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**English**



**19 & 20 JANUARY**

**2025**

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Ebook



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PIB News



Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English  
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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Quiz - English  
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**PIB News**



February 29 2024 PIB News - English  
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English  
Article

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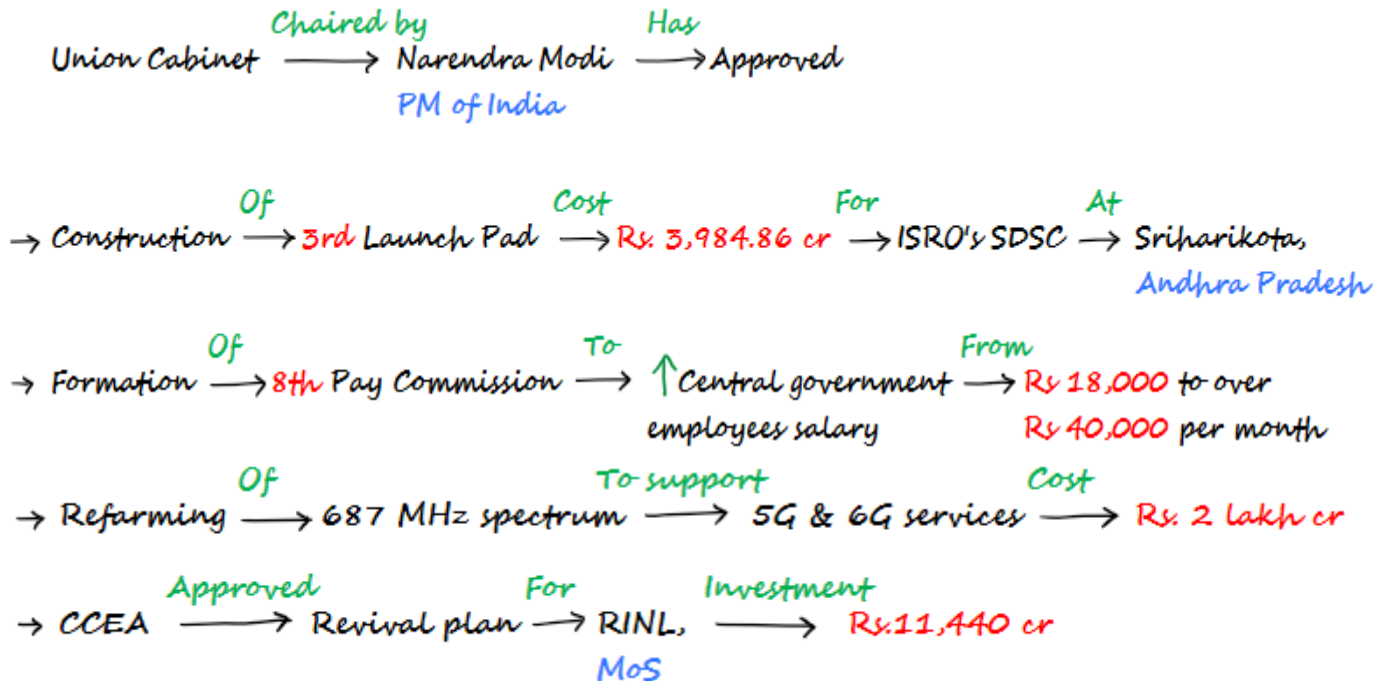
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## Hand Written Notes

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



PM - Prime Minister

ISRO - Indian Space Research Organisation

SDSC - Satish Dhawan Space Centre

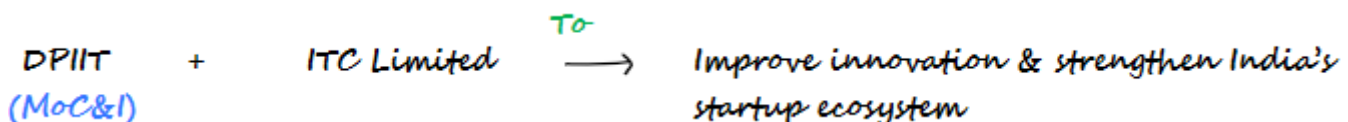
MHz - Megahertz

CCEA - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

RINL - Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited

MoS - Ministry of Steel

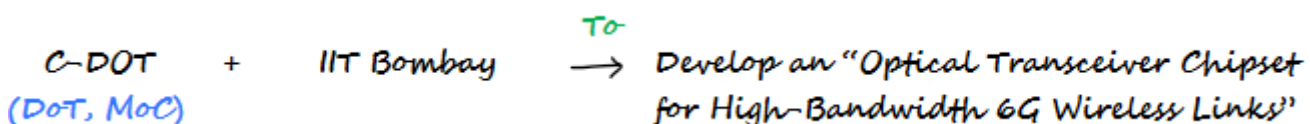
2)



DPIIT - Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

MoC&I - Ministry of Commerce & Industry

3)



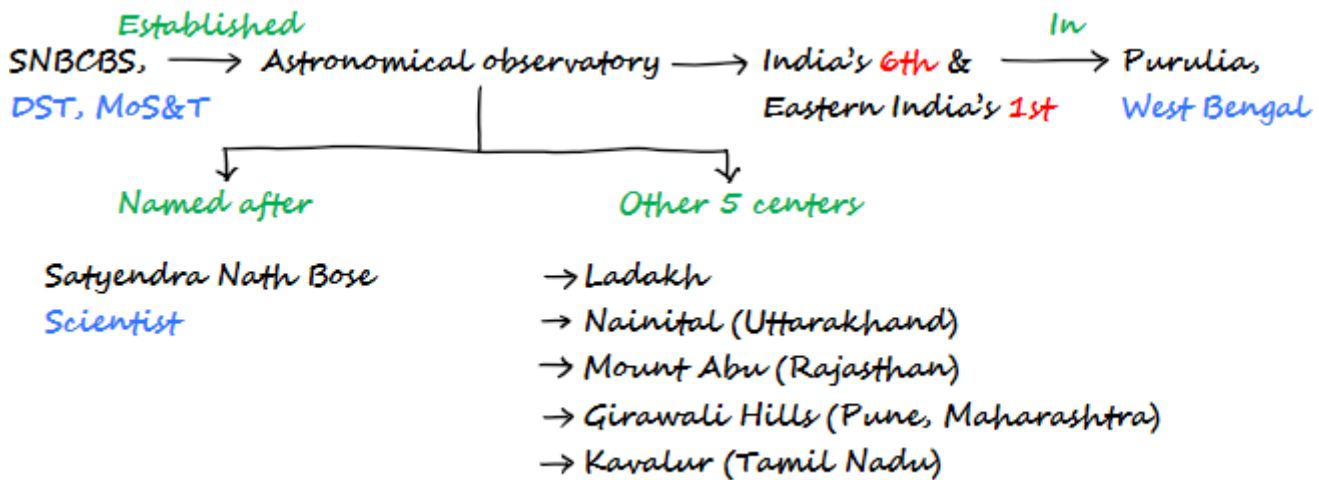
C-DOT - Centre for Development of Telematics

DoT - Department of Telecommunications

MoC - Ministry of Communications

IIT - Indian Institute of Technology

4)



SNBCBS - Satyendra Nath Bose Centre for Basic Sciences

DST - Department of Science and Technology

MoS&T - Ministry of Science and Technology

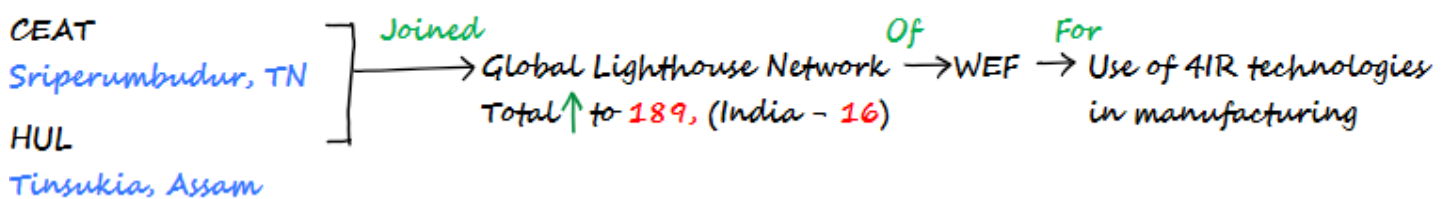
5)



MoD - Ministry of Defence

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



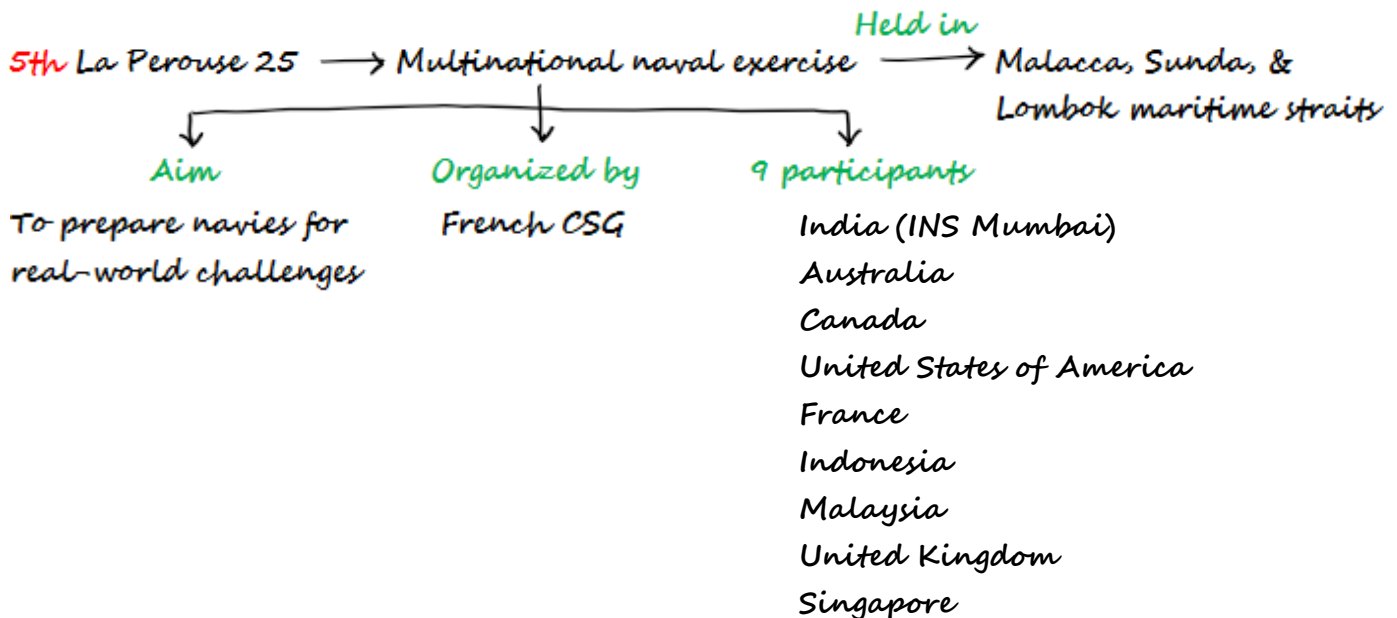
WEF - World Economic Forum

TN - Tamil Nadu

HUL - Hindustan Unilever Limited

4IR - Fourth Industrial Revolution

2)

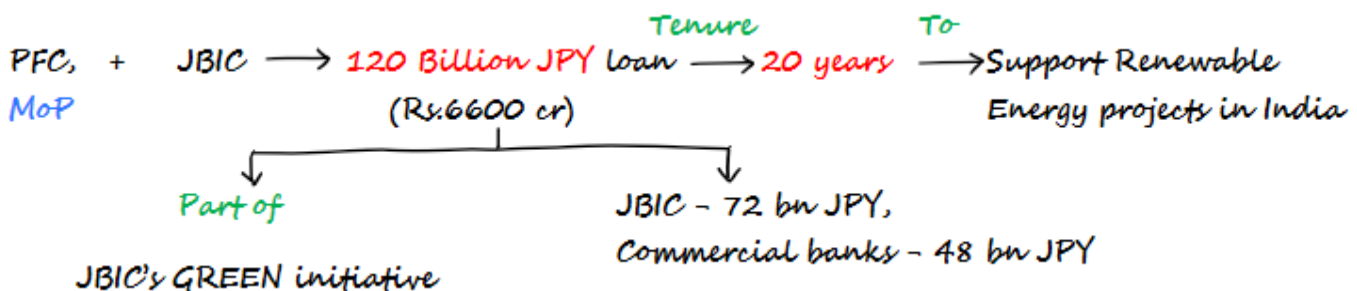


CSG - Carrier Strike Group

INS - Indian Naval Ship

## BANKING & FINANCE

1)



PFC - Power Finance Corporation

MoP - Ministry of Power

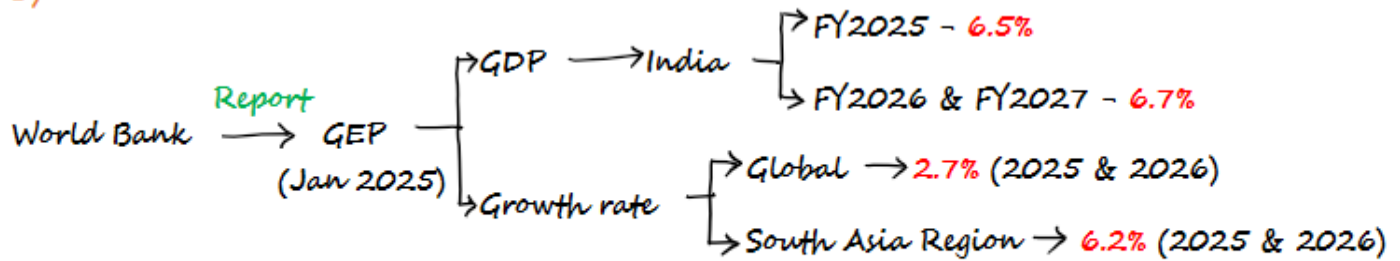
JBIC - Japan Bank for International Cooperation

JPY - Japanese Yen

GREEN - Global Action for Reconciling Economic Growth and Environmental Preservation

**ECONOMY & BUSINESS**

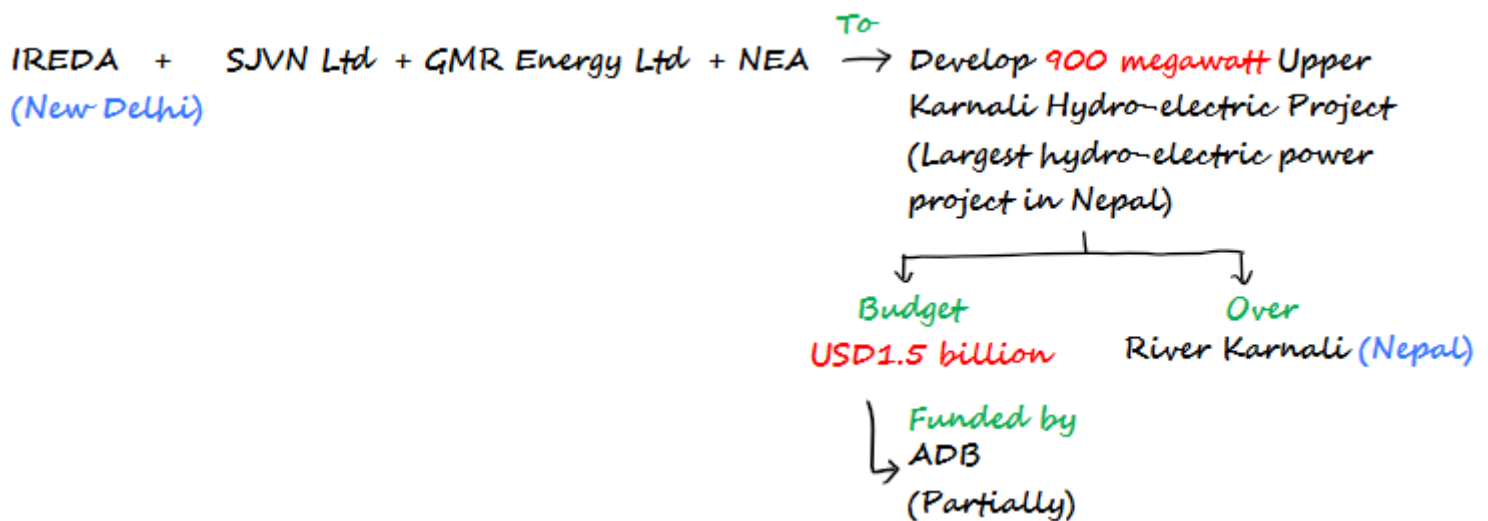
1)



GEP - Global Economic Prospects

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

2)

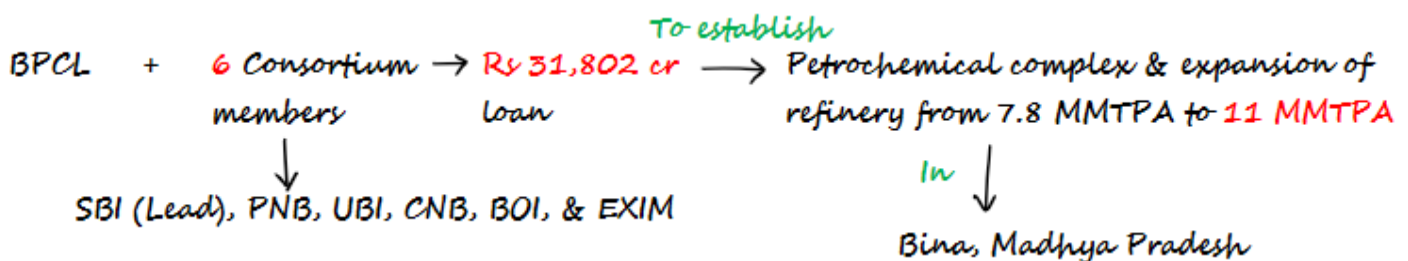


IREDA - Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited

NEA - Nepal Electricity Authority

ADB - Asian Development Bank

3)



BPCL - Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited

SBI - State Bank of India

PNB - Punjab National Bank

UBI - Union Bank of India

CNB - Canara Bank



BOI - Bank of India

EXIM - Export-Import Bank of India

MMTPA - Million metric tonnes per annum

4)

Uttarakhand + Verkijs, <sup>To</sup> Evaluate & promote geothermal energy <sup>In</sup> Uttarakhand  
Iceland

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

Blue Origin → Successfully <sup>Conducted</sup> → 1<sup>st</sup> Flight Test → New Glenn rocket → USA  
(Reusable)  
↓ Aim ↓ About

To showcase rocket's capabilities by launching Blue Ring Pathfinder test satellite into orbit

Mission name - NG-1

Named after - John Glenn

(1<sup>st</sup> American to orbit Earth)

USA - United States of America

2)

SpaceX <sup>Launched</sup> → 2 Lunar Landers <sup>Into</sup> → Moon <sup>Via</sup> → Falcon 9 rocket <sup>From</sup> → Kennedy Space Center, USA  
↓ Blue Ghost ↓ Resilience

Led by - Firefly Aerospace (USA)

Led by - ispace Inc (Japan)

<sup>Payloads:</sup>

<sup>Payload</sup> - Tenacious Micro Rover

LuGRE - Monitoring GPS signals

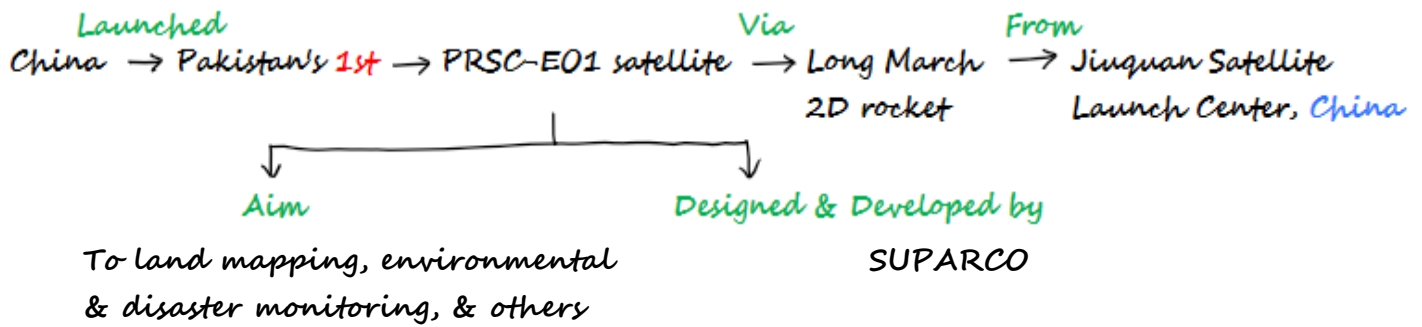
RadPC - Demonstrate radiation-tolerant computing

To collect lunar regolith, capture high-definition images

USA - United States of America

LuGRE - Lunar Global Navigation Satellite System Receiver Experiment

3)

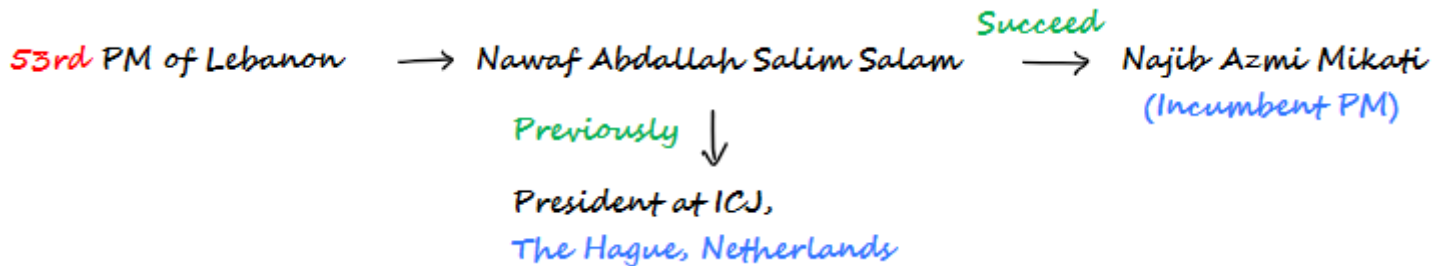


PRSC-EO1 - Pakistan's Remote Sensing Satellite - Earth Observing 1

SUPARCO - Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission

### APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)



PM - Prime Minister

ICJ - International Court of Justice

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- ▶ [Uttarakhand govt inks MoU with ITBP to offer chopper service to tourists in border areas](#)
- ▶ [The Design Clinic Facility unveiled at the 71st Foundation Day of National Research Development Corporation \(NRDC\)](#)
- ▶ [Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority issues LoA for agri processing facility](#)
- ▶ [Experts on GM crop committees to declare conflict of interest](#)

## Detailed Content

Current Affairs 19 & 20 January 2025 : Headlines



**AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY**

**ENGLISH**



**Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin launches massive New Glenn rocket on first test flight and reaches orbit**

**India's Economy To Grow By 6.7% In Next Two Fiscal Years: World Bank**



**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**19 & 20 January 2025**

- ▶ Cabinet approvals on January 16th 2025
- ▶ DPIIT Partners with ITC to Bolster India's Startup Ecosystem
- ▶ C-DOT & IIT Bombay Signed Agreement to Develop Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links
- ▶ India's 6th Astronomical Observatory & Eastern India's 1st Inaugurated in WB
- ▶ Govt Launches Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan App to Promote Battlefield Tourism
- ▶ WEF Includes CEAT and HUL in the Global Lighthouse Network
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- ▶ PFC Sign 120 Billion JPY Loan Deal with JBIC for RE Projects in India
- ▶ Indian Economy Expected to Grow by 6.7% in Next Two Fiscal Year: World Bank
- ▶ IREDA Partners with SJVN, GMR and NEA for 900 MW Upper Karnali Hydropower Project in Nepal
- ▶ BPCL Signs Loan Agreement with SBI - led Consortium for Expansion Projects
- ▶ Uttarakhand Signs MoU with Iceland's Verkis for Geothermal Energy Development
- ▶ Nawaf Abdallah Salim Salam appointed as 53rd PM of Lebanon
- ▶ Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin Launched 'New Glenn Rocket' on First Test Flight
- ▶ SpaceX Falcon 9 Launches Blue Ghost and Resilience Lunar Landers from Kennedy Space Center
- ▶ China Launches PRSC-EO1 Satellite for Pakistan's Space Program



## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Cabinet approvals on January 16th 2025

On January 16 2025, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** has approved the following proposals:



- i. Construction of a Third Launch Pad (TLP) for Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- ii. Formation of the **8th Pay Commission** to revise salaries of central government employees and pensioners.
- iii. Refarming of 687 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum from government ministries and ISRO to support 5th Generation (5G) and future 6th Generation (6G) services.
- iv. Revival plan for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) at a total cost of Rs 11,440 crores.
- v. Creation of 2 new Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) reserve Battalions.

### Cabinet approves construction of TLP for ISRO

i. The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of a TLP at the ISRO's SDSC in Sriharikota to enhance its space infrastructure and support the development of Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLV).

- The project costs **Rs. 3,984.86 crore** and is expected to be completed in 4 years.
- ii. The TLP will be versatile, supporting both NGLV and Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3) vehicles, including advanced features like horizontal rocket integration.
  - iii. This new pad will boost India's space capabilities, enabling the launch of heavier spacecraft, with the ability to carry 30,000 tonnes (t) into low Earth orbit, compared to the current 8,000 t.
  - iv. The project aligns with India's growing space ambitions, including upcoming missions like the 'Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS)' and crewed lunar missions.

**Note:** Indian Space Transportation Systems are completely reliant on two launch pads viz. First Launch Pad (FLP) & Second Launch Pad (SLP)

### Cabinet approves formation of the 8th Pay Commission :

i. The Union Cabinet approved the formation of the 8th Pay Commission to revise the salary and pension of over 1.2 crore central government employees and pensioners. The term of the 7th Pay Commission will conclude on December 31 2025, after which the 8th Pay Commission will come into effect.

- This will increase the minimum basic salary of central government employees from Rs 18,000 to over Rs 40,000 per month.
- ii. The salary hike, expected to be between 25% and 30%, will also include allowances, perks, and performance pay.
    - Approximately 50 lakh central government employees and 65 lakh pensioners will benefit, including defence personnel and government employees in New Delhi (Delhi).
  - iii. The fitment factor is estimated to range between 2.6% and 2.85%, compared to 2.57% under the **7th Pay Commission**.

### About Pay Commissions:

- Pay Commissions are typically formed once every 10 years to advise the government on revising the pay structure and scale for its employees.
- Since 1947, a total of 7 Pay Commissions have been constituted, with the most recent one being implemented in 2016.
- The 7th Pay Commission was formed by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government on 28 February 2014. It was chaired by Justice Ashok Kumar Mathur.

### Cabinet approves refarming of 687 MHz spectrum for 5G, 6G :

i.The Union Cabinet has approved the refarming of **687 megahertz**(MHz) of spectrum from government ministries and ISRO to support 5G and future 6G services.

- This spectrum, valued at **Rs. 2 lakh crore**, will be auctioned to telecom operators.
- Of the 687 MHz, 328 MHz will be released immediately, with the remaining portion becoming available in phases by 2030.

ii.The refarming aims to address the rising demand for telecommunication spectrum, projected to reach **2000 MHz** by 2030.

iii.This initiative increases the total available spectrum from 900 MHz to 1,587 MHz, narrowing the gap to 413 MHz.

iv.The refarming reallocates spectrum from key government departments, including Ministry of Defence(MoD), ISRO, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoI&B), to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communication(MoC) .



### CCEA Approves revival plan for RINL :

i.The Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (**CCEA**) has approved a revival plan for Visakhapatnam(Andhra Pradesh, AP) based Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL),with a total investment of Rs.11,440 crores.

- This plan includes an equity infusion of Rs.10,300 crores into RINL and the conversion of Rs.1,140 crores of working capital loans into 7% Non-cumulative Preference Share Capital, redeemable after 10 years.

ii.RINL is a Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel(MoS), fully owned by the Government of India(GoI), and operates the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (**VSP**) in AP.

- The plant has an installed capacity of **7.3 million** tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of liquid steel.

iii.The goal is for the plant to reach full production capacity, that includes starting full production with 2 blast furnaces in January 2025 and 3 blast furnaces by August 2025.

iv.This strategic move aligns with the 'National Steel Policy of 2017', and ensuring India's self-reliance in the steel sector as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

### MHA approves Creation of 2 new CISF reserve Battalions

i.The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved the creation of **two new battalions** for the CISF to enhance its capacity and manage increasing security demands.

- The two newly sanctioned battalions will consist of 1,025 personnel, bringing the total number of CISF battalions from **13 to 15** and creating **2,050 new posts**.

ii.With this expansion, the CISF's total strength will rise to nearly 2 lakh personnel.

Note: The CISF is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces(CAPF), established under the CISF Act, of 1968.

### DPIIT Partners with ITC to Bolster India's Startup Ecosystem

In January 2025, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I), entered into a strategic partnership with Kolkata (West Bengal) based **ITC Limited** to improve **innovation** and strengthen India's **startup** ecosystem.

- The partnership aims to capitalize on ITC's market network and DPIIT's support initiatives to enhance technological progress and create market opportunities for startups nationwide.
- i. Under this partnership, ITC aims to implement startup solutions in strategic areas such as energy storage systems, integrating Renewable Energy (RE) sources for manufacturing locations and digital platforms for Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES).
- ii. This collaboration focuses on digital to improve manufacturing's operational excellence and readiness for the future, as well as on renewable energy to strengthen ITCs' sustainability.

### C-DOT & IIT Bombay Signed Agreement to Develop Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links

In January 2025, the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications (MoC) signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT B), Mumbai (Maharashtra) to develop an "**Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links.**"

- The agreement was signed in the presence of Dr. Rajkumar Upadhyay, Chief executive Officer (CEO) of C-DOT, Professor Shalabh Gupta, Principal Investigator from IIT Bombay, and C-DOT Directors Dr. Pankaj Kumar Dalela and Shikha Srivastava.
- i. The collaboration is under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) 6G Call for Proposal initiative.
- ii. It aims to accelerate research on the 6G ecosystem to position India as a global leader in the design, development, and deployment of 6G technology by 2030.
- iii. The initiative focuses on affordability, sustainability, and ubiquity, ensuring that cutting-edge communication solutions are accessible to all.

### India's 6th Astronomical Observatory & Eastern India's 1st Inaugurated in WB

In January 2025, the Satyendra Nath Bose Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBCBS), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), established **India's sixth** and **Eastern India's first** astronomical observatory in the Garpanchkot Hills of Purulia district in West Bengal (WB), to aid scientific observations, student training, and global research collaboration.

- The observatory center has been named after the renowned scientist Satyendra Nath Bose.
- The other 5 centers are located in Ladakh, Nainital (Uttarakhand), Mount Abu (Rajasthan), Girawali Hills (Pune, Maharashtra) and Kavalur (Tamil Nadu, TN)

**Key People:** Vishvajit Sahay, Additional Secretary of the Union Science and Technology Department, and other dignitaries were present at the inauguration event.

- i. The observatory is equipped with two telescopes, and its seeing value of 1.3 arc seconds matches the standards of the other five astronomical centers across the country.



- It currently has a 14-inch diameter telescope, with a 1-meter diameter telescope set to be installed soon.
- ii. It is located 600 meters (m) above sea level in a pollution-free area, with the best observation period being from November to April.
- iii. An automatic weather forecasting center has been set up on the hilltop to measure rainfall, temperature, and wind speed.
- iv. SNBCBS has partnered with Sidhu Kanu Birsa University in WB for the observatory's operations and resource sharing.

### Govt Launches Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan App to Promote Battlefield Tourism

Union Minister **Rajnath Singh**, Ministry of Defence (MoD) launched “**Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan**” mobile application (**app**) and website to enable civilians to visit and explore significant battlefields along India's borders. The app was launched on 15 January 2025, coinciding with the 77th Indian Army Day.

- This app was developed by the MoD, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), and the Indian Army (IA).
- i. The app offers a comprehensive guide to tourists, which includes historical insights, battle accounts, stories of bravery, travel information, and applications for permission to enter restricted places.
- ii. It includes detailed information of **77** battlefield sites and provides visitors an in-depth overview of some of the major military events.
- iii. As part of their tour schedule, tourists can visit important locations like **Siachen**, the world's highest battlefield, and **Galwan**, the site of the 2020 conflict between Indian and Chinese forces.
- iv. Users can explore sites like the Dras War Memorial (Kargil War, 1999) in Ladakh, Walong War Memorial (Battle of Walong, 1962) in Arunachal Pradesh (AR), Tawang War Memorial in AR, Longewala War Memorial in Rajasthan, Operation Meghdoot War Memorial in Ladakh, Kibithoo and Bum-La in Arunachal Pradesh (AP), Rezang-La, and Pangong Tso in Ladakh and Cho-La conflict site in Sikkim, using the app's virtual tours and interactive multimedia features.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### WEF Includes CEAT and HUL in the Global Lighthouse Network

In January 2025, Switzerland based World Economic Forum (**WEF**) announced that Sriperumbudur (Tamil Nadu, TN) based **CEAT Limited** and Tinsukia (Assam) based facility of Hindustan Unilever Limited (**HUL**), the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Company have joined its Global Lighthouse Network (**GLN**) for driving manufacturing transformation through innovation.



- Other 15 new members include companies from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, Germany, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), and Morocco (Home to the first Lighthouse site in Africa).



**Note:** As of January 2025, a total of **16 Indian companies** joined WEF's GLN, with Bharuch (Gujarat) based Jubilant Ingrevia which became a member in October 2024.

**Key points:**

i. The WEF announced that 17 innovative industrial sites have joined the GLN, bringing the total to 189 facilities, 25 of which are Sustainability Lighthouses that use advanced Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR/Industry 4.0) technologies in manufacturing.

- 13 sites have been named 4IR Lighthouses for driving significant performance improvements through technology-driven transformation.
- 5 sites have been named Sustainability Lighthouses ((one of which was already a Factory Lighthouse) for using advanced solutions to lower their environmental impact.

ii. The latest cohort of Lighthouses has seen an average 53% increase in labor productivity and a 26% reduction in conversion costs, driven by digital solutions like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Advanced Analytics (AA), and more.

**About Global Lighthouse Network (GLN):**

i. GLN is an initiative by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and co-founded with McKinsey & Company. Launched in 2018.

ii. The network aims to enhance the performance of manufacturing and supply chains by adopting 4IR technologies.

iii. It helps shape the future by using digital and analytics tools across the value chain to boost growth, productivity, resilience, and environmental sustainability.

iv. It recognizes and awards the world's most advanced operational sites.

**About CEAT Limited:**

Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer **(MD & CEO)** – Arnab Banerjee

**Headquarters** – Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Founded** – 1924

**About Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL):**

Chief Executive Officer **(CEO)** – Rohit Jawa

**Headquarters** – Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Founded** – 1933

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**Indian Navy Participates in 5th Edition of La Perouse 25 Multinational Naval Exercise**

On January 16, 2025, the Indian Navy **(IN)**, along with eight Indo-Pacific nations, is participating in the **5th edition of the La Perouse 25** multinational naval exercise.

- The exercise is being conducted in the strategic maritime straits of **Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok**, which serve as crucial routes for global maritime trade between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.
- This eight-day exercise, organized by the French Carrier Strike Group (CSG), began on **January 16, 2025, and will continue until January 24, 2025.**

**About the exercise La Perouse 25:**

The exercise aims to prepare navies for real-world challenges, enhancing their collective response capabilities.



**Participants:**

- i. The exercise involves naval forces from nine nations: **India, Australia, Canada**, the United States of America (**USA**), **France, Indonesia, Malaysia**, the United Kingdom (**UK**), and **Singapore**.
- ii. The Indian Navy participated with its destroyer Indian Naval Ship (INS) Mumbai while other nations have deployed various advanced vessels.

**Key Points:**

- i. A highlight of the exercise is the use **IORIS** (Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing) system.
- ii. During the exercise, all **navies trained in the use of IORIS**, a system designed for communication and coordination, enabling the effective exchange of information and documents to collectively manage maritime crises.
- iii. The exercise **focused** on enhancing interoperability through training in ship inspections for illicit activities while emphasizing the protection of key trade routes from accidents, illegal activities, and natural disasters.

**Note:** The **4th edition** of the La Perouse exercise was held in 2023 and involved seven nations, taking place in the Bay of Bengal.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### **PFC Sign 120 Billion JPY Loan Deal with JBIC for RE Projects in India**

In January 2025, New Delhi (Delhi) based Power Finance Corporation Limited (**PFC**) under the Ministry of Power (MoP) signed an agreement with Tokyo (Japan) based Japan Bank for International Cooperation (**JBIC**) for **120 billion** Japanese Yen (**JPY**) or **Rs.6600 crore** loan to support Renewable Energy(**RE**) projects in India.



- Under the agreement, JBIC will contribute **JPY 72 billion**(Rs 40.04 billion), while the remaining amount will be provided by commercial banks.
- The initiative supports India's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions and transitioning to cleaner energy sources.

**Key People:** The loan agreement was signed by **Parminder Chopra**, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of PFC and **Ogawa Kazunori**, Senior MD of JBIC in Japan.

**Key Points:**

- i. The long-term loan, with a tenure of **up to 20 years**, will be granted to PFC as part of JBIC's 'Global Action for Reconciling Economic Growth and Environmental Preservation' (**GREEN**) initiative.
  - This agreement represents JBIC's largest green financing deal with any Indian company.
- ii. PFC will utilize the funds for energy projects in India, including RE, next-generation energy supply, and energy-efficient power generation and heat supply.
- iii. It supports India's goal of achieving 50% cumulative electric power generation from non-fossil-fuel-based energy sources by 2030.

**Note:** In August 2024, PFC received a 25.5 billion yen (Around Rs. 147 crore) loan from JBIC to fund for wind energy project in Karnataka.

**About Power Finance Corporation (PFC):**

PFC, a **Maharatna** public sector company and one of India's top non-banking financial companies (NBFC), operates under the Ministry of Power (**MoP**), Government of India (GoI).

Chairman & Managing Director (**CMD**) – Parminder Chopra

**Headquarter** – New Delhi, Delhi

**Founded** – 1986

**About Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC):**

President & Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) – Tadashi Maeda

**Headquarters** – Tokyo, Japan

**Founded** – 1999

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

### Indian Economy Expected to Grow by 6.7% in Next Two Fiscal Year: World Bank

In January 2025, **The World Bank (WB)** released its biannual report titled **Global Economic Prospects (GEP) for January 2025**. The report has projected that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will grow at a rate of **6.7%** over the next two financial years i.e. for Financial Year 2025-26 (FY26) and FY27.



- The projection for FY26 remained same from its GEP for June 2024 and growth rate for FY27 was revised downwards by 10 basis point (bps), from its previous estimate of **6.8%**.

**India-Specific:**

- i. The report has estimated India's GDP growth rate for the current financial year (FY25) at **6.5%**, down from the 8.2% in FY24, due to slowdown in investment and weak manufacturing growth.
- ii. The report underscored that India's services sector is expected to maintain its growth, while manufacturing activity is projected to strengthen, supported by government initiatives to improve logistics infrastructure and business conditions through tax reforms.



- It further highlighted that Private Consumption growth is expected to increase due to a stronger labour market, expanding credit, and decreasing inflation.

iii. As per the report, investment growth is expected to be stable, strengthened by increasing private investment, strong balance sheets, and easing financing conditions.

#### **Global Scenario:**

i. The report has estimated that global growth will remain stable at **2.7%** in both **2025** and **2026**. This projection is based on the gradual decline in inflation and interest rates.

- However, the report highlighted that this projection for global growth rate is less than 3.1% recorded in the decade before the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii. The report has cautioned about certain risks that may pose certain challenges to the global economy such as heightened policy uncertainty and adverse trade policy shifts, geopolitical tensions, persistent inflation, and climate-related natural disasters.

iii. The report projected that South Asia Region (**SAR**) is estimated to grow at **6.2%** in **2025** and **2026**, compared to a 6% growth in 2024. This projection is mainly driven by the robust growth in India.

#### **About World Bank (WB):**

**President**– Ajay Banga

**Headquarters**– Washington, DC, the United States of America (USA)

**Established**– 1944

### **IREDA Partners with SJVN, GMR and NEA for 900 MW Upper Karnali Hydropower Project in Nepal**

On 17th January 2025, New Delhi(Delhi) based Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (**IREDA**) entered into a Joint Venture (**JV**) Agreement with Shimla, Himachal Pradesh(HP) based **SJVN Limited**(formerly known as Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam), **GMR Energy Limited**, and Nepal Electricity Authority (**NEA**) for the development of the 900 megawatt (MW) Upper Karnali Hydro-electric Project over River Karnali, the largest hydro-electric power project in Nepal.



- The agreement was signed in the presence of senior officials from IREDA, SJVN, and GMR Energy Limited in New Delhi, Delhi.
- The project is partly funded by the Asian Development Bank(ADB), and is expected to be completed within five years of commencement of construction.

#### **Key Points:**

i. The joint venture agreement provides a thorough framework for the planning, building, operation, and maintenance of the project using a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (**BOOT**) model.

- The **USD1.5 billion project** will be in operation for 25 years from its Commercial Operation Date (CoD).

ii. Nepal, will be utilising only 108 Megawatt(MW) of the total power generated for domestic consumption, leaving 792 MW of power for export to countries like India and Bangladesh.



- iii. This strategic initiative aims to promote renewable energy sources and enhance regional energy security.
- iv. This project will be an example of cross-border cooperation by utilizing the enormous potential of hydropower, providing both environmental and economic advantages.
- v. IREDA will invest Rs174.22 crore to acquire a 5% stake with SJVN also investing a similar amount to acquire up to 10% joint stake in GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Ltd and Karnali Transmission Co Pvt Ltd, both of which are being executed by GMR Nepal, in association with SJVN.

**About Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) :**

Chairman & Managing Director(CMD) – Pradip Kumar Das  
Headquarters – New Delhi, Delhi  
Founded – 1987

**BPCL Signs Loan Agreement with SBI – led Consortium for Expansion Projects**

On January 2025, Mumbai, Maharashtra based Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (**BPCL**), India's 2nd-largest oil marketing company has signed a loan agreement worth **Rs 31,802 crore** with a consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI).

- It aims to finance the expansion of its refinery to 11 Million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) from 7.8 MMTPA and setting up of a petrochemical complex in Bina, Madhya Pradesh (MP).
- i. Other consortium members include Punjab National Bank (PNB), Union Bank of India (UBI), Canara Bank (CNB), Bank of India (BOI), and Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM).
- ii. BPCL Said that it will construct petrochemicals complex that produces Downstream polymers and Chemicals such as Linear Low Density Polyethylene (LLDPE), High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), Polypropylene (PP), benzene, toluene, and mixed xylene.

**Uttarakhand Signs MoU with Iceland's Verkis for Geothermal Energy Development**

The Government of **Uttarakhand** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with Icelandic company Verkis Consulting Engineers (**Verkis**) for geothermal exploration and development in Uttarakhand.

- The agreement was signed in the virtual presence of Chief Minister (CM) **Pushkar Singh Dhami** and Icelandic Ambassador **Dr Benedict Hoskulsson**.
  - i. The MoU aims to evaluate and promote geothermal energy across identified sites in Uttarakhand.
  - ii. Under the agreement, feasibility studies for these projects will be funded by the Government of Iceland.
  - iii. The initiative has the necessary approvals from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC); the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE); and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- Note:** Kolkata (West Bengal, WB) based Geological Survey of India (**GSI**) and Dehradun (Uttarakhand) based Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (**WIHG**) have identified **40** geothermal hotspots in the state.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

**Nawaf Abdallah Salim Salam appointed as 53rd PM of Lebanon**

In January 2025, **Nawaf Abdallah Salim Salam** was appointed as the 53rd Prime Minister (PM) of Lebanon. He was selected by the parliament by securing **78 votes** out of 128 Members of the Parliament (MPs) and will replace incumbent PM **Najib Azmi Mikati**.

- Currently, he is serving as the President at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), The Hague, Netherlands.



**About Nawaf Abdallah Salim Salam:**

- i. Nawaf Abdallah Salim Salam is a Lebanese politician, diplomat, jurist, and academic who had a distinguished career in international law and diplomacy.
- ii. He began his legal career in 1984 as an appellate lawyer. He served as an advisor and representative for numerous local and international organizations between 1984 to 1989 and 1992 to 2007
- iii. He is known for voting to condemn Israel 210 times when he was Lebanon's ambassador to the UN. He also voted against United Nations (UN) resolutions condemning crimes committed by Iran, Lebanon, Cuba and Syria.
- iv. He held positions as Lebanon's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UNs) in New York, the United States of America (USA) from 2007 to 2017.
- v. He served as a judge at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from 2009 to 2018.
  - He also served as the President of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and Vice President (VP) of the 67th UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- vi. In February 2024, he was elected as the **27th President** of the ICJ, becoming the 2nd Arab and 1st Lebanese to hold the esteemed position.

**About Lebanon:**

**President**– Joseph Khalil Aoun

**Capital**– Beirut

**Currency**– Lebanese Pound (LBP)

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin Launched 'New Glenn Rocket' on First Test Flight**

In January 2025, **Blue Origin Enterprises, L.P.**, the American space technology company headquartered in Washington, the United States of America (USA), founded by Amazon's Executive Chairman **Jeff Bezos**, successfully launched its reusable '**New Glenn (NG) rocket**' on a first test flight, from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, the USA. The rocket was named after John Glenn who was the first American to orbit Earth.



- The mission named **NG-1**, included a first-stage booster landing in the Atlantic Ocean, while the rocket's second stage continues towards orbit
- The 320-foot (98-meter(m)) rocket sent a prototype satellite into orbit, designed to deploy satellites into their correct orbits.

#### **About New Glenn Rocket:**

i. The mission aimed to demonstrate the rocket's capabilities by placing the Blue Ring Pathfinder test satellite into orbit and landing the rocket's booster onto a drone ship in the Atlantic Ocean.

- The rocket is built to haul spacecraft and eventually astronauts to orbit and also the Moon.

ii. The first-stage booster couldn't land on a barge in the Atlantic, but the company emphasized that the main mission was successful.

iii. For this test, the satellite was planned to stay inside the second stage while orbiting Earth. The mission was expected to last six hours, after which the second stage would be placed in a safe orbit to avoid creating space debris, following NASA's guidelines.

iv. New Glenn is one of several large rockets launched in recent years, joining United Launch Alliance's Vulcan, Europe's updated Ariane 6, and NASA's Space Launch System (SLS), which replaced the Saturn V for moon missions.

**Note:** SpaceX's Starship, founded by Elon Musk, is the largest rocket ever built, standing about 400 feet (123 meters) tall.

#### **About Blue Origin Enterprises, L.P.:**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dave Limp

**Headquarters** – Washington, the United States of America (USA)

**Founded** – 2000

#### **SpaceX Falcon 9 Launches Blue Ghost and Resilience Lunar Landers from Kennedy Space Center**

On January 15, 2025, a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, United States of America (USA) carrying two lunar landers: **Blue Ghost** as the primary payload and **Resilience** as the secondary payload.



- The Blue Ghost, named Ghost Riders in the Sky, is led by **Firefly Aerospace**, headquartered in Texas, USA and the Resilience lunar lander, is spearheaded by Tokyo (Japan)-based **ispace Inc.**
- The two landers have different timelines for reaching the Moon, with Blue Ghost being deployed first.



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### About Blue Ghost Mission:

Blue Ghost is expected to take **about 45 days** to reach the Moon, gradually increasing its orbit around Earth before entering lunar orbit and landing near Mons Latreille, a volcanic feature in Mare Crisium, located on the Moon's northeast side.

**Note:** Blue Ghost's mission, targeting a landing on **March 2, 2025**, will span 60 days, including approximately 45 days in orbit and 14 days of operations on the lunar surface.

#### Key payloads onboard include:

- **LuGRE** (Lunar Global Navigation Satellite System,(GNSS) Receiver Experiment): Monitoring GPS signals to extend navigation capabilities to the Moon.
- **RadPC:** Demonstrating radiation-tolerant computing during transit.

#### Key Operations:

- i. After landing in Mare Crisium, Blue Ghost will run 10 NASA payloads over a full lunar day (14 Earth days), performing subsurface drilling, sample collection, X-ray imaging, and dust studies.
- ii. It will also capture a total lunar eclipse and observe regolith reactions at sunset, with brief operations continuing into the lunar night.

### About Resilience Mission:

The Resilience mission focuses on deploying innovative technologies and cultural payloads. Resilience — also known as the Hakuto-R Mission 2 lander. It will land in Mare Frigoris, carrying:

- **Tenacious Micro Rover:** Built by ispace-Europe, this rover will collect lunar regolith, capture high-definition images, and transmit data to the lander.
- Water Electrolyzer and Food Production Equipment, Deep Space Radiation Probe
- **Moonhouse:** A symbolic model house designed by Swedish artist Mikael Genberg.
- **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) **Memory Disk:** Preserving linguistic and cultural heritage.

Resilience will take about **four to five months** to reach the Moon's Mare Frigoris in the far north.

#### Points to Note:

- i. Both missions are pivotal efforts to advance lunar exploration under National Aeronautics and Space Administration (**NASA**)'s **Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative**.
- ii. These efforts are key milestones in NASA's goal to develop a lunar economy and support future human exploration under the **Artemis program**.
- iii. Both landers face significant challenges in achieving a successful soft landing on the Moon. They must navigate rocky terrain and craters while relying on thrusters for a controlled descent since there is no atmosphere to use parachutes

#### About Firefly Aerospace:

Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**)-Jason Kim

**Headquarters**- Texas, United States of America (USA)

**Established**- 2014

#### About ispace Inc:

**Founder and** Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**)- Takeshi Hakamada

**Established**- 2010

**Headquarters**- Tokyo, Japan

### China Launches PRSC-E01 Satellite for Pakistan's Space Program

On January 17 2025, China successfully launched Pakistan's first Remote Sensing Satellite -Earth Observing 1 (**PRSC-E01**) aboard the Long March-Dimensional (LM-2D) rocket for Pakistan from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center (**JSLC**), China. The rocket also carried 2 other satellites, Tianlu-1 and Lantan-1.



- The satellite was designed and developed by Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (**SUPARCO**).
- The PRSC-EO1 launch marked the **95th flight** of the Long March-2D and the **556th flight** of the entire Long March fleet. The launch was China's third orbital launch attempt of the year.



### Key Points:

i. PRSC-EO1 satellite was equipped with a high-resolution electro-optical sensor.

- It is the first of a series of three optical remote sensing satellites for Pakistan, which will join Pakistan's existing remote sensing satellites, PRSS-1 and PakTES-1A, in orbit.

ii. The satellite's data will be used for various purposes including land mapping, agricultural classification and assessment, urban and rural planning, environmental monitoring, natural disaster monitoring and management, surveying, natural resource protection, and others.

iii. The mission also launched Decentralized autonomous organization (**DAO-1 or Tianlu-1**), developed by Galaxy Space (Anhui) for Jianghuai Frontier Innovation Technology Center, China and **Blue Carbon-1** (Lantan-1), developed by Geespace, also known as Zhejiang Geespace Technology Co Limited (China) for Hangzhou Dianzi University (China).

iv. The LM-2D is a two-stage liquid propellant launch vehicle designed and developed by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology (SAST), a subsidiary of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

- It is primarily used to launch small to medium-sized satellites into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO), with a payload capacity ranging from 1,300 kilogram (kg) to 700 kilometer (km) SSO.

**Note:** In 2018, China sent 2 Pakistan satellites into orbit. The PRSS-1, Pakistan's first optical remote sensing satellite, and the PakTES-1A, a smaller observation craft.

### About China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC):

**Chairman-** Chen Mingbo

**Headquarters-** Beijing, China

**Established-** 1999

## Aspirant Queries

**Aspirant:** Does Affairscloud covers all the Current affairs topics related to examinations?

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**Example:** In 'Important Days' topics the International Organisations publish their reports and Rankings in the evenings, to make sure every data is covered, we delay the topics to the next day Candidates appearing for Competitive Exams. Kindly Share the General Awareness questions, which asked in their respective exams to “[gaanalysis.ac@gmail.com](mailto:gaanalysis.ac@gmail.com)”

### GA Questions Asked in Exams



- [Affairscloud's Self Analysis for General Awareness Section](#)

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**Detailed Analysis of GA Questions asked in IBPS Clerk Mains Exam 2024:**



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## GENERAL AWARENESS

OCTOBER 13 2024		COVERED IN AFFAIRSCLOUD		
CATEGORIES	QUESTIONS COLLECTED	OVERALL	QUIZ	HANDWRITTEN NOTES
Current Affairs	42	37	29	16
Current Static Banking	1	—	—	—
Current Static GK	2	1	—	—
Static Banking	—	—	—	—
Static GK	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>

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