

SSC BANKING MANTHAN

Current Affairs Supplement

July, 2024

Registered / Corporate Office:
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Preface

Dear Readers,

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

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Indian Navy participates in RIMPAC naval exercise

- **The Indian Navy has joined the world’s largest naval military wargame Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) in Hawaii.** Twenty-nine nations, 40 surface ships, three submarines, over 150 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel are going to train and operate in and around the Hawaiian Islands during the exercise.
- **This exercise is the world’s biggest international maritime warfare exercise, and it takes place in Hawaii with a huge group of troops from around the world. The Hawaiian Islands are the focus of this huge show of military power and cooperation, which runs until August 01. RIMP began with a phase in the harbor that lasted from June 27 to July 7. This was followed by a carefully planned phase at sea. The last phase is split into three smaller phases.** During these phases, the naval forces that are taking part will carry out some complicated maritime activities. An aircraft carrier battle group, submarines, maritime reconnaissance planes, and remotely piloted surface ships will all be moving around, and amphibious force landing operations will also be shown. Commander of the US 3rd Fleet and the RIMPAC 2024 Combined Task Force, Vice Admiral John Wade, talked about the exercise’s **two goals: to strengthen ties between countries and make it easier for allied forces to work together. The main objective is to improve everyone’s skills in maritime operations, which will help keep the Indo-Pacific area peaceful and stable. In a nutshell, this is what this year’s RIMPAC theme, “Partners: Integrated and Prepared,” means.**
- **The INS Shivalik, a guided missile stealth frigate that was planned and built in India, shows how technically advanced and flexible the Indian Navy is. The frigate was sent to Pearl Harbor to take part in different parts of RIMPAC 2024.** It had been sent to key areas like the South China Sea and the North Pacific Ocean before. That the ship traveled 9000 Nautical Miles to take part in the drill shows how far the Indian Navy can go”. **Indian Navy said that INS Shivalik, mission deployed to the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean, departed Singapore on May 30 for onward passage to Yokosuka, Japan to participate in Japan-India maritime exercise JIMEX-24 scheduled to be held mid-June and then onward to RIMPAC-24.**
- **29 nations, 40 surface ships, 3 submarines, 14 national land forces, over 150 aircraft, and more than 25,000 personnel participated in the exercise.** This year’s participants in RIMPAC include forces from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, U.K. and the U.S.

The Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) is the world’s largest international maritime warfare exercise. RIMPAC is held biennially during June and July of even-numbered years from Honolulu, Hawaii, with the exception of 2020 where it was held in August. It is hosted and administered by the United States Navy’s Indo-Pacific Command, headquartered at Pearl Harbor, in conjunction with the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and Hawaii National Guard forces under the control of the Governor of Hawaii. The first RIMPAC, held in 1971, involved forces from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). India first participated in RIMPAC in 2014 when the indigenously built Shivalik class stealth frigate INS Sahyadri took part in the exercise.

India takes first steps to meet 2070 net-zero goal, NITI Aayog forms panels

- Three years after India declared its goal to become a net-zero economy by 2070, the policy design for achieving the target has begun, with the NITI Aayog forming dedicated multi-sectoral committees to prepare a transition plan. In 2021, India joined a select group of nations that set a target year for becoming net-zero carbon economy. At COP26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined a five-pronged ‘Panchamitra’ climate action target for India and committed to a net-zero target by 2070, joining nations like the US, the UK, and China.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. It was established to replace the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model. The Planning Commission was an institution in the Government of India, which formulated India’s Five-Year Plans, among other functions. After India achieved independence, a formal model of planning was adopted, and accordingly the Planning Commission, reporting directly to the Prime Minister of India, was established on 15 March 1950, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman. Authority for creation of the Planning Commission was not derived from the Constitution of India or statute; it is an arm of the Central Government of India. The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1951, focusing mainly on development of the agricultural sector. NITI Aayog is the premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current Chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current Vice Chairman is Suman Bery and the current Chief Executive Officer is Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam.

Uttar Pradesh to set up Bioplastic Park in Lakhimpur Kheri at Rs. 2,000 crore

- The Uttar Pradesh government will set up a bioplastic park in Gola Gokarnnath of Lakhimpur Kheri district at an investment of Rs. 2,000 crore. The park will be developed by the Balrampur Sugar Mills Firm over 1,000 hectares in Kumbhi village of the district on public private partnership (PPP) model. The Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) will serve as the nodal agency for the park’s development.

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.

Maharashtra announces pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens from all religions

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced ‘Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana’, a pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens from all religions. “The scheme titled ‘Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana’ will be for the senior citizens of all religions”. Rules will be framed for the scheme and the government will facilitate the pilgrimage of senior citizens from all religions who are unable to do it on their own.

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.

Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi is Jharkhand High Court Chief Justice

- Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi was appointed as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court, the law ministry said. Justice Sarangi is at present a judge of the Orissa High Court. His name was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium in December last year.

Article 124(2) of the Indian Constitution provides that the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President after consultation with such a number of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose. As per Article 217, the Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the CJI and the State Governor, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court. The names are recommended by the Collegium. Collegium System is the system of appointment and transfer of judges that has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court, and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution. The Supreme Court collegium is headed by the CJI and comprises four other senior most judges of the court. A HC collegium is led by its Chief Justice and four other senior most judges of that court. The collegium sends its final recommendation to the President of India for approval. The President can either accept it or reject it. In the case it is rejected, the recommendation comes back to the collegium. If the collegium reiterates its recommendation to the President, then he/she is bound by that recommendation.

Hemant Soren to become Jharkhand CM once again

- **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) supremo Hemant Soren has become the Chief Minister of Jharkhand once again.** Soren was released from jail after nearly five months, following the high court's decision to grant him bail in a money laundering case related to an alleged land scam. This comes after a meeting of INDIA bloc legislators held in Ranchi convened by the former CM.

Jharkhand (meaning 'the land of forests') is a state in eastern India. The state shares its border with the states of Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south and West Bengal to the east. **The city of Ranchi is its capital and Dumka its sub-capital. Hemant Soren is the current Chief Minister of Jharkhand. C. P. Radhakrishnan is serving as the current Governor of Jharkhand. The state was formed on 15 November 2000, from the territory that had previously been part of Bihar.**

Chhattisgarh launches 'single window system 2.0' for ease of industrialists

- **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai launched the second edition of the 'single window system' (SWS) to facilitate speedy approvals of various clearances required for setting up industries.** Sai said the state government would extend all possible assistance to entrepreneurs interested in investing in the state. The Commerce and Industry Department already operates a 'single window system' portal which has been updated and re-launched.

Chhattisgarh was formed on 1 November 2000 by partitioning 10 Chhattisgarhi and 6 Gondi speaking southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. It is a land locked state of India. The capital city is Raipur. Biswabhusan Harichandan is present Governor of Chhattisgarh.

Awadhesh Prasad among Lok Sabha panel of chairpersons

- **Amidst speculation that he may be the Opposition's candidate for the post of Deputy Speaker, Samajwadi Party MP from Faizabad Awadhesh Prasad was named as one of the nine members of the panel of chairpersons to help Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.** Birla said he had selected Jagdambika Pal (BJP), P C Mohan (BJP), Sandhya Ray (BJP), Dilip Saikia (BJP), Kumari Selja (Congress), A Raja (DMK), Dr. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar (TMC), Krishna Prasad Tenneti (TDP) and Awadhesh Prasad (SP) as members of the panel of chairpersons.

In the context of the Parliamentary System, the Presiding Officers refer to the officials who oversee and regulate the proceedings of the Houses of Legislative Body such as Parliament in the case of India. The Presiding Officers are responsible for upholding parliamentary rules, maintaining order, managing debates, and conducting the legislative process as per the established procedures within their respective houses of the legislative body. Overall, their role is to ensure that the legislative body functions smoothly and efficiently. The Presiding Officers of Lok Sabha primarily include – the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha. Additionally, the Lok Sabha also has a Panel of Chairpersons, any members of which assume the role of Presiding Officer in the absence of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, ensuring the continuity of parliamentary proceedings.

Uttar Pradesh cabinet passes draft of UP NIRMAN Bill-2024 to attract investors

- In a bid to make Uttar Pradesh a one trillion dollar economy, the Uttar Pradesh government passed draft of Uttar Pradesh Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing (Construction) Area Bill (NIRMAN)-2024. This draft of the Bill to make a Special Investment Region (SIR) was approved in the cabinet meeting held in Lok Bhavan under chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Through this, the big investors of the country and the world can be attracted to invest in UP.

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'Sampoornata Abhiyan' launched by NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog launched the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' witnessing significant participation from citizens across the country. The launch events were organised across all the 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks. This comprehensive three-month campaign, running from 4th July to 30th September 2024, aims to achieve 100% saturation of 12 key social sector indicators across all Aspirational Districts and Blocks.
- The first day of the campaign witnessed the enthusiastic participation of lakhs of district and block-level officials, frontline workers, community leaders, local artists, students, and local representatives (Block Pramukhs/Sarpanchs) from Jammu and Kashmir to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The Aspirational Districts and Blocks pledged their commitment to the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' by reiterating its principles through the 'Sampoornata Pledge' committing to fulfil the campaign's goals and accelerating progress towards full saturation of the identified indicators. The programme also included organising camps emphasizing on the key indicators of the campaign as in Ratlam and Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, the programme was launched amid fanfare and local participation at the district headquarters of Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand and Nuh, Haryana.

Justice Sheel Nagu appointed Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court

- The Centre notified the appointment of Justice Sheel Nagu as the Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court. Justice Nagu was serving as the Acting Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court after Chief Justice Ravi Malimath demitted the office on May 24, 2024. Now, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva has been appointed as the new Acting Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Justice Nagu's name was recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium — comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and BR Gavai — on December 28, 2023 after the retirement of Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha. Chief Justice Jha retired on October 13, 2023.

First-ever India-Belarus Consular Dialogue held in Minsk

- The first ever India-Belarus Consular Dialogue was held on 28 June 2024 in Minsk. The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Aman Puri, JS (CPV), while the Belarusian delegation was led by Mr. Andrei Kozhan, Head of General Directorate for Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. A wide gamut of consular issues ranging from welfare of the Indian students in Belarus to enhancing tourism between the two countries was discussed during the first-ever India-Belarus Consular Dialogue.

Belarus is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest. Minsk is the capital and largest city. The ruble, rouble or rubel is the currency of Belarus. Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko has been the President of Belarus since the office's establishment in 1994. This makes him the longest-serving European president.

India-Thailand joint military exercise MAITREE

- The opening ceremony of the 13th edition of Joint Military Exercise MAITREE was held at Tak Province in Thailand. Exercise MAITREE is an annual training event held in India and Thailand alternatively. However, the current edition is being held after a gap of 4 years (12th edition held in Umroi, Meghalaya in 2019) due to Covid- 19 pandemic.

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. Srettha Thavisin, nicknamed Nid, is a Thai businessman and politician currently serving as the Prime Minister of Thailand since 22 August 2023.

India's first 'inclusive sports manual' for differently-abled kids designed in Kerala

- The Kerala General Education Department has designed an unique "inclusive sports manual" with the objective of promoting the sports talents of differently-abled schoolchildren and ensuring their participation in the field. Another programme, titled "Healthy Kids," envisaged to ensure the physical and mental health of children by initiating them to sports and games, would be implemented for primary students of the state-run schools.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be first Indian PM to visit Vienna in 41 years

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Austria on July 9 and 10 becoming the first Indian leader to travel to the country in 41 years. PM Modi would first travel to Russia and from there he is expected to depart for Austria. The last Indian prime minister to visit Austria was Indira Gandhi in 1983. She had also visited the country in 1971. Former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Indian leader to visit Austria in 1955. In November 1999, the then Indian President KR Narayanan made India's first state visit to Austria after which in 2011, ex-President Pratibha Patil travelled to the country.

Ministry of Culture initiates Project PARI for the 46th World Heritage Committee Meeting

- India has long been a vibrant centre of artistic expression, with its rich history of public art reflecting the country's cultural and spiritual diversity. From ancient rock-cut temples and intricate frescoes to grand public sculptures and vibrant street art, Bharat's landscapes have always been adorned with artistic marvels. Historically, art has been deeply intertwined with daily life, religious practices, and social customs, manifesting through various modalities such as dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.
- Project PARI (Public Art of India), an initiative by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, being executed by Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art seeks to bring forth public art that draws inspiration from millennia of artistic heritage (lok kala/lok sanskriti) while incorporating modern themes and techniques. These expressions underscore the intrinsic value that art holds in Indian society, serving as a testament to the nation's enduring commitment to creativity and artistic expression. The first intervention under Project PARI is taking place in Delhi.
- It coincides with the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee scheduled to be held in New Delhi, India between 21-31 July 2024. The representation of art in public spaces is particularly significant, reflecting the nation's rich and diverse cultural heritage. The democratization of art through public installations transforms urban landscapes into accessible galleries, where art transcends the confines of traditional venues such as museums and galleries. By integrating art into streets, parks, and transit hubs, these initiatives ensure that artistic experiences are available to one and all.

The World Heritage Committee is a committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that selects the sites to be listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, defines the use of the World Heritage Fund and allocates financial assistance upon requests from States Parties. It comprises representatives from 21 state parties that are elected by the General Assembly of States Parties for a four-year term. These parties vote on decisions and proposals related to the World Heritage Convention and World Heritage List.

16th edition of India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced

- **The 16th edition of India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).** The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 03rd to 16th July 2024. **Indian contingent comprising of 45 personnel is being represented by a Battalion of SIKKIM SCOUTS** along with personnel from other arms and services.
- **The Mongolian contingent is being represented by personnel from 150 Quick Reaction Force Battalion of the Mangolian Army.** Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Mongolia. Last edition was conducted in Mongolia in July 2023.
- **The aim of the 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 and mountainous terrain.

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.

Uttarakhand to give 33% reservation to women in cooperative institutions

- **An order giving 33 per cent reservation to women in cooperative institutions was issued by the Uttarakhand government.** The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet chaired here recently by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and will end the monopoly of men in cooperative institutions. The order issued on International Cooperative Day will ensure the participation of women in 10 district cooperative banks, 670 multipurpose cooperative societies and other top cooperative institutions in the state.
- **Women will also get the quota in Uttarakhand State Cooperative Bank, State Cooperative Federation, Housing and Construction Cooperative Federation, Regional Co-operative Union, Consumer Cooperative Federation, and Silk Federation among others.** State Cooperative Minister Dhan Singh Rawat said it was a historic decision by the state government which will prove to be a milestone in the direction of women's empowerment.

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 27th 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.**

Kerala's digital education model a global exemplar, says UNICEF Study

- **A UNICEF India study has extolled Kerala's digital education initiatives (EdTech),** describing it as a model not just for other Indian states, but also for middle-income and developed countries. The report titled "Empowering Adolescents with Future-Ready Skills – The Inspiring Story of Little KITEs," was published.
- **The study focused on the Little KITEs programme, considered to be the largest ICT Network of students in India, implemented by the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) across 2,174 high schools** in the southern state. Aligned with global and national efforts to develop future-ready skills alongside United Nation's Global framework.

UNICEF, originally called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in full, now officially United Nations Children's Fund, is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. The agency is among the most widespread and recognizable social welfare organizations in the world, with a presence in 192 countries and territories. UNICEF's activities include providing immunizations and disease prevention, administering treatment for children and mothers with HIV,

enhancing childhood and maternal nutrition, improving sanitation, promoting education, and providing emergency relief in response to disasters. **UNICEF is the successor of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, created on 11 December 1946, in New York**, by the U.N. Relief Rehabilitation Administration to provide immediate relief to children and mothers affected by World War II. **Catherine Mary Russell is an American who is currently serving as Executive Director of UNICEF.**

D Y Chandrachud inaugurates New Office of Securities Appellate Tribunal in Mumbai

- Amid soaring stock markets, **Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said that it is important for the regulatory authorities to ensure that everyone holds their balance and nerves amid the wins.** In his address after inaugurating the new office of the Securities Appellate Tribunal in Mumbai, Mr. Chandrachud hoped that the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Securities Appellate Tribunal would celebrate the successes while exercising caution.
- **He also pitched for more such tribunal benches not only to ensure that the backbone is stable but also to manage the higher workloads because of the higher quantum of transactions and newer regulations.** Stating that investors prefer markets where they feel their investment is protected and that they have effective mechanisms for dispute resolution, the CJI expressed the need for an early filling up of the vacancies at SAT to ensure that the tribunal functions effectively and at full capacity.
- **Mr. Chandrachud also launched a new website for the Securities Appellate Tribunal on the occasion. Highlighting the need for robust physical as well as virtual infrastructure in all courts and tribunals across the country for speedy delivery,** the CJI said advancements in the digital arena warrant the reimagination of the concept of access to justice.

Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) is formed as a statutory and autonomous body as per the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992. It was mainly established to hear appeals against orders passed by the SEBI or by an adjudicating officer under the SEBI Act. The SAT hears appeals against the following orders: Orders issued by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) in relation to cases filed before it. Orders issued by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) in relation to cases filed before it. Hear the orders passed by SEBI. Composition: SAT consists of one Presiding Officer and such number of Judicial and Technical members as the Central Government may determine. Every person aggrieved by the order of the SEBI or adjudicating officer is liable to make an appeal to the SAT. No appeal can be made to the SAT against any order made with the consent of the parties. Every person aggrieved by any order or decision of SAT can file an appeal to the Supreme Court. An appeal can only be made on any question of law.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Russia to hold summit talks with Putin

- **It is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first trip to Russia since 2019, the first after the start of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022 and the first in Mr. Modi's third term as the Prime Minister.** Russian President Putin hosted a private dinner for Mr. Modi at the 22nd India-Russia summit in Moscow.
- The annual summit between the Prime Minister of India and the president of Russia is the **highest institutional dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between the two countries.** The annual summits are held alternatively in India and Russia. **The last summit was held on December 6, 2021, in New Delhi. President Putin had visited India to attend the summit.** Recently, the Prime Minister of India paid a high-profile visit to Russia to hold the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with the President of Russia. **This visit reflected India's underlying multipolar vision in its outreach to the rest of the world.**
- **The summit saw both sides sealing 28 MoUs and agreements besides coming out with a joint statement titled "India-Russia Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity".** Prime Minister Modi and President Putin last held bilateral talks on the margins of a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at Samarkand in Uzbekistan on September 16, 2022.
- **Political Relations:** Both sides emphasized that **India-Russia ties** have stayed strong despite the **complex and challenging geopolitical situation.** They have worked to create a balanced, mutually beneficial, sustainable, and long-term partnership.

- **Trade and Economic Partnership:** The leaders agreed to boost and sustain **bilateral trade** growth by setting a target of **USD 100 billion by 2030**. They also decided to promote using **national currencies** for bilateral trade.
- **Transport and Connectivity:** They agreed for faster completion of projects like the **Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor, International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and Northern Sea Route**.
- **Energy Partnership:** Energy sector has emerged as a **significant pillar** of the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. Russia agreed to explore increasing the supply of **coking coal** and exporting **anthracite coal** to India.
- **Cooperation in the Russian Far East and Arctic:** Both countries signed an agreement for India-Russia cooperation in trade, economic, and investment in the **Russian Far East** from 2024 to 2029, as well as cooperation in the **Arctic zone** of Russia.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** Both welcomed the progress in building the remaining **nuclear power plant** units at **Kudankulam** and agreed to stick to the schedule, including delivery timelines.
- **Space:** Both sides strengthened partnership between **India's ISRO** and **Russia's Roscosmos** for peaceful space exploration, including **human spaceflight programs**, satellite navigation, and planetary exploration.
- **Military and Military Technical Cooperation:** Both agreed to promote joint manufacturing of defense equipment in India involving **technology transfer** and allow exports to friendly third countries.
- **Education and Science & Technology:** Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation under the Roadmap for Science, Technology & Innovation Cooperation 2021.
- **UN and Multilateral Fora:** Both sides emphasized the importance of the **United Nations** and the need to respect international law. They reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of the **UN Charter**, including the principle of **non-interference** in the internal affairs of member states.
- **Counter Terrorism:** They strongly condemned the recent dastardly terrorist attack on an Army convoy in **Kathua** area (Jammu & Kashmir) and on the **Crocus City Hall** in Moscow.
- **Recognition:** President Vladimir Putin conferred PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest civilian honor, the "**Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle**," for his significant role in strengthening the strategic partnership between India and Russia.
- **Boosting Trade Linkage:** If traffic on the **INSTC, Northern Sea Route** and **Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor** increase, transit time could be reduced from 40 days to 20 days.
- **Increasing Regional Trade:** A free-trade agreement with the **Eurasian Economic Union** can result in India taking a more proactive role in Eurasian trade.
- **People to people Connectivity:** Establishing two new **consulates** in Ekaterinburg and Kazan reflects the increasing presence of an **Indian diaspora** across Russia.
- **Business Growth:** The Indian **pharmaceutical sector** has become a major supplier of medicines in Russia, surpassing Germany. Companies like Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Sun Pharma, and Cipla have partnered with Russian firms to produce **generic medicines** locally.
- **Capital Market Development:** Banks in Russia have invested the idle rupee in Russian accounts in Indian shares, government **securities** and **infrastructure projects** and the transaction cost involved in converting rupees to ruble have come down.
- **Repatriation:** Putin agreed to discharge and **repatriate** the Indians serving in the Russian armed forces is a significant **diplomatic victory** for New Delhi.

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

Sharing of Google location PIN in return for bail violates privacy: Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court held that **requiring an accused to share his or her Google location PIN with the investigating officer to facilitate tracking of movement is a violation of the right to privacy.** A Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said a condition for bail should not defeat the very purpose of grant of bail.
- **“There cannot be a bail condition defeating the purpose of bail.** We have said Google PIN cannot be a condition. The police cannot peep into the private life of an accused on bail,” the apex court observed during the pronouncement of judgment.
- **The verdict came in an appeal filed by a Nigerian national, Frank Vitus, who is an accused in a drugs case, challenging a Delhi High Court order of 2022, mandating him to share his Google Map location with the probe officer as a condition for his bail.** The apex court had earlier asked Google for its assistance to understand the technology better and test it on the threshold of fundamental rights.
- **In October 2023, Justice Oka’s Bench had dealt with a similar question of law in a separate case which involved allegations of money-laundering. In that, the Delhi High Court, again, had granted bail to Raman Bhuraria, an auditor.** One of the bail conditions was for Bhuraria to “drop a Google pin location from his mobile phone to the Investigating Officer concerned, which shall be kept operational throughout his bail.” He had been arrested in connection with a money-laundering probe arising from an alleged ₹3,269 crore financial irregularity case against Shakti Bhog Foods Limited.

Generally understood that privacy is synonymous with the right to be let alone. **The Supreme Court described privacy and its importance in the landmark decision of K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India in 2017 that - Right to Privacy is a fundamental and inalienable right and attaches to the person covering all information about that person and the choices that he/ she makes. The right to privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.**

For better tracking of Indian Ocean’s health, INCOIS upgrades data assimilation system

- **Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has upgraded its system for gathering information on the health of the Indian Ocean.** The upgraded version of the Regional Analysis of Indian Ocean, a data assimilation system developed in INCOIS, has been incorporated with the Sea surface height anomaly (SSHA).
- **Compared to the previous version which used only salinity and sea surface temperature, this upgraded version factors in sea surface height.** The system has been under development since 2023 and was implemented in recent months. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), the Indian counterpart of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in the Pacific Ocean, is a significant ocean phenomenon that affects India’s weather systems. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is in its neutral phase, but it is expected to turn positive later in the monsoon season. When this shift occurs, the IOD, combined with other favourable factors, is expected to increase rainfall in the country from August onwards. In the new system, for running ocean models, observations are taken at the ocean’s surface and below the water at depths ranging from 3 metres to 2,000 metres, depending on the requirement. As a result, the ocean current analysis from the additional information obtained has improved the ocean current analysis.

Divorced Muslim women can claim maintenance under Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code

- **The Supreme Court held that Muslim women can claim maintenance from their divorced husbands under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.** A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih said this in two separate but concurring judgments. Justice Nagarathna said Section 125 CrPC would apply to all women and not just married women.
- **The Supreme Court was hearing an appeal by Mohd. Abdul Samad, who had been ordered to pay maintenance of Rs. 20,000 to his ex-wife by a family court in Telangana.** The woman had moved the family court under Section 125 of CrPC stating that Samad had given her triple talaq. He appealed to the high court which, while disposing it of on December 13, 2023, said “that several questions are raised which need to be adjudicated” but “directed the petitioner to pay 10,000/- as interim maintenance”.

- Challenging this, Samad told the Supreme Court that the high court had failed to appreciate that the provisions of **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986**, which is a Special Act, would prevail over the provisions of **Section 125 CrPC**, which is a general Act. The 1986 law was enacted by the **Rajiv Gandhi government** to nullify the Supreme Court ruling in the **Shah Bano case**.
- Samad contended that “the provisions of **Section 3 and 4**” of the 1986 Act “which starts with **non-obstante clause**, will prevail over the provisions of **section 125 Cr.P.C**, which has **no non-obstante clause** and as such the application for grant of maintenance by Muslim divorced women under **section 125 Cr.P.C**, would not be maintainable before family court when the Special Act gives jurisdiction to First st class Magistrate to decide the issue of Maher and payment of other subsistence allowance under **Section 3 and 4** of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986”.
- Section 125 of the CrPC says that “(1) If any person having sufficient means neglects or refuses to maintain —
 - his wife, unable to maintain herself, or
 - his legitimate or illegitimate minor child, whether married or not, unable to maintain itself, or
 - his legitimate or illegitimate child (not being a married daughter) who has attained majority, where such child is, by reason of any physical or mental abnormality or injury unable to maintain itself, or
 - his father or mother, unable to maintain himself or herself, a Magistrate of the first class may, upon proof of such neglect or refusal, order such person to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance of his wife or such child, father or mother, at such monthly rate as such Magistrate thinks fit and to pay the same to such person as the Magistrate may from time to time direct.”
- A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court had in its **September 2001 judgment in the case Danial Latifi & Another vs Union Of India** upheld the constitutional validity of the 1986 Act and said that its provisions do not offend **Articles 14, 15 and 21** of the Constitution of India.

The Code of Criminal Procedure, commonly called Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), was the **main legislation on procedure for administration of substantive criminal law in India**. It was enacted in **1973** and came into force on **1 April 1974**. It provides the machinery for the investigation of crime, apprehension of suspected criminals, collection of evidence, determination of guilt or innocence of the accused person and the determination of punishment of the guilty. It also deals with public nuisance, prevention of offences and maintenance of wife, child and parents. **On 11 August 2023**, a Bill to replace the CrPC with the **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)** was introduced in the Lok Sabha. **On 26 December 2023**, it was replaced with **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**.

PM Narendra Modi announces opening of consulates in Russia’s Kazan and Yekaterinburg

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, currently in Moscow for a two-day visit, announced the opening of two new consulates in Russia’s Kazan and Yekaterinburg. Addressing the Indian diaspora, PM Modi said that after being elected to office for a third consecutive term, this was his first interaction with the Indian community overseas. He praised President Vladimir Putin for strengthening India-Russia ties, mentioning that he has visited Russia six times in the last ten years and has met with Putin seventeen times. He also highlighted that India’s relationship with Russia dates back to the 17th century, with the establishment of the India House at Astrakhan, where Gujarat traders had settled. He also emphasised the importance of new connectivity initiatives, including the International North-South Trade Corridor and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor.

India pitches for infusing new energies into BIMSTEC grouping

- India has called on the seven-nation Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping to infuse new energies, resources, and a fresh commitment to bolster cooperation among the Bay of Bengal countries. The first day’s deliberations covered connectivity, cooperation in trade and business, collaboration in health and space, digital public infrastructure and capacity building and societal exchanges.
- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), brings together seven countries of South and Southeast Asia for multifaceted cooperation. Besides India, the BIMSTEC comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. In his opening

remarks, Jaishankar said BIMSTEC should harbour higher aspirations. “For India, BIMSTEC represents the intersection of its ‘Neighbourhood First’ outlook, the ‘Act East Policy’ and the ‘SAGAR’ vision”.

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’s population to peak in early 2060s to 1.7 billion before declining: United Nations

- “India’s population is projected to peak in the early 2060s at about 1.7 billion and then decline by 12%, but India will remain the world’s most populous country throughout the century,” the United Nations has said. The World Population Prospects 2024 report, released on July 11, said the world’s population is expected to continue growing over the coming 50-60 years, reaching a peak of around 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024.
- After peaking, the global population is projected to start declining gradually, falling to 10.2 billion people by the end of the century. India, which surpassed China as the world’s most populous nation last year, will continue to hold that position through 2100.
- “The population of India, which is expected to remain the world’s largest throughout the century, will likely decline by 12% after reaching its peak in the early 2060s at about 1.7 billion,” the UN report published by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division said.
- According to the report, India’s population in 2024 is projected at 1.45 billion and this will peak to 1.69 billion in 2054. After this, India’s population is projected to decline to 1.5 billion by the end of the century in 2100, but the country will still remain the most populous nation on Earth.

India to host first global summit for media and entertainment sector in November

- India will host the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit in November alongside the International Film Festival of India in Goa, with I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw promising to strengthen the ecosystem for the protection of intellectual property rights in the media and entertainment sector.
- Vaishnaw and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant made the announcement of the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Goa from November 20-24 and described it as a visionary initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as India seeks to make a mark in the media and entertainment sector. “The media and entertainment (M&E) world is undergoing a structural change and has seen immense technology infusion. This has opened many opportunities, but also caused concerns among few participants who have not been able to keep up with the change”.

Gaurav Gogoi to be Congress’ deputy leader in Lok Sabha, Kodikunnil Suresh to be chief whip

- Congress’ Gaurav Gogoi will be the party’s deputy leader in the Lok Sabha and a letter about the decision has been sent to Speaker Om Birla. While Gogoi will be the party’s deputy leader in the Lower House, eight-time MP from Kerala Kodikunnil Suresh will be the party’s chief whip. Virudhunagar MP Manickam Tagore and Kishanganj MP Mohammad Jawed will be the party’s whips in the Lok Sabha.
- The choice of leaders in the party’s core team in the Lower House underlines a preference for continuity – a theme prevalent in setting up of the new council of ministers for the third term of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But the Congress also tried to maintain a regional balance: Suresh and Tagore from South India, Jawaid from north and with Gogoi, an MP representing northeast.

A whip in parliamentary parlance is a written order that party members be present for an important vote, or that they vote only in a particular way. The term is derived from the old British practice of “whipping in” lawmakers to follow the party line. The importance of a whip can be inferred from the number of times an order is underlined. **Appointment:** In India all parties can issue a whip to their members. Parties appoint a senior member from among their House contingents to issue whips — this member is called a Chief Whip, and he/she is assisted by additional Whips. **Types of whips:** One-line whip: A one-line whip, underlined once, is usually issued to inform party members of a vote, and allows them to abstain in case they decide not to follow the party line. Two-line whip: A two-line whip directs them to be present during the vote. Three-line whip: A three-line whip is the strongest, employed on important occasions such as the second reading of a Bill or a no-confidence motion, and places an obligation on members to toe the party line. **In India, rebelling against a three-line whip can put a lawmaker’s membership of the House at risk. The anti-defection law allows the Speaker/Chairperson to disqualify such a member; the only exception is when more than a third of legislators vote against a directive, effectively splitting the party.**

Supreme Court Collegium recommends 2 high court judges for elevation

- The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended two senior high court judges for appointment as judges in the apex court. Jammu and Kashmir’s chief justice, Justice N Kotiswar Singh, and Madras High Court judge, Justice R Mahadevan, have been recommended by the Collegium for appointment as judges in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Collegium is headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud. The panel recently recommended to the Centre the names of three additional judges of the Delhi High Court for appointment as permanent judges.

Scindia launches NERACE App, holds meeting with Meghalaya CM, members of NEC

- Union minister of communications and development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya Scindia launched the North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE) with an aim to integrate farmers and sellers, enhancing agricultural connectivity in the North Eastern Region.
- The app and web portal are expected to bring together 50,000 farmers and 5,000 buyers over the next five years. The NERACE app is intended to support agricultural and horticultural products and is designed to promote Northeast as a reliable partner in the international agricultural value chain. It seeks to enhance the reach and profitability of high-value agro-horticultural products from the region. NERACE will promote local specialities like Black Rice, Kiwi, Large Cardamom, and medicinal plants in domestic and international markets.

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is a Government of India ministry, established in September 2001, which functions as the nodal Department of the Central Government to deal with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight States of Northeast India: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It acts as a facilitator between the Central Ministries/ Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region in the economic development including removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provision of basic minimum services, creating an environment for private investment and to remove impediments to lasting peace and security in the North Eastern Region. The current Minister of Development of North Eastern Region is Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Kerala retains top rank in NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index 2023-24; Bihar worst performer

- Uttarakhand and Kerala have emerged as the top performer states in NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index 2023-24, which evaluates progress of states and union territories on social, economic and environmental parameters, while Bihar has been adjudged as the worst performer.
- According to the NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index 2023-24, India’s overall Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) score increased to 71 in 2023-24, compared to 66 in 2020-21, supported by significant progress on eliminating poverty, providing decent work, economic growth, climate action and life on land.
- Among states, Uttarakhand and Kerala have emerged as joint top performing states with a score of 79, followed by Tamil Nadu (78) and Goa (77). On the contrary, Bihar (57), Jharkhand (62) and Nagaland (63)

were the worst performing states in this year's index. Among the union territories, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Delhi were the top five performers.

- “Targetted intervention by the government has helped India achieve significant improvements across 16 goals set under the SDGs,” NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said after releasing the report. “India is not only on track and ahead of others in achieving most of the targets under SDGs,” he said, adding government hopes to achieve targets before 2030 across some of these goals. The index shows that out of the 16 goals, India's overall score is below 50 only on the ‘Goal 5’ (gender equality). 32 states and union territories (UTs) are in the front-runner category, with 10 new entrants including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh.

The Niti Aayog Sustainable Development Index India: Baseline Report 2018 highlights the progress made by the states and union territories in achieving their SDG targets. The main people responsible for creating the Niti Aayog SDG goals index 2018 are Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, and chairperson Hon Mr. Narendra Modi. Niti Aayog's Sustainable Development Index measures the outcomes of all the states in achieving the goals in different sectors, including health, education, water, and so on. **The Health Index, Water Management Index, School Education Quality Index, and Digital Transformation Index are made to measure the progress made in different sectors.**

SC Collegium recommends judge from Ladakh for his first High Court Chief Justiceship

- **The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud recommended Justice Tashi Rabstan to be appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of Meghalaya. Justice Rabstan would be the first Chief Justice from the region of Ladakh** which has otherwise little or no representation among the judges of the High Court and no representation at all so far in the office of Chief Justice. **He is currently serving as the seniormost puisne judge in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.**
- **The Collegium recommended Justice K.R. Shriram, a senior Judge of the Bombay High Court, for appointment as Madras High Court Chief Justice. Justice G.S. Sandhawalia, from the Punjab and Haryana High Court, was recommended for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.**
- **Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar, seniormost puisne Judge of the Bombay High Court, was recommended for appointment as Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala. The Collegium suggested Justice Rajiv Shakhder to be appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh. Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao, the current Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, was recommended for transfer as Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court. Justice Manmohan, currently the Acting Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, was recommended to be appointed as its regular Chief Justice.** The Collegium resolution addressed existing vacancies in the office of Chief Justices in the High Courts of Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Madras and Kerala and those likely to arise in the office of Chief Justices of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and Meghalaya.

Article 124(2) of the Indian Constitution provides that the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President after consultation with such a number of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose. As per Article 217, the Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the CJI and the State Governor, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court. The names are recommended by the Collegium. Collegium System is the system of appointment and transfer of judges that has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court, and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution. The Supreme Court collegium is headed by the CJI and comprises four other senior most judges of the court. A HC collegium is led by its Chief Justice and four other senior most judges of that court. The collegium sends its final recommendation to the President of India for approval. The President can either accept it or reject it. In the case it is rejected, the recommendation comes back to the collegium. If the collegium reiterates its recommendation to the President, then he/she is bound by that recommendation.

The Government to soon launch an ‘Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises’ (AgriSURE) to provide support to Startup and Agripreneurs

- The Government is poised to launch the ‘Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises’ (AgriSURE) to support start-ups and agripreneurs through investments in sector-specific, sector-agnostic, and debt Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity support to start-ups working in Agriculture and allied sectors.
- This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India’s agricultural sector through the establishment of a Rs. 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF). The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high- impact activities in the agriculture value chain.
- The announcement was made at the Pre-Launch Stakeholder meet held at NABARD Headquarters in Mumbai. The fund will focus on innovation in agriculture, enhancing the farm produce value chain, creating rural infrastructure, generating employment, and supporting Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs). **The fund will also encourage IT-based solutions and machinery rental services for farmers. NABVENTURES, a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD, will be the Fund manager of AgriSURE. The fund is designed to operate for 10 years, extendable by two or more years.**

Alternative Investment Fund refers to a fund established or formed in India, serving as a privately pooled investment mechanism. It gathers funds from sophisticated investors, whether domestic or international, with the aim of investing according to a specific investment policy, ultimately benefiting its investors. **These investment vehicles adhere to the SEBI (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012.** An AIF can be established in the form of a trust or a company or a limited liability partnership or a body corporate. Most of the AIFs registered with SEBI are in trust form.

Rajasthan to become first State to adopt a road safety action plan for 10 years

- **Rajasthan will shortly become the first State in the country to adopt an action plan for road safety for the next 10 years.** The action plan, to be accompanied by a government policy, will be **aimed at reducing road accidents in the State by 50% till 2030.** Deputy Chief Minister Prem Chand Bairwa said that the policy would generate awareness among the public at large about road safety provisions and bring about behavioural changes for complying with road safety rules.

Rajasthan is a state in northern India. It is the **largest Indian state by area** and the **seventh largest by population.** It is on India’s northwestern side, where it comprises most of the wide and **inhospitable Thar Desert (also known as the Great Indian Desert)** and shares a border with the Pakistani provinces of Punjab to the northwest and Sindh to the west, along the Sutlej-Indus River valley. **Kalraj Mishra is serving as the Governor of Rajasthan. Bhajan Lal Sharma is current chief minister of Rajasthan since December 2023.**

Andhra Pradesh first state to conduct skill census

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu signed on five files** which included issuing mega DSC notification, reopening Anna canteens, increasing social pension amount to Rs. 4,000, cancellation of Land Titling Act, conducting skill census. **The skill census is aimed at creating opportunities for the unemployed youth in Andhra Pradesh.**
- **Andhra Pradesh is the first state in the country to have a skill census.** The process will identify and document the skills of individuals and provide them with appropriate training based on their identified skills to make them industry-ready. The TDP government believes that the census will help the government understand the needs of the unemployed youth and also upskill them to make them more employable. It is aimed at increasing the overall efficiency of the workforce in the state.

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 13th Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Syed Abdul Nazeer is the 24th 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.**

India's first toll-free national anti-narcotics helpline 1933 launched

- **India launched its first national toll-free anti-narcotics helpline, '1933', alongside an email service under the name MANAS (Madak Padarth Nisedh Asuchna Kendra). It was launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the seventh Narco-Coordination Centre meeting on July 18, the helpline aims to provide a user-friendly platform for citizens to report drug-related crimes and seek assistance 24×7. "The toll-free number for MANAS (National Narcotics helpline) will be 1933 along with an email–info.ncbmanas@gov.in.**
- **MANAS will address various drug-related issues including trafficking, illegal sale, storage, manufacturing, and cultivation of narcotics.** It guarantees confidentiality and promises prompt action under the NDPS Act. Citizens can report crimes via phone (1933), email (info.ncbmanas@gov.in), or the website ncbmanas.gov.in. The initiative aims to streamline reporting, replacing an earlier less-accessible system. **Under PM Modi's leadership, the government is committed to a 'zero-tolerance policy' against drug trafficking.** The Ministry of Home Affairs plans to **achieve a drug-free India by 2047** through institutional strengthening, coordinated efforts among agencies, and extensive public awareness campaigns.

ICAR launched 'one scientist, one product' scheme

- **The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched its 'One Scientist-One Product' programme to improve research in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry.** It also formally announced the release of 323 varieties of 56 crops, including cereals, oilseeds, forage crops, and sugarcane, at a function in Delhi as part of the 96th foundation day of the institution. These crops include 289 climate-resilient varieties and 27 bio-fortified varieties. **The 'one scientist, one product' programme was inaugurated by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.**
- **It aims to enhance agricultural productivity by assigning specific research targets to individual scientists within the organization in the next 5 years.** The initiative is part of a broader plan to release 100 new seed varieties across various crops within the government's 100-day plan. **Climate-Resilient Crops:** A significant target is to increase the area under climate-resilient paddy seeds to 25% of the total kharif acreage, up from the current 15%.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an **autonomous body responsible for co-ordinating agricultural education and research in India.** It is headquartered in New Delhi. It reports to the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture.** **The Union Minister of Agriculture serves as its president.** It is the largest network of agricultural research and education institutes in the world.

India hosts BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers

- **The seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) should find solutions to the regional challenges within itself,** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said addressing the first BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' retreat held.
- **The meeting assumes significance as it is being held in the backdrop of major developments in neighbouring Myanmar where the military junta has been receiving battlefield setbacks against dozens of Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs). This is the first time such an event was organised since the Charter of BIMSTEC came into effect on May 20,** which marked a landmark development in the evolution of the organisation. **The developments in Myanmar pose a major issue before the BIMSTEC as instability there has put a question mark on a number of developmental and connectivity projects that were aimed at firming up ties among countries like Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand.**

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.

Government Revises Composition of NITI Aayog

- The Government has revised the composition of NITI Aayog. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has been included as an Ex-Officio Member along with Home Minister Amit Shah, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Special Invitees are Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy, MSME Minister Jitan Ram Majhi, Panchayatiraj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr Virendra Kumar, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi, Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan and Minister for Planning Rao Inderjit Singh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the chairperson of NITI Aayog while Suman Bery will continue to hold the Vice President post. The Full Time Members are V K Saraswat, Prof. Ramesh Chand, Dr V K Paul, and Anand Virmani.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. It was established to replace the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model. The Planning Commission was an institution in the Government of India, which formulated India's Five-Year Plans, among other functions. After India achieved independence, a formal model of planning was adopted, and accordingly the Planning Commission, reporting directly to the Prime Minister of India, was established on 15 March 1950, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman. Authority for creation of the Planning Commission was not derived from the Constitution of India or statute; it is an arm of the Central Government of India. The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1951, focusing mainly on development of the agricultural sector. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current Chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current Vice Chairman is Suman Bery and the current Chief Executive Officer is Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam.

Shah inaugurates 'PM College of Excellence' in 55 MP districts

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah virtually inaugurated 'Prime Minister's College of Excellence' for all 55 districts in Madhya Pradesh and hailed Narendra Modi's farsightedness in bringing in the New Education Policy amid the aim of making India a developed country by 2047. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target to make India a developed nation by 2047 when the country will celebrate 100 years of Independence.
- NEP will play a major role in it. In order to become a developed nation, the foundation of education has to be strengthened and PM Modi has shown farsightedness by bringing in NEP that fulfils the needs of the next 25 years". "NEP will not only get our students to stand on par with people of the world but will also unite the country's culture. It is focused on quality and not quantity and provides an opportunity to students to think out of the box. NEP ensures their 360 degree development".

The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of new education system of India. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2040. Education in India is a Concurrent List subject. In January 2015, a committee under former Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian started the consultation process for the New Education Policy. Based on the committee report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan.

India to host 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial conference on civil aviation

- **India will host the second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on civil aviation** on September 11 and 12. The first conference was organised in February 2018 in Beijing. As many as 39 Member States of U.N. aviation safety body International Civil Aviation Organisation fall in the Asia Pacific region and are expected to participate. “This region recorded the 33.41% of the global departures, which is the highest among all the regions in the world and it is indeed opportune that the second ministerial conference to consolidate Asia Pacific regional collaboration and co-operation to craft a futuristic vision in the region.

Karnataka Cabinet clears Bill mandating 50% reservation for locals in management jobs and 75% in non-management positions

- **The Karnataka Cabinet has cleared a Bill mandating that industries, factories and other establishments appoint local candidates in 50% of management positions and 75% in non-management positions.** The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was cleared in the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on July 15. It is expected to be tabled in the ongoing legislature session.
- **The Act defines a local candidate as a person “who is born in the State of Karnataka and who is domiciled in the State for a period of 15 years and who is capable of speaking, reading and writing Kannada in a legible way and has passed a required test conducted by the nodal agency”.**
- **According to the Act, candidates must have a secondary school certificate with Kannada as a language. If not, they should pass a Kannada proficiency test,** as specified by the nodal agency notified by the government. If qualified or suitable local candidates are not available, the industries and establishments, in collaboration with the government, should take steps to train local candidates within three years. “If sufficient number of local candidates are not available, then an industry or factory or other establishments may apply for relaxation from the provisions of this Act to the government, and after due enquiry, the government may pass appropriate orders and such orders passed by the government shall be final,” according to the Bill.

Karnataka is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. **Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. Siddaramaiah is serving as the current Chief Minister of Karnataka. Thaawarchand Gehlot is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka. Coffee production in India is dominated in the hill tracts of South Indian states, with Karnataka accounting for 71%, followed by Kerala with 21% and Tamil Nadu (5% of overall production with 8,200 tonnes).**

UGC launches project to develop 22,000 books in Indian languages

- **The Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) launched a project to develop 22,000 books in Indian languages in the next five years. The project, titled ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing), was launched by Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Higher Education, and it will be a collaborative effort of the UGC and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, a high-powered committee under the ministry, to promote Indian languages in education.**
- **“This project aims to create a robust ecosystem for translation and original book writing in Indian languages across various disciplines within higher education. The goal is to produce 1,000 books in 22 languages within five years, resulting in 22,000 books in Bharatiya bhasha.”.UGC launches project to develop 22,000 books in Indian languages.**

University Grants Commission is a statutory body under Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India. It was set up in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 and is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education in India. It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognized universities and colleges. The UGC headquarters are in New Delhi, and it has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore. A proposal to replace it with another new regulatory body called HECI is under consideration by the Government of India.

Justices Kotiswar Singh, R. Mahadevan appointed to Supreme Court; top court to regain full strength

- **President Droupadi Murmu appointed Justices N. Kotiswar Singh and Madras High Court Acting Chief Justice R. Mahadevan as Supreme Court judges.** A five-member Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud had recommended their names in a resolution. **The Centre notified the two appointments which would return the top court to its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges.**
- **Justice Singh is the first judge from Manipur, a State which has witnessed traumatic months of ethnic violence, to be appointed to the Supreme Court.** “Mr Justice N. Kotiswar Singh originally hails from Manipur... His (Justice Singh) appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court will provide representation to the North-East, and in particular, he will be **the first Judge from the State of Manipur to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court,**” the Collegium had highlighted in its resolution. Justice Singh was serving as the Chief Justice of the High Court for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. He was due to retire on February 28, 2025.

The Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania. Originally, the Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges; leaving it to parliament to increase this number. At present, SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges. The motto of the Supreme Court is ‘Yato Dharmastato Jayah’, means “whence law (dharma), thence victory”. It is also referred to – as the wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity.

Haryana announces 10% quota for Agniveers in state level recruitment among other benefits

- **Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini announced more benefits for Agniveers who complete their short four-year stint in the armed forces.** These include age relaxation in state public services recruitment, a horizontal reservation, and subsidy to industrial units that employ Agniveers.
- On the horizontal reservation, Saini said, “**The government will provide 5% horizontal reservation for Agniveers in direct recruitment to civil posts in Group C and 1% horizontal reservation in Group B.**” Further, the government will provide 10% horizontal reservation in direct recruitment to the posts of Constable, Mining Guard, Forest Guard, Jail Warden and SPO recruited by the state government.
- In 2022, **Union Government approved the AGNIPATH Scheme for recruitment of youth in the Armed Forces. The youth selected under this scheme will be known as Agniveers.** The Agniveers will be getting attractive monthly package with Risk and Hardship allowances as applicable in the three services. **Aspirants between the ages of 17.5 years and 21 years will be eligible to apply. The scheme is only applicable to personnel below officer ranks. Later, the government extended the upper age limit to 23 years for recruitment in 2022.**
- **Agniveers will be also paid one-time Seva Nidhi package upon completion of engagement period of four years.** The AGNIPATH Scheme cleared by Cabinet Committee on Security allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years. **Over forty six thousand Agniveers to be recruited this year.** This is a major defence policy reform introduced by the Government to usher in a new era in the Human Resource policy of the three services. **The policy, which comes into immediate effect, will govern the enrollment for the three services.**
- **Recruits will get starting salary of Rs. 30,000, along with additional benefits which will go up to Rs. 40,000 by the end of the four-year service.** During this period, 30 per cent of their salary will be set aside under a Seva Nidhi programme, and the government will contribute an equal amount every month, and it will also accrue interest. **At the end of the four-year period, each soldier will get Rs. 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount, which will be tax-free. For 25% of soldiers, who are re-selected, the initial four-year period will not be considered for retirement benefits. Of the total annual recruits, only 25 per cent will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission. They will also get a INR 48 lakh life insurance cover for the four years. In case of death, the payout will be over INR 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.**

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).

India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra opens in Mauritius

- **India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra** was inaugurated by EAM Jaishankar in Mauritius. Jaishankar inaugurated the Jan Aushadhi Kendra with Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. **"Delighted to inaugurate along with Prime Minister Jugnauth the first overseas Jan Aushadi Kendra in Mauritius.** This Aushadi Kendra is the delivery of the promise made by PM Narendra Modi earlier this year. Jaishankar, who is on an official visit to Mauritius, also launched modern medical facility built with Indian grant assistance.

Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) is a government initiative launched to provide affordable and quality medicines to the public. They operate under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) scheme of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. The Jan Aushadhi Scheme, revamped as Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY) in September 2015, aimed to make quality medicines available at affordable prices, particularly for the poor and disadvantaged. In November 2016, the scheme underwent further enhancement and was renamed as PMBJP to strengthen its impact. PMBJP, focuses on providing generic drugs through exclusive outlets known as Jan Aushadhi Kendras. These stores offer generic medicines at significantly lower prices compared to branded drugs, ensuring reduced out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare. Generic drugs provided by PMBJP stores are equivalent in quality and efficacy to expensive branded drugs, promoting the rational use of medications.

NITI Aayog to release Report on 'Electronics: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains'

- **NITI Aayog will unveil its report titled "Electronics: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains".** This report is the outcome of extensive analysis of India's electronics sector including its scopes and challenges. The report lays down the roadmap for the country to become a global manufacturing hub in electronics manufacturing. **In the current scenario, 70% of international trade comprises Global Value Chain (GVC) items emphasizing the critical need for India to enhance its GVC participation.** This can be achieved by prioritizing sectors such as electronics, semiconductors, automobiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals, which play a significant role in the GVC landscape.
- **Within GVCs, the electronics sector holds a significant position as nearly 80% of electronics exports come from GVCs.** In the financial year 2023, India's electronics sector recorded a significant value of exports, contributing a considerable share of 5.32% to India's total merchandise exports. The sector's export performance highlights its competitiveness in the global market and its ability to capitalize on international demand.
- **It has also enhanced India's position in the global electronics landscape.** The electronics sector is very high in terms of GVC participation. It is not confined to a particular country or economy and is spread across several geographies and firms. Presently, India's electronics manufacturing primarily involves the final assembly of electronic goods. While brands and design firms have started increasingly outsourcing assembly, testing, and packaging tasks to Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) companies in India, the ecosystem for design and component manufacturing is at a nascent stage.
- **The manufacturing sector will play a crucial role in India's journey towards becoming Viksit Bharat.** It can be achieved by accelerating Make-in-India by engaging in Global Value Chains. With this perspective, NITI Aayog will release a comprehensive report on the subject suggesting a roadmap for country for becoming manufacturing powerhouse in the electronics sector.

Thane to Borivali: India's Longest and Largest Urban Tunnel

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest and largest urban tunnel project. The Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, costing Rs. 16,000 crore, will cut travel time between Thane and Borivali to 12 minutes, down from an hour.
- PM Modi attended the launch and inauguration of several infrastructure projects worth Rs. 29,000 crore in Mumbai. The Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel project, aimed at constructing India's longest and largest urban tunnel connecting Borivali and Thane is one of the most significant road and rail infrastructure initiatives.

Patalpani Rail Tunnel (49 km): Expected to open in 2025, it is set to become one of the world's longest railway tunnels, linking Indore and Mumbai. The tunnel, stretching 49 kilometers, will not only facilitate transportation but also provide access to the scenic Patalpani waterfall. **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel (9.028 km):** Also known as the Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, it is the longest road tunnel in India, which is located in Jammu and Kashmir, , inaugurated in 2017.

Nagaland was awarded the title of best state in horticulture at the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024

- Nagaland was honored as the best state in horticulture at the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024, recognizing its innovative agricultural practices. The award was presented at the 15th Agriculture Leadership Conclave in New Delhi, emphasizing Nagaland's contributions to agricultural development.

Centre grants clearance to Parandur Airport

- The Union government has granted clearance for the Greenfield airport in Tamil Nadu's Parandur, which has faced stiff opposition from locals who are to be displaced due to the project. The state government-owned Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation Limited (TIDCO) had submitted an application to the civil aviation ministry for the grant of site clearance for the airport at Parandur in Kancheepuram district, 70 km away from Chennai.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation in India is the nodal ministry responsible for the formulation of national policies and programmes for the development and regulation of civil aviation. Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu is an Indian politician from Andhra Pradesh. He is currently serving as the 33th Minister for Civil Aviation since June 2024. He represents Srikakulam Lok Sabha constituency as a Member of Parliament.

PM Modi Announces One Million Dollar Grant To UNESCO World Heritage Centre

- Mr Modi said, India is committed to promoting global cooperation and engaging local communities towards heritage conservation efforts. He said, India's heritage is not just a history but also a science. The Prime Minister said, over the years, the government has brought back more than 350 ancient heritage sites of India. He said, the return of ancient heritage reflects global generosity and respect for history.
- The Prime Minister said, this event is taking place in India, which is one of the oldest living civilizations in the world. Prime Minister Modi announced that India will contribute one million dollar to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. He said, this grant will be used for capacity building, technical assistance and conservation of the world heritage sites. Mr Modi said, the grant will especially be used for the countries of the Global South.

India hosted the World Heritage Committee Meeting for the first time

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee on 21st July 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Director General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay also attended the inaugural event. India is hosting the World Heritage Committee Meeting for the first time. It will take place from 21 to 31 July, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- The World Heritage Committee meets once a year and is responsible for managing all matters pertaining to World Heritage and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage list. During this meeting, proposals for nominating new sites on the World Heritage list, State of Conservation reports of 124 existing World Heritage properties, International Assistance and Utilisation of World Heritage Funds, etc., will be

discussed. Meeting will be attended by more than 2000 international and national delegates from more than 150 countries. Along with the World Heritage Committee Meeting, World Heritage Young Professionals' Forum and World Heritage Site Managers' Forum are also being held in the sidelines.

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.

India building its largest research vessel to explore deep oceans

- **Indian researchers could soon set sail on the largest indigenously built Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) to unravel the deep and vast oceans for marine, metal, and mineral wealth.** The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) signed a **Rs. 839.55 crore contract deal in Goa with the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd**, which is controlled by the Ministry of Defence.
- **Over the next three years, the Kolkata-based shipbuilding company will build the new ORV, the first-of-its-kind and the largest research-class vessel.** It will be 89.50 metre in length, 18.80 metre in width, and have a depth of 12.50 metre. **The new ORV will be fitted with a dynamic positioning system, which will enable the manoeuvring of the vessel and have it docked over a desired location for the required periods to carry out high-precision scientific operations.** It will be Silent-A compliant, which means that the vessel will produce minimal underwater radiated noise.

The **Deep Ocean Mission 2023** was launched by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** in 2018. **Indian Institute of Ocean Technology** has developed the **Samudrayaan 2023 Mission** which is **capable of going 6 Km deep** in the sea. Moreover, this mission has been allotted the **wholesome budget of Rs. 8,000 Crore** which will be spent on the **Deep Sea Exploration Mission 2023**. Also, DOM is one of nine missions under the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC).

Maharashtra's Ratnagiri gets India's first sea zipline

- **India now has its first Sea Zipline facility at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra.** Nestled amidst the scenic beauty of the Konkan coast, Aare Ware Beach in Ratnagiri is a hidden gem. **Elevating its appeal is the introduction of India's first sea zipline – the Ocean Fly Zipline.** Before embarking on this thrilling aerial adventure, enjoy the serene ambiance of Aare Ware Beach. Away from the hustle and bustle of city life, this secluded paradise features pristine shores kissed by the turquoise waters of the Arabian Sea.

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. C. P. Radhakrishnan who was serving as the Jharkhand Governor was sworn in as the new Governor of Maharashtra.

EAM Jaishankar unveils world's first postal stamp featuring Ram Lalla in Laos

- **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar along with his Laotian counterpart unveiled a postage stamp set featuring Ram Lalla, the deity of Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi Temple.** The latest stamp set is the **first in the world to feature Ram Lalla.** The stamp set includes two stamps, one of Ram Lalla and the other of Lord Buddha of Luang Prabang, the ancient capital of Laos.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar is an Indian diplomat and politician serving as the Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India since 30 May 2019. He is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party and a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha since 5 July 2019, representing Gujarat. He previously served as the Foreign Secretary from January 2015 to January 2018.

Tripura to launch learning assessment survey in schools

- **The Tripura education department has decided to launch a learning assessment survey of Class 3 students.** Earlier in 2019, a similar comprehensive survey was held in 4,398 government and government-aided schools in Tripura. The 2019 survey noted that nearly 50,000 students in Class 5 could not read Class 2 Bengali language textbooks. About 46 per cent of the surveyed students also could not perform simple subtraction. Whereas, nearly 36 per cent of students in Class 8 failed to read Bengali textbooks from Standard 2.
- **The state government later introduced innovative teaching methods that included segmenting students into three categories based on their learning abilities** and holding special classes to bridge the learning gap. It also **launched an ambitious Rs. 500 crore Vidyajyoti scheme to provide world-class education in government schools.** The first such survey conducted by the Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), an organisation under the NCERT.

Tripura is a state in Northeast India. The **third-smallest state** in the country. **Agartala is the capital** and the largest city of the Indian state of Tripura. **Satyadev Narayan Arya is the current Governor** of Tripura. **Manik Saha is serving as the current Chief Minister of Tripura** since 2022.

Union Budget 2024-25: Coalition Economix

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made history by presenting her seventh consecutive budget on July 23.** The finance minister surpassed the record of **Morarji Desai who presented six budgets consecutively.** Despite global economy remaining under the grip of policy uncertainties, India's economic growth continues to be the shining exception and will remain so in the years ahead. **Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament said that India's inflation continues to be low, stable and moving towards the 4 per cent target.** Core inflation (non-food, non-fuel) currently is 3.1 per cent and steps are being taken to ensure supplies of perishable goods reach market adequately.
- The Finance Minister said that as mentioned in the interim budget, **the focus is on 4 major castes, namely 'Garib' (Poor), 'Mahilayen' (Women), 'Yuva' (Youth) and 'Annadata' (Farmer).** Dwelling on the Budget theme, Smt Sitharaman said, turning attention to the full year and beyond, in this budget, we particularly focus on employment, skilling, MSMEs, and the middle class. **She announced the Prime Minister's package of 5 schemes and initiatives to facilitate employment, skilling and other opportunities for 4.1 crore youth over a 5-year period with a central outlay of Rs. 2 lakh crore.** This year, Rs.1.48 lakh crore has been allocated for education, employment and skilling.
- **The Union Budget unveiled a concerted jobs push and a raft of schemes for young people ranging from internship guarantees to employment-linked incentives** even as it laid out a bouquet of sops for critical allies and attempted to balance the exigencies of running a coalition with maintaining fiscal discipline.
- Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's second-shortest budget speech, and her seventh overall, also focussed on changes in direct and indirect tax regimes – **including a hike in long term capital gains tax for listed assets from 10% to 12.5%, the scrapping of indexation (which took inflation into account while calculating asset values) and introduction of a flat 12.5% rate for real-estate,** the removal of the angel tax for all investors, and a sharp reduction in customs duties for items such as gold, silver and mobile phones, which will make these items cheaper for consumers.
- The government **announced five schemes with an aggregate spend of around ₹2 lakh crore for roughly 41 million people – it will pay one month's wage up to ₹15,000 in three instalments to every new person entering the workforce, incentivise employers up to ₹3,000 a month for two years towards their EPFO contribution** for new employees, offer a direct incentive to both employer and employee for their EPFO

contribution for the first four years, skill two million people over five years, and offer internship opportunities at 500 top companies for 10 million people over five years.

- The focus was on generating employment, a key grassroots grievance that hurt the BJP in the recently concluded polls. In addition to the five schemes listed above, **the government also announced upgradation of 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes, government-backed skilling loans up to ₹7.5 lakh and financial support for loans up to ₹10 lakh for higher education** in domestic institutions, making up its second thrust area – jobs.
- A third priority of the budget was maintaining fiscal discipline. **It lowered its fiscal deficit target for the current year to 4.9% of the Gross Domestic Product, from the 5.1% target set in the interim budget in February** and from 5.6% in the previous year. It lowered its gross borrowing target to ₹14.01 lakh crore rupees but said it **still plans to spend a record ₹11.11 lakh crore rupees in capital expenditure on long-term infrastructure. Taxes were a fourth key area.**
- **The government raised the short-term capital gains tax – on stocks held for less than one year – to 20% from 15%, and the long-term capital gains tax – for stocks held for over one year – to 12.5% from 10%. The step** was seen as an effort to arrest the frenzy that has propelled the markets to record highs, a day after the economic survey sounded a word of caution on galloping markets. It caused a temporary slide in India's benchmark indices but they recovered shortly after and ended the day flat.
- **But the four main priorities outlined the government's immediate and medium-term outlook – resolve the lingering problem around too few new jobs, win back key demographics such as young people disillusioned over bread-and-butter issues, shun populism as much as possible by training focus on fiscal prudence, but also ensure that allies critical to its survival remain in good humour.**
- Bhutan has emerged as the top recipient of Indian government aid to foreign countries, according to the Union Budget documents released after finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024-25. **The budget estimate for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for FY 2024-25 is ₹22,155 crore.**
- **This amount exceeds the ₹18,050 crore allocated in FY 2023-24 but falls short of the revised estimate of ₹29,121 crore for the same fiscal year. Bhutan gets the highest aid as per the Budget 2024-2025 as it is estimated to receive ₹2,068.56 crore.** This is less than last year's ₹2,400 crore. The revised budget for FY 2023-2024 showed a slightly lower utilisation at ₹2,398.97 crore. Maldives will get ₹400 crore in the new budget, the same as last year. However, the revised budget for FY 2023-2024 shows a higher amount of ₹770.90 crore.

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.

'Purvodaya' plan for five states includes Andhra Pradesh

- Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced to formulate a 'Purvodaya' plan, targeted at five states - Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. "The states in the eastern part of the country are rich in endowments and have strong cultural traditions. We will formulate a plan - Purvodaya - for the all-round development of the eastern region covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. This will cover human resource development, infrastructure, and generation of economic opportunities to make the region an engine to attain Viksit Bharat," Sitharaman said.
- The 'Purvodaya' concept was publically announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, during a meeting Paradip, Odisha after dedicating an oil refinery to the Indian Oil Corporation Limited back then. Additionally, he said that for India to become a developed nation, the eastern parts of the country need to develop.

Centre to launch PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyaan for tribal welfare

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the **Union government will launch the PM - Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyaan with an aim at achieving full saturation of basic facilities among five crore Scheduled Tribe families across 63,000 villages in tribal-majority areas and aspirational districts.**
- **The scheme, designed after the PM-JANMAN to achieve saturation of basic facilities for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, will be for Scheduled Tribe populations across the country, the Finance Minister said in her Budget (2024-25) speech on July 23, without going into the details for how much funds are being set aside for this or how this package would be implemented or overseen.**

Amit Shah-led high-level committee approves disaster mitigation projects

- **A high-level committee headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah approved several disaster mitigation and capacity building projects for various states that include combating urban flooding and checking glacial lake outburst floods. The committee gave its nod to nine proposals for funding from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).**
- **Among the proposals approved include six projects in Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, West Bengal and Maharashtra at a total cost of Rs. 2514.36 crore for urban floor management. The six cities where the funds will be spent are Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Pune, according to an official statement. The committee also considered a proposal to implement Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme in all the 28 states.**
- **Three project proposals were approved under the scheme for “Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the states” for Assam, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu of a total outlay of Rs. 810.64 crore. The central government has allocated a total amount of Rs. 5000 crore under NDRF for this scheme, and had already approved the proposals of 11 states at a total outlay of Rs. 1691.43 crore.**

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

In a first, MHA to establish Bhartiya Bhasha Anubhag for translations to and from Hindi

- **In a first, the 2024-25 Union Budget has set aside ₹56 crore to establish the ‘Bhartiya Bhasha Anubhag’ (Indian Languages Department) for the “development of a platform to facilitate the translation of various languages into Hindi and vice-versa”. No English translation was provided for the platform. Per the Official Languages Act, 1963, Hindi and English are the languages to be used in correspondence between Ministries and State governments.**

PM Narendra Modi conducts ‘first blast’ of Shinkun La tunnel

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi carried out the “first blast” for the construction of a tunnel that aims to provide all-weather connectivity between Himachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Ladakh. Mr. Modi carried out the “first blast”, marking the start of construction of the Shinkun La tunnel, remotely from Ladakh’s Drass. The project consists of a 4.1 km twin-tube tunnel, to be constructed at an altitude of around 15,800 ft. on the Nimu-Padum-Darcha Road, to provide all-weather connectivity to Leh. “Once completed, it will be the highest tunnel in the world. The Shinkun La tunnel will not only ensure swift and efficient movement of our armed forces and equipment but also foster economic and social development in Ladakh.”**

Renaming in President's House – 'Durbar Hall' is now 'Ganatantra Mandap' & 'Ashok Hall' is 'Ashok Mandap'

- The government stand to de-hyphenate from British legacy and symbolism was reflected in President Droupadi Murmu's move announced to rename 'Durbar Hall' and 'Ashok Hall' – the two important enclosures of the Rashtrapati Bhavan – as 'Ganatantra Mandap' and 'Ashok Mandap' respectively.
- The Rashtrapati Bhavan officially stated that President Droupadi Murmu was "pleased to rename" two of their important halls which are part of 340 rooms housed on four floors and spread across roughly 18,580 square metres. The term 'Durbar' rooted in Persian refers to courts and assemblies of Indian rulers and the British, reflecting on the colonial and feudal legacies.

Rented accommodation at Rs. 5 per day: 'Shramik Basera' scheme for construction workers launched

- Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel laid the foundation stone of houses for providing temporary accommodation to labourers at a token rent of Rs. 5 per day under the Shramik Basera scheme. The CM attended a function at a site in Jagatpur of Ahmedabad. Similar functions were held at 17 sites across Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Vadodara and Rajkot.
- Once completed, the 17 sites will provide rented accommodation facilities to more than 15,000 construction labourers. An official release stated that the state government is planning to construct similar accommodation facilities for three lakh construction labourers across the state in the next three years at the cost of Rs. 1,500 crore. While the token rent for every labourer is Rs. 5 per day, it will be free for the children of labourers upto six years.

Gujarat is a state on the western coast of India with a longest coastline of India 1,600 km (990 mi). Its capital city is Gandhinagar, while its largest city is Ahmedabad. Gujarat International Finance Tec-City is a business district promoted by the Government of Gujarat through a joint venture company. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city in the Ahmedabad and international financial services centre. Acharya Devvrat is Governor of Gujarat and Bhupendra Patel is the current Chief Minister of Gujarat. Gujarat has become the first state to implement newly-introduced 10 per cent reservations in government jobs and higher education for the economically weaker sections in the general category and followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Telangana: Rajiv Gandhi Civil Abhaya Hastham scheme launched

- Stressing that the Congress government was well aware of the hardships faced by unemployed youth, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said a job calendar would be announced in the ensuing budget session of the State Assembly. "The State government will compile the data of vacancies in all departments before March every year. The job calendar will be planned in a way to issue notifications by June 2 and complete the recruitment process by December 9," Revanth Reddy said after formally launching the Rajiv Gandhi Civil Abhaya Hastham programme at Praja Bhavan.

Telangana is a state in India situated on the south-central stretch of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau. On 2 June 2014, the area was separated from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state with Hyderabad as its capital. It is a land locked state in India. Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao has served as the first Chief Minister of Telangana since 2014 to 6 December 2023. Revanth Reddy is the current Chief Minister of Telangana. Jishnu Dev Varma is serving as current Governor of Telangana.

Sunken museum at Humayun's Tomb site in Delhi inaugurated

- India's first sunken museum at the Humayun Tomb complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Delhi is inaugurated. The museum, whose layout is inspired by the medieval 'baolis', or traditional water tanks, showcases the legacy of Mughal emperor Humayun, including lesser-known facets of his life, and the heritage of the Nizamuddin area over the last seven centuries. The finial of the Mughal monument (Humayun's Tomb) which was knocked off in a 2014 storm is its "centre-piece". The tomb of Humayun was built by his widow, Biga Begum (Hajji Begum), in 1569-70, 14 years after his death, according to a portal of the ministry of culture.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) has built the museum on behalf of the ASI as part of the urban renewal initiative.

Ravi Kishan introduces Bill for official status to Bhojpuri

- **Bhojpuri superstar and BJP MP Ravi Kishan has introduced a private member Bill in Lok Sabha to include Bhojpuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution** so that it can be accorded the status of an official language. Mr. Kishan, who introduced The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024, said he wants to underline that the Bhojpuri language is not about crass songs but has a rich cultural history and literature that needs to be promoted.
- **Bhojpuri is the mother tongue of a large number of people residing in Uttar Pradesh, Western Bihar, Jharkhand and some parts of Madhya Pradesh as well as in several other countries**, it further noted. In Mauritius, this language is spoken by a large number of people and it is estimated that around 140 million people speak Bhojpuri, the Bill's note on objective states. The inclusion of Bhojpuri in the Eighth Schedule has been an old demand of people who speak this language. **The Eighth Schedule lists the official languages of the country. Originally, there were 14 languages in the schedule, now there are 22.**

The Eighth schedule of the Constitution defined 14 languages in 1950. These included Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. In 1967, 21st amendment to the constitution added Sindhi as one of the languages in the eight schedule. The 71st Amendment, enacted in 1992, included three more languages Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali to the list. In 2003, the 92nd Amendment was enacted, which added Bodo, Dogri, Santhali and Maithali, raising the total number of languages to 22. In 2011, the spelling Oriya was changed to Odia by 96th amendment

International



Mongolia ruling party wins reduced majority in vote dominated by graft

- Mongolia's ruling party emerged from this week's polls with its parliamentary majority significantly diminished, after a campaign dominated by graft fears and the state of the economy. **Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene** declared victory in the previous day's polls, in which millions of Mongolians turned out to elect 126 members of the State Great Khural, the country's unicameral parliament. The new parliament will see the MPP hold 54% of the seats, compared to around 80% in 2020.

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.

A centre-right coalition in Bulgaria is tapped to form a new government

- **Bulgarian President Rumen Radev** tapped the largest group in parliament, the centre-right GERB-UDF coalition, to form the country's new government. Accepting the mandate, Prime Minister-designate Rosen Zhelyazkov presented a proposal for a Cabinet and asked the president to send it to parliament for approval. The 56-year-old lawyer and former parliament speaker, who has served in different ministerial positions in previous governments, said that the new Cabinet was "a team of experts and seasoned politicians from GERB".
- **The GERB-UDF coalition finished first in the June elections but only has 68 legislators in the 240-seat National Assembly.** The coalition picked Zhelyazkov to head a new government over its leader, Boyko Borissov, who led three governments between 2009 and 2021, when his third Cabinet resigned following major anti-corruption protests.

Bulgaria is a country in Southeast Europe. Sofia is the nation's capital and largest city. The lev is the currency of Bulgaria. Rumen Radev has been the President of Bulgaria since 22 January 2017.

Hungary takes on European Union presidency amid concerns

- Hungary takes over the European Union's (EU) rotating presidency on July 1, promising to be an "honest broker" despite widespread concerns over what critics see as an authoritarian, Russia-friendly government. **Nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban**, who has run the central European country since 2010 aiming to transform it into an "illiberal democracy", frequently clashes with Brussels over rule-of-law and human rights issues.

Hungary is a landlocked country in Central Europe. Budapest is the country's capital and largest city; it is bordered by Slovakia to the north, Ukraine to the northeast, Romania to the east and southeast, Serbia to the south, Croatia and Slovenia to the southwest and Austria to the west. The forint is the currency of Hungary.

PM-elect Dick Schoof, Dutch government sworn-in 7 months after far-right party won elections

- **The Netherlands has a different Prime Minister** for the first time in 14 years as Dutch King Willem-Alexander swore in the country's new government more than seven months after elections dominated by a far-right, anti-Islam party.

- **Dick Schoof, former head of the Dutch intelligence agency and counterterrorism office, signed the official royal decree at Huis Ten Bosch Palace, saying he “declared and promised” to uphold his duties as the country’s prime minister. He was formally installed alongside 15 other ministers who make up the country’s right-leaning coalition.**

The Netherlands, informally Holland is a country located in northwestern Europe with overseas territories in the Caribbean. It is the largest of four constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Amsterdam is the country’s most populous city and the nominal capital. Mark Rutte has served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands since 2010. He was also the Leader of the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) from 2006 through 2023. He is currently acting in a demissionary capacity and will not return to politics following installation of a new cabinet.

SCO chair Kazakhstan to host unique World Nomadic Games celebrating Central Asian spirit

- **Kazakhstan, which hosted the SCO Summit, will be hosting a series of international meets this year including ‘World Nomadic Games’ to celebrate local and unique traditions. “Under the leadership of President Tokayev, the country will continue a constructive and balanced foreign policy, taking into account the national interests of the country. In 2024, our country will host a number of representative summits and forums. Kazakhstan will chair several authoritative international organizations at once, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).**

Kazakhstan is a country in Central Asia; it has borders with Russia in the north, China in the east, and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan in the south. The capital is Nur-Sultan, formerly known as Astana. Kazakhstan is the world’s largest landlocked country and the ninth-largest in the world. Kassym-Jomart Kemeluly Tokayev has been serving as the President of Kazakhstan since 20 March 2019. The tenge is the currency of Kazakhstan.

Egypt swears in a new Cabinet as mounting economic challenges fuel public discontent

- **Egypt’s new Cabinet was sworn as the country faces an ailing economy and raging conflicts in neighbouring nations. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly — who was first appointed in 2018 — has been again tapped to form the new Cabinet which includes several technocrats. Some ministers, including those in charge of police and tourism, remain in place, but others, particularly defence, foreign affairs and economy-related portfolios, represent major challenges. The ministers have taken the oath before President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi in Cairo.**

Egypt is a country located in North Africa. Mostafa Madbouly is the current Prime Minister of Egypt. Cairo is the capital city of Egypt. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is the current President of Egypt since 2014. Egyptian pound is the currency of Egypt. Egypt is home to famous monuments such as the Giza Pyramid Complex and the Great Sphinx. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Pyramids of Giza are built on the banks of the Nile River. The Great Pyramid of Giza was built in 2560 BC. India and Egypt, two of the world’s oldest civilizations, have enjoyed a history of close contact from ancient times.

UK elections: Kier Starmer ends 14-year rule of Conservatives

- **United Kingdom’s Labour Party leader Kier Starmer, who is on course to be the new prime minister, thanked British people and said the country has to “return politics to public service”. He also said the people are ready for change and ending the politics of performance. “The fight for trust is the battle that defines our age. It is why we’ve campaigned so hard on demonstrating we are fit for public service. We have to return politics to public service. Starmer’s Labour Party has won 381 seats, while Sunak’s Conservative Party had secured only 92. Out of the 650 seats in total, 562 have been declared so far.**

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.

Belarus officially joins Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- Belarus has become the 10th member state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The announcement was made by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during the SCO summit in Astana, marking a milestone for the organization that seeks to bolster regional security and cooperation. Tokayev, addressing the heads of state at the summit, expressed his congratulations to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and emphasized that Belarus had swiftly met all necessary requirements for full membership.

SCO Summit 2024 concluded in Astana, Kazakhstan

- Recently the 2024 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit was concluded in Astana, Kazakhstan and brought together leaders from across the region. India played a prominent role, with the External Affairs Minister delivering the Prime Minister's message that highlighted combating terrorism and addressing climate change as key priorities.
- India's External Affairs Minister met the Chinese Foreign Minister on the margins of the SCO Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. Both ministers emphasised the need for "complete disengagement" of troops and restoring peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The two ministers agreed to expedite efforts through diplomatic and military channels to resolve remaining issues in Eastern Ladakh.
- Make in India and Global Economic Growth: The 'Make in India' initiative was highlighted as it has the potential to become a significant engine for global economic growth.
- The Council of Heads of State– Members of the SCO adopted the SCO Development Strategy until 2035, including resolutions on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, anti-drug strategy, energy cooperation, economic development, and cooperation in protected areas and eco-tourism. Commitments also included signing a memorandum to combat illicit drug trafficking and an interaction plan on international information security issues.
- At the SCO summit, the External Affairs Minister of India urged the global community to isolate countries that harbour terrorists and condone terrorism. He emphasised the need to counter cross-border terrorism and highlighted the importance of combating terrorism as a foundational goal of the SCO. India has been proactive in enhancing its security-related cooperation within the SCO framework, particularly through the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which focuses on security and defence issues. The Russian President emphasised the SCO's role in promoting a fair, multipolar world order.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), also known as the Shanghai Pact, is a transcontinental political, economic, security, and military alliance. It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization. The creation of SCO was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting in June 2002, and entered into force on 19 September 2003. In terms of geographic scope and population, it is the world's largest regional organization, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of global GDP. The SCO is the successor to the Shanghai Five, a mutual security agreement formed in 1996 between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Its membership has since expanded to eight states, with India and Pakistan joining on 9 June 2017. Iran started accession as a full member in September 2021 at the Dushanbe Summit in Tajikistan. Iran has been accepted as the ninth full member of the organisation. Several countries are engaged as observers or partners. The SCO is governed by the Heads of State Council (HSC), its supreme decision-making body, which meets once a year. Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Reformist Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff election

- Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's runoff presidential election besting hard-liner Saeed Jalili by promising to reach out to the West and ease enforcement on the country's mandatory headscarf law after years of sanctions and protests squeezing the Islamic Republic.
- Pezeshkian promised no radical changes to Iran's Shiite theocracy in his campaign and long has held Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the final arbiter of all matters of state in the country. But even Pezeshkian's modest aims will be challenged by an Iranian government still largely held by hard-liners, the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, and Western fears over Tehran enriching uranium to near-weapons-grade levels. A vote count offered by authorities put Pezeshkian as the winner with 16.3 million votes to Jalili's 13.5 million. Overall, Iran's Interior Ministry said 30 million people voted in an election held without internationally recognized monitors.

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

Senegal's President Faye looks to reunite ECOWAS, a bloc split by coups

- Senegal's President Basirou Diomaye Faye, Africa's youngest, is suddenly faced with a huge challenge of reuniting the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a weakened regional bloc that is older than him.
- Faye was tasked with getting the military junta-ruled Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso back to ECOWAS at the bloc's summit in Nigeria's capital Abuja. The three nations left ECOWAS and formed an alliance after the military takeovers fractured their relations with West African neighbours.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa. Collectively, Considered one of the pillar regional blocs of the continent-wide African Economic Community (AEC), the stated goal of ECOWAS is to achieve "collective self-sufficiency" for its member states by creating a single large trade bloc by building a full economic and trading union. The union was established on 28 May 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos, with its stated mission to promote economic integration across the region. A revised version of the treaty was agreed and signed on 24 July 1993 in Cotonou, the largest city in Benin. ECOWAS's fundamental principles rely on equity, inter-dependence, solidarity, co-operation, nonaggression, regional peace, promotion of human rights, and economic and social justice. The 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The main goal of ECOWAS is to promote economic cooperation among member states in order to raise living standards and promote economic development. In 2024, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali announced their withdrawal from the bloc. The countries had earlier been suspended from ECOWAS due to military takeovers of their respective governments.

'World's First' Industrial Solar Fuel Plant Opens in Germany

- By generating fuel from solar heat, the company wants to remove the dependence on fossil fuels, particularly in aviation. According to the company, they want to demonstrate the technology's capabilities and prove that the technology needed for solar fuel is ready for large scale production.
- The plant is called DAWN and includes a 65-foot high solar tower that is surrounded by a mirror field to capture solar rays. A black surface inside the tower absorbs heat that is then sent to a thermochemical reactor. Once the heat is sent to the reactor, it's then used to make synthetic liquid fuels or syngas. A cost-effective thermal energy storage system also helps store energy or generate solar fuel when the sun is not out. DAWN was inaugurated in honor of the summer solstice. The plant is located in Jülich, Germany.

Germany is a country in Central Europe. It is the second-most populous country in Europe after Russia, and the most populous member state of the European Union. The nation's capital and largest city is Berlin, and its financial centre is Frankfurt; the largest urban area is the Ruhr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is serving as the President of Germany since 19 March 2017. Euro is the official currency of it. Olaf Scholz is the chancellor of Germany.

Canada has become outlier among NATO members

- **Canada has become an outlier among the 32-member NATO alliance.** “Over the past several years, **Ottawa has become an outlier among the 32-member alliance.** It has failed to hit domestic military spending goals, has fallen short on benchmarks to fund new equipment and has no plans to get there,” “Politico” said.
- **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrived in Washington, DC to participate in this year's NATO summit that formally begins.** The summit will be an opportunity for the prime minister to reaffirm Canada's commitment to Euro-Atlantic security and stability, particularly in the face of ongoing Russian aggression and destabilisation.

The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also called the North Atlantic Alliance is an intergovernmental military alliance of 32 member states – 30 European and two North American.** Established in the aftermath of World War II, the organization implements the North Atlantic Treaty, **signed in Washington, D.C., on 4 April 1949.** NATO is a collective security system: its independent member states agree to defend each other against attacks by third parties. **The organization's motto is animus in consulendo liber (Latin for ‘a mind unfettered in deliberation’).** NATO's main headquarters are located in **Brussels, Belgium,** while NATO's **military headquarters are near Mons, Belgium.** NATO formed with twelve founding members and has added new members ten times, **most recently when Sweden joined the alliance on 7 March 2024.** **Jens Stoltenberg is a Norwegian politician who has served as the 13th secretary general of NATO since 2014.** A member of the Norwegian Labour Party, he previously served as the 34th Prime Minister of Norway.

Exercise Pitch Black 2024 takes off

- **The Indian Air Force (IAF) has embarked on a significant international engagement by participating in Exercise Pitch Black 2024, hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at their Base Darwin, Australia.** This biennial, multi-national exercise, scheduled from July 12 to August 2, 2024, represents a crucial platform for enhancing international military cooperation and showcasing air combat capabilities.
- **Exercise Pitch Black has a rich history spanning 43 years. The name ‘Pitch Black’ originates from the exercise's emphasis on nighttime flying over vast unpopulated areas,** creating unique and challenging combat scenarios. It is the **Australia's biggest international air combat training activity.**
- **The primary focus of Exercise Pitch Black 2024 is on Large Force Employment (LFE) warfare.** This approach aims to strengthen international cooperation, enhance operational experience and Facilitate interoperability among diverse air forces **Indian Air Force Contingent: The IAF contingent comprises over 150 highly skilled Air Warriors, including: Pilots, Engineers, Technicians, Controllers, Subject matter experts and Aircraft Deployment. The IAF is deploying a formidable fleet for the exercise: Su-30 MKI multirole fighters, C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft, IL-78 Air-to-Air Refuelling aircraft and these aircraft will operate in combat-enabling roles, showcasing the IAF's operational capabilities and readiness.**

European Union halted Georgia's induction in the bloc

- **After Georgia passed an unprecedented law which could undermine the rights of a free and independent media, the European Union has become strict over the South Caucasus country. The EU has halted Georgia's accession of the bloc and has frozen the financial assistance being provided to the country in order to show its resistance towards the law which was adopted by the Georgian government. The European Union leaders decided to halt the financial aid in the previous meeting of the European Council as the law was already passed and adopted by the Georgian administration.**

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.

Meet hijab-clad Kenza Layli from Morocco, world's first-ever Miss AI who beat 1500 contestants

- The winner of the first Miss AI 2024 pageant was announced recently; AI generated influencer, Kenza Layli from Morocco won over 1,500 contenders. In a futuristic turn of events, there now seems to be a pageant for AI influencers. Earlier this year the World AI Creator Awards announced Miss AI 2024, the first international beauty pageant solely for AI influencers. As the winner of the pageant, Kenza Layli from Morocco won over 1,500 contenders.
- The hijab-wearing activist and influencer is wholly AI-generated, from her captions to her outfits to her facial features. With over 190,000 followers, she mainly focuses on content that revolves around the traditions and culture of Moroccan society. She was created by Myriam Bessa, CEO of Phoenix AI. AI-generated influencers from all over the world competed in this international pageant. The prizes included a \$5,000 cash prize for the creator along with a \$3,000 mentorship program and PR support. Contenders were judged with respect to various categories including beauty, tech and social clout. The judging panel was composed of a pageant historian, a media entrepreneur, and two AI influencers. Kenza bested two others, Lalina Valina from France and Olivia C. who is a Portuguese globetrotter.

Philippines chosen to host climate 'loss and damage' fund board

- The Philippines has been chosen to host the board of the “Loss and Damage” fund created by U.N. talks, marking another step towards providing financial help for countries to recover and rebuild from the impact of global warming. The World Bank’s board approved a plan for the bank to act as interim host of the fund for four years.
- Some countries, however, voiced concern that allowing the World Bank to host would give donors, including the United States that appoints the World Bank’s president, too much influence. The Philippines must enact legislation before it can become host and Marcos did not say when it would take on its role.
- An archipelago of more than 7,600 islands, the Philippines, which also has a seat on the fund’s board, is frequently hit by typhoons and other climate-change induced disasters. As host, Manila could focus attention on the Asia-Pacific region, where many countries struggle with limited resources, hindering their ability to respond to the effects of climate change.
- Who pays for loss and damage has been among the most intractable issues at U.N. climate talks, as developed countries blamed for producing the most emissions historically have been nervous about how much of the bill for redressing damage they might face. COP27 in Egypt in 2022 however managed to establish a U.N. “loss and damage” fund dedicated to addressing irreparable climate-driven damage from drought, floods and rising sea levels, but did not decide on detail.

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.

Two Russian warships in China for joint naval exercises

- **Two Russian warships have arrived in the southern Chinese port city of Zhanjiang to take part in joint naval exercises.** China and Russia have greatly reinforced ties since the start of the Russian offensive in Ukraine that began in February 2022. **Their common goal is also to reduce the role of the United States and the West on the international stage.** “A detachment of vessels from the Pacific fleet will take part in the joint naval exercise — Interaction Maritime 2024”. The two countries hold joint military exercises regularly, but their level of interoperability is greatly inferior to that of the Western military alliance NATO.

World’s first hydrogen-powered commercial ferry launches in San Francisco

- **The world’s first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100% hydrogen fuel, the MV Sea Change, was launched at the San Francisco Ferry Building.** The 70-foot catamaran can transport up to 75 passengers along the waterfront between Pier 41 and the downtown San Francisco ferry terminal. **Unlike current diesel-powered ferries that emit pollutants, the hydrogen-powered Sea Change produces only heat and water vapor as byproducts.** Passengers can even drink the emissions from an onboard water fountain. The Sea Change can travel about 300 nautical miles and operate for 16 hours before needing to refuel. The hydrogen fuel cells produce electricity by combining oxygen and hydrogen in an electrochemical reaction. **The project was financed and managed by SWITCH Maritime,** with the vessel constructed at Bay Ship and Yacht in Alameda, California, and All-American Marine in Bellingham, Washington. Officials hope the technology can help clean up the shipping industry, **which produces nearly 3% of the world’s total greenhouse gas emissions.**

Nepal PM Prachanda loses trust vote in Parliament

- **Nepal’s prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda lost trust vote in parliament after the largest party in his government,** the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), withdrew support. According to Nepal parliament speaker Dev Raj Ghimire, Dahal received 63 votes in his favor while 194 other members voted against him, denying him the majority required to hold on to power. **Khadga Prasad Oli, the leader of the communist party, will be the new prime minister of Nepal.**

K P Sharma Oli appointed Nepal’s new Prime Minister

- **K P Sharma Oli was appointed Nepal’s Prime Minister for the third time to lead the new coalition government** that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the country. **Oli, succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda who lost the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives** leading to the formation of the new government process as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution.
- **President Ram Chandra Paudel appointed Oli as the new Prime Minister of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML)-Nepali Congress (NC) coalition.** Oli staked his claim to become the next Prime Minister with the backing of NC president Sher Bahadur Deuba and submitted the signatures of 165 House of Representatives (HoR) members – 77 from his party and 88 from the NC.

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.** **Khadga Prasad Oli is serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal.** **Bidya Devi Bhandari served as the second president of Nepal and she is the first woman to hold the office in the country.** **Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.** **Ram Chandra Paudel is serving as the third President of Nepal since March 2023.**

Armenia launches joint military drills with the US amid souring ties with old ally Russia

- **Armenia launched joint military drills with the United States, a move that reflects its leader’s efforts to forge closer ties with the US and other Western allies as the country’s relations with old ally Russia sour.** **The “Eagle Partner” war games are aimed at increasing interoperability of units participating in international peacekeeping missions.** They involve Armenian peacekeeping forces, servicemen of the US Army Europe and Africa, and the Kansas National Guard. It wasn’t immediately clear how many troops were taking part.

- The exercises were scheduled to last through July 24. **Russia has been Armenia’s main economic partner and ally since the 1991 Soviet collapse. Landlocked Armenia, which used to be part of the Soviet Union, hosts a Russian military base and is part of the Moscow-led security alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Armenia’s ties with Russia, however, have grown increasingly strained since Azerbaijan waged a lightning military campaign last year to take the Karabakh region, ending three decades of ethnic Armenian separatist rule there. Armenian authorities accused Russian peacekeepers who were deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh after a previous round of hostilities in 2020 of failing to stop Azerbaijan’s onslaught. Moscow rejected the accusations, arguing that its troops didn’t have a mandate to intervene. Russia has engaged in a delicate balancing act, trying to preserve close relations with Armenia while also maintaining warm ties with Azerbaijan and its main ally Turkey, a key economic partner for Moscow amid Western sanctions.**
- The Kremlin has been angered by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s efforts to deepen Armenia’s ties with the West and distance his country from Moscow-dominated alliances. **Russia was particularly vexed by Armenia’s decision to join the International Criminal Court, which last year indicted Russian President Vladimir Putin for alleged war crimes connected to Russia’s war in Ukraine. As the rift with Russia kept widening, Armenia froze its participation in the Russian-dominated security alliance, canceled its involvement in joint military drills and snubbed the bloc’s summits. In September 2023, Armenia also held the “Eagle Partner” drills, eliciting dismay in Moscow, where officials called the move “unfriendly.”**

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

Rwanda votes as President Kagame set to extend rule

- **Millions of Rwandans were voting in presidential and parliamentary elections with the African nation’s leader Paul Kagame widely expected to cruise to victory and extend his iron-fisted rule for another five years. Rwanda’s de facto leader since the end of the 1994 genocide and President since 2000, Mr. Kagame faces only two challengers after several prominent critics were barred from standing. The lineup is a carbon copy of the last election in 2017, when Mr. Kagame obliterated his rivals with almost 99% of the vote.**

Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Rift Valley of Central Africa, where the African Great Lakes region and Southeast Africa converge. Its capital and largest city is Kigali. The Rwandan franc is the currency of Rwanda. Paul Kagame has been the President of Rwanda since 2000. Edouard Ngirente serves as the Prime Minister of Rwanda since 30 August 2017.

China Builds World’s First Commercial Underwater Data Center

- **China is making waves in the data center industry by constructing the world’s first commercial underwater data center.** The facility, located off the coast of Sanya on Hainan Island, aims to harness the power of cold seawater to cool its operations and significantly reduce energy consumption.
- **The massive project, spanning 68,000 square meters, will consist of 100 individual data storage units, each weighing 1,300 tons and capable of processing millions of high-definition images in seconds.** Construction began in April and is expected to be completed within five years. As the demand for data processing and cloud services surges globally, data centers are facing increasing pressure to become more energy-efficient. Traditional land-based facilities often require vast amounts of land, water, and electricity. China’s underwater data center offers a potential solution to these challenges.

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

India backs Mauritius' efforts to reclaim Chagos Archipelago

- Though claimed by Mauritius, Chagos is part of the UK's British Indian Ocean Territory and Diego Garcia was leased to the US in the 1960s. India will continue supporting Mauritius on the issue of Chagos Archipelago in line with its stand on decolonisation, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said amid the Indian Ocean nation's efforts to reclaim the British-administered islands that house a major US military base.
- Jugnauth raised the issue of the Chagos Archipelago – a group of seven atolls that includes Diego Garcia island, which houses a strategic US military base – in his address at the same event and expressed gratitude for India's "unflinching support" to Mauritius's efforts to complete its "decolonisation process so that we can effectively exercise our sovereignty over our entire territory, including the Chagos Archipelago".

Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 kilometres (1,200 mi) off the southeast coast of the African continent. Ameenah Gurib was the first woman to ever hold the title of President of Mauritius. Prithvirajsing Roopun is serving as President of Mauritius. Port Louis is the capital city of Mauritius. The rupee is the currency of Mauritius. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is serving as the prime minister of Mauritius since January 2017. The main island of Mauritius, where most of the population is concentrated, hosts the capital and largest city, Port Louis. The islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, along with nearby Réunion (a French overseas department), are part of the Mascarene Islands.

Roberta Metsola Re-Elected As European Parliament Chief

- EU lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to give conservative Maltese politician Roberta Metsola another term as speaker of the European Parliament. Metsola won a massive majority with 562 votes as the 720-seat parliament met for its first session in Strasbourg, France, with new MEPs. Metsola, who belongs to the largest political group in the parliament, will be the parliament's president for the next two and a half years.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda Sworn In For Second Five-Year Term

- Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda was sworn in for a second five-year term. The ceremony commenced with a ceremonial event at the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas, where Mr. Nausėda took the presidential oath with his hand on the Constitution. On this occasion, the 60-year-old economist, Mr. Nausėda proposed increasing Lithuania's defense budget to four percent of GDP. This would allow Lithuania to fund long-range air defense, a missile shield for the Baltic Sea coast, and border fortifications.

Lithuania is a country in the Baltic region of Europe. It is one of three Baltic states and lies on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Vilnius is the capital of and largest city. Gitanas Nausėda is the incumbent President of Lithuania since 2019. Ingrida Simonyte is serving as the 17th and current prime minister of Lithuania since 2020. The Baltic states or the Baltic countries is a geopolitical term encompassing Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. All three countries are members of NATO, the European Union, the Eurozone, and the OECD. The three sovereign states on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea are sometimes referred to as the "Baltic nations", less often and in historical circumstances also as the "Baltic republics", the "Baltic lands", or simply the Baltics.

Sri Lanka Celebrates Annual Kataragama Esala Festival

- **The annual Kataragama Esala festival is being celebrated in Sri Lanka.** Devotees who started their Pada Yatra in May have reached Kataragama completing a journey of over 500 kilometres across difficult terrain on foot from as far afield as Jaffna in Sri Lanka's northern peninsula.
- **The festival which is celebrated across faiths is known to have deep bonds bridging India and Sri Lanka.** Katharagama's main temple of the Maha Devala is dedicated to the Hindu God of War, Skanda. Said to have six heads, twelve arms, twenty names and two wives, Skanda is also ardently worshipped by Buddhists as the Katharagama Deviyo, while Muslims believe that the place has connection with Hazrat Khizr. The Perahara which commenced on 6th of July will feature fire walk event and end on 21st July with a grand procession.

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.

EAM Jaishankar inaugurates Maitree Udyan in Port Louis, Mauritius

- **EAM Jaishankar inaugurates Maitree Udyan in Port Louis, Mauritius.** External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar inaugurated the India -Mauritius Maitree Udyan in Port Louis and planted a tree there.

Ursula von der Leyen wins second term as European Commission president

- **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was elected for a second term after pledging to establish a continental "defence union" and to maintain Europe's green transition** while alleviating its impact on industry. Members of the European Parliament supported von der Leyen's bid for another five-year term at the helm of the EU's powerful executive body, with 401 votes in her favour and 284 against, in a secret ballot within the 720-member chamber.

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.

Ukraine's largest music festival returns with a break from the inescapable reality of war

- **This year, Ukraine's largest music festival struck a different chord.** Gone were the international headliners, the massive performance halls and the hundreds of thousands of visitors. **Instead, beloved local artists graced the stage this past weekend at the Atlas Festival — the first since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022** — for a smaller but still ebullient crowd. The stage was erected in a shopping mall parking lot, the only option with a shelter large enough to contain the 25,000 people expected in the event of an air raid.

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.

Israel's Presence in West Bank and East Jerusalem is Illegal, Said UN Top Court ICJ

- **United Nations' top court International Court of Justice (ICJ) has said that Israel's presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal. The ICJ also ruled that Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza is unlawful and advised Tel Aviv to cease immediately all settlement activities and evacuate all settlers present in the occupied territories. The advisory opinion was the first time the ICJ has expressed its view on the legality of Israel's presence in territories it captured in the 1967 war. According to the ICJ, an advisory opinion is not legally binding but carries moral authority and can shape international law.**
- **The court's advisory opinion is not legally binding but still carries significant political weight. It marks the first time the ICJ has delivered a position on the legality of the 57-year occupation. The ICJ, based at The Hague in the Netherlands, has been examining the issue since the beginning of last year, at the request of the UN General Assembly. The court was specifically asked to give its view on Israel's policies and practices towards the Palestinians, and on the legal status of the occupation. Delivering the court's findings, ICJ President Nawaf Salam said it had found that "Israel's... continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal." "The State of Israel is under the obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible". He said Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 did not bring Israel's occupation of that area to an end because it still exercises effective control over it. The court also said Israel should evacuate all of its settlers from the West Bank and East Jerusalem and pay reparations to Palestinians for damages caused by the occupation.**

Bangladesh Supreme Court Scraps Most Jobs Quota That Sparked Violent Protests

- **Bangladesh Supreme Court scrapped most of the quota in the government jobs that sparked countrywide clashes between police and university students claiming over 100 lives. With the Top Court's ruling, just 5 per cent of civil service jobs instead of 30 per cent would remain for the relatives of war veterans of 1971. The university students have been protesting against the quota system, terming it discriminatory. In 2018, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government scrapped the quota system, but the lower court reinstated, sparking deadly protests.**

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 16th and current President of Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh. India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh (4,096-kilometer) (2,545-mile).

Nepal PM K.P Sharma Oli Secures Trust Vote with Two-Thirds Majority

- **Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has secured a vote of confidence with a two-thirds majority from the House of Representatives (HoR). A total of 188 out of 263 members of the House of Representatives (HoR) present in the meeting voted for the proposal on the vote of confidence to the government presented at the HoR meeting by PM Oli. Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire declared that PM Oli received 188 votes in favour of his proposal while 74 votes were against the proposal, so PM Oli secured the vote of confidence with a two-third majority out of present HoR members in the assembly. One vote remained neutral.**
- **Earlier, PM Oli presented his proposal according to Article 76 (4) of the Constitution of Nepal and as per Rule 155 of the House of Representatives Regulations, 2079BS. To secure a vote of confidence 138 votes were needed whereas 184 votes were needed for a two-thirds majority. Oli was appointed Prime Minister for the fourth time on July 14. The Prime Minister updated the House on the seven-point pact reached on July 1 between the first and second largest parties in the HoR while seeking a vote of confidence in the House. The following are the seven points in the agreement which the PM shared with the House:**

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. Bidya Devi Bhandari served as the second president of Nepal and she is the first woman to hold the office in the country. Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Ram Chandra Paudel is serving as the third President of Nepal since March 2023.

China makes world's first high-speed carbon fiber train

- China recently presented a ground-breaking advancement in high-speed rail technology, cementing its position as a global leader in the sector. According to Interesting Engineering, the country has unveiled the first carbon fiber-only passenger train in history. Because this train is noticeably lighter than conventional trains, it will help cut pollution tremendously, as per the reports of Yahoo Tech.
- Transporting vehicles with less weight and energy without sacrificing performance is the main objective of rail transportation technology. A cleaner, low-carbon future depends on maintaining this focus. Qingdao Sifang, the company behind the new train, emphasized this point on the Chinese social media platform WeChat. Later this year, a coastal city will host the new carbon fiber train's operational launch when factory testing is over.

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

Hamas and Fatah sign declaration in Beijing on ending yearslong rift as war rages in Gaza

- Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah signed a declaration in Beijing on ending a yearlong rift taking a step toward potentially resolving the deep divide between the sides as the war in Gaza rages on. The declaration by the two heavyweights of Palestinian politics - and other smaller Palestinian groups - to form a unity government for the Palestinian territories is the result of the latest in a series of talks meant to unite the sides.

An armed conflict between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups has been taking place chiefly in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel since 7 October 2023. The fifth war of the Gaza-Israel conflict since 2008, it has been the deadliest for Palestinians in the entire Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the most significant military engagement in the region since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The war began when Hamas-led militant groups launched a surprise attack on Israel on 7 October, which involved a rocket barrage and a few thousand militants breaching the Gaza-Israel barrier and attacking Israeli civilian communities and military bases. During this attack, 1,139 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, including 815 civilians. In addition, 251 Israelis and foreigners were taken captive into Gaza, with the stated goal to force Israel to release Palestinian prisoners. Hamas said its attack was in response to Israel's continued occupation, blockade of Gaza, and settlements expansion, as well as alleged threats to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the plight of Palestinians. After clearing militants from its territory, Israel launched one of the most destructive bombing campaigns in modern history and invaded Gaza on 27 October with the stated objectives of destroying Hamas and freeing hostages. Israel's tightened blockade cut off basic necessities and attacks on infrastructure have caused healthcare collapse and an impending famine.

Israeli parliament approves bill to label U.N. relief agency UNRWA as a terror organisation

- The Israeli parliament gave preliminary approval to a bill that declares the main United Nations relief organisation for Palestinians a terrorist organisation and proposes to sever relations with the body. The vote against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) is the latest step in a Israeli push against the agency, which Israeli leaders have accused of collaborating with the Islamist movement Hamas in Gaza.

Israel is a country in the Middle East, Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally. Knesset is the unicameral national legislature of Israel. Israeli new shekel is the currency of Israel. It is bordered by Lebanon to the north, by Syria to the northeast, by Jordan to the east, by the Red Sea to the south, by Egypt to the southwest, by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and by the Palestinian territories – the West Bank along the east and the Gaza Strip along the southwest. Isaac Herzog is serving as the current President of Israel since 7 July 2021. Benjamin Netanyahu is the current Prime Minister of Israel.

Junta chief takes over as acting President in Myanmar

- Myanmar’s acting President has taken medical leave and transferred his duties to Military Chief Min Aung Hlaing, the junta said. Acting President U. Myint Swe “took sick leave and is getting treatment according to his current health situation”, the junta’s information team said in a statement. Myint Swe was Vice-President under the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi that the military ousted in 2021. He was later appointed acting President by the junta. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power in 2021, deposing the government of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Myanmar is formerly known as Burma, is a country in Southeast Asia. It is the largest country in Mainland Southeast Asia. Myanmar is bordered by Bangladesh and India to its northwest, China to its northeast, Laos and Thailand to its east and southeast, and the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to its south and southwest. The country’s capital city is Naypyidaw, and its largest city is Yangon (Rangoon). The kyat is the currency of Myanmar (Burma). Following the 2020 Myanmar general election, in which Aung San Suu Kyi’s party won a clear majority in both houses, the Burmese military (Tatmadaw) again seized power in a coup d’état. Min Aung Hlaing is army general who has ruled Myanmar as the chairman of the State Administration Council since seizing power in the February 2021 coup d’état. He took the nominally civilian role of prime minister of Myanmar in August 2021 upon the formation of the Provisional Government. Myint Swe is currently serving as Acting President of Myanmar as well as First Vice President. The Tatmadaw is the official name of the armed forces of Myanmar (formerly Burma).

SCO countries hold first joint live anti-terror drills with all member states

- The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held the first joint anti-terrorism drill in China focussing on live drills and specialised operations such as “the eradication of terrorist groups.” The ‘Interaction-2024’ joint counter-terrorism exercises were held recently in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- “The exercise marks the first time the relevant agencies from all SCO member states have participated in a joint counter-terrorism live drill.” Since terrorist threats often spill over to other countries and flow around the globe, the latest large-scale SCO exercise was held to enhance the member states’ capabilities and interoperability in joint anti-terrorism operations.
- The latest exercise has established a new model for joint live drills by relevant agencies and enhanced the joint operational capabilities of the SCO member states’ authorities, the Ministry of Public Security said, adding, in response to significant terrorist threats, the exercise included specialized operations such as “the eradication of terrorist groups.”
- Representatives from SCO member states, the SCO Secretariat, and the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure observed the exercise. The Beijing-based SCO has emerged as one of the largest trans-regional international organisations focussing on deepening security-related cooperation with its

Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence. Belarus became the 10th official member state of the SCO that already has China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), also known as the Shanghai Pact, is a transcontinental political, economic, security, and military alliance. It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization. The creation of SCO was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting in June 2002, and entered into force on 19 September 2003. In terms of geographic scope and population, it is the world's largest regional organization, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of global GDP. The SCO is the successor to the Shanghai Five, a mutual security agreement formed in 1996 between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Its membership has since expanded to eight states, with India and Pakistan joining on 9 June 2017. Iran started accession as a full member in September 2021 at the Dushanbe Summit in Tajikistan. Iran has been accepted as the ninth full member of the organisation. Several countries are engaged as observers or partners. The SCO is governed by the Heads of State Council (HSC), its supreme decision-making body, which meets once a year. Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Wales Is Set To Get Its 1st Female First Minister After Eluned Morgan Was Chosen To Lead Governing Welsh Labour Party

- **Wales is set to get its first female First Minister after Eluned Morgan was chosen to lead the governing Welsh Labour Party.** Ms Morgan will take charge following a confirmation vote in Wales' parliament, the Senedd. Ms Morgan succeeds First Minister Vaughan Gething, who stepped down as party leader amid acrimony and a campaign donation scandal.
- She is currently the Welsh Health Minister. Wales, which has a population of about three million, is one of four parts of the United Kingdom, along with England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. **The First Minister of Wales is the leader of the Welsh Government and keeper of the Welsh Seal.**

Sri Lanka will hold presidential election on September 21, its first since declaring bankruptcy in 2022

- **Sri Lanka will hold a presidential election on September 21 that will likely be a test of confidence in President Ranil Wickremesinghe's efforts to resolve the country's worst economic crisis.** The date was announced in a decree the independent elections commission released on July 26. It also said nominations will be accepted on August 15.
- **It will be the first election in the South Asian island nation after it declared bankruptcy in 2022 and suspended repayments on some \$83 billion in domestic and foreign loans.** That followed a severe foreign exchange crisis that led to a severe shortage of essentials such as food, medicine, fuel and cooking gas, and extended power outages. **It will be the first election in the South Asian island nation after it declared bankruptcy in 2022 and suspended repayments on some \$83 billion in domestic and foreign loans.** That followed a severe foreign exchange crisis that led to a severe shortage of essentials such as food, medicine, fuel and cooking gas, and extended power outages.

Japan's Sado mines included in UNESCO World Heritage List

- **A network of mines on a Japanese island infamous for using conscripted wartime labour was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List after South Korea dropped earlier objections to its listing.**
- **The Sado gold and silver mines, now a popular tourist attraction, are believed to have started operating as early as the 12th century and produced until after World War II.** Sado gold and silver mines in Japan added to UNESCO World Heritage List after South Korea's objections dropped.

Historic sites in South Africa linked to liberation struggle, Mandela gets UNESCO World Heritage tag

- A set of historic sites in South Africa associated with the country's liberation struggle and human rights crusader Nelson Mandela was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Members of the South African delegation broke into impromptu celebrations as soon as the announcement was made during a session of the World Heritage Committee.
- The nomination named 'Human Rights, Liberation Struggle and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites' was put forth by the African country. Various State Parties, including Italy, South Korea, Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, Japan, and Italy supported the nomination. A Japanese delegate said these sites hold "outstanding importance for all humankind". A member of the South African delegation expressed joy while delivering the statement on behalf of her country. She also thanked India for playing host to the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

UNESCO tag for Tell Umm Amer heritage site in Gaza

- Amid the ongoing Gaza conflict, the Palestinian heritage site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer received the UNESCO tag and was simultaneously put on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer in Palestine has been inscribed on World Heritage List and List of World Heritage in Danger, it was announced in the plenary meeting of the session.

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.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

New base years for national accounts, macro indicators from Jan-Feb 2026

- The updated new base year for national accounts and other macro-indicators is expected to come into effect from January-February 2026, coinciding with the first and second advance estimates of national income for FY26. It will advise on the base year for gross domestic product (GDP) and its alignment with other macro-indicators. Starting January-February 2026, the new base year for national accounts will come into effect.
- The development comes at a time when the government is planning to update the base year for major macro-indicators such as GDP, wholesale price index (WPI) used for wholesale inflation, consumer price index (CPI) used to determine consumer inflation, and index of industrial production (IIP) used for calculation of industrial growth.
- While the decision to choose a base year for GDP will be taken by ACNAS, the sources also indicated that 2024 is expected to be the new base year for CPI as the ministry of statistics and programme implementation (MoSPI) is currently undertaking a year-long market survey to identify changes in the prices of items over time and measure items that are consumed most frequently.

India, four SE Asia countries plan instant retail cross-border payments

- The central banks of India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines are working together to start an instant cross-border retail payments platform by 2026, the Bank of International Settlements (BIS) said. BIS, dubbed the central bankers' central bank, said it aims to link each country's instant digital payment system – like India's United Payment Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow – as part of Project Nexus, its initiative to enhance cross-border payments. India and the other four countries will be the founding members of the platform, while Indonesia will serve as a special observer, the BIS said.

BMRCL's Green Initiative: India's First Bamboo-Themed Metro Station Coming up in Bengaluru

- The proposed Bamboo Bazar Metro Station, under construction by the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL), will feature a complete bamboo decor, marking a first for Indian metro stations. Construction for both projects is set to begin in the next three months, with an estimated cost of Rs. 5-6 crore. However, the final cost and bamboo requirements are still being determined. The BMRCL will use its corporate social responsibility funds to finance the metro station's development and the greening of the medians.

Japan's 1st new banknotes in 20 years use holograms to defeat counterfeits

- Japan began circulating its first new banknotes in 20 years featuring three-dimensional portraits of the founders of financial and female education institutions in an attempt to frustrate counterfeiters. The notes use printed patterns to generate holograms of the portraits facing different directions, depending on the angle of view, employing a technology that Japan's National Printing Bureau says is the world's first for paper money. Though existing bills stay in use, train stations, parking lots and ramen shops are scrambling to upgrade payment machines while the government pushes consumers and businesses to use less cash in its bid to digitise the economy.

Mumbai is India's costliest city, Islamabad worlds cheapest

- **World's costliest cities for expats in 2024 are Hong Kong, Singapore and Zurich, as per Mercer's Cost of Living City rankings.** The cities retained their positions from last year while Islamabad, Lagos and Abuja ranked lowest in terms of living costs. **In India, Mumbai ranks the highest while being on the 136th place globally-up 11 spots from last year.** This makes Mumbai the costliest city in India for expats while Delhi is at 165th position in the world- moving up four points.

Steve Ballmer is richer than Bill Gates, a first for Microsoft billionaires

- **Steve Ballmer passed Bill Gates to become the sixth-richest person in the world,** the first time the former chief executive officer of Microsoft Corp. has been wealthier than the company's co-founder. The move came as Microsoft shares rose to a fresh record, bringing their total gain this year to 21%.
- **The company, through its partnership with OpenAI, has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the artificial intelligence rally that has powered the US stock market higher.** More than 90% of Ballmer's \$157.2 billion net worth is in Microsoft shares, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
- **Gates founded Microsoft with his friend Paul Allen in 1975 and led it until 2000, when Ballmer — one of the company's earliest employees — replaced him as CEO.** Ballmer retired in 2014 and became Microsoft's largest shareholder that same year. He bought the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers for \$2 billion in 2014, an investment that is estimated to be worth \$4.6 billion.
- **Gates, meanwhile, has diversified his \$156.7 billion fortune: About half his wealth is held through Cascade Investment,** which was created with the proceeds of Microsoft stock sales and dividends. He also owns a \$21 billion stake in waste-management company Republic Services Inc. through Cascade.

Conformity to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Mandatory for Stainless Steel and Aluminium Utensils

- In a significant move to enhance kitchen safety, quality, and efficiency, **the Government of India has mandated conformity to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for stainless steel and aluminium utensils.** According to the Quality Control Order issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, on March 14, 2024, the ISI mark would be compulsory for such utensils. Non-compliance is punishable, emphasising the government's commitment to consumer safety and product integrity. Recently, the BIS has developed a range of standards covering essential kitchen items.
- **These standards reflect the BIS's commitment to ensuring that all kitchen utensils meet stringent criteria and adhere to the quality and safety benchmarks.** Stainless steel utensils have long been favoured in kitchens worldwide for their durability, versatility, and sleek appearance.
- By introducing these standards, **the BIS aims to uphold cultural diversity in culinary practices while promoting superior product performance and consumer safety.** Comprising an alloy of steel with chromium and other metals such as nickel, molybdenum, and manganese, stainless steel is renowned for its enhanced corrosion resistance and robust mechanical properties.
- **The BIS has codified these attributes in the Indian Standard IS 14756:2022,** which specifies the requirements for various types of utensils used in cooking, serving, dining, and storage. Aluminium utensils are another cornerstone of both household and professional kitchens, valued for their lightweight nature, excellent heat conductivity, affordability, and durability. **The BIS has developed the Indian Standard IS 1660:2024,** which outlines the specifications for wrought and cast aluminium utensils up to 30 litres in capacity including hard anodized and non-stick unreinforced plastic coating. This standard ensures that aluminium utensils meet the highest material quality and performance standards.

EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism a trade barrier for India

- **The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is not a restrictive trade barrier, and is only for dealing with carbon emissions,** said Gerassimos Thomas, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union, who had visited New Delhi along with other to discuss the implementation and effects of the CBAM for both India and Europe.

- The CBAM is the European Union’s planned tax on carbon emissions caused due to manufacturing of goods imported to the EU from countries like China and India. It especially focuses on energy-intensive products like iron, steel, cement, fertiliser and aluminum. The CBAM has been controversial due to concerns among poorer countries that it can lead to inability to export goods and cause harm to their economies and livelihoods.

Hong Kong to launch Asia’s first inverse bitcoin ETF

- Asia’s first inverse bitcoin exchange-traded fund that allows investors to bet on a fall in the cryptocurrency, is set to debut in Hong Kong. Hong Kong’s CSOP Asset Management said it will launch the CSOP Bitcoin Futures Daily (-1x) Inverse Product on the city’s stock exchange.

UP, West Bengal, Maharashtra had highest share of informal sector enterprises in 2022-23

- Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra had the highest share of informal sector enterprises in both rural and urban areas in 2022-23, the latest Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises for 2022-23 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) showed.
- While the share of informal sector enterprises decreased in the post-pandemic year 2022-23 for some states such as Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the state of Uttar Pradesh topped among major states with an increase in the number of unincorporated non-agricultural enterprises. Among the major states, Uttar Pradesh recorded a 13.83 per cent share of informal sector enterprises in 2022-23, that is, October 2022 – September 2023, up from 12.99 per cent in the previous year. West Bengal, which followed at second position in 2022-23, saw a marginal dip in its share of informal sector enterprises to 12.04 per cent from 12.31 per cent in 2021-22, while Maharashtra’s share rose to 9.37 per cent from 8.81 per cent during the same period.
- While comparison with the previous data of National Sample Survey’s 73rd round on Unincorporated Enterprises for 2015-16 showed a decline in workers employed in states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in 2022-23, the share of informal sector workers increased in most states in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic compared with 2021-22.

16th Finance Commission sets up five-member advisory panel

- The Sixteenth Finance Commission, headed by Arvind Panagariya set up a five-member advisory council to advise the Commission on the Terms of Reference (ToR), assist in the preparation of research papers and help broaden the Commission’s ambit.
- The convener of the five-member panel would be Poonam Gupta, Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and part-time member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).
- Other members of the panel are EY’s Chief Policy Advisor DK Srivastava, Axis Bank’s Chief Economist Neelkanth Mishra, who is also part-time Chairperson of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and part-time member of EAC-PM. HSBC’s Chief India Economist Pranjul Bhandari and Rahul Bajoria, Bank of America head of India and ASEAN economic research, are the other members of the council.
- The role and functions of the advisory council include helping the Commission to broaden its ambit and understanding by seeking the best national and international practices on matters pertaining to fiscal devolution and improving the quality, reach, and enforcement of its recommendations, the statement said. Also, the council will advise the Commission on any of the Terms of Reference or related subjects that may be of relevance. It will also assist in the preparation of papers or research studies and monitor or assess studies commissioned by the Finance Commission, thereby enhancing the commission’s understanding of the issues in its Terms of Reference.

The Finance Commissions are commissions periodically constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to define the financial relations between the central government of India and the individual state governments. The First Commission was established in 1951 under The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951. Fifteen Finance Commissions have been constituted since the promulgation of Indian Constitution in 1950. Individual commissions operate under the terms of reference which are different for

every commission, and they define the terms of qualification, appointment and disqualification, the term, eligibility and powers of the Finance Commission. As per the constitution, the commission is appointed every five years and consists of a chairman and four other members. **The Finance Commission was established in 1951 by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the then-incumbent law minister, to address these imbalances. The First FC was constituted in 1951 with Shri Kshitish Chandra Neogy as the Chairman; it submitted its reports in 1953. The most recent Finance Commission was 15th FC and constituted in 2017 and is chaired by N. K.Singh.**

India's overall SDG score on national index up in 2023-24 at 71: NITI Aayog report

- **India's overall score on the national Sustainable Development Goal Index, prepared by NITI Aayog, stood at 71 in 2023-24 compared to 66 in 2020-21** with significant progress on eliminating poverty, providing decent work, economic growth, climate action and life on earth. **India's score was 60 in 2019-20 and 57 in 2018 which was the baseline report.**
- **The SDG India Index 2023-24, released by NITI Aayog shows Uttarakhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Himachal Pradesh emerged as the top performing states in the overall ranking.** On the contrary, Bihar, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh were the laggard states, placed at the bottom of the index.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations members in 2015, created 17 world Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They were created with the aim of “peace and prosperity for people and the planet...” – while tackling climate change and working to preserve oceans and forests. The SDGs highlight the connections between the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development. Sustainability is at the center of the SDGs. The short titles of the 17 SDGs are: No poverty (SDG 1), Zero hunger (SDG 2), Good health and well-being (SDG 3), Quality education (SDG 4), Gender equality (SDG 5), Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), Climate action (SDG 13), Life below water (SDG 14), Life on land (SDG 15), Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), and Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17).

India records 163% increase in electronic waste, says UNCTAD report

- **India has the highest growth rate globally in the volume of waste generated from screens, computers, and small IT and telecommunication equipment (SCSIT) at 163 per cent between 2010 and 2022,** according to the latest United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Digital Economy Report for 2024.
- According to the report titled **“Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future,” India doubled its share in SCSIT waste generation in the world from 3.1 per cent in 2010 to 6.4 per cent in 2022.** The report further noted that developing countries in Asia generated most of such waste in 2022, with China representing almost half of the waste generated in this region.
- **The report also highlighted the detrimental effects of electronic waste, emphasising that a significant portion of waste generated from digitalisation is managed in informal settings,** particularly in developing countries. “Digitalisation-related waste contains hazardous materials which, if not properly handled and treated, can have damaging effects on the environment and human health. Toxic materials include heavy metals and substances such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury, as well as persistent organic pollutants”.

UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is an intergovernmental organization within the United Nations Secretariat that promotes the interests of developing countries in world trade. It was established in 1964 by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development but rebranded to its current name on the occasion of its 60th anniversary in 2024. It reports to both the General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). **UNCTAD is composed of 195 member states and works with non-governmental organizations worldwide; its permanent secretariat is at UNOG in Geneva, Switzerland. The primary objective of UNCTAD is to formulate policies relating to all aspects of development, including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology.**

IMF maintains 2024 global growth forecast, warns of inflation risk

- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF) held global growth expectations for 2024 steady in a report even as it cut forecasts for the United States and Japan, while warning of inflation risks and trade tensions ahead. The IMF expects the world economy to grow 3.2% this year, unchanged from its April forecast, according to its World Economic Outlook update.**
- **“Global activity and world trade firmed up at the turn of the year, with trade spurred by strong exports from Asia.” For 2025, it expects global growth of 3.3%. But even as many countries saw better growth than anticipated early this year, the IMF flagged surprises in Japan and the United States. The Washington-based lender also cautioned that risks to inflation have increased, with services prices holding up disinflation. This increases the prospect of interest rates staying elevated for longer, “in the context of escalating trade tensions and increased policy uncertainty.”**
- **While world growth appears stable, the IMF lowered projections for the United States and Japan. U.S. growth in 2024 was downgraded to 2.6%, 0.1 percentage points below April’s forecast, due to a “slower-than-expected start to the year.” Japan’s economy was seen expanding 0.2 percentage points less than expected, by 0.7% this year, mainly thanks to temporary supply disruptions and weak private investment in the first quarter. China and India are expected to power activity in Asia — with China’s 2024 forecast revised up to 5.0% on a private consumption rebound and strong exports.**

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

IMF forecasts Indian growth rate at seven per cent in 2024

- **The IMF revised upward its projections for India and said the country is now expected to grow by seven per cent in 2024, compared to 6.8 per cent projected in April. “The forecast for growth in India has been revised upward, to 7 per cent, this year, with the change reflecting carryover from upward revisions to growth in 2023 and improved prospects for private consumption, particularly in rural areas,” the International Monetary Fund said in its latest edition of the world economic outlook update.**
- **India’s economy is now forecast to expand by 7 per cent, up from the 6.8 per cent the IMF had projected in April. Overall, global growth is projected to be in line with the April 2024 World Economic Outlook (WEO) forecast, at 3.2 per cent in 2024 and 3.3 per cent in 2025.**
- **However, varied momentum in activity at the turn of the year has somewhat narrowed the output divergence across economies as cyclical factors wane and activity becomes better aligned with its potential. Services price inflation is holding up progress on disinflation, which is complicating monetary policy normalisation. Upside risks to inflation have thus increased, raising the prospect of higher-for-even-longer interest rates, in the context of escalating trade tensions and increased policy uncertainty.**
- **To manage these risks and preserve growth, the policy mix should be sequenced carefully to achieve price stability and replenish diminished buffers, the report said. “Growth in major advanced economies is becoming more aligned as output gaps are closing. The United States shows increasing signs of cooling, especially in the labour market, after a strong 2023. The euro area, meanwhile, is poised to pick up after a nearly flat performance last year,” said Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Economic Counsellor and the Director of Research of the IMF.**

Bursa Malaysia and Pribumi Launch World's First Zakat Index

- Bursa Malaysia and Persatuan Remisier Bumiputera Malaysia (Pribumi) have launched the Pribumi Bursa Malaysia Zakat Index (PBMZI), a new customised index designed to promote greater recognition of public-listed companies (PLCs) that choose to adopt corporate zakat practice.
- The exchange's chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar said the launch of the zakat index – the world's first – seeks to recognise zakat-paying listed issuers and encourage greater zakat contributions from more PLCs. "Currently, the zakat index has 27 constituents across various sectors, including financial services, utilities telecommunications, property, plantations, technology, healthcare, transportation, consumer products and energy,".

Kuwait announces 'giant' oil discovery

- Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) had made a "giant" oil discovery in the Al-Nokhatha field east of the Kuwaiti island of Failaka, with oil reserves estimated at 3.2 billion barrels. KPC's CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Nasir Al-Sabah said that the new discovery's reserves were equivalent to the country's entire production in three years.

SEBI proposes to bring 'new asset class' with minimum investment limit of Rs. 10 lakh

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) proposed to introduce a new asset class or product category to bridge the gap between mutual funds (MFs) and portfolio management services (PMS). The minimum investment threshold under the new asset class has been proposed at Rs. 10 lakh per investor.
- The new asset class is likely to provide investors with a regulated investment product featuring higher risk-taking capabilities and a higher ticket size, aimed at curbing the proliferation of unregistered and unauthorised investment products. "The proposed new asset class intends to fill the gap between MFs and PMS by offering a regulated product featuring greater flexibility, higher risk-taking capability and a higher ticket size, to meet the needs of the emerging category of investors,".

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

Karnataka to unveil country's maiden GCC policy soon

- Karnataka currently is home to 570 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) with a 2x enterprise-ready talent compared to any other location in the country. By 2030, Karnataka could host around 330 Forbes 2000 enterprises, and the trend would be driven by India's increasing prominence as the global GCC hub.
- The report was jointly released by the Department of Electronics, IT/BT, Science and Technology, Government of Karnataka and Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), and ANSR, an advisory firm focused on GCCs. According to the Karnataka GCC Landscape Report, Bengaluru remains the hotspot for GCC buildouts, a hub for start-ups and the preferred choice for platform engineering, owing to access to 25% of India's digital talent. Also, 60% of Forbes Global 2000 companies who have GCCs in India have their centres set up in the city.

Economic Survey 2023-24: Indian economy likely to grow by 6.5% to 7% this year

- The Indian economy has broadly caught up with pre-COVID growth trends, averting any permanent scarring, and is likely to grow by 6.5% to 7% this year with prospects of clocking 7%-plus growth in coming years, as per the Economic Survey for 2023-24 that also drew attention to the need to address inequality and unemployment as a policy priority.
- Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran, the lead author of the Survey put together by the Economics Division in the Department of Economic Affairs, made a pitch for the Central and State governments to let go of their myriad regulatory powers to ease the burden on businesses. He also prodded the

corporate sector, ‘swimming in excess profits’, to take responsibility of generating productive jobs in its own ‘enlightened self-interest’.

The Economic Survey of India is an annual document released by the Ministry of Finance. It is usually presented in Parliament a day before the Union Budget. It is prepared by the Economics Division of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the guidance of the Chief Economic Advisor. It reviews the developments in the Indian economy over the previous 12 months and presents the economic outlook for the current fiscal year. It also presents the current state of the Indian economy, including data on gross domestic product (GDP), inflation, employment, and trade. The first Economic Survey in India was presented in the year 1950-51. Up to 1964, it was presented along with the Union Budget. From 1964 onwards, it has been delinked from the Budget. J J Anjaria was India’s first Chief Economic Advisor (CEA). He was appointed in 1956. Venkatramanan Anantha Nageswaran is the current Chief Economic Advisor.

Singapore at #1, India at #82: How the Henley Passport Index decides the World’s Most Powerful Passport

- The Henley Passport Index recently released a comprehensive list of the most powerful passports in the world. Singapore dethroned Japan as #1 and India moved two points up, standing at 82nd instead of last year’s 84th position. In stark contrast, Singapore has regained its title as the world’s most powerful passport in the 2024 index, offering its citizens visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to an impressive 195 countries. Following closely behind are France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Japan, all tied for second place with access to 192 countries.
- The Henley Passport Index is the original ranking of all the world’s passports based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and additional research from the Henley & Partners’ research team, a London-based immigration consultancy. India moved two points up this year, standing at 82nd instead of last year’s 84th position. An Indian passport holder can travel to the following 58 countries visa-free.
- The Henley Passport Index highlights the varying degrees of global mobility offered by different national passports, a reflection of international diplomatic relations and travel agreements. Notably, Pakistan’s passport is ranked 100th, giving its holders access to 33 countries, while Afghanistan occupies the last place with visa-free entry to just 26 destinations.

MSDE revamps Model Skill Loan Scheme; raises loan limit to Rs. 7.5 lakh

- The ministry of skills development and entrepreneurship has enhanced the limit of loans provided by the government for skilling under the credit guarantee fund scheme to Rs. 7.5 lakh from Rs. 1.5 lakh, besides widening the lending network to include small finance banks and added more courses as part of the revamped Model Skill Loan Scheme.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is a ministry of the Government of India which came into existence on 9 November 2014 and gazetted on 8 December 2014. After the formation of the first government of Narendra Modi on 26 May 2014, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was renamed as the “Ministry of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, Youth Affairs and Sports” and was thereupon bifurcated after a cabinet reshuffle on 9 November 2014. The current minister is Jayant Chaudhary who holds the rank of a minister of state (independent charge) since 10 June 2024.

India’s First Integrated Agri-Export Facility Approved For Mumbai’s Jawaharlal Nehru Port

- India’s first Integrated Agri-Export Facility will come up at Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai to bolster the country’s agricultural export and import capabilities. Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has approved the project of Development of an Export-Import cum Domestic Agricultural Commodity-Based Processing and Storage Facility on public private partnership mode worth over 284 crore rupees.
- Mr. Sonowal said, the development of this all-in-one agricultural facility will streamline logistics, reduce wastage, and provide better prices for agricultural products. He said, this is a significant step towards empowering the farmers and boosting India’s agricultural sector. The facility will cater to exports of prominent items like non-basmati rice, maize, spices, onion, and wheat.

India launches UPI payments at world-renowned Galeries Lafayette in Paris

- India has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at Paris' historic department store Galeries Lafayette after a successful launch at the iconic Eiffel Tower. This significant step is towards realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of globalising UPI, which is an Indian instant payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016. The UPI became live at the flagship store of the world-renowned Galeries Lafayette in Haussmann, Paris. This expands the acceptance of UPI in Paris after a successful launch at the iconic Eiffel Tower”.

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.

Banks in News

NABARD set to introduce Rs. 750 crore agri fund for startups, rural enterprises

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is all set to introduce a Rs. 750 crore ‘Agri-SURE’ fund, an agri fund for start-ups and rural enterprises. The fund is being launched by NABVENTURES, a subsidiary of NABARD with an initial corpus of Rs750 crore with Rs. 250 crore each from NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture, and Rs. 250 crore from other institutions.

NABARD came into existence on 12 July 1982 by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC). NABARD is headquartered at Mumbai. The Bank has been entrusted with “matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India”. Shri Shaji K V assumed charge as Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on 7th December 2022.

RBI, ASEAN countries to create instant cross-border retail payments platform

- The Reserve Bank of India and countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) grouping will create a platform to enable instant cross-border retail payments, with the domestic central bank working with individual member states to set up the systems.
- “Reserve Bank of India has been collaborating bilaterally with various countries to link India’s Fast Payments System (FPS) – the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), with their respective FPSs for cross-border Person to Person (P2P) and Person to Merchant (P2M) payments”. While bilateral connectivity of fast payment systems can benefit India and its partner countries, a multilateral approach will impart further impetus to efforts aimed at expanding the global reach of domestic payment systems.

Bandhan Bank appoints Ratan Kumar Kesh as interim MD & CEO

- Ratan Kumar Kesh, executive director and chief operating officer of Bandhan Bank, has been appointed interim MD & CEO of the private lender since July 10. The present MD & CEO and founder of the bank will retire on July 9.

RBI appoints Arnab Kumar Chowdhury as new executive director

- Arnab Kumar Chowdhury has been appointed as executive director by the Reserve Bank of India, taking charge of three key departments, including DICGC, effective immediately.
- Previously serving as Chief General Manager-in-Charge of the Supervision Department, Chowdhury brings over 30 years of experience in financial entity supervision, corporate strategy, and policy formulation to his new role. He holds a master’s in economics and is a certified associate of IIBF.

RBI forms panel to review fee structure for white-label ATMs

- RBI has set up a review committee to revise the fee structure for white-label ATMs (WLAs) to propose a fair and sustainable model. The committee, led by Indian Banks’ Association CEO Sunil Mehta, will assess current policies, ATM infrastructure, and global best practices, reporting to RBI deputy governor T Rabi Sankar.

CS Setty gets FSIB approval to head SBI as next chairman

- Challa Sreenivasulu Setty has been selected as the next chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) by the Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB), an arm of the central government. The two other contenders were Ashwini Tiwari and Vinay Tonse. Setty will succeed current chairman Dinesh Khara, whose term ends on August 28.

The Financial Services Institutions Bureau will select the chiefs of public sector banks and insurance companies. The FSIB will have the clear mandate to issue guidelines and select general managers and directors of state-run non-life insurers, general insurers and Financial Institutions. FSIB will be the single entity for making recommendations for appointments of WTD (Whole-time Director) and NEC (Non-executive Chairman) in Public Sector Banks, India Private Limited company and Financial Institutions. The Department of Financial

Services shall first carry out necessary modifications in the Nationalised Banks (Management and Miscellaneous Provisions) Scheme of 1970/1980 (as amended).

PNB introduces Safety Ring mechanism to enhance security for internet, mobile banking users

- **State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) introduced a new security feature ‘Safety Ring’** within its internet banking system and mobile banking system in response to the increasing number of cyber frauds. This mechanism provides an additional safety layer to minimise potential losses in case of unauthorised access by fraudsters. Safety Ring is an optional feature that allows customers to set a daily transaction limit with respect to term deposits (TDs) on online closure or availing overdraft facility on TDs up to the set limit amount. The limit set by the customer should be the consolidated digital channels limit up to which the customer can close the TD or avail overdraft facility on TD.

Punjab National Bank (abbreviated as PNB) is an Indian government public sector bank based in New Delhi. It was founded in May 1894 and is the second-largest public sector bank in India in terms of its business volumes, with over 180 million customers, 12,248 branches, and 13,000+ ATMs. On 30 August 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India would be merged with Punjab National Bank. The proposed merger would make Punjab National Bank, the second largest public sector bank in the country.

Asian Development Bank retains India’s growth forecast at 7% for 2024-25

- **The Asian Development Bank (ADB) maintained India’s GDP growth forecast at 7 per cent for the current financial year, citing that a rebound in agriculture is expected given above-normal monsoon projections.**
- **The ADB forecast comes a day after the International Monetary Fund revised upward its GDP growth projections for India to 7 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent projected in April.**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila 1550, Philippines. The bank also maintains 31 field offices around the world to promote social and economic development in Asia. Starting with 31 members at its establishment, ADB now has 68 members. The ADB was modeled closely on the World Bank and has a similar weighted voting system, where votes are distributed in proportion with members’ capital subscriptions. Japan and the United States each holds the largest proportion of shares at 15.571%. China holds 6.429%, India holds 6.317%, and Australia holds 5.773%. Masatsugu Asakawa, a Japanese civil servant, is the president of the ADB.

RBI allows resident Indians to open Foreign Currency Accounts in IFSC, Gujarat

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a notification issued allowed resident individuals to open Foreign Currency Account (FCA) in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) at GIFT City in Gujarat under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS).**
- **“On a review, it has been decided that Authorised Persons may facilitate remittances for all permissible purposes under LRS to IFSCs for availing financial services or financial products as per the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019 within IFSCs; and all current or capital account transactions, in any other foreign jurisdiction (other than IFSCs) through an FCA held in IFSCs”.**

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is an under-construction central business district in Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India. It is India’s first operational greenfield smart city and international financial services center, which the Government of Gujarat promoted as a greenfield project, The city is located on the banks of the Sabarmati River and is around 12 km (7.5 mi) from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. The city is designed so residents can walk to work, and includes commercial, financial and residential complexes.

World Bank looking to issue first ‘drought’ bond in next 12-18 months

- **The World Bank is looking to issue its first drought bond in the next 12-18-months and broaden its offering of catastrophe bonds supporting countries suffering devastation from storms and earthquakes. The drought**

bond would be a new instrument in the multilateral lender's suite of so-called cat bonds - fixed income instruments that pay out to countries in the event of a natural disaster.

- The World Bank has arranged and issued cat bonds through its lending arm, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), to help emerging economies mitigate the fallout from storms and earthquakes for well over a decade. It has made \$568 million of insurance payouts on these instruments. The vast majority of the World Bank's existing cat bonds cover countries in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, with Mexico dominating issuance.

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.

RBI issues revised framework for domestic money transfer

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a review of Domestic Money Transfer framework has made it tougher for transfer of money in banking channel by account holders. It has issued a new circular detailing the changes which will come into effect from November 1. The framework for Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in 2011. The RBI in the circular said, "There has been significant increase in the availability of banking outlets, developments in payment systems for funds transfers, and ease in fulfilling KYC requirements etc., since then; and now, users have multiple digital options for funds transfer."
- For Cash Pay-in Service remitting banks / Business Correspondents (BCs) will need to register the remitter based on a verified cell phone number and a self-certified 'Officially Valid Document (OVD)' as per a previous Master Direction. "Every transaction by a remitter will be validated by an Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA)," the RBI said. Remitting banks and their BCs will need to conform to provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the rules / regulations framed thereunder (as amended from time to time), pertaining to cash deposits. Remitter bank will need include remitter details as part of the IMPS / NEFT transaction message. The transaction message will include an identifier to identify the fund transfer as a cash-based remittance, it further said. As per the circular the guidelines on Card-to-Card transfer are excluded from the purview of the DMT framework and will be governed under the guidelines / approvals granted for such instruments. All other instructions in the above circular dated October 5, 2011 including the limits in size of transactions will continue to be applicable.

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

GAIL says Urja Ganga gas pipeline completion delayed to March 2025

- “The construction of the Rs. 12,940-crore ‘Urja Ganga’ gas pipeline, India’s most ambitious project taking environment-friendly fuel to eastern parts of the country, has been delayed by nine months and will now be completed by March 2025,” State-owned GAIL (India) Limited said.
- The 3,306 km Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline was originally targeted for completion by June 2024. But due to “delay in right of use (RoU) availability”, the completion schedule has been revised “from June 2024 to March 2025”, GAIL said in a stock exchange filing. Traditionally, natural gas was available for use as fuel to generate electricity, make fertilizer or turn into CNG and cooking gas only in the western and northern parts of the country, as pipelines taking the fuel from source to users were limited to these parts.
- In October 2016, work on laying a pipeline from Jagdishpur in Uttar Pradesh to Haldia in West Bengal, Bokaro in Jharkhand and Dhamra in Odisha began. The line was extended to Guwahati in Assam from Barauni in Bihar, a length of 726 km, to take the fuel to hereto-unconnected States in the eastern region. The Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline (JHBDPL), popularly called the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga pipeline, is to supply gas to the eastern States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

Launched in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project (PMUGP) is a transformative initiative spanning a 3,400 km pipeline network connecting Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha to the existing gas grid. This project aims to address regional disparities in Eastern India by harnessing natural resources for comprehensive development.

Tata Asset Management launches India’s first tourism index mutual fund

- Tata Asset Management Company launched the nation’s first tourism index fund, comprising a collection of companies forming part of the Nifty 500. The Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund will track the Nifty India Tourism Index. This open-ended index fund will give exposure to India’s fastest-growing companies from travel, tourism and hospitality businesses. According to Tata AMC, the companies forming the index are leaders in their respective segments.
- They have benefitted from the rising disposable income levels, evolving tastes of the Indian consumer and sustained higher discretionary spending. The fund has given 32% weightage to the hotels and resorts sector. It is followed by airlines (19%), restaurants (19%), tour, travel related services (16%), airports and airport services (10%) and luggage (3%).

Air India welcomes first narrow body aircraft in Delhi

- Tata Group-owned Air India welcomed its first narrow-body aircraft in new livery. The Airbus A320 Neo, registered VT-RTN, landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi from the Airbus facility in Toulouse, France. Notably, this introduction marks the first time Air India is offering premium economy on its narrow-body aircraft. The A320 Neo is expected to enter service in August 2024, primarily operating on domestic short-haul routes. Currently, three A320 Neo aircraft with three-class configurations in the old Air India livery have already commenced operations within the domestic network.
- Founded by the legendary J.R.D. Tata, Air India has a rich history in the aviation sector. Its inaugural flight took off on October 15, 1932. Since then, Air India has built an extensive domestic network and operates non-stop flights to major cities around the world, including destinations in the USA, Canada, U.K., Europe, the Far East, Southeast Asia, Australia, and the Gulf.

Air India is the flag carrier airline of India, headquartered at New Delhi. It is owned by Talace Private Limited, a Special-Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of Tata Sons, after Air India Limited’s former owner, the Government of India, completed the sale. Air India operates a fleet of Airbus and Boeing aircraft serving 102 domestic and international destinations. The airline was founded by J. R. D. Tata as Tata Airlines in 1932; Tata himself flew its first single-engine de Havilland Puss Moth, carrying air mail from Karachi’s Drigh Road Aerodrome to Bombay’s Juhu aerodrome and later continuing to Madras (currently Chennai). After World War II, it became a

public limited company and was renamed as Air India. On 21 February 1960, it took delivery of its first Boeing 707 named Gauri Shankar and became the first Asian airline to induct a jet aircraft in its fleet. Air India's mascot is the Maharajah (Emperor) and the erstwhile logo consisted of a flying swan with the wheel of Konark inside it, before being replaced by a new logo inspired by the airline's Jharokha window pattern in 2023. Natarajan Chandrasekaran is the chairman of Tata Sons. He was chief operating officer (COO) and executive director of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), where in 2009, he became chief executive officer (CEO).

Air India to set up training school in Amravati, make it operational by early 2026

- Air India announced its plans to set up a flying training organisation (FTO) in Maharashtra's Amravati, and make it operational by early 2026. The company claims it will be South Asia's largest such facility. The FTO's target will be to operationalise 180 commercial pilots every year, adding that the DGCA-licensed FTO at Amravati's Belora airport will be operational by the first quarter of FY26.

IREDA to invest ₹290 crore in 900 MW project in Nepal

- State-owned IREDA will invest ₹290 crore in a 900 MW hydroelectric power project in Nepal. The Board of Directors of IREDA gave in-principle approval for the equity investment at a meeting. The company will pick up a 10 per cent stake in the Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) is an Indian public sector enterprise which provides financial assistance and other services to projects related to renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation. Formed in 1987, IREDA is a Navratna organisation owned by the Government of India and administratively controlled by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). It is headquartered in New Delhi.

WEP and Transunion Cibil to collaborate to enhance financial literacy and business skills of women entrepreneurs

- NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL have launched SEHER, a comprehensive credit education program for women entrepreneurs. SEHER aims to enhance financial literacy and business skills, enabling women to access crucial financial tools for business growth.
- This initiative supports WEP's goal of improving financing access for women in India's 63 million MSMEs. NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship platform and credit bure have collaborated to launch SEHER, a comprehensive credit education program designed to enhance financial literacy and business skills among women entrepreneurs. This initiative is expected to enable women to access the financial tools necessary for business growth and job creation.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. It was established to replace the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model. The Planning Commission was an institution in the Government of India, which formulated India's Five-Year Plans, among other functions. After India achieved independence, a formal model of planning was adopted, and accordingly the Planning Commission, reporting directly to the Prime Minister of India, was established on 15 March 1950, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman. Authority for creation of the Planning Commission was not derived from the Constitution of India or statute; it is an arm of the Central Government of India. The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1951, focusing mainly on development of the agricultural sector. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current Chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current Vice Chairman is Suman Bery and the current Chief Executive Officer is Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam.

Bajaj Launches World's First CNG Bike

- Bajaj Auto has launched its much-awaited Freedom motorcycle, which runs on petrol but also has the option of CNG (compressed natural gas). Prices of the Freedom 125 start at Rs. 95,000 for the NGO4 Drum, while the mid-spec NGO4 Drum LED retails for Rs. 1.05 lakh, and the top-spec NGO4 Disc LED is priced at Rs. 1.10 lakh (all ex-showroom prices).

Hindustan Zinc launches Asia's first low-carbon zinc brand, EcoZen

- Vedanta-owned Hindustan Zinc (HZL), India's largest zinc producer, has launched EcoZen, Asia's first low-carbon green zinc brand. It has been developed to meet the growing demand for sustainable and environmentally-friendly materials, particularly in the automotive sector.
- Manufactured using renewable energy, the carbon footprint of EcoZen is about 75 per cent lower than the global average. EcoZen claims to have less than one tonne of carbon emission produced for every tonne of zinc made. This initiative aligns with HZL's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) is an Indian integrated mining and resources producer of zinc, lead, silver and cadmium. It is a subsidiary of Vedanta Limited. Earlier it was a Central Public Sector Undertaking, sold by Government of India to Vedanta Limited when Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Bharatiya Janta Party Government was in power in the year 2003. HZL is the world's second largest zinc producer. They are one of the world's largest integrated producers of zinc and are among leading global lead and silver producers.

Tata and Airbus to establish India's first private helicopter assembly for H125 choppers

- In the backdrop of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India, Airbus Helicopters has announced that it is partnering with the Tata Group to establish a Final Assembly Line (FAL) for civil helicopters in the country, making it India's first helicopter assembly facility in the private sector. **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) and Airbus Helicopters have signed a deal to set up a final assembly line (FAL) in India for single-engine H125 choppers.** This is the first instance of the private sector setting up a helicopter assembly facility in India.
- **The FAL will produce H125 choppers for India and neighbouring countries.** The contract was signed at the Farnborough International Airshow, according to a statement by Airbus and TASL. **Deliveries of the first 'Made in India' H125s are expected to begin in 2026.**

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

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



SERA, Blue Origin announce India partner nation for human space flight programme

- **The Space Exploration and Research Agency and Blue Origin announced India as a partner nation in their human spaceflight programme for citizens from countries who have sent a few or no astronauts to space.** SERA, a US-based agency, will offer citizens from across the world six seats on a future mission of New Shepard, Blue Origin's reusable suborbital rocket. New Shepard will fly the selected astronauts on an 11-minute journey past the Kármán line (100 km), the internationally recognised boundary of space. Astronauts will experience several minutes of weightlessness before making a controlled descent back to the landing pad.

India's Aditya-L1 completes first Halo orbit

- **Isro said that India's first space-based solar observatory, Aditya-L1, has successfully completed its first halo orbit around the Sun-Earth L1 Lagrangian point.** The solar observatory launched and inserted into its targeted halo orbit has now demonstrated its ability to maintain its complex trajectory. **"The Aditya-L1 mission, designed to study the Sun, takes approximately 178 days to complete one revolution around the L1 point.**
- This achievement validates the sophisticated flight dynamics software developed in-house at the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) in Bengaluru. **"The mission's success hinges on the precise modelling of complex dynamics and the accurate understanding of perturbing forces acting on the spacecraft.** These factors are crucial in determining the trajectory and planning orbit manoeuvres with high precision," Isro said.

Aditya-L1 was launched aboard the PSLV C57 on 2 September 2023, It successfully achieved its intended orbit nearly an hour later, and separated from its fourth stage. It was inserted at the L1 point on 6 January 2024. Aditya-L1 is the India's first spacecraft to study solar atmosphere developed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and various other Indian research institutes. In celestial mechanics, the Lagrange points (also Lagrangian points, L-points, or libration points) are points near two large orbiting bodies. Normally, the two objects exert an unbalanced gravitational force at a point, altering the orbit of whatever is at that point. At the Lagrange points, the gravitational forces of the two large bodies and the centrifugal force balance each other. Aditya-L1 will be able to provide observations of Sun's photosphere, chromosphere and corona. In addition, an instrument will study the solar energetic particles' flux reaching the L1 orbit, while a magnetometer payload will measure the variation in magnetic field strength at the halo orbit around L1.

ISRO will launch first dedicated SSLV commercial mission in 2026

- **ISRO's commercial arm NSIL said on June 26 that its newest rocket, the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), will have its first dedicated commercial launch when it puts into orbit the Optimus – a satellite built by Australia-based Space Machines Company.** The announcement was made jointly by NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) and Space Machines Company at the India Space Congress, organised by the Satcom Industry Association-India.
- This pioneering collaboration sets the stage for the launch of Space Machines Company's second Optimus spacecraft, weighing 450 kg, the largest Australian-designed and built spacecraft so far. **"This will be the first dedicated commercial launch for SSLV. The first commercial launch was Janus, a 10-kilogramme nanosatellite on board the SSLV-D2 mission. This mission, named Space MAITRI (Mission for Australia-India's Technology, Research and Innovation), marks a significant milestone in the strategic partnership between Australia and India in the space domain, fostering closer ties between commercial, institutional and government space organisations from both nation.**

ISRO is the space agency of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. S Somanath is current the chairperson of the ISRO. Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) or Sriharikota Range (SHAR) is a rocket launch centre operated by ISRO. It is located in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. Sreedhara Panicker Somanath from Kerala is an Indian aerospace engineer serving as the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Under his chairmanship, ISRO carried out the third Indian lunar exploration mission named Chandrayaan-3. Somanath served as the director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram and director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, Thiruvananthapuram.

World to witness 1st Indian in Space and other Indian in Deep Sea by 2025

- **World to witness 1st Indian in Space and other Indian in Deep Sea by 2025, says Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.** Four astronauts-three Group Captains and one Wing Commander have been selected for India's 1st Human Space Mission- Gaganyaan. Similarly, he also shared that India's Deep-Sea mission will send three Indians to deep sea in 2025.

ISRO to organise hackathon to celebrate first National Space Day on Aug 23

- **For the first National Space Day, which will fall on August 23, to commemorate the safe landing of the Vikram Lander near the southern polar region of the moon,** the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be organising Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon. Following the Vikram landing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that "National Space Day" will be celebrated on August 23 every year.

NATO completes 75 years since formation

- **NATO's 75th anniversary summit was meant to showcase the triumph of a larger, stronger alliance.** Instead, leaders are coming together in Washington in the shadow of setbacks in Ukraine and electoral headwinds on both sides of the Atlantic.
- **US President Joe Biden, fighting for his political life after a disastrous debate against NATO skeptic Donald Trump, will turn his attention away from campaigning to welcome leaders of the 32-nation transatlantic alliance for three days.** Biden has also invited the leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, a sign of NATO's growing role in Asia in the face of a rising China.

Two Gaganyaan astronauts shortlisted, one to travel to International Space Station on NASA mission this year

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has shortlisted two of its four trained Gaganyaan astronauts for a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) in collaboration with United States' NASA** later this year. Only one of the shortlisted astronauts will go on the mission which is supposed to take place "no earlier than October 2024.
- **The Axiom-4 mission, which will take the Indian astronauts to the ISS, is the fourth private astronaut mission of NASA and a private US company Axiom Space.** The mission is expected to dock with the ISS for fourteen days. At the time when the Axiom-4 mission was announced last year: "The Ax-4 crew members will train with NASA, international partners, and SpaceX for their flight. Axiom Space has contracted SpaceX as launch provider for transportation to and from the space station, and to familiarize the private astronauts with systems, procedures, and emergency preparedness for the Dragon spacecraft."

Gaganyaan is an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft intended to be the formative spacecraft of the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme. It is ISRO's first human space flight programme. The spacecraft is being designed to carry three people, and a planned upgraded version will be equipped with rendezvous and docking capabilities. In its maiden crewed mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s largely autonomous 5.3-metric ton capsule will orbit the Earth at 400 km altitude for up to seven days with a two- or three-person crew on board. **The first crewed mission was originally planned to be launched on ISRO's LVM3 in December 2021, But this has since been delayed to no earlier than 2025.**

India's mission to drill a 6-km deep hole in Koyna, Maharashtra

- **Scientific deep-drilling is the enterprise of strategically digging boreholes to observe and analyse deeper parts of the earth's crust.** It offers opportunities and access to study earthquakes and expands our understanding of the planet's history, rock types, energy resources, life forms, climate change patterns, the evolution of life, and more.
- **The Borehole Geophysics Research Laboratory (BGRL) in Karad, Maharashtra,** is a specialised institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India mandated to execute India's sole scientific deep-drilling programme.
- **Under BGRL, the aim is to drill the earth's crust to a depth of 6 km and conduct scientific observations and analysis to help expand the understanding of reservoir-triggered earthquakes** in the active fault zone in the Koyna-Warna region of Maharashtra.
- **This region has been experiencing frequent and recurrent earthquakes since the Shivaji Sagar Lake, or the Koyna Dam, was impounded in 1962.** BGRL's pilot borehole — to a depth of 3 km in Koyna — is complete, and the Ministry of Earth Sciences is committed to completing the task of reaching a depth of 6 km. The Koyna pilot borehole is about 0.45 m wide (at the surface) and roughly 3 km deep. It is unique in many ways. First, because of the drilling technique: a hybrid of two well-established techniques called mud rotary drilling and percussion drilling (a.k.a. air hammering).
- **Unlike most earthquakes that occur at tectonic plate boundaries, Koyna witnessed a series of tremors following the construction of the Koyna Dam in 1962.** This phenomenon, where human activity (filling the reservoir) triggered earthquakes, is called Reservoir-Induced Seismicity (RIS).
- **Scientists aim to directly study the earth's composition and stresses at the source of these triggered earthquakes through deep drilling.** The Koyna-Warna region sits on a geological fault line, making it inherently prone to earthquakes. However, the triggered events here differ from those along plate boundaries. There are no other significant sources of seismic activity within a 50 km radius of the Koyna Dam. This isolation makes Koyna an ideal location for focused research.

Scientific deep drilling involves drilling deep into the Earth's crust to study its composition, structure, and processes. This research can provide insights into geological formations, natural resources, and Earth's history. Deep drilling projects often aim to advance our understanding of tectonics, earthquake mechanisms, and geothermal energy potential. **The interior of the Earth is studied through direct methods like drilling and sampling rock from deep boreholes, and indirect methods such as seismic wave analysis, gravity measurements, and studying Earth's magnetic field.** Seismic Waves: The study of seismic waves generated by earthquakes provides valuable information about the Earth's interior structure. Seismic waves travel through the Earth's interior and their behaviour, such as refraction and reflection, helps scientists infer the composition and properties of the different layers.

India's 1st space park project ready for takeoff at Technocity

- **India's first space park, proposed at Technopark Phase IV (Technocity) in Pallipuram, is moving closer to becoming a reality.** The tender for constructing two major buildings—the common facility centre and the research and development centre—is expected to be floated by this month's end.
- **A single-window committee formed by the state govt is set to approve the designs submitted by K-Space authorities within the next 10 days.** Currently, the space park office operates from a rented building in Pattom. The project has secured a Rs. 241 crore loan from NABARD for the construction of the buildings and the campus. The new facilities will be built on 3.5 acres of the 18.5 acres allotted by the state govt.

DRDO unveils indigenous light tank Zorawar

- **The prototype of the country's indigenous light tank Zorawar is ready and will soon be subjected to extensive trials.** It was jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) as the lead integrator.
- **The tank is currently powered by a Cummins engine and DRDO has taken up a project to develop a new engine domestically.** "It has been developed from the drawing board within shortest possible time and capable of operation in the most challenging environment on the earth, i.e. extreme weather and extreme height with minimal logistic support in high altitude area along the northern border of India". First prototype is ready

after factory acceptance. Shortly, it will be subjected to internal trials in the field area and thereafter handed over to the users for trials.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency of the Republic of India, **charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India.** It was formed in 1958 by the merger of the **Technical Development Establishment** and the **Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr. Samir V Kamat** is the **current Chairman of DRDO.**

China's iSpace rocket fails soon after launch, losing 3 weather satellites

- A Chinese rocket start-up has suffered yet another launch failure, resulting in the loss of three satellites as part of a commercial constellation being assembled for global weather forecasting and earthquake prediction. **Hyperbola-1** – a 24-metre (79 ft) high solid-fuel rocket produced by iSpace – lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in China's Gobi Desert.
- "The rocket's first, second and third stages flew normally, but the fourth stage suffered an anomaly and the launch mission ended in failure," the company said, adding that the specific reasons for the failure would be announced as soon as possible after detailed investigations.
- The relatively small **Hyperbola-1**, which can deliver a 300 kg (661 pounds) payload into a 500 km (311 miles) sun-synchronous orbit, was carrying **Yunyao-1 weather satellites 15, 16 and 17 for the Tianjin-based Yunyao Aerospace Technology company.** The satellites did not reach orbit. Yunyao Aerospace Technology had planned to launch nearly 40 satellites this year to complete its 90-satellite Yunyao-1 constellation by next year.

India sanctions seven defence projects to boost private sector involvement

- With an aim to raise the contribution of the private sector towards defence and aerospace manufacturing, the **Government decided to sanction seven new projects to them under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme.** While it will nurture industries, especially MSMEs and start-ups, this step is part of the larger plan to bring down the country's dependency on defence imports.
- These projects sanctioned will be in direction to meet various requirements of the Armed Forces and aerospace and defence sectors. **The TDF scheme is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Defence executed by DRDO under the 'Make in India' initiative.** It has various objectives including providing Grant in Aid to Indian industries.
- **The sanctioned projects include the Indigenous Scenario and Sensor Simulation Toolkit, Underwater Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Long-range Remotely Operated Vehicles for Detection and Neutralisation and Development of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System-based Timing Acquisition & Dissemination System.** The other three projects sanctioned to the private sector include the Development of Ice Detection Sensor for Aircraft, the Development of a Radar Signal Processor with an Active Antenna Array Simulator and the Development of Graphene-Based Smart and E-textiles for Multifunctional Wearable Applications.

China builds world's first field test network for 6G communication

- A group of Chinese telecom engineers has established the world's first field test network for **6G communication and intelligent integration.** The experimental network has demonstrated that semantic communication can reach the transmission capabilities of 6G on existing 4G infrastructure.
- Also, the network has achieved a remarkable tenfold improvement in key communication metrics, including capacity, coverage and efficiency, according to a team from Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications who unveiled their work at a seminar. **China is working to commercialize 6G, the next-generation wireless technology after 5G, by around 2030, while 6G standards are expected to be set in 2025.**

ISRO scientists create the first undersea map of Ram Setu

- The scientists from Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) have **collaborated with NASA's ICESat-2 satellite to successfully map out a comprehensive map of submerged Ram Setu also called Adam's Bridge.**

- The entire bridge can be seen through a 10 meter resolution map, the data for which has been collected over the due course of 6 years between October 2018 to October 2023. **This is a first of its kind undersea map, which is 29 meters long and is 8 meters above the seabed.**
- **The report is the first to provide intricate details about the Adam’s Bridge using NASA satellite ICESat-2 water penetrated photons.** The ship mapping was difficult as the waters are very shallow in this area. Earlier the research for this bridge was limited to elevated portions of the bridge but ICESat-2’s laser helped researchers penetrate deeper in the water body.

Adam’s Bridge also known as Rama’s Bridge or Rama Setu,[c] is a chain of natural limestone shoals between Pamban Island, also known as Rameswaram Island, off the south-eastern coast of Tamil Nadu, India, and Mannar Island, off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka. Geological evidence suggests that the **bridge was formerly a land connection between India and Sri Lanka.** The ancient Sanskrit epic Ramayana (8th century BCE–3rd century CE) mentions a bridge constructed by the god Rama to reach the island Lanka and rescue his wife Sita from Ravana. In popular belief, Lanka is equated to present-day Sri Lanka and the bridge is described as “Rama’s Setu”.

CSIR chief Kalaiselvi gets two-year extension

- **Nallathamby Kalaiselvi, the first woman Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was granted a two-year extension in service.** A government order said the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet had approved the extension of tenure of Ms. Kalaiselvi “for a period of two years beyond 07.08.2024, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.”
- **She was appointed to the post in August 2022 following the superannuation of Shekhar Mande** in April that year. She will also hold the charge of Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Ms. Kalaiselvi has risen through the ranks in CSIR and **broke the proverbial glass ceiling by becoming the first woman scientist to head the Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CSIR-CECRI) in February 2019.**

PGIMER to set up India’s first medical institutional museum

- It promises to be a walk down memory lane and a testament to the times gone by. PGIMER, Chandigarh announced the **creation of India’s first museum within a medical institution, dedicated to chronicling its illustrious history and contributions to medical science.** The ambitious project honours the vision of the late Sardar Partap Singh Kairon, the then chief minister of Punjab, and the distinguished medical educationist of the combined state of Punjab, supported by the first Prime Minister of India, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru.

India completes UN human rights review

- **India successfully concluded its fourth periodic review by the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in Geneva.** The Human Rights Committee, comprising 18 independent experts, monitors the implementation of the ICCPR, reviews reports of all countries by conducting periodic reviews and make observations and recommendations. The Indian delegation, jointly led by Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, included secretary (West) Pavan Kapoor from the ministries of women and child development, social justice and empowerment, electronics and information technology, minority affairs, external affairs, tribal affairs, home affairs.
- **The rights and freedoms provided in the ICCPR are guaranteed under the Constitution** and legislative and judicial framework, the external affairs ministry said. **India became a party to the ICCPR in 1979 and has undergone three such reviews so far, the last being in 1997.**

What is dual-tower solar thermal plant, that could boost efficiency by 24%

- **China has unveiled the world’s first dual-tower solar thermal power plant, which utilises an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency.** Located in Gansu Province, the plant features two 200-meter tall towers, each surrounded by nearly 30,000 mirrors that form overlapping circles to focus sunlight onto the towers. This dual-tower configuration is a key innovation that sets this plant apart from traditional solar thermal facilities. “The mirrors in the overlapping area can be utilized by either tower,” explains plant project manager Wen Jianghong. “This configuration is expected to enhance efficiency by 24 percent under the same boundary conditions”

₹1,000 crore venture capital fund to promote space technology

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Budget a **venture capital fund of ₹1,000 crore to promote space technology**. “With our continued emphasis on expanding the space economy by five times in the next 10 years, a venture capital fund of ₹1,000 crore will be set up,” she said.
- **Pawan Goenka, chairman of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)**, which has been formed under the Department of Space to promote and supervise non-government entities (NGEs) to undertake space activities, said the announcement will give a major boost to new entrepreneurs and NGEs in the space sector. “At IN-SPACe, we look forward to supporting the growth of the space economy and nurturing an enabling ecosystem for NGEs. The fund, along with the existing policies for the space sector, will fuel technological innovation and create a fertile ground for NGE’s to thrive.”

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) is an **autonomous nodal agency, approved by the Union Government** and will be governed by the Department of Space. This organisation shall act as a medium between ISRO and the private space sector in India. Under the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, the private parties will be allowed to perform space activities and use the equipment and facilities of the Department of Space (DoS) for launch manifest. This will be the first time that the infrastructure and property under the control of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be used by the private sector. IN-SPACe will act as a single-point interface between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and everyone who wants to participate in space-related activities, or use India’s space resources.

India successfully tests ballistic missile defence system

- **India successfully flight-tested Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System from off the Odisha coast**. The test demonstrated India’s indigenous capability to defend against ballistic missiles of 5,000 km class. The Target Missile was launched from LC-IV Dhamra at 1620 hrs mimicking adversary Ballistic Missile, which was detected by weapon system radars deployed on land and sea and activated the AD Interceptor system,” it said.
- **The Phase-II AD Endo-atmospheric missile was launched from LC-III at ITR, Chandipur**. A number of state-of-the-art indigenous technologies developed by various DRDO labs have been incorporated into the system. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the successful flight test and stated that it has again demonstrated India’s ballistic missiles defence capability. “The DRDO successfully flight-tested Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System on July 24,” the ministry said.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency of the Republic of India, **charged with the military’s research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India**. It was formed in 1958 by the merger of the Technical Development Establishment and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr. Samir V Kamat** is the current Chairman of DRDO.

One Gaganyaan astronaut to travel to ISS in joint mission with NASA

- **One of the four astronauts undergoing training for the Gaganyaan mission will travel to the International Space Station as part of a collaborative effort with NASA**. Singh said NASA has identified a private entity Axiom Space and ISRO had signed a Space Flight Agreement with the American firm for the joint mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- During Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the US last year, **President Joe Biden announced that India and the US were collaborating to send an Indian astronaut to the ISS in 2024**. India’s Astronaut Selection Board had selected four astronauts from the group of test pilots from the Indian Air Force for the Gaganyaan mission, India’s first human space flight planned to take place next year. “**All four astronauts have undergone training on a spaceflight basic module in Russia**.”
- **Currently, astronauts are undergoing training at ISRO’s Astronauts Training Facility (ATF) in Bengaluru for the Gaganyaan Mission**”. The minister said two out of three semesters of the Gaganyatri training programme have been completed while independent training simulators and static mockup simulators have been realised. Sharing an update on the Gaganyaan mission, Singh said ground testing of propulsion systems stages, including solid, liquid and cryogenic engine, towards human rating of the launch vehicle has been completed.

Gaganyaan is an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft intended to be the formative spacecraft of the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme. It is ISRO's first human space flight programme. The spacecraft is being designed to carry three people, and a planned upgraded version will be equipped with rendezvous and docking capabilities. In its maiden crewed mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s largely autonomous 5.3-metric ton capsule will orbit the Earth at 400 km altitude for up to seven days with a two- or three-person crew on board. The first crewed mission was originally planned to be launched on ISRO's LVM3 in December 2021, But this has since been delayed to no earlier than 2025.

Career
Launcher



Inventions/Discoveries/Health

Rotten eggs chemical detected on Jupiter-like alien planet

- **The planet known as HD 189733b, discovered in 2005, already had a reputation as a rather extreme place, a scorching hot gas giant a bit larger than Jupiter that is a striking cobalt blue colour and has molten glass rain that blows sideways in its fierce atmospheric winds. Add hydrogen sulfide, the chemical compound behind the stench of rotten eggs. Researchers said new data from the James Webb Space Telescope is giving a fuller picture of HD 189733b, already among the most thoroughly studied exoplanets, as planets beyond our solar system are called. A trace amount of hydrogen sulfide was detected in its atmosphere, a first for any exoplanet.**
- **It is a type called a “hot Jupiter” - gas giants similar to the largest planet in our solar system, only much hotter owing to their close proximity to their host stars. This planet orbits 170 times closer to its host star than Jupiter does to the sun. It completes one orbit every two days as opposed to the 12 years Jupiter takes for one orbit of the sun.**
- **In fact, its orbit is 13 times nearer to its host star than our innermost planet Mercury is to the sun, leaving the temperature on the side of the planet facing the star at about 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit (930 degrees Celsius). This planet is located 64 light-years from Earth, considered in our neighbourhood within the Milky Way galaxy, in the constellation Vulpecula. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).**

Thirty Meter Telescope

- **The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) is a revolutionary class of extremely large telescopes that will enable us to explore deeper into space and observe cosmic objects with unparalleled sensitivity. Indian scientists have developed an open-source tool to generate an infrared star catalogue for the Adaptive Optics System (AOS) of the TMT.**
- **This is an ambitious international project involving India, the United States, Canada, China, and Japan that aims to significantly advance our understanding of the universe. The TMT is a next-generation astronomical observatory designed to provide unprecedented resolution and sensitivity with its massive 30-meter primary mirror, advanced adaptive optics system, and state-of-the-art instruments.**

Scientists have confirmed a cave on the moon that could be used to shelter future explorers

- **Scientists have confirmed a cave on the moon, not far from where Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed 55 years ago, and suspect there are hundreds more that could house future astronauts. An Italian-led team reported that there's evidence for a sizable cave accessible from the deepest known pit on the moon. It's located at the Sea of Tranquility, just 250 miles (400 kilometers) from Apollo 11's landing site. The pit, like the more than 200 others discovered up there, was created by the collapse of a lava tube.**
- **Researchers analyzed radar measurements by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, and compared the results with lava tubes on Earth. The radar data reveals only the initial part of the underground cavity, according to the scientists. They estimate it's at least 130 feet (40 meters) wide and tens of yards (meters) long, probably more.**

South Africa: Scientists Make Live Rhino Horns Radioactive in World First

- **In South Africa, radioactive material has been inserted into rhino horns, in a world first, to curb poaching. South Africa is home to 80% of the world's rhinos, which makes a hotbed of poaching. Every 20 hours in South Africa, a rhino dies for its horn. Poached horns trafficked across the world for medicine use or as status symbols. In February the environment ministry said that despite government efforts to tackle the illicit trade, 499 of the giant mammals were killed in 2023, mostly in state-run parks, an 11% increase over 2022 figures.**

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates Asia's first health research related “Pre-clinical Network facility” under Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)

- **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated Asia's first health research-related “Pre-clinical Network Facility” under the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology under the aegis of the “Translational Health Science & Technology Institute” (THSTI), Faridabad.**

- **The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has selected BRIC-THSTI as a pre-clinical network laboratory based on its capability to handle BSL3 pathogens.** It will be the 9th such network laboratory across the globe and the first such laboratory in the whole of Asia. The other labs are located in the USA, Europe and Australia. The experimental Animal Facility is one of the largest small animal facility in the country with a housing capacity of about 75,000 mice, including immune compromised mice and other species such as rat, rabbit, hamsters, guinea pigs etc.
- **The Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) is an institute of the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC), Department of Biotechnology under Ministry of Science and Technology which facilitated the signing of more than a dozen agreements and MoU's signed with Private sector for Vaccine development and research in Nipah Virus, Influenza and other respiratory diseases.** It will also facilitate innovative and cutting-edge fundamental research in the country, support translational research to test drug and vaccine candidates, identify biomarkers of disease progression/resolution and foster research collaborations across disciplines and professions with connectivity to industry and academia.

Serum Institute's New "High Efficacy" Malaria Vaccine Rolls out in Africa

- **A new "high efficacy" malaria vaccine co-developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII) and the University of Oxford was officially rolled out when Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa became the first country to begin administering R21/Matrix-M.** The vaccine, which was **granted World Health Organisation (WHO) approval last year**, is said to have undergone a rigorous regulatory process and clinical assessment and was found to be highly effective and affordable. As a low-dose vaccine, it can be manufactured at speed and scale which is seen as critical to stemming the spread of the mosquito-borne disease. "Reducing the malaria burden is finally within sight. Today's start of the R21/Matrix-M vaccine roll-out marks a monumental milestone after years of incredible work with our partners at Oxford and Novavax," said SII CEO Adar Poonawalla.

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.**

Study finds 'dark oxygen' 13,000 feet below the ocean

- **Scientists have been fascinated by the mystery of dark matter for decades, thinking that it uses gravitational attraction to hold galaxies together. Dark oxygen is found well below the ocean's surface.** A recent study published in Nature Geoscience reveals that oxygen is released from mineral deposits located 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) below the surface in the Pacific Ocean's Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ).
- **This depth is almost half of Mount Everest's height.** The 4.5 million square kilometer (1.7 million square mile) Central Cordillera (CCZ) is home to iron and manganese-rich polymetallic nodules, which resemble coal. The journey to this discovery began over a decade ago during a 2013 research mission. It has been discovered that these nodules may manufacture oxygen on their own without the need of sunshine or photosynthesis. The initial goal of research was to comprehend how the CCZ seafloor's oxygen levels changed with depth. They tracked oxygen levels using landers, which are mechanical platforms made to descend freely to the seafloor, and found this surprising source of dark oxygen.

World's largest platypus conservation center

- **The world's largest platypus conservation center has welcomed its first residents as part of a project to protect the semi-aquatic mammal found only in Australia** amid threats to its habitat from extreme weather and humans. The four platypuses — two females and two males — were released over the last two weeks into a custom-built research facility at Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo, about 400 kilometers (250 miles), northwest of Sydney. Platypus numbers may have more than halved over several decades, research models show, but figures are hard to pinpoint. Environment groups estimate the total population between 30,000 and 300,000.

ISRO conducts experimental flight of Air Breathing Propulsion System

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully carried out the second experimental flight for the demonstration of Air Breathing Propulsion Technology.** The second experimental flight for the demonstration of Air Breathing Propulsion Technology was carried out.
- The propulsion systems were **symmetrically mounted on either side of a RH-560 Sounding Rocket and launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.** RH-560 is a two-stage, solid motor based sub-orbital rocket that is designed to be utilised as a cost-effective flying test bed for the demonstration of advanced technologies.
- **It is the heaviest sounding rocket in the ISRO's family of sounding rockets, and is launched from Sriharikota.** According to ISRO, the flight test achieved satisfactory performance of the Sounding Rocket along with successful ignition of the Air Breathing Propulsion Systems.

European Space Agency announces mission to study Apophis asteroid

- The European Space Agency (ESA) has announced a **mission to study the Apophis asteroid when it passes by Earth at a very close distance in 2029.** ESA is the second major space agency, after NASA, to commit a space mission for Apophis that was once considered to be on a pathway to collide with the Earth.
- **Apophis will come within 32,000 km of the Earth in 2029,** offering space agency's a rare opportunity to study an asteroid from such close quarters. **ESA said an asteroid of such large size comes this close to the Earth only once in about 5,000 to 10,000 years.** "ESA's Space Safety programme... has received permission to begin preparatory work for its next planetary defence mission – the Rapid Apophis Mission for Space Safety (Ramses)," ESA said in a statement last week.
- **The Ramses spacecraft would approach the asteroid, which is about 375 m at its widest, before it comes to the closest distance to Earth** and then accompany it on its pathway for some time, in a mission similar to the one planned for NASA's OSIRIX-APEX spacecraft. More space missions are expected to join these two in studying this asteroid.

99942 Apophis (provisional designation 2004 MN4) is a near-Earth asteroid and a potentially hazardous object with a diameter of 370 metres (1,210 feet) that caused a brief period of concern in December 2004 when initial observations indicated a probability up to 2.7% that it would hit Earth on April 13, 2029. Additional observations provided improved predictions that eliminated the possibility of an impact on Earth in 2029. Until 2006, a small possibility nevertheless remained that, **during its 2029 close encounter with Earth, Apophis would pass through a gravitational keyhole of no more than about 800 kilometres (500 mi) in diameter, which would have set up a future impact exactly seven years later on April 13, 2036.** This possibility kept it at Level 1 on the Torino impact hazard scale until August 2006, when the probability that Apophis would pass through the keyhole was determined to be very small and Apophis's rating on the Torino scale was lowered to zero. By 2008, the keyhole had been determined to be less than 1 km wide.¹ During the short time when it had been of greatest concern, Apophis set the record for highest rating ever on the Torino scale, reaching level 4 on December 27, 2004.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

European carbon removal specialists to support new projects in India

- A team of European carbon removal specialists launched an initiative to help Indian businesses develop projects that suck carbon dioxide out the atmosphere and mitigate global warming. The Amsterdam-based group, called removes, has raised more than 220 million euros (\$238 million) to support carbon dioxide removal (CDR) projects throughout Europe, and will now accept applications from Indian start-ups.
- CDR refers to a wide range of interventions that sequester CO₂ that has already been emitted. It includes reforestation and filters that extract carbon directly from the air. Indian projects are expected to focus on biochar - charcoal produced from burning organic matter - as well as “enhanced weathering”, where materials like basalt are spread across land to absorb CO₂. Around 7-9 billion metric tons of CO₂ need to be removed annually to keep temperature rises below the key 1.5 degree Celsius threshold, up from 2 billion tons currently.

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty on climate change. Adopted in 2015, the agreement covers climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance. The Paris Agreement was negotiated by 196 parties at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference near Paris, France. As of February 2023, 195 members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are parties to the agreement. Of the three UNFCCC member states which have not ratified the agreement, the only major emitter is Iran. The United States withdrew from the agreement in 2020, but rejoined in 2021. The Paris Agreement’s long-term temperature goal is to keep the rise in mean global temperature to well below 2 °C (3.6 °F) above pre-industrial levels, and preferably limit the increase to 1.5 °C (2.7 °F), recognizing that this would substantially reduce the effects of climate change.

The Prime Minister of India at the COP-26 Glasgow summit presented five nectar elements, Panchamrit, to deal with climate change: 1. India will reach its non-fossil installed electricity capacity to 500 GW by 2030. 2. India will meet 50% of its electricity requirements from renewable energy by 2030. 3. India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now onwards till 2030. 4. By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by less than 45%. 5. By the year 2070, India will achieve the target of Net-zero.

World’s first floating wind power-fishery integrated platform now operational in SE China’s Fujian

- The world’s first floating wind power-fishery integrated platform started official operation at the Nanri Island offshore wind farm in Putian, southeast China’s Fujian Province, as part of China’s efforts to support oceanic green development through an innovative model to produce marine green products and clean energy.
- Located at the center of the platform is a hexagonal water pool, beneath which lies a double-layered aquaculture net cage capable of accommodating 50,000 deep-sea fish. This innovative design enables the platform to simultaneously generate power on water and facilitate fish farming underwater. According to the staff, the development and construction of the wind power-fishery integrated platform is a multifaceted interdisciplinary project, involving research in energy and power as well as fish farming.

India becomes world’s first country to prepare list of its entire animal species

- In a major milestone, India has managed to prepare a comprehensive list of animal species that exist in India. With this, India has become the only country to make a checklist of entire national fauna. The list covers 1,04,561 species. The faunal checklist will be an invaluable reference for taxonomists, academicians, researchers, conservation managers and policymakers. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav also launched the Fauna of India Checklist Portal on the occasion of the 109th Foundation Day of the ZSI in Kolkata. He emphasized that India is a global leader in biodiversity conservation, highlighting that the country’s tradition, ethos, and values respect nature and promote biodiversity conservation.

IIT Madras Launches World's First MBA in Digital Maritime And Supply Chain

- **IIT Madras has launched world's first MBA in Digital Maritime and Supply Chain to cater to the needs of working professionals worldwide.** The 24-month programme has been designed to equip global professionals with the skills necessary to navigate the rapidly evolving digital landscape of maritime trade and supply chain management.
- **The programme offers a unique blend of online learning and on-campus immersion modules, providing flexibility while ensuring a comprehensive educational experience.** Over two years, the participants will engage with cutting-edge digital technologies such as IoT, AI, ML, and Blockchain, enhancing their ability to tackle modern maritime challenges and drive career advancement.

World's oldest cave painting in Indonesia shows a pig and people

- On the ceiling of a limestone cave on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, scientists have **discovered artwork depicting three human-like figures interacting with a wild pig in what they have determined is the world's oldest-known confidently dated cave painting - created at least 51,200 years ago.**
- The researchers used a new scientific approach to determine the **minimum age of the newly disclosed painting inside the Leang Karampuang cave in the Maros-Pangkep region of South Sulawesi province** by using a laser to date a type of crystal called calcium carbonate that formed naturally on top of the painting.

41,000-year-old Ostrich nest found in Andhra Pradesh

- **Archaeologists have uncovered a 41,000-year-old ostrich nest in Andhra Pradesh, making it the oldest known nest of its kind globally.** This significant find was made by a collaborative team from Vadodara's MS University and researchers from Germany, Australia, and the US while examining a fossil-rich site in Prakasam district. **The nest originally housed 9-11 ostrich eggs, offering new insights into the region's prehistoric fauna. An ostrich nest typically spans 9-10 feet and can hold 30-40 eggs.** The discovery of nearly 3,500 ostrich eggshell fragments within a 1x1.5 meter area marks the first evidence of ostriches in South India and provides crucial data on the extinction of megafauna—large animals over 40 kg, such as horses, elephants, cattle, and hippopotamuses—in India around 40,000 years ago.

Thermonuclear blasts and new species

- **Musk has directed SpaceX employees to drill into the design and details of a Martian city.** One team is drawing up plans for small dome habitats, including the materials that could be used to build them. Another is working on spacesuits to combat Mars' hostile environment, while a medical team is researching whether humans can have children there. Musk has volunteered his sperm to help seed a colony, two people familiar with his comments said. **The initiatives, which are in their infancy, are a shift toward more concrete planning for life on Mars as Musk's timeline has hastened. While he said in 2016 that it would take 40 to 100 years to have a self-sustaining civilization on the planet he now expects 1 million people to be living there in about 20 years.**

ZSI scientist discover new species of dogfish shark *Squalus hima* from India

- **Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of deep-water dogfish shark *Squalus hima* from Sakthikulangara fishing harbour in Kerala along the Arabian Sea.** *Squalus* is a genus of dogfish sharks in the family Squalidae. commonly known as spurdogs, and are characterized by smooth dorsal fin spines. The discovery has been made by a team of scientists led by Bineesh K. K Scientist at the Marine Biology Regional Centre of ZSI.
- **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.

South Africa passes its first sweeping climate change law

- **South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed into law a broad climate change act that will set caps for large emitters and require every town and city to publish an adaptation plan.** The Climate Change Bill aims to enable South Africa to meet its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris climate agreement.

South Africa, which is the world's most carbon-intensive major economy and among the top 15 greenhouse gas emitters, is on track to miss those targets because of its heavy reliance on coal for electricity.

India's First Rain Gauge Website Launched In Kerala's Wayanad

- **In Kerala's Wayanad, the District Disaster Management Authority collects rainfall data through rain gauges.** More than 200 rain gauges have been installed at various places, including the Collectorate. A rain gauge is a device used to measure the amount of rain received in an area within a given period of time. The main parts of a rain gauge are a funnel with a fixed mouth and a cylinder attached to collect rainwater.
- The height from the bottom to the top of one side of the vessel shall be marked in mm. **It is possible to observe the variation of rainfall according to the different topographies of the district and identify the microclimate characteristics through rain gauge observation. This system can calculate the amount of rainfall recorded in each area and issue warnings.** A website and app called DM Suite has been prepared in the district to record the information received from rain gauges. This is India's first rain gauge website.

Union Cabinet approves India's signing of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement

- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved India to sign the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.** This landmark decision marks a significant step towards the conservation and sustainable utilisation of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- **Often referred to as the 'High Seas', areas beyond national jurisdiction are the global common oceans open to all for internationally lawful purposes such as navigation, overflight, laying submarine cables and pipelines, etc.** The Ministry of Earth Sciences will spearhead the country's implementation of the BBNJ Agreement.
- **The BBNJ Agreement, or the 'High Seas Treaty', is an international treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It aims to address the growing concerns over the long-term protection of marine biodiversity in the high seas.** It sets precise mechanisms for the sustainable use of marine biological diversity through international cooperation and coordination. Parties cannot claim or exercise sovereign rights over marine resources derived from the high seas and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
- **It follows an inclusive, integrated, ecosystem-centric approach based on the precautionary principle and promotes using traditional knowledge and the best available scientific knowledge.** It helps minimise impacts on the marine environment through area-based management tools and establishes rules for conducting environmental impact assessments. It would also contribute to achieving several SDGs, particularly SDG14 (Life Below Water).

India Leads Global Maritime Discourse at IMO Council Session in London

- **The A high-level Indian delegation, led by Shri T.K. Ramachandaran, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, is participating in the 132nd session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London.**
- **India, an elected member of the IMO Council in the category of countries with the largest interest in international seaborne trade, emphasized the urgent issue of seafarer abandonment.** The delegation pointed out that despite efforts, there are currently 44 active cases involving 292 Indian seafarers. India's strong stance on the need for effective measures and oversight to resolve such issues was well received.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Mercedes driver George Russell wins Formula 1's Austrian GP after Verstappen, Norris clash at front

- **George Russell clinched Mercedes' first win of the season at Formula 1's Austrian GP** after taking advantage of a late clash between McLaren driver Lando Norris and championship leader Max Verstappen in a Red Bull. It was **Russell's second F1 win**.

Hat-trick of Test wins: How Harmanpreet Kaur's India dug deep to break the South African resistance in Chennai

- Harmanpreet Kaur & Co had to send down 154.4 overs in the second innings to dismiss South Africa for 373. Chasing 37 for their win, India made it in 9.4 overs. South Africa's remarkable fightback continued well into the last session of the final day before **India won the one-off Test by a 10-wicket margin**.

Hardik Pandya becomes first India player to be ranked No.1 in ICC allrounders list

- After his consistent performances, **Hardik Pandya became the first Indian player to become No.1 in the ICC men's T20I allrounder rankings**. He is now tied with Sri Lanka skipper Wanindu Hasaranga. Pandya played a pivotal part in India's T20 World Cup triumph when he picked up the wickets of Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in the final. He finished the tournament with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and 11 wickets.

Mark Cavendish breaks Eddy Merckx's long-standing record for most career Tour de France stage wins with 35th victory

- **Mark Cavendish wrote a new chapter of Tour de France history in what is expected to be his last appearance at cycling's biggest race**. The veteran Isle of Man sprinter broke Eddy Merckx's long-standing record for most career Tour de France stage wins with his 35th victory. Norwegian rider Alexander Kristoff, who had crashed earlier, finished third.

Vishy Anand Wins 10th Leon Masters Title

- **Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand has won his 10th Leon Masters title after defeating GM Jaime Santos 3-1 in the final match**. Anand took over to win the last two games after a shaky start and has now won the event in northwest Spain in 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2016, and 2024.
- Viswanathan "Vishy" Anand is an Indian chess grandmaster, a former five-time World Chess Champion and a record two-time Chess World Cup Champion. He became the first grandmaster from India in 1988, and he has the eighth-highest peak FIDE rating of all time. In 2022, he was elected the deputy president of FIDE.
- **Anand defeated Alexei Shirov in a six-game match to win the 2000 FIDE World Chess Championship, a title he held until 2002**. He became the undisputed world champion in 2007 and defended his title against Vladimir Kramnik in 2008, Veselin Topalov in 2010, and Boris Gelfand in 2012. In 2013, he lost the title to challenger Magnus Carlsen, and he lost a rematch to Carlsen in 2014 after winning the 2014 Candidates Tournament. **In April 2006, Anand became the fourth player in history to pass the 2800 Elo mark on the**

FIDE rating list, after Kramnik, Topalov, and Garry Kasparov. He occupied the number one position for 21 months, the sixth-longest period on record.

Vinesh gets title boost ahead of Paris Olympics with gold medal in 50 kg category at Grand Prix of Spain

- **Vinesh Phogat made a desperate plea to government authorities, seeking their intervention in getting a visa.** Turns out those were the only moments of stress the Indian wrestler had to grapple with. For, once the visa came through and she made the journey to Spain, Vinesh remained largely untroubled on the mat.
- Vinesh's final stretch of preparation for the Paris Olympics kick-started in the **best possible way after the former Asian Games champion and world championship bronze medallist won the 50 kg category at the Grand Prix of Spain.**

Hamilton ends win drought with record ninth British victory

- **Seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton took his first Formula One victory in 945 days with a record ninth British Grand Prix win.** Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen finished 1.4 seconds behind, extending his overall lead, and McLaren's Lando Norris was third. Mercedes' pole-sitter George Russell retired with a suspected water system issue.

Superbet Classic Chess: Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh lose in tiebreaker; Caruana wins title

- **World number two Fabiano Caruana defended his Superbet Classic title by winning all three rapid games in a thrilling four-way tiebreaker,** featuring Indian Grandmasters D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa, after a rather dull tournament. Caruana lost to Anish Giri of Holland in the Classical format to split the competition wide open as Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and France's Alireza Firouzja all finished the classical section tied for first.

Badminton: India's Tasnim Mir & Tharun Manneppalli Clinch Singles Titles at Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2024

- **In Badminton, Indian shuttlers bagged the men's and women's singles titles at the Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2024, in Saint-Denis, the capital of the French overseas département of Réunion in the Western Indian Ocean.** In Men's singles, India's Tharun Manneppalli defeated Yudai Okimoto of Japan in straight sets, 21-15, 21-15, to win his second title of the year.
- **Earlier, he won the Kazakhstan International Challenge. While in women's singles, World No. 75, India's Tasnim Mir clinched the title,** defeating compatriot Rakshitha Sree, also in straight games 21-15, 21-19. in the final. However, in the men's doubles final, the Indian duo of Prakash Raj and Gouse Shaik lost to Julien Maio and William Villeger of France, 9-21, 14-21, to settle for a runner-up finish.

Gautam Gambhir named new Indian cricket team head coach

- **BCCI Secretary Jay Shah announced Gautam Gambhir as the new head coach of the Indian men's cricket team. Former T20 and ODI World Cup winner** with India takes over as head coach from Rahul Dravid, who stepped down from the role after India's T20 World Cup win. Having taken over as team mentor of the Kolkata Knight Riders ahead of IPL 2024, Gambhir was hailed for guiding the franchise to the title, having already captained KKR to two league titles during his playing days.

Star shuttler PV Sindhu to be India's flag bearer, along with table tennis ace A Sharath Kamal

- London Olympic bronze medallist shooter Gagan Narang replaced Mary Kom as India's Chef-de-Mission for the Paris Olympics where **ace shuttler PV Sindhu will be the female flag bearer during the opening ceremony.**

Ravichandran Ashwin to be co-owner of a Global Chess League franchise

- **Indian cricket team star Ravichandran Ashwin has been revealed to be a co-owner of a franchise in the Global Chess League ahead of its second season,** which will be held at London Friends House.
- **The spinner has joined hands with Prachura PP and Venkat K Narayana to own a team that has been named as American Gambits.** The American Gambits will replace the Chingari Gulf Titans, which was owned by Chingari app owner Tech4Billion Group.

Billiards: Dhruv Sitwala Clinched the Asian Championship Title

- **In Billiards, Dhruv Sitwala clinched the Asian Championship title last night. Sitwala defeated Ace Indian cueist and compatriot Pankaj Advani 5-2 in the final.** With the loss, Pankaj fell short in his quest to secure a hat-trick of titles.

Wimbledon 2024 final: Carlos Alcaraz defeats Novak Djokovic to retain crown

- **Carlos Alcaraz defeated Novak Djokovic to retain his Wimbledon crown. This was also the Spaniard's 4th Grand Slam title.** Earlier, Alcaraz won the first two sets 6-2, 6-2 in the men's final on Centre Court after breaking his opponent twice in each set. He would then put down the Serb in the 3rd set tiebreaker 7-6 (4) to win the whole thing.
- **The Spaniard won his first Slam title at the 2022 U.S. Open as a teenager,** and no man ever has collected more Slam hardware before turning 22 than he has. He improved to 4-0 in major finals.

Barbora beats Jasmine in Wimbledon final; wins her second Grand Slam title

- **Barbora Krejčíková won Wimbledon for her second Grand Slam title with a 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Jasmine Paolini in the final.** Krejčíková is a 28-year-old from the Czech Republic who adds this trophy to her championship at the French Open in 2021. The seventh-seeded Paolini was the runner-up at the French Open last month and is the first woman since Serena Williams in 2016 to get to the finals at Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same season.

Wimbledon 2024: Hsieh Su-wei, Jan Zielinski crowned mixed doubles champions

- **Hsieh Su-wei and Jan Zielinski secured their second mixed doubles Grand Slam title of the year at Wimbledon by defeating the Mexican duo of Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos in a decisive 6-4, 6-2 final.** The Taiwanese-Polish partnership, which began with their unexpected collaboration at the Australian Open in January, once again showcased their exceptional synergy on the court. The Mexican pair, Gonzalez and Olmos, made history by becoming the first Mexican duo to reach the All England Club final, chasing their own slice of Grand Slam glory.

India's Shaurya Bawa signs off with bronze at World Junior Squash Championship

- **India's Shaurya Bawa went down to Egyptian top seed Mohamed Zakaria in the boys' singles semifinals of the World junior squash championships in Houston. Bawa is only the second Indian male after Kush Kumar (in 2014) to reach the World junior semifinals and will collect a bronze medal.**

Orfi becomes first player to win hat-trick of WSF World Junior Championship titles

- **Amina Orfi has become the first ever player to win a hat-trick of WSF World Junior Squash Championship titles** after a comprehensive win over Egyptian compatriot Fayrouz Aboelkheir in Houston Squash Club, USA.
- Orfi, 17, who won the 2022 edition in France and the 2023 edition in Australia, came into today's final against Aboelkheir knowing that a win would see her draw level with **Egyptian legend Nour El Sherbini's record haul of three titles, but put her in a class of her own as the only player to win three consecutively.**

Yuki Bhambri, Albano Olivetti Clinch Men's Doubles Title At ATP Swiss Open

- **India's Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti clinched the men's doubles title at the Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament defeating French pair of Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin in the final** in Gstaad, Switzerland. This was the third ATP doubles title for the 32-year-old Bhambri. The pair of Bhambri and Olivetti, beat their French opponents 3-6 6-3 10-6 to win the title. This is the year's second ATP Tour title for the Indo-French pair. Bhambri and Olivetti also won the Bavarian International Tennis Championships in Munich in April.

Nuno Borges Beat Nadal to Lift Swedish Open Men's Singles Trophy

- In Swedish Open Tennis, Nuno Borges of Portugal defeated Spaniard Rafael Nadal in the final, 6-3, 6-2, to win the men's singles tennis title at Bastad in Sweden. It was Borges's first ATP Tour title. He became the second Portuguese player in the Open Era to win a main tour singles title, after João Sousa. It was also Nadal's first final since the 2022 French Open.

Randhir Singh set to become first Indian to take OCA head role after Elections

- Former member of the International Olympic Council Randhir Singh is set to become the head of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) after emerging as the sole candidate for the top post on the September 8 Elections. He has also served as a secretary general of the Indian Olympic Association.

Shooter Abhinav Bindra awarded the Olympic Order

- Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya has congratulated shooter Abhinav Bindra on being awarded the Olympic Order for outstanding contributions to the Olympic Movement. Mr Mandaviya said that his achievement has filled the country with pride and is truly well-deserved.

India's Leander Paes, Vijay Amritraj create history, inducted into Tennis Hall of Fame

- Former doubles world number one Leander Paes and tennis broadcaster, actor and player Vijay Amritraj became the first Asian men inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. The first inductees from India were joined by British tennis journalist and author Richard Evans in enshrinement ceremonies at the Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island. Paes and Amritraj made India the 28th nation represented in the Hall of Fame.

Olympic Games 2024: Nita Ambani re-elected unanimously as IOC Member

- Ahead of the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has announced that Nita M. Ambani, leading Indian philanthropist and Founder of the Reliance Foundation has been re-elected unanimously as the IOC from India at the 142nd IOC session in Paris that is currently underway, winning unanimously with 100% of the vote.

Oscar Piastri Wins F1 Title At Hungarian Grand Prix

- The Australian Formula 1 (F1) racer Oscar Piastri secured his first-ever F1 title victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix. The Australian rookie led a strong McLaren one-two finish alongside the British-Belgian racer Lando Norris. However, the race became dramatic when team orders late in the race saw Norris give up the lead, overshadowing the celebration.

Chamari Athapaththu becomes first to hit hundred in Women's T20 Asia Cup

- Sri Lankan skipper Chamari Athapaththu made history after she became the first batter to score a hundred in the history of the Women's Asia Cup. The Sri Lankan skipper achieved the feat in the match against Malaysia at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium. She stayed not out on 119 off 69 balls with the help of 14 fours and seven sixes.

Atiqa Mir, from Kashmir, is the first female to win the Max Challenge International Trophy

- Nine-year-old Atiqa Mir from Kashmir has achieved a significant milestone by winning the Rotax Challenge International Trophy at the Le Mans Kart International Circuit. She is one of the youngest female motorsport drivers globally.

Georgian shooter becomes first 10-time female Olympian

- Georgian shooter Nino Salukvadze has become the first woman to compete at 10 Olympic Games in a career which began representing the Soviet Union. In a career spanning five decades, Salukvadze has competed on three different Olympic teams - first with the Soviet Union in 1988, then the Unified Team which was organized for ex-Soviet athletes in Barcelona in 1992 after the Soviet Union collapsed. For the last eight Summer Olympics, she's represented her home country of Georgia following its independence.

- In 2016, Salukvadze and her son Tsothe Machavariani, who's also a pistol shooter, became the first mother-and-son duo in Olympic history to compete at the same Games. Salukvadze already had the record for most Olympic appearances by a female athlete and is now tied with Canadian showjumper Ian Millar for the most of any athlete. Salukvadze is the only Olympian to compete at 10 Summer Games in a row, unlike Millar, whose appearances weren't consecutive because Canada boycotted the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

Indian teenager Aarav Dengla wins oldest French chess tournament moved out of Paris for Olympics

- Indian teenager Aarav Dengla won the 2024 Grand Paris Masters Championship, the oldest French chess tournament. The tournament was conducted outside the capital city for the first time due to the upcoming Olympic Games. Held at the Blanche de Castille High School in Villemomble outside Paris, the Masters chess event had 250 players in contention for the coveted title.
- The 15-year-old Dengla took the spotlight in the Masters tournament. Dengla achieved a perfect score of 7 points to secure a clear victory to mark his first Parisian championship title. He finished ahead of his compatriot Dalvi Aakash who received an International Master (IM) norm.



Career
Launcher

Sport Events

IND end over a decade of pain, with 2024 T20 World Cup

- **BCCI secretary Jay Shah** praised India's title win in the T20 World Cup, stating that the team has "silenced their critics" with an outstanding performance. **Shah also announced a substantial prize of Rs. 125 crore for the World Cup-winning team led by Rohit Sharma.**
- **India clinched their second T20 World Cup title with a thrilling seven-run victory over South Africa in a tense final held in Barbados. Jasprit Bumrah had a tournament to remember, collecting 15 wickets at an average of 8.26.** The pacer ended the T20 World Cup 2024 with an economy rate of just 4.17, by far and away the best rate of those to bowl a minimum of 20 overs at the tournament. Fittingly, he was declared as the Player of the Tournament.
- **The 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup was the ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. It was co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States from 1 to 29 June 2024; the tournament being hosted by the West Indies for the second time, while this was also the first major ICC tournament to feature matches played in the United States.**
- The tournament field expanded from 16 to 20 teams, including the two hosts, the top eight teams from the 2022 edition, the best placed two teams in the ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings not already qualified, and eight other teams determined by regional qualifiers. **Canada and Uganda qualified for the men's T20 World Cup for the first time, while the United States participated for the first time by virtue of being co-hosts.**
- **England were the defending champions and were beaten in the semi-finals by India, who went on to win their second T20 World Cup title, defeating South Africa by 7 runs and equalling England and West Indies with the most titles in the T20 World Cup.**

Euro 2024: Spain's young and unfashionable triumph, England second best again

- **Spain struck late to win Euro 2024 with a 2-1 victory over England in Berlin to capture the trophy for a record fourth time.** Real Sociedad striker Mikel Oyarzabal turned home in the 86th minute after Nico Williams sent Spain ahead early in the second half but England substitute Cole Palmer pulled the Three Lions level.

Argentina win record 16th Copa America, Martinez nets extra-time winner against Colombia

- **Argentina clinched the Copa America 2024 title on the back of Lautaro Martinez's extra-time winner over Colombia at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami.** The win marked Argentina's third consecutive major title triumph following the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the previous Copa America, beating Brazil 1-0 in the final held in Rio de Janeiro. **Argentina also surpassed Uruguay for the most Copa America titles, having secured their 16th title in 30 final appearances.** The Albiceleste also ended Colombia's 28-match winning streak dating back to 2022. Their last defeat also came against Argentina.

Union Budget 2024-25: Khelo India once again gets lion's share in Budget for sports

- **Khelo India, which is the government's flagship project to promote sports at the grassroots level, was once again the biggest beneficiary in the union budget for the sports ministry as it was assigned ₹900 crore from the overall allocation of ₹3,442.32 crore.**

ICC forms three-member committee to review conduct of T20 World Cup 2024

- **The International Cricket Council (ICC) formed a three-member committee to "review the delivery" of the T20 World Cup which was co-hosted by the USA and the West Indies.** The committee features former New Zealand batter Roger Twose and two other directors Lawson Naidoo and Imran Khwaja, who is the deputy chair of the ICC.

Opening Ceremony of Paris Olympics 2024 held along River Seine in France

- **The Paris Olympics 2024 kicked off officially with the Opening Ceremony scheduled to be held along the River Seine.** This year, the Paris Olympic Games will feature a celebration of the centenary of the 1924 Olympics. **The French capital was the venue for the second-ever Olympics in the year 1900 and then hosted**

the Games almost exactly 100 years ago in 1924. Paris will become just the second city after London to host the Olympics three times.

- **The design of the Paris 2024 Olympic medals celebrates the return of the Games to France, each Games medal being embellished with an original piece of the Eiffel Tower.** The Paris 24 Olympic medals designed by 240-year-old Maison Chaumet. Each medal features the face of ‘Marianne’, the embodiment of the French Republic. **The ribbons are made in Saint-Étienne, and feature the Eiffel Tower’s patterns, with the Paralympic medal specifically in the original red colour of the Eiffel Tower.**

Paris Olympics: China wins first gold of Paris 2024

- **The 10m air rifle pairing of Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won the first gold medal of the Paris Olympics, thus making China the first nation to stand atop the podium at the Paris Olympics.** Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won the gold medal match by a margin of 16-12 over Keum Jihyeon and Park Jahun of the Republic of Korea. **Meanwhile, the first medal of Paris 2024 was won by Kazakhstan. The win marked Kazakhstan’s first Olympic medal in shooting since 1996.** The mixed 10m rifle pair of Alexandre Le and Islam Satpayev claimed the first medals of Paris 2024. India’s 10m air rifle mixed team duos of Ramita Jindal-Arjun Babuta and Sandeep Singh-Elavenil Valarivan failed to make it to the medal rounds of their event at the Chateauroux shooting range. While the Ramita and Arjun pair ended sixth, Sandeep Singh and Elavenil Valarivan finished 12th.

IOC announces first Olympic Esports Games to be hosted in Saudi Arabia

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that it has **partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia to host the inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2025 in Saudi Arabia.** This groundbreaking step follows the IOC’s recent announcement that the IOC Executive Board (EB) has established Olympic Esports Games. **The proposal will be made to the IOC Session, which will be held on the eve of the Olympic Games Paris 2024.** The duration of the partnership between the IOC and the Saudi NOC will be 12 years, with Olympic Esports Games held regularly.

AWARDS



Captain Anshuman Singh's widow Smriti Singh receives Kirti Chakra

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred Kirti Chakra (posthumously) upon Captain Anshuman Singh for his courageous actions that saved the life of a fellow Army personnel during a fire incident. Captain Anshuman Singh, a doctor with the Army Medical Corps, 26th Battalion, the Punjab Regiment, was awarded for exhibiting “exceptional bravery and resolve to rescue many people in a major fire incident”.
- President Murmu conferred 10 Kirti Chakras, including seven posthumously, to personnel of the Army and paramilitary forces for displaying indomitable courage and extraordinary valour in the line of duty. President Murmu, who is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, also presented 26 Shaurya Chakras, including seven posthumously, to the personnel of the armed forces, Central Armed Police Forces and state/Union Territory police during a defence investiture ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Shah Rukh Khan to be felicitated with Lifetime Achievement Award at Locarno Film Festival

- Superstar Shah Rukh Khan will be honoured with a lifetime achievement award at the upcoming Locarno Film Festival. The Jawan star will be feted for proving his versatility as an actor in over 100 films cutting across various genres.
- The Bollywood star will be honored with the award on August 10 in the festival's Piazza Grande. He will engage in a public conversation. Additionally, the festival will showcase the 2002 hit costume drama “Devdas,” where Khan portrays a melancholic aristocrat whose life spirals down after his family prevents him from marrying his childhood love.

Dan David Prize names 9 historians as winners of prestigious award

- The Dan David Prize named nine historians as the 2024 winners of the prestigious award, with each of them receiving \$300,000 to advance their research. Past winners of the prize, which David set up in 2001 and is headquartered at Tel Aviv University, have included Canadian author Margaret Atwood, the cellist Yo-Yo Ma and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert.
- The award has since shifted to focus on historians in the early and middle stages of their career with the idea that the prize will greatly enhance their research abilities. The prize was also awarded this year to Benjamin Brose from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Cécile Fromont from Harvard University and Daniel Jütte from New York University, as well as Stuart McManus from the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

P. Geetha Receives Inaugural K. Saraswathi Amma Award

- In a significant recognition of feminist literature and studies, writer, critic, and feminist activist P. Geetha has been awarded the first K. Saraswathi Amma Award. This prestigious accolade, instituted by WINGS (Women's Integration and Growth Through Sports) Kerala, marks a pivotal moment in the acknowledgment of feminist contributions to literature and social discourse.
- P. Geetha's groundbreaking work “Aan Thachukal” (male creations), an analysis of M.T. Vasudevan Nair's scripts, earned her this distinguished award. The book exemplifies the critical examination of gender representations in literature, a theme that resonates deeply with the award's namesake, K. Saraswathi Amma.

HCLTech chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra awarded France's highest civilian honour

- HCLTech chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra was conferred France's highest civilian honor, the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour). The award, which is conferred for outstanding service to France, recognised Nadar Malhotra's business and sustainability contributions and efforts to promote economic ties between France and India.
- The fourth largest player in India's \$250 billion IT export industry, HCLTech services French companies across industries like aerospace, manufacturing, financial services and pharmaceuticals. It is also involved in imparting software coding skills in middle schools to boost France's local technology ecosystem. The award was conferred at a special ceremony held at the French Ambassador's residence in Delhi.

NRI industrialist Swraj Paul awards honorary doctorate to son Akash Paul

- Leading NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul, in his capacity as the Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, has awarded an honorary doctorate to his son Akash Paul for services to business administration. The ceremony also saw honorary fellowships awarded to Thomas Anthony Modrowski, posthumously, and to Stephen Smith for contributions to manufacturing and architecture.

Indian captain wins maritime bravery award

- Captain Avhilash Rawat and his crew from an oil tanker have received the 2024 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. They were honoured for their "determination and endurance" during a rescue mission in the Red Sea, where they faced a serious fire after their ship was hit by an anti-ship missile believed to be fired by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.
- A total of 41 nominations were received from 15 member states and three non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO. These nominations underwent initial review by an Assessment Panel. Subsequently, a panel of judges considered the recommendations made by the Assessment Panel and ultimately selected the recipients of honours. They will be honoured alongside other recipients at the IMO Headquarters in London on December 2.

Vladimir Putin awards PM Modi Russia's highest civilian honour for 'outstanding service'

- President Vladimir Putin officially bestowed Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle. The ceremony recognised Modi's 'exceptional' contributions to advancing the strategic partnership between Russia and India.
- Established in 1698 by Tsar Peter the Great, the Order of St. Andrew is the highest order of chivalry in Russia. It holds deep historical and cultural significance as a symbol of honour and achievement. The badge of the order is a golden cross with blue enamel, featuring a crucified Saint Andrew the Apostle. It is adorned with a double-headed eagle and a ribbon inscribed with "FOR FAITH AND LOYALTY."

Maharashtra Wins Best Agriculture State Award 2024, CM Eknath Shinde to Receive Honor

- Maharashtra has been honored with the Best Agriculture State Award for 2024 by the 15th Agriculture Leadership Awards Committee. The announcement was made by the committee, which is chaired by former Chief Justice of India, Justice P. Sathasivam. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will receive the award at a ceremony in New Delhi.

Poet Jukanti Jagannatham Honoured With Sri Dasarathi Krishnamacharya Award

- Telangana government has nominated eminent writer and poet Jukanti Jagannatham for the prestigious "Sri Dasarathi Krishnamacharya Award" for this year. The state government announced that Mr Jagannatham will be bestowed with the award including one lakh rupees cash and a memento on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dasarathi Krishnamacharya. The state government issued the orders to this effect as per the recommendations of the Committee constituted by the government. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy congratulated Jagannatham for being nominated for the prestigious award.

Two Indian space scientists honoured at international space scientists meet

- **Two Indian space scientists, Prahlad Chandra Agrawal and Anil Bhardwaj, were honoured with prestigious awards** by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), **the world’s first scientific body dedicated to space science research.** Agrawal, one of the seniormost space scientists in India and a retired professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, received the Harrie Massey Award at the 45th COSPAR scientific assembly, which opened in Busan, South Korea.
- The award citation said the Harrie Massey Award **recognises outstanding contributions to space research in which a leadership role is of particular importance.** Anil Bhardwaj, director of the Ahmedabad-based Physical Research Laboratory, was awarded the Vikram Sarabhai Medal, which honours outstanding space science research in developing countries. This medal was instituted jointly by COSPAR and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Anil Bhardwaj, director of the Ahmedabad-based Physical Research Laboratory, was **awarded the Vikram Sarabhai Medal, which honours outstanding space science research in developing countries.** This medal was **instituted jointly by COSPAR and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).** Along with a medal and citation, the award for Agrawal also involves naming of a minor planet after the scientist. **Agrawal, best known for his work in X-ray astronomy, led the AstroSat programme, India’s first multiwavelength astronomy satellite, which was launched in 2015 and is still under operation.**

Curator-publisher Rahaab Allana receives insignia of ‘Officier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres’

- **Curator and author Rahaab Allana was conferred with the insignia of Officier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres at the Embassy of France.** The French government distinction is given to “persons who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the field of art, culture and literature or for their contribution to the influence of arts in France and throughout the world.”
- **Allana, curator and publisher, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, received the honour for his career as curator of contemporary South Asian photography as well as his contributions to Indo-French artistic cooperation over the years.** Some noted Indian recipients of this honour in the past include Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia, Raghu Rai, Ebrahim Alkazi, Habib Tanveer, Shahrukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai, and Upamanyu Chatterjee.

Padma Shri Awardee Kamala Pujari Passes Away at 74

- **Kamala Pujari, the renowned Padma Shri awardee and pioneering organic farmer, passed away at the age of 74 due to kidney-related ailments.** She was being treated at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack but succumbed to her condition early on Saturday. Her death has prompted condolences from prominent leaders and the announcement of state honours by the Odisha government.

10th National Community Radio Awards announced by Ashwini Vaishnaw

- On July 25, 2024, a significant milestone was achieved in India’s community radio landscape. **Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Ashwini Vaishnaw, announced the winners of the 10th National Community Radio Awards and inaugurated the country’s 500th Community Radio Station.** The event was graced by the presence of Mizoram’s Chief Minister, Lalduhoma, marking the importance of this occasion for both national and regional development in communications.
- **The 500th Community Radio Station, a landmark in India’s community broadcasting sector, has been established at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in Aizawl, Mizoram. This new station, named “Apna Radio 90.0 FM”, is set to play a crucial role in disseminating vital information to the local community.**

PERSONS IN NEWS

Rachel Reeves, UK's first female Chancellor of Exchequer

- **Labour Party leader Rachel Reeves created history after she was appointed by Sir Keir Starmer, the UK's new Prime Minister, as his Chancellor of the Exchequer (equivalent to a finance minister), making Reeves the first woman to hold the coveted post.** The 45-year-old, who succeeds Jeremy Hunt of the Conservatives as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, studied at New College, Oxford, and the London School of Economics (LSE).

From Kerala to UK Parliament, nurse from Kottayam scripts history

- **A nurse from Kerala, who migrated to the United Kingdom two decades ago, is set to be elected to the British Parliament after he contested as a Labour Party candidate in the recently concluded UK elections and won. Sojan Joseph, who contested from the Conservative Party's stronghold of Ashford, will be the first Keralite to get elected to the British Parliament.** He defeated the veteran politician Damien Green. Hailing from Kaipuzha in Kottayam – a hub of nursing professionals in Kerala – Sojan scripted victory for the Labour Party in Ashford for the first time in the last 139 years.

British Indian ex-MP Alok Sharma made peer in House of Lords

- **Indian-origin former Conservative Party member of Parliament Alok Sharma, who had chosen not to seek re-election in general election, will now take his seat in the House of Lords after being conferred a peerage by King Charles III.** The Agra-born MP, who was knighted as Sir Alok in the King's New Year's Honours list last year for his contribution to **tackling climate change through his leadership as president of the COP26 climate summit over two years ago, now becomes Lord Sharma.** Sharma was among seven nominations made by outgoing prime minister Rishi Sunak for his customary "Dissolution Peerages," which also saw former Prime Minister Theresa May become a peer in the Upper House of the UK Parliament.

Gen Upendra Dwivedi becomes chief of 1.3 million-strong Army

- **Gen Upendra Dwivedi, who has vast operational experience along the frontiers with China and Pakistan assumed charge as the 30th Chief of the Army Staff at a time India is facing myriad security challenges including along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).** Gen Dwivedi succeeds Gen Manoj Pande who superannuated after more than four decades of service. Gen Dwivedi has taken charge of the 1.3 million-strong Army at a time India is facing various security challenges including along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

PM releases three books on life of former vice president Venkaiah Naidu

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a ceremony released three books on the life and journey of former vice president of India, Venkaiah Naidu.** The three books – a biography, a photo chronicle, and a pictorial biography – were released by the PM on the eve of Naidu's 75th birthday via a video conference.
- **The books are titled "Venkaiah Naidu – Life in Service", "Celebrating Bharat – The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice President of India", and a photo chronicle and pictorial biography in Telugu titled "Mahaneta – Life and Journey of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu."** These books will be released on the occasion of Naidu's 75th birthday on July 1.

Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography

- **Manoj Bajpayee in 'The Definitive Biography',** pointing out why despite portraying numerous unforgettable characters in his career: Bhiku Mhatre (Satya), Sardar Khan (Gangs of Wasseypur), Ganpat Bhonsale (Bhonsale) or Shrikant Tiwari (Family Man), to name a few, he is still not considered a star.
- **The author, journalist Piyush Pandey, was inspired to write Bajpayee's biography** when he learnt that, like him, Manoj also grew up in a small village, couldn't speak English, dreamt of a career in films, attempted many times to get into film school and failed. But, unlike him, Manoj went on to carve an admirable career in Bollywood.

UAE names street after 84-year-old doctor with Indian roots

- A road in the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi has been named after an 84-year-old doctor with Indian roots as a tribute to his significant contributions to the country's health sector. The Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT) has named a road in Abu Dhabi after Dr George Matthew to recognise his contributions as part of its "Honouring UAE's Visionaries: Commemorative Streets" project, which aims to honour individuals who have greatly contributed to the nation's development. The road near Sheikh Shakbooth Medical City in Al Mafraq will now be known as George Matthew Street.

SC appoints ex-CJI U U Lalit as head of committee for appointment of VCs in West Bengal

- The Supreme Court appointed former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit to head a search-cum-selection committee to oversee the appointments of vice-chancellors for state-run universities in West Bengal. The ruling TMC dispensation has a running feud with West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose, who is also the chancellor of state-run universities, over how the state's universities should be run. Besides Justice Lalit, the committee will comprise five members, who will prepare a panel of three names in an alphabetical order for appointment of vice-chancellors in each university.

Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan appointed as the Principle Advisor at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme

- Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan has been appointed as the Principle Advisor at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme on a pro bono basis. As the Principal Advisor for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan will provide technical advice on the overall strategy to achieve program goals, suggest policy directions and necessary course corrections for optimal outcomes, and advise on research strategy.
- She will also assist in the formation of expert groups with top talent globally. Additionally, she will support the Union Health Ministry, state officials, and development partners in assessing the impact of the programme. Prof. Swaminathan was the former Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization and has also served as the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) previously.

In historic first, Lahore High Court swears in woman Chief Justice

- Justice Aalia Neelum took oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Pakistan, making her the first woman to be elevated as the court's top judge. Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath of office to her. Punjab province's first woman Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was also present in the oath-taking ceremony.

PM Modi becomes most followed global leader on X with 100 million followers

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a new milestone by becoming the most followed global leader on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) with over 100 million followers. The prime minister is far ahead of other world leaders like US president Joe Biden (38.1 million followers), Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed (11.2 million followers) and Pope Francis (18.5 million followers). In India, PM Modi has more followers than other Indian politicians. Leader of opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has 26.4 million followers while Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has 27.5 million followers.

Manvi Madhu Kashyap becomes India's first-ever transwoman sub-inspector

- For the first time in India, Manvi Madhu Kashyap, a resident of a small village in Bhagalpur, Bihar, has become the country's first transgender sub-inspector. Additionally, the Bihar Police has appointed three transgender individuals as sub-inspectors, including two trans men and one trans woman.

Vikram Misri, who has served in US and China, takes charge as Foreign Secretary

- Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri, a 1989-batch IFS officer who has served in Washington DC and Beijing, took charge as Foreign Secretary. He will be in office for a term of two years, ending in July 2026. Pavan Kapoor, a 1990-batch IFS officer, who is Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, will become the new Deputy NSA.

Donald Trump attacked at Pennsylvania rally

- **Former US President Donald Trump was evacuated to a safe space after gunshots were heard in the crowd during his rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.** According to a statement by a White House spokesperson, the suspect and at least one attendee were killed, while two others were injured during the incident.

Ex-NATO chief Robertson to lead U.K. defence review

- **Former NATO leader George Robertson will lead a review of Britain’s military strategy to counter what he calls the “deadly quartet” of China, Iran, Russia and North Korea.** Robertson, a former British defence secretary — who was NATO Secretary-General between 1999 and 2003 — will be assisted by ex-White House adviser Fiona Hill and Gen. Richard Barrons, a former director of operations for the U.K. armed forces. Mr. Robertson told that the U.K. and its NATO allies were “confronted by a deadly quartet of nations, increasingly working together,” referring to Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.

JD Vance accepts Trump’s VP nomination

- **Former US President Donald Trump’s Vice Presidential pick, JD Vance took centre stage. While starting off his speech, the Republican Senator from Ohio mentioned the assassination attempt against Trump at a Pennsylvania rally.** Vance officially accepted Trump’s nomination to be his vice presidential candidate for the 2024 US presidential elections.

Joe Biden pulls out of U.S. presidential race, endorses Kamala Harris

- **U.S. President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign after fellow Democrats lost faith in his mental acuity and ability to beat Donald Trump,** leaving the presidential race in uncharted territory. He also announced his endorsement of Vice-President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee. **In 2020, Ms. Harris became the first Indian-American and first African-American woman Vice-President of the U.S.,** and will be looking to repeat the feat as the President too, if Democrats approve her as the party candidate to run the 2024 presidential race.

Iran’s Khamenei formally grants Masoud Pezeshkian presidential powers

- **Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave his official endorsement to reformist Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic republic’s ninth president.**

Mysuru’s Capt. Supreetha becomes first woman officer to be deployed at Siachen Glacier

- **Captain Supreetha C.T., who hails from Mysuru, has become the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence, to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier.** Capt. Supreetha joined the Indian Army as a Lieutenant in 2021 and had been posted in the Army Air Defence after undergoing training at Chennai.

CM Sukhu releases ‘Ek Refugee Scientist’ autobiography

- **Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu released the autobiography ‘Ek Refugee Scientist,’ penned by Dr. M.K. Shingari of district Solan.** The Chief Minister lauded Dr. Shingari’s work and extended his best wishes for the success of the new publication. He expressed confidence that the book would serve as an inspiration for the younger generation.

Alia Bhatt turns writer; launches a children book: ‘A new adventure begins’

- **Alia Bhatt has started a new chapter of her life by turning into a storyteller. The actor has launched her first children’s picture book,** and she says she is working on the whole series of books for the future. Alia introduced the first one in a series of children’s picture books, called Ed Finds A Home, under her kids wear brand Ed-a-Mamma.

Shah Rukh Khan is the first Indian actor to be honoured with a gold coin from the Grevin Museum

- **Shah Rukh Khan has once again made history by becoming the first Indian actor to be honoured with a customised gold coin by the Grévin Museum in Paris.**

RRR Star Ram Charan to be Honoured at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2024

- **Ram Charan, the superstar known for his stellar performance in the global blockbuster “RRR”, is set to be the guest of honor at the prestigious Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2024.** This recognition comes as a testament to his significant contributions to Indian cinema and his rising international profile. Ram Charan will be awarded the title of Ambassador for Indian Art and Culture at IFFM 2024. This accolade recognizes his outstanding contributions to Indian cinema and his role in promoting Indian culture globally.

Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur appointed IFFI festival director

- **Veteran filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, known for films such as “Mr India”, “Bandit Queen” and “Elizabeth”, has been appointed festival director for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).** Mr. Kapur will head the festival, held annually in Goa, for the 55th and 56th editions. Mr. Kapur served as the head of the chairperson of the International competition Jury at the 54th IFFI. He also served as chairperson of the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India from 2020-2023.



Career
Launcher

MISCELLANEOUS

Jagannath Rath Yatra 2024: Odisha Police to use AI for traffic, crowd management

- **Odisha Police will use AI technology on a pilot basis for effective traffic and crowd management during the Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra.** The Rath Yatra, also known as the Chariot festival, is believed to be as old as the Jagannath Temple in Puri. This year, Lord Jagannath Yatra will take place on July 7.
- **Bhubaneswar-based miniature artist, L Eswar Rao, curated eco-friendly chariots of the holy trinity Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra and Lord Balabhadra** using papers and incense sticks ahead of the world-famous Rath Yatra. The deities sitting inside the holy chariots have been made out of tamarind seeds, and completed in seven days. The chariots are two inches tall from bottom to top.

First case under new penal code Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita registered in Delhi

- **The first FIR under Section Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, was registered on July 1 at Kamla Market Police Station in Delhi.** The case has been registered against a street vendor under Section 285 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for obstruction under foot over bridge of New Delhi Railway Station and making sales.

Tripura to launch Vidya Pravesh scheme to boost elementary education

- **Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that the Centre has been working to improve the education system and that the state government is working in tandem with it to introduce the ambitious Vidya Pravesh scheme.** The Vidya Pravesh scheme is a three-month play-based school preparation module, and Rs. 128 crore was sanctioned for it recently to boost the quality of elementary education.

Assam to introduce first-ever witness protection scheme for better justice delivery

- **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma gave approval to the state's first-ever witness protection scheme for ensuring fair justice delivery system.** Announcing the cabinet meeting resolutions held at Nalbari, CM Biswa Sarma said the cabinet has approved the Assam Witness Protection Scheme, 2024 to ensure adherence to Section 398 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, to ensure protection of witnesses against imminent threats during the course of the investigation and trial of any cases. According to the scheme, a witness in any case could apply for Witness Protection in prescribed form before a competent authority through its member secretary for seeking Witness Protection Order.

Tamil Nadu CM Stalin forms committee to recommend amendments to be made at state level in three new criminal laws

- **Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin formed a one-man committee to study and recommend the amendments to be made at the state level in three criminal laws enacted by the Government of India.** The Committee will be headed by Justice M Satyanarayan (retired) to study and recommend the amendments, which will also include a change of the name of the laws in Hindi.

Prime Minister pays tribute at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in Moscow

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid tributes at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in Moscow. He also laid a wreath at the Tomb.** The 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' is a war memorial located at the Kremlin wall, Moscow. It is dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during World War II.

India's first Gen AI Conclave begins in Kochi

- **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called for using generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to predict extreme weather events,** making it a life saver, and improve irrigation, fertilisation and pest resistance to improve agricultural production and productivity. India's first Gen AI Conclave begins in Kochi
- **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called for using generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to predict extreme weather events,** making it a life saver, and improve irrigation, fertilisation and pest resistance to improve agricultural production and productivity.

Eastern India's 1st University For students With disabilities To be Opened In Ranchi

- **The Jharkhand government is working on a plan to open eastern India's first university for physically challenged students in the state.** The proposed university will offer education according to the needs of students with disabilities.
- **Higher and technical education minister Champai Soren directed officials to prepare a proposal to open the university for physically challenged students in Ranchi.** The department also proposed a 'Navothan Scholarship Scheme', under which the government will reimburse the full course fee (up to a maximum of Rs. 10 lakh per year) of meritorious orphan and physically challenged students of the state.

Ramayan Temple in Bihar set to become world's largest, projected completion by 2025

- **The construction work of the 'world's largest Ramayan temple' started in the East Champaran district of Bihar following some religious rituals at the site.** The reports stated that the 'Ramayan temple' in Bihar will be taller than the 12th-century Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia.
- The estimated cost of the temple's construction is ₹500 crore. By the end of 2025, the construction work of the three-storeyed Viraat Ramayan temple is expected to be completed. **In East Champaran district which is about 120 km from Patna, the temple will be constructed on 3.76 lakh sq. ft. land in the Kaithwalia-Bahuara villages.** The Ramayan temple will consist of 12 domes, of which, the highest will be of 270 ft tall. In addition, it will also have around 22 sanctum sanctorum for different deities along with marriage halls and guest houses in the complex.

Centre likely to approve MoU to shift Assam Rifles' base from Aizawl

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma **assuring him that the Centre would approve an MoU to relocate the Assam Rifles' base from Aizawl to a designated location.** The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Mizoram government and Assam Rifles to shift the paramilitary force's base to Zokhawsang on the eastern outskirts of the state capital was referred to the Centre last year.

Palitana: World's first city where eating non-vegetarian food is illegal

- **Palitana, located in Bhavnagar district in Gujarat is the holiest pilgrimage site for Jains. It is renowned for its vegetarian status.** Selling or consuming meat and eggs is illegal in Palitana, making it completely vegetarian. The ban on animal slaughter is believed to have started after a hunger strike in 2014 by a few Jain monks.
- Jainism emphasizes on Ahimsa (non-violence) principle and reverence for all living beings. Therefore, vegetarianism is very vital in the religion, respectively. **On the other hand, Palitana has over 900 temples, most notably the magnificent Adinath temple, accessible by climbing 3,950 steps.** It is the pride of Jains.

Maharashtra Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojna

- **The Maharashtra Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojna was introduced in the state budget, which is aimed at empowering and providing support to women in the state.** The scheme focuses on promoting their education, health, and overall well-being, to ensure their holistic development. Earlier this month, the Maharashtra government extended the application deadline from July 15 to August 31.

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde Announces 'Ladka Bhau' Job Training and Stipend Scheme For Youth At Pandharpur

- **Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced a job training and stipend scheme for youth, tentatively named 'Ladka Bhau' Yojana, days after it introduced a monthly financial assistance scheme for eligible women.** He declared broad features of the new scheme, primarily targeting men, at Pandharpur in Solapur district on the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi. He said that under this scheme, job seekers who are class 12 pass will receive 6,000 rupees, diploma holders will get 8,000 rupees, and those with a bachelor's degree will get 10,000 rupees per annum. They will receive this stipend from the government during their on-job training in the industry.

Robots set to clean international airport in Thiruvananthapuram in what could be a first for India

- Airport robots are going to soon be ubiquitous in India. **The latest development on this technology is the planned use of robots in the cleaning operations at the Trivandrum International airport in the southern state of Kerala, which could be a first for Indian airports.** The robot will be used in the international airport to clean canals and remove rainwater. The reports said that the airport operator, Adani enterprises, has reached an agreement towards this. The robot is expected to be handed over in 60 days.

India Tops Global Milk Production, Contributing 25% of the World's Supply

- **India is ranked first in milk production contributing 25 percent of global milk production.** Milk production in the country is growing at an annual growth rate of about 6 per cent over the past 9 years whereas world milk production is growing at 2.1 per cent per annum.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) has decided to create a bamboo theme-based station

- **In a first-of-its-kind, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) has decided to create a bamboo theme-based station, marking a significant green initiative in urban infrastructure.** With this, the Bamboo Bazar Metro station will become India's first-ever metro station to feature a complete bamboo décor. The station will feature bamboo-based designs, structures, and interiors, promoting environmental awareness and showcasing the aesthetic appeal of natural materials in urban spaces.

Coal India bags first critical mineral asset

- **State-owned Coal India has bagged the first critical mineral asset, a graphite block, in Madhya Pradesh. Owning a graphite asset will give Coal India an advantage in powering green energy transition momentum to an extent.** "Coal India Ltd (CIL) has successfully opened its account in domestic critical mineral asset emerging as the preferred bidder for Khattali Chotti graphite block in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh,". The company accounts for more than 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

Six Indian Languages Granted Classical Status

- **Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that six Indian languages Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Odia have been accorded the status of Classical Language.** In the minister said Government is committed to promote all Indian languages including classical languages. The National Education Policy, 2020 also focuses on promotion of all Indian Languages.
- Mr. Shekhawat said that **Central Institute of Indian Languages works for the promotion of all Indian languages including four classical languages – Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Odia.** He said that Development and promotion of Classical Tamil is done by the Central Institute of Classical Tamil. He informed that the Government is promoting Sanskrit Language through three Central Universities. No proposal has been received in respect of Classical language projects in respect of Classical Malayalam language.

Culture Ministry to host State museum conclave in Delhi

- Curators, administrators of museums, and domain experts will gather next week in Delhi for a three-day conclave to foster collaboration between the Centre and States for the proposed 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum' project. **The State Museum Conclave, to be hosted by the Ministry of Culture, will be held from August 1-3 at the Bharat Mandapam, where the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC) is currently underway. The upcoming Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, billed to be the largest museum in the world, will have eight thematic segments telling the story of India spanning over 5,000 years.** The new museum, to be housed in the North Block and South Block in the heart of the country's capital, will be spread over 1,54,000 sq. m., making it the largest museum in the world.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Asteroid Day 30 June

- In December 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 30 June International Asteroid Day in order to “observe each year at the international level the anniversary of the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908, and to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard.” International Asteroid Day aims to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard and to inform the public about the crisis communication actions to be taken at the global level in case of a credible near-Earth object threat.

National Doctor’s Day

- National Doctor’s Day is celebrated on July 1st every year to honor the significant role physician’s play in our lives. This day commemorates Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the second chief minister of West Bengal and a renowned physician, who was born and passed away on this day. The theme for the celebration of National Doctor’s Day in 2024 is “Healing Hands, Caring Hearts.”

International Day of Parliamentarism 30 June

- The International Day of Parliamentarism is celebrated every year on 30 June, the date in 1889 on which the IPU was founded. The Day was established in 2018 through a United Nations General Assembly Resolution. In 2024, the focus is on “Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding.” This theme emphasizes how parliamentarians can contribute to international cooperation and conflict resolution.

USA Independence Day

- Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States which commemorates the ratification of the Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America.
- The Founding Father delegates of the Second Continental Congress declared that the Thirteen Colonies were no longer subject (and subordinate) to the monarch of Britain, King George III, and were now united, free, and independent states. The Congress voted to approve independence by passing the Lee Resolution on July 2 and adopted the Declaration of Independence two days later, on July 4. Thomas Jefferson was an American statesman, diplomat, lawyer, architect, philosopher, and Founding Father who served as the third president of the United States from 1801 to 1809. He was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence.

International Day of Cooperatives 6 July

- This year on July 6, cooperatives around the world will celebrate the International Day of Cooperatives with the theme “Cooperatives Building a Better Future for All”. Cooperatives will have the opportunity to showcase their current and historical contributions to building a sustainable future, accelerating efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. The theme aligns well with the objectives of the upcoming UN Summit of the Future whose theme is “Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow”.

World Kiswahili Language Day

- The celebrations for the 3rd World Kiswahili Language Day, chaired by the Permanent Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, took place on 5 July 2024 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, under the theme: “Kiswahili: Education and Culture of Peace”.
- World Swahili Language Day is observed annually on 7 July. Kiswahili is one of the most widely used languages of the African family, and the most widely spoken in sub-Saharan Africa. It is among the 10 most widely spoken languages in the world, with more than 230 million speakers.

World Zoonoses Day

- World Zoonoses Day is observed annually on the 6th of July to mark the successful administration of the first rabies vaccine by Louis Pasteur. Zoonoses are infectious diseases that can transfer between animals

and humans, such as rabies, anthrax, influenza (H1N1 and H5N1), Nipah, COVID-19, brucellosis, and tuberculosis. These diseases are caused by various pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi.

- **World Zoonoses Day is celebrated in honour of Louis Pasteur, who administered the first successful rabies vaccine, a zoonotic disease, on July 6, 1885.** This day is dedicated to raising awareness about zoonoses—diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans—and promoting preventive and control measures. **The theme of the 2024 World Zoonoses Day is “One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses”.**

World Population Day 11 July

- **World Population Day is an annual event, observed on July 11 every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues.** It took hundreds of thousands of years for the world population to grow to 1 billion – then in just another 200 years or so, it grew sevenfold. It stood at almost 7.9 billion in 2021, and it’s expected to grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050, and 10.9 billion in 2100, as per the United Nations (UN).
- World Population Day is observed on July 11 every year to focus on the challenges and opportunities caused by the rising population. It is a reminder to address population-related concerns and work towards a sustainable future. **“Leave no one behind, count everyone” is the theme for World Population Day 2024.**

International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms, 12 July

- Recognizing that sand and dust storms and their negative impacts at different scales are issues of international concern, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed **12 July as the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms.** This year’s theme of **Desertification and Drought Day, “United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future,”** underscores the critical importance of collective action to preserve our planet’s vital land resources for future generations.

Bastille Day or French National Day

- **The French National Day is celebrated on July 14 each year, on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille prison in Paris in 1789.** The French monarchy was abolished only in 1792, and Louis XVI guillotined a year later. The Revolution, however, did not actualise its driving principles of “Liberté, égalité, fraternité”. Political violence and instability continued till Napoleon seized power in 1799, bringing an end to the revolutionary period.
- **During the revolutionary period, the storming of the Bastille had been celebrated annually since 1790,** often in grand events which included the burning of Bastille replicas. But under Napoleon, and after the subsequent return of the monarchy in 1815, these ceremonies became more muted.
- It was finally in 1879, that July 14 was chosen as France’s National Day, by Republican President Jules Grévy. **At the time, however, there was some consternation regarding the violent history of July 14.** To those who had issues, the Republicans — those who opposed the institution of monarchy — pointed to July 14, 1790, the day in which the inaugural Fête de la Fédération (or the “Festival of the Federation”) was held across France, celebrating not just the Revolution, but also national unity.

World Youth Skills Day 15 July

- **The World Youth Skill Day is an annual event designated by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2014, with the first observance taking place on July 15, 2015.** The day aims to promote awareness and understanding of the importance of youth skills development in response to the challenges of unemployment and underemployment faced by young people globally. The World Youth Skills Day 2024 will be observed July 15. **This year’s event theme is “Youth Skills for Peace and Development.”**

Malala Day

- **Malala Day is celebrated every year on July 12 to celebrate the birthday of activist Malala Yousafzai.** Malala Day was designated by the United Nations to honour the young woman who has been advocating for women’s education for years.

World Day for International Justice

- **World Day for International Justice**, also referred to as **Day of International Criminal Justice** or **International Justice Day**, is an international day celebrated throughout the world on **July 17** as part of an effort to recognize the emerging system of international criminal justice. On 1 June 2010, at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in Kampala (Uganda), the Assembly of State Parties decided to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice.
- The theme for **World Day for International Justice 2024** is “**Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice**”, which emphasizes the United Nations’ recommendations to enhance global solidarity and restore trust in governments.

Nelson Mandela International Day

- **Nelson Mandela International Day** is an annual international day in honour of **Nelson Mandela**, celebrated each year on **18 July**, **Mandela’s birthday**. The day was officially declared by the United Nations in November 2009, with the first UN Mandela Day held on 18 July 2010. **This year, the theme** to celebrate Nelson Mandela International Day 2024 is ‘**Combating poverty and inequality is in our hands.**’

World Chess Day 20 July

- On 12 December 2019, the **General Assembly proclaimed 20 July as World Chess Day** to mark the date of the establishment of the **International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924**. Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players around the world since 1966.

International Moon Day 20 July

- The **General Assembly declared International Moon Day**, a **United Nations-designated international day** to be observed annually on **20 July**, in its resolution on “**International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space**” in 2021. International Moon Day marks the **anniversary of the first landing by humans on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 lunar mission**. The celebrations will also consider the achievements of all States in the exploration of the Moon and raise public awareness of sustainable Moon exploration and utilization.
- International Moon Day coincides with the date of the **historic Moon landing on July 20, 1969**, when **astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to set foot on the lunar surface**. This event marked a pivotal moment in human history and space exploration.

World Paper Bag Day 2024

- **World Paper Bag Day** is an annual event that is celebrated every year on **July 12** to help raise awareness of the **environmental benefits of using paper bags over plastic bags**. This day also celebrates the invention of the first paper bag machine in 1852 by Francis Wolle. Paper bags are an amazing invention that has helped to combat the problems arising from plastic pollution. According to Earth911, paper bags can be recycled up to 5 to 7 times, making them a smart choice for reusing. This is because the fibres in paper bags can be broken down and reused to make new paper products. By reusing paper bags, the amount of waste in landfills can be significantly reduced. The theme of World Paper Bag Day 2024 according to India Today is “**Sustainable Choices for a Greener Future.**”

National Flag Day 2024

- **India’s National Flag Day** commemorates the adoption of the **Indian national flag on July 22, 1947**, by the Constituent Assembly, a few days before the country attained Independence from the British on August 15, 1947. **The Indian national flag, known as the “Tiranga”,** features three horizontal stripes of equal width.
- The top stripe is saffron (kesaria), representing courage and sacrifice. The middle stripe is white, symbolising peace and truth, with a navy blue Ashoka Chakra (wheel) at its centre, which signifies the eternal wheel of law. The bottom stripe is green, denoting growth and auspiciousness. **The flag’s proportions are in the ratio of 2:3 and the Ashoka Chakra has 24 spokes, representing continuous progress.**

National Mango Day

- **National Mango Day is celebrated on July 22** to honour the delicious and versatile tropical fruit, known for its flavour and several health benefits. National Mango Day celebrates the mango, a fruit with a long and colourful history. Native to South Asia, mangoes have been cultivated for over 4,000 years and are deeply rooted in the cultural and culinary traditions of many countries. They were first introduced to the Americas in the 18th century and have since become a beloved fruit worldwide.

World Drowning Prevention Day 25 July

- **World Drowning Prevention Day, declared in April 2021 by General Assembly resolution is held annually on 25 July.** This global advocacy event serves as an opportunity to highlight the tragic and profound impact of drowning on families and communities and to offer life-saving solutions to prevent it.
- The new UN General Assembly resolution invited WHO to coordinate actions on drowning prevention within the UN system. In this capacity, WHO leads preparations for World Drowning Prevention Day by producing related advocacy materials, hosting a global launch event and supporting national and local activities in countries and communities around the world. **Overarching Theme: “Anyone can drown, no one should”.** This powerful theme serves as a reminder of the universal vulnerability to drowning and the imperative to prevent such tragedies.

World Hepatitis Day

- **World Hepatitis Day, 28 July, is an opportunity to step up national and international efforts on hepatitis,** encourage actions and engagement by individuals, partners and the public and highlight the need for a greater global response as outlined in the WHO’s Global hepatitis report of 2017.
- **The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.** Low coverage of testing and treatment is the most important gap to **be addressed in order to achieve the global elimination goals by 2030.**
- This year’s theme is: **It’s time for action.** With a person dying every 30 seconds from a hepatitis-related illness, we must accelerate action on better prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to save lives and improve health outcomes.
- **There are 5 main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D, and E.** Together, hepatitis B and C are the most common infections and result in 1.3 million deaths and 2.2 million new infections per year. **There is no vaccine for hepatitis C,** but it can be treated with antiviral medications.

QUESTIONS

- Where will the Bioplastic Park in Uttar Pradesh set up?
(a) Unnao (b) Lakhimpur Kheri (c) Sant Kabir Nagar (d) Maharajganj
- Who has been selected as the next chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) by the Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB)?
(a) Dinesh Khara (b) Ashwini Tiwari
(c) Challa Sreenivasulu Setty (d) Vinay Tonse
- Which of the following Institutes has recently launched world's first MBA in Digital Maritime and Supply Chain to cater to the needs of working professionals worldwide?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Madras (c) IIT Kanpur (d) IIT Kharagpur
- Asteroid Day is an annual global event which is held on _____, the anniversary of the Tunguska event in 1908 when a meteor air burst levelled about 2,150 km² of forest in Siberia, Russia.
(a) June 21 (b) June 25 (c) June 28 (d) June 30
- How much prize money did BCCI announce for the Indian cricket team following their T20 World Cup victory in 2024?
(a) Rs. 50 crore (b) Rs. 75 crore (c) Rs. 100 crore (d) Rs. 125 crore
- What accolade did Jasprit Bumrah receive at the end of the T20 World Cup 2024?
(a) Best Batsman of the Tournament (b) Player of the Tournament
(c) Best Fielder of the Tournament (d) Best Bowler of the Tournament
- Which of the following states recently announced 'Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana', a pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens from all religions?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
- Recently, Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene was declared victorious in _____.
(a) Belarus (b) Finland (c) Bulgaria (d) Mongolia
- Which of the following Indian warships has been deployed for the RIMPAC exercise?
(a) INS Vikrant (b) INS Shivalik (c) INS Chakra (d) INS Viraat
- Which of the following states is **NOT** among the primary beneficiaries of the Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline project?
(a) Bihar (b) Assam (c) Gujarat (d) Odisha
- When is National Doctor's Day celebrated in India?
(a) January 1st (b) April 1st (c) July 1st (d) October 1st
- What initiative did Prime Minister Narendra Modi outline at COP26 in Glasgow to support India's net-zero target?
(a) Five-Year Plan (b) Panchamitra Climate Action
(c) Green India Mission (d) National Solar Mission
- Which of the following countries took over the European Union's rotating presidency on July 1?
(a) Poland (b) Hungary (c) Austria (d) Italy
- Recently, Which of the following countries has managed to prepare a comprehensive list of animal species and has become the only country to make a checklist of entire national fauna?
(a) India (b) China (c) USA (d) Japan

15. Recently, Air India announced its plans to set up a flying training organisation (FTO) in _____ and claims it will be South Asia's largest such facility.
(a) Jabalpur (b) Shimoga (c) Amravati (d) Jalore
16. Recently, the first FIR under Section Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, was registered on July 1 in _____.
(a) Goa (b) Delhi (c) Sikkim (d) Haryana
17. What is the significance of the Kármán line in the context of the New Shepard mission?
(a) It is the point where the rocket lands.
(b) It is the boundary where astronauts begin to experience gravity.
(c) It is the internationally recognized boundary of space at 100 km above sea level.
(d) It is the maximum altitude the New Shepard can reach.
18. Who won Mercedes' first race of the Formula 1 season at the Austrian GP?
(a) Lewis Hamilton (b) George Russell (c) Lando Norris (d) Max Verstappen
19. When is the updated new base year for national accounts and other macro-indicators expected to come into effect?
(a) January-February 2024 (b) January-February 2025
(c) January-February 2026 (d) January-February 2027
20. Who did Bulgarian President Rumen Radev recently tap to form the new government?
(a) Boyko Borissov (b) Rosen Zhelyazkov (c) Korneliya Ninova (d) Plamen Oresharski
21. Which of the following Indian states is to introduce the ambitious "Vidya Pravesh scheme"?
(a) Tripura (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Sikkim (d) Rajasthan
22. Who is the new Prime Minister of the Netherlands, succeeding the previous tenure of 14 years?
(a) Willem-Alexander (b) Dick Schoof (c) Nathan Sciver (d) Thomas Alexander
23. What event will Kazakhstan host to celebrate local and unique traditions in 2024?
(a) World Wildlife Fund (b) World Nomadic Games
(c) International Film Festival (d) World Economic Forum
24. Which of the following countries is not a founding member of the instant cross-border retail payments platform initiated by the central banks and the Bank of International Settlements (BIS)?
(a) India (b) Malaysia (c) Indonesia (d) Philippines
25. The Reserve Bank of India and countries in the _____ grouping will create a platform to enable instant cross-border retail payments, with the domestic central bank working with individual member states to set up the systems.
(a) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
(b) BRICS
(c) G-20
(d) Association of Southeast Asian Nations
26. Who has been appointed as the executive director of the Reserve Bank of India, effective immediately?
(a) Rajesh Kumar Singh (b) Arnab Kumar Chowdhury
(c) Suresh Chandra Gupta (d) Piyush Jain Mehta
27. Which of the following centers developed the sophisticated flight dynamics software that contributed to the success of the Aditya-L1 mission?
(a) Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)
(b) Indian Space Research Organisation Satellite Centre (ISRO SC)
(c) UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC)
(d) Space Applications Centre (SAC)

28. Which of the following satellites will be launched during the first dedicated commercial launch of ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)?
(a) Janus (b) Optimus (c) Cartosat-3 (d) GSAT-11
29. When is the International Day of Parliamentarism celebrated each year?
(a) June 1 (b) June 15 (c) June 30 (d) July 1
30. Which of the following books is not one of the three books released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the life and journey of former Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu?
(a) Venkaiah Naidu – Life in Service
(b) Celebrating Bharat – The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice President of India
(c) Mahaneta – Life and Journey of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu
(d) Journey of a Patriot – The Life and Legacy of Venkaiah Naidu
31. Who has become the Chief Minister of Jharkhand?
(a) Hemant Soren (b) Sita Soren (c) Shibu Soren (d) Champai Soren
32. Which of the following states recently launched the second edition of the 'single window system' (SWS) to facilitate speedy approvals of various clearances required for setting up industries?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Haryana
33. Who was named as one of the nine members of the panel of chairpersons to help Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla from the Samajwadi Party?
(a) Jagdambika Pal (b) Awadhesh Prasad (c) P C Mohan (d) Sandhya Ray
34. Who was appointed as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court according to the law ministry's announcement?
(a) Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi (b) Justice Shashi Shekhar Sharma
(c) Justice Jyoti Shankar Tewari (d) Justice Abhay Kumar Sinha
35. In a bid to make _____ a one trillion dollar economy, who passed draft of Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing (Construction) Area Bill (NIRMAN)-2024.
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Maharashtra
(c) Bihar (d) Haryana
36. Who was reappointed as the Prime Minister of Egypt in the new Cabinet?
(a) Abdel Fattah el-Sissi (b) Mustafa Madbouly
(c) Mohamed Morsi (d) Hosni Mubarak
37. The proposed Bamboo Bazar Metro Station, under construction by the _____ will feature a complete bamboo decor, marking a first for Indian metro stations.
(a) Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) (b) Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRCL)
(c) Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) (d) Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC)
38. What is a unique feature of Japan's new banknotes, introduced to counteract counterfeiting?
(a) Embedded microchips for tracking (b) Three-dimensional portraits using holograms
(c) Watermarks visible under UV light (d) Color-changing ink based on temperature
39. Who will be honoured with a lifetime achievement award at the upcoming Locarno Film Festival?
(a) Shah Rukh Khan (b) Aamir Khan
(c) Ajay Devgan (d) Sanjay Dutt
40. US American Independence Day, known colloquially as the _____ of July.
(a) Second (b) Fourth (c) Sixth (d) Seventh

41. Which of the following has recently launched the ‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’ witnessing significant participation from citizens across the country?
(a) Ministry of Home Affairs (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Finance Commission (d) NITI Aayog
42. Who has been recently appointed as the Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court?
(a) Justice Ravi Malimath (b) Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva
(c) Justice Sheel Nagu (d) Justice Ravi Shankar Jha
43. Recently, India’s first ‘inclusive sports manual’ for differently-abled kids is designed in _____.
(a) Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
44. Who was the last Indian Prime Minister to visit Austria before Narendra Modi’s scheduled visit in July 2024?
(a) Jawaharlal Nehru (b) Indira Gandhi (c) Rajiv Gandhi (d) Indra Kumar Gujral
45. Who is on course to become the new prime minister of the United Kingdom?
(a) Rishi Sunak (b) Kier Starmer (c) Boris Johnson (d) Theresa May
46. Which of the following cities is ranked the highest in terms of cost of living for expats in 2024, according to Mercer’s Cost of Living City rankings?
(a) Zurich (b) Chicago (c) Singapore (d) Hong Kong
47. Who among the following recently became the sixth-richest person in the world, surpassing Bill Gates for the first time?
(a) Elon Musk (b) Jeff Bezos (c) Steve Ballmer (d) Warren Buffett
48. According to Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, World is to witness 1st Indian in Space and other Indian in Deep Sea by _____.
(a) 2025 (b) 2026 (c) 2027 (d) 2028
49. The Dan David Prize is the largest _____ prize in the world.
(a) Geography (b) Mathematics (c) History (d) Astronomy
50. Who among the following recently broke Eddy Merckx’s long-standing record for most careers Tour de France stage wins with 35th victory?
(a) Stephen Dare (b) Mark Cavendish (c) Matthew Head (d) Mannick Ratnam
51. Which of the following countries recently became the 10th member state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?
(a) Kazakhstan (b) Belarus (c) Uzbekistan (d) Fiji
52. The Joint Military Exercise MAITREE is held between _____.
(a) India and Malaysia (b) India and Indonesia (c) India and Thailand (d) India and Singapore
53. Who was recently appointed as the UK’s Chancellor of the Exchequer by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, making her the first woman to hold this position?
(a) Zarah Sultana (b) Liz Truss (c) Rachel Reeves (d) Preet Kaur Gill
54. The World’s First CNG Bike recently launched by Bajaj Auto is _____.
(a) Bharat 100 (b) Freedom 125 (c) Pulsar 150 (d) India 200
55. Recently, In a significant move to enhance kitchen safety, quality, and efficiency, the Government of India has mandated conformity to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for _____ and aluminium utensils.
(a) Brass Utensils (b) Iron Utensils (c) Silver Utensils (d) Stainless Steel

56. “Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography” is authored by _____.
(a) Piyush Pandey (b) Deepak Dubey (c) Vipul Sharma (d) Mahesh Kumar Meena
57. Recently, India has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at _____ historic department store Galeries Lafayette.
(a) Milan (b) Paris (c) London (d) Amsterdam
58. The first National Space Day will fall on _____.
(a) August 12 (b) August 17 (c) August 23 (d) August 27
59. What is the theme for the International Day of Cooperatives in 2024?
(a) Cooperatives Empowering Communities (b) Cooperatives Building a Better Future for All
(c) Cooperatives and Sustainable Growth (d) Cooperatives for Global Unity
60. Name the Indian chess player who recently won the Leon Masters title 2024.
(a) Gukesh D (b) Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa
(c) Viswanathan Anand (d) Ganesh Deshmukh
61. The Ratha Yatra is considered the oldest and largest Hindu chariot festival celebrated annually in _____.
(a) West Bengal (b) Odisha (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Telangana
62. Who was recently conferred the Kirti Chakra (posthumously) by President Droupadi Murmu for his courageous actions that saved the life of fellow Army personnel during a fire incident?
(a) Captain Anshuman Singh (b) Captain Kaustubh Rana
(c) Major Gautam Kulshrestha (d) Lieutenant Colonel Ardeshir Tarapore
63. Name the Project, an initiative by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, being executed by Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art seeks to bring forth public art that draws inspiration from millennia of artistic heritage?
(a) Project PARI (b) Project UNITY (c) Project NARI (d) Project UNIFORM
64. Who has been conferred a peerage by King Charles III and will take a seat in the House of Lords after choosing not to seek re-election in the general election of UK?
(a) Rishi Sunak (b) Alok Sharma (c) Theresa May (d) Boris Johnson
65. The CBAM is the _____ planned tax on carbon emissions caused due to manufacturing of goods imported from countries like China and India.
(a) European Union (b) Canada (c) Nordic Countries (d) USA
66. Who has been appointed as the interim Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Bandhan Bank since July 10?
(a) Chandra Shekhar Ghosh (b) Ratan Kumar Kesh
(c) Arundhati Bhattacharya (d) Aditya Puri
67. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance of _____ member states.
(a) 22 (b) 26 (c) 32 (d) 38
68. Name the mission who will take the Indian astronauts to the ISS and is the fourth private astronaut mission of NASA.
(a) Sand-4 (b) Atom-3 (c) Axiom-4 (d) Sajel-3
69. Name the top Indian wrestler who recently clinched the women’s 50 kg gold medal at the Grand Prix of Spain.
(a) Vinesh Phogat (b) Rani Disfota (c) Vaidehi Kumari (d) Maneka Rana

70. World Swahili Language Day is observed annually on _____.
(a) 3rd July (b) 7th July (c) 9th July (d) 11th July
71. India's first space park is proposed at Technopark Phase IV (Technocity) in _____.
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Andhra Pradesh
72. Recently which of the following Indian states passed an order giving 33 per cent reservation to women in cooperative institutions?
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
73. Recently, The 16th edition of _____ Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).
(a) India-Japan (b) India-Singapore (c) India-Mongolia (d) India-Myanmar
74. Who among the following recently won Iran's runoff presidential election?
(a) Saeed Jalili (b) Masoud Pezeshkian
(c) Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (d) Hassan Rouhani
75. What is the name of the programme described in the UNICEF India study as the largest ICT Network of students in India?
(a) Little STARS (b) Little Leaders (c) Little Scholars (d) Little KITEs
76. Recently, which of the following aviation companies welcomed its first narrow-body aircraft in new livery, the Airbus A320 Neo?
(a) Jet Airways (b) Air India (c) Indigo Airways (d) Go Airways
77. NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL have launched _____ a comprehensive credit education program for women entrepreneurs.
(a) PRAHAR (b) PRAKHAR (c) SEHER (d) URJA
78. Which of the following organizations collaborated with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) to develop the indigenous light tank Zorawar?
(a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
(b) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)
(c) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
(d) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
79. Who won the British Grand Prix recently marking his first Formula One victory in 945 days?
(a) Max Verstappen (b) George Russell (c) Lando Norris (d) Lewis Hamilton
80. Who among the following recently defended the Superbet Classic title by winning all three rapid games in a thrilling four-way tiebreaker?
(a) D Gukesh (b) R Praggnanandhaa
(c) Fabiano Caruana (d) Anish Giri
81. Who has been recently appointed to head the search-cum-selection committee for overseeing the appointments of vice-chancellors for state-run universities in West Bengal?
(a) A.M. Khanvilkar (b) U U Lalit
(c) Deepak Misra (d) Ranjan Gogoi
82. Who is the head of the one-man committee formed by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin to study and recommend amendments to three criminal laws enacted by the Government of India?
(a) Justice AK Ganguly (b) Justice M Satyanarayan
(c) Justice R Banumathi (d) Justice T S Thakur

83. Which of the following ministries will lead India's implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement?
(a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(b) Ministry of Earth Sciences
(c) Ministry of External Affairs
(d) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
84. Which among the following Indian shuttlers won the men's singles title at the Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2024?
(a) Prakash Raj
(b) Vipul Mahadik
(c) Tharun Mannepilli
(d) Manek Shah
85. Which of the following individuals was recently conferred France's highest civilian honor, the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, for his / her contributions to business and sustainability?
(a) Sundar Pichai
(b) Roshni Nadar Malhotra
(c) Satya Nadella
(d) Natarajan Chandrasekaran
86. The 22nd India-Russia summit 2024 is held in _____.
(a) St. Petersburg
(b) New Delhi
(c) Moscow
(d) Bengaluru
87. In the case involving Nigerian national Frank Vitus, what was the condition imposed by the Delhi High Court for his bail that he challenged in the Supreme Court?
(a) Reporting to the police station daily.
(b) Sharing his Google Map location with the investigating officer.
(c) Surrendering his passport to the authorities.
(d) Wearing an electronic tracking device.
88. Why did Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso leave ECOWAS?
(a) They formed a new alliance after military takeovers
(b) They experienced economic downturns
(c) They were seeking membership in the African Union
(d) They faced natural disasters
89. Recently, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud inaugurated New Office of Securities Appellate Tribunal in _____.
(a) Mumbai
(b) Hyderabad
(c) Gandhinagar
(d) Patna
90. Which of the following sectors has the highest weightage in the Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund?
(a) Airlines
(b) Restaurants
(c) Hotels and Resorts
(d) Airports and Airport Services
91. Recently who has been officially bestowed with Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle?
(a) S Jaishankar
(b) Narendra Modi
(c) Ruchira Kamboj
(d) Shashi Tharoor
92. Name the state owned bank that recently introduced a new security feature 'Safety Ring' within its internet banking system and mobile banking system in response to the increasing number of cyber frauds?
(a) State Bank of India
(b) Union Bank of India
(c) Punjab National Bank
(d) Canara Bank
93. Who recently replaced Mary Kom as India's Chef-de-Mission for the Paris Olympics?
(a) PV Sindhu
(b) Vinesh Phogat
(c) Gagan Narang
(d) Neeraj Chopra
94. According to American media outlet, which of the following countries has become an outlier among the 32-member NATO alliance?
(a) India
(b) Canada
(c) Mexico
(d) South Africa

95. Who has been recently appointed as the Principle Advisor at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme on a pro bono basis?
(a) Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan (b) Prof. (Dr.) Mridula Shankar
(c) Prof. (Dr.) Priya Mahadevan (d) Prof. (Dr.) Anukeerti Singh
96. Who among the following former Indian Cricketers is recently announced as the new head coach of the Indian men's cricket team?
(a) Gautam Gambhir (b) Sachin Tendulkar (c) Virendra Sehwag (d) Yuvraj Singh
97. What makes the exoplanet HD 189733b unique among the known exoplanets?
(a) It is the smallest exoplanet ever discovered.
(b) It has an atmosphere containing trace amounts of hydrogen sulfide, a first for any exoplanet.
(c) It is the coldest gas giant in our galaxy.
(d) It completes an orbit around its host star in 12 years.
98. What new parameter has been included in the upgraded version of the Regional Analysis of the Indian Ocean system developed by INCOIS?
(a) Salinity (b) Sea surface temperature
(c) Sea surface height anomaly (d) Atmospheric pressure
99. Where are the two new Indian consulates announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be located in Russia?
(a) Moscow and St. Petersburg (b) Kazan and Yekaterinburg
(c) Novosibirsk and Vladivostok (d) Sochi and Samara
100. Which of the following states recorded the highest share of informal sector enterprises in both rural and urban areas in 2022-23, according to the latest Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises?
(a) West Bengal (b) Maharashtra (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
101. The Supreme Court of India recently held that Muslim women can claim maintenance from their divorced husbands under which section of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973?
(a) Section 124 (b) Section 125 (c) Section 126 (d) Section 127
102. Which of the following states has been recently honored with the Best Agriculture State Award for 2024?
(a) Punjab (b) Maharashtra (c) Gujarat (d) Karnataka
103. Where did Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi pay tributes during his visit to Moscow?
(a) Red Square (b) Lenin's Mausoleum
(c) The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (d) The Bolshoi Theatre
104. Exercise Pitch Black is biggest international air combat training activity of _____.
(a) Australia (b) Belgium (c) Russia (d) USA
105. Name the country which passed an unprecedented law that could undermine the rights of a free and independent media after which the European Union has become strict over the country.
(a) Georgia (b) Belarus (c) Latvia (d) Lithuania
106. Name the world's first-ever Miss AI who beat 1500 contestants from Morocco?
(a) Kenza Layli (b) Meet Layli (c) Vipula Yani (d) Alankritu
107. Who is the convenor of the five-member advisory council set up by the Sixteenth Finance Commission?
(a) DK Srivastava (b) Neelkanth Mishra (c) Pranjul Bhandari (d) Poonam Gupta
108. What is the theme for World Population Day 2024?
(a) "Focus on Future Generations" (b) "Leave no one behind, count everyone"
(c) "Population and Poverty" (d) "Sustainable Growth for All"

109. The IMO was established following agreement at a UN conference held in Geneva in 1948 and is headquartered at _____.
- (a) Paris (b) London (c) Amsterdam (d) Helsinki
110. Which among the following cricket players has been revealed as a co-owner of a franchise in the Global Chess League ahead of its second season?
- (a) Virat Kohli (b) Rohit Sharma
(c) Ravichandran Ashwin (d) MS Dhoni
111. The Borehole Geophysics Research Laboratory (BGRL) in Karad, Maharashtra, is a specialised institute under the _____ of the Government of India mandated to execute India's sole scientific deep-drilling programme.
- (a) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (b) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
(c) Ministry of Earth Sciences (d) Ministry of Science and Technology
112. International day of combating sand and dust storms is celebrated on _____.
- (a) 6 July (b) 12 July (c) 16 July (d) 19 July
113. Which of the following countries are involved in the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project?
- (a) India, United States, Canada, Australia, Japan
(b) India, United States, Canada, China, Japan
(c) India, Russia, Canada, China, Japan
(d) India, United States, Germany, China, Japan
114. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed resident individuals to open Foreign Currency Account (FCA) in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) at GIFT City in Gujarat under the _____.
- (a) Liberalised Remittance Yojana (LRY) (b) Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)
(c) Standard Reality Scheme (SRS) (d) Marginalized Remittance Sheme (MRS)
115. Which of the following countries has been chosen to host the board of the "Loss and Damage" fund created by U.N. talks?
- (a) Egypt (b) Philippines (c) Malaysia (d) Seychelles
116. Who has been recently awarded the 2024 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea?
- (a) Captain Avhilash Rawat (b) Captain Vishwas Rajpoot
(c) Captain Nitesh Yadav (d) Captain Ajeet Bhargawa
117. Who are the two senior high court judges recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium for appointment as judges in the Supreme Court?
- (a) Justice N Kotiswar Singh and Justice R Mahadevan
(b) Justice Vipul Shah and Justice R Mahadevan
(c) Justice N Kotiswar Singh and Justice Mukesh Kumar Meena
(d) Justice R Mahadevan and Justice A N Patel
118. India's first Gen AI Conclave held in _____.
- (a) Gurugram (b) Hyderabad (c) Kochi (d) Bengaluru
119. Which of the following Indian states is planning to open eastern India's first university for physically challenged students?
- (a) West Bengal (b) Bihar (c) Jharkhand (d) Odisha
120. Who among the following recently took oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Pakistan, making her the first woman to be elevated as the court's top judge?
- (a) Justice Saima Khanum (b) Justice Naima Khan
(c) Justice Ayesha Chowdhury (d) Justice Aalia Neelum

121. What was India's overall score on the national Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index, prepared by NITI Aayog, in 2023-24?
(a) 57 (b) 60 (c) 66 (d) 71
122. Where is the construction work of the world's largest Ramayan temple taking place?
(a) Guwahati, Assam (b) East Champaran, Bihar
(c) Angkor Wat, Cambodia (d) Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
123. Recently, The Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT) has named a road in _____ after Dr George Mathew to recognise his contributions as part of its "Honouring UAE's Visionaries: Commemorative Streets" project.
(a) Dubai (b) Sharjah (c) Abu Dhabi (d) Masdar
124. Which government initiative was launched by Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to enhance agricultural connectivity in the North Eastern Region of India?
(a) Agri-Connect NE (b) North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE)
(c) NE Agro-Hub (d) North East Agro Market Integration (NEAMI)
125. Which entities are contributing to the initial corpus of the 'Agri-SURE' fund?
(a) NABARD, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Finance
(b) NABARD, Ministry of Agriculture, and other institutions
(c) Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, and other institutions
(d) NABARD, Ministry of Finance, and other institutions
126. What was the primary mission of the Hyperbola-1 rocket during its recent launch attempt?
(a) To deliver a communication satellite into orbit
(b) To carry a scientific experiment to the International Space Station
(c) To deploy weather forecasting and earthquake prediction satellites
(d) To test new propulsion technology
127. The Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme is a flagship programme of the _____ executed by DRDO under the 'Make in India' initiative.
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Science & Technology
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Ministry of Defence
128. Who recently won the Maiden Wimbledon Title in Wimbledon 2024 Women's Singles final?
(a) Jasmine Paolini (b) Barbora Krejčíková (c) Danielle Collins (d) Jelena Ostapenko
129. Who among the following recently won Wimbledon 2024 men's final?
(a) Carlos Alcaraz (b) Novak Djokovic (c) Daniil Medvedev (d) Lorenzo Musetti
130. The French National Day is celebrated on _____ each year, on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille prison in Paris in 1789.
(a) July 10 (b) July 12 (c) July 14 (d) July 16
131. The first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit is to be held in _____.
(a) Sikkim (b) Nagaland (c) Goa (d) Manipur
132. Who has been appointed as Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha?
(a) Kodikunnil Suresh (b) Gaurav Gogoi (c) Manickam Tagore (d) Mohammad Jawed
133. Who among the following recently became the most followed global leader on social media platform X (formerly Twitter)?
(a) Joe Biden (b) Sheikh Mohammed (c) Narendra Modi (d) Pope Francis

134. The joint naval exercise “Maritime Cooperation – 2024” is held between _____.
(a) South Korea and North Korea (b) Russia and China
(c) Saudi Arabia and India (d) China and Japan
135. Who is the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) who will become the new Prime Minister of Nepal after Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost the trust vote?
(a) Dev Raj Ghimire (b) Sher Bahadur Deuba
(c) Khadga Prasad Oli (d) Bidhya Devi Bhandari
136. Recently, the world’s first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100% hydrogen fuel, the MV Sea Change, was launched in _____.
(a) San Francisco (b) Paris (c) Los Angeles (d) Zurich
137. Which of the following countries has shown the highest growth rate in the volume of waste generated from screens, computers, and small IT and telecommunication equipment (SCSIT) between 2010 and 2022, according to the UNCTAD Digital Economy Report for 2024?
(a) China (b) India (c) United States (d) Brazil
138. Who is current Union Minister of development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER)?
(a) Kiren Rijiju (b) J P Nadda (c) Dr Jitendra Singh (d) Jyotiraditya Scindia
139. The world’s first “hydrogen apartment” block has been unveiled in _____.
(a) South Korea (b) Japan (c) Germany (d) USA
140. What is the theme for World Youth Skills Day 2024?
(a) Youth Empowerment through Education (b) Skills for Sustainable Future
(c) Youth Skills for Peace and Development (d) Innovation and Entrepreneurship
141. Which of the following teams recently won the Euro 2024 football final?
(a) Spain (b) England (c) Germany (d) France
142. Which is World’s first city where eating non-vegetarian food is illegal?
(a) Pushkar (b) Hapur (c) Imphal (d) Palitana
143. Which of the following High Courts will have its first Chief Justice from the region of Ladakh?
(a) Madras High Court (b) Jharkhand High Court
(c) Meghalaya High Court (d) Himachal Pradesh High Court
144. Name the wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD, which will be the Fund manager of AgriSURE.
(a) BHARATVENTURE (b) ABBVENTURES
(c) INDVENTURES (d) NABVENTURES
145. Which of the following Indian states is set to become the first to adopt a 10-year action plan for road safety?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Rajasthan (c) Karnataka (d) Punjab
146. Which is the first state in the country to have a skill census?
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Manipur (d) Mizoram
147. Which of the following two states emerged as the top performers in NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index 2023-24?
(a) Bihar and Jharkhand (b) Uttarakhand and Kerala
(c) Tamil Nadu and Goa (d) Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir
148. Recently, the former US President Donald Trump was shot in _____.
(a) New Jersey (b) Pennsylvania (c) Oklahoma (d) New York

149. Which of the following countries has recently made a “giant” oil discovery in the Al-Nokhatha field?
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Iraq (c) Kuwait (d) Iran
150. Malala Day is celebrated every year on _____ to celebrate the birthday of activist Malala Yousafzai.
(a) July 8 (b) July 10 (c) July 12 (d) July 15
151. Which of the following states introduced “Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojna” in the state budget, which is aimed at empowering and providing support to women in the state?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Madhya Pradesh
152. Recently, which of the following launched ‘One Scientist-One Product’ programme to improve research in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry?
(a) NABARD (b) FCI
(c) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (d) NITI Aayog
153. Recently, which of the following countries launched joint military drills “Eagle Partner” with the United States?
(a) Armenia (b) Albania (c) Siberia (d) Sweden
154. Recently, the world’s first Zakat Index was launched in _____.
(a) Malaysia (b) Kuwait (c) Saudi Arabia (d) Maldives
155. Which of the following Indian states is to unveil country’s maiden Global Capability Centres (GCC) policy soon?
(a) Karnataka (b) Kerala (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Maharashtra
156. What recent collaboration has allowed scientists to map the submerged Ram Setu, also known as Adam’s Bridge?
(a) Collaboration between ISRO and European Space Agency (ESA)
(b) Collaboration between ISRO and NASA’s ICESat-2 satellite
(c) Collaboration between NASA and Roscosmos
(d) Collaboration between ISRO and JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency)
157. Where was the new species of deep-water dogfish shark, *Squalus hima*, discovered recently?
(a) Bay of Bengal (b) Gulf of Mannar
(c) Arabian Sea (d) Indian Ocean
158. Which of the following countries did Argentina defeat to win the Copa America 2024 title?
(a) Brazil (b) Uruguay (c) Colombia (d) Chile
159. When is the World Day for International Justice celebrated?
(a) June 1 (b) July 17 (c) August 23 (d) December 10
160. Who of the following recently took charge as Foreign Secretary, serving a term until July 2026?
(a) Pavan Kapoor (b) Vikram Misri
(c) S. Jaishankar (d) Harsh Vardhan Shringla
161. When is Nelson Mandela International Day celebrated each year?
(a) July 10 (b) July 18 (c) July 23 (d) July 28
162. What percentage of management positions in industries, factories, and other establishments in Karnataka must be filled by local candidates as per the Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2024?
(a) 25% (b) 50% (c) 75% (d) 100%
163. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation is an international organisation of _____ South Asian and Southeast Asian nations.
(a) Four (b) Five (c) Seven (d) Eleven

164. Who won the mixed doubles title at Wimbledon 2024?
(a) Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos
(b) Hsieh Su-wei and Jan Zielinski
(c) Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty
(d) Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams
165. Which of the following countries will host the second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on civil aviation in September 2024?
(a) China (b) India (c) Japan (d) South Korea
166. What is the revised growth projection for India's economy in 2024 according to the latest IMF world economic outlook update?
(a) 6.5% (b) 6.8% (c) 7.0% (d) 7.2%
167. Who is the expected winner in the upcoming Rwandan presidential and parliamentary elections?
(a) Thomas Udane (b) Paul Kagame (c) Lataor Kingima (d) Kuma Latur
168. Who has been newly included as an Ex-Officio Member of NITI Aayog?
(a) Nitin Gadkari (b) Rajnath Singh
(c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Bhupinder Yadav
169. Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah virtually inaugurated 'Prime Minister's College of Excellence' for all _____ districts in Madhya Pradesh.
(a) 39 (b) 47 (c) 55 (d) 62
170. What is the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) global growth forecast for 2024 in its World Economic Outlook update?
(a) 3.0% (b) 3.2% (c) 3.5% (d) 4.0%
171. Who has been appointed as the first Supreme Court judge from Manipur?
(a) Justice Bimal Chauhan (b) Justice R. Mahadevan
(c) Justice N. Kotiswar Singh (d) Justice T. Manohar Singh
172. Which of the following Indian International airports could be a first for India where robots set to clean international airport?
(a) Trivandrum International airport (b) Dharamshala International airport
(c) Shimla International airport (d) Lucknow International airport
173. Which of the following countries is making waves in the data center industry by constructing the world's first commercial underwater data center?
(a) India (b) Japan (c) Indonesia (d) China
174. Who will lead the review of Britain's military strategy to address the "deadly quartet" of China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea?
(a) Fiona Hill (b) Gen. Richard Barrons (c) George Robertson (d) Boris Johnson
175. Which of the following countries currently administers the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia?
(a) India (b) Mauritius (c) United Kingdom (d) United States
176. What is the GDP growth forecast for India by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the current financial year?
(a) 6.5% (b) 7% (c) 7.5% (d) 8%
177. Name the country where radioactive material has been inserted into rhino horns, in a world first, to curb poaching.
(a) South Africa (b) India (c) Indonesia (d) Zimbabwe

178. Who is the first woman Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) who was granted a two-year extension in service?
(a) Poonam Maheshwari (b) Nallathamby Kalaiselvi
(c) Deepika Rajan (d) Soumya Nagrajan
179. Shaurya Bawa is only the second Indian male to reach the World Junior Squash Championships semifinals. Who was the first?
(a) Saurav Ghosal (b) Mahesh Mangaonkar
(c) Kush Kumar (d) Harinder Pal Sandhu
180. On 12 December 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed _____ as World Chess Day to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.
(a) 16 July (b) 20 July (c) 22 July (d) 24 July
181. Recently, India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra was inaugurated by EAM S Jaishankar in _____.
(a) Sri Lanka (b) Mauritius (c) Maldives (d) Bangladesh
182. Which of the following states recently announced a job training and stipend scheme for youth, tentatively named 'Ladka Bhau' Yojana?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
183. In July 2024 which of the following Indian states announced 10% quota for Agniveers in state level recruitment among other benefits?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Uttarakhand (c) Haryana (d) Himachal Pradesh
184. Recently, EU lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to give conservative Maltese politician _____ another term as speaker of the European Parliament.
(a) Kuprene Metcalf (b) Alberta Queen (c) Roberta Metsola (d) Margaret Prince
185. Recently, Gitanas Nausėda was sworn in for a second five-year term as the President of _____.
(a) Latvia (b) Lithuania (c) Belgium (d) Moldova
186. The annual Kataragama Esala festival is celebrated in _____.
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Bhutan
187. State-owned IREDA will invest Rs. 290 crore in a 900 MW the Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project in _____.
(a) Nepal (b) Myanmar (c) Bhutan (d) Sri Lanka
188. Which of the following Indian leading medical institutions recently announced the creation of India's first museum within a medical institution, dedicated to chronicling its illustrious history and contributions to medical science?
(a) AFMC, Pune (b) AIIMS, New Delhi
(c) PGIMER, Chandigarh (d) KGMU, Lucknow
189. The inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2025 is to be held in _____.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) USA (c) Kuwait (d) Australia
190. The International Moon Day is observed annually on _____.
(a) 16 July (b) 18 July (c) 20 July (d) 24 July
191. Which of the following states was honored as the best state in horticulture at the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024, recognizing its innovative agricultural practices?
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram
(c) Sikkim (d) Nagaland

192. Which of the following recently unveiled its report titled “Electronics: Powering India’s Participation in Global Value Chains”?
(a) Ministry of Electronic & Communication (b) NITI Aayog
(c) Bharat Electronics Limited (d) Reserve Bank of India
193. Recently, Indian Prime Minister inaugurated India’s longest and largest urban tunnel project, the _____ Twin Tunnel.
(a) Thane - Borivali (b) Pune - Yawatmal (c) Thane - Nasik (d) Mumbai - Navi Mumbai
194. Recently, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar inaugurated “Maitree Udyan” in _____.
(a) Port Louis (b) Colombo (c) Male (d) Zurich
195. Who is Former US President Donald Trump’s Vice Presidential pick?
(a) JD Vance (b) Candoliza Rise (c) Arnold Slazenger (d) Kamala Harris
196. Who is looking to issue its first drought bond in the next 12-18-months and broaden its offering of catastrophe bonds supporting countries suffering devastation from storms and earthquakes?
(a) IMF (b) ADB (c) AIIB (d) World Bank
197. Recently, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated Asia’s first health research-related “Pre-clinical Network Facility” under the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology under the aegis of the “Translational Health Science & Technology Institute” (THSTI), _____.
(a) Gurugram (b) Noida (c) Faridabad (d) Hisar
198. Recently, A new “high efficacy” malaria vaccine co-developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII) and the University of Oxford was officially rolled out when _____ in West Africa became the first country to begin administering R21/Matrix-M.
(a) Morocco (b) The Gambia (c) Cote d’Ivoire (d) Niger
199. Who has become the first ever player to win a hat-trick of WSF World Junior Squash Championship titles?
(a) Sushma Bharadwaj (b) Natalie Sciver (c) Amina Orfi (d) Omisha Lathar
200. World Paper Bag Day is an annual event that is celebrated every year on _____ to help raise awareness of the environmental benefits of using paper bags over plastic bags.
(a) July 8 (b) July 10 (c) July 12 (d) July 16
201. Name the Indian teenager who recently won the 2024 Grand Paris Masters Championship, the oldest French chess tournament.
(a) Aarav Dengla (b) Vipul Dahiya (c) Mahendra Nagpal (d) Deepak Rana
202. Which of the following tournaments did Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivett recently win by defeating the French pair of Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin?
(a) Australian Open (b) Swiss Open (c) Wimbledon (d) French Open
203. Recently, the Union government has granted clearance for the Greenfield airport in _____ Parandur.
(a) Kerala’s (b) Tamil Nadu’s (c) Karnataka’s (d) Maharashtra’s
204. Which of the following countries has recently unveiled the world’s first dual-tower solar thermal power plant, which utilises an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency?
(a) China (b) Germany (c) USA (d) Japan
205. Recently, Prime Minister Modi announced that India will contribute how much to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre?
(a) \$500,000 (b) \$1 million (c) \$2 million (d) \$5 million

206. Recently, Ursula von der Leyen was elected for a second term as _____.
- (a) Secretary-General of the United Nations (b) European Commission President
(c) Director of UNICEF (d) Director General of UNESCO
207. Who among the following inaugurated the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee on 21st July 2024?
- (a) Director General of UNESCO Audrey Azoulay
(b) Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(c) Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine M. Russell
(d) Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres
208. What is the minimum investment threshold proposed for the new asset class by SEBI?
- (a) Rs. 1 lakh per investor (b) Rs. 5 lakh per investor
(c) Rs. 10 lakh per investor (d) Rs. 25 lakh per investor
209. Over the next three years, the _____ based shipbuilding company will build the new ORV, the first-of-its-kind and the largest research-class vessel.
- (a) Chennai (b) Cochin (c) Kolkata (d) Mumbai
210. Which prestigious award did Prahlad Chandra Agrawal recently receive at the 45th COSPAR scientific assembly?
- (a) Vikram Sarabhai Medal (b) Harrie Massey Award
(c) Bharat Bhatnagar Science Award (d) Carl Sagan Medal
211. Who among the following won the men's singles title at the Swedish Open 2024 Tennis in Bastad, Sweden?
- (a) Rafael Nadal (b) Nuno Borges
(c) Roger Federer (d) Carlos Alcaraz
212. What is the primary objective of the European Space Agency's (ESA) Rapid Apophis Mission for Space Safety (Ramses)?
- (a) To deflect the Apophis asteroid from its path (b) To study the Apophis asteroid from a close distance
(c) To land a rover on the surface of Apophis (d) To search for potential life forms on Apophis
213. The Atlas Festival is an annual music and arts festival held in _____.
- (a) Ukraine (b) Canada (c) New Zealand (d) Mexico
214. Which of the following states laid the foundation stone of houses for providing temporary accommodation to labourers at a token rent of Rs. 5 per day under the Shramik Basera scheme?
- (a) Karnataka (b) Rajasthan (c) Gujarat (d) Haryana
215. Which of the following states launched the Rajiv Gandhi Civil Abhaya Hastham programme?
- (a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Odisha
216. Recently, United Nations' top court International Court of Justice (ICJ) has said that _____ presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal.
- (a) Israel's (b) Turkey's (c) Egypt's (d) Mexico's
217. What was the primary cause of the countrywide clashes between police and university students in Bangladesh?
- (a) A rise in civil service job quotas for war veterans
(b) The Supreme Court's decision to reduce the quota for war veterans' relatives in government jobs
(c) A new law increasing the number of civil service jobs available
(d) The reinstatement of the quota system by the Prime Minister's government
218. Whom did U.S. President Joe Biden recently endorsed as the Democratic nominee of US Presidential election?
- (a) Kamala Harris (b) Hillary Clinton
(c) Barak Obama (d) Ghazala Hashmi

219. Who is head of the committee to revise the fee structure for white-label ATMs (WLAs) to propose a fair and sustainable model by RBI?
(a) Sunil Mehta (b) Vipul Mehta (c) Mukesh Mahajan (d) Manish Markandeya
220. Which critical mineral asset has Coal India recently acquired located in the Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh?
(a) Lithium (b) Graphite (c) Cobalt (d) Rare Earth Elements
221. Where is India's first sea zipline, the Ocean Fly Zipline, located?
(a) Panaji (b) Ratnagiri (c) Mumbai (d) Kochi
222. Which of the following languages has NOT been accorded the status of Classical Language by the Government of India?
(a) Tamil (b) Sanskrit (c) Bengali (d) Malayalam
223. Which of the following countries has recently unveiled the first carbon fiber-only passenger train in history?
(a) India (b) Japan (c) China (d) USA
224. Asia's first inverse bitcoin exchange-traded fund that allows investors to bet on a fall in the cryptocurrency, is set to debut in _____.
(a) Hong Kong (b) Singapore (c) Vietnam (d) Thailand
225. What is the projected growth rate of the Indian economy for the year 2023-24, according to the Economic Survey?
(a) 5% to 5.5% (b) 6.5% to 7% (c) 7% to 8% (d) 8% to 9%
226. Recently, India's first rain gauge website is launched in _____.
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Maharashtra
227. Who has been recently awarded the Olympic Order for outstanding contributions to the Olympic Movement?
(a) Neeraj Chopra (b) Abhinav Bindra (c) P.V. Sindhu (d) Yogeshwar Dutt
228. Who among the following recently secured his first-ever Formula 1 title victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix?
(a) Lando Norris (b) Max Verstappen (c) Oscar Piastri (d) Charles Leclerc
229. When is India's National Flag Day commemorated?
(a) June 15 (b) August 7 (c) July 22 (d) July 29
230. Who is set to become the head of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) after the September 8 Elections?
(a) Randhir Singh (b) Narinder Batra (c) Suresh Kalmadi (d) Keshav D. S. Kumar
231. Which of the following countries is the top recipient of Indian government aid according to the Union Budget 2024-25?
(a) Maldives (b) Nepal (c) Bhutan (d) Sri Lanka
232. Recent, Union Budget focused on changes in direct and indirect tax regimes – including a hike in long term capital gains tax for listed assets from 10% to _____.
(a) 12.5% (b) 15% (c) 17.5% (d) 20%
233. Which of the following two major Palestinian factions signed a declaration in Beijing to end their years long rift?
(a) Hamas and Fatah (b) Hamas and Hezbollah
(c) Fatah and PLO (d) Hamas and Islamic Jihad
234. Who has taken over the duties of Myanmar's acting President during his medical leave?
(a) Aung San Suu Kyi (b) Min Aung Hlaing
(c) Man Ki Chang (d) Hun Hi Manh

235. What is the amount of the venture capital fund announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to promote space technology?
(a) ₹500 crore (b) ₹1,000 crore (c) ₹1,500 crore (d) ₹2,000 crore
236. _____ and Airbus Helicopters have signed a deal to set up a final assembly line (FAL) in India for single-engine H125 choppers which is the first instance of the private sector setting up a helicopter assembly facility in India?
(a) Wipro Advanced Systems Ltd (WASL) (b) Kalyani Advanced Systems Ltd (KASL)
(c) Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) (d) Ambani Advanced Systems Ltd (AASL)
237. Which of the following successfully carried out the second experimental flight for the demonstration of Air Breathing Propulsion Technology?
(a) DRDO (b) SAARC
(c) Indian Space Research Organisation (d) Ministry of Science & Technology
238. How much was Khelo India's allocation increased to in the 2023-24 budget before it was revised?
(a) ₹750 crore (b) ₹880 crore (c) ₹900 crore (d) ₹1,000 crore
239. Who were the first Asian men inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame?
(a) Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj (b) Mahesh Bhupathi and Rohan Bopanna
(c) Sania Mirza and Vijay Amritraj (d) Richard Evans and Leander Paes
240. World Drowning Prevention Day is held annually on _____.
(a) 19 July (b) 22 July (c) 25 July (d) 27 July
241. Recently, In a first-of-its-kind, _____ has decided to create a bamboo theme-based station, marking a significant green initiative in urban infrastructure.
(a) Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (b) Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation
(c) Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (d) Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation
242. Name the first joint anti-terrorism drill in China focussing on live drills and specialised operations such as "the eradication of terrorist groups organized by SCO member countries."
(a) SCO-2024 (b) Unique-2024 (c) Union-2024 (d) Interaction-2024
243. Which of the following countries is ranked first in milk production contributing 25 percent of global milk production?
(a) China (b) Australia (c) USA (d) India
244. As of the latest Henley Passport Index, what rank does the Indian passport hold?
(a) 80th (b) 82nd (c) 84th (d) 86th
245. Which of the following countries recently took the top spot in the Henley Passport Index, surpassing Japan?
(a) Norway (b) Singapore (c) Germany (d) United States
246. The framework for Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in _____.
(a) 2003 (b) 2007 (c) 2009 (d) 2011
247. Recently, India successfully flight-tested Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System from off the Odisha coast. The test demonstrated India's indigenous capability to defend against ballistic missiles of _____ class.
(a) 2,000 km (b) 3,000 km (c) 5,000 km (d) 7,000 km
248. Who has been re-elected unanimously as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from India ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games?
(a) Ratan Tata (b) Nita M. Ambani (c) Mukesh Ambani (d) Sundar Pichai

249. Who is part of the three-member committee formed by the ICC to review the delivery of the T20 World Cup?
(a) Sachin Tendulkar, Roger Twose, and Imran Khwaja
(b) Roger Twose, Lawson Naidoo, and Imran Khwaja
(c) Ricky Ponting, Lawson Naidoo, and Imran Khwaja
(d) Roger Twose, Lawson Naidoo, and Virat Kohli
250. Who was recently conferred with the insignia of Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres at the Embassy of France for his contributions to contemporary South Asian photography and Indo-French artistic cooperation?
(a) Raghu Rai (b) Bilas Rao Mahadev (c) Rahaab Allana (d) Mahesh Rana
251. Name the first Indian actor to be honoured with a customised gold coin by the Grévin Museum in Paris.
(a) Amitabh Bachchan (b) Salman Khan (c) Shah Rukh Khan (d) Ranbir Kapoor
252. The Shinkun La tunnel will ensure swift and efficient movement of our armed forces and equipment and also foster economic and social development in _____.
(a) Sikkim (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Ladakh
253. Under the Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme, which of the following states received approval for the expansion and modernization of fire services?
(a) Assam, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha
(c) Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand (d) Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh
254. Who is set to become the first female First Minister of Wales?
(a) Nicola Sturgeon (b) Arlene Foster
(c) Eluned Morgan (d) Theresa May
255. According to the Official Languages Act, 1963, which of the following languages are mandated for use in correspondence between Ministries and State governments?
(a) Hindi and regional languages (b) Hindi and English
(c) Hindi only (d) English only
256. Recently, The Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship has increased the limit of loans provided by the government for skilling under the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme to what amount?
(a) Rs. 1.5 lakh (b) Rs. 3 lakh
(c) Rs. 5 lakh (d) Rs. 7.5 lakh
257. Scientists have been fascinated by the mystery of dark matter for decades, thinking that it uses gravitational attraction to hold galaxies together. _____ is found well below the ocean's surface recently.
(a) Dark Nitrogen (b) Dark Oxygen
(c) Dark Hydrogen (d) Dark Helium
258. The Paris Olympics 2024 will kick off officially with the Opening Ceremony scheduled to be held along the _____.
(a) River Thames (b) River Volga (c) River Seine (d) River Danube
259. World Hepatitis Day is celebrated every year on _____.
(a) 21st July (b) 23rd July (c) 27th July (d) 28th July
260. Who has been appointed as the festival director for the 55th and 56th editions of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI)?
(a) Shekhar Kapur (b) Anurag Kashyap (c) Mira Nair (d) Sanjay Leela Bhansali
261. The State Museum Conclave is to be hosted by the Ministry of Culture and will be held in _____.
(a) Panaji (b) New Delhi (c) Jaipur (d) Hyderabad

262. Who has recently become the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence, to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier?
(a) Captain Supreetha C.T. (b) Captain Sudeepta B.N
(c) Captain Gurkeerat Maan (d) Captain Sudeeksha Jain
263. Recently, Sado gold and silver mines in _____ added to UNESCO World Heritage List.
(a) Japan (b) South Korea (c) Peru (d) New Zealand
264. Recently, A set of historic sites in South Africa associated with the country's liberation struggle and human rights crusader _____ was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.
(a) Mahatma Gandhi (b) Nelson Mandela (c) Jacob Zuma (d) Che Guevara
265. Name India's largest zinc producer that has launched EcoZen, Asia's first low-carbon green zinc brand.
(a) Hindustan Zinc (b) Bharat Zinc
(c) Indian Zinc Limited (d) Hindustan Zinc Limited and Niriyatak
266. Recently, the world's largest platypus conservation center has welcomed its first residents as part of a project to protect the semi-aquatic mammal found only in _____ amid threats to its habitat from extreme weather and humans.
(a) Chile (b) Australia (c) Mexico (d) Canada
267. Who among the following recently became the first batter to score a hundred in the history of the Women's Asia Cup?
(a) Smriti Mandhana (b) Chamari Athapaththu
(c) Nida Dar (d) Harmanpreet Kaur
268. The 10m air rifle pairing of Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won the first gold medal of the Paris Olympics, thus making _____ the first nation to stand atop the podium at the Paris Olympics.
(a) China (b) Thailand (c) South Korea (d) Vietnam
269. Recently, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister released the autobiography 'Ek Refugee Scientist,' penned by _____.
(a) Dr. P.V Natrajan (b) Dr. V.P Malik (c) Dr. N.S. Dev (d) Dr. M.K. Shingari
270. World Hepatitis Day is observed on _____, every year.
(a) July 17 (b) July 24 (c) July 28 (d) July 30
271. Name the Indian actress who recently introduced the first one in a series of children's picture books, called Ed Finds a Home, under her kids wear brand Ed-a-Mamma?
(a) Madhuri Dixit Nene (b) Alia Bhatt (c) Sonakshi Sinha (d) Deepika Padukone
272. Recently, Bhojpuri superstar and BJP MP Ravi Kishan has introduced a private member Bill in Lok Sabha to include Bhojpuri in the _____ of the Constitution so that it can be accorded the status of an official language.
(a) Sixth Schedule (b) Eighth Schedule (c) Ninth Schedule (d) Eleventh Schedule
273. Recently, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar along with his Laotian counterpart unveiled a postage stamp set featuring _____.
(a) Ram Lalla (b) Banke Bihari (c) Vaishno Devi (d) Hanuman
274. India's first sunken museum is set to be inaugurated at _____.
(a) Qutub Minar (b) Humayun Tomb (c) Red Fort (d) Taj Mahal
275. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei recently gave his official endorsement to reformist Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic republic's _____ president.
(a) Seventh (b) Ninth (c) Eleventh (d) Fifteenth

276. Recently, the _____ heritage site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer received the UNESCO tag and was simultaneously put on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
(a) Palestine (b) Yemen (c) Oman (d) Jordan
277. Recently, India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility will come up at _____ to bolster the country's agricultural export and import capabilities.
(a) Jawaharlal Nehru Port (b) Mundra Port
(c) Paradip Port (d) Haldia Port
278. Which of the following African countries has recently signed into law a broad climate change act that will set caps for large emitters and require every town and city to publish an adaptation plan?
(a) South Africa (b) Zimbabwe (c) Kenya (d) Eritrea
279. Name the first female to win the Max Challenge International Trophy recently.
(a) Atiqa Mir (b) Saima Muqem (c) Eima Wajed (d) Sabiha Hasan
280. Name the first woman to compete at 10 Olympic Games in a career which began representing the Soviet Union.
(a) Eliena Jister (b) Nino Salukvadze (c) Nelin Kustograph (d) Alexandra Tresicgh

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **b** The bioplastic park will be set up in Gola Gokarnnath of Lakhimpur Kheri district.
2. **c** Challa Sreenivasulu Setty has been selected as the next chairman of SBI by FSIB.
3. **b** IIT Madras has launched world's first MBA in Digital Maritime and Supply Chain to cater to the needs of working professionals worldwide.
4. **d** Asteroid Day is an annual global event which is held on June 30, the anniversary of the Tunguska event in 1908 when a meteor air burst levelled about 2,150 km² of forest in Siberia, Russia.
5. **d** BCCI secretary Jay Shah announced a substantial prize of Rs. 125 crore for the World Cup-winning team led by Rohit Sharma, praising their outstanding performance and silencing their critics with a thrilling victory over South Africa.
6. **b** Jasprit Bumrah was awarded the title of Player of the Tournament for his outstanding performance, where he took 15 wickets at an average of 8.26 and an economy rate of 4.17.
7. **b** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced 'Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana', a pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens from all religions.
8. **d** Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene declared victory in the previous day's polls, in which millions of Mongolians turned out to elect 126 members of the State Great Khural, the country's unicameral parliament.
9. **b** The Indian Navy has deployed the frontline warship INS Shivalik for the RIMPAC exercise.
10. **c** The Jagdishpur-Haldia-Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline (Urja Ganga) is primarily aimed at supplying natural gas to the eastern states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal, as well as extending to Assam. Gujarat, located in western India, is not part of the eastern region that this pipeline project intends to serve.
11. **c** National Doctor's Day is celebrated on July 1st every year in India to honor the significant role physicians play in our lives. This date was chosen to commemorate Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who was born and passed away on this day.
12. **b** At COP26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the five-pronged 'Panchamitra' climate action target to support India's commitment to achieving a net-zero economy by 2070. This initiative outlines India's comprehensive approach to addressing climate change and reducing carbon emissions.
13. **b** Hungary took over the European Union's rotating presidency on July 1. Despite promising to be an "honest broker," there are widespread concerns due to its government being seen as authoritarian and Russia-friendly.
14. **a** In a major milestone, India has managed to prepare a comprehensive list of animal species that exist in India.
15. **c** Air India announced its plans to set up a flying training organisation (FTO) in Maharashtra's Amravati, and make it operational by early 2026. The company claims it will be South Asia's largest such facility.
16. **b** The first FIR under Section Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, was registered on July 1 at Kamla Market Police Station in Delhi.
17. **c** The Kármán line, located at 100 km above sea level, is recognized internationally as the boundary of space. During the New Shepard mission, the rocket will cross this line, allowing the astronauts to experience several minutes of weightlessness before descending back to the landing pad. This line is significant as it marks the transition from Earth's atmosphere to outer space.
18. **b** George Russell clinched Mercedes' first win of the season at the Formula 1 Austrian GP. This was a significant victory as it marked Mercedes' return to the top step of the podium.
19. **c** The new base year for national accounts and other macro-indicators is expected to come into effect from January-February 2026, coinciding with the first and second advance estimates of national income for FY26. This update aligns with the government's plan to update major macro-indicators such as GDP, WPI, CPI, and IIP.

- 20. b** Bulgarian President Rumen Radev tapped the centre-right GERB-UDF coalition, the largest group in parliament, to form the country's new government. The Prime Minister-designate from this coalition, who presented a proposal for the Cabinet, is Rosen Zhelyazkov.
- 21. a** Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that the Centre has been working to improve the education system and that the state government is working in tandem with it to introduce the ambitious Vidya Pravesh scheme.
- 22. b** Dick Schoof, former head of the Dutch intelligence agency and counterterrorism office, has been sworn in as the new Prime Minister of the Netherlands.
- 23. b** Kazakhstan will host the World Nomadic Games in 2024 to celebrate local and unique traditions. This event is part of a series of international meetings that the country will be hosting throughout the year.
- 24. c** The central banks of India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines are the founding members of the instant cross-border retail payments platform. Indonesia will serve as a special observer, not a founding member.
- 25. d** The Reserve Bank of India and countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) grouping will create a platform to enable instant cross-border retail payments, with the domestic central bank working with individual member states to set up the systems.
- 26. b** Arnab Kumar Chowdhury has been appointed as the executive director of the Reserve Bank of India. His role includes overseeing three key departments, including the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- 27. c** The sophisticated flight dynamics software crucial for the Aditya-L1 mission's success was developed in-house at the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) in Bengaluru. This software is responsible for the precise modelling of complex dynamics and the accurate understanding of perturbing forces acting on the spacecraft, ensuring high precision in trajectory and orbit manoeuvres.
- 28. b** The first dedicated commercial launch of ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) will put into orbit the Optimus satellite, which is built by the Australia-based Space Machines Company. This information was jointly announced by NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) and Space Machines Company at the India Space Congress.
- 29. c** The International Day of Parliamentarism is celebrated every year on June 30. This date marks the founding of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889.
- 30. d** The three books released are "Venkaiah Naidu – Life in Service," "Celebrating Bharat – The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice President of India," and "Mahaneta – Life and Journey of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu." The title "Journey of a Patriot – The Life and Legacy of Venkaiah Naidu" is not mentioned among the released books.
- 31. a** Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) supremo Hemant Soren has become the Chief Minister of Jharkhand once again.
- 32. c** Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai launched the second edition of the 'single window system' (SWS) to facilitate speedy approvals of various clearances required for setting up industries.
- 33. b** Awadhesh Prasad, a Samajwadi Party MP from Faizabad, was named as one of the nine members of the panel of chairpersons to assist Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. This selection has led to speculation that he may be the Opposition's candidate for the post of Deputy Speaker.
- 34. a** Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi has been appointed as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court. This information directly matches the details provided in the question stem.
- 35. a** In a bid to make Uttar Pradesh a one trillion dollar economy, the Uttar Pradesh government passed draft of Uttar Pradesh Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing (Construction) Area Bill (NIRMAN)-2024.
- 36. b** Mustafa Madbouly, who was first appointed as Prime Minister in 2018, has been reappointed to form the new Cabinet in Egypt. This reflects continuity in leadership despite the ongoing economic and regional challenges the country faces.
- 37. a** The proposed Bamboo Bazar Metro Station, under construction by the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL), will feature a complete bamboo decor, marking a first for Indian metro stations.

- 38. b** The new Japanese banknotes feature three-dimensional portraits created by printed patterns that generate holograms. These holograms show the portraits facing different directions depending on the angle of view, a technology that Japan's National Printing Bureau claims is the world's first for paper money. This feature aims to make counterfeiting more difficult.
- 39. a** Superstar Shah Rukh Khan will be honoured with a lifetime achievement award at the upcoming Locarno Film Festival.
- 40. b** Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States which commemorates the ratification of the Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America.
- 41. d** NITI Aayog launched the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' witnessing significant participation from citizens across the country.
- 42. c** The Centre notified the appointment of Justice Sheel Nagu as the Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court. Justice Nagu was previously serving as the Acting Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.
- 43. a** India's first 'inclusive sports manual' for differently-abled kids designed in Kerala.
- 44. b** Indira Gandhi was the last Indian Prime Minister to visit Austria in 1983. She also visited the country earlier in 1971. Narendra Modi's visit in July 2024 marks the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Austria in 41 years since Indira Gandhi's visit.
- 45. b** Kier Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, is on course to become the new prime minister of the United Kingdom as his party has won a significant number of seats in the election.
- 46. d** According to Mercer's Cost of Living City rankings for 2024, Hong Kong is ranked the highest in terms of cost of living for expats. The city has maintained its position from the previous year, indicating its high living costs for expatriates.
- 47. c** Steve Ballmer surpassed Bill Gates to become the sixth-richest person in the world. This is notable because it's the first time that the former Microsoft CEO has been wealthier than the company's co-founder. The increase in Ballmer's wealth is largely due to the rise in Microsoft shares, which have seen a significant gain this year.
- 48. a** World to witness 1st Indian in Space and other Indian in Deep Sea by 2025, says Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- 49. c** The Dan David Prize is the largest history prize in the world.
- 50. b** Mark Cavendish breaks Eddy Merckx's long-standing record for most career Tour de France stage wins with 35th victory.
- 51. b** The announcement of Belarus becoming the 10th member state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was made by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during the SCO summit in Astana. This marks a significant milestone for the organization, highlighting Belarus's growing integration into regional alliances that counter Western influence.
- 52. c** The opening ceremony of the 13th edition of Joint Military Exercise MAITREE was held at Tak Province in Thailand. Exercise MAITREE is an annual training event held in India and Thailand alternatively.
- 53. c** Rachel Reeves was appointed as the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, making her the first woman to hold this position. She succeeds Jeremy Hunt of the Conservative Party.
- 54. b** Bajaj Auto has launched its much-awaited Freedom motorcycle, which runs on petrol but also has the option of CNG (compressed natural gas). Prices of the Freedom 125 start at ₹ 95,000 for the NGO4 Drum.
- 55. d** In a significant move to enhance kitchen safety, quality, and efficiency, the Government of India has mandated conformity to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for stainless steel and aluminium utensils.
- 56. a** "Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography" by journalist Piyush Pandey offers readers an intimate look into the life of one of India's most respected actors.
- 57. b** India has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at Paris' historic department store Galeries Lafayette after a successful launch at the iconic Eiffel Tower.
- 58. c** For the first National Space Day, which will fall on August 23, to commemorate the safe landing of the Vikram Lander near the southern polar region of the moon, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be organising Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon.

- 59. b** The theme for the International Day of Cooperatives in 2024 is “Cooperatives Building a Better Future for All.” This theme emphasizes the role of cooperatives in contributing to a sustainable future and aligns with global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
- 60. c** Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand has won his 10th Leon Masters title after defeating GM Jaime Santos 3-1 in the final match.
- 61. b** The Ratha Yatra of Puri is considered the oldest and largest Hindu chariot festival celebrated annually, on the bright half of the lunar month of Ashadh (June–July). The festival is held at the city of Puri, in the state of Odisha, India and associated with the deity Jagannath (a form of Vishnu or Krishna).
- 62. a** Captain Anshuman Singh, a doctor with the Army Medical Corps, 26th Battalion, the Punjab Regiment, was awarded the Kirti Chakra (posthumously) for exhibiting exceptional bravery and resolve to rescue many people during a major fire incident. President Droupadi Murmu conferred this honor in recognition of his courageous actions.
- 63. a** Project PARI (Public Art of India), an initiative by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, being executed by Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art seeks to bring forth public art that draws inspiration from millennia of artistic heritage (lok kala/lok sanskriti) while incorporating modern themes and techniques.
- 64. b** Alok Sharma, an Indian-origin former Conservative Party member of Parliament, has been conferred a peerage by King Charles III. As a result, he will take his seat in the House of Lords. This was after he decided not to seek re-election in the general election.
- 65. a** The CBAM is the European Union’s planned tax on carbon emissions caused due to manufacturing of goods imported to the EU from countries like China and India.
- 66. b** Ratan Kumar Kesh, who is the executive director and chief operating officer of Bandhan Bank, has been appointed as the interim Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the private lender starting from July 10. This decision follows the retirement of the current MD & CEO and founder of the bank on July 9.
- 67. c** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance of 32 member states—30 European and 2 North American.
- 68. c** The Axiom-4 mission, who will take the Indian astronauts to the ISS, is the fourth private astronaut mission of NASA and a private US company Axiom Space.
- 69. a** Top Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat clinched the women’s 50 kg gold medal at the Grand Prix of Spain.
- 70. b** The celebrations for the 3rd World Kiswahili Language Day, chaired by the Permanent Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, will take place on 5 July 2024 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, under the theme: “Kiswahili: Education and Culture of Peace”. World Swahili Language Day is observed annually on 7 July.
- 71. c** India’s first space park, proposed at Technopark Phase IV (Technocity) in Pallipuram, Kerala is moving closer to becoming a reality.
- 72. a** An order giving 33 per cent reservation to women in cooperative institutions was issued by the Uttarakhand government.
- 73. c** The 16th edition of India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).
- 74. b** Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran’s runoff presidential election by promising to reach out to the West and ease enforcement on the country’s mandatory headscarf law. His opponent, Saeed Jalili, was a hard-liner, but Pezeshkian’s more reformist approach appealed to the voters.
- 75. d** The study titled “Empowering Adolescents with Future-Ready Skills – The Inspiring Story of Little KITEs” focused on the Little KITEs programme. This programme, implemented by the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), is considered the largest ICT Network of students in India, spanning 2,174 high schools in Kerala.
- 76. b** Tata Group-owned Air India welcomed its first narrow-body aircraft in new livery. The Airbus A320 Neo, registered VT-RTN, landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi from the Airbus facility in Toulouse, France.

77. c NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL have launched SEHER, a comprehensive credit education program for women entrepreneurs.
78. c The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) collaborated with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) as the lead integrator to develop the indigenous light tank Zorawar. The DRDO is an agency under the Ministry of Defence in India, responsible for the development of technology for use by the military.
79. d Lewis Hamilton, a seven-time world champion, won the British Grand Prix, which was his first Formula One victory in 945 days. This win was also his record ninth victory at the British Grand Prix.
80. c Fabiano Caruana successfully defended his Superbet Classic title by winning all three rapid games in the tiebreaker. Despite a challenging tournament, he emerged victorious in the rapid section against his competitors.
81. b The Supreme Court appointed former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit to head the search-cum-selection committee responsible for overseeing the appointments of vice-chancellors for state-run universities in West Bengal.
82. b Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin appointed a one-man committee to study and recommend amendments to three criminal laws enacted by the Government of India. The committee is headed by Justice M Satyanarayan, a retired judge.
83. b The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved India to sign the BBNJ Agreement, with the Ministry of Earth Sciences spearheading the country's implementation. This ministry will play a crucial role in managing and coordinating efforts related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
84. c Tharun Manneppalli won the men's singles title at the Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2024 by defeating Yudai Okimoto of Japan in straight sets, 21-15, 21-15. Prakash Raj and Gouse Shaik were the Indian duo who competed in the men's doubles final but did not win the title.
85. b Roshni Nadar Malhotra, the chairperson of HCLTech, was awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur for her outstanding service to France, particularly in promoting economic ties between France and India, and her contributions to business and sustainability.
86. c Russian President Putin is hosted a private dinner for Mr. Modi at the 22nd India-Russia summit in Moscow.
87. b Frank Vitus, a Nigerian national accused in a drugs case, challenged a Delhi High Court order that mandated him to share his Google Map location with the probe officer as a condition for his bail. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Vitus, stating that such a condition violates the right to privacy and defeats the purpose of granting bail.
88. a Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso left ECOWAS and formed a new alliance after experiencing military takeovers, which fractured their relations with other West African countries in the bloc. President Basirou Diomaye Faye has been tasked with the challenge of reintegrating these nations into ECOWAS.
89. a D Y Chandrachud inaugurates New Office of Securities Appellate Tribunal in Mumbai.
90. c The Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund has given 32% weightage to the hotels and resorts sector, which is the highest among the sectors listed in the index fund. This sector is followed by airlines and restaurants, each with 19% weightage.
91. b President Vladimir Putin officially bestowed Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle.
92. c State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) introduced a new security feature 'Safety Ring' within its internet banking system and mobile banking system in response to the increasing number of cyber frauds.
93. c Gagan Narang, a London Olympic bronze medallist shooter, was chosen to replace Mary Kom as India's Chef-de-Mission for the Paris Olympics. The Chef-de-Mission is responsible for leading and managing the national delegation during the games.
94. b Canada has become an outlier among the 32-member NATO alliance.
95. a Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan has been appointed as the Principle Advisor at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme on a pro bono basis.

- 96. a** BCCI Secretary Jay Shah announced Gautam Gambhir as the new head coach of the Indian men's cricket team.
- 97. b** HD 189733b is notable for being one of the most thoroughly studied exoplanets and for having an atmosphere with trace amounts of hydrogen sulfide, marking a first in exoplanet research. The presence of hydrogen sulfide, a compound known for the stench of rotten eggs, adds to its unique characteristics, which also include its scorching temperature, cobalt blue color, and molten glass rain.
- 98. c** The upgraded version of the Regional Analysis of the Indian Ocean system now incorporates the Sea surface height anomaly (SSHA), in addition to the previously used parameters of salinity and sea surface temperature. This inclusion enhances the accuracy of the data assimilation system used to monitor the health of the Indian Ocean.
- 99. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to Moscow, announced the opening of two new Indian consulates in the cities of Kazan and Yekaterinburg, expanding India's diplomatic presence in Russia.
- 100. c** The Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises for 2022-23 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) showed that Uttar Pradesh had the highest share of informal sector enterprises in both rural and urban areas. Specifically, Uttar Pradesh recorded a 13.83 per cent share of informal sector enterprises in 2022-23, which was the highest among the major states.
- 101. b** The Supreme Court of India held that Muslim women can claim maintenance from their divorced husbands under Section 125 of the CrPC, 1973. This section provides for maintenance of wives, children, and parents who are unable to maintain themselves. Despite the provisions of The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, the Court ruled that Section 125 CrPC applies to all women, including divorced Muslim women, ensuring their right to maintenance.
- 102. b** Maharashtra has been recognized for its excellence in agriculture by being honored with the Best Agriculture State Award for 2024. This recognition was given by the 15th Agriculture Leadership Awards Committee.
- 103. c** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid tributes at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow. This memorial is dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during World War II and is located at the Kremlin wall.
- 104. a** Australia's biggest international air combat training activity, Exercise Pitch Black, will take to the skies over the Northern Territory from 12 July to 2 August.
- 105. a** After Georgia passed an unprecedented law which could undermine the rights of a free and independent media, the European Union has become strict over the South Caucasus country.
- 106. a** Meet hijab-clad Kenza Layli from Morocco, world's first-ever Miss AI who beat 1500 contestants.
- 107. d** The convenor of the five-member advisory council is Poonam Gupta, who is the Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM). This information highlights her role and position within the advisory council set up by the Sixteenth Finance Commission.
- 108. b** The theme for World Population Day 2024 is "Leave no one behind, count everyone." This theme emphasizes the importance of including every individual in efforts to address population-related challenges and opportunities, ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for all.
- 109. b** The IMO was established following agreement at a UN conference held in Geneva in 1948 and the IMO came into existence ten years later, meeting for the first time on 17 March 1958. Headquartered in London, United Kingdom, the IMO, in 2024, has 176 Member States and three Associate Members.
- 110. c** Ravichandran Ashwin, a star player of the Indian cricket team, has been revealed to be a co-owner of a franchise in the Global Chess League ahead of its second season, which will be held at London Friends House.
- 111. c** The Borehole Geophysics Research Laboratory (BGRL) in Karad, Maharashtra, is a specialised institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India mandated to execute India's sole scientific deep-drilling programme.
- 112. b** Recognizing that sand and dust storms and their negative impacts at different scales are issues of international concern, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 12 July as the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms.

- 113. b** The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) is an ambitious international project that involves collaboration between several countries, specifically India, the United States, Canada, China, and Japan. These nations are working together to advance our understanding of the universe through this next-generation astronomical observatory.
- 114. b** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a notification issued allowed resident individuals to open Foreign Currency Account (FCA) in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) at GIFT City in Gujarat under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS).
- 115. b** The Philippines has been selected to host the board of the “Loss and Damage” fund, as part of U.N. efforts to provide financial assistance to countries recovering from the impacts of global warming. The choice highlights the country’s vulnerability to climate-change-induced disasters and its role in focusing attention on the Asia-Pacific region.
- 116. a** Captain Avhilash Rawat and his crew from an oil tanker have received the 2024 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.
- 117. a** The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended Justice N Kotiswar Singh, the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir, and Justice R Mahadevan of the Madras High Court for appointment as judges in the Supreme Court. The other options either mix judges incorrectly or include judges not mentioned in the recommendation.
- 118. c** India’s first Gen AI Conclave held in Kochi
- 119. c** The Jharkhand government is working on a plan to establish eastern India’s first university specifically designed for physically challenged students. The initiative aims to cater to the educational needs of students with disabilities.
- 120. d** Justice Aalia Neelum took oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Pakistan, making her the first woman to be elevated as the court’s top judge.
- 121. d** India’s overall score on the national Sustainable Development Goal Index, prepared by NITI Aayog, was 71 in 2023-24. This reflects an improvement from previous years, highlighting significant progress in various areas such as eliminating poverty, providing decent work, economic growth, climate action, and life on earth.
- 122. b** The construction of the world’s largest Ramayan temple has started in the Kaithwalia-Bahuara villages in the East Champaran district of Bihar. This site is approximately 120 km from Patna, the capital of Bihar. The project includes a three-storeyed Viraat Ramayan temple and is expected to be taller than the Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia.
- 123. c** The Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT) has named a road in Abu Dhabi after Dr George Matthew to recognise his contributions as part of its “Honouring UAE’s Visionaries: Commemorative Streets” project, which aims to honour individuals who have greatly contributed to the nation’s development.
- 124. b** The North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE) was launched by Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia with the aim of integrating farmers and sellers, enhancing agricultural connectivity in the North Eastern Region of India. This initiative is designed to support agricultural and horticultural products and promote the region as a reliable partner in the international agricultural value chain.
- 125. b** The ‘Agri-SURE’ fund’s initial corpus of Rs. 750 crore includes contributions of Rs. 250 crore each from NABARD, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other institutions. This collaboration aims to support agricultural start-ups and rural enterprises.
- 126. c** The Hyperbola-1 rocket was carrying Yunyao-1 weather satellites 15, 16, and 17 for the Tianjin-based Yunyao Aerospace Technology company.
- 127. d** The TDF scheme is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Defence executed by DRDO under the ‘Make in India’ initiative.
- 128. b** Krejčíková Defeated Paolini In 3-Set Thriller To Win Maiden Wimbledon Title in Wimbledon 2024 Women’s Singles Final.
- 129. a** Carlos Alcaraz defeated Novak Djokovic to retain his Wimbledon crown. This was also the Spaniard’s 4th Grand Slam title.
- 130. c** The French National Day is celebrated on July 14 each year, on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille prison in Paris in 1789.

- 131. c** Vaishnav and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant made the announcement of the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Goa from November 20-24 and described it as a visionary initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as India seeks to make a mark in the media and entertainment sector.
- 132. b** Gaurav Gogoi has been appointed as Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha. This position was confirmed through a letter sent to Speaker Om Birla.
- 133. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi surpassed other global leaders on social media platform X with over 100 million followers, setting a new milestone.
- 134. b** A major naval cooperation event is taking place at the Chinese port of Zhanjiang. Two powerful corvettes from the Russian Pacific Fleet have arrived to participate in the joint naval exercise "Maritime Cooperation - 2024."
- 135. c** Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as Prachanda, lost the trust vote in the Nepalese parliament, leading to the largest party in his government, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), withdrawing support. As a result, Khadga Prasad Oli, the leader of the Communist Party, will become the new Prime Minister of Nepal.
- 136. a** The world's first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100% hydrogen fuel, the MV Sea Change, was launched at the San Francisco Ferry Building.
- 137. b** According to the UNCTAD Digital Economy Report for 2024, India experienced a growth rate of 163% in the volume of SCST waste generated, marking the highest globally during the mentioned period.
- 138. d** Union minister of communications and development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya Scindia launched the North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE) with an aim to integrate farmers and sellers, enhancing agricultural connectivity in the North Eastern Region.
- 139. a** The world's first "hydrogen apartment" block has been unveiled in Ulsan, South Korea.
- 140. c** The theme for World Youth Skills Day 2024 is "Youth Skills for Peace and Development," highlighting the role of skills in fostering peaceful societies and sustainable development.
- 141. a** Spain won the Euro 2024 final with a 2-1 victory over England.
- 142. d** Palitana is World's first city where eating non-vegetarian food is illegal.
- 143. c** Justice Tashi Rabstan, recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, will become the first Chief Justice from Ladakh, addressing the lack of representation for the region in such positions.
- 144. d** NABVENTURES, a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD, will be the Fund manager of AgriSURE.
- 145. b** Rajasthan is preparing to implement a 10-year action plan for road safety, making it the first state in India to do so. This plan aims to reduce road accidents by 50% by 2030.
- 146. a** Andhra Pradesh is the first state in the country to have a skill census.
- 147. b** According to the SDG India Index 2023-24 by NITI Aayog, Uttarakhand and Kerala jointly secured the top position with a score of 79, reflecting their progress on social, economic, and environmental parameters. Bihar, Jharkhand, and Nagaland were among the worst performers in this year's index, as indicated by their lower scores.
- 148. b** Former US President Donald Trump was evacuated to a safe space after gunshots were heard in the crowd during his rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.
- 149. c** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) had made a "giant" oil discovery in the Al-Nokhatha field east of the Kuwaiti island of Failaka, with oil reserves estimated at 3.2 billion barrels.
- 150. c** Malala Day is celebrated every year on July 12 to celebrate the birthday of activist Malala Yousafzai.
- 151. a** The Maharashtra Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojna was introduced in the state budget, which is aimed at empowering and providing support to women in the state.

- 152. c** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) will launch its ‘One Scientist-One Product’ programme to improve research in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry.
- 153. a** Armenia launched joint military drills with the United States, a move that reflects its leader’s efforts to forge closer ties with the US and other Western allies as the country’s relations with old ally Russia sour. The “Eagle Partner” war games are aimed at increasing interoperability of units participating in international peacekeeping missions.
- 154. a** Bursa Malaysia and Persatuan Remisier Bumiputera Malaysia (Pribumi) have launched the Pribumi Bursa Malaysia Zakat Index (PBMZI), a new customised index designed to promote greater recognition of public-listed companies (PLCs) that choose to adopt corporate zakat practice.
- 155. a** Karnataka to unveil country’s maiden GCC policy soon.
- 156. b** The scientists from ISRO collaborated with NASA’s ICESat-2 satellite to map the submerged Ram Setu.
- 157. c** The new species of deep-water dogfish shark, *Squalus hima*, was discovered by scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at the Sakthikulangara fishing harbour in Kerala, which is along the Arabian Sea.
- 158. c** Argentina clinched the Copa America 2024 title by defeating Colombia. The match was decided by Lautaro Martinez’s extra-time winner at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami.
- 159. b** The World Day for International Justice, also known as Day of International Criminal Justice or International Justice Day, is celebrated on July 17 each year. This day recognizes the emerging system of international criminal justice and was established during the Review Conference of the Rome Statute on June 1, 2010, in Kampala, Uganda.
- 160. b** Vikram Misri, a 1989-batch IFS officer who has served in Washington DC and Beijing, took charge as Foreign Secretary for a term ending in July 2026. This indicates his prominent role and experience in international relations.
- 161. b** Nelson Mandela International Day is celebrated annually on July 18, which is Nelson Mandela’s birthday. This day honors Mandela’s legacy and contributions to peace, justice, and human rights.
- 162. b** The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2024, mandates that industries, factories, and other establishments appoint local candidates in 50% of management positions.
- 163. c** The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation 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 US\$5.2 trillion.
- 164. b** Hsieh Su-wei and Jan Zielinski defeated Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos in the final to win their second mixed doubles Grand Slam title of the year.
- 165. b** Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on civil aviation on September 11 and 12, 2024. This is the second such conference, with the first having been organized in Beijing in February 2018.
- 166. c** The IMF revised upward its projections for India’s economic growth in 2024 to 7.0%, compared to the 6.8% projection made in April. This revision reflects improved prospects for private consumption, especially in rural areas, and carryover effects from upward revisions to growth in 2023.
- 167. b** Paul Kagame, who has been Rwanda’s de facto leader since the end of the 1994 genocide and President since 2000, is widely expected to win the upcoming elections. The text mentions that Mr. Kagame faces only two challengers and that there is little doubt about the outcome, similar to the 2017 election where he won with almost 99% of the vote.
- 168. b** The Government has revised the composition of NITI Aayog and included Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as an Ex-Officio Member along with Home Minister Amit Shah, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- 169. c** Union Home Minister Amit Shah virtually inaugurated ‘Prime Minister’s College of Excellence’ for all 55 districts in Madhya Pradesh and hailed Narendra Modi’s farsightedness in bringing in the New Education Policy amid the aim of making India a developed country by 2047.

- 170. b** The IMF held its global growth expectations for 2024 steady at 3.2%, which was unchanged from its April forecast. This indicates that despite other economic changes, the IMF's overall outlook for global growth remains consistent at 3.2%.
- 171. c** Justice Singh is the first judge from Manipur to be appointed to the Supreme Court. This appointment is significant as it provides representation to the North-East region, specifically from Manipur.
- 172. a** The latest development on this technology is the planned use of robots in the cleaning operations at the Trivandrum International airport in the southern state of Kerala, which could be a first for Indian airports.
- 173. d** China is making waves in the data center industry by constructing the world's first commercial underwater data center.
- 174. c** George Robertson, a former British defence secretary and NATO Secretary-General, is leading the review of Britain's military strategy. Fiona Hill and Gen. Richard Barrons will assist him in this task.
- 175. c** The Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, which is administered by the United Kingdom. Despite Mauritius's claim and ongoing efforts to reclaim the islands, the UK currently holds administrative control over the territory.
- 176. b** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) maintained its forecast for India's GDP growth at 7% for the current financial year, expecting a rebound in agriculture due to above-normal monsoon projections.
- 177. a** In South Africa, radioactive material has been inserted into rhino horns, in a world first, to curb poaching. South Africa is home to 80% of the world's rhinos, which makes a hotbed of poaching.
- 178. b** Nallathambi Kalaiselvi made history as the first woman to be appointed as the Director General of CSIR. She was granted a two-year extension in service, starting from August 7, 2024, or until further orders. Her notable achievements include being the first woman scientist to lead the Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CSIR-CECRI) in February 2019.
- 179. c** According to the given information, Shaurya Bawa is only the second Indian male to reach the World Junior Squash Championships semifinals. The first Indian male to achieve this was Kush Kumar in 2014. This makes Kush Kumar the correct answer to the question.
- 180. b** On 12 December 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed 20 July as World Chess Day to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.
- 181. b** India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra was inaugurated by EAM Jaishankar in Mauritius.
- 182. b** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced a job training and stipend scheme for youth, tentatively named 'Ladka Bhau' Yojana, days after it introduced a monthly financial assistance scheme for eligible women.
- 183. c** Haryana announces 10% quota for Agniveers in state level recruitment among other benefits.
- 184. c** EU lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to give conservative Maltese politician Roberta Metsola another term as speaker of the European Parliament.
- 185. b** Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda was sworn in for a second five-year term.
- 186. c** The annual Kataragama Esala festival is being celebrated in Sri Lanka.
- 187. a** State-owned IREDA will invest ₹290 crore in a 900 MW hydroelectric power project in Nepal.
- 188. c** PGIMER, Chandigarh announced the creation of India's first museum within a medical institution, dedicated to chronicling its illustrious history and contributions to medical science.
- 189. a** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that it has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia to host the inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2025 in Saudi Arabia.
- 190. c** The General Assembly declared International Moon Day, a United Nations-designated international day to be observed annually on 20 July, in its resolution on "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" in 2021.

- 191. d** Nagaland was honored as the best state in horticulture at the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024, recognizing its innovative agricultural practices.
- 192. b** NITI Aayog will unveil its report titled “Electronics: Powering India’s Participation in Global Value Chains”.
- 193. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India’s longest and largest urban tunnel project. The Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, costing Rs. 16,000 crore, will cut travel time between Thane and Borivali to 12 minutes, down from an hour.
- 194. a** EAM Jaishankar inaugurates Maitree Udyan in Port Louis, Mauritius. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar inaugurated the India -Mauritius Maitree Udyan in Port Louis and planted a tree there.
- 195. a** Former US President Donald Trump’s Vice Presidential pick, JD Vance took centre stage.
- 196. d** The World Bank is looking to issue its first drought bond in the next 12-18-months and broaden its offering of catastrophe bonds supporting countries suffering devastation from storms and earthquakes.
- 197. c** Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated Asia’s first health research-related “Pre-clinical Network Facility” under the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology under the aegis of the “Translational Health Science & Technology Institute” (THSTI), Faridabad.
- 198. c** A new “high efficacy” malaria vaccine co-developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII) and the University of Oxford was officially rolled out when Cote d’Ivoire in West Africa became the first country to begin administering R21/Matrix-M.
- 199. c** Amina Orfi has become the first ever player to win a hat-trick of WSF World Junior Squash Championship titles after a comprehensive win over Egyptian compatriot Fayrouz Aboelkheir in Houston Squash Club, USA.
- 200. c** World Paper Bag Day is an annual event that is celebrated every year on July 12 to help raise awareness of the environmental benefits of using paper bags over plastic bags.
- 201. a** Indian teenager Aarav Dengla won the 2024 Grand Paris Masters Championship, the oldest French chess tournament.
- 202. b** Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti clinched the men’s doubles title at the Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament by defeating the French pair of Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin in the final held in Gstaad, Switzerland.
- 203. b** The Union government has granted clearance for the greenfield airport in Tamil Nadu’s Parandur, which has faced stiff opposition from locals who are to be displaced due to the project.
- 204. a** China has unveiled the world’s first dual-tower solar thermal power plant, which utilises an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency.
- 205. b** Prime Minister Modi announced that India will contribute one million dollars to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. This contribution is intended to support capacity building, technical assistance, and conservation of world heritage sites, particularly for countries of the Global South.
- 206. b** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was elected for a second term after pledging to establish a continental “defence union” and to maintain Europe’s green transition while alleviating its impact on industry.
- 207. b** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee on 21st July 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. This event marks the first time India is hosting the World Heritage Committee Meeting.
- 208. c** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed a minimum investment threshold of Rs. 10 lakh per investor for the new asset class. This threshold is intended to attract investors who are looking for a regulated investment product with higher risk-taking capabilities and a higher ticket size.
- 209. c** Over the next three years, the Kolkata-based shipbuilding company will build the new ORV, the first-of-its-kind and the largest research-class vessel. It will be 89.50 metre in length, 18.80 metre in width, and have a depth of 12.50 metre.
- 210. b** Prahlad Chandra Agrawal was awarded the Harrie Massey Award at the 45th COSPAR scientific assembly held in Busan, South Korea. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to space research with a significant leadership role. Agrawal’s recognition in the field of X-ray astronomy and his leadership in the AstroSat programme played a key role in his receipt of this award.

- 211. b** Nuno Borges from Portugal won the men's singles title at the Swedish Open Tennis in Bastad by defeating Rafael Nadal with scores of 6-3, 6-2.
- 212. b** The primary objective of ESA's Rapid Apophis Mission for Space Safety (Ramses) is to study the Apophis asteroid from a close distance. This mission will allow scientists to gather detailed data about the asteroid as it comes within 32,000 km of Earth, which is a rare opportunity since an asteroid of such a large size comes this close to Earth only once every 5,000 to 10,000 years.
- 213. a** The Atlas Festival is an annual music and arts festival held at the Expocenter of Ukraine in Kyiv, Ukraine. It was founded as Atlas Weekend by Dmytro Sydorenko and is organized by PMK Event Agency and concert hall Atlas.
- 214. c** Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel laid the foundation stone of houses for providing temporary accommodation to labourers at a token rent of Rs. 5 per day under the Shramik Basera scheme.
- 215. b** The job calendar will be planned in a way to issue notifications by June 2 and complete the recruitment process by December 9," Revanth Reddy said after formally launching the Rajiv Gandhi Civil Abhaya Hastham programme at Praja Bhavan.
- 216. a** United Nations' top court International Court of Justice (ICJ) has said that Israel's presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal.
- 217. b** The clashes were sparked by the Supreme Court's decision to reduce the quota for war veterans' relatives in government jobs from 30% to 5%, which led to protests by university students who viewed the quota system as discriminatory.
- 218. a** U.S. President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign after fellow Democrats lost faith in his mental acuity and ability to beat Donald Trump, leaving the presidential race in uncharted territory. He also announced his endorsement of Vice-President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee.
- 219. a** RBI has set up a review committee to revise the fee structure for white-label ATMs (WLAs) to propose a fair and sustainable model. The committee, led by Indian Banks' Association CEO Sunil Mehta, will assess current policies, ATM infrastructure, and global best practices, reporting to RBI deputy governor T Rabi Sankar. India's ATM market is forecasted to grow at a 9.2% CAGR from 2024 to 2032, with four authorized non-bank entities currently operating WLAs. The interchange fee remains at ₹17 for financial and ₹6 for non-financial transactions.
- 220. b** Coal India has recently acquired a graphite block, specifically the Khattali Chotti graphite block located in the Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh. This makes graphite the correct answer.
- 221. b** India's first sea zipline, the Ocean Fly Zipline, is located in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.
- 222. c** The languages that have been given the status of Classical Language are Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia. Bengali is not included in this list.
- 223. c** China has unveiled the first carbon fiber-only passenger train in history.
- 224. a** Asia's first inverse bitcoin exchange-traded fund that allows investors to bet on a fall in the cryptocurrency, is set to debut in Hong Kong.
- 225. b** The Economic Survey for 2023-24 projects the Indian economy to grow by 6.5% to 7% this year. This growth rate indicates that the economy has largely recovered from the impacts of COVID-19 and is on track for sustained growth in the coming years.
- 226. a** India's First Rain Gauge Website Launched In Kerala's Wayanad.
- 227. b** Abhinav Bindra, the Indian shooter, has been awarded the Olympic Order for his outstanding contributions to the Olympic Movement. This honor recognizes his exceptional achievements in the sport and his influence on the Olympic community.
- 228. c** Oscar Piastri, an Australian rookie, achieved his first-ever Formula 1 title victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix.
- 229. c** India's National Flag Day is observed on July 22, commemorating the adoption of the Indian national flag by the Constituent Assembly in 1947.

- 230. a** Randhir Singh is the sole candidate for the top post of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) in the September 8 Elections.
- 231. c** According to the Union Budget 2024-25, Bhutan is the top recipient of Indian government aid, with an estimated allocation of ₹2,068.56 crore. This is highlighted in the budget documents released after finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for FY 2024-25.
- 232. a** Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's second-shortest budget speech, and her seventh overall, also focussed on changes in direct and indirect tax regimes – including a hike in long term capital gains tax for listed assets from 10% to 12.5%, the scrapping of indexation (which took inflation into account while calculating asset values) and introduction of a flat 12.5% rate for real-estate, the removal of the angel tax for all investors, and a sharp reduction in customs duties for items such as gold, silver and mobile phones, which will make these items cheaper for consumers.
- 233. a** The declaration in Beijing was signed by Hamas and Fatah, the two major factions in Palestinian politics, along with other smaller Palestinian groups. This move aims to resolve the longstanding divide between the factions, especially significant amidst the ongoing conflict in Gaza.
- 234. b** The acting President of Myanmar has taken medical leave and transferred his duties to Military Chief Min Aung Hlaing. Min Aung Hlaing is the head of Myanmar's military junta, which has been in power since the 2021 coup.
- 235. b** In the budget announcement, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that a venture capital fund of ₹1,000 crore will be set up to promote space technology. This fund aims to significantly enhance the space economy over the next decade.
- 236. c** Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) and Airbus Helicopters have signed a deal to set up a final assembly line (FAL) in India for single-engine H125 choppers. This is the first instance of the private sector setting up a helicopter assembly facility in India.
- 237. c** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully carried out the second experimental flight for the demonstration of Air Breathing Propulsion Technology.
- 238. d** Khelo India's allocation for 2022-23 was ₹596.39 crore, and it was initially increased to ₹1,000 crore in the 2023-24 budget before being revised to ₹880 crore.
- 239. a** Leander Paes, a former doubles world number one, and Vijay Amritraj, a tennis broadcaster, actor, and player, were the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. They were honored for their significant contributions to tennis and their achievements on the global stage.
- 240. c** World Drowning Prevention Day, declared in April 2021 by General Assembly resolution is held annually on 25 July.
- 241. b** In a first-of-its-kind, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) has decided to create a bamboo theme-based station, marking a significant green initiative in urban infrastructure.
- 242. d** The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held the first joint anti-terrorism drill in China focussing on live drills and specialised operations such as "the eradication of terrorist groups." The 'Interaction-2024' joint counter-terrorism exercises were held recently in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- 243. d** India is ranked first in milk production contributing 25 percent of global milk production.
- 244. b** The Indian passport moved up two positions in the latest Henley Passport Index, now ranking at 82nd compared to its previous position of 84th. This improvement means that Indian passport holders can travel to 58 countries visa-free. The Henley Passport Index ranks passports based on the freedom of travel they provide, with data sourced from IATA and additional research by Henley & Partners.
- 245. b** According to the Henley Passport Index, Singapore has recently dethroned Japan to become the country with the most powerful passport. The index is based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and additional research from Henley & Partners, ranking passports by the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- 246. d** The framework for Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in 2011.
- 247. c** India successfully flight-tested Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System from off the Odisha coast. The test demonstrated India's indigenous capability to defend against ballistic missiles of 5,000 km class.

- 248. b** Nita M. Ambani, a leading Indian philanthropist and the Founder of the Reliance Foundation, has been re-elected unanimously as the IOC member from India. This re-election took place at the 142nd IOC session in Paris, where she secured 100% of the vote, demonstrating strong support and recognition for her contributions to sports and philanthropy.
- 249. b** The ICC formed a three-member committee to review the delivery of the T20 World Cup, which includes former New Zealand batter Roger Twose, Lawson Naidoo, and Imran Khwaja, the deputy chair of the ICC.
- 250. c** Rahaab Allana, a curator and author, was honored with the insignia of Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres at the Embassy of France for his significant career in contemporary South Asian photography and his contributions to Indo-French artistic cooperation.
- 251. c** Shah Rukh Khan made history by becoming the first Indian actor to be honoured with a customised gold coin by the Grévin Museum in Paris.
- 252. d** "Once completed, it will be the highest tunnel in the world. The Shinkun La tunnel will not only ensure swift and efficient movement of our armed forces and equipment but also foster economic and social development in Ladakh,"
- 253. a** The committee approved three project proposals under the Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme for the expansion and modernization of fire services in Assam, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, with a total outlay of Rs. 810.64 crore.
- 254. c** Eluned Morgan was chosen to lead the governing Welsh Labour Party, making her the first female First Minister of Wales. Nicola Sturgeon is associated with Scotland, Arlene Foster with Northern Ireland, and Theresa May is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- 255. b** The Official Languages Act, 1963, specifies that both Hindi and English are to be used for correspondence between Ministries and State governments. This ensures that communication can be understood by officials who are proficient in either or both of these languages, thereby maintaining clarity and effectiveness in government operations.
- 256. d** The Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship has enhanced the loan limit for skilling under the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme from Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 7.5 lakh. This significant increase is aimed at providing more financial support to individuals seeking skill development.
- 257. b** Scientists have been fascinated by the mystery of dark matter for decades, thinking that it uses gravitational attraction to hold galaxies together. Dark oxygen is found well below the ocean's surface.
- 258. c** The Paris Olympics 2024 will kick off officially with the Opening Ceremony scheduled to be held along the River Seine.
- 259. d** World Hepatitis Day, 28 July, is an opportunity to step up national and international efforts on hepatitis, encourage actions and engagement by individuals, partners and the public and highlight the need for a greater global response as outlined in the WHO's Global hepatitis report of 2017.
- 260. a** Veteran filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, known for his notable works like "Mr India," "Bandit Queen," and "Elizabeth," has been appointed as the festival director for the 55th and 56th editions of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
- 261. b** The State Museum Conclave, to be hosted by the Ministry of Culture, will be held from August 1-3 at the Bharat Mandapam, where the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC) is currently underway.
- 262. a** Captain Supreetha C.T., who hails from Mysuru, has become the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence, to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier.
- 263. a** Sado gold and silver mines in Japan added to UNESCO World Heritage List after South Korea's objections dropped.
- 264. b** A set of historic sites in South Africa associated with the country's liberation struggle and human rights crusader Nelson Mandela was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- 265. a** Vedanta-owned Hindustan Zinc (HZL), India's largest zinc producer, has launched EcoZen, Asia's first low-carbon green zinc brand.
- 266. b** The world's largest platypus conservation center has welcomed its first residents as part of a project to protect the semi-aquatic mammal found only in Australia amid threats to its habitat from extreme weather and humans.

267. **b** Chamari Athapaththu made history after she became the first batter to score a hundred in the history of the Women's Asia Cup.
268. **a** The 10m air rifle pairing of Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won the first gold medal of the Paris Olympics, thus making China the first nation to stand atop the podium at the Paris Olympics.
269. **d** Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu released the autobiography 'Ek Refugee Scientist,' penned by Dr. M.K. Shingari of district Solan.
270. **c** World Hepatitis Day, observed on July 28 every year, aims to raise global awareness of hepatitis — a group of infectious diseases known as hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E — and encourage prevention, diagnosis and treatment.
271. **b** Alia introduced the first one in a series of children's picture books, called Ed Finds A Home, under her kids wear brand Ed-a-Mamma.
272. **b** Bhojpuri superstar and BJP MP Ravi Kishan has introduced a private member Bill in Lok Sabha to include Bhojpuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution so that it can be accorded the status of an official language.
273. **a** External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar along with his Laotian counterpart unveiled a postage stamp set featuring Ram Lalla, the deity of Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi Temple.
274. **b** The country's first sunken museum at the Humayun Tomb complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Delhi is all set to be inaugurated.
275. **b** Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave his official endorsement to reformist Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic republic's ninth president.
276. **a** Amid the ongoing Gaza conflict, the Palestinian heritage site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer received the UNESCO tag and was simultaneously put on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
277. **a** India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility will come up at Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai to bolster the country's agricultural export and import capabilities.
278. **a** South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed into law a broad climate change act that will set caps for large emitters and require every town and city to publish an adaptation plan.
279. **a** Nine-year-old Atiqa Mir from Kashmir has achieved a significant milestone by winning the Rotax Challenge International Trophy at the Le Mans Kart International Circuit.
280. **b** Georgian shooter Nino Salukvadze has become the first woman to compete at 10 Olympic Games in a career which began representing the Soviet Union.