric data for weather forecasts.** The IndOOS array of buoys fell into neglect and disrepair during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to gaps in observational data considered crucial by weather forecasters, particularly since the links between the Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon and monsoon were established.
- **The reactivation of IndOOS was discussed last month during a meeting of Earth Sciences Secretary M Ravichandran with Rick Spinrad, Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US.** **The moored buoys are part of the Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA) programme that was born out of a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and NOAA in 2008.** RAMA moored buoys are usually replaced once a year because sensors fall out of calibration and batteries run down. This servicing is typically done using research vessels primarily from Indonesia, India and South Korea in partnership with NOAA.

Army successfully conducts field trials of anti-tank guided missile system

- **The Indian Army has successfully carried out field trials of indigenously-developed man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) weapon system, paving way for its induction into the force's armoury. The weapon system has been designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).**
- **The overall system consisted of the MPATGM, launchers, target acquisition device and a fire control unit.** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has complimented the DRDO and the Indian Army for the successful trials of the system, terming it as an important step towards achieving self-reliance in advanced technology-based defence system development.

India Celebrates World Quantum Day 2024 - Aspires to lead in Quantum Science and Technology

- **India celebrates World Quantum Day 2024 on April 14, 2024, with aspirations to become a global leader in various fields of Quantum Science and Technology.** Quantum Mechanics, the study of atoms and sub-atomic particles, has now advanced to such an extent that it has now moved to the engineering domain and is leading to novel and varied applications.
- **Researchers worldwide have utilized its principles to develop technologies such as LEDs, lasers, and ultra-precise atomic clocks used in the Global Positioning System.** Considerable attention is now being paid to controlling and manipulating quantum systems for Quantum Computing, Quantum Communications, and Quantum Sensing applications. **To advance the awareness and appreciation of quantum science and technology among the public worldwide, an international initiative was taken in 2022, commemorated annually as the World Quantum Day on April 14th.**

Centre eases FDI norms for space sector to boost offshore investment

- **The government has notified amendments to the foreign direct investment policy in the space sector to attract offshore investors in satellite manufacturing and satellite launch vehicles segments.** Amendment made in the FDI policy for space sector prescribes liberalized entry route and provides clarity for FDI in satellites, launch vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, creation of spaceports for launching and receiving Spacecraft and manufacturing of space-related components and systems. Concurrently, approvals for Musk's satellite internet project, Starlink, are nearing finalization.
- **As per the notification, up to 74 per cent FDI for satellite manufacturing & operation, satellite data products and ground segment & user segment are allowed under automatic route.** Beyond 74 per cent these activities are under government route.
- **FDI up to 49 per cent is allowed for Launch Vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, Creation of Spaceports for launching and receiving Spacecraft are under automatic route but beyond 49 per cent government permission would be required.** Besides, **100 per cent FDI allowed for manufacturing of components and systems/ sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user segment without government permission.**

SPACE, a premier testing & evaluation hub for sonar systems for Indian Navy, set up by DRDO, inaugurated in Kerala

- **A state-of-the-art Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterisation and Evaluation (SPACE) was inaugurated by Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat at Underwater Acoustic Research Facility, Kulamavu in Idukki, Kerala.**
- **The SPACE, set up by the Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO, has been designed as a premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems destined for Indian Navy onboard various platforms including ships, submarines and helicopters.** The SPACE marks a milestone in naval technology advancement.
- **It will consist of two distinct assemblages - a platform which floats on the water surface, and a submersible platform which can be lowered to any depth upto 100 m using winch systems.** Upon completion of operations, the submersible platform can be winched up and docked with the floating platform.

- **The SPACE will mainly be utilised for evaluation of complete sonar system**, allowing for quick deployment and easy recovery of scientific packages such as sensors and transducers. It will be suitable for survey, sampling, and data collection of air, surface, mid-water, and reservoir floor parameters using modern scientific instrumentation. **It will cater to the needs of data processing and sample analyses in modern, well equipped scientific laboratories heralding a new era of Anti-Submarine Warfare research capabilities.**

NASA says its futuristic Dragonfly mission will launch in 2028

- **NASA confirmed Dragonfly rotorcraft mission to Saturn’s organic compound-rich moon Titan with a budget of \$3.35 billion** and a launch date set for July 2028. The Dragonfly mission passed all the criteria of its Preliminary Design Review in early 2023 but it was asked to develop an updated budget and schedule to fit into the current budget of the space agency.
- This updated plan was presented and then conditionally approved in November 2023. **Dragonfly was confirmed with the release of the US President’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request**, with a two-times cost increase and a delay of more than two years from its originally intended launch window selected in 2019. But to compensate for this delay, NASA will provide extra funding for a heavy-lift launch vehicle so that the time spent cruising to the Saturnian moon is reduced.
- a distinct “light fingerprint” that our cutting edge space telescopes, like Webb, might be able to detect.

Rocket Lab set to reuse Electron rocket for the first time

- **California-based Rocket Lab announced that it is, for the first time, returning a previously flown Electron rocket’s first stage back into the production line**, preparing to launch it again. **This will be the first time that it is reflighting the Electron rocket**, a big step for a company that aims to make it the **world’s first reusable small orbital launch vehicle**. The company has already recovered many first stages of Electron rockets in various ways — having them return to Earth with a parachute, splashing them down in the ocean, and even trying to catch them mid-air using a helicopter.
- **Rocket Lab analysed the boosters recovered previously but this is the first time one has been moved back into the standard production line in preparation to be launched again**. This first stage was launched as part of the “Four of a Kind” mission after recovery; it has already passed more acceptance tests than any other recovered Electron stage. It will now go through a final fit out, along with rigorous qualification and acceptance tests that will hold it to the same standards as a brand new Electron.

India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030

- **India has made a declaration to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030**. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S. Somanath made the declaration, at the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) annual meet.

NASA says Artemis 3 astronauts will install moonquake detector

- **NASA said its Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland is building a moonquake detector for astronauts to deploy when they land on the Moon during the Artemis 3 mission**. The space agency selected the instrument, the Lunar Environment Monitoring Station (LEMS) as one of the first three potential payloads of Artemis 3. LEMS is a compact, autonomous seismometer made to sustain long-term monitoring of ground motion from moonquakes around the celestial body’s South Pole.
- It is intended to work on the lunar surface from three months up to two years and could become a key station in a future global lunar geophysical network. **Moonquakes were first observed by Apollo missions when they placed seismometers between 1969 and 1972. These quakes are caused by the same tug of gravity that causes ocean tides**. The Moon’s surface trembles as it expands and contracts due to temperature changes. Seismic data was collected on the Earth facing side of the Moon near the equator. But scientists do not yet have seismic data from the lunar South Pole that can help them **understand the local and global lunar surface structure**.
- **The other candidate instruments are the Lunar Effects on Agricultural Flora Instrument, which is led by researchers at Space Lab Technologies, and the Lunar Dielectric Analyser instrument led by researchers at the Tokyo University and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.**

The Artemis program is a Moon exploration program that is led by the United States' NASA and was formally established in 2017 via Space Policy Directive 1. The Artemis program is intended to reestablish a human presence on the Moon for the first time since Apollo 17 in 1972. The program's stated long-term goal is to establish a permanent base on the Moon to facilitate human missions to Mars. Two principal elements of the Artemis program are derived from the now-cancelled Constellation program: the Orion spacecraft and the Space Launch System (as a reincarnation of Ares V). Other elements of the program, such as the Lunar Gateway space station and the Human Landing System, are in development by government space agencies and private spaceflight companies. This collaboration is bound together by the Artemis Accords and governmental contracts.

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams set for third space mission

- **Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams, along with Butch Wilmore, will embark on her third space mission with NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test to the International Space Station set for launch.** The astronauts will lift off aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket from the Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral, Florida. They will dock at the orbiting laboratory.
- **The mission, a part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program, is the first crewed flight for the Starliner spacecraft.** The mission will test the end-to-end capabilities of the spacecraft's system, including launch, docking and return to Earth in the western United States. Following a successful crewed flight test, NASA will begin the final process of certifying Starliner and systems for crewed missions to the space station.
- **Sunita Lyn Williams is an American astronaut, United States Navy officer, and former record holder for most spacewalks by a woman (seven) and most spacewalk time for a woman (50 hours, 40 minutes).** Williams was assigned to the International Space Station as a member of Expedition 14 and Expedition 15. In 2012, she served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then commander of Expedition 33.

The International Space Station (ISS) is a modular space station (habitable artificial satellite) in low Earth orbit. The ISS was launched in 1998 as part of joint efforts by the U.S., Russia, Japan, Canada and Europe. It is a multinational collaborative project involving five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada). The ownership and use of the space station is established by intergovernmental treaties and agreements. The station serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which scientific research is conducted in astrobiology, astronomy, meteorology, physics, and other fields. The ISS is suited for testing the spacecraft systems and equipment required for possible future long-duration missions to the Moon and Mars. The ISS was originally built to operate for 15 years.

China publishes world's first high-definition lunar geologic atlas

- **China released a geologic atlas set of the global moon with a scale of 1:2.5 million, which is the first complete high-definition lunar geologic atlas in the world, providing basic map data for future lunar research and exploration.**
- **This geologic atlas set, available in both Chinese and English, includes the Geologic Atlas of the Lunar Globe and the Map Quadrangles of the Geologic Atlas of the Moon, according to the Institute of Geochemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).**
- **"The geologic atlas of the moon is of great significance for studying the evolution of the moon, selecting the site for a future lunar research station and utilizing lunar resources. It can also help us better understand the Earth and other planets in the solar system, such as Mars.**

India becomes second-largest source country for new citizens in America after Mexico

- **A total of 65,960 Indians officially became US citizens, making India the second-largest source country for new citizens in America after Mexico, according to the latest Congressional report.** An estimated 46 million foreign-born persons resided in the United States in 2022, approximately 14 per cent of the total US population of 333 million, according to American Community Survey data from the US Census Bureau.
- **In its latest "US Naturalisation Policy" report of April 15, the independent Congressional Research Service in the fiscal year 2022, a total of 969,380 individuals became naturalised US citizens.** "Individuals born in Mexico represented the largest number of naturalisations, followed by persons from India, Philippines, Cuba, and

the Dominican Republic”. Based on the latest available data, CRS said in 2022, as many as 128,878, Mexican nationals became American citizens. They were followed by Indians (65,960), the Philippines (53,413), Cuba (46,913), the Dominican Republic (34,525), Vietnam (33,246) and China (27,038).

India bats for designing regional ocean observations to better understand deep ecosystems

- Amid challenges posed by climate change, **India has made a strong pitch for designing region-specific ocean observations for forecasting and roping in NGOs to harness traditional knowledge for better understanding of deep-sea ecosystems at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona**, India also called for people-centred multi-hazard early warning systems and designing adaptation planning strategies to increase coastal resilience.
- **The Indian delegation to the Conference was led by Earth Sciences Secretary M Ravichandran and comprised experts in the area of ocean studies, including T Srinivasa Kumar, Director of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)**. Ravichandran also urged integration of ocean observation systems across platforms in accessible and usable formats, bringing focus on use of science for policy and decision making by coastal cities and a greater emphasis on region specific ocean observations.

‘ROCKS’, India’s first air-launched quasi-ballistic missile

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) quietly **test fired a quasi-ballistic missile — ROCKS — from the Su-30 MKI, marking a significant increase in India’s ability to target deep inside enemy territory without even crossing its own air space**. The missile, a next generation extended stand-off air-to-surface missile, has been designed and manufactured by Israeli defence major Rafael Advanced Defense Systems keeping India’s needs in mind.

Inventions/Discoveries/Health

WHO launches CoViNet: a global network for coronaviruses

- **WHO has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet, to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for early and accurate detection**, monitoring and assessment of SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV and novel coronaviruses of public health importance. **CoViNet expands on the WHO COVID-19 reference laboratory network established** during the early days of the pandemic. Initially, the lab network was focused on SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but will now address a broader range of coronaviruses, including MERS-CoV and potential new coronaviruses.
- **CoViNet is a network of global laboratories with expertise in human, animal and environmental coronavirus surveillance.** The network currently includes 36 laboratories from 21 countries in all 6 WHO regions. Representatives of the laboratories met in Geneva to finalize an action plan for 2024-2025 so that WHO Member States are better equipped for early detection, risk assessment, and response to coronavirus-related health challenges. **Vaccine Maitri (“Vaccine Friendship”) is a humanitarian initiative undertaken by the Indian government to provide COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world.** The government started providing vaccines from 20 January 2021. **Bhutan and Maldives were the first countries to receive vaccines as a grant by India.**

CoWIN (Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network) is an Indian government web portal for COVID-19 vaccination registration, owned and operated by India’s Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It displays booking slots of COVID-19 vaccine available in the nearby areas and can be booked on the website. **The site also provides vaccination certificates to the beneficiaries, which act as Vaccine Passports during the COVID-19 pandemic for the beneficiaries and can be stored in Digilocker.** Users can access the platform via desktop, tablet, and mobile phones. **On 16 January 2021, CoWIN was launched and started offering COVID-19 vaccination for Frontline Workers in the country. On 1 March 2021, the platform started offering vaccination to all residents over the age of 60, residents between the ages of 45 and 60 with one or more qualifying comorbidities, and any health care or frontline worker that did not receive a dose during phase 1.**

World’s most powerful laser points to uncharted arenas

- **In the control room of a research centre in Romania, part of the European Union’s Infrastructure ELI project, engineer Antonia Toma activates the world’s most powerful laser, which promises revolutionary advances in everything from the health sector to space.**
- **The laser at the centre, near the Romanian capital Bucharest, is operated by French company Thales, using Nobel prize-winning inventions. France’s Gerard Mourou and Donna Strickland of Canada won the 2018 Nobel Physics Prize for harnessing the power of lasers for advanced precision instruments.** The sharp beams of laser light have given us new opportunities for deepening our knowledge about the world and shaping it.
- **Gerard Mourou describes the process of amplifying a “small luminous seed” of energy millions of times to achieve “phenomenal powers.”** Mourou envisions applications for the laser including treating nuclear waste to shorten its radioactivity and cleaning space debris, marking a shift from the “century of the electron” to the “21st century being that of the laser.

Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI) Project is an international laser user facility open to the global scientific community, representing the first ESFRI Landmark in newer EU Member States. ELI aims to study extreme light-matter interactions at unprecedented intensities and time scales, contributing to pan-European research efforts. Three high-power, high-repetition-rate laser facilities have been established in Czech Republic (ELI Beamlines), Hungary (ELI-ALPS), and Romania (ELI-NP) through this investment. The three ELI pillars will be managed by the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), involving governance and funding aspects. ELI ERIC’s Founding Members include the Host Countries (the Czech Republic and Hungary), Italy (a supporter since ELI’s preparatory phase), and Lithuania (noted for its contributions to laser physics). **Germany and Bulgaria are participating as Founding Observers, with the prospect of future membership.**

Study of brightest explosion in space deepens mystery of gold, platinum's origin

- **Northwestern University confirmed that the brightest gamma-ray burst ever recorded, GRB 221009A, was caused by the collapse and explosion of a massive star.** But the study also found no evidence of heavy elements like gold and platinum, meaning that we still don't know where and how they are formed.
- **Gamma-ray bursts are the most powerful and violent explosions we know in the universe. These explosions can send out light with up to quintillion times (that is 10 followed by 18 zeroes) the brightness of the Sun.** GRBs was discovered by accident, but current scientific consensus suggests they signal the birth of black holes. **GRB 221009A was recorded in October 2022 and is also called B.O.A.T or the "brightest of all time," because it is.**
- **Researchers from Northwestern University and other institutions used the James Webb Space Telescope to confirm that it was caused by the collapse and explosion of a massive star.** But having solved one mystery, it seems like they have thrown open another one.

India-born researcher led NASA's sounding rockets mission during solar eclipse

- **NASA's mission that launched sounding rockets during the recent total solar eclipse was led by Aroh Barjatya, an India-born researcher who studied in cities across the country before moving to the United States, his family said. The US space agency on April 8 launched three sounding rockets during the solar eclipse — visible in North America — to study how Earth's upper atmosphere is affected when sunlight momentarily dims over a portion of the planet. "The mission was led by Aroh Barjatya, a professor of engineering physics at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, where he directs the Space and Atmospheric Instrumentation Lab".**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. Bill Nelson was sworn in as the 14th NASA administrator on May 3, 2021, tasked with carrying out the Biden-Harris administration's vision for the agency.

A black hole, 33 times the mass of the Sun, found hiding in Milky Way Galaxy

- **In a first, ESA's Gaia mission researchers have discovered a huge black hole that is of stellar origin, hiding in plain sight in our very own Milky Way Galaxy.** This sleeping giant was found in the constellation Aquila and that is just under 2000 light-years away from Earth. The intriguing part is that galaxies of such nature have not been found in the Milky Way before. They were mostly seen in galaxies that are much farther away.
- **Most stellar-mass black holes eat up matter from some hapless nearby star companion.** However, when a black hole does not have a companion close enough to steal matter from, **it does not have such material at its disposal and it becomes even tougher to spot and gets termed as a 'dormant' black hole.**

A black hole is a region of spacetime where gravity is so strong that nothing, including light or other electromagnetic waves, has enough energy to escape its event horizon. The theory of general relativity predicts that a sufficiently compact mass can deform spacetime to form a black hole. The boundary of no escape is called the event horizon. Although it has a great effect on the fate and circumstances of an object crossing it, it has no locally detectable features according to general relativity. In many ways, a black hole acts like an ideal black body, as it reflects no light. Moreover, quantum field theory in curved spacetime predicts that event horizons emit Hawking radiation, with the same spectrum as a black body of a temperature inversely proportional to its mass. This temperature is of the order of billionths of a kelvin for stellar black holes, making it essentially impossible to observe directly.

In world first, Nigeria introduces new 5-in-1 vaccine against meningitis

- **In a historic move, Nigeria has become the first country in the world to roll out a new vaccine (called Men5CV) recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), which protects people against five strains of the meningococcus bacteria.**

- **The vaccine and emergency vaccination activities are funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, which funds the global meningitis vaccine stockpile, and supports lower-income countries with routine vaccination against meningitis. **Nigeria is one of the 26 meningitis hyper-endemic countries of Africa**, situated in the area known as the African Meningitis Belt. Last year, there was a 50% jump in annual meningitis cases reported across Africa.

Chinese scientists develop world's first orbiter that allows smartphones to make direct satellite calls

- **A team of Chinese engineers and scientists have developed the world's first satellite that lets smartphones place a call directly through it, instead of mobile towers.** The idea is, that in case of an emergency where mobile connectivity may be severely impacted because of a natural calamity or any other disaster, people can call for help directly, by connecting to an overhead communication orbiter.
- **Named after the Chinese term for “connecting with heaven,” reminiscent of the biblical Tower of Babel**, the project symbolized a commitment to enhancing communication resilience in the face of adversity. Sixteen years since its inception, the Tiantong Project has witnessed some major advancement in satellite communication technology. This, as if by miracle coincides with new trends and developments in mobile phone connectivity.

4 flares erupt from Sun in rare celestial event

- **Four solar flares erupted simultaneously in a rare celestial event, possibly heralding in the Sun's dynamic 11-year cycle.** The sight of “sympathetic solar flares” in different regions of the star was captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.
- **The four-part eruption began, originating from three sunspots and a large magnetic filament.** Each of the blast sites were separated by hundreds of thousands of miles and the area between them covered around a third of the solar surface facing Earth.

NASA Mars sample return program is expensive and will take too long

- **NASA's Perseverance Rover, nicknamed Percy, in 2023 created the first “sample depot on another world” by putting down ten rock sample tubes** that are slated to be returned to Earth as part of the Mars Sample Return Campaign. **One problem, though — that plan is too expensive and will only be executed by the year 2040.**
- **“The bottom line is that \$11 billion is too expensive, and not returning samples until 2040 is unacceptably too long.** It's the decade of the 2040s that we're going to be landing astronauts on Mars,”. Nelson attributed this to the 2025 budget of the space agency as well as additional budget cuts. An independent review of the return program conducted last year referred to it as a highly constrained and challenging campaign that had unrealistic budget and schedule expectations from the beginning. **For context, the cost of the whole program was estimated to be around \$3 billion in 2020.**

Mars is the fourth planet and the furthest terrestrial planet from the Sun. The reddish color of its surface is due to finely grained iron(III) oxide dust in the soil, giving it the nickname “the Red Planet”. Mars's radius is second smallest among the planets in the Solar System at 3,389.5 km. The Martian dichotomy is visible on the surface: on average, the terrain on Mars's northern hemisphere is flatter and lower than its southern hemisphere. Mars has a thin atmosphere made primarily of carbon dioxide, and two irregularly shaped natural satellites: Phobos and Deimos. Like the other planets in the Solar System, Mars was formed approximately 4.5 billion years ago. **The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), unofficially known as Mangalyaan was a space probe orbiting Mars since 24 September 2014. It was launched on 5 November 2013 by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It was India's first interplanetary mission and it made ISRO the fourth space agency to achieve Mars orbit, after Roscosmos, NASA, and the European Space Agency. It made India the first Asian nation to reach the Martian orbit and the first nation in the world to do so on its maiden attempt.**

Researchers develop new technique to measure blood glucose using smartphone

- **The US government's National Institute of Standards and Technology announced that its researchers have developed a technique to use the magnetometer on an ordinary cellphone to measure the concentration of glucose in blood with high accuracy.** Pretty much all modern cell phones have a magnetometer that acts like a compass, detecting the direction of Earth's magnetic field. This is very useful for navigation and other purposes. However, the researchers were able to use it for a completely different purpose.

- The researchers believe that the smartphone can be used to measure a host of different molecules and biomarkers in blood. In the proof of concept study, the researchers strapped a tiny well containing a solution (used instead of blood for testing) to a cellphone along with a strip of hydrogel.
- Hydrogel is a porous material that swells when it is put in water. They also embedded tiny magnetic particles within the hydrogel after engineering it to react to the presence of glucose or pH levels (acidity measurement) by expanding and contracting. Changes in pH levels can sometimes indicate different disorders.

PM Narendra Modi launches programme to vaccinate 2 crore animals in Bihar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the Centre has launched a programme to vaccinate about 2 crore animals and to protect them from various diseases. The central government has launched a program to vaccinate about 2 crore animals in Bihar for free, to protect them from several diseases.

Gravitational waves reveal neutron star merging with mystery object in ‘mass gap’

- Northwestern University announced that an international team of astrophysicists has used gravitational waves to discover for the first time a merger between a potential neutron star and a mysterious object in the “mass gap.” The “mass gap” is the range between the heaviest known neutron star and the lightest known black hole and that is where the mass of the mystery object puts it.
- It is between 2.5 to 4.5 times the mass of our Sun and is located about 650 million light-years away from our planet but we cannot find out what it is just using gravitational wave signals. “While previous evidence for mass-gap objects has been reported both in gravitational and electromagnetic waves, this system is especially exciting because it’s the first gravitational-wave detection of a mass-gap object paired with a neutron star. The observation of this system has important implications for both theories of binary evolution and electromagnetic counterparts to compact-object mergers”.

Gravitational waves are waves of the intensity of gravity generated by the accelerated masses of an orbital binary system that propagate as waves outward from their source at the speed of light. They were first proposed by Oliver Heaviside in 1893 and then later by Henri Poincaré in 1905 as waves similar to electromagnetic waves but the gravitational equivalent. Gravitational waves were later predicted in 1916 by Albert Einstein on the basis of his general theory of relativity as ripples in spacetime. Later he refused to accept gravitational waves. Gravitational waves transport energy as gravitational radiation, a form of radiant energy similar to electromagnetic radiation. Newton’s law of universal gravitation, part of classical mechanics, does not provide for their existence, since that law is predicated on the assumption that physical interactions propagate instantaneously (at infinite speed) – showing one of the ways the methods of Newtonian physics are unable to explain phenomena associated with relativity. The first indirect evidence for the existence of gravitational waves came in 1974 from the observed orbital decay of the Hulse–Taylor binary pulsar, which matched the decay predicted by general relativity as energy is lost to gravitational radiation. In 1993, Russell A. Hulse and Joseph Hooton Taylor Jr. received the Nobel Prize in Physics for this discovery. The first direct observation of gravitational waves was made in 2015, when a signal generated by the merger of two black holes was received by the LIGO gravitational wave detectors in Livingston, Louisiana, and in Hanford, Washington. The 2017 Nobel Prize in Physics was subsequently awarded to Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Barry Barish for their role in the direct detection of gravitational waves.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Archaeological excavation reveals 5,200-year-old Harappan settlement in Kachchh, Gujarat

- **The Indus Valley civilisation, considered one of the earliest cradles of civilisation, has enthralled the academic community and aficionados of history alike.** Excavations undertaken in several sites where the ancient city of Harappa thrived several centuries ago continue to unravel the secrets of the civilisation. **Archaeologists from Kerala University, who had earlier undertaken many successful expeditions to discover an Early Harappan necropolis Juna Khatiya in Gujarat in 2019, has stumbled upon more crucial findings from a 5,200-year old Harappan settlement at Padta Bet, around 1.5 km away, near Khatiya village, in Kachchh district.**

The Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC), also known as the Indus Civilisation, was a Bronze Age civilisation in the northwestern regions of South Asia, lasting from 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE, and in its mature form 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE. Together with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, it was one of three early civilisations of the Near East and South Asia, and of the three, the most widespread, its sites spanning an area from much of Pakistan, to northeast Afghanistan, and northwestern India. The civilisation flourished both in the alluvial plain of the Indus River, which flows through the length of Pakistan, and along a system of perennial monsoon-fed rivers that once coursed in the vicinity of the Ghaggar-Hakra, a seasonal river in northwest India and eastern Pakistan. The term Harappan is sometimes applied to the Indus civilisation after its type site Harappa, the first to be excavated early in the 20th century in what was then the Punjab province of British India and is now Punjab, Pakistan. The discovery of Harappa and soon afterwards Mohenjo-daro was the culmination of work that had begun after the founding of the Archaeological Survey of India in the British Raj in 1861.

Scientists find ‘pristine’ ocean mountain range with 50 unknown species

- **An international team of scientists announced they discovered 160 species when exploring 10 seamounts and two islands on the 2,900-kilometre-long ocean ridge Salas y Gómez.** They suspect that at least 50 of those species are new to science.
- They discovered squid, fish, corals, mollusks, sea stars, glass sponges, sea urchins, crabs, and squat lobsters, and other species. **They also potentially set a record for sighting the deepest-known photosynthesis-dependent animal — Leptoseria or the wrinkle coral.**
- **The findings come from a 40-day expedition across the Salas y Gómez Ridge to Rapa Nui, more commonly known as Easter Island.** The ridge has over 110 seamounts and it supports the migration of many marine animals like whales, sea turtles, swordfish, tuna and sharks. 78,000 square metres were mapped by the scientists during the expedition. This includes six seamounts that have not yet been documented in hydrographic surveys.

Melting ice sheets may postpone need for ‘negative leap second’

- **It’s a well-known fact that climate change has been messing with the weather and sea levels.** The study notes that as glaciers and ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica melt at an accelerating rate thanks to rising temperatures, all that extra liquid is redistributing weight across the planet.
- **That’s ever-so-slightly slowing down the Earth’s rotation on its axis.** Our clocks and calendars are based on this rotation rate, which is managed by scientists calculating what’s called Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). But the rotation hasn’t been perfectly steady. In fact, for a few decades now, the Earth has actually been spinning a tiny bit faster than normal.
- **To account for that speedup, timekeepers have periodically added a “leap second” to clocks around the world – they’ve done it 27 times since the 1970s.** The plan was to subtract that leap second for the first time in 2026, a tweak they nicknamed the “negative leap second.” But this new research suggests the accelerating melt from Antarctica and Greenland has acted like a brake, slowing the rotation back down just enough that we may not need that negative leap second until 2029 or later.

Scientists are grasping at straws while trying to protect infant corals from hungry fish

- **South Florida researchers trying to prevent predatory fish from devouring laboratory-grown coral are grasping at biodegradable straws in an effort to restore what some call the rainforest of the sea.** South Florida

researchers trying to prevent predatory fish from devouring laboratory-grown coral are grasping at biodegradable straws in an effort to restore what some call the rainforest of the sea.

- Scientists around the world have been working for years to address the decline of coral reef populations. **Just last summer, reef rescue groups in South Florida and the Florida Keys were trying to save coral from rising ocean temperatures.** Besides working to keep existing coral alive, researchers have also been growing new coral in labs and then placing them in the ocean.
- **Marine researcher Kyle Pisano said one problem is that predators like parrot fish attempt to bite and destroy the newly transplanted coral in areas like South Florida,** leaving them with less than a 40% survival rate. With projects calling for thousands of coral to be planted over the next year and tens of thousands of coral to be planted over the next decade, the losses add up when coral pieces can cost more than \$100 each.

Team led by PRL Ahmedabad finds ozone on Jupiter’s moon Callisto

- **An international team of scientists, including from India, has discovered strong evidence indicating the presence of ozone on Jupiter’s moon Callisto,** shedding light on the complex chemical processes taking place on icy celestial bodies in the Solar System.

Could Gujarat’s Luna crater be 6,900 years old?

- **Next to the vast expanses of the salt desert in Gujarat’s Kutch, a conspicuous circular feature has evoked curiosity for decades now.** New findings suggest that it is a product of a meteorite impact. A recent geochemical analysis has found out that the structure contains characteristic signatures of a meteorite impact.
- **According to NASA’s Earth Observatory, the newly studied Luna impact crater — named for its proximity to a village of the same name — measures approximately 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) across,** while its outer rim rises about 6 meters (20 feet) above the crater floor. Radiocarbon dating of plant remnants contained in silt at the site indicates that a meteorite impact occurred about 6,900 years ago.
- **The Luna structure is situated in grassland called the Banni Plains,** which remain submerged for most of the year, and the Luna crater often contains water. On collecting samples of rocks and sediments during the short dry period in May 2022, scientists detected several minerals that are uncommon in natural settings on Earth.

Luna crater is an impact crater at Luna village in Bhuj taluka of Kutch district of Gujarat, India. The crater is located in a low-lying, soft, flat area and appears unconventional and deceptive when compared to other craters in India, which are usually found on hard, rocky surfaces. **Lonar Lake, also known as Lonar crater, is a notified National Geo-heritage Monument, saline, soda lake, located at Lonar, 79 km from Buldhana city in Buldhana district, Maharashtra, India.** Lonar Lake is an astrobleme created by a meteorite impact during the Pleistocene Epoch. It is one of only four known hyper-velocity impact craters in basaltic rock anywhere on Earth.

IUCN representative to be an observer in Tamil Nadu’s Nilgiri Tahr survey

- **With a resolve to remove the Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) from the endangered status, the Tamil Nadu government will execute a synchronised survey of the State animal.** The three-day exercise is being done to estimate the population of the Tahrs, which once roamed the length and breadth of the Anamalai and Nilgiris landscape.
- **The animal is listed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and protected under Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.** At present, there are around 3,000 Tahrs in the Western Ghats, according to a report released by the World Wildlife Fund India in 2015, and a sizeable portion is concentrated in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR). In 2020, the Nature Conservation Foundation found around 510 individuals in the ATR, which houses the second largest population of the species after the Eravikulam National Park in Kerala.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN; officially International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy and education. **IUCN’s mission is to “influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”.** IUCN was established in 1948. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.

Fossils of massive prehistoric snake found in lignite mine in Gujarat

- **Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have reported the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eocene. The fossils were found in Kutch, Gujarat, and the reptile, named Vasuki Indicus, could have been anywhere between 10 metres and 15 metres long, or as big as a modern-day school bus. It belonged to the now-extinct Madtsoiidae snake family but represents a unique lineage from India.**

Purple is the new green for alien life

- **From tiny single-celled algae to the giant sequoias, green is the colour that we most associate with life on Earth. But a new study suggests that in the search for extraterrestrial life, we should probably look for the colour purple instead of green. The reason so many plants and life forms are green is because they produce oxygen with the help of the green pigment chlorophyll. But things could be very different on an Earth-like planet that orbits another star since bacteria-like life form might be able to live in locations that receive little sunlight and have no oxygen. In fact, there are such locations on Earth, where the bacteria have purple pigments to help absorb the energy from invisible infrared radiation to power their photosynthesis. If there is a distant world where such bacteria dominate, they might generate**

World Penguin Day 2024

- **World Penguin Day is celebrated every year on 25th April. It's a day set aside to spread knowledge about these amazing birds, their habitats, and the conservation measures required to keep them safe. This day is important because it marks the start of the Adelie penguins' northern migration.**
- **Adelie penguins are one of the 17–20 species of penguins recognized globally. Penguins are iconic birds noted for their striking black-and-white plumage and ability to live in harsh regions. Penguins spend roughly half of their life on land and the other half at sea. In 1972, Gerry Wallace of Alamogordo, California wrote the event of Penguin Awareness Day on his wife Aleta's calendar. Since then, this day has been observed.**



SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Mirabai Chanu Becomes The Only Indian Weightlifter To Qualify For Paris Olympics

- Tokyo Olympics medallist Mirabai Chanu became the only Indian weightlifter to qualify for the Paris Olympics this year after competing successfully at the IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand. Chanu, who is back in action after a six-month-long injury lay-off, lifted a total of 184 kg at the World Cup, which is the final and a compulsory qualifier for Paris 2024. With her event completed, the Tokyo Olympics silver medalist has fulfilled the criteria for Paris Olympics, which is participating in two mandatory events and three other qualifiers.
- The 2017 world champion is ranked second in the women's 49 kg Olympic Qualification Ranking (OQR) currently, behind China's Jiang Huihua. The qualification will come after the conclusion of the World Cup. The top 10 lifters from each weight class will qualify for the Paris Olympics.

Paris Olympics: Bilquis Mir from J-K becomes first woman to represent India as jury member

- Bilquis Mir from Jammu and Kashmir is set to become the first woman from India to represent the country as a jury member at this year's Summer Olympics, which is to be hosted by Paris. Mir's appointment as a jury member for the Paris Games was officially conveyed through a letter from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

Jasprit Bumrah became the first Indian to take 150 wickets for a single Indian Premier League franchise

- Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah created history, becoming the first Indian to take 150 wickets for a single Indian Premier League franchise. Bumrah accomplished the feat in the clash against Delhi Capitals at Wankhede. He grabbed a couple of wickets in the high-scoring encounter against Delhi and took his tally to 150, playing for Mumbai Indians.

Indian Shuttlers Anupama Upadhyaya, M Tharun Clinch Their Singles Titles At Kazakhstan International Badminton Challenge Tournament

- Indian shuttlers Anupama Upadhyaya and M. Tharun have clinched Women's and Men's singles titles, at Kazakhstan International Badminton Challenge tournament in Astana. Anupama defeated Isharani Baruah in all-Indian women's singles final. In the Men's final, Tharun beat eighth-seeded Malaysian Soong Joo Ven. However, in mixed doubles, Sanjai Srivatsa Dhanraj and Maneesha K pair lost to Malaysia's Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien in the summit clash.

Sumit Nagal created history, becoming the first Indian to record a main-draw win at Monte Carlo Masters

- The unseeded 93rd-ranked Nagal, who is only the third Indian to feature in the main draw in Monte Carlo after Vijay Amritraj (1977) and Ramesh Krishnan (1982). Nagal is also the first Indian to win an ATP Masters 1000 match on clay since the series began in 1990. The Indian will next face seventh-seeded Dane and last year's runner-up Holger Rune.

Rohit Sharma becomes first Indian to achieve this massive feat in T20 cricket

- **Rohit Sharma's ability to hit sixes consistently makes him one of the most prolific hitters in the modern game.** And the Indian skipper owned the record of becoming the first batter from the country to hit 500 sixes in T20 cricket.

Tsitsipas sweeps aside Ruud to win Monte Carlo Masters for the third time

- **Stefanos Tsitsipas swept aside Casper Ruud 6-1, 6-4 to win the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters for the third time in four years, and then wept in his chair.**

Virat Kohli's statue unveiled in Jaipur wax museum

- **Virat Kohli will now be forever immortalized in Jaipur with the city's wax museum unveiling a statue of the cricketer on occasion of World Heritage Day.** The statue, weighing 35 kg, has been sculpted. The museum, located on the Nahargarh fort premises, already has 44 wax statues, including those of cricketers Sachin Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni. The museum also has the statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, APJ Abdul Kalam, Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Kalpana Chawala, Amitabh Bachchan and Mother Teresa.

Another race, another victory for Red Bull's Max Verstappen at Chinese GP

- **The three-time defending champion won the Chinese Grand Prix starting from pole, his fourth victory in five races this season and his 23rd in the last 27 extending through last season.** This was the first F1 in China since 2019 when the COVID-19 pandemic and China's clampdown wiped out four races. Shanghai-born Zhou Guanyu finished 14th for Sauber, perhaps his last chance to race at home as teams next season will shuffle their driver lineups.

Gukesh becomes youngest winner, to challenge for world title

- **India's 17-year-old Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament to become youngest ever challenger to the world title.** He will take on reigning world champion, China's Ding Liren, for the crown later this year.
- Gukesh accumulated nine out of a possible 14 points here after drawing his final round game against American Hikaru Nakamura. **He became only the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the Candidates. Five-time world champion Anand's triumph came in 2014.**

India's Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Gopichand Swami and Parneet Kaur Won Gold in The Women's Final At Archery World Cup in Shanghai

- **In Archery, India's Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Gopichand Swami and Parneet Kaur won gold in the women's final, beating Italy 236-225 at the Archery World Cup in Shanghai.** The Indian women's team just dropped four points and managed to beat the sixth-seeded Italy without breaking a sweat. India added a third gold to their kitty as the pair of Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Abhishek Verma won the compound mixed team gold final by defeating Estonia 158-157.

Sport Events

Hockey India Annual Awards: Hardik Singh, Salima Tete Bag Men's, Women's Player of the Year

- **National team midfielders Hardik Singh and Salima Tete were honoured with the Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of The Year 2023 in men's and women's categories, respectively, at the Hockey India Annual Awards held in the national capital. Hardik and Salima received a cash prize of Rs. 25 lakh along with a trophy each.**
- **The 1975 World Cup winner Ashok Kumar won the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award named after his father Major Dhyam Chand.** Ace goalie P.R. Sreejesh was honoured with the Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year, receiving a cheque of Rs. 5,00,000 along with a trophy. For his consistent performances throughout the year, Harmanpreet Singh won the Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year, earning himself a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh along with a trophy.
- **Midfielder Hardik also won the Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year while Abhishek won the prestigious Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year, both earning themselves INR 5 lakh and a trophy each.** Forward Deepika Soreng bagged the Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year in the Women – Under 21 category while Arajjeet Singh Hundal bagged the Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Men – Under 21).
- **The award ceremony started with the Milestone Awards 2023 with Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit, Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Udita, Salima Tete, and Gurjant Singh winning a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh and a trophy each for completing 100 international caps. Nikki Pradhan, Amit Rohidas, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, and Neha were also presented with Rs. 1.5 lakh and a trophy each for completing 150 international caps.**

Bengal to host India's first state association-run women's franchise T20 league

- **The Cricket Association of Bengal [CAB] has announced the launch of the Bengal Pro T20 tournament, with a men's event and a women's event.**

In Spain Masters 2024 Badminton Tournament, Kean Yew Loh of Singapore Wins the Men's Title

- **In Spain Masters 2024 Badminton tournament, Kean Yew Loh of Singapore has won the Men's title.** In the finals, he defeated Toma Junior Popov of France. **In the Women's Singles, Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand has lifted the crown.** In the final, She defeated her compatriot Supanida Katethong.

In Spain Masters 2024 Badminton Tournament Women's Singles, Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand has lifted the crown

- **In the Women's Singles, Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand has lifted the crown. In the final, She defeated her compatriot Supanida Katethong.**

IPL-17 | Yuzvendra Chahal first bowler to take 200 wickets

- **Rajasthan Royals spinner Yuzvendra Chahal took his 200th IPL wicket to become the first bowler to achieve the feat in the franchise tournament.** Chahal dismissed Mumbai Indians all-rounder Mohammad Nabi caught and bowled for 23 with his leg-spin as he celebrated the achievement at Rajasthan's home ground in Jaipur. He has played 154 white-ball matches for India, claiming 217 wickets since his international debut in 2016.

ICC ropes in Usain Bolt as T20 WC ambassador

- **The International Cricket Council (ICC) named sprint legend Usain Bolt as the ambassador of the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the West Indies and USA from June 1 to 29.** Jamaica-born Bolt had created history at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing where he won the 100m, 200m and 4x100m races in world record times.

Dharamsala to get India's first 'hybrid pitch'

- The picturesque Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium has become the first BCCI-accredited venue to install a state-of-the-art 'hybrid pitch' and future international and IPL matches will be held on this track. The Netherlands-based 'SISGrass', a part of the SIS Pitches group of companies, has been roped in for the first-ever hybrid pitch installation.

DD News sports new saffron logo

- Doordarshan News has launched its new saffron-coloured logo by announcing that it is now available in a refurbished avatar. The logo's colour has been changed from ruby red to saffron.
- Saffron adorns the top band of the national tricolour, while the colour is also used predominantly in the ruling BJP's party flag. The public broadcaster has been allocated an outlay of ₹2,539.61 crore for the upgrade and expansion of broadcasting infrastructure till 2025-2026. It is also working on its plan to launch an over-the-top (OTT) platform.

RRU to set up India's first Olympics study centre

- With India working on a strong bid to host Olympics in the country, the Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) announced that it would establish India's first Olympic Studies and Research Centre (OSRC) by June. RRU officials said that OSRC is a global network of study and research centres organized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Currently there are 70 centres in 24 countries with expertise in 24 subjects. "The Bharat Centre of Olympic Research and Education (B-CORE) is backed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and recognized by the IOC".

Balraj Panwar bags India's first Paris Olympics quota in rowing

- India celebrated a historic milestone in the sport of rowing as Balraj Panwar clinched the nation's first quota for the Paris Olympics by securing a commendable third-place finish in the men's single scull event at the Asian Olympic qualifiers in Chungju, South Korea. Panwar, renowned as India's ace Single Sculler, delivered a stellar performance during the Qualification Championships in Chungju, clocking over the 2000m course.

Mohun Bagan defeated Mumbai City FC 2-1 to win their maiden ISL League Shield.

- This was Mohun Bagan's first victory over the two-time Shield Winners across four seasons as the Mumbai heavyweights were also unbeaten over them in previous eight matches, winning six of them. The win also sealed their berth in the AFC Champions League 2 for the first time as 60,000 chanted 'Mohun Bagan across the Salt Lake Stadium stands.

Italy's Jannik Sinner Clinches Men's Single Title of Miami Open Tennis in US

- In Tennis, Italy's Jannik Sinner won the Men's Singles title of Miami Open tournament in the United States. Second seed Sinner defeated 11th seed Bulgarian player Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 6-1 in the final.
- Unseeded American player Danielle Collins has won the Women's Singles title. Sinner's third title of the season means he will move to a career-high second in the ATP world rankings, ahead of Spain's Carlos Alcaraz. In a major upset, Collins defeated fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in straight sets 7-5, 6-3 in the final.
- Earlier, Indian Tennis star Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden clinched the historic Men's doubles title. The duo defeated Croatia's Ivan Dodic and American Austin Krajicek 6-7, 6-3, 10-6. The 44-year old Bopanna, became the oldest man to win an ATP Masters 1000 title and the second Indian to reach the finals of all nine ATP Masters 1000 events.

AWARDS



President confers Bharat Ratna on ex-PMs Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh, 2 others posthumously

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour, on former prime ministers P V Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, agriculture scientist M S Swaminathan and two-time former Bihar chief minister Karpoori Thakur, posthumously at a ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The awards to Rao, Singh, Thakur and Swaminathan were received by their kin.
- P V Prabhakar Rao, the son of former Prime Minister Rao, received the award conferred on his father from the president. Jayant Chaudhary, Singh's grandson and chief of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), accepted the honour from Murmu. Swaminathan's daughter Nitya Rao and Thakur's son Ram Nath Thakur received the award from the president. This year, the government announced five Bharat Ratna awards, including one to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stalwart and former deputy prime minister L K Advani.

SJVN Awarded for Outstanding Corporate Social Responsibility

- SJVN Limited, a leading public sector undertaking, has been honored with two prestigious awards at the 15th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2024. The awards were given by the Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) in recognition of SJVN's remarkable contributions to corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- SJVN has been conferred with the 'Achievement Award for Creating Social Development & Impact' and the 'CIDC Partners in Progress Trophy'. These awards acknowledge the company's unwavering commitment to driving positive change through innovative and sustainable CSR initiatives.

Professor Meena Charanda Honoured with 'International Culture Award' 2024

- Professor Meena Charanda, Principal of Kalindi College, Delhi University, has been awarded the prestigious 'International Culture Award' for the year 2024. Prof. Charanda received this honour in recognition of her remarkable work in the field of education and social service. The award ceremony took place on March 30, 2024, at the India International Center.
- The selection for the 'International Culture Award' was made by a 5-member committee headed by K Yogesh, Chairman of Socrates Social Research University (Trust). The committee comprised experienced members from various fields.

Vijay Jain Bags Times Power Icon 2024 Award

- At a glittering event recently held in Noida, organized by The Times Group, Vijay Jain, the Managing Director of Star Estate, was awarded the prestigious Times Power Icon 2024 Award. The event celebrated and honoured top industry leaders, gracing the occasion with the presence of industry leaders and celebrities, including Cine icon Ada Sharma, who presented the award to Vijay Jain.

Vineet Jain Honoured with ENBA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023

- Vineet Jain, the managing director of the Times Group, received the prestigious Exchange4Media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 for his significant contributions to Indian

television news. While accepting the award at a ceremony on Saturday, Jain attributed the achievement to the collective efforts of teams at the Times Group. He also acknowledged the unwavering support of his elder brother, Samir Jain, throughout their journey of expanding and diversifying the group.

Prestigious John Dirks Gairdner global health award for Dr Gagandeep Kang

- **Dr Gagandeep Kang, Director of Global Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been selected for the prestigious John Dirks Award in global health.** It is the most well-recognised global health award.
- **The John Dirks Award in global health is awarded by the Gairdner Foundation in Canada.** The awards were announced and Dr Kang's initial reaction was one of surprise. "There are so many people doing outstanding work in global health. So to have the work my colleagues and I have done in India is recognition of our contributions to the health of children in India and assesses our efforts and the resulting impact," Dr Kang said.
- **She is the first Indian woman to get this award and says it is a huge honour for all the work that she and her colleagues did while at Christian Medical College, Vellore.** The focus of Dr Kang's work has been on childhood diarrhoea disease and comprehensive studies, including the work on vaccines.
- **Dr Kang previously was a Professor at the Department of Gastrointestinal Science at CMC, Vellore and later executive director of the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad.** After her superannuation from CMC, Dr Kang continues to work on diarrhoea in children and making better vaccines. She also became the first Indian woman to be elected Fellow of the Royal Society.

Nobel laureate Peter Higgs, who proposed existence of 'god particle', dies at 94

- **Nobel prize-winning physicist Peter Higgs, who proposed the existence of the so-called "god particle" that helped explain how matter formed after the Big Bang, has died at age 94.** Higgs predicted the existence of a new particle — the so-called Higgs boson — in 1964. But it would be almost 50 years before the particle's existence could be confirmed at the Large Hadron Collider.
- **Higgs' theory related to how subatomic particles that are the building blocks of matter get their mass.** This theoretical understanding is a central part of the so-called Standard Model, which describes the physics of how the world is constructed. **Edinburgh University said his groundbreaking 1964 paper demonstrated how "elemental particles achieved mass through the existence of a new sub-atomic particle" which became known as the Higgs boson.**
- **In 2012, in one of the biggest breakthroughs in physics in decades, scientists at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, announced that they had finally found a Higgs boson using the \$10 billion particle collider built in a 17-mile (27-kilometer) tunnel under the Swiss-French border.** Higgs won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work, alongside Francois Englert of Belgium, who independently came up with the same theory.

Chandrayaan-3 team receives 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration

- **India's Chandrayaan-3 mission team has been presented with the prestigious 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration** in recognition of it raising the bar for space exploration. The award was received by India's Consul General on behalf of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) during the opening ceremony of the annual Space Symposium in Colorado. As the first nation to land on the Moon's South Pole, Chandrayaan-3, a mission developed by the ISRO, extends humanity's space exploration aspirations to new and fertile areas for understanding and cooperation.

Amitabh Bachchan, Rahman conferred with Mangeshkar award

- **Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan was conferred with the third Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award in recognition for his exemplary contribution to the country, people and society.** Past recipients of the award include Prime Minister Narendra Modi and singer Asha Bhosale.
- **The Deenanath Mangeshkar Smriti Pratishthan, which instituted the Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award after the death Bharat Ratna awardee and legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, also conferred awards on several other eminent personalities for contributions to their field.**

MHU University, Karnal Honoured With Best Horticulture University Award

- **Maharana Pratap Horticultural University (MHU), Karnal, has been honoured with the prestigious Best Horticulture University Award.** This accolade was bestowed by ‘Krishi Vyapaar Shikhar Sammelan and Puraskar Sanstha’ at an event in Hyderabad, underscoring MHU’s exemplary contributions to the remarkable advancements in horticulture.
- In recent times during research on biological microorganisms MHU scientists have identified many good microbial-related bio-inputs. These can be successfully used in the field of horticulture to produce safe and quality crops. **Their use will reduce the need for chemical fertilisers by 20 to 25 percent in the fields.**
- **Due to these achievements, the ‘Krishi Vyapaar Shikhar Sammelan and Puraskar Sanstha’ have honoured MHU by awarding it the Best Horticulture University Award.** The entire team of MHU is continuously striving to reach the advanced technologies used in the field of horticulture to the farmers and the main objective of MHU is to boost quality production.

Kannada poet Mamta G. Sagar wins international award

- **Mamta G. Sagar, a Bengaluru-based Kannada poet, writer, academic and activist, has recently won the World Literary Prize from the World Organization of Writers (WOW) for her contributions to the world of literature.** Dr Sagar, a facilitator at Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, known for her involvement in diverse forms of transdisciplinary creative writing and cultural industries, received the award at a ceremony in Abuja, Nigeria.

Utsa Patnaik selected for Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023

- **Utsa Patnaik, a renowned economist of national and international repute, has been selected for the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023.** The award is given every year by the Malcolm & Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust. The prestigious national award honours outstanding social scientists selected by a national-level jury specially constituted for this purpose, from the nominations received.

Mathematician wins Turing award for harnessing randomness

- **The mathematician Avi Wigderson has won the 2023 Turing award, often referred to as the Nobel prize for computing, for his work on understanding how randomness can shape and improve computer algorithms.** Wigderson, who also won the prestigious Abel prize in 2021 for his mathematical contributions to computer science, was taken aback by the award.

Reuters’ Mohammed Salem wins 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for picture of mourning Palestinian woman

- **Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem won the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for his image of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip.** The picture was taken on Oct. 17, 2023, at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, where families were searching for relatives killed during Israeli bombing of the Palestinian enclave.
- **GEO photographer Lee-Ann Olwage of South Africa won the story of the year category with images documenting dementia in Madagascar.** The long-term projects category was won by Alejandro Cegarra of Venezuela for the series “The Two Walls” for The New York Times/Bloomberg. Ukrainian photographer Julia Kochetova won the open format award with “War is Personal”, which documented the war in her country by weaving together pictures, poetry, audio and music in documentary style.

Venkaiah Naidu, Mithun Chakraborty, Usha Uthup, Ram Naik conferred with Padma Awards

- **Former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu, founder of Sulabh International Bindeshwar Pathak and a host of other prominent persons were conferred with Padma Awards by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.** Naidu, Pathak, who was given the award posthumously, and renowned Bharatanatyam dancer Padma Subrahmanyam were conferred with the Padma Vibhushan. Pathak’s wife Amola received the award from the President.

- Actor Mithun Chakraborty, singer Usha Uthup, former Uttar Pradesh governor Ram Naik and industrialist Sitaram Jindal were conferred with the Padma Bhushan. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, among others, were present at the function.
- Gujarat-based cardiologist Tejas Madhusudan Patel, veteran Marathi film director Dattatray Ambadas Mayaloo alias Rajdutt and Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur, a distinguished Physician known globally for his contribution to research and policy on Kala Azar, were given the Padma Bhushan. Padma Shri awardees include master carpet weaver from Uttar Pradesh Khalil Ahamad, Madhya Pradesh's folk singer Kaluram Bamaniya, Bangladeshi singer Rezwana Choudhury Bannya and Chikankari embroidery artist from Uttar Pradesh Naseem Bano.

Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honors of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day after the Bharat Ratna. The Award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. **The total number of awards to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should not be more than 120.** The award does not amount to a title and cannot be used as a suffix or prefix to the awardees' name. **The Government of India instituted two civilian awards-Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954.** All nominations are placed before the **Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. The Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary** and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members. **The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval.** The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service etc. The Padma award is just an honor. **No cash allowance or any facility/benefit in terms of concession etc. in rail/air travel is attached to these awards.**

PERSONS IN NEWS

Taylor Swift becomes world's first billionaire from music

- **Pop superstar Taylor Swift has joined the ranks of the world's billionaires, according to Forbes' World's Billionaires list.** Forbes stated that her fortune includes more than \$500 million in estimated wealth gained from royalties and touring, plus a music catalog worth \$500 million and some \$125 million in real estate. While reporting the musician's growth in net worth over the years, it highlighted that the musician's net worth increased from \$280 million in 2017, \$365 million in 2020, \$740 million in 2023, to \$1.1 billion in 2024.

Indian-American actor and 'Mean Girls' star Avantika Vandanapu was named the South Asian Person of the Year by Harvard University

- **Indian-American actor Avantika Vandanapu was named the South Asian Person of the Year by Harvard University.** The 19-year-old was recognised for her outstanding achievements and impact on both the international and Indian entertainment industries.
- **"Being honoured by such a prestigious institution as Harvard University is truly humbling and incredibly motivating.** This award not only acknowledges my efforts but also underscores the significance of narratives transcending borders and the crucial role of Indian representation in global media,".
- **The young actor has recently faced backlash after rumours she was being cast as Princess Rapunzel in a live-action version of the 2010 animated Disney film "Tangled."** Several Disney fans and critics took to social media to share their displeasure over an actor of South Asian heritage portraying the fictional character.

NSE CEO Ashish Chauhan, Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu appointed UGC members for 3 years

- The central government notified the appointment of National Stock Exchange CEO and managing director **Ashish Kumar Chauhan and Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu as members of the University Grants Commission (UGC)**, India's regulator for higher education, taking the body's strength to eight members from just four.
- The Department of Higher Education in the Education Ministry also appointed **Sachidananda Mohanty, former vice chancellor of the Central University of Odisha and serving vice chancellor of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration Shashikala Gulabrao Wanjari to the Commission**, with a tenure of three years, or till further orders.

Justice Aniruddha Bose to Head National Judicial Academy Post Retirement as Supreme Court Judge

- **The Supreme Court has appointed Justice Aniruddha Bose as the Director of The National Judicial Academy (NJAC), Bhopal.** The Chief Justice, DY Chandrachud announced the decision of appointment during the ceremonial bench conducted honoring the retiring justice. Justice Bose will now be heading the NJAC, Bhopal.

Ram Charan Receives Honorary Doctorate from Vels University

- **Ram Charan was recently conferred with an honorary doctorate by Vels University during its 14th Annual Convocation at the Pallavaram campus in Chennai.** The actor has now joined the ranks of recipients like Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Director Shankar. **Ram Charan received the honour for his contribution to the entertainment industry and entrepreneurship.** Ram Charan, Indian actor, film producer, and entrepreneur, received an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from Vels University at their 14th Annual Convocation (sic)."

Sakshi Malik included in TIME magazine's list of 100 most influential people of 2024

- **Sakshi Malik revealed that she had been included in TIME magazine's list of the 100 most influential people for the year 2024.** Sakshi, India's only female Olympic medallist in wrestling has been honoured for her relentless fight against alleged sexual harassment of female wrestlers by **former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.** Other Indians to feature in the TIME list include actress Alia Bhatt, Indo-British actor Dev Patel and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella.

Nalin Prabhat appointed D-G of National Security Guard

- **Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat has been appointed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism and counter-hijack force.** Mr. Prabhat is a 1992 batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre. He is currently posted as Additional Director-General, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Salman Rushdie to release 'Knife' memoir recounting stabbing

- **British-American author Salman Rushdie releases his memoir "Knife",** recounting the harrowing experience of being stabbed at a public event in 2022 and how he overcame the near-fatal ordeal. Rushdie lost sight in one eye after the attack by a knife-wielding assailant, who jumped on stage at an arts gathering in New York State.

Sam Pitroda's New Book 'The Idea of Democracy'

- **Renowned author Sam Pitroda has written a new book titled 'The Idea of Democracy',** which explores the current state of democracy and its potential challenges in countries like India and the United States. The book launch event was attended by Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal and other eminent personalities from the literary industry.

AMU gets its first woman V-C: Naima Khatoon

- **Naima Khatoon Gulrez, the principal of Aligarh Muslim University's Women's College since 2014, has been appointed as the university's first woman Vice-Chancellor.** The AMU Court had shortlisted three candidates for the post and forwarded the names to President Droupadi Murmu for final selection last November.

Former wrestler Narsingh Yadav elected chairman of WFI's seven-member athletes' panel

- **Former Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Narsingh Pancham Yadav was elected chairman of the Wrestling Federation of India's Athletes' Commission,** completing a process that was mandated by the sport's world governing body. A total of eight candidates were in fray for the seven positions and after polling, conducted on ballot paper, seven members got elected. They then chose Narsingh as chairman of the commission.
- **Ahead of the 2016 Olympics, the Games-bound Narsingh had grabbed headlines when two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, who missed the qualification event due to an injury,** requested for a trial bout against him. Sushil moved the Delhi High Court and only after his appeal was rejected, it was confirmed that Narsingh would go to Rio Olympics.

PM inaugurates 2550th Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav at Bharat Mandapam

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 2550th Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.** The PM released a commemorative stamp and coin to mark the occasion. In his address, Modi highlighted the significance of the youth's commitment to the values of Bhagwan Mahaveer and emphasised the importance of celebrating these values for thousands of years to come.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chief Justice of India D. Y. Chandrachud Emphasizes on Pivotal Role of Technology in Transforming Criminal Justice System

- **Chief Justice of India Justice D. Y. Chandrachud** has emphasized the pivotal role of technology in transforming the criminal justice system. **Delivering the 20th D. P. Kohli Memorial Lecture in New Delhi on the occasion of CBI day, Justice Chandrachud advocated to adopt new technology to tackle new-age criminal networks effectively.** The Chief Justice said, the role of technology will facilitate speedy and fair trial. Justice Chandrachud said that in the era of digital transformation, law and Technology holds immense potential to shape the cause of crime detection.

India planning to have only one air traffic management from Nagpur

- **The government of India has begun working to have one Indian Single Sky Harmonised (ISHAN) air traffic management (ATM) from Nagpur with an aim to reduce carbon footprint, enhance safety, and aircraft fuel usage.** India has four flight information regions (FIRs) – Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai and a sub-FIR in Guwahati. The Nagpur air traffic control is located in the central part of the country and the government is planning the move to unify all four.

International Year of Camelids (IYC) 2024

- **The UN has designated 2024 as the International Year of Camelids. Camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas and guanacos are an important source of livelihood for millions of families - most of them pastoralists - in dryland and mountainous rangeland ecosystems around the world.** The Year is meant to raise the public's and policymakers' awareness of the significant role of camelids in protecting ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, assuring food security and adapting to climate change.
- **The resolution for the International Year of Camelids, proposed by the Government of Bolivia and presented by Ecuador as Country Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), was approved by the UN General Assembly on 17 October 2017** upon recommendation by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN). Until FAO starts preparing for this year, several organisations involved in the IYRP initiative, including the League of Pastoral Peoples (LPP), are drawing attention to the IYC. Below is an overview (18-slide PPT) on the IYC prepared by the LLP.

Closing ceremony of the International Year of Millets 2023 took place at the FAO headquarters

- **The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) organized closing ceremony of the International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 at the FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy.** The high-level hybrid event that allowed participants to join both in-person and virtually and was graced by esteemed dignitaries from various parts of the world, including Additional Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Smt. Maninder Kaur Dwivedi from Govt. of India. Following a proposal by India, backed by more than 70 countries, the United Nations General Assembly, at its 75th session in March 2021, declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

Utkala Dibasa 2024

- **Odisha Day, also Utkala Dibasa, is celebrated on 1 April in the Indian state of Odisha in memory of the formation of the state as a separate state out of Bihar and Orissa Province with addition of Koraput District and Ganjam District from the Madras Presidency on 1 April 1936.**

Pin code MH-1718: In Antarctica, a post office with Indian address

- **India's two research bases on Antarctica — Maitri and Bharati — are located 3,000 km apart. Notably, both branches are part of the Goa postal division. In 1984, shortly after India's first foray to Antarctica, its first post office on the icy continent was set up at Dakshi Gangotri — the nation's first scientific base there.** Within the first year, as many as 10,000 letters and mail had been posted and 'cancelled' at the historic post office.
- **And so began what officials describe as a "unique experiment" for India's postal fraternity. Dakshin Gangotri submerged in ice in 1988-89 and was subsequently decommissioned. On January 26, 1990, a post office branch was set up at India's Maitri research station on Antarctica.**

World's first carbon-absorbing concrete used to make a house in Japan

- **CO₂-SUICOM is short for CO₂-Storage and Utilization for Infrastructure by CONcrete Materials.** Jointly developed by Kajima, The Chugoku Electric Power Co., Denka, and Landes Co., is the world's first carbon-capturing concrete. It is located beside a road on a property extending 110m in length. 70 minutes from Tokyo, Karuizawa is one of Japan's oldest and most famous mountain resort towns. It is known for its mild summers, with forests in the surrounding area that offer cycling and walking paths.

Assam's Charaideo Maidam nominated for UNESCO world heritage tag

- **The nomination will make Assam's Charaideo Maidam the sole historical site in India for consideration for this prestigious recognition.** Following the submission of the proposal, a team from UNESCO conducted site inspections to assess the historical significance and preservation of Charaideo Maidam.

Indian Army completes 40 years of presence in world's highest battlefield, the Siachen glacier

- **The induction of heavy-lift helicopters and logistic drones, deployment of all-terrain vehicles and laying of an extensive network of tracks are among a host of measures that have enhanced India's combat prowess in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield. Under its "Operation Meghdoot", the Indian Army established its full control over the glacier on April 13, 1984.**
- **The Siachen glacier at the height of around 20,000 feet in the Karakoram mountain range is known as the highest militarised zone in the world where soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds. Under its "Operation Meghdoot", the Indian Army established its full control over the glacier on April 13, 1984.**

Traditional Harvest Festivals including Vaisakhi, Vishu and Bohag Bihu being celebrated

- **Traditional harvest festivals are being celebrated in various regions of the country for two days beginning in the form of Vaisakhi, Vishu, Bishub, Bohag Bihu, Poila Boishakh, Vaishakhadi and Puthandu. People of Punjab call it 'Vaisakhi', in Kerala, the day is celebrated as 'Vishu', in West Bengal, it is celebrated as 'Poila Boishakh', in Assam, as 'Bohag Bihu'. In Tamil Nadu, it is observed as 'Puthandu'. The festival of harvest, Baisakhi is being celebrated in the northern part of the country with full enthusiasm and mutual brotherhood.**

Ladakh Celebrates Apricot Blossom Festival in Different Parts of Kargil and Leh Districts

- **The Union Territory of Ladakh celebrates Apricot Blossom festival in the different parts of Kargil and Leh districts.** The events are organised by the Department of Tourism, Ladakh, in collaboration with the local communities featuring day-long performances to promote tourism in the region.
- **The Apricot Blossom Festival includes interactive exhibitions, traditional music and dance performances and serves as a platform for locals to showcase their artistic skills.** This festival is also an opportunity for tourists to be part of the celebrations with an enthralling landscape of apricot trees in full bloom.
- **Famous for apricot production, Ladakh widely grows and transports the fruit beyond the region, and the people welcome the blooming season since the fruit is also one of the primary sources of income in the entire region. The festival, locally called Chuli Mentok, is a jubilant occasion for the people as it marks the onset of the spring season after a long, harsh winter.**

Nepal: Bisket Jatra Festival Culminates With Huge Celebration in Bhaktapur District

- **Bisket Jatra is an eight-day celebration that culminated with a huge celebration in the district of Bhaktapur.** Thousands of people gathered in Bhaktapur Durbar Square to witness the celebration. **People assembled and pulled the chariot of Bhairava and Bhadra Kali in opposite directions in the city lanes.** In the tug of war, people pulled an unequal number of ropes which were biased toward the forward direction. A tug of war took place during Jatra to determine to which half of the city the chariot would go first. With unstable wheels, the heavy chariot trembling with push and pull forces in opposite directions, and people falling to the ground during tug of war, made this event appear as the most dangerous part of the festival.

70-storey skyscraper temple in Vrindavan would boost Indian tourism: ISKCON leader

- A skyscraper Krishna temple in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh would emerge as a major display of Indian culture internationally and would boost tourism in India and local economy. There can't be a broken infrastructure for spirituality and temples can't be in perpetual disrepair. Being built at a cost of USD 80 million, Vrindavan Heritage Tower will be 70 floors high and 210 metres.

Supreme Court to consider uniform guidelines for advocates' bodies across the country

- The Supreme Court has decided to consider framing guidelines for advocates' associations across the country in a bid to make their admission regulations uniform and democratic. A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant has titled the proceedings 'In Re: Strengthening of the Institution of Bar Associations'. The top court impleaded major bar associations and bodies, including the Tamil Nadu Bar Council and the Madras High Court Advocates Association as parties in the case. It issued notice to the Madras Bar Association in March. The court, in its order, clarified that its limited purpose was to "lay down broad guidelines that may be followed for strengthening and enhancing the status and streamlining the overall functioning of Bar Associations throughout the country".

In a first, UN celebrates Ambedkar's birth anniversary for two days

- The United Nations celebrated the 133rd birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar with global leaders for two days, on April 18 and April 23, at its headquarters in New York. Leaders and representatives from 195 countries participated in the events, organised by the Foundation for Human Horizon. It was the first time in UN history that two full days were dedicated to Dr Ambedkar.

Govt mulls opening overseas campus for National Institute of Fashion Technology

- The government is exploring the possibilities of opening an overseas campus of its premier education brand – the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) – even as it has recently forged alliances with universities in the United Kingdom, Australia, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Finland, Sweden and Nepal, and is currently holding talks with an institute at Tashkent in Uzbekistan, two officials said.
- NIFT already has 18 campuses in India and the 19th one in Varanasi is set to be operational this year, they said asking not to be named. "Textile ministry in cooperation with other government departments, including commerce, are working to make NIFT an internationally recognised educational institute. NIFT has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with universities in Mauritius, UK, Bangladesh, and Nepal to collaborate for reciprocal student exchange in different formats such as semester exchange programme, short-term programmes.

Chennai Trade Centre to host first Automation Expo road show

- Chennai will be hosting the first Automation Expo Road Show to discuss the impact of AI and Robotics in process and factory automation. The road show, to be organised as part of the Automation Expo 2024, would be held at the Chennai Trade Centre on May 3. About 50 exhibitors from Mumbai would take part and display their exhibits. More than 800 firms are expected to take part in the 17th International Exhibition and Conference 'Automation Expo 2024,' to be organised by IED Communications Ltd. in Mumbai from August 21.

Ministry Of Mines to Hold Critical Minerals Summit In New Delhi

- The Ministry of Mines will hold Critical Minerals Summit: Enhancing Beneficiation and Processing Capabilities in New Delhi. The two day Summit is a pivotal event designed to foster collaboration, share knowledge and drive innovation in the field of critical mineral beneficiation and processing.
- The summit is set against the backdrop of India's rapid economic growth and ambitious clean energy targets, which underscore the urgent need for securing a domestic supply of Critical Raw Materials. The summit will bring together a diverse array of Indian and international stakeholders, including industry leaders, startups, government officials, scientists, academics, and policy experts.

BJP becomes first Indian party to cross Rs. 100 crore ad spend on Google

- The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has become the first political party in India to have crossed Rs. 100 crore in political advertisements on search titan Google and its video platform YouTube. The amount spent on promoting BJP's digital campaigns (more than Rs. 101 crore) is equal to the spending by Congress, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and political advisory firm Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) since May 2018 when Google started publishing the Google Ads Transparency report.
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IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action 4 April

- On 8 December 2005, the **General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.** It called for continued efforts by States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries where mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the civilian population, or an impediment to social and economic development at the national and local levels.
- For over 20 years, the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has been driven by the needs of affected people and tailored to the threat of explosive hazards faced by civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarians. **The theme for International Day for Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action 2024 is ‘Protecting Lives, Building Peace.’**

International Day of Conscience 5 April

- Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the **General Assembly declared 5 April the International Day of Conscience.**
- **The theme for the International Day of Conscience in 2024 is ‘Promoting a Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience’.** This theme emphasizes the importance of cultivating a global mindset focused on peace, compassion, and moral integrity. The task of the United Nations to save future generations from the scourge of war requires transformation towards a culture of peace, which consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.

National Maritime Day 2024

- **National Maritime Day is celebrated on 5 April every year.** The day was first observed on 5 April 1964 to raise awareness about the international economy and promote maritime trade. **International Maritime Organization has chosen “Navigating the future: safety first!” as the theme for the 2024.**

World Health Day

- **World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April,** under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization, as well as other related organizations. In 1948, the WHO held the First World Health Assembly. **The theme for World Health Day 2024 is ‘My health, my right.’**

International Carrot Day

- **Every year on April 4, carrot enthusiasts around the world come together to celebrate International Carrot Day.** This whimsical holiday honours the humble carrot, a versatile and nutritious vegetable that has been a staple in diets across cultures for centuries.

International Day of Sports for Development and Peace

- **The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDS DP), which takes place annually on 6 April,** presents an opportunity to recognize the positive role sport and physical activity play in communities and in people’s lives across the globe. **The global theme for 2024 is “Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies”.**

World Homeopathy Day

- **World Homeopathy Day is celebrated annually to honour the work of German physician and chemist Dr Samuel Hahnemann on his birth anniversary - April 10.** Homeopathy, an alternative medicinal practice claims to treat diseases and disorders applying the principle of curing ‘like with like’.

- It is believed that the origin of homeopathy dates back to 5th century BC but it was not before 19th century that homeopathy gained popularity in Europe and spread to North America. **The theme for World Homeopathy Day is “Homeoparivar: One Health, One Family.**

National Safe Motherhood Day 2024

- **Every year on April 11, National Safe Motherhood Day is observed in India to raise awareness about the importance of proper healthcare and maternity services for expectant mothers.** It's a day to honour motherhood and advocate for safe pregnancy and childbirth practices, ensuring the well-being of both the mother and the child. This occasion serves as a reminder of the significant strides made in maternal healthcare while highlighting the challenges that still exist.

National Pet Day

- **National Pet Day, celebrated on April 11 every year, serves as a special occasion to cherish the unique bond shared between pets and their owners.** It's a day when pet lovers come together to celebrate the unconditional love, comfort, and joy that pet brings into their lives, all while raising awareness about the importance of animal welfare.
- **The theme for National Pet Day 2024 is “Don’t Shop! Adopt!”** This poignant theme, observed annually on April 11th, advocates for prospective pet owners to opt for adoption from shelters rather than purchasing from breeders or pet stores.

World Chagas Disease Day

- **Chagas disease, also known as “silent or silenced disease”,** affects mainly poor people without access to health care or people without a political voice. The disease progresses slowly and often shows an asymptomatic clinical course. Without treatment, Chagas disease can lead to severe cardiac and digestive alterations and become fatal. Raising awareness of the disease is essential to **improve the rates of early treatment and cure, together with the interruption of its transmission.** 14 April is World Chagas Disease. **The World Chagas Disease Day was celebrated for the first time in 2020.**
- The theme for 2024 is **Tackling Chagas disease: detect early and care for life,** to increase public awareness of Chagas disease and secure greater funding and support for early diagnosis and life-long, comprehensive follow-up care initiatives.

World Heritage Day

- **The International Day for Monuments and Sites also known as World Heritage Day is an international observance held on 18 April each year** around the world with different types of activities, including visits to monuments and heritage sites, conferences, round tables and newspaper articles.
- **The International Day for Monuments and Sites was proposed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on 18 April 1982** and approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983 during the assembly's 22nd general conference.
- **This year, the theme for World Heritage Day 2024 is ‘Discover and Experience Diversity.** ‘ This theme shines a light on the richness of our history. It also reminds us to explore and appreciate the unique heritage of different communities.

World Liver Day 2024

- **Every year on April 19, we observe World Liver Day to raise awareness of liver-related illnesses.** One of the most important organs in vertebrate species is the liver. It facilitates food digestion, gives the body energy, and flushes out dangerous substances.
- **The theme for World Liver Day 2024 is “Keep your liver healthy and disease-free”.** The current year's theme focuses on the need of regular well-being check-ups to prevent liver-related disorders.

Chinese Language Day

- The United Nations selected April 20 for Chinese Language Day as the date commemorates Gu Yu (or “Grain Rain”) one of the 24 solar terms of the Chinese culture. During this period, rain brings the rapid growth of grain.

World Creativity and Innovation Day 21 April

- World Creativity and Innovation Day is a global UN day celebrated on April 21 to raise awareness around the importance of creativity and innovation in problem solving with respect to advancing the United Nations sustainable development goals, also known as the “global goals”. The day was created with UN resolution with the support of 80 countries. The first World Creativity and Innovation Day was celebrated on April 21, 2018.
- This year, the theme of World Creativity and Innovation Day is “step out and innovate.” World Creativity and Innovation Day has been observed by citizens and organizations in over 50 countries since 2002.

International Mother Earth Day

- International Mother Earth Day was established in 2009, by the United Nations General Assembly. The Resolution was introduced by Bolivia and endorsed by over 50 member states. It recognizes that “the Earth and its ecosystems are our home” and that “it is necessary to promote harmony with nature and the Earth.” The term Mother Earth is used because it “reflects the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species and the planet we all inhabit”. It is decided to designate April 22 as International Mother Earth Day.
- General Assembly President Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann welcomed the creation of International Mother Earth Day, saying: “International Mother Earth Day promotes a view of the Earth as the entity that sustains all living things found in nature. Inclusiveness is at the heart of International Mother Earth Day; fostering shared responsibilities to rebuild our troubled relationship with nature is a cause that is uniting people around the world.” The theme for World Earth Day 2024 is “Planet vs. Plastics”. This captivating theme aims to increase public awareness of the harmful effects that plastic pollution has on the environment and its inhabitants.

English Language Day 23 April

- UN English Day is observed annually on 23 April. The event was established by UN’s Department of Public Information in 2010 “to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization”.

World Book and Copyright Day 23 April 2024

- World Book and Copyright Day is a celebration to promote the enjoyment of books and reading. Each year, on 23 April, celebrations take place all over the world to recognize the scope of books - a link between the past and the future, a bridge between generations and across cultures. It is the date on which several prominent authors, William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega all died. “Read Your Way” is the theme for this year’s World Book and Copyright Day.

World Malaria Day

- World Malaria Day is an international observance commemorated every year on 25 April and recognizes global efforts to control malaria. This year the World Malaria Day 2024 theme is “Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world”.

World Intellectual Property Day April 26, 2024

- World Intellectual Property Day is observed annually on 26 April. The event was established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2000 to “raise awareness of how patents, copyright, trademarks and designs impact on daily life” and “to celebrate creativity, and the contribution made by creators and innovators to the development of economies and societies across the globe”.
- 26 April was chosen as the date for World Intellectual Property Day because it coincides with the date on which the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization entered into force in 1970. World Intellectual Property Day is WIPO’s largest intellectual property (IP) public outreach campaign. The official

theme for World Intellectual Property Day 2024 is “IP and the SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity”.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 28 April

- In 2003, the International Labour Organization (ILO), began to observe World Day in order to stress the prevention of accidents and diseases at work, capitalizing on the ILO’s traditional strengths of tripartism and social dialogue. **28 April is also the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers organized worldwide by the trade union movement since 1996.**
- For 2024, **the theme is to focus on ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate**, which reveals new data on the impact of climate change on workers’ safety and health.



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QUESTIONS

- How many members does the Schengen area currently comprise with the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania?
(a) 27 members (b) 28 members (c) 29 members (d) 30 members
- The Armed Forces are planning to turn _____ into the first “tri-service common defence station” in the country for the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
(a) Mumbai (b) Pune (c) New Delhi (d) Bhopal
- Recently, over _____ products from across India have been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
(a) 40 (b) 50 (c) 60 (d) 75
- Who among the following activated the world’s most powerful laser in the control room of a research centre in Romania as part of the European Union’s Infrastructure ELI project?
(a) Stephen Knight (b) Antonia Toma (c) Anthony Thrach (d) Tom Matthews
- The Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act says payments due to _____ registered micro and small-scale industries would be allowed as deduction only if the actual payment was made within the time stipulated in the MSME Act.
(a) UDYAN (b) UDHYAM (c) MICROSIS (d) INDIANA
- Which of the following companies recently became First-in-India to integrate transgender employees in mine?
(a) Tata Steel (b) Bhushan Steel (c) Adani Power (d) Tata Power
- Which of the following has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet, to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for early and accurate detection, monitoring and assessment of SARS-CoV-2 and MERS-CoV?
(a) WHO (b) UNGA (c) UNESCO (d) UNICEF
- Who among the following recently accepted the Bharat Ratna award on behalf of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh?
(a) P V Prabhakar Rao (b) Jayant Chaudhary (c) Chaudhry Ajeet Singh (d) Ram Nath Thakur
- Who among the following won the Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of The Year 2023 in the men’s category at the Hockey India Annual Awards?
(a) Salim Tete (b) Ashok Kumar (c) P.R. Sreejesh (d) Hardik Singh
- The UN has designated _____ as the International Year of Camelids.
(a) 2024 (b) 2025 (c) 2026 (d) 2027
- Which of the following is to construct the world’s first Esports Island?
(a) USA (b) France (c) Germany (d) Abu Dhabi
- What milestone has India’s defence exports achieved recently, according to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh?
(a) ₹ 20,000 crore-mark for the first time (b) ₹ 21,000 crore-mark for the first time
(c) ₹ 22,000 crore-mark for the first time (d) ₹ 23,000 crore-mark for the first time
- In which country stringent new hate crime law recently came into force?
(a) Scotland (b) Ireland (c) France (d) Germany
- Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is setting up its first data center in India in _____.
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Chennai (d) Bengaluru

15. Recently, AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) amalgamated _____ marking the first such consolidation in the sector.
(a) Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (b) Fincare Small Finance Bank
(c) Equitas Small Finance Bank (d) Unity Small Finance Bank
16. Recently, The Securities and Exchange Board of India – SEBI has launched a new and more user friendly version of its complaint redress system _____.
(a) SCORES 1.0 (b) SCORES 2.0 (c) SCORES 5.0 (d) SCORES 7.0
17. In which category did REC Limited recently won the SKOCH ESG Award 2024?
(a) Renewable Energy Development (b) Sustainable Financing
(c) Green Technology Innovation (d) Climate Change Mitigation
18. Which of the following agencies recently organized the 20th D. P. Kohli Memorial Lecture on the occasion of its Raising Day?
(a) Enforcement Directorate (b) National Investigation Agency
(c) Central Bureau of Investigation (d) Criminal Investigation Department
19. Recently, Venturi Astrolab Inc, a Los Angeles-based startup founded by a veteran spaceflight robotics engineer, has unveiled a groundbreaking prototype of a lunar rover, the _____ vehicle.
(a) INIX (b) LINUX (c) FLEX (d) CANON
20. Who among the following recently won the Men’s Singles title at the Miami Open tournament in 2024?
(a) Grigor Dimitrov (b) Jannik Sinner (c) Carlos Alcaraz (d) Rohan Bopanna
21. Recently, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was sworn in for his third term as President of _____.
(a) Egypt (b) Lebanon (c) Syria (d) Morocco
22. Which of the following has released a Consultation Paper on inputs for formulation of National Broadcasting Policy-2024?
(a) Ministry of Communication and information Technology of India
(b) Press Information Bureau
(c) NITI Aayog
(d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
23. Who of the following has recently implemented the ‘One Vehicle, One FASTag’ initiative?
(a) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India
(b) RITES Limited
(c) IRCON Limited
(d) National Highways Authority of India
24. Which of the following countries recently appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the African nation’s first woman Prime Minister?
(a) Democratic Republic of Congo (b) Somalia
(c) The Gambia (d) Senegal
25. Which of the following countries has recently opened the world’s first exclusive mosque for transgender people, also called the third gender?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Pakistan
(c) Malaysia (d) Indonesia
26. Who among the following recently topped the annual list of the world’s billionaires by Forbes?
(a) Jeff Bezos (b) Mark Zuckerberg
(c) Bernard Arnault (d) Elon Musk

27. What is the projected growth rate for the Indian economy in 2024 according to the World Bank?
(a) 6.0% (b) 7.5% (c) 8.7% (d) 5.3%
28. Where is the location of the world's most powerful MRI scanner where around 20 healthy volunteers have undergone scanning?
(a) Silicon Valley, USA (b) Tokyo, Japan (c) Paris, France (d) Cambridge, England
29. Which of the following IIM's has recently inked a three-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) to advance educational collaboration and foster excellence in land port management?
(a) IIM Indore (b) IIM Shillong (c) IIM Ahmadabad (d) IIM Lucknow
30. Who won the Men's Singles title in the Spain Masters 2024 Badminton tournament?
(a) Toma Junior Popov of France (b) Kean Yew Loh of Singapore
(c) Supanida Katethong of Thailand (d) Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand
31. Which of the following individuals secured the top spot as the wealthiest individual in both Asia and India, according to Forbes' recent update?
(a) Gautam Adani (b) Mukesh Ambani (c) Savitri Jindal (d) Sunil Bharti Mittal
32. Name the national digital identity for health which is part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
(a) AASHA (b) ABHA (c) RATNA (d) SAGAR
33. Who was recently sworn in as the new President of Senegal?
(a) Amadou Ba (b) Bassirou Diomaye Faye
(c) Ousmane Sonko (d) Macky Sall
34. Recently, Coastal security exercise _____ conducted off Lakshadweep Islands.
(a) 'Ratnakar Suraksha' (b) 'Sagar Kavach' (c) 'Sagar Ratna' (d) 'Sindhu Rakshak'
35. Who among the following emerged victorious in the Women's Singles category of the 2024 Spain Masters Badminton Tournament?
(a) Supanida Katethong of Thailand (b) Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand
(c) Carolina Marin of Spain (d) Tai Tzu-Ying of Chinese Taipei
36. Name the first company in India which exceeded 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity.
(a) Adani Green Energy Ltd. (b) Tata Green Energy Ltd.
(c) Jindal Green Energy Ltd. (d) Godrej Green Energy Ltd.
37. The General Assembly declared _____ the International Day of Conscience.
(a) 2 April (b) 5 April (c) 7 April (d) 9 April
38. Which of the following institutions recently collaborated in the development of the CAR-T Cell Therapy?
(a) IIT Bombay and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
(b) Tata Memorial Centre (TMC) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)
(c) IIT Bombay and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC)
(d) Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and Apollo Hospitals
39. Which of the following organizations is overseeing the 3rd Association of Indian Universities (AIU) National Moot Court Competition hosted by the School of Law at DY Patil Deemed to be University?
(a) International Court of Justice (ICJ)
(b) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
(c) Association of Indian Universities (AIU)
(d) International Bar Association (IBA)

40. What is the proposed allocation ratio for the Nifty500 Multicap Infrastructure index?
(a) 50:30:20 (b) 60:20:20 (c) 40:30:30 (d) 70:15:15
41. Recently, four products Lakadong turmeric, Garo Dakmanda textile, Lyrnai pottery and brewed rice wine, 'chubitchi', from which state received GI tags?
(a) Meghalaya (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Assam (d) West Bengal
42. Which of the following places is recognised as India's first planned ecotourism destination?
(a) Nallamalla (b) Ooty (c) Kochi (d) Thenmala
43. Which of the following countries former leader Hun Sen was promoted as senate president, taking over a key ceremonial role less than a year after handing power to his son?
(a) Cambodia (b) Thailand (c) Laos (d) Vietnam
44. Who among the following Kolkata-based business leader has been selected as a member of the 2024 Class of Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum?
(a) Adwaita Nayar (b) Shashwat Goenka (c) Arjun Bhartia (d) Priya Agarwal Hebbar
45. Name the Indian Women who topped the 'Forbes World Billionaire List' for 2024 with \$35.5 billion net worth.
(a) Anu Aga (b) Vinod Rai Gupta (c) Rekha Jhunjhunwala (d) Savitri Jindal
46. Which of the following Asian countries is world's third biggest oil consumer and importer?
(a) Japan (b) China (c) Indonesia (d) India
47. Recently, An international team of scientists, including from India, has discovered strong evidence indicating the presence of ozone on Jupiter's moon _____.
(a) Callisto (b) Ganymede (c) Io (d) Europa
48. Which of the following companies have been selected by NASA to develop technologies for the Lunar Terrain Vehicle (LTV), the successor to the Lunar Roving Vehicle?
(a) SpaceX, Blue Origin, Boeing
(b) Intuitive Machines, Lunar Outpost, and Venturi Astrolab
(c) Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon
(d) Boeing, Sierra Nevada Corporation, Virgin Galactic
49. Who among the following recently became the only Indian weightlifter to qualify for the Paris Olympics this year after competing successfully at the IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand?
(a) Mirabai Chanu (b) Alankrita Mukherjee (c) Vibha Jha (d) Geeta Phogat
50. National Maritime Day is celebrated on _____ every year.
(a) 2 April (b) 5 April (c) 7 April (d) 9 April
51. Name the person from Jammu and Kashmir to become the first woman from India to represent the country as a jury member at this year's Summer Olympics, which is to be hosted by Paris.
(a) Sania Mir (b) Rehana Sultana (c) Shazia Ilmi (d) Bilquis Mir
52. The unicameral legislature of Kuwait is _____.
(a) National Assembly (b) Emir Council
(c) Emir Assembly (d) National Council of Kuwait
53. Recently, The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud has recommended to the Centre the names of five additional judges of the _____ for appointment as permanent judges of that court.
(a) Madhya Pradesh High Court (b) Chhattisgarh High Court
(c) Karnataka High Court (d) Kerala High Court

54. Who among the following recently announced the resignation as Icelandic Prime Minister to run for President?
(a) Bjarni Benediktsson (b) Katrin Jakobsdottir
(c) Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson (d) Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson
55. The central government has launched a program to vaccinate about 2 crore animals in _____ for free.
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Maharashtra (c) Bihar (d) Madhya Pradesh
56. Who has been selected as one of the five Indians to join the Young Global Leaders Class of 2024 by the World Economic Forum?
(a) Priya Agarwal Hebbar (b) Anupriya Patel
(c) Muskaan Luthra Gill (d) Alankrita Srivastava
57. The government of India has begun working to have one Indian Single Sky Harmonised (ISHAN) air traffic management (ATM) from _____ with an aim to reduce carbon footprint, enhance safety, and aircraft fuel usage.
(a) Indore (b) Bhopal (c) Bengaluru (d) Nagpur
58. The First Light Fusion, in _____, has increased the distance a projectile is fired into the fuel by more than ten times.
(a) Lima (b) Jakarta (c) London (d) Oxfordshire
59. Recently, Archaeologists from Kerala University has stumbled upon more crucial findings from a 5,200-year old Harappan settlement at Padta Bet in _____.
(a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Haryana (d) Jammu & Kashmir
60. World Health Day is celebrated annually on _____ to raise awareness about health-related issues worldwide and to promote healthy habits and lifestyles.
(a) April 2nd (b) April 5th (c) April 7th (d) April 9th
61. Recently, the sitars and tanpuras of Miraj, a small town in _____ known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments, have been awarded the coveted Geographical Indication tags.
(a) Gujarat's Vadodara district (b) Rajasthan's Udaipur district
(c) Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam (d) Maharashtra's Sangli district
62. Which of the following union ministries recently declared its intention to delist 18 protected monuments as they have "ceased to be of national importance"?
(a) Ministry of Home Affairs (b) Ministry of Culture
(c) Ministry of Finance (d) Ministry of Defence
63. Recently, which of the following countries has launched its second military spy satellite into space, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year?
(a) Indonesia (b) Malaysia (c) South Korea (d) Mauritius
64. Recently, _____ Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah submitted his cabinet's resignation as expected to the emir.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Kuwait (c) UAE (d) Jordan
65. According to a report by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), _____ came third on the list of most improved countries as a result of its youthful demographic, which promises strong demand and availability of good labour.
(a) USA (b) France (c) India (d) Japan
66. Recently, Reserve Bank of India has said that currently around _____ users in the country are using Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
(a) 40 lakh (b) 45 lakh (c) 50 lakh (d) 60 lakh

67. Recently, Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) and _____ have officially joined the Regional Payment Connectivity (RPC) after previously expressing their interest in joining the initiative.
(a) Bank of Japan (BOJ) (b) Bank of America (BOA)
(c) Bank of the Lao PDR (BOL) (d) Bank of Singapore (BOS)
68. Recently, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and _____ officially unveiled the world's first-ever IBM quantum computer on a university campus.
(a) Acer (b) IBM (c) Dell (d) Microsoft
69. The first Indian to take 150 wickets for a single Indian Premier League franchise is _____.
(a) Jasprit Bumrah (b) Bhuvaneshwar Kumar (c) Ishant Sharma (d) Prasiddh Krishna
70. Every year on _____, carrot enthusiasts around the world come together to celebrate International Carrot Day.
(a) April 2 (b) April 4 (c) April 7 (d) April 10
71. The Supreme Court has expanded the scope of _____ to include the "right against the adverse effects of climate change".
(a) Articles 12 and 18 (b) Articles 11 and 17 (c) Articles 14 and 21 (d) Articles 16 and 24
72. Who is to be new President of Slovakia?
(a) Peter Pellegrini (b) Ivan Korcok (c) Robert Fico (d) Zuzana Čaputová
73. Which of the following countries is **not** associated with territorial claims over the South China Sea?
(a) Taiwan (b) Indonesia (c) New Zealand (d) Vietnam
74. Who has been recently appointed by the World Bank Group to serve on the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel?
(a) Deepak Mohanthy (b) Amritpal Singh
(c) Rakesh Mohan (d) Mukesh Dhingra
75. Which of the following is set to establish a pioneering ASEAN Climate Finance Policy Platform aimed at bolstering the fight against climate change in Southeast Asia?
(a) AIIB (b) ADB
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) World Bank
76. Recently, The _____ deferred the implementation of its new norms for exchange traded currency derivatives (ETCD) market to May 3 from April 5.
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Reserve Bank of India
(c) NITI Aayog (d) Bank of Singapore
77. Recently, The new generation ballistic missile _____ was successfully flight-tested by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) along with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.
(a) Agni-Union (b) Agni-Unique (c) Agni-One (d) Agni-Prime
78. The First AI Engineer of India is _____.
(a) Devika (b) Yogita (c) Anika (d) Namita
79. Name the Indian shuttler who recently clinched the Men's singles titles, at Kazakhstan International Badminton Challenge tournament in Astana.
(a) M Arun (b) K Shitraj (c) L Lathigaraj (d) M. Tharun
80. The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDS DP) takes place annually on _____.
(a) 3 April (b) 6 April (c) 9 April (d) 12 April

81. Which region in Uttar Pradesh has recently received the first Geographical Indication (GI) tag for its wheat produce?
(a) Bundelkhand (b) Awadh (c) Rohilkhand (d) Purvanchal
82. With 100 per cent electrification, which of the following railways will become the largest green railways of the world?
(a) Russian Railways (b) US Railways (c) Indian Railways (d) British Railways
83. Which of the following countries recently launched new gold-backed currency that started trading amid doubts about the country's third such re-launch in a decade?
(a) South Africa (b) Zimbabwe (c) Angola (d) Chad
84. Which of the following countries are involved in the AUKUS security pact?
(a) Britain, Canada, and China (b) Britain, the U.S., and Australia
(c) China, Japan, and Australia (d) Britain, Russia, and the U.S.
85. Name the pioneering, environment-friendly prepaid forex corporate card recently launched by Thomas Cook (India) Limited.
(a) EnterpriseFx (b) GradeOnFx (c) GreenFx (d) EnergyFx
86. What milestone did the combined market capitalization of all listed stocks on the BSE achieved recently?
(a) Rs. 200 lakh crore (b) Rs. 300 lakh crore
(c) Rs. 400 lakh crore (d) Rs. 500 lakh crore
87. The first launch of the Angara A5 space rocket is related with which of the following countries?
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) Canada (d) Japan
88. The Igla-S MANPADS is being acquired to enhance the _____ Army's Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) capabilities.
(a) British (b) Indian (c) US (d) Russian
89. Who has been recently appointed as a full-time member of the Sixteenth Finance Commission by the Centre?
(a) Vipul Jha (b) Manoj Panda (c) Ajay Narayan Singh (d) Vikram Ahuja
90. India's two research bases on Antarctica — Maitri and Bharati — are located 3,000 km apart. Notably, both branches are part of the _____ postal division.
(a) Kerala (b) Goa (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Maharashtra
91. World Homeopathy Day is celebrated annually to honour the work of German physician and chemist Dr Samuel Hahnemann on his birth anniversary - _____.
(a) April 5 (b) April 7 (c) April 10 (d) April 13
92. What position did Bjarni Benediktsson assume in Iceland?
(a) Foreign Minister (b) Prime Minister (c) Minister of Finance (d) Minister of Environment
93. Who among the following recently became Ireland's youngest ever prime minister?
(a) Simon Harris (b) Sinn Fein (c) Alex Tsipiras (d) Drek Later
94. Which of the following countries is **NOT** a partner in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)?
(a) China (b) Japan (c) New Zealand (d) Philippines
95. Who was recently elected unopposed as the chairman of the Senate in Pakistan?
(a) Saidal Khan Nasir (b) Yusuf Raza Gilani
(c) Bilawal Zardari Bhutto (d) Hina Khar Rabbani

96. India's first vertical-lift bridge connecting the country's mainland with Rameswaram Island is _____.
- (a) Kambhat railway bridge (b) Shiva railway bridge
(c) Palk Strait railway bridge (d) Pamban railway bridge
97. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the status of unicorns in the country according to the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024?
- (a) The number of unicorns has increased significantly to 100.
(b) The number of unicorns has declined for the first time in four years to 67.
(c) The country has maintained its position as the leading hub for unicorns globally.
(d) The valuation of unicorns has decreased by 50% compared to the previous year.
98. What is the expected size of the co-lending book of non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) by June 2024 according to CRISIL Ratings?
- (a) Rs. 50,000 crore (b) Rs. 75,000 crore
(c) Rs. 1 Lakh crore (d) Rs. 1.5 Lakh crore
99. Which of the following companies collaborated to develop and launch TSAT-1A, India's first private sector-built earth observation satellite?
- (a) SpaceX and NASA
(b) Boeing and Lockheed Martin
(c) Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) and Satellogic
(d) ISRO and DRDO
100. Which of the following organizations was recently presented with the 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration?
- (a) National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
(b) European Space Agency (ESA)
(c) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
(d) China National Space Administration (CNSA)
101. Who was recently named the South Asian Person of the Year by Harvard University for her significant contributions and impact on both the international and Indian entertainment industries?
- (a) Avantika Vandhanapu (b) Radhika Burman
(c) Sushmita Rangasami (d) Nivedita Narvekar
102. Which of the following countries will have a defence attaché posted by India for the first time, indicating their growing importance as a security partner?
- (a) Brazil (b) Japan (c) Poland (d) Russia
103. Recently, In which country liberal opposition parties scored a landslide victory in a parliamentary election held recently?
- (a) South Korea (b) Vietnam (c) Taiwan (d) Thailand
104. Recently, Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar inaugurated a 350m long major pier for Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) and a residential accommodation at Naval Base _____.
- (a) Kunwar (b) Karanj (c) Karwar (d) Kasauti
105. Who has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the National Housing Bank (NHB)?
- (a) Sanjay Shukla (b) Rajesh Kumar
(c) Priya Gupta (d) Ankit Patel
106. Which of the following countries carmaker Citroën recently became the first multinational car manufacturer in India to export domestically made electric vehicles to the international market?
- (a) France (b) Germany (c) US (d) Japan

107. Which of the following banks recently established a branch in Kavaratti Island in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, becoming the only private sector bank in the region?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) Kotak Mahindra Bank
108. Who among the following has been recently appointed as member / members of the University Grants Commission (UGC) by the central government?
(a) Ashish Kumar Chauhan (b) Sachidananda Mohanty
(c) Sridhar Vembu (d) All of the above
109. Which of the following currently holds the top position as the world's most valued airline in terms of market capitalization?
(a) Delta Air Lines (b) Ryan Air
(c) Southwest Airlines (d) IndiGo Airlines
110. Who will be the second Indian citizen to travel to space?
(a) Kalpana Roberts (b) Gopichand Thotakura
(c) Ankur Raizada (d) Sumit Reymond
111. Which of the following Indian institutions achieved a significant milestone by securing the 20th spot globally in developmental studies according to the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world university rankings?
(a) Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (b) Delhi University
(c) Jadhavpur University (d) Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi
112. Who was the first Prime Minister of India to feature on the cover of Newsweek?
(a) Indira Gandhi (b) Jawaharlal Nehru (c) PV Narsimharao (d) Manmohan Singh
113. Which of the following state / union territories becomes the first state in India to offer a new QR-based ticketing service?
(a) Delhi (b) Lakshadweep (c) Assam (d) Puducherry
114. Which of the following countries top property tycoon was recently sentenced to death in one of the biggest corruption cases in history, with an estimated \$27 billion in damages?
(a) Vietnam (b) Singapore (c) Thailand (d) Laos
115. Who will take over as the UK's first-ever woman high commissioner to India?
(a) Lindy Cameron (b) Alberta Maurice (c) Alexa Zerito (d) Nathan Ellis
116. How many Indian institutions were featured in the top 500 list of the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world university rankings by subject?
(a) 55 (b) 69 (c) 78 (d) 89
117. Which country along with India have signed a protocol to amend the double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA), which included a principal purpose test (PPT) to decide whether a foreign investor is eligible to claim treaty?
(a) Maldives (b) Mauritius (c) Sri Lanka (d) Seychelles
118. Where is the National Judicial Academy (NJAC) located in India?
(a) Pune (b) Bhopal (c) Udaipur (d) Surat
119. The National Safe Motherhood Day in India is observed on _____ to raise awareness about the importance of proper healthcare and maternity services for expectant mothers.
(a) April 5 (b) April 8 (c) April 11 (d) April 14
120. Who has been recently selected for the prestigious John Dirks Award in global health?
(a) Dr Gagandeep Kang (b) Dr Mishika Jain
(c) Dr Anudeep Rohilla (d) Dr Sukirti Kandpal

121. Name the operation under which the Indian Army established its full control over the Siachen glacier on April 13, 1984.
(a) Operation Meghdoot (b) Operation Sarthak
(c) Operation Singhnaad (d) Operation Fateh
122. Name the actor who was recently conferred with an honorary doctorate by Vels University during its 14th Annual Convocation at the Pallavaram campus in Chennai.
(a) Ram Charan (b) Ajay Devgan
(c) Chiranjeevi (d) Pawan Kalyan
123. India celebrates World Quantum Day 2024 on _____, with aspirations to become a global leader in various fields of Quantum Science and Technology.
(a) April 7 (b) April 9 (c) April 11 (d) April 14
124. According to the latest data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project, India has lost _____ hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period.
(a) 1.87 million (b) 2.07 million (c) 2.33 million (d) 2.58 million
125. As per their GDP data, India is ranked _____ in world's GDP rankings in 2024.
(a) 1st (b) 3rd (c) 5th (d) 7th
126. Name the first fully Licensed decentralized gambling platform, has launched and is offering users a safe, secure, and streamlined online casino service powered by the latest in blockchain and smart contract technology?
(a) Coinmarket Cap (b) Zebpay
(c) Uno Unicorn (d) CoinGames
127. According to a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report, which of the following countries has the highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25 per cent inflation rate?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Nepal (c) Bhutan (d) Pakistan
128. The Indian Army has successfully carried out field trials of indigenously-developed _____ weapon system, paving way for its induction into the force's armoury.
(a) MPATGM (b) SUNDAR (c) MODEM (d) UNIQUE
129. National Pet Day is celebrated on _____ every year.
(a) April 7 (b) April 9 (c) April 11 (d) April 14
130. Which of the following Indian state's Charaideo Maidam was recently nominated for UNESCO world heritage tag?
(a) Assam (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram (d) Nagaland
131. The World Designing Forum, one of the world's largest global fashion community, has announced the setting up of India's first Handloom Cluster and Apparel Designing Park in _____.
(a) Ahmadabad (b) Surat (c) Agra (d) Kanpur
132. Recently, The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including _____ from the health drinks category from their portals.
(a) Coca Cola (b) Dettol (c) Bournvita (d) Beckitt Benkiser
133. The IMF executive board had recently confirmed that it had reappointed Kristalina Georgieva to serve for a second _____ term running the international financial institution.
(a) Two-year (b) Three-year (c) Four-year (d) Five-year
134. Recently, The _____ military reported a successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.
(a) Russian (b) French (c) German (d) American

135. Recently, India ranked number _____ in cybercrime, with frauds involving people to make advance fee payment being the most common type, according to a new research that surveyed cybercrime experts around the world.
(a) 5 (b) 8 (c) 10 (d) 13
136. Recently, Rating agency Moody's maintained outlook for the government of India to be _____.
(a) Unstable (b) Stable (c) Negative (d) Extreme Positive
137. Which of the following telecom service providers is to raise Rs. 18,000 cr via India's largest ever FPO?
(a) Vodafone Idea (b) Airtel (c) Reliance Jio (d) BSNL
138. Recently, Northwestern University confirmed that the brightest _____ burst ever recorded, GRB 221009A, was caused by the collapse and explosion of a massive star.
(a) Alpha-ray (b) Beta-ray (c) Gamma-ray (d) Neurons
139. World Chagas Disease is observed on _____.
(a) 11 April (b) 12 April (c) 14 April (d) 17 April
140. Who among the following joined the ranks of the world's first billionaire from music, according to Forbes' ?
(a) Madonna (b) Lady Gaga (c) Katy Perry (d) Taylor Swift
141. Puthandu also known as _____ New Year is the first day of year on the _____ calendar.
(a) Tamil (b) Kannada (c) Telugu (d) Malyalam
142. Name the British-American author who recently released his memoir "Knife".
(a) Danish Jauhar (b) J K Rowling (c) Salman Rushdie (d) Imran Sultan
143. Which of the following states has taken lead in implementing the Centre's Green Credit Programme (GCP) which got over 500 land parcels spanning 4,980 hectares for tree plantation in the past two months?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Assam (d) Maharashtra
144. Name India's largest integrated power company that is gearing up to launch the latest edition of Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative.
(a) NTPC Limited (b) NHPC Limited (c) Tata Power (d) Reliance Energy
145. Recently, The _____ and India launched an Expression of Interest (EoI) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs) for a matchmaking event.
(a) World Bank (b) European Parliament (c) European Union (EU) (d) IMF
146. According to a joint study by Knight Frank India and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), The Indian real estate market is expected to reach _____ by 2034.
(a) \$0.5 Trillion (b) \$1 Trillion (c) \$1.5 Trillion (d) \$3.75 Trillion
147. Name the Indian Batsman who owned the record of becoming the first batter from the country to hit 500 sixes in T20 cricket.
(a) Hardik Pandya (b) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (c) Rohit Sharma (d) Virat Kohli
148. The NASA's mission that launched sounding rockets during the recent total solar eclipse was led by _____, an India-born researcher.
(a) Anunay Bharadwaj (b) Gautam Barjatya (c) Aroh Barjatya (d) Bimal Khetan
149. Recently, Sam Bankman-Fried, facing the prospect of spending much of his adult life behind bars, appealed his conviction and 25-year prison sentence for stealing \$8 billion from customers of the now-bankrupt _____ cryptocurrency exchange he founded.
(a) Binance (b) Crypton (c) FTX (d) HNX

150. Name the mathematician who has won the 2023 Turing award, often referred to as the Nobel Prize for computing.
(a) Avi Wigderson (b) Thomas Bush (c) Alexiras Duren (d) Mitchell Revman
151. Name the renowned author who has written a new book titled 'The Idea of Democracy', which explores the current state of democracy and its potential challenges in countries like India and the United States?
(a) Sam Pitroda (b) Raghuram Rajan (c) N V Chandrasekhar (d) Colonel GVK Narsimhan
152. Which of the following celebrates Apricot Blossom festival?
(a) Sikkim (b) Ladakh (c) Puducherry (d) Nagaland
153. Who among the following recently won the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters for the third time in four years?
(a) Stefanos Tsitsipas (b) Casper Ruud (c) Andy Murray (d) Thomas Bach
154. Which of the following has become the first country in the world to roll out a new vaccine (called Men5CV) recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), which protects people against five strains of the meningococcus bacteria?
(a) Nigeria (b) Zimbabwe (c) South Africa (d) USA
155. According to the Airports Council International (ACI) World, what is the ranking of Delhi airport among the world's busiest airports for 2023?
(a) First (b) Fifth (c) Tenth (d) Fifteenth
156. Who among the following recently became the first former U.S. president to stand criminal trial?
(a) Donald Trump (b) George W. Bush (c) Barack Obama (d) Bill Clinton
157. The Rig is the world's first floating theme park off the coast of _____.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Canada (c) USA (d) Singapore
158. Which of the following universities has been honoured with the prestigious Best Horticulture University Award?
(a) Visva-Bharati University
(b) Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University
(c) Maharana Pratap Horticultural University
(d) Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry
159. Recently, which of the following cricket stadiums has become the first BCCI-accredited venue to install a hybrid pitch?
(a) Wankhede Stadium (b) Eden Gardens Stadium
(c) HPCA Stadium (d) M. Chinnaswamy Stadium
160. Who is set to succeed Lee Hsien Loong as the Prime Minister of Singapore?
(a) Teo Chee Hean (b) Lawrence Wong
(c) Dr. Ng Eng Hen (d) Heng Swee Keat
161. Who was conferred with the third Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award for exemplary contribution to the country, people, and society?
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amitabh Bachchan
(c) Alka Yagnik (d) Udit Narayan
162. Which of the following teams recently won their maiden ISL League Shield football?
(a) Mohun Bagan (b) Chennaiyin (c) Kerala Blasters (d) Odisha
163. Recently, The Indian Army contingent departed to take part in the fifth edition of _____ joint military exercise DUSTLIK.
(a) India-Afghanistan (b) India-Kazakhstan (c) India-Uzbekistan (d) India-Kyrgyzstan

164. Which of the following countries urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to hold Azerbaijan responsible for what it said was the ethnic cleansing from the Nagorno-Karabakh region?
(a) Armenia (b) Poland
(c) Georgia (d) Turkey
165. Which of the following recently announced the launch of a “large fleet order”, a first in India?
(a) Ola (b) Pay Later (c) Zomato (d) Swiggy
166. India is embarking on a revolutionary journey into the future of technology with the inauguration of its First Metaverse Experience Center in _____.
(a) Noida (b) Gurugram (c) Mumbai (d) Pune
167. NASA’s Perseverance Rover, nicknamed _____ in 2023 created the first “sample depot on another world” by putting down ten rock sample tubes that are slated to be returned to Earth as part of the Mars Sample Return Campaign.
(a) Mercy (b) Guama (c) Percy (d) Luthra
168. In a first, ESA’s Gaia mission researchers have discovered a huge black hole that is of stellar origin, hiding in plain sight in our very own Milky Way Galaxy. This sleeping giant was found in the constellation _____ and that is just under 2000 light-years away from Earth.
(a) Orion (b) Lyra (c) Aquila (d) Ursa Minor
169. What does SURAKSHA stand for in CDP-SURAKSHA?
(a) Sustainable Urban Resource Allocation for Knowledgeable Horticulture Assistance
(b) Secure Unified Resource Allocation for Knowledgeable Horticulture Assistance
(c) System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance
(d) Sustainable Unified Resource Allocation for Knowledgeable Horticulture Assistance
170. How many countries currently host Olympic Studies and Research Centres (OSRC) as part of the global network organized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)?
(a) 12 countries (b) 24 countries (c) 48 countries (d) 70 countries
171. The International Day for Monuments and Sites also known as World Heritage Day is an international observance held on _____ each year around the world.
(a) 14 April (b) 16 April (c) 18 April (d) 20 April
172. Bisket Jatra is an eight-day celebration that culminated with a huge celebration in _____.
(a) Bhutan (b) Myanmar (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
173. What is the maximum percentage of foreign direct investment (FDI) allowed under the automatic route for satellite manufacturing and operation, satellite data products, ground segment, and user segment according to the amended FDI policy in the space sector?
(a) 24% (b) 74% (c) 100% (d) 51%
174. What percentage of Inter-Regional networks does Power Grid Corporation operate?
(a) 64% (b) 76% (c) 86% (d) 92%
175. Which of the following Indians also featured in TIME magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people for the year 2024?
(a) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (b) Priyanka Chopra
(c) Alia Bhatt (d) Virat Kohli
176. Which of the following countries newspaper “Annahar” has recently introduced the world’s first AI designed to perform presidential duties?
(a) Lebanon (b) Oman (c) Jordan (d) Saudi Arabia

177. Uttar Pradesh got its first glass skywalk bridge in _____.
(a) Chitrakoot (b) Varanasi (c) Mirzapur (d) Pilibhit
178. Recently, Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande inaugurated a high-tech IT Laboratory, at the Academy of Armed Forces in _____.
(a) Kyrgyzstan (b) Uzbekistan (c) Kazakhstan (d) Turkmenistan
179. Name the 183rd state to join UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage?
(a) United Kingdom (b) France (c) Canada (d) Germany
180. Name the set up by Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO, that has been designed as a premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems destined for Indian Navy.
(a) SPACE (b) OCEAN (c) KNOWN (d) MERIT
181. Every year on _____, we observe World Liver Day to raise awareness of liver-related illnesses.
(a) April 11 (b) April 15 (c) April 19 (d) April 23
182. Recently, The Centre has constituted a _____ committee to examine and recommend on various issues affecting queer community.
(a) Three-member (b) Four-member
(c) Six-member (d) Eight-member
183. Which of the following airports recently dethroned Singapore's Changi Airport to claim the top spot in the Skytrax World Airport Awards in 2024?
(a) Hamad International Airport (b) Dubai Airport
(c) Seoul Incheon Airport (d) Hong Kong Airport
184. Who among the following Indian cricketers will now be forever immortalized in Jaipur with the city's wax museum unveiling a statue of the cricketer on occasion of World Heritage Day?
(a) Suryakumar Yadav (b) Virat Kohli (c) Rohit Sharma (d) Jasprit Bumrah
185. Recently, Croatia's governing conservatives convincingly won a highly contested parliamentary election. Name the capital and the largest city of the Republic of Croatia?
(a) Minsk (b) Riga (c) Zagreb (d) Sofia
186. Who will take over as the next Chief of Naval Staff on April 30, 2024?
(a) Admiral R. Hari Kumar (b) Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi
(c) Vice-Admiral K. N. Sushil (d) Rear Admiral Anil Chawla
187. Which of the following countries parliament recently voted to suspend the country's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty that once was a key security doctrine for the continent, a 1990 agreement that was abandoned last year by Russia?
(a) Croatia (b) Belarus (c) France (d) Portugal
188. Which of the following countries scrapped its target of cutting climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, but said it still intends to meet a 2045 net zero target?
(a) Belgium (b) Ireland (c) Russia (d) Scotland
189. Which of the following entities has onboarded SBI National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) on its Bharat BillPay platform?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
(b) National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
(c) NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL)
(d) Visa and Rupay

190. NASA confirmed _____ rotorcraft mission to Saturn’s organic compound-rich moon Titan with a budget of \$3.35 billion and a launch date set for July 2028.
(a) Dragonfly (b) Wagonfly (c) Butterfly (d) Rovershaft
191. Who has been recently selected for the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023?
(a) Deena Nayak (b) Utsa Patnaik (c) Vidushi Srivastava (d) Maneka Gupta
192. Name the Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who has been appointed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG)?
(a) Nalin Prabhat (b) Vipul Bharadwaj (c) Mukesh Chandra (d) Ajeet Raheja
193. The Bhadla Solar Park, the largest solar park in the world is located in _____.
(a) Rajasthan (b) Karnataka (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
194. The United Nations selected _____ for Chinese Language Day.
(a) April 13 (b) April 18 (c) April 20 (d) April 24
195. The California-based Rocket Lab announced that it is, for the first time, returning a previously flown _____ rocket’s first stage back into the production line, preparing to launch it again.
(a) Positron (b) Electron (c) Proton (d) Neutron
196. Recently, which of the following courts has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a national asset and a major contributor to the nation’s financial wealth?
(a) Madras High Court (b) Delhi High Court
(c) National Green Tribunal (d) Supreme Court
197. We often find the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) in news. The Hainan Free Trade Port is in _____.
(a) Japan (b) China (c) Indonesia (d) Malaysia
198. Recently, India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to _____, becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia.
(a) Philippines (b) Sri Lanka (c) Maldives (d) Mauritius
199. Recently, the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to “initiate appropriate action” against _____ company selling baby products with higher sugar content in India.
(a) Nestle (b) Britannia (c) Godrej (d) Parle
200. Which of the following countries high court has recently overturned former President Abdulla Yameen’s 11-year prison sentence on money laundering and bribery charges and ordered a retrial?
(a) Mauritius (b) Seychelles (c) Maldives (d) Sri Lanka
201. Recently, The lac bangles of _____ have received the second GI tag of Indian city after haleem.
(a) Bhopal (b) Jaipur (c) Hyderabad (d) Pune
202. World Creativity and Innovation Day is a global UN day celebrated on _____ to raise awareness around the importance of creativity and innovation in problem solving with respect to advancing the United Nations sustainable development goals.
(a) April 14 (b) April 18 (c) April 21 (d) April 24
203. Name the Indian who clinched the nation’s first quota for the Paris Olympics in the sport of rowing by securing a commendable third-place finish in the men’s single scull event at the Asian Olympic qualifiers in Chungju, South Korea.
(a) Muneesh Bajaj (b) Ankit Razdan (c) Bipul Maharaj (d) Balraj Panwar

204. Recently, Researchers at the _____ have reported the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eocene.
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay (b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi (d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee
205. Name the exercise launched by Indian Navy that carried out an extensive exercise along the East Coast as part of efforts to check its preparedness to meet any maritime security challenges.
(a) 'Poorvi Vayu' (b) 'Poorvi Leher' (c) 'Union Exercise' (d) 'Ekal Prayas'
206. Which of the following has recently decided to consider framing guidelines for advocates' associations across the country in a bid to make their admission regulations uniform and democratic?
(a) NALSA (b) National Judicial Academy
(c) Delhi High Court (d) Supreme Court
207. Recently, NASA welcomed _____ as the 38th country to sign the Artemis Accords.
(a) Finland (b) Ireland (c) Sweden (d) Belgium
208. Doordarshan News has recently launched its new _____ coloured logo by announcing that it is now available in a refurbished avatar.
(a) White (b) Saffron (c) Green (d) Purple
209. Recently, True Gamers has unveiled plans to build the world's first eSports island in _____.
(a) Dubai (b) Abu Dhabi (c) Wellington (d) Canberra
210. Recently, OpenAI has hired _____, its first official in India, in order to handle government relations.
(a) Deepika Rao (b) Anamika Raheja (c) Deepanita Bakshi (d) Pragya Misra
211. Which of the following state's traditional attire, 'Risa,' has been officially granted the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) registration, commonly known as the GI tag?
(a) Nagaland (b) Tripura (c) Meghalaya (d) Assam
212. The Stad Ship Tunnel is a planned canal and tunnel to bypass the Stad peninsula in _____.
(a) Belgium (b) Norway (c) Finland (d) Switzerland
213. The 19th campus of National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) is to be operational this year in _____.
(a) Varanasi (b) Lucknow (c) Meerut (d) Hisar
214. Which of the following countries is investing heavily to transform into a top tourist destination, with projects like the Red Sea Project and Neom?
(a) Kuwait (b) Jordan (c) Oman (d) Saudi Arabia
215. Which of the following companies recently pulled off 1.5 bn, OpenAI-type deal with G42?
(a) Google (b) Microsoft (c) Adobe (d) Meta
216. Which of the following countries recently released a geologic atlas set of the global moon with a scale of 1 : 2.5 million, which is the first complete high-definition lunar geologic atlas in the world?
(a) China (b) USA (c) Russia (d) Canada
217. Recently, A team of _____ engineers and scientists have developed the world's first satellite that lets smartphones place a call directly through it, instead of mobile towers.
(a) Japanese (b) Chinese (c) American (d) Russian
218. Who among the following recently won the Chinese Grand Prix?
(a) Iva Stankovic (b) Peter Lockheed (c) Max Verstappen (d) Valtteri Bottas

219. International Mother Earth Day is designated on _____.
(a) April 17 (b) April 20 (c) April 22 (d) April 26
220. Name the Reuters photographer who won the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for his image of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip.
(a) Mohammed Yunus (b) Mohammed Saharyar
(c) Mohammed Salem (d) Rehan Khan
221. Name India's 17-year-old Grandmaster who scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament to become youngest ever challenger to the world title.
(a) M Murugesh (b) D Gukesh (c) Kapil Karawal (d) R Praggananda
222. According to the latest Congressional report, which of the following countries is the largest source country for new citizens in America?
(a) China (b) Mexico (c) India (d) South Korea
223. The International Potato Center -South Asia Regional Centre (CIP-SARC) is expected to come up in _____.
(a) Shimla (b) New Delhi (c) Agra (d) Kanpur
224. Recently, _____ started its first ever Hindi language radio broadcast and is the largest expatriate community in the nation.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Germany (c) United Kingdom (d) Kuwait
225. Silo is the world's first Zero Waste restaurant, based in _____.
(a) Munich (b) Paris (c) Zurich (d) London
226. Which of the following has recently achieved "Navratna" status, as granted by the Department of Public Enterprise?
(a) National Fertilizers Ltd (b) Rites Limited
(c) National Aluminium Company Limited (d) IRCON International
227. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 2550th Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti at Bharat Mandapam in _____.
(a) Hyderabad (b) Bengaluru (c) New Delhi (d) Mumbai
228. Name the new-age fintech company that offers integrated solutions spanning the blockchain layer 1, native coin, exchange services, MPC Wallet, DeFi, NFT, gaming, and other products, has launched its India operations.
(a) NIFDAQ (b) KIDAQ (c) LIDAQ (d) CIFDAQ
229. The Higher School of Economics, located in _____, and the University of Delhi signed an agreement on strategic cooperation and joint actions, and a large research hub will begin operating at the partner university.
(a) Germany (b) USA (c) Russia (d) France
230. The first Indian company to cross the Rs. 1 lakh crore mark in annual pre-tax profit is _____.
(a) Reliance Industries Ltd (b) Tata Power
(c) TCS (d) NALCO
231. Who among the following received the Padma Vibhushan award posthumously this year?
(a) M Venkaiah Naidu (b) Bindeshwar Pathak
(c) Padma Subrahmanyam (d) Amola Pathak
232. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which of the following countries is the largest military spender globally in 2023?
(a) United States (b) India (c) Ukraine (d) Russia

233. Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) is a multinational grouping developed in _____ for cooperation between the Republic of India and _____ Pacific Islands nations.
(a) 2010 and 10 (b) 2011 and 11
(c) 2014 and 14 (d) 2017 and 17
234. Recently, Indian fintech major BharatPe launched _____, an all-in-one payment product that integrates POS (point of sale), QR code, and speaker into one device.
(a) BharatPe Ek (b) BharatPe Unique
(c) BharatPe One (d) BharatPe India
235. The ONGC plans drilling for India’s first geothermal project in _____.
(a) Gujarat (b) Ladakh
(c) Jammu & Kashmir (d) Maharashtra
236. Who has been recently appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University?
(a) Naima Khatoon Gulrez (b) Saima Akhtar
(c) Momina Khatoon (d) Zahida Khan Naseem
237. Who is set to introduce derivative contracts on the Nifty Next 50 index?
(a) National Stock Exchange (b) India International Exchange
(c) Bombay Stock Exchange (d) Vadodara Stock Exchange
238. Which of the following companies topped the India Involved Ranking 2023 according to Skoch, a leading Indian think-tank?
(a) Hindustan Unilever (b) Reliance Industries (c) Adani Group (d) Bank of India
239. Recently, the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference was held in _____.
(a) Milan, Italy (b) London, United Kingdom
(c) Paris, France (d) Barcelona, Spain
240. The first bowler who took 200th IPL wicket recently is _____.
(a) Andre Russell (b) Yuzvendra Chahal (c) Ishant Sharma (d) Ravindra Jadeja
241. Recently, US President Joe Biden has signed into law measures that would ban Chinese-owned _____ unless it is sold to any US company within a year.
(a) TikTok (b) Alibaba (c) Tencent (d) Petro China
242. Recently, The 6th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has begun in _____.
(a) Chennai (b) Bengaluru (c) New Delhi (d) Hyderabad
243. Name the financial services firm that has got Sebi approval to launch Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund through new fund offering (NFO) and which will be India’s first non-cyclical index fund.
(a) Groww (b) Angel One (c) Finastra (d) Moneytap
244. How many incumbent deputy governors are there in Reserve Bank of India at present?
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Six (d) Eight
245. Recently, India’s first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project was inaugurated at 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in _____.
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Rajasthan (d) Himachal Pradesh
246. How many solar flares erupted simultaneously in a rare celestial event, possibly heralding in the Sun’s dynamic 11-year cycle?
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Six

247. Name the Indian-origin astronaut who will embark on her third space mission with NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test to the International Space Station set for launch.
(a) Anita Bajaj (b) Deepika Jhangiani (c) Sunita Williams (d) Sushmita Albert
248. Who was recently elected as the chairman of the Wrestling Federation of India's Athletes' Commission?
(a) Sushil Kumar (b) Narsingh Pancham Yadav
(c) Babita Phogat (d) M C Marykom
249. Recently, The International Cricket Council (ICC) named sprint legend _____ as the ambassador of the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the West Indies and USA.
(a) Usain Bolt (b) Michael Phelps (c) Shakira (d) Michael Jordan
250. World Malaria Day is an international observance commemorated every year on _____.
(a) 22 April (b) 25 April (c) 28 April (d) 30 April
251. Where was the second Global IP Leadership Summit and Awards organized by ASSOCHAM held recently?
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Bangalore (d) Kolkata
252. Where will be the G7 Summit Outreach Session going to be held in 2024?
(a) Rome, Italy (b) Milan, Italy (c) Puglia, Italy (d) Venice, Italy
253. Where was the Third Biennial Pan-Commonwealth Commonwealth Heads of Public Service meeting held recently?
(a) New York, USA (b) London, United Kingdom
(c) Nairobi, Kenya (d) New Delhi, India
254. Which of the following cities will begin charging day trippers for entry, a world first aimed at easing pressure on city drowning under the weight of mass tourism?
(a) Venice (b) Milan
(c) Paris (d) London
255. Who has been formally declared as new President of Indonesia after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates?
(a) Gibran Rakabuming Raka (b) Prabowo Subianto
(c) Ryamizard Ryacudu (d) Joko Widodo
256. Who has been appointed as the new National Security Adviser (NSA) by U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak?
(a) Tim Barrow (b) General Gwyn Jenkins
(c) Dominic Raab (d) Boris Johnson
257. Recently, The Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port in _____ has received the shipping ministry's approval for operating as India's first transshipment port.
(a) Kochi (b) Thiruvananthapuram
(c) Vishakhapatnam (d) Kanyakumari
258. World Penguin Day is celebrated every year on _____.
(a) 22nd April (b) 23rd April (c) 25th April (d) 27th April
259. Recently, The Indian Air Force (IAF) quietly test fired a quasi-ballistic missile _____ from the Su-30 MKI, marking a significant increase in India's ability to target deep inside enemy territory without even crossing its own air space.
(a) DESERTs (b) ROCKS (c) CROSSES (d) MOUNTAINS
260. World Intellectual Property Day is observed annually on _____.
(a) 24 April (b) 26 April (c) 28 April (d) 30 April

261. Every year, _____ is observed as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, emphasizing the importance of preventing accidents and diseases in the workplace, and promoting occupational safety and health.
(a) 21 April (b) 25 April (c) 28 April (d) 5 May
262. With a resolve to remove the Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) from the endangered status, the _____ government will execute a synchronised survey of the State animal.
(a) Karnataka (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Kerala (d) Maharashtra
263. Which of the following recently issued a draft guideline for development of a regulatory framework for electronic platforms that enable borrowers to compare loan options by multiple lenders?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) NABARD (c) SIDBI (d) State Bank of India
264. Recently, A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between _____ and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), for the supply of 9 lakh metric tonnes of limestone.
(a) NHPC Limited (b) Tata Power (c) NTPC Limited (d) OIL Limited
265. The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Special Meeting on ‘Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy’ will be held in _____.
(a) Berlin (b) London (c) Riyadh (d) Madrid
266. Which of the following islands will be the first artificial energy island in the world to combine both direct current (HVDC) and alternating current (HVAC)?
(a) Princess Elisabeth Island (b) Santorini Island
(c) Bora-Bora Island (d) Zanzibar Island
267. Recently, Vuong Dinh Hue has resigned as the head of the Parliament of _____.
(a) Vietnam (b) Laos (c) Cambodia (d) Thailand
268. Where will the Automation Expo Road Show be held?
(a) Mumbai Trade Centre (b) Chennai Trade Centre
(c) Bangalore Exhibition Hall (d) Delhi Convention Center
269. The Al Maktoum International Airport is in _____.
(a) Dubai (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Jordan (d) Oman
270. For the first time in the country, around 80,000 secondary school teachers in _____ are all set to get hands-on training in AI.
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
271. Name the political party which has become the first political party in India to have crossed Rs. 100 crore in political advertisements on search titan Google and its video platform YouTube?
(a) Indian National Congress (b) Aam Aadmi Party
(c) Samajwadi Party (d) Bharatiya Janata Party
272. Which of the following Union Ministries held Critical Minerals Summit: Enhancing Beneficiation and Processing Capabilities in New Delhi?
(a) Ministry of Home Affairs (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Mines (d) Ministry of Earth Sciences
273. According to NASA’s Earth Observatory, the newly studied _____ impact crater — named for its proximity to a village of the same name — measures approximately 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) across, while its outer rim rises about 6 meters (20 feet) above the crater floor.
(a) Juno (b) Mexico (c) Luna (d) Alex

274. Who is **not** among that won gold in the women's final in Archery World Cup in Shanghai?
(a) Aditi Gopichand Swami (b) Deepika Kumari
(c) Jyothi Surekha Vennam (d) Parneet Kaur
275. The Centre and the _____ government are discussing the possibility of an agreement to develop an electric propulsion system in India to power domestic warships.
(a) US (b) UK (c) Ireland (d) France
276. _____, the largest Indian family office that manages over \$10 billion for software tycoon Azim Premji, will invest more money into artificial intelligence companies while fine-tuning its proprietary AI investment tools.
(a) Azimji Invest (b) Premji Invest (c) Wipro Invest (d) India Invest
277. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said small finance banks (SFBs) should have a minimum net worth of _____ to become universal banks in accordance with the on-tap licensing norms.
(a) Rs. 500 crore (b) Rs. 800 crore (c) Rs. 1,000 crore (d) Rs. 5,000 crore
278. The first Arab state to operate a nuclear power plant is _____.
(a) UAE (b) Syria (c) Oman (d) Saudi Arabia
279. The ruling People's National Congress (PNC) of the _____ secured a big win in the parliamentary elections giving President Mohamed Muizzu significant control over the legislature.
(a) Mauritius (b) Sri Lanka (c) Maldives (d) Iraq
280. The current Chairperson of NHRC is _____.
(a) Arun Kumar Mishra (b) Deepak Sabharwal (c) Jasti Chamleshwar (d) Hima Kohli

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. c With the addition of Bulgaria and Romania as partial members, the Schengen zone now comprises 29 members, including 25 EU member states and four non-EU countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein).
2. a The Armed Forces are planning to turn Mumbai into the first “tri-service common defence station” in the country for the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
3. c Over 60 products from across India, including the famous Banaras Thandai, have been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
4. b Antonia Toma activated the laser in the control room of the research centre in Romania.
5. a Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act says payments due to UDYAN-registered micro and small-scale industries would be allowed as deduction only if the actual payment was made within the time stipulated in the MSME Act.
6. a Tata Steel becomes First-in-India to integrate transgender employees in mine.
7. a WHO has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet, to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for early and accurate detection, monitoring and assessment of SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV and novel coronaviruses of public health importance.
8. b Jayant Chaudhary, who is also the chief of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), accepted the honor from President Droupadi Murmu on behalf of his grandfather, Chaudhary Charan Singh. P V Prabhakar Rao received the award on behalf of P V Narasimha Rao, and Nitya Rao and Ram Nath Thakur received the awards on behalf of M S Swaminathan and Karpoori Thakur, respectively.
9. d Hardik Singh won the Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of The Year 2023 in the men’s category.
10. a The UN has designated 2024 as the International Year of Camelids.
11. d Abu Dhabi is constructing the world’s first Esports island, aiming to rival Saudi Arabia’s sports supercity, Qiddiya.
12. b Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India’s defence exports have crossed the ₹ 21,000 crore-mark for the first time in the history of Independent India.
13. a A stringent new law to crack down on hate crimes came into force in Scotland with critics warning that the act can be misused by sections of society. The devolved Scottish government said the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act will provide greater protection for victims and communities.
14. c Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is reportedly setting up its first data center in India at the Reliance Industries campus in Chennai.
15. b AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) amalgamated Fincare Small Finance Bank (Fincare SFB), marking the first such consolidation in the sector.
16. b The Securities and Exchange Board of India – SEBI has launched a new and more user friendly version of its complaint redress system – SCORES 2.0.
17. b REC Limited was bestowed with the SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in the ‘Renewable Energy Financing’ category, highlighting its dedication to sustainable financing practices.
18. c The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is organising the 20th D. P. Kohli Memorial Lecture on the occasion of Raising Day of the Investigation Agency.
19. c Venturi Astrolab Inc, a Los Angeles-based startup founded by a veteran spaceflight robotics engineer, has unveiled a groundbreaking prototype of a lunar rover, the Flexible Logistics and Exploration (FLEX) vehicle.
20. b “Italy’s Jannik Sinner won the Men’s Singles title of Miami Open tournament in the United States.”

21. a Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was sworn in for his third term as President.
22. d Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a Consultation Paper on inputs for formulation of National Broadcasting Policy-2024.
23. d The 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' initiative of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has been implemented starting. The 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' concept aims to deter the practice of using a single FASTag for multiple vehicles or associating multiple FASTags with one vehicle.
24. a The Democratic Republic of Congo appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the African nation's first woman Prime Minister.
25. a Bangladesh has opened what can be called the world's first exclusive mosque for transgender people, also called the third gender.
26. c Bernard Arnault and his family are at number one with a net worth of \$233 billion. Bernard Arnault is head of LVMH and is followed by Elon Musk with a net worth of \$195 billion.
27. b The World Bank has projected that the Indian economy will grow at 7.5% in 2024, as per its latest South Asia Development Update. This indicates a significant revision from earlier projections, which were lower by 1.2%.
28. c The MRI machine is located in the Plateau de Saclay area south of Paris, home to many technology companies and universities.
29. a IIM Indore has inked a three-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) to advance educational collaboration and foster excellence in land port management.
30. b Kean Yew Loh of Singapore defeated Toma Junior Popov of France in the finals to clinch the Men's Singles title in the Spain Masters 2024 Badminton tournament.
31. b Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries, has secured the top spot as the wealthiest individual in both Asia and India in a recent update from Forbes.
32. b ABHA Ayushman Bharat Health Account- ABHA is the national digital identity for health which is part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
33. b Bassirou Diomaye Faye, a former tax inspector, was sworn in as Senegal's president.
34. b Assets of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Police, fisheries, customs and other security agencies were engaged in the coastal security exercise – Sagar Kavach.
35. b Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand defeated her compatriot Supanida Katethong to lift the crown, as mentioned in the provided information.
36. a Adani Green Energy Ltd. is the first company in India to exceed 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity.
37. b The General Assembly declared 5 April the International Day of Conscience.
38. c The CAR-T Cell Therapy was developed through a collaborative effort between IIT Bombay and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC).
39. c The event is organized under the auspices of the AIU, indicating that the AIU is overseeing the competition.
40. a The Nifty500 Multicap Infrastructure index is proposed to have an allocation ratio of 50:30:20, as mentioned in the circular issued by the National Stock Exchange (NSE) of India.
41. a Four products of Meghalaya — its famed Lakadong turmeric, considered to be one of the best varieties of turmeric in the world with its high curcumin content, Garo Dakmanda textile, Lyrnai pottery and Garo tribe's home brewed rice wine, 'chubitchi', received GI tags.
42. d Thenmala is recognised as India's first planned ecotourism destination.

43. a Former Cambodian leader Hun Sen was promoted to senate president, taking over a key ceremonial role less than a year after handing power to his son.
44. b Shashwat Goenka, the vice chairman of Kolkata-based RPSG Group, has been chosen as a member of the 2024 Class of Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum.
45. d The 'Forbes World Billionaire List' for 2024, released included 200 Indians with a collective net worth of \$954 billion. Savitri Jindal stands out as India's richest woman, with a net worth of \$35.5 billion.
46. d India, the world's third biggest oil consumer and importer, plans to build its first commercial crude oil strategic storage as part of efforts to shore up stockpiles as insurance against any supply disruption.
47. a An international team of scientists, including from India, has discovered strong evidence indicating the presence of ozone on Jupiter's moon Callisto, shedding light on the complex chemical processes taking place on icy celestial bodies in the Solar System.
48. b Intuitive Machines, Lunar Outpost, and Venturi Astrolab, three companies have been selected by NASA to develop technologies for the Lunar Terrain Vehicle (LTV) as the successor to the Lunar Roving Vehicle.
49. a Tokyo Olympics medallist Mirabai Chanu became the only Indian weightlifter to qualify for the Paris Olympics this year after competing successfully at the IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand.
50. b National Maritime Day is celebrated on 5 April every year.
51. d Bilquis Mir from Jammu and Kashmir is set to become the first woman from India to represent the country as a jury member at this year's Summer Olympics, which is to be hosted by Paris.
52. a Opposition lawmakers maintained a majority in Kuwait's parliament, results showed on after the Gulf state's third parliamentary vote in as many years held just months into the new emir's reign. The National Assembly is the unicameral legislature of Kuwait. The National Assembly meets in Kuwait City.
53. c The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud has recommended to the Centre the names of five additional judges of the Karnataka High Court for appointment as permanent judges of that court.
54. b Katrin Jakobsdottir has held the position of Prime Minister since 2017 and announced her resignation to pursue the presidency.
55. c The central government has launched a program to vaccinate about 2 crore animals in Bihar for free.
56. a Priya Agarwal Hebbbar, Chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Ltd. & Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Ltd., has been selected as one of the five Indians to join the Young Global Leaders Class of 2024 by the World Economic Forum, a group of nearly 90 people who are "making a change."
57. d The government of India has begun working to have one Indian Single Sky Harmonised (ISHAN) air traffic management (ATM) from Nagpur with an aim to reduce carbon footprint, enhance safety, and aircraft fuel usage.
58. d First Light Fusion, in Yarnton, Oxfordshire, has increased the distance a projectile is fired into the fuel by more than ten times. The company says the development is crucial to its design for a commercial power plant.
59. b Archaeologists from Kerala University, who had earlier undertaken many successful expeditions to discover an Early Harappan necropolis Juna Khatiya in Gujarat in 2019, has stumbled upon more crucial findings from a 5,200-year old Harappan settlement at Padta Bet, around 1.5 km away, near Khatiya village, in Kachchh district.
60. c World Health Day is celebrated annually on April 7th to raise awareness about health-related issues worldwide and to promote healthy habits and lifestyles.
61. d The sitars and tanpuras of Miraj, a small town in Maharashtra's Sangli district known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments, have been awarded the coveted Geographical Indication tags.
62. b The Ministry of Culture, in a notification issued on March 8, declared its intention to delist 18 protected monuments as they have "ceased to be of national importance."

- 63. c** South Korea has launched its second military spy satellite into space, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.
- 64. b** Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah submitted his cabinet's resignation as expected to the Kuwaiti emir.
- 65. c** Greece, Qatar and India have improved the most globally in providing the best environment to businesses in the past one year, according to a report by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- 66. c** Reserve Bank of India has said that currently around 50 lakh users in the country are using Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- 67. c** Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) and Bank of the Lao PDR (BOL) have officially joined the Regional Payment Connectivity (RPC) after previously expressing their interest in joining the initiative.
- 68. b** Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and IBM officially unveiled the world's first-ever IBM quantum computer on a university campus.
- 69. a** Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah created history, becoming the first Indian to take 150 wickets for a single Indian Premier League franchise.
- 70. b** Every year on April 4, carrot enthusiasts around the world come together to celebrate International Carrot Day.
- 71. c** The Supreme Court has expanded the scope of Articles 14 and 21 to include the "right against the adverse effects of climate change".
- 72. a** Peter Pellegrini to be Slovakia's President as ex-Foreign Minister Ivan Korcok concedes defeat. A close ally of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico beat a pro-Western career diplomat to become Slovakia's new President, and succeed Zuzana Čaputová, the country's first female head of State.
- 73. c** China conducted military "combat patrols" in the disputed South China Sea, the same day as joint drills by the Philippines, the United States, Japan and Australia. Several countries have made competing territorial claims over the South China Sea.
- 74. c** President Emeritus and Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), Rakesh Mohan has been appointed by the World Bank Group to serve on the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel.
- 75. b** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is set to establish a pioneering ASEAN Climate Finance Policy Platform aimed at bolstering the fight against climate change in Southeast Asia.
- 76. b** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deferred the implementation of its new norms for exchange traded currency derivatives (ETCD) market to May 3 from April 5.
- 77. d** The new generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime was successfully flight-tested by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) along with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.
- 78. a** India Gets Its First AI Engineer 'Devika'.
- 79. d** Indian shuttlers Anupama Upadhyaya and M. Tharun have clinched Women's and Men's singles titles, at Kazakhstan International Badminton Challenge tournament in Astana.
- 80. b** The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), which takes place annually on 6 April, presents an opportunity to recognize the positive role sport and physical activity play in communities and in people's lives across the globe.
- 81. a** Kathiya Gehu (wheat) from the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh has received the first Geographical Indication (GI) tag for a farm produce in the area.
- 82. c** With 100 per cent electrification, Indian Railways will become the largest green railways of the world. Already many regions in India are 100 per cent electrified.

- 83. b** Zimbabwe's new gold-backed currency started trading amid doubts that the country's third such re-launch in a decade will have any more success in ending repeated, crippling bouts of high inflation. The Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) was announced by the central bank with an initial rate of 13.56 to \$1
- 84. b** Britain, the U.S., and Australia are considering working together through the AUKUS security pact.
- 85. a** Thomas Cook (India) Limited, India's leading omnichannel forex services company, has launched EnterpriseFx – a pioneering, environment-friendly prepaid forex corporate card.
- 86. c** The combined market capitalisation of all listed stocks on BSE hit the Rs. 400 lakh crore milestones for the first time ever."
- 87. a** The first launch of the Angara A5 space rocket from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome will take place, in what could be a milestone for President Vladimir Putin's space ambitions.
- 88. b** The Iгла-S MANPADS is being acquired to enhance the Indian Army's Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) capabilities.
- 89. b** The Centre has notified the appointment of economist Manoj Panda as a full-time member of the Sixteenth Finance Commission.
- 90. b** India's two research bases on Antarctica — Maitri and Bharati — are located 3,000 km apart. Notably, both branches are part of the Goa postal division.
- 91. c** World Homeopathy Day is celebrated annually to honour the work of German physician and chemist Dr Samuel Hahnemann on his birth anniversary - April 10.
- 92. b** Bjarni Benediktsson has become the Iceland Prime Minister. While he currently serves as foreign minister, he assumed the role of prime minister.
- 93. a** Simon Harris became Ireland's youngest ever prime minister pledging to bring new ideas and energy to the less than 12 months he has boost the coalition government's bid to halt a first electoral victory by left-wing Sinn Fein.
- 94. a** The IPEF partners include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam. China is not part of this partnership.
- 95. b** Yusuf Raza Gilani was elected unopposed as chairman of the Senate amidst protests from lawmakers of Imran Khan's party.
- 96. d** A sharp curve in the upcoming Pamban railway bridge, India's first vertical-lift bridge connecting the country's mainland with Rameswaram island, has become an additional challenge for the Railways besides its mechanical peculiarity and a rough sea.
- 97. b** The number of unicorns in the country has declined for the first time in four years to 67, indicating a decrease rather than an increase in their number.
- 98. c** CRISIL Ratings expects the co-lending book of NBFCs to reach Rs. one lakh crore by June 2024.
- 99. c** Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) and Satellogic. TASL, a subsidiary of Tata Sons specializing in aerospace and defense solutions, collaborated with Satellogic, a leading provider of high-resolution satellite imagery, to develop and launch TSAT-1A.
- 100. c** The award was received by India's Consul General on behalf of ISRO during the Space Symposium in Colorado.
- 101. a** Avantika Vandanapu was named the South Asian Person of the Year by Harvard University for her significant contributions and impact on both the international and Indian entertainment industries.
- 102. c** India's decision to post a defence attaché in Poland reflects the increasing significance of Poland as a security partner in Europe. This move signifies India's recognition of Poland's role in regional security dynamics and the need to strengthen bilateral military cooperation between the two countries.
- 103. a** South Korea's liberal opposition parties scored a landslide victory in a parliamentary election held, dealing a resounding blow to President Yoon Suk Yeol and his conservative party but likely falling just short of a super majority.

- 104. c** Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar inaugurated a 350m long major pier for Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) and a residential accommodation at Naval Base Karwar.
- 105. a** The decision to appoint Sanjay Shukla as the MD of NHB comes after an evaluation process conducted by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau, which scrutinized 16 candidates for the post.
- 106. a** French carmaker Citroën became the first multinational car manufacturer in India to export domestically made electric vehicles to the international market.
- 107. b** HDFC Bank recently established a branch in Kavaratti Island, making it the only private sector bank in the region. This move aims to upgrade banking infrastructure in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.
- 108. d** The central government appointed Ashish Kumar Chauhan, Sridhar Vembu, Sachidananda Mohanty, and Shashikala Gulabrao Wanjari as members of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Therefore, all options are correct.
- 109. b** The Irish company Ryan Air holds the top position as the world's most valued airline with a market capitalization of Rs. 3,375 crore, surpassing both Delta Air Lines and IndiGo Airlines.
- 110. b** Gopichand Thotakura will be part of a six-member crew on the next Blue Origin mission, becoming the second Indian citizen to go to space after Rakesh Sharma.
- 111. d** Jawaharlal Nehru University made its debut in development studies and secured the 20th spot worldwide, indicating its notable achievement in this field.
- 112. a** Narendra Modi is set to become the first prime minister of India to feature on the cover of Newsweek after Indira Gandhi, who was featured on the cover of Newsweek's April 1966 issue.
- 113. a** Delhi becomes the first state in India to offer these services on WhatsApp. WhatsApp has introduced a new QR-based ticketing service for DTC commuters across the Delhi NCR region.
- 114. a** A top Vietnamese property tycoon was sentenced to death in one of the biggest corruption cases in history, with an estimated \$27 billion in damages.
- 115. a** Lindy Cameron, the former CEO of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, will take over as the country's first-ever woman high commissioner to India.
- 116. b** Indian universities saw a significant increase in representation, with 69 institutions featured in the top 500 list of the latest QS world university rankings by subject, marking a 19.4% increase from the previous year's entries.
- 117. b** India and Mauritius have signed a protocol to amend the double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA), which included a principal purpose test (PPT) to decide whether a foreign investor is eligible to claim treaty.
- 118. b** NJAC is located in Bhopal, as mentioned in the context of Justice Aniruddha Bose's appointment as its Director.
- 119. c** National Safe Motherhood Day in India is observed on April 11 to raise awareness about the importance of proper healthcare and maternity services for expectant mothers.
- 120. a** Dr Gagandeep Kang, Director of Global Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been selected for the prestigious John Dirks Award in global health.
- 121. a** Under its "Operation Meghdoot", the Indian Army established its full control over the glacier on April 13, 1984.
- 122. a** Ram Charan was recently conferred with an honorary doctorate by Vels University during its 14th Annual Convocation at the Pallavaram campus in Chennai.
- 123. d** India celebrates World Quantum Day 2024 on April 14, 2024, with aspirations to become a global leader in various fields of Quantum Science and Technology.
- 124. c** India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period, according to the latest data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project.

125. c India is ranked 5th in world's GDP rankings in 2024.
126. d CoinGames, the first fully Licensed decentralized gambling platform, has launched and is offering users a safe, secure, and streamlined online casino service powered by the latest in blockchain and smart contract technology.
127. d Pakistan has the highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25 per cent inflation rate and its economy may grow at the fourth lowest pace of 1.9 per cent in the region, according to a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report.
128. a The Indian Army has successfully carried out field trials of indigenously-developed man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) weapon system, paving way for its induction into the force's armoury.
129. c National Pet Day, celebrated on April 11 every year, serves as a special occasion to cherish the unique bond shared between pets and their owners.
130. a Assam's Charaideo Maidam nominated for UNESCO world heritage tag.
131. c The World Designing Forum, one of the world's largest global fashion community, has announced the setting up of India's first Handloom Cluster and Apparel Designing Park in Agra.
132. c The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the health drinks category from their portals.
133. d The IMF executive board confirmed that it had reappointed Kristalina Georgieva to serve for a second five-year term running the international financial institution.
134. a The Russian military reported a successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.
135. c India ranked number 10 in cybercrime, with frauds involving people to make advance fee payment being the most common type, according to a new research that surveyed cybercrime experts around the world.
136. b Rating agency Moody's maintained outlook for the government of India to be stable. The long-term and short-term ratings of the government of India is pegged at Baa3 and P-3, respectively.
137. a Vi to raise Rs. 18,000 cr via India's largest ever FPO
138. c Northwestern University confirmed that the brightest gamma-ray burst ever recorded, GRB 221009A, was caused by the collapse and explosion of a massive star.
139. c 14 April is World Chagas Disease.
140. d Pop superstar Taylor Swift has joined the ranks of the world's billionaires, according to Forbes' World's Billionaires list.
141. a Puthandu also known as Tamil New Year, is the first day of year on the Tamil calendar that is traditionally celebrated as a festival by Tamils.
142. c British-American author Salman Rushdie releases his memoir "Knife", recounting the harrowing experience of being stabbed at a public event in 2022 and how he overcame the near-fatal ordeal.
143. a Madhya Pradesh has taken lead in implementing the Centre's Green Credit Programme (GCP) which got over 500 land parcels spanning 4,980 hectares across 10 states approved for tree plantation in the past two months.
144. a NTPC Limited, India's largest integrated power company, is gearing up to launch the latest edition of Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative.
145. c The European Union (EU) and India launched an Expression of Interest (EoI) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs) for a matchmaking event.
146. c The Indian real estate market is expected to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2034, contributing 10.5% to economic output, according to a joint study by Knight Frank India and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

147. c Rohit Sharma's ability to hit sixes consistently makes him one of the most prolific hitters in the modern game. And the Indian skipper owned the record of becoming the first batter from the country to hit 500 sixes in T20 cricket.
148. c NASA's mission that launched sounding rockets during the recent total solar eclipse was led by Aroh Barjatya, an India-born researcher who studied in cities across the country before moving to the United States, his family said.
149. c Sam Bankman-Fried, facing the prospect of spending much of his adult life behind bars, appealed his conviction and 25-year prison sentence for stealing \$8 billion from customers of the now-bankrupt FTX cryptocurrency exchange he founded.
150. a The mathematician Avi Wigderson has won the 2023 Turing award, often referred to as the Nobel prize for computing, for his work on understanding how randomness can shape and improve computer algorithms.
151. a Renowned author Sam Pitroda has written a new book titled 'The Idea of Democracy', which explores the current state of democracy and its potential challenges in countries like India and the United States.
152. b The Union Territory of Ladakh celebrates Apricot Blossom festival in the different parts of Kargil and Leh districts.
153. a Stefanos Tsitsipas swept aside Casper Ruud 6-1, 6-4 to win the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters for the third time in four years, and then wept in his chair.
154. a Nigeria has become the first country in the world to roll out a new vaccine (called Men5CV) recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), which protects people against five strains of the meningococcus bacteria.
155. c The Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi is ranked tenth among the world's busiest airports for 2023.
156. a Donald Trump became the first former U.S. president to stand criminal trial when he appeared in a Manhattan court to face charges stemming from a hush-money payment that could complicate his bid to win back the White House.
157. a The Rig, the world's first floating theme park off the coast of Saudi Arabia, has revealed more about its true scale.
158. c Maharana Pratap Horticultural University (MHU), Karnal, has been honoured with the prestigious Best Horticulture University Award.
159. c The Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium has become the first BCCI-accredited venue to install a state-of-the-art 'hybrid pitch', paving the way for future international and IPL matches to be held on this innovative track.
160. b Lee Hsien Loong, who has been the Prime Minister for two decades, will step down on May 15 and hand over power to his deputy, Lawrence Wong, who currently holds the positions of Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.
161. b The correct answer is (b) Amitabh Bachchan. He was honored with the third Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award for his outstanding contributions.
162. a This was Mohun Bagan's first victory over the two-time Shield Winners across four seasons as the Mumbai heavyweights were also unbeaten over them in previous eight matches, winning six of them.
163. c The Indian Army contingent departed to take part in the fifth edition of India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK.
164. a Armenia urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to hold Azerbaijan responsible for what it said was the ethnic cleansing of Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
165. c Zomato announced the launch of a "large fleet order", a first in India.
166. a India is embarking on a revolutionary journey into the future of technology with the inauguration of its First Metaverse Experience Center in Noida.
167. c NASA's Perseverance Rover, nicknamed Percy, in 2023 created the first "sample depot on another world" by putting down ten rock sample tubes that are slated to be returned to Earth as part of the Mars Sample Return Campaign.
168. c In a first, ESA's Gaia mission researchers have discovered a huge black hole that is of stellar origin, hiding in plain sight in our very own Milky Way Galaxy. This sleeping giant was found in the constellation Aquila and that is just under 2000 light-years away from Earth.

- 169. c** SURAKSHA stands for “System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance” as part of the CDP-SURAKSHA platform.
- 170. b** There are currently 70 centres in 24 countries participating in the global network of Olympic Studies and Research Centres organized by the IOC.
- 171. c** The International Day for Monuments and Sites also known as World Heritage Day is an international observance held on 18 April each year around the world.
- 172. d** Bisket Jatra is an eight-day celebration that culminated with a huge celebration in the district of Bhaktapur, Nepal.
- 173. b** Up to 74% FDI for satellite manufacturing & operation, satellite data products, ground segment & user segment are allowed under the automatic route. Beyond 74%, government permission would be required.
- 174. c** “It operates 86 per cent of Inter-Regional networks” directly indicates the percentage of Inter-Regional networks operated by Power Grid Corporation.
- 175. c** Alongside Sakshi Malik, other Indians who featured in the TIME list include actress Alia Bhatt, Indo-British actor Dev Patel, and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella.
- 176. a** Lebanese newspaper Annahar has introduced the world’s first AI designed to perform presidential duties for Lebanon.
- 177. a** Uttar Pradesh gets its first glass skywalk bridge in Chitrakoot.
- 178. b** Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande inaugurated a high-tech IT Laboratory, at the Academy of Armed Forces in Uzbekistan.
- 179. a** Intangible Cultural Heritage: the United Kingdom becomes the 183rd State to join UNESCO’s Convention.
- 180. a** The SPACE, set up by the Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO, has been designed as a premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems destined for Indian Navy onboard various platforms including ships, submarines and helicopters.
- 181. c** Every year on April 19, we observe World Liver Day to raise awareness of liver-related illnesses.
- 182. c** The Centre has constituted a six-member committee to examine and recommend on various issues affecting queer community. This is in keeping with the Supreme Court’s judgement in which it examined the issue of same sex marriages.
- 183. a** Hamad International Airport Doha surpassed Singapore’s Changi Airport to secure the first place in the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.
- 184. b** Virat Kohli will now be forever immortalized in Jaipur with the city’s wax museum unveiling a statue of the cricketer on occasion of World Heritage Day.
- 185. c** Croatia’s governing conservatives convincingly won a highly contested parliamentary election, but will still need support from far-right groups to stay in power. Zagreb is the capital and the largest city of the Republic of Croatia.
- 186. b** Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who is currently serving as the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff, will take over as the next Chief of Naval Staff upon the superannuation of Admiral R. Hari Kumar on April 30, 2024.
- 187. b** The Belarusian parliament voted to suspend the country’s participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty that once was a key security doctrine for the continent, a 1990 agreement that was abandoned last year by Russia.
- 188. d** Scotland scrapped its target of cutting climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, but said it still intends to meet a 2045 net zero target.
- 189. c** NBBL, a subsidiary of NPCI, in association with SBI, has onboarded SBI NCMC on its Bharat BillPay platform.
- 190. a** NASA confirmed Dragonfly rotorcraft mission to Saturn’s organic compound-rich moon Titan with a budget of \$3.35 billion and a launch date set for July 2028.

- 191. b** Utsa Patnaik, a renowned economist of national and international repute, has been selected for the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023.
- 192. a** Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat has been appointed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism and counter-hijack force.
- 193. a** The Bhadla Solar Park is a solar power plant located in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, India. It covers an area of 56 square kilometers and has a total installed capacity of 2,245 megawatts (MW), making it the largest solar park in the world as of 2023.
- 194. c** The United Nations selected April 20 for Chinese Language Day
- 195. b** California-based Rocket Lab announced that it is, for the first time, returning a previously flown Electron rocket's first stage back into the production line, preparing to launch it again.
- 196. d** The Supreme Court has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a national asset and a major contributor to the nation's financial wealth.
- 197. b** The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) has taken shape and gained momentum, six years after Chinese President Xi Jinping's announcement of establishing FTP.
- 198. a** India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to Philippines. In January 2022, Philippines concluded a \$375-million deal with India for three batteries of shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia.
- 199. a** Taking cognizance of reports on Nestle selling baby products with higher sugar content in India, the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to "initiate appropriate action" against the company.
- 200. c** Maldives High Court has overturned former President Abdulla Yameen's 11-year prison sentence on money laundering and bribery charges and ordered a retrial.
- 201. c** The lac bangles of Hyderabad have been registered with the Registrar of Geographical Indications, Chennai. This is the second GI tag for a Hyderabad product after haleem.
- 202. c** World Creativity and Innovation Day is a global UN day celebrated on April 21 to raise awareness around the importance of creativity and innovation in problem solving with respect to advancing the United Nations sustainable development goals, also known as the "global goals".
- 203. d** India celebrated a historic milestone in the sport of rowing as Balraj Panwar clinched the nation's first quota for the Paris Olympics by securing a commendable third-place finish in the men's single scull event at the Asian Olympic qualifiers in Chungju, South Korea.
- 204. d** Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have reported the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eocene.
- 205. b** The Indian Navy carried out an extensive exercise along the East Coast as part of efforts to check its preparedness to meet any maritime security challenges. The exercise 'Poorvi Leher' witnessed participation of ships, submarines, aircraft and special naval forces.
- 206. d** The Supreme Court has decided to consider framing guidelines for advocates' associations across the country in a bid to make their admission regulations uniform and democratic.
- 207. c** NASA welcomed Sweden as the 38th country to sign the Artemis Accords.
- 208. b** Doordarshan News has launched its new saffron-coloured logo by announcing that it is now available in a refurbished avatar.
- 209. b** True Gamers, a United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based eSports network, has unveiled plans to build the world's first eSports island in Abu Dhabi.
- 210. d** OpenAI has hired Pragya Misra, its first official in India, in order to handle government relations, reported Bloomberg.

211. **b** Tripura's traditional attire, 'Risa,' has been officially granted the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) registration, commonly known as the GI tag.
212. **b** The Stad Ship Tunnel is a planned canal and tunnel to bypass the Stad peninsula in Stad Municipality in Vestland county, Norway.
213. **a** NIFT already has 18 campuses in India and the 19th one in Varanasi is set to be operational this year, they said asking not to be named.
214. **d** Saudi Arabia is investing heavily to transform into a top tourist destination, with projects like the Red Sea Project and Neom.
215. **b** Satya Nadella pulls off \$1.5 bn, OpenAI-type deal with G42 to cement Microsoft's AI lead.
216. **a** China released a geologic atlas set of the global moon with a scale of 1 : 2.5 million, which is the first complete high-definition lunar geologic atlas in the world, providing basic map data for future lunar research and exploration.
217. **b** A team of Chinese engineers and scientists have developed the world's first satellite that lets smartphones place a call directly through it, instead of mobile towers.
218. **c** The three-time defending champion won the Chinese Grand Prix starting from pole, his fourth victory in five races this season and his 23rd in the last 27 extending through last season.
219. **c** It is decided to designate April 22 as International Mother Earth Day.
220. **c** Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem won the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for his image of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip.
221. **b** India's 17-year-old Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament to become youngest ever challenger to the world title.
222. **b** A total of 65,960 Indians officially became US citizens, making India the second-largest source country for new citizens in America after Mexico, according to the latest Congressional report.
223. **c** The CIP-South Asia Regional Centre (CIP-SARC) is expected to come up in Agra.
224. **d** Kuwait started its first ever Hindi language radio broadcast. The Hindi programme will be available on Kuwait radio on frequencies FM 93.3 and AM 96.3.
225. **d** Silo is the world's first Zero Waste restaurant, based in Hackney Wick, East London.
226. **a** National Fertilizers Ltd made a significant announcement, revealing that it has achieved "Navratna" status, as granted by the Department of Public Enterprise.
227. **c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 2550th Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
228. **d** CIFDAQ, a new-age fintech company that offers integrated solutions spanning the blockchain layer 1, native coin, exchange services, MPC Wallet, DeFi, NFT, gaming, and other products, has launched its India operations.
229. **c** The Higher School of Economics, located in Russia, and the University of Delhi signed an agreement on strategic cooperation and joint actions, and a large research hub will begin operating at the partner university.
230. **a** Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became the first Indian company to cross the Rs. 1 lakh crore mark in annual pre-tax profit.
231. **b** Bindeshwar Pathak was given the Padma Vibhushan award posthumously, and his wife, Amola, received the award from the President.
232. **a** United States, China and Russia were the top spenders in 2023.

233. c Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) is a multinational grouping developed in 2014 for cooperation between the Republic of India and 14 Pacific Islands nations which include Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. All heads of state or heads of government of the above countries met in Suva, Fiji in November 2014 for the first time where the annual summit was conceptualised.
234. c Indian fintech major BharatPe launched BharatPe One, an all-in-one payment product that integrates POS (point of sale), QR code, and speaker into one device.
235. b ONGC plans June drilling for India’s first geothermal project in Ladakh.
236. a Naima Khatoon Gulrez has been appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University after serving as the principal of its Women’s College since 2014.
237. a The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is set to introduce derivative contracts on the Nifty Next 50 index.
238. b Reliance Industries topped the India Involved Ranking 2023, followed by Hindustan Unilever and Adani Group.
239. d Focused on ‘delivering the science we need for the ocean we want’, the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference, which will be hosted by the Government of Spain in Barcelona from 10 - 12 April 2024.
240. b Rajasthan Royals spinner Yuzvendra Chahal took his 200th IPL wicket to become the first bowler to achieve the feat in the franchise tournament.
241. a US President Joe Biden has signed into law measures that would ban Chinese-owned TikTok unless it is sold to any US company within a year.
242. c The 6th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has begun in New Delhi.
243. a Financial services firm Groww has got Sebi approval to launch Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund through new fund offering (NFO). This will be India’s first non-cyclical index fund and will be launched by Groww Mutual Fund, Groww’s AMC business.
244. b Currently there are four incumbent deputy governors of the Reserve Bank of India.
245. d India’s first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project at 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Himachal’s Jhakri was inaugurated.
246. c Four solar flares erupted simultaneously in a rare celestial event, possibly heralding in the Sun’s dynamic 11-year cycle.
247. c Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams, along with Butch Wilmore, will embark on her third space mission with NASA’s Boeing Crew Flight Test to the International Space Station set for launch.
248. b Narsingh Pancham Yadav a former Commonwealth Games gold-medallist, was elected as the chairman of the Athletes’ Commission after polling by seven members who were elected from a pool of eight candidates.
249. a The International Cricket Council (ICC) named sprint legend Usain Bolt as the ambassador of the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the West Indies and USA from June 1 to 29.
250. b World Malaria Day is an international observance commemorated every year on 25 April.
251. b The summit took place in New Delhi, India, where industry leaders gathered to discuss intellectual property (IP) rights and innovation strategies.
252. c Prime Minister Modi thanked Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni for the invitation to attend the G7 Summit Outreach Sessions in Italy’s Puglia region.
253. b The meeting took place at the Commonwealth Secretariat Marlborough House headquarters in London, where India’s CPGRAMS system was recognized for its effectiveness in public grievance redressal.

- 254. a** Venice will begin charging day trippers for entry, a world first aimed at easing pressure on the Italian city drowning under the weight of mass tourism.
- 255. b** Indonesia's electoral commission formally declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates.
- 256. b** General Gwyn Jenkins has been appointed as the new National Security Adviser by U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.
- 257. b** The Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port has received the shipping ministry's approval for operating as India's first transshipment port. The Vizhinjam International Seaport Thiruvananthapuram is India's first deep water container transshipment port, currently under-construction in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- 258. c** World Penguin Day is celebrated every year on 25th April.
- 259. b** The Indian Air Force (IAF) quietly test fired a quasi-ballistic missile — ROCKS — from the Su-30 MKI, marking a significant increase in India's ability to target deep inside enemy territory without even crossing its own air space.
- 260. b** World Intellectual Property Day is observed annually on 26 April.
- 261. c** 28 April is observed as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, emphasizing the importance of preventing accidents and diseases in the workplace, and promoting occupational safety and health.
- 262. b** With a resolve to remove the Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) from the endangered status, the Tamil Nadu government will execute a synchronised survey of the State animal.
- 263. a** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a draft guideline for development of a regulatory framework for electronic platforms that enable borrowers to compare loan options by multiple lenders.
- 264. c** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between NTPC Limited and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), for the supply of 9 lakh metric tonnes of limestone (lime chips, a by-product of the RINL, for the NTPC units across the country for five years.
- 265. c** The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Special Meeting on 'Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy' will be held on April 28 and 29 in Riyadh in the Gulf nation.
- 266. a** Princess Elisabeth Island will be the first artificial energy island in the world to combine both direct current (HVDC) and alternating current (HVAC).
- 267. a** The head of Vietnam's Parliament, Vuong Dinh Hue, has resigned.
- 268. b** The Automation Expo Road Show will be held at the Chennai Trade Centre, as mentioned in the provided details.
- 269. a** Dubai announced the commencement of construction on a new terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport.
- 270. b** For the first time in the country, around 80,000 secondary school teachers in Kerala are all set to get hands-on training in AI.
- 271. d** The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has become the first political party in India to have crossed Rs. 100 crore in political advertisements on search titan Google and its video platform YouTube.
- 272. c** The Ministry of Mines held Critical Minerals Summit: Enhancing Beneficiation and Processing Capabilities in New Delhi.
- 273. c** According to NASA's Earth Observatory, the newly studied Luna impact crater — named for its proximity to a village of the same name — measures approximately 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) across, while its outer rim rises about 6 meters (20 feet) above the crater floor.
- 274. b** In Archery, India's Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Gopichand Swami and Parneet Kaur won gold in the women's final, beating Italy 236-225 at the Archery World Cup in Shanghai.
- 275. b** The Centre and the UK government are discussing the possibility of an agreement to develop an electric propulsion system in India to power domestic warships.

276. **b** Premji Invest, the largest Indian family office that manages over \$10 billion for software tycoon Azim Premji, will invest more money into artificial intelligence companies while fine-tuning its proprietary AI investment tools.
277. **c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said small finance banks (SFBs) should have a minimum net worth of Rs. 1,000 crore to become universal banks in accordance with the on-tap licensing norms.
278. **a** The UAE, a U.S. security partner, became the first Arab state to operate a nuclear power plant when in 2021 it opened in the South Korean-built Barakah facility in Abu Dhabi.
279. **c** The ruling People's National Congress (PNC) of the Maldives secured a big win in the parliamentary elections giving President Mohamed Muizzu significant control over the legislature, six months after he rose to the country's top office.
280. **a** Arun Kumar Mishra is the current chairman of the National Human Rights Commission.



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