

# **SSC BANKING MANTHAN**

## **Current Affairs Supplement**

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## **Preface**

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**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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## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

### National



### Mound-burial system of Ahom dynasty in Assam included in UNESCO World Heritage List

- **The Charaideo Moidams, a unique 700-year-old mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty from Assam, has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the first cultural property from the Northeast to get the coveted tag.** The decision was taken during the ongoing 46<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) being held in India.
- **The Charaideo moidams represents the late medieval (13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century CE) mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahom community in Assam. Charaideo, more than 400 km east of Guwahati, was the first capital of the Ahom dynasty founded by Chao Lung Sukaphaa in 1253. The Ahoms preferred to place the deceased family members at Charaideo where the first king Sukapha was laid to rest.**
- **The historical chronicles inform that wives, attendants, pet animals and huge quantity of valuables were buried with the departed kings. After 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation and began entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.** Out of 386 Maidams explored so far, 90 royal burials at Charaideo are the best preserved, representative of and the most complete examples of mound burial tradition of the Ahoms.
- **Architecturally it comprises a massive underground vault with one or more chambers having domical superstructure.** It is covered by a heap of earthen mound and externally it appears a hemispherical mound. At the top of the mound, a small open pavilion chow-chali is provided. An octagonal dwarf wall encloses whole maidam.
- **Moidams has become the 43<sup>rd</sup> property from India to be included in the UNESCO List.** India now stands at the 6<sup>th</sup> position globally for the most number of World Heritage Properties. **The Moidams are the first site from the North East to be recognized as a World Heritage Site in the cultural category. Assam has 2 other World Heritage Sites in the natural category: Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park, both upgraded to tiger reserves.**

The Ahom, also known as the Tai-Ahom, are an ethnic group from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India. This ethnic group is made up of interbred descendants of the Tai people, who first came to Assam's Brahmaputra valley in 1228, and indigenous people who later joined them. The current Ahom people and culture are a mix of the ancient Tai people and culture, as well as indigenous Tibeto-Burman people and cultures that they assimilated in Assam. Sukaphaa, the Tai group's leader, and his 9000 supporters founded the Ahom empire (1228–1826 CE), which ruled over part of modern-day Assam's Brahmaputra Valley until 1826. It retained sovereignty for 600 years until annexed by British India in 1826 (Treaty of Yandaboo). Lachit Borphukan (1622-1672) is the most celebrated ruler of Ahom Dynasty. The Ahom navy, led by Lachit Borphukan, defeated the Mughal forces commanded by Ram Singh I during the reign of Aurangzeb at the Battle of Saraighat in 1671. The Lachit Borphukan gold medal is awarded to the best cadet from the National Defence Academy. The medal was instituted in 1999 to inspire defence personnel to emulate Borphukan's heroism and sacrifices.

## Largest Industrial Parks among 12 Proposed in Budget will be established near Dighi Port in Maharashtra

- **Union Minister of Commerce and Industries Piyush Goyal** said that the **largest industrial parks among the 12 proposed in the recent Union Budget will be established near Dighi Port in Raigad district of Maharashtra**, and investors are enthusiastic about the project. He praised the budget as one that strengthens the country's economy. He expressed confidence that Maharashtra, with its extensive cooperative societies, will be the largest beneficiary of the proposed National Cooperation Policy.

**Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is serving as Minister of Commerce and Industry since 2019.** He also served as Minister of Textiles and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. He was elevated to the Cabinet Minister position on 3 September 2017. **Formerly a Member of Parliament for Rajya Sabha from the state of Maharashtra, he is also the former Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha.** Goyal was elected as member of 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha Representing Mumbai North Lok Sabha constituency.

## Government setting up 7 PM MITRA Parks to give a boost to Textiles Sector

- **The Government has approved setting up of 7 (Seven) PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks in Greenfield/Brownfield sites (including a Greenfield project in Virudhanagar Tamil Nadu) with world class infrastructure including plug and play facility with an outlay of Rs. 4,445 cr for a period of seven years upto 2027-28.** It is envisaged that each park when completed will generate 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect employments.
- **In order to implement the PM MITRA Scheme in Virudhnagar, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) i.e. 'PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Park, Tamil Nadu Limited' has been incorporated with Government of Tamil Nadu holding 51% stake in the SPV and remaining 49% being held by the Government of India.** The process of obtaining Environmental Clearance as well as layout approval from Directorate of Town and Country Planning has been completed. The Process of providing Water and Power supply up till the park gate is in progress. Memoranduma of Understanding (MoU) worth Rs. 1,200 cr for investment in the park has been signed so far.

**PM-MITRA will offer the opportunity to create an Integrated Textiles Value Chain right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing etc. at one location and will reduce the logistics cost of the Industry.** A Special Purpose Vehicle owned by the Centre and State Government will be set up for each park which will oversee the implementation of the project. **The Ministry of Textiles will provide financial support in the form of Development Capital Support up to Rs. 500 crores per park to the Park SPV.** A Competitive Incentive Support (CIS) of up to Rs. 300 crore per park to the units in PM MITRA Park shall also be provided to incentivise speedy implementation. State governments will provide a contiguous and encumbrance-free land parcel of at least 1000 acres of land. **Government of India has planned to establish these parks in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.**

## Uttarakhand opens it's first-ever bird gallery in Dehradun

- **The research wing of the Uttarakhand Forest Department established Uttarakhand's first bird gallery at the Nature Education Centre, Jolly Grant, in Dehradun.** This gallery showcases high-resolution images of Uttarakhand's birds, giving visitors an eye-catching display of the state's feathery inhabitants. **Uttarakhand has the highest number of bird species reported in India, with over 710 species, which is more than 50 percent of the country's bird species.**

**Uttarakhand is often referred to as the Devbhumi, due to many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state.** **On 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27<sup>th</sup> state of the Republic of India, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh.** **Pushkar Singh Dhami is the current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.** **Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh is serving as the current Governor of Uttarakhand.** **The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head.** **Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand.** **The High Court of the state is located in Nainital.**

## India and United States of America sign the first ever ‘Cultural Property Agreement’

- The Government of India and the Government of the United States of America signed the first ever ‘Cultural Property Agreement’ to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA, the 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 on the sidelines of the 46<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Committee, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The agreement aligns with the Article 9 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.
- The Cultural Property Agreement (CPA) is aligned with the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to which both countries are States party. The Illicit trafficking of cultural property is a longstanding issue that has affected many cultures and countries throughout history. A large number of antiquities have been smuggled out of Bharat before the ratification of 1970 UNESCO Convention, and which are now housed in various museums, institutions and private collections across the world.
- The CPA restricts the importation into the US of certain archaeological and ethnological material ranging from 1.7 million years ago through 1947. The list of such items restricted for import will be promulgated by the Government of the US. The US shall offer to return to India any object or material on the Designate List forfeited to the Government of the US. Similar agreements exist between the US and countries like Algeria, Cambodia, China, Egypt, and Italy.
- The agreement is the result of year-long bilateral discussions initiated during the G20 meetings. Under India’s G20 Presidency, the focus on protecting cultural property has been a top priority. The Kashi Culture Pathway and the New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration (NDLD) in 2023 underscored the commitment to fighting illicit trafficking. It marks a shift in the global development strategy, emphasising culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 development framework.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN). It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO’s programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. Political and economic arrangements of governments are not enough to secure the lasting and sincere support of the peoples. Peace must be founded upon dialogue and mutual understanding. Peace must be built upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity. It is headquartered at the World Heritage Centre in Paris, France. Audrey Azoulay is a French civil servant and politician who has been serving as the Director-General of the UNESCO since 2017, becoming the second female leader of the organization.

## President Droupadi Murmu Appoints New Governors in Multiple States; Gulab Chand Kataria to Be New Governor of Punjab

- President Droupadi Murmu has appointed new Governors in different States. Former Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde has been appointed Governor of Rajasthan. Former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura Jishnu Dev Varma has been appointed Governor of Telangana. Former Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan Om Prakash Mathur appointed as Governor of Sikkim.
- Former Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar has been appointed as Governor of Jharkhand. Former Lok Sabha MP from Assam Ramen Deka appointed as Governor of Chhattisgarh. Former Karnataka Minister C H Vijayashankar has been appointed as Governor of Meghalaya. C.P. Radhakrishnan who is presently Governor of Jharkhand has been appointed as Governor of Maharashtra.
- Gulab Chand Kataria who is currently Assam Governor has been appointed Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Lakshman Prasad Acharya who is currently Sikkim Governor appointed as Governor of Assam and has also been given additional charge as Governor of Manipur. Former IAS officer K. Kailashnathan has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.

The Governor is the Chief Executive Head of a State. Same as the President of India, the Governor is a nominal (titular or constitutional) head and he/she acts as an agent of the central government. Hence, the office of governor has a dual role. Articles 153 to 167 in Part VI of the Constitution states about the State Executive,

that comprises the Governor, the Chief Minister, the Council of Ministers as well as the Advocate General of the State. Generally, there is a governor for each state, however, the 7<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1956 facilitated the appointment of the same person as a governor for two or more states. The Governor is neither directly elected by the people nor indirectly elected by a specially constituted electoral college. Rather he/she is appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal. The Governor makes an oath or affirmation, that is administered by the Chief Justice of the concerned State's High Court and in his/her absence, the senior-most judge of that court available. He/she should have attained the age of 35 years. He/she must be a citizen of India.

### President Droupadi Murmu held first governor's conference

- **President Droupadi Murmu presided over the Conference of Governors on August 2 and 3, 2024** at Rashtrapati Bhavan. This is the first Conference of Governors to be presided over by President Murmu. Besides governors from all states who have been invited for the conference, it was attended by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar; Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers of Home Affairs; Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Education; Tribal Affairs; Information and Broadcasting; Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and Youth Affairs and Sports; Vice Chairman and CEO of NITI Aayog and other senior officials from PMO, Cabinet Secretariat, MHA and other Ministries also participated.
- **The agenda of the Conference includes the implementation of three criminal laws, reforms in higher education and accreditation of universities**, and the development of focus areas development like tribal areas, aspirational districts and blocks and border areas, role of Governors in campaigns like MYBharat, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and Ek Vriksha Maa ke Naam and natural farming. Enhancing public connect and role of Governors in better coordination between various central agencies in the state is also part of agenda.

Droupadi Murmu is serving as the 15<sup>th</sup> and current President of India since 25 July 2022. She is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). She is the first person belonging to the indigenous, scheduled tribe community (Santal) to be elected as the President of India. Prior to her presidency she served as the ninth Governor of Jharkhand between 2015 and 2021, and held various portfolios in the cabinet of Government of Odisha between 2000 to 2004. Before entering politics, she worked as a clerk in the State Irrigation and Power Department from 1979 to 1983, and then as a teacher in Rairangpur until 1997. She is the youngest and first individual born after India's independence in 1947 to have been elected president. Murmu is only the second woman after Pratibha Patil to serve as the President of India. Prathibha Devisingh Patil served as the 12<sup>th</sup> President of India spanning from 2007 to 2012. She is the first woman to become the President of India. Pranab Mukherjee served as the 13<sup>th</sup> President of India from 2012 until 2017. Ram Nath Kovind served as the 14<sup>th</sup> President of India from 2017 to 2022. He is the second Dalit to serve as President of India after the first Dalit President K. R Narayanan (1997 to 2002).

### India Assumes Chair of Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre

- **India has assumed the Chair of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC).** Union Home Ministry said, ADPC is an autonomous International Organization for cooperation in and implementation of disaster risk reduction and building climate resilience in Asia and the Pacific region.
- **India and eight neighbouring countries Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand are the founding members of ADPC.** As a representative of the Government of India, Rajendra Singh, a Member, of the National Disaster Management Authority took over the Chair of ADPC from China for the year 2024-25 in Bangkok, Thailand. ADPC operates as an autonomous international organisation governed by the Board of Trustees, with headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand and sub-centers in operational countries.
- **India has spearheaded international efforts in DRR, notably through the establishment of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and India is committed to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR),** which it signed during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. The Disaster Management Act of 2005 establishes the legal and institutional framework for disaster management in India at national, state, and district levels.

National Disaster Management Authority (India), abbreviated as NDMA, is an apex Body of Government of India, with a mandate to lay down policies for disaster management. NDMA was established through the Disaster Management Act enacted by the Government of India on 23 December 2005. NDMA is responsible for framing policies, laying down guidelines and best-practices for coordinating with the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMA's) to ensure a holistic and distributed approach to disaster management. It is headed by the Prime Minister of India.

## Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launches NATS 2.0 portal

- **Union Minister for Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi launched the National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme 2.0 Portal and disbursed ₹100 crore stipends to apprentices through the DBT mode.** These apprentices are undergoing training in various sectors such as IT/ITes, manufacturing, automobile, etc.
- This initiative aligns with the Government's focus on skilling and employability of youth. **NATS 2.0 portal is expected to be utilized by a large number of beneficiaries to register and apply for apprenticeships.** Additionally, establishments/industries will leverage the portal to manage their vacancies and contracts. Therefore, a significant number of young graduates and diploma holders will be supported in attaining employability skills, accompanied by a guaranteed monthly stipend.
- **Two Panel Discussions on Future of Apprenticeships – Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Program, Credits for all apprenticeship, Industry and Higher Education collaboration and Leveraging Technology for DBT and Strengthening e-Governance were also organised during the event** which were attended by eminent dignitaries, academicians, and students. Top three establishments/industries Cognizant Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd., Infosys Ltd.' and Tech Mahindra Pvt. Ltd. were recognised during the event.

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, previously the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020)**, is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the **National Policy on Education** approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** is the **First Minister of Education** in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as **Maulana Azad**; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning 'Our Master' and he had adopted **Azad (Free)** as his pen name. The current **Union Minister for Education is Dharmendra Pradhan** since 7 July 2021. Shri Pradhan represents **Madhya Pradesh** in the **Rajya Sabha** as **Member of Parliament**.

## India to Host First Multinational Air Exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' From August 6

- **India will host its first multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' in two phases in Sular, Tamil Nadu.** In this exercise, nearly 30 countries will participate, and out of 30, ten countries will join the exercise with their fighter aircraft. **The exercise will showcase India's defense prowess and provide a platform for participating militaries to foster interoperability.** The first phase is to be held in Sular, Tamilnadu from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August, and the second phase in Jodhpur, Rajasthan from 29<sup>th</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> September.

## India Elected As Vice Chair of Supply Chain Council under Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

- **India has been elected as Vice Chair of the Supply Chain Council.** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry termed it a significant milestone for the country. The Ministry said that **India and 13 other Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) partners have established three supply chain bodies** under the landmark Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Agreement relating to supply chain resilience.
- The Ministry said that the **USA has been elected as Chair of the Supply Chain Council.** It added that **Korea was elected as Chair and Japan as Vice Chair of the Crisis Response Network**, while for the **Labour Rights Advisory Board**, the **USA is Chair and Vice Chair is from Fiji.**
- The Ministry said that through the inaugural meetings, **14 IPEF partners reaffirmed their commitments and collective resolve to facilitate closer cooperation to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of critical supply chains.** During the meetings, each of the three supply chain bodies elected a Chair and Vice Chair, who will serve for a term of two years.



- Supply Chain Resilience is a pillar out of four pillars under the IPEF framework. **IPEF was launched in May 2022 in Tokyo, Japan, comprising 14 countries. The IPEF seeks to strengthen economic engagement and cooperation among partner countries to advance growth, economic stability, and prosperity in the region. India signed a supply chain resilience agreement in November 2023.** The agreement was ratified in February this year and has been in force since then.

**The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) is an economic initiative, comprising 14 countries, 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. Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam. **These 14 IPEF partners represent 40% of global GDP and 28% of global goods and services trade. The IPEF is built on 4 main pillars: (I) fair and resilient trade, (II) supply chain resilience, (III) clean economy (renewable energy and reduction of carbon emissions), and (IV) fair economy (tax and anti-corruption policies).** India has joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF while it has an observer status in Pillar I.

### Union Civil Aviation Minister Introduces Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024

- **The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu.** While introducing the Bill, the Minister said, **Aircraft Act was established in 1934** and a lot of amendments have been made over the years. He said the amendments were incorporated into the Act in bits and pieces. He said, this has created confusion in the Act. He said, **The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak has been brought to clear out the confusion.**
- **The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak empowers the Central Government to make rules regulating the design, manufacture, maintenance, possession, use, operation, sale, export or import of any aircraft or class of aircraft and for securing the safety of aircraft operations.** Bill is aimed to empower the government to make rules for the investigation of any air accident or incident.

**Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu is currently serving as the 33<sup>th</sup> Union Minister of Civil Aviation since June 2024. He becomes the youngest ever member of the Union Cabinet Minister. He represents Srikakulam in the Lok Sabha constituency as a Member of Parliament. He won the general elections in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. He won the 2014 Indian general election in Andhra Pradesh for the first time and retained the seat in 2019 and 2024 as a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidate.**

### Uttar Pradesh Assembly Passes Bill for State Capital Region Development Authority

- **The Uttar Pradesh assembly passed the Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region and Other Regions Development Authority Bill 2024** of the ongoing monsoon session in the state. **This will ensure the development of the State Capital Region (SCR) on the lines of the National Capital Region.**
- An area of 27,826 sq. km from six districts of Uttar Pradesh, namely, Lucknow, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Raebareilly, and Barabanki, have been included in the SCR region. **The headquarters of the Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region Development Authority will be built in Lucknow. The Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region Development Authority will be the Chief Minister, and its Vice Chairman will be the Chief Secretary of the state.** Uttar Pradesh is following a path already taken by other states in adopting the NCR model for capital region development. Similar approaches have been adopted by Andhra Pradesh and Assam.

**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.**

## Vietnam PM, PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Army Software Park in Vietnam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnam PM Pham Minh Chinh at Hyderabad House jointly inaugurated the Army Software Park at the Tele-Communications University in Nha Trang, Vietnam. Moreover, India has extended a credit line of \$300 million that will strengthen Vietnam's maritime security.
- Various delegates from both sides signed several Memorandums of Understanding, aimed at strengthening the bilateral ties between both the countries. An MoU detailing the plan of action to advance comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam 2024-2028 was exchanged by Vietnam Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

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.

## Govt. introduces Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Lok Sabha

- Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai introduced the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to create a “disaster database at national and State level,” and makes provision for constitution of “Urban Disaster Management Authority” for State capitals and large cities having municipal corporations, except the union territories of Delhi and Chandigarh.
- The database will include disaster assessment, fund allocation detail, expenditure, preparedness and mitigation plan, risk register according to type and severity of risk and such other relevant matters, in accordance with such policy, as may be determined by the Central government.
- The Bill empowers the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMA) to prepare the disaster plan at national level and State level respectively instead of the plans made by National Executive Committee and the State Executive Committees earlier. The NDMA may also appoint experts and consultants as necessary to perform its functions.
- The Bill empowers the NDMA to take stock of the entire range of disaster risks in the country periodically, including emerging disaster risks, which include “risks of those disasters that may not have taken place, but may occur in future due to extreme climate events and other factors.” Opposition members opposed the Bill as it creates several authorities and also encroaches upon the functions of the State governments.

## States have right to sub-classify SCs for quotas: Supreme Court

- A seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, in a majority judgment, held that States have a right to sub-classify Scheduled Castes notified in the Presidential List with an objective to provide them “more” preferential treatment in public employment and education.
- The Court ruled that states are constitutionally allowed to sub-classify SCs and STs based on varying levels of backwardness. The seven-judge Bench ruled that states can now sub-classify SCs within the 15% reservation quota to provide better support for the most disadvantaged groups. Chief Justice of India emphasised the difference between “sub-classification” and “sub-categorisation,” cautioning against using these classifications for political appeasement rather than genuine upliftment. The Court noted that sub-classification should be based on empirical data and historical evidence of systemic discrimination, rather than arbitrary or political reasons. States must base their sub-classification on empirical evidence to ensure fairness and effectiveness. The Court clarified that 100% reservation for any sub-class is not permissible.
- Four of the seven judges on the Bench separately said the government should extend the “creamy layer principle” to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, like in the case of Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. The court stated that Reservation has to be limited only to the first generation. If any generation in the family has taken advantage of the reservation and achieved a higher status, the benefit of reservation would not be logically available to the second generation. It was necessary to exclude the affluent individuals or families from the benefits of reservation and make room for the really underprivileged within these classes. “The State must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so as to exclude them from the benefit of affirmative action. In my view, only this and this alone can achieve the real equality as enshrined under the Constitution.

- The Constitution Bench judgment followed a reference made to the seven-judge Bench in 2020 to examine the constitutionality of Tamil Nadu Arunthathiyars Reservation Act, 2009 and the Punjab Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act, 2006. The latter gave preferential quota to Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs. Chief Justice Chandrachud traced the power of these States to sub-classify the Scheduled Castes for the purpose of affirmative action, including reservations, to Articles 15(4) [prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, caste, etc] and 16(5) [equal opportunity in public employment] of the Constitution.
- The issue of sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and its referral to a seven-judge bench was initiated by a five-judge bench in the case of State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh, 2020. Reconsideration of EV Chinniah Judgment: The five-judge bench found it necessary to reconsider the judgement in EV Chinniah v. State of Andhra Pradesh, 2004. The EV Chinniah ruling stated that sub-classification within SCs was not permissible, as SCs formed a homogeneous group.
- The Supreme Court’s decision reverses the E.V. Chinnaiah ruling, which had previously held that SCs and STs were a homogeneous group and thus could not be subdivided for reservation purposes by the states and unconstitutional under Article 341 of the Indian Constitution.
- The Chief Justice agreed that ‘Scheduled Castes’ did not form an “indivisible monolith”. The ‘Scheduled Castes’ notified by the President under Article 341(1) of the Constitution had heterogeneous groups of castes, races or tribes with varying degrees of backwardness. Their inclusion in the President’s List by the Parliament under Article 341(2) did not mean they were a “uniform and internally homogenous unit” incapable of further sub-classification. The Court acknowledged that systemic discrimination prevents some members of SCs and STs from advancing, and therefore, sub-classification under Article 14 of the Constitution can help address these disparities. The Chief Justice of India stated that the new ruling on sub-classifying Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes does not violate Articles 14 or 341 of the Constitution.

Article 15 in Constitution of India: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth: (1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to- (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public. (3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children. (4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. (5) Nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of article 19 shall prevent the State from making any special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30.

Article 16 in Constitution of India: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment: (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State. (3) Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from making any law prescribing, in regard to a class or classes of employment or appointment to an office under the Government of, or any local or other authority within, a State or Union territory, any requirement as to residence within that State or Union territory prior to such employment or appointment. (4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State. (4A) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion, with consequential seniority, to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which in the opinion of State are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

## IIT Delhi Transfers Indigenous Healthcare Technologies to Industry under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology funded Project NNetRA

- Two indigenous healthcare technologies developed under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)-funded project Nanoelectronics Network for Research and Applications (NNetRA) were transferred to Industry on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 at an event hosted by Indian Institute of Technology Delhi.
- Technology transfer ceremony took place in the presence of several distinguished dignitaries such as Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director, IITD, Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Additional Secretary, MeitY, Smt. Sunita Verma, Senior Director; Group Coordinator (R&D in Electronic and IT), MeitY, FITT Team, Prof Neeraj Khare, the CI of the project and Dr. Sangeeta Semwal, Scientist E, MeitY. Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) at IIT Delhi has played an instrumental role in fostering this technology transfer. **The technology named “DNA Aptamer for Prostate Cancer Detection” has been transferred to Dr. Swapnil Sinha, HUMMSA Biotech Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, India. The aptamer is developed by Prof. Prashant Mishra and team from IIT Delhi and is capable of binding to the specific oncogenes and could be useful as theranostics for prostate cancer.**

## Amit Shah launched the e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti and e-Summon apps for the three new criminal laws

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, **Shri Amit Shah launched the e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti and e-Summon apps for the three new criminal laws in Chandigarh.** The Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh, Shri Gulab Chand Kataria, and the Union Home Secretary were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.
- He said three new laws brought in by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji - **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)- have the fragrance of Indianness and our ethos of justice.** He said that it is the responsibility of the Constitution to give justice to every person and our criminal justice system is the means to bring this spirit of the Constitution to reality.

In a move that will completely overhaul the criminal justice system in the country, three new criminal laws come into effect from today, July 1. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), passed in Parliament last December, will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 respectively. Several new provisions have been incorporated in the three new criminal laws to suit contemporary times and technologies in vogue. The three new laws received Parliament’s nod on December 21, 2023. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent on December 25, 2023, and was published in the official gazette on the same day. As per the notification, the three laws will focus on justice rather than punishment and are aimed at providing speedy justice, all the way, strengthening the judicial and court management system emphasising ‘access to justice by all’. **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will have 358 sections (instead of 511 sections in the IPC).** A total of 20 new crimes have been added to the bill, and the imprisonment sentence has been increased for 33 of them. The amount of the fine has been increased in 83 crimes and mandatory minimum punishment has been introduced in 23 crimes. The penalty of community service has been introduced for six crimes and 19 sections have been repealed or removed from the bill. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has introduced a new chapter titled ‘Crimes against Women and Children’ to deal with sexual crimes. Provisions related to the gang rape of a minor woman will become consistent with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), and a provision has been made for life imprisonment or death penalty in the case of girls below 18 years of age. There is the provision of 20 years imprisonment or life imprisonment in all cases of gang rape and the new crime category of gang rape of a woman under 18 years of age in the Sanhita. The Sanhita provides targeted penalties for persons fraudulently engaging in sexual intercourse or promising to marry without true intention to marry. Terrorism has been defined for the first time in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and it has been made a punishable offence. **Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita will have 531 sections (in place of 484 sections of CrPC).** A total of 177 provisions have been changed in the bill, and nine new sections as well as 39 new sub-sections have been added to it. **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam will have 170 provisions (instead of the original 167 provisions, and a total of 24 provisions have been changed.**

## India hosted First BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi

- The Ministry of External Affairs of India, together with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), is organized the first BIMSTEC Business Summit on August 6, 2024, in New Delhi. This summit aims to improve cooperation among the countries that are part of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
- India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, opened the summit. There was an important speech by the Minister of Commerce and Industries, Shri Piyush Goyal. The goal is to boost trade and investment relationships among the participating countries. The event is expected to draw a diverse array of participants, including ministers from BIMSTEC member states responsible for trade, commerce, industry, and energy, along with high-ranking government officials, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and industry associations. The main topics discussed at the summit are: Making trade easier, Improving regional connectivity, Ensuring energy security, Promoting inclusive growth and Encouraging sustainable development.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations, housing 1.73 billion people and having a combined gross domestic product of \$3.8 trillion (2021). The BIMSTEC member states – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand– are among the countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal. Fourteen priority sectors of cooperation have been identified and several BIMSTEC centres have been established to focus on those sectors. A BIMSTEC free trade agreement is under negotiation (c. 2018), also referred to as the mini SAARC. Leadership is rotated in alphabetical order of country names. The permanent secretariat is in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

## India retains eighth position in global agriculture exports in 2023

- Despite a drop in its agriculture exports in 2023 to \$51 billion from \$55 billion in 2022, India maintained its position as world's eighth largest exporter of agriculture products in the year as seven of the top ten exporting nations witnessed a decline, per figures collated by the WTO. India had imposed a ban on export of wheat in May 2022, non-basmati rice in July 2023 and on sugar from October 2023. The fall in agriculture exports in India can be attributed to geopolitical factors such as the Red Sea crisis and the continuing Russia-Ukraine war but the decline was largely across regulated commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar, and onions, officials in India had earlier pointed out.
- The EU maintained its top position in 2023 by exporting agriculture produce valued at \$836 billion compared to \$799 billion in 2022. The US, too, continued at the second spot despite a drop in agriculture exports in 2023 to \$198 billion as opposed to \$222 billion in the previous year. Brazil's agriculture exports increased to \$157 billion in 2023 from \$148 billion in 2022 while it retained the third spot. China was the fourth largest agriculture exporter in 2023 with shipments valued at \$95 billion which was marginally below exports worth \$96 billion in 2022.

World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations. It officially commenced operations on 1 January 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was established in 1948. The WTO is the world's largest international economic organization, with 164 member states representing over 96% of global trade and global GDP. The WTO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the current Director-General of the World Trade Organization. She has become the first woman and the first African to hold the office.

## National Commission for Women Inaugurates Digital Shakti Center in New Delhi

- The National Commission for Women has inaugurated the Digital Shakti Center to combat cyber-crimes against women in New Delhi. The centre is a dedicated facility that aims at raising awareness about cyber-crimes. It will provide essential technical support for registering and addressing complaints.
- The commission emphasised that with the alarming rise in cyber-crimes such as identity theft, cyberstalking, and sexual exploitation, this initiative is crucial in empowering women to navigate and protect themselves in the digital world. It said that building on the success of its Digital Shakti campaign, which was launched in 2018, the

centre will offer expert guidance to ensure timely and effective resolution of cybercrime complaints. The NCW added that the Digital Shakti campaign has reached millions of women, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to safeguard their digital spaces.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is a statutory body of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women. It was established on 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act. The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik. As of 16 August 2024, Rekha Sharma is the chairperson. The objective of the NCW is to represent the rights of women in India and to provide a voice for their issues and concerns.

### Government of India approves 8 high-speed road corridor projects of Rs. 50,655 cr

- The government of India approved eight national high-speed road corridor projects of length 936 km entailing investment of Rs. 50,655 crore to improve logistics efficiency and connectivity across the country. The implementation of these eight important projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore mandays of direct and indirect employment.
- The projects approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs include 6-Lane Agra-Gwalior National High-Speed Corridor, 4-Lane Kharagpur-Moregram National High-Speed Corridor, 6-Lane Tharad-Deesa-Mehsana-Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor, 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road, 4-Lane Section between Pathalgaon and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National Highspeed Corridor, and 6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is a ministry of the Government of India that is the apex body for formulation and administration of the rules, regulations and laws relating to road transport, transport research and in also to increase the mobility and efficiency of the road transport system in India. Nitin Jairam Gadkari is an Indian politician from Maharashtra who is serving as the 40<sup>th</sup> Minister of Road Transport & Highways in the Government of India since 2024. He is also the longest serving Minister for Road Transport & Highways, currently in his tenure for over ten years (2014-present), and is the only person to serve under a single portfolio for three consecutive terms. He earlier served as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He currently represents the Nagpur constituency in the Lok Sabha and is a lawyer by profession.

### India and Vietnam Team Up to Preserve Maritime History with NMHC in Lothal, Gujarat

- India and Vietnam, two nations with a rich and intertwined maritime history, are joining forces to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat. This partnership, rooted in centuries-old maritime connections, highlights the enduring bond between the two countries and their commitment to preserving and celebrating their shared heritage. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and Vietnam at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr. Pham Minh Chinh.

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..

### India's first Vande Bharat Metro set to run

- After the success of the Vande Bharat Express, Indian Railways is set to introduce the country's first Vande Bharat Metro. The trial run for this new train has already begun and is expected to be completed soon. Following the trial, this premium train will be available for public travel. The Vande Bharat Metro will connect approximately 124 cities across India. Some of the proposed routes include Lucknow-Kanpur, Agra-Mathura, Delhi-Rewari, Bhubaneswar-Balasore, Agra-Delhi, Tirupati-Chennai, and Delhi-Moradabad. These routes have been strategically selected to enhance connectivity between key cities and towns.

The Vande Bharat Express, previously known as Train 18, is a semi-high-speed, electric multiple unit train operated by Indian Railways. It was designed and manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai. The first train was manufactured in 18 months at the cost of Rs. 97 crore. The service was named 'Vande Bharat Express' on 27 January 2019. The train was launched on 15 February 2019. The first Vande Bharat Express

train, between New Delhi and Varanasi, was flagged off on February 15, 2019. Sudhanshu Mani is the architect and designer of the India's first modern semi-high speed Vande Bharat Express.

## Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in Collaboration with Airbus Begins Its First Executive Training Program for Aviation Sector in New Delhi

- **Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in collaboration with Airbus has started its first executive training program for the aviation sector** in New Delhi. This three-day program will be focused on Safety Management Systems for working professionals. The program attracts participants from leading airlines as well as representatives from Airbus and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. **This course is also being attended by international professionals, including four participants from Nepal and four from Bhutan.** The instructors for the program are leading experts from the industry.

Recently, the government of India has launched the ambitious Gati Shakti scheme or National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity plan, with the aim of coordinated planning and execution of infrastructure projects to bring down logistics costs. To ensure integrated planning and implementation of infrastructure projects in the next four years, with focus on expediting works on the ground, saving costs and creating jobs. **The Gati Shakti scheme will subsume the Rs. 110 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline that was launched in 2019.**

## First Multinational Air Exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' begins at Sular in Tamil Nadu

- **India hosted its first multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' in Sular, Tamil Nadu. This is India's first international air exercise of its kind, featuring participation from around 30 countries.** In the exercise, nearly 30 countries participated, and out of 30, ten countries joined the exercise with their fighter aircraft. The exercise is being conducted in two phases, **which aims to showcase India's defense prowess and provide a platform for participating militaries to foster interoperability.** 10 countries including Australia, Bangladesh, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA, and Singapore will join the exercise with their aircraft and 18 countries will attend as observers.
- **Phase One (August 6-14) at Sular, Tamil Nadu,** with active participation from countries like France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. **Phase Two (September 1-14) at Jodhpur, Rajasthan,** involving countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Greece, Singapore, UAE, and the USA. **The exercise aims to enhance strategic relations and mutual understanding of air operations among the participating nations.** It also showcases India's indigenous defence capabilities with aircraft like the Tejas, Prachand, Dhruv, and Rudra.

## Haryana becomes first state in India to buy all crops from farmers at MSP

- **Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced the procurement of all crops in the state at the minimum support price, thus becoming the first in the country to procure all crops at MSP.** The Chief Minister said now farmers will be allowed to buy a three-star motor from anywhere in the country for new tubewell connections. At present, only 10 companies of three-star motors are registered in the state.

**Haryana is a state in India** located in the northern-part of the country. It was **carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on a linguistic basis.** The state capital is Chandigarh and the most populous city is Faridabad, which is a part of the National Capital Region. **The city of Gurgaon is among India's largest financial and technology hubs.** **Bandaru Dattatreya is serving as the current Governor of Haryana since 2021. Nayab Singh Saini is serving as the current Chief Minister of Haryana.** According to the 2011 Census, the lowest sex ratio in India is in Haryana, where sex ratio is only 879 whereas the highest sex ratio is in Kerala (1084).

## CJI DY Chandrachud Launches e-DHCR Portal

- **Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud launched the e-DHCR, a new portal for reportable judgments of the Delhi High Court.** The e-DHCR portal will serve as the official law report of the Delhi High Court judgments. It contains more than 2,000 judgments rendered by the Delhi High Court from the year 2007 to May 2024. Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the portal, the Chief Justice called the portal a "significant leap forward in how legal knowledge is shared, accessed, and utilised". "The portal is designed not just as a tool for case management but as a powerful platform for the digital publication of judgements of public importance," he said.

- **“This initiative marks a profound shift in ensuring the democratised dissemination of legal knowledge, making landmark judgements and legal precedents available online to anyone with an internet connection,”** the Chief Justice added. He said that the “march of technology” was unstoppable and courts should embrace such changes “to enhance accessibility and efficiency”. “Each technological advancement, including the e-DHCR portal, plays a crucial role in building a more accessible and efficient justice system,” the Chief Justice said.

**Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud is an Indian jurist, who is the 50<sup>th</sup> and current chief justice of India serving since November 2022. He was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of India in May 2016. He has also previously served as the chief justice of the Allahabad High Court from 2013 to 2016 and as a judge of the Bombay High Court from 2000 to 2013. He is also a former executive chairperson (ex officio) of the National Legal Services Authority. The only child of India’s longest-serving chief justice, Y. V. Chandrachud. His father, Y.V. Chandrachud, was the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of India.**

### Indian Army chief to review Strike Corps Ex Parvat Prahaar in Ladakh

- **India is conducting a large-scale strike corps exercise in Eastern Ladakh, with all elements including artillery, armoured and infantry troops taking part in the wargames.** Being conducted in areas close to border flashpoints on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the exercise will test the preparedness of troops that have been tasked with quickly maneuvering to the front in case hostilities break out.
- **India and China have been engaged in a military standoff for over four years and multiple rounds of talks** at military as well as political levels have not yielded much result in ending the standoff. The Indian Army has deployed over 500 tanks and armoured fighting vehicles in the area since 2020 and has built infrastructure at a very fast pace there.

**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 Upendra Dwivedi is a serving four star general officer of the Indian Army. He is the current and 30<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Army Staff. He took over as the 30<sup>th</sup> COAS succeeding General Manoj Pande on 30 June 2024.**

### India’s first round-the-clock grain ATM opened at Mancheswar in Odisha

- **India’s first round-the-clock grain ATM was opened at Mancheswar in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.** Krushna Chandra Patra, Odisha Minister for Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, **unveiled the Annapurthi Grain ATM** in the presence of Nozomi Hashimoto, Deputy Country Director, of the World Food Programme in India.
- **The Odisha government has launched this initiative in partnership with the World Food Programme to achieve nutritional security in the state. The World Food Programme in India said that the ATM will dispense rice/wheat around the clock.** Annapurthi can dispense grain up to 50 kilograms in five minutes, with an error rate of 0.01 per cent. Once biometric authentication is completed, it provides consistent access to the full food ration.

**The World Food Programme (WFP) is an international organization within the United Nations that provides food assistance worldwide. It is the world’s largest humanitarian organization and the leading provider of school meals. Founded in 1961, WFP is headquartered in Rome and has offices in 80 countries. WFP is an executive member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, a consortium of UN entities that aims to fulfil the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), with a priority on achieving SDG 2 for “zero hunger” by 2030. The World Food Programme was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for its efforts to provide food assistance in areas of conflict, and to prevent the use of food as a weapon of war and conflict.**



## Earthquake 2,500 years ago abruptly changed Ganga River's course

- In 2018, geochronologist Elizabeth Chamberlain, an assistant professor at the Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands, and her team were in Bangladesh to study the movement of river channels in the Ganga delta. They were exploring an almost 2-km-wide “paleochannel” — a well-preserved mud and sand archive of the river’s ancient course — about 45 km to the south of the modern Ganga River.
- The area is used to cultivate rice. Based on geological measures in this area, they found the Ganga had abruptly changed its course — or avulsed — about 2,500 years ago, leaving behind the palaeochannel. During their fieldwork, the team also chanced upon two large sand dikes a kilometre to the east of the palaeochannel.
- These dikes are formed when earthquakes disturb the river bed and cause sediments to flow as if they were liquid. Scientists call this process liquefaction. The sand dikes and their composition, consisting of “fine sands” and “silty muds”, as the researchers reported in their paper, provided conclusive evidence of a major ancient earthquake. The team figured that if this earthquake indeed caused the Ganga to avulse, the time of the earthquake and the time of avulsion should coincide. To find the time when these two events occurred, Dr. Chamberlain used a technique called optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating.
- This method relies on estimating how long a mineral grain (i.e. a mineral particle less than a few millimetres in size, like quartz grains in sand or mud) has been buried by measuring the amount of natural radiation stored in it. The researchers extracted mineral samples from the sand dikes and the paleochannel and treated the grains in these samples to light and heat. “As buried grains absorb low doses of natural radiation, energy builds up in their crystals,” Dr. Chamberlain explained. This is because the natural radioactivity forces electrons in the minerals to escape their atoms and become trapped in the crystal structure — or the space between the atoms — of these minerals.

The Ganges is a trans-boundary river of Asia which flows through India and Bangladesh. The 2,525 km (1,569 mi)-long river rises in the western Himalayas in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. The Ganga river system is the largest in India having a number of perennial and non-perennial rivers originating in the Himalayas in the north and the Peninsula in the south, respectively. The river has a length of 2,525 km. It is shared by Uttarakhand (110 km) and Uttar Pradesh (1,450 km), Bihar (445 km) and West Bengal (520 km). The Sundarban Delta derived its name from the Sundari tree, which grows well in marshland. It is the world’s largest and fastest growing delta. It is also the home of Royal Bengal tiger.

## Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill, amends LTCG tax provision on immovable properties

- The Finance Bill 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha with an amendment relaxing the recently introduced new capital gains tax on real estate. It allows tax payers an option to switch to a new lower tax rate or stick to the old regime that had higher rate with indexation benefit. The amendment comes after a proposal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long-term capital gains on sale of immovable properties in the Budget 2024-25 had evoked criticism from various corners, including Opposition parties and tax professionals. The Budget had proposed a lower 12.5% rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.
- With this amendment, individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5% without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20% tax. The Finance Bill 2024 was passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha with a total of 45 official amendments. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, rejected criticism from Opposition parties that the middle class was heavily taxed. She said that the Budget proposals were aimed at promoting investment and benefiting the middle class. She said that the Narendra Modi government had brought in a simplified taxation regime and eased compliance without drastically increasing taxes.

The Union Budget of India also referred to as the Annual Financial Statement in the Article 112 of the Constitution of India, is the annual budget of the Republic of India. The Government presents it on the first day of February so that it could be materialised before the beginning of new financial year in April. Until 2016 it was presented on the last working day of February by the Finance Minister in Parliament. The budget, which is

presented by means of the Finance bill and the Appropriation bill has to be passed by Lok Sabha before it can come into effect on 1 April, the start of India's financial year. As of January 2021, Morarji Desai has presented 10 budgets which is the highest count followed by P Chidambaram's 9 and Pranab Mukherjee's 8. Yashwant Sinha, Yashwantrao Chavan and C.D. Deshmukh have presented 7 budgets each while Manmohan Singh and T.T. Krishnamachari have presented 6 budgets.

## Lok Sabha Passes Finance Bill 2024

- Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill, 2024. **The Bill gives effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2024- 2025. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasized that the approach to taxation has been to bring in greater simplification of tax laws and procedures and enable growth and employment in this country.** She said the Narendra Modi government has brought in transformational changes in tax governance in the last decade.
- She pointed out that without drastically increasing taxes and minimizing litigation, the government has helped in bringing a simplified taxation regime, greater transparency, and ease of compliance. Refuting claims of tax burden on the middle class, the Finance Minister said that in 2023, the slabs for personal income tax were significantly liberalized. She said **all taxpayers had reduced tax liabilities of 37 thousand 500 rupees. She highlighted that this government has again revised slabs in the new regime in this budget and this will have an impact on the middle class.**

## Dwarka to host India's first-ever tourist submarine adventure

- **The burgeoning sector of religious tourism in India is exemplified by the Gujarat government's pioneering initiative to introduce submarine tourism to explore the submerged city of Dwarka.** The state government has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders to commence submarine services for tourists, marking India's inaugural underwater tourism facility.
- **The project is slated to become operational by Diwali in October 2024.** The upcoming Dwarka submarine tourism initiative will be a pioneering venture in India, **marking the country's first underwater tourism experience.** Historically, various religious sites have been developed to boost tourism and underscore the significance of spiritual locations. This new project aims to enhance that tradition by offering a unique perspective on the submerged city of Dwarka, further enriching India's rich tapestry of spiritual tourism. **Dwarka, according to legends, was submerged under the Arabian Sea as Lord Krishna departed from the world, marking the beginning of the Kali Yuga.**

## IAF Contingent Returns after successfully participating in exercise Udara Shakti 2024 At Malaysia

- **The Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent returned to India after successfully participating in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in Malaysia's Kuantan.** The joint air exercise was conducted in collaboration with the Royal Malaysian Air Force. The Indian Air Force's Su-30MKI fighter jets engaged in air combat missions alongside the Royal Malaysian Air Force's Su-30MKM fighters. **The primary focus of the exercise was to bolster operational efficiency and enhance the technical expertise of both air forces.**

## Andhra Pradesh to launch India's first ever 'Skill Census'

- **Andhra Pradesh Education Minister Nara Lokesh said that the state would launch India's first Skill Census initiative, aimed at identifying and enhancing the skills of the youth to improve their employment prospects.** The minister held a high-level review meeting with Skill Development officials and directed them to make all necessary arrangements to carry out the Skill Census.
- He said that the **primary goal of the Skill Census is to gather detailed information, promote skill development, provide job opportunities, and subsequently improve the economic conditions of the youth.** As part of the Skill Census, the government will identify youth with interests in various sectors, provide them with specialised training, and issue certifications in collaboration with reputed organisations. These certifications are expected to increase job prospects not only within the state but also through platforms like Naukri.com and LinkedIn, and even in other states and countries.

**Andhra Pradesh is a state in the southern coastal region of India. It is the seventh-largest state. It shares borders with Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and the Bay of Bengal. It has the second-longest coastline in India at about 974 km (605 mi). After existence as Andhra State and unified Andhra Pradesh, the state took its present form on 2 June 2014, when the new state of Telangana was formed through bifurcation. Amaravati is the capital of the state, with the largest city being Visakhapatnam. Telugu, one of the classical languages of India used by the majority of people, is the first official language. Nara Chandrababu Naidu is currently serving as the 13<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Syed Abdul Nazeer is the 24<sup>th</sup> Governor of Andhra Pradesh. He is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India and a former judge of the Karnataka High Court. Andhra Pradesh is the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis in India on 1 October 1953. On 2 June 2014, Telangana was separated from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state with Hyderabad as its capital.**

### Four major projects worth Rs. 920 crores operationalized in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar under Namami Gange Mission 2.0

- **In a significant stride towards rejuvenating and conserving the sacred River Ganga, the Government of India has successfully completed and operationalized four major projects under the Namami Gange Mission 2.0.** These initiatives located across the mainstream of the river Ganga in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, are pivotal in the ongoing efforts to curb pollution and enhance the ecological health of the Ganga and its tributaries.
- **These projects built for Rs. 920 crores,** will add 145 MLD of sewage treatment capacity, provide better sewer networks, and intercept numerous drains. Designed to **meet the stringent discharge standards prescribed by the National Green Tribunal,** these initiatives ensure substantial improvements in the water quality of the Ganga and its tributaries.

**Namami Gange Programme is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as ‘Flagship Programme’ by the Union Government of India in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 crore. The program had aims of controlling pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga. It aimed at engaging with the UK community which will connect various interest groups including Scientists, Technology companies, Investors and community members. NMCG (National Mission For Clean Ganga) has decided to declare Chacha Chaudhary the popular comic book character, as the mascot of the Namami Gange Programme a statement issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

### 3 more Indian wetlands get Ramsar tag

- **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav said on the eve of Independence Day 2024 that India has increased its tally of Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) to 85 from existing 82 by designating three more wetlands as Ramsar Sites.** In a post on X, Shri Yadav expressed happiness on addition of three Ramsar sites on the eve of Independence Day.
- **Shri Yadav said that the achievement reflects the emphasis Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has laid on establishing harmony with nature, calling our wetlands Amrit Dharohars, and working relentlessly for their conservation. Union Minister congratulated the states of Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh whose wetlands have been added to the Ramsar sites. Sh. Yadav also said that India needs to pledge that Viksit Bharat is a Green Bharat.**
- **With this addition, the area of Ramsar sites touched to 1358067.757 ha in the country. The three new sites included are Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary and Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and Tawa Reservoir in Madhya Pradesh.** These new designated sites are a testament to the significant policy push from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for wetlands conservation and management in the country.
- **In June 2024, two of Bihar’s wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Nagi and Nakti bird sanctuaries, both located in Bihar’s Jamui district, are now recognised under the Ramsar Convention.** Both the bird sanctuaries are built on human-made wetlands primarily developed for irrigation through the construction of the Nakti Dam. Both sanctuaries were designated as Bird Sanctuaries in 1984 due to their importance as wintering habitats for

migratory species. This includes one of the largest congregations of red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*) and bar-headed geese (*Anser indicus*) on the Indo-Gangetic plain.

- **India is one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. India became a signatory to the convention on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1982.** During 1982 to 2013, a total of 26 sites were added to the list of Ramsar sites, however, during 2014 to 2024, the country has added 59 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites. **Currently, Tamil Nadu harbours maximum number of Ramsar Sites (18 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).** As of August 3, 2024, the **United Kingdom has the most Ramsar sites with 175, followed by Mexico with 142. Bolivia has the largest area of listed wetlands, covering about 148,000 square kilometers.**

**A Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, which is also known as the ‘Convention on Wetlands’ — an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1971, and named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed that year. Ramsar Sites in India are wetlands or similar sites of international significance to conserve and ensure sustainable use of its resources. India is one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. India signed it on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1982.**

### India is now all set to commission its second nuclear-powered submarine armed with nuclear missiles

- **India is now all set to commission its second nuclear-powered submarine armed with nuclear missiles for strategic deterrence,** while the project to build two nuclear-powered attack submarines with conventional weapons is also headed for final approval amid China’s fast-expanding naval footprint in the Indian Ocean Region. **The INS Arighat, India’s second indigenously built SSBN, is currently in the final stages of trials and upgrades as required by the Indian Navy.** According to sources, the submarine is expected to be officially commissioned into service within the next two months. Once commissioned, **INS Arighat will join INS Arihant, which was inducted into the Navy in 2016, as part of India’s growing fleet of nuclear submarines. It represents a critical component of India’s nuclear triad, enabling the nation to launch nuclear missiles from land, air, and sea.**
- **The 6,000-tonne INS Arighat, it was constructed at the Indian Navy’s Ship Building Centre (SBC) in Visakhapatnam, is “fully ready” for formal commissioning** after extensive trials that saw some technical issues being ironed out with upgrades over an extended period. **“The SSBN (naval parlance for nuclear-propelled submarines with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles) will be commissioned within a month or two.**
- **Parallely, on the conventional (non-nuclear) warfare front, the around Rs. 40,000 crore project to indigenously construct two nuclear-powered submarines, armed with torpedoes, anti-ship and land-attack missiles, is now before the PM-led Cabinet Committee on Security for the final nod after repeated iterations and inter-ministerial consultations, another source said. In tandem with the imminent commissioning of INS Arighat, India is set to embark on the construction of six nuclear submarines (SSNs) this year, a project that is expected to cost over Rs1 lakh crore (approximately \$12 billion).**

**With 172 nuclear weapons, India is now ahead of Pakistan in the ranking of nuclear-armed countries across the world,** the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has found. According to a report by SIPRI, released, **India’s nuclear arsenal has seen a slight expansion, growing from 164 warheads in January 2023 to 172 warheads by January 2024, placing it 6<sup>th</sup> among the world’s nuclear-armed states.** Pakistan, meanwhile, has recorded no increase in the number of warheads which stood at 170 both in January 2023 and 2024. China’s nuclear arsenal has increased significantly from 410 warheads in January 2023 to 500 by January 2024, with expectations of continued growth, as noted by SIPRI. **The report states that Russia and the USA collectively possess nearly 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons.**

### Three Indian Ocean structures named Ashoka, Chandragupta and Kalpataru

- **Three underwater geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India. Named after the rulers of the Mauryan dynasty are the Ashoka seamount and the Chandragupta ridge.** Kalpataru ridge is the third structure for which the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) have recently awarded names originally proposed by India. In all, there are now seven structures in the Indian Ocean named mainly after Indian scientists or bear names proposed by India in this region of the Indian Ocean.

- All the three recently named structures were discovered by oceanographers from the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa. These are located along the Southwest Indian Ridge area of the Indian Ocean and were discovered during an international survey exploration programme. **Since 2004, India has been undertaking the Indian Southern Ocean Research Programme with NCPOR being the nodal agency.** These sea explorations aim at studying the bio-geochemistry, biodiversity, lower atmospheric processes, paleoclimate, hydrodynamics, air-sea interactions among a host of other research areas.

**The Indian Ocean is the third-largest of the world's five oceanic divisions, covering 70,560,000 km<sup>2</sup> or ~19.8% of the water on Earth's surface. The Indian Ocean covers one-fifth of the Earth's waters and is considered to be the youngest of the three oceans, Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. Moreover, it is the only ocean that is enclosed by major landmasses. It is bounded by Asia to the north, Africa to the west and Australia to the east. To the south it is bounded by the Southern Ocean or Antarctica, depending on the definition in use. Along its core, the Indian Ocean has some large marginal or regional seas such as the Arabian Sea, Laccadive Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Andaman Sea. The Indian Ocean has been known by its present name since at least 1515 named after India, which projects into it. It was earlier known as the Eastern Ocean. The Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest of Earth's five oceanic divisions.**

### Ancient Maharashtra rock art declared 'protected monument'

- The Maharashtra government declared the geoglyphs and petroglyphs in Ratnagiri as 'protected monuments' under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1960. **The group of petroglyphs at Deud, Ratnagiri, dates back to the Mesolithic era (roughly 20,000-10,000 years ago).** Geoglyphs and petroglyphs are different types of ancient art forms. They involve the creation of images or designs on the earth's surface or rock surfaces. The petroglyphs depict a rhino, deer, monkey, donkey, and footprints. **The group of petroglyphs in the Konkan region are important as they represent the creations of Mesolithic humans.** The total area around the monument to be protected is 210 sq metres. While seven, including a 17-ft long petroglyph, have been discovered in Umbarle village, Dapoli taluka, the eighth is in Borkhat village, Mandangad taluka.
- **Geoglyphs are spread across the 900 km of the Konkan coast in Maharashtra and Goa. Ratnagiri alone is home to more than 1,500 such artworks across 70 sites, seven of which are on the Unesco's tentative World Heritage list.** Geoglyphs and petroglyphs are distinct ancient art forms involving images or designs created on rock surfaces or the earth's surface. The large concentration of these artworks on laterite plateaus in Konkan is unique and significant. **According to UNESCO, these rock art collections are remarkable open-air ensembles of prehistoric human expression, showcasing diverse life forms such as marine, riverine, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and avians that have vanished from the region centuries ago.**

**The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is an Indian government agency that is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural historical monuments in the country. It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the "Father of Indian Archaeology". It works under the Union Ministry of Culture, is responsible for protecting and maintaining certain specific monuments and archaeological sites that have been declared to be of national importance under the relevant provisions of The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 and The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).**

### Union Minority Affairs Minister, Shri Kiren Rijju launches Jiyo Parsi scheme Portal

- Shri Kiren Rijju, Union Minister of Minority Affairs launched the Jiyo Parsi scheme Portal. The Minister opined that Government's intervention in the form of this specific scheme is expected to bear more fruits for the community in future. **He requested the eligible Parsi couples to avail the benefits of the scheme and build a strong community and help the Government in building a stronger nation.**

**Jiyo Parsi is a unique Central Sector Scheme for arresting the population decline of the Parsi Community. The scheme was launched in 2013-14. The objective of the scheme is to reverse the declining trend of Parsi Population by adopting scientific protocol and structured interventions to stabilize their population in India.**

## NIRF Ranking 2024, IIT Madras tops overall category

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras bagged the top position as the best educational institution in the country overall category in the 2024 ranking conducted by National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), a surprise to no one as this is the sixth consecutive time it has appeared at the top. The NIRF rankings lists have been released for 16 different categories. Three new categories- state universities, skill universities and open universities have been added this year. The other categories include universities, colleges, research institutions, engineering, management, pharmacy, medical, dental, law, architecture and planning, agriculture and allied sectors, and innovation.**
- **For medical category, AIIMS Delhi has ranked on top, second spot is acquired by PGIMER, Chandigarh and third place is acquired by Christian Medical College, Vellore.** A Core Committee constructed the methodology for ranking institutes set up by MHRD to identify the broad parameters for ranking various universities and institutions. The parameters on which institutes are ranked are teaching, learning, and resources, research and professional practice, graduation outcome, outreach and inclusivity, and perception.
- **In fact, seven IITs have always been featured in the top 10 list of the overall category – IIT Madras, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Guwahati and IIT Roorkee, with institutions like Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru and All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi managing to break through their domination. IIT Madras has topped the overall category followed by IISc Bengaluru in second place, IIT Bombay in the third position. Under engineering category, IIT Madras has again topped followed by IIT Delhi in second place and IIT Bombay in the third spot. The NIRF report for 2024, prepared by the Ministry of Education, states that the ranking of institutions has remained largely consistent among the top 25, despite minor variations in individual ranks due to performance differences across some parameters.**

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) is a methodology to rank institutions across the country based on various parameters. NIRF was approved by the Ministry of Education (Erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) and launched on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015. It is the first-ever effort by the government to rank Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country. Parameters for NIRF Ranking: The weightage for each parameter varies depending on the category of the institution.

## BJP's Jagdambika Pal to head joint panel on Waqf Bill

- **Senior BJP Lok Sabha member Jagdambika Pal was named chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill.** A Lok Sabha notification said Speaker Om Birla appointed Pal as the head of the 31-member committee.
- **Amid protests by the opposition in the Lok Sabha on its provisions, the government had decided to refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses. The joint panel has 31 members – 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha – and will submit its report by the next session.** The 73-year-old Pal is a fourth-term MP from Uttar Pradesh and is seen as a lawmaker who enjoys warm cross-party relations. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha adopted a motion moved by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, naming the members to be part of the committee.
- **Transparency:** The Bill outlines around 40 amendments to the current Waqf Act, including that Waqf Boards will be required to undergo mandatory verification for all property claims, ensuring transparency
- **Gender Diversity:** Sections 9 and 14 of the Waqf Act, 1995 will be amended to modify the composition and functioning of the Waqf Board, including the addition of women representatives.
- **Revised Verification Procedures:** New verification procedures will be introduced for Waqf properties to address disputes and prevent misuse, with district magistrates potentially overseeing these properties.
- **Limited Power:** The amendments respond to concerns about the Waqf Boards' unchecked powers, which have led to extensive land being claimed as Waqf, causing disputes and misuse claims. For example, in September 2022, the Tamil Nadu Waqf Board claimed the entire Thiruchendurai village, which is predominantly Hindu.

The Waqf act was first passed by Parliament in 1954. It was later repealed, and a new Waqf Act was passed in 1995, which gave more powers to Waqf Boards. In 2013, the Act was further amended to grant the Waqf Board extensive powers to designate property as ‘Waqf Property.’ Waqf: It is the permanent dedication of movable or immovable properties for religious, pious or charitable purposes as recognised by Muslim law. It implies the endowment of property, whether movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, to God by a Muslim, under the premise that the transfer will benefit the needy. The proceeds from a Waqf typically fund educational institutions, graveyards, mosques and shelter homes. Waqfs in India are regulated by the Waqf act, 1995.

### ‘Mitra Shakti’: India-Sri Lanka joint military exercise begins

- The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of India- Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise MITRA SHAKTI commenced, at Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Indian contingent comprising of 106 personnel is being represented by a Battalion of Rajputana Rifles along with personnel from other arms and services. The Sri Lankan contingent is being represented by personnel from Gajaba Regiment of Sri Lankan Army. Joint Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Sri Lanka. Last edition was conducted in Pune in Nov 2023.
- Aim of the Joint Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban environment. Exercise MITRA SHAKTI will enable both sides to share best practices in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations. It will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between the two armies. The Joint Exercise will also enhance defence cooperation, further augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka is separated from the India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. Colombo is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. Ranil Wickremesinghe is the current President of Sri Lanka, in office since January 2015. Sri Lankan rupee is the currency of Sri Lanka. Dinesh Gunawardena is the current Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

### Paris Olympics medalist Aman Sehrawat made brand ambassador of New Delhi Municipal Council

- Wrestler Aman Sehrawat who has bagged bronze medal at the Paris Olympics has been made the brand ambassador of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). Sehrawat, who scripted history by becoming India’s youngest Olympic medalist, was felicitated by Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena.
- Meanwhile, Sukhdev Raj who is a sports teacher at the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) school in Sultan Puri has been selected as the technical officer of Taekwondo for the Paralympic Games to be held in Paris from August 28. Taekwondo players trained under Raj had participated in 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, 2022 Asian Games Hangzhou, 2024 Paralympic Games Paris and other international events.
- Raj is being sent to the Paralympics by the Cerebral Palsy Sport Federation of India. The civic body said that the experience of participating in the Olympics will be useful for Raj in not just training the MCD students in Taekwondo but also in case India gets to host the Ability Sport Games.

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 7<sup>th</sup> and current Chief Minister of Delhi since 2015.

## Supreme Court refuses to restrict States' power to tax mines only prospectively

- The Supreme Court declined pleas by the Centre and assesses to apply its majority judgment upholding the power of State Legislatures to tax mines and minerals rights only with prospective effect. A nine-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud declared that States could levy tax on mines and mineral rights from April 1, 2005. Demands of tax would not operate for transactions prior to this court-off date.
- The court clarified that there would be no interest or penalty imposed on the assesseees for tax due from the cut-off date of April 1, 2005 and the date of the judgment, July 25, 2024. The payment of tax for this period would be paid in instalments staggered across 12 years, commencing from April 1, 2026. The payment is staggered over 12 years and there would be no tax demands for transactions prior to April 1, 2005," Chief Justice addressed the lawyers present in the courtroom.
- In 1989, India Cements versus State of Tamil Nadu saw a Constitution Bench hold that "royalty is tax" and State legislatures had no legislative competence to impose cess on royalty.
- But, in January 2004, another Constitution Bench, in State of West Bengal versus Kesoram Industries, held that "royalty is not a tax" and "the power to levy tax on mineral rights vests with the State legislatures".

## India to test new SAMAR 2 Air defence system with 30 km range by December

- India is gearing up to test-fire its newly developed air defence system, SAMAR 2, by December. The SAMAR 2 system, which boasts a range of nearly 30 km, a significant upgrade from its predecessor, SAMAR 1, which has a range of 8 km, is the latest addition to India's evolving air defense capabilities. The system is developed in collaboration with two industry partners and is designed to counter a variety of aerial threats, including fighter jets, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Both SAMAR 1 and SAMAR 2 use Russian-origin air-to-air missiles.
- Both SAMAR systems utilize repurposed Russian-origin air-to-air missiles, demonstrating India's innovative approach to bolstering its defence capabilities. SAMAR 1 is equipped with the R-73E missile, while SAMAR 2 will employ the R-27 missile. The innovative aspect lies in converting air-to-air missiles, which have exceeded their shelf life for aerial combat, into effective surface-to-air defense weapons.
- SAMAR 1 was recently showcased at the International Defence Aviation Exposition held alongside the Tarang Shakti 2024 exercise, currently the largest multilateral air combat drills hosted by India. With participation from ten foreign air forces and 18 countries as observers, the exercise underscores India's growing prominence in the global defence arena.
- The SAMAR systems are designed to neutralize various aerial threats, including fighter jets, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). While enhancing its short-range air defence capabilities, India is simultaneously progressing with its long-range air defence projects. Notably, the DRDO is developing an indigenous long-range surface-to-air missile system under Project Kusha, anticipated to have a 350 km range.

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).

## Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched National Pest Surveillance System On The Occasion Of Independence Day

- Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan inaugurated the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) in New Delhi. Mr Chauhan highlighted that through NPSS, the farmers will be able to know different types of insecticides and pesticides and save their crops from their harmful effect.



On the occasion, Mr Chauhan also interacted with many farmers who are the beneficiaries of the various schemes being implemented by the Central Government. Around Five Hundred farmers were present in the event. Recently, the Central Government released One Hundred Nine high-yielding, climate-resilient, and bio-fortified crop varieties.

**Agriculture in India is counted as the primary sector. The contribution of agriculture to GDP rose to 19.9% in 2020-21, up from 17.8% in 2019-20.** The last time the agriculture sector accounted for 20% of GDP was in 2003-04. Based on the data on the total workforce compared to manufacturing (from 1993 to 2021), the agricultural workforce share fell from 64.6% in 1993-94 to 42.5% in 2018-19. Shivraj Singh Chouhan is serving as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and 23<sup>rd</sup> Minister of Rural Development since 11 June 2024. He was the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh from 2020 to 2023.

### Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches 'ASEAN-India Fellowship' for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Sciences in PUSA, New Delhi

- The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Science was **launched by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** in the presence of Union Ministers of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Bhagirath Choudhary and Shri Ram Nath Thakur in ICAR, PUSA, New Delhi.
- Shri Chouhan applauded that the **ICAR has been at the forefront of shaping and ensuring the quality of agricultural education in India.** It sets the rules, policies, and standards to ensure that agrarian education thrives across the country and contributes to sustainable development in this sector. Currently, around 135 international students are pursuing their degrees at various agricultural universities. India has maintained a strong partnership with ASEAN member countries since the establishment of ASEAN. **ASEAN is the cornerstone of India's 'Act East Policy' and the 'Indo-Pacific Vision' built upon it. India fully supports ASEAN unity, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific.**
- The Agriculture Minister stated that the **ASEAN-India fellowship aims to support postgraduate studies in various emerging fields of agriculture and allied sciences.** Participating Indian faculty members will be facilitated with introductory visits to ASEAN member countries to **aid ASEAN capacity-building which will promote the development of a pool of expert human resources in ASEAN for the growth of agriculture and allied sciences,** he added.

**The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that aims to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The motto of ASEAN is "One Vision, One Identity, One Community".** 8<sup>th</sup> August is observed as ASEAN Day. ASEAN Secretariat is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. It was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

### Chief Justice of India and Seychelles to Inaugurate International Conference on Law and Technology in Kerala

- An international conference on "Law and Technology: Sustainable, Transport, Tourism and Technological Innovations" **organised by the Commonwealth Legal Education Association will be inaugurated jointly by Chief Justice of India Dr D Y Chandrachud and the Chief Justice of Seychelles Justice Roney Govinden** at Kumarakom in Kottayam district, Kerala.
- Supreme Court judges, High Court judges, Attorney Generals, legal luminaries, academicians and technocrats are participating in the three-day conference. Judges from Malaysia, Seychelles, Nepal, Fiji and Vice Chancellors from the National Law Universities are also participating in the event. **The conference aims to foster international cooperation, share best practices and develop innovative legal solutions to complex challenges pertaining to sustainable transport and tourism.**

## Kerala HC to launch first exclusively online court in Kollam District

- **The Kerala High Court is set to launch a first-of-its-kind online court called “24×7 ON Courts — Open and Networked Courts”.** The project will be inaugurated by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud. The new initiative will allow all court processes to be conducted exclusively online right from the filing stage through the stages of case registration, admission, appearances, hearing, and passing of judgments and orders.
- **The ON Court initiative is a pilot project that will be launched in Kollam District. It will begin accepting cases from September 2024 onwards** and will hear cheque dishonor cases to start, which are the largest source of pending criminal cases in the country.
- For persons without internet browser access, **the portal will also be accessible through e-Sewa Kendra centers located at every court complex.** Even before the launch of the ON Court portal, e-Sewa Kendra allowed litigants to find information on the status of their cases and obtain copies of judgments and orders. The Kerala HC launched the first mobile eSewa Kendra (located inside a bus) at Thodupuzha, Idukki.

## Bangladeshi-born man becomes 1<sup>st</sup> person to get citizenship under CAA in Assam

- **Dulon Das, 50, whose family came to Silchar in Assam from Bangladesh’s Sylhet in 1988, has become the first person to get Indian Citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the northeastern state.** Das added he was asked to visit Guwahati’s Regional Passport Office to collect his citizenship certificate.
- Das applied for Indian citizenship in April after the CAA rules were notified over four years after the passage of the law. **His family came to Assam in 1988 after multiple attacks. Das has been voting in Assam since 1996 and his family members have documents such as Aadhar.** They did not apply for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) since it was impossible to establish the family tree. Having come to India post 1971, Das applied for citizenship under CAA.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) was passed by the Parliament of India on 11 December 2019. It amended the Citizenship Act, 1955 by providing an accelerated pathway to Indian citizenship for persecuted religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who arrived in India by 2014. The eligible minorities were stated as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis or Christians. The law does not grant such eligibility to Muslims from these countries. Under the 2019 amendment, migrants who had entered India by 31 December 2014, and had suffered “religious persecution or fear of religious persecution” in their country of origin, were made eligible for accelerated citizenship.

## Centre unveils Krishi-DSS, a satellite-based platform to support farmers

- **The Centre unveiled the Krishi-Decision Support System (K-DSS) portal, a satellite-based geospatial platform that will provide farmers with information on the weather, groundwater levels, soil health, reservoir storage levels etc and include data like satellite images.**
- **The Krishi-DSS was launched during the National Conference on Space Driven Solutions for Agriculture Transformation in India organised by the agriculture ministry.** The one-day conference is part of the events planned by the government in the run-up to the first National Space Day 2024, which will be observed on August 23, the first anniversary of India’s landing on the moon.
- **The Krishi-DSS is part of the Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture** announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget. The Krishi-DSS will function as a repository of standardised geospatial data on weather, soil, crop, reservoir, and groundwater data.

## Maharashtra govt’s ‘Ladki Bahin’ scheme

- **The Maharashtra government officially launched and roll out the ‘Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana’, which seeks to provide ₹1500 per month to over one crore women in the state.** The Maharashtra government has launched an app called Nari Shakti Dhoot, through which women eligible for the scheme can easily apply online.

## Indian sweet ‘Magji Laddu’ from Odisha awarded Geographical Indication Tag

- Sweet lovers across India have a new reason to celebrate as the delectable Indian sweet ‘Magji’ from Odisha’s Dhenkanal district, Odisha has been honoured with the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The Dhenkanal Sweets Association, in collaboration with the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), applied to the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai in 2020 for the GI tag for ‘Magji Laddu’. This delicacy is one of the 56 meals known as ‘chappan bhog’ that are offered at Puri Jagannath Temple. Chappan means the number 56 in Hindi language and bhog means ‘food offering’. It is also a Unesco World Heritage Site known for its intricate architecture.

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.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Poland visit, first Indian PM to visit Poland in 45 years

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Warsaw for the first leg of his two-nation visit to Poland and Ukraine. Before departing from India, PM Modi said that India hoped for an early return of peace and stability in the region as a “friend and partner”. During his stay in Poland, Modi met President Andrzej Sebastian Duda and held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Modi first headed to Poland on August 21, and then to Ukraine on August 23. This also marks the first-ever visit by an Indian PM to Poland in 45 years. Morarji Desai was the last Prime Minister to visit Poland in 1979.
- At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, paid an official visit to Poland from August 21-22, 2024. The historic visit, came as both nations celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their diplomatic relations.
- Diplomatic relations between India and Poland were established in 1954, leading to the opening of the Indian Embassy in Warsaw in 1957 and Polish Embassy in New Delhi in 1954. PM of India paid tribute at the Dobry Maharaja Memorial in Warsaw. The memorial commemorates the deep respect and gratitude of the Polish people and government for the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar (Jamnagar in Gujarat), Shri Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja, who provided shelter to over a thousand Polish children during World War II, earning him the title “Dobry (Good) Maharaja” in Poland.
- The PM of India also visited the Kolhapur Memorial. The memorial is dedicated to the generosity of the princely state of Kolhapur in providing shelter to around 5,000 Polish refugees, including women and children, during World War II. Kolhapur State (1710–1949) was a Maratha princely State of India. In 1949, the princely state of Kolhapur was merged into the Bombay presidency.
- Monument to the Battle of Monte Cassino: The PM of India laid a wreath at this monument, recognizing the shared sacrifices of soldiers from Poland, India, and other nations during World War II. The monument commemorates the Second Polish Corps’ soldiers who fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II.
- Recognizing their long-standing ties, reaffirming the deep-rooted bonds of friendship between their countries and peoples, and commitment to realizing the full potential of their ties, the two leaders decided to elevate India-Poland bilateral relations to the level of a “Strategic Partnership”. To implement the Strategic Partnership, both sides agreed to a five-year Joint Action Plan for 2024-2028. Poland continues to be India’s largest trading & investment partner in Central & Eastern Europe.

- The two sides decided that the next round of the Joint Working Group for defence cooperation will take place in 2024. **Trade and Investment:** Focus on balancing trade, exploring high-tech and green technology opportunities, and enhancing economic security. They committed to exploring new areas of cooperation and agreed to utilise the **Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC) to address trade imbalances and expand the trade basket. JCEC is an institutional mechanism led by the Commerce Ministers of both countries. It includes Joint Working Groups focusing on Infrastructure, Tourism, Railways, Food Processing, Renewable Energy, Information Technology, and Agriculture.**

**Poland is a country in Central Europe.** It extends from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains in the south, bordered by Lithuania and Russia to the northeast, Belarus and Ukraine to the east, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to the south, and Germany to the west. **The capital and largest city is Warsaw. The Polish zloty is the official currency and legal tender of Poland.**

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Ukraine

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed several documents during the visit to Kyiv** in sectors including agriculture, food industry, medical product regulation and cultural cooperation. **This is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine since the country became independent in 1991.**
- **PM Narendra Modi said India stood “firmly for peace” in the war between Ukraine and Russia** during a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. “We were not neutral from day one; we have taken a side, and we stand firmly for peace,” PM Modi said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday honoured the memories of children who have lost their lives in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. With folded hands, PM Modi offered a silent prayer before placing a small toy (a doll) at the memorial as the Ukrainian President placed a teddy bear.
- **The presentation of the Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri (BHISHM) cubes** has been one of the key highlights of the ongoing visit of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi to war-affected Ukraine. The BHISHM Cubes, also known as Arokya Maitri cubes, are critical trauma care cubes that have been indigenously developed by Project BHISHM under Project Aarogya Maitri.** External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that India has handed over 10 BHISHM cubes, which contain medical support equipment of 22 tonnes along with 10 generator sets.
- **An Intergovernmental Commission between India and Ukraine has been established to restore and deepen bilateral trade and economic relations to pre-conflict levels.** Bilateral trade has reached USD 3.386 billion in 2021-22. **Signing of Four Key Agreements:** Both signed four agreements covering areas such as **agriculture, the food industry, medical product regulation, and cultural cooperation.** The agreements aim to promote cooperation in agriculture and food industry, regulate medical products, provide humanitarian grant assistance, and strengthen cultural ties between the two nations.
- **Shri Narendra Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Ukraine since diplomatic relations was established in 1992.** India was one of the first countries to recognise Ukraine after it gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Pre-war Ukraine was among the biggest sources of sunflower oil for India. The visit is part of India’s broader strategy to enhance relations with Europe, moving beyond the narrow focus on relations with Europe’s big four i.e., Russia, Germany, France, and Britain. The visit marks a significant shift in India’s foreign policy, reflecting a broader engagement with central and Eastern Europe.
- **India has a significant inventory of Soviet-era defence equipment** still operational, including gas turbine engines for Indian Navy Warships and An-32 aircraft operated by the IAF (Indian Air Force). **In June 2009, India signed a USD 400 million agreement with Ukraine’s SpetsTechnoExport (STE) to upgrade its fleet of 105 AN-32 aircraft, extend their life by 40 years, and improve their avionics.** The IAF is heavily dependent on the AN-32 for air maintenance of **army troops deployed** along our northern frontier, **air cargo drop-off and para drop-off.** The IAF is heavily dependent on the AN-32 for air maintenance of army troops deployed along our northern frontier, air cargo drop-off and para drop-off. Ukraine is supplying critical components for the construction of two Admiral Grigorovich-class frigates at the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL).

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe. It is the second-largest country by area in Europe after Russia, which it borders to the east and north-east. Ukraine also shares borders with Belarus to the north; Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the west; Romania and Moldova to the south; and has a coastline along the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. With a population of 43 million, Ukraine is the eighth-most populous country in Europe. The nation's capital and largest city is Kyiv. The hryvnia, hryvna, or sometimes gryvnya, has been the national currency of Ukraine since 2 September 1996. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a Ukrainian politician, former actor and comedian, who is the sixth and current President of Ukraine.

### Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army have successfully executed a “first of its kind” operation

- **Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army have successfully executed a “first of its kind” operation** involving the precise para-drop of the **Aarogya Maitri Health Cube** at an altitude of approximately **15,000 feet**. The trauma care cubes, which have been developed indigenously under **Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri)**, are crucial for providing critical medical assistance in remote areas.
- **The IAF deployed its advanced tactical transport aircraft, the C-130J Super Hercules, to airlift and accurately para-drop the cube.** The Indian Army's Para Brigade, renowned for its operational expertise and agility, played a crucial role in the successful deployment of the trauma care cube. They utilized their advanced precision drop equipment to ensure the cube's safe and accurate delivery.

**The Indian Air Force (IAF) is the air arm of the Indian Armed Forces.** Its primary mission is to **secure Indian airspace and to conduct aerial warfare during armed conflicts.** It was officially established on **8 October 1932** as an **auxiliary air force of the British Empire** which honoured India's aviation service during World War II with the prefix **Royal**. **After India gained independence from United Kingdom in 1947, the name Royal Indian Air Force was kept and served in the name of the Dominion of India.** With the transition to a republic in 1950, the prefix **Royal** was removed. **Since 1950, the IAF has been involved in four wars with neighbouring Pakistan.** Other major operations undertaken by the IAF include **Operation Vijay, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Cactus and Operation Poomalai.** The President of India holds the rank of **Supreme Commander** of the IAF. **Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari** is currently serving as the **Chief of the Air Staff (CAS).**

### Puttur to Become India's First City Council to Convert Waste to CNG

- **Puttur City Municipal of Dakshina Kannada district is taking significant strides towards addressing its longstanding garbage problem by pioneering a project to convert raw garbage into Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).** This initiative, which is now in its final stages of development, is set to **make Puttur the first city council in India to implement such a project at the municipal level.**
- **The project is a response to the environmental and health concerns raised by the Puttur municipal council's dumping yard,** which was identified as hazardous after a fire broke out, raising alarms about the impact on the environment and public health. The initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Rotary Club, Charitable Trust of Puttur East, Swachh Bharat Trust, and Green Energy Organizations of Krishna Muli. Together, these organizations have established a **bio-CNG plant** at the dumping yard in Bannur, with an investment of approximately **Rs. 3 crore.** This plant, which will soon be officially commissioned, marks a transformative step in waste management for the city.
- **The bio-CNG plant is designed to process around 8 tonnes of sorted green waste collected daily from the Puttur Municipal Council, converting it into approximately 500 kilograms of CNG each day.** This CNG will not only fuel all the garbage collection vehicles operated by the Municipal Corporation but will also be available for private vehicles, contributing to a significant reduction in the city's reliance on diesel and other fossil fuels. The introduction of two new CNG vehicles specifically for the Municipal Corporation highlights the city's commitment to using this cleaner energy source.

**Compressed natural gas (CNG)** is a fuel gas mainly composed of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), compressed to less than 1% of the volume it occupies at standard atmospheric pressure. **CNG is an abbreviation of “Compressed Natural Gas” whereas LPG is an abbreviation of “Liquefied Petroleum Gas”.** The primary difference between CNG and LPG lies in the components that make up these fuels. **While CNG is primarily made up of Methane, LPG is primarily made up of propane.**

### Maharashtra Launches First ‘Solar Village’ With Manyachiwadi

- **Chief Minister of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde inaugurated the first ‘Solar Village’ in the state.** The Manyachiwadi village in the Patan Taluka of Satara district has become the first ‘Solar Village’ in Maharashtra. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde asserted that the state government is committed to promoting the use of renewable energy and reducing the dependency on traditional power sources.
- He further said that **the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lessened the burden of electricity bills in the state.** He also mentioned that the state government provides a 90 to 95% subsidy to farmers for setting up solar pump sets under the Mukhyamantri Saur Krushi Pump Yojana. Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that 12 thousand megawatts of electricity will be generated in the state through solar energy in the next one and a half years.
- He added that this will ensure that farmers can get free electricity during the day, when most of the agricultural activities are done. **The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (MSEDCL) has announced an ambitious plan to provide up to 100% solar-powered electricity to two villages in each district.** Following Manyachiwadi, over 70 other villages across Maharashtra will also be part of this project.

**Maharashtra is India’s second-most populous state and third-largest state by area. Nagpur is Maharashtra’s second capital and hosts the winter session of the state legislature. Pune is its cultural capital. Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray was former Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Uddhav Thackeray was the first of his family to be the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. His father Bal Thackeray founded the Shiv Sena over five decades ago. Eknath Sambhaji Shinde is serving as the Current Chief Minister of Maharashtra.**

### First ever Joint Commanders Conference to be held in Lucknow in September

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** will, on September 5, address the first ever Joint Commanders Conference where major issues related to transforming the military would be discussed. The meeting is planned to be held in Lucknow with the Indian Army playing the host.
- **The theme of the meeting is ‘Strong and Secure India Transformation of Armed Forces’.** The meeting of the top military commanders from the armed forces would be addressed by the Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, on the first day, while the main address would be delivered by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

**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).**

### Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Releases Centenary Commemorative Coin Honoring M. Karunanidhi

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released the centenary commemorative coin of Dr.Kalaaignar M.Karunanidhi in Chennai.** He said that Kalaaignar had played a defining role in realising the importance of federalism in a democracy. Mr. Singh said that it was the DMK patriarch who resonated with the voice of Tamil Nadu in national politics. Remembering the days when he was a minister while DMK was part of the NDA, Mr.

Singh said that Karunanidhi maintained a great relationship with all the leaders of the nation. The Defence Minister said that Kalaingar had emphasised that the development of the states is imperative to the growth of the nation. Prior to the release of the commemorative coin, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh paid respects at the memorial of the departed leader Kalaingar Karunanidhi.

### INS Tabar Arrives In Denmark to Strengthen Naval Ties and Engage In Bilateral Activities

- **The Indian Navy's frontline stealth frigate, INS Tabar, has arrived at Esbjerg, Denmark, for a two-day visit.** The Defence Ministry said the ongoing visit by INS Tabar to Denmark aims to enhance the existing bonds between both nations and Navies. During the stay in Esbjerg harbour, the ship's crew will participate in various bilateral professional interactions with the Danish Armed Forces, including cultural exchange. The Ministry said the **Indian Navy remains committed to fostering partnerships with navies across the world. INS Tabar is equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors and is among the earliest stealth frigates of the Indian Navy.**

**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 Dinesh Kumar Tripathi is a serving four star flag officer of the Indian Navy. He is the current and the 26<sup>th</sup> Chief of Naval Staff. General Anil Chauhan is a four-star general of the Indian Army, who is the current and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces.**

### Jammu & Kashmir to hold first local elections in a decade

- **Indian-administered Kashmir will hold local elections starting on September 18, according to the Election Commission, the first regional polls there in a decade and five years** after New Delhi scrapped the region's special autonomy. Voting for the region's assembly will be held in three stages between September 18 and October 1, while the vote counting is set for October 4. Nearly nine million people are registered to vote for the 90-member legislative assembly.

**Jammu and Kashmir is a region administered by India as a union territory and consists of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China since 1962. The region of Jammu and Kashmir is separated by the Line of Control from the Pakistani-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the west and north, respectively. A resolution to repeal Article 370 was passed by both the houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. All provisions of the Indian Constitution are now equally applicable to it. Provisions for the formation of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were contained within the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which was passed by both houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. The act re-constituted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, 'Jammu and Kashmir' and 'Ladakh', with effect from 31 October 2019. The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is administered under the provisions of Article 239 of the Constitution of India. The Article 239A, originally formulated for the union territory of Puduchery, will also be applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. Manoj Sinha is the current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Girish Chandra Murmu was the first Lieutenant Governor.**

### Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal Khattar Launches Portal for Online Monitoring Of Projects – Thermal (PROMPT)

- The Union Minister of Power and Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, **Shri Manohar Lal launched Portal for Online monitoring of Projects – Thermal (PROMPT)** in New Delhi. Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal remarked that the **electricity is the key driver for the ongoing economic activities in the country.** Accordingly, the demand for power is also increasing therefore completion of ongoing schemes and thermal projects in timebound manner are extremely critical. **“The launch of the portal PROMPT will enable transparent, coordinated, and effective working of the power sector in the country.** The Central Electricity Authority

(CEA) has been actively monitoring the progress of under-construction power projects through regular site visits, interactions with developers, and periodic review meetings with stakeholders. These efforts are aimed at identifying and resolving critical issues to ensure timely commissioning of power projects.

**Manohar Lal Khattar is serving as the 33<sup>rd</sup> Minister of Power, 40<sup>th</sup> Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs since 2024. He also served 10<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Haryana from 26 October 2014 till his resignation on 12 March 2024. He was elected to the Lok Sabha, lower house of the Parliament of India from Karnal, Haryana in the 2024 Indian general election.**

### **Kolkata rape and murder case: SC says incident final straw, forms task force to frame protocol for doctors' safety**

- **The Supreme Court said the “horrific” rape and murder of a junior doctor at the State-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata was the last straw and “the nation cannot wait for another rape and murder in order to bring in safety laws for medical professionals and doctors”.**
- **Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a three-judge Bench, warned the West Bengal government against “unleashing” its might on protestors expressing their grief and shock at a brutal crime committed on a young doctor while she was resting in the hospital’s seminar room during a 36-hour shift on August 9.**
- **The SC appointed a National Task Force who are to prepare an action plan to prevent gender-based violence and ensure dignified working conditions for interns, and resident and non-resident doctors. The Chief Justice said women medical professionals were especially vulnerable to sexual assaults. Gender violence in the medical profession was a matter of very serious concern. “The safety of doctors who don the role of health providers is a matter of national concern,” Chief Justice Chandrachud stressed. The court constituted a National Task Force (NTF) to work out the modalities of safety measures which could be put in place for medical professionals.**
- **The Supreme Court formed a 10-member National Task Force to make a blueprint for the safety and facility of healthcare workers at their workplace. The newly established NTF comprises a distinguished panel of medical experts from various specialisations, including: Surgeon Vice-Admiral Aarti Sarin, Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Dr M Shreenivas, Dr Pratima Murty, Dr Goverdhan Dutt Puri, Dr Saumitra Rawat, Anita Saxena, Pallavi Sapre, Dean and Dr Padma Srivastava. In addition to the core members, the NTF will also include ex officio members such as: the Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India, the Home Secretary, the Secretary of the Union Health Ministry, the Chairperson of the National Medical Commission, and the President of the National Board of Examiners.**
- **The Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) met for the first time to formulate a protocol for the safety and security of healthcare professionals. At the meeting, it was decided that the NTF would hold wider consultations with all stakeholders and chief secretaries and directors general of police (DGPs) of all states. “A meeting will be held with chief secretaries and DGPs of all states on August 28 through videoconferencing to discuss short-term measures regarding security of medical professionals. It will be co-chaired by Union home and health secretaries,” an official source said.**
- **The NTF will formulate effective recommendations to remedy issues pertaining to safety, working conditions and well-being of medical professionals, and other related matters, according to terms of reference for the task force released by the Union health ministry. The apex court has directed the task force to submit an interim report within three weeks and a final report within two months of the order. The health ministry also operationalised a national portal for seeking suggestions from individuals and different stakeholders across the country. This comes after the top court last week directed the Union health secretary to launch a portal where the stakeholders can submit suggestions to the NTF.**

**As per constitutional provisions, health and law and order are State subjects. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of the State government or Union Territory administration to take note of events and eventualities, and do what is necessary to prevent violence. The details of the number of fatalities of medical professionals due to attacks by families of patients are not maintained centrally.**



## 123 countries joined Voice of Global South summit

- **India hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Voice of Global South Summit** on 17 August 2024. This **unique initiative began as an extension** of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas', and is underpinned by **India's philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**. It envisages bringing together countries of the Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform across a whole range of issues. **China and Pakistan were not among the invitees to the third Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India on the virtual format that was joined by 123 nations across the globe**. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar confirmed this at a media briefing after conclusion of the summit that focused on unitedly dealing with challenges facing the Global South or the developing countries.
- Jaishankar said **123 countries participated at the summit. Twenty-one countries were represented at the level of head of state and government while 34 foreign ministers joined it**, according to the external affairs minister. Apart from the foreign ministers, 118 ministers also joined the summit that comprised 10 ministerial sessions. **The 3<sup>rd</sup> VOGSS, with the overarching theme of "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future"**, will act as a platform to expand discussions held in the previous Summits on a range of complex challenges that continue to affect the world, such as conflicts, food and energy security crises, climate change - all of which disproportionately affect developing countries in a severe manner.
- In the last few years, **India has been positioning itself as a leading voice, flagging concerns, challenges and aspirations of the Global South or the developing nations, especially the African continent**. As the G20 president last year, India focused on issues like inclusive growth, digital innovation, climate resilience, and equitable global health access with an aim to benefit the Global South.

**India had hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)** on 12-13 January 2023, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November 2023, both in virtual format. **Both the previous editions of the Summit saw participation of over 100 countries from the Global South**. The inputs and feedback received from the leaders of the developing countries in these two Summits was appropriately reflected in the agenda and discussions of the G-20 Summit under India's Presidency last year, including in the G-20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration.

## Shri Bhagirath Choudhary launches the digital geo-spatial platform, Krishi-Decision Support System

- **To commemorate the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 Mission, and soft landing of the Vikram Lander and deployment of the Pragyaan Rover on the Moon on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2023**, the Government of India has **declared 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of August of every year as the National Space Day (NSpD)**. With this achievement, India has joined the elite group of Space fairing nations becoming only the fourth to land on the surface of the Moon, and the first nation to land near the south pole of the Moon.
- To mark this special day in the history of the Indian Space Program, the Department of Space is organizing nation-wide celebrations during August, 2024 to engage and inspire the youth of the Nation towards space science and its applications with the **theme "Touching lives while touching the Moon: India's Space Saga"**. Krishi-DSS is a first-of-its-kind geospatial platform specifically designed for Indian agriculture. The platform provides seamless access to comprehensive data including satellite images, weather information, reservoir storage, groundwater levels and soil health information, which can be easily accessed from anywhere at any time.

**Chandrayaan-3 is the third mission in the Chandrayaan programme, a series of lunar-exploration missions developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**. The mission consists of a Vikram lunar lander and a Pragyan lunar rover was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre on 14 July 2023. The spacecraft entered lunar orbit on 5 August, and **India became the first country to touch down near the lunar south pole, at 69°S, the southernmost lunar landing on 23 August 2023**, made ISRO the fourth space agency to successfully land on the Moon, after USSR, NASA and the CNSA. **Chandrayaan-3 was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre on 14 July 2023. The spacecraft entered lunar orbit on 5 August, and became the first lander to touch down near the lunar south pole on 23 August, making India the fourth country to successfully land on the Moon, and at 69°S, the southernmost lunar landing, until IM-1 landed further southwards in Malapert A crater on 22**

**February 2024.** The lander was not built to withstand the cold temperatures of the lunar night, and sunset over the landing site ended the surface mission twelve days after landing. The propulsion module, still operational, transited back to a high Earth orbit from lunar orbit on 22 November 2023 for continued scientific observations of Earth. It operated until 22 August 2024.

## India, Japan hold ‘2+2’ dialogue with focus on Indo-Pacific

- **The India-Japan partnership is set against a larger context of a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific** and it will continue to grow, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said as the two sides **held a fresh edition of “2+2” dialogue amid China’s increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.** The Japanese delegation at the talks in Delhi was headed by Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Defence Minister Kihara Minoru. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh headed the Indian team. “As we both step forward into a more volatile and unpredictable world, there is a need for reliable partners with whom there are substantial convergences”.

**2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.** It is a format of dialogue where the defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. **India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners: the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.**

## In a first, Indian Railways to develop master clock system

- **In a first, the Indian Railways will develop a master clock system for synchronising time with the applications and systems across its network,** with plans to demonstrate a prototype by Gandhi Jayanti this year. The necessity of keeping uniform time across all systems and applications involved in train operations arose following difficulties in accident investigations.
- **The time for the master clock system will be sourced from the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NAVIC) or the National Physical Laboratories (NPL).** The high-level team, led by the Railway Board’s director for telecommunications, will study the existing system of time synchronisation and its impact on various applications in terms of proper functioning and post-incident analysis. The team will finalise the architecture for the master clock system and the time dissemination for different functioning assets spread across various Zonal Railways, production units, workshops, and data centres.

**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 18<sup>th</sup> railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Ashwini Vaishnav is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Minister of Information and Broadcasting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Minister of Electronics and Information Technology since 2024 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.**

## Jindal Global University to set up India’s first Constitution Museum

- **The O.P. Jindal Global University, based in Sonapat, Haryana, is establishing India’s first Constitution Museum to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India.** “The Constitution Academy and The Rights & Freedoms Museum” will be a landmark institution established on the JGU campus, and will be inaugurated and dedicated to the nation on November 26, 2024 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution.
- **Adopted on November 26, 1949, the Constitution outlines the fundamental laws of our country reflecting the values, principles, and governance framework.** It guides the State’s functioning, thus ensuring all citizen’s rights and responsibilities. With its roots grounded in historical struggles, philosophical ideals, and societal aspirations, the Constitution embodies the nation’s collective journey toward democracy, justice, and equality.

## MP goes digital, becomes 1<sup>st</sup> state to notify rules for serving summons, warrants online

- **Madhya Pradesh has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first state in India to formalize rules allowing the digital issuance of summons and warrants.** This pioneering initiative permits the use of electronic methods such as email, messaging apps like WhatsApp, and text messages in its judicial processes.
- **The state’s Home Department has introduced the “Madhya Pradesh Electronic Processes (Issuance, Service and Execution) Rules, 2024,”** which have been officially published in the Madhya Pradesh Gazette. This development, sanctioned under the country’s new law, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (Indian Civil Security Code) 2023, aims to accelerate judicial procedures, fortify legal proceedings, and enhance the efficiency of the judicial system.

## I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches ‘Create In India Challenge Season One’

- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched ‘Create in India Challenge-Season One’** in New Delhi in the run-up to the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit. Mr Vaishnaw said that **reflecting the evolution of Indian economy and the impact of technological advancements, 25 challenges have been launched.**
- He said, the Media and Entertainment industry has also evolved, significantly boosting the creator economy. The Minister said, **this creator economy was recognized by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who presented the first National Creator Awards.**
- He said, **the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) is set to take place for the first time and the Ministry has received a lot of positive feedback.** Mr Vaishnaw said, considering this, Ministry is planning to organize it on a large scale. He said, in the near future, WAVES is poised to become a significant event, with these 25 challenges playing a crucial role in it.

## Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Releases An E-Magazine, Sapno Ki Udaan, on the occasion National Space Day

- **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released an e-magazine, Sapno ki Udaan, on the occasion of India’s first National Space Day.** The e-magazine is a mix of poetry, essays, stories, anecdotes, and riddles contributed by students, teachers, and parents from around India. The Department of School Education and Literacy, in collaboration with NCERT, **released this e-magazine to commemorate the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the lunar South Pole.**
- During the virtual launch of the e-magazine, Mr. Pradhan said that this will **fulfill the recommendations of the National Education Policy by making education accessible and equitable, and preparing students for the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** He also said the current theme of the magazine, space, resonates with the vastness of the imagination of children.

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, previously the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020)**, is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the **National Policy on Education** approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** is the **First Minister of Education** in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as **Maulana Azad**; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning ‘Our Master’ and he had adopted **Azad (Free)** as his pen name. The current Union Minister for Education is **Dharmendra Pradhan** since 7 July 2021. Shri Pradhan represents Madhya Pradesh in the **Rajya Sabha** as Member of Parliament.

## Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi participated in ‘Lakhpati Didi Sammelan’ at Jalgaon

- **The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi participated in Lakhpati Didi Sammelan in Jalgaon, Maharashtra.** He handed out certificates and felicitated **11 lakh new Lakhpati Didis who recently became Lakhpati during the third term of the present government.** The Prime Minister also interacted with Lakhpati Didis from across the country. Shri Modi released a Revolving Fund of Rs. 2,500 crore, benefiting about 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHG). He also disbursed bank loans of Rs. 5,000 crore which will benefit

25.8 lakh members of 2.35 lakh SHGs. Since the inception of the Lakhpati Didi Yojna, one crore women have already been made Lakhpati Didis and the government has set a target of three crore Lakhpati Didis.

**Narendra Damodardas Modi is serving as the 14<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of India since 2014.** Modi was the **Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014** and is the **Member of Parliament from Varanasi from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).** He is the **first prime minister to have been born after India's independence in 1947** and the **second prime minister not belonging to the Indian National Congress to have won two consecutive majorities in the Lok Sabha**, or lower house of Indian of parliament. He is also the **longest serving prime minister from a non-Congress party.** In the 2024 general election, Modi's party lost its majority in the lower house of Parliament and formed a government leading the National Democratic Alliance coalition.

### Amit Shah inaugurates NCB's zonal office in Chhattisgarh's Raipur

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the zonal office of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur.** "The office is located on the third floor of the Central Secretariat building in Sec-24 of Nava Raipur Atal Nagar".
- **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) was established in 1986, to ensure the implementation of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985.** It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It coordinates with state governments and other central departments, carrying out India's international commitments on drug trafficking, and aiding international and foreign drug law enforcement authorities. Officers are drawn from the Indian Revenue Service, the Indian Police Service, and paramilitary forces, as well as directly recruited personnel.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is a ministry of the Government of India. It is **mainly responsible for the maintenance of internal security and domestic policy.** **Amit Shah is an Indian politician who is currently serving as the 31<sup>st</sup> Minister of Home Affairs since 2019 and the 1<sup>st</sup> Minister of Co-operation of India since 2021.** **He became the youngest full-time Home Minister in the country at the age of 54.** He served as the 10<sup>th</sup> President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2014 to 2020. He has also served as chairman of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) since 2014. He was elected to the lower house of Parliament, Lok Sabha, in the 2019 Indian general elections from Gandhinagar. Earlier, he had been elected as a member of the upper house of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from Gujarat from 2017 to 2019. **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel served as the country's first Home Minister during the country's political unification and the 1947 Indo-Pakistani War.**

### India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable Deliberates Six Identified Pillars

- **The second India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) was held in Singapore.** During the meeting, the leaders of India and Singapore emphasised ways of further enhancing cooperation between India and Singapore in emerging and futuristic areas. **Both sides deliberated upon six pillars identified under ISMR, which include digitalisation, skill development, sustainability, healthcare and medicine, and advanced manufacturing and connectivity.**
- The leaders also discussed plans **for commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore, alongside regional and global cooperation, including ASEAN and G20 developments.** The leaders noted that the discussions during the first round of ISMR have resulted in the successful conclusion of MoUs on healthcare, education, skill development, digital cooperation and semiconductor ecosystem cooperation.
- **The high-level Ministerial mechanism called the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) was established to chart a roadmap to take bilateral relations to a new level.** The inaugural meeting of ISMR took place in September 2022 in New Delhi.
- **The focus areas include digital connectivity, Fintech, Green Economy, Green Hydrogen, Skill Development and Food Security. India and Singapore's bilateral trade is continuously rising.** Bilateral trade expanded from 6.7 billion US dollars in the Financial Year 2004-05 to 30.11 billion US dollars in 2021-22. Singapore is India's sixth largest trade partner with a share of 2.9 percent of India's overall trade. Singapore continued to be the largest source of FDI into India.

Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lawrence Wong 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.

## Odisha govt to cover one crore women under Subhadra Yojana

- The Odisha government has decided to include around one crore women, aged between 21 to 60 years, under the Subhadra Yojana, which was one of the major poll promises of the BJP. As per the standard operating procedure (SOP), all women, who have ration cards and none of their family members is a government employee or has a four-wheeler or land more than five acres, or a government pensioner or receiving Rs. 1,500 a month (or Rs. 18,000 a year) under any other scheme, will be eligible for the scheme.
- The state cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has approved the scheme that will be implemented from 2024-25 to 2028-29. An outlay of Rs. 55,825 crore has been made for this initiative. The government has made a provision of Rs. 10,000 crore in the 2024-25 budget.

The modern state of Odisha was established on 1 April 1936, as a province in British India. The ancient kingdom of Kalinga, which was invaded by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in 261 BCE resulting in the Kalinga War, coincides with the borders of modern-day Odisha. Konark Sun Temple is a 13<sup>th</sup>-century CE sun temple at Konark about 35 kilometres northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India. The temple is attributed to king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty about 1250 CE.

## First indigenously developed Pollution Control Vessel of ICG, 'Samudra Pratap'

- Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth urged industry partners to work for the country to become not only fully Self-sufficient (Aatmanirbhar) in defence production but also a net exporter. He was speaking on occasion of launching of the first indigenously built Pollution Control Vessel (Samudra Pratap) in Goa.
- The Ship has been built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The vessel will help to check the oil spillage in the country's sea coast. The ship was launched and named as 'Samudra Pratap' by Smt Neeta Seth, in presence of Shri Sanjay Seth, Raksha Rajya Mantri.
- GSL, a premier Indian Shipyard, signed a contract for constructing two Pollution Control Vessels for Indian Coast Guard at a cost of Rs. 583 Crores. It is for the first time that these vessels are being designed and constructed indigenously. The ship has been designed and constructed in-house by Goa Shipyard Ltd to meet the specific requirements of ICG. The ship has a length of 114.5m, breadth of 16.5m and would displace 4170 T. The Keel laying ceremony of the ship was held on 21 Nov 2022. 'Samudra Pratap' is an exemplary testimony of the nation's ship building capabilities and propels Goa Shipyard Limited into the league of Indian Shipyards capable of producing state-of-art Pollution Control Vessels.

An oil spill is the release of a liquid petroleum hydrocarbon into the environment, especially marine areas, due to human activity. Oil spills may be caused by releases of crude oil from tankers, offshore platforms, drilling rigs or wells. Oil on ocean surfaces harms aquatic life by blocking sunlight and reducing dissolved oxygen levels. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill (2010) in the Gulf of Mexico is considered the largest and most famous oil spill in history. Oilzapping is the new technique of using bacteria to get rid of oil spills.

## Term of 22<sup>nd</sup> law panel ends

- The term of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Law Commission, which is without a chairperson for the past few months, ends with its key report on the uniform civil code still in works. The report prepared by the law panel on simultaneous elections is ready and is pending submission to the law ministry. In the absence of a chairperson, the report cannot be submitted, people aware of the procedure noted.
- Justice (retd) Ritu Raj Awasthi, who headed the 22<sup>nd</sup> law panel, was appointed a member of the anti-corruption watchdog Lokpal a few months ago. In March 2024, Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, the then Chairman of the Law Commission, resigned after a 17-month tenure. While the report on simultaneous elections is ready, it cannot be submitted to the Law Ministry due to procedural requirements that stipulate

the need for a chairperson. A high-level committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind submitted a report on ‘one nation, one election’ in March.

The Law Commission of India is an executive body established by an order of the Government of India. The commission’s function is to research and advise the government on legal reform, and is composed of legal experts, and headed by a retired judge. The commission is established for a fixed tenure and works as an advisory body to the Ministry of Law and Justice. The first Law Commission was established during colonial rule in India by the East India Company under the Charter Act of 1833 and was presided by Lord Macaulay. The first Law Commission of independent India was established in 1955 for a three-year term with its chairman being the then Attorney-General of India, M. C. Setalvad.

### Centre to create 5 new districts in Ladakh

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to create five new districts in the union territory of Ladakh. Amit Shah said the creation of new districts will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny. These districts are – Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang. Ladakh currently has only two districts – Leh and Kargil. Both districts have their autonomous district councils which govern them. After the creation of the new districts, Ladakh will have seven districts in total.

Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory which constitutes a part of the larger Kashmir region and has been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. The Leh district contains the Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys. The Kargil district contains the Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys. Ladakh was established as a union territory of India on 31 October, 2019, following the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. Prior to that, it was part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Ladakh is both the largest and the second least populous union territory of India. Radha Krishna Mathur served as the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh from 2019 to 2023. He retired as the Chief Information Commissioner of India (CIC) in November 2018. B. D. Mishra is a former brigadier of the Indian Army. He is the present Lieutenant governor of Ladakh. The eastern end, consisting of the uninhabited Aksai Chin plains, is claimed by the Indian Government as part of Ladakh, and has been under Chinese control since 1962.

### Government Gears Up To Host World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) In Goa

- The Government is gearing up to host the inaugural World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), aiming to bolster India’s Media and Entertainment industry and extend its global influence. The Summit will be being held in Goa from 20<sup>th</sup> of November to 25<sup>th</sup> of November this year.
- With the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw, launching 25 Challenges under the ‘Create in India Challenge – Season 1’, WAVES is poised to become a significant platform for icons of the Media and Entertainment fraternity worldwide, focusing on entertainment economics and technology.
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will give opportunities to all the finalists in all of the 25 events to come together at the main WAVES Platform and showcase their best. The final selected people from across various challenges will be given an opportunity to participate in some of the biggest relevant platforms across the world. Waves Challenges aimed at engaging the entire creator’s community throughout the country over the next few months.
- These challenges are being organised in the run up to the main event and aimed at engaging the entire creator’s community throughout the country over the next few months. Prasar Bharati, India’s public broadcaster is hosting The Battle of the Bands and The Symphony of India challenge. The Battle of the Bands, in particular, provides a platform for bands to experiment with combining modern music and traditional folk pieces. This innovative approach has the potential to attract a wider audience and introduce new generations to the beauty and diversity of India’s musical traditions.

## Ahead of polls, Maharashtra becomes first state to approve Unified Pension Scheme

- The Maharashtra Cabinet approved the central government's Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), becoming the first state to do so and just within 24 hours of Modi government's announcement. The move by the Maharashtra government comes hours after employee unions demanded states to implement the newly approved scheme by the Modi government, which will take effect from April 1, 2025. Over 99 per cent of the employees covered under NPS would find it beneficial to shift to UPS.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which will provide government employees with assured pension after retirement. The scheme will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2025 with central government employees shifting to UPS from the current National Pension System (NPS). State governments will also have the option to adopt the Unified Pension Scheme.

Provisions of the Unified Pension Scheme: **Assured Pension:** This would amount to 50% of the employee's average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before retirement for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years. The amount would proportionately go down for a smaller service period, up to a minimum of 10 years of service. **Assured Minimum Pension:** In the case of retirement after a minimum 10 years of service, the UPS provides for an assured minimum pension of Rs. 10,000 per month. **Assured Family Pension:** Upon a retiree's death, their immediate family would be eligible for 60% of the pension last drawn by the retiree. **Inflation Indexation:** Dearness relief will be available on the above mentioned three kinds of pensions. **Indexation will be calculated based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers.** **Lumpsum Payment at Retirement:** In addition to gratuity, employees will receive a lump sum payment at retirement equivalent to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of their monthly emoluments (pay+DA) as of the retirement date for every completed six months of service. This payment will not affect the amount of the assured pension. Gratuity is an amount paid by an employer to its employees for rendering their services. **Choice for Employees:** The employees can still opt to remain under the NPS. However, an employee can only opt for once. once opted, the option can not be changed.

## Programme Aarambh Launched In Punjab: Aims At Enhancing Early Childhood Education

- In Punjab, the "Aarambh" programme, aimed at enhancing early childhood education has been launched. The activities provided to parents and educators will be aligned with the state's curriculum, ensuring they are easy to implement at home while promoting cognitive, pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, social-emotional and fine and gross motor skills in children.
- "Aarambh" initiative is designed to focus on the holistic development of young children attending Anganwadi centres. It is set to provide a nurturing and play-based learning environment for children, with active participation from parents and Anganwadi workers. The program aims to foster comprehensive development through engaging activities. "Aarambh" is grounded in the key principles of the National Education Policy 2020 and aligns with national initiatives like the foundational "Aadharshila" and "Poshan bhi Padhai bhi" training curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Punjab is a state in northern India. The state is bordered by the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh to the north and northeast, Haryana to the south and southeast, and Rajasthan to the southwest; by the Indian union territories of Chandigarh to the east and Jammu and Kashmir to the north. It shares an international border by Punjab, a province of Pakistan to the west. The state capital is Chandigarh, a union territory and also the capital of the neighbouring state of Haryana. The five tributary rivers of the Indus River from which the region took its name are the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum rivers (in order from east to west). After the partition of India in 1947, only 3 of the 5 rivers, the Sutlej, Ravi and Beas rivers flows in Indian Punjab, while other two rivers became part of Punjab, Pakistan. Gulab Chand Kataria is the current Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh. Bhagwant Singh Mann is the current Chief Minister of Punjab.

## SC-appointed National Task Force holds 1<sup>st</sup> meet

- The first meeting of the National Task Force (NTF), which was recently constituted by the health ministry following the directions of the Supreme Court (SC), to make recommendations for the safety, security and working conditions of medical professionals was held.

- The deliberations were chaired by Union cabinet secretary TVS Somanathan and home secretary Govind Mohan, the health ministry said in a communique. There were elaborate and detailed discussions on various issues by the NTF members and they also put forth their suggestions.
- During the meeting, the members informed that they have been approached directly by various stakeholders and have individually received almost 300 to 400 suggestions. The health ministry also informed that a national portal has been created by it under the title ‘Suggestions to NTF’ to seek suggestions from individuals and different stakeholders across the country.

The Supreme Court has constituted a national task force (NTF) of senior medical professionals to formulate comprehensive safety protocols for healthcare workers across India. This decision comes in the wake of the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, which has sparked widespread protests among the medical fraternity demanding enhanced safety measures. The Supreme Court bench took suo motu cognisance of the case, emphasising the urgent need for a national consensus on standard safety protocols for medical professionals. As per constitutional provisions, health and law and order are State subjects. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of the State government or Union Territory administration to take note of events and eventualities, and do what is necessary to prevent violence. The details of the number of fatalities of medical professionals due to attacks by families of patients are not maintained centrally.

### 12 members elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha

- In the Rajya Sabha by polls, nine BJP members and two from NDA allies as well as Congress’s Abhishek Manu Singhvi have been elected unopposed. The BJP candidates elected unopposed included Mission Ranjan Dass and Rameshwar Teli from Assam, Manan Kumar Mishra from Bihar, Kiran Chaudhary from Haryana, George Kurien from Madhya Pradesh, Dhirya Sheel Patil from Maharashtra, Mamata Mohanta from Odisha, Ravneet Singh Bittu from Rajasthan and Rajeev Bhattacharjee from Tripura. Congress’s Abhishek Manu Singhvi was elected unopposed from Telangana. NCP Ajit Pawar faction’s Nitin Patil got elected from Maharashtra and RLM’s Upendra Kushwaha made it to the upper house from Bihar.

The Rajya Sabha, constitutionally the Council of States (informally known as the House of Elders), is the upper house of the bicameral Parliament of India. As of March 2022 it has a maximum membership of 245, of which 233 are elected by the legislatures of the states and union territories using single transferable votes through Open Ballot while the President can appoint 12 members for their contributions to art, literature, science, and social services. The potential seating capacity of the Rajya Sabha is 250 (238 elected, 12 appointed), according to article 80 of the Indian Constitution. Members sit for staggered terms lasting six years, with about a third of the 233 designates up for election every two years, in even-numbered years. The Rajya Sabha meets in continuous sessions, and unlike the Lok Sabha, being the lower house of the Parliament, the Rajya Sabha is not subjected to dissolution. However, the Rajya Sabha, like the Lok Sabha can be prorogued by the President. Jagdeep Dhankhar is serving as the 14<sup>th</sup> and current vice president of India since 2022. He previously served as the Governor of West Bengal from 2019 to 2022.

### India & Chile Strengthen Agricultural Ties in High-Level Meeting

- Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ramnath Thakur met Chile’s Agriculture Minister Esteban Valenzuela and his delegation for a high-level bilateral meeting in New Delhi. The meeting concentrated on key areas of mutual interest and collaboration, including the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Agricultural Cooperation, the Horticulture Action Plan, and the e-certification of phytosanitary certificates.
- The discussions also addressed agricultural challenges in both Chile and India and explored opportunities to boost agricultural trade between the two countries. The ministers underscored the importance of sustainable practices and reaffirmed their commitment to deepening the agricultural partnership to strengthen cooperation.

Chile is a country in western South America. It occupies a long, narrow strip of land between the Andes to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The country’s capital and largest city is Santiago, and its national language is Spanish. The peso is the currency of Chile. Gabriel Boric Font is a Chilean politician serving as the president of Chile since 11 March 2022.



## Himachal Pradesh raises minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years

- The Himachal Pradesh State Assembly passed a Bill increasing the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years in order to support gender equality and higher education. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced by Women Empowerment Minister Dhani Ram Shandil in the State Assembly during its ongoing monsoon session. The Bill was passed by voice vote.
- The Bill states the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 was enacted to prohibit solemnisation of child marriage and matters related to it. In order to provide for gender equality and opportunities of obtaining higher education, it has become necessary to increase the minimum age of marriage for the girls. Thus, it is proposed to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and other related Acts in their application to the State of Himachal Pradesh and increase the minimum age for marriage for girls to 21 years.

Himachal Pradesh (“Province of the Snow-laden Mountains”) is a state in the northern part of India. Situated in the Western Himalayas, it is one of the eleven mountain states and is characterized by an extreme landscape featuring several peaks and extensive river systems. The state also shares an international border to the east with the Tibet Autonomous Region in China. Himachal Pradesh is also known as ‘Dev Bhoomi’ or ‘Land of God’ and ‘Veer Bhoomi’ which means ‘Land of Braves’. Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh. In 1864, Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India. Dharamshala is the winter capital city. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is serving as the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Shiv Pratap Shukla is the Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

## Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari Launches First Comic Book on Indian Air Force Heroes

- Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari has launched the first comic book in the series of heroes of the Indian Air Force. The book published by the Indian Air Force is aimed at presenting historical and heroic narratives of the Indian Air Force since its inception.
- It also aims to educate the readers about the war history of the Indian Air Force and foster a sense of duty and inspiration among the youth of the nation. This comic book consists of two stories, the first is about the Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh DFC and the second is about the 1971 epic Battle of Boyra. It also gives out information about career choices in the Indian Air Force and the eligibility criteria. The book is free for circulation amongst young children. The distribution will be done during Induction Publicity drives conducted by the Indian Air Force.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is the air arm of the Indian Armed Forces. Its primary mission is to secure Indian airspace and to conduct aerial warfare during armed conflicts. It was officially established on 8 October 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire which honoured India’s aviation service during World War II with the prefix Royal. After India gained independence from United Kingdom in 1947, the name Royal Indian Air Force was kept and served in the name of the Dominion of India. With the transition to a republic in 1950, the prefix Royal was removed. Since 1950, the IAF has been involved in four wars with neighbouring Pakistan. Other major operations undertaken by the IAF include Operation Vijay, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Cactus and Operation Poomalai. The President of India holds the rank of Supreme Commander of the IAF. Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari is currently serving as the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS).

## Centre Gives Nod to Expansion of ‘Agriculture Infrastructure Fund’

- Union Cabinet has also accorded approval for the progressive expansion of the Central Sector Scheme of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. This will significantly enhance and strengthen the agricultural infrastructure in the country and support the farming community. The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund was established in 2020 with a corpus of one lakh crore rupees to provide all-around financial support to the farmers.

## Govt Approves 12 New Industrial Smart Cities Under National Industrial Corridor Development Programme & E-Auction Of 730 Private FM Channels

- Union Cabinet has approved twelve new Greenfield industrial smart cities under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme to transform the country’s industrial landscape. The combined estimated investment in these industrial areas will be 28 thousand 602 crore rupees. He said these projects will create ten lakh direct and up to 30 lakh indirect jobs.

- **The projects span across ten states and are strategically planned along six major corridors.** These are Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Gaya in Bihar, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Dighi in Maharashtra, Orvakal and Koppurthy in Andhra Pradesh, Palakkad in Kerala, Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan, and Agra and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.
- **The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to conduct e-auctions for 730 Private FM channels in 234 new cities.** The move aims to boost local content in the mother tongue and create new employment opportunities. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, the decision will take the FM radio to uncovered tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

**Greenfield and brownfield projects are two types of investments that differ in how they are made and the type of property involved: Greenfield projects: Involve building new facilities from the ground up in an area with no previous facilities.** The term “greenfield” comes from the idea that the land may have been a green field, such as an empty pasture, before construction. **Brownfield projects: Involve purchasing or leasing an existing facility to start a new business activity or modify or upgrade an existing facility.**

### Centre to provide ₹4,136 crore for 15 GW hydropower projects in the Northeast

- **The Union Cabinet approved equity support of ₹4,136 crore to northeast states for developing hydropower projects, totalling 15,000 MW capacity over the next eight years.** The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Power for providing central financial assistance (CFA) to the state governments of Northeast Region (NER) towards their equity participation in the development of hydroelectric projects through Joint Venture (JV) collaboration between state entities and Central Public Sector Undertakings.
- **The scheme will be funded through 10% gross budgetary support (GBS) for the northeastern region from the total outlay of the Ministry of Power.** The grant towards the equity portion of the state government of NER would be capped at 24 per cent of the total project equity, subject to a maximum of ₹750 crore per project. The cap of ₹750 crore for each project would be revisited, if required, on a case-to-case basis.

### Government launches She-Box Portal To Make Workplaces Safer For Women

- **The government has launched the She-Box portal to make workplaces safer for women.** Women and Child Development Minister Annpurna Devi launched the portal in New Delhi. **She-Box portal is a centralized platform for registering and monitoring complaints of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.** This platform provides facility to file complaints, track its status and ensure a time-bound processing of complaints by Internal Committees.
- **WCD Minister Annpurna Devi said, this initiative is a critical step forward in providing a more efficient and secure platform for addressing workplace-related sexual harassment complaints.** She said, the government is committed to creating a safer and more inclusive working environment for women in the country. She expressed confidence that with the help of portal complaints can be safely registered without personal information being publicly accessible.

**Protection of children by the state is guaranteed to Indian citizens by an expansive reading of Article 21 of the Indian constitution, and also mandated given India’s status as signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, came into effect on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012** which was enacted in consequence to India’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. **The aim of this special law is to address offences of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, which were either not specifically defined or in adequately penalised. The Act defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years.** The Act provides punishment as per the gravity of offence. **The Act was further reviewed and amended in 2019 to introduce more stringent punishment including the death penalty for committing sexual crimes on children,** with a view to deter the perpetrators & prevent such crimes against children. The Government of India has also notified the POCSO Rules, 2020.

## Centre approves 3 railway projects: 300 km of new tracks, 14 stations

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi **approved three projects under the ministry of railways**. These projects, with a total estimated cost of ₹6,456 crore, will cover four states – Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh. The approved projects include two new railway lines and one multi-tracking initiative.
- **Covering seven districts across these states, the projects will expand the Indian Railways network by approximately 300 km**. The projects include two new railway lines and one multi-tracking initiative that will cover seven districts across Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh, expanding the Indian Railways network by approximately 300 km.

Electric rail transportation was first introduced in India all the way back in 1925 when a 16 km section of railway was electrified to provide a rapid suburban service from the suburbs of Mumbai (then Bombay) into the city. Around 40,000 km have been electrified since 2014, versus 21,801 in all the years prior to 2014. With 94% of lines electrified as of 1 January 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged that Indian Railways will achieve 100% electrification within “a few months”.

## Government Launches Single Simplified Pension Application Form and Digital Integration of Bhavishya with E-HRMS

- In a move to simplify the process for the pensioners, **the government launched a single simplified pension application form and digital integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS**. These unique initiatives were launched by the Minister of State for Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh. The government is committed to ease of living. He said, single simplified pension application form and digital integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS will simplify the process for pensioners.
- Secretary of Department of Personnel and Training Vivek Joshi termed **these initiatives a significant milestone to enhance human resource management**. He said, nine pension forms have been merged and a new single form has been created which will simplify the pension process. Secretary Pensions V Srinivas said, with the integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS, real time tracking of pension application by the pensioners will be possible.

## New single unified pension form launched, nine forms merged into one for ease of senior citizens and pensioners

- **The government has launched a single unified pension form, merging merging nine separate forms into one “Form 6-A” to streamline the process for pensioners**, reducing the complexity of handling multiple forms, and significantly cutting down on the time and effort required for senior citizens and pensioners.
- **The retiring officials, who are on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A through e-HRMS (only Superannuation cases) and the retiring officials, who are not on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A in Bhavishya**. The Bhavishya platform is the base for a Common Single Window Portal for pensioners and elderly citizens. The State Bank of India (SBI), Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India and Union Bank of India are already linked with the Integrated Pensioners’ Portal.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi Lays Foundation Stone for Vadhvan Port

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port in the Palghar district of Maharashtra**. He also inaugurated various fisheries projects and distributed transponders and Kisan Credit Cards to fishermen. The Prime Minister said that in the last decade, development on India’s coast has gained unprecedented pace. He noted that the government has modernized ports, developed waterways, and invested lakhs and crores of rupees in this direction.
- The Prime Minister added that private investment has also increased, providing benefits and new opportunities for youths. Mr. Modi said that the whole world is **looking at Vadhvan Port**, which will change the economic picture of this entire region. He emphasized on India’s journey towards progress, and a developed Maharashtra is an essential part of the resolve for a Developed India. **The cost of this project is around 76,000 crore rupees. It aims to establish a world-class maritime gateway that will boost the country’s trade and economic growth by catering to large container vessels**, offering deeper drafts, and accommodating ultra-large cargo ships.

- Vadhvan Port, located near Dahanu town in Palghar district, will be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will provide direct connectivity to international shipping routes, reducing transit times and costs. **The Prime Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 218 fisheries projects worth around 1,560 crore rupees, aimed at bolstering the sector's infrastructure and productivity across the nation.** Additionally, the Prime Minister launched the National Rollout of the Vessel Communication and Support System at a cost of around Rs. 364 crore. Under this project, one lakh transponders will be installed in a phased manner on mechanized and motorized fishing vessels in 13 coastal states and Union Territories.

**In India, ports are categorised into major ports and non-major ports (informally called minor ports). As of 2024, there are 13 major ports and 176 non-major ports across the country.** Major ports are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways of the Government of India, while non-major ports fall under the jurisdiction of State Maritime Boards of respective state governments—this also includes private ports running under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Among the 176 non-major ports, cargo is handled only at 68 ports, others are used by fishing vessels and ferries. **India has a coastline of 7517 kilometres, forming one of the largest peninsulas in the world. According to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, around 95 percent of India's trading by volume and 70 percent by value is done through maritime transport.**

### Uttar Pradesh to get India's first Solar-powered E-way by 2026: Mega Project along Bundelkhand Expressway to Take off This Year

- **The country's first solar-powered expressway is all set to become a reality by 2026.** Among the many solar power developers that have shown interest in the project are Tusco Ltd, Torrent Power Ltd, Somaya Solar Solutions Pvt Ltd, 3R Management Ltd, Avaada Energy Ltd, Atria Brindavan Power Ltd, Erisha E Mobility, and MahaPreit, said sources with UPEIDA.
- **Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP),** in its study, found that apart from the land utilised in the establishment of the expressway and the area of its utility, there was around 1,500 hectares of surplus land, which is adequate to set up solar parks, having the capacity to generate around 450 Megawatts to 550 Megawatts of energy.
- **The estimated cost of the project is around Rs. 2,500 crore,** said Shahi. Once installed, the solar park would power the entire 296-km-long Bundelkhand Expressway, making it the country's first solar-powered expressway. As of now, **Bhadla Solar Park in Rajasthan is the world's largest solar power plant, covering 14,000 acres of land, and having the capacity to generate 2,245 MW of power.** The project along the Bundelkhand Expressway is expressed to surpass it. Other than powering the expressway, the energy would be utilised in providing electricity to other establishments including one lakh houses and industries that would come up in its vicinity.

**India surpassed Japan to claim the title of the world's third-largest solar power generator in 2023** as it has climbed from ninth ranking in 2015, according to a report from global energy think tank Ember. Accompanying this review is the world's inaugural open dataset on electricity generation in 2023, **encompassing 80 nations that represent 92 percent of global electricity demand, along with historical data from 215 countries.** India experienced the world's fourth-largest surge in solar generation in 2023, adding 18 Terawatt hours (TWh) to its capacity, following China (+156 TWh), the United States (+33 TWh), and Brazil (+22 TWh). These top four countries collectively accounted for 75 percent of global solar growth that year.

### Skill India's first certified naturalists ready to transform eco-tourism

- The first batch of Certified Naturalists graduated at the Bannerghatta Nature Camp, **completing a course offered by The Naturalist School in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.** This 750-hour course, **the first of its kind in India, aligns with the goals of the Skill India Mission,** according to its founders. **Focusing on key areas like flora and fauna identification, eco-friendly practices, and guiding techniques, the participants gained hands-on experience through on-the-job training** at the Bannerghatta Biological Park from May to August.

**In 2015, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi launched the Skill India Mission, which was in accordance with his vision to help India become ‘Aatmanirbhar’ (self-reliant).** This initiative was aimed to create and implement comprehensive skill development training programmes that would help bridge the gap between industry demands and skill requirements and therefore, develop the country at large. The Skill India programmes comprised implementing curriculum-based skill training courses, wherein trainees would gain certifications and endorsements from industry-recognised learning centres.

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Career  
Launcher

## International



### Multilateral peacekeeping exercise begins in Mongolia

- **An Indian contingent is part of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Khaan Quest**, a multinational peacekeeping exercise, which commenced in Mongolia on July 27 with an opening ceremony, **held at the Five Hills Training Area in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar. The Indian Army contingent includes 40 personnel from a Battalion of the Madras Regiment**, along with others. The exercise has around 430 participants from 23 countries, including Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Türkiye, the United States, and the United Kingdom, among others. **“On 27 July, Ambassador Atul Malhari Gotsurve participated in the inaugural ceremony of the 21<sup>st</sup> multinational military Exercise Khaan Quest-2024.**
- The Indian contingent departed on July 25 for the exercise, which is scheduled to run from July 27 to August 9. One woman officer and two women soldiers are also part of the contingent. **“Aim of Exercise Khaan Quest is to prepare Indian armed forces for peacekeeping missions while operating in a multinational environment, thereby increasing interoperability and military readiness** in peace support operations under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter. The exercise will focus on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning and joint tactical drills,” the Army said in a statement issued as the contingent departed.
- **The exercise started as a bilateral event between the U.S. and Mongolian armed forces in 2003 and graduated to a multinational peacekeeping exercise from 2006 onwards.** The exercise will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between soldiers of the participating countries and also sharing of their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures for the conduct of joint operations, the statement added.

**Mongolia is a landlocked unitary sovereign state in East Asia. Ulaanbaatar is the capital and largest city of Mongolia. Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh is currently serving as the President of Mongolia. Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene is currently serving as Prime Minister of Mongolia since October, 2017. The togrog or tugrik is the official currency of Mongolia.**

### China, Italy tie for first place in UNESCO’s World Heritage List

- **During the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, India, the Beijing Central Axis and Badain Jaran Desert were included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List, raising the total number of World Heritage sites in China to 59**, which makes it one of the countries with the **largest number of World Heritage sites, along with Italy.** China’s Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf (Phase II) was also inscribed during the session as a serial extension of the property of the same name (Phase I) already inscribed on the list.
- **Preparation work for the Beijing Central Axis to be recognized as a World Heritage site started in 2011.** It is a building ensemble that runs through the core area of the Chinese capital. Since then, the Beijing government has initiated more than 100 renovation projects for cultural relics on the axis.
- Home to a variety of plant species and wildlife, the Badain Jaran Desert in north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is known for its unique and varied landscapes. **The 46<sup>th</sup> session inscribed 16 new properties on the list, including 11 cultural sites, four natural sites**, and a mixed cultural and natural property, along with two significant modifications to the boundaries. **China now has 15 World Natural Heritage sites, leading in the total number of World Natural Heritage sites worldwide.** It also has four mixed heritage sites.

## South Africa appoints a woman as chief justice for the first time

- **South Africa appointed its first female Chief Justice. President Cyril Ramaphosa named Mandisa Maya, the current deputy chief justice, as the country's new most senior judge.** Her term is due to start on Sept. 1, when she will replace Chief Justice Raymond Zondo as the head of the apex Constitutional Court. Zondo is retiring. Maya, 60, previously served as the judge president of the Supreme Court of Appeal, the second-highest court in South Africa, before her promotion to the Constitutional Court. She was the first Black woman to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal and the first woman to be appointed deputy president and then president of that court.

**South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is the southernmost country in Africa. South Africa has three capital cities, with the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government based in Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town respectively. The South African rand is the official currency of it.**

## Sierra Leone outlaws child marriage in new legislation

- **Sierra Leone's parliament has approved a law banning child marriage in a development lauded by activists as a major win for children's rights. The law criminalizes marrying girls less than 18 years of age.** It also prescribes jail terms of up to 15 years for offenders. One-third of all girls are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in the West African country, according to UNICEF.

**Sierra Leone is a country on the southwest coast of West Africa. Freetown is the capital and largest city of Sierra Leone. The leone is the currency of Sierra Leone. Julius Maada Wonie Bio has been serving as President of Sierra Leone since 4 April 2018.**

## Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro wins third term as President amid Opposition claims of irregularities

- **Nicolas Maduro was declared the winner in Venezuela's presidential election, even as his opponents were preparing to dispute the results, setting up a high-stakes showdown that will determine whether the South American nation transitions away from one party rule. The National Electoral Council said Maduro secured 51% of the vote, overcoming the main Opposition candidate, Edmundo González, who garnered 44%.**
- Foreign leaders held off recognising the results as the electoral council promised to release official tallies in the "coming hours." "The Maduro regime should understand that the results it published are difficult to believe," said Gabriel Boric, the leftist leader of Chile. "We won't recognise any result that is not verifiable." U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. has "serious concerns that the result announced does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people," speaking in Tokyo.

**Venezuela is a country on the northern coast of South America, consisting of a continental landmass and many islands and islets in the Caribbean Sea. Nicolas Maduro has been the President of Venezuela since assuming office in 2013. Venezuela Capital is Caracas and Currency is Venezuelan bolivar.**

## Turkey approves controversial stray dog cull

- **Turkey's parliament approved a move to euthanise some of the country's four million stray dogs, a measure opponents say could lead to a vast animal cull. The controversial article, part of a draft law on the fate of the animals, says those who are sick or deemed aggressive must be put down. The government says the euthanasia clause is needed to prevent dog attacks and the spread of rabies. It says the other homeless dogs should be captured en masse, placed in animal shelters and put up for adoption.**

**Turkey, officially the Republic of Turkiye is a transcontinental country located mainly on Anatolia in Western Asia, with a portion on the Balkans in Southeast Europe. It shares borders with the Black Sea to the north; Georgia to the northeast; Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran to the east; Iraq to the southeast; Syria and the Mediterranean Sea to the south; the Aegean Sea to the west; and Greece and Bulgaria to the northwest. Cyprus is located off the south coast. Ankara is Turkey's capital. The Turkish lira is the official currency of Turkey and Northern Cyprus. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is serving as the current President of Turkey since 2014.**

## Philippine and Japanese navies held their first joint exercise

- **The Philippine and Japanese navies held their first joint exercise in the South China Sea, as the two US allies boost security ties in the face of China’s growing pressure.** The drills followed the signing less than a month ago of an agreement between Manila and Tokyo to allow the deployment of troops on each other’s territory.
- **The Japanese destroyer JS Sazanami and the Philippine guided missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal took part in the two countries’ first bilateral “Maritime Cooperative Activity”.** “This activity was part of the ongoing efforts to **strengthen regional and international cooperation towards realising a free and open Indo-Pacific.**” The two vessels held a communications exercise and undertook tactical manoeuvres in the West Philippine Sea, Manila’s name for parts of the South China Sea that are closest to the Filipino coast.

**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. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. is the current President of the Philippines.**

## World’s First Hydrogen Fuel Cell-Powered Apartment Unveiled

- **In Ulsan, South Korea, the Yuldong-With-U apartment complex is an example of carbon-neutral living.** Compared to city gas, it could potentially reduce energy costs by 20% to 40%. The complex quickly generated much interest because its energy solution powers 437 apartment units while supporting their heating needs through hydrogen fuel cells.
- **The world’s first “hydrogen apartment” is a pioneering move forward to sustainable urban living. The Yuldong Combined Heat and Power Plant is central to the operation, located around 650 feet from the apartment complex.** The plant efficiently produces electricity and heat with minimal environmental impacts because of the by-product hydrogen pipelined to it from various industrial activities. Among the various alternatives, this method of hydrogen production is said to be the most cost-effective.

## North Korea’s Kim oversees delivery of new tactical ballistic missile launchers

- **North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the delivery of a new tactical ballistic missile system to troops.** Kim also gave a speech at the ceremonial event in Pyongyang where 250 new tactical ballistic missile launchers were unveiled. The launchers have been described as a powerful up-to-date tactical attack weapon personally designed by Kim and ready to be transferred to KPA units.
- **Pyongyang will have enhanced nuclear readiness in the near future to deter nuclear threats and protect itself to respond to any challenges,** the leader was quoted as saying in the speech to troops and military scientists. Kim reaffirmed his stance that stockpiling and improving the country’s nuclear weapons was the best way to counter what he said were nuclear threats and pressure from the United States.

**North Korea is a country in East Asia.** It constitutes the northern half of the Korean Peninsula and borders China and Russia to the north at the Yalu (Amnok) and Tumen rivers, and South Korea to the south at the Korean Demilitarized Zone. **Pyongyang is the capital and largest city. Kim Jong Un has been supreme leader of North Korea since 2011 and the leader of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) since 2012. He is the third son of Kim Jong Il, who was North Korea’s second supreme leader from 1994 to 2011, and Ko Yong-hui. The Korean People’s won, more commonly known as the North Korean won is the official currency of North Korea.**

## Drukyl’s Literature and Arts Festival

- **The stage is set in a traditional Bhutanese living room format for the Bhutan Echoes - Drukyl’s Literature Festival Bhutan Echoes in Thimphu.** This year’s theme is “**Enlighten, Evolve, and Evoke**”, with the festival taking place in between the artsy valleys where mountains are covered by clouds.
- **The multicoloured paintings in the traditional architecture — showcase the scenic views of Bhutan — from every single window. Be it the river, mountains, or the different monasteries. While the panels and walls have symbols of wisdom imprinted on them, the carpet features — the sun and moon — symbolising feminine and masculine energy, respectively. A traditionally carved table also makes it to the set. The Queen Mother of Bhutan, Gyalyum Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck is the chief patron of the festival.** She inaugurated it at the Royal University of Bhutan, after lighting the butter lamp. The festival will take place from August 3-5.



Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia. Thimphu is its capital and largest city, while Phuntsholing is its financial center. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the current reigning Druk Gyalpo or “Dragon King” of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Lotay Tshering is the current Prime Minister of Bhutan in office since 7 November 2018. He has also been the president of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa since 14 May 2018. Bhutan is the first country in the world to come up with a happiness index and linked it to development, which is otherwise based on GDP numbers. The ngultrum is the currency of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

### US Vice President Kamala Harris Wins Democratic Party’s Presidential Nomination

- **US Vice-President Kamala Harris has passed the threshold to clinch the Democratic presidential nomination** in a vote of party delegates. Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison announced that **Ms Harris has won enough votes from Democratic delegates to win the party’s nomination for president.**
- **She formally became the nominee after securing the support of 2,350 delegates.** She ran unopposed in the virtual roll call after President Joe Biden stepped aside last month and endorsed her. Ms Harris said she was honoured to be the presumptive Democratic nominee for president of the United States. **Kamala Harris was the sole candidate on the ballot for a five-day electronic vote of nearly 4,000 party convention delegates.** She will be officially crowned at a Chicago convention. **Ms Harris is the first black and first South Asian woman to become the White House standard-bearer for a major US political party.** If she defeats Republican nominee Donald Trump in November, she would be America’s first female president.

**Kamala Devi Harris** is an American politician and attorney **who is the 49<sup>th</sup> and current vice president of the United States since 2021 under President Joe Biden.** She is the **first female vice president,** making her the **highest-ranking female official in U.S. history,** as well as the **first African American and first Asian American vice president.** A member of the Democratic Party, she served as a **U.S. senator from California from 2017 to 2021,** and earlier as the **attorney general of California.** **Harris is the Democratic Party’s nominee in the 2024 U.S. presidential election.**

### Turkiye formally asks to join the genocide case against Israel at the UN court

- **“Turkiye filed a request with a U.N. court to join South Africa’s lawsuit accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza”.** Turkiye’s ambassador to the Netherlands, accompanied by a group of Turkish legislators, submitted a declaration of intervention to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.
- With the development, **Turkiye, one of the fiercest critics of Israel’s actions in Gaza, becomes the latest nation seeking to participate in the case.** Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua and Libya have also asked to join the case. The court’s decision on their requests is still pending.

**Turkey, officially the Republic of Turkiye is a transcontinental country located mainly on Anatolia in Western Asia,** with a portion on the Balkans in Southeast Europe. It shares **borders with the Black Sea to the north;** Georgia to the northeast; Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran to the east; Iraq to the southeast; Syria and the Mediterranean Sea to the south; the Aegean Sea to the west; and Greece and Bulgaria to the northwest. Cyprus is located off the south coast. **Ankara is Turkey’s capital. The Turkish lira is the official currency of Turkey and Northern Cyprus. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is serving as the current President of Turkey since 2014.**

### Amidst Violent Protests, Sheikh Hasina Resigns as Prime Minister, Army Chief Announces Formation of Interim Government

- As violence gripped Bangladesh amid ongoing student protests, **Sheikh Hasina resigned as the country’s Prime Minister and left the country in a military helicopter.** Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman announced that an **interim government will be formed to run the country.**
- The Army Chief said he is taking full responsibility and would talk to the president to form the interim government. He urged the countrymen to remain patient and maintain peace. **The students had been protesting against a 30 per cent reservation in government jobs for relatives of freedom fighters who wrested independence for Bangladesh from Pakistan in a bloody civil war in 1971.**

- Protesters argue that this system is discriminatory and favours supporters of Prime Minister Hasina's Awami League party. They advocate for a merit-based system to replace the existing quota. The quota system was established in 1972 and briefly abolished in 2018. The protests began last month following a High Court order to restore 30 per cent job quotas for descendants of freedom fighters. After the Supreme Court slashed the reservations to 5 per cent on the 21<sup>st</sup> of last month, student leaders put the protests on hold but the demonstrations flared up because the students said the government ignored their call to release all their leaders, making the resignation of PM Hasina their primary demand.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country's largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman often shortened as Sheikh Mujib or Mujib, was a Bangladeshi politician, statesman and Founding Father of Bangladesh who served as the first President and later as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 17 April 1971 until his assassination on 15 August 1975. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16<sup>th</sup> and current President of Bangladesh. India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh (4,096-kilometer) (2,545-mile).

### Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has been appointed as the head of Bangladesh's interim government

- Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has been appointed as the head of Bangladesh's interim government. The top positions in Bangladesh Army underwent a major reshuffle following Hasina's escape after deadly protests against her government over a controversial job quota system.
- The 13-member team from Students Against Discrimination participated in the meeting, which also included Dhaka University professors Asif Nazrul from the law department and Tanzim Uddin from the IER department. Yunus, an economist and banker, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his work with microcredit, has previously faced corruption charges under Hasina's rule, which he alleges were driven by personal animosity. After Mr. Yunus, 13 out of the 16 advisers of the interim government were sworn in. The Cabinet members are: Saleh Uddin Ahmed, Asif Nazrul, Adilur Rahman Khan, Hasan Arif, Tauhid Hossain, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Brig. Gen. (Retd) M. Sakhawat Hossain, Supradip Chakma, Farida Akhtar, Bidhan Ranjan Roy, A.F.M. Khalid Hossain, Nurjahan Begum, Sharmin Murshid, Md. Nahid Islam (students' representative), Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan (students' representative) and Farooqui Azam.

### EU Passes World's First AI Law

- The European Union's new artificial intelligence law takes effect on August 1, significantly changing the landscape of AI regulations. This act is to oversee how companies develop, use, and apply AI technologies for their usage. This step will mark a major step towards responsible and ethical usage of AI within the EU member nations. The EU's executive body, including EU member states, lawmakers, and the European Commission, gave their final approval to the AI Act in May 2024. This decision can be seen as the EU's commitment to realizing the use of AI in a way that benefits society while minimizing the potential harm of its side effects.

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.

## Vietnam's president is confirmed as the new Communist Party chief – the country's most powerful role

- Vietnamese President To Lam was confirmed as the new chief of the Communist Party after his predecessor died. Lam will be the general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the country's most powerful political role. It was unclear if Lam will stay in his role as president. The previous general secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong, dominated Vietnamese politics since he became party chief in 2011. He was elected to a third term as general secretary in 2021.

## Syed Refaat Ahmed took the oath as Bangladesh's new chief justice

- Syed Refaat Ahmed took the oath as Bangladesh's new chief justice, succeeding Obaidul Hassan, who resigned along with five other Appellate Division judges. Their resignations came amidst massive street protests demanding a revamp of the judiciary, with protesters gathering at the apex court premises and issuing an ultimatum for the judges to step down. Hassan, appointed to lead the Supreme Court last year, was targeted by protesters who considered him a loyalist of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

## Iran President presents cabinet to parliament for approval

- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian presented his Cabinet to parliament notably including a woman and a Western-friendly diplomat as the country's Foreign Minister. Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf announced the names of the 19-member Cabinet presented by the President during an Assembly session broadcast live on state television.
- For the post of Foreign Minister, Mr. Pezeshkian has named Abbas Araghchi, a career diplomat who has led nuclear negotiations since 2013. Mr. Pezeshkian has also nominated one woman, Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second Iranian woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic Republic was established in 1979. The 48-year-old is set to head the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

## Tunisian President replaces Prime Minister without any explanation

- Tunisian President Kais Saied sacked his Prime Minister Ahmed Hachani without explanation and replaced him with Social Affairs Minister Kamel Madouri.

Tunisia is the northernmost country in Africa. Tunis is the capital and largest city of the country. The dinar is the national currency of Tunisia.

## India to introduce UPI payment service in Maldives

- India and Maldives have signed an agreement to introduce the Unified Payments Interface in the archipelago nation, which will have a "very positive" impact on its tourism sector. "Witnessed signing of MoU between (the) National Payments Corporation of India and (the) Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Maldives on (the) introduction of (a) digital payment system in the Maldives," he said in a post on X. Developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Unified Payment Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones.
- Bhutan was one of the first countries to adopt UPI payments outside India back in 2021 in collaboration with the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan. Besides, Bhutan is also one of the first countries to adopt and issue RuPay bank cards. France is one of the first countries in the European region to access UPI payments, that too at the iconic Eiffel Tower in collaboration with Lyra. The govt of France has confirmed that more merchants across France and Europe will soon start accepting UPI payments, which will be a big development, especially for Indian travellers.
- UAE being the third-largest trade partner of India, recently announced a partnership with the govt of India regarding the adoption of UPI payments in the country just a few days ago in collaboration with Mashreq, a major bank in UAE.
- Sri Lanka and Mauritius are the latest islands to adopt India's UPI payment system on February 12, helping Indian tourists to send and receive money in these countries. Right now, UPI is available in seven countries, they are Sri Lanka, Mauritius, France, UAE, Singapore, Bhutan and Nepal.

Unified Payments Interface, commonly known as UPI is a mobile-first payment system developed in India by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). It makes it easy to send and receive by just scanning a QR code or using a user's phone number. Unlike most digital payment systems, the amount gets directly debited to the linked bank account. UPI can be used on BHIM, a first-party app. It can also be accessed via third-party platforms such as Google Pay, Amazon Pay, PhonePe, BharatPe, and a lot more. Most banks that officially operate in India support UPI payment, and unlike a credit or debit card payment, there is no charge involved in UPI payment. To prevent fraudulent activities, NPCI has thought of various features like how the account is directly linked to the phone number, and if the SIM card is removed, UPI ceases to work, and at times, one might also face downtime due to service issues. To solve that, NPCI came up with UPI Lite, which does not require a PIN or internet to make transactions. However, there is a limit of Rs. 500 per transaction and Rs. 4,000 limit per day.

### Paul Kagame Became Rwanda's President Consecutively for the Fourth Term

- Rwanda's President Paul Kagame was sworn in for his fourth term after securing over 99 per cent of the vote. The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Faustin Ntezilyayo, during which Kagame pledged to uphold peace, national sovereignty, and national unity.
- The President expressed his gratitude to the citizens for their support. However, Rights activists have criticized the election outcome, arguing that it highlights the lack of democratic processes in the country. Only two out of eight candidates were allowed to run in the presidential race and those who criticised Kagame were barred from participating. Democratic Green Party candidate Frank Habineza could only muster 0.53% and independent Philippe Mpayimana 0.32%.

Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, where the African Great Lakes region and Southeast Africa converge. Its capital and largest city is Kigali. The Rwandan franc is the currency.

### Indonesian President Joko Widodo holds first Cabinet meeting in unfinished future capital Nusantara

- Indonesian President Joko Widodo held his first Cabinet meeting in the future capital of Nusantara, amid miles of construction sites and doubts about the sustainability of the ambitious mega project. Mr. Widodo began working from the city two weeks ago, using an office inside the construction site of the massive new palace in the form of the mythical eagle-shaped Garuda, the symbol of the country.
- The city is set to hold its first Indonesian Independence Day celebration. Construction of the new city began in mid-2022, after Mr. Widodo announced a plan to relocate the capital from Jakarta. The metropolis suffers from pollution and congestion, is prone to earthquakes, and is rapidly sinking. It will be a futuristic green city centred around forests and parks that utilises renewable energy sources and smart waste management, spread over an area of about 2,600 sqkm (1,000 square miles). But the project, which is using land carved out of Borneo's jungle, has been dogged by criticism from environmentalists and Indigenous communities, who say it degrades the environment, further shrinks the habitat of endangered animals such as orangutans, and displaces Indigenous people who rely on the land for their livelihoods.

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 14<sup>th</sup>-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. Jakarta is the capital and largest city of Indonesia. Nusantara is the future capital of Indonesia, located between Kutai Kartanegara Regency and Penajam North Paser Regency, East Kalimantan, on the island of Borneo.

### South Korea, U.S. to stage annual drills over North Korea's missile, cyber threats

- South Korea and the United States kicked off annual summertime military exercises on August 19, 2024, seeking to boost their joint readiness to fend off North Korea's weapons and cyber threats. The Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises, set to end on August 29, come as North Korea races to advance its nuclear and missile

programmes and tries to launch reconnaissance satellites. The drills will reflect “realistic threats” across all domains, including the North’s missile threats but also GPS jamming, cyberattacks and other lessons learned from recent incidents, the two countries’ militaries have said. “South Korea will separately carry out the simultaneous government-led Ulchi civil defence drills, under the scenario of a nuclear attack by the North,” officials said.

- **South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol urged a thorough readiness posture against North Korea, calling it “the most reckless and irrational country in the world.** “As seen in Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East, war can break out at any time,” he told a cabinet meeting. “The nature of war has also changed from the past, being carried out in a hybrid form that mixes regular, irregular and cyber warfare, and even public opinion and psychological warfare using fake news.” Seoul and Washington say the exercises are defensive and a response to the North’s threats.

**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. 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, popular name given to latitude 38° N that in East Asia roughly demarcates North Korea and South Korea.**

## Thailand court dismisses PM Srettha Thavisin over cabinet appointment

- **Thailand’s Constitutional Court dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin for appointing to his cabinet a former lawyer who served jail time,** raising the spectre of more political upheaval and a reset of the governing alliance.
- **Real estate tycoon Srettha becomes the fourth Thai premier in 16 years to be removed by verdicts by the same court, after it ruled he violated the constitution by appointing a minister** who did not meet ethical standards. Srettha’s removal after less than a year in power means parliament must convene to choose a new premier, with the prospect of more uncertainty in a country dogged for two decades by coups and court rulings that have brought down multiple governments and political parties.

**Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia. Bangkok is the nation’s capital and largest city. The baht is the official currency of Thailand. Vajiralongkorn is the King of Thailand. Paetongtarn Shinawatra is a Thai politician and businesswoman who has been serving as Prime Minister of Thailand since 16 August 2024 and as leader of the Pheu Thai Party since 2023.**

## Paetongtarn Shinawatra nominated as Thailand’s New PM

- **Thailand’s Populist Pheu Thai Party nominated its party leader, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, in a Parliament vote for the country’s new leader.** The move comes after **former Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin was removed by a court order over an ethical violation.** If Ms Paetongtarn is approved by Parliament’s vote, which is scheduled, she will become Thailand’s second Woman Prime Minister and the country’s third leader from the Shinawatra family after her father and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra.

## World’s largest sovereign wealth fund posts \$138 billion in first-half profit

- **Norway’s massive sovereign wealth fund posted first-half profit of 1.48 trillion kroner (\$138 billion), primarily driven by robust returns on its investments in technology stocks.** The so-called Government Pension Fund Global — **the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund** — said it had a value of 17.75 trillion kroner at the end of June. The fund’s overall return for the six-month period was 8.6%, which was 0.04 percentage points lower than the return on its benchmark index. Norway’s sovereign wealth fund said its equity portfolio posted a return of 12.5% through the first half of the year, while its fixed income and unlisted real estate portfolios incurred marginal losses.

**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. The krone is the currency of the Kingdom of Norway (including overseas territories and dependencies).**

## Nepal adopts transitional justice Bill, ends post-civil war peace process

- **Nepal’s House of Representatives adopted a landmark transitional justice Bill that would formally end a post-civil war peace process, nearly 18 years after an accord was signed. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli said a panel that will be formed soon will deal with cases** — around 60,000 in number — over alleged human rights violations including torture, forced disappearances, rape, and murder during the decade-long conflict. Interestingly, the Maoists who had spearheaded the insurgency were on one side, while the Monarchy, Nepali congress, and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist, were on the other side of the conflict that resulted in more than 17,000 deaths.

**Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia.** Nepal has a diverse geography, including **fertile plains, subalpine forested hills, and eight of the world’s ten tallest mountains, including Mount Everest, the highest point on Earth.** Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural state, with Nepali as the official language. Kathmandu is the nation’s capital and the largest city. **The name “Nepal” is first recorded in texts from the Vedic period of the Indian subcontinent, the era in ancient Nepal when Hinduism was founded, the predominant religion of the country. The Constitution of Nepal, adopted in 2015, affirms Nepal as a secular federal parliamentary republic divided into seven provinces. KP Sharma Oli is serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal. Bidya Devi Bhandari served as the second president of Nepal. She is the first woman to hold the office in the country. Ram Chandra Paudel is a Nepalese politician serving as the third President of Nepal, in office since 13 March 2023. Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.**

## India, EU held regional conference on countering terrorism online

- **The European Union (EU) and the external affairs ministry were organised a regional conference in New Delhi to discuss emerging threats in online radicalisation and to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by terrorists. The conference aims to enhance counter-terror dialogues and partnerships in the region, in line with the EU’s Indo-Pacific strategy that envisages a deeper and stronger engagement with partners which share common goals and face common challenges, the EU said**
- **The Track 1.5 conference, which was held on August 21-22 in collaboration with organising partner Global Counter-Terrorism Council (GCTC), an international think tank, will gather experts, policymakers, academia and law enforcement officials from India, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Europe. The expected outcomes from the meeting include strategies to address complex challenges posed by the intersection of technology and terrorism, and identifying possible areas of collaboration between the EU, India and the wider region to counter violent extremism in the digital sphere.**

**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.**

## Texas gets 90-ft-tall Hanuman sculpture, 3<sup>rd</sup> tallest statue in US

- **A grand Pran Pratishtha ceremony was held in Houston, Texas, where a 90-foot-tall Hanuman statue was inaugurated. This is the third tallest statue in the United States. The statue was named ‘Statue of Union,’ and it commemorates Lord Hanuman’s role in reuniting Sri Rama and Sita. The temple has been built at the Sri Ashtalakshmi Temple in Sugar Land, Texas. The visionary behind the project happens to be His Holiness Sri Chinnajeeyar Swamiji.**

The United States of America (U.S.A. or USA), commonly known as the United States (U.S. or US) or America, is a country primarily located in North America. It consists of 50 states, a federal district. It is the world's third-largest country by both land and total area. The national capital is Washington, D.C., and the most populous city and financial center is New York City. Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. is the 46<sup>th</sup> and current President of the United States. A member of the Democratic Party, he previously served as the 47<sup>th</sup> vice president from 2009 to 2017 under Barack Obama and represented Delaware in the United States Senate from 1973 to 2009. Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris defeated incumbent president Donald Trump and vice president Mike Pence in the 2020 presidential election. He is the oldest president and the first to have a female vice president. The United States dollar is the official currency of the United States and several other countries.

## UK Partners with DP World to Build Congo's First Deep-Sea Port

- DP World and the British government's development-finance arm will break ground on a deep-sea port in the Democratic Republic of Congo as the Emirate logistics company broadens its expansion in Africa. British International Investment Plc is investing \$35 million in DP World's infrastructure build at the Port of Banana — located where the Congo River meets the Atlantic Ocean — following similar partnerships between the two companies in Somaliland, Egypt and Senegal.

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. Kier Starmer is the current Prime Minister since July 2024 and as Leader of the Labour Party since 2020.

## Germany joins US-led UN Command in South Korea policing armistice border

- Germany joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea becoming the 18<sup>th</sup> nation in a group that helps police the heavily fortified border with North Korea and has committed to defend the South in the event of a war. The move is evidence of Berlin's strong belief that European security is closely linked to security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It is the latest move by the United States and its partners to expand alliances and partnerships, including those that span the globe, and try to turn the 74-year-old command into a source of broader regional security. Current UNC members, among them Australia, Britain, Turkey and the United States, sent troops or contributed medical support during the 1950-53 Korean War. Established in 1950, the UNC was mandated to restore peace and enforce the armistice while serving as a channel of communication with North Korea.

## India allows Nepal to export additional 251 MW of power

- India has allowed Nepal to export an additional 251 MW of electricity to the country, marking the first time the Himalayan nation will supply power to Bihar under a medium-term sales agreement. "India's Designated Authority for Cross-Border Trade has approved an additional 251 MW of power exports from 12 hydropower projects in Nepal". With this, Nepal would be exporting 941 MW of hydropower from 28 projects. Earlier, Nepal was exporting 690 MW of electricity from 16 projects. Nepal first started its power exports by selling in the Day Ahead Market of the Indian Energy Exchange.

## Azerbaijan applies to join BRICS, alongside India, Russia and China

- In a turn of events after a meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijan formally applied to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies. BRICS, acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has included five nations for over a decade but now the interests in the group is rising as Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates joined in January and Saudi Arabia has said that it is also considering on joining the

bloc. The BRICS bloc already includes countries which are a great reservoir of oil alongside over a quarter of world GDP is included in the nations which are a part of the BRICS bloc.

Azerbaijan is a transcontinental country located at the boundary of Eastern Europe and West Asia. Baku is the capital and largest city. The manat is the currency of Azerbaijan. 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. Ilham Aliyev is the current president of Azerbaijan. Ali Asadov is the current Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

## Ukraine ratifies Rome Statute, paving way for ICC membership

- Ukraine's parliament voted to ratify the Rome Statute, allowing the country to join the International Criminal Court (ICC) in a step Ukrainian leaders have cast as central to Kyiv's European aspirations. Ukraine has recognised the ICC's jurisdiction in the past, but full membership of the court is a key part of Ukraine's quest to eventually join the European Union
- It would also allow authorities "to more effectively punish" suspected Russian war criminals amid Moscow's war on Ukraine, according to lawmaker Oleksiy Honcharenko. The ICC has issued arrest warrants for Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin and ex-defence minister Sergei Shoigu for their roles in alleged crimes against Ukrainian civilians. Russia has denied targeting civilians.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal seated in The Hague, Netherlands. It is the first and only permanent international court with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The ICC is distinct from the International Court of Justice, an organ of the United Nations that hears disputes between states. Established in 2002 pursuant to the multilateral Rome Statute, the ICC is considered by its proponents to be a major step toward justice, and an innovation in international law and human rights. India did not signed the Rome Statute, and thus, is not a member of ICC because of following reasons: State sovereignty, National interests, Difficulty in collection of evidences, Problem to find impartial prosecutors and Crime definition.

## Taliban appoints ambassador to UAE for first time since Afghanistan takeover

- Afghanistan's Taliban-led foreign ministry said it has appointed its first accredited ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, the second country to accept an envoy at that level after China. The Taliban's government has not been officially recognised by any foreign capital and only Beijing has formally accepted the credentials of an ambassador. The Taliban entered the Afghan capital on Aug. 15, 2021, as the Afghan security forces, set up with years of Western support, disintegrated and U.S.-backed President Ashraf Ghani fled. Though China and the UAE have not formally recognised the Taliban administration or confirmed any official change in relations, diplomats and international analysts say formally accepting an ambassador is a grey area of international diplomacy that could constitute upgraded ties.

## Vietnam approves three new Deputy Prime Ministers

- Vietnam announced three new Deputy Prime Ministers, the latest high-level political changes during a turbulent period for the ruling Communist Party. Only one of the outgoing politicians was explicitly linked to the anti-corruption campaign. Former deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai was sacked Monday for violating party regulations and law. The government now has five deputy prime ministers. President To Lam was named as general secretary — Vietnam's top leader — this month following the death of his predecessor, Nguyen Phu Trong. Mr. Trong, the most powerful man in decades, was the mastermind of the "blazing furnace" crackdown on corruption.

## Canada's Mining Firm Unearths 2,492 Carat Diamond In Botswana, World's Second Largest

- A Canada based mining company unearthed a massive 2,492-carat stone at Karowe Diamond Mine in northeastern Botswana. Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi's government described the diamond as the second largest in the world. This is the third very large diamond unearthed at the Karowe mine in recent years. The 1,758-carat stone unearthed in 2019 was previously the largest ever mined in Botswana.



Canada is a country in North America. Its ten provinces and three territories extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific and northward into the Arctic Ocean, covering 9.98 million square kilometres (3.85 million square miles), making it the world's second-largest country by total area. Its southern and western border with the United States, stretching 8,891 kilometres (5,525 mi), is the world's longest bi-national land border. Canada's capital is Ottawa, and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The Canadian dollar is the currency of Canada. Justin Trudeau is current Prime Minister of Canada since November 2015. Mary Simon has served as the 30<sup>th</sup> governor general of Canada since July 26, 2021.

### Indonesia, U.S. hold annual joint military exercises

- **Indonesia and the United States began two weeks of annual military exercises involving more than 4,500 personnel**, aimed at boosting operational skills as Washington seeks to shore-up ties in a region where China is vying for influence. **Super Garuda Shield, which has been held since 2006**, will include simulations like land and air operations, combat search and rescue and exercises in engineering and cargo delivery.
- **The drills are taking place in Sidoarjo, East Java province**, and also include troops from Australia, Japan, Britain, France and New Zealand. They will be observed by Malaysia, the Philippines and East Timor. **The programme will include a joint exercise against cyber threats, which Indonesia has experienced several times** in the past few years, including a cyberattack in June that disrupted multiple government services including immigration and operations of major airports.

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 14<sup>th</sup>-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. Jakarta is the capital and largest city of Indonesia. **In August 2019, President Joko Widodo announced plans to move the capital from Jakarta to the planned city of Nusantara**, in the province of East Kalimantan on the island of Borneo. **Joko Widodo is the current President of Indonesia.**

### Australia gives millions of workers 'right to disconnect'

- **Australia gave millions of workers the legal right to "disconnect" allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours contact from employers, to the distress of big industry.** People can now "refuse to monitor, read, or respond to" their employers' attempts to contact them outside work hours - unless that refusal is deemed "unreasonable". The law is similar to those of some European and Latin American countries. France introduced the right to disconnect in 2017, hoping to tackle the "always on" culture facilitated by smartphones and other digital devices.

Australia is the largest country in Oceania and the world's sixth-largest country by total area. Australia's capital is Canberra, and its largest city is Sydney. **Charles III (Charles Philip Arthur George) is King of the United Kingdom and 14 other Commonwealth realms.** He acceded to the throne on 8 September 2022 upon the death of his mother, Elizabeth II: the **United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon.** The Australian dollar is the currency of Australia. **Anthony Albanese is the current Prime Minister of Australia.**

### Iran Appoints Fatemeh Mohajerani as First Female Government Spokesperson

- **In Iran, for the first time, a woman will be the government spokesperson.** At the suggestion of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, **Fatemeh Mohajerani was appointed as the first female government spokesperson.**
- **Mohajerani is a Doctor of Business Administration from Edinburgh and has earlier served as the head of the Technical and Vocational Training University of Shariati (for women).** This is the latest appointment of a woman to a senior position. Besides her, three women hold high positions in the government including Shina Ansari who was appointed as head of the Department of Environment. Pezeshkian administration has indicated appointing more women in the government.

Iran also known as Persia and officially the Islamic Republic of Iran is a country located in Western Asia. Tehran is the capital and largest city of Iran. The rial is the official currency of Iran. Seyyed Ali Hosseini Khamenei is the second and current supreme leader of Iran, in office since 1989. Khamenei is the longest-serving head of state in the Middle East, as well as the second-longest-serving Iranian leader of the last century, after Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi

### Australia & Pacific Leaders Endorse Pacific Policing Initiative to Counter China's Influence

- In a move aimed at countering China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, along with other Pacific leaders endorsed the Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI). Marking a significant regional effort to bolster peace and security throughout the region, the PPI has been announced on the sidelines of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders' Meeting in Tonga.
- The Initiative is aimed to enhance the capacity of Pacific nations to address law and order challenges, fulfil internal security needs, and provide mutual support in times of crisis. Australia has promised to commit approximately 400 million dollars over five years to ensure the PPI delivers on the aspirations of Pacific countries. The country's contribution will include infrastructure costs associated with new policing Centres of Excellence in the region.
- Under the new initiative, Brisbane will host the PPI Policing Development and Coordination Hub, and four regional police training Centres of Excellence will be set up around the region, with one such facility already there in Papua New Guinea. Australian PM stressed that PPI is a Pacific-led, Australia-backed initiative, that will reflect the collective strengths of the region.

In a narrow sense, sometimes known as the **Indo-West Pacific or Indo-Pacific Asia**, it comprises the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the seas connecting the two. It does not include the temperate and polar regions of the Indian and Pacific oceans, nor the Tropical Eastern Pacific, along the Pacific coast of the Americas, which is also a distinct marine realm. The term is especially useful in marine biology, ichthyology, and similar fields, since many marine habitats are continuously connected from Madagascar to Japan and Oceania, and a number of species occur over that range, but are not found in the Atlantic Ocean. **The Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest of Earth's five oceanic divisions.** It extends from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Southern Ocean (or, depending on definition, to Antarctica) in the south, and is bounded by the continents of Asia and Australia in the west and the Americas in the east. **The Indian Ocean is the third-largest of the world's five oceanic divisions, covering approx. 20% of the water on Earth's surface.**

### Dhulikhel Becomes Nepal's First 'Healthy City' And Second Healthiest City In Asia

- WHO has declared Dhulikhel Municipality of Kavrepalanchok district as Nepal's first 'healthy city' and second healthiest city in Asia. Since 2014, Dhulikhel Municipality has implemented various programmes to achieve the status.
- Dhulikhel Municipality, which initiated a campaign to become a healthy city, has been monitored by the World Health Organisation since 2021 to achieve the feat of becoming Nepal's healthiest city. Dhulikhel scored 65.48 points on various indicators for healthy cities, joining the WHO Healthy City Network.
- The evaluations were made on various indicators, including citizens' access to health, their participation in health policy-making, political commitment to health, nutrition, child health and innovative health initiatives such as tuberculosis-free and nutrition-friendly programmes, among others.
- The municipality is awarded USD 5,000 for implementing various programmes under the Healthy City initiative. This news comes amidst reports of Nepal being the third most polluted country in the world, based on satellite-derived particulate matter 2.5 data.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. The WHO Constitution states its main objective as "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health". Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, it has six regional offices and 150 field offices worldwide. The WHO was established on 7 April 1948. The first meeting of the World Health Assembly (WHA), the agency's governing body, took place on 24 July of that year. The current director-general is Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of Ethiopia.

## University Of Southampton Becomes First UK University To Set Up Campus In India

- **The University of Southampton has become the first UK University to receive approval from the Indian government to establish a comprehensive campus in the country.** This move marks a significant milestone in the Indian education sector, aligning with the University Grants Commission's (UGC) initiative to invite the top 500 foreign universities to set up campuses in India.
- **A letter of intent (LoI) was handed over to the University of Southampton, marking the formal beginning of this collaboration.** The event took place in the presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who emphasised the significance of this development under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. **The University of Southampton, recognised as one of the top 100 universities globally, will establish its campus in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR).** This campus will focus on education, research, knowledge exchange, and enterprise activities, integrating Southampton's world-class expertise with India's emerging potential as a global education hub.

## India and Malaysia Sign MoU for Strengthening Co-operation in the Field of Tourism

- **India and Malaysia have very close political, economic and socio-cultural relations.** To further strengthen this relationship, **India and Malaysia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the Ministry of Tourism, Government of Republic of India and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Government of Malaysia **for strengthening co-operation in the field of tourism.**

**Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy in Southeast Asia. Kuala Lumpur is the national capital of Malaysia as well as its largest city. The Malaysian ringgit is the currency of Malaysia. Anwar bin Ibrahim is the 10<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Malaysia since 2022. Ibrahim Iskandar of Johor is the seventeenth and current Yang di-Pertuan Agong (king of Malaysia). He is the fifth sultan of modern Johor, ascending to the throne following the death of his father, Sultan Iskandar, in 2010.**

## Navies of Singapore & China conduct bilateral exercise

- **Singapore and China have commenced the third edition of Exercise Maritime Cooperation,** highlighting their enduring defence ties. Running from September 1 to 5, the exercise involves personnel from both navies and includes activities such as vessel boarding and mine clearance. **The event aims to build mutual trust and understanding between the two nations' navies.**
- **This is the third edition of the maritime exercise since its inauguration in 2015.** The Formidable-class frigate RSS Stalwart from Singapore is participating in the exercise. It will observe the conduct of various tasks by the PLA Navy ships, such as vessel boarding and mine clearance, the report said. The exercise underscores the "longstanding, warm and friendly bilateral defence relationship between both countries", the statement said.

**Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lawrence Wong 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.**

## ECONOMY AND FINANCE



### Economy News

#### Japan introduces the world's first green fuel engine with insane power

- **Japan has been on the vanguard of developing “green fuel” engines, partly attributable to its development of accurate hydrogen engines. Toyota, a global automobile manufacturer, has been at the forefront of the innovation of this strategy.** The process of Toyota working on constructing a hydrogen engine started with the Corolla Concept unveiled at the 2020 Tokyo Motor Show. The Corolla Concept was one of the most notable hybrids from Toyota that used a hydrogen engine that allowed driving fans to feel the usual coveted roar of a gasoline engine but without corresponding emissions.

**Toyota Motor Corporation is a Japanese multinational automotive manufacturer headquartered in Toyota City, Aichi, Japan. It was founded by Kiichiro Toyoda and incorporated on August 28, 1937. Toyota is the largest automobile manufacturer in the world, producing about 10 million vehicles per year.**

#### UP govt grants approval to 1200 megawatt pumped storage power plant project

- **The Uttar Pradesh government has granted in-principal approval for the 1200 megawatt pumped storage power plant project of THDC India in the Robertsganj tehsil of Sonbhadra district.** The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 6,600 crore. The project is expected to generate electricity for 6 hours and 36 minutes each day. The source of water supply will be the Son River.

#### AERB Grants Permission for First Approach to Criticality of 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor

- **The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has officially granted permission for the “First Approach to Criticality” of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, India’s first indigenous PFBR.** This critical milestone includes the loading of fuel into the reactor core and the initiation of “Low Power Physics Experiments.” The approval follows a review process, which included phased core loading activities. Earlier this year, the core loading began with the insertion of control sub-assemblies and blanket sub-assemblies, all conducted under the stringent oversight of AERB.

#### India Ranks 39<sup>th</sup> in Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024

- **India is ranked 39<sup>th</sup> among 119 countries,** according to the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 report published by the World Economic Forum.
- **Minister of Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, said that as per the UNWTO barometer for May 2024, there were 975 million international tourist arrivals around the world in 2022,** wherein India recorded 14.3 million international tourist arrivals that represented 1.47 per cent of the international inbound tourism market share.
- **The share of India’s international tourist arrivals in Asia and the Pacific will be 15.66 per cent in 2022.** He said that India’s scores have improved in three areas: prioritisation of travel and tourism, safety and security, and health and hygiene.

## India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Aluminium Producer in the World

- **Production of key minerals in the country, such as iron ore and limestone, has continued to show robust growth in Q1 of FY 2024-25**, after reaching record production levels in FY 2023-24. Iron ore and limestone account for about 80% of the total MCDR mineral production by value. Production of iron ore was 275 million metric ton (MMT) and limestone at 450 MMT in FY 2023-24.
- As per provisional data, in the non-ferrous metal sector, **primary aluminium production in FY 2024-25 (April-June) posted a growth of 1.2% over the corresponding period last year**, increasing to 10.43 lakh ton (LT) in FY 2024-25 (April-June) from 10.28 LT in FY 2023-24 (April-June).
- **India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Aluminium producer, 3<sup>rd</sup> largest lime producer and 4<sup>th</sup> largest iron ore producer in the world.** Continued growth in production of iron ore and limestone in the current financial year reflects the robust demand conditions in the user industries viz. steel and cement. Coupled with growth in Aluminium, these growth trends point towards continued strong economic activity in user sectors such as energy, infrastructure, construction, automotive and machinery.

## India, World Bank sign \$500 million agreement for Green National Highway Corridor project

- **The Government of India and the World Bank have signed a \$500 million agreement to construct the Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP), spanning 781 kilometers across Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh.** The total project cost is estimated at \$1.29 billion (Rs. 7,662.47 crore). This information was provided by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari. Scheduled for completion by May 2026, the GNHCP includes several innovative approaches to reduce carbon emissions and conserve natural resources throughout its lifecycle.

## Gold industry announces formation of self-regulatory body

- **The Indian gold industry has announced the formation of the Indian Association for Gold Excellence and Standards (IAGES), a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) which will be supported by the World Gold Council (WGC).** “IAGES will aim at increasing consumer confidence and enhancing trust in the Indian gold industry through encouraging adoption of fair, transparent and sustainable practices, regulatory compliance, establishing code of conduct and introducing an audit framework – created by the Indian gold industry, for the Indian gold industry across the entire industry value chain.”. National industry associations including the Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), All India Gems and Jewellery Council of India (GJC) and Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), would be the key stakeholders. **It will be independently governed and professionally managed. However, the adoption of the Code of Conduct will be entirely voluntary. The SRO is expected to be operational in early 2025.**

## e-Sankhyiki Portal launched

- **The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has launched the e-Sankhyiki portal on June 29, marking a significant advancement in data management and dissemination in India.** This initiative **aims to streamline the sharing of official statistics** through a comprehensive system designed to enhance ease of access and analysis.
- **Data is the cornerstone of decision-making, driving innovation, efficiency, and growth across all sectors by providing critical insights and enabling informed choices.** Under Government of India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the backbone of the country’s data ecosystem. MoSPI is dedicated to generating and disseminating official statistics. With the mandate to ensure the availability and accessibility of quality data, it is ensured that every citizen, researcher and policymaker has access to accurate and reliable information. **In line with this mission, e-Sankhyiki, a national statistics office data portal, has been launched.** This new platform is a comprehensive and user-friendly resource for reliable data, offering easy access and efficient management at the click of a mouse.

## Singareni Collieries launches India’s first pilot geothermal power plant

- **India’s state-owned mining company Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has commissioned an experimental 20 kW power plant in the Manuguru region, Bhadrachalam district, Telangana.** Using binary ORC (Organic Rankine Cycle) technology, this plant is the first of its kind in India.

- **Work on the project began in 2021, supported by the Ministry of Coal with funding of INR 2.42 Crores (approx. USD 288,000).** The geothermal resources were discovered while drilling for coal reserves. Local residents were already using these hot springs for agriculture and laundry.
- **Apart from Telangana, exploratory work and resource assessments are underway in the Ladakh region of north-west India and Arunachal Pradesh in the north-east.** Earlier this year, Oil India Limited (OIL) announced detailed studies and surveys to assess the geothermal potential of the Arunachal Pradesh and Assam regions. In Ladakh, drilling for a geothermal project by ONGC recently resumed after a two-year hiatus.

### Maharashtra approves RRP Electronics' mega semi-conductor project

- **RRP Electronics Ltd., which is into semiconductor said the Government of Maharashtra** at a recent cabinet meeting had approved its mega project with **an investment of ₹24,000 crore in two phases.**
- **The company, to be the first entity which is going to set up a semiconductor plant in Maharashtra, will initially set up an Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing (OSAT) facility** in a 40,000 sq.ft. area at Mahape, which is expected to be operational by September 16, 2024. The company had tied up with leading design company HMT Zurich, which will handhold it to produce semiconductors.

### NSE's Registered Investor Base Surpasses 10 Crore Milestone for the First Time

- **The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has achieved a significant milestone, with its unique registered investor base surpassing the 10-crore mark for the first time.** It took over 25 years to reach the 4-crore mark in March 2021, but the pace of growth has accelerated considerably since then. The addition of each subsequent crore has occurred at an average interval of 6 to 7 months, with the latest crore added in just over five months, according to an NSE release.
- During this period, daily new unique investor registrations have averaged between 50,000 and 78,000. The investor base has grown more than threefold in the last five years, driven by rapid digitization, increased investor awareness, enhanced financial inclusion, and robust market performance. **The 10-crore registered investors have a median age of approximately 32 years, a decrease from 38 years five years ago. Notably, 40 per cent of the investors are under 30 years old, and over 20 per cent are female.**
- **Geographically, North India leads in registrations with a 42 per cent share, followed by West India at 25 per cent, South India at 18 per cent, and East India at 14 per cent.** Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra remain the top states for new investor registrations, together accounting for more than a quarter of the total.

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).

### US accounts for highest FPI investment in India, followed by Luxembourg and Canada: SEBI Report

- **The United States accounts for the highest share of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) investing in India during the fiscal year 2023-24, highlights a report by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).** The report also added that as of March 31, 2024, the total number of registered FPIs in India reached 11,219. This marks a slight increase from the previous year, where the number stood at 11,081. Out of the total registered FPIs, the United States led with 3,457 investors.
- **SEBI's report emphasized the distribution of FPIs across different countries. The United States topped the list with 3,457 registered FPIs, followed by Luxembourg with 1,393 and Canada with 804.** The report provided a detailed analysis of the country-wise distribution of FPIs, including their Assets under Custody (AUC). The AUC refers to the total value of assets managed by these FPIs and held under the custody of custodians.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) refers to the purchase and holding of a wide array of foreign financial assets by investors seeking to invest in a country outside their own. In India, foreign portfolio investment is regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). **Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors. It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.** Examples of FPIs include stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, American Depositary Receipts (ADRs), and Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs). **FPI is part of a country's capital account and is shown on its Balance of Payments (BOP).** The BOP measures the amount of money flowing from one country to other countries over one monetary year. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) brought new FPI Regulations, 2019, replacing the erstwhile FPI Regulations of 2014. **FPI is often referred to as "hot money" because of its tendency to flee at the first signs of trouble in an economy. FPI is more liquid, volatile and therefore riskier than FDI.**

### Wealthiest individual in China

- **Colin Huang Zheng is a prominent Chinese entrepreneur and founder of PDD Holdings, the parent company of the e-commerce platform Pinduoduo.** Huang's journey from a middle-class background, with parents who worked in factories, to becoming the richest person in China is a testament to his innovative approach in the tech industry. **As of August 2024, Huang's net worth is estimated at \$46.9 billion, making him the wealthiest individual in China, surpassing Zhong Shanshan, China bottled-water king.**

### Government approves 20% premium for gas from new wells for ONGC

- **The government has approved a 20% premium over the regulated or APM price for any natural gas that ONGC will produce from new wells.** Currently, two pricing regimes govern the majority of the domestic production of natural gas, which is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser, turn into CNG for running automobiles and piped to households for cooking. Gas produced from legacy or fields given to state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd, on nomination basis, is priced at 10% of the prevailing price of crude oil that India imports.

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.**

### Bitcoin Developer Launches World's First Fully Anonymous DAO

- On August 12, **Amir Taaki, a leading developer of the Bitcoin protocol, announced the creation of the world's first fully anonymous on-chain decentralized autonomous organization (DAO).** The DAO uses smart contracts to transfer funds without revealing treasury details or recipient identities, ensuring complete anonymity. Amir Taaki, a leading developer of the Bitcoin protocol, announced the creation of the world's first fully anonymous on-chain decentralized autonomous organization (DAO). The DAO can have smart contracts that can perform actions such as transferring of funds without the necessity of disclosing the information on the treasury or the identity of the recipient.

A **cryptocurrency or crypto, is a virtual currency secured by cryptography.** It is **designed to work as a medium of exchange, where individual ownership records are stored in a computerised database.** The defining trait of a cryptocurrency is that they are not issued by the government agency of any country making them immune against any interference and manipulation from them. **The first type of crypto currency was Bitcoin, which to this day remains the most-used, valuable and popular.** Along with Bitcoin, other alternative cryptocurrencies with varying degrees of functions and specifications have been created. **Some are iterations of bitcoin while others have been created from the ground up.** **Bitcoin was launched in 2009 by an individual or group known by the pseudonym "Satoshi Nakamoto.** The competing cryptocurrencies that were created as a result of Bitcoin's success are known as altcoins. **Some of the well-known altcoins are as follows: Litecoin, Peercoin, Namecoin, Ethereum and Cardana.**

## India is set to open its first lithium mines in the Katghora region

- **India is set to open its first lithium mines in the Katghora region of Korba district of Chhattisgarh** following confirmation of significant lithium deposits by the Geological Survey of India (GSI). The decision to open the lithium mines was announced during the sixth governing body meeting of the National Mineral Exploration Trust in New Delhi.
- **Among these 20 blocks, the lithium and Rare Earth Element (REE) block in Katghora area was included.** Preliminary surveys by GSI have found lithium content ranging from 10 PPM to 2,000 PPM in an area of approximately 250 hectares. The block also contains rare earth elements. Critical and strategic minerals are required for renewable energy, defence, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, high-tech electronics, telecommunications, and transportation and currently, the country relies on imports for these minerals.
- **Lithium was among the 23 proposals by state for exploration projects and is considered as a critical mineral used in making lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles,** the demand of which has grown exponentially. Chhattisgarh has generated approximately Rs. 13,000 crore in mineral revenue in 2023-24, which is nearly 30 times more than the year of state formation.

## Delhi's IGI Airport becomes India's first net zero carbon emission airport

- **The Delhi Airport became the first Indian airport to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emission Airport status under Airport Council International's (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program.** Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airport Infrastructure Limited, announced that the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has become the first airport in India to successfully achieve Net Zero Carbon Emission Airport status (Level 5 certification) under the ACI's ACA program.

## KIA Bengaluru becomes first airport in Asia to receive Level 5 Accreditation of ACI

- **Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru has become the first in Asia to receive Airports Council International's (ACI) highest Level 5 accreditation.** Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), which manages KIA, said that the Level 5 accreditation came into effect.
- **According to BIAL, KIA has made a 95.6% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, attaining the highest emission elimination by an Indian airport, achieved seven years ahead of the initial target of 2030.** The company claims that the airport has made significant strides in its decarbonisation journey and set new benchmarks by transitioning to 100% renewable electricity, and implementing initiatives focusing on sustainable mobility and green infrastructure.

## China approves record 11 new nuclear power reactors costing 220 billion yuan

- **China approved 11 nuclear reactors across five sites, a record amount of new permits as the nation leans even more heavily on atomic energy to support its push to eliminate emissions.** China's cabinet approved the new reactors in sites spread across Jiangsu, Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang and Guangxi. The total investment for all 11 units will be at least 220 billion yuan with construction taking about five years.
- **China has more nuclear reactors under construction than any other nation in the world, and approved 10 new reactors in both 2022 and 2023.** CGN Power Co., the listed unit of state-owned China General Nuclear Power Corp., said in a Hong Kong stock exchange filing that it received approvals for six reactors across three sites. China National Nuclear Power Co. said on WeChat it had been approved for three reactors, while State Power Investment Corp. said it received approval for two units.

## India's second 700 MW nuclear power KAPS-4 plant starts operations at full capacity

- **India's second home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat started operating at its full capacity.** The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) said Unit 4 at KAPS had been operating at 90% capacity before raising it to full power of 700 MWe. "The full power operation of KAPS-4 after the smooth operation of its twin unit KAPS-3 at full power demonstrates the strength of the first of a kind indigenous 700 MW Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) design," the NPCIL said.
- **The KAPS-4 unit achieved first criticality on December 17 last year and commenced commercial operations on March 31.** The power level of the unit, which commenced commercial operation on March 31,



2024, was raised in line with the permissions of the regulatory authority, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). **India is building 14 more 700 MW nuclear power reactors of the same design which are expected to commence operations progressively by 2031-32.** The NPCIL presently operates a fleet of 24 reactors with a total capacity of 8180 MW and has eight units with a capacity of 6800 MW under construction.

**Nuclear energy is the fifth-largest source of electricity in India, contributing about 2% of the country's total electricity generation. India currently has over 22 nuclear reactors in 7 power plants across the country, which together produce 6,780 MW of nuclear power. Of these reactors, 18 are Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and 4 are Light Water Reactors (LWRs). In January 2021, the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3), India's first 700 MWe unit and the biggest indigenously developed variant of the PHWR, was connected to the grid. The government is promoting the expansion of nuclear installations to other parts of the country. For example, an upcoming nuclear power plant in Gorakhpur town in Haryana will become operational in the near future. India is also working on an entirely indigenous thorium-based nuclear plant, "Bhavni," which will be the first of its kind using Uranium-233. The experimental thorium plant "Kamini" already exists in Kalpakkam.**

### Dabur picks Tamil Nadu for its first manufacturing unit in South India

- **Ayurvedic and natural FMCG company Dabur India Limited has signed a facilitation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Tamil Nadu to set up a new consumer goods manufacturing facility in the State, which will be Dabur's first such unit in South India.**
- The MoU outlines an approved Phase 1 investment of Rs. 135 crore, scaling up to Rs. 400 crore over a period of five years. This project is expected to generate direct employment for around 250 people, besides creating thousands of indirect job opportunities. **Dabur's state-of-the-art multi-category manufacturing facility will be set up in SIPCOT Tindivanam, Tamil Nadu.** This will be amongst Dabur's most-modern and environment-friendly manufacturing facilities with the capacity to manufacture a range of Dabur's products for the southern market.

### South Asia's tallest skydeck, three times taller than Qutub Minar to be built in Bengaluru

- **The Karnataka government has approved the construction of South Asia's tallest Skydeck in Bengaluru,** which will offer a 360-degree view of the city. This is among a series of infrastructure projects aimed to enhance the city's infrastructure and tourism appeal.
- **The skydeck will be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹500 crore and it would be 250 metres high.** For reference, the Qutub Minar is 73 meters tall. The building will be located in NICE Road in the outer parts of Bengaluru, and the project also has plans to connect it with the metro rail system for easy access.

### 78% of India's delivery gig workers earn less than 2.5 lakh a year: Report

- **77.6% of gig delivery workers in India earn less than ₹2,50,000 per annum, citing a recent survey by Borzo (formerly WeFast), a global same-day delivery company.** The survey report titled 'Understanding the Financial literacy of gig delivery partners,' covered more than 2,000 such workers of Zomato, Swiggy, Uber, and Amazon across 40 Indian cities, assessing multiple aspects of their financial situation. Close to 61% of the participants admitted to not being aware of income tax brackets. Only 33.5% of the surveyed gig workers filed income tax returns (ITRs), which means 66.5% haven't done so.

### Assam cites national interest, allows Vedanta project in Gibbon habitat

- **Citing national interest, the Assam wildlife department has recommended to the Centre that forest clearance be granted to a Cairn Oil and Gas proposal for oil and gas exploration in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of the Hollongapar Gibbon wildlife sanctuary, home to the endangered Hoolock Gibbon and wild elephants, official records show.**
- **Cairn Oil and Gas, Vedanta's subsidiary, has sought diversion of 4.49 hectares of forest land for oil and gas exploration drilling in Jorhat, Assam, and is currently pending before the Union Environment Ministry's Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), which appraises proposals for forest diversion.** FAC had last month sought the state Chief Wildlife Warden's views on the project from a wildlife conservation point of view. Also, for the wildlife conservation plan and mitigation of human-wildlife conflict, 2% of the total project cost shall be deposited with the Chief Wildlife Warden.

Vedanta Limited is an Indian multinational mining company headquartered in Mumbai, India, with its main operations in iron ore, gold and aluminium mines in Goa, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Odisha. Vedanta (then called Sterlite industries) began in the 1980s, as the founder D.P. Agarwal founded Sterlite Industries (India) Limited in Mumbai and began to buy mining concessions in different states of India.

## Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare will set up "Matri Van" in about 1 acre of land

- Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** planted saplings at IARI Campus PUSA as a part of the campaign Plant4Mother campaign. Shri Chouhan informed that the Ministry will set up "Matri Van" in about 1 acre of land.
- Shri Chouhan also informed that over 800 institutions under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare participated, and it is expected that between 3000-4000 saplings were planted during the event. As part of the Global Campaign, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change are being made efforts to ensure that 80 crore saplings are planted across the country by September 2024 and 140 crore saplings by March 2025.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change started the tree plantation activity at Asola Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary on June 20, 2024, wherein individuals planted trees in honour of their mothers. Planting trees also fulfills Mission LiFE purpose launched by the Government which is a mass movement of Environmental Conscious Lifestyle. In agriculture, growing trees is an important step to achieve sustainable farming.

Agriculture in India is counted as the primary sector. The contribution of agriculture to GDP rose to 19.9% in 2020-21, up from 17.8% in 2019-20. The last time the agriculture sector accounted for 20% of GDP was in 2003-04. Based on the data on the total workforce compared to manufacturing (from 1993 to 2021), the agricultural workforce share fell from 64.6% in 1993-94 to 42.5% in 2018-19. Shivraj Singh Chouhan is serving as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and 23<sup>rd</sup> Minister of Rural Development since 11 June 2024. He was the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh from 2020 to 2023.

## India's first quantum computer set for launch under National Quantum Mission

- The National Quantum Mission is set to take off with multiple initiatives including setting up a grant for start-ups that need funding ranging ₹10-50 crore, launching India's first quantum computer achieving computation of 6 qubits over the next few months, and setting up four companies under section 8 to undertake various activities under the mission. These companies will be run under the aegis of premier institutes like Indian Institute of Technology or the Indian Institute of Sciences.

## New base year for retail inflation likely

- A Union government-appointed panel formed to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks changes in retail prices, is likely to revise the base year used to measure inflation from 2012 to 2024 and lower the weight assigned to food items to keep pace with changing consumption patterns. A 22-member panel set up by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation is currently working on arriving at a new base year for various price indices. Currently, while the base year for CPI is 2012, it is 2011-12 for other indices such as gross domestic product (GDP) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

## India ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index

- Global property consultant JLL has announced that India's top real estate markets have entered the 'transparent' zone for the first time, driven by the institutionalisation of commercial assets and improvements in data access.
- This development was highlighted in JLL's 'Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2024'. With a composite score of 2.44, India now ranks 31<sup>st</sup> among 89 countries. There are 13 countries featured in the high-transparency zone. The United Kingdom is at the top (with a score of 1.24) in the global list, followed by France, the United States, Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Belgium and Singapore.

## World's lowest birth rate pushes South Korea to hire foreign nannies

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- **South Korea will start allowing families to hire foreign nannies as the nation grapples with the world's lowest birth rate. South Korea suffers from the world's lowest fertility rate of 0.72 children per woman. Successive governments have sunk 380 trillion won (\$284 billion) in incentives to boost fertility, according to the National Assembly Budget Office research. But the situation has not improved, prompting President Yoon Suk Yeol's government to tap foreign nannies.**

**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. 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, popular name given to latitude 38° N that in East Asia roughly demarcates North Korea and South Korea.**

## The world's first document-free airport scheduled to take off in 2025

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- **Abu Dhabi Airports is developing a “Smart Travel” project that involves rolling out biometric authentication artificial intelligence (AI) into all security checkpoints at the airport by 2025. The project will use the databases of the United Arab Emirates' Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security to “automatically authenticate travellers”.**

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## Banks in News

### SWIFT, Axis Bank launch AI pilot to tackle payment fraud

- **Belgium-based Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT)**, the global specialist in financial transactions, is **launching an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven pilot in partnership with Axis Bank to help combat payment fraud occurring in cross-border payments**. Along with global banks, including BNY Mellon, Deutsche Bank, DNB, HSBC, Intesa Sanpaolo and Standard Bank, the duo will test the use of secure data collaboration and federated learning technologies.

**SWIFT is formally known as the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)**. It is a **trusted messaging system for banks and other financial institutions around the world**. It **doesn't settle any money itself, but provides instruction messages for just how to give and receive specific funds**. It is **controlled by the central banks of the G10 countries, the European Central Bank, and the National Bank of Belgium**. It was established in 1973 and is based in Belgium. The Group of Ten is made up of eleven industrial countries (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) which consult and co-operate on economic, monetary and financial matters. Prior to SWIFT, the only reliable means of message confirmation for international funds transfer was Telex. It was discontinued due to a range of issues such as low speed, security concerns, and a free message format. There are about 11,000 member banks in 200 countries and territories that use SWIFT. Since it began in 1973, SWIFT has become an integral part of the flow of global trade. India's financial system has access to the SWIFT. **Iran and North Korea are already out of the SWIFT platform. Recently, the US and the European Commission has excluded several Russian banks from SWIFT messaging system to counter Russia's war over Ukraine.**

### SBI unveils MSME Sahaj offering loans

- **The State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced MSME Sahaj**, a new initiative designed to **cater to the working capital requirements of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)**. This web-based solution is aimed at facilitating fast and convenient invoice financing for MSMEs.
- **This program is intended to assist even those MSMEs that have not previously utilised credit facilities from SBI**, provided they are sole proprietors with a satisfactory current account. Current SBI MSME customers can conveniently access MSME Sahaj via the Yono SBI mobile app.

As per the latest classification of MSME: **1. Micro enterprises would be those with investments not exceeding Rs. one crore and turnover of Rs. 5 crore. 2. Small enterprises would be those with investment up to Rs. 10 crore and turnover of up to Rs. 50 crore. 3. Medium enterprises – as those with investments not exceeding Rs. 50 crore and turnover of Rs. 250 crore.**

### World Bank B-Ready index groundwork kicks off

- **India has initiated preparations for the World Bank's new B-Ready index, replacing the Doing Business index**. The report will evaluate **aspects of business environments, including trade and taxation**. The commerce ministry is collecting data on e-commerce to improve India's digital trade capabilities, aiming for e-commerce exports of \$200-300 billion by 2030. The World Bank's new flagship report benchmarking the **business environment and investment climate in economies worldwide**. **B-Ready is replacing the World Bank's Doing Business index that ranked countries based on their business enabling environment.**

**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.

## Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024

- The Government is scheduled to introduce the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 which seeks to increase the option for nominees per bank account to four, from existing one, among others. Another proposed change relates to redefining ‘substantial interest’ for directorships, which could increase to ₹2 crore instead of the current limit of ₹5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago. There are some changes with respect to cooperative banks. In addition, the Bill also seeks to give greater freedom to banks in deciding the remuneration to be paid to statutory auditors.

## Can pay up to ₹5 lakh in taxes via UPI soon: RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India has decided to enhance the limit for tax payments via UPI from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per transaction. “As direct and indirect tax payments are common, regular and high value, it has been decided to enhance the limit for tax payments through UPI from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per transaction. Necessary instructions will be issued”.
- The RBI is also provisioning to introduce ‘Delegated Payments’ through UPI. This will enable a secondary user, like a spouse to make payments via UPI by using the bank account of the primarily user. Delegated Payments would enable a UPI user to set a payment limit for another user on their bank account. Currently, the transaction limit for UPI is capped at ₹1 lakh. Based on the various use-cases, the Reserve Bank has periodically reviewed and enhanced the limits for a few categories like capital markets, IPO subscriptions, loan collections, insurance, medical and educational services etc.”.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an advanced version of Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)- round-the-clock funds transfer service to make cashless payments faster, easier and smoother. UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood. UPI is currently the biggest among the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) operated systems including National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS), Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), RuPay etc. The top UPI apps today include PhonePe, Paytm, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and BHIM, the latter being the Government offering. As part of an agreement, India’s UPI will be linked to Singapore’s PayNow. NPCI launched UPI with 21 member banks in 2016.

## RBI to set up public repository of digital lending apps

- To aid borrowers verify claims of digital lending app’s (DLAs) association with Regulated Entities (RE), the RBI will make available a public repository of DLAs on its website. “The repository will be based on data submitted by REs (without any RBI intervention) directly to the repository and will get updated as when REs report the details - addition of new DLAs or deletion of any existing DLA,”. Guidelines on digital lending to protect customer interest, data privacy, concerns on interest rates and recovery practices, and so on, were issued on September 02, 2022.

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.

## Bandhan Bank introduces new savings product ‘avni’ exclusively for women

- **Bandhan Bank has introduced ‘avni’,** a savings product specifically for women, aiming to increase current and savings account deposits. Targeted at affluent women, it offers benefits like free airport lounge access and personal insurance. A loyalty program has also been launched. The bank’s deposits grew by 23% year-on-year but CASA growth was slower at 14%.
- **The product called “avni” is targeted at the affluent segment of the society.** The customers opting for this product will have to maintain an average quarterly balance of Rs. 25,000. The bank will offer a debit card with free airport lounge access, personal insurance cover of Rs. 10 lakh and discount in processing fee on gold loans, annual locker rentals to customers enrolling to the avni scheme.

**Bandhan Bank Ltd. is a banking and financial services company, headquartered in Kolkata.** In 2006, Bandhan acquired a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) and created Bandhan Financial Services Private Limited (BFSPL) to scale up its microfinance activities. **In 2010, it became the largest microfinance institution (MFI) in the country.** In April 2014, Bandhan received an in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). **On June 17, 2015, RBI granted the banking licence to Bandhan, making it the first-ever microfinance institution to become a universal bank in India.** Bandhan Bank commenced operations on August 23, 2015. The then Union Finance Minister, Late Shri Arun Jaitley, inaugurated the Bank in Kolkata

## RBI Governor Addresses Global Conference on DPI and Emerging Technologies In Bengaluru

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that **the new trinity of GEM, UPI, and ULI represents a revolutionary step forward in India’s digital payments.** He explained that the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) tech platform promoted by RBI will make frictionless credit possible in India.
- **RBI Governor addresses Global Conference on DPI and Emerging Technologies in Bengaluru.** He was speaking during the inaugural address at the Global Conference on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Emerging Technologies in Bengaluru, as part of RBI@90 initiative.

## Federal Bank Launches India’s First Facial Payment System

- **Private sector lender Federal Bank has launched SmilePay that allows customers to complete transactions using facial recognition technology.** Launched by Federal Bank’s executive director Shalini Warriar at the Global Fintech Fest, the facial recognition-based payment system is the first-of-its-kind in the country. The technology is being built on the UIDAI’s face authentication service, ensuring secure transactions. It eliminates the need for cash, cards or even mobile devices, offering greater convenience for customers and efficiency for merchants.

## RBI Recognizes Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment as SRO-FT

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) **issued the ‘Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisation(s) in the FinTech Sector’ and invited applications for recognition as a Self-Regulatory Organisation** in the FinTech Sector (SRO-FT). The RBI stated that three applications for recognition as SRO-FT have been received, and each application was examined against the relevant requirements under the framework.
- The RBI has **recognized the Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE) as an SRO-FT.** Of the remaining two applications, one has been returned with a provision for resubmission after meeting specific requirements, while the third application is still under examination.
- **The SRO-FT (fintech) will operate “objectively, with credibility and responsibility” under the oversight of the central bank, and will work towards “healthy and sustainable development” of the sector,** the rules said. The framework defines fintech as entities providing technological solutions for delivery of financial products and services to businesses and consumers or encompassing regulatory and supervisory compliance in partnership with traditional financial institutions or otherwise.
- The SRO-FT should be capable of motivating its members to align with regulatory priorities. This should involve facilitating communication between industry players and RBI, advocating for necessary changes, and promoting a culture of compliance, RBI said. On September 6, 2023, **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das urged fintechs to establish SRO over the next year.**

## Top 10 richest global central banks in 2024

- **Central banks play a crucial role in maintaining economic stability and growth by implementing stable monetary policy and ensuring financial stability.** Globally, they have specialised departments dedicated to regulation and supervision, staffed with experts who monitor compliance with established financial laws and regulations.
- **The total wealth of central banks reflects the economic outlook of their respective countries**, which is mainly assessed through the central bank's assets, with the balance sheet acting as a crucial indicator of the nation's economic health. When evaluating a central bank's assets, several factors come into play. Foreign exchange reserves, which include **monetary gold, foreign currency holdings, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and reserve positions in the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, are critical indicators of a central bank's financial health. Interestingly, India's Reserve Bank of India ranks 12<sup>th</sup> around the world.
- According to the SWFI report, **the Federal Reserve System of the United States of America ranks as the world's richest central bank, with assets worth \$7.84 trillion.** Notably, European central banks dominate the list of the world's richest central banks, occupying seven of the top ten spots. Collectively, these European institutions have a combined worth of \$11.09 trillion. According to the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI), **the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's central banking institution, ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among the world's central banks by total assets.**

## Top global ranking for RBI Governor recognition of his leadership

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on receiving top rating in a global ranking of central bankers**, lauding it as recognition of his leadership. **Mr. Shaktikanta Das has been ranked as the top central banker globally for the second consecutive year by the US-based Global Finance magazine.**
- **Mr. Das has been placed at the top of the list with two other central bank governors**, who have been rated A+. Grades are based on a scale from A to F for success in inflation control, economic growth goals, currency stability and interest rate management, according to a statement by Global Finance magazine.

**Shaktikanta Das is serving as the current & 25<sup>th</sup> governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).** He was earlier a **member of the Fifteenth Finance Commission and India's Sherpa to the G20.** Das is a retired 1980 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Tamil Nadu cadre. During his career as an IAS officer, Das served in various capacities for Indian and Tamil Nadu governments, including as Economic Affairs Secretary, Revenue Secretary, Fertilizers Secretary. He has also served as India's Alternate Governor in the World Bank, ADB, NDB & AIIB.

## Women hold only 20.8% of total money in bank accounts, rural women have more money in banks than urban woman

- **Only 20.8% or around a fifth of the total amount of bank deposits in India belongs to women account holders**, according to the latest **"Men and Women"** report released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). This is despite the fact that 36.4% of all bank accounts, adding up to 917.7 million accounts in India are owned by women.
- **The total amount of money held by women account holders amounted to ₹39 trillion**, out of the total ₹187 trillion. This included accounts of Hindu undivided families, resident individuals, farmers, traders, professionals and self-employed people, wage and salary earners, and others. In urban areas, only 16.5% or ₹1.9 trillion of the total deposits belonged to women, while it was 30% or ₹5.91 trillion in rural areas, which is attributed to the wide proliferation of Jan Dhan accounts in rural areas.

## RBI forms expert committee to benchmark its statistics

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra to benchmark the statistics regularly disseminated by it against global standards/best practices;** study the quality of other regular data, where such benchmarks do not exist (e.g., sectors of national priority); and provide guidance on the scope for any further data refinement. **"The Committee will submit its report by the end of November 2024"**.

## RBI to launch Unified Lending Interface to transform lending space

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) plans to launch the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) at national level to transform India’s lending sector.** The ULI was launched as a pilot project by the RBI in 2023. **In 2023, the RBI had announced the setting up of a Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit which is now branded as the ULI.** ULI is a digital platform that is expected to make the lending process easy. It would enable frictionless credit while delivering banking services to farmers and MSME borrowers.
- **Consent-Based Digital Access:** ULI will provide lenders with digital access to both financial and non-financial data of customers, including land records, through a consent-based system. Similar to Unified Payment Interface (UPI), which has revolutionised the retail payment system in the country, ULI will transform the lending landscape.
- **Common and Standardised APIs:** ULI will feature standardised Application Programming Interface (APIs) that allow for a ‘plug and play’ approach, simplifying data access and reducing technical integration complexity. The ‘plug and play’ concept refers to ready-made facilities with essential infrastructure like power, network etc allowing industries to start operations immediately.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das said, “Just like UPI transformed the payments ecosystem, we expect that ULI will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in India. **The ‘new trinity’ of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India’s digital infrastructure journey. The central bank launched also CBDC pilots both in retail and wholesale segments back in 2022.** The governor said, “While the retail pilot started with the initial use case of payments, currently both the offline and programmability functionalities are also being tested. The programmability feature of CBDC could serve as a key enabler for financial inclusion by ensuring delivery of funds to the targeted user.”

**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.**



## Firms in News

### RIL becomes India's first company to surpass Rs. 10 lakh crore in annual revenue

- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has become the first Indian company to surpass Rs. 10 lakh crore in annual revenue.** This significant milestone was announced by RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani during the company's Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- During the AGM, **Ambani revealed that Reliance achieved a record consolidated turnover of Rs. 10,00,122 crore (USD 119.9 billion) for the financial year 2023-24.** For the same period, RIL reported an EBITDA of Rs. 1,78,677 crore (USD 21.4 billion) and a net profit of Rs. 79,020 crore (USD 9.5 billion).
- **The company also recorded exports amounting to Rs. 2,99,832 crore (USD 35.9 billion),** which accounted for 8.2% of India's total merchandise exports. In the last three years, Reliance Industries has invested over Rs. 5.28 lakh crore (USD 66.0 billion), demonstrating its commitment to expanding its operations.
- Additionally, **the company remained the largest contributor to the national exchequer, contributing Rs. 1,86,440 crore (USD 22.4 billion) through various taxes and duties during FY 2023-24.** Over the past three years, RIL's total contribution to the exchequer has crossed Rs. 5.5 lakh crore (USD 68.7 billion), the highest by any Indian corporate. On the social front, RIL increased its annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending by 25%, reaching Rs. 1,592 crore (USD 191 million) in the last year.

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. It is India's largest private tax payer and largest exporter, accounting for 7% of India's total merchandise exports. 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.

### Tech Leaders Forum of India Launched At World Education Conference 2024 in Dubai

- **The Tech Leaders Forum of India (TELFI) was officially launched at the World Education Conference 2024, hosted by the Federation of Economic Development Association (FEDA) at Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University in Dubai.** TELFI, a new initiative aimed at empowering engineers, was unveiled as a key highlight of the conference. The forum is designed to support engineers through various professional activities, including webinars, workshops, and training sessions. Its primary goal is to provide engineers with the resources, knowledge, and network needed to excel in their careers and drive technological advancements both in India and internationally.
- The launch of TELFI took place against the backdrop of the larger World Education Conference 2024, which saw participation from over 150 attendees representing diverse academic fields. **The conference, organized by FEDA, a membership-based organization dedicated to promoting economic growth in India, served as a platform for showcasing academic excellence and fostering the exchange of ideas.**

### India's total market cap touches all-time high of \$5.5 trn for first time

- **India's market cap crossed \$5.5 trillion for the first time just over two months after it first crossed \$5 trillion.** The milestone comes amid broader market outperformance even as the benchmark indices ended little changed for a second day in a row. The combined market cap of all BSE-listed companies stood at Rs. 461 trillion (\$5.5 trillion). India's market capitalisation had closed above \$5 trillion on May 24, 2024, as per Bloomberg data.

### Paytm launches India's first NFC card sandbox

- **One 97 Communications Limited (OCL), Paytm's parent company, launched India's first NFC Card Sandbox which is a two-in-one mobile QR payment device that combines NFC card payment technology with mobile QR payments.** The Paytm NFC Card Sandbox will allow customers to make payments by tapping a debit or credit card or scanning a QR code. The device can help small shops in accepting all types of payments, including UPI and card transactions.

- **NFC stands for Near Field Communication and is a technology that allows for wireless data transfer between devices that are close to each other within a few centimetres.** It is commonly used for contactless payments and data exchange.

### NSE launches India's first website for passive funds

- **The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched India's first website for passive funds to provide a comprehensive platform for retail investors and empower them to easily access information and understand the Indian passive funds industry.**
- **India's first website for passive funds provides in-depth information on aggregate industry data, fund-wise data, screeners for selecting funds based on various parameters** such as underlying index, AUM, tracking error, tracking difference, trading volume, TER, comparison of funds etc.
- **The website can be accessed on (www.indiapassivefunds.com). It will offer comprehensive information on passive funds such as ETFs and index funds.** The objective behind this is to provide investors with all the necessary information and insights to review and evaluate the passive fund industry and its various products effectively.

### India Becomes Largest Market For Meta AI Usage

- **Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said that India is now their largest market for artificial intelligence, AI, usage.** In the second quarter earnings call, Zuckerberg said, they are observing promising retention and engagement on the WhatsApp and India has become their largest market for Meta AI usage. **Meta AI is now available in Hindi and 7 other languages including French and German.** In India, Meta AI was launched last year but was made exclusively public for everyone in June this year.

**Meta Platforms, Inc., doing business as Meta, and formerly named Facebook, Inc., and it is an American multinational technology conglomerate based in Menlo Park, California. The company owns and operates Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and WhatsApp, among other products and services. Meta is one of the world's most valuable companies and among the ten largest publicly traded corporations in the United States. It is considered one of the Big Five American information technology companies, alongside Google parent company Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft. Mark Zuckerberg is an American business magnate, computer programmer, internet entrepreneur and philanthropist. He is known for co-founding the social media website Facebook and its parent company Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook, Inc.), of which he is the executive chairman, chief executive officer, and controlling shareholder.**

### Reliance Industries jumps two places on Fortune's Global 500 list

- **Oil-to-telecom-to-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd continues to be the highest-ranked Indian firm on the Fortune Global 500 list, jumping two places to be ranked at No.86 in the 2024 ranking.** The firm was placed at No.88 in last year's ranking and has gained a whopping 69 places in the last three years - from being placed at No.155 in 2021 to being at No.86 in 2024.
- **The 2024 ranking has nine Indian firms, five of them from the public sector.** Insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) jumped 12 places to be ranked at No.95 on the 2024 list while state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) slid 22 places to 116. State Bank of India (SBI) soared 57 spots to rank at No.178.
- **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) were ranked at No.180 and No.258 after they slid 22 and 25 spots respectively.** Tata Motors was ranked at No.271, up 66 spots. HDFC Bank at No.306 and Rajesh Exports at No.463 were the other Indian firms on the list.
- **US retailer Walmart remains No.1 for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year while Amazon reached a new high to claim No.2 spot (up from No.4 last year),** according to Fortune. Saudi Aramco fell to No.4 from being at No.2 in 2023; however, with \$ 121 billion in profits, it was the most profitable company on the list for the third year in a row. Chinese state-owned electric utility State Grid is ranked at No.3 on the list which also has two other Chinese firms in top 10 - Sinopec Group at No.5 and China National Petroleum at No.6.

## Top 10 best global airlines in 2024—Indian airline Vistara claims the top spot in South Asia

- **The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts that the industry will achieve a net profit of \$30.5 billion, with total revenues expected to approach \$1 trillion in 2024.** Global airlines are redefining air travel, transforming it from a mere journey between point A and point B into a more enriching and enjoyable experience for passengers. They are innovating, evolving, and focussing on enhancing customer service, safety, and sustainability.
- But beyond the metrics, the true measure of an airline's success lies in the satisfaction of its passengers, in addition to efficiency, punctuality, onboard amenities, and commitment to sustainability. **It's noteworthy to mention that, Qatar Airways has reclaimed the top spot, earning the coveted title of the world's best airline in 2024, replacing Singapore Airlines, and pushing it to the second position, while Emirates secured third rank.**
- **India has become the third-largest domestic airline market globally, with its capacity doubling from 7.9 million in 2014 to 15.5 million in April 2024, according to OAG data.** In the latest Skytrax rankings of the best airlines in South Asia for 2024, it's notable that six out of the top ten airlines are Indian carriers.

## Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory

- **Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory in the current fiscal as it pivots a green pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions from operations by 2035.** In its largest annual report, the firm said it is targeting to commission the first train of 20 GW solar PV (photovoltaic) manufacturing by the end of the 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024 to March 2025) and scale up to 20 GW in a phased manner over 2026.
- **The solar giga factory will include the manufacturing of PV modules, cells, wafers and ingots, polysilicon, and glass at a single location. The modules convert sunlight into electricity. It is also targeting industrialising sodium-ion cell production at the MW level in 2025 and the first 50 MWh a year lithium battery cells pilot in 2026.**

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. It is India's largest private tax payer and largest exporter, accounting for 7% of India's total merchandise exports. 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.

## Countries with the most billionaires in 2024—India ranks third globally

- **The phenomenon of billionaires has been a significant aspect of global wealth distribution, with individuals amassing fortunes that often surpass the GDP of entire nations.** Historically, the world has always had people with incredible wealth, from the opulent lifestyles of Roman emperors to John D. Rockefeller, who became the world's first billionaire in measurable dollars.
- The presence of billionaires is more pronounced than ever, with Forbes highlighting a record 2,781 billionaires worldwide from 78 countries. **Undoubtedly, the United States emerged in the top position in the global billionaire rankings, featuring 813 billionaires.**
- **Elon Musk—the CEO and Founder of Space X and Tesla—once again claimed the title of the richest person in the world, surpassing Bernard Arnault, the Chairman and CEO of LVMH from France.** After the United States, China holds the second spot, even though it lost 155 billionaires compared to last year, with the present billionaire count having 473. It's worth noting that the U.S. and China combined have nearly half of the 3,279 billionaires worldwide, far surpassing other countries.
- **India has reached a historic high with 271 billionaires, including 84 newcomers, ranking it third globally. Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, ranks as the richest Indian at number 11<sup>th</sup> globally, the only Asian member of the exclusive \$100 billion club.**

## NPCI introduces BBPS for Business, UPI Circle to boost digital payments

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has announced the **introduction of two new offerings namely Bharat BillPay (BBPS) for Business, designed to streamline business-to-business (B2B) transactions** across different ERPs and accounting platforms, and UPI Circle, which enables delegate payments to users.
- **These payment solutions are aimed to enhance inclusivity, security, and efficiency of India's digital payment ecosystem**, NPCI said. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Shaktikanta Das unveiled these products at the Global FinTech Festival in Mumbai.
- **Bharat BillPay for Business aims to standardise, simplify and automate various invoice payment processes for day-to-day business operations irrespective of size of the business.** Offerings like business onboarding, search and add business, purchase order (PO) creation, invoice management, automated reminders, guaranteed settlement, financing, AR (Accounts Receivable) and AP (Accounts Payable) dashboard, and online dispute resolution are inbuilt in this platform.

**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.

## Hurun Rich List: Gautam Adani tops list with Rs. 11.6 lakh cr wealth, surpasses Mukesh Ambani

- India's billionaires' community has achieved remarkable success once again. **As per the 2024 Hurun India Rich List, the number of billionaires has surpassed 300, reaching precisely 334 billionaires.** This marks a striking six-fold increase since the list was established 13 years ago.
- **Gautam Adani (62) and his family have secured the top position in the 2024 Hurun India Rich List**, amassing a wealth of Rs. 11.6 lakh crore. His wealth has surged by an impressive 95%, establishing him as the leading figure in the prestigious listing.
- **Adani replaced Reliance Industries Limited Mukesh Ambani to become the richest Indian. Ambani's overall net worth increased by 25 per cent to Rs. 10.14 lakh crore, as per the 2024 Hurun India Rich List. In the third spot sits HCL's founder, Shiv Nadar, and his family, with a substantial fortune totaling Rs. 314,000 crore. The renowned vaccine tycoon, Cyrus S Poonawalla, claims the fourth spot on the list with a substantial wealth of Rs. 289,800 crore.**

**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. Adani subsequently lost more than \$104 billion of market capitalization after fraud and market manipulation allegations by short-seller firm Hindenburg Research.

## Google Expands 'AI Overviews' Feature To India & Five Other Countries

- **Tech giant Google announced to bring its 'AI Overviews' feature to six new countries, including India. In India, the company is rolling out the 'AI Overviews' in English and Hindi** and are also introducing popular country-first features that were well-received during its Search Labs experiment.
- **The six new countries are India, United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico and Brazil**, along with local language support in each country. People who are looking for help with complex topics are engaging more and keep coming back for AI Overviews. Google found that people prefer using Search with AI Overviews, and they find their search results more helpful. The company is also testing the addition of links to relevant web pages directly within the text of AI Overviews, making it even easier for people to click out and visit sites that interest them.

## Razorpay featured on 'Forbes Cloud 100 2024,' only Indian company on list

- **Payments gateway platform Razorpay has now been included in the 2024 Forbes Cloud 100 list, marking the company's third consecutive appearance on the Forbes list of the top 100 cloud-computing private companies** in the world. Razorpay, with nearly 3,300 employees, and having raised close to \$742 million in funding, ranked 70<sup>th</sup> on the Forbes Cloud 100 list of companies.

## BPCL Unveils India's First Biofuel Blend HFHSD Bunker at Mumbai Port

- **BPCL Unveils India's First Biofuel Blend HFHSD Bunker at Mumbai Port.** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has set a new benchmark in the Indian maritime industry by launching first biofuel blend High Flash High Speed Diesel (HFHSD) bunker by an OMC at Mumbai Port.
- **The Mumbai Port Authority's chairman highlighted the critical responsibilities that BPCL and MbPA have played in promoting Mumbai Port's economic growth and maintaining energy security over many years.** In order to establish cleaner bunkering choices and establish Mumbai Port as a leading bunkering hub on India's western coast, he underlined the significance of both organizations collaborating closely. Additionally, he emphasized the necessity of promoting supply chain innovation and adjusting to new technology advancements.

**Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) is an Indian public sector undertaking (PSU) under the ownership of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.** It operates three refineries in Bina, Kochi and Mumbai. **BPCL is India's second-largest government-owned downstream oil producer**, whose operations are overseen by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. BPCL was ranked 309<sup>th</sup> on the Fortune list of the world's biggest PSUs in 2020, and 1052<sup>nd</sup> on Forbes's "Global 2000" list in 2023.

## BPCL to invest Rs. 1.7 lakh crore in next 5 years

- **State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd has proposed to invest Rs. 1.7 lakh crore over the next five years** in petrochemicals, green energy, gasoline marketing and oil refining businesses. **BPCL has launched 'Project Aspire', a five-year strategic framework with a planned capital expenditure of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore.** The project is based on two pillars: 'Nurturing the Core' (refining, marketing, and upstream petroleum products) and 'Investing in Future Big Bets' (petrochemicals, gas, green energy, non-fuel retail, and digital), the company said in its Annual Report.

## Amul is world's strongest food brand with \$3.3 billion value in 2024

- **Amul is the world's strongest food brand in Brand Finance's Global Food & Drinks Report 2024 owing to the company's impressive Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91 out of 100 owing to which it got an AAA+ rating.** The company's brand value saw an 11 per cent increase from 2023, reaching \$3.3 billion in the latest ranking attributed to higher scores in familiarity, consideration and recommendation metrics. Amul shares its AAA+ brand strength rating with Hershey's which experienced a slight 0.5 per cent dip in brand value to \$3.9 billion, placing it second after leading the list last year. At present, Amul dominates India's dairy market with nearly 75 per cent of the milk market, 85 per cent of the butter market and 66 per cent of the cheese market.

**Amul is an acronym (Anand Milk Union Limited) of the Indian Multinational cooperative society named Gujarat Milk Marketing Federation based in Anand, Gujarat.** It is under the ownership of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited, Department of Cooperation, Government of Gujarat. It is controlled by 3.6 million milk producers. **Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel founded the organisation in 1946 and served as its chairman until his retirement in the 1970s.** He hired Verghese Kurien in 1949, initially as the general manager, where Kurien guided the technical and marketing efforts of the cooperative. Verghese Kurien led initiatives that contributed to the extensive increase in milk production in India termed as the White Revolution.

## BEML signs MoU with Indian Navy to develop advanced marine applications for Defence

- **BEML Ltd., which is into defence and heavy engineering manufacturing, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Marine Engineering, Indian Navy, for indigenous design, development, manufacture, testing, and product support of critical marine equipment and systems.**
- **Aligned with the Government of India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, the partnership aims to strengthen self-reliance in defence production and minimise reliance on foreign imports.**

## World's richest young billionaires 2024 revealed

- **Forbes recently released Forbes' World's Youngest Billionaires 2024 list and for the first time in the last 15 years, not a single self-made venture under the age of 30 made it to the list.** This indicates that the era of 'transfer of generational wealth' has begun.

- The list includes names from around the world including Gen Z Ray Ban heirs Clemente and Luca Del Vecchio to Red Bull's Mark Mateschitz. **The youngest billionaire of 2024 is Livia Voigt who is 19 years old and still in university. The Brazilian teenager who owns a minority stake in WEG which was co-founded by her late grandfather is worth US\$1.1 billion.**
- **The youngest billionaire in Hong Kong is Jonathan Kwok. After his father Walter Kwok's death in 2018, Jonathan inherited stakes in Sun Hung Kai Properties and Empire Group Holdings.** Mark Mateschitz became a top young billionaire in 2022 when he inherited 49% of Red Bull after his father Dietrich passed away, as reported by Business Insider. With Red Bull earning \$11.6 billion and selling 12.1 billion cans last year, Mark's fortune has grown significantly.

### Google built illegal monopoly to become world's default search engine

- **A United States judge ruled that Google violated antitrust laws by using billions of dollars to create an illegal monopoly and become the default search engine worldwide.** This landmark judgment is a major victory for the country's federal authorities targeting Big Tech's dominance. The ruling opens the door for a second trial to determine potential remedies, including a possible breakup of Google's parent company, Alphabet. **Judge Amit Mehta found that Google controls about 90 per cent of the online search market and 95 per cent of the smartphone search market.**

Google is an American multinational corporation and technology company focusing on online advertising, search engine technology, cloud computing, computer software, quantum computing, e-commerce, consumer electronics, and artificial intelligence (AI). It has been referred to as "the most powerful company in the world" and is one of the world's most valuable brands due to its market dominance, data collection, and technological advantages in the field of AI. Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc., is one of the five Big Tech companies, alongside Amazon, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft. **Google was founded on September 4, 1998, by American computer scientists Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were PhD students at Stanford University in California. In 2015, Google was reorganized as a wholly owned subsidiary of Alphabet Inc. Google is Alphabet's largest subsidiary and is a holding company for Alphabet's internet properties and interests. Sundar Pichai was appointed CEO of Google on October 24, 2015, replacing Larry Page, who became the CEO of Alphabet. On December 3, 2019, Pichai also became the CEO of Alphabet.**

### Tata Group unveils Rs. 27,000 crore semiconductor facility in Assam, promising 15 billion chips annually

- **At the Tata Group's Rs. 27,000-crore Greenfield semiconductor assembly and test facility in Assam, which is expected to be operationalised by next year, around 15 billion chips will be packaged annually for customers globally. For India's first indigenous facility for assembly and testing of semiconductor chips.** Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March this year laid the foundation stone through a virtual interaction for the two facilities at Gujarat and Assam. Assam is closer to the current semiconductor packaging and test hubs in Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Singapore.

**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, Cromã, and Tata Starbucks, etc.**

### Hurun list: Ambanis most valuable among family businesses in India

- **The Ambani family has become the most valuable family business in the country with a worth of ₹25.75 lakh crore, the Barclays Private Clients Hurun India noted.** The Bajaj family comes second most valuable family in the list at ₹7.13 lakh crore while Birlas come third at ₹5.39 lakh crore.

- The Adani family's value has been pegged at ₹15.44 lakh crore in the list, but being a first generation it does not feature in the main list. **The Adani family is the richest first-generation family in India with active second-generation leaders, the list noted.** Serum's Poonawalla family follows next with its business valued at ₹2.37 lakh crore.

### NHPC Limited accorded with 'Navratna' company status

- **NHPC Limited has been accorded with the prestigious status of 'Navratna' company by the Government of India. The conferring of Navratna status brings forth key advantages to NHPC.** It will enable faster decision-making, increase efficiency and empower employees. It will support major CAPEX and investment plans, drive growth, expand market reach and achieve long-term gains.
- **NHPC will have enhanced powers to establish joint ventures and overseas offices, access new markets and leverage local expertise.** Additionally, it will foster innovation by furthering technological alliances and strengthening market positioning. It will also facilitate mergers and acquisitions leading to growth and increased market share. Currently, NHPC's total installed capacity is 7144.20 MW and the company is presently engaged in the construction of projects aggregating to 10442.70 MW. These include the 2000 MW Subansiri Lower project (Assam/ Arunachal Pradesh) and 2880 MW Dibang Multi-purpose project (Arunachal Pradesh).

**NHPC Limited (erstwhile National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) is an Indian public sector hydropower company that was incorporated in 1975 to plan, promote and organise an integrated and efficient development of hydroelectric power. Recently it has expanded to include other sources of energy like solar, geothermal, tidal, and wind. At present, NHPC is a Navratna Enterprise of the Govt. of India and among the top ten companies in the country in terms of investment base.**

**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.**

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



### Ladakh proposed for India's first Mars and Moon analogue research station

- **Scientists from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have identified Ladakh as the perfect site for India's inaugural Mars and Moon analogue research station.** The team, comprising Binita Phartiyal from BSIP, IISc's Alope Kumar, and Shubhanshu Shukla, one of India's Gaganyaan astronauts, made the proposal based on previous research and their own field experience. **The research comes as India steps up its space programme, which includes plans for a space station by 2035 and a landing on the moon by 2040.**
- An analogue research station is a facility where activities intended for Moon and Mars missions can be simulated, the report stated. For instance, astronaut habitats can be built and tested there due to the geological similarities with extraterrestrial conditions. The station also allows for studying how microbes and other organisms react to such extreme environments. **The proposed research station would serve multiple functions: a testing platform for space technologies, advancing Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), engineering integration, human studies and crew training, and geological and astrobiological research.** Establishing such a facility would greatly enhance India's space programme, especially the Indian human space programme and future Mars missions, the report said. It would also offer valuable opportunities for studying extremophiles and conducting comparative research with samples from India's polar research stations.

### China confirms discovering world's first large shallow gas field in disputed South China Sea

- **China has announced the discovery of a major gas field, estimated to exceed 100 billion cubic meters, in the South China Sea,** a region already fraught with military and diplomatic tensions. This development, confirmed by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) could escalate disputes with other countries that have competing claims in the area.

### ISRO to Launch Earth Observation Satellite through SSLV This Independence Day

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO will celebrate this Independence Day in space by launching an Earth Observation Satellite into orbit. The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle will be used to launch the satellite on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 9.17 am from Sriharikota.**
- **The Small launch vehicle developed by ISRO can be produced at low cost, has low turnaround time, can accommodate multiple micro satellites and can be launched on demand in less time with minimal infrastructure requirements. It can carry a 500 kg satellite to a 500 kms orbit.** Once the demonstration flight is successful, it will be transferred to the private sector for production.

### Isro announced the first celebration to honour the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission

- **Isro announced a slew of activities ahead of the first celebration to honour the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission that helped India go down in history as the first country to land on the south pole of the moon.** From India's first successful experimental launch space vehicle, SLV-3, to the **proposed vehicle for India's first human space mission, HLVM-3,** it covers the evolution of launch vehicle technology Isro has developed in all these years for various purposes.

**Chandrayaan-3 is the third Indian lunar exploration mission under the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Chandrayaan programme. It consists of a lander named Vikram and a rover named Pragyan, similar to**



those of the Chandrayaan-2 mission. **The propulsion module carried the lander and rover configuration to lunar orbit in preparation for a powered descent by the lander. Chandrayaan-3 was launched on 14 July 2023. The spacecraft entered lunar orbit on 5 August, and the lander touched down in the lunar South Pole region on 23 August 2023, making India the fourth country to successfully land on the Moon, and the first to do so near the lunar South Pole.**

## UK Space Command launches first military satellite

- **The UK Space Command launched its first military satellite, Tyche, which is designed to provide surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for the country's armed forces.** The new satellite will provide daytime images and videos of the Earth's surface. It will be able to support military operations, as well as contribute to wider government tasks such as natural disaster monitoring, mapping, environmental monitoring, and climate change tracking.
- **Operating in Low Earth Orbit, the 150-kg satellite has a life of about five years and will provide timely space-based imagery in support of the armed forces.** The successful launch of Tyche is a significant milestone for the UK's space capabilities. "This is a fabulous day for UK space. The successful launch of Tyche has shown that UK Space Command, and its essential partners across defence and industry, can rapidly take a concept through to the delivery of a satellite capability on orbit.

## India's first reusable hybrid rocket to be launched from Tamil Nadu in three days

- **A reusable hybrid rocket will be launched from Chennai shores and will place three CubeSats and 50 PICO satellites in the sub-orbit.** The satellites will monitor and collect data on various atmospheric conditions. Space Zone India, a Chennai-based start-up which manufactured the rocket, claimed this would be India's first reusable hybrid rocket that combines the advantages of both liquid and solid fuel propellant systems to improve efficiency and reduce operation costs.
- **Named 'Mission Rhumi -2024', the project was guided by Mylswamy Annadurai, former ISRO director and Moon Man of India.** Hybrid rockets use a separate oxidiser tank, which in this case is filled with semi-cryogenic nitrous oxide at -80°C. This oxidiser is stored separately from the solid wax fuel until combustion, ensuring enhanced safety. The solid wax fuel, housed in a separate tank, combines with the oxidiser only during the combustion process.

## Tanager-1: NASA has launched a satellite to track methane emissions

- **A satellite developed by a coalition of companies and organisations, including NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California. Known as Tanager-1, the satellite can detect major emitters of carbon dioxide and methane.**
- **Notably, the launch has come just months after MethaneSAT — a satellite which tracks and measures methane emissions — was launched in March.** The satellite will use imaging spectrometer technology developed at Jet Propulsion Laboratory to track methane and carbon dioxide emissions. It will do so by measuring hundreds of wavelengths of light that are reflected by Earth's surface.

**Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, commonly referred to as SpaceX, is an American spacecraft manufacturer, launch service provider and satellite communications company headquartered at the SpaceX Starbase near Brownsville, Texas. The company was founded in 2002 by Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs and ultimately developing a sustainable colony on Mars. The company currently produces and operates the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets along with the Dragon spacecraft. The company offers internet service via its Starlink subsidiary, which became the largest-ever satellite constellation in January 2020 and, as of April 2024, comprised more than 6,000 small satellites in orbit.**

## Weighing 800 g, design model of humanoid skull for Isro's uncrewed Gaganyaan mission ready

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has finalised a humanoid skull model, technology of which will form the basis for the demonstration of the uncrewed Gaganyaan mission.** Scheduled for 2025, the uncrewed mission will see the space agency fly Vyommitra, the robot, into space.

- **Gaganyaan is India’s ambitious manned mission whose objective is to demonstrate Isro’s capability to send astronauts into space.** The mission will put three Indian astronauts into space, about 400 km from the Earth, for three days. The spacecraft is scheduled to land back on Indian sea waters.
- **Ahead of the manned mission, two precursor missions—Gaganyaan 1 (G1) and Gaganyaan 2 (G2)—will be undertaken in 2024 and 2025, respectively.** Currently, the technology testing for G1 is in its advanced stages, Isro sources said. G1, scheduled for a launch in December, will mainly test the safe re-entry of the crew module and its orientation upon its dive into the sea. **The successor mission, G2, will put Vyommitra inside the pressurised crew module equipped with a life-support environment.** The robot will be tasked with recording all parameters that will be used to study the impacts of the flight on humans.

### Andhra Pradesh CM Launches India’s First Indigenous Monkeypox RT-PCR Kit

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- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Nara Chandrababu Naidu launched India’s first indigenous Monkeypox RT-PCR Kit at the AP Medtech Zone (AMTZ) in Visakhapatnam.** This kit was developed at AMTZ in collaboration with Transasia Diagnostics and has been validated by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).
- The Chief Minister highlighted that the lyophilized components in the kit are specifically designed to ensure that it can be shipped and used in even the most remote areas. **He emphasized that this kit offers precise, reliable, and accessible diagnosis.** Mr. Naidu further underscored the **importance of this innovation as a reflection of the “Make in AP” initiative,** showcasing Andhra Pradesh’s and India’s leadership in healthcare innovation on the global stage.

### IIM Bangalore announces India’s first global centre of excellence on PE and VC

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- As the private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) landscape in India continues to grow, **IIM Bangalore announced to set up country’s first global centre on PE-VC.** Named after the legendary investment banker **Tony James,** the Centre aims to be a global thought leader for research in matters relating to the PE and VC landscape.
- **Cyriac is contributing Rs. 17.5 crore towards the centre.** “This is the single largest-ever contribution from an alumnus and we are grateful to Mathew not just for his generous support but for his extreme thoughtfulness in contributing to the naming of four classrooms on campus after faculty who taught his batch.”

### Science and Technology Ministry withdraws support from Kalinga Prize

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- **The Science and Technology Ministry has withdrawn its contribution to the prestigious UNESCO Kalinga Prize for Popularisation of Science, UNESCO’s oldest award,** instituted through a donation by Odisha’s former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik way back in 1951. The government has, last year, instituted a new set of science awards, called Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, to replace all the earlier awards, including the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards. The inaugural set of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskars was announced last week.

### Sci560 expo inaugurated in Bengaluru

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- **The exhibition Sci560, is born from the collaborative efforts of ten city-wide institutions and Science Gallery Bengaluru,** and is supported by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies. Karnataka Minister for Science and Technology N S Boseraju officially inaugurated the Sci560 exhibition season, declaring it open to public. According to SGB, **the name ‘Sci560’ combines Bengaluru’s pin code, which starts with 560, with ‘sci’ to highlight the exhibition’s focus on science.** The name also subtly evokes ‘sci-fi’, connecting the city’s scientific history with a sense of exploration and innovation for the future.

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## Inventions/Discoveries/Health

### Indian scientists build breakthrough gene-editor

- Scientists from the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, have developed an enhanced genome-editing system that can modify DNA more precisely and more efficiently than existing CRISPR-based technologies. CRISPR occurs naturally in some bacteria, as a part of their immune system that limits infections by recognising and destroying viral DNA.
- In Nobel-prize winning work, scientists repurposed this bacterial defence mechanism to develop a novel approach for editing the genomes of higher-order organisms. **The CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing tool uses a guide-RNA (gRNA) designed to find and bind to a specific part of the target genome.**
- **The gRNA directs an enzyme, Cas9, to the target site, which is followed by a short DNA sequence called protospacer adjacent motif (PAM).** Cas9 recognises and binds to the PAM sequence, and acts as a molecular scissor that snips some damaged DNA. This automatically triggers the cell's DNA repair system, which repairs the snipped part to insert the correct DNA sequence.

**CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) is a family of DNA sequences found in the genomes of prokaryotic organisms such as bacteria and archaea. These sequences are derived from DNA fragments of bacteriophages that had previously infected the prokaryote. They are used to detect and destroy DNA from similar bacteriophages during subsequent infections. Hence these sequences play a key role in the antiviral (i.e. anti-phage) defense system of prokaryotes and provide a form of acquired immunity. Cas9 (or "CRISPR-associated protein 9") is an enzyme that uses CRISPR sequences as a guide to recognize and open up specific strands of DNA that are complementary to the CRISPR sequence. Cas9 enzymes together with CRISPR sequences form the basis of a technology known as CRISPR-Cas9 that can be used to edit genes within the organisms. This editing process has a wide variety of applications including basic biological research, development of biotechnological products, and treatment of diseases. The development of the CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technique was recognized by the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020 awarded to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna.**

### Fourteen African countries provide critical resources for health in WHO's first-ever Investment Round

- In an unprecedented show of **unity in support of the World Health Organization, 14 African countries and many partners pledged over US\$ 45 million to the WHO Investment Round**, a three-month-old initiative aimed at generating sustainable financing for the organization at the center of the global health architecture.
- **The commitments were made during the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Africa, with heads of state and government from across the continent underscoring the importance of investing in global health and ensuring a strong WHO.** The countries and partners came together for the historic event aimed at sustainably funding WHO and thus enabling it to more effectively fulfil its mandate and advance key objectives to promote, provide and protect health and well-being for all. The countries included Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chad, Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

### IIT Bombay researchers show one way how animals find their way home

- **Researchers at IIT Bombay are using robots to understand how animals find their way back home from unfamiliar places, a skill called homing.** Nitin Kumar, assistant professor at the Department of Physics at IIT Bombay, explained, **"The primary goal of our research group is to understand the physics of active and living systems. We achieve this by performing experiments on centimetre-sized self-propelled programmable robots.** In simple words, we model these robots to mimic the dynamics of living organisms, both at the individual and collective levels." **Homing is crucial for many life-forms, from birds flying thousands of kilometres during migration to ants finding their way back to their colonies after foraging.** Humans have even harnessed this ability to train homing pigeons to deliver messages over long distances.

- **Dr. Kumar’s team has now developed a robot that mimics foraging and homing behaviour. This robot is designed to move on its own and use light as a guide to return home.** In a new study, they have reported some principles of homing based on their studies with the robot. The foraging robot is programmed to move semi-randomly, like how animals might wander when looking for food. This type of movement is called active brownian (AB) motion. The robot’s direction changes frequently due to rotational diffusion, a mechanism that introduces a certain level of randomness to its path. When the robot needs to return home, it shifts to a different mode that doesn’t include randomness inputs.

### James Webb Telescope uncovers possible underground ocean on Uranus’ moon

- Scientists believe they have made an important observation as part of their search for water across the solar system. **Using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) developed by NASA, they have found the presence of carbon dioxide ice on the surface of one of the 27 moons that orbit Uranus.**
- **The team working on the “Moons of Uranus” project has been closely studying four specific moons orbiting Uranus in order to find traces of ammonia, organic molecules, water, or carbon dioxide ice.** After 21 hours of gazing through the JWST, the scientists found that carbon dioxide ice was present on the surface of Uranus’ moon called Ariel. They believe that the carbon dioxide ice is an indication that there is a liquid ocean flowing underneath Ariel’s surface.

**The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) is a space telescope currently conducting infrared astronomy.** As the largest telescope in space, it is **equipped with high-resolution and high-sensitivity instruments, allowing it to view objects too old, distant, or faint for the Hubble Space Telescope.** This enables investigations across many fields of astronomy and cosmology, such as observation of the first stars, the formation of the first galaxies, and detailed atmospheric characterization of potentially habitable exoplanets. **The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) led Webb’s design and development and partnered with two main agencies: the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).** The telescope is named after **James E. Webb, who was the administrator of NASA from 1961 to 1968** during the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs. **The James Webb Space Telescope was launched on 25 December 2021 on an Ariane 5 rocket from Kourou, French Guiana, and arrived at the Sun–Earth L2 Lagrange point in January 2022. The first Webb image was released to the public via a press conference on 11 July 2022.**

### DRDO Successfully Tests Long Range Glide Bomb ‘GAURAV’ From Su-30 MK-I

- **The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has carried out a successful maiden flight test of Long Range Glide Bomb (LRGB), GAURAV from the Su-30 MK-I platform of the Indian Air Force.** GAURAV is an air-launched one thousand-kilogram class glide bomb capable of hitting targets at long distances.
- It has been **designed and developed indigenously by the Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad.** During the flight test, the glide bomb hit the target erected at Long Wheeler’s island with pinpoint accuracy. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented DRDO, IAF and industry for the successful flight test. He termed it a major milestone in the country’s effort to develop indigenous defence technologies for further strengthening the capability of the Armed Forces.

### India-Israel join hands for new water technology centre at IIT Madras

- **India and Israel have joined hands for the establishment of a new water technology centre at IIT Madras,** which is expected to serve as a “key contributor” to India’s efforts to achieve sustainable water supply for all. The Embassy of Israel in India in its statement termed the deal a “significant milestone” in the ongoing collaboration between the two countries in the field of integrated water resource management.
- **“This tripartite agreement, signed by the Embassy of Israel, IIT Madras, and the AMRUT mission of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, reflects a shared commitment to address the critical challenges of water management in India”.** The Center of Water Technology aims to become a hub for innovation, research, and capacity-building in water technologies, particularly focusing on sustainable solutions for urban water supply. **To kickstart this initiative, a capacity-building course on ‘24/7 Water Supply in Urban Areas’ was organised at IIT-Madras.**

## NASA's Mars explorer begins challenging journey to Crater summit

- **NASA's Perseverance rover has embarked on a challenging new mission on Mars, beginning its ascent to the rim of Jezero Crater after spending 3 1/2 years exploring its floor. The six-wheeled Perseverance rover, which has been operating on Mars since 2021, initiated its ascent with the objective of reaching the summit of a 1,000-foot (305-meter) crater.** During its exploration of the crater's floor, an area formerly submerged in water, the rover has collected 22 rock core samples. These samples have the potential to provide crucial insights into Mars' ancient climate and possibly reveal evidence of past life on the planet. Currently, NASA is exploring methods to transport these samples back to Earth.

## Meet Black Hole Finder, an app that lets you help scientists explore the universe's darkest secrets

- **The Dutch Black Hole Consortium, a group of scientists working on finding new black holes, recently unveiled a new app called Black Hole Finder that lets you aid astronomers identify new black holes.** The app is free-to-use and is available on Android and iOS and can also be accessed from a web browser.
- According to the Black Hole Finder's Google Play Store listing, the app lets you **"explore the universe and learn more about these mysterious and fascinating objects"** by using real data from telescopes and other astronomical sources to help scientists identify potential black holes.
- **Black Hole Finder shows you images captured by the Chilean telescope array BlackGEM that is tasked with searching the skies for cosmic events called 'kilonovas'.** The developers recently added support for languages like Spanish, German, Chinese, Italian, Polish and Bengali, making it accessible to more users worldwide.

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. John Michell, an English clergyman and astronomer, is considered the "father" of the black hole concept. Albert Einstein first predicted the existence of black holes in 1916, with his general theory of relativity. The term "black hole" was coined many years later in 1967 by American astronomer John Wheeler.

## Indian Institute of Astrophysics astronomers find new method to predict amplitude of upcoming solar cycle

- **Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have found a new method to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle.** Besides, their research can also help in space weather forecasting. The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory. The intricacies of the solar cycle and forecasting space weather are important fields of current research, including in India.
- **Space weather is concerned with the varying conditions within the solar system and its heliosphere influenced by the sun and solar wind.** "The main components of space weather are the solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares. They can compress the magnetosphere of the Earth and trigger geomagnetic storms, which can affect communication and power transmission, damage spacecraft electronics, and threaten the lives of astronauts.

## First-ever phase-three clinical trials for dengue vaccine initiated in India

- **The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Panacea Biotec Limited announced the initiation of the first ever phase 3 clinical trial for a dengue vaccine in India.** The trial will evaluate the efficacy of India's indigenous tetravalent dengue vaccine; DengiAll has been developed by Panacea Biotec.

- **The first participant in this trial was vaccinated at the Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Rohtak.** The tetravalent dengue vaccine strain (TV003/TV005), originally developed by the National Institutes of Health, U.S., has shown promising results in preclinical and clinical trials worldwide.
- **Panacea Biotech, one of three Indian companies to receive the strain, is at the most advanced stage of developing the vaccine.** The company has worked extensively on these strains to develop a full-fledged vaccine formulation and holds a process patent for this work. Phases 1 and 2 in the clinical trials of the Indian vaccine formulation were completed in 2018-19 and yielded promising results.
- In collaboration with the ICMR, **Panacea Biotech will conduct the phase 3 clinical trial across 19 sites in 18 States and Union Territories of India, involving more than 10,335 healthy adult participants.** The trial, primarily funded by the ICMR with partial support from Panacea Biotech, is set to follow up with the participants for two years. **Currently, there is no antiviral treatment or licensed vaccine against dengue in India.** The development of an effective vaccine is complex as good efficacy has to be achieved for all four serotypes. In India, all four serotypes of the dengue virus are known to circulate or co-circulate in many regions.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the dengue virus (Genus Flavivirus), transmitted by several species of female mosquito within the genus Aedes, principally Aedes aegypti. This mosquito also transmits chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika infection. There are 4 distinct, but closely related, serotypes (separate groups within a species of microorganisms that all share a similar characteristic) of the virus that cause dengue (DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4).

### Moon Crater Named After National Luminary Pasang Lhamu Sherpa

- **Lhamu Pasang Sherpa, the first Nepalese woman to summit Everest, now has a lunar crater named in her honor.** Nepal celebrates the naming of a crater at the Moon's South Pole in honor of Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, the first Nepali woman to summit Mt. Everest. The US Geological Survey, which maps extraterrestrial planets and the Moon, as well as topographic and hydrological features of Earth, has named a crater on the Moon's South Pole after Sherpa. On April 22, 1993, Pasang Lhamu made mountaineering history by becoming the first Nepalese woman to successfully reach the summit of the world's highest peak. Unfortunately, during the descent, the climbers encountered severe weather conditions. She died near the south summit of Mt. Everest.
- **The Government of Nepal has honored her memory by declaring Pasang Lhamu a National Luminary.** Jasamba Mountain (7,315m) in the Mahalangur Range has been renamed Pasang Lhamu Mountain, and the 117 km-long highway from Trishuli to Dhunche has been designated Pasang Lhamu Highway. Additionally, postage stamps have been issued in her name.

### Australia's world-first peanut allergy treatment for infants

- **Australia is taking steps to tackle peanut allergy in babies.** The country has launched a nationwide programme to build immunity for those allergic to peanuts. **Touted as the world's first, the initiative entails life-saving treatment for babies with potentially deadly peanut allergies.** Ten paediatric hospitals in five states have joined hands with the National Allergy Centre of Excellence (NACE) to roll out the peanut oral immunotherapy (OIT) programme.

### Astronomers unveil 34 new giant radio sources discovered using GMRT

- **A team of Indian radio astronomers has identified 34 new giant radio sources (GRSs) using the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) operated by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).** This discovery, derived from the TIFR GMRT Sky Survey Alternative Data Release 1 (TGSS ADR1) at 150 MHz, includes some of the most distant GRSs known. Notably, two of these sources challenge long-held beliefs about the environments in which GRSs form.
- **The GMRT, located near Khodad village, about 90 km north of Pune, is a state-of-the-art facility operated by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of TIFR.** From 2010 to 2012, the GMRT conducted the TIFR GMRT Sky Survey (TGSS) to map the radio sky at 150 MHz, covering approximately 90% of the sky. This survey has proven to be a treasure trove for astronomers, enabling significant discoveries like these 34 new GRSs.

- **GRSs are among the universe’s largest structures, spanning millions of light-years and puzzling astronomers with their enormous size and rarity.** The team behind this discovery includes PhD students Netai Bhukta (SKBU, India) and Souvik Manik (MCC, India), alongside astronomers Sabyasachi Pal (MCC, India) and Sushanta K Mondal (SKBU, India). The team leveraged the TGSS for its low frequencies and the sensitivity of the GMRT to identify these colossal structures.
- According to Sabyasachi Pal, **GRSs are some of the universe’s most colossal structures, stretching across millions of light-years, equivalent to lining up several tens of Milky Way galaxies in a row.** At their core lies a supermassive black hole, with masses ranging from ten million to one billion times that of the Sun. This black hole serves as the engine, pulling in surrounding matter that becomes ionised and generates powerful electromagnetic forces. These forces propel material outward, forming jets of hot plasma that create massive lobes of radio emissions extending far beyond the visible galaxy.

### SpaceX’s historic Polaris Dawn astronaut mission to launch on August 26

- **SpaceX is set to launch the groundbreaking Polaris Dawn mission on August 26, marking a significant milestone in private spaceflight.** The mission, set to take off from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida aboard a Falcon 9 rocket, will feature the first-ever private spacewalk and aims to reach the highest Earth orbit since the Apollo era.
- **The Polaris Dawn crew consists of four members: billionaire entrepreneur Jared Isaacman,** who will command the mission; pilot Scott “Kidd” Poteet, a retired US Air Force lieutenant colonel; and mission specialists Sarah Gillis and Anna Menon, both SpaceX engineers.
- **The mission is the first of three planned under the Polaris Program, all funded and commanded by Isaacman,** who previously led the Inspiration4 mission in September 2021. Polaris Dawn will not dock with the International Space Station (ISS) but will operate as a free-flying mission in Earth orbit.
- **Polaris Dawn aims to achieve several historic firsts, including: The first-ever private spacewalk.** Reaching an altitude of approximately 700 kilometers, the highest for a crewed mission since the Apollo era. Testing SpaceX’s newly designed extravehicular activity (EVA) spacesuits in space. Conducting scientific experiments and testing Starlink’s laser-based communications.

### Scientists use magnetism to mind-control mice in world’s first experiment

- In a world-first experiment, **researchers at the Center for Nanomedicine within the Institute for Basic Science (IBS) and Yonsei University in South Korea have successfully demonstrated the ability to control specific brain regions in mice using magnetic fields.**
- **This breakthrough, known as Nano-MIND (Magnetogenetic Interface for NeuroDynamics) technology, opens up new possibilities for understanding and manipulating complex brain functions** such as cognition, emotion, and motivation. The Nano-MIND technology allows for wireless, remote, and precise modulation of specific deep brain neural circuits using magnetism. This innovative approach leverages magnetic fields and magnetized nanoparticles to selectively activate targeted brain circuits, offering a significant advancement over existing methods of brain manipulation.

### India selects two astronaut-designates for upcoming Axiom-4 mission to International Space Station

- **India has shortlisted two astronaut-designates for the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station.** Indian astronauts **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair have been shortlisted to go to the U.S. to train for the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).** A National Mission Assignment Board has recommended two Gaganyatris (astronauts) as prime and backup Mission Pilot for this mission. **Group Captain Shukla will be the prime mission pilot and Group Captain Nair will be the backup.** The Axiom-4 mission is the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station.

**Axiom Mission 4 (or Ax-4) is a private spaceflight to the International Space Station. The flight will be launched in October 2024 and will last 14 days. It will be operated by Axiom Space and use a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft. The flight will take off from the LC-39 A of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, using Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket. The flight is organized in collaboration with NASA and will be the fourth flight of Axiom Space after Axiom Mission 1, Axiom Mission 2, and Axiom Mission 3.**

## Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers developed at IIT-BHU to rejuvenate small rivers

- In a bid to sustainable river management, a **Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers** has been developed at IIT-BHU to rejuvenate small rivers through innovative and sustainable approaches. This initiative, part of the Green Strategic Partnership between India and Denmark, aims to rejuvenate small rivers through innovative and sustainable approaches. **With an initial funding of ₹16.80 crore from Ministry of Jal Shakti and an additional grant of ₹5 crore from Denmark**, the project aims to create a collaborative platform for government bodies, academic institutions and local communities to develop and implement solutions for clean river water. **A hybrid lab model will be established at IIT-BHU, coupled with an on-field living lab at the Varuna River. This model will allow for real-world testing and scaling of solutions aimed at improving river health.**

## Scientists propose warming up Mars by using heat-trapping ‘glitter’

- Scientists are now proposing a new approach to warm up Earth’s planetary neighbor by pumping engineered particles -similar in size to **commercially available glitter and made of iron or aluminum** – into the atmosphere as aerosols to trap escaping heat and scatter sunlight toward the Martian surface.
- **The idea would be to augment the natural greenhouse effect on Mars to raise its surface temperature by roughly 50 degrees Fahrenheit (28 degrees Celsius) over a span of a decade.** This alone would not make Mars habitable for people, but the scientists who developed the proposal see it as a potentially doable initial step. **The key elements of our paper are a novel proposal to use engineered nanoparticles to warm Mars’ atmosphere, and climate modeling that suggests this approach could be much more efficient than previous concepts.** This is important because it presents a potentially more feasible method for modifying Mars’ climate, which could inform future Mars exploration strategies.

## WHO Launches Six-Month Global Plan to Combat Mpox Outbreak

- **World Health Organization (WHO) launched a six-month global strategic and response plan to stop the deadly outbreak of Mpox.** This plan aims to curtail human-to-human transmission of Mpox through coordinated global, regional, and national efforts. **Starting from September 2024 to February 2025, and envisions 135 million U.S. dollars in funding, the plan includes strategic vaccination efforts for people at the highest risk of interrupting transmission chains.** This includes close contacts of recent cases and healthcare workers. Further, the WHO outlined that at the global level, the emphasis is on leadership, timely evidence-based guidance, and access to medical counter-measures for the most at-risk groups in affected countries.
- WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, **the new plan is based on the principles of equity, global solidarity, community empowerment, human rights, and coordination across sectors,** international agencies and national and local partners, civil society, researchers and manufacturers, and our Member States. **The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Mpox Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 14<sup>th</sup> August in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa.** According to WHO, globally since 2022, more than 99 thousand cases and 208 deaths from 116 countries, had been reported due to Mpox.

**Mpox, also known as monkeypox, is a DNA virus. It belongs to the family Poxviridae, which consists of large, double-stranded DNA viruses.** The virus was first identified in monkeys in 1958 but has since been found to infect humans as well. **The first reported human case of mpox was a nine-month-old boy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1970).** **Transmission:** Mpox is primarily transmitted to humans from animals, particularly rodents and primates, through direct contact or through contaminated objects. **Symptoms:** Mpox infection in humans typically presents with fever, headache, muscle aches, and a characteristic rash that progresses from macules to papules to vesicles and pustules. **Vaccination:** While a vaccine for mpox exists, its availability and effectiveness are limited, highlighting the need for improved prevention and control measures.



## ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

### Govt issues 5<sup>th</sup> draft notification to declare over 56k sq km of Western Ghats eco sensitive

- The Centre has issued a fifth draft notification to declare over 56,800 square kilometres of the Western Ghats across six states, including 13 villages in Kerala's landslide-hit Wayanad, Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), inviting suggestions and objections within 60 days. The draft notification proposes to declare 9,993.7 sq km in Kerala, including 13 villages in two talukas of the landslide-hit district, ecologically sensitive.
- Overall, the notification includes 449 sq km in Gujarat, 17,340 sq km in Maharashtra, 1,461 sq km in Goa, 20,668 sq km in Karnataka, 6,914 sq km in Tamil Nadu, and 9,993.7 sq km in Kerala in the proposed ESA. The draft notification suggests a complete ban on mining, quarrying, and sand mining, with existing mines to be phased out within five years "from the date of issue of the final notification or on the expiry of the existing mining lease, whichever is earlier".

The Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri, is a mountain range that stretches 1,600 km (990 mi) along the western coast of the Indian peninsula. Covering an area of 160,000 km<sup>2</sup> (62,000 sq mi), it traverses the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. The range forms an almost continuous chain of mountains along the western edge of the Deccan Plateau, from the Tapti River to Swamithoppe in Kanyakumari district at the southern tip of the Indian peninsula. The Western Ghats meet with the Eastern Ghats at Nilgiris before continuing south.

### Kerala's first zoo-safari park to come up in Kannur

- Kerala's first zoo-safari park is set to come up at Taliparamba, Kannur district. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has approved the project during a high-level meeting, marking a significant step in promoting wildlife tourism in the region. The zoo safari will be established on a 250-acre plot of plantation corporation land along the Taliparamba-Alakode state highway.

### World's first melanistic tiger safari to be established in Odisha by year-end

- Odisha is set to have the world's first melanistic tiger safari in close vicinity of Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district by year-end. "Competent authorities have accorded clearances for the proposed tiger safari, a first of its kind in the world. Of the three mandatory seal of approval, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has accorded 'in-principle' approval to it".

### New evidence suggests complex life on Earth may have begun 1.5 billion years earlier

- A team of scientists has uncovered evidence suggesting that complex life on Earth may have emerged 1.5 billion years earlier than previously believed. Their findings, reported from Gabon, indicate that environmental conditions suitable for animal life existed as far back as 2.1 billion years ago.
- The research team discovered fossil-like formations deep within rocks in Gabon, which they argue point to a nutrient-rich inland sea capable of supporting early life forms. This environment, they propose, was rich in oxygen and phosphorus due to volcanic activity caused by the collision of two continental plates. These conditions could have supported simple, brainless organisms similar to modern slime molds.

### Real-life Iron Man: World's first heart made from Titanium keeps a man alive

- In a groundbreaking medical achievement, the American became the first person in the world to receive a revolutionary artificial heart. The device, developed by medical technology company BiVACOR, is a titanium blood-pumper designed to fully replace the function of a failing human heart.
- The BiVACOR Total Artificial Heart (TAH) represents a significant departure from traditional artificial heart designs. Unlike its predecessors, the TAH doesn't mimic the beating of a natural heart. Instead, it utilises a single, magnetically levitating rotor to pump blood to both the lungs and the rest of the body. This innovative design eliminates the need for flexible chambers or pumping diaphragms, resulting in a more durable and compact device.

### Centre finalising Great Nicobar project

- The detailed project report (DPR) of a ₹41,000-crore international transshipment port project at Great Nicobar Island in the Bay of Bengal is being finalised by the government, and it will go ahead with the

implementation of the project in the next few months. **Great Nicobar Transshipment port project has been under scrutiny over environmental concerns.** “The project has received the environmental clearances and nod from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and now there is no hurdle in its implementation.

### Government Declares Adichunchanagiri In Karnataka And Choolannur In Kerala As Peacock Sanctuary

- **The Central Government has declared Adichunchanagiri in Karnataka and Choolannur in Kerala as Peacock Sanctuary.** Several measures are being taken for the conservation of the national bird and has also set up breeding and conservation centers for peacocks.

### PM Modi Releases 109 High-Yielding, Climate-Resilient, And Biofortified Crop Varieties In New Delhi; Interacts With Farmers And Scientists

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient, and biofortified crop varieties at the India Agricultural Research Institute** in New Delhi. The 109 varieties of 65 crops include 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops. Among the field crops, seeds of various kinds of cereal including millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, fibre, and other potential crops were released. The horticultural crops will cover different varieties of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, tubers, spices, flowers, and medicinal plants.

### Assam: HaatiApp launched to reduce human-elephant conflict

- **Aaranyak, an NGO based in Guwahati, launched a mobile application, HaatiApp, with the aim to reduce the human-elephant conflict in Assam and surrounding states.** Bibhuti P Lahkar, who heads the Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD) of Aaranyak, said that this application will create a bridge between government departments and the common people.

### Methane-eating bacteria discovered in Western Ghats

- **Scientists from the MACS Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) have reported the discovery of India’s first indigenous methane-eating bacteria, known as methanotrophs, in rice fields and wetlands in Western India.** Methane, the second most important greenhouse gas, has 26 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide. It is produced by methanogens in wetlands, rice fields, ruminants, and landfills.
- **Methanotrophs, or methane-oxidizing bacteria, counteract this by oxidizing methane, thereby reducing its concentration in the atmosphere.** These bacteria thrive in environments where both methane and oxygen are present, such as wetlands, rice fields, ponds, and other water bodies.

### Plastic-eating fungi could be glimmer of hope in cutting ocean pollution

- **Scientists in Germany have identified plastic-eating fungi that could offer a glimmer of hope in tackling the problem of millions of tonnes of waste polluting the world’s oceans every year.** But they warn that their work is likely to be only a small part of solving plastic pollution, and say there is still a need to reduce food packaging and other debris from entering the environment where it can take decades to degrade.
- **An analysis at Lake Stechlin in north-eastern Germany into how micro fungi thrive on some plastics with no other carbon source to feed on has clearly demonstrated that some of them are capable of degrading synthetic polymers, said the team leader.** However, their enzyme activity is heavily dependent on external conditions, such as temperature or micronutrients. Some 390 million tonnes of plastic were produced worldwide in 2021, data from the Plastics Europe plastics producer association show, up from 1.7 million tonnes in 1950. Although the recycling rate has increased in the last few years, less than 10% of plastic waste is recycled worldwide.

### Neelakurinji becomes a ‘threatened species,’ officially

- **Neelakurinji (Strobilanthes kunthiana), the purplish flowering shrub, which blooms once in 12 years, has been included on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) official Red List of threatened species. This is the first ever Global Red List assessment for this flagship species of the montane grasslands of southwest India.** The latest global assessment confirms its threatened status in the Vulnerable (Criteria A2c) category of the IUCN.

- The mass blooming of the flower is a huge tourist attraction. The blooming was reported recently, though not in a vast spread, at Peerumade in Idukki. **“The species was considered threatened but was not evaluated against IUCN global standards until this assessment. Its distribution across the montane sky island landscapes in the Western Ghats, its nature of blooming once in 12 years, and lack of ecological studies were the major hindrances to a comprehensive assessment”.**
- **Strobilanthes kunthiana is an endemic shrub of three-metre height, seen only in the high-altitude shola grassland ecosystems of five mountain landscapes of southwest India at an elevation of 1,340–2,600 m. Known for their massive blooming, they impart purplish blue colours to the mountain grasslands and are popularly known as Neelakurinji (Blue Strobilanthes) blooms. They are semelparous with showy synchronous blooming and fruiting at every 12 years at the end of the life cycle, which has been reported since 1832.**

### India’s first tagging of horseshoe crabs kicked off by Zoological Survey of India and Odisha Forest Dept.

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- **The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Odisha Forest Department have joined hands to tag horseshoe crabs along the State’s coast to understand the population and habitat utilisation for its conservation and management.** Horseshoe crabs are one of oldest living creatures on the Earth, and a valuable species medicinally.
- This follows reports of a dwindling population of horseshoe crabs along the Odisha coast. **In the first two days, scientists affixed tag, the first such effort in the country, on 70 horseshoe crabs.** **“India is home to two species of horseshoe crabs — Tachyplesus gigas and Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda (mangrove) — and both the species are found along the northeastern coast of India, especially along the Odisha and West Bengal coast.**
- **The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), founded on 1 July 1916 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of the Government of India as a premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country.**

### Highway passing via Gir gets speed monitoring system to save lions

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- **To prevent death of wild animals and ensure safety of humans taking the roads criss-crossing Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (GNPWLS), the habitat of Asiatic lions, the Gujarat forest department has installed high-tech speed monitoring system as well as thermal and optical cameras along a 1-km stretch of state highway 26.**
- **As part of a pilot project, the department has installed 54 cameras and 20 LED display units along the 1-km stretch, extending towards the forest from Vavaniya Ness forest check-post on the western periphery of GNPWLS.** The cameras include 16 thermal and optical cameras, eight pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras and four automatic-number-plate-recognition (ANPR) cameras. Called Gir Speed Monitoring System (GSMS), the system also includes four speed guns, four strobe lights.

### Super Blue Moon

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- **A rare full moon, also known as a super blue moon was visible from across the Earth on August 19 and remained visible for the three days, according to NASA. The next three remaining super moons of 2024 will appear on September 17, known as the Harvest Moon, October 17, known as the Hunter’s Moon, and November 15’s full moon, known as the Beaver Moon.** Compared to a regular full moon, a supermoon will be up to 30 per cent brighter and up to 14 per cent larger. **During this super blue moon, 98 per cent of the moon’s nearside will be illuminated by the Sun gradually increasing to 99 and 100 per cent in consecutive days.** At the peak of the supermoon, it will be around 225,288 miles away from the Earth.
- **A blue moon is the second full moon that occurs within a single calendar month.** Since full moons typically happen once a month, having two in the same month is rare, making the second one a “Blue Moon”. **The next Blue Moon will occur on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.**

## SPORTS



### Sports Personalities in News

#### With her 10m air pistol bronze, Manu Bhaker becomes first Indian woman shooter to win an Olympic medal

- **Manu Bhaker wins bronze in women's 10m air pistol; gets first medal for India at Paris Olympics.** India's Manu Bhaker won the bronze medal and brought the first medal for the country at the Paris Olympics 2024 in the women's 10m air pistol event. This is the fifth shooting medal for India. Earlier, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (silver in Athens Olympics, 2004), Bindra (gold, Beijing 2008), Gagan Narang (bronze, London 2012) and Vijay Kumar (silver, London) have brought glory to the country in shooting.

#### Harshitha, Athapaththu deliver maiden Asia Cup title for Sri Lanka

- Led by Harshitha Samarawickrama and skipper Chamari Athapaththu's brisk half-centuries, Sri Lanka stunned seven-time champions India to clinch their maiden Asia Cup title with a comprehensive eight-wicket win in Dambulla.

#### Norman Pritchard: Colonised India's first athlete to win two medals in same Olympics

- While the International Olympic Committee (IOC) lists him as an Indian, World Athletics (formerly IAAF) credits his Olympic medals to Britain. Pritchard was born in then Calcutta in 1875 and died in Los Angeles in 1929 at the age of 54. Pritchard had done it pre-independence in the 1900 edition, which also took place in Paris, by winning silver medals in 200m sprint and 200m hurdles.

#### Paris Olympics: Manu Bhaker becomes first Indian to win two medals in a single edition

- **Manu Bhaker made history by becoming the first Indian player to win two Olympic medals in one single Olympic edition.** She won a bronze in the 10m air pistol shooting as well as another bronze in mixed 10 m air pistol shooting at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris. The 22-year-old secured a bronze in the 10m air pistol competition at the Chateauroux Range, marking a significant achievement as the first Indian woman to earn a medal in shooting at the Olympics.

#### Jiya Rai Becomes World's Youngest & Fastest Female Para Swimmer to Swim Solo across English Channel

- **Para swimmer Jiya Rai has become the world's youngest and fastest female para swimmer to swim solo across the English Channel successfully.** The 16-year-old covered the 34 km stretch, from Abbots Cliff in England to Pointe de la Courte-Dune in France, in 17 hours and 25 minutes.
- **She is an international open water para swimmer with a world record in open water swimming.** Despite having a disability, she has many inspiring achievements to her credit, including swimming across Palk Bay earlier. Jiya Rai is a recipient of many international and national awards including the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMB) – 2022 the highest award for citizens below 18 years of Age. She has dedicated her exceptional conquest of the English Channel to raising awareness about autism. She is the daughter of a naval personnel serving in Mumbai. The Indian Navy and the Mumbai-headquartered Western Naval Command have congratulated her for the feat and extended best wishes.

## Swapnil Kusale Clinches India's First Ever 50m Rifle 3 Positions Olympic Bronze

- **Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale kept his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help the country claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event of the ongoing Games.** His medal comes following the stunning performance of Manu Bhaker, who clinched the women's 10m air pistol and mixed team 10m air pistol bronze alongside Sarabjot Singh.

## John Abraham becomes owner of Goa Aces in Indian Racing Festival 2024

- **John Abraham has acquired ownership of the Goa Aces by JA Racing, a team set to compete in the Indian Racing Festival 2024.** This motorsport event, organised by Racing Promotions (RPPL), aims to engage the growing motorsport fan base in India and will take place from August 24 to November 17. Other notable team owners include former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and actor Arjun Kapoor.
- **The Indian Racing Festival, now in its third edition, will feature eight city-based teams from Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Goa, Kochi, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata.** These teams will compete fiercely for the championship title. The festival will also introduce a groundbreaking night race on a street circuit in Chennai, marking a historic first for Indian motorsport events.

## Paris Olympics: Julien Alfred Becomes Fastest Woman in the World

- **Saint Lucia's Julien Alfred became the fastest woman on earth after winning the 100-meter race at the ongoing Paris Olympics.** Alfred stunned pre-race favorite Sha'Carri Richardson of the United States, who claimed the second spot.
- **Alfred clocked 10.72 seconds to claim gold in the rain-drenched race at the Stade de France's running track.** Meanwhile, Richardson had to settle for silver after clocking 10.87 seconds. USA's Melissa Jefferson claimed bronze with a time of 10.92 seconds. In the final, Richardson's poor reaction time contributed to her second-place finish. **American had a reaction time of 0.221 seconds,** while Alfred had a reaction time of 0.144 seconds. Alfred was too far down the track for Richardson to mount one of her famous comebacks.

## Novak Djokovic wins first gold in tennis

- **Novak Djokovic beat Carlos Alcaraz 7-6(3), 7-6(2) in the men's singles Olympic final at Roland Garros in Paris.** The No 1 seed prevailed over the No 2 seed in an epic of intensity and tactical fortitude, ultimately decided by Djokovic's adaptability behind serve. He played two completely flawless tiebreaks, **which have become a calling card of his game through 24 Grand Slam singles titles and now, finally, one Olympic gold medal,** at the age of 37. **Alcaraz earns a silver medal at his first Olympics,** with the 21-year-old likely to play many more at the highest level.

## Dinesh Karthik appointed SA20 league ambassador

- **Former India wicketkeeper Batter Dinesh Karthik was appointed the league ambassador of the SA20 League.** Karthik, who is the first Indian player to be associated with the South African tournament, retired from all forms of cricket earlier this year. The SA20 comprises six franchises – MI Cape Town, Joburg Super Kings, Durban Super Giants, Paarl Royals, Pretoria Capitals, Sunrisers Eastern Cape, all of which are owned by the owners of IPL teams.

## Manu Bhaker to be India's flag-bearer for Paris Olympics closing ceremony

- **India's two-time Olympic medalist and star shooter Manu Bhaker will be the flag bearer for the country at the closing ceremony of the ongoing Paris Olympics 2024.** Bhaker is the first athlete from the Indian contingent after independence to get two medals in a single edition of the Paris Olympics. Earlier in the 1900 Olympics, Norman Pritchard won two medals while representing India, both silver in the 200m and 200m hurdles.
- Bhaker also joined an elite group of athletes to have multiple individual medals at the Olympics: **PV Sindhu (badminton silver at Rio 2016 and bronze medal at Tokyo 2020) and Sushil Kumar (wrestling bronze at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and silver medal at the 2012 London Olympics).**

## Tokyo Gold, Paris Silver: Neeraj Chopra achieves another Olympic first for India

- Neeraj Chopra made history by becoming the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win medals at consecutive Olympics. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, Neeraj secured a silver medal with a season-best throw of 89.45 meters in the javelin final, adding to his historic gold medal from the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. This achievement places Neeraj in an elite group of Indian athletes who have won multiple individual medals at the Olympics. Before him, only Sushil Kumar (Wrestling) and P.V. Sindhu (Badminton) had managed to win medals in back-to-back Olympic Games.
- Neeraj is also the fifth Indian to win multiple individual medals at the Olympics, joining the ranks of Norman Pritchard, Sushil Kumar, P.V. Sindhu, and Manu Bhaker. Meanwhile, Arshad Nadeem made history at the Paris 2024 Olympics by setting an Olympic record with a massive 92.97m throw on his second attempt, securing the gold medal in the men's javelin throw. This achievement marks Pakistan's first Olympic medal since 1992. Nadeem capped off the night with another impressive throw of 91.79m on his final attempt, further solidifying his dominance.

## Vinesh Phogat Disqualified From Paris Olympics For Being Overweight

- In an unfortunate event for India at the Paris Olympics, wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified from the 50 kg freestyle wrestling for being overweight by a few grams, after she stormed into the Olympic final. The Indian Olympics Association in a statement said, that despite the best efforts by the team through the night, she weighed in a few grams over 50 kg. Vinesh went on to beat Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez and became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the final at the Olympics.

## Olympics 2024: Manu Bhaker, Sreejesh to be India's flag-bearers at closing ceremony

- Two time Olympic medalists Manu Bhaker and PR Sreejesh are set to be India's flag bearers. Indian Olympic athletes receive rewards from both the government and the national sports body. Gold medalists are awarded Rs. 75 lakhs (\$90,000) from the the Indian Olympic Association and Rs. 50 lakh for silver medalists and Rs. 25 lakh for bronze winners.

## Abhinav Bindra Receives The Olympic Order Award By International Olympic Committee In Paris

- India's first individual Olympic gold medalist, Abhinav Bindra, was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at the 142<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session in Paris. The Olympic Order is the highest honour bestowed by the IOC, recognizing exceptional contributions to the Olympic Movement. Bindra won India's first individual Olympic gold in the Men's 10-meter Air Rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Games. With a distinguished career that includes over 150 individual medals, Bindra has become a prominent figure in Indian sports.

## Ravichandran Ashwin is currently enjoying the critical success of his book "I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story".

- Engineer, cricketer, a popular youtuber and now an author too. Parallel processing or multi-tasking comes easy to R Ashwin, who would rather fail than play safe whether it's life or cricket. Ravichandran Ashwin is currently enjoying the critical success of his book "I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story". The 37-year-old off-spinner, one of the sharpest minds in international cricket right now, is also a refreshingly candid voice with 516 Test wickets lending considerable weight to his views. He is currently enjoying the critical success of his book "I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story". Co-authored by Sidharth Monga and published by Penguin Random House, it chronicles Ashwin's life till 2011 and also gives a peak into his mind, which enjoys probability analysis as much as decoding a difficult batter.

## CAS Rejects Wrestler Vinesh Phogat's Appeal against Disqualification from Paris Olympics

- Wrestler Vinesh Phogat's joint silver medal hope came to an end with the Court of Arbitration for Sport, CAS, rejecting her appeal against disqualification from the Paris Olympics.
- The ad-hoc division of the CAS rejected her appeal days after it concluded the hearing in the case. Vinesh Phogat was disqualified after she weighed 100 grams more than her 50-kg weight category on the day of her final gold medal bout.

- Following this, Phogat approached the CAS for a joint silver medal. IOA President PT Usha expressed shock and disappointment at the decision of the CAS. The IOA said that it is exploring the next legal remedy available for Phogat.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) is an international body established in 1984 to settle disputes related to sport through arbitration. Its headquarters are in Lausanne, Switzerland and its courts are located in New York City, Sydney, and Lausanne. Temporary courts are established in current Olympic host cities. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is the international, non-governmental, sports governing body of the modern Olympic Games. Founded in 1894 by Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas, it is based in Lausanne, Switzerland. The IOC is the authority responsible for organizing the Summer, Winter, and Youth Olympics. The IOC also is the governing body of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and of the worldwide Olympic Movement, the IOC's term for all entities and individuals involved in the Olympic Games. The IOC president has been Thomas Bach since 2013.

## Alexander Zverev Becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Player to Earn 50 Tour-Level Wins This Season

- In Tennis, German star Alexander Zverev overcame Karen Khachanov in straight sets at the Cincinnati Open in USA, becoming the first player to earn 50 tour-level wins this season. Zverev defeated Khachanov 6-3, 6-2 for an opening win at the ATP Masters 1000 event. Zverev has earned at least 50 tour-level wins in a season five times in his career, having also hit the milestone in 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2023.
- Zverev leads this year's stats for most wins this season with 50 wins and 15 losses with Jannik Sinner placed second with 45 wins and five losses. Casper Ruud was third with 44-13 record this season followed by Carlos Alcaraz who has a 38-7 record.

## Bank of America partners with FIFA as first-time sponsor for 2026 World Cup

- Bank of America (BAC.N), opens new tab is partnering with FIFA to become a sponsor for the 2026 World Cup in a move that will link the financial giant with one of the world's most-watched sporting events. Sponsoring sport can be a fruitful marketing tactic for companies as it allows them to reach a wider audience and boost recognition of their brands.
- The second-biggest U.S. lender will be FIFA's first-ever global sponsor in the banking category. The 2026 World Cup will feature 104 matches and 48 participating teams, significantly higher than the last summit clash in Qatar in 2022, when 32 teams played 64 matches.

## India Sends 84 Athletes To Paris Paralympics; 47 First-Timers And 50 Supported By TOPS

- The largest-ever contingent of 84 players will take part in the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games this year. The Paralympic Games will take place from the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month to the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. Forty-seven athletes are taking part in the games for the first time. In the last Paralympic Games held in Tokyo, Indian players performed well, winning 19 medals. In those games, 54 players participated from the Indian side.

## Sumit Antil & Bhagyashree Jadhav to Be India's Flagbearers for Opening Ceremony of Paris Paralympics 2024

- Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist Sumit Antil and shot-put star Bhagyashree Jadhav will be flagbearers of Indian contingent at the opening ceremony of the Paris Paralympics. The Paralympic Games will take place from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> September this year. In Paris Paralympics, 84 athletes will represent India. This is the country's largest-ever contingent in a Paralympic games. A total of 54 athletes had represented the country in Tokyo Paralympics.
- Sumit is a reigning Paralympic champion in the men's Javelin Throw F64 category. On the other hand, Bhagyashree won a silver medal in the shot put F34 category at the 2022 Asian Para Games and finished seventh at the Tokyo Paralympics. She also won silver in Women's Shot Put F34 at the Para-Athletics World Championships in May this year.

## Sinner beats Tiafoe to win Cincinnati Open

- World number one Jannik Sinner beat Frances Tiafoe at the Cincinnati Open final. The who has been struggling over the last couple months with a hip issue and who missed the Paris Olympics due to tonsillitis, was

error-prone to start the contest and came up limping after several points in the tight first set. But he found his game in the tiebreak, absorbing the American's powerful serve on set point and Tiafoe's next shot sailed long to hand the Italian the opener.

- **Tiafoe, who has struggled to find momentum and wins this season, could not take advantage of his three break point opportunities in the first set and fell into a 2-0 hole to start the second from which he was never able to recover.** Sinner rifled a forehand winner up the line for a 4-1 lead in the second and completed the win with an unreturnable serve on match point. Sinner's triumph at the Masters 1000 event follows his Grand Slam breakthrough at the Australian Open in January and is his fifth title of the year and first at the tournament in Ohio.

### Polish cyclist Katarzyna Niewiadoma wins her first Women's Tour de France by four seconds

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- **Katarzyna Niewiadoma of Poland won her first Women's Tour de France title by a mere four seconds**, one of the closest margins in the event's history, men or women. **Niewiadoma, riding for Canyon-SRAM Racing, held off a fierce challenge from the reigning champion**, Demi Vollering of the Netherlands. The final stage, which concluded on the grueling Alpe d'Huez, saw Vollering secure a stage win and close in on Niewiadoma's lead, but she fell just short of overtaking her. Niewiadoma's win makes her the third different winner in as many editions of the Women's Tour de France.

### Manchester City forward Phil Foden won the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award

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- **Manchester City forward Phil Foden won the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award. Foden played a key role in City winning an unprecedented fourth consecutive Premier League title last term.** The 24-year-old scored 19 times and delivered eight assists for Pep Guardiola's team as they pipped Arsenal to the title on the last day of the season. Foden also won the 2023-24 Premier League player of the season award and was named the Football Writers' Association footballer of the year.

### CEAT awards: Rohit Sharma named 'men's International Cricketer of the Year', Virat wins 'Batter of Year'

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- **India captain Rohit Sharma was named the 'Men's International Cricketer of the Year', while former head coach Rahul Dravid was conferred with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the Ceat Cricket Rating Awards 2023-24.** India's batting mainstay Virat Kohli was named the 'Men's ODI Batter of the Year' while Mohammed Shami, the highest wicket-taker during the 2023 ODI World Cup with 24 scalps, was named the 'ODI Bowler of the Year'.

### Blind Rakshitha Raju Makes History as India's First Female Athlete to Compete in Paris Paralympics Women's 1500m Race

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- **Despite all challenges and odds, 22-year-old Rakshitha Raju, the first Indian athlete with a complete visual impairment, will participate with the world's top athletes in the Paris Paralympics. Rakshitha will be competing in the Women's 1500 m T-11 category of the quadrennial event making history as the first Indian athlete to compete in this category at the Paralympic Games.** She won gold in the 2018 Jakarta Asian Para Games and a gold medal in the Women's 1500m-T11 at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Para Games. She was honored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### Norris fights back to win Dutch GP

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- **McLaren's Lando Norris fought back to take a dominant victory in the Dutch Grand Prix despite losing the lead to Max Verstappen's Red Bull at the start.** Norris, for whom starts and first laps have been a weakness in recent races, was passed almost immediately when he had too much wheel spin off the line. But such was the pace in his McLaren that he re-passed Verstappen on lap 18, before the pit stops, and romped away into the distance.

### Neeraj Chopra Finishes Second in Men's Javelin Throw Event At Lausanne Diamond League 2024

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- **Paris Olympics silver medallist Neeraj Chopra finished second in the men's javelin throw event at the Lausanne Diamond League 2024 competition in Switzerland.** The star Indian athlete produced his season-best throw of 89.49 metres to finish second behind Grendian ace Peters Anderson who reached 90.61 metres in his final attempt.



- The Lausanne Diamond League meet was the fifth competition of the season for Neeraj Chopra. The Brussels Diamond League Final will be his final event of the season. Anderson, a bronze medalist at the 2024 Paris Games, dominated the event from the start and finished with a record 90.61 metre throw.
- Germany's Julian Weber finished third with his best throw of 87.08 metres in 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt while the world no. 1 Jakub Vadlejch finished seventh with his best 82.03 metre throw at Stade Olympique de la Pontaise. Japan's Roderick Genki Dean also produced his season-best throw of 83.19 metres and finished fifth in the standings.

## Badminton: 13-year-old Tanvi Patri wins Asian Championships U-15 title

- Top seed Tanvi Patri of India defeated Vietnam's Thi Thi Huyen Nguyen in the final to win the Asian Championships U-15 title at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in Chengdu, China. Tanvi Patri, cruised to a 22-20, 21-11 win in just 34 minutes over her second-seeded opponent in the summit clash.

## U-17 Wrestling Championship: Ronak Dahiya Wins Bronze In Greco-Roman

- Indian wrestler Ronak Dahiya won Bronze medal in Men's Greco-Roman 110 kilograms event at Under-17 World Wrestling Championship in Jordan. Dahiya defeated Turkish wrestler Emrullah Capkan 6-1 in the crucial medal match. With this, India has finished their campaign in Men's Greco-Roman category with two Bronze medals in the championship as Sainath Pardhi also secured Bronze in GR 51 kilograms category.

## INS Satavahana honours Olympian Jyothi Yarraji

- INS Satavahana, under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command, felicitated Olympian Jyothi Yarraji, who hails from Visakhapatnam, for her groundbreaking achievement of being India's first woman Olympic hurdler. The Secretary of AP Athletics Association also attended the event. During the event, the Olympian shared her inspiring journey, answered the questions of the audience and motivated young naval personnel, including Agniveers, to chase their dreams, according to a release from the ENC.

## BCCI's Jay Shah becomes youngest ICC chairman, to succeed Greg Barclay

- BCCI Secretary Jay Shah was elected unopposed as the new Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC). Shah, currently serving as the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), will officially assume the role on December 1, 2024. This election marks a significant milestone as Shah becomes the youngest person to lead the global cricket governing body. With Jay Shah being the sole nominee, the election process was straightforward. Shah's unopposed election signifies a smooth transition of leadership from the outgoing chairman, Greg Barclay, who chose not to seek a third term.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the world governing body of cricket. It was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from Australia, England and South Africa. It was renamed as the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and took up its current name in 1987. The ICC has its headquarters in Dubai, UAE. The ICC has 105 member nations currently: 12 Full Members that play Test matches, and 94 Associate Members. Shashank Manohar resigned as Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) on 30 June 2020, after more than four years in the role. New Zealand administrator Greg Barclay was elected Chairman on 24 November 2020. Geoffrey John Allardice is an Australian former cricketer and current administrator, who serves as the CEO of the International Cricket Council.

## Avani Lekhara becomes first Indian woman to win two gold medals at Paralympics

- India's medal tally at the Paris Paralympics commenced with a brilliant performance in the Women's 10m air rifle final (SH1). Avani Lekhara clinched a gold medal, and Mona Agarwal secured a bronze.

## Cristiano Ronaldo to be honored by UEFA as all-time top goalscorer during Champions League draw ceremony

- Five-time Ballon D'or winner, Cristiano Ronaldo is set to receive a special award at the UEFA Champions League draw ceremony. The 39-year-old Portuguese will be honored with the all-time top goalscorer award for

Europe's top club competition. The former Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus forward scored 140 goals from 183 appearances in the Champions League before he signed for Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr midway through the 2022/23 season.

### Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Launches 'Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training' (RESET) Programme

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- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the “Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training” (RESET) Programme on the occasion of National Sports Day in New Delhi. “RESET Programme is aimed at empowering retired sportspersons who have played for the country and brought immense laurels to the nation. **The programme will support retired athletes on their career development journey by empowering them with the necessary knowledge and skills and making them more employable.** The applications will be invited through a dedicated portal. Initially, the programmes will be of two levels based on educational qualifications of Class 12<sup>th</sup> and above and Class 11<sup>th</sup> and below.

### Preethi Pal wins historic 100m bronze at Paris Paralympics, wins India's first-ever track medal

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- **Preethi Pal became the first Indian to win a Paralympic medal in a track event. 23-year-old Preethi won a bronze medal in the women's T35 100m event with a personal best time of 14.21 seconds at the Paris Paralympics.** Apart from it being the country's first track medal ever at the Games, Preethi's bronze is also India's first medal from para-athletics at Paris 2024. Preethi had earlier won bronze at the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan and thus clinched a quota for the Games.

## Sport Events

### Chennai to host India's first night race on street circuit at Indian Racing Festival

- **The Chennai Formula Racing Circuit will make its much-anticipated debut at the Indian Racing Festival (IRF) as it returns for its third season starting from August.** The circuit, made by Racing Promotions Pvt. Ltd (RPPL) in collaboration with the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT), will be 3.5 kilometres long. The circuit will commence at the Island Grounds and weave past several key landmarks such as the Marina Beach, before rounding back to the starting point.

### India's first basketball academy at Karjat

- In a major boost for young talent in the country, **the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has joined forces with Corvuss American Academy to establish India's first basketball academy at Karjat, near Mumbai.** The academy will provide full scholarships to 52 players from 26 states, covering their boarding, lodging, and an international education curriculum.

### India to host T20 Asia Cup in 2025, Bangladesh to conduct 2027 edition in ODI format

- **India will host the next edition of the men's Asia Cup cricket tournament in T20 format in 2025 as a precursor to the T20 World Cup scheduled in the country in 2026,** the Asian Cricket Council stated in its Invitation for Expression of Interest (IEOI). The Asia Cup is always used as a dress rehearsal for the global event and played in the format in which the World Cup will be held. The 2023 edition, hosted by Pakistan Cricket Board, was held in 'Hybrid Model' as India refused to travel to the neighbouring country and played its matches in Sri Lanka.

### India Wins CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League For The Second Time

- **India lifted the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League final after beating hosts Nepal 3-2 at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu.** This victory marked India's second title in the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League. Despite losing to Nepal once in the league stage, India managed to secure the championship in the finals. The final match showcased the high level of competition and skill between the two teams. India clinched Gold, Nepal secured the silver medal and Iran settled with bronze in the tournament.

### India wins Bronze, back-to-back hockey medals for 1<sup>st</sup> time since 1972

- **India gave PR Sreejesh the perfect farewell as they defeated Spain 2-1 to claim the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics 2024. This was the first time India won back-to-back medals for the first time since 1972.** Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace after India were behind in the contest to claim the win as they got their record-extending 13<sup>th</sup> hockey medal at the Olympics.

### U.S. pips China in Olympic medal table race

- **The United States pipped China for top spot in the battle of medals as Paris prepared to bring the curtain down on one of the most successful Olympic Games in history.** The United States women's basketball team squeezed past France 67-66 to clinch the last gold of the Games. **The win — the eighth consecutive Olympic women's basketball won by the USA — ensured the Americans finished level with China on 40 golds each as the games drew to a close.** The USA however finished on top of the overall medal table with a total of 126 medals, with China in second place on 91.

### 'India' wins first-ever breakdancing match in Olympics history; finishes fourth at Paris Games

- **India Sardjoe created history after winning the first-ever breakdancing match at the Paris Olympics 2024.** She finished her impressive campaign after a heartbreaking loss in the semi-final of the debut sport. Her name 'India' caught the sporting world by surprise as many thought that India country making strides in breaking at the Olympics.

### Paris Olympics 2024 Closing Ceremony held At Stade De France

- **The Paris Olympics 2024 has officially come to an end with the Closing Ceremony at Stade de France.** The ceremony was held with around 80,000 spectators. **The name given to the Closing Ceremony is 'Records',**

which included the celebration of the success and achievements of the athletes, along with several artistic performances by prominent actors and artists. In the Closing Ceremony, the Olympic Flame was also extinguished and the **Olympic Flag was transferred to the Los Angeles 2028 Organising Committee, marking the transition to the next Summer Games.**

### India at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics

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- **A total of 117 Indian athletes made up the contingent that went on the hunt for medals and sporting immortality at the Paris 2024 Olympics**, which ran from July 26 to August 11. In all, India won six medals - a silver and five bronze - at the Paris 2024 Olympics. **Manu Bhaker won the first medal for India at the Paris 2024 Olympics. She bagged a bronze and became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal.** She then created history by becoming the first Indian to win two medals at a single edition of the Olympics after she clinched a mixed team 10m air pistol bronze with Sarabjot Singh. Swapnil Kusale added a third medal in shooting to make it India's biggest haul in a sport in a single edition of the Olympics.
- **The Indian men's hockey team matched their Tokyo 2020 success with the bronze in Paris while Neeraj Chopra became the most successful individual Olympian** after he claimed a silver medal in the javelin throw. Later, Aman Sehrawat became India's youngest Olympic medallist when he won bronze in wrestling.
- **However, India left the Paris 2024 Olympics with more heartbreaks than cheers. India missed out on six potential medals, most by a whisker**, with the athletes finishing fourth in their respective events. **This included Lakshya Sen, Mirabai Chanu and Manu Bhaker, who could have bagged her third medal at the Games. Vinesh Phogat's disqualification ahead of a historic final also added to India's woes.**
- **There was Indian interest in a total of 69 medal events across 16 sports** - archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, equestrian, golf, hockey, judo, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, table tennis and tennis - at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Neeraj Chopra, badminton ace PV Sindhu, weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, boxer Lovlina Borgohain and select members of the Harmanpreet Singh-led Indian men's hockey team were the other returning Olympic medallists in the Indian contingent to Paris 2024.
- Overall, **India have won 41 medals at the Olympics to date. Interestingly, it was Norman Pritchard's dual silver which opened India's account in Paris 1900. KD Jadhav, with a wrestling bronze at Helsinki 1952, was the first individual athlete from independent India to get on the Olympic medal winners list. Weightlifter Karnam Malleswari became the first woman to win an Olympic medal at Sydney 2000. Rifle shooter Abhinav Bindra was the first Indian to win an Olympic gold medal in an individual event at Beijing 2008 and was the only one to do so for over a decade before Neeraj's javelin triumph at Tokyo 2020.** Men's hockey, with 13 medals including eight golds, has been the biggest contributor to India's Olympic medals tally followed by wrestling with eight medals. India returned with its best-ever haul of seven medals, including one gold, from Tokyo 2020.

### USA maintains Olympic medal tally domination amidst growing global competition

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- **The United States of America had its best Olympic performance in recent times at the Paris 2024.** It took home 126 medals (40 gold, 44 silver, and 42 bronze), the most it has won at an Olympics since the 1984 edition, where it left with 174 medals (81 gold, 61 silver, and 30 bronze).
- **The fight for national bragging rights over gold medals — considered by many countries to be the most coveted prize — came down to the wire and in the end China and the U.S. tied with forty apiece.** China, with 91 overall medals, has cemented itself as America's chief rival in the Summer Games. **Meanwhile, Russia, once a world powerhouse at both the Summer and Winter Olympics, was nearly invisible in Paris**, fielding only about fifteen athletes and barely registering in the total medal count. Once again in Paris, America's Olympic engine fired on two cylinders: swimming and track.
- **In the pool, U.S. swimmers led by Katie Ledecky and Torri Huske, racked up 28 medals, including 8 gold.** On the track, American athletes were even more dominant winning 34 total medals, 14 gold. Those two sporting disciplines alone accounted for roughly half of the total U.S. medal tally. China, by contrast, garnered most of its gold medals from diving (8 gold), shooting (5 gold), table tennis (5 gold) and weightlifting (5 gold). So while the two countries go head-to-head in the medal count, they often do it in very different sports.

## HASTPA launches India's first-ever international mountain cycling racing team

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- The Himalayan Adventure Sports and Tourism Promotion Association (HASTPA) made a historic leap in Indian sports after they launched the country's first-ever international mountain biking (MTB) and cycling racing four-member team in Shimla.
- HASTPA claimed that this team would be the first in India and expressed immense pride in announcing the creation of the Scott Racing Team, India's inaugural international MTB team. "HASTPA is proud to announce the launch of India's first-ever Scott racing team, which is a groundbreaking moment for Indian cycling sport. The launch of the team signifies not just a milestone in Indian sports but also a step forward in elevating India's presence on the global mountain biking stage.

## Bangladesh Crowns New Champion Of SAFF U-20 Championship

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- Bangladesh has been crowned the new champion of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) U-20 Championship football tournament after defeating hosts Nepal by 4-1 in the final. This is the first time that Bangladesh has won this Championship.
- Along with Nepal and Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives and Bhutan participated in the competition that began on August 18, 2024. India had won SAFFU-20 in 2019, 2022 and 2023. The SAFF U-20 Championship is a biennial football championship for male footballers under the age of 20 and is organized by the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF).

## Lord's to host its first-ever women's Test

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- Lord's, the 'home of cricket', will host its first-ever Women's Test between India and England in 2026, the ECB announced. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said that after playing a three-match ODI series against hosts England in July 2025, India will return in 2026 for a one-off Test. India will travel to England for a white-ball tour in 2025. A five-match T20 series will be followed by three ODIs.

## Asian Surfing Championships 2024: India clinch silver medal at Maruhaba Cup

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- India edged out Chinese Taipei and China to bag the silver medal at the Maruhaba Cup, a team event in the Asian Surfing Championships 2024 at the picturesque Thulusdhoo Island in the Maldives. The Maruhaba Cup, a category within the Asian Surfing Championship, brought together elite surfers from across the continent in a team event.

## ICC moves women's T20 World Cup to UAE amid unrest in Bangladesh

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- The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that the Women's T20 World Cup will be moved to the United Arab Emirates due to the ongoing unrest in Bangladesh following the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The event, originally scheduled from October 3 to 20, will now be held in Dubai and Sharjah.

## Haryana to Commence First-Ever Global Women's Kabaddi League in September

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- The first-ever Global Women's Kabaddi League will commence next month in Haryana. Officially named the Global Pravasi Women's Kabaddi League (GPKL), this groundbreaking tournament will feature female athletes from over 15 countries. The event represents a significant advancement in promoting Kabaddi internationally, supporting efforts to include the sport in the Olympic Games, and bolstering India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics. Organized by the Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA) in partnership with World Kabaddi, the League's launch will take place in Haryana. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed between HIPSA and the Government of Haryana to facilitate this initiative.

## AWARDS



### KIIT DU Awarded Prestigious UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status

- **KIIT Deemed to be University** has been granted the distinguished **Special Consultative Status** by the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC)**, recognising the University's substantial contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **From a pool of 476 applications around the World, only 19 organisations**, including KIIT DU, were selected for this prestigious honour. **The status was conferred during the UN ECOSOC management segment meeting held on 23 July 2024**, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
- This recognition underscores KIIT's unwavering commitment to the **United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the SDGs**. **Attaining Special Consultative Status** marks significant milestones, positioning KIIT among a select group of universities globally that have earned this esteemed distinction.

### CWC Wins GEEF Global WaterTech Award 2024

- **The Central Water Commission (CWC)** has been honored with the **GEEF Global WaterTech Award** in the category **'Water Department of the Year'** at the **Global Water Tech Summit – 2024**, held by the **Global Energy and Environment Foundation (GEEF)** in New Delhi. The Global WaterTech Award celebrates significant achievements in the water sector, including advancements in innovation, technology, conservation, and sustainable development. The Global Water Awards, established by Global Water Intelligence in 2006, honor critical achievements in the international water industry.

### Tamil Epigrapher V. Vedachalam Honoured with Prestigious V Venkayya Epigraphy Award

- **The year 2024 marks a significant milestone in the field of Indian epigraphy as V. Vedachalam, a renowned Tamil epigrapher and historian, receives the prestigious V Venkayya Epigraphy Award.** This accolade not only recognizes Dr. Vedachalam's extensive contributions to the field but also highlights the continuing importance of epigraphic studies in understanding India's rich historical tapestry.

### Jitendra Singh Conferred The Prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award"

- In a ceremony to mark the International Meet of leading medical celebrities, professionals and Medicos from all over the country and abroad, **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh was conferred the prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award"**. In recognition of his exemplary dedication to the advancement of diabetology, diabetes care and diabetes research he earned acknowledgement across the country and overseas.
- **The citation further mentions that falling in the genre of the great Dr. B C Roy, Dr Jitendra Singh is another rare example of a nationally known Medical Professional**, who proved equally successful in public life by being popularly elected to the House of People (Lok Sabha) for three consecutive terms with a decisive margin and also being among the few in the country and first in Jammu & Kashmir to find a berth in Union Council of Ministers consequently for the third term.

## President Droupadi Murmu Honoured With Timor-Leste’s Highest Civilian Award; PM Says, Proud Moment For Country

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed immense pride over **President Droupadi Murmu’s recognition with the Grand Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste, the highest civilian award of the nation.** He added this prestigious honour reflects the strong ties and mutual respect between India and Timor-Leste. Mr. Modi said that it is also a recognition of her monumental contribution to public life for several years. **President Droupadi Murmu was conferred with the Grand-Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste, the country’s highest civilian award.** The award is in recognition of her achievements in public service and dedication to education, social welfare and empowerment of women.

## President Droupadi Murmu Conferred Highest Honour – Companion Of The Order Of Fiji In Capital Suva

- **President Droupadi Murmu who is on a two-day visit to Fiji, was conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the highest honour of Fiji by the President of Fiji.** President Murmu addressed the Fijian Parliament where she recalled the 75 years diplomatic association between the countries. President Murmu later addressed the Fijian Parliament where she thanked the Fijian Government for their support for Aditya L1 Mission and recalled India’s support to Fiji during Covid-19 crisis through the Vaccine Maitri initiative. She also emphasised the importance of Global South voicing the concerns of developing nations for Climate justice.

## Biochemist Govindarajan Padmanabhan to receive India’s first ‘Vigyan Ratna Puraskar’

- In a landmark announcement the central government revealed the names of the recipients for the first-ever ‘Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar’, a prestigious award recognising excellence in science and technology. **Leading the list of honorees is celebrated biochemist Govindarajan Padmanabhan, who has been selected for the first ‘Vigyan Ratna Puraskar’, the highest individual accolade in this new category.**
- **Padmanabhan’s illustrious career in biochemistry has been marked by groundbreaking research and numerous contributions** that have advanced the field significantly. In addition to individual achievements, the awards also recognize collaborative efforts that have propelled India’s scientific missions. **The scientists and engineers behind the successful Chandrayaan-3 mission have been selected for the ‘Vigyan Team Award’.** The awards aim to honour individuals and teams who have made significant contributions to India’s scientific and technological advancement.

## President Droupadi Murmu Approves 103 Gallantry Awards For Armed Forces And Central Armed Police Forces

- **President Droupadi Murmu approved 103 Gallantry awards to Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel on the eve of Independence Day.** These are **four Kirti Chakras including three posthumous, 18 Shaurya Chakras including four posthumous and one Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry).** Among the Gallantry awards are 63 Sena Medals (Gallantry) including two posthumous, 11 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry) and six Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).
- **The Kirti Chakra awardees killed in action are Colonel Manpreet Singh of 19 Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Rifleman Ravi Kumar of 63 RR, and Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Humayun Muzammil Bhat. Major Malla Ram Gopal Naidu is the only living recipient of the honour.**
- **Colonel Manpreet Singh, the commanding officer of 19 RR, was killed in a counter-insurgency operation in Anantnag last year.** He was a second-generation army officer and had completed 17 years of service. Singh is survived by his wife, a seven-year-old son, a three-year-old daughter, and his mother. Bhat, 34, was also killed in the same operation. His father, Ghulam Hassan Bhat, retired as an Inspector General of police in Kashmir.
- **The Shaurya Chakra awardees include Colonel Pawan Singh of 666 Army Aviation Squadron (Reconnaissance and Observation), Major CVS Nikhil of 21 Para (Special Forces), Major Aashish Dhonchak of 19 RR (posthumous), Major Tripatpreet Singh of 34 RR, Major Sahil Randhawa of 34 RR, Subedar Sanjeev Singh Jasrotia of 5 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, Naib Subedar P Pabin Singha of 56 RR, and Sepoy Pardeep Singh of 19 RR (posthumous).**

- **The President has also approved 39 Mention-in-Despatches**, including posthumously to Army Dog Kent, for their significant contributions to different military operations. **The operations include Operation Rakshak, Operation Snow Leopard, Operation Sahayata, Operation Hifazat, Operation Orchid and Operation Katchal.** She has approved one President's Tatrakshak Medal (Distinguished Service), one Tatrakshak Medal (Gallantry) and two Tatrakshak Medals (Meritorious Service) to the Indian Coast Guard personnel. She also approved the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Services and the Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

**The Kirti Chakra is an Indian military decoration awarded for valour**, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the field of battle. It may be awarded to civilians as well as military personnel, including posthumous awards. It is the peacetime equivalent of the Maha Vir Chakra. It is second in order of precedence of peacetime gallantry awards, comes after Ashoka Chakra and before Shaurya Chakra. Before 1967, the award was known as the Ashoka Chakra, Class II. Established as the "Ashoka Chakra, Class II" by the President of India, 4 January 1952 (with effect from 15 August 1947). The statutes were revised and the decoration renamed on 27 January 1967.

### Bollywood Icon Shah Rukh Khan Rules Locarno as He Receives Lifetime Award

- "King Khan" ruled the Piazza Grande, the iconic big square in the center of picturesque Swiss town Locarno. Bollywood icon **Shah Rukh Khan brought his global star power to the 77<sup>th</sup> edition of the Locarno Film Festival as he was honored with a lifetime achievement award, the so-called Pardo alla Carriera, or Career Leopard.**

### 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards; 'Aaina' Shines In Non-Feature, 'Gulmohar' Wins Best Hindi Film, Rishabh Shetty Wins Best Actor Award

- **The 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards for the year 2022 were announced** in New Delhi. As expected, actor **Rishabh Shetty won the Best Actor award in a Feature Film for his scintillating performance in the Kannada folk action thriller, Kantara.** The film, which was also directed by Rishabh, was also named Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.
- **The Best Actress in a Feature Film award was a tie between Nithya Menen, for her performance in the Tamil comedy-drama Thiruchitrambalam, and Manasi Parekh for her Gujarati drama film, Kutch Express.** In the non-feature film category, Aaina won the best non-feature film award. In the feature film category, the best Hindi film award was bagged by Gulmohar. Haryanvi film Fouja won the Best Lyrics award in the non-feature film category. The best singer award male was given to Arijit Singh.
- Meanwhile, **Anand Ekarshi's Malayalam suspense chamber drama, Aattam, bagged the Best Film, Best Editing and Best Screenplay awards.** Sooraj R Barjatya was named **Best Director for his Hindi adventure drama, Uunchai, which was headlined by an ensemble cast including Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, and Boman Irani.**
- The 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards recognises films certified by the censor board between January 1 and December 31, 2022. The winners will be felicitated by President Droupadi Murmu in a ceremony in October 2024. Notably, the jury said today that the recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award will be announced later.
- Best Feature Film – Aattam
- Best Actor – Rishabh Shetty, Kantara
- Best Actress – Nithya Menen in Tiruchitrambalam, and Manasi Parekh in Kutch Express
- Best Director – Sooraj Barjatya, Uunchai
- Best Supporting Actress – Neena Gupta, Uunchai
- Best Supporting Actor – Pawan Malhotra, Fouja
- Best Feature Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment – Kantara
- Best Debut – Fouja, Pramod Kumar
- Best Telugu Film – Karthikeya 2
- Best Tamil Film – Ponniyin Selvan – Part 1



- Best Punjabi Film – Baaghi Di Dhee
- Best Odia Film – Daman
- Best Malayalam Film – Saudi Velakka CC.225/2009
- Best Marathi Film – Vaalvi
- Best Kannada Film – KGF: Chapter 2
- Best Hindi Film – Gulmohar
- Best Tiwa Film – Sikaisal
- Best Bengali Film – Kaberi Antardhan
- Best Assamese Film – Emuthi Puthi
- Special Mentions – Manoj Bajpayee in Gulmohar, and Sanjoy Salil Chowdhury for Kadhikan

### Nepal Tourism Board Receives PATA Gold Award For Sustainable Tourism

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- **Nepal Tourism Board has received the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award in Sustainable Tourism for Livelihood Recovery Project (STLRP).** This is the third time NTB has received a PATA award in community-based tourism.
- **The award recognizes the project's efforts in creating employment opportunities and enhancing sustainable tourism development** in all seven provinces of Nepal. NTB's STLRP previously won the PATA Gold Award in 2022 and 2023.
- **In 2022, it was recognized for Tourism Destination Resilience, and in 2023, for its initiatives in women's empowerment through tourism, sustainability, and social responsibility.** This Community-based tourism project has generated short-term employment for around 10,000 tourism workers and provided capacity-building training for 4,000 individuals since the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Meanwhile, Kerala Tourism of India has won the PATA Gold Award 2024 in the Digital Marketing category. Kerala's Department of Tourism online contest of Holiday Heist was a winning entry in this category.** All award recipients were honoured at the PATA Gold Awards Presentation in Bangkok, Thailand. The Pacific Asia Travel Association is a not-for-profit membership-based association that catalyses the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region.

### Pakistan's Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) awarded to top Chinese general

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- **Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China General Li Qiaoming was conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, one of the top honours in Pakistan,** for his "unwavering commitment" in promoting close cooperation between the militaries of the two all-weather friends. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Asim Munir participated during a special investiture ceremony at the President's House and attended by service chiefs and parliamentarians. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the deepening military-to-military exchanges and noted that the defence and strategic ties between Pakistan and China are vital for peace and stability in the region.

### 24<sup>th</sup> International Mother Teresa Awards Given For Significant Contributions

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- **The 24<sup>th</sup> International Mother Teresa Awards Ceremony held at the Millennium Plaza Dubai, commemorating the 114<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the revered humanitarian.** This prestigious event, **organized by the All-India Minority and Weaker Sections Council,** was held outside India for only the second time, with both international ceremonies having taken place in Dubai.
- **India for only the second time, with both international ceremonies occurring in Dubai. The awards, established after Mother Teresa's passing in 1997,** recognized exceptional individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields including education, science, culture, sports, social work, medicine,

industry, and politics in India. This year’s ceremony featured a diverse group of awardees from different countries and sectors.

- **Notable Award Recipients:**
- **João Bernardo Vieira II (Posthumously, Guinea-Bissau)**
- **Sidharth Srivastava and Namit Bajoria (Industry)**
- **Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Chairman, NRB Bank Limited)**
- **Irka Bochenko (Arts)**
- **MP Rozario (Education)**
- **Murli Panjabi and Sureandar Singh Khandari (Social Work, UAE)**
- **Ahmed al Hashemi (Young Musician and Child Prodigy)**

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Career  
Launcher

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Former Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan Appointed As Chairperson Of UPSC

- **Former Union Health Secretary and 1983-batch IAS officer Preeti Sudan has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).** President Droupadi Murmu has approved the appointment of Ms. Sudan. She takes charge on 1<sup>st</sup> August. Ms Sudan succeeded Dr. Manoj Soni, who resigned earlier this month before the end of his tenure.

### Indian Armed Forces Get First Woman Director General of Medical Service

- **Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair has become the first woman to be appointed the Director General of Medical Services.** She was also the first woman to serve as the Director of General Hospital Services (Armed Forces) as well as the first woman to be the Principal Medical Officer of the Western Air Command. She graduated from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune with a distinguished academic record and was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in Dec 1985. Previously, Lt Gen Nair was nominated as an expert member of the prestigious Dr Kasturirangan Committee for drafting part of the medical education component of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2019.

### Piyush Goyal Launches ‘India@100’ By Prof. K V Subramanian, Envisions India As A Developed Nation By 2047

- **Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal launched the book titled ‘India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow’s Economic Powerhouse’ authored by Prof. K V Subramanian** in New Delhi. Mr Goyal said that India can achieve the target of Viksit Bharat with the collective efforts of 1.4 billion citizens. He has expressed confidence that India will become a developed nation by 2047 in all sectors, including infrastructure, employment generation, tourism, manufacturing, shipping, and technology.

### Nathwani’s Book ‘Call Of the Gir’ On Asiatic Lions & Conservation Efforts

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appreciated the book ‘Call of the Gir’ written by Rajya Sabha Member Parimal Nathwani.** The Prime Minister said he knows Mr Nathwani for his passion for wildlife. The Prime Minister said that this book will surely help all those interested in the majestic Gir Lion. The book is based on Gir’s landscapes, which are known for the Asiatic lions. The book combines vivid photography and narratives to highlight the urgency of conservation efforts.

### PM Modi Extends Condolences on the Passing of Classical Dancer Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended condolences to the family and admirers of Indian classical dancer Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy, who passed away at the age of 84.** The Prime Minister said that her excellence and dedication to Indian classical dance inspired generations and left an indelible mark on country’s cultural landscape. He added that **Dr. Krishnamurthy has worked greatly to enrich country’s heritage.** Vibhushan awardee Dr. Krishnamurthy passed away after battling age-related ailments.
- **Mungara Yamini Krishnamurthy (20 December 1940 – 3 August 2024) was an Indian classical dancer recognized for her contributions to Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi.** She was a recipient of the Padma Shri (1968), Padma Bhushan (2001), Padma Vibhushan (2016) and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1977).

### Senior IAS Officer T.V Somanathan Appointed Cabinet Secretary

- **The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of T.V. Somanathan as Cabinet Secretary.** Mr. Somanathan has been appointed for a tenure of two years, starting from the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. He is an officer from the 1987 batch of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) of Tamil Nadu cadre. The Committee has also approved Mr. Somanathan’s appointment as Officer on Special Duty in the Cabinet Secretariat. This appointment will commence from the date he joins the assignment and continue until he takes over as Cabinet Secretary.

## Vinay Mohan Kwatra Becomes Indian Ambassador to the US

- **Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been appointed the Indian Ambassador to the United States**, starting his role on August 12, 2024, and **succeeding Taranjit Singh Sandhu**. This move is part of a broader plan to strengthen India-US relations.
- **Kwatra previously served as India's Foreign Secretary**, gaining extensive experience in international diplomacy. Before that, he was the Minister of Commerce at the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC, where he built key diplomatic connections. Kwatra's appointment is crucial for strengthening the strategic partnership between India and the US.

## Vinay Mohan Kwatra assumes charge as India's new Ambassador to U.S.

- **Vinay Mohan Kwatra took charge as the Indian ambassador to the United States**. Mr. Kwatra, till recently was India's Foreign Secretary.

## Parvathaneni Harish appointed as India's Permanent Representative to U.N.

- **Seasoned diplomat Parvathaneni Harish was appointed as India's next ambassador to the United Nations in New York**. Mr. Harish, a 1990-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is presently serving as India's ambassador to Germany. The position of India's ambassador or permanent representative to the U.N. has been lying vacant after Ruchira Kamboj retired in June.

## Acting ED Director Rahul Navin appointed as full-time chief

- **Rahul Navin, the acting chief of Enforcement Directorate (ED), was appointed as the agency's new Director for a period of two years**. The 1993-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) official had been given the additional charge as ED Director in September last year on completion of the tenure of his predecessor Sanjay Kumar Mishra. He joined the agency as a Special Director in November 2019. Under Mr. Navin, the agency has been investigating a large number of sensitive cases of financial fraud and corruption under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act violations.

## IPS Nalin Prabhat appointed new DGP of Jammu and Kashmir, set to assume charge from Oct 1

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) appointed 1992-batch IPS officer Nalin Prabhat as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir**. He is set to assume charge from October 1. Till then, he will work as the Special Director-General (DG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police. The Centre was considering appointing Prabhat, as the new DG of the Jammu and Kashmir Police amid the rising terror attacks in the Jammu region since June 9 in which the security forces have suffered casualties.
- In an order, **the Centre said, "Consequent upon joining the AGMUT cadre on inter-cadre deputation from AP cadre, Prabhat is hereby posted as Special DG, J&K police with immediate effect and till September 30**. Further, upon retirement of R R Swain, IPS of 1991-batch of AGMUT-cadre on September 30, Prabhat is appointed as DGP, J&K police from October 1.

## Grammy winner Ricky Kej's rendition of India's national anthem sets Guinness world record

- On the eve of India's 78<sup>th</sup> Independence Day, **Grammy-winning composer Ricky Kej unveiled a spectacular new rendition of the Indian National Anthem, featuring an impressive collaboration of artists and a Guinness World Record**. This rendition brings together top classical musicians from both North and South India, including renowned figures like Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Amaan & Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Rahul Sharma. It also features the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from the UK and a choir of 14,000 tribal children from the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences.

## Renowned actor Pankaj Tripathi to be guest of honour at NYC's India Day Parade

- **Actor Pankaj Tripathi says India's message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and its rich cultural heritage will be on display at a mega parade in the American city that will celebrate the country's 78<sup>th</sup> Independence Day**. Tripathi is in New York and will be the guest of honour at the 42<sup>nd</sup> India Day Parade that is being organised by leading diaspora organisation Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE at Madison Avenue in the

heart of Manhattan. Along with Tripathi, actor-politician Manoj Tiwari will be the guest of honour at the parade, while actor Sonakshi Sinha will be the grand marshal and her actor-husband Zaheer Iqbal will be the VIP guest.

## World's oldest person, Spain's Maria Branyas Morera, dies at 117

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- **The world's oldest living person, Spain's Maria Branyas Morera**, who was born in the United States and lived through two world wars, has **died at the age of 117**.

## Ram Charan awarded 'Ambassador of Indian Arts and Culture' at Melbourne's Indian Film Festival

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- **Global star Ram Charan took center stage at Melbourne's Federation Square**, where he had the honor of hoisting the Indian national flag. **This symbolic gesture was part of the vibrant celebrations of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2024**, which runs from August 15-25. At the festival's awards ceremony held at the iconic Palais Theatre, **Ram Charan was honored with the prestigious title of "Ambassador of Indian Arts and Culture" by the Victorian government**. This accolade not only celebrates his contributions to Indian cinema but also highlights his role in promoting Indian arts and culture on the global stage.

## Telegram Founder And CEO Pavel Durov Arrested At Le Bourget Airport, Outside Paris

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- **The founder and CEO of popular messaging application Telegram, Pavel Durov was arrested at Le Bourget Airport, outside Paris. Durov's arrest was made under a warrant related to offenses connected to the Telegram platform.** The investigation was focused on lack of moderators on Telegram that allowed criminal activity. After Durov's arrest, the Russian embassy in France is taking immediate steps to gather more information about the situation.

## Centre appoints B Srinivasan as new NSG director general

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- **The Centre appointed 1992 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer B Srinivasan as the new director general of National Security Guard (NSG).** Srinivasan, a 1992 batch Bihar cadre IPS officer, takes over as NSG director general after Nalin Prabhat's departure to being deputed as Jammu and Kashmir's Special Director General of Police.

## Pakistani Christian Joseph Pereira is 1<sup>st</sup> Goan to get Indian citizenship under CAA

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- **Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant handed over the Indian citizenship certificate to a 78-year-old Pakistani Christian under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, making him the first such person from the coastal state.** Joseph Francis Pereira went from Goa to Pakistan for studies before liberation and subsequently took up a job there. He attained Pakistani citizenship and lived in Karachi before returning to India in 2013.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Delhi becomes India's first city to have highest number of EVs

- **Delhi got a fleet of 320 electric buses, taking the number of such vehicles in the city to 1,970.** Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena flagged off the fleet of new buses. **Delhi has now become the first city in India and the third across the world to have the highest number of electric buses.**

### PM inaugurated the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Agricultural Economists

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024 at National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex, New Delhi.** The triennial conference, organised by the International Association of Agricultural Economists will be held from 02 to 07 August 2024. The ICAE is being held in India after 65 years. **Theme for the Conference: Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems.**

### Over 2.1 lakh Indians renounced Indian citizenship in 2023

- **More than 2.16 lakh Indians renounced their citizenship in 2023.** In 2023, the number of Indians who renounced their citizenship stood at 2,16,219 (2.16 lakh). The corresponding figure for 2022 was 2,25,620 (2.25 lakh); 1,63,370 (1.63 lakh) in 2021; 85,256 in 2020; and 1,44,017 (1.44 lakh) in 2019, according to the data.

### Rajasthan Secures 1<sup>st</sup> Rank Nationwide to Successfully Implement Free Medicine Scheme

- **Rajasthan's free medicine scheme, launched by former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, now ranks first in the country in terms of implementation and operation.** Rajasthan has secured maximum points overall in all parameters including the number of approved medicines in the scheme, available rate contracts, availability of medicines across medical institutions. **Drugs and Vaccines Distribution System (DVDMS) dashboard was created by the Government of India in April 2019 to compile information on the progress of the free medicine scheme operated in multiple states.**

### India Accounts for Nearly Half of the Global Digital Payments: RBI Report

- **India accounts for nearly half of the world's digital payments, holding a 48.5 percent share in global real-time payment volumes, according to a report released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).** The report also underscores India's leadership in global remittances, receiving USD 115.3 billion in 2023. **The digital economy currently makes up about a tenth of India's GDP and is expected to grow to a fifth of GDP by 2026,** based on growth rates observed over the past decade. India's digital revolution is not limited to financial technology (FinTech); it also encompasses the India Stack, which includes biometric identification, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile connectivity, digital lockers, and consent-based data sharing.

### First ever ED raids in UT of Ladakh related to cryptocurrency case

- **In its first ever raids in the Union Territory of Ladakh, the Enforcement Directorate conducted searches as part of its money laundering probe linked to a fake cryptocurrency operator.** The agency raided at least six premises in Leh in Ladakh, Jammu in J-K and Sonapat in Haryana in the case against A R Mir and others. It is alleged that thousands of investors deposited money in a fake currency but did not get any returns or currency back.

### Western Ghats Panel likely to suggest ESA incentives

- **While the Centre's fresh draft notification has set the basic framework on ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) of six Western Ghats states, the expert panel is planning to go beyond that. Several measures, such as favourable loan and insurance regimes, incentivised green building norms and a clear-cut ESA regime, have been envisaged to avoid dual interpretation.** The draft notification strives for a consensus among **six states - Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka and Gujarat,** involved since the issue emerged in 2011. **Headed by former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar, the five-member committee is focusing on creating an eco-sensitive area framework that will gain consensus from all stakeholders on infrastructure issues and the protection of biodiversity in the Western Ghats.**

## India to Have Its First University for Blind Students Soon In Odisha

- **India's first university for blind students will be constructed in Odisha and will provide educational and technical courses.** There are more than 50 lakh blind people in the country and Odisha counts more than 5.21 lakh of them, including 2 lakh youth. Keeping these statistics in mind, it has been decided to open this university. This university will be named after blind poet and 19<sup>th</sup>-century social reformer Bhima Bhoi. There will also be technical schools of excellence in this university.

## Gujarat Celebrates World Lion Day, Lion Population Rises To 674

- **In Gujarat, the state-level celebration of World Lion Day is organized at Sasan Gir in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.** The grand celebration is being organized across 11 districts of Saurashtra, involving over 21 lakh citizens from more than 11,000 educational institutions. The event aims to raise awareness about the conservation of Asiatic lions, which are found only in Gujarat. The lion population has grown significantly from 284 in 1990 to over 674 in 2020.

## Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia Release Commemorative Postage Stamps for the XXXIII Olympics Paris 2024

- Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment and Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister of Communications & Development of North Eastern Region **jointly released commemorative postage stamps celebrating the XXXIII Olympics Paris 2024 in New Delhi.**

## NCERT removes cartoon on coalition politics, says it cast 'India in a negative light'

- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has **removed a political cartoon from the Class 12 Political Science textbook saying that "it shows India in a negative light"**. It is one of the multiple changes introduced and made public by the NCERT in its document that chronicles the latest set of changes in rationalised textbooks.
- **The removed cartoon depicted political leaders from 1990 onwards and posed questions on the survival of their respective governments featured in Chapter 8 — Recent Developments in Indian Politics of Politics in India since Independence.** The cartoon by Ravishankar, and originally published in magazine, had on display V.P. Singh (1990), Chandra Shekhar (1990), P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991), H.D. Deve Gowda (1996), I.K. Gujral (1997) and A.B. Vajpayee (1998) and a serial string of questions on the survival of their coalition governments and democracy.

## Centre approved Rs. 62,936 cr-worth sewerage projects in AMRUT 2.0 scheme

- **The Centre has approved Rs. 62,935.90 crore worth sewerage and septage projects under the AMRUT 2.0 (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) scheme** so far and a massive 29,105 km sewerage network along with 5,791.94 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage treatment capacity is being set up in these projects.
- **The AMRUT 2.0 scheme was launched on October 1, 2021,** for a period of 5 years from the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Centre earlier sanctioned a sum of Rs. 32,456 crore for sewerage and septage projects so far under the AMRUT scheme and as many as 313 sewerage treatment plants (STPs) with a total capacity of 6,232 million litres per day (MLD) have been taken up for construction.

## BIS launches environment department, aims for global impact

- **The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) announced the launch of a new Environment and Ecology Department (EED), aiming to set global benchmarks in sustainability and environmental standardisation.** The national standards body organised a workshop to mark the department's creation, with over 100 experts attending from across the country. BIS plans to host seminars in the coming months to solidify its position as a leader in environmental standardisation. The move comes as India seeks to strengthen its role in global environmental policy and sustainable development efforts.

## A first in state: Elephanta Caves, World Heritage site, adopted by private firm

- A private firm recently adopted the Elephanta Caves, a Unesco World Heritage Site, under the Archaeological Survey of India's 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme was the first monument in the state to have been adopted under the initiative. Queries from pvt firms have been received for adopting monuments like Shaniwarwada and Pataleshwar Caves in Pune, too. "The monument's entry ticket is a Government of India ticket. Thus, the private agency will have no role in ticketing. Nor will it have any role in determining the price of the entry ticket to the adopted monument. The firm will be responsible for the development and refurbishment of the public amenities as a part of its CSR. Maximum firms that have signed MoUs under the scheme would use their CSR funds to develop public amenities at the sites they have adopted."

## Columbia's president resigns after months of turmoil, including protests over the Israel-Hamas war

- Columbia University President Minouche Shafik resigned after a brief, tumultuous tenure that saw the head of the prestigious New York university grapple with protests over the Israel-Hamas war and criticism over how the school handled divisions related to the conflict.
- The school in upper Manhattan was roiled this year by student protests, culminating in scenes of police officers carrying zip ties and riot shields storming a building that had been occupied by pro-Palestinian protesters. Similar protests swept college campuses nationwide.

## Govt approves Metro projects in Bengaluru, Pune, Thane

- The Union Cabinet approved Metro projects for Pune, Thane and Bengaluru proposed by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, with a total cost of over Rs. 30,000 crore. The Bangalore Metro project Phase-3, which covers 31 stations over a length of 44.65 km, was approved by the Cabinet at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The cost would be Rs. 15,611 crore.
- The project is expected to be completed by 2029 and connect the western part of the city to the Metro network. The project includes two corridors, one from JP Nagar 4<sup>th</sup> Phase to Kempapura along Outer Ring Road West and another from Hosahalli to Kadabagere along Magadi Road. Once completed, the project will take Bengaluru's Metro network to 220.20 km.

## Wings EV to unveil 'India's first electric micro-car'

- The Indian automobile industry will soon witness a new category entrant: an 'electric microcar' christened Robin, a two-seater EV that the makers say, would be as maneuverable as a motorbike. Wings EV, an Indore-based firm, founded by a father-son duo will unveil Robin in Bengaluru in April 2025 to boost "personal commuting with zero pollution, less congestion and less road space". Wings EV has conducted user research in six cities across the country and more than 300 test drives in Bengaluru, said Mr. Dandekar, a techie who worked 17 years in Silicon Valley. Later in 2025, Robin will also be launched in Chennai and Hyderabad or Pune, before the company rolls it out nationwide in a new format.

## FSSAI withdraws advisory on removal of claims of 'A1', 'A2' types of milk, milk products

- Food safety regulator FSSAI withdrew its recent advisory wherein food businesses were directed to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products from packaging. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said the advisory has been withdrawn to carry out further consultations with stakeholders. It would imply that food business operators (FBOs) can continue to sell and market their products with claims of 'A1' and "A2" types of milk. A1 and A2 milk differ in their beta-casein protein composition, which varies based on cow breed.
- The FSSAI had asked FBOs to remove claims of 'A1 and A2 from their products. E-commerce platforms were also told to remove these claims from products and websites immediately. The regulator had said that the claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products do not conform with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. After examination, the FSSAI had found that A1 and A2 differentiation is linked to the structure of beta-casein protein in milk. However, current FSSAI regulations do not recognise this differentiation.



## With plantation of 35k trees, Nava Raipur to be '1<sup>st</sup> Peepal city'

- The new capital of Chhattisgarh Nava Raipur will be developed as the 'first Peepal city' in the country with more than 35,000 lush peepal trees to be planted with a vision of 'People for Peepal', on an area spread across 60 km. Inspired from Prime Minister's 'Ek ped Ma ke naam' campaign, the initiative is being taken by Nava Raipur Development Authority and minister for environment O P Choudhary who said that over 1.6 lakh saplings of huge trees will be planted in Nava Raipur as part of 'Peepal for people' campaign.

## After three key cities in Hyderabad, Telangana CM pushes for 'Future City' as fourth city

- If the Congress government in Telangana led by chief minister A Revanth Reddy has its way, the state capital will soon have a fourth city, named as "Future City," the other three being Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Cyberabad. Coming up at Mucherla in Rangareddy district, about 50 km from the main city of Hyderabad towards its southern side, the "Future City" is proposed to be developed as an ultramodern region keeping in view the future needs of the Generation Next.

## India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train likely to be operational by year-end

- India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train is expected to be operational by the end of the year. This will be the third version of the Vande Bharat series, after the chair-car train introduced in 2019 and the first Vande Metro, which is expected to operate in Gujarat.

## Education Ministry defines 'literacy,' 'full literacy'

- In a letter to all States, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has defined 'literacy,' and what it means to achieve 'full literacy,' in the light of the renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme (2022-27), which aims to onboard one crore learners per year above 15 years across all States and union territories.
- In the letter, School Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar has stated that literacy may be understood as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, i.e. to identify, understand, interpret and create along with critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy etc, and full literacy (to be considered equivalent to 100% literacy) will be achieving 95% literacy in a State/UT that may be considered as equivalent to fully literate.
- According to the Census 2011, India faces a significant literacy challenge, with 25.76 crore non-literate individuals in the 15 years and above age group, comprising 9.08 crore males and 16.68 crore females. Despite the progress made under the Saakshar Bharat programme, which certified 7.64 crore individuals as literate between 2009-10 and 2017-18, an estimated 18.12 crore adults in India remain non-literate.

## South India's first adivasi library 'Kaanu' opens in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar

- South India's first adivasi library, 'Kaanu', will be inaugurated at BR Hills in Chamarajanagar district Kaanu' means evergreen forest in Soliga language. It will be the first South Indian Adivasi Knowledge Centre. There is no institution dedicated for research on various aspects related to adivasis in South India.

## South India's first underground AC market opens in Bengaluru

- Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Vijayanagar MLA M Krishnappa inaugurated the Rs. 13-crore 'Palike Bazaar', located next to the Vijayanagar metro station and the bus stand. The market has been designed along the lines of New Delhi's famous Palika Bazaar.
- The Bengaluru market, named after the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Vijayanagar emperor Krishnadevaraya, spans 1,365 square metres (136 metres long and 11 metres wide) and has a total of 79 shops. While the market has central air-conditioning, 31 shops have their separate air-conditioning, too. Each shop gets about nine square metres of space. The project was taken up by Parichita Constructions.

## Government Employees Welcome Unified Pension Scheme, Providing Assured Pension To Them

- Government employees have welcomed Union Cabinet's decision to approve Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), providing assured pensions to them. Union Cabinet approved the Unified Pension Scheme for government

employees. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the **first pillar of the scheme ensures 50 percent of the average basic pay drawn over the last twelve months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.**

- The second pillar guarantees that 60 percent of the pension is assured for the family after the employee's demise. **There will be assured minimum pension at least 10 thousand rupees per month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service. There is Inflation indexation on assured pension, on assured family pension and assured minimum pension.** There will be Dearness Relief based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers as in case of service employees. There will be lump sum payment at superannuation in addition to gratuity. Mr. Vaishnaw noted that about 23 lakh central government employees would benefit from this scheme. It will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- Mr. Vaishnaw said that the **Cabinet also approved the Bio E3-Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment policy to foster high-performance biomanufacturing.** Mr Vaishnaw said that the policy will provide innovation-driven support to research and development and entrepreneurship across thematic sectors.
- The Cabinet also **approved the continuation of three umbrella schemes, which have been merged into a unified central sector scheme named Vigyan Dhara, with an outlay of 10,579 crore rupees.** This scheme comprises three broad components- Science and Technology Institutional and Human Capacity Building, Research and Development, and Innovation, Technology Development, and Deployment.

### Launch of “Bharat Zero Emission Trucking (ZET) Policy Advisory” document

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- **The Bharat ZET Policy Advisory document has been conceived as a dynamic document, outlining a comprehensive set of 30 policy interventions designed to accelerate ZET adoption in India.** These interventions are categorized into five key areas: incentives, regulations, infrastructure, business and financing, and stakeholder-centric initiatives.
- **Each policy intervention identifies a nodal agency responsible for implementation, a list of key stakeholders, its impact on the sector, and the methodology of policy formulation.** These recommendations will be further refined through extensive stakeholder consultations, including detailed cost-benefit and impact analyses by the concerned ministries, departments, and institutions.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### International Day of Friendship 30 July

- **July 30 is the United Nations International Day of Friendship.** An international celebration was first suggested by the World Friendship Crusade. This organisation was founded by Dr Ramón Artemio Bracho and his friends in Puerto Pinasco, Paraguay, in 1958. They wanted to support the power of friendship and its importance in creating a culture of peace.

### World Day against Trafficking in Persons 30 July

- **The World Day against Trafficking in Persons is observed annually on July 30** to raise awareness about human trafficking and to promote and protect the rights of trafficking victims. **The theme for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2024 is “Leave no child behind in the fight against human trafficking”.**

### International Tiger Day

- **Global Tiger Day, often called International Tiger Day, is an annual celebration to raise awareness for tiger conservation, held annually on 29 July.** It was created in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia.
- **The day is a reminder of the collective effort of 13 tiger range countries to double the wild tigers’ population by 2022 through the TX2 global goal.** The TX2 goal is a global commitment to double the world’s wild tigers by 2022. The goal has been set by the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** through the **Global Tiger Initiative, Global Tiger Forum and other critical platforms.** The day was first established in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit.

### World Wide Web Day 2024

- **World Wide Web Day is celebrated annually on August 1, and in 2024, it is being observed with this year’s theme emphasising the transformative role of the web in revolutionising communication, collaboration, and access to knowledge, effectively bringing the world closer together.**
- **World Wide Web Day is a global event that recognises and appreciates the transformative impact of the World Wide Web on various aspects of society.** Its history dates back to late 1989 when British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee proposed the concept of a global information space while being employed at CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research).

### Independence Day of Niger

- **Niger formally achieved its independence from France on August 3, 1960.** Hamani Dori was elected president by the National Assembly on November 9, 1961.

### Hiroshima Day

- **On August 6, 1945, during World War II, a U.S. B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb code-named “Little Boy” on Hiroshima, Japan, resulting in an estimated 140,000 deaths.** Seventy-seven years have elapsed since then and every year the world remembers August 6 as a day of solemn remembrance and reflection. This day stands as a poignant reminder of the cataclysmic impact of nuclear warfare and the urgent call for global unity in pursuit of peace and disarmament.

### National Mountain Climbing Day

- Mountain climbing is a thrilling experience for those who seek adventure. It aids in maintaining optimum physical health. **National Mountain Climbing Day is observed on August 1.** The achievement of Matthews and Madigan aligns with the longstanding tradition of the Adirondack 46ers Club. **Established in 1925, this club honors individuals who have successfully climbed all 46 high peaks of the Adirondack Mountain range.**

### “VIRAASAT”, an exhibition to celebrate 10<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day

- **“VIRAASAT”, a fortnight long exhibition dedicated to celebrating 10<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day began at Handloom Haat in Janpath on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2024. This year, the 10<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> August.** National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd (NHDC) is organising the handloom expo under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India which will conclude on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2024.

- The series “VIRAASAT”- the “Exclusive Handloom Expo” is a continuation of celebrations held during previous year around the National Handloom Day. The event focuses on the glorious tradition of Handloom and Handicrafts. It also provides market connect to the handloom weavers and artisans. Hon’ble Vice President of India was the Chief Guest on the occasion. During the function, **Sant Kabir Awards and National Handloom Awards were conferred** to handloom weavers for their outstanding contribution in handloom sector. **Award Catalogue and Coffee Table Book- “Parampara- Sustainability in Handloom Traditions of India”** will be released by the Hon’ble Vice President of India.
- National Handloom Day was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 7, 2015, in Chennai, marking the centenary of the Swadeshi Movement. The Swadeshi Movement, initiated in 1905, was a crucial part of India’s struggle for independence, advocating for the use of domestic products and the boycott of foreign goods. Handlooms, being a symbol of self-reliance and economic independence, played a pivotal role in this movement.

## International Day of the World’s Indigenous People 9 August

- The International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples is observed on 9 August each year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world’s indigenous population. The theme for the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 2024 is “Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact.”

## Nagasaki Day 2024

- Nagasaki Day, observed annually in August, is a solemn occasion that marks the devastating atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, by the United States during World War II in 1945. Nagasaki Day marks the solemn anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945, during World War II; so, it is observed annually on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

## International Youth Day 12 August

- International Youth Day (IYD) is an awareness day designated by the United Nations that takes place on August 12. The theme of the International Youth Day this year is ‘From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development.’

## National Javelin Day 2024

- August 7 is celebrated as National Javelin Day in India. The Athletics Federation of India, the governing body for athletics in the country, designated this date to honour Neeraj Chopra’s historic gold medal win in the javelin throw at the Tokyo Olympics. On August 7, 2021, Neeraj Chopra made history by throwing the javelin 87.58 meters in the men’s Javelin Throw final at the Tokyo Olympics, securing the gold medal. This victory marked India’s first-ever gold medal in track and field events at the Olympics. With this achievement, Chopra also became the second individual gold medallist from India, following Abhinav Bindra’s gold medal in shooting at the 2008 Beijing Games.

## World Biofuel Day

- Every year on August 10, World Biofuel Day is observed to underline the significance of biofuels as a sustainable source of energy. The day also commemorates the successful operation of an engine on peanut oil by German engineer Sir Rudolf Diesel on August 9, 1893.
- The theme for World Biofuel Day 2024 is “Sustainable Biofuels: Fueling a Greener Future”. The theme emphasizes the importance of developing and using biofuels in a sustainable way to ensure long-term environmental benefits.

## World Steelman Day 11 August

- Acknowledging that the steelpan promotes inclusive societies, sustainable communities and the creative economy and can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being, gender equality and youth empowerment, the General Assembly decided to proclaim 11 August as World Steelman Day. The Assembly invited stakeholders to observe World Steelman Day, through activities aimed at raising awareness of the cultural and historical significance of the steelpan as well as its link to sustainable development.

## World Elephant Day

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- **World Elephant Day is an international annual event on August 12**, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's elephants. **Conceived in 2011 by Canadian filmmakers Patricia Sims and Michael Clark of Canazwest Pictures, and Sivaporn Dardarananda**, Secretary-General of the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation in Thailand, it was officially founded, supported and launched by Patricia Sims and the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation on August 12, 2012.
- **The theme for World Elephant Day 2024, which is celebrated on August 12, is “Personifying prehistoric beauty, theological relevance, and environmental importance”**. The theme aims to highlight the significance of elephants in different cultures and ecosystems, and to promote their conservation and protection.

## World Organ Donation Day 2024

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- **Organ Donation Day is observed on August 13 each year and in 2024 under the slogan, “Be the Reason for Someone’s Smile Today!”** This theme aims to highlight the critical role that organ donation plays in saving lives and to promote awareness about the urgent need for more donors. By focussing on it, the day seeks to inspire individuals to make the life-saving decision to donate their organs and help those in need.

## World Humanitarian Day 19 August

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- **On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers**, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. **Five years later, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day (WHD)**. Each year, WHD focuses on a theme, bringing together partners from across the humanitarian system to advocate for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises, and for the safety and security of aid workers. **The theme of the 2024 World Humanitarian Day global campaign is #ActForHumanity**.

## Indonesian Independence Day

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- **Nusantara, the new capital city of Indonesia, will host Independence Day celebrations on 17 August, as the country looks to a future without Jakarta as its capital**. The country declared independence from the Dutch in 1945 with Jakarta as its seat of government and administrative centre.

## World Sanskrit Day

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- **World Sanskrit Day is an annual event focused around the ancient Indian language Sanskrit** that incorporates lectures about the language and is aimed to promote its revival and maintenance. It is celebrated on Shraavana Poornima, that is the full moon day of the Shraavana month in the Hindu calendar. **August 19 marks the 56<sup>th</sup> National Sanskrit Day in 2024**. The theme for World Sanskrit Day 2024 is “Vedic Heritage and Tradition”.

## World Photography Day

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- Photography captures moments, allowing us to relive them with just a glance. **World Photography Day, celebrated annually on August 19**, honors the art of photography and its powerful ability to evoke emotions. On World Photography Day, photographers and enthusiasts alike come together to raise awareness of photography's impact and celebrate its possibilities. **The theme for World Photography Day 2024 is “An Entire Day”**.

## International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism 21 August

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- **The General Assembly, established the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism to be commemorated annually on 21 August**, in order to honour and support the victims and survivors of terrorism and to promote and protect the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In April 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres published his report on the ‘Progress of the UN system to support Member States in assisting victims of terrorism’ which calls for the ‘enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism’. **The theme for the 2024 International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism is “Voices for Peace: Victims of Terrorism as Peace Advocates and Educators”**.

## Akshay Urja Day

- Every year on August 20, Akshay Urja Day is celebrated to underscore the significance of renewable energy sources and to highlight the strides India has made in advancing the same. Initiated in 2004 by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the observance provides an opportunity to showcase India's commitment to renewable energy transition as it aims at achieving 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel by 2030.

## Women's Equality Day

- Women's Equality Day is celebrated in the United States on August 26 to commemorate the 1920 adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibits the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex. The 2024 Day will focus on the theme, 'Count Her In: Accelerating Gender Equality Through Economic Empowerment'.

## International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

- On the night of 22 to 23 August 1791, in Saint Domingue the Republic of Haiti saw the beginning of the uprising that would play a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. It is against this background that the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is commemorated on 23 August each year. It was first celebrated in a number of countries, in particular in Haiti (23 August 1998) and Gorée Island in Senegal (23 August 1999).
- This International Day is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with the goals of the intercultural project "The Routes of Enslaved Peoples", it should offer an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, the methods and the consequences of this tragedy, and for an analysis of the interactions to which it has given rise between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

## European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism

- The Black Ribbon Day, officially known in the European Union as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism and also referred to as the Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, is an international day of remembrance for victims of totalitarianism regimes, specifically Stalinist, communist, Nazi and fascist regimes. Formally recognised by the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and some other countries, it is observed on 23 August. It symbolises the rejection of "extremism, intolerance and oppression" according to the European Union.

## National Sports Day

- National Sports Day is celebrated annually on 29<sup>th</sup> August, to emphasize the importance of sports and physical activities and to honor Major Dhyan Chand's legacy in Indian hockey. The day commemorates the birth anniversary of greatest field hockey player Major Dhyan Chand.
- Known as "The Hockey Wizard," Dhyan Chand's unparalleled skills and dedication to the sport left an indelible mark on the world of hockey. Over a career that spanned from 1926 to 1948, Dhyan Chand scored more than 1,000 goals, leading India to three consecutive Olympic gold medals in 1928, 1932, and 1936. Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya paid a floral tribute to Major Dhyan Chand at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi.
- The theme of the National Sports Day 2024 is 'Sport for the Promotion and Peaceful and Inclusive Societies'. The theme highlights the importance of sports as a tool to unite individuals and strengthen social bonds.

## International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, 30 August

- The International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances is observed on August 30. Enforced disappearances involve the arrest or abduction of a person by or on behalf of the state, followed by a refusal by the same authorities to acknowledge it. The International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. The date, August 30, was chosen to

commemorate the enforced disappearance of Jonas Burgos, a Filipino human rights activist who was abducted by state forces in 2007.

### National Nutrition Week 2024

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- **National Nutrition Week, celebrated annually in the first week of September,** is an event that raises awareness about the importance of nutrition in our daily lives. **As we observe National Nutrition Week 2024, it's important to reflect on what constitutes a healthy and nutritious diet.** Proper nutrition plays a critical role in maintaining overall health, preventing chronic diseases, and promoting longevity.
- **Celebrated from September 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>,** this initiative focuses on educating the public, particularly women and children, about the benefits of a balanced diet, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle to improve overall health. Read on as we discuss the theme, significance, and history of NNW. **The theme for National Nutrition Week 2024 is “Nutritious Diets for Everyone.”** This theme aligns with the United Nations’ goal for sustainable development, focusing on encouraging diets that meet the nutritional needs of people at all life stages.

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Career  
Launcher

## QUESTIONS

1. Recently, the mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty in \_\_\_\_\_ ‘Moidams’ was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the first cultural property from the Northeast to get the coveted tag.  
(a) Assam (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Tripura (d) Nagaland
2. Recently, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the largest industrial parks among the 12 proposed in the recent Union Budget will be established near Dighi Port in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
3. An Indian contingent is part of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Khaan Quest, a multinational peacekeeping exercise, which commenced in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Mongolia (b) Bhutan (c) Malaysia (d) Kazakhstan
4. Recently, Mandisa Maya has been appointed as first female chief justice of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) South Africa (b) New Zealand (c) Germany (d) Chile
5. Which of the following countries has the largest number of World Heritage sites, along with Italy?  
(a) India (b) Japan (c) China (d) Russia
6. Which of the following countries recently introduced the world’s first green fuel engine with insane power?  
(a) Japan (b) Russia (c) Australia (d) France
7. Kerala’s first zoo-safari park is set to come up at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Kochi (b) Kollam (c) Kannur (d) Kozhikode
8. Which of the following teams recently clinched their maiden Women’s Asia Cup title in Cricket?  
(a) Pakistan (b) Sri Lanka (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
9. Who among the following recently won the bronze in women’s 10m air pistol and gets first medal for India at Paris Olympics?  
(a) Manu Bhaker (b) Deepika Kumari (c) Mahek Nagpal (d) Anjali Thapa
10. The United Nations International Day of Friendship falls on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) July 10 (b) July 17 (c) July 24 (d) July 30
11. What position does Rajasthan hold in terms of the implementation and operation of the free medicine scheme launched by former chief minister Ashok Gehlot?  
(a) Second (b) First (c) Third (d) Fourth
12. Which of the following two countries recently signed the first-ever ‘Cultural Property Agreement’ to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities on the sidelines of the 46<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Committee meeting?  
(a) India and France (b) India and the United States of America  
(c) India and the United Kingdom (d) India and Germany
13. Who has been recently appointed as the new Governor of Rajasthan by President Droupadi Murmu?  
(a) Jishnu Dev Varma (b) Om Prakash Mathur  
(c) Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde (d) Santosh Kumar Gangwar
14. Which of the following African countries parliament has approved a law banning child marriage in a development lauded by activists as a major win for children’s rights?  
(a) Sierra Leone (b) The Gambia  
(c) Morocco (d) Algeria



15. Who was recently declared the winner in Venezuela's presidential election?  
(a) Edmundo González (b) Hugo Chávez  
(c) Nicolás Maduro (d) Juan Guaidó
16. Which of the following banks has introduced MSME Sahaj, a new initiative designed to cater to the working capital requirements of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)?  
(a) State Bank of India (b) Canara Bank  
(c) Union Bank of India (d) Punjab National Bank
17. The Uttar Pradesh government has granted in-principal approval for the 1200 megawatt pumped storage power plant project of THDC India in Sonbhadra district. The source of water supply will be the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Ganga River (b) Gandak River (c) Son River (d) Betwa River
18. Which of the following states is set to have the world's first melanistic tiger safari?  
(a) West Bengal (b) Odisha (c) Jharkhand (d) Madhya Pradesh
19. What is the length of the Chennai Formula Racing Circuit debuting at the Indian Racing Festival?  
(a) 2.5 kilometers (b) 3.5 kilometers (c) 4.5 kilometers (d) 5.5 kilometers
20. Which of the following dates is observed annually as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons?  
(a) January 30 (b) April 30 (c) July 30 (d) October 30
21. Which of the following countries has assumed the Chair of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for the year 2024-25?  
(a) Bangladesh (b) China (c) India (d) Thailand
22. Which of the following cities recently became the first city in India with the highest number of electric buses?  
(a) Mumbai (b) Delhi (c) Bangalore (d) Hyderabad
23. Which of the following countries parliament recently approved a move to euthanise some of the country's four million stray dogs?  
(a) Germany (b) Egypt (c) France (d) Turkey
24. Who among the following preside over the Conference of Governors on August 2 and 3, 2024?  
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar  
(c) President Droupadi Murmu (d) Union Home Minister Amit Shah
25. Which technology does the Paytm Card Soundbox utilize for wireless data transfer?  
(a) Bluetooth (b) Infrared  
(c) Near Field Communication (d) Wi-Fi
26. When is Global Tiger Day celebrated each year?  
(a) July 4 (b) July 14 (c) July 29 (d) August 29
27. Who is the first Indian player to win two Olympic medals in one single Olympic edition?  
(a) Saina Nehwal (b) PV Sindhu  
(c) Abhinav Bindra (d) Manu Bhaker
28. What is the primary purpose of the National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme 2.0 Portal launched by Union Minister for Education?  
(a) To provide free education to underprivileged children  
(b) To promote foreign direct investment in India  
(c) To support young graduates and diploma holders in attaining employability skills  
(d) To offer healthcare services to rural areas

29. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has officially granted permission for the “First Approach to Criticality” of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at \_\_\_\_\_, India’s first indigenous PFBR.  
(a) Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu (b) Tarapur, Maharashtra  
(c) Kaiga, Karnataka (d) Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu
30. Recently, Scientists from the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, have developed an enhanced genome-editing system that can modify \_\_\_\_\_ more precisely and more efficiently than existing CRISPR-based technologies.  
(a) DNA (b) RNA (c) Lipid Profile (d) Electrolyte
31. Which of the following states in India will host the first phase of the multinational air exercise ‘Tarang Shakti 2024’?  
(a) Rajasthan (b) Maharashtra (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
32. Who authored the book titled ‘India@100: Envisioning tomorrow’s Economic Powerhouse’?  
(a) Piyush Goyal (b) Raghuram Rajan  
(c) Prof. K V Subramanian (d) Arvind Subramanian
33. Which of the following is **NOT** a power granted to the Central Government by the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024?  
(a) Regulating the design of aircraft (b) Regulating the sale of aircraft  
(c) Increasing the number of pilots in the country (d) Securing the safety of aircraft operations
34. Which of the following districts is **NOT** included in the Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region (SCR)?  
(a) Lucknow (b) Hardoi (c) Sitapur (d) Kanpur
35. Which of the following organizations is launching an AI-driven pilot in partnership with Axis Bank to combat payment fraud in cross-border payments?  
(a) World Bank  
(b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
(c) Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT)  
(d) European Central Bank (ECB)
36. Who has recently launched India’s first website for passive funds to provide a comprehensive platform for retail investors and empower them to easily access information and understand the Indian passive funds industry?  
(a) National Stock Exchange (b) Bombay Stock Exchange  
(c) GIFT City Stock Exchange (d) Kolkata Stock Exchange
37. Which of the following countries is a world first in taking steps to tackle peanut allergy in babies?  
(a) Australia (b) Fiji (c) France (d) Canada
38. Name the Para swimmer who has become the world’s youngest and fastest female para swimmer to swim solo across the English Channel successfully.  
(a) Jiya Rai (b) Anamika Goswami (c) Mridula Rana (d) Shalini Gupta
39. Who has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)?  
(a) Dr. Manoj Soni (b) Preeti Sudan (c) Vipul Kumar Jain (d) Arvind Saxena
40. Who is the author of the book “Call of the Gir”?  
(a) Deepak Gulreza (b) Parimal Nathwani (c) Mrunal Saha (d) Ankit Raha
41. Who is the first woman to be appointed the Director General of Medical Services?  
(a) Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair (b) Lieutenant General Madhuri Kanitkar  
(c) Lieutenant General Punita Arora (d) Lieutenant General Nirmala Deshmukh

42. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and \_\_\_\_\_ PM Pham Minh Chinh at Hyderabad House jointly inaugurated the Army Software Park at the Tele-Communications University in Nha Trang.  
(a) Thailand (b) Singapore  
(c) Laos (d) Vietnam
43. What is the significance of the recent discovery by Indian radio astronomers?  
(a) They found the closest star to Earth.  
(b) They discovered 34 new giant radio sources (GRSs).  
(c) They identified a new galaxy cluster.  
(d) They detected a new type of black hole.
44. The world's first "hydrogen apartment" is a pioneering move forward to sustainable urban living recently unveiled in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) South Korea (b) Japan (c) Argentina (d) Brazil
45. Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, recently announced that which country has become Meta's largest market for artificial intelligence (AI) usage?  
(a) United States (b) Germany (c) India (d) China
46. According to the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 report published by the World Economic Forum, what is India's rank among 119 countries?  
(a) 25<sup>th</sup> (b) 39<sup>th</sup> (c) 45<sup>th</sup> (d) 50<sup>th</sup>
47. Which of the following regions has been identified as the perfect site for India's inaugural Mars and Moon analogue research station?  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Ladakh (c) Rajasthan (d) Gujarat
48. In a world-first experiment, researchers at the Center for Nanomedicine within the Institute for Basic Science (IBS) and Yonsei University in South Korea have successfully demonstrated the ability to control specific brain regions in \_\_\_\_\_ using magnetic fields.  
(a) Donkey (b) Mice (c) Monkey (d) Snake
49. Who among the following won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol and the mixed team 10m air pistol event alongside Sarabjot Singh?  
(a) Anjum Moudgil (b) Rahi Sarnobat  
(c) Manu Bhaker (d) Heena Sidhu
50. Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale achieved a historic feat in which event at the ongoing Olympic Games?  
(a) Men's 10m air pistol (b) Men's 25m rapid fire pistol  
(c) Men's 50m rifle 3 positions (d) Men's trap shooting
51. Which of the following organizations played a crucial role in fostering the technology transfer of two indigenous healthcare technologies developed under the MeitY-funded project Nanoelectronics Network for Research and Applications (NNetRA)?  
(a) Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)  
(b) Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT)  
(c) Department of Biotechnology (DBT)  
(d) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
52. According to the fifth draft notification, which of the following activities is suggested to be completely banned in the proposed Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) across the Western Ghats?  
(a) Fishing and Quarrying (b) Farming and sand mining  
(c) Mining, quarrying, and sand mining (d) Tourism and sand mining

53. What is the theme of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE)?  
(a) Innovation in Agricultural Practices  
(b) Global Food Security and Sustainability  
(c) Transformation towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems  
(d) Agricultural Economics in the Modern Era
54. The Philippine and Japanese navies held their first joint exercise in the \_\_\_\_\_ as the two US allies boost security ties in the face of China's growing pressure.  
(a) Indian Ocean (b) South China Sea (c) Arctic Ocean (d) Pacific Ocean
55. Which of the following countries is the largest Aluminum producer in the World?  
(a) India (b) China (c) USA (d) Russia
56. Who has been selected as the prime mission pilot for India's participation in the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station?  
(a) Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair (b) Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla  
(c) Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma (d) Commander Sunita Williams
57. What is the newly suggested timeline for the emergence of complex life on Earth, according to the findings in Gabon?  
(a) 1.5 billion years ago (b) 2.1 billion years ago  
(c) 3.6 billion years ago (d) 4.5 billion years ago
58. The Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has joined forces with Corvuss American Academy to establish India's first basketball academy at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Karjat (b) Bharuch (c) Kochi (d) Panvel
59. Who among the following has acquired ownership of the Goa Aces team set to compete in the Indian Racing Festival 2024?  
(a) Sourav Ganguly (b) Arjun Kapoor (c) John Abraham (d) MS Dhoni
60. World Wide Web Day is celebrated annually on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) July 27 (b) July 29 (c) August 1 (d) August 7
61. Who among the following recently launched the e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti, and e-Summon apps in Chandigarh?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Amit Shah  
(c) Shri Gulab Chand Kataria (d) Smt. Droupadi Murmu
62. Which of the following states is **NOT** involved in the consensus on ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) of the Western Ghats as per the Centre's fresh draft notification?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Goa
63. Recently, the Tech Leaders Forum of India (TELFI) was officially launched at the World Education Conference 2024, hosted by the Federation of Economic Development Association (FEDA) in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Dubai (b) Berlin (c) Zurich (d) Stockholm
64. Who among the following won the gold medal in the 100-meter race at the Paris Olympics 2024?  
(a) Sha'Carri Richardson (b) Melissa Jefferson  
(c) Julien Alfred (d) Elaine Thompson-Herah
65. Which of the following countries will host the next edition of the men's Asia Cup cricket tournament in T20 format in 2025?  
(a) Pakistan (b) Sri Lanka (c) India (d) Bangladesh

66. What is the projected growth of India's digital economy as a percentage of GDP by 2026 based on observed growth rates over the past decade?  
(a) 15% (b) 20% (c) 25% (d) 30%
67. Recently, Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy passed away at the age of 84. She was a renowned \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Indian Banker (b) Indian Economist  
(c) Indian Classical Dancer (d) Indian Classical Singer
68. Which of the following countries leader Kim Jong Un unveiled 250 new tactical ballistic missile launchers recently?  
(a) South Korea (b) Vietnam (c) Japan (d) North Korea
69. Every \_\_\_\_\_, Hiroshima Day is observed as a solemn occasion to advocate for peace politics and raise awareness of the catastrophic consequences of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima.  
(a) July 29 (b) August 2 (c) August 4 (d) August 6
70. Who is heading the five-member committee focusing on creating an eco-sensitive area framework for the Western Ghats?  
(a) Former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar  
(b) Former Director General of Forests Ramesh Kumar  
(c) Former Director General of Forests Ashok Kumar  
(d) Former Director General of Forests Vijay Kumar
71. When is National Mountain Climbing Day observed in India?  
(a) June 15 (b) August 1 (c) December 10 (d) April 20
72. Who among the following won the men's singles Olympic final at Roland Garros in Paris?  
(a) Carlos Alcaraz (b) Roger Federer (c) Novak Djokovic (d) Rafael Nadal
73. The Tata Group's RS.27,000-crore semiconductor assembly and testing facility is being set up in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Gujarat (b) Assam (c) Rajasthan (d) Maharashtra
74. Which of the following states will the Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP) span across?  
(a) Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat  
(b) Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh  
(c) Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh  
(d) Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh
75. Who among the following has clinched the Democratic presidential nomination following the endorsement of President Joe Biden?  
(a) Elizabeth Warren (b) Kamala Harris  
(c) Bernie Sanders (d) Cory Booker
76. Who was recently confirmed as the new general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam?  
(a) Nguyen Phu Trong (b) To Lam  
(c) Ka Min Chao (d) Pham Minh Chinh
77. What is the total length of the eight national high-speed road corridor projects approved by the government?  
(a) 936 km (b) 1,200 km  
(c) 800 km (d) 1,000 km
78. Recently, India and Vietnam, two nations with a rich and intertwined maritime history, are joining forces to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Kandla, Gujarat (b) Haldia, West Bengal  
(c) Kochi, Kerala (d) Lothal, Gujarat

79. What is the theme of this year's Bhutan Echoes - Drukylul's Literature Festival?  
(a) "Explore, Engage, Enlighten" (b) "Celebrate, Reflect, Inspire"  
(c) "Enlighten, Evolve, and Evoke" (d) "Create, Connect, and Contemplate"
80. In 2023, despite a decrease in its agriculture exports, which position did India hold in the global ranking of agriculture product exporters?  
(a) 5<sup>th</sup> (b) 6<sup>th</sup> (c) 7<sup>th</sup> (d) 8<sup>th</sup>
81. Who will be the flag bearer for India at the closing ceremony of the ongoing Paris Olympics 2024?  
(a) Manu Bhaker (b) P V Sindhu (c) Manika Batra (d) Vinesh Phogat
82. Name former Indian cricketer who is first Indian player to be appointed as the league ambassador of the South Africa 20 League.  
(a) Dinesh Karthik (b) Yuvraj Singh (c) Virendra Sehwag (d) Akash Chopra
83. The Central Government has declared Adichunchanagiri in Karnataka and Choolannur in Kerala as \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Asian King Vulture Conservation Centre (b) Peacock Sanctuary  
(c) Lion Safari (d) Tiger Reserve
84. Recently, A United States judge ruled that \_\_\_\_\_ violated antitrust laws by using billions of dollars to create an illegal monopoly and become the default search engine worldwide.  
(a) Mozilla (b) Google (c) Facebook (d) Microsoft
85. Which of the following countries is preparing to host the first-ever BIMSTEC Business Summit?  
(a) Myanmar (b) Cambodia (c) India (d) Singapore
86. Recently, India has initiated preparations for the \_\_\_\_\_ new B-Ready index, replacing the Doing Business index.  
(a) International Monetary Fund (b) Asian Development Bank  
(c) World Bank (d) AIIB
87. Recently, The National Commission for Women has inaugurated the Digital Shakti Center to combat cyber crimes against women in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Lucknow (b) Kochi (c) Chennai (d) New Delhi
88. Which of the following countries Prime Minister resigned and left the country in a military helicopter amid ongoing student protests recently?  
(a) Bangladesh (b) Pakistan (c) Vietnam (d) Thailand
89. After the success of the Vande Bharat Express, Indian Railways is set to introduce the country's first \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Vande Bharat Monorail (b) Vande Bharat Bullet Train  
(c) Vande Bharat Metro (d) Vande Bharat Hyperloop
90. The European Union's new artificial intelligence law takes effect on \_\_\_\_\_, significantly changing the landscape of AI regulations.  
(a) July 5 (b) July 15 (c) August 1 (d) August 10
91. Who has been recently conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the highest honour of Fiji by the President of Fiji?  
(a) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
(c) President Droupadi Murmu (d) Nita Ambani
92. Recently, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in collaboration with Airbus has started its first executive training program for the aviation sector in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) New Delhi (b) Chennai (c) Hyderabad (d) Bengaluru

93. India will host its first multinational air exercise \_\_\_\_\_ in Sular, Tamilnadu.  
(a) 'Mitra Shakti 2024' (b) 'Tarang Shakti 2024'  
(c) 'Unity 2024' (d) 'Togetherness 2024'
94. Name the first Indian state in India to buy all crops from farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP).  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Haryana (c) Punjab (d) Bihar
95. Recently, Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud launched the e-DHCR, a new portal for reportable judgments of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Delhi High Court (b) Bombay High Court  
(c) Madhya Pradesh High Court (d) Madras High Court
96. Who has been recently appointed as the head of Bangladesh's interim government?  
(a) Shah Mahmood (b) Mohammad Tayyab  
(c) Muhammad Yunus (d) Yasir Nahad
97. Recently, Indian gold industry has announced the formation of the \_\_\_\_\_, a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) which will be supported by the World Gold Council (WGC).  
(a) INIG (b) IAGES (c) IGIC (d) IANI
98. Recently, Lhamu Pasang Sherpa, the first \_\_\_\_\_ woman to summit Everest, now has a lunar crater named in her honor.  
(a) Nepalese (b) Bhutanese (c) Japanese (d) Malaysian
99. The AMRUT 2.0 scheme was launched for a period of 5 years from the financial year \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 2017-18 to 2021-22 (b) 2019-20 to 2023-24  
(c) 2021-22 to 2025-26 (d) 2023-24 to 2027-28
100. In India, National Handloom Day is celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 27<sup>th</sup> July (b) 29<sup>th</sup> July (c) 4<sup>th</sup> August (d) 7<sup>th</sup> August
101. India is conducting a large-scale strike corps exercise \_\_\_\_\_ in Eastern Ladakh, with all elements including artillery, armoured and infantry troops taking part in the wargames.  
(a) Exercise Trained Tiger (b) Exercise Unique Bharat  
(c) Exercise Parvat Pahaar (d) Exercise Shakti Pahaar
102. Recently, The Finance Bill 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha with an amendment relaxing the recently introduced new capital gains tax on real estate. The Budget had proposed a lower \_\_\_\_\_ rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.  
(a) 7.5% (b) 10.5% (c) 12.5% (d) 15%
103. Who has been recently replaced as the new Prime Minister of Tunisia by Tunisian President Kais Saied?  
(a) Ahmed Hachani (b) Kamel Madouri (c) Rachel Rakhauri (d) Ahmed Bilal
104. Name the national statistics office data portal that has been launched recently.  
(a) e-Sankhyiki (b) e-Warshiki (c) e-Dhan (d) e-Vishakha
105. Name the company which is highest-ranked Indian firm on the Fortune Global 500 list in the 2024 ranking?  
(a) Reliance Industries Ltd (b) Indian Oil  
(c) State Bank of India (d) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
106. India's state-owned mining company Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has commissioned an experimental 20 kW power plant in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Odisha

107. Which of the following celebrated this Independence Day in space by launching an Earth Observation Satellite into orbit?  
(a) Indian Space Research Organisation  
(b) Kalyani Group  
(c) Defence Research and Development Organisation  
(d) Ministry of Science & Technology
108. Which of the following teams recently lifted the CAVA Women’s Volleyball Nations League?  
(a) India (b) Nepal (c) Bangladesh (d) Pakistan
109. Name the Indian wrestler who was disqualified from the 50 kg freestyle wrestling for being overweight by a few grams, after she stormed into the Olympic final.  
(a) Vinesh Phogat (b) Geeta Phogat (c) Babita Phogat (d) Anjali Paharia
110. National Javelin Day in India is celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 1 (b) August 5 (c) August 7 (d) August 9
111. Recently, India’s first round-the-clock grain ATM was opened in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bhubaneswar, Odisha (b) Patna, Bihar  
(c) Shimla, Himachal Pradesh (d) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
112. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, Neeraj Chopra secured a silver medal with a season-best throw of \_\_\_\_\_ meters in the javelin final, adding to his historic gold medal from the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.  
(a) 87.58 (b) 88.34 (c) 89.45 (d) 90.17
113. The Government is scheduled to introduce the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 which seeks to increase the option for nominees per bank account to \_\_\_\_\_, from existing one, among others.  
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Five
114. The International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples is observed on \_\_\_\_\_ each year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world’s indigenous population.  
(a) 3 August (b) 7 August (c) 9 August (d) 13 August
115. Recently, which of the following countries confirmed discovering world’s first large shallow gas field in the South China Sea?  
(a) China (b) Japan (c) Philippines (d) South Korea
116. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India has decided to enhance the limit for tax payments via UPI from ₹1 lakh to \_\_\_\_\_ per transaction.  
(a) ₹2 lakh (b) ₹3 lakh (c) ₹5 lakh (d) ₹7.5 lakh
117. To aid borrowers verify claims of digital lending app’s (DLAs) association with Regulated Entities (RE), the \_\_\_\_\_ will make available a public repository of DLAs on its website.  
(a) UPI (b) NPCI  
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) Ministry of Finance
118. Which of the following is set to launch the groundbreaking “Polaris Dawn” mission on August 26?  
(a) ISRO (b) SpaceX (c) NASA (d) JAXA
119. In Hockey, India defeated which team to claim the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics 2024?  
(a) Spain (b) Germany (c) The Netherlands (d) Pakistan
120. Who among the following recently made history by becoming the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win medals at consecutive Olympics?  
(a) Mridul Saha (b) Anshul Kamble (c) Arshad Nadeem (d) Neeraj Chopra



121. Which of the following places is to host India's first-ever tourist submarine adventure?  
(a) Dwarka (b) Kochi (c) Chennai (d) Paradip
122. Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent returned to India after successfully participating in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Malaysia (b) Indonesia (c) Singapore (d) Australia
123. Which of the following Indian states will launch India's first Skill Census initiative, aimed at identifying and enhancing the skills of the youth to improve their employment prospects?  
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh  
(c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
124. Which of the following countries recently nominated Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic Republic was established in 1979?  
(a) Iraq (b) Kuwait (c) Iran (d) Syria
125. According to the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's central banking institution ranked \_\_\_\_\_ among the world's central banks by total assets.  
(a) 4<sup>th</sup> (b) 7<sup>th</sup> (c) 10<sup>th</sup> (d) 12<sup>th</sup>
126. Which of the following states recently approved RRP Electronics' mega semi-conductor project?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
127. The Scientists are now proposing a new approach to warm up which planet by pumping engineered particles - similar in size to commercially available glitter and made of iron or aluminum – into the atmosphere as aerosols?  
(a) Venus (b) Mercury (c) Mars (d) Jupiter
128. Who among the following were India's flag-bearers at closing ceremony of Olympics 2024?  
(a) Lalit Upadhyay and PV Sindhu (b) Manu Bhaker and PR Sreejesh  
(c) Harmanpreet Singh and Neeraj Chopra (d) Neeraj Chopra and PR Sreejesh
129. Which of the following countries topped the medal tally at Paris Olympics 2024?  
(a) USA (b) China (c) Japan (d) Canada
130. Every year Nagasaki Day is observed on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 5<sup>th</sup> (b) August 6<sup>th</sup> (c) August 9<sup>th</sup> (d) August 12<sup>th</sup>
131. India's first university for blind students will be constructed in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
132. Recently, Syed Refaat Ahmed took the oath as new chief justice of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bangladesh (b) Pakistan (c) Maldives (d) Iran
133. In the latest Skytrax rankings of the best airlines in South Asia for 2024, \_\_\_\_\_ out of the top ten airlines are Indian carriers.  
(a) Two (b) Four (c) Six (d) Eight
134. The \_\_\_\_\_ has recently achieved a significant milestone, with its unique registered investor base surpassing the 10-crore mark for the first time.  
(a) Madras Stock Exchange (b) India International Exchange  
(c) Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) (d) National Stock Exchange (NSE)
135. The lion population has grown significantly from 284 in 1990 to over \_\_\_\_\_ in 2020.  
(a) 440 (b) 532 (c) 674 (d) 888

136. Who among the following was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at the 142<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session in Paris?  
(a) Abhinav Bindra (b) Neeraj Chopra (c) Sakshi Malik (d) Saina Nehwal
137. Recently, Indian President Droupadi Murmu was awarded the Grand Collar of the Order, highest civilian award of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Suriname (b) Timor-Leste (c) New Zealand (d) Canada
138. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released \_\_\_\_\_ high-yielding, climate-resilient, and biofortified crop varieties at the India Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.  
(a) 54 (b) 79 (c) 87 (d) 109
139. International Youth Day (IYD) is an awareness day designated by the United Nations that takes place on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 3<sup>rd</sup> (b) August 6<sup>th</sup> (c) August 8<sup>th</sup> (d) August 12<sup>th</sup>
140. Recently, who has been appointed as Cabinet Secretary of India?  
(a) Vipul Mahajan (b) A. K. Luthra (c) T.V. Somanathan (d) B.K. Mohanthy
141. Recently, Three underwater geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India. Which of the following is not among the three names?  
(a) Kalpataru (b) Ashoka (c) Chandragupta (d) Rana Pratap
142. Recently, In August 2024, India has signed an agreement to introduce the Unified Payments Interface in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Brazil
143. Which of the following countries has emerged in the top position in the global billionaire rankings, featuring 813 billionaires?  
(a) Japan (b) China (c) USA (d) Canada
144. As of August 2024, Colin Huang Zheng is the wealthiest individual in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) South Korea (b) Thailand (c) China (d) Japan
145. Recently, Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory in the current fiscal as it pivots a green pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions from operations by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 2027 (b) 2030 (c) 2033 (d) 2035
146. Recently, Aaranyak an NGO based in Guwahati, launched a mobile application, \_\_\_\_\_ with the aim to reduce the human-elephant conflict in Assam and surrounding states.  
(a) GajApp (b) HaatiApp (c) ElephantApp (d) SaathiApp
147. Recently, ISRO announced a slew of activities ahead of the first celebration to honour the success of the \_\_\_\_\_ mission.  
(a) Chandrayaan-7 (b) Chandrayaan-2 (c) Chandrayaan-3 (d) Chandrayaan-4
148. World Steelpan Day is observed on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 5 August (b) 7 August (c) 11 August (d) 12 August
149. The 2028 Summer Olympics Games is scheduled to be held in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Los Angeles (b) London (c) Ottawa (d) Amsterdam
150. Every year on \_\_\_\_\_, World Biofuel Day is observed to underline the significance of biofuels as a sustainable source of energy.  
(a) August 5 (b) August 8 (c) August 10 (d) August 13

151. World Elephant Day is an international annual event on \_\_\_\_\_, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's elephants.  
(a) August 5 (b) August 9 (c) August 12 (d) August 15
152. Name the Bollywood actor who was recently honoured with the Pardo Alla Carriera award at the Locarno Film Festival 2024.  
(a) Shah Rukh Khan (b) Akshay Kumar  
(c) Ajay Devgan (d) Salman Khan
153. The first-ever Global Women's Kabaddi League will commence in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Haryana (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) West Bengal (d) Odisha
154. Recently, The Maharashtra government declared the geoglyphs and petroglyphs in \_\_\_\_\_ as 'protected monuments' under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1960.  
(a) Beed (b) Ratnagiri (c) Chandrapur (d) Solapur
155. Who among the following will be the chairman of recently constituted Expert Committee to benchmark the statistics regularly disseminated by it against global standards/best practices; study the quality of other regular data?  
(a) V N Kulsrestha (b) Michael Debabrata Patra  
(c) Mahesh Kumar Jain (d) TV Rajeshwar
156. According to a report by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), which of the following countries accounts for the highest share of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) investing in India during the fiscal year 2023-24?  
(a) USA (b) Canada (c) France (d) Germany
157. Recently, Scientists in \_\_\_\_\_ have identified plastic-eating fungi that could offer a glimmer of hope in tackling the problem of millions of tonnes of waste polluting the world's oceans every year.  
(a) Germany (b) Canada (c) Mexico (d) Brazil
158. Recently, Paul Kagame was sworn in for his fourth term after securing over 99 per cent of the vote as the President of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Rwanda (b) Nigeria (c) Liberia (d) Senegal
159. Recently, Indonesian President Joko Widodo held his first Cabinet meeting in the future capital of \_\_\_\_\_, amid miles of construction sites and doubts about the sustainability of the ambitious mega project.  
(a) Tallinn (b) Nusantara (c) Tirana (d) Riga
160. Recently, Scientists from the MACS Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) have reported the discovery of India's first indigenous \_\_\_\_\_ eating bacteria, known as methanotrophs, in rice fields and wetlands in Western India.  
(a) Nitrogen (b) Helium (c) Methane (d) Hydrogen
161. Which of the following institutes topped both the overall and engineering categories in the latest NIRF rankings 2024?  
(a) IIT Bombay (b) IIT Delhi (c) IIT Madras (d) IISc Bengaluru
162. Who among the following Union Ministers recently launched the "Jiyo Parsi" scheme Portal?  
(a) Amit Shah (b) Nirmala Sitharaman  
(c) Kiren Rijiju (d) Rajnath Singh
163. Who has been appointed as the chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament to examine the Waqf (Amendment) Bill?  
(a) Kirtivardhan Singh (b) Kamlesh Paswan  
(c) Jagdambika Pal (d) Aparajita Sarangi

164. Where is the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise ‘Mitra Shakti’ being conducted?  
(a) Pune, India (b) Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka  
(c) Guwahati, India (d) Colombo, Sri Lanka
165. The Ulchi Freedom Shield, annual summertime military drills is scheduled to be held between \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) USA and UK (b) South Korea and USA  
(c) France and Germany (d) USA and Canada
166. India is set to open its first lithium mines in the Katghora region of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Chhattisgarh (b) Jharkhand (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
167. What is the name of the Long Range Glide Bomb that was successfully tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Su-30 MK-I platform?  
(a) DHRUV (b) GAURAV (c) NAG (d) SHAKTI
168. Which of the following recently announced the launch of a new Environment and Ecology Department (EED), aiming to set global benchmarks in sustainability and environmental standardization?  
(a) Coal India Limited  
(b) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India  
(c) Indian Space Research Organisation  
(d) Bureau of Indian Standards
169. What is the title of Ravichandran Ashwin’s book that has recently received critical success?  
(a) The Art of Cricket: A Spinner’s Tale  
(b) Winning the Streets: A Cricket Legend’s Journey  
(c) I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story  
(d) Cricket Chronicles: Ashwin’s Path to Success
170. Organ Donation Day is observed on \_\_\_\_\_ each year.  
(a) August 10 (b) August 13 (c) August 17 (d) August 19
171. Who has been recently made the brand ambassador of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)?  
(a) Aman Sehrawat (b) Neeraj Chopra (c) Manu Bhaker (d) Vinesh Phogat
172. India is gearing up to test-fire its newly developed air defence system \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) SAFAR 3 (b) UNO INDIA 5 (c) SAMAR 2 (d) BHARAT 5
173. Recently, 3 new sites have been granted the Ramsar site tag, taking the tally of such wetlands of International Importance to \_\_\_\_\_ in India.  
(a) 64 (b) 73 (c) 85 (d) 96
174. Which of the following union ministries recently launched a digital initiative “National Pest Surveillance System”?  
(a) Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry  
(b) Chemicals and Fertilizers Ministry  
(c) Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry  
(d) Environment, Forests and Climate Change Ministry
175. Which of the following countries constitutional Court dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin for appointing to his cabinet a former lawyer who served jail time?  
(a) Thailand (b) Laos (c) Vietnam (d) Singapore
176. What was the main factor contributing to Norway’s sovereign wealth fund’s first-half profit of 1.48 trillion kroner (\$138 billion)?  
(a) Returns on fixed income investments (b) Returns on technology stocks  
(c) Gains from unlisted real estate (d) Government contributions to the fund

177. What is the significance of the Phase 3 clinical trial initiated by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Panacea Biotec Limited?  
(a) It is the first phase of clinical trials for a dengue vaccine in India.  
(b) It is the first ever phase 3 clinical trials for a dengue vaccine in India.  
(c) It is a global trial conducted by the National Institutes of Health, U.S.  
(d) It is a trial focused on developing a vaccine for all mosquito-borne diseases.
178. Which of the following organizations rejected Vinesh Phogat’s appeal against her disqualification from the Paris Olympics?  
(a) International Olympic Committee (IOC) (b) International Wrestling Federation (IWF)  
(c) Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) (d) Indian Olympic Association (IOA)
179. Who was recently appointed as India’s next ambassador to the United Nations in New York?  
(a) Ruchira Kamboj (b) T. S. Tirumurti (c) Parvathaneni Harish (d) Syed Akbaruddin
180. Who was appointed as the new Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for a period of two years?  
(a) Sanjay Kumar Mishra (b) Rahul Navin (c) Suresh Kumar (d) Anil Deshmukh
181. Who among the following recently launched the ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Science?  
(a) Shri Amit Shah (b) Shri Amitabh Kant  
(c) Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan (d) Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud
182. Who has recently become Thailand’s youngest-ever prime minister?  
(a) Srettha Thavisin (b) Prayuth Chan-ocha  
(c) Paetongtarn Shinawatra (d) Yingluck Shinawatra
183. Which of the following Indian companies has been included in the 2024 Forbes Cloud 100 list for the third consecutive time?  
(a) PayPal (b) Razorpay (c) Stripe (d) Square
184. Which of the following two countries have recently collaborated to establish a new water technology center at IIT Madras?  
(a) India and the United States (b) India and Israel  
(c) India and Germany (d) India and Japan
185. The Chief Justice of India and Seychelles is to inaugurate International Conference on Law and Technology in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Goa
186. Which of the following countries is **NOT** included in Google’s rollout of the ‘AI Overviews’ feature?  
(a) India (b) United Kingdom (c) Japan (d) Australia
187. Which of the following is **NOT** a main component of space weather as described in the research from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)?  
(a) Solar wind (b) Coronal mass ejections  
(c) Solar flares (d) Earth’s magnetic field
188. Who was the first player to earn 50 tour-level wins in the 2024 tennis season?  
(a) Karen Khachanov (b) Jannik Sinner  
(c) Casper Ruud (d) Alexander Zverev
189. Which of the following companies is partnering with FIFA to become a sponsor for the 2026 World Cup?  
(a) JPMorgan Chase (b) Citibank (c) Bank of America (d) Wells Fargo

190. World Humanitarian Day is celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 15 August (b) 17 August (c) 19 August (d) 23 August
191. Who among the following became the first person in Assam to receive Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)?  
(a) Ramesh Patel (b) Dulon Das (c) Suresh Kumar (d) Rajiv Singh
192. Which of the following awards was approved by President Droupadi Murmu for the Indian Coast Guard personnel on the eve of Independence Day?  
(a) Kirti Chakra (b) Samudra Prahari Chakra  
(c) Tatrakshak Medal (d) Nauka Rakshak Medal
193. Which of the following high courts launched a first-of-its-kind online court called “24×7 ON Courts — Open and Networked Courts”?  
(a) Kerala High Court (b) Madras High Court (c) Delhi High Court (d) Rajasthan High Court
194. Name the portal unveiled by the centre, a satellite-based geospatial platform that will provide farmers with information on the weather, groundwater levels, soil health, reservoir storage levels etc and include data like satellite images.  
(a) Krishi-Decision Support System (b) Krishi-Darshan Support Sahayak  
(c) Krishi-Darshan Support System (d) Krishi-Decision Support Sahayak Portal
195. Which of the following countries House of Representatives adopted a landmark transitional justice Bill that would formally end a post-civil war peace process, nearly 18 years after an accord was signed?  
(a) Yemen (b) Nepal (c) Bhutan (d) Myanmar
196. Which of the following airports became the first in India to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emission Airport status under the Airport Council International’s (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program?  
(a) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (b) Indira Gandhi International Airport  
(c) Kempegowda International Airport (d) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport
197. Which of the following cities is Wings EV planning to unveil the Robin electric microcar in April 2025?  
(a) Hyderabad (b) Indore (c) Bengaluru (d) Chennai
198. Which of the following union ministries has withdrawn its contribution to the prestigious UNESCO Kalinga Prize for Popularisation of Science, UNESCO’s oldest award?  
(a) Science and Technology Ministry (b) Education Ministry  
(c) Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare Ministry (d) Information and Broadcasting Ministry
199. The largest-ever contingent of \_\_\_\_\_ players will take part in the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games this year.  
(a) 43 (b) 62 (c) 77 (d) 84
200. Name the Grammy winner whose rendition of India’s national anthem recently sets Guinness world record.  
(a) Olivia Rodrigo (b) Samara Joy (c) Ricky Kej (d) Bonnie Raitt
201. Which of the following states officially launched and roll out the ‘Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana’, which seeks to provide ₹1500 per month to over one crore women in the state?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Madhya Pradesh  
(c) Gujarat (d) Uttar Pradesh
202. Recently, Indian sweet ‘Magji’ from \_\_\_\_\_ has been honoured with the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.  
(a) Punjab’s Amritsar district (b) Odisha’s Dhenkanal district  
(c) Jharkhand’s Ranchi district (d) Madhya Pradesh’s Ratlam district

203. Name the first military satellite launched by UK Space Command which is designed to provide surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for the country's armed forces.  
(a) Tyche (b) Nolan (c) Psyche (d) Alex
204. Who is the youngest billionaire of 2024, according to Forbes' World's Youngest Billionaires list?  
(a) Mark Mateschitz (b) Clemente Del Vecchio  
(c) Livia Voigt (d) Jonathan Kwok
205. What percentage of the total bank deposits in India belongs to women account holders, according to the latest "Men and Women" report by the National Statistical Office (NSO)?  
(a) 16.5% (b) 20.8% (c) 30% (d) 36.4%
206. What is the significance of Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru receiving Airports Council International's (ACI) Level 5 accreditation?  
(a) It became the first airport in India to receive this accreditation.  
(b) It became the first airport in Asia to receive this accreditation.  
(c) It achieved a 100% reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.  
(d) It achieved the target of zero carbon emissions by 2030.
207. What unique blooming characteristic is associated with Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*)?  
(a) Blooms once every 6 years (b) Blooms every 12 years  
(c) Blooms every 15 year (d) Blooms once every 20 years
208. Who among the following will be the flag bearers for the Indian contingent at the opening ceremony of the Paris Paralympics?  
(a) Sumit Antil and Bhagyashri Jadhav (b) Sumit Antil and Neeraj Chopra  
(c) Bhagyashri Jadhav and Devendra Jhajharia (d) Neeraj Chopra and Devendra Jhajharia
209. Which monument in Maharashtra was the first to be adopted under the Archaeological Survey of India's 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme by a private firm?  
(a) Shaniwarwada (b) Pataleshwar Caves  
(c) Elephanta Caves (d) Ajanta Caves
210. From which colonial power did Indonesia declare its independence in 1945?  
(a) British (b) Spanish (c) Dutch (d) French
211. India's first city council to convert waste into CNG is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Kakinada (b) Panvel (c) Puttur (d) Bharuch
212. The Track 1.5 conference, which is to discuss emerging threats in online radicalisation and to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by terrorists is to be held between \_\_\_\_\_ and external affairs ministry.  
(a) European Union (b) USA (c) African Union (d) BRICS
213. Which of the following companies has proposed 'Project Aspire' to invest Rs. 1.7 lakh crore over the next five years in petrochemicals, green energy, gasoline marketing and oil refining businesses?  
(a) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (b) Indian Oil Corporation Ltd  
(c) Oil India Ltd (d) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd
214. Which of the following Chinese provinces is **NOT** mentioned as a site for the newly approved nuclear reactors?  
(a) Jiangsu (b) Shandong (c) Sichuan (d) Zhejiang
215. Where was the 90-foot-tall Hanuman statue, named 'Statue of Union,' inaugurated recently?  
(a) New York City, New York (b) Sugar Land, Texas  
(c) Los Angeles, California (d) Chicago, Illinois

216. What is the name of India's first-ever international mountain biking (MTB) team launched by HASTPA?  
(a) Everest Riders (b) Indian Cycling Elite  
(c) Scott Racing Team (d) Himalayan Wheels
217. Who won the Best Actor award at the 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards for his performance in the Kannada film Kantara?  
(a) Rishabh Shetty (b) Yash (c) Rajkumar Rao (d) Ram Charan Teja
218. Recently, Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army have successfully executed a "first of its kind" operation involving the precise para-drop of the Aarogya Maitri Health Cube at an altitude of approximately \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 11,800 feet (b) 13,000 feet (c) 15,000 feet (d) 18,500 feet
219. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the \_\_\_\_\_ Forest Department have joined hands to tag horseshoe crabs along the State's coast to understand the population and habitat utilisation for its conservation and management.  
(a) Odisha (b) West Bengal (c) Gujarat (d) Goa
220. In 2024, the 56<sup>th</sup> National Sanskrit Day was celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 6 (b) August 12 (c) August 19 (d) August 23
221. Which of the following villages has become the first 'Solar Village' in Maharashtra, inaugurated by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde recently?  
(a) Pen (b) Manyachiwadi (c) Raigad (d) Khinchiyawadi
222. In September 2024, the first ever Joint Commanders Conference is to be held in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Lucknow (b) Bhopal (c) Varanasi (d) Pune
223. Recently, who among the following released the centenary commemorative coin of Dr.Kalaignar M.Karunanidhi in Chennai?  
(a) Rajnath Singh (b) Amit Shah (c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Narendra Modi
224. According to the Election Commission, after delimitation in 2022 the total seats in Jammu & Kashmir assembly rose to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 78 seats (b) 94 seats (c) 105 seats (d) 114 seats
225. Recently, Germany joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea becoming the \_\_\_\_\_ nation in a group that helps police the heavily fortified border with North Korea and has committed to defend the South in the event of a war.  
(a) 7<sup>th</sup> (b) 11<sup>th</sup> (c) 18<sup>th</sup> (d) 23<sup>rd</sup>
226. The British International Investment Plc is investing \$35 million in DP World's infrastructure build at the \_\_\_\_\_ located where the Congo River meets the Atlantic Ocean.  
(a) Port of Banana (b) Port of Guava (c) Port of Orange (d) Port of Coconut
227. Recently, BPCL unveiled India's first Biofuel Blend HFHSD Bunker at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Mumbai Port (b) Haldia Port (c) Paradip Port (d) Vardhman Port
228. According to NASA, the Harvest Moon (full moon) will appear in 2024 on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) September 17 (b) October 19 (c) December 21 (d) November 15
229. Who among the following was the guest of honour at the 42<sup>nd</sup> India Day Parade that is being organised by leading diaspora organisation Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE at Madison Avenue in the heart of Manhattan in USA?  
(a) Pankaj Tripathi (b) Nawazzuddin Siddhiqui  
(c) Shahrukh Khan (d) Rajkumar Rao



230. World Photography Day is celebrated annually on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 9 (b) August 14 (c) August 19 (d) August 23
231. Who among the following recently launched Portal for Online monitoring of Projects – Thermal (PROMPT) in New Delhi?  
(a) Shri Manohar Lal (b) Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan  
(c) Shri Parahlad Patel (d) Shri Amit Shah
232. Recently, the third Voice of Global South Summit was hosted by India on the virtual format that was joined by \_\_\_\_\_ nations across the globe.  
(a) 76 (b) 99 (c) 107 (d) 123
233. Which significant event led to the declaration of 23<sup>rd</sup> August as National Space Day (NSpD) in India?  
(a) The launch of Chandrayaan-2 Mission  
(b) The successful Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan)  
(c) The soft landing of the Vikram Lander and deployment of the Pragyaan Rover on the Moon  
(d) The launch of India's first satellite, Aryabhata
234. What is the proposed name of the fourth city that the Congress government in Telangana plans to develop in the state capital?  
(a) Techno City (b) Future City (c) Neo City (d) NextGen City
235. Which of the following Indian states have entered into medium-term power sales agreements with Nepal's Electricity Authority?  
(a) Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar and West Bengal  
(c) Haryana and Bihar (d) Punjab and Rajasthan
236. What is the primary purpose of the Black Hole Finder app developed by the Dutch Black Hole Consortium?  
(a) To provide a virtual tour of the Milky Way galaxy  
(b) To aid astronomers in identifying new black holes  
(c) To simulate black hole formation in real-time  
(d) To teach users about the life cycle of stars
237. Where will the rescheduled Women's T20 World Cup be held in 2024?  
(a) Mumbai and Delhi (b) Colombo and Kandy (c) Dubai and Sharjah (d) Melbourne and Sydney
238. Who did Jannik Sinner defeat to win the Cincinnati Open final?  
(a) Novak Djokovic (b) Frances Tiafoe (c) Carlos Alcaraz (d) Daniil Medvedev
239. The General Assembly, established the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism to be commemorated annually on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 15 August (b) 18 August (c) 21 August (d) 25 August
240. Who was the world's oldest living person who recently passed away at the age of 117?  
(a) Jeanne Calment (b) Maria Branyas Morera  
(c) Kane Tanaka (d) Susannah Mushatt Jones
241. Which of the following Indian Universities is establishing India's first Constitution Museum to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India?  
(a) Babu Banarasidas University (b) Amity University  
(c) O.P. Jindal Global University (d) Galgotia University
242. Name the transcontinental country which formally applied to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies recently.  
(a) Azerbaijan (b) Turkey (c) Georgia (d) Kazakhstan

243. Which of the following countries parliament recently voted to ratify the Rome Statute, allowing the country to join the International Criminal Court (ICC)?  
(a) Yemen (b) Ukraine (c) Iran (d) Malaysia
244. Name the world's strongest food brand in Brand Finance's Global Food & Drinks Report 2024 owing to the company's impressive Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91 out of 100.  
(a) Amul (b) Mother Dairy (c) Pepsico (d) Coca Cola
245. Who has been ranked as the top central banker globally for the second consecutive year by the US-based Global Finance magazine?  
(a) Ajay Banga (b) Tiff Macklem (c) Shaktikanta Das (d) David Gossiet
246. Recently, India's second home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in \_\_\_\_\_ started operating at its full capacity.  
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
247. Name the mission that will launch India's first reusable hybrid rocket that combines the advantages of both liquid and solid fuel propellant systems to improve efficiency and reduce operation costs.  
(a) Mission Kahkaha -2024 (b) Mission Antriksh -2024  
(c) Mission Rhumi -2024 (d) Mission Bhumi -2024
248. Who among the following recently won the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award?  
(a) Nathan Gregory (b) Alex Freight (c) Phil Foden (d) Edward Gough
249. Recently, Katarzyna Niewiadoma of \_\_\_\_\_ won her first Women's Tour de France title.  
(a) Poland (b) Switzerland (c) Ireland (d) Iceland
250. Every year on \_\_\_\_\_ Akshay Urja Day is celebrated to underscore the significance of renewable energy sources  
(a) August 12 (b) August 14 (c) August 17 (d) August 20
251. Which of the following states in India has become the first to formalize rules allowing the digital issuance of summons and warrants?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Karnataka (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
252. Who was the last Indian Prime Minister to visit Poland before Narendra Modi's planned visit in 2024?  
(a) Jawaharlal Nehru (b) Indira Gandhi  
(c) Morarji Desai (d) Rajiv Gandhi
253. Who among the following presented the first National Creator Awards in India?  
(a) Ashwini Vaishnaw (b) Amitabh Bachchan  
(c) Narendra Modi (d) Prakash Javadekar
254. Which is the first country to formally accept the credentials of a Taliban-appointed ambassador?  
(a) United States (b) China  
(c) Russia (d) India
255. Which of the following banks has introduced 'avni', a savings product specifically for women, aiming to increase current and savings account deposits?  
(a) IDFC First Bank (b) ICICI Bank  
(c) HDFC Bank (d) Bandhan Bank
256. Where will Dabur India Limited's new consumer goods manufacturing facility to be set up?  
(a) SITCOM Bengaluru, Karnataka (b) DRCOT Kochi, Kerala  
(c) SIPCOT Tindivanam, Tamil Nadu (d) VPRAS Gulbarga, Karnataka

257. From which sources will the time for the Indian Railways' master clock system be sourced?  
(a) GPS and National Physical Laboratories (NPL)  
(b) Internet and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)  
(c) NAVIC and National Physical Laboratories (NPL)  
(d) Atomic clocks and Global Positioning System (GPS)
258. Which of the following celestial bodies was recently found to have carbon dioxide ice on its surface, as observed by the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)?  
(a) Titan (b) Europa (c) Ariel (d) Callisto
259. Which cricket venue is set to host its first-ever Women's Test match between India and England in 2026?  
(a) The Oval (b) Old Trafford (c) Lord's (d) Edgbaston
260. Who was recently awarded 'Ambassador of Indian Arts and Culture' at Melbourne's Indian Film Festival?  
(a) Ajay Devgan (b) Shahrukh Khan  
(c) Amiabh Bachchan (d) Ram Charan
261. Recently, Food safety regulator FSSAI withdrew its recent advisory wherein food businesses were directed to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of \_\_\_\_\_ from packaging.  
(a) Mustard Oil (b) Agricultural Products  
(c) Milk and Milk Products (d) Meat and Non Veg Product
262. Which of the following Asian teams recently bagged the silver medal at the Maruhaba Cup, a team event in the Asian Surfing Championships 2024 in Maldives?  
(a) Sri Lanka (b) India (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
263. Recently, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released an e-magazine, \_\_\_\_\_, on the occasion of India's first National Space Day.  
(a) Aagey Badho (b) Utkrishta Bharat (c) Bharat Ek Lakshya (d) Sapno ki Udaan
264. Recently, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented four Bharat Health Initiatives for Sahyog Hita and Maitri—BHISHM Cubes—to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Yemen (b) Palestine (c) Ukraine (d) Mauritius
265. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the 'Lakhpati Didi Sammelan'.  
(a) Maharashtra's Jalgaon (b) Bihar's Samastipur  
(c) Jharkhand's Jamshedpur (d) Gujarat's Rajkot
266. Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the zonal office of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Chhattisgarh's \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bilaspur (b) Dantewada (c) Raipur (d) Ambikapur
267. Which of the following countries recently announced three new Deputy Prime Ministers, the latest high-level political changes during a turbulent period for the ruling Communist Party?  
(a) Thailand (b) Vietnam (c) Singapore (d) China
268. Recently, RBI Governor addressed Global Conference on DPI And Emerging Technologies in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Mumbai (b) Bengaluru (c) Pune (d) Hyderabad
269. What is the name of the satellite launched by NASA to track methane emissions?  
(a) Challenger-II (b) Strict-II (c) Tanager-1 (d) Manager III
270. India's first female athlete to compete in Paris Paralympics Women's 1500m Race is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Rakshitha Raju (b) Bipula Garg  
(c) Nikitha G Gangopadhyay (d) Madhumalti Gupta

271. Which of the following states has recently decided to include around one crore women, aged between 21 to 60 years, under the Subhadra Yojana?  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Haryana (c) Odisha (d) Madhya Pradesh
272. Recently, Canada's Mining Firm Unearths 2,492 Carat Diamond in \_\_\_\_\_, the World's Second Largest.  
(a) Uganda (b) Botswana (c) Rwanda (d) Eritrea
273. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has defined 'literacy,' and what it means to achieve 'full literacy,' in the light of the renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 2020-25 (b) 2021-26 (c) 2022-27 (d) 2024-29
274. South Asia's tallest Skydeck will be build in \_\_\_\_\_, which will offer a 360-degree view of the city.  
(a) Mumbai (b) Dhaka (c) Bengaluru (d) Colombo
275. Which of the following countries has the largest source of FDI into India?  
(a) Mauritius (b) Singapore (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
276. The ISRO has finalised a humanoid skull model, technology of which will form the basis for the demonstration of the uncrewed Gaganyaan mission. The uncrewed mission will see the space agency fly \_\_\_\_\_, the robot, into space.  
(a) Sommitra (b) Vyommitra (c) Vayu (d) Pawan
277. Who among the following recently won the Dutch Grand Prix 2024?  
(a) Charles Leclerc (b) Max Verstappen (c) Carlos Sainz Jr. (d) Lando Norris
278. Women's Equality Day is celebrated in the United States on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) August 19 (b) August 21 (c) August 26 (d) August 29
279. The first Vande Metro is expected to operate in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Goa (d) Sikkim
280. Which of the following has recently launched a six-month global strategic and response plan to stop the deadly outbreak of Mpox?  
(a) WHO (b) UNICEF (c) UNGA (d) Amnesty International
281. Which of the following Indian states has recommended to the Centre that forest clearance be granted to a Cairn Oil and Gas proposal for oil and gas exploration in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of the Hollongapar Gibbon wildlife sanctuary?  
(a) Assam (b) West Bengal  
(c) Nagaland (d) Arunachal Pradesh
282. Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to create \_\_\_\_\_ new districts in the union territory of Ladakh.  
(a) Three (b) Five (c) Seven (d) Nine
283. Which of the following Indian states is to host the inaugural World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES)?  
(a) Goa (b) Karnataka (c) Assam (d) West Bengal
284. Recently, South India's first underground AC market 'Palike Bazaar' opened in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Kochi (c) Chennai (d) Guwahati
285. Name the annual military exercises which was held between Indonesia and the United States.  
(a) Hitachi (b) Gibraltar Pioneer (c) Super Garuda Shield (d) Super Hercules

286. About what percentage of gig delivery workers in India earn less than ₹2,50,000 per annum, citing a recent survey by Borzo (formerly WeFast), a global same-day delivery company?  
(a) 34% (b) 54% (c) 78% (d) 86%
287. Which of the following places will be developed as the ‘first Peepal city’ in India with more than 35,000 lush peepal trees to be planted with a vision of ‘People for Peepal’?  
(a) Navi Mumbai (b) Nava Raipur  
(c) Naya Bhubaneswar (d) Naya Bhopal
288. As the private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) landscape in India continues to grow, which IIM announced to set up country’s first global centre on PE-VC?  
(a) IIM Indore (b) IIM Bangalore (c) IIM Kolkata (d) IIM Lucknow
289. Who among the following Indian recently won the final of Asian Championships U-15 title at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in Chengdu, China?  
(a) Sheena Roy (b) Mridula Dutt (c) Bhairavi Anand (d) Tanvi Patri
290. The South India’s first adivasi library, ‘Kaanu’ inaugurated in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Andhra Pradesh
291. Which of the following states approved the central government’s Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), becoming the first state to do so?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Goa (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
292. Which of the following states has recently launched the “Aarambh” programme, aimed at enhancing early childhood education?  
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Rajasthan (d) Madhya Pradesh
293. What is full form of UPS, the recently launched pension scheme of Union Government?  
(a) Unified Payment System (b) Union Pension Scheme  
(c) Unified Pension Scheme (d) Union Bharat Yojana
294. Which of the following countries recently gave millions of workers the legal right to “disconnect” allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours contact from employers?  
(a) New Zealand (b) Australia (c) USA (d) Canada
295. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to launch \_\_\_\_\_ nationwide soon as it expects this platform to transform the lending sector in India.  
(a) Bharat Lending Interface (BLI) (b) Bharat Lending Union (BLU)  
(c) Unified Lending Interface (ULI) (d) Unified Lending Payment Interface (ULPI)
296. The National Quantum Mission is set to take off with multiple initiatives including setting up a grant for start-ups that need funding ranging \_\_\_\_\_, launching India’s first quantum computer achieving computation of 6 qubits.  
(a) ₹5-20 crore (b) ₹10-50 crore  
(c) ₹20-70 crore (d) ₹30-90 crore
297. A hybrid lab model, a Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers will be established at IIT-BHU coupled with an on-field living lab at the \_\_\_\_\_ River.  
(a) Varuna (b) Yamuna (c) Ganga (d) Rapti
298. Who among the following secured first position at the Lausanne Diamond League 2024 competition in Switzerland?  
(a) Arshad Nadeem (b) Peters Anderson  
(c) Alex Drekson (d) Neeraj Chopra

299. To prevent death of wild animals and ensure safety of humans taking the roads criss-crossing Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (GNPWLS), the habitat of Asiatic lions, the Gujarat forest department has installed high-tech speed monitoring system along a \_\_\_\_\_ stretch of state highway 26.  
(a) 0.5-km (b) 1-km (c) 2-km (d) 5-km
300. The \_\_\_\_\_ ZET Policy Advisory document has been conceived as a dynamic document, outlining a comprehensive set of 30 policy interventions designed to accelerate ZET adoption in India.  
(a) India (b) Hindustan (c) Country (d) Bharat
301. Who among the following chaired the first meeting of the National Task Force (NTF) on the safety of medical professionals?  
(a) Union Minister of Health JP Nadda and Union Cabinet Secretary  
(b) Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah  
(c) Union Cabinet Secretary TVS Somanathan and Home Secretary Govind Mohan  
(d) Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Home Secretary Govind Mohan
302. Which of the following BJP members was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Assam in the recent by-polls?  
(a) Manan Kumar Mishra (b) Kiran Chaudhary  
(c) Mission Ranjan Dass (d) Rajeev Bhattacharjee
303. What is the main objective of the Himachal Pradesh State Assembly's recent amendment to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006?  
(a) To reduce the age of marriage for women  
(b) To increase the age of marriage for women  
(c) To decrease the legal marriage age for men  
(d) To equalize the marriage age of men and women
304. Who was awarded the Nishan-e-Imtiaz for their "unwavering commitment" in promoting close cooperation between the militaries of Pakistan and China?  
(a) General Li Qiaoming (b) General Asim Munir  
(c) Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif (d) President Xi Jinping
305. Which of the following organizations is responsible for organizing the International Mother Teresa Awards?  
(a) United Nations  
(b) World Health Organization  
(c) All-India Minority and Weaker Sections Council  
(d) Indian National Congress
306. What is the main reason for lowering the weight assigned to food items in the updated Consumer Price Index (CPI)?  
(a) To increase inflation rates  
(b) To reflect changing consumption patterns  
(c) To reduce the importance of food in the economy  
(d) To align with global standards
307. The exhibition Sci560 was recently inaugurated in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bhopal (b) Pune (c) Bengaluru (d) Chennai
308. Which of the following countries ranks at the top of the Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2024, with the highest transparency?  
(a) United States (b) United Kingdom (c) India (d) Canada
309. Who was recently elected unopposed as the new Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 2024?  
(a) Greg Barclay (b) Sourav Ganguly (c) Jay Shah (d) Shashank Manohar

310. Who has been recently appointed as the new director general of National Security Guard (NSG)?  
(a) B Srinivasan (b) N B Nair (c) Pawan Rajnayar (d) Vipul Kumar Pushpendra
311. Which of the following countries will host the Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI) Policing Development and Coordination Hub?  
(a) Tonga (b) Australia (c) Papua New Guinea (d) Fiji
312. What significant event is featured in one of the stories of the first comic book released by the Indian Air Force recently?  
(a) The 1999 Battle of Kargil (b) The 1971 epic Battle of Boyra  
(c) The 1965 Indo-Pak war of Gujranwala (d) The Siachen Glacier conflict
313. Who was recently appointed as the first female government spokesperson in Iran?  
(a) Shina Ansari (b) Fatemeh Mohajerani (c) Masoumeh Ebtekar (d) Zahra Shojaei
314. Which of the following is **NOT** among one of the locations for the new Greenfield industrial smart cities approved under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme?  
(a) Khurpia, Uttarakhand (b) Gaya, Bihar  
(c) Rajpura-Patiala, Punjab (d) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
315. What is the maximum grant amount that can be provided towards the equity portion of a state government in the northeastern region for a hydropower project under the approved scheme?  
(a) ₹500 crore (b) ₹600 crore (c) ₹750 crore (d) ₹1,000 crore
316. Which of the following organizations has been recognized by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a Self-Regulatory Organisation in the FinTech Sector (SRO-FT)?  
(a) National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)  
(b) Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE)  
(c) Digital Lenders Association of India (DLAI)  
(d) Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)
317. Jezero is a crater on \_\_\_\_\_ in the Syrtis Major quadrangle, about 45.0 km (28.0 mi) in diameter.  
(a) Venus (b) Mars (c) Jupiter (d) Saturn
318. In which year was the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund established, and with what corpus amount?  
(a) 2018, 50,000 crore rupees (b) 2020, one lakh crore rupees  
(c) 2022, 75,000 crore rupees (d) 2019, 90,000 crore rupees
319. Which of the following features is **NOT** included in the Bharat BillPay for Business platform?  
(a) Automated reminders (b) Purchase order (PO) creation  
(c) Peer-to-peer (P2P) money transfers (d) Online dispute resolution
320. National Sports Day is celebrated on which date in India to honor Major Dhyan Chand's legacy?  
(a) August 15 (b) August 29  
(c) October 2 (d) January 26
321. Which of the following UK universities has become the first to receive approval from the Indian government to establish a comprehensive campus in the country?  
(a) University of Oxford (b) University of Cambridge  
(c) University of Southampton (d) University of Edinburgh
322. Which of the following private sector banks has recently launched Smile Pay, a first-of-its-kind facial recognition-based payment system in India?  
(a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank  
(c) Axis Bank (d) Federal Bank

323. Who among the following topped the 2024 Hurun India Rich List with a wealth of Rs. 11.6 lakh crore?  
(a) Mukesh Ambani (b) Shiv Nadar  
(c) Gautam Adani (d) Cyrus S Poonawalla
324. Recently, WHO has declared Dhulikhel Municipality of Kavrepalanchok district as \_\_\_\_\_ first ‘healthy city’ and second healthiest city in Asia.  
(a) Thailand’s (b) Sri Lanka’s (c) Nepal’s (d) Bhutan’s
325. What is the name of the first indigenously built Pollution Control Vessel launched by Goa Shipyard Limited for the Indian Coast Guard?  
(a) Samudra Rakshak (b) Samudra Prahari  
(c) Samudra Pratap (d) Samudra Nidhi
326. Union Ministry for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare will set up \_\_\_\_\_ in about 1 acre of land as a part of the campaign Plant4Mother campaign.  
(a) “Matritwa Van” (b) “Bharat Van” (c) “Matri Van” (d) “Maa Van”
327. Which of the following states are covered by the projects approved recently by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) under the Ministry of Railways?  
(a) Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh  
(b) Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh  
(c) Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana  
(d) Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand
328. What is the primary purpose of the She-Box portal launched by the Indian government?  
(a) To provide financial assistance to women  
(b) To monitor workplace attendance of women  
(c) To register and monitor complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace  
(d) To offer job opportunities for women
329. Who among the following recently launched India’s first indigenous Monkeypox RT-PCR Kit?  
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Jagat Prakash Nadda  
(c) Nara Chandrababu Naidu (d) Ashwini Vaishnav
330. Which of the following countries has been recently crowned as the new champion of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) U-20 Championship football tournament?  
(a) Bangladesh (b) India (c) Pakistan (d) Nepal
331. Who among the following became the first Indian woman to win two gold medals at the Paralympics games?  
(a) Mona Agarwal (b) Deepa Malik (c) Avani Lekhara (d) Pooja Khanna
332. Which of the following countries recently signed a MoU with India for Strengthening Co-operation in the Field of Tourism?  
(a) Malaysia (b) Indonesia (c) Mauritius (d) Maldives
333. What does the digital integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS enable for pensioners?  
(a) Automatic approval of pension applications  
(b) Real-time tracking of pension applications  
(c) Online submission of pension forms  
(d) Increased pension amounts
334. Which of the following countries has the lowest fertility rate in World?  
(a) Japan (b) South Korea  
(c) Canada (d) Bhutan



335. Which of the following companies has become the first Indian company to surpass Rs. 10 lakh crore in annual revenue?  
(a) Tata Consultancy Services (b) Bharti Airtel  
(c) HDFC Bank (d) Reliance Industries Limited
336. During the WHO Regional Committee for Africa, how many African countries pledged support to the WHO Investment Round?  
(a) 10 (b) 12 (c) 14 (d) 16
337. Who among the following Union Ministers launched the 25 Challenges under the ‘Create in India Challenge – Season 1’ in August 2024?  
(a) Nitin Gadkari (b) Piyush Goel (c) Ashwini Vaishnaw (d) JP Nadda
338. Recently, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port in the \_\_\_\_\_ district of Maharashtra.  
(a) Palghar (b) Navi Mumbai (c) Nagaon (d) Jaigad
339. Recently, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the \_\_\_\_\_ Programme on the occasion of National Sports Day in New Delhi.  
(a) TRY (b) RESET (c) UNION (d) MELODY
340. Which of the following countries has recently received the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award in Sustainable Tourism for Livelihood Recovery Project (STLRP)?  
(a) Nepal (b) Bhutan (c) Singapore (d) Malaysia
341. Who among the following recently became the first Indian to win a Paralympic medal in a track event?  
(a) Deepa Raj (b) Kritika Lal (c) Mohika Gupta (d) Preethi Pal
342. Who among the following was recently felicitated by INS Satavahana for her groundbreaking achievement in athletics?  
(a) P. V. Sindhu (b) Saina Nehwal  
(c) Jyothi Yarraji (d) Mary Kom
343. Which of the following states is to get India’s First Solar-powered Expressway by 2026?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Maharashtra  
(c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Haryana
344. Which of the following families has been recognized as the most valuable family business in India according to the Barclays Private Clients Hurun India report?  
(a) Adani family (b) Bajaj family  
(c) Ambani family (d) Birla family
345. Which of the following companies has been recently accorded with the prestigious status of ‘Navratna’ company by the Government of India?  
(a) Bridge & Roof Company (India) Limited  
(b) Bharat Dynamics Limited  
(c) NHPC Limited  
(d) Balmer Lawrie & Co. Limited.
346. Which of the following platforms serves as the base for the Common Single Window Portal for pensioners and elderly citizens?  
(a) e-HRMS (b) Bhavishya  
(c) Pensioners’ Portal (d) Integrated Pensioners’ Portal

347. Which of the following union ministries collaborated with The Naturalist School to offer the Certified Naturalist course, the first of its kind in India at the Bannerghatta Nature Camp?
- (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
  - (b) Ministry of Tourism
  - (c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
  - (d) Ministry of Education
348. Which of the following International airports is developing a “Smart Travel” project that involves rolling out biometric authentication artificial intelligence (AI) into all security checkpoints at the airport by 2025?
- (a) Kempegowda Airport
  - (b) Atlanta Airport
  - (c) Heathrow Airport
  - (d) Abu Dhabi Airport
349. Which of the following two countries navies recently participated in Exercise Maritime Cooperation (XMC) 2024?
- (a) China and Japan
  - (b) Singapore and South Korea
  - (c) Singapore and China
  - (d) India and Singapore
350. Which of the following IIT’s researchers are using robots to understand how animals find their way back home from unfamiliar places, a skill called homing?
- (a) IIT Bombay
  - (b) IIT Madras
  - (c) IIT Delhi
  - (d) IIT Kanpur



Career  
Launcher

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a The mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty in Assam — ‘Moidams’ — was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the first cultural property from the Northeast to get the coveted tag.
2. a Union Minister of Commerce and Industries Piyush Goyal said that the largest industrial parks among the 12 proposed in the recent Union Budget will be established near Dighi Port in Raigad district of Maharashtra, and investors are enthusiastic about the project.
3. a An Indian contingent is part of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Khaan Quest, a multinational peacekeeping exercise, which commenced in Mongolia on July 27 with an opening ceremony, held at the Five Hills Training Area in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar.
4. a South Africa appointed its first female chief justice. President Cyril Ramaphosa named Mandisa Maya, the current deputy chief justice, as the country’s new most senior judge.
5. c During the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, India, the Beijing Central Axis and Badain Jaran Desert were included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List, raising the total number of World Heritage sites in China to 59, which makes it one of the countries with the largest number of World Heritage sites, along with Italy.
6. a Japan introduces the world’s first green fuel engine with insane power.
7. c Kerala’s first zoo-safari park is set to come up at Taliparamba, Kannur district.
8. b Led by Harshitha Samarawickrama and skipper Chamari Athapaththu’s brisk half-centuries, Sri Lanka stunned seven-time champions India to clinch their maiden Asia Cup title with a comprehensive eight-wicket win in Dambulla.
9. a Manu Bhaker wins bronze in women’s 10m air pistol; gets first medal for India at Paris Olympics
10. d July 30 is the United Nations International Day of Friendship.
11. b Rajasthan’s free medicine scheme, which was launched by former chief minister Ashok Gehlot, ranks first in the country in terms of its implementation and operation. This ranking is based on various parameters such as the number of approved medicines, available rate contracts, and the availability of medicines across medical institutions.
12. b The Government of India and the Government of the United States of America signed the first-ever ‘Cultural Property Agreement’ on July 26, 2024. This agreement was signed on the sidelines of the 46<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Committee meeting held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The agreement aims to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA.
13. c Former Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde has been appointed as the Governor of Rajasthan by President Droupadi Murmu. This appointment is part of a series of new gubernatorial assignments made recently.
14. a Sierra Leone’s parliament has approved a law banning child marriage in a development lauded by activists as a major win for children’s rights.
15. c Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner of the presidential election in Venezuela. The National Electoral Council announced that Maduro secured 51% of the vote, overcoming his main opponent, Edmundo González, who garnered 44%.
16. a The State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced MSME Sahaj, a new initiative designed to cater to the working capital requirements of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
17. c The source of water supply will be the Son River.
18. b Odisha is set to have the world’s first melanistic tiger safari in close vicinity of Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district by year-end.
19. b The Chennai Formula Racing Circuit, which will make its debut at the Indian Racing Festival, is 3.5 kilometers long. This length was mentioned as part of the collaboration between Racing Promotions Pvt. Ltd (RPPL) and the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT).

20. c The World Day against Trafficking in Persons is observed annually on July 30. This day aims to raise awareness about human trafficking and to promote and protect the rights of trafficking victims. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 to highlight the plight of human trafficking victims and to encourage actions to address this global issue.
21. c India has assumed the Chair of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for the year 2024-25. Rajendra Singh, a member of the National Disaster Management Authority, represents India in this role, taking over from China during a ceremony held in Bangkok, Thailand.
22. b Delhi has recently added a fleet of 320 electric buses, bringing the total number to 1,970. This makes it the first city in India to have the highest number of electric buses, significantly contributing to its efforts in reducing pollution.
23. d Turkey's parliament approved a move to euthanise some of the country's four million stray dogs, a measure opponents say could lead to a vast animal cull.
24. c The conference will be presided over by President Droupadi Murmu, making it her first time leading this event. The other attendees include various high-ranking officials, but the role of presiding is specifically held by the President.
25. c NFC, which stands for Near Field Communication, is a technology that enables wireless data transfer between devices that are in close proximity to each other, typically within a few centimeters. The Paytm NFC Card Soundbox uses this technology to allow contactless card payments by tapping a debit or credit card.
26. c Global Tiger Day, also known as International Tiger Day, is celebrated annually on July 29. This day aims to raise awareness about tiger conservation efforts worldwide.
27. d Manu Bhaker made history by becoming the first Indian player to win two Olympic medals in one single Olympic edition. She achieved this feat at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.
28. c The National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme 2.0 Portal is designed to help young graduates and diploma holders gain employability skills through apprenticeships in various sectors such as IT/ITes, manufacturing, and automobile. This initiative aligns with the Government's focus on skilling and employability of youth.
29. a The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has officially granted permission for the "First Approach to Criticality" of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, India's first indigenous PFBR.
30. a Scientists from the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, have developed an enhanced genome-editing system that can modify DNA more precisely and more efficiently than existing CRISPR-based technologies.
31. c The first phase of the multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' will be held in Sular, Tamil Nadu from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August. Tamil Nadu is chosen to host this phase of the exercise to showcase India's defense capabilities and provide a platform for participating militaries to foster interoperability.
32. c The book 'India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse' was authored by Prof. K V Subramanian. It was launched by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal in New Delhi.
33. c The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 empowers the Central Government to make rules regarding the design, manufacture, maintenance, possession, use, operation, sale, export or import of any aircraft, and for securing the safety of aircraft operations. It does not specifically grant powers related to increasing the number of pilots in the country.
34. d The Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region (SCR) includes the districts of Lucknow, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Raebareilly, and Barabanki. Kanpur is not listed among the districts included in the SCR, making it the correct answer. The SCR aims to encompass a specific area of 27,826 sq. km from these six districts to facilitate targeted development.
35. c SWIFT, based in Belgium, is the organization launching an AI-driven pilot in partnership with Axis Bank. This initiative aims to combat payment fraud in cross-border payments. SWIFT specializes in financial transactions and provides a secure and standardized way for financial institutions to send and receive information about financial transactions.
36. a The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched India's first website for passive funds to provide a comprehensive platform for retail investors and empower them to easily access information and understand the Indian passive funds industry.
37. a Australia's world-first peanut allergy treatment for infants.

- 38. a** Para swimmer Jiya Rai has become the world’s youngest and fastest female para swimmer to swim solo across the English Channel successfully.
- 39. b** Former Union Health Secretary and 1983-batch IAS officer Preeti Sudan has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). She will take charge on 1<sup>st</sup> August, succeeding Dr. Manoj Soni.
- 40. b** Parimal Nathwani, a member of the Rajya Sabha, is the author of the book “Call of the Gir”. The book is appreciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for its focus on the Gir landscapes and Asiatic lions, highlighting the urgency of conservation efforts.
- 41. a** Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair has achieved the milestone of being the first woman appointed as the Director General of Medical Services. She has a notable career in the Armed Forces Medical Services and has held several pioneering positions, making significant contributions to military medical services.
- 42. d** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnam PM Pham Minh Chinh at Hyderabad House jointly inaugurated the Army Software Park at the Tele-Communications University in Nha Trang, Vietnam.
- 43. b** The discovery of 34 new giant radio sources (GRSs) by Indian radio astronomers is significant as these GRSs are among the largest objects in the universe. This finding contributes to our understanding of the universe’s structure and the distribution of such massive objects.
- 44. a** The world’s first “hydrogen apartment” is a pioneering move forward to sustainable urban living.
- 45. c** During the second quarter earnings call, Mark Zuckerberg stated that India is now their largest market for AI usage.
- 46. b** The Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024, published by the World Economic Forum, ranks India at 39<sup>th</sup> among 119 countries. This ranking reflects various factors influencing travel and tourism development, such as infrastructure, safety, and prioritization of tourism.
- 47. b** Scientists from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have identified Ladakh as the perfect site for India’s inaugural Mars and Moon analogue research station. This decision is based on previous research and the team’s field experience in the region.
- 48. b** In a world-first experiment, researchers at the Center for Nanomedicine within the Institute for Basic Science (IBS) and Yonsei University in South Korea have successfully demonstrated the ability to control specific brain regions in mice using magnetic fields.
- 49. c** Manu Bhaker clinched the women’s 10m air pistol bronze and also won the mixed team 10m air pistol bronze alongside Sarabjot Singh. She is known for her remarkable shooting skills and has consistently performed well in international competitions.
- 50. c** Swapnil Kusale kept his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help India claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event. This specific event involves shooting from three different positions: kneeling, prone, and standing.
- 51. b** The Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) at IIT Delhi was instrumental in fostering the technology transfer of the healthcare technologies developed under the MeitY-funded project NNetRA. The FITT team facilitated the process, ensuring the technologies reached industry partners for further development and application.
- 52. c** The draft notification suggests a complete ban on mining, quarrying, and sand mining, with existing mines to be phased out within five years from the date of issue of the final notification or on the expiry of the existing mining lease, whichever is earlier.
- 53. c** The theme for the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) is “Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems.” This theme reflects the conference’s focus on addressing the critical challenges and opportunities in transforming agricultural and food systems towards sustainability, ensuring food security, and promoting environmental conservation.
- 54. b** The Philippine and Japanese navies held their first joint exercise in the South China Sea, as the two US allies boost security ties in the face of China’s growing pressure.
- 55. b** India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Aluminium Producer in the World. China leads as the top producer, accounting for nearly 60% of the world’s smelter capacity. Its neighbor India is the second-largest producer, making only a tenth of China’s output.

- 56. b** The National Mission Assignment Board has recommended Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla as the prime mission pilot for the Axiom-4 mission, which is the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station. Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair has been designated as the backup mission pilot.
- 57. b** The team of scientists reported that environmental conditions suitable for animal life existed as far back as 2.1 billion years ago, suggesting that complex life on Earth may have emerged 1.5 billion years earlier than previously believed. This finding is based on the discovery of fossil-like formations in Gabon.
- 58. a** The Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has joined forces with Corvuss American Academy to establish India's first basketball academy at Karjat, near Mumbai.
- 59. c** John Abraham has acquired ownership of the Goa Aces by JA Racing, a team that will compete in the Indian Racing Festival 2024. The other notable team owners mentioned are Sourav Ganguly and Arjun Kapoor, but they are not associated with the Goa Aces team.
- 60. c** World Wide Web Day is celebrated annually on August 1, and in 2024, it is being observed with this year's theme emphasising the transformative role of the web in revolutionising communication, collaboration, and access to knowledge, effectively bringing the world closer together.
- 61. b** The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, launched the e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti, and e-Summon apps for the three new criminal laws in Chandigarh.
- 62. c** The draft notification involves six states: Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, and Gujarat. Andhra Pradesh is not mentioned as one of the states involved in this consensus.
- 63. a** The Tech Leaders Forum of India (TELFI) was officially launched at the World Education Conference 2024, hosted by the Federation of Economic Development Association (FEDA) at Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University in Dubai.
- 64. c** Julien Alfred of Saint Lucia won the gold medal in the 100-meter race at the Paris Olympics by clocking 10.72 seconds.
- 65. c** According to the Asian Cricket Council, India will host the men's Asia Cup cricket tournament in T20 format in 2025. This tournament will serve as a precursor to the T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in India in 2026.
- 66. b** The report indicates that India's digital economy currently makes up about a tenth (10%) of the country's GDP and is expected to grow to a fifth (20%) of GDP by 2026. This projection is based on the growth rates observed over the past decade, showing significant expansion in the digital sector.
- 67. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended condolences to the family and admirers of Indian classical dancer Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy, who passed away at the age of 84.
- 68. d** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the delivery of a new tactical ballistic missile system to troops. Kim also gave a speech at the ceremonial event in Pyongyang where 250 new tactical ballistic missile launchers were unveiled.
- 69. d** Every August 6, Hiroshima Day is observed as a solemn occasion to advocate for peace politics and raise awareness of the catastrophic consequences of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima.
- 70. a** The committee focusing on creating an eco-sensitive area framework for the Western Ghats is headed by former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar.
- 71. b** National Mountain Climbing Day is observed on August 1. This day is dedicated to celebrating the adventure and physical benefits associated with mountain climbing. The other dates listed are not related to this observance.
- 72. c** Novak Djokovic defeated Carlos Alcaraz in the men's singles Olympic final at Roland Garros in Paris with a score of 7-6(3), 7-6(2). Djokovic's win in this final added an Olympic gold medal to his impressive list of achievements, which includes 24 Grand Slam singles titles.
- 73. b** The facility in Assam is specifically being established for semiconductor assembly and testing. It is not intended for manufacturing, research and development, or design and prototyping.
- 74. b** The GNHCP will span across Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh, as stated in the provided information.

- 75. b** Kamala Harris has secured the Democratic presidential nomination after receiving enough votes from Democratic delegates and running unopposed in the virtual roll call. President Joe Biden endorsed her and stepped aside from the race, which contributed to her unopposed status.
- 76. b** To Lam was confirmed as the new general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam following the death of his predecessor, Nguyen Phu Trong. To Lam's appointment marks a significant shift in Vietnamese politics as he assumes the country's most powerful political role.
- 77. a** The total length of the eight national high-speed road corridor projects approved by the government is 936 km, as mentioned in the first bullet point.
- 78. d** India and Vietnam, two nations with a rich and intertwined maritime history, are joining forces to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat.
- 79. c** "Enlighten, Evolve, and Evoke" theme for this year's festival, which takes place in the scenic valleys of Bhutan, is centered around these three concepts.
- 80. d** India maintained its position as the world's eighth-largest exporter of agriculture products in 2023, even though its exports dropped from \$55 billion in 2022 to \$51 billion. This was due to a decline in exports by seven of the top ten exporting nations.
- 81. a** India's two-time Olympic medalist and star shooter Manu Bhaker will be the flag bearer for the country at the closing ceremony of the ongoing Paris Olympics 2024.
- 82. a** Former India wicketkeeper Batter Dinesh Karthik was appointed the league ambassador of the SA20 League. Karthik, who is the first Indian player to be associated with the South African tournament, retired from all forms of cricket earlier this year.
- 83. b** The Central Government has declared Adichunchanagiri in Karnataka and Choolannur in Kerala as Peacock Sanctuary.
- 84. b** A United States judge ruled that Google violated antitrust laws by using billions of dollars to create an illegal monopoly and become the default search engine worldwide.
- 85. c** India is preparing to host the first-ever BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi from August 6-8, marking a significant step towards fostering greater regional collaboration in the Bay of Bengal region.
- 86. c** India has initiated preparations for the World Bank's new B-Ready index, replacing the Doing Business index.
- 87. d** The National Commission for Women has inaugurated the Digital Shakti Center to combat cyber crimes against women in New Delhi.
- 88. a** As violence gripped Bangladesh amid ongoing student protests, Sheikh Hasina resigned as the country's Prime Minister and left the country in a military helicopter.
- 89. c** After the success of the Vande Bharat Express, Indian Railways is set to introduce the country's first Vande Bharat Metro.
- 90. c** The European Union's new artificial intelligence law takes effect on August 1, significantly changing the landscape of AI regulations.
- 91. c** President Droupadi Murmu who is on a two-day visit to Fiji, was conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the highest honour of Fiji by the President of Fiji.
- 92. a** Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in collaboration with Airbus has started its first executive training program for the aviation sector in New Delhi.
- 93. b** India will host its first multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' in Sular, Tamilnadu.
- 94. b** Haryana becomes first state in India to buy all crops from farmers at MSP.
- 95. a** Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud launched the e-DHCR, a new portal for reportable judgments of the Delhi High Court.

96. c Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has been appointed as the head of Bangladesh's interim government.
97. b The Indian gold industry has announced the formation of the Indian Association for Gold (Excellence and Standards IAGES), a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) which will be supported by the World Gold Council (WGC).
98. a Lhamu Pasang Sherpa, the first Nepalese woman to summit Everest, now has a lunar crater named in her honor.
99. c The AMRUT 2.0 scheme was launched on October 1, 2021, for a period of 5 years from the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26.
100. d The 10<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day will be celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
101. c India is conducting a large-scale strike corps exercise in Eastern Ladakh, with all elements including artillery, armoured and infantry troops taking part in the wargames. Indian Army chief to review Strike Corps Ex Parvat Prahaar in Ladakh.
102. c The Budget had proposed a lower 12.5% rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.
103. b Tunisian President Kais Saied sacked his Prime Minister Ahmed Hachani without explanation and replaced him with Social Affairs Minister Kamel Madouri.
104. a In line with this mission, e-Sankhyiki, a national statistics office data portal, has been launched.
105. a Oil-to-telecom-to-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd continues to be the highest-ranked Indian firm on the Fortune Global 500 list, jumping two places to be ranked at No. 86 in the 2024 ranking.
106. a India's state-owned mining company Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has commissioned an experimental 20 kW power plant in the Manuguru region, Bhadradri Kothagudem district, Telangana.
107. a The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO will celebrate this Independence Day in space by launching an Earth Observation Satellite into orbit.
108. a India lifted the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League final after beating hosts Nepal 3-2 at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu.
109. a In an unfortunate event for India at the Paris Olympics, wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified from the 50 kg freestyle wrestling for being overweight by a few grams, after she stormed into the Olympic final.
110. c August 7 is celebrated as National Javelin Day in India.
111. a India's first round-the-clock grain ATM was opened at Mancheswar in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
112. c At the 2024 Paris Olympics, Neeraj secured a silver medal with a season-best throw of 89.45 meters in the javelin final, adding to his historic gold medal from the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
113. d The Government is scheduled to introduce the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 which seeks to increase the option for nominees per bank account to four, from existing one, among others.
114. c The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on 9 August each year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population.
115. a China confirms discovering world's first large shallow gas field.
116. c The Reserve Bank of India has decided to enhance the limit for tax payments via UPI from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per transaction.
117. c To aid borrowers verify claims of digital lending app's (DLAs) association with Regulated Entities (RE), the RBI will make available a public repository of DLAs on its website.
118. b SpaceX is set to launch the groundbreaking Polaris Dawn mission on August 26, marking a significant milestone in private spaceflight.



119. a India gave PR Sreejesh the perfect farewell as they defeated Spain 2-1 to claim the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics 2024.
120. d Neeraj Chopra made history by becoming the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win medals at consecutive Olympics.
121. a Dwarka to host India's first-ever tourist submarine adventure.
122. a The Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent returned to India after successfully participating in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in Malaysia's Kuantan.
123. b Andhra Pradesh Education Minister Nara Lokesh said that the state would launch India's first Skill Census initiative, aimed at identifying and enhancing the skills of the youth to improve their employment prospects.
124. c Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has nominated one woman, Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second Iranian woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic Republic was established in 1979.
125. d According to the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's central banking institution, ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among the world's central banks by total assets.
126. a Maharashtra approves RRP Electronics' mega semi-conductor project.
127. c Scientists are now proposing a new approach to warm up Earth's planetary neighbor by pumping engineered particles -similar in size to commercially available glitter and made of iron or aluminum – into the atmosphere as aerosols to trap escaping heat and scatter sunlight toward the Martian surface.
128. b Olympics 2024: Manu Bhaker, Sreejesh to be India's flag-bearers at closing ceremony.
129. a The United States pipped China for top spot in the battle of medals as Paris prepared to bring the curtain down on one of the most successful Olympic Games in history.
130. c Nagasaki Day marks the solemn anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945, during World War II; so, it is observed annually on August 9<sup>th</sup>.
131. b India's first university for blind students will be constructed in Odisha and will provide educational and technical courses.
132. a Syed Refaat Ahmed took the oath as Bangladesh's new chief justice, succeeding Obaidul Hassan, who resigned along with five other Appellate Division judges.
133. c In the latest Skytrax rankings of the best airlines in South Asia for 2024, it's notable that six out of the top ten airlines are Indian carriers.
134. d The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has achieved a significant milestone, with its unique registered investor base surpassing the 10-crore mark for the first time.
135. c The lion population has grown significantly from 284 in 1990 to over 674 in 2020.
136. a India's first individual Olympic gold medalist, Abhinav Bindra, was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at the 142<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session in Paris.
137. b Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed immense pride over President Droupadi Murmu's recognition with the Grand Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste, the highest civilian award of the nation.
138. d Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient, and biofortified crop varieties at the India Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.
139. d International Youth Day (IYD) is an awareness day designated by the United Nations that takes place on August 12.
140. c The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of T.V. Somanathan as Cabinet Secretary.
141. d Three underwater geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India. Named after the rulers of the Mauryan dynasty are the Ashoka seamount and the Chandragupta ridge. Kalpataru ridge is the third

structure for which the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) have recently awarded names originally proposed by India.

- 142. b** India and Maldives have signed an agreement to introduce the Unified Payments Interface in the archipelago nation, which will have a “very positive” impact on its tourism sector.
- 143. c** The United States emerged in the top position in the global billionaire rankings, featuring 813 billionaires.
- 144. c** As of August 2024, Huang's net worth is estimated at \$46.9 billion, making him the wealthiest individual in China, surpassing Zhong Shanshan, China bottled-water king.
- 145. d** Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory in the current fiscal as it pivots a green pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions from operations by 2035.
- 146. b** Aaranyak, an NGO based in Guwahati, launched a mobile application, HaatiApp, with the aim to reduce the human-elephant conflict in Assam and surrounding states.
- 147. c** Isro announced a slew of activities ahead of the first celebration to honour the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission that helped India go down in history as the first country to land on the south pole of the moon.
- 148. c** Acknowledging that the steelpan promotes inclusive societies, sustainable communities and the creative economy and can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being, gender equality and youth empowerment, the General Assembly decided to proclaim 11 August as World Steelpan Day.
- 149. a** In the Closing Ceremony, the Olympic Flame will also be extinguished and the Olympic Flag will be transferred to the Los Angeles 2028 Organising Committee, marking the transition to the next Summer Games.
- 150. c** Every year on August 10, World Biofuel Day is observed to underline the significance of biofuels as a sustainable source of energy.
- 151. c** World Elephant Day is an international annual event on August 12, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's elephants.
- 152. a** Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan was honoured with the Pardo Alla Carriera award at the Locarno Film Festival 2024.
- 153. a** The first-ever Global Women's Kabaddi League will commence next month in Haryana.
- 154. b** The Maharashtra government declared the geoglyphs and petroglyphs in Ratnagiri as 'protected monuments' under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1960.
- 155. b** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra to benchmark the statistics regularly disseminated by it against global standards/best practices; study the quality of other regular data, where such benchmarks do not exist (e.g., sectors of national priority); and provide guidance on the scope for any further data refinement.
- 156. a** The United States accounts for the highest share of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) investing in India during the fiscal year 2023-24, highlights a report by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- 157. a** Scientists in Germany have identified plastic-eating fungi that could offer a glimmer of hope in tackling the problem of millions of tonnes of waste polluting the world's oceans every year.
- 158. a** Rwanda's President Paul Kagame was sworn in for his fourth term after securing over 99 per cent of the vote.
- 159. b** Indonesian President Joko Widodo held his first Cabinet meeting in the future capital of Nusantara, amid miles of construction sites and doubts about the sustainability of the ambitious mega project.
- 160. c** Scientists from the MACS Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) have reported the discovery of India's first indigenous methane-eating bacteria, known as methanotrophs, in rice fields and wetlands in Western India.

- 161. c** IIT Madras has ranked first in both the overall and engineering categories in the latest NIRF rankings, showcasing its strong performance across multiple academic and research dimensions.
- 162. c** Shri Kiren Rijiju, the Union Minister of Minority Affairs, launched the Jiyo Parsi scheme Portal. The scheme aims to support the Parsi community, encouraging eligible couples to benefit from it and contribute to nation-building.
- 163. c** Jagdambika Pal, a senior BJP Lok Sabha member, was named chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill. He is a fourth-term MP from Uttar Pradesh and was appointed by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.
- 164. b** The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise ‘Mitra Shakti’ is being conducted at the Army Training School in Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. This exercise aims to facilitate interoperability and the sharing of best practices between the two nations’ militaries. The last edition of the exercise was held in Pune, India, in November 2023.
- 165. b** South Korea and the United States will begin annual summertime military drills to ramp up their capability to counter North Korea’s weapons and cyber threats. The Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises, set to run from August 19 to 29.
- 166. a** India is set to open its first lithium mines in the Katghora region of Korba district of Chhattisgarh following confirmation of significant lithium deposits by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- 167. b** The Long Range Glide Bomb successfully tested by DRDO is named GAURAV. It is an air-launched, one thousand-kilogram class glide bomb capable of hitting targets at long distances. This milestone showcases the capability of indigenous defence technology in India.
- 168. d** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) announced the launch of a new Environment and Ecology Department (EED), aiming to set global benchmarks in sustainability and environmental standardisation.
- 169. c** Ravichandran Ashwin’s book titled I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story is currently enjoying critical success. The book, co-authored by Sidharth Monga, chronicles Ashwin’s life until 2011 and provides insights into his analytical mind.
- 170. b** Organ Donation Day is observed on August 13 each year and in 2024 under the slogan, “Be the Reason for Someone’s Smile Today!”
- 171. a** Wrestler Aman Sehrawat who has bagged bronze medal at the Paris Olympics has been made the brand ambassador of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC).
- 172. c** India is gearing up to test-fire its newly developed air defence system, SAMAR 2, by December.
- 173. c** Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary, Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu), and Madhya Pradesh’s Tawa Reservoir have been granted the Ramsar site tag, taking the tally of such wetlands of International Importance to 85 in India.
- 174. a** Union Agriculture and Farmer’s Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will launch the National Pest Surveillance System on the occasion of Independence Day in New Delhi. This digital initiative by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare utilizes cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to offer timely and precise pest management advisories.
- 175. a** Thailand’s Constitutional Court dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin for appointing to his cabinet a former lawyer who served jail time, raising the spectre of more political upheaval and a reset of the governing alliance.
- 176. b** The main driver of Norway’s sovereign wealth fund’s significant profit in the first half of the year was robust returns on its investments in technology stocks. The other options (fixed income, unlisted real estate, and government contributions) were not mentioned as primary contributors to the profit.
- 177. b** The Phase 3 clinical trial initiated by the ICMR and Panacea Biotec Limited is significant because it marks the first ever phase 3 clinical trial for a dengue vaccine in India. The trial will evaluate the efficacy of the indigenous tetravalent dengue vaccine, DengiAll, developed by Panacea Biotec.
- 178. c** The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) rejected Vinesh Phogat’s appeal against her disqualification from the Paris Olympics. She had approached CAS for a joint silver medal after being disqualified due to a minor weight discrepancy.

- 179. c** Parvathaneni Harish, a 1990-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, was recently appointed as India's next ambassador to the United Nations in New York. This position was vacant after the retirement of Ruchira Kamboj in June.
- 180. b** Rahul Navin, an officer from the 1993 batch of the Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax), was appointed as the new Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for a period of two years. He was previously given additional charge as ED Director in September last year following the completion of the tenure of his predecessor, Sanjay Kumar Mishra.
- 181. c** The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Science was launched by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, at ICAR, PUSA, New Delhi. The fellowship aims to support postgraduate studies in agriculture and allied sciences, enhancing the partnership between India and ASEAN.
- 182. c** Paetongtarn Shinawatra has recently been confirmed as Thailand's youngest-ever prime minister by the ruling coalition of her Pheu Thai party. She succeeds Srettha Thavisin, who was removed from his post by a constitutional court ruling.
- 183. b** Razorpay, a payments gateway platform, has been included in the 2024 Forbes Cloud 100 list for the third consecutive time. This list recognizes the top 100 cloud-computing private companies in the world. The company's consistent presence on the list highlights its significance in the cloud-computing sector.
- 184. b** India and Israel have joined hands to establish a new water technology center at IIT Madras. This collaboration is part of the ongoing partnership between the two countries to improve integrated water resource management, aiming to provide sustainable water supply solutions for urban areas in India.
- 185. a** Chief Justice of India and Seychelles to Inaugurate International Conference on Law and Technology in Kerala.
- 186. d** Google's 'AI Overviews' feature is being rolled out in six new countries: India, United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil. Australia is not included in this list.
- 187. d** The main components of space weather include solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares, as they are directly influenced by solar activity. The Earth's magnetic field is affected by space weather but is not a component of it. Instead, it is part of what gets influenced by solar events, leading to phenomena like geomagnetic storms.
- 188. d** Alexander Zverev became the first player in the 2024 tennis season to achieve 50 tour-level wins. He reached this milestone after defeating Karen Khachanov in straight sets at the Cincinnati Open.
- 189. c** Bank of America (BAC.N) is partnering with FIFA to sponsor the 2026 World Cup, marking its entry as FIFA's first-ever global sponsor in the banking category. This partnership aligns with the company's strategy to reach a broader audience through one of the world's most-watched sporting events.
- 190. c** Five years later, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day (WHD).
- 191. b** Dulon Das, who came to Silchar in Assam from Sylhet, Bangladesh, in 1988, became the first person to receive Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in Assam. He applied for citizenship in April after the CAA rules were notified and was asked to visit Guwahati's Regional Passport Office to collect his citizenship certificate.
- 192. c** The Tatrakshak Medal is an award given to Indian Coast Guard personnel. President Droupadi Murmu approved one President's Tatrakshak Medal (Distinguished Service), one Tatrakshak Medal (Gallantry), and two Tatrakshak Medals (Meritorious Service) for the Indian Coast Guard personnel on the eve of Independence Day.
- 193. a** The Kerala High Court launched a first-of-its-kind online court called "24x7 ON Courts — Open and Networked Courts".
- 194. a** The Centre unveiled the Krishi-Decision Support System (K-DSS) portal, a satellite-based geospatial platform that will provide farmers with information on the weather, groundwater levels, soil health, reservoir storage levels etc and include data like satellite images.
- 195. b** Nepal's House of Representatives adopted a landmark transitional justice Bill that would formally end a post-civil war peace process, nearly 18 years after an accord was signed.

- 196. b** The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi became the first Indian airport to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emission Airport status. This was accomplished under the Airport Council International's (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program, earning it the Level 5 certification.
- 197. c** Wings EV, an Indore-based firm, has chosen Bengaluru as the city to unveil its electric microcar, Robin, in April 2025. This is a strategic choice, likely due to Bengaluru's reputation as a tech hub and its interest in innovative transportation solutions.
- 198. a** The Science and Technology Ministry has withdrawn its contribution to the prestigious UNESCO Kalinga Prize for Popularisation of Science, UNESCO's oldest award, instituted through a donation by Odisha's former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik way back in 1951.
- 199. d** The largest-ever contingent of 84 players will take part in the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games this year.
- 200. c** Grammy winner Ricky Kej's rendition of India's national anthem sets Guinness world record.
- 201. a** The Maharashtra government will officially launch and roll out the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana', which seeks to provide ₹1500 per month to over one crore women in the state.
- 202. b** Sweet lovers across India have a new reason to celebrate as the delectable Indian sweet 'Magji' from Odisha's Dhenkanal district has been honoured with the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- 203. a** The UK Space Command launched its first military satellite, Tyche, which is designed to provide surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for the country's armed forces.
- 204. c** Livia Voigt, a 19-year-old Brazilian teenager, is the youngest billionaire of 2024. She owns a minority stake in WEG, a company co-founded by her late grandfather, and is worth US\$1.1 billion.
- 205. b** According to the latest "Men and Women" report by the National Statistical Office (NSO), only 20.8% or around a fifth of the total amount of bank deposits in India belongs to women account holders. Despite women owning 36.4% of all bank accounts, their share of the total deposits is relatively low at 20.8%.
- 206. b** Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first airport in Asia to receive Airports Council International's (ACI) highest Level 5 accreditation. This recognition highlights KIA's leadership in implementing advanced sustainability practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 207. b** Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) is known for its unique blooming cycle, where it blooms once every 12 years. This phenomenon, called semelparity, results in a massive and synchronized flowering event, which has been documented since 1832.
- 208. a** Sumit Antil, a Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist in the men's Javelin Throw F64 category, and Bhagyashri Jadhav, a shot-put star who won a silver medal in the F34 category at the 2022 Asian Para Games, will be the flag bearers for the Indian contingent at the opening ceremony of the Paris Paralympics.
- 209. c** The Elephanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was the first monument in Maharashtra to be adopted by a private firm under the 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme. This initiative allows private firms to use their CSR funds to develop and refurbish public amenities at heritage sites.
- 210. c** Indonesia declared its independence from the Dutch in 1945, with Jakarta serving as its seat of government and administrative centre since then.
- 211. c** Puttur to become India's First City Council to Convert Waste to CNG.
- 212. a** The European Union (EU) and the external affairs ministry are organising a regional conference in New Delhi to discuss emerging threats in online radicalisation and to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by terrorists.
- 213. d** State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd has proposed to invest Rs. 1.7 lakh crore over the next five years in petrochemicals, green energy, gasoline marketing and oil refining businesses. BPCL has launched 'Project Aspire', a five-year strategic framework with a planned capital expenditure of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore.
- 214. c** The new nuclear reactors are approved for sites in Jiangsu, Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Guangxi.

- 215. b** The statue was inaugurated at the Sri Ashtalakshmi Temple in Sugar Land, Texas.
- 216. c** The Scott Racing Team is the name of India's first-ever international mountain biking (MTB) team launched by the Himalayan Adventure Sports and Tourism Promotion Association (HASTPA). This groundbreaking team signifies a significant development in Indian cycling sports, as it marks India's debut on the global mountain biking stage.
- 217. a** Rishabh Shetty won the Best Actor award at the 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards for his role in the Kannada film "Kantara." His performance was highly praised, earning him this prestigious recognition.
- 218. c** Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army have successfully executed a "first of its kind" operation involving the precise para-drop of the Aarogya Maitri Health Cube at an altitude of approximately 15,000 feet.
- 219. a** The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Odisha Forest Department have joined hands to tag horseshoe crabs along the State's coast to understand the population and habitat utilisation for its conservation and management.
- 220. c** August 19 marks the 56<sup>th</sup> National Sanskrit Day in 2024.
- 221. b** Manyachiwadi village in the Patan Taluka of Satara district has been recognized as the first 'Solar Village' in Maharashtra. This initiative was inaugurated by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as part of the state's commitment to promoting renewable energy.
- 222. a** First ever Joint Commanders Conference to be held in Lucknow in September.
- 223. a** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released the centenary commemorative coin of Dr.Kalaignar M.Karunanidhi in Chennai.
- 224. d** After delimitation, the total seats in the assembly rose to 114 seats, out of which 24 seats are designated for areas that fall under Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Out of the remaining 90 seats, 43 seats are in Jammu division and 47 seats are in the Kashmir division.
- 225. c** Germany joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea becoming the 18<sup>th</sup> nation in a group that helps police the heavily fortified border with North Korea and has committed to defend the South in the event of a war.
- 226. a** DP World and the British government's development-finance arm will break ground on a deep-sea port in the Democratic Republic of Congo as the Emirate logistics company broadens its expansion in Africa. British International Investment Plc is investing \$35 million in DP World's infrastructure build at the Port of Banana — located where the Congo River meets the Atlantic Ocean — following similar partnerships between the two companies in Somaliland, Egypt and Senegal.
- 227. a** BPCL Unveils India's First Biofuel Blend HFHSD Bunker at Mumbai Port.
- 228. a** A rare full moon, also known as a super blue moon, will be visible from across the Earth on August 19 and will remain visible for the next three days, according to NASA. The next three remaining super moons of 2024 will appear on September 17, known as the Harvest Moon, October 17, known as the Hunter's Moon, and November 15's full moon, known as the Beaver Moon.
- 229. a** Actor Pankaj Tripathi is in New York and was the guest of honour at the 42<sup>nd</sup> India Day Parade that is being organised by leading diaspora organisation Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE at Madison Avenue in the heart of Manhattan.
- 230. c** World Photography Day, celebrated annually on August 19, honors the art of photography and its powerful ability to evoke emotions.
- 231. a** The Union Minister of Power and Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal launched Portal for Online monitoring of Projects – Thermal (PROMPT) in New Delhi.
- 232. d** China and Pakistan were not among the invitees to the third Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India on the virtual format that was joined by 123 nations across the globe.
- 233. c** On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023, India celebrated a major milestone in its space program with the successful soft landing of the Vikram Lander and deployment of the Pragyaa Rover on the Moon's surface as part of the Chandrayaan-3 Mission. This achievement made India the fourth country to land on the Moon and the first to do so near the South Pole. To commemorate this

accomplishment, the Government of India declared 23<sup>rd</sup> August as National Space Day (NSpD) to inspire future generations in the field of space science.

- 234. b** The Congress government in Telangana, led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, is planning to develop a new city named “Future City” as the fourth city in the state capital, in addition to Hyderabad, Secunderabad, and Cyberabad. This city is proposed to cater to the future needs of the next generation.
- 235. c** Nepal Electricity Authority has entered into medium-term power sales agreements specifically with discoms in the Indian states of Haryana and Bihar. This agreement signifies a step forward in the energy trade between the two countries.
- 236. b** The Black Hole Finder app was created by the Dutch Black Hole Consortium with the primary goal of assisting astronomers in the identification of new black holes. The app uses real data from telescopes, allowing users to contribute to the discovery process by analyzing cosmic events captured by observatories like the Chilean telescope array BlackGEM.
- 237. c** The Women’s T20 World Cup, originally planned to take place in Bangladesh, has been rescheduled to be held in Dubai and Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, due to the unrest in Bangladesh following the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
- 238. b** Jannik Sinner won the Cincinnati Open final by defeating Frances Tiafoe. This victory is significant as it marks Sinner’s fifth title of the year and his first at the Masters 1000 event in Ohio.
- 239. c** The General Assembly, established the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism to be commemorated annually on 21 August.
- 240. b** Maria Branyas Morera, who was recognized as the world’s oldest living person, recently passed away at the age of 117. She was born in the United States but spent most of her life in Spain. Jeanne Calment, Kane Tanaka, and Susannah Mushatt Jones were also notable centenarians but have all passed away in previous years.
- 241. c** The O.P. Jindal Global University, based in Sonapat, Haryana, is establishing India’s first Constitution Museum to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India.
- 242. a** In a turn of events after a meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijan formally applied to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies.
- 243. b** Ukraine’s parliament voted to ratify the Rome Statute, allowing the country to join the International Criminal Court (ICC) in a step Ukrainian leaders have cast as central to Kyiv’s European aspirations.
- 244. a** Amul is the world’s strongest food brand in Brand Finance’s Global Food & Drinks Report 2024 owing to the company’s impressive Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91 out of 100 owing to which it got an AAA+ rating.
- 245. c** Mr. Shaktikanta Das has been ranked as the top central banker globally for the second consecutive year by the US-based Global Finance magazine.
- 246. a** India’s second home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat started operating at its full capacity.
- 247. c** India’s first reusable hybrid rocket that combines the advantages of both liquid and solid fuel propellant systems to improve efficiency and reduce operation costs. Named ‘Mission Rhumi-2024’, the project was guided by Mylswamy Annadurai, former ISRO director and Moon Man of India.
- 248. c** Manchester City forward Phil Foden won the Professional Footballers’ Association Player of the Year award.
- 249. a** Katarzyna Niewiadoma of Poland won her first Women’s Tour de France title by a mere four seconds, one of the closest margins in the event’s history, men or women.
- 250. d** Every year on August 20, Akshay Urja Day is celebrated to underscore the significance of renewable energy sources and to highlight the strides India has made in advancing the same.
- 251. c** Madhya Pradesh is the first state in India to implement rules allowing the digital issuance of summons and warrants. This pioneering initiative is part of the state’s efforts to enhance the efficiency of its judicial system by utilizing electronic methods for judicial processes.

252. c Morarji Desai was the last Indian Prime Minister to visit Poland in 1979. Narendra Modi's visit in 2024 marks the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland in 45 years.
253. c Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted that the creator economy, which has been significantly boosted by the evolving media and entertainment industry, was recognized by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who presented the first National Creator Awards.
254. b China is the first country to formally accept the credentials of a Taliban-appointed ambassador. Although this does not equate to full diplomatic recognition of the Taliban administration, it does indicate a level of diplomatic engagement. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has also recently accepted a Taliban-appointed ambassador, making it the second country to do so
255. d Bandhan Bank has introduced 'avni', a savings product specifically for women, aiming to increase current and savings account deposits.
256. c Dabur India Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Tamil Nadu to establish a new consumer goods manufacturing facility in SIPCOT Tindivanam, Tamil Nadu. This will be Dabur's first manufacturing unit in South India.
257. c The time for the Indian Railways' master clock system will be sourced from NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) and the National Physical Laboratories (NPL). These sources will provide accurate and synchronized time, which is crucial for the proper functioning of various applications and systems across the railway network.
258. c The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), developed by NASA, detected the presence of carbon dioxide ice on the surface of Ariel, one of the 27 moons orbiting Uranus. This discovery was part of the "Moons of Uranus" project, which aims to explore the presence of organic molecules, water, ammonia, and carbon dioxide ice on Uranus' moons.
259. c Lord's, known as the 'home of cricket,' has a prestigious history in the sport. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced that in 2026, Lord's will host its first-ever Women's Test match between India and England. This marks a significant milestone for women's cricket at one of the most iconic cricket grounds in the world.
260. d Ram Charan awarded 'Ambassador of Indian Arts and Culture' at Melbourne's Indian Film Festival.
261. c Food safety regulator FSSAI withdrew its recent advisory wherein food businesses were directed to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products from packaging.
262. b India edged out Chinese Taipei and China to bag the silver medal at the Maruhaba Cup, a team event in the Asian Surfing Championships 2024 at the picturesque Thulusdhoo Island in the Maldives.
263. d Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released an e-magazine, Sapno ki Udaan, on the occasion of India's first National Space Day.
264. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented four Bharat Health Initiatives for Sahyog Hita and Maitri—BHISHM Cubes—to the Government of Ukraine.
265. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Maharashtra's Jalgaon to participate in the 'Lakhpati Didi Sammelan'.
266. c Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the zonal office of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur.
267. b Vietnam announced three new Deputy Prime Ministers, the latest high-level political changes during a turbulent period for the ruling Communist Party.
268. b RBI Governor Addresses Global Conference on DPI and Emerging Technologies in Bengaluru.
269. c Tanager-1: NASA has launched a satellite to track methane emissions
270. a Blind Rakshitha Raju Makes History as India's First Female Athlete to Compete in Paris Paralympics Women's 1500m Race.
271. c The Odisha government has decided to include around one crore women, aged between 21 to 60 years, under the Subhadra Yojana.



- 272. b** Canada's Mining Firm Unearths 2,492 Carat Diamond in Botswana, The World's Second Largest.
- 273. c** The Ministry of Education (MoE) has defined 'literacy,' and what it means to achieve 'full literacy,' in the light of the renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme (2022-27), which aims to onboard one crore learners per year above 15 years across all States and union territories.
- 274. c** The Karnataka government has approved the construction of South Asia's tallest Skydeck in Bengaluru, which will offer a 360-degree view of the city.
- 275. b** Singapore is India's sixth largest trade partner with a share of 2.9 percent of India's overall trade. Singapore continued to be the largest source of FDI into India.
- 276. b** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has finalised a humanoid skull model, technology of which will form the basis for the demonstration of the uncrewed Gaganyaan mission. Scheduled for 2025, the uncrewed mission will see the space agency fly Vyommitra, the robot, into space.
- 277. d** McLaren's Lando Norris fought back to take a dominant victory in the Dutch Grand Prix despite losing the lead to Max Verstappen's Red Bull at the start.
- 278. c** Women's Equality Day is celebrated in the United States on August 26 to commemorate the 1920 adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibits the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex.
- 279. b** The first Vande Metro is expected to operate in Gujarat
- 280. a** World Health Organization (WHO) launched a six-month global strategic and response plan to stop the deadly outbreak of Mpox.
- 281. a** Citing national interest, the Assam wildlife department has recommended to the Centre that forest clearance be granted to a Cairn Oil and Gas proposal for oil and gas exploration in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of the Hollongapar Gibbon wildlife sanctuary, home to the endangered Hoolock Gibbon and wild elephants, official records show.
- 282. b** The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to create five new districts in the union territory of Ladakh.
- 283. a** The Government is gearing up to host the inaugural World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), aiming to bolster India's Media and Entertainment industry and extend its global influence. The Summit will be being held in Goa from 20<sup>th</sup> of November to 25<sup>th</sup> of November this year.
- 284. a** Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Vijayanagar MLA M Krishnappa inaugurated the Rs. 13-crore 'Palike Bazaar', located next to the Vijayanagar metro station and the bus stand.
- 285. c** Indonesia and the United States began two weeks of annual military exercises involving more than 4,500 personnel, aimed at boosting operational skills as Washington seeks to shore-up ties in a region where China is vying for influence. Super Garuda Shield, which has been held since 2006, will include simulations like land and air operations, combat search and rescue and exercises in engineering and cargo delivery.
- 286. c** 77.6% of gig delivery workers in India earn less than ₹2,50,000 per annum, citing a recent survey by Borzo (formerly WeFast), a global same-day delivery company.
- 287. b** The new capital of Chhattisgarh Nava Raipur will be developed as the 'first Peepal city' in the country with more than 35,000 lush peepal trees to be planted with a vision of 'People for Peepal', on an area spread across 60 km.
- 288. b** As the private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) landscape in India continues to grow, IIM Bangalore announced to set up country's first global centre on PE-VC.
- 289. d** Top seed Tanvi Patri of India defeated Vietnam's Thi Thi Huyen Nguyen in the final to win the Asian Championships U-15 title at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in Chengdu, China.
- 290. b** South India's first adivasi library, 'Kaanu', will be inaugurated at BR Hills in Chamarajanagar district Kaanu' means evergreen forest in Soliga language.

- 291. a** The Maharashtra Cabinet approved the central government's Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), becoming the first state to do so and just within 24 hours of Modi government's announcement.
- 292. a** In Punjab, the "Aarambh" programme, aimed at enhancing early childhood education has been launched.
- 293. c** Government employees have welcomed Union Cabinet's decision to approve Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), providing assured pensions to them.
- 294. b** Australia gave millions of workers the legal right to "disconnect" allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours contact from employers, to the distress of big industry.
- 295. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das said that the central bank was set to launch Unified Lending Interface (ULI) nationwide soon as it expects this platform to transform the lending sector in India.
- 296. b** The National Quantum Mission is set to take off with multiple initiatives including setting up a grant for start-ups that need funding ranging ₹10-50 crore, launching India's first quantum computer achieving computation of 6 qubits over the next few months, and setting up four companies under section 8 to undertake various activities under the mission.
- 297. a** In a bid to sustainable river management, a Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers has been developed at IIT-BHU to rejuvenate small rivers through innovative and sustainable approaches.
- 298. b** The star Indian athlete produced his season-best throw of 89.49 metres to finish second behind Grenadian ace Peters Anderson who reached 90.61 metres in his final attempt.
- 299. b** To prevent death of wild animals and ensure safety of humans taking the roads criss-crossing Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (GNPWLS), the habitat of Asiatic lions, the Gujarat forest department has installed high-tech speed monitoring system as well as thermal and optical cameras along a 1-km stretch of state highway 26.
- 300. d** The Bharat ZET Policy Advisory document has been conceived as a dynamic document, outlining a comprehensive set of 30 policy interventions designed to accelerate ZET adoption in India.
- 301. c** The first meeting of the National Task Force (NTF) was chaired by Union Cabinet Secretary TVS Somanathan and Home Secretary Govind Mohan.
- 302. c** In the recent Rajya Sabha by-polls, Mission Ranjan Dass and Rameshwar Teli were the BJP members elected unopposed from Assam.
- 303. b** The Himachal Pradesh State Assembly passed a Bill to increase the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years. This amendment was made to support gender equality and provide greater opportunities for higher education for women.
- 304. a** General Li Qiaoming, the Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China, was conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, which is one of Pakistan's top honors. This award recognized his significant efforts and dedication to enhancing military cooperation between Pakistan and China.
- 305. c** The International Mother Teresa Awards are organized by the All-India Minority and Weaker Sections Council. These awards were established after Mother Teresa's passing in 1997 and recognize individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields.
- 306. b** The panel is considering lowering the weight assigned to food items in the CPI to keep pace with changing consumption patterns. This adjustment ensures that the index accurately represents current consumer behavior and economic conditions.
- 307. c** The exhibition Sci560, is born from the collaborative efforts of ten city-wide institutions and Science Gallery Bengaluru, and is supported by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies.
- 308. b** The United Kingdom ranks at the top of the Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2024, with a composite score of 1.24, followed by France, the United States, and other countries. India, on the other hand, ranks 31<sup>st</sup>. The other options do not reflect the correct ranking.
- 309. c** Jay Shah, the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), was elected unopposed as the new Chairman of the ICC. He will officially assume the role on December 1, 2024, succeeding Greg Barclay, who chose not to seek a third term.

- 310. a** The Centre appointed 1992 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer B Srinivasan as the new director general of National Security Guard (NSG).
- 311. b** The PPI Policing Development and Coordination Hub will be located in Brisbane, Australia. This hub is a part of Australia's broader commitment to the PPI, which also includes establishing new regional police training Centres of Excellence to support the security and law enforcement capabilities of Pacific nations.
- 312. b** The first comic book in the series includes a story about the 1971 epic Battle of Boyra. This battle is one of the two stories featured in the book, highlighting significant events in the Indian Air Force's history.
- 313. b** Fatemeh Mohajerani was appointed as the first female government spokesperson in Iran. This historic appointment was made by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Mohajerani, who holds a Doctor of Business Administration from Edinburgh, has previously served as the head of the Technical and Vocational Training University of Shariati for women.
- 314. d** The Union Cabinet approved twelve new greenfield industrial smart cities under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme. These cities are located in Uttarakhand, Bihar, Punjab, Telangana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, is not mentioned as one of the locations for these new industrial cities.
- 315. c** The grant towards the equity portion of the state government of the northeastern region is capped at 24% of the total project equity, subject to a maximum of ₹750 crore per project. This cap may be revisited on a case-to-case basis if required.
- 316. b** The RBI has recognized the Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE) as a Self-Regulatory Organisation in the FinTech Sector (SRO-FT). This recognition is part of RBI's efforts to establish a regulatory framework for self-regulation within the FinTech industry.
- 317. b** Jezero is a crater on Mars in the Syrtis Major quadrangle, about 45.0 km (28.0 mi) in diameter. Thought to have once been flooded with water, the crater contains a fan-delta deposit rich in clays.
- 318. b** The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund was established in the year 2020 with a corpus of one lakh crore rupees. This fund was created to provide all-around financial support to farmers and to significantly enhance and strengthen the agricultural infrastructure across the country.
- 319. c** The Bharat BillPay for Business platform is tailored for business transactions and includes features like automated reminders, purchase order (PO) creation, and online dispute resolution. However, it does not offer peer-to-peer (P2P) money transfers, as this feature is typically associated with individual payment platforms, not business-oriented solutions.
- 320. b** National Sports Day in India is celebrated annually on August 29<sup>th</sup>. This day commemorates the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest field hockey players in history. The day is observed to emphasize the importance of sports and physical activities in the country.
- 321. c** The University of Southampton is the first UK University to receive approval from the Indian government to establish a comprehensive campus in India. This initiative aligns with the University Grants Commission's (UGC) efforts to invite top foreign universities to set up campuses in India, marking a significant milestone in the Indian education sector.
- 322. d** Federal Bank has introduced Smile Pay, a first-of-its-kind facial recognition-based payment system in India, allowing customers to complete transactions without the need for cash, cards, or mobile devices.
- 323. c** Gautam Adani and his family topped the 2024 Hurun India Rich List with a wealth of Rs. 11.6 lakh crore. His wealth saw an impressive 95% increase, making him the richest individual in India, surpassing Mukesh Ambani.
- 324. c** WHO has declared Dhulikhel Municipality of Kavrepalanchok district as Nepal's first 'healthy city' and second healthiest city in Asia.
- 325. c** The first indigenously built Pollution Control Vessel was named "Samudra Pratap." This vessel was designed and constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) to meet the specific requirements of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The ship is intended to help check oil spillage along the country's sea coast.
- 326. c** Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings at IARI Campus PUSA as a part of the campaign Plant4Mother campaign. Shri Chouhan informed that the Ministry will set up "Matri Van" in about 1 acre of land.

- 327. b** The CCEA approved three railway projects under the Ministry of Railways, which will cover four states: Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh. These projects involve the construction of new railway lines and multi-tracking initiatives, expanding the Indian Railways network by approximately 300 km.
- 328. c** The She-Box portal is a centralized platform launched by the Indian government to register and monitor complaints related to sexual harassment of women at the workplace. Its main purpose is to provide a safe and efficient mechanism for addressing such complaints and ensuring timely processing by Internal Committees.
- 329. c** Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, launched India's first indigenous Monkeypox RT-PCR Kit. The kit was developed at the AP Medtech Zone in Visakhapatnam in collaboration with Transasia Diagnostics and validated by ICMR and CDSCO.
- 330. a** Bangladesh has been crowned the new champion of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) U-20 Championship football tournament after defeating hosts Nepal by 4-1 in the final.
- 331. c** Avani Lekhara made history by becoming the first Indian woman to win two gold medals at the Paralympics. She achieved this milestone at the Paris Paralympics, where she won a gold medal in the Women's 10m air rifle final (SH1) event.
- 332. a** India and Malaysia Sign MoU for Strengthening Co-operation in the Field of Tourism.
- 333. b** The digital integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS enables real-time tracking of pension applications by pensioners.
- 334. b** South Korea's fertility rate, already the world's lowest, continued its dramatic decline in 2023, as women concerned about their career advancement and the financial cost of raising children decided to delay childbirth or to not have babies.
- 335. d** Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has become the first Indian company to surpass Rs. 10 lakh crore in annual revenue.
- 336. c** Fourteen African countries, including Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chad, Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania, pledged support to the WHO Investment Round during the WHO Regional Committee for Africa. This show of unity underscored the importance of investing in global health and ensuring a strong WHO.
- 337. c** Ashwini Vaishnav, the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, launched the 25 Challenges under the 'Create in India Challenge – Season 1' in August 2024.
- 338. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port in the Palghar district of Maharashtra.
- 339. b** Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the "Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training" (RESET) Programme on the occasion of National Sports Day in New Delhi.
- 340. a** Nepal Tourism Board has received the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award in Sustainable Tourism for Livelihood Recovery Project (STLRP).
- 341. d** Preethi Pal became the first Indian to win a Paralympic medal in a track event. Preethi won a bronze medal in the women's T35 100m event with a personal best time of 14.21 seconds at the Paris Paralympics.
- 342. c** Jyothi Yarraji, who hails from Visakhapatnam, was felicitated by INS Satavahana under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command for her remarkable achievement of becoming India's first woman Olympic hurdler.
- 343. a** Uttar Pradesh to get India's First Solar-powered E-way by 2026: Mega Project along Bundelkhand Expressway to Take off This Year.
- 344. c** The Barclays Private Clients Hurun India report has named the Ambani family as the most valuable family business in India, with a worth of ₹25.75 lakh crore. Although the Adani family has a significant value, they are classified as a first-generation family and do not feature in the main list.
- 345. c** NHPC Limited has been accorded with the prestigious status of 'Navratna' company by the Government of India. The conferring of Navratna status brings forth key advantages to NHPC.

- 346. b** The Bhavishya platform is the foundation for the Common Single Window Portal, which is designed to assist pensioners and elderly citizens. It is a key tool in the government’s efforts to streamline pension-related processes.
- 347. c** The Certified Naturalist course was a collaborative effort between The Naturalist School and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, aligning with the Skill India Mission to enhance vocational training and skill development in India.
- 348. d** Abu Dhabi Airports is developing a “Smart Travel” project that involves rolling out biometric authentication artificial intelligence (AI) into all security checkpoints at the airport by 2025.
- 349. c** Singapore and China have commenced the third edition of Exercise Maritime Cooperation, highlighting their enduring defence ties.
- 350. a** Researchers at IIT Bombay are using robots to understand how animals find their way back home from unfamiliar places, a skill called homing.



Career  
Launcher