

CurrentTap

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Comprehensive **Current Affairs Magazine** Covering

GA**ESI****FINANCE**

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1. GA IN NEWS

FIRST IN NEWS

S.No	News	Key Facts
1.	Air India's first Flying Training Organisation (FTO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be set up at Belora airport at Amaravati, Maharashtra. Also, South Asia's Largest FTO. Partner: Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC). Will be operational by mid-2026.
2.	World's First AI Dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Medusa dress; Features robotic snakes. Creator: Christina Ernst, a Google software engineer and founder of She Builds Robots.
3.	First International Conference on Steel Slag Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizers: CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) & PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) Venue: New-Delhi. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's First Steel Slag Road was built at Hazira, Surat.
4.	Induction of The First Indigenous Chip-Based 4G Mobile Base Stations by the Indian Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Sahyadri LTE base stations; Chip Developer: Signalchip. Procured from Bangalore-based firm Signaltron through the government e-marketplace portal.
5.	World's first CNG motorcycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Bajaj Freedom 125.
6.	First Indian to receive Russia's Highest Civilian Honour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awardee: Narendra Modi, The PM of India. Award Name: Order of St Andrew the Apostle. Announced in 2019 for his contributions to the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership & friendly ties between the two countries. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by: Tsar Peter the Great in 1698. Notable past winners: Former President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, and China President Xi Jinping. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> DID YOU KNOW? <p>2000: India-Russia Strategic Partnership declared. 2010: Elevated to "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership".</p> </div>
7.	First Country to Prepare Entire Fauna Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feat achieved by India. Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) released the Fauna of India Checklist Portal during Animal Taxonomy Summit-2024 at Kolkata. A comprehensive checklist of India's entire fauna, covering 104,561 species. Includes 121 checklists covering all known taxa and 36 phyla, along with details on endemic, threatened, and scheduled species.

		About Animal Taxonomy Summit-2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized as a part of 109th Foundation Day of ZSI. Themes: Taxonomy, Systematics and Evolution; Ecology and Animal Behaviour; and Biodiversity and Conservation. 																				
8.	First State in India to Adopt a Road Safety Action Plan for 10 Years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State: Rajasthan. Aim: to reduce road accidents in Rajasthan by 50% by the year 2030. To be implemented in three stages from 2025 to 2033. World Bank to provide assistance. 																				
9.	World's First Miss AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winner: Kenza Layli, a Moroccan virtual model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creator: Meriam Bessa; Reward: \$20,000 Event: 1st World AI Creator Awards (WAICA), organized by Fanvue. Second Place: French AI model Lalina Valina. Third Place: Portuguese AI model Olivia C. 																				
10.	India's first tourism index mutual fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund. Comprises a collection of companies forming part of the Nifty 500. Tracks Nifty India Tourism Index. 																				
11.	India's first deep water Container Transhipment Port & Terminal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vizhinjam Port near Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. First Mothership 'MV San Fernando' docked recently. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrived from Xiamen port in China. Owned by SFL Corporation Ltd & sailing under the flag of Marshall Islands. Significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's first automated & largest transhipment port. India's first Greenfield port project developed under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A collaborative initiative of Government of Kerala, Government of India, and Adani Port SEZ (project executor). 																				
12.	India's first exchange traded fund (ETF) in the oil and gas sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: ICICI Prudential Nifty Oil & Gas ETF. An open-ended ETF tracking the Nifty Oil & Gas Index. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nifty Oil & Gas Index comprises a maximum of 15 stocks listed on the NSE. 																				
13.	Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) turnover crossed Rs. 1.5 lakh crore for the first time in 2023-24	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Particulars</th> <th>2013-14</th> <th>2023-24</th> <th>Growth</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Production (Rs. Crores)</td> <td>26,109.08</td> <td>1,08,297.68</td> <td>315.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sales/ Turnover (Rs. Crores)</td> <td>31,154.20</td> <td>1,55,673.12</td> <td>400% (highest ever)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Employment Generation (Lakhs)</td> <td>5.62</td> <td>10.17</td> <td>81.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business at Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan, New Delhi (Rs. Crores)</td> <td>51.13</td> <td>95.74</td> <td>87.23%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>About KVIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statutory body under the KVIC Act, 1956. Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. 	Particulars	2013-14	2023-24	Growth	Production (Rs. Crores)	26,109.08	1,08,297.68	315.00%	Sales/ Turnover (Rs. Crores)	31,154.20	1,55,673.12	400% (highest ever)	New Employment Generation (Lakhs)	5.62	10.17	81.00%	Business at Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan, New Delhi (Rs. Crores)	51.13	95.74	87.23%
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14.	Turkey launched its first domestically-produced communications satellite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Turksat 6A. Developed by: Aselsan, a Turkish defense corporation. Launch Vehicle: SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. 																				

15.	First Woman Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Justice Aalia Neelum. Predecessor: Shujaat Ali Khan.
16.	First Green Loan Facility between Indian Entity & German based Deutsche Bank AG's GIFT City branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loan secured by REC Limited. Value: JPY 31.96 billion (equivalent to USD 200 million). Tenure: 5-year. One of the first JPY-denominated green loan transactions for Deutsche Bank AG, GIFT City.
17.	Eastern India's first university for physically challenged students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be set up at Ranchi by the Jharkhand Government. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of Jharkhand has proposed 'Navothan Scholarship Scheme'. Benefits: full course fee (up to ₹10 lakh per year) for meritorious orphan and physically challenged students, along with ₹48,000 per year for lodging and food expenses.
18.	Inaugural Olympics Esports Games 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host: Saudi Arabia. International Olympic Committee (IOC) partnered with Saudi Arabia for 12 years to organize e-sports regularly. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first edition of Esports World Cup is being held Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
19.	First direct observation of a smaller black hole in a pair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study conducted by 32 scientists from 10 countries (includes India). A smaller black hole orbiting a larger black hole was directly observed in galaxy OJ 287 (Located 4 billion light years away). NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) and Swift telescope were crucial in observing the event. Initially proposed by researchers at the University of Turku, Finland.
20.	First Bird Gallery of Uttarakhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Nature Education Centre, Jolly Grant, Dehradun. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uttarakhand accounts for highest number of bird species in India.
21.	World's First 3D-Printed Electric Abra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial operations launched in Dubai. Manufacturers: Al Seer Marine Company, in collaboration with Mitsubishi (Japan), Siemens (Germany), and Torqeedo (Germany).
22.	NASA Transmits Hip-Hop Song to Deep Space for the First Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Song: "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" by Missy Elliott. Song transmitted to Venus (Approximately 158 million miles). Also, the second song ever transmitted to space by NASA. <p>DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>Missy Elliott was the first female hip-hop artist to be inducted to Songwriters Hall of Fame (2019). She was also the first female rapper to be inducted to Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2023).</p> <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASA previously transmitted "Across the Universe" by The Beatles to the North Star, Polaris, in 2008.
23.	First woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Capt. Supreetha C.T; She is from Mysuru, Karnataka. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shiva Chouhan - first female officer to be deployed in Siachen.

24.	First Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leander Paes: Inducted under the player category. Vijay Amritraj: Inducted under the contributor category. India became the 28th nation to be represented in the International Tennis Hall of Fame. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leander Paes is the only Indian to win an Olympic medal in tennis. Vijay Amritraj led India's Davis Cup team to finals in 1974 and 1987 & he was the first Indian to serve as United Nations Messenger of Peace (2001).
25.	First instance of the private sector setting up a helicopter assembly facility in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility Name: H125 Final Assembly Line (FAL) Set up by: Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and Airbus Helicopters. First 'Made in India' H125s expected to commence in 2026. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H125 is the only helicopter to have landed on Mount Everest.
26.	World's First Carbon Fiber High-Speed Train	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Cetrovo 1.0 or the Carbon Star Rapid Transit. Launched by China in Qingdao.
27.	Delhi Court unveils its first 'pilot hybrid court'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features 'speech-to-text facility'. Utilizes advanced technologies like 'Automatic Speech Recognition' and 'Large Language Models' .
28.	First Indian actor to get customised gold coin by Grévin wax museum in Paris, France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actor Name: Shah Rukh Khan. Recognized for his contributions to cinema. <p>Other Milestones Achieved by Shah Rukh Khan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Indian actor to receive UNESCO's Pyramide con Marni Award (2011) for philanthropic endeavors related to children's education. Only actor to have trailers of his films displayed on the Burj Khalifa, Dubai. Awarded Yale Chubb Fellowship for his films and philanthropy. Awarded Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government for significant contributions to French cultural heritage.
29.	Mumbai's First Underground Metro Line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mumbai Metro 3 or Aqua Line (Colaba-Bandra- Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ)). Funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
30.	Asia's first low-carbon 'green' zinc brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: EcoZen; Launched by: Hindustan Zinc (world's second-largest integrated zinc producer). <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindustan Zinc aims to become Net Zero by 2050.
31.	First undersea map of Ram Setu (Adam's Bridge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created by ISRO's Jodhpur and Hyderabad National Remote Sensing Centre using NASA's ICESat-2 satellite. ISRO team led by Giribabu Dandabathula. 29 meters long and 8 meters above the seabed. <p>About Ram Setu</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connects Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu in India to Talaimannar Island in Sri Lanka. Mentioned in the Ramayana as a bridge built by Lord Rama's army to reach Lanka. Known as 'Sethu Bandhai' by Persians until the 9th century AD.
32.	First Black African to win a stage in the Tour de France (bicycle race)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of the person: Biniam Girmay (Eritrea). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Won the third stage a reduced bunch sprint. Runners-up: Fernando Gaviria (Colombia) & Arnaud de Lie (Belgium)
33.	India's First Government Skill University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Shri Vishwakarma Skill University. Set up by the Haryana Government. Location: Dudhola village of Palwal district, Haryana.
34.	India's first Sunken Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Humayun's Tomb complex in Delhi. Set up by Archaeological Survey of India and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, marking 25 years of conservation efforts at the site. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>Humayun's Tomb complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</p> </div>
35.	First Divyangjan expedition to hoist the largest Indian flag on Mt. Kilimanjaro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence. Started from Kanchenjunga National Park, Sikkim. To display a 7,800-square foot national flag to commemorate the 78th Independence Day. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is the African continent's highest peak at 5,895 meters.</p> </div>
36.	India's First Integrated Agri-Export Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be set up at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), Mumbai. Project Name: Export-Import cum Domestic Agricultural Commodity-Based Processing & Storage Facility. Project Value: Rs. 284.19 Crore. Implemented on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>JNPA is the first major port in India that operates entirely on a landlord model, with all berths managed through PPP. It is also ranked among the top 100 container ports globally, according to Lloyds List Top 100 Ports Report.</p> </div>
37.	India's first Bullet Train Project and High-Speed Rail Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Name: Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project. Designed with support from Japanese Railway.
38.	India's first indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: 500 MWe sodium-cooled PFBR. Location: Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. Commissioned by: Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI). Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) officially granted permission for the "First Approach to Criticality" of the project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the loading of fuel into the reactor core and the initiation of "Low Power Physics Experiments."

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

S.No	Initiative	Key Facts
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1.	Special Campaign for Redressal of Family Pension Grievances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DOPPW); Duration: One Month. Launched as a part of 100 days action plan of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions. 1891 family pension related grievances of 46 Departments/ Ministries shortlisted for the Campaign. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized Pensioners Grievance Redress And Monitoring System (CPENGRAMS) – Portal for registering pension related grievances.
2.	Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50th edition of the programme held recently. <p>About the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted since 1975. Sponsored by the Department of Personnel and Training. A 10-month long course for senior officers in the rank of Deputy Secretary/Director or above in the Government of India. Degree offered by the Punjab University upon completion.
3.	Post Office Act 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Came into effect recently. Repealed the Indian Post Office Act, 1898. Significance: Regulates private courier services for the first time. Aim: to create a simple legislative framework for delivery of citizen centric services, banking services and benefits of Government schemes at the last mile.
4.	Lokpath Mobile App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by: Government of Madhya Pradesh. Allows public to report road problems by uploading photos, which will be resolved in seven days.
5.	Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a similar law legislated in Rajasthan. Penalty: Rs 5,000 to Rs 1 lakh.
6.	'75 years of Constitution' campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Culture. Objective: To celebrate 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution of India and create awareness about its significance . Similar to the Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India on 26 November 1949, It came into effect on 26 January 1950.
7.	Mandatory labelling of salt, sugar, and saturated fat on packaged food items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). To be displayed in bold letters and relatively increased font size. Initiative includes advisories sent to e-commerce websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing misleading terms like 'Health Drink' . Preventing false claims by Food Business Operators (FBOs) such as '100% fruit juices' from labels of reconstituted fruit juices.
8.	Mandatory ISI Mark for Stainless Steel and Aluminium Kitchen Utensils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has formulated two Indian Standards for this purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IS 14756:2022 for stainless steel utensils. IS 1660:2024 for aluminium utensils.

9.	Safety and Compliance Measures in the Petroleum and Explosives Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% concession for women entrepreneurs and 50% for MSMEs in licensing fees for licenses granted by Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO). <p>About PESO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subordinate Office under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Administers regulatory frameworks under the Explosives Act, 1884, and the Petroleum Act, 1934.
10.	SARV DHARMA MEETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCM has advised State Governments and UTs to hold "SARV DHARMA MEETING" with all communities at the sub-divisional level monthly and at the district level half-yearly basis. Aim: To protect and safeguard the interests of all Minority communities and to build confidence among different communities. <p>About National Commission for Minorities (NCM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established under the NCT Act, 1992. Chairperson: Iqbal Singh Lalpura.
11.	Haj Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Minority Affairs. Previously managed by the Ministry of External Affairs.
12.	'Digital Nagarik' Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Karnataka Govt., in partnership with Meta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Indian state to collaborate with Meta for such initiative. Aim: to empower 1 lakh teachers and 10 lakh students aged 18 to 24 with digital safety knowledge and AR-VR skills by 2025.
13.	'Mitra Van' initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by the Uttar Pradesh Government as part of the Vriksharopan Jan Abhiyan-2024. Aim: increasing green cover along the border of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal by planting 35 crore saplings. Identified districts: 35 border districts. Special forests such as 'Shakti Van', 'Yuva Van', and 'Bal Van' will be set up in each participating district.
14.	IT Saksham Yuva Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by the Govt. of Haryana. Target: Provide jobs to 5,000 youth in the first phase, scaling up to 60,000 jobs under 'Mission 60,000'.
15.	Projects Dedicated by the PM of India in Maharashtra Worth Over Rs 29,400 Crores	<p>Key Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maharashtra Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim: providing opportunities for skill enhancement and industry exposure for youth aged 18 to 30 years. Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel Project.
16.	Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam Campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indore created world record of planting 11 lakh saplings in a day and achieved its target of planting 51 lakh trees. <p>Note: The campaign discussed in detail in CurrentTap June 2024.</p>
17.	Leadership Programme in Science & Technology (LEADS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative of National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and the Indian National Science Academy (INSA). Objective: To build leadership and governance capacities among scientists, equipping them with the latest knowledge and skills to manage scientific institutions effectively.
18.	NITI GearShift Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by NITI Aayog under its e-FAST India initiative. Collaborators: IIM Bangalore, Smart Freight Centre India, CALSTART/Drive to Zero, and WRI India. Aim

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Foster innovative business models for the adoption of zero-emission trucks (ZETs) in India. ○ Address financial, technical, and operational challenges in the adoption of electric trucks. <p>About e-FAST India (Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport – India)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India's first electric freight platform. ● Aim: to raise awareness on freight electrification through on-ground demonstration pilots and evidence-based research. 				
19.	Operation Nanhe Farishtey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launched by Railway Protection Force (RPF) in 2018. ● Aim: To rescue children in need of care and protection across various Indian Railway Zones. ● 84,119 children rescued in last seven years. 				
20.	Amendment in Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiative of Department of Consumer Affairs. ● Objective: to ensure mandatory declaration of all information on pre-packaged commodities used for retail sale. ● Exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Packages containing more than 25 kg or 25 litres, except cement, fertilizer, and agricultural farm produce sold in bags above 50 kg; ○ Packaged commodities meant for industrial or institutional consumers. 				
21.	State Maritime & Waterways Transport Committee (SMWTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constituted in 13 states. ● Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways plans to setup them in all 30 coastal and waterways states and UTs. 				
22.	Lok Samvardhan Parv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs as a part of its 100 days' programme. ● Objectives: To showcase the schemes, programmes, and achievements of the Ministry of Minority Affairs. ● Duration: 16th to the 31st of this month. ● Key Announcement: Credit Plan by National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) to extend credit of over Rs.1000 crores to more than 2.5 lakh beneficiaries during 2024-25. 				
23.	Mineral Exploration Hackathon and the National District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiatives of Ministry of Mines. ● Launched from Begumpet, Hyderabad. ● Mineral Exploration Hackathon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focuses on innovative techniques using AI and ML. ○ Aims to integrate multiple mineral exploration data sets to identify new mineral targets. ● National DMF Portal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Centralized platform for information on District Mineral Foundations. ○ Provides details on 645 DMFs with enhanced transparency and dynamic analytics. 				
24.	Initiatives launched by the Geological Survey of India (GSI)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Initiative</th><th style="text-align: center;">Key Information</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inaugurated at GSI, Dharitri Campus, Salt Lake City, Kolkata. ● Provides live forecasting report for Kalimpong, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri districts. ● Will issue early warning bulletins for all landslide-prone states by 2030 </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Initiative	Key Information	National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inaugurated at GSI, Dharitri Campus, Salt Lake City, Kolkata. ● Provides live forecasting report for Kalimpong, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri districts. ● Will issue early warning bulletins for all landslide-prone states by 2030
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		<p>Bhusanket Web Portal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates dissemination of landslide hazard data. • Initiates short-range and medium-range landslide forecasting. <p>Bhooskhalan Mobile App</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows daily landslide forecasts and stakeholder updates.
25.	Business Advisory Committee (BAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituted & Chaired by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. • Objective: to decide the Parliamentary agenda. • Members: 14 nominated MPs from various parties.
26.	Digital Postal Index Number (DIGIPIN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative of : Department of Posts. • Collaborating Entity: IIT Hyderabad. • Objective: To establish a standardized, geo-coded addressing framework across India, including its Exclusive Economic Zone. • Each 4mX4m unit within India is assigned a unique 10-digit alphanumeric code based on its latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates. • Designed to be a permanent digital infrastructure, unaffected by changes in state, city, or locality names or road networks.
27.	Kavach - Automatic Train Protection (ATP) System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by: Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO), under the Ministry of Railways in collaboration with the Indian Industry. • Key Function: to control the train's speed if the driver fails to apply the brakes on time. • Allocation for 2024-25: ₹1112.57 crore. • So far been deployed on 1465 Route km and 144 locomotives (including Electric Multiple Unit rakes) on South Central Railway. • KAVACH 4.0 approved by RDSO.
28.	Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS) 2.0 Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers: DGFT, BIS, and MSTC Ltd., a CPSE under the Ministry of Steel. • Key Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ API integration with multiple government portals. ○ Robust data entry system promoting transparency and accountability. ○ Integration of various databases to locate areas of risk and permit better risk management. ○ Enables Customs to conduct better analysis and risk management of steel imports. <p>About SIMS Portal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced in 2019. • Provides detailed steel import data to the domestic industry <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is the second-largest steel producer globally • India imported finished steel at around 8 million tonnes in 2023-24.
29.	E-Upahaar portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched by the President of India on the completion of two years of her Presidency. • Selected gift items to be auctioned by the Rashtrapati Bhavan through the portal. • First phase includes around 250 exquisite gifts. • Objectives: Increase citizen engagement, Support a noble cause by donating all proceeds to help children in need.

30.	One DAE One Subscription (ODOS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Objective: Provide unified access to national and international research papers and scientific journals for all DAE units and subunits. Aligns with the broader 'One Nation One Subscription' (ONOS) initiative, making knowledge accessible nationwide. <p>Key Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAE signed agreements with Wiley India Private Limited and Springer Nature Group. DAE can publish open-access articles without additional charges.
31.	Chardham project, Uttarakhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the improvement of five existing National Highways connecting Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath, and the Tanakpur to Pithoragarh section of Kailas-Mansarovar yatra, totaling about 825 km.
32.	Initiatives to Enhance Cybersecurity Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National agency for incident response under Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000. Manages the Cyber Swachhta Kendra for detecting and removing malicious programs Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (14C) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Objective: to enhance the coordinated response of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to cybercrimes. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System Toll-free helpline number '1930' for online cyber complaints. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Reserve Bank of India, under Sections 10(2) and 18 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, mandates that payment system data be stored within India.
33.	National Feeder Monitoring System (NFMS) Control Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up at REC Headquarters, Gurugram. Inaugurated on the 55th Foundation Day of REC Limited. Purpose: daily monitoring and data dissemination to distribution utilities (DISCOMS). <p>About NFMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A flagship initiative of Ministry of Power. Provides detailed real-time information on power supply, outages, and the health of feeders across India.
34.	E-SeHAT Tele-consultation Pilot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Ministry of Defence under Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS). Developed by C-DAC Mohali. Objective: To provide health care services to ex-servicemen and their dependents through video-based clinical consultation. Coverage: Launched at 12 ECHS Polyclinics , seven in Delhi NCR and five in Baramulla, Imphal, Churachandpur, Dimapur, Aizawl.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

S.No	Focus Area	Key Outcomes
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1.	Conference on 'Port of the Future' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized by: Mormugao Port Authority and Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. • Venue: International Centre Goa, Dona Paula. • Key objective: Preparing a roadmap for Indian ports to implement 5G technology.
2.	22nd India-Russia Annual Summit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue: Moscow; Co-chairs: PM of India & President of Russia. • Significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PM of India's first visit to Russia since 2019 & first in his third term. ○ Also his first visit after the start of the Ukraine conflict in 2022. Key Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral Trade Target: to increase to USD 100 billion by 2030, including the use of national currencies to bypass Western sanctions. • Explore the possibility of a Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-India Free Trade Area. • Development of Russian-Indian economic cooperation until 2030. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinated by the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC). • Increasing capacity for the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor and the North-South Transport Corridor. • Nine MoUs were signed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program of India-Russia cooperation in trade, economic and investment spheres in the Russian Far East for the period from 2024 to 2029 & of cooperation principles in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. ○ Other Key Areas of Cooperation: climate change, polar research, cartography, and spatial data, broadcasting, legal arbitration, investment promotion, and pharmaceuticals. • Other Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Indian consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg.
3.	Highlights of PM of India's official visit to Austria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First visit of Shri Narendra Modi & first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Austria in 41 years after Indira Gandhi. • 2024 marks the 75th year of diplomatic relations between the two countries. • Met with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer & President Alexander Van der Bellen. • Outcome: Joint Statement on Enhanced India-Austria Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A blueprint for cooperation over the coming decades has been prepared.

DID YOU KNOW?

India-Russia bilateral trade reached an all-time high of \$65.70 billion in FY 2023-24, nearly double the target of \$30 billion set for 2025.

The 21st India-Russia Annual Summit was held in Delhi in 2021. Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) comprise Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key Areas of Cooperation: Infrastructure development, innovation, renewable energy, hydrogen, water and waste management, artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum technology. ● First-ever high-level bilateral Business Forum held in Vienna. <p>Key Information Shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commitments to climate neutrality: EU level by 2050, Austria by 2040, & India for net zero emissions by 2070. ● UNSC candidature- Austria (2027-28) & India (2028-29).
4.	World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hosted by India as a part of 46th session of the World Heritage Committee and in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme ● Venue: Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology, New Delhi. ● Theme: "World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth" ● Sub themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Change and Heritage Preservation ○ Innovative Technologies in Heritage Promotion ○ Community Engagement in Heritage Conservation ○ Sustainable Tourism and Entrepreneurship ● Participants: 50 young professionals (20 from India, 30 international).
5.	15th Toy Biz International B2B Expo 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Largest toy fair in South Asia. ● Organizer: Toy Association of India; Venue: New Delhi. ● 2nd Edition of Toy CEO Meet organized during the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organizers: Toy Association of India in association with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>According to a Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) report, In 2022, the global toy market was valued at approximately USD 60.3 billion, with China dominating the market with an 80% share. India's share in the global toy export market is minimal, ranking 27th with exports totaling USD 167 million.</p> </div>
6.	5G and 6G Technologies Hackathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be hosted by India alongside WTSA24 (World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly) Outreach Sessions. ● To be held in dedicated 5G labs in Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. ● Aim: fostering innovation in next-generation telecom technologies. <p>About WTSA24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Venue: New Delhi, India. ● A quadrennial event of International Telecommunication Union (ITU). <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DoT in association with COAI will organize the Indian Mobile Congress (IMC 2024) on the sidelines of WTSA24.
7.	World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be held at Goa. ● Organizers: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Goa Government, FICCI, CII and NFDC. ● Tagline: Come, soil with us.
8.	SAUSHRUTAM Shalya Sangoshti (2nd edition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organized by All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi. ● Organized on Sushruta Jayanti-2024 (15th July). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sushruta considered as the father of surgery.

9.	2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be hosted by India at Delhi. Organizers: Union Ministry of Civil Aviation & International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)-Asia and Pacific (APAC). First edition held in 2018 in Beijing, China. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Asia Pacific region recorded 33.41% of global departures, the highest among all regions.
10.	Pichhda Varg Samman Sammelan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue: Mahendragarh, Haryana. Key Announcements by Haryana Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the creamy layer limit for OBCs from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh (excluding salaries and agricultural income). 8% reservation for Group A and 5% reservation for Group B in Panchayats and Municipal Corporations. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27% reservation for OBCs in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools, and NEET examinations introduced by the BJP Government for the first time.
11.	13th Edition of India Chem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be held at Mumbai. Theme: "Advantage Bharat: Indian Chemicals and Petrochemicals Paving the Future". Organizers: Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals & FICCI.
12.	India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be held at New Delhi. Organizers: Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Theme: "The Future is Now".
13.	4th International Climate Summit 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizer: PHDCCI; Venue: New Delhi. Theme: "Corn Ethanol: Energy Security, Food Security, and Decarbonization".
14.	Union Minister of External Affairs visit to Mauritius-Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Inaugurations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra. 12 High Impact Community Development Projects financed by India. Mediclinic project at Grand Bois. India-Mauritius 'Maitree Udyam' Focus Areas of MoUs signed: education, culture, digitization of Immigration Archives, and collaboration in space and innovation. Reaffirmed India's support on the issue of Chagos Archipelago. <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>The Chagos Archipelago is in the Indian Ocean. Mauritius claims it, but the UK established it as British Indian Ocean Territory.</p> </div>
15.	21st National Good Governance Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized by: Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG); Theme: Innovation – States. Initiatives showcased at the webinar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karnataka's Land Resource Inventory (LRI) for scientific soil, water conservation, and sustainable farming. Didi Ki Rasoi initiative of JEEVIKA (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society). <p>About Didi Ki Rasoi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by World Bank.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: Setting up food service counters in all district and block hospitals in Bihar.
16.	Journey Towards Viksit Bharat: A Post Union Budget 2024-25 Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi. Aim: to present the outline for the Government's larger vision for growth and the industry's role.

MOUs AND AGREEMENTS

S.No	Signing Entities	Key Facts
1.	Gujarat Government with tech companies to increase AI presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoU with IBM: to promote an AI Cluster at GIFT City focusing on AI-driven solutions in the banking, financial services, and insurance sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IBM will also collaborate on developing AI curriculum for state schools and universities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four state universities in Gujarat (GTU, IITRAM, P.D.E.U, and Ganpat University) joined as aggregators to train 25,000 students in deep technology courses over three years. MoU with Microsoft: to establish an AI Center of Excellence focusing on key technologies such as machine learning, cognitive services, and bot services. MoU with NASSCOM: to enhance AI capabilities in Gujarat.
2.	Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), MosChip Technologies & Socionext Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: To design and develop an indigenous High-Performance Computing (HPC) Processor SoC (System on Chip) based on the Arm architecture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HPC Processor named AUM will be built on TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited) 5nm technology node. MoU signed under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM). <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-DAC developed indigenous compute node RUDRA, Trinetra-Interconnect and System Software stack.
3.	Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) & Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective of the Statement of Intent: to collaborate on formalizing and strengthening Self Help Group (SHG) women-led rural enterprises through MoMSME's flagship schemes.
4.	BPCL & Indian Olympic Association (IOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPCL to partner IOA for four years covering Paris 2024 to Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPCL aims to become a Net Zero Energy Company by 2040.
5.	Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: Implementation of the Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal river linking project. To provide water to 13 districts in Rajasthan and the Malwa and Chambal regions in Madhya Pradesh.
6.	India and Taiwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First bilateral agreement for organic products.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for organic products.
7.	India and Marshall Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India to provide an annual grant for four community development projects- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community sports centre in Ailuk Atoll. Airport terminal on Mejit Island. Community centres at Arno and Wotje Atolls. Signed as a part of India's outreach to Pacific Island states.
8.	Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and Airbus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: aerospace teaching and research. <p>About GSV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established through an Act of Parliament in 2022. A central university sponsored by the Ministry of Railways. First Chancellor: Ashwini Vaishnaw; Location: Vadodara, Gujarat, The first university aiming to fulfil the mandate PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan 2021 and National Logistics Policy 2022.
9.	Asian Development Bank (ADB) & ENGIE Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: To construct and operate a 400-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant in Surendranagar district, Gujarat. Lead arranger for the loan: ADB. Project financed by the ADB & the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); Total Loan Amount: Rs 14.6 billion (USD 175.9 million). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each bank contributes Rs 7.3 billion.
10.	MoUs signed by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoU with 'Enable Me' Access Association (EMA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training on Universal Design using Indian Accessibility standards. Support the Accessible India Campaign 2.0. MoU with Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center (ISLRTC) with YUNIKEE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide free and accessible skills training to the deaf community and their youth.
11.	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) & M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: Livelihood generation among rural, tribal, and farming communities.
12.	Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) & Government of Guyana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: To provide a line of credit worth \$2.5 million for the installation of a solar photovoltaic power plant at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Guyana.
13.	Star Health Insurance & Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: To enhance access to health insurance across Himachal Pradesh.
14.	Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide housing loans to women borrowers or co-borrowers. To address the shortage of financing in the low-income and affordable housing segment in India. Nonconvertible debentures financing agreement for USD 60 million. Half of the funds will be deployed in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

15.	Karnataka with multiple companies from Japan and South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Commitment: Rs 6,450 crore
16.	Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Jointly serve as a Project Service Provider for design, construction, and consultancy services, both in India and abroad.
17.	BNP Paribas & Mistral AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: to implement Mistral AI's commercial models across all its business lines.
18.	Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: to develop an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Audit Tool to enhance the oversight of corporate performance and detect corporate frauds in India. • Budget Allocation: ICAI has allocated ₹25 crore for developing AI tools and plans to increase this budget to ₹100 crore.
19.	Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Steel Authority of India (SAIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim: to offer various kinds of loans such as home loans, car loans, and education loans to SAIL's employees at concessional rates.
20.	National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) to Greenko Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan Sanctioned by NaBFID to Greenko Group: Rs 6200 crore. • Aim: to prepay a USD 500 million bond maturing in January and another USD 535 million bond maturing in July 2024. <p>About NaBFID</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Development Finance Institution (DFI) in India, • Established in 2021 under the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act, 2021. • Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
21.	National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) & Netflix India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: To launch "The Voicebox" - an upskilling program for voice-over artists in India. • Program Details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sponsor: Netflix Fund for Creative Equity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ USD 100 million annually over five years to support underrepresented communities in the TV and film industries globally. ○ Training Partner: Pearl Academy ○ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training for voice-over artists in languages including English, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Gujarati. ○ At least 50% of the participants will be women. ○ Seven top participants from each batch will be chosen to contribute to Netflix's project, "Azaadi ki Amrit Kahaniya".
22.	Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata & Pacific International Lines (PIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: To inaugurate the China Calcutta Service (CCS) at the Kolkata Dock System (KDS).
23.	Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Establishment of 'BIS Standardization Chair Professor' at IISc.

24.	National Telecommunications Institute (NTIPRIT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) & IIT Jammu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: to address the growing need for cybersecurity tools and skilled manpower to operate them as the use of e-services increases. • The programme will provide six-month hybrid training course (both in-campus and online) to 30 selected officers.
25.	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) with 72 Private Institutions and Start-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empower persons with disabilities (Divyangjans) socially, educationally, and economically. ○ Promote the development and deployment of innovative, technology-based products and programs for persons with disabilities.
26.	Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (GBPUAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: To develop the first Standardized Agriculture Demonstration Farm (SADF) in India.
27.	NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVNL) & Municipal Corporations of Gurugram and Faridabad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: To establish first waste-to-charcoal plants, also known as green coal plants, in Bandhwari in Gurugram District and Motuka in Faridabad District. • Each plant will convert 1,500 tonnes of daily collected waste into charcoal • These green coal plants in Haryana will be largest in India. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's first green coal plant located in Ramana area of Varanasi.
28.	C-DOT with IIT Roorkee & IIT Mandi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Development of 'Cell-Free' 6G Access Points. • MoU signed under Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF).
29.	Real Madrid Foundation & Conscient Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Transform the future of football in India by fostering young talent at the grassroots level. • 4,500 players will be trained across 30 youth academies in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Pune, under the Educational Football Program.
30.	Ministry of Defence (MoD) & National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To facilitate capital market access for MSMEs in the defence sector. ○ To enable MSMEs to raise productive capital for growth plans efficiently and transparently through the NSE Emerge platform. • MoU Duration: Five Years.
31.	Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) with multiple countries for overseas critical minerals acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Argentina- Obtained exclusivity rights for exploration and development of lithium blocks in Catamarca Province. • With Australia- joint due diligence and investment in Lithium and Cobalt assets. • With Chile- exploration of brine type lithium blocks. <p>Note: KABIL discussed in CurrentTap May 2024.</p>

BANKING AND FINANCE

S.No	Program / Initiative	Key Facts																			
1.	'Bridge the Gap' initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by: HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited Objective: To enhance public awareness about life insurance and reduce the life insurance coverage gap in India. Partner: ET NOW (to produce informative chat shows). Aligns with IRDAI's goal of achieving 'Insurance for All' by 2047. 																			
2.	Citibank credit card migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Axis Bank took over Citibank's consumer operations in India in 2023. All Citi relationships, including credit cards, are being migrated to Axis Bank. 																			
3.	Introduction of New Yen Banknotes By Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issued for the first time in two decades. Features 3D hologram technology to fight counterfeiting. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Denomination</th><th>Featured Person</th><th>Description</th><th>Reverse Side Image</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10,000 yen</td><td>Eiichi Shibusawa</td><td>Known as "the father of Japanese capitalism".</td><td>Tokyo Station</td></tr> <tr> <td>5,000 yen</td><td>Umeko Tsuda</td><td>Pioneer feminist and educator</td><td>Wisteria flowers</td></tr> <tr> <td>1,000 yen</td><td>Shibasaburo Kitasato</td><td>Physician and bacteriologist</td><td>Mount Fuji by Katsushika Hokusai</td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Denomination	Featured Person	Description	Reverse Side Image	10,000 yen	Eiichi Shibusawa	Known as "the father of Japanese capitalism".	Tokyo Station	5,000 yen	Umeko Tsuda	Pioneer feminist and educator	Wisteria flowers	1,000 yen	Shibasaburo Kitasato	Physician and bacteriologist	Mount Fuji by Katsushika Hokusai
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4.	SBI's fifth infrastructure bond issuance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount Raised: Rs 10,000 crore; Tenure: 15 years. Coupon Rate: 7.36% payable annually. Base Issue Size: Rs 5,000 crore. Exempt from regulatory reserve requirements like Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR). 																			
5.	MSME Sahaj - End to End Digital Invoice Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by: State Bank of India (SBI). Complete digital process from loan application to disbursement within 15 minutes without manual intervention. Finance provided against GST-registered sales invoices up to ₹1 lakh. Available through SBI's 'Yono' application for existing customers. 																			
6.	Sapphiro Forex Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by: ICICI Bank; Powered by: Visa. Target Audience: Students planning to study abroad. Supports 15 different currencies. 																			
7.	Co-lending Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parties: Axis Bank & Piramal Finance. Aim: to extend loans to the middle and low-income segment borrowers with a focus on rural and semi-urban regions. 																			
8.	Indiabulls Housing Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebranded itself as Sammaan Capital. 																			
9.	Paytm Health Saathi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An exclusive health and income protection plan for its merchant partners. Monthly subscription: starts at ₹35. 																			
10.	'Jeevan Samarth' initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by the LIC to transform its agency ecosystem. 																			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner: A T Kearney. Focus on establishing global best practices at all operational levels in response to the evolving insurance sector landscape.
11.	Elevate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An industry first health insurance product powered with AI. Launched by ICICI Lombard.
12.	69th Foundation Day of SBI	<p>11 initiatives to mitigate risks in its agricultural loan portfolio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced digital banking features include tap-and-pay on the BHIM SBI PAY app and end-to-end digital loans against mutual funds on the YONO app. Opening of 35 new Agricultural Centralised Processing Cells. Opening of the second Global NRI Centre in Patiala, Punjab Redesigning High Court branches Fully digital end-to-end journey for SBI Surya Ghar Loan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credit to install solar rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Scheme. loans for up to 10 KW capacity.
13.	Monetary Penalty on Punjab National Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imposed by the RBI for violations of loans and advances norms & Know Your Customer (KYC) related regulations Penalty Amount: Rs 1.32 crore.
14.	Banaras Merchantile Co-operative Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RBI cancelled the license due to worsening financial position of the bank.
15.	'Safety Ring' Security Feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Punjab National Bank (PNB). To enhance security within PNB's internet and mobile banking systems in response to the increasing number of cyber frauds. Additional safety layer to minimize potential losses in case of unauthorized access.
16.	Bancassurance tie-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered between Federal Bank & Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance.
17.	Cancellation of Registration of two NBFCs by RBI	<p>NBFC & Reason</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Star Finserv India, operating under 'Progcap', violated RBI guidelines by outsourcing essential decision-making functions. Polytex India, operating under 'Z2P', breached norms by outsourcing core financial services.
18.	Golden Years Pension Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Ageas Federal Life Insurance. A Unit Linked Individual Pension Plan (ULIP), where returns depend on the performance of the Bluechip Pension Fund. Unique Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Investment Booster, providing extra allocations for individuals aged 18-35 to encourage early retirement planning. Entry Range: 18 to 70 years for the Classic Option and up to 60 years for the Golden Waiver of Premium Option. In the event of the policyholder's death, beneficiaries receive 105% of the total premiums paid, and future premiums are waived under the Golden Waiver of Premium Option.
19.	FATF Mutual Evaluation Report 2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muthoot Finance only Indian NBFC to be selected for the report. <p>Note: FATF discussed in GA+Finance section in CurrentTap June 2024 (News 2.61).</p>
20.	QR Code-Based UPI Payments in Qatar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be launched by NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Qatar National Bank (QNB).
21.	Kotak BSE PSU Index Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund. An open-ended scheme tracking the BSE PSU Index.

22.	Savings+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Bajaj Finserv Asset Management. Partner: Perfios, a B2B SaaS Fintech company. Designed for retail investors to invest surplus cash from savings accounts into investment funds.
23.	Bancassurance Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parties: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) & IDFC First Bank. Objective: provide life insurance coverage to all by 2047.
24.	Strategic Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered between Karnataka Bank and ICICI Lombard General Insurance to provide an enhanced range of insurance solutions.
25.	Unicorn Status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bengaluru based ride-hailing startup Rapido became the third Indian startup to achieve unicorn status in 2024, following fintech Perfios and AI upstart Krutrim. Rapido raised \$120 million in Series E funding led by existing investor WestBridge. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapido was established in 2015 by Aravind Sanka, Pavan Guntupalli, and Rishikesh SR.

DEFENCE EXERCISES/ INITIATIVES/ TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Exercise/ Technology	Key Facts
1.	SEBEX 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.01 times more lethal than standard TNT. One of the most potent non-nuclear explosives globally. Developed by Economic Explosives Limited (EEL) under the Make in India initiative. Certified under Indian Navy's Defence Export Promotion Scheme. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Navy has also certified SITBEX 1 & SIMEX 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SITBEX 1- EEL's first thermobaric explosive.
2.	Exercise MAITREE (13th edition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India- Thailand joint military Exercise. Venue: Fort Vachiraprakan in Tak Province of Thailand. Previous edition held at Umroi, Meghalaya in 2019.
3.	Weapon Systems School (WSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaugurated at Air Force Station Begumpet, Hyderabad.
4.	NOMADIC ELEPHANT (16 th edition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise. Venue: Umroi (Meghalaya). Previous edition held in Mongolia.
5.	Zorawar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's indigenous light tank; Weighs less than 25 tonnes. Developed by: DRDO and Larsen & Toubro (L&T), in collaboration with various Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
6.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved a record-high of Rs 1,26,887 crore. Growth of 16.7% over the previous FY (Rs 1,08,684 crore)

	Annual Defence Production in India for FY 2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Contributors to the Value of Production (VoP) in 2023-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPSUs/other PSUs- 79.2%; Private sector- 20.8%
		Additional Information
7.	Indian Naval Ship Tabar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence Exports: Reached a record-high of Rs 21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, 32.5% growth over the previous fiscal year (Rs 15,920 crore).
8.	Exercise Pitch Black 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host: Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Venue: RAAF Base Darwin, Australia. Significance: Largest in the 43-year history of the exercise Participants: 20 countries (including IAF); Frequency: Biennial. India participates for the third time after 2018 and 2022.
9.	Birlestik-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International operational-tactical command-staff exercise Location: Aktau, Kazakhstan Participants: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.
10.	Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) delivered 35,000 Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Ministry of Defence. <p>Note: IRRPL discussed in CurrentTap May 2024.</p>
11.	'Heart to Bravehearts' Car Rally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized by Mahindra & Mahindra & the Indian Army. Commemorate 25 years of the Kargil War victory. Flagged from Delhi Cantonment and concludes at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras.
12.	28th Malabar naval exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be held at Bay of Bengal. Participants: India, US, Japan, and Australia (Quad countries). Started as a bilateral exercise between India and the US in 1992.
13.	Letter of Intent to Develop Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signatories: France, Germany, Italy, and Poland. Aim: to develop ground-launched cruise missiles with a range beyond 500 km (310 miles). Agreement signed on the sidelines of NATO summit.
14.	Fifth Positive Indigenisation List (PIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notified by the Ministry of Defence. Includes 346 strategically important items. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Defence launched the SRIJAN Portal in 2020 to offer defence items for indigenisation.
15.	Tripur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First of Two Additional P1135.6 Follow-On Ships. First time being constructed indigenously by an Indian shipyard. Being constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) with technology transfer from Russia for the Indian Navy. Follow-on ships of the Teg and Talwar class acquired from Russia. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India had contracted four frigates from Russia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two to be built in Russia and two at GSL. The first ship from Russia, Tushil, is expected to be delivered in September 2024, and the second, Tamal, by February 2025.
16.	Annual Operational Sea Training Conference (Maiden edition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized by Indian Coast Guard (ICG). Venue: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. ICG launched 'Suvidha Software Version 1.0' to enhance training protocols and ensure consistency across all ICG platforms.

17.	Ballistic Missile Defence System (BMD) of India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase II (AD Endo-atmospheric missile) was successfully tested. • A two-stage, solid-propelled, ground-launched missile system • Developed by DRDO & its laboratories; Range: 5000 km. • The maiden test of Phase-II BMD was conducted in 2022.
18.	Exercise KHAAN QUEST (21st edition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multinational Military Exercise; Organizer: Mongolian Armed Forces. • Co-sponsor: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. • Venue: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Total Participating Nations: 23. • Indian Representation: Battalion of the MADRAS REGIMENT, including one Woman Officer and two Women Soldiers. • First edition: started as a bilateral event between the USA and Mongolian Armed Forces in 2003.
19.	Zen Technologies launches four new defence products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed in partnership with Pune-based AI Turing Technologies. • Product Details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hawkeye: An all-weather anti-drone system camera capable of tracking drones up to 15 km. ◦ Barbarik-URCWS (Ultralight Remote Control Weapon Station): world's lightest remote-controlled weapon station ◦ Prahasta: An automated quadruped equipped with LIDAR and reinforcement learning for real-time 3D terrain mapping and mission planning, useful in counter-insurgency operations. ◦ Sthir Stab 640: A stabilization system designed to enhance targeting and situational awareness capabilities.
20.	Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in Russia's Navy Day Celebrations at Neva River, St Petersburg, Russia <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INS Tabar is a stealth frigate built in Russia for the Indian Navy.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Technology in News	Key Facts
1.	Aditya-L1 Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed its first halo orbit around the Sun-Earth Lagrange 1 (L1) point in 178 days <p>About the Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's first solar mission; launched on September 2, 2023. • Initiative of ISRO. • Key Objective: Study of Solar upper atmospheric (chromosphere and corona) dynamics.
2.	Human Spaceflight Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched by: US based Space Exploration and Research Agency (SERA) in collaboration with Jeff Bezos owned Blue Origin. • Partner Nation: India. • Purpose: To democratize space access by enabling citizens from countries with few or no astronauts to participate in space exploration. • To send six citizen astronauts from across the world under a future mission of New Shepard, Blue Origin's reusable suborbital rocket. • Journey Duration: 11-minute journey past the Kármán line (100 km), the internationally recognized boundary of space.

3.	Google Translate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included 110 new languages. Largest expansion in the history of the translation tool. Now includes a total of 243 languages. AI model PaLM 2 large language model (LLM) used for expansion. Part of Google's 1,000-language initiative. Indian dialects Awadhi, Punjabi & Marwadi are part of the expansion. <p>About 1,000-language initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announced in 2022. Aim: to develop AI models that can support the world's 1,000 most spoken languages
4.	Advanced Land Observation Satellite (ALOS-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by: Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in collaboration with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI). An advanced earth observation satellite for disaster response, security, mapmaking & monitoring military activity Launched using Japan's H3 rocket from Tanegashima Space Center.
5.	Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by ISRO as part of National Space Day celebrations. Features 12 problem statements in areas such as Geospatial Domain, Space Science, Image Processing, and AI/ML. Open to undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD students across India. 30 teams to be shortlisted for grand finale at NRSC, Hyderabad. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 23 will be celebrated as 'National Space Day' every year to honor the success of the Chandrayaan-3 Mission, which achieved the landing of the Vikram lander and the deployment of the Pragyan Rover on the moon on August 23, 2023.
6.	Indo-French Liver and Metabolic Disease Network (InFLiMeN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A virtual platform aimed at preventing and curing metabolic liver diseases; targets non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) A joint initiative involving 11 French and 17 Indian doctors.
7.	Habitable Worlds Observatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First telescope designed specifically to search for signs of life on planets orbiting other stars. Initiative of NASA; To be launched in 2040. Objective: To detect signs of extraterrestrial life on Earth-like planets by 2050.
8.	MeDeViS (Medical Devices Information System)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by the World Health Organization (WHO). First global open-access clearinghouse for information on medical devices. Includes information on 2301 types of medical devices.
9.	Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five projects selected to receive grants under round 15 Priority Areas for round 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial intelligence and machine learning New and renewable energy technologies (particularly ultra-low-cost solar and clean hydrogen) Urban mining and electronic waste recycling Antimicrobial resistance RNA vaccines and therapies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants: range between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000, covering up to 100% of eligible project expenditure. <p>About AISRF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 2006. Objective: Strengthen the scientific relationship between the two countries and address common challenges through joint research efforts.
10.	Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25th PM-STIAC Meeting held recently. Key Areas of Discussion: Carbon Capture Utilisation & Storage (CCUS) and Carbon Credit in India. <p>About PM-STIAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituted in August 2018. Overarching body to assess S&T matters, formulate interventions, develop roadmaps, and advise the Prime Minister. Chairperson: Principal Scientific Advisor to the Govt. of India. Approved Missions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep Ocean Exploration Mission, AI Mission, National Quantum Mission, Waste to Wealth Mission, National One Health Mission, Electric Vehicle Mission, AGNI Mission, Natural Language Translation Mission, National Bio-Diversity Mission, Bio-Science for Human Health Mission, S&T for Sustainable Livelihood System Mission.
11.	Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners: CalTech, Universities of California, Canada, Japan, China and India. World's most advanced and capable ground-based optical, near-infrared, and mid-infrared observatory. Proposed site: Mauna Kea, Hawai'i <p>TMT-India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-Ordinator: India TMT Coordination Centre (ITCC) Institutes: Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru; Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune; Aryabhatta Research Institute for Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital. Researchers at IIA developed an automated code. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: to generate an all-sky Near Infrared (NIR) stars catalogue for the Narrow Field Infrared Adaptive Optics System (NFIRAO) of TMT to produce high-quality images.
12.	National Centre for Combustion Research and Development (NCCRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World's largest combustion research center Location: IIT Madras. Supported by: Department of Science and Technology (DST). Specializes in automotive, thermal power, aerospace propulsion, fire research, and microgravity combustion. Agnikul Cosmos, incubated at the Incubation Cell, IIT Madras received significant support and training from NCCRD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agnikul Cosms launched Agnibaan <p>Note: Agnibaan discussed in CurrentTap May 2024.</p>

13.	New Russian Orbital Space Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be set up by 2033; Budget: 608.9 billion rubles. Nodal Agency: Roscosmos (Russia's state space corporation) Aim: to create the four-module core of its planned new orbital space station by 2030. Timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2027: Launch of the scientific and energy modules. By 2030: Launch of three core modules - the universal nodal, gateway, and base modules. By 2033: Launch of two additional target modules.
14.	Ariane-6 Rocket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by: European Space Agency (ESA). Developed by: ArianeGroup; Launch site: Kourou, French Guiana. Mission: Demonstration flight to orbit multiple satellites <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europe aims to develop reusable rocket technologies by the 2030s to compete with current market leaders.
15.	Axiom-4 mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a part of the mission, ISRO has shortlisted two of its four trained Gaganyaan astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) in collaboration with NASA <p>About the Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASA's fourth private astronaut mission in collaboration with Axiom Space. The mission will involve a fourteen-day stay on the ISS. Will be launched by SpaceX.
16.	New method to generate truly unpredictable random numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by: Researchers at the Quantum Information and Computing (QuIC) lab, Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru. Collaborators: Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, IISER-Thiruvananthapuram, and the Bose Institute, Kolkata. Generates over 900,000 random bits at a rate of nearly 4,000 bits/second.
17.	R21/Matrix-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First "high efficacy" malaria vaccine rolled out in Africa. First official vaccination took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire Co-developed by: Serum Institute of India (SII) & University of Oxford. Second malaria vaccine available in Sub-Saharan Africa following RTS,S.
18.	Discovery of Six New Exoplanets by NASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly Discovered Exoplanets as part of five separate studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HD 36384 b: A super-Jupiter orbiting an M giant star. TOI-198 b: A potentially rocky planet on the innermost edge of the habitable zone around an M dwarf. TOI-2095 b and TOI-2095 c: Large, hot super-Earths orbiting a shared M dwarf star. TOI-4860 b: A Jupiter-sized gas giant (hot Jupiter) orbiting an M dwarf star. MWC 758 c: A giant protoplanet orbiting a very young star with a protoplanetary disk. The discovery of six new exoplanets has brought the total to 5,502. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS): Launched in 2018, identified thousands of exoplanet candidates. Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope (launch in 2027) will feature the Roman Coronagraph Instrument to directly image exoplanets.

19.	5G Intelligent Village and Quantum Encryption Algorithm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Funded under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) <p>About 5G Intelligent Villages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim: harness 5G technology to transform rural life, driving digital inclusion and economic growth. Pillars: agriculture, education, healthcare, governance, and sustainability. Proposed villages: Dharmaj (Gujarat), Ramgarh Urf Rajahi (Uttar Pradesh), Anandpur Jalbera (Haryana), Bajargaon (Maharashtra), Bhagwanpura (Rajasthan), Dablong (Assam), Raosar (Madhya Pradesh), Aari (Madhya Pradesh), Banskhedi (Madhya Pradesh), Burripalem (Andhra Pradesh). <p>About Quantum Encryption Algorithm (QEA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim: to secure digital communication channels with advanced encryption capabilities leveraging quantum mechanics. Calls for developing an India-specific quantum encryption algorithm. <p>About TTDF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up under the Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF) of the DoT to promote research, design, prototyping, and manufacturing of telecommunication products.
20.	Amendments to Mobile Number Portability (MNP) Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven-day waiting period for issuing Unique Porting Codes (UPCs) (previously 10 day waiting period). Denial of UPC requests if made within seven days of a SIM swap or replacement.
21.	CrowdStrike-Microsoft outage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largest IT outage in history. Affected nearly 8.5 million Windows devices. Root Cause: defect found in a single content update released by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. CrowdStrike's Falcon Sensor software conflicted with the Windows OS, resulting in a "blue screen of death" (BSOD) for users.
22.	Centre of Excellence on "Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: IITM Research Park, Chennai. Sub-centre of Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCoE)-India <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Bharat 6G Vision" document envisions India as a leading contributor to 6G technology by 2030.
23.	65th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue: Bath, United Kingdom. Top 3 countries: USA, China, and South Korea. India ranked fourth with 4 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Honourable Mention. Gold Medalists for India: Adhitya Mangudy, Ananda Bhaduri , Kanav Talwar & Rushil Mathur. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhitya Mangudy ranked fifth individually, best-ever for an Indian.
24.	35th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue: Astana (Kazakhstan). India won one gold & three silver medals. Gold Medalist for India: Vedant Sakre.
25.	Chandipura Virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent outbreak in Gujarat; An encephalitis-causing virus. Discovered in 1965 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. Primarily affects children under 15 in rural areas.
26.	CHAPEA (Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog) Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaugural crew completed a 378-day simulated Mars mission at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew Members: Kelly Haston (Team Leader), Anca Selariu, Ross Brockwell & Nathan Jones.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Habitat: Mars Dune Alpha, a 3D printed facility ● First of three planned by NASA under CHAPEA. ● Aim: to provide insights into the potential impacts of long-duration missions to Mars on crew health and performance. ● Part of NASA's Artemis program, which aims to prepare for a trip to Mars by first sending humans back to the Moon. ○ NASA aims to send astronauts to Mars by the 2030s.
27.	Project Indus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiative of Tech Mahindra. ● Led by CP Gurnani, former CEO of Tech Mahindra ● A large-language model (LLM) for under \$5 million. ● Can communicate in about 40 different local languages and dialects. ● Developed using Dell Technologies' "GenAI in a box" framework.
28.	India's Nuclear Power Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India's installed nuclear power capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 70% surge over the last 10 years, rising from 4,780 MW in 2013-14 to 8,180 MW in 2023-24. ○ will increase from 8,180 MW to 22,480 MW by 2031-32. ● Target: to achieve a nuclear capacity of 1 lakh MW by 2047 to support its Net Zero transition by 2070.
29.	Magnetofossils in rock varnish layers in Ladakh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spotted by Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, an autonomous institute of the DST. ● The research helps in better targeting potential biosignatures on Mars and other planetary bodies, crucial for the search for extraterrestrial life.
30.	Discovery of Lithium Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discovered by Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) at Mandyā and Yadgiri districts, Karnataka. ● 1,600 tonnes (G3 stage) of Lithium resources found in in the Marlagalla area, Mandyā district. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preliminary survey in Masanbal, Hamirpur district, Himachal Pradesh has led to the identification of surface uranium.
31.	Paediatric heart transplant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performed at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Kerala.

ENVIRONMENT

S.No	News	Key Facts
1.	GAIL's Net Zero Emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advanced its Net Zero target for Scope-1 and Scope-2 emissions by five years to 2035. ● Aligned with India's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2070.
2.	New horned frog species (<i>Xenophrys apatani</i>).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discovered at Tale Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. ● Named after Apatani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. ● Discovered by researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Shillong, Pune & Itanagar.

3.	#GharGharSolarTataPower keSang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rooftop solar initiative of Tata Power. • Launched from Varanasi, UP. • Aim: to power every home UP with clean energy. • Maximum Subsidy: Rs. 1,08,000 (Rs. 78,000 from the Central Government and Rs. 30,000 from the State Government for up to 3 kW). • Aligns with India's national goal to achieve 40 GW of solar rooftop installations.
4.	"Grow with the Trees" Plantation Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized by the Border Security Forces (BSF) in association with SBI Bank in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.
5.	'Lifestyle for Sustainability' campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative of Brahma Kumaris. • Aim: to connect people with nature and promote environmental consciousness.
6.	Delhi's Automatic Weather Forecast Centers (AWS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current number: 17 AWS. • Planned installation: 50 more AWS, aiming for a total of 100. • A 20 petaflops capacity High-Performance Computing (HPC) System will be installed as part of the upgradation.
7.	Uropeltis caudomaculata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shield-tail snake species. • Discovered in the Meghamalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu), Periyar Tiger Reserve, and Yellapetty, Munnar (Kerala) in Western Ghats.
8.	Two New Species of Jumping Spiders in Western Ghats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habrocestum swaminathan - Discovered on the banks of the Kunthi river. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Named after M.S. Swaminathan. • Habrocestum benjamin - Found near Thusharagiri, at the foothills of the Nilgiri biosphere reserve. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Named after Suresh P. Benjamin, a Sri Lanka-based jumping spider specialist. • Discovered by Researchers from Christ College, Irinjalakuda, Kerala.
9.	Multitranche Financing Facility (MFF) Solar Rooftop Investment Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan approval by the Asian Development Bank (ADB): \$240.5 million. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Will support tranches 2 and 3 of the programme. • Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To finance rooftop solar systems in India ◦ Support the Prime Minister Surya Ghar program, encouraging rooftop solar installations. <p>About the Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved by ADB in 2016 and restructured in 2023 to focus on residential solar rooftop deployments. <p>About ADB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment: 1966; Total Members: 68 members. • HQ: Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.
10.	Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handed over by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to the Indian Navy for performance testing. • An initiative under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

SPORTS

S.No	Sports Event and Venue	Key Facts

1.	Leon Masters Chess Tournament Venue: Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Viswanathan Anand won the title for the 10th time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First won the title in 1996. ○ Defeated Spaniard Jaime Santos Latasa 3-1 in the finals.
2.	Bilateral International Deaf Cricket Series Venue: England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indian Deaf Cricket Team won against England with a 5-2 win in the T20 matches.
3.	Wimbledon 2024 (Tennis) Venue: All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Wimbledon, London.	<p>Men's Singles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winner: Carlos Alcaraz (Spain) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Spanish player to win back-to-back Wimbledon titles. ○ Fourth player after Mats Wilander, Bjorn Borg, and Boris Becker to win 4 Grand Slams at the age of 21 or under. ○ Sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back. ○ Second man after Roger Federer to win his first four Grand Slam finals. ● Runner-up: Novak Djokovic (Serbia). <p>Women's Singles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winner: Barbora Krejcikova (Czech Republic). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Her second grand slam title after French Open 2021. ○ Fourth Czech woman to win Wimbledon, following Marketa Vondrousova (2023), Petra Kvitova and Jana Novotna (1998). ○ Joins Simona Halep as one of only two active players to have won both Wimbledon and the French Open. ● Runner-up: Jasmine Paolini (Italy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Italian woman to reach a Wimbledon singles final. <p>Men's Doubles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winners: Henry Patten (Great Britain) and Harri Heliovaara (Finland) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First doubles grand slam title for Patten and Heliovaara. ○ Harri Heliovaara - first Finnish man to win the Wimbledon doubles title. ● Runners-up: Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson (Australia). <p>Women's Doubles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winners: Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic) and Taylor Townsend (USA, her first grand slam title). ● Runners-up: Gabriela Dabrowski (Canada) and Erin Routliffe (New Zealand). <p>Mixed Doubles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winners: Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) and Jan Zielinski (Poland) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The duo's first mixed doubles title at Wimbledon. ● Runners-up: Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos (Mexico)
4.	UEFA Euro 2024 (Football) Host: Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Winner: Spain (4th title); Runner-up: England (2nd consecutive loss in finals); Scoreline: 2-1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spain won under the captaincy of Alvaro Morata. ○ Trophy Name: Henri Delaunay Cup. ○ Finals venue: Olympiastadion in Berlin. ○ Young Player of the Tournament: Lamine Yamal (Spain) ○ Player of the Tournament: Rodri (Spain)
5.	Durand Cup 2024 (133rd edition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asia's oldest football tournament ○ Venues: Kolkata, Kokrajhar (Assam), Jamshedpur & Shillong. ○ Defending Champions: Mohun Bagan Super Giant, with a record 17 wins.

6.	Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2024 (Badminton)	Event	Winner	Runner-up
		Men's Singles	Tharun Manepalli (India)	Yudai Okimoto (Japan)
		Women's Singles	Tasnim Mir (India)	Rakshitha Sree (India)
		Men's Doubles	Julien Maio & William Villeger (France)	Prakash Raj & Gouse Shaik (India)
7.	British Grand Prix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winner: Lewis Hamilton (British, Mercedes); won for the 9th time. Runner-up: Max Verstappen (Dutch, Red Bull Racing) 		
8.	Asian Squash Doubles Championship 2024 Venue: Arena Emas, Johor, Malaysia.	Event	Winner	Runner-up
		Men's Doubles	Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar (India)	Ong Sai Hung and Syafiq Kamal (Malaysia)
		Mixed Doubles	Abhay Singh and Joshua Chinappa (India)	Tong Tsz Wing and Ming Hong Tang (Hong Kong China)
9.	1 st World Championship of Legends Venue: England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A T20 tournament featuring retired international cricketers. Winner: India Champions & Runner Up: Pakistan Champions. India Champions won by five wickets. Player of the Match (Finals): Ambati Rayudu (India). Player of the Tournament: Yusuf Pathan (India). 		
10.	Hungarian Grand Prix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's Kush Maini won his maiden Formula 2 Sprint Race. Initial winner, Richard Verschoor, was disqualified due to a technical infringement. 		
11.	ICC Annual Conference 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue & Host: Colombo, Sri Lanka. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First time the event is held in the Asian Region. Theme: "Capitalizing on the Olympic Opportunity". 		
12.	2024 Copa América Host: United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winner: Argentina (16th title); Runner-up: Colombia; Score: 1-0. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argentina defeated Brazil in the previous edition in 2021. Argentina won the maximum number of Copa America titles, followed by Uruguay (15 titles) Lautaro Martinez scored the winning goal. Finals held at Hard Rock Stadium. Golden Boot (Top scorer): Lautaro Martinez (Argentina) Golden Ball (Best Player): James Rodriguez (Colombia) Golden Glove (Best Goalkeeper): Emiliano Martinez (Argentina). 		
13.	CSK's Super Kings Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New facility inaugurated at Sydney, Australia. Previous facilities are located at USA (Dallas) and the United Kingdom (Reading). 		
14.	2024 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host: Sri Lanka. Winner of the previous edition: India. 		
15.	2030 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host: French Alps (contingent upon France providing financial assistance). France was the solo contender to host the games. The first edition of the Winter Games to fully integrate the principles of Olympic Agenda 2020 and 2020+5, emphasizing sustainability. 		
16.	'Wrestle for Glory' Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by IndusInd Bank in collaboration with Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), Vijayanagar facility, Bellary. Part of the 'IndusInd For Sports' initiative. 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aim: Empower 50 talented female wrestlers from across India by providing comprehensive training and support.
17.	Men's Asia Cup Cricket Tournament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2025: To be hosted by India, T20 format. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ India to host Asia Cup after 34 years. ○ 2027: To be hosted by Bangladesh, ODI format. ○ Precursors to the respective format's World Cups (T20 World Cup in 2026 in India, ODI World Cup in 2027 in South Africa). <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2023 edition of the Asia Cup hosted by Pakistan in a 'Hybrid Model'. India's matches were hosted in Sri Lanka. ● India are the defending champions, having won three of the last four editions of Men's Asia Cup.

33rd Summer Olympics (Paris Olympics 2024)

S.No	News/ Events	Winners/ Key Facts
1.	Gender Equality in Paris Olympics & Mascot details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First Olympic Games with an equal number of male and female athletes. ● France to host the Olympics for the sixth time, and Paris for the third time. ● Mascots: Olympic Phryge & Paralympic Phryge. ● Motto of the Mascots: "Alone we go faster, but together we go further". ○ Total Sports: 32; Breaking introduced for the first time. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The 1900 Olympics in Paris were the first Games to feature women competitors.
2.	Key Appointments in Indian Contingent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chef-de-Mission for India: Gagan Narang (former shooter). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mary Kom (boxer) resigned citing personal reasons. ○ Gagan Narang was former deputy Chef-de-mission. ○ Flag bearers for opening ceremony: PV Sindhu (Badminton) & Sharath Kamal (Table Tennis). ○ Second successive Summer Games with two flag-bearers for India. ○ India will field its largest-ever shooting contingent with 21 qualifiers. <p>DID YOU KNOW?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Gagan Narang- Four-time Olympian and 2012 men's 10m Air Rifle bronze medalist. Mary Kom- 2012 London Olympics bronze-medalist. P V Sindhu- first Indian woman to win two Olympic medals. won silver (Rio 2016) & bronze in (Tokyo 2020). </div> <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) updated its protocol to permit one female and one male athlete to jointly bear the flag during the Olympic Games' opening ceremony. ○ At Tokyo 2020, Mary Kom and Manpreet Singh were India's flag-bearers.
3.	Sponsors for Indian Contingent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principal Sponsor for the Indian contingent: Adani Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campaign Theme: #DeshkaGeetAtOlympics ○ Official footwear partner for the Indian contingent – PUMA.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campaign Name of PUMA: "See the Game Like We Do".
4.	Indian Contingent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 117 athletes (70 men and 47 women) in 16 sports disciplines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ India's second-largest contingent in the Olympics after Tokyo Olympics (121 participants). ○ 72 athletes made Olympic debut. ○ First-time achievement: Indian shooters secured quotas in every Olympic shooting category. ○ First Indians to qualify for athletics events: Race walkers Priyanka Goswami and Akshdeep Singh. ○ Major Contributors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Haryana: 24 athletes, making up 20% of the Indian contingent. ○ Punjab: 19 athletes. ○ Both Haryana and Punjab contribute 36% of the total contingent. ● Oldest Athlete: Rohan Bopanna (44 years old, Tennis). ● Youngest Athlete: Dhinidhi Desinghu (14 years old, Swimming-200m freestyle). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dhinidhi Desinghu's debut in Olympics. ● Most experienced athlete: Sharath Kamal, his fifth appearance in the table tennis discipline. ● Athletics contributes the most to the Indian squad (29), followed by shooting (21). ● Tanisha Crasto (Badminton): only Indian 2024 Olympian born outside the country, she was born in Dubai. ● Features five previous medalists – Neeraj Chopra, Mirabai Chanu, PV Sindhu, Lovlina Borgohain, and the men's hockey team.
5.	Women's 10m Air Pistol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gold: Oh Ye Jin (South Korea, Olympic record of 243.2 points) ○ Silver: Yeji Kim (South Korea, 241.3). ○ Bronze: Manu Bhaker (India, scored 221.7). <p>Significance of Manu Bhaker's Bronze Medal Victory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India's first medal at Paris 2024 Olympics. ● First Olympic medal in shooting for India since the London 2012 Olympic Games. ● First Indian female shooter to win a medal in Olympics. ● First female shooter to reach an Olympic final in an individual event in the last 20 years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suma Shirur reached the Final of the 10m Air Rifle event in Athens 2004. ● India's fifth Olympic medal in shooting after Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (2004 Athens), Abhinav Bindra (2008 Beijing), Vijay Kumar (2012 London) and Gagan Narang (2012 London). ● Manu Bhaker is also the only athlete from the 21-member Indian shooting team to participate in multiple individual events.
6.	10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Venue: Chateauroux Shooting Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold: Zorana Arunovic and Damir Mikec (Serbia) ● Silver: Ilayda Seval Tarhan and Yusuf Dikec (Turkiye). ● Bronze: Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh (India) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defeated South Korea's Oh Ye Jin and Wonho Lee. <p>Significance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manu Bhaker - the first athlete of independent India to win two medals in one edition of the Olympics. ● India's second medal at Paris Olympics. ● India's first-ever medal in a shooting team event.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarabjot's first Olympic medal & he is the sixth Indian shooter to win an Olympic medal.
Additional Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manu Bhaker is from Jhajjar, Haryana. Sarabjot Singh is from Ambala, Haryana. 		
7.	First South Korean Singer to Bear the Olympic Torch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kim Seokjin (Jin) of BTS.
8.	India House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's first-ever country house at the Olympic Games. Set up by Reliance Foundation at Parc de la Villette.

AWARDS

S.No	Award/Milestone	Key Facts
1.	Golden Peacock Award for Excellence in Occupational Health & Safety (GPOHSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded To: L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Ltd (L&TMHRL) Given By: Institute of Directors (IOD) at the 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change.
2.	Pardo alla Carriera Ascona-Locarno Tourism Award (Career Achievement Award) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipient: Shah Rukh Khan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Indian to receive this award. Awarded at 77th Locarno Film Festival, Switzerland. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other awards received by Shah Rukh Khan: Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (2007) & Légion d'honneur (2014) from France.
3.	Hans Von Hentig Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awardee: K Chockalingam, Former Vice Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. First Indian and Asian scholar to receive the award. He is from Kanniyakumari, Tamil Nadu. To be awarded at 18th WSV International Symposium at National Forensic Science University at Gandhinagar. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Society of Victimology's (WSV) highest honour. Instituted in 1982; Awarded every three years.
4.	Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipient: Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCLTech. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First woman to lead a listed IT company in India <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte France's highest civilian award for outstanding service to France, regardless of the recipient's nationality.
5.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipient: P. Geetha, writer, critic, and feminist activist.

	K. Saraswathi Amma Award (first edition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose: Awarded for feminist studies, specifically her work "Aan Thachukal" about M.T. Vasudevan Nair's scripts. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded by: WINGS (Women's Integration and Growth Through Sports) Kerala. Instituted in honour of Saraswathi Amma, a Malayalam feminist writer.
6.	Spice Award 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awardee: Sopna Kallingal of Kallingal Plantation, Thrissur. Awarded for promoting a sustainable spice-based cropping system. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instituted by: ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research. Recognizes contributions to the field of spice cultivation and management, particularly in promoting sustainability and innovation.
7.	Gallantry Awards 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaurya Chakra awarded to Parshotam Kumar, a civilian from Rajouri, Jammu & Kashmir. <p>Note: Gallantry Awards discussed in detail in CurrentTap January 2024.</p>
8.	Dr. C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipient: Sivashankari, Tamil writer. Recognition: Contribution to the field of literature. Awarded by: Sushila Narayana Reddy Trust <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sivashankari is a recipient of Saraswati Samman Award.
9.	Agriculture Leadership Award-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best Agriculture State Award- Maharashtra. Best state in Horticulture- Nagaland. Best Animal Husbandry State-Haryana. Best State for Food Processing- Himachal Pradesh. Innovation Leadership: Jammu & Kashmir. Exemplary Research Leadership in Sugarcane Sector: ICAR - Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded during the 15th Agriculture Leadership Conclave in New Delhi. Instituted in 2008 by Agriculture Today Group.
10.	International Maritime Organisation (IMO) 2024 Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea	<p>Key Winners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captain Avhilash Rawat and the crew of the oil tanker Marlin Luanda. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated exceptional bravery and resilience while coordinating firefighting and damage control efforts. Captain Brijesh Nambiar and the crew of the Indian Navy Ship (INS) Visakhapatnam received a Letter of Commendation for their support to Marlin Luanda.
11.	Golden Sand Master Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awardee: Sudarsan Pattnaik (Odisha). Awarded at: International Sand Sculpture Championship, St. Petersburg, Russia. Only Indian participant in the event. He created a created a 12-foot sand sculpture depicting Mahaprabhu Jagannath and his devotee Balaram Das.
12.	Olympic Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to: Abhinav Bindra (Former Indian Shooter). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Indian individual to win an Olympic gold medal (2008 Beijing Olympics, men's 10-meter air rifle event). Member of IOC Athletes Commission. First Indian Athlete to win this award. Purpose: For outstanding contributions to the Olympic Movement.

		About the Award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest recognition bestowed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). • Established in 1975, replacing the Olympic Diploma of Merit. • Notable Recipients: Indira Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.
13.	Vikram Sarabhai Medal & Harrie Massey Award 	<p>Vikram Sarabhai Medal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardee: Anil Bhardwaj <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Director of the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad. • Recognize his contributions to the Planetary Exploration Program of India. • Significance: Second ISRO scientist to receive this medal; the first was given to the late Prof. U. R. Rao in 1996 in Birmingham, UK. • About the Award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Instituted by COSPAR and ISRO to honor the memory of Vikram Sarabhai (Father of Indian Space Program). ◦ Awarded for outstanding contributions to space research in developing countries <p>Harrie Massey Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardee: Prahlad Chandra Agrawal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Retired professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. ◦ Renowned for his contributions to X-ray astronomy. ◦ Led India's first multiwavelength astronomy satellite, AstroSat, which was launched in 2015 and is still operational. • Recognizes outstanding contributions to space research with a leadership role • The award includes the naming of a minor planet (20064 Prahladagrawal) in his honor. <p>About 45th COSPAR Scientific Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted by South Korea for the first time. • A biennial global conference. <p>About Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established in 1958 by the International Council for Scientific Unions. • World's first scientific body dedicated to space science research.
14.	2024 Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly (ESPY) Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pat Tillman Award awarded to Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex. • Honored in recognition of his Invictus Games Foundation- a platform for sports competition for wounded, injured, and sick service men and women. • Named after Pat Tillman, an NFL player who left his football career to join the army after 9/11.
15.	Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Excellence Awards 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded by: Department of Telecommunications (DoT). • Awardees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Dr. Kiran Kumar Kuchi, Professor IIT Hyderabad: For advancements in telecom technology and mentorship. ◦ Elena Geo Systems Private Limited: For advancements in NavIC-based devices and applications. ◦ Astrome Technologies Private Limited: For pioneering millimeter-wave multi-beam technology.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tejas Networks Limited: For innovations in telecom equipment manufacturing. ○ Nivetti Systems Private Limited: For contributions in secure networking products.
16.	Gandhi Mandela Award 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awardees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rigoberta Menchú Tum, a Guatemalan activist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognition: For lifelong dedication to Indigenous rights. ✓ Other Awards received by her: Nobel Peace Prize (1992), Princess of Asturias Award (1998). ○ Victor Gonzalez Torres (Mexican politician and businessman). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Honored for his exceptional contributions to healthcare ● Awarded on the 106th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela. ● Other Awards received by her: Nobel Peace Prize (1992), Princess of Asturias Award (1998). <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awarded by: Gandhi Mandela Foundation. ● Honors individuals who advance peace, harmony, and the principles of Gandhi and Mandela. ● Previous Honoree: The Dalai Lama in 2019
17.	2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awardees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF Programme) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implemented by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS). ✓ Recognized as the world's largest agroecology programme. ○ Dr. Rattan Lal, Renowned soil scientist of Indian origin. ○ Egypt-based SEKEM, focuses on holistic approaches to tackle climate change <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awarded by Portugal based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. ● Purpose: Recognizes pioneering work in sustainable agriculture, global food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem protection. ● Total Prize: 1 million euros
18.	Fleet Awards Function-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awarded by Eastern Naval Command at Visakhapatnam ● Best Ship of the Eastern Fleet: INS Delhi ● Best Ship in Corvettes/OPVs/LSTs: INS Kavaratti.
19.	All India Football Federation (AIFF) Awards 2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Men's Player of the Year: Lallianzuala Chhangte (Mizoram). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Second consecutive win. ● Women's Player of the Year: Indumathi Kathiresan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First player from Tamil Nadu to win this award. ● Promising Men's Player of the Year: David Lalhansanga ● Promising Women's Player of the Year: Neha
20.	Officer des Arts et des Lettres (Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awardee: Rahaab Allana, Curator and Publisher, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts in New Delhi. ● Recognized for his outstanding work as a curator of South Asian photography and contributions to Indo-French artistic collaboration. <p>About the Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awarded by: The Government of France. ● Purpose: to recognize individuals distinguished for their creativity in art, culture, literature, or their contribution to the arts' influence in France and globally.

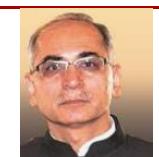
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable Indian Recipients: Shahrukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai. 																				
		Additional Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rahaab Allana founded ASAP/art, South Asia's first contemporary art news and reviews app. 																				
21.	10th National Community Radio Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded by: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th><th>Winner</th><th>Location</th><th>Programme</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Thematic Award</td><td>Radio Mayur</td><td>District Saran, Bihar</td><td>Tech Sakhi</td></tr> <tr> <td>Most Innovative Community Engagement</td><td>Yerlawani Sangli</td><td>Sangli, Maharashtra</td><td>Kahani sunandachi</td></tr> <tr> <td>Promoting Local Culture</td><td>Radio Brahmaputra</td><td>Dibrugarh, Assam</td><td>Igarekun</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sustainability Model</td><td>Radio Benziger (run by Bishop Benziger Hospital Society)</td><td>Kollam, Kerala</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's 500th Community Radio Station- Apna Radio 90.0 FM inaugurated at Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) Aizawl, Mizoram. 	Category	Winner	Location	Programme	Thematic Award	Radio Mayur	District Saran, Bihar	Tech Sakhi	Most Innovative Community Engagement	Yerlawani Sangli	Sangli, Maharashtra	Kahani sunandachi	Promoting Local Culture	Radio Brahmaputra	Dibrugarh, Assam	Igarekun	Sustainability Model	Radio Benziger (run by Bishop Benziger Hospital Society)	Kollam, Kerala	-
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22.	Rajbhasha Gaurav Samman 2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Category I- HPCL-Visakha Refinery. Category II: GAIL, Category III- MSTC. Awarded by: Town Official Language Implementation Committee (TOLIC) (PSU), Visakhapatnam. 																				
23.	GEEF Global WaterTech Award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Water Commission (CWC) awarded under the category 'Water Department of the Year' Awarded at Global Water Tech Summit – 2024. Purpose: recognizes achievements in the water sector, including innovation, technology, conservation, and sustainable development. New initiatives by CWC recognized include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of the mobile app 'Floodwatch India' in 2023 for real-time flood-related information dissemination. <p>About Global Water Tech Summit - 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized by the Global Energy and Environment Foundation (GEEF) in New Delhi. 																				
24.	UN ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) Special Consultative Status Award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Odisha. Purpose: Recognize and reward KIIT's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its commitment to the United Nations' Agenda 2030. Only 19 organizations received the distinction. KIIT is the only professional/technical university in India to achieve this status, and the only university in South Asia to receive UN Volunteers (UNV) status for student engagement. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIT MoU with UN Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: allowing students to serve as 'National University UN Volunteers' for various UN agencies. 																				

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIT collaboration with American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) and the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objective: fostering international understanding and diplomacy. |
|--|--|---|

APPOINTMENT

<p>Dr. BN Gangadhar</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Appointed as the chairperson of the National Medical Commission (NMC) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a period of four years. • Previous Role: President of the autonomous Medical Assessment and Rating Board. <p>About National Medical Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statutory body under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019. • Regulates medical education, medical professionals, institutes, and research in India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: New Prime Minister of the Netherlands. ○ Not aligned with a political party, a first for the Netherlands since World War II. ○ Predecessor: Mark Rutte (served the role for 14 years). 	 Dick Schoof
<p>Edward Kieswetter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Re-elected as the Chairperson of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) for a second term (2024-25). • Other Roles: Commissioner of South African Revenue Service (SARS). <p>About World Customs Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment: 1952; Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Re-designated as the MD and CEO of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). ○ Previous Role: Chairman of LIC. 	Siddhartha Mohanty
<p>Arnab Kumar Chowdhury and Charulatha S. Kar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Appointed as the executive directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). • Arnab Kumar Chowdhury- will oversee the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), Foreign Exchange Department, and International Department. • Charulatha S. Kar: manage the Department of Communication, Human Resource Management Department, and Right to Information (First Appellate Authority).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: New Principal Spokesperson of the Central Government and Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau (PIB). ○ Predecessor for the latter role: Sheyphali B Sharan. 	Dhirendra K Ojha
 Hemant Soren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Took the oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand for the third term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Champai Soren. • Won the floor test in the Jharkhand Assembly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total Strength of Jharkhand Assembly: 81. • First time in the past 10 years that any Chief Minister has used the full strength of the Cabinet.
<p>Approval of Eight Executive Director Appointments by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL): Amit Mishra & Rashmi Bajpai • GIC Re: Hitesh Ramesh Chandra Joshi & Radhika C.S. • National Insurance Company Ltd (NICL): T. Babu Paul & Prasad C.G. • United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL): Sunita Gupta • Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd: Dasarathi Singh 	

 Sir Keir Starmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predecessor: Rishi Sunak (UK's first Indian-origin PM). Labour Party secured 412 seats out of 650 in the House of Commons. Ended 14 years of Conservative Party rule in the UK. Key Appointees in his Cabinet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Prime Minister: Angela Rayner Chancellor of the Exchequer: Rachel Reeves (First woman to hold this post) Foreign Secretary: David Lammy; Defence Secretary: John Healey 	DID YOU KNOW? The House of Lords & The House of the Commons are the Upper & Lower Houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (UK).
 Masoud Pezeshkian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New President elect of Iran. First reformist president in almost two decades 	
Appointments in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rajinder Khanna, Deputy NSA, promoted to Additional National Security Adviser. (role created for the first time). Pavan Kapoor appointed Deputy NSA, replacing Vikram Misri T. V. Ravichandran appointed as Deputy NSA, replacing Rajinder Khanna. Pankaj Kumar continues as Deputy NSA. Air Marshal Sandeep Singh (retd) holds the post of Military Adviser in the NSCS. Vice-Admiral Ashok Kumar (retd) serves as the first National Maritime Security Coordinator. 		
 Ratan Kumar Kesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New Interim CEO and MD of Bandhan Bank. Chandra Sekhar Ghosh, the founder and former MD and CEO stepped down. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Reported as the CMD of Indian Energy Exchange Ltd (IEX). Rohit Bajaj has been promoted to Joint Managing Director. 		Satyendar Goel
 Gautam Gambhir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Head Coach of Indian men's cricket team; Predecessor: Rahul Dravid India's youngest-ever head coach; Tenure: 2027. Mentored IPL franchises like Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow Super Giants. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New MD and CEO of Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL). Predecessor: Surinder Chawla. 		Arun Kumar Bansal
 U U Lalit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Chairperson of search-cum-selection committees for shortlisting names for Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) in West Bengal's state-run universities. The decision comes amid ongoing conflicts between the West Bengal government and the West Bengal Governor over V-C appointments. U U Lalit is a former Chief Justice of India (CJI). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New president of News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predecessor: Avinash Pandey, former CEO of ABP Network. Chairman of India TV. 		 Rajat Sharma
 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time after winning the vote of confidence. Predecessor: Pushpa Kamal Dahal. 	

KP Sharma Oli	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: To Take charge as BSNL CMD Predecessor: P.K. Purwar 	Robert Ravi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Both were sworn in as Supreme Court judges. The Supreme Court returned to its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges. Predecessors: Justice Aniruddha Bose & Justice A.S. Bopanna. <p>About Justice N. Kotiswar Singh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Supreme Court judge from Manipur. Former Chief Justice of the High Court for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.</p> </div>  Justice N. Kotiswar Singh 
<p>About Justice R. Mahadevan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Madras. Hails from Tamil Nadu. 	 Justice R. Mahadevan
<p>About Supreme Court Collegium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairperson: Chief Justice of India; Total Members: Five Role: Evaluates and decides on promoting High Court judges to the Supreme Court, appointing High Court judges as Chief Justices, and other judicial appointments. 	
 Sumanth Sinha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Co-Chair of the Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders. He is the Chairman and CEO of ReNew. Other co-chairs of the Alliance: Ester Baiget (CEO of Novonexis) and Jesper Brodin (CEO of Ingka Group Ikea). <p>About Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largest CEO-led climate alliance in the world. A flagship initiative of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Founded in 2014; Total Members: 130 members Aim: to drive significant climate action and promote sustainability initiatives globally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Reappointed as President of the European Parliament (EU assembly) for a second term; Tenure: two and a half years. Maltese lawmaker, first woman in 20 years to head the EU assembly & the youngest person to preside over the EU assembly at the age of 43 in 2022. First woman to win a second term as head of the EU assembly. Third woman President of the EU assembly, after Simone Veil (1979-1982) and Nicole Fontaine (1999-2002). 	 Roberta Metsola
<p>About European Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU's only directly elected institution; Total Members: 720. 	
 Paul Kagame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Re-elected as the President of Rwanda for a fourth term. Serving as the President of Rwanda since 2000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: New CEO of HSBC Holdings Plc, Europe's largest bank. Currently serving as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at HSBC. Predecessor: Noel Quinn. 	Georges Elhedery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: India's new Ambassador to the U.S. Former Foreign Secretary. Predecessor: Tarunjit Singh Sandhu.

Vinay Mohan Kwatra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Appointed as the brand ambassador for MotoGP in India by EuroSport. ○ He will feature in the 'Face Kar Race Kar' campaign. 	 Shikhar Dhawan 
Manolo Marquez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Appointed as the new head coach of the Indian men's senior football team. • Predecessor: Igor Stimac. • Will continue as the head coach of FC Goa concurrently for the 2024-25 season. • Former Spanish football player. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Re-elected for a second term as Chairperson of PwC India. ○ Professional Associations: Member of FICCI's National Committee on Stressed Assets, CII Corporate Governance Council, and CII Economic Affairs Council. Also a member of the SEBI Primary Market Advisory Committee. 		 Sanjeev Krishnan
 Nita Ambani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Re-elected unanimously as member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for a second term during the 142nd IOC session in Paris. • First Indian woman to join the IOC in 2016 at the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. • Founder of Reliance Foundation. <p>About International Olympic Committee (IOC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members: 111 members; President: Thomas Bach; HQ: Lausanne, Switzerland. • Establishment: 1894. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Appointed as the festival director for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa for the 55th and 56th editions. • Veteran Indian filmmaker known for films "Mr. India," "Bandit Queen," and "Elizabeth". • Served as the chairperson of the International competition Jury at the 54th IFFI. • Former Chair of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. 		 Shekhar Kapur
 Krishnan Venkat Subramanian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: New MD & CEO of Federal Bank. • Predecessor: Shyam Srinivasan (longest-serving MD and CEO of the bank). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: President of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICMAI) for the period 2024-2025; Predecessor: Ashwin Dalwadi ○ Served as the Chairman of Bhubaneswar Chapter of ICMAI. <p>About ICMAI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded in 1944; Initially known as The Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India. • The only recognised statutory professional organisation in India for Cost and Management Accountancy. • HQ: Kolkata, West Bengal. 		 Bibhuti Bhushan Nayak
 K Paul Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Re-appointed as Managing Director & CEO of ESAF Small Finance Bank. • Other Roles: Chairman of the Board of Sa-Dhan, an association of microfinance and impact finance institutions. • Appointment approved by the RBI under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Re-elected as President of Mauritania for second term. 		

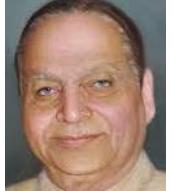
		Mohamed Ould Ghazouani
 Manoj Mittal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). ○ Previous Roles: MD and CEO at the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) and Deputy Managing Director at SIDBI. <p>About SIDBI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Established in 1990 under the Small Industries Development Bank of India Act, 1989. ○ Principal financial institution for promoting, financing, and developing the MSME sector. ○ HQ: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Elected as the President of Venezuela for the third term. 		 Nicolas Maduro

GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

S.No	New Governor/ Administrator Name	State/ UT	Key Facts & Miscellaneous
1.	Santosh Kumar Gangwar	Jharkhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: C. P. Radhakrishnan. ○ Served as the MP from Bareilly, UP for record eight times.
2.	Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde	Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Kalraj Mishra.
3.	Jishnu Dev Varma	Telangana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: C. P. Radhakrishnan (Additional Charge). ○ Former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura. ○ Memoir Name: "Views, Reviews & My Poems".
4.	Om Prakash Mathur	Sikkim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Lakshman Prasad Acharya. ○ Former Rajya Sabha Member from Rajasthan.
5.	Ramen Deka	Chhattisgarh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Biswabhusan Harichandan ○ Former Lok Sabha MP from Mangaldoi in Assam.
6.	C H Vijayashankar	Meghalaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Phagu Chauhan ○ Former Lok Sabha MP from Mysuru, Karnataka.
7.	C.P. Radhakrishnan	Maharashtra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Ramesh Bais. ○ Former Lok Sabha MP from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
8.	Gulab Chand Kataria	Punjab, Chandigarh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: Banwarilal Purohit
9.	Lakshman Prasad Acharya	Assam, Manipur (Additional Charge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replaces Anusuiya Uikye (Manipur) & Gulab Chand Kataria (Assam).
10.	K. Kailash Nathan	Puducherry (Lt. Governor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predecessor: C. P. Radhakrishnan (Additional Charge).

Note: A Governor is appointed by the President (**Articles 155**); To be eligible for appointment as a Governor, a person must be a citizen of India and at least 35 years old (**Article 157**).

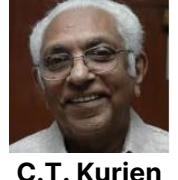
PERSONS IN NEWS

 <p>Rohit Sharma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Became the most successful captain in the history of T20Is. • Broke Babar Azam's record by securing his 49th win as a captain in T20Is. • Milestone achieved after India's victory over England in the 2nd semi-final of the T20 World Cup 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: A commemorative coin of Rs 100 was released to mark his 101st birth anniversary. ○ He was a freedom fighter from Maharashtra and Founder-Editor of the Lokmat Media Group. 	 <p>Jawaharlal Darda</p>
 <p>Anton Zeilinger</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: The Prime Minister of India met him during his visit to Austria, discussed about quantum technologies & spirituality • An Austrian quantum physicist. • Awarded Nobel Prize for Physics in 2022. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purpose: experiments with entangled photons, establishing the violation of Bell inequalities, and pioneering quantum information science ○ Co-awardees: Alain Aspect (France) & John Clauser (US). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why in News: Retired from Test cricket in a series against West Indies; appointed as the bowling mentor for the England cricket team for the remaining of the Test series ○ First fast bowler ever to take 700 wickets in Test cricket (milestone achieved against India). ○ Third-highest wicket-taker in Test cricket history with 700 wickets, behind Shane Warne (708) and Muttiah Muralitharan (800). 	 <p>James Anderson (England)</p>
 <p>Skalzang Rigzin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Only the eighth Indian and the first Indian civilian to summit Everest without supplementary oxygen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Previously, only seven Indians from the Indian Army had achieved this feat. • Also, the first mountaineer from India to ascend Annapurna (10th highest peak) without the help of oxygen in 2022. • Hails from Tia village, Ladakh. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: To retire from World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) in 2025. • A 16-time WWE Champion. 	 <p>John Cena</p>
 <p>Manoj Soni</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why in News: Resigned as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) citing personal reasons. • He was appointed to the role for five-year tenure till 2029. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He became the youngest ever Vice-Chancellor in India at the age of 40 when he was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, in 2005. <p>About UPSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for conducting civil services examinations and selecting candidates for various administrative positions in the Indian government. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Retired from international football after Euro 2024. Toni Kroos (Germany), Olivier Giroud (France) & Xherdan Shaqiri (Switzerland) also retired from International Football. 	 Thomas Muller
 Harmanpreet Kaur <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Became India's highest T20I run-getter, surpassing Smriti Mandhana. Achieved the record during India's Women's Asia Cup T20 match against the UAE. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the same match India marked their first 200-plus total in WT20Is. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Set to retire from international hockey after the Paris Olympics 2024. Veteran goalkeeper of Indian Hockey Team. Recipient of Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honor. 	 PR Sreejesh
 Mukesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: Ministry of Culture released a commemorative stamp marking his 100th birth anniversary. Dept. of Post also launched a commemorative of Denomination Rs30. A legendary playback singer from India. Awards: National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer for the song "Kai Baar Yahi Dekha Hai" from the film Rajnigandha (1974). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: First Indian to occupy the number one spot in the ICC T20I all-rounders' rankings. 	 Hardik Pandya
 Dr. Jitendra Singh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: conferred the prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award" for his contributions to diabetology, diabetes care, and diabetes research. Awarded during the International Meet of leading medical professionals from across the country and abroad in Chennai. <p>Notable Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pioneering work on "Stress Diabetes in Kashmiri Migrants," hailed by WHO. His book "Diabetes Made Easy" was a best-seller at the World Book Fair in New Delhi. Jamna Devi Gian Devi Award for journalism. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: inducted as a Fellow of Royal Society of Chemistry, London (FRSC). Chief Scientist at CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad. Awards: CSIR Young Scientist Award 2007, Scopus Young Scientist Award 2011, NASI Reliance Industries Platinum Jubilee Award 2013, VNMM award from IIT-Roorkee 2015. Ranked among the Top 2% of Scientists worldwide by Stanford University, USA, and Elsevier Science Publishers in 2021, 2022 & 2023. 	 Dr. S. Sridhar
 Elon Musk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why in News: According to Forbes estimates, his net worth dropped more than any other billionaire in the first half of 2024. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famous companies owned by Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, X (formerly Twitter). Despite the loss, he remains the richest person on the planet. Top 5 Billionaires who lost wealth in the first half of 2024: Elon Musk (USA), Dieter Schwarz (Germany), Carlos Slim Helu & family (Mexico), Zhong Shanshan (China) & Andrew Forrest & family (Australia) 	

OBITUARIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second MP of Sikkim and the first one to have won in a contest after Sikkim became a part of India; served as an MP from 1980 to 1984. 		 Pahalwan Subba
Additional Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First MP from Sikkim: Chatra Bahadur Chhetri. (elected unopposed in 1977 Lok Sabha polls.) 		
Bhupinder Singh Rawat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Indian footballer; Nicknamed scooter. Member of the Indian football team in the 1969 Merdeka tournament in Malaysia. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American screenwriter and director. Won an Academy (Oscar) Award for the screenplay of "Chinatown." Received a lifetime achievement award from the Writers Guild of America. 		Robert Towne
 Ismail Kadare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albania's best-known novelist Famous Work: The General of the Dead Army. Awards & Honours: Man Booker International Prize (2005), Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour (France). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American film producer; producer of Titanic & "Avatar" series. Won the Oscar for Best Picture for Titanic (1997). 		 Jon Landau
Eric Poujade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French gymnast Won a Silver medal in Artistic Gymnastics in the pommel horse event at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder of stationery brand Camlin. He sold Camlin to Japan's Kokuyo. Served as the chairman emeritus of Kokuyo Camlin at the time of his death. 		 Subhash Dandekar
 Bob Newhart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American comedian and actor. Won Grammy Award for "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart". Won Emmy Award for his guest performance in "The Big Bang Theory." Memoir: "I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This!" 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vietnam's longest serving Communist Party chief. Served as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) since 2011. 		Nguyen Phu Trong
 Dr. M.S. Valiathan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Cardiac Surgeon and Medical Innovator. Founding Director of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), an institute of national importance. Led the Indigenous development of the TTK-Chitra valve, the first-ever mechanical heart valve prosthesis in India, implanted first in 1990. First Vice-Chancellor of Manipal Academy of Higher Education. Important Awards: Padma Shri (2002) and Padma Vibhushan (2005); Dr. B.C. Roy National Award; Chevalier of the Order of Palmes Académiques from the French Government; Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indian Medical Association. Hails from Kerala. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An organic farmer from Cuttack, Odisha. Awards: Padma Shri (2019), Equator Initiative Award, Best Farmer Award by Odisha Government (2004). 	 Kamala Pujari
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famous Indian economist and professor. Founding Director of the Madras Institute of Development Studies. 	 C.T. Kurien
 Father Francis D'Britto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic priest, Marathi writer, and environmental activist from Vasai, Maharashtra. Founder of Harit Vasai Movement. Translated the Bible into Marathi, named 'Subodh Bible'. The first Catholic priest to receive Dnyanoba-Tukaram Puraskar. Other Awards: Maharashtra Government's literary award for best translation in 2013 & Sahitya Akademi award in 2014.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Vice President of Indonesia. 	 Hamzah Haz
 Anshuman Gaekwad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Indian Cricketer and Coach

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

S.No	Book Title	Author and Key Facts						
1.	Kargil War: The Turning Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author: Late Colonel M B Ravindranath, Vir Chakra awardee. 						
2.	'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author: Dr R Balasubramaniam. 						
3.	Books published by the Directorate of Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center; background-color: #800000; color: white;">Book Name</th><th style="text-align: center; background-color: #800000; color: white;">Key Details</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Wings to Our Hopes - Volume 1 (Aashaon Ki Udaan)</td><td>collection of selected speeches of President Droupadi Murmu during first year of her Presidency.</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present</td><td>Provides an in-depth exploration of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, tracing its history, legacy, and architectural splendour.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Book Name	Key Details	Wings to Our Hopes - Volume 1 (Aashaon Ki Udaan)	collection of selected speeches of President Droupadi Murmu during first year of her Presidency.	Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present	Provides an in-depth exploration of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, tracing its history, legacy, and architectural splendour.
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		Kahani Rashtrapati Bhavan Ki	Aimed at children, it presents nearly 100 years of the history of Rashtrapati Bhavan in simple words.
4.	The Prisoner of Bhopal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author: Tim Walker. Commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984. 	
5.	AUTOBIOGRAPHY Of Ek Refugee Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author: Dr. M.K. Shingari. 	
6.	Call of the Gir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author: Parimal Nathwani, Rajya Sabha Member from Andhra Pradesh. A coffee table book on Gir and Asiatic lions. 	

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

S.No	Name	Key Facts
1.	Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles 2024 	Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to: Girls Will Be Girls (Director: Shuchi Talati). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debut production of Pushing Buttons Studios, the production house of Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal. The film won grand jury prizes at Transylvania International Film Festival in Romania and Biarritz Film Festival in France. Also won World Cinema Dramatic category and Special Jury Award for Acting at Sundance Film Festival 2024.
2.	Divya Kala Mela, Divya Kala Shakti & Divyangjan Rozgar Mela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisers: Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) and National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC). Venue: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Divya Kala Shakti & Divyangjan Rozgar Mela organized for the first time along with Divya Kala Mela in Odisha. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divya Kala Mela- showcased vibrant products crafted by Divyang artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs. Divya Kala Shakti- Cultural program featuring performances by Divyangjan artists from six states viz, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Odisha
3.	Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host: Victorian State Government. Telugu Actor Ram Charan to be awarded 'Ambassador for Indian Art and Culture' for stellar contributions to Indian cinema. He is also the Guest of Honour of the festival.
4.	Tanabata Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrated in Japan. Honors the meeting of cosmic lovers Orihime and Hikoboshi

PLACES IN NEWS

S.No	Place	Key Facts
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1.	Places visited by the PM of India during Russia Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosatom Pavilion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Location: All Russian Exhibition Centre, VDNKh, Moscow. ○ One of the largest exhibitions showcasing the history of scientific and technological developments. ○ Features the "Atomic Symphony," a working model of the VVER-1000 reactor, central to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) in India. • Tomb of the Unknown Soldier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A war memorial located at the Kremlin wall, Moscow. ○ Dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during World War II.
2.	Mica mines in Koderma and Giridih districts, Jharkhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declared 'Child Labour Free' by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). • The 'Child Labour Free Mica' programme will continue to monitor these villages until 2025 to ensure no child returns to labour in mica mining.
3.	National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be set up at Saragwala village near Lothal, Gujarat • An initiative of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) under the Sagarmala programme.
4.	Indian Newspaper Society (INS) Towers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
5.	Shahid Beheshti Port, Chabahar, Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by the Government of India; Contract Duration: 10 years. <p>Note: Shahid Beheshti Port discussed in CurrentTap May 2024 (News 2.17).</p>
6.	Vadhavan Port	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: Vadhavan, Palghar District, Maharashtra. • Project Cost: Rs 76,200 crore. • A joint venture between the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA, 74%) and the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB, 26%). • First time the Central government has shared equity with a state government in a major port project. • Expected to be operational by 2030. • On completion it will be one of the top 10 ports of the world & India's largest ever container port.
		<p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An International Container Transhipment Terminal will also be setup in Galathea Bay in Great Nicobar Island.
7.	Freedom Plaza in Edogawa, Tokyo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahatma Gandhi's bust was unveiled.
8.	Paradip Port, Odisha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest cargo-handling major port in India, , with a cargo throughput of 145.38 million metric tonnes (MMT) in the financial year 2023-24.
		<p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision 2047 envisages to increase the port handling capacity to 10,000 MTPA, with avenues for private participation and master plans for becoming mega ports by 2047.

DAYS IN NEWS

S.No	Days	Key Facts
1.	National Doctors Day (July 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Healing Hands, Caring Hearts." Birth and death anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, a physician, freedom fighter, and former CM of West Bengal.
2.	National Chartered Accountants Day (July 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year marks the 76th anniversary of the ICAI's establishment <p>About Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statutory body under the Chartered Accountants Act of 1949. Regulates the profession of Chartered Accountancy in India. India's only licencing and regulatory body for financial audits and the accounting profession. Ministry: Ministry of Corporate Affairs; HQ: New Delhi
3.	International Plastic Bag Free Day 2024 (July 3)	<p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Union aims to phase out single use plastics by 2030.
4.	World Zoonoses Day (July 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrated in honour of Louis Pasteur, who administered the first successful rabies vaccine, a zoonotic disease, on July 6, 1885.
5.	National Fish Farmer's Day (July 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisheries Summer Meet 2024: Organized by the Department of Fisheries at IDA Scudder Trade Centre in Madurai, Tamil Nadu Commemorates the contribution of Professor Dr. Hiralal Chaudhury and his colleague Dr. K. H. Alikunhi in the Indian fisheries sector
6.	World Population Day (July 11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Leave No One Behind, Count Everyone".
7.	International Malala Day (July 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honours Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani advocate for girls' education and the youngest recipient of the Nobel Prize.
8.	International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms (July 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations has declared 2025–2034 as the Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (SDS).
9.	170th Annual Day of Central Public Works Department (CPWD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPWD established in 1854. Ministry: Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
10.	World Youth Skills Day (July 15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Youth Skills for Peace and Development."

11.	73rd Foundation Day of the CSIR - Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) (July 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 1952, under the guidance of Sir Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar, the first DG of CSIR.
12.	World Day for International Justice 2024 (July 17) 	--
13.	Nelson Mandela International Day 2024 (July 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality". The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First black & first democratically elected President of South Africa; Won Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.
14.	International Moon Day (July 20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Illuminating the Shadows". Commemorates the anniversary of the first human landing on the Moon with the Apollo 11 mission. 2024 marks the 55th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission.
15.	National Flag Day 2024 (July 22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorates the adoption of the Indian national flag by the Constituent Assembly on July 22, 1947.
16.	World Brain Day (July 22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: Brain Health and Prevention.
17.	National Broadcasting Day (July 23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorates the establishment of the then Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC), now All India Radio, on this date in 1927. 97th anniversary of the establishment of All India Radio (AIR) in 2024. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1923, the Radio Club of Bombay made India's first-ever broadcast.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed annually to honor Indian soldiers' bravery and commemorate India's 1999 Kargil War victory (Operation Vijay) against Pakistan. <p>Key Highlights of this year's celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shradhanjali Samaroh held at Kargil War Memorial (Drass) in Ladakh. The PM witnessed the first blast of the Shinkun La Tunnel Project. Department of Posts released a commemorative postage stamp of Denomination Rs 5. <p>Note: Shinku La tunnel discussed in CurrentTap May 2024</p>	
18.	25th Kargil Vijay Diwas (July 26) 	--
19.	Int'l Day on Mangroves Conservation (July 26) 	--

20.	86th Foundation Day of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) (July 27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established as the Crown Representatives Police on July 27, 1939. Renamed as the CRPF in 1949, through an Act of Parliament. Largest paramilitary force in India. Only paramilitary force in India with six all-women battalions. Operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
21.	18th Foundation Day of Ministry of Earth Sciences (July 27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Earth Sciences was established in 2006.
22.	World Nature Conservation Day (July 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Connecting People and Plants, Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation."
23.	International Tiger Day (July 29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit. Originated from the efforts of 13 tiger range countries to create TX2, a global goal to double the wild tiger population by 2022.
24.	World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (July 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking".

MISCELLANEOUS

S.No	News	Key Facts																		
1.	A new MA course in Bhagavadgita studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). 																		
2.	New Presidential Palace of Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded by China. Vanuatu is a South Pacific Nation. 																		
3.	Photographic exhibition "Thailand-India Interwoven Legacies: Stream of Faith in Buddhism."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue: National Museum in New Delhi. Holy Relics of Lord Buddha and his chief disciples, Arahant Sariputta and Arahant Maha Mogallana, excavated from Piprahwa, Uttar Pradesh. 																		
4.	Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's longest urban tunnel (11.8 km long). 																		
5.	World's 10 largest coal mines by WorldAtlas.com	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rank</th><th>Mine Name</th><th>Location</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Black Thunder Mine</td><td>Wyoming, USA</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Gevra OC Mine</td><td>Korba district, Chhattisgarh</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>North Antelope Rochelle Mine</td><td>Wyoming, USA</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Kusmunda OC Mine</td><td>Korba Coalfields, Chhattisgarh.</td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>Northern Shaanxi Mine</td><td>Shaanxi province, China</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Rank	Mine Name	Location	1	Black Thunder Mine	Wyoming, USA	2	Gevra OC Mine	Korba district, Chhattisgarh	3	North Antelope Rochelle Mine	Wyoming, USA	4	Kusmunda OC Mine	Korba Coalfields, Chhattisgarh.	5	Northern Shaanxi Mine	Shaanxi province, China
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Gevra & Kusmunda are operated by South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a subsidiary of Coal India. Gevra Mine: produced 59 million tons in FY 23-24. Kusmunda Mine: Produced over 50 million tons in FY 23-24, making it the second Indian mine to achieve this milestone after Gevra.
6.	National Communications Academy (NCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nodal Department: Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Formed by merging National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT), National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF), and Wireless Monitoring Training & Development Centre (WMTDC). ex-officio Chairperson: Secretary (Telecom). Campuses: Ghaziabad and Ghitorni. Aim: to streamline training, optimize resources, and provide a holistic approach to skill-building in the communications sector.
7.	India's Contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount: USD 2.5 million (first tranche). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of India's annual contribution of USD 5 million for 2024-25. UNRWA Pledging Conference 2024 held in New York, USA <p>About UNRWA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Establishment: 1949.
8.	Withdrawal of Free Electricity Scheme in Himachal Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Himachal Pradesh cabinet to withdraw the free electricity scheme for all income tax payers due to the poor financial condition of the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board.
9.	Elon Musk to Shift HQ of SpaceX and X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SpaceX: Moving from Hawthorne, California to Starbase, near Brownsville, Texas. X: Moving from San Francisco, California to Austin, Texas. Reason: California's new Support Academic Futures and Educators for Today's Youth Act (SAFETY Act) Act prevents schools from requiring employees to inform parents if students request to use different pronouns.
10.	ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) acquires Equinor's stake in Azerbaijan oilfields & associated pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value: \$60 million. Oil Field: 0.615% participating interest in the offshore Azeri Chirag Gunashli (ACG) oil field. Pipeline: 0.737% shares in the Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline company. OVL initially acquired a 2.72% stake in ACG in 2013. BP operates the ACG field with a 30.37% stake. ACG is a super-giant offshore oil field in the Caspian Sea.
11.	World's most-tracked flight on Flightradar24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'AIC24WC', Air India flight that carried T20 World Cup winning Team India from Bridgetown, Barbados to Delhi Tracked for over 15 hours by nearly 5,252 users. <p>Additional Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post T20 World Cup 2024 victory, Team India was stranded in Barbados due to Hurricane Beryl.
12.	Renaming of Halls at Rashtrapati Bhavan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durbar Hall renamed as Ganatantra Mandap Ashok Hall renamed as Ashok Mandap.

13.	Mankind Pharma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To acquire 100% stake in Bharat Serums and Vaccines (BSV) from Advent International for Rs 13,630 crore.
14.	Mobile Therapy Bus initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID), under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) & the Hans Foundation Aim: to support children with disabilities in marginalized communities. Five buses deployed in Noida, Ghaziabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai.
15.	Ola Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house mapping service of Ola, announced complete transition from Google Maps

2. GA + ESI

PIB IN NEWS

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – HEALTH

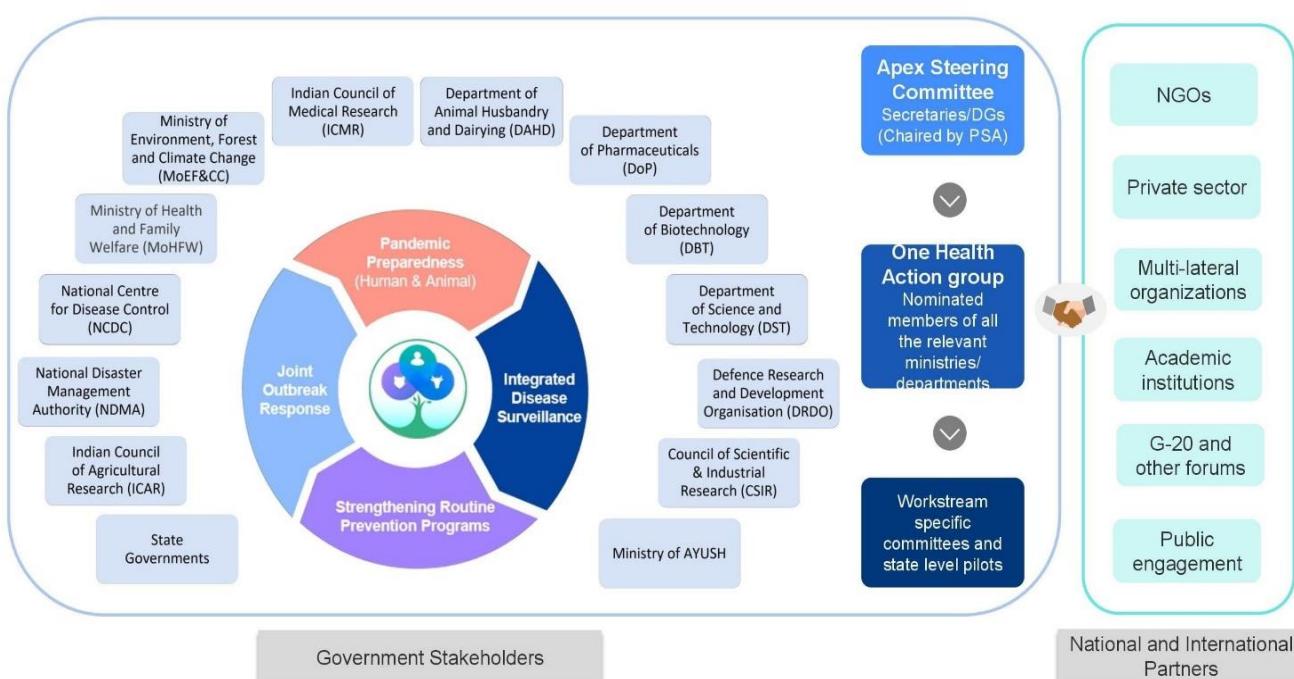
2.1 National One Health Mission (NOHM)

Why in News

- NOHM has been reviewed by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

Key Work Done Under NOHM

- Establishment of a **national network of Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories** for testing high-risk or unknown pathogens.
- Epidemiology Training Program:** Launched to build capacity in epidemiology.

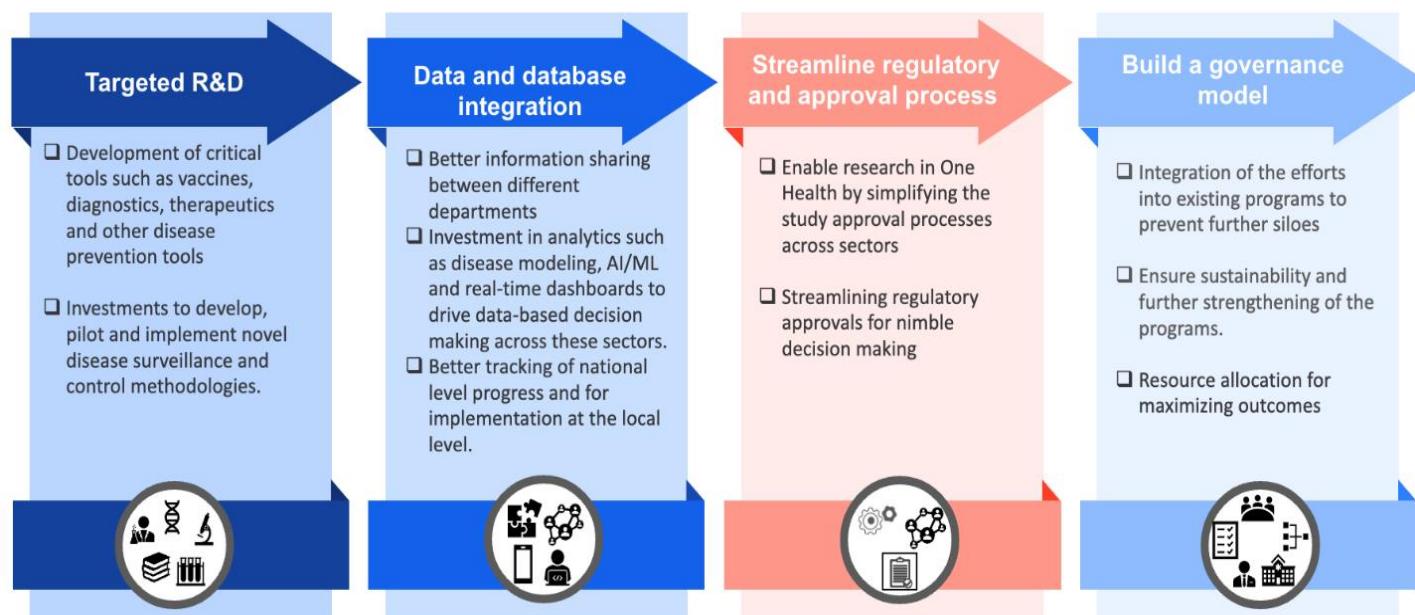


- **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP):** Active since **2004**, monitoring **over 33 communicable diseases** across all States/UTs. Enhanced to include decentralized surveillance and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs).
- **₹386.86 Crore approved for a new program under NOHM** to bolster integrated disease control and pandemic preparedness.
- **Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequencing (INSACOG) Network:** Conducts Whole Genomic Sequencing for timely detection of new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

About National One Health Mission

- **Launch Year:** Approved by Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (**PM-STIAC**) in **2022**.
- **Objective:** To **integrate human, animal, plant, and environmental health** for holistic disease control and pandemic preparedness.
- **Features:**
 - Mission is created with **collaboration of 13 Government departments for unified pandemic preparedness.**
 - Based on approach to achieve the goal of '**Health and Wellness for All**'.

Critical enabling activities of the One Health Mission



2.2 Comprehensive Lactation Management Centres (CLMC)

Why in News

- Government of India has established CLMC **to support feeding of sick, preterm, and low birth weight babies admitted in intensive care units.**

Key Highlights

- Comprehensive Lactation Management Centres (CLMC) **provide safe, pasteurized donor human milk and facilitate expression of mother's own milk.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is implementing Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Adolescent Health Plus Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) strategy under National Health Mission (NHM), which includes various interventions **including CLMCs and LMUs** to improve maternal and child health including nutritional deficiencies and anemia.

- These centres **support sick, preterm, and low birth weight babies** in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) and Special Newborn Care Units (SNCU).
- **Breast milk is essential for newborns**, providing nutrients and protection against illnesses like pneumonia, diarrhoea, asthma, allergies, obesity, diabetes, and heart diseases.
- As of FY 2023-24, there are **52 operational CLMCs** and **50 Lactation Management Units (LMUs)** across various States/UTs in India.

Additional Information

- CLMCs are established at **Government Medical Colleges or District Hospitals** while LMUs can be established at all **sub-district hospitals**.

2.3 Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

Why in News

- **Full Immunization Coverage for FY 2023-24** stands at **93.23%**.

Key Highlights

- Zero dose children account for 0.11% of India's total population.
- **India's Immunisation Programme targets 2.6 crore children and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually** through 1.2 crore vaccination sessions.
- **Under Mission Indradhanush**, 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women have been vaccinated till 2023.
- **India's immunization coverage for most antigens is over 90%**.
- **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) coverage in India is 83%**, higher than the global average of 65%.
- **DTP-1 (Penta-1) coverage is above 90% with only a 2% dropout rate** for DTP-3 (Penta-3).

Mission Indradhanush

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** launched "Mission Indradhanush" in December **2014** to achieve more than 90% full immunization coverage in the country.
- Mission Indradhanush and Intensified Mission Indradhanush initiatives have **reduced the number of zero dose children by 34% between 2014-2023**.
- **12 phases** of Mission Indradhanush **conducted across all districts**, vaccinating 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women.
- It was **also identified as one of the flagship schemes under Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**.

DID YOU KNOW?

India provides maximum number of WHO recommended vaccines under the UIP in comparison to most of the other countries. The mean coverage for India is 83.4%, which is more than 10 percentage point of the global coverage.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0 Campaign

- Conducted in **2023**.
- **Aims to enhance immunization coverage for all vaccines** provided **under** the Universal Immunization Programme (**UIP**) as per the National Immunization Schedule (NIS).
- IMI 5.0 ensures that **routine immunization services reach the missed-out and dropped out children** and pregnant women across the country.
- For the **1st time** the campaign is being conducted across all the districts in the country and **includes children up to 5 years of age**.
 - Previous campaigns included children up to 2 years of age.

- **Special focus** is on-
 - **Improvement of Measles and Rubella vaccination coverage** with the aim of **Measles & Rubella elimination by 2023**
 - **Use of U-WIN digital platform for Routine Immunization in pilot mode across all districts** of the country.
- IMI 5.0 was **conducted in 3 rounds: 7 -12 August, 11-16 September, and 9-14 October 2023 as 6 days in a month** with the inclusion of a Routine Immunization Day.
 - All States/UTs **except Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Punjab concluded all the three rounds** of IMI 5.0 campaign by 14th October 2023.
 - **These states would complete by November 2023.**

Miscellaneous Points

- The country has achieved a noteworthy reduction in the **Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)** from 45 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 32 per 1000 live births in 2020.
- India introduced **6 new vaccines** under the UIP to increase the breadth of protection **since 2014**.
- India was awarded the **Measles and Rubella Champion Award** in March 2024.

Note: Kindly refer to **SchemesTap** for more information on **UIP**.

2.4 MANAS (Madak Padarth Nisedh Asuchna Kendra)

Why in News

- Union Home Minister launched the **National Narcotics Helpline 'MANAS' at the 7th Apex Level Meeting of Narco-Coordination Center (NCORD)**.

Key Highlights

- MANAS will have a **toll-free number 1933**, a web portal, a mobile app, and will be integrated with the UMANG app.
- Citizens can **anonymously** connect with NCB 24x7 for de-addiction and rehabilitation advice and to share information on drug trafficking.

Additional Information

- **NCORD mechanism** was formed in **2016** for better coordination between states and **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
 - It has been further strengthened through a **four-tier system in 2019**.
 - Its **Apex Level NCORD Committee** is headed by **Union Home Secretary**.
- **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance)** was developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) and National e-Governance Division (**NeGD**) in **2017 to drive Mobile Governance in India**.
 - UMANG provides a **single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services** ranging from Central to Local Government bodies.

Key Terms

- **Zero Dose Children:** Children who did not receive any vaccine.
- **DTP-1 (Penta-1):** The first dose of the pentavalent vaccine.
- **DTP-3 (Penta-3):** The third dose of the pentavalent vaccine.
- **Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR):** The number of deaths of children under five years of age per 1000 live births.

DID YOU KNOW?

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) along with Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) has developed a web portal and mobile app "**MAPDRUGS**" in **2023** to curb illegal cultivation and provide accurate Geographic Information System (GIS) information so that such illicit cultivation can be destroyed by the concerned agencies.

2.5 Swachh Gaon, Shudh Jal- Behtar Kal

Why in News

- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), under Ministry of Jal Shakti, launched this **2-month awareness campaign to promote safe water and sanitation practices in rural areas.**

Key Highlights

- The campaign runs from **July 1st to August 31st, 2024**, in collaboration with the **National STOP Diarrhoea Campaign**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **National STOP Diarrhoea Campaign**.

2.6 Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH)

Why in News

- Union Health Minister delivered a keynote address at the 33rd PMNCH Board Meeting** in Geneva, Switzerland.

Key Highlights

- The **meeting provides an opportunity** for Board members **to agree on major priorities and opportunities for PMNCH**.
- Discussions on priorities for the 2026-2030 PMNCH Strategy** and positioning in relation to the post-2030 UN Sustainable Development Goal-setting process.

About PMNCH

- Established in 2005.**
- Governance Structure: Governed by a Board** and **administered by a Secretariat** hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Objective:** World's largest alliance committed to maternal, newborn, and child health.

2.7 National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme

Why in News

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

About National TB Elimination Programme

- Launched in 1997, based on the DOTS strategy**, as **Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP)**.
 - Initial Goal of RNTCP:** To achieve and maintain a TB treatment success rate of at least 85% and detect at least 70% of new sputum-positive cases.
- Evolution:** It was renamed as the **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)** to reflect the goal of TB elimination in 2020.
- Ministry Involved:** Ministry of **Health & Family Welfare**.
- Objective:** To reduce and eliminate TB in India by 2025.
- Features:**
 - Universal Drug Susceptibility Testing (UDST)** implementation to test all diagnosed TB patients for drug resistance at the time of diagnosis.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tuberculosis (TB), caused by the bacterium **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**, is an airborne infectious disease where one patient can infect 10 or more people annually.

- **Bedaquiline and Delamanid** medications for **drug-resistant TB**.
- '**Pradhan Mantri Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan**' was launched to **eliminate TB in India by 2025**, 5 years ahead of the global target.
 - ✓ It would be done through **a comprehensive approach** that includes **early detection, regular treatment, and community engagement**.
- **Ni-kshay Mitra initiative:**
 - **Aim:** To provide support to TB patients beyond medical treatment.
 - ✓ This includes **nutritional support, vocational aid, and psychological care**.
 - **Implementation:** The scheme invites NGOs, corporates, and individuals to contribute as '**Nikshay Mitras**' (friends of Nikshay).
- **Ni-kshay 2.0 portal:**
 - **Description:** Nikshay is a **web-enabled patient management system** for TB control under the NTEP.
 - **Purpose:** It **records the details of TB patients** and **monitors their treatment and progress**.
 - It also **acts as a platform for the delivery of various supportive schemes** like the Nikshay Poshan Yojana.
- **National Strategic Plan 2017-2025:**
 - **Vision:** **TB-Free India** with zero deaths, disease, and poverty due to tuberculosis.
 - **Goal:** Rapid decline in TB burden and **elimination by 2025**.
 - **Strategic Pillars:** "**Detect - Treat - Prevent - Build**" (DTPB).
 - **Action List:** Incentives for private doctors, modern MIS system, nutritional support through DBT, TB Corpus Fund, **annual national review by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)**.

About DOTS Strategy

- **Full Form:** "Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course".
- It means that a **trained health care worker or other designated individual (excluding a family member) provides the prescribed TB drugs and watches the patient swallow every dose**.
- **Key Features:** It includes **five elements – political commitment, microscopy services, drug supplies, surveillance and monitoring systems, and use of direct observation of treatment**.
- India **achieved nationwide coverage** of DOTS strategy in 2006, starting from 1993.

DID YOU KNOW?

India contributes to one-fourth of the global burden in case of in Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB).

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – EDUCATION

2.8 Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam 2024

Why in News

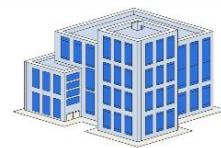
- Ministry of Education will celebrate the 4th anniversary of the National Education Policy 2020 with the Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam 2024 in New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- **Important initiatives to be inaugurated** include:
 - **Dedicated TV Channels** for learning various Indian languages, including a Tamil Channel.

- **Primers** for early graders in **25 Indian languages** in pursuance to 54 already done.
- Guidelines for **10 Bagless days** in schools.
- Career Guidance Guidelines and a library of over 500 job cards.
- **NMM** (National Mission on Mentoring) & **NPST** (National Professional Standards for Teachers) in Braille and Audio Books.
- **School Innovation Marathon** by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) & AIM (Atal Innovation Mission).
- Graduation Attributes and Professional Competencies.
- Several books and lecture notes promoting **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)**.
 - ✓ A **compilation of lecture notes from the Faculty Training Program for Master Trainers** in IKS was released in collaboration with University Grants Commission.
 - ✓ "**Kautilya's Arthashastra: Timeless Strategies for Modern Governance**" by Vinayak Rajat Bhat and Tejusvi Shukla was released, providing an interpretation of Kautilya's work with contemporary examples.
 - ✓ "**Marma Kannadi: Decoding the Human Body the Siddha Way**" by Gurukkal Dr. S. Mahesh was released, detailing marmas and Siddha medicine and delving into the teachings of the sage Agasthya.
 - ✓ "**Shodha Vijaya**," a collection of research articles on southern dynasties with a focus on the Vijayanagara Kingdom, edited and guided by Dr. Manorama B. N. and published by Noopura Bhramari (A Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems in Karnataka), was released, covering topics from theatre and dance to ancient scriptures.
 - ✓ **A report on the state of the Indian Knowledge Systems and Heritage (IKS & H) Industry** by Prof. Mohan Raghavan was also released, projecting the industry's potential to become a trillion-dollar sector within the next decade.
- **ABSS 2024 witnessed six thematic sessions on:**

PARAKH



INDEPENDENT BODY

Established in 2023 under **Ministry of Education**, based on National Education Policy 2020.



NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CENTRE

Serve as a national assessment center that fulfills objectives outlined by the **National Education Policy 2020**.



IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

Educational Testing Service (ETS), under guidance of **National Council for Education Research (NCERT)**.

FOCUS AREAS



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN COMPETENCY BASED ASSESSMENT

Project Vidyasagar in collaboration with PHD Chamber of Commerce to familiarize educators with pedagogical and policy changes.



LARGE-SCALE ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY

Mandated to organize large-scale achievement surveys to **periodically monitor and assess the educational** of the country.



EQUIVALENCE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Aiming **uniformity in assessment**, will develop **norms, standards, and guidelines** for student assessment and evaluation across all recognized school boards in India.



HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARDS (HPCS)

Develop **360-degree HPCs** for **Foundational, Preparational, Middle, and Secondary Stages** to support competency-based learning and teaching assessments

- **Importance of Sustainability** in Education Curriculum, Job Prospects, Industry-Academia Collaboration
- **PM SHRI** (School Education & Skilling)
- Role of HEIs in Promoting STEM & Enhancing GER through the **Vidya Shakti Scheme**, aiming to increase STEM enrolment.
- Equivalence of **Curriculum and Assessment** across all School Boards
- Role of **Ranking and Accreditation** in Enhancing Quality
- **NCF-FS** (National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage) and **NCF-SE (National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023) Salient Features and Implementation Roadmap**
- **APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry) ID** was also mentioned.
- **Digital Didi program** highlighted for empowering rural women and improving student performance through weekly micro assessments.
- **EKAL School initiatives** focus on single-teacher institutions in rural areas and mobile computer labs for computer literacy.
- **PARAKH** was mentioned.

About APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card

- **Launch Year:** 2023
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Education.
- **Objective:** To provide a unique and permanent **12-digit ID** to every student in India, consolidating their academic achievements and facilitating a unified academic experience.
- **Features:**
 - APAAR ID **integrates with various digital assets** like the Academic Bank of Credit and DigiLocker and platforms such as Swayam and DIKSHA, supporting the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's vision for digital and inclusive.
 - APAAR ID will **remain with the children for their entire life**. Students will also be able to get credit in the future by passing various exams.
 - Students will **not be required to give certificates anywhere** and just giving APAAR ID will be sufficient.
 - It is **linked to ABC (Academic Bank of Credit)** and **operates through National Academic Depository** to receive and store academic credits and records.
 - **Made mandatory for admissions** to any college or university
- **Territorial Coverage:** Nationwide, with a specific focus on tracking the educational journey of 260 million students.
- **Target:** All student records to be mapped on to APAAR **by 2026-27**.
 - **25 crore APAAR IDs** have been created.

DIGITAL DIDI PROGRAM



- Initiated by **Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)**, to address menstrual health misconceptions and misinformation in rural and semi-urban India among adolescent girls and women and provides access to sustainable menstrual products.
- The program features the innovative '**SmartPad**', which includes a QR code granting access to a **100-hour digital literacy course**.
- Implemented in **24 states and 135 districts**, it targets **350 villages, training 35,000 women and girls** in digital literacy and empowering 350 women as HealthPreneurs to facilitate community healthcare.

About Ekal Vidyalaya

- **1980s:** Founded by Dr. Rakesh Popli and Rama Popli, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's teachings, to improve rural education.
- **1986:** First Ekal school started with a holistic syllabus, addressing the lack of educational options in rural areas.
- Primarily supported by individual donors, making it one of the largest individual donation-based movements globally.
- **Impact:** Since 1989, brought literacy and economic opportunity to over 10 million students in 80,000 villages.
- **Beneficiaries:**
 - Current Students: 2.27 million (1.14 million girls, 1.13 million boys).
 - Teachers: 70% are women, acting as role models for gender equality.
 - Schools: 86,239 Ekal schools across all states in India.
- **School Tuition:** Completely free, with all learning materials, including digital tools, provided at no cost.

Miscellaneous Points

- The **first ABSS event** was organized in **2022** at **Varanasi**.
- **Indian Knowledge Systems Division (IKS Division)** of the **Ministry of Education** (MoE) was established in **2020**, with a vision to promote **interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research** on all aspects of IKS, preserve and disseminate a deeper understanding and appreciation of IKS for further research, and societal applications.
 - Division initiated **IKS Wiki portal** for article publishing in various Bhāratīya languages, fostering a broader dissemination and engagement with traditional knowledge systems.

Note: Kindly refer to **SchemesTap** for the schemes mentioned in the document.

2.9 Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence

Why in News

- Union Home Minister inaugurated the Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence in all 55 districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- The initiative is **part of the New Education Policy introduced in 2020**.
- **Madhya Pradesh is the first state to implement the New Education Policy** and translate engineering and medical science curriculum into the mother tongue.
- **Features of Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence:**
 - Emphasis on **practicals, skill development, and vocational training**.
 - **Offers multidisciplinary courses** such as Biotechnology, Computer Science, Culture, Arts, B. Ed, and B. Sc Agriculture.
 - **Connected with IIT Delhi and other prestigious institutions** for diploma and certificate courses.
 - Focuses on **360-degree development of students**.
 - **Promotes out-of-the-box thinking** and inner strengths development.

2.10 Bagless Days Guidelines

Why in News

- The guidelines for Bagless Days in schools were **reviewed**.

Key Highlights

- Guidelines were developed by PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), a unit of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) based in Bhopal, under the Ministry of Education.
- **Objective:** To make learning in schools more joyful, experiential, and stress-free for students.
- **Features:**
 - Encourages Bagless Days throughout the year with activities such as arts, quizzes, sports, and skill-based learning.
 - Students will gain exposure to activities outside the classroom, including visits to historical, cultural, and tourist sites, interactions with local artists and craftsmen, and visits to various educational institutions within their locality.
 - As per NEP 2020, students in grades 6-8 will participate in a 10-day bagless period to intern with local skill experts and engage in activities outside traditional school settings.

2.11 National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) and National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)

Why in News

- A two-day National Sensitization Workshop on Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), NMM, and NPST was inaugurated to emphasize the importance of these programs in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Key Highlights

- **Organized by:** National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in collaboration with Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida.

About ITEP

- The **4-year integrated B.Ed. program** aims at preparing teachers for Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary stages as per the new school structure of NEP2020.
- ITEP norms and standards were **announced in 2021**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **NMM and NPST**.

2.12 Workshop on Writing of Textbooks in Bharatiya Bhasha for Higher Education

Why in News

- The workshop for Vice Chancellors was **inaugurated by the Minister of State for Education in New Delhi**.

Key Highlights

- Workshop was **organized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS)**.
- **3 significant projects were launched** during the event:
 - **ASMITA** (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian languages through Translation and Academic writing): Led by **UGC in collaboration with BBS**, aims to produce **22,000 books in 5 years in 22 languages**. **13 nodal universities** have been identified to lead the project.

- **Bahubhasha Shabdkosh:** Led by the Central Institute of Indian Languages in collaboration with BBS, aims to create a grand repository of multilingual dictionaries.
- **Real-time Translation Architecture:** Led by the National Education Technology Forum in collaboration with BBS, aims to enhance real-time translation capabilities.
- Vice Chancellors were grouped into **12 Manthan Satras to develop textbooks in 12 regional languages.**

2.13 SATHEE (Self-Assessment, Test and Help for Entrance Examination) - A Coaching Portal

Why in News

- SATHEE portal was launched to provide free, quality educational content and guidance for competitive exams to students nationwide.

Key Highlights

- **User Base:** Over 4 lakh students/learners have registered on the portal.

About SATHEE Portal

- **Launched in 2023.**
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Education.**
- **Purpose of SATHEE Portal:** To assist students in preparing for competitive examinations like JEE, NEET, UPSC, GATE, and CAT.
- **Collaboration:** The initiative is a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, UGC, and IIT Kanpur.
- **Language Accessibility:** The course is available in multiple languages, supported by an AI-based translation tool developed by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education), which supports 22 Indian languages.
- **Content Providers:** Recorded videos by faculty from IITs and IISc.
- **Language Availability:** Digital learning material currently available in English, Hindi, Odia, Telugu, and plans to extend to 13 languages.
- **AI Features:** The portal uses AI for interaction and is customizable to each student's learning pace.
 - It includes an **AI chatbot** for aligning learning needs.
 - **Mock Tests:** Pan India mock tests are conducted every weekend with detailed performance analysis.
 - **Rural Coverage:** Initiatives to increase rural coverage of students appearing for entrance tests, including the involvement of **SATHEE mitras** (friends).
- The content is also broadcasted on the DTH platform.

2.14 National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme (NATS) 2.0 Portal

Why in News

- Union Minister for Education launched NATS 2.0 portal and disbursed ₹100 crore stipends to apprentices through the Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) mode.

Key Highlights

- Developed by the Ministry of Education with support from AICTE and Board of Apprenticeship Training / Practical Training (BOAT/BOPT).
- Objective: To democratize apprenticeship, bridge skills gap, and make youth future-ready.

- Portal will be used by beneficiaries **to register and apply for apprenticeships** and **by establishments/industries to manage vacancies and contracts**.
- **Top three establishments recognized** were **Cognizant, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra**.
- All **educational institutions and industries are encouraged** to join the NATS 2.0 portal.

2.15 Shiksha Saptah

Why in News

- Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, is celebrating 'Shiksha Saptah' from **July 22 to July 28** to mark the fourth anniversary of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Key Highlights

- **July 22 is observed as Teaching-Learning Material (TLM) Day**, emphasizing the use of local resources for high-quality curriculum-aligned teaching materials.
- Other themed days like Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Day, Sports Day, Cultural Day, Skilling and Digital Initiatives Day, Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE or School Nutrition Day, and Community Involvement Day (through the Vidyanjali and Tithi Bhojan initiatives) are to be observed, respectively, till **July 28**.

DID YOU KNOW?

Vidyanjali, a school volunteer management program, launched on **7th September 2021** by the Department of School Education & Literacy, aims **to strengthen schools and improve education quality** through community, CSR, and private sector involvement.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

2.16 Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)

Why in News

- India assumed the **Chair of ADPC** for the year **2024-25**.
- **Rajendra Singh**, Member & HoD, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) will be Chairperson.
- **Former Chair:** China.

About ADPC

- Established in **1986** as a **regional disaster preparedness center (DMC)** in **Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)**; **Head office:** Bangkok, Thailand.
- **Nine Founding Members:** India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

2.17 Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement

Why in News

- India to sign the **BBNJ Agreement**.

Key Highlights

- **Ministry of Earth Sciences** will lead the **implementation** of the Agreement in India.

About Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement

- Agreed upon in **March 2023**.

- Agreement focuses on the conservation and sustainable utilization of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (Exclusive Economic Zone), also known as the 'High Seas'.
- The BBNJ Agreement is open for signature for 2 years starting September 2023 and will become legally binding 120 days after the 60th ratification.
 - As of June 2024, 91 countries have signed, and 8 have ratified the agreement.
- Agreement is part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
 - 3rd implementation agreement under UNCLOS after 1994 Part XI Implementation Agreement (which addresses the exploration and extraction of mineral resources in the international seabed area) and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement (which addresses the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks).
- It supports achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG14 (Life Below Water).

Key Terms

- **Exclusive Economic Zone:** An area of the ocean, generally extending 200 nautical miles (230 miles) beyond a nation's territorial sea, within which a coastal nation has jurisdiction over both living and nonliving resources.

UNCLOS



- UNCLOS - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- Adopted on December 10, 1982, and came into force on November 16, 1994.
- **Objective:** Environmental protection of the seas and addressing maritime boundaries, rights to marine resources, and dispute resolution.
- It establishes the International Seabed Authority to regulate mining and related activities on the ocean floor beyond national jurisdiction.
- As of July 2024, more than 160 countries have ratified UNCLOS.

2.18 Climate Finance Action Fund (CFAF)

Why in News

- Azerbaijan launched the Climate Finance Action Fund (CFAF).
- Launched as part of 14 initiatives under the COP29 thematic days framework.

Key Features

- A public-private partnership fund to mobilize private sector investment and de-risk investment.
- Annual contributions from fossil fuel-producing countries and companies.
- Initial Fund-raising target: \$1 billion; Founding Contributor: Azerbaijan.
 - Will start after raising \$1 billion and securing commitments from 10 contributing countries.
- Annual contributions can be fixed sums or based on production volume.
- 50% of the capital will go to climate projects in developing countries, focusing on clean energy, energy efficiency, climate resilience, and new technologies.

- 50% for helping members meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to maintain the 1.5°C temperature target.
- 20% of revenues will be directed to a Rapid Response Funding Facility for immediate disaster response support in Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, and other vulnerable developing communities.
- The fund will be based in **Baku, Azerbaijan**.

Relevance

- **Azerbaijan** holds the **Presidency of 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [COP29]**.

2.19 Amrit Sarovar Mission

Why in News

- Amrit Sarovar Mission has achieved the **construction/rejuvenation of 68,863 Amrit Sarovars** as of July 2024.

2.20 Ideas4LiFE Portal

Why in News

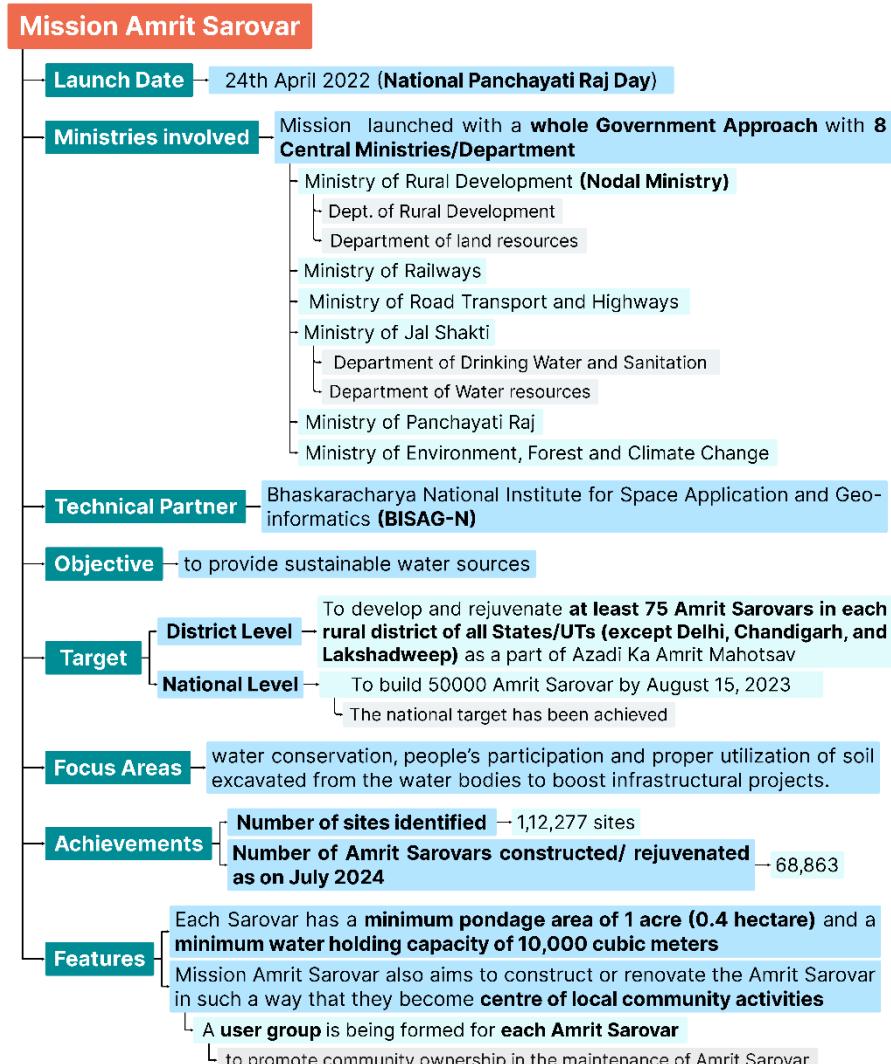
- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the **Ideas4LiFE portal** for inviting ideas related to environment-friendly lifestyles.

Key Highlights

- Portal was developed in collaboration with **UNICEF YuWaah**.
- The **initiative is part of Mission LiFE**, focusing on sustainable consumption and mindful utilization of resources.
- The portal allows participants to submit their ideas online, with the **winning ideas under each of the 7 themes of Mission LiFE being recognized and awarded**.
 - **7 themes of Mission LiFE covered by the Ideas4LiFE Ideathon are:** Save Water, Save Energy, Reduce Waste, Reduce E-Waste, Say No to Single-Use Plastics, Adopt Sustainable Food Systems, and Adopt Healthy Lifestyles.

About UNICEF YuWaah

- **Launched in 2019, YuWaah (Generation Unlimited in India)** at UNICEF has benefited over 76 million young people to date through opportunities for skills development and



employment, innovation entrepreneurship, career guidance, civic action and volunteering avenues.

- **YuWaah's Strategic Priorities in India:**

- **Build pathways for 100 million young people** to aspirational economic opportunities.
- **Facilitate 200 million young people** to gain relevant skills aligned with the future of work and lead productive lives.
- **Partner with 300 million young people** as change-makers and create spaces for developing their leadership.

2.21 People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)

Why in News

- Thazhakara grama panchayat published the second volume of its People's Biodiversity Register, detailing the region's biodiversity.

Key Highlights

- Thazhakara grama panchayat has become one of the first in Kerala to update and publish a comprehensive PBR with community involvement.
- PBR includes details on the region's biodiversity, identification of resources, traditional knowledge, and the impact of climate change.
- PBR will aid in conservation, sustainable resource utilization, and protection of traditional knowledge.

Miscellaneous Points

Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)

Proposed by	Narendra Modi, The Prime Minister of India
Announced at	26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) at Glasgow, United Kingdom in 2021
Launch date	October 20, 2022
Launched at	Statue of Unity, EktaNagar, Kevadia, Gujarat
Initiated & led by	Government of India
Need	<p>Nearly 3 billion people are projected to experience chronic water scarcity due to droughts at 2°C warming</p> <p>global economy could lose up to 18% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2050 without urgent action by one and all</p>
Aim	<p>to nudge individuals and communities to practice a lifestyle that is synchronous with nature and does not harm it.</p> <p>People practicing such life lifestyle are recognized as 'Pro Planet People'.</p>
Objectives	<p>to mobilize at least one billion Indians and other global citizens to take individual and collective action for protecting & preserving environment during 2022-2027</p> <p>at least 80% of all villages and urban local bodies within India to become environment-friendly by 2028.</p>
Key Principle	Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet and by the planet
Duration	5 years
Nodal Agency	<p>1st Year (Curator & Incubator) → NITI Aayog</p> <p>2nd to 5th Year (Implementor) → Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)</p>
Three Pronged Strategy	<p>Change in Demand (Phase I)</p> <p>to nudge individuals to practise simple yet effective environment-friendly actions in daily lives</p> <p>Change in Supply (Phase II)</p> <p>to enable industries and markets to respond swiftly to the changing demand</p> <p>Change in Policy (Phase III)</p> <p>to influence government and industrial policy to support both sustainable consumption and production</p>
Focus Area	2022-23 → Change in Demand (Phase 1)
Implementation Mechanism	<p>Compilation of 75 LiFE actions lists across seven categories, viz energy, water saving, single-use plastic, sustainable food systems, waste reduction (swachhata actions), healthy lifestyle, and e-waste compiled to commemorate the mission launch in the 75th year of India's Independence</p> <p>Creation of LiFE Dashboard</p> <p>Conducting a baseline survey to gain insight into the baseline level of all LiFE action indicators to measure success</p> <p>Identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and impact of LiFE actions</p> <p>Coordinated and concerted actions by Ministries/Departments</p>
Global promotion activities	<p>Proposal by India to United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to declare International LiFE Day</p> <p>MoEFCC, Ministry of External Affairs, with support from NITI Aayog will identify & build capacity to countries to implement the Mission</p> <p>Top 5 ideas research proposals on how environment-friendly actions can be adopted will be acknowledged at International LiFE conference in June 2023.</p>

DID YOU KNOW?

As per **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, one of the main functions of the **Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC)**, constituted by every local body, is to **prepare PBR** in which the biological diversity of the area is documented.

- Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) aims to **update the PBR in 50% of local bodies in Kerala by the end of 2024.**

2.22 Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution

Why in News

- Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) highlighted some initiatives in Parliament.

Key Highlights

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) conducts **Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan, ranking 131 cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), launched in 2019**, based on population.
 - Delhi ranked 9th among 47 cities** with a population of more than 10 lakh for air quality improvement measures under NCAP.
 - NCAP aims for a 20-30% reduction in PM concentrations by 2024**, which was revised for **up to 40% reduction or achievement of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** by 2025-26 in **131 cities (non-attainment cities and Million Plus Cities)** in **24 States**.
 - Rs. 19,614.44 crores have been allocated** to 131 cities from FY 2019-20 to FY 2025-26 for implementing **City Action Plans under NCAP**.
 - ✓ **49 Million Plus Cities/Urban Agglomerations** funded under XVth Finance Commission air quality grant.
 - ✓ **Remaining 82 cities funded by MoEF&CC** under Control of Pollution Scheme.
 - 95 cities have shown improvement in air quality in terms of annual PM10 concentrations in FY 2023-24 compared to **FY 2017-18 baseline**.
 - 18 cities met NAAQS for PM10 (60 µg/m³) in FY 2023-24.**
- Notification of **Ambient Air Quality Standards**.
- Promotion of **ethanol blending**.
 - Average ethanol blending in **petrol crossed 15%** for the first time in May 2024.
 - Government has set **target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol** under EBP programme by **Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26**.
- Launching of **National Air Quality Index in 2014**.
- Introduction of **BS VI compliant vehicles** since April 2020.
- Notification of **Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules 2016**.
- Constitution of **Commission on Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM)**.
- Shifting of operational brick kilns to **zig-zag technology**.
- CPCB directed all 17 categories of highly polluting industries to install **Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS)**.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kerala was the **first state in India to publish the first volume of the PBR across all local bodies**.

DID YOU KNOW?

In **2009**, the Central Pollution Control Board (**CPCB**) notified the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (**NAAQS**), covering 12 pollutants: **PM10, PM2.5, SO₂, NO₂, CO, NH₃, Ozone, Lead, Benzene, Benzo-Pyrene, Arsenic, and Nickel**.

KEY TERMS

PM10

Particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less, which can cause health issues when inhaled.

2.23 Development of Infrastructure on Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

Why in News

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued **updates regarding the development of infrastructure in ESZ**.

Key Highlights

- Based on proposals and recommendations of the State Government, Ministry notifies the ESZs around Protected Areas such as National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**
- The **guidelines for declaring ESZs** were issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in **2011**.
- The **purpose of ESZs is to act as a "Shock Absorber" for ecosystems** and serve as **transition zones** from areas of high protection to lesser protection.
- ESZs are regulatory rather than prohibitive**, allowing local community activities like agriculture and house constructions.

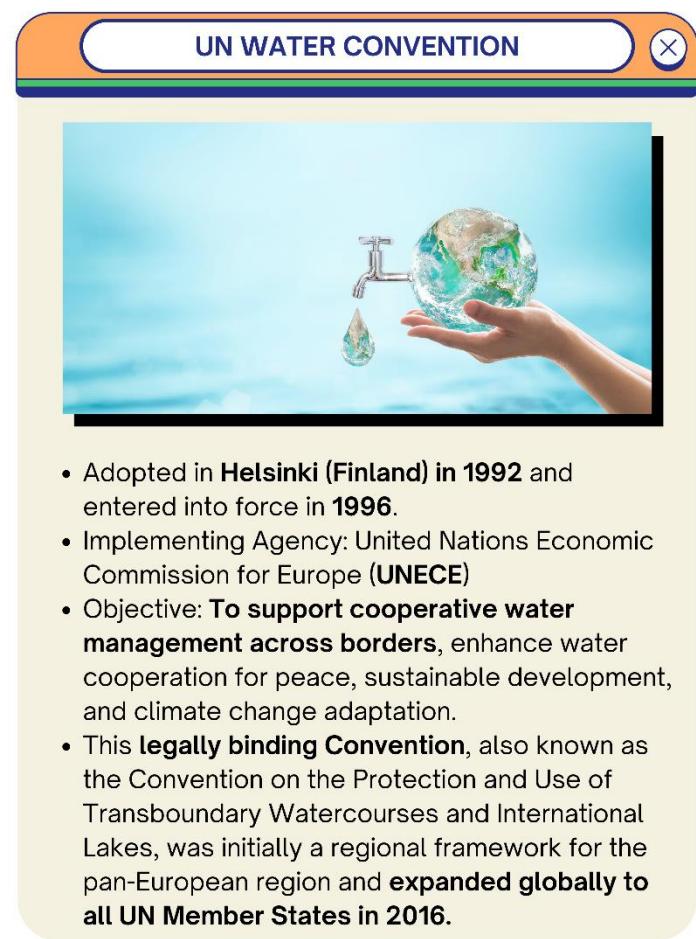
2.24 Ivory Coast Joins UN Water Convention

Why in News

- Ivory Coast has become the 10th African nation and overall 53rd party (India is not a party yet) to join the 1992 Convention.

Key Highlights

- Ivory Coast shares 8 transboundary river basins with 6 neighbouring countries.



2.25 Project Tiger & Elephant

Why in News

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEFCC**) is taking measures for the conservation of elephants and their habitats under the Project Tiger & Elephant scheme.

Key Highlights

- Elephant Population Estimates:**
 - 2017: 29,964
- Legislative and Protective Measures:**
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
 - Indian Forest Act, 1927
- Conservation Efforts:**
 - Financial and technical assistance** under Project Tiger & Elephant.
 - Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat scheme.**
 - Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016.**
- Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun** in consultation with the Ministry of Environment Forest, and Climate Change, National Highway Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority and World Bank Group has published a document namely '**Eco-friendly**

Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure' (2016) to assist project agencies in designing linear infrastructure, including railways lines, in a manner that reduces human-animal conflicts.

- **Elephant Corridors:**
 - **150 corridors ground-validated** across 15 states.
 - **33 Elephant Reserves** established in 14 states.
- **Budget Allocation and Expenditure 2023-24:** ₹336.80 crore (Budget Estimate), ₹244.60 crore (Revised Estimate), ₹243.75 crore (Expenditure)

About Project Tiger & Elephant (Central Sponsored Scheme)

- Official **merger of Project Tiger (Launched in 1973) and Project Elephant (Launched in 1992)** announced in **2023** to rationalize funding and minimize overlap in conservation areas for both conservation projects.
- New division established called '**Project Tiger and Elephant Division**' under **MoEFCC**.

About Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 (CAMPA Act)

- **Purpose:** Compensate for forest area loss and ensure sustainability.
- **Funds Established:**
 - **National Compensatory Afforestation Fund** under the Public Account of India.
 - **State Compensatory Afforestation Fund** under the Public Account of each state.
- **Company Obligations:**
 - Companies diverting forest land must provide alternative land for afforestation.
 - Companies must pay for planting new trees on the provided alternative land.
- **Fund Allocation:**
 - **90%** of the funds to **states**.
 - **10%** of the funds retained by the **center**.
 - **Funds can be used for** catchment area treatment, assisted natural regeneration, forest management, wildlife protection, village relocation, managing human-wildlife conflicts, training and awareness, wood-saving devices, **and allied activities**.
 - **Audit of the accounts** of both National and States/UTs CAMPA Authorities by the **Comptroller and Auditor- General of India (C&AG)**.

Miscellaneous Points

- **Total Tiger Reserves: 55**
 - **55th: Dholpur – Karauli Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan**
 - **54th: Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (MP)**
 - **53rd: Ranipur Tiger Reserve (UP)**
- **23 tiger reserves in India have achieved Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Accreditation including Kali, Melghat, Navegaon-Nagzira, Pilibhit, and Periyar.**
- **Tiger Reserves are notified by State Governments** as per provisions of Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 on advice of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

2.26 Compulsory Ban on Polythene Bags

Why in News

DID YOU KNOW?

As per the **5th cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2022** (usually done in cycles of four years) summary report, India has a minimum of 3,167 tigers, maximum of 3,925, with an average number of **3,682 tigers** (highest in Madhya Pradesh) reflecting a commendable annual growth rate of 6.1%.

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has enforced a compulsory ban on polythene bags and certain single-use plastics to combat environmental pollution.

Key Highlights

- Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021: Amending Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.**
 - Prohibition of identified single-use plastic items from July 2022.
 - Ban on plastic carry bags less than 120 microns from December 2022.
 - Ban on non-woven plastic carry bags less than 60 GSM (Grams per Square Meter) from September 2021.
 - It will be the responsibility of urban local bodies and 'gram panchayats' for setting up and coordinating the waste management system and for performing the associated functions.
 - The provision of minimum thickness of 50 micron will not be applicable to carry bags made up of compostable plastic.
- Implementation Steps:**
 - Special Task Forces constituted in all 36 States/UTs.
 - Directions under **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** to restrict raw material supply for banned plastics.
 - Online platforms for monitoring:** National Dashboard, CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) Monitoring Module, and CPCB Grievance Redressal App.
- MoEFCC also notified the **Guidelines on Extended Producers Responsibility on plastic packaging as Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022** in 2022.
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.

Additional Information

- In the **4th United Nations Environment Assembly held in 2019**, India had piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic products pollution.

2.27 Water Management System

Why in News

- Ministry of Jal Shakti** is addressing the exploitation of groundwater resources in India, focusing on sustainable water management practices.

Key Highlights

- Groundwater Statistics (2023):**
 - Total annual extractable groundwater: 407.21 billion cubic meters (bcm)
 - Total annual groundwater extraction: 241.34 bcm
- National Water Policy (2012):**
 - Evolving water-efficient agricultural systems.
 - Reuse of urban water effluents and industrial pollutants.
- Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE): Set up in 2022.**

DID YOU KNOW?

For wider public outreach, **PRAKRITI** - mascot was also launched in 2022.

DID YOU KNOW?

Water being a state subject, the issues related to development, regulation and management of water resources, including ground water, are primarily the responsibilities of the state governments.

- Promotion of water efficiency in irrigation, domestic supply, and industrial uses.
- Target: To achieve the target for improvement in water use efficiency by 20%.
- **Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA): Set up in 1997 under Environment Protection Act, 1986.**
 - Regulation of groundwater abstraction.
 - **Mandatory installation of STP** for infrastructure projects drawing 20KLD or more groundwater.
 - **Biennial water audits** for industries abstracting over 100 KLD groundwater.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA): Catch the Rain Campaign**
 - Launched in 2019.
 - Focuses on monsoon rainfall harvesting and water conservation activities.
 - Themed 'Nari Shakti se Jal Shakti' for 2024-25.
- **State Initiatives:**
 - Various states have implemented significant water conservation programs:
 - ✓ Rajasthan: Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan
 - ✓ Maharashtra: Jalyukt Shivar
 - ✓ Gujarat: Sujalam Sufalam Abhiyan
 - ✓ Telangana: Mission Kakatiya
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh: Neeru Chettu
 - ✓ Bihar: Jal Jeevan Hariyali
 - ✓ Haryana: Jal Hi Jeevan
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu: Kudimaramath scheme

2.28 Urban Flooding During Monsoon Season

Why in News

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is addressing urban flooding during the monsoon season through various measures and guidelines.

Key Highlights

- **Government Roles:**
 - **Urban planning, land use regulation, and building construction** are functions of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Urban Development Authorities.
 - **Flood control and drainage planning** are the responsibilities of State Governments and ULBs.
 - The **central government provides financial and technical support** to states.
- **Guidelines and Documents:**
 - Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation Guidelines 2015
 - River Centric Urban Planning Guidelines, 2021
 - Guidance Document on Creation of Rainwater Harvesting Parks, 2021

2.29 National Action Programme to Combat Desertification

Why in News

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has prepared the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, 2023, in line with its commitments to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Key Highlights

- National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, 2023:**
 - Commitment to **restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.**
 - Creation of an **additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030** through additional forest and tree cover.
 - The plan **does not include financial assistance provisions.**

DID YOU KNOW?

National Forest Policy (NFP), 1988 envisages the national goal to have a **minimum of one-third of the total land area under forest or tree cover.**

UNCCD



- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):** India is a party to the UNCCD along with 196 other nations and European Union.
- Adopted in 1994.
- Sole legally binding** international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- Parties to the Convention meet in Conferences of the Parties (COPs) every 2 years.
- COP 14** to the UNCCD was held in 2019 in New Delhi, India.

2.30 Management of Hazardous Waste

Why in News

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) had updated the **Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016** to enhance the safe management of hazardous wastes.

Key Highlights

- Updated Rules (2016):
 - Supersedes the 2008 rules under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**
 - Ensures environmentally sound storage, treatment, and disposal of hazardous wastes.

2.31 Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)

Why in News

CEPI



- Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)** was launched at Davos in 2017.
- Objective:** To accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging viral threats through bringing together public-sector, private-sector and academic partners.
- CEPI's 2022-2026 plan**, known as CEPI 2.0, will help the world make the scientific progress needed to respond to the **next Disease X** threat with a new vaccine in just 100 days. This goal is known as the **100 Days Mission**.

- Ministry of Science and Technology inaugurated **Asia's first health research-related "Pre-clinical Network Facility"** under the CEPI.

Key Highlights

- The facility is **located at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology** under the **Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI)** in Faridabad (Haryana).
- Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) – Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI)** was selected as a pre-clinical network laboratory for its capability to handle **BSL3** (Bio-Safety Level 3) pathogens, making it the 9th such facility globally and the first in Asia.
- The laboratory includes one of the largest small animal facilities in India, housing about 75,000 mice and other species like rats, rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs.
- Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic) Facility** was also inaugurated to act as a repository for microbial cultures, facilitating research and development.

Miscellaneous Points

- THSTI has played an important role in developing **Nipah monoclonal antibodies**.

2.32 Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage

KEY TERMS

Why in News

- The **Philippines** has been selected as the **host country for the Board of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage**.

Legal Personality

The legal status allowing an entity to enter into agreements, contracts, and obligations under the law.

Key Highlights

- Philippines hosting the Board will grant the Board the **legal personality** needed, for example, to negotiate and enter into a hosting arrangement with the **World Bank, which will be the interim trustee of the Fund**, operationalize the financial intermediary fund, and host of the Fund's secretariat.
- The Fund was **operationalized at the COP 28 UN Climate Change Conference** in 2023 to assist vulnerable countries in recovering from climate impacts.
- Board comprises **26 members** (12 from developed country and 14 from developing country).
- The Fund will be **accountable to and function under** the guidance of the Conference of the Parties (**COP**) and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (**CMA**).

2.33 Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM)

Why in News

- CAQM has **issued statutory directions** to Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi for the implementation and review of the updated action plans **for preventing and controlling stubble burning during the 2024 paddy harvest season**.

Key Highlights

- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has identified **Crop Residue Management as a priority area** for preventing air pollution.
- A framework for preventing and controlling stubble burning** was developed and updated based on learnings from 2021, 2022, and 2023.

- Measures include **in-situ and ex-situ management of stubble**, IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) activities, and enforcement mechanisms.

About the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas (CAQM)

- **Introduced through an Ordinance in 2020 and act was passed in 2021 making it a statutory commission.**
- **Aimed** at improving air quality in NCR and adjoining areas of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Replaces the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority (1998).
- **Composition:** Chairperson, member-secretary (Joint Secretary rank), serving/former Joint Secretary, three independent technical members, three NGO members.
 - **Tenure:** three years or till 70 years of age.
- **Ex-officio Members:** Central and state government representatives, CPCB, ISRO, NITI Aayog, certain ministries.
- **Selection Committee:** Headed by the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, includes Cabinet Secretary and other ministers.
- **Functions:** Coordinate state actions, plan pollution control, identify air pollutants, conduct R&D, train workforce, prepare action plans.
- **Jurisdiction:** Sole authority on air quality management, prevails over state and central pollution boards.
- **Penalties:**
 - Imprisonment up to five years, fine up to one crore rupees, or both.
 - Farmers excluded but subject to environmental compensation for stubble burning.
 - Appeals go to the National Green Tribunal.

KEY TERMS

In-situ Management

Managing stubble directly in the field where it is produced.

Ex-situ Management

Managing stubble outside the field where it is produced, often by using it as fuel or feedstock.

2G Ethanol Plant

A plant that produces **ethanol from lignocellulosic biomass**, such as agricultural residue.

Miscellaneous Points

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** developed a standard protocol for recording and monitoring crop residue burning events, issued in August 2021.
- One **commercial Second Generation (2G) ethanol plant** based on paddy straw feedstock was set up by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) at Panipat in 2022.

2.34 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Why in News

- India submitted its **Third National Communication to the UNFCCC**, highlighting the impacts of climate change and the nation's efforts to mitigate these effects.

Key Highlights of Communication

- India's climate adaptation actions are primarily financed through domestic resources.
- The **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** provides an overarching framework with missions in areas such as solar energy, energy efficiency, water, agriculture, and more.
- States/Union Territories have prepared **State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC)** addressing state-specific climate issues.

- In 2022, India updated its **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** and introduced **Mission 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment)** to promote responsible consumption.

About the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- A multilateral treaty adopted in **1992** to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations.
- Treaty came into force in **1994**.
- 198 Parties** are part of the Convention.
- Key Agreements:**
 - Kyoto Protocol (1997):** Industrialized countries committed to quantified emissions reduction targets.
 - ✓ First commitment period: 2008-2012.
 - ✓ Second commitment period (Doha Amendment): 2013-2020.
 - Paris Agreement (2015):** All parties must plan, report, and review their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to mitigate climate change.
 - ✓ **India's first NDCs** cover the period up to 2030.
- Conferences of the Parties (COP):**
 - Annual meetings since 1995** (first held in Berlin, Germany) to measure progress and negotiate climate responses.
 - Host country rotates** among 5 UN regional groups (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, and Western European and Others).
 - COP28 (2023)** was held in Dubai included the **first Global Stocktake**.
 - ✓ Global Stocktake will be reviewed every five years to assess progress on **Paris Agreement (2015)**.
 - COP29 (2024)** will be held in **Baku, Azerbaijan**.

About NAPCC

- Introduced in **2008**.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF)** coordinates the overall implementation of NAPCC.
- Focuses on addressing climate change through **8 National Missions**.
 - National Solar Mission:** Launched in 2010 to promote solar energy development and utilization.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
 - National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency:** Approved in 2009 to improve energy efficiency across various sectors.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of Power
 - National Mission on Sustainable Habitat:** Approved in 2011 to focus on sustainable urban planning and habitat.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of Urban Development
 - National Water Mission:** Ensures effective water resource management.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation
 - National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem:** Approved in 2014 to protect and preserve the Himalayan ecosystem.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology

KEY TERMS

Global Stocktake

Where **States assessed the progress made towards the goals set in the Paris Agreement** and charted a course of action.

Nationally Determined Contributions

Climate action plans submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement detailing their efforts to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

- **National Mission for a Green India:** Approved in 2014 to emphasize on afforestation and eco-restoration.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture:** Operational from the year 2014-15 to promote climate-resilient agricultural practices.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture
- **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change:** Develops a strategic knowledge framework for climate change.
 - ✓ **Ministry:** Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology

2.35 Steps taken by the Government for Water Conservation and Rainwater Harvesting

Why in News

- Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti highlighted major steps taken by the Government for water conservation and rainwater harvesting to reduce water stress in the country.

Key Highlights

- **15th Finance Commission Grants:** Financial assistance provided to States for rainwater harvesting.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA):** Implemented annually since 2019, with the current year's theme "Catch the Rain 2024," covering all districts.
- **Building Bye Laws:** Guidelines for States to adopt measures for rainwater harvesting and water conservation.
- **Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE):** Established in 2022 under National Water Mission to promote water use efficiency across various sectors.
- **Mission Amrit Sarovar:** Launched on National Panchayati Raj Day on 24th April, 2022 to create/rejuvenate at least 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district.
- **National Aquifer Mapping (NAQUIM) Project:** Completed mapping of 25 lakh sq. km. for water conservation measures by March 31, 2023.
 - **Initiated in 2012 by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** under the Ground Water Management and Regulation Plan Scheme (XII plan).
 - Aimed to delineate aquifers and prepare area-specific groundwater management plans with community participation.
- **Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater (2020):** Master Plan has provisions for construction of about 1.42 crore Rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of monsoon rainfall.
- **National Water Policy (2012):** Advocates rainwater harvesting and conservation of water.

About Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain Campaign

- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in 2019,

KEY TERMS

Jal Shakti Kendras (JSKs)

Planned to set up at each District Headquarter to disseminate information related to water conservation techniques and will provide technical guidance to people.

KEY TERMS

Rainwater Harvesting

The collection and storage of rainwater for reuse on-site, rather than allowing it to run off.

Aquifer Management Plan

A strategy for managing groundwater resources to ensure their sustainable use.

Artificial Recharge

The process of augmenting the natural replenishment of groundwater storage by some method of construction, spreading of water, or by artificially changing natural conditions.

- covering **256 water stressed districts**, to initiate water conservation at the grass-root level through **citizen participation to accelerate water conservation**.
- A campaign. “**Catch the Rain**” with the tagline “**Catch the Rain – where it falls when it falls**” was started **by National Water Mission in 2020** to take up the Jal Shakti Abhiyan -II (JSA -II).
 - **Later in 2021**, The “**Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain**” campaign with the theme “Catch the Rain, where it falls, when it falls” was launched on **22 March, the World Water Day, covering all districts**.
 - **Implementing Agency: Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, and Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation**, as part of **National Water Mission**.
 - **5th Edition in 2024 covering** all blocks of **all districts** across the country with the theme: “**Nari Shakti se Jal Shakti**”

2.36 Financing Mitigation and Adaptation Projects (FMAP)

KEY TERMS

Why in News

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) received approval for funding of **\$215.6 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF)** to create a **\$1 billion corpus** for financing mitigation and adaptation projects for MSMEs.

Mitigation and Adaptation

Efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases (mitigation) and adjust to current or expected future climate (adaptation).

Key Highlights

- Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved a **\$200 million loan** and a **\$15.6 million grant** for SIDBI.
- **SIDBI will add another \$800 million** from its balance sheet and market raising to form the \$1 billion fund.
- FMAP facility will **support MSME projects in renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, and e-mobility**.
- The FMAP programme will **provide nearly 10,000 concessional loans to MSMEs**.
- **Expected outcomes** include a **reduction of 35.3 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions** and substantial water savings, **benefiting more than 10.8 million beneficiaries**.

Miscellaneous Points

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** approved \$240 million for lending for rooftop solar projects in India in July 2024.
 - ADB loan will be routed through the **State Bank of India and NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture And Rural Development)**.
- **GCF is the world's largest dedicated climate fund, set up by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010**, with a portfolio of 270 projects worth \$14.9 billion, aiming for transformative climate action in 130 developing countries.

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA

2.37 Employee Provident Fund Organization (EPFO)

Why in News

- EPFO recorded a **19.50 lakh net addition of members in May 2024**, the **highest since April 2018**.

Key Highlights

- Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Haryana saw the highest net addition figures, comprising **58.24% of the total net members added**.
- Expert services**, which encompass manpower suppliers, normal contractors, security services, and miscellaneous activities, **account for around 42.33% of the total net membership addition**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **EPFO**.

2.38 Efforts to Promote and Support Startups

Why in News

- The Government of India has undertaken various efforts to promote and support startups, **recognizing more than 1.4 lakh startups by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as of June 2024**.

Key Initiatives

- Startup India Initiative:** Launched on **January 16, 2016**, by **DPIIT**, to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and encouraging investments.
- Startup India Action Plan:** Launched in **2016** comprising **19 action items** spanning simplification, funding support, and industry-academia partnerships.
- Ease of Procurement:** Central Ministries/Departments directed to relax conditions for DPIIT-recognized startups in public procurement.
- Startup India: The Way Ahead:** Unveiled on January 16, 2021.
 - Includes actionable plans for promoting ease of doing business, leveraging technology for reforms, building stakeholder capacities, and enabling a digital Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- Startups allowed to self-certify compliance** under 9 Labour and 3 Environment laws for 3-5 years from incorporation.
- Startups **incorporated on or after April 1, 2016**, can apply for income tax exemption for **3 consecutive years** out of ten years since incorporation.
- Faster Exit for Startups:** Startups notified as 'fast track firms' to wind up operations within 90 days compared to 180 days for other companies.
- Exemption under Section 56 of the Income Tax Act:** DPIIT recognized startups eligible for exemption from provisions of section 56(2)(viib).
- Support for Intellectual Property Protection:**
 - Fast-tracked patent application examination and disposal.
 - Government launched **Start-ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP)** which facilitates the startups to file applications for patents, designs and trademarks through registered facilitators in appropriate IP offices by paying only the statutory fees.
 - Startups receive 80% rebate on filing patents and 50% rebate on trademarks.
- Startup India Hub:**
 - Online platform launched in **2017**.
 - Connects startups, investors, mentors, academic institutions, and other stakeholders.**
- International Market Access:**
 - Connects Indian startup ecosystem to global counterparts.

- **Established bridges with around 20 countries** for cross-collaboration and soft-landing platforms.
- **Startup India Showcase:**
 - **Online discovery platform** for promising startups.
- **National Startup Advisory Council:**
 - Constituted in January **2020**.
 - Advises the Government on building a strong startup ecosystem.
- **National Startup Awards (NSA): Started in 2020.**
 - Recognizes and rewards outstanding startups and ecosystem enablers.
 - Provides handholding support across various tracks like investor connect, mentorship, and international market access.
- **States' Startup Ranking Framework (SRF): Launched in 2018.**
 - Encourages competitive federalism and creates a thriving startup ecosystem.
 - Facilitates states to identify and replicate good practices.
- **Startup Champions on Doordarshan:**
 - **Weekly program** covering stories of award-winning/nationally recognized startups.
 - Telecasted in **Hindi and English** across Doordarshan network channels.
- **Startup India Innovation Week:**
 - Celebrated **around National Startup Day on January 16**.
 - Brings together key stakeholders to celebrate entrepreneurship and promote innovation.
- **ASCEND (Accelerating Startup Caliber & Entrepreneurial Drive):**
 - **Sensitization workshops** for startups and entrepreneurship in **North Eastern States**.
 - Aims to augment knowledge and create a robust startup ecosystem.
- **Startup India Investor Connect Portal:**
 - Co-developed with **SIDBI in 2023**.
 - Links startups with investors to help mobilize capital.
- **National Mentorship Portal (MAARG): Launched in 2023.**
 - MAARG - Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth
 - Facilitates accessibility to mentorship for startups across the country.
- **MeitY Start-up Hub (MSH): Launched in 2019.**
 - Nodal entity under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY).
 - **Assists incubators and startups** in improving scalability and market outreach.
- **Domain-specific Centres of Excellence:**
 - Operationalized by MeitY in diverse areas of national interest.
 - Aims to **drive self-sufficiency and capture new technology areas**.
- **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC):**
 - An **Industry - academia interface agency of Department of Biotechnology**, Ministry of Science & Technology.
 - **Supports biotech startups** in sectors including clean energy and emerging technologies.
 - Provides project-based funding and incubation support under **its key Schemes** including Biotech Ignition Grant (BIG), Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI), Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP) and Bioincubators Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies (BioNEST) Scheme.
- **North-East Region Entrepreneurship & Startup Summit (NERES): By Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

- Platform for startups and aspiring entrepreneurs in North-East Region to pitch business ideas.
- **NERES 1.0** was held in **2020** in **Guwahati, Assam** in collaboration with Federation of Industry & Commerce of North-Eastern Region (FINER) as the industry partner.
- **National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI):**
 - Umbrella program launched in **2016** by the **Department Science and Technology (DST)** to nurture ideas and innovations into successful startups.
- **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX):**
 - launched by the Department of Defense Production, **Ministry of Defense**, in **2018**.
 - Fosters innovation and technology development in **Defence and Aerospace**.
 - **Funded and managed by a 'Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)' which has been formed as a 'not for profit' company as per Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013** for this purpose, by the **two founder members i.e. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL**.

2.39 National Career Service (NCS) Portal

Why in News

- NCS Portal **surpassed 2 million active vacancies** in July.

Key Highlights

- **Highest vacancies** are in the **finance and insurance sector** with 14.7 lakh openings.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024** for **National Career Service (NCS) Portal**.

2.40 National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (Mission Karmayogi)

Why in News

- Union Minister reviewed the progress of the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building.

Key Highlights

- Nearly 31 lakh employees across the Government of India are currently undergoing training under **Mission Karmayogi**.
- **National Standards for Civil Services Training Institute (NSCTI)** introduced to standardize capacity-building practices.
- Development of in-house capacities within CSTIs to digitize training courses for **Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) platform**.
- Minister launched several initiatives under the mission including **Amrit Gyan Kosh** (a knowledge bank designed to nurture shared learning resources), **Quality Improvement Plan**, **Faculty Development Programme**, and **Faculty Portal**.



2.41 Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO)

KEY TERMS

KLEMS Database

A database providing employment estimates across capital, labor, energy, materials, and services sectors, published by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

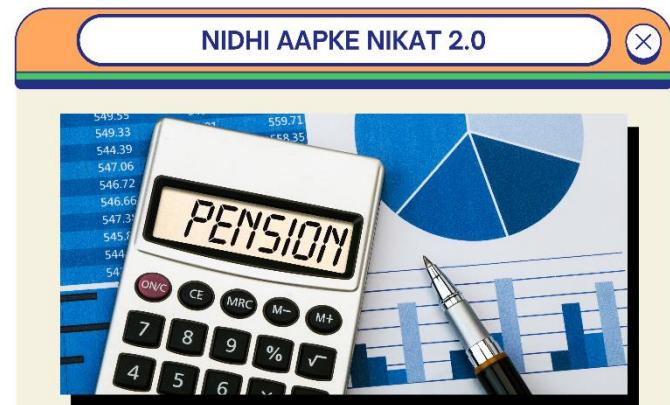
The ratio of the working population to the total population aged 15 years and above, indicating the level of employment.

Key Highlights

- Employment in India increased to **64.33 crore in 2023-24**, up from 47.5 crore in 2017-18.
- The manufacturing sector (formal and informal entities) saw an increase of **85 lakh employment opportunities** from 2017-18 to 2022-23
- More than 1.3 crore net subscribers** joined EPFO during **2023-24**.
- The **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** for persons aged 15 years and above showed an increasing trend with **56%** in 2022-23.

Miscellaneous Points

- Employment and Unemployment data is collected through the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) during July to June every year **since 2017-18**.
- Ministry of Labour & Employment has framed a **model State Action Plan** enumerating the action points to be taken by respective state governments **for the eradication of child labour**.
- EPFO has settled 25% more claims in the Q1 of the FY25 than Q1 of FY24**.
- EPFO has observed a **significant increase in the registration of new establishments** from 1.17 lakhs in 2019-20 to **2.94 lakhs in 2023-24**.
- Aadhaar seeding has been mandatory** to avoid mismatch of member details for employees joined after 01.09.2017.
- Auto Transfer of accounts** for employees having one UAN (Universal Account Number) allotment after 2012.
- Auto transfer facility on change of employment** for employees who joined after 01.10.2016.
- PRAYAAS initiative** was launched in **2020** with an aim of handing over PPOs (Pension Payment Order) to members of EPS 1995 on the day of their superannuation.
 - PPO, also known as Pension Payment Order, is a unique 12-digit number designated to every pensioner under the Employee Provident Fund (EPF).
- Nidhi Aapke Nikat initiative** has been launched for on-spot grievance redressal.



- Launched in **2023** to provide a platform for **on-the-spot grievance redressal**, information sharing, and facilitation of pension-centric services to employees, employers, and pensioners at the district level.
- Special focus on **Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS-95) pensioners** through a dedicated Pension Helpdesk
- Submission of **Digital Life Certificates** and handover of **Pension Payment Order (PPO)** under **PRAYAS Yojna**.
- District Camps are organised on **27th of every month or next working day** in case 27th is holiday.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **EPFO**.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

2.42 National Legal Services Authority

Why in News

- Regular **Legal Awareness Programmes** are being organized under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority at various levels to create awareness about the functioning of Legal Aid Clinics and the rights of weaker and marginalized sections of society.

Key Highlights

- Regulation 3 of the **National Legal Services Authority (Legal Services Clinics) Regulations, 2011**, allows for the **establishment of District Legal Services Clinics** based on financial resources.
 - These Clinics can be set up in** villages, jails, educational institutions, community centers, protection homes, courts, juvenile justice boards, and other areas facing barriers to access legal services.
- The number of Legal Services Clinics and persons provided legal assistance for 2023-24 and 2024-25 (up to May 2024) are:
 - Total for 2023-24: 11,384 clinics, 1,036,040 persons assisted
 - Total for 2024-25 (up to May 2024): 11,574 clinics, 197,119 persons assisted

About National Legal Services Authority

- Constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- Nodal Ministry: **Ministry of Law and Justice**
- Objective:** To provide **free Legal Services to the weaker sections** of society and to **organize Lok Adalats** for amicable settlement of disputes.
- Hon'ble Dr. Justice D. Y. Chandrachud, The **Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief**.
- The President nominates the **senior-most judge of the Supreme Court** (currently Justice Sanjiv Khanna), as the **Executive Chairperson of NALSA**.
- NALSA is **housed at Supreme Court of India**.
- Persons eligible for free legal services includes** Women and children, Members of SC/ST, Industrial workmen, Victims of mass disasters, violence, flood, drought, earthquake, and industrial disaster, Disabled persons, Persons in custody, Persons whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 1 lakh (in the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee the limit is Rs. 5,00,000), Victims of trafficking in human beings or beggars.
- In every State, **State Legal Services Authority (SLSA)** has been constituted to give effect to the policies and directions of the **NALSA** and to give free legal services to the people and conduct Lok Adalats in the State.
 - SLSA is **headed by Chief Justice of the respective High Court** who is the **Patron-in-Chief** of the SLSA.
 - A Seniormost Judge of High Court is nominated as **Executive Chairman**, SLSA.
- In every District, **District Legal Services Authority** (DLSA) has been constituted in the District Courts Complex to implement Legal Services Programmes in the District.
 - Chaired by the District Judge** of the respective district.
 - A **Civil Judge Cadre Judicial Officer** is appointed as **Secretary on full time basis**.

2.43 Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

Why in News

- In the last 2 years, **27 establishments surrendered their exemption**, adding about 30,000 employees and Rs. 1688.82 crores to the EPFO Fund.

Key Highlights

- Due to improved services, **more establishments are surrendering their exemptions** granted by EPFO.
 - These **establishments prefer to let EPFO manage their employees' Provident Fund (PF) directly**.
 - This **allows them to focus on their core business activities**.
- A **new software and portal will be launched to simplify the process of surrendering exemptions**.
- Establishments that wish to manage the PF corpus of their employees need to seek exemption under **Section 17 of the EPF Act**.
 - This **allows EPFO to permit them to manage their own PF Trust without making statutory contributions**.
 - Such exempted establishments are **statutorily mandated to provide benefits that are at least on par with those provided by EPFO to subscribers** and comply with the notified conditions of exemption as outlined in the Act.

2.44 Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Why in News

- Department of Consumer Affairs reported over 100% case disposal** by Consumer Commissions in 2022 and 2023.

Key Highlights

- Consumer Protection Act, 2019 replaced the Consumer Protection Act, 1986** to modernize consumer protection in the era of globalization, technology, and e-commerce.
 - The **Act establishes a three-tier quasi-judicial system** for consumer grievance redressal:
 - ✓ National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)
 - ✓ State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC)
 - ✓ District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDRC)
 - Simplified adjudication process:**
 - ✓ Complaints can be filed at the place of residence/work, cause of action, or place of business of the opposite party.
 - ✓ **E-filing** (launched in 2020 with Delhi being first to adopt) and virtual hearings.
 - ✓ Deemed admissibility of complaints if not decided within 21 days.
- Introduction of e-Daakhlil** in 2020 for online filing of cases in NCDRC and Consumer Commissions in 35 States/UTs.
- Video conferencing facilities** in National and State Consumer Commissions.

DID YOU KNOW?

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)**, launched in **2020** under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, aims to regulate consumer rights violations, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements, empowered under Section 18(2)(1) of the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.

- Revamped **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)** with 17 languages and a toll-free number **1915** for pre-litigation grievance redressal.
- The "**Jago Grahak Jago**" campaign and "**Jagriti**" mascot (**launched in 2022-23**) for consumer awareness.

2.45 Rehabilitation of Child Labourers

Why in News

- The government is implementing comprehensive measures to eliminate child labour.

Key Highlights

- The **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986** prohibits employment of children below 14 years in any occupation or process and prohibition of adolescents in the age group of 14 to 18 years in hazardous occupations and processes.
- The **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 1988** ensures enforcement through District Nodal Officers and Task Forces.
- Ministry of Labour & Employment has framed a **model State Action Plan** for the eradication of child labour.

KEY TERMS

2.46 Data Privacy

Why in News

- The **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act was enacted in 2023**, focusing on obligations for safeguarding digital personal data and outlining rights and duties of Data Principals.

Key Highlights of DPDP Act

- The **DPDP Act, 2023** obligates Data Fiduciaries to safeguard digital personal data and enshrines the rights and duties of Data Principals.
 - **Section 17(2) of the DPDP Act exempts processing of personal data** for research, archiving, or statistical purposes from the Act's provisions, provided it follows prescribed guidelines.

Other Initiatives for Data Privacy

- The **Collection of Statistics (CoS) Act, 2008**, enacted in 2009, mandates that information collected from individuals be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes.
- **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012**, by the Ministry of Science & Technology, led to **guidelines on Statistical Data Dissemination** notified by Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in 2019.
 - **Data from National Sample Surveys by MoSPI** is **categorized into shareable and non-shareable**. Data compromising national security or revealing individual identities is not shared.

2.47 Sampoornata Abhiyan

Why in News

- NITI Aayog is launching the '**Sampoornata Abhiyan**' campaign from July 4th to September 30th, 2024.

Key Highlights

Data Fiduciaries

Entities responsible for processing personal data and ensuring its protection.

Data Principals

Individuals whose personal data is processed by Data Fiduciaries.

- **Objective:** To achieve saturation in 6 identified indicators in 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks.
- **6 indicators for Aspirational Blocks include:**
 - Percentage of pregnant women registered for Antenatal Care (ANC) within the first trimester.
 - Percentage of persons screened for Diabetes against the targeted population in the Block.
 - Percentage of persons screened for Hypertension against the targeted population in the Block.
 - Percentage of pregnant women taking Supplementary Nutrition under the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) Programme regularly.
 - Percentage of Soil Health Cards generated against the soil sample collection target.
 - Percentage of SHGs (Self-help Groups) that have received a Revolving Fund against the total SHGs in the block.
- **6 indicators for Aspirational Districts include:**
 - Percentage of pregnant women registered for Antenatal Care (ANC) within the first trimester.
 - Percentage of pregnant women taking Supplementary Nutrition under the ICDS Programme regularly.
 - Percentage of children fully immunized (9-11 months) (BCG+DPT3+OPV3+Measles 1).
 - Number of Soil Health Cards distributed.
 - Percentage of schools with functional electricity at the secondary level.
 - Percentage of schools providing textbooks to children within 1 month of the start of the academic session.
- **Districts and Blocks will develop a 3-month action plan to achieve saturation**, track progress monthly, and implement awareness and behavior change campaigns.
- **NITI Aayog**, in collaboration with relevant Central Ministries, Departments, and State Governments, **will ensure effective development through improved planning, capacity building, and sustainable service delivery**.

Miscellaneous Points

- **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) was launched in 2018**, and the **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was launched in 2023** to ensure the development of backward areas.

GENDER ISSUES

2.48 SEHER Program

Why in News

- Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL launched the SEHER Program.

Key Highlights

- SEHER is a credit education program launched to help women entrepreneurs access financial tools for business growth.
- Program is part of WEP's Financing Women Collaborative (FWC), aimed at accelerating access to finance for women entrepreneurs.

Miscellaneous Points

- According to the Udyam Registration Portal of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):
 - India has 6.3 crore MSMEs of which 20.5% are women-owned, employing as many as 2.7 crore people.
 - Rural areas have a slightly greater share of women-owned enterprises (22.24%) compared to urban areas (18.42%).
- Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP):
 - Incubated by NITI Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform that transitioned as a public-private partnership in 2022 to build a comprehensive ecosystem supporting women entrepreneurs across India.
- Estimates suggest that accelerating women's entrepreneurship could create over 30 million new women-owned enterprises and 150 to 170 million more jobs.
- TransUnion CIBIL aims to propagate financial knowledge and improve business management skills among women entrepreneurs.

2.49 Digital Shakti 5.0

Why in News

- National Commission for Women (NCW) and CyberPeace Foundation launched the 5th phase of the Digital Shakti Campaign.

Key Highlights

- It aims at digitally empowering and upskilling women and girls in cyberspace.
- In this phase, the goal is to increase the number of trained women to 10 lakhs from current 6 lakhs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Digital Shakti, launched in 2018 at Punjab University in collaboration with Facebook and the National Commission for Women, was revamped as the We Think Digital - Digital Shakti campaign in its 2nd phase in 2020.

INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

2.50 Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

Why in News

- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports discussed the promotion of leadership skills among youth through initiatives like National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), and MY Bharat.

Key Highlights

- **MY Bharat:** An autonomous body under the Department of Youth Affairs.
 - Promotes youth development and youth-led development through 'Kartavya Bodh' and 'SevaBhaav'.
 - Over 1.51 crore registrations on MY Bharat Portal since its launch.

About NYKS

- Nehru Yuva Kendras were established in 1972.
- Objective: To provide avenues for rural youth to take part in the process of nation-building as well as providing opportunities for the development of their personality and skills.

- In the year 1987-88, NYKS was set up as an autonomous organization under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, to oversee the working of these Kendras.**

2.51 Vision 2019-2024 of MoSPI

Why in News

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) highlighted progress on its Vision 2019-2024 goals.**

Key Highlights

- e-Sankhyiki Portal:** Launched on June 29, 2024 (National Statistics Day), to provide time series data on National Accounts Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Index of Industrial Production, and Annual Survey of Industries in first phase.
- Online Computer Monitoring System (OCMS) Portal:** It performs triple role in monitoring the implementation status of central sector projects costing more than Rs 150 Crores in infrastructure sectors and performance of key 11 infrastructure sectors.
- e-SAKSHI Portal:** Developed in 2024 to implement the revised fund flow procedure under Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (**MPLADS**) scheme.
 - The portal offers convenience and accessibility, allowing MPs to propose, track, and oversee the projects at their fingertips.
- National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Surveys:** Conducted using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI).

Miscellaneous Points

- Yearly review meetings** for schemes are held by **NITI Aayog**.
- In addition to this, **for continuation of any scheme beyond Finance Commission Cycle or renewal**, a **third-party evaluation** of the scheme, by an **independent agency in case of Central Sector Schemes** and **Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)**, **NITI Aayog in case of Centrally Sponsored Schemes**, is also carried out to assess the impact of the scheme on ground level.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **e-Sankhyiki Portal**.

'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) Platform

Launch Year — 31st October, 2023 — On National Unity Day

Vision Envisioned as a pivotal, technology-driven facilitator for youth development and youth-led development Overarching goal of providing equitable opportunities to empower the youth in realizing their aspirations and contributing to the creation of a "Viksit Bharat"

Objectives

- To make it a whole of Government platform dedicated to the advancement of the youth
- Leadership Development in Youth to make them social innovators through experiential learning by shifting from isolated physical interaction to programmatic skills
- Better alignment between aspirations of youth and community needs
- Enhanced efficiency through convergence of existing programmes
- Act as a one-stop shop for young people and Ministries with improved two-way communication to connect youth government initiatives and activities of other stakeholder that engage with youth
- Ensuring accessibility by creating a Phygital Ecosystem - a blend of physical and digital experiences

Beneficiaries

- Benefit the youth in the age-group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National Youth Policy
- In case of programme components specifically meant for the adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age-group of 10-19 years

Features

- Create a centralized youth database
 - Urban youth
 - Rural youth
 - Rurban youth
- Provides a framework where youth of our country can seamlessly connect with programs, mentors, and their local communities
- It is 'Phygital Platform' (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally
- Youth across the country can register on the MY Bharat portal (<https://www.mybharat.gov.in/>) and signup for various opportunities and events available on the portal

2.52 Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

Why in News

- Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances released the **23rd monthly report of CPGRAMS for States/UTs** and **26th monthly report on CPGRAMS performance for Central Ministries/Departments** of June, 2024.

Key Highlights

- Citizens can lodge grievances **pertaining to Central Ministries, State Governments, and Union Territories**.
- Collaboration with Common Service Centres (CSCs)** to facilitate filing of grievances for rural citizens.
- State-wise Performance:**
 - Uttar Pradesh** received the highest number of grievances.
 - Uttar Pradesh and Assam** disposed the maximum grievances.
- Grievance Redressal Index for Central Ministries/Departments:**
 - Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Department of Revenue, and Department of Posts** topped in Group A (more than 500 grievances).
 - NITI Aayog, Department of Land Resources, and Department of Investment & Public Asset Management** topped in Group B (less than 500 grievances).
- Grievance Redressal Index for States/UTs:**

S. No.	Group	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
1	Group A – North-Eastern States	Sikkim	Tripura	Assam
2	Group B – Union Territories	Andaman & Nicobar	Chandigarh	Puducherry
3	Group C – States with Grievances ≥ 20000	Punjab	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan
4	Group D – States with Grievances < 20000	Telangana	Chhattisgarh	Uttarakhand

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024** for more information on **CPGRAMS**.

2.53 16th Finance Commission

Why in News

- 16th Finance Commission has **constituted an Advisory Council**.

Key Highlights

- The Advisory Council **members are Dr. D.K. Srivastava, Mr. Neelkanth Mishra, Dr. Poonam Gupta, Ms. Pranjul Bhandari, and Mr. Rahul Bajoria**.
- Dr. Poonam Gupta** will serve as the **Convenor** of the Advisory Council.
- Role and Functions of the Advisory Council:**
 - To **advise the Commission** on any of the Terms of Reference (ToR) or related subjects.
 - To **assist in the preparation of papers or research studies** and to monitor or assess studies commissioned by the Finance Commission.

KEY TERMS

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Specific guidelines or instructions given to a commission or committee outlining the scope and objectives of their work

- To help **broaden the Commission's ambit and understanding** by seeking the best national and international practices on fiscal devolution and improving the quality, reach, and enforcement of its recommendations.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024** for more information on **16th Finance Commission**.

2.54 Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas

Why in News

- Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to **observe 25th June every year as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas.'**

Key Highlights

- The decision was made **to honor the spirit of millions who struggled to revive democracy during the 1975 Emergency.**
- On 25 June 1975, the National Emergency was imposed by the then PM Indira Gandhi**, leading to widespread arrests and silencing of the media.
- Emergency was **revoked on March 21, 1977.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Under Article 352 of the Constitution, the President can declare a state of emergency based on the advice of the Prime Minister and their Cabinet if India's security is threatened by war, foreign attacks, or armed rebellion within the country.

2.55 Global IndiaAI Summit 2024

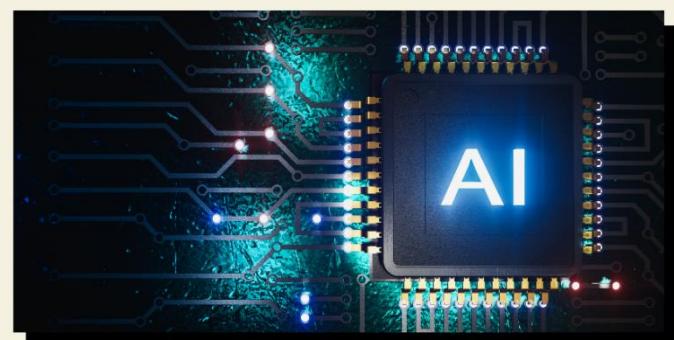
Why in News

- Global IndiaAI Summit 2024 is **being organized to advance the responsible development, deployment, and adoption of artificial intelligence in India.**
- 6th meeting of the GPAI Ministerial Council** was also held.

Key Highlights

- Organised by:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**).
- India, as the lead chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)**, will host member countries and experts to promote safe, secure, and trustworthy AI.
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (**OECD**) - OCDE and GPAI announced a new integrated partnership on AI based on the principles of the OECD Recommendation on AI.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON AI



About IndiaAI Mission

- Launch Year:** 2024
- Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- Budget allocation of **Rs.10,371.92 crore** for the next 5 years.
 - Out of this, **₹2,000 crore would be utilized to develop indigenous AI based solutions.**

- Launched in **2020**, GPAI is a multistakeholder initiative which aims **to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI** by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- Secretariat is hosted at the OECD.**
- Members:** 29 including India (Lead Chair for 2023-2024).
- Serbia elected as **Lead Chair of GPAI for 2024-25.**

- **Implementing Agency:** IndiaAI Independent Business Division (IBD) under Digital India Corporation (DIC)
- **Objective:** To establish a **comprehensive ecosystem that catalyzes AI innovation** across various sectors.
- **Components & Objectives:**
 - **IndiaAI Compute Capacity:** Building a scalable AI compute ecosystem with 10,000+ GPUs (**Graphics Processing Units**) through public-private partnerships, including an AI marketplace for services and pre-trained models.
 - ✓ Once built, AI infrastructure programme **will be merged with the 2nd phase of National Supercomputing Mission.**
 - ✓ Public-sector capacity will be created by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, who will offer AI-compute-as-a-service, based on **designed-in-India Rudra servers**.
 - **IndiaAI Innovation Centre:** Development and deployment of indigenous Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) and domain-specific foundational models in key sectors.
 - **IndiaAI Datasets Platform:** Streamlining access to quality non-personal datasets for AI innovation.
 - **IndiaAI Application Development Initiative:** Promoting socio-economic AI applications in critical sectors.
 - **IndiaAI FutureSkills:** Enhancing AI education and setting up Data and AI Labs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities for foundational courses.
 - **IndiaAI Startup Financing:** Supporting deep-tech AI startups.
 - **Safe & Trusted AI:** Implementing Responsible AI projects.

2.56 102nd International Cooperative Day

Why in News

- Union **Minister of Cooperation addressed the "Sahkar Se Samriddhi" conference** on the 102nd International Cooperative Day on **6th July 2024**.

Key Highlights

- **Theme:** "Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All."
- Launch of a **scheme for 50% assistance on the purchase of nano-fertilizer by farmers**.
- Launch of '**Bharat Organic Atta**' produced by the National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL).
- **All Panchayats in the country will have their own Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) by 2029.**
 - There are **65000 functional PACS in India as of now**.
- Central government has also formed **3 multi-state cooperative institutions**
 - Organic Committee, Export Committee and Seed Committee.



- Annual celebration on the **first Saturday of July since 1923**.
- Implementing Agency: **International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)**
- **Objective:** To celebrate and promote the cooperative movement worldwide.
- **Ministry of Cooperation (India) was established** on this day in **2021**.

Miscellaneous Points

- Year 2025 has been declared as the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations General Assembly.
- National Cooperative Organic Limited (NCOL) has been established in 2023 to promote organic products.

2.57 Cabinet Committees

Why in News

- Government has reconstituted 8 Cabinet Committees.

Key Highlights

- Prime Minister will head 6 out of the 8 reconstituted Cabinet Committees.
- Home Minister will head Cabinet Committee on Accommodation, and Defence Minister will head Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.
- Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs will be the largest, with 14 members, including Prime Minister as Chairman.
- Home Minister is the sole Cabinet member to feature on all these committees.

About Cabinet Committees

- Objective: To streamline decision-making and coordinate various aspects of governance.
- 8 Committees:
 - Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)
 - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)
 - Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) - Headed by the Prime Minister, with the Home Minister as the only member.
 - Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
 - Cabinet Committee on Accommodation (CCA)
 - Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA)
 - Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG)
 - Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development (CCESD).

2.58 54th Pre-Retirement Counseling (PRC) Workshop

Why in News

- Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare inaugurated the 54th Pre-Retirement Counseling (PRC) workshop at the State Convention Centre, Jammu.

Key Highlights

- Workshop aims to facilitate the superannuation process for retiring employees, promoting 'Ease of Living' for pensioners.
- Sessions will include information on BHAVISHYA Portal, Integrated Pensioners Portal, Retirement Benefits, Family Pension, CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme), Income Tax Rules, ANUBHAV, Digital Life Certificate, Investment modes and opportunities, among others.
- Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS's) success story is being emulated by Bangladesh, the Maldives and South Africa.

Note: Kindly refer to CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024 for more information on BHAVISHYA Portal, Integrated Pensioners Portal, CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme), ANUBHAV portal and CPGRAMS.

2.59 MyGov

Why in News

- MyGov platform celebrated its 10th anniversary.

2.60 National Culture Fund (NCF)

Why in News

- It has been highlighted.

About National Culture Fund

- **Launch Year:** 1996 under the Charitable Endowment Act, 1890.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Culture
- **Objective:** To mobilize extra resources through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for promoting, protecting, and preserving India's cultural heritage.
- **Features:**
 - Governed by a **Council chaired by the Minister of Culture** with up to 25 members.
 - **Executive Committee headed by Secretary (Culture)** with up to 11 members.
 - **Donations to NCF are eligible for 100% tax benefit** under Section 80G(ii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
 - Covered under **Schedule VII No. (v) of the Companies Act, 2013** for **CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)** contributions.
 - Annual accounts **audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.**



- Launch Year: **July 26, 2014**
- An Independent Business Division under **Digital India Corporation**, a **Section 8 company** under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- Objective: **To provide a platform for participative governance**, allowing citizens to connect with the government and contribute to policy-making.
- MyGov has also **launched State instances (State-level Portal)** in 23 States including Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and others.

2.61 Governing Council of NITI Aayog

Why in News

- Prime Minister will chair the 9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog, focusing on the 'Viksit Bharat@2047' vision.

Key Highlights

- **Theme of the meeting is 'Viksit Bharat@2047'**, with a focus on making India a developed nation.
- The meeting will also focus on recommendations from the **3rd National Conference of Chief Secretaries**, held in 2023, covering **5 key themes**: Drinking Water, Electricity, Health, Schooling, and Land and Property.
- NITI Aayog to prepare an '**Investment-friendly Charter**' of parameters which would include policies, programmes and processes to be put in place for attracting investments. The States may be monitored on the achievement in these

DID YOU KNOW?

The **Governing Council of NITI Aayog**, comprising Chief Ministers of all States and Union Territories with legislatures and Lt Governors of other Union Territories and **chaired by Prime Minister**, was established in **2015** and reconstituted in **2021** by the Cabinet Secretariat.

- parameters to promote healthy competition among them for attracting investments.
- Prime Minister encouraged the **creation of River Grids at State level** for effective utilization of water resources.
 - **Key Stakeholders of Governing Council:** Prime Minister as Chairperson, Chief Ministers, Lieutenant Governors, Union Ministers as Ex-officio Members and Special Invitees, Vice Chairman and Members of NITI Aayog.

Miscellaneous Points

- The **Prime Minister is the Chairperson of NITI Aayog.**
- India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy with GDP crossing US\$ 5 trillion and aspirations to reach a **US\$ 30 trillion economy by 2047.**

2.62 e-Office

Why in News

- The **government is set to implement e-Office in all attached, subordinate offices, and autonomous bodies** as part of DARPG's 100-days agenda.

Key Highlights

- DARPG issued guidelines for the adoption of e-Office on June 24, 2024.

About e-Office

- **Objective:** To achieve a simplified, responsive, effective, accountable, and transparent working environment in government offices.
- Developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC) as an integral part of the Digital India Programme.**
- **Features:**
 - **File Management System (eFile):** A workflow-based system for managing the entire life cycle of a document from receipt to disposal, including scanning, electronic diarization, file creation, digital signing, dispatch, and archival.
 - **Knowledge Management System (KMS):** A central repository for managing electronic documents, providing version tracking, search, share, and publication functionalities.
 - **Work from Anywhere (WAW) Portal:** A portal for virtual office functions, allowing secure access to office work from anywhere.
 - **Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW):** A web-based application for processing APAR (Annual Performance Appraisal Report), ensuring transparency and reducing delays.

2.63 Indian Digital Public Infrastructure

Why in News

- Government of India is enhancing the reach of Indian Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) across various domains.

Key Highlights

- **Aadhaar:** 138.04 crore Aadhaar numbers have been generated, providing a unique digital identity based on biometric and demographic data.
- **Unified Payment Interface (UPI):** More than 1,388 crore financial transactions were conducted through UPI in June 2024 alone, contributing significantly to financial inclusion.
- **DigiLocker:** Facilitated over 30 crore users and made 675 crore issued documents available for digital issuance and verification.

- **Global Initiatives:**

- **India Stack Global:** Developed to share India's DPI success with the global community and facilitate replication in friendly countries.
- **Global DPI Repository:** Launched under India's G20 Presidency in 2023, it aims to provide a comprehensive portal for digital public infrastructures.
- **International Cooperation:** India has signed **MoUs with 10 countries (Armenia, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Antigua and Barbuda, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago, Tanzania, Kenya, Cuba, and Colombia)** to share successful digital solutions implemented at population scale.

About Aadhar

- Aadhaar is the **world's largest digital identity program**, providing a foundational identity layer in India through a **unique 12-digit number**.
- At the time of its **launch in 2009 (First UID generated in 2010)** with the name of Unique Identification (UID), **India was the first country to implement a biometric-based unique ID system** for its residents on such a large scale.
- To issue such a UID to every resident of India, the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**, was **created in 2009** which subsequently became a Statutory Authority in July 2016 after the promulgation of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.
- The **Aadhaar Act 2016** provides legal backing for this initiative.
- **Key use-cases of Aadhaar** include Direct Benefit Transfer, Digital Life Certificates, Aadhaar-based electronic signatures, biometric attendance systems, and Aadhaar-enabled payment systems.

2.64 e-Courts Mission Mode Project

Why in News

- Phase II of the Project has focused on ICT enablement of District & Subordinate Courts and citizen-centric initiatives.

About the Project

- Project, launched in **2007**, is **part of the National e-Governance Plan for ICT development of the Indian Judiciary**.





- A flagship initiative, launched in **2015**, by Ministry of Electronics & IT (**MeitY**) under **Digital India programme**.
- DigiLocker allows for **digital storage, sharing, and verification of documents and certificates**.
- The **Information Technology (Preservation & Retention of Information by Intermediaries Providing Digital Locker Facilities) Rules, 2016**, provide **legal backing** for documents issued through DigiLocker.
- It **categorizes documents into various sectors** such as Transport Departments, Education & Learning, Banking, Health & Wellness, Sports & Culture, and more.

KEY TERMS

India Stack

India Stack is the **moniker for a set of open APIs (Application Programming Interface) and digital public goods** that aim to unlock the economic primitives of identity, data, and payments at population scale.

- Implemented by the **Department of Justice (Ministry of Law & Justice)** in coordination with the **e-Committee, Supreme Court of India**.
- **Phase I (2011-2015):**
 - **Financial outlay: Rs.935 crore.**
- **Phase II (2015-2023):**
 - **Financial outlay: Rs.1670 crore.**
- **Phase III (2023 onwards):**
 - **Budgetary outlay: Rs.7,210 crore for 4 years.**
- **Aims to digitize entire court records**, enhance e-Filing/e-Payments, establish e-Sewa Kendras, and implement AI/ML technologies.

2.65 Gram Manchitra Application

Why in News

- Gram Manchitra application was **highlighted due to its facilitation and support for Gram Panchayats (GPs) in spatial planning using geo-spatial technology.**

Key Highlights

- Gram Manchitra is a **Geographic Information System (GIS) application launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj** to aid Gram Panchayats in planning Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- The **Ministry also launched mActionSoft**, a mobile-based solution for capturing geo-tagged photos of assets at different stages: before the start, during, and upon completion.
- **Assets geo-tagged using mActionSoft are available on Gram Manchitra.**
- **eGramSwaraj**, a comprehensive application launched in 2020 for Panchayats under the **e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP)**, encompasses planning, budgeting, accounting, monitoring, asset management, and online payments.
- **AuditOnline** application, launched in 2020, allows for online audits of Panchayat accounts, with 2.52 lakh Audit Plans created and 2.48 lakh Audit Reports generated for the audit year 2022-23.
- **BharatNet project**, implemented by the **Department of Telecommunications**, aims to connect all GPs by broadband, with 2.17 lakh GPs made Service Ready.
 - BharatNet project scope **extended to all inhabited villages beyond GPs** as of 2021.
- **2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats have finalized their Citizen Charters.**

About e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project

- Launch year: **2018** (Under **National e-Governance Plan of 2006**)
- Nodal Ministry: **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**
- **Objective:**
 - **Automation of internal workflow processes** of panchayats.
 - **Improving delivery of services** to citizens through Social Auditing.

DID YOU KNOW

States/UTs prepare GPDP considering resources related with Central Finance Commission and Central Government Schemes/Programmes available at Gram Panchayat (GP) level, **State Finance Commission Grants, GP's Own Source Revenue and schemes/programmes of State Governments.**

Panchayat being State subject, **conducting social audit of the executed work under GPDP is sole responsibility of State Government** to ensure achievement of public accountability in utilization of these grants by PRIs and shared with States.

- **Capacity building** of panchayat representatives and officials.
- **Transparency, accountability, efficiency and RTI (Right to Information) compliance** of panchayats.
- Improving governance of the local self-government by **ensuring people's participation in decision-making**.
- **Features:**
 - **Launch of eGramSwaraj portal in 2020:**
 - ✓ It is a **simplified work-based accounting application** to address various aspects of Panchayat functioning like planning, budgeting and accounting.
 - **Integration of eGramSwaraj with Public Financial Management System(PFMS):**
 - ✓ To ensure better financial management of Panchayati Raj Institutions for enhancing transparency & accountability in maintenance of accounts.
 - ✓ It enables Gram Panchayats to make online payments to vendors/ service providers.
 - **AuditOnline application:**
 - ✓ For strengthening transparency and accountability at grassroots level.
 - ✓ It allows for online audit of Panchayat accounts and records detailed information about internal and external audit.
 - **e-GramSwaraj has been integrated with Government e-Marketplace (GeM) in 2023:**
 - ✓ It will **enable Panchayats to procure their goods and services through GeM** leveraging the e-Gram Swaraj platform.
 - ✓ **Allow local producers/ cooperatives/ artisans/ SHGs to sell their product to Government entities** directly by promoting spirit of "Vocal for Local".
 - ✓ As of July 2024, **94,712 Gram Panchayats have on-boarded** onto the eGram Swaraj- Government e-Marketplace (GeM) interface.

KEY TERMS

Geo-Tagging

The process of **adding geographical identification metadata to various media** such as photos or videos.

Geo-Spatial Technology

A **technology that uses data related to geographical locations for visualization and analysis**.

2.66 Highlights of New Criminal Laws

Why in News

- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) **came into force in July except** the provision of section 106(2) of BNS in the first schedule of BNSS, and BSA.

Key Highlights

- **Provisions to reduce jail overcrowding include:**
 - **Time-bound plea bargaining within 30 days** from the date of framing of charge.
 - **First-time offenders may receive one-fourth/one-sixth** of the prescribed punishment.
 - **Maximum detention period for undertrial prisoners is one-third** of the maximum imprisonment period.
 - **Community service introduced** as a punishment for minor offences.
- **Key provisions include:**
 - **Report Incidents Online:** Citizens can report incidents electronically without visiting a police station.

- **File FIR at Any Police Station:** Zero FIR allows FIR filing at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction.
- **Free Copy of FIR:** Victims receive a free copy of the FIR.
- **Right to Inform Upon Arrest:** Arrested individuals can inform a person of their choice.
- **Display of Arrest Information:** Arrest details are displayed in police stations and district headquarters.
- **Forensic Evidence Collection and Videography:** Forensic experts must collect evidence and videograph crime scenes for serious offenses.
- **Fast-Track Investigations:** Investigations for offenses against women and children must be completed **within two months**.
- **Progress Updates to Victims:** Victims receive case progress **updates within 90 days**.
- **Free Medical Treatment for Victims:** Guaranteed free first-aid or medical treatment for victims of crimes against women and children.
- **Electronic Summons:** Summons can be served electronically.
- **Statements by Woman Magistrate:** Victim statements for certain offenses must be recorded by a woman magistrate if possible.
- **Supply of Police Report and Other Documents:** Both the accused and victim receive FIR, police report/chargesheet, and other documents **within 14 days**.
- **Limited Adjournments:** Courts can grant a **maximum of two adjournments**.
- **Witness Protection Scheme:** **State governments** must implement a Witness Protection Scheme.
- **Gender Inclusivity:** Gender definition **includes transgender** individuals.
- **All Proceedings in Electronic Mode:** Legal proceedings are conducted electronically.
- **Audio-Video Recording of Statements:** Victim statements related to rape offenses must be recorded via audio-video.
- **Exemption from Going to Police Station:** Certain individuals are exempt from attending police stations.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **3 New Criminal Laws**.

GLOBALIZATION

2.67 International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Why in News

- India participated in the 132nd session of the IMO Council in London.

Key Highlights

- India secured a position in the Joint Tripartite Working Group on seafarers' issues alongside seven other countries.
- India reiterated the **proposal for the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT)**.

KEY TERMS

Plea Bargaining

A **negotiation in which an accused agrees to plead guilty to a lesser charge in exchange for a more lenient sentence**.

Community Service

A form of **punishment where the offender performs unpaid work for the community as an alternative to imprisonment**.

- SACE-SMarT aims to transform the maritime sector with a focus on sustainability, technology, and digital proficiency.

About IMO

- **Establishment:** 1958
- **HQ:** London, United Kingdom.
- India joined IMO in 1959.

2.68 Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Why in News

- Elisa de Anda Madrazo (Mexico) began her 2-year term as President of the FATF.

Key Highlights

- She succeeded Mr. T. Raja Kumar of Singapore as President of FATF.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **FATF**.

2.69 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) Summit

Why in News

- NATO summit was held recently.

Key Highlights

- The summit will include Sweden as a member for the first time.
- The summit marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO.
- Objective: To increase military, political, and financial support for Ukraine.
- USA held a meeting with IP4 members (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea).

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- An intergovernmental military alliance
- Establishment — 1949
- Total Members — 32
- Headquarters — Brussels, Belgium
- Secretary General — Jens Stoltenberg

EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS)



- Initiated in 2005 with convening of 1st East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with 16 countries.
- EAS has 18 members - 10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) along with Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.
- East Asia Summit has identified 6 priority areas of cooperation among members, namely environment and energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, natural disaster management, and ASEAN Connectivity.
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) leads the forum, and the chair position rotates between ASEAN Member States annually.

Why in News

- India hosted the 6th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation.

Key Highlights

- Organised by Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Governments of Australia and Indonesia.
- Knowledge Partners: ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and the National Maritime Foundation (NMF).

- **Objective:** To strengthen the ASEAN-led EAS mechanism as well as to support the implementation of the EAS Plan of Action 2024-2028.

2.71 BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)

Why in News

- Ministry of Earth Sciences is organizing a high-level workshop for BIMSTEC countries to promote scientific capacity, skill, and regional cooperation in Noida.

Key Highlights

- **Organized by:** National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), a sub-ordinate office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC) at NCMRWF, Noida.
- **Aims to boost human resources capacity building, scientific knowledge sharing, and improve forecasting, early warning systems, and observing systems.**

2.72 Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

Why in News

- Report has been released by 'India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure for Economic Transformation, Financial Inclusion and Development'.

Key Highlights

- Task Force was led by the **Co-Chairs, Shri Amitabh Kant**, G20 Sherpa of India and **Shri Nandan Nilekani**, Co-founder and Chairman of Infosys and the Founding Chairman of UIDAI (Aadhaar).
- The report will be taken forward during the Brazilian and South African G20 Presidencies.
- Key statistics: **UPI is used by 46% of the population**, facilitating 13 billion transactions monthly; **Aadhaar supports 1.3 billion digital identities**.
- The report has talked about 5 stages for DPI, starting from advocacy, advisory, and financing to skilling, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
- It has suggested an annual forum for countries to share their experiences of deploying DPI.

About the Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure

- **Launch Year:** 2023 (Establishment of the Task Force)

BIMSTEC



- **BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**
- **Launch Year:** 1997.
- **Secretariat:** Dhaka, Bangladesh (Established in 2014 after 3rd BIMSTEC Summit).
- Developed by: Bangkok Declaration
- **Members:** Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, later joined by Myanmar, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- **Objective:** To promote economic cooperation among countries bordering the Bay of Bengal, focusing on multiple sectors for comprehensive regional development.
- **BIMSTEC Charter** was signed and adopted during the 5th BIMSTEC Summit (Colombo, Sri Lanka) in 2022.

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance
- **Objective:**
 - To define and promote a global framework for Digital Public Infrastructure.
 - To support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and social goals like inclusive growth through DPI.
- **Features:**
 - Part 1: DPI Approach as a transformative paradigm for global challenges.
 - Part 2: India's DPI achievements during its G20 Presidency.
 - Part 3: Strategic blueprint for global DPI advancement with policy recommendations.

KEY TERMS

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

The **foundational digital systems** that enable **essential public services**, such as digital identity, payment systems, and data sharing frameworks.

2.73 14th BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting

Why in News

- Commerce Secretary participated in the 14th BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting held under the **BRICS Presidency of the Russian Federation for 2024**.

Key Highlights

- The **theme** of BRICS 2024 is "**Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development.**"
- Key issues addressed included resolving WTO issues like Public Stock Holding, Dispute Settlement system, and WTO Reform through "**30 for 30**" bringing in at least 30 operational improvements to the WTO before the organization completes 30 years in 2025.
- They re-iterated the **Jaipur call for action** for enhancing access to information for MSMEs issued during India's Presidency in 2023.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **BRICS**.

2.74 IAEA Deepens Ties with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

Why in News

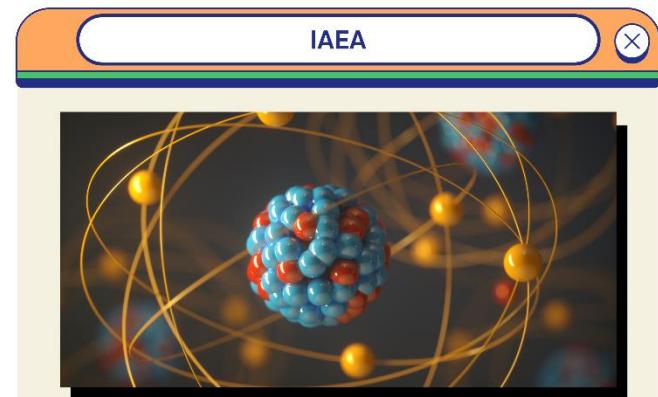
- **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** and the **United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)** signed an agreement to launch new joint activities to enhance collaboration during the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York.

Key Highlights

KEY TERMS

Public Stock Holding

Public Stock Holding is a **policy tool** that governments use to buy, store, and distribute food grains to ensure food security for their populations.



- International Atomic Energy Agency was created in **1957**.
- Widely known as the world's "**Atoms for Peace and Development**" organization within the United Nations family, the IAEA is the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear field.
- Objective: To promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- Headquarters in **Vienna, Austria**.
- In **2005**, **Nobel Peace Prize** was awarded to the IAEA and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, for their work for a safer and more peaceful world.
- Members: **178 (including India)**

- IAEA will participate in UNOSSC's 'Data to Policy Network' and 'Solutions Lab' programs.
 - Under the auspices of the UNOSSC 'Data to Policy Network', the IAEA will host targeted workshops for national policymakers to consider climate action success stories that might be adapted to their countries' needs.
 - UNOSSC 'Solutions Lab' will bring the IAEA together with other international organizations to identify areas where nuclear science and technology can be supported by conventional techniques.
- Initial activities will **focus on climate change**, highlighting IAEA's role in South-South and **triangular cooperation** for sustainable development.
- A new joint publication will feature 20 IAEA climate action case studies demonstrating the benefits of South-South cooperation.

KEY TERMS

Triangular Cooperation

South-South cooperation facilitated by a global North country or international organization.

About UNOSSC

- Established to **promote, coordinate and support South-South and triangular cooperation** globally and within the United Nations system.
- Hosted by **UNDP (UN Development Program)** since 1974.
- **UNOSSC Strategic Framework** is presented every 4 years (Current Framework: 2022-25).

2.75 24th SCO Summit (2024)

Why in News

- Prime Minister conveyed best wishes to **China for the presidency of the SCO in 2025**.

Key Highlights

- Member States approved of the **SCO Counter-Narcotics Strategy for 2024-2029**.

2.76 Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

Why in News

- India participated in the **86th session of the Executive Committee of the CAC** to support the advancement of standards development for spices and food safety.

Key Highlights

- India is a member elected on a geographic basis (Asia) in the CAC since December 2023.
- Session was held at Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) Headquarters in Rome (Italy).

About Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- **Establishment:**
 - It is an **international food standards body**, established in 1961 by FAO & WHO.
 - Joined by the World Health Organization (**WHO**) in June 1962, held its **first session in Rome in 1963**.
- **Mandate:** It has been **responsible for the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme OR Codex Standards**.
 - Developed by Regional Coordinating Committees, **applicable to specific regions**.

- **Covers all foods, standards for specific foods, food labeling, food hygiene, food additives and pesticide residues**, and procedures for assessing the safety of foods derived from modern biotechnology.
- **Used as reference standards for international trade and resolving trade disputes.**
- **Membership:** Comprises 189 members; including 188 countries and 1 Member Organization (**The European Union**).
- **India has been a member since 1964.**
- Recognized by the **WTO's Agreement on Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)**.

2.77 India-Saudi Arabia Ties

Why in News

- First meeting of the **India-Saudi Arabia High-Level Task Force on Investments (constituted in 2023)** was held to discuss bilateral investment opportunities.

Key Highlights

- **Co-chaired** by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India and the Saudi Energy Minister.
- The Government of India reiterated its **intention to support Saudi investments of USD 100 billion**.
- The Saudi side was **invited to set up an office of the Sovereign Wealth Fund PIF in India**.

KEY TERMS

Sovereign Wealth Fund

A state-owned investment fund used by the government to invest in various sectors for the long-term benefit of the country's economy.

2.78 Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA)

Why in News

- Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) was in the news.

2.79 G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting

Why in News

- G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' meeting in **Fortaleza, Brazil** finalized the Labour and Employment track text.

Key Highlights

- The **final text of the Labour and Employment Ministerial declaration was approved**, focusing on creating formal jobs and promoting decent work.
- The **declaration urges policy measures** for job formalization, platform work response, adequate wage floors, social protection, and social dialogue.
- Discussions included enhancing the **mobility of semi-skilled and skilled workers from India to Japan**.

GLOBAL BIOFUELS ALLIANCE



- Biofuels are usually **liquid fuels created using organic materials**, such as biomass and natural waste.
- Launched by **India along with USA, Brazil, Italy, Argentina, Singapore, Bangladesh, Mauritius, and UAE** on September 9, 2023, during 18th G20 Summit in **New Delhi** to promote sustainability and clean energy through the adoption of biofuels.
- Membership: **24 countries and 12 international organizations**.
- Meetings: **3 meetings of the Temporary Executive Committee (TEC) have been held** to define immediate initiatives, including Biofuels Workshop series and Biofuels Country Landscapes (Policy Framework).

- India's achievements highlighted:** over 80 million employment opportunities created from 2017-18 to 2021-22, youth unemployment rate reduced to 10% in 2022-23.

Miscellaneous Points

- Brazil** for the first time will **host G20 summit in 2024**.
 - Will be held in July 2024 in **Rio De Janeiro**.
- Current G20 Troika:** India (2023 host), Brazil (2024 host) and South Africa (2025 host).

2.80 G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting

Why in News

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry attended the **G7 Trade Ministers' meeting in Italy** to discuss enhancing global trade relations and economic cooperation.

Key Highlights

- Engagement with the UK Secretary of State** for Business and Trade included plans for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the UK.
- He also highlighted the need for robust partnerships in the face of **3Cs – Covid, Conflicts and Climate change**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on G7.

2.81 India-USA Signs First Ever 'Cultural Property Agreement' (CPA)

Why in News

- India and the United States signed the first-ever 'Cultural Property Agreement'** to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA.

Key Highlights

- The agreement was signed during the **46th World Heritage Committee session** in New Delhi.
- The CPA aligns with the **1970 UNESCO Convention on preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of cultural property**.

Group of Twenty (G20)



The premier forum for international economic cooperation

Established in 1999

after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98

a forum for the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss global economic and financial issues

Timeline

upgraded to the level of Heads of State/Government in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis of 2007

First G20 Summit held in **2008** in **Washington DC, USA**

Since **2011**, the G20 Summit is held **annually**, under the leadership of a **rotating Presidency**

Members

19 countries + European Union (EU) + African Union (AU)

African Union (AU), Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, UK, USA & EU

India's G20 Presidency for 2023

Duration → 1st December 2022 to 30th November 2023

Theme → One Earth, One Family, One Future or Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the **Maha Upanishad**

Green Development, Climate Finance & LiFE

Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth

Accelerating progress on SDGs

Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure

Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century

Women-led development

Sherpa Track → Coordinated by: Sherpas of member countries

India's Sherpa: Amitabh Kant
oversees inputs from 13 Working Groups, engagement groups & 2 Initiatives viz, Research Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG) and G20 Empower

Finance Track → Led by: Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors

Guest Countries (9) → Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and UAE.

Total Invited Organizations → Fourteen

Highlights

Startup20 Engagement Group & Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group established for the first time

India hosted meetings across 32 different work streams

G20 Presidency for 2024

President Nation → Brazil

Motto → Building a Fair World and a Sustainable Planet

Secretariat → No permanent Secretariat

G20 Troika → Previous, current and incoming Presidencies

Indonesia (2022), India (2023) and Brazil (2024)

Developing countries in G20 Troika for the first time

G20 members represent around **85% of the global GDP**

G20 members represent over **75% of the global trade**

G20 members constitute about **two-thirds of the world population**

- CPA restricts the importation into the United States of certain archaeological material ranging in date from 1.7 million years ago through 1770 CE and certain ethnological material, which may include categories of civic, religious, and royal architectural material, religious material and ceremonial items, and manuscripts ranging in date from 2nd century BCE to 1947 CE.

Miscellaneous Points

- The exhibition "**Re(ad)address: Return of Treasures**" was inaugurated by the Prime Minister at 46th World heritage Committee to highlight the issue of illicit trafficking of antiquities and efforts in repatriation.

2.82 Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

Why in News

- India has been elected as Vice-Chair of the Supply Chain Council under the IPEF.

Key Highlights

- India, along with 13 other IPEF partners, established 3 supply chain bodies under the IPEF Agreement for Supply Chain Resilience (signed in 2023 and ratified in 2024 to make IPEF supply chains more resilient, robust, and well-integrated).
 - Supply Chain Council (SCC)
 - Crisis Response Network (CRN)
 - Labor Rights Advisory Board (LRAB)
- first in-person meeting of the Supply Chain Council and Crisis Response Network is planned for September 2024 in Washington, D.C. on the margins of Supply Chain Summit.
- Chairs and Vice-Chairs elected for two-year terms:
 - Supply Chain Council: USA (Chair) and India (Vice Chair)
 - Crisis Response Network: Republic of Korea (Chair) and Japan (Vice Chair)
 - Labor Rights Advisory Board: USA (Chair) and Fiji (Vice Chair)
- India joined Pillars II to IV, maintaining observer status in Pillar I.

2.83 QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)

Why in News

- External Affairs Minister attended the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting.

Key Highlights

- There are 16 working groups within Quad, with plans to advance and better resource the group.

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)



Launched by United States in Japan in May 2022.

14 Participating Countries

Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam

IPEF partners aim to contribute to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region.

Statistics



The 14 IPEF partners represent 40 percent of global GDP and 28 percent of global goods and services trade.



Four Pillars of IPEF

1. **Trade** (Including digital trade - India has not joined this pillar)
2. **Supply Chains** (Agreement on this pillar has been finalised)
3. **Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure** (1st regional treaty-level agreement focused on the clean economy)
4. **Tax and Anti-Corruption**

IPEF is designed to be flexible, meaning that IPEF partners are not required to join all four pillars

- The **first cohort of Quad STEM fellowships** has graduated, with the second cohort covering ASEAN.

2.84 46th World Heritage Committee Meeting



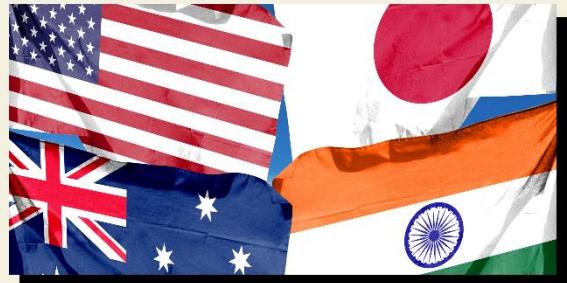
Why in News

- Annually held UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Committee Meeting is **being hosted by India for the first time**.

Key Highlights

- Organised by:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on behalf of the Ministry of Culture.
- The logo of the meeting is inspired by the World Heritage Site of Hampi**, featuring the stone chariot from the **Vijaya Vitthala Temple**, with the **tagline "May our Glory Grow"** derived from the **Taitiriya Upanishad**.
- The agenda includes **identifying cultural and natural properties for the World Heritage List**, monitoring the **state of conservation of 124 existing World Heritage properties**, deciding on the **List of World Heritage in Danger**, and examining **requests for International Assistance financed by the World Heritage Fund**.
- North East India's historic **Maidam, the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty (13th to the 18th century)** in **Assam**, has become **India's 43rd World Heritage Site** and **North East India's first heritage** to get the status of Cultural World Heritage.
 - In 2020, Assam state govt organised "**Me-Dam-Me-Phi**" initiative (festival for ancestor worship) at Charaideo.
 - Other World Heritage Sites from North East** India are Kaziranga National Park (Assam) and Manas National Park (Assam), **both were inscribed in 1985 in the natural category**.
- India will contribute 1 million dollars to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (established in 1992 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France)** to be used for capacity building, technical assistance and conservation of world heritage sites.
- UNESCO decided to register Japan's **Sado gold mine** as a **Cultural World Heritage site**

QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE



- An **informal strategic forum** comprises four nations: **USA, India, Australia, and Japan**.
- Primary objective: work for a **free, open, prosperous, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region**.
- Established in **2007**; First met in 2007 on the sidelines of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).
- Origin date back to informal collaboration in response to the **December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami**.
- Idea first pitched by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in **2007**.
- First official Quad talks took place in the **Philippines** in **2017**.
- Quad Summit: **2024 (India)**



सह नी यशः

UNESCO



- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Officially established in November **1945** at the United Nations Conference (ECO/CONF) in **London** with **44 countries** participating.
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**.
- Membership: **194 Members and 12 Associate Members**.
- Objective: UNESCO, a United Nations agency, aims to **foster global cooperation in education, arts, science, and culture** to promote world peace.

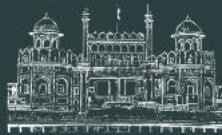
after Japan agreed to exhibit its use of Korean laborers during WWII.

- The Sado gold mine, located on an island off the **coast of Niigata** in northern Japan, **operated for nearly 400 years and closed in 1989**.
- The event included the **launch of Project PARI and its catalogue**, celebrating India's public art.
- **24 new sites were approved for inclusion in the World Heritage List**.
- India highlighted **Kashi Culture Pathway** and the **New Delhi Leaders' Declaration 2023** (NDLD), the world's first and only document with its compelling articulation of the Culture goal.
 - **Outcome document of the G20 Culture Ministers' meeting**, held in Varanasi under India's 2023 Presidency of the G20, has been referred to as **Kashi Culture Pathway**.
- **Parallel events include:**
 - **World Heritage Young Professionals Forum**: Held at Pt. Deendayal Institute of Archaeology in Greater Noida, with 50 young professionals from 31 countries, funded by the Government of India, to bring young people and heritage experts together to foster intercultural learning and exchange.
 - ✓ **A certificate program in World Heritage Management is also being started** for young professionals in India.
 - **6th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum**: Focusing on "Heritage and Communities: Inclusive and Effective Approaches for the Sustainable Management of World Heritage Properties," with 82 site managers from 35 countries.

About PARI Project (Public Art of India)

- **Objective:** To celebrate and enhance the aesthetic and cultural landscape of India through public art.
- This initiative by the **Ministry of Culture**, is executed by **Lalit Kala Akademi** and the **National Gallery of Modern Art**.
- The first major event under Project PARI coincides with the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.
- Traditional art forms such as sculptures, murals, and installations have been created by the artists engaged in this project inspired by **Rajasthan's Phad paintings, West Bengal's Alpona art, Telangana's Cheriyal paintings, Kerala's murals, and Gujarat's Pithora Art**, among others.



	
21 Member states , with a term of 6 years, meet annually	Implements World Heritage Convention and World Heritage Fund
	5Cs
Inscriptions or deletions of properties on the World Heritage List and List of World Heritage in Danger	Strategic Objectives: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication, and Communities

DID YOU KNOW?

India was elected to the 21-member **World Heritage Committee (WHC)** in the 23rd General Assembly in **2021** for a period of **four years (2021-2025)** and **for a fourth term** (1985-1991, 2001-2007 and 2011-2015).

Additional Information

- **India has now inscribed 43 Properties in the World Heritage List** which include 35 Cultural, 7 Natural, 1 Mixed Heritage Sites. Some of them are:
 - Santiniketan (West Bengal)
 - Sacred ensembles of the Hoysalas (**Karnataka**)
 - Rani ki Vav, Patan, Gujarat
 - Kailasa Temple, Ellora Caves, Maharashtra
 - Hoysala Temple, Halebid, Karnataka
- **India is the 6th country on the list and 2nd in the Asia Pacific Region** based on the numbers of the World Heritage List.
- In addition, India has **57 Sites on the Tentative List of the World Heritage**.
- **World Heritage Convention** was adopted in **1972**. Convention **came into force in 1975**. India ratified it in 1977.
- The **45th session of the committee** was held at **Riyadh in Saudi Arabia**.

Key Terms

- **World Heritage Committee:** A committee comprising representatives from 21 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention elected by the General Assembly of UNESCO, responsible for implementing the World Heritage Convention.
 - **India is currently a member** of this committee.
- **World Heritage Convention:** A **1972** international agreement to identify and protect cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.
 - **195 Countries (member states) have ratified** the Convention as of date. India ratified in **1977**.

2.85 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Why in News

- India successfully concluded its 4th periodic review (last in 1997) by the Human Rights Committee under the ICCPR in Geneva (Switzerland).

Key Highlights

- The Human Rights Committee, comprising **18 independent experts**, monitors the implementation of the ICCPR and reviews reports from all States Parties through periodic reviews.

ICCP



- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) adopted by the UN General Assembly in **1966** and came into force in **1976**.
- India became a State Party to ICCPR in **1979**.
- It is a multilateral treaty that commits nations to respect the civil and political rights of individuals.
- The Covenant is **legally binding**.
- Parties to this covenant: **174**
- **Human Rights Committee**, established under its article **28**, monitors its implementation.

DID YOU KNOW?

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India has maintained an "**A**" **status accreditation** by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions **since 1999**.

MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY

2.86 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Why in News

- India implements a uniform 5% IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax) rate on aircraft parts to boost the domestic Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) industry.

Key Highlights

- MRO industry in India is projected to become a \$4 billion industry by 2030.

2.87 Monthly Accounts of the Government of India

Why in News

- Government of India published the consolidated Monthly Accounts up to June 2024 for FY25.

Key Highlights

- Total Receipts up to June 2024:** ₹8,34,197 crore (27.1% of BE 2024-25)
 - Tax Revenue (Net to Centre):** ₹5,49,633 crore
 - Non-Tax Revenue:** ₹2,80,044 crore
 - Non-Debt Capital Receipts:** ₹4,520 crore from Recovery of Loans
- ₹2,79,502 crore transferred to State Governments as Devolution of Share of Taxes.**
- Total Expenditure:** ₹9,69,909 crore (20.4% of BE 2024-25)
 - Revenue Account:** ₹7,88,858 crore
 - Interest Payments: ₹2,64,052 crore
 - Major Subsidies: ₹90,174 crore
 - Capital Account:** ₹1,81,051 crore

2.88 Taxnet 2.0 Project

Why in News

- Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) awarded the Taxnet 2.0 project to M/s Bharti-Airtel Ltd.

Key Highlights

- Taxnet 2.0 is aimed at enhancing the digital infrastructure with significant advancement over the current Taxnet 1.0 project of the Income Tax Department (ITD).

2.89 GSTR-1A

Why in News

- Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), **Ministry of Finance notified the GSTR-1A form** in July **to allow taxpayers to amend outward supply details in GSTR-1** to enhance GST compliance.

Key Highlights

- GSTR-1A must be filed before GSTR-3B** for the respective tax period.
- GSTR-1A will facilitate taxpayer to add any particulars of supply of the current tax period missed out in reporting in form GSTR-1** of the said tax period **or to amend any particulars already declared in GSTR-1** of the current tax, to ensure that correct liability is auto-populated in GSTR-3B.

Miscellaneous Points

- Taxpayers with an annual turnover of up to Rs 5 crore can file GSTR-1** quarterly within the 13th day of the end of the quarter, while GSTR-3B is filed between the 22nd-24th day of the succeeding month.

KEY TERMS

Form GSTR-1

A monthly/quarterly Statement of Outward Supplies to be furnished by all normal and casual registered taxpayers making outward supplies of goods and services or both and contains details of outward supplies of goods and services.

Form GSTR-3B

A simplified summary return and the purpose of the return is for taxpayers to declare their summary GST liabilities for a particular tax period and discharge these liabilities. A normal taxpayer is required to file Form GSTR-3B returns for every tax period.

2.90 Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES)

Why in News

- Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), under **Commerce Ministry, has announced a cap on interest equalisation at Rs 1.66 crore per IEC** (import-export code) for the period from July to August.

KEY TERMS

Importer-Exporter Code (IEC)

An Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) is a key business identification number mandatory for export from or import to India.

Key Highlights

- The **interest equalisation scheme (IES) was extended for 2 months** to boost outbound shipments.
 - The scheme, which ended on June 30, is **applicable only to MSME manufacturer exporters** and provides a 3% interest equalisation **benefits on pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit**.

INFLATION

2.91 Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)

Why in News

- Labour Bureau, under M/o Labour & Employment, released the CPI-IW for May 2024.

Key Highlights

- All-India CPI-IW for May 2024 increased by 0.5 points, reaching 139.9.

About the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)

- Launch Year:** 1944
- New series of CPI- IW on base 2016 =100** has been effective from September 2020.
- Objective:** To measures the relative changes in retail prices of fixed basket of goods and services consumed by industrial workers over a period.
- Utilization:** For regulation of wages & dearness allowance for millions of workers & employees in the country.

- Labour Bureau **compiles monthly Retail Price Indices for 317 selected commodities in urban areas for 88 selected centres** every month.
- **Group-wise CPI-IW:**
 - Food & Beverages
 - Pan, Supari, Tobacco & Intoxicants
 - Clothing & Footwear
 - Housing
 - Fuel & Light
 - Miscellaneous

2.92 All India Consumer Price Index (CPI) for June 2024

Why in News

- Central Statistics Office (CSO), under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers (**Base – 2012**) for rural, urban, and combined for June 2024.

Key Highlights

- **Year-on-year inflation rate** based on All India CPI for June 2024 is **5.08%** (Provisional).
- Corresponding inflation rate for **rural and urban areas** is **5.66% and 4.39%, respectively**.

2.93 Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

Why in News

- The Index of Eight Core Industries **increased by 4.0% in June 2024** compared to June 2023.

Key Highlights

- Final growth rate of ICI for March 2024: 6.3%

2.94 Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

Why in News

- India's **IIP recorded a growth of 5.9% in May 2024**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024** for more information on **IIP**.

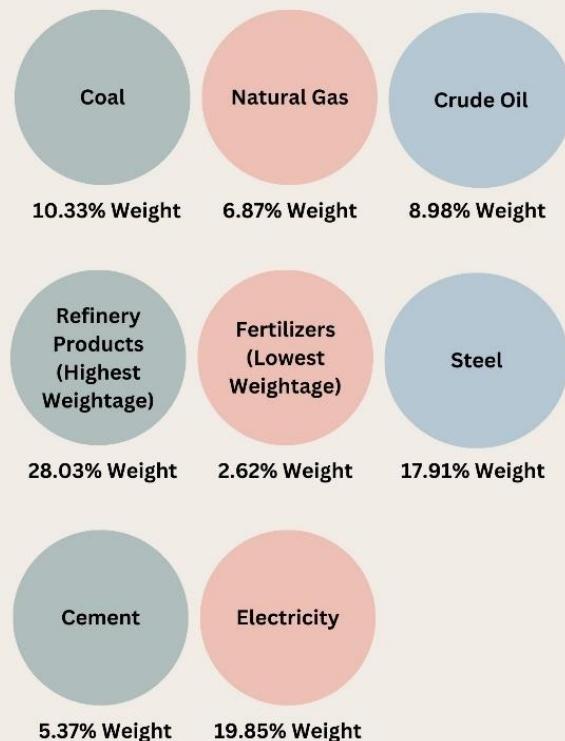
2.95 Wholesale Price Index (WPI)

Why in News

Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- Measures the combined and individual performance of production of eight core industries.
- **Base Year: 2011-12**, aligning with Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Initially compiled with base 1980-81.
- Combined weight of these 8 core industries is **40.27% of the IIP**.
- Compiled and released by the **Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA)**, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

8 Core Industries



- Calculation Method: Using **Laspeyres' fixed-base formula**, as weighted averages of Production Relatives of industries.
- Since April 2014, **includes data from renewable sources** of electricity generation.
- Since March 2019, **includes Hot Rolled Pickled and Oiled (HRPO)** under Cold Rolled (CR) coils in steel production.

- WPI rose to **3.36% in June 2024**, marking the **highest level in 16 months** due to increased food prices and higher costs in manufactured products.

Key Highlights

- **Food Inflation: 8.7% rise**, driven by vegetables, cereals, and fruits.
- **Manufactured Products: 1.43% rise**.
- **Fuel and Power: Inflation remained negative at -1.93%** for the fourth consecutive month.
- **Vegetables: Wholesale price inflation surged to 38.8%**, with onion and potato prices rising to 93.4% and 66.4%, respectively.
- **Primary articles index increased by 2.08%**.
- The **final WPI for April 2024 was 152.9 with an inflation rate of 1.19%**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 31st May 2024** for more information on **WPI**.

EXPORT-IMPORT POLICY

2.96 Export Data for June 2024

Why in News

- India's total exports in June 2024 **grew by 5.40% year-on-year**.

Key Highlights

- **Merchandise exports grew by 2.55% to USD 35.20 billion**.
- **Non-petroleum and non-gems & jewellery exports increased by 8.48%** to USD 27.43 billion.
- **Major drivers of export growth included Engineering Goods (10.27%), Electronic Goods (16.91%), Drugs & Pharmaceuticals (9.93%), Coffee (70.02%), and Organic & Inorganic Chemicals (3.32%)**.
- **Total exports (Merchandise and Services combined): USD 65.47 billion**.
- **Total imports (Merchandise and Services combined): USD 73.47 billion**.
- **Trade balance: Deficit of USD 8.00 billion**.
- **Top 5 export destinations** in terms of change in value: USA, UAE, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Tanzania.
- **Top 5 import sources, in terms of change in value**: UAE, China, Russia, Indonesia and USA.

- **Cumulative exports (Merchandise and Services combined) for April-June 2024:** USD 200.33 billion.
- **Cumulative imports (Merchandise and Services combined) for April-June 2024:** USD 222.89 billion.

2.97 India-EFTA Agreement

Why in News

- **Ministry of Commerce and Industry eyes US\$100 billion FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) from EFTA nations under the recently signed India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in March 2024.**

About India-EFTA TEPA

- EFTA is **one important economic block out of the three (other two – European Union & UK)** in Europe.
- EFTA's market access offer covers **100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).**

DID YOU KNOW?

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA), established in **1960** to promote free trade and economic integration among its 4 member states (**Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein**), sees **Switzerland as India's top trading partner** within the group and the **largest source of its gold imports**, ahead of the UAE.

- **India has offered 105 sub-sectors to the EFTA** and secured commitments in **128 sub-sectors from Switzerland**, 114 from Norway, 107 from Liechtenstein, and 110 from Iceland.
- **Services offers from EFTA include** better access through digital delivery of Services (**Mode 1**), commercial presence (**Mode 3**) and improved commitments and certainty for entry and temporary stay of key personnel (**Mode 4**).
- The **effective duty on Gold remains untouched**.
- The **binding investments do not cover foreign portfolio investment (FPIs)**.
- While **EFTA will lift duties on Indian rice exports** except those used for animal consumption, **India will remove duties on Swiss chocolates and watches** over 7 years.

Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)

India and European Free Trade Association (EFTA)



India's first FTA (Free Trade Agreement) with **4 developed nations** and an important economic bloc in Europe.

KEY FEATURES

- For the **first time in an FTA signed by India**, Agreement includes a **binding commitment**.
- Comprehensive coverage: **14 chapters** from market access to intellectual property.
- **Exclusions:** dairy, soya, coal, some agriculture.
- **Mutual Recognition Agreements** in professional services.
- EFTA's exports to India: **80% is gold**.

SNAPSHOT

99.6% of India's exports get easy access in EFTA

\$100

Billion investment, 1 million jobs in 15 years in India by EFTA nations

95.3% of EFTA exports get easy access in India

Binding commitment clause will be reviewed in phases, starting with a **\$10 billion** investment.

Additional Information

- India aims to achieve \$2 trillion in exports by 2030.
- India-Russia bilateral trade target: US\$100 bn by 2030.

2.98 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

Why in News

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry highlighted the benefits of FTAs signed in last 10 years.

Key Highlights

- Four FTAs signed in last 10 years with Australia, Mauritius, EFTA, and the UAE.
- The India-EFTA (European Free Trade Association) FTA includes a \$100 billion investment commitment linked to concessions.
- The government decided to walk out of RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) negotiations, deeming it unfavorable.
- India's GDP and Foreign Exchange Reserves have more than doubled in the last ten years.
- The government is setting up 12 new industrial parks and 5-6 mega textile parks.
- The government has launched an Anusandhan Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore for private-sector driven research and development.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest trading bloc, promotes economic integration, trade liberalization, and cooperation among 15 member countries. Negotiations began in 2012, the agreement was signed in 2020, and came into force in 2022. Member countries include China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia, and ASEAN nations. India, a founding member, withdrew from the negotiations in 2019.

PUBLIC FINANCE - POLITICAL ECONOMY - - SERVICES SECTOR IN INDIA.

2.99 15th Finance Commission Grants to Panchayats in Kerala

Why in News

- Government of India has released Rs 5337 crore as 15th Finance Commission grants to Panchayats in Kerala for the period 2020-21 to 2026-27.

Key Highlights

- Grants are divided into Untied (Basic) and Tied grants for rural local bodies.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj highlighted the need for Kerala to furnish details on the State Finance Commission, which is a mandatory condition for the release of further grants after March 2024.

INDIAN AGRICULTURE

2.100 AgriSURE

Why in News

- Government is poised to launch the 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE), a blended capital fund.

Key Highlights

- It will be a Rs 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).

- It will **provide equity and debt investments** to support start-ups and agripreneurs.
- Fund is structured to **support approximately 85 agri start-ups** with investment sizes of **up to Rs 25 crore each by the end of its term.**
- An **equal contribution of Rs 250 crores each** will be provided **by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and NABARD.**
- An **additional Rs 250 crores** will be **raised through financial institutions.**
- NABVENTURES**, a fully owned subsidiary of NABARD (Headquartered in Mumbai), will **act as the fund manager.**
- Tenure:** 10 years, extendable by two or more years.

KEY TERMS

Blended Capital Fund

A fund that **combines equity, debt, and other financial instruments to provide a mix of capital** to start-ups and businesses.

Miscellaneous Points

- NABARD also launched the AgriSURE Greenathon 2024**, a hackathon focusing on "Smart Agriculture on a Budget," "Turning Agri-Waste into Profitable Business Opportunities," and "Tech Solutions Making Regenerative Agriculture Remunerative."

2.101 Bhartiya Beej Sahkari Samiti Limited (BBSSL)

Why in News

- Ministry of Cooperation has set up BBSSL under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002.

About Bhartiya Beej Sahkari Samiti Limited (BBSSL)

- Registered in **January 2023**.
- Promoted by **IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative), KRIBHCO (Krishak Bharati Cooperative), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), and NCDC (National Cooperative Development Corporation).**
- Initial paid-up capital: Rs. 250 Cr** with contributions of **Rs. 50 Cr each by the five promoters.**
- Authorized share capital is Rs. 500 Cr.**
- Objectives:**
 - To improve crop yield, increase seed replacement rate, and varietal replacement rate by involving farmers in the production of certified seeds.
 - To undertake production, procurement, and distribution of quality seeds under a single brand through a network of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS).
 - To source breeder seeds from Public Sector Research Organizations and International Research Institutes like ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics), IRRI (International Rice Research Institute), and CIMMYT (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center).
- Provisions for the **disposal of net profits include transferring at least 25% to the reserve fund, 1% to the cooperative education fund, and 10% to a reserve fund for unforeseen losses.** After the above

KEY TERMS

Seed Replacement Rate

The percentage of area sown out of the total area of crop planted in the season by using certified quality seeds other than the farm-saved seed.

Varietal Replacement Rate

The ratio at which older crop varieties are replaced by newer varieties.

allocations, the remaining net profit can be used as follows:

- **Dividend to Members:** Aim to pay up to 20% dividend on paid-up share capital. If profits are low, a lesser rate may be decided.
- **Education Fund:** For education and training of members, directors, and employees as approved by the Board of Directors.
- **Donations:** For cooperative movement development or charitable purposes as defined by the Charitable Endowments Act.
- **Ex-Gratia Payments:** Additional payments to society employees.
- **Other Funds:** Creation of any other necessary funds.
- **Undistributed Profit:** Any remaining profit is added to the Reserve Fund.
- General Body and Board of Directors will ensure equitable distribution of net surplus and dividends.
- **Eligibility for Ordinary Membership in BBSSL**
 - **Multi-State or Co-operative Societies:** Any co-operative society, whether it operates in multiple states or just one.
 - **National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC):** This corporation, established under the National Co-operative Development Corporation Act, 1962.
 - **Government-Owned Corporations:** Any corporation that is owned or controlled by the Government.
 - **Permitted Classes or Associations:** Certain classes or associations of people as allowed by the Central Registrar, considering the society's nature and activities.
 - **Individuals cannot become ordinary members** of BBSSL.
 - Any company created or incorporated under the Companies Act/Producer **Companies Act, except a Government Company, can only become an Associate or Nominal Member.**

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

2.102 Road Infrastructure Development in NER

Why in News

- Government of India is actively developing road infrastructure in the North Eastern Region (NER).

Key Highlights

- **National Highways (NHs) Development:**
 - **Total of 9,984 km of National Highways constructed in the last 10 years.**
 - Currently, 265 NH projects are under implementation with a total length of 5,055 km.
- **Union Budget Allocation:** 10% of the total budget is earmarked for NER.
- **Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East (SARDP-NE):** Started in 2005.
 - **Objective:** Upgrading NHs, providing connectivity to district headquarters (by minimum 2 lane highway standards) and remote areas, and improving strategic border roads.
 - **Total length sanctioned: 5,468 km** at a cost of Rs. 63,542 crores.
 - **Completed: 3,699 km** with an expenditure of Rs. 38,160 crores.
- **National Highway Development Project (NHDP) Phase-III (Approved in 2005):** Developed 110 km of NHs in NER.
- **Bharatmala Pariyojna:** Launched in 2015.

- Total length sanctioned: **2,767 km.**
- Completed: **272 km.**
- **Trans-Arunachal Highway from Tawang to Kanubari:**
 - Total length: **1,077 km.**
 - **Completed:** 815 km.
- **Frontier Highway in Arunachal Pradesh:**
 - **Objective:** Enhance **connectivity in border areas** for strategic and socio-economic development.
 - **Projects sanctioned:** 41 with a total length of **1,498 km.**
 - **Funding:** Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Ministry of Defence, and Central Road & Infrastructure Fund.

About Bharatmala Pariyojna

- **Aims to improve road connectivity** to border areas, coastal roads, non-major ports, and enhance national corridors, economic corridors, inter corridors, and feeder routes, integrating with Sagarmala.
- **34,800 km of National Highway** length was planned for development **under Phase-I** of Bharatmala Pariyojana.
- **Funding: Estimated cost of Rs. 6,92,324 crores** funded through cess on petrol and diesel (Rs. 2,37,024 crore), toll collection (Rs. 46,048 crore), additional budgetary support (Rs. 59,973 crore), NH monetisation through Toll-Operate-Transfer (Rs. 34,000 crore), Internal & Extra Budgetary Resources (Rs. 2,09,279 crore), and private sector investment (Rs. 1,06,000 crore).

2.103 National Electric Bus Programme

Why in News

- NITI Aayog has requested **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)** to manage the demand aggregation for **50,000 E-buses as part of the National Electric Bus Programme.**

About CESL

- A green energy focused **venture of The EESL Group owned by central public sector undertakings** under the **Ministry of Power, New and Renewable Energy.**

2.104 Logistics Industry

Why in News

- The Government of India is promoting a green logistics industry to balance economic growth and environmental well-being.

Key Initiatives in Logistics Sector

NATIONAL ELECTRIC BUS PROGRAMME



- Launch Year: **2022**
- Nodal Agency: **NITI Aayog**
- Implementing Agency: **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**
- Objective: To deploy **50,000 new e-buses** across India by **2027**, consolidating demand and supporting state transportation entities.
- Features: **Collaboration with states and DISCOMs (Distribution Companies) for charging infrastructure at depots**, assisting state transportation entities in incorporating e-buses into their operations.

KEY TERMS

Demand Aggregation

The process of **combining multiple demands to achieve economies of scale**, particularly in procurement.

- **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan:** Enhances industrial productivity and green logistics through multi-modal connectivity.
- **National Logistics Policy (NLP) 2022:** Aims to create a cost-efficient, resilient, and sustainable logistics ecosystem.
 - **Sectoral Plan for Efficient Logistics (SPEL):** Focuses on sectors like coal, cement, fertilizer, steel, and pharma.
 - **Coal Logistics Plan:** Shifts towards a railway-based system to reduce carbon emissions by 100,000 tonnes per annum and improve wagon turnaround time by 10%.
 - **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC)** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has developed digital platforms like **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) and Logistics Data Bank (LDB)** for digitalized tracking and monitoring of logistics movement in the country.
 - ✓ **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan:** Integrated with ULIP for secure data access and resource management.
- **Indian Railways Initiatives:**
 - Increase **freight share from 35-36% to 45% by 2030.**
 - **Rail Sagar Corridor Program:** Aims to boost rail and ports-based cargo.
 - **GatiShakti Multi Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT) Policy:** Enhances railways cargo traffic growth.
- **Freight Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Calculator:** Compares transportation costs and Greenhouse Gas emissions across modes.
- **E-Handbook on Warehousing Standards:** Launched in 2022 by Warehousing Association of India (WAI) and DPIIT to promote optimal warehouse space utilization, interoperability, and sustainability.

About PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP)

- Launched in **2021** to enhance multimodal connectivity infrastructure for various economic zones in India.
- It aims for economic growth and sustainable development through a **transformative approach driven by seven key sectors:** Railways, Roads, Ports, Waterways, Airports, Mass Transport, and Logistics Infrastructure.
- It **aims to align infrastructure projects within the National Infrastructure Pipeline with the PM GatiShakti framework** to boost productivity and economic growth.
- The plan is **developed as a digital master planning tool by BISAG-N**, using a dynamic GIS platform that integrates data from various ministries.
- The **Logistics Division, Ministry of Commerce & Industry**, will assist stakeholders through BISAG-N to maintain and update their data layers, ensuring comprehensive and coordinated infrastructure development across the country.

Rail Sagar Corridor Program

- Announced in the **interim budget of 2024.**

LOGISTICS DATA BANK PROJECT



- Launched in **2016** at Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Mumbai: The project aims to **improve the efficiency of India's logistics sector** using Information Technology.
- **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** oversees the project.
- Implemented by **Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Logistics Data Services Ltd. (DLDL)**: A Special Purpose Vehicle jointly owned by Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Trust and NEC Corporation.
- Key Features: Uses **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags** to track containers, reducing lead time and transaction costs, and integrates supply chain information for real-time updates through a single window.

- As part of the strategy for 'Amrit Kaal', **3 major economic railway corridor programmes** have been identified under the PM Gati Shakti for enabling multi-modal connectivity.
 - **Amrit Chaturbhuj** is being planned along the high density traffic route to decongest the corridors enabling faster passenger train movement.
 - **Rail Sagar** would come up to improve connectivity with ports.
 - **Economy Corridor** will come up for energy, cement and mining and boost freight loadings.
- It is a significant component of the **Indian Railways' broader plan to add 40,000 km of new rail routes** under the **Amrit Chaturbhuj, Rail Sagar and Economic Corridor program**.
- With an estimated **investment of Rs 12 lakh crore**, these initiatives are set to transform India's transportation infrastructure

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 31st May 2024** for **ULIP**.

2.105 Expansion of Thermal Power Plants

Why in News

- Government of India proposes to set up an additional 80 GW coal-based capacity by 2031-32 to meet the estimated electricity demand.

Key Initiatives in Power Sector

- **Thermal Power Generation Studies:**
 - Conducted by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to estimate electricity demand by 2031-32.
 - Required coal & lignite based installed capacity by 2032: 283 GW.
 - Present installed capacity: 217.5 GW.
 - Additional 80 GW coal-based capacity needed.
 - Total expenditure expected as per **National Electricity Plan (2022-32)**: Rs 6,67,200 Cr by 2031-32.
- **Renewable Energy Generation Initiatives:**
 - India aims for **50% cumulative installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources** by 2030.
 - **Current achievement: 45.5% Installed Capacity** from non-fossil fuel-based resources.
 - **Steps taken to promote renewable energy:**
 - ✓ 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) permitted under the automatic route.
 - ✓ **Waiver of Inter State Transmission System (ISTS) charges** for solar and wind power projects commissioned by June 2025.
 - ✓ Trajectory for Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) declared up to 2029-30.
 - ✓ **Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Parks** set up to provide land and transmission connectivity for large-scale projects.
 - ✓ **Green Energy Open Access Rules 2022** notified.
 - ✓ **Green Term Ahead Market (GTAM) launched in 2020** to enable bulk electricity buyers (discoms; corporates with a contracted load of 1 MW or above) to procure

DID YOU KNOW?

Current Power Generation (As on May 2024): 12.76% from **Renewable** energy sources and 87.24% from **conventional** energy sources (Including 78% from Thermal energy sources).

KEY TERMS

Biomass Co-firing

The process of **burning biomass along with coal in thermal power plants** to reduce emissions.

renewable energy (RE) on a short-term basis from sellers (merchant RE projects or discoms having surplus RE beyond their renewable purchase obligations or RPOs).

- ✓ **Prescribed trajectory for RE power bids issued** with an annual target of 50 GW from FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28.
- **Emission Reduction Measures for Thermal Power Plants:**
 - **Biomass co-firing policy** issued by the Ministry of Power mandates 5-7% biomass co-firing with coal.

2.106 National Capital Goods Policy

Why in News

- National Capital Goods Policy, 2016 aims **to enhance the competitiveness** of the capital goods sector.

Key Features of Policy

- To **increase budgetary allocation and scope of the present "Scheme on Enhancement of Competitiveness in the Capital Goods Sector"** adding components i.e. skills, capacity building, advanced manufacturing and cluster development.
- To **launch a "Technology Development Fund**" under PPP model to fund technology acquisition/ transfer, purchase of IPRs/ designs and drawings/ commercialization.
- To **set up regional State-of-the-Art Greenfield Centre of Excellence** for skill development.
- To **modernize existing CG manufacturing units**, especially SMEs by replacing with the modern, computer controlled and energy efficient machineries across capital goods sub-sectors.
- To **upgrade/ develop, testing and certification infrastructure**.

Additional Information

- The **production of the Capital Goods Sector** increased from Rs. 2.29 lakh crore in 2014-15 to **Rs. 4.29 lakh crore in 2023-24**.

2.107 Government Initiatives to Reduce Crude Oil Imports

Why in News

- Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has implemented various initiatives to reduce crude oil imports in India.

Key Highlights

- **Demand Substitution:**
 - **Promotion of natural gas as fuel/feedstock** to increase its share from current 6% to 15% in the economy by 2030.
 - **Encouragement of renewable and alternative fuels** like ethanol, biodiesel, compressed biogas.
 - **Establishment of 2G Ethanol plants** and the **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme** for compressed biogas.
- **Hydrocarbon Production Policies:**
 - Policies for relaxations and extensions under **Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime**.
 - **Discovered Small Field Policy (2015), HELP (2016) replacing New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP)**, and policies for **Coal Bed Methane (CBM)**.
 - **National Data Repository (NDR 2017)** and seismic data acquisition programs.

- Reforms in **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP 2019)** and **Natural Gas Marketing Reforms (2020)**.
- **Infrastructure and Discoveries:**
 - Release of **1 million Sq. Km. 'No-Go' areas for exploration**.
 - **12 hydrocarbon discoveries under Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP)**, with one already producing gas and condensate in Gujarat.

Miscellaneous Points

- Production of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) has reached 2 million Standard Cubic Meters per day.
- HELP 2016 provides for **revenue sharing model**, the government will receive a share of the gross revenue from the sale of oil and gas, etc. and will not be concerned with the cost incurred.
 - HELP provides for a uniform licensing system that will cover all hydrocarbons such as oil, gas, and coal bed methane.
 - Under HELP, Open Acreage Licensing (OALP) mechanism has been launched which allows the investors to carve out blocks of their choice by assessing E&P (Exploration & Production) data available at NDR & by submitting an Expression of Interest (EoI) throughout the year without waiting for a formal bid round from the government.
- The **unified tariff (UFT) policy** introduced by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) in 2023 aims to create a single, consistent and fair tariff structure for natural gas transport across the country.
 - The UFT policy will **apply to a network of 21 pipelines, representing around 90% of pipelines in operation or under construction**.
 - There are **three tariff zones for gas pricing** based on the distance from the entry point:
 - ✓ **First Zone**: Up to 300 kilometers (km) from the entry point.
 - ✓ **Second Zone**: Between 300 km and 1,200 km from the entry point.
 - ✓ **Third Zone**: Beyond 1,200 km from the entry point.

2.108 MSMEs in India

Why in News

- Government has highlighted the contribution of MSMEs to the GDP and export sector.

Key Highlights

- **Share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in India's GDP in 2022-23**: 30.1%
- **Share of MSME manufacturing output** in all India manufacturing output during 2022-23: 35.4%
- **Share of MSME products in all India exports**:
 - **2023-24**: 45.73%
 - **2024-25 (up to May 2024)**: 45.79%
- **Total employment reported by MSMEs** on the Udyam Registration Portal from July 2020 to July 2024 is 20.39 crore.
- **Number of accounts and amount outstanding to MSME sector by Scheduled Commercial Banks** during 2022-23 was 2.13 crores and Rs. 22.60 lakh crore respectively.
- **Micro & Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs)** have been established by States/UTs to handle cases of delayed payments to MSEs under **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) Act, 2006**.
- Schedule Commercial Banks (SCBs) have been mandated **not to accept collateral security in the case of loans up to ₹10 lakh** extended to units in MSE category.

- Computation of working capital requirement of MSE units to be done by banks on the basis of simplified method of minimum 20% of the projected annual turnover of the unit for borrowing limits up to ₹ 5 crore.
- **Udyamimitra Portal** and **Psbloanin59minutes**: Provide ease of access to credit for MSMEs.
 - “**PSB Loans in 59 Minutes**” portal was launched in **2018** to facilitate credit in 59 minutes through Public Sector Banks (PSBs).
- **SAMADHAAN Portal**: Launched in **2017** for monitoring outstanding dues to MSEs (Micro and Small Enterprises) from buyers of goods and services.
 - A **sub-portal created in 2020** for reporting dues and monthly payments by Central Ministries/Departments/Public Sector Enterprises to MSMEs.
- Companies must submit returns to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs if payment to MSEs exceeds **45 days**.
- Ministry of MSME has set up **18 Tool Rooms & Technical Institutions known as Technology Centres (TCs)** in various sectors like general engineering, automation etc. **to support MSMEs with the relevant technologies and provide skilling to youth and re-skilling the working manpower** of the industry.
- As informed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the **Expert Committee** on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**Chaired by Shri UK Sinha**) constituted in 2018, the **overall credit gap in the MSME sector** is estimated to be **Rs. 20 – 25 trillion**.

Revised Classification of MSMEs applicable since 1st July 2020

- **Micro Enterprises**: Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment not more than Rs.1 crore and annual turnover not more than Rs. 5 crores.
- **Small Enterprises**: Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment not more than Rs.10 crore and annual turnover not more than Rs. 50 crores.
- **Medium Enterprises**: Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment not more than Rs.50 crore and annual turnover not more than Rs. 250 crores.

Additional Information

- As of March 31, 2024, **35% of 2.48 crore MSMEs registered on Udyam portal consented to onboard on GeM platform**.
- The **Equal Remuneration Act, 1976**, which provides for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers, **applies to the MSME sector as well**.
- Out of the 4.75 crore MSMEs registered on Udyam Portal & Udyam Assist Platform (UAP), **15.43 lakh MSMEs are owned by persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes** from 01.07.2020 to 22.07.2024.

2.109 Digital Transformation of MSMEs

Why in News

- Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has undertaken **several initiatives to access modern technology and digital transformation of MSMEs.**

Key Highlights

- Initiatives for digital transformation of MSMEs include:**
 - Udyam Registration Portal:** Only Government Portal for MSME Registration, **launched in 2020, for formalization of enterprises having PAN (Permanent Account Number).**
 - ✓ **Udyam Assist Platform** for formalizing Informal Micro Enterprises.
 - Launching of an **online Portal "Champions" in 2020** to cover many aspects of e-governance including grievance redress and handholding of MSMEs.
 - Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**
 - Government of India has also instructed Central Ministries/Department/Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and all companies with a **turnover of Rs. 250 Crore or more** to get themselves on-boarded on the **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)**, an electronic platform for facilitating the discounting of trade receivables of MSMEs through multiple financiers.
 - msmemart.com:** Portal provides **online platform to MSME's for B2B (Business to Business) marketing** and connecting with the buyers and suppliers all over the world.
 - ✓ Developed by **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** under Ministry of MSMEs.
 - MSME SAMBANDH, launched in 2017,** for monitoring procurement by CPSEs from Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)
 - Samadhaan Portal, launched in 2017,** for monitoring of outstanding dues to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) from buyers of goods and services.
- Schemes run by the Ministry include:**
 - MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (**MSE GIFT Scheme**)
 - MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (**MSE SPICE Scheme**)
 - MSME Sustainable (**ZED**) Certification Scheme
 - Trade Enablement and Marketing (**TEAM**) Scheme

Other Initiatives for MSMEs

- No global tenders** for procurement up to ₹200 crores.
- Inclusion of **Retail and Wholesale traders as MSMEs** since 2021.



Udyam Assist Platform

- Launch Year: 2023
- Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Implementing Agency: **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)**
- Objective: **To facilitate the registration of Informal Micro Enterprises**, enabling them to avail benefits such as Priority Sector Lending and formal recognition.
- Offers a streamlined process to obtain an Udyam Assist Certificate, **even for those without a Goods and Services Tax Number (GSTN)**, enhancing their access to financial and support services.

Government-e-Marketplace (GeM)

India's online marketplace for public procurement
Launch → August 9, 2016
Ministry → Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Launched as a part of → Digital India initiative
Aim → To enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement
Three Pillars → Efficiency, Transparency and Inclusivity
Owner → GeM SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) L Registered under section 8, Companies Act 2013
Run by → consortium of Intellect Design Arena, Infibeam and Tata Communications

- **Non-tax benefits extended for 3 years** in case of an upward change in MSME status.
- **Finance, Income, and Trade (FIT) Rank:**
 - **Launched by CIBIL in 2022** in collaboration with **Online PSB Loans Limited (OPL)** under the mentorship of Small Industries Development Bank of India (**SIDBI**).
 - Uses Goods and Services Tax (GST), bank statements, and income tax returns to provide a ranking model for MSME lending.
 - **Utilizes machine learning algorithms to predict the probability of an MSME becoming a non-performing asset (NPA) within the next 12 months.**
 - Ranks MSMEs on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least risky and 10 the most at-risk.
- **Vendor Development Programme (VDP):**
 - **Organized by Development Institutions (DIIs) and MSME-Development and Facilitation Offices (DFOs)** in collaboration with CPSEs and other Government Departments.
 - Objective: **To facilitate market linkages for MSMEs** under the Public Procurement Policy.
 - Benefits include assistance with GeM registration and understanding public procurement with CPSEs.
 - From 2019-2023, **total 9,474 MSMEs participated.**
- **Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises:**
 - **Implemented from 2012**, to promote the growth and development of MSEs.
 - **Benefits available only to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs):**
 - ✓ **Purchase Preference: 25% annual procurement from MSEs** by Central Ministries/Departments/CPSUs, with **4% from SC/ST-owned MSEs and 3% from women-owned MSEs.**
 - ✓ **Price Match-Making Facility:** MSEs within L1+15% price band (where L1 is price quotation from someone other than MSE) can match L1 price and supply up to 25% of the total tendered value.
 - ✓ **Exemption from Earnest Money Deposit.**
 - ✓ Other Benefits: **Tender sets free of cost** and **e-procurement** to reduce transaction costs and increase transparency.

Note:

- Kindly refer to **SchemeTap 1st to 31st July 2024 for Schemes mentioned above.**

2.110 GeM (Government e-Marketplace)

Why in News

- GeM's e-Learning Training Courses are now available in 12 official languages of India.

Key Highlights

- **Launched in 2024**, GeM Learning Management System (LMS) provides access to multilingual, **SCORM-compliant (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) interactive e-Learning courses** to understand policies, functionalities, and navigate the portal with ease.
- **LMS offers 4-level Buyer Certification program** to empower users with progressive learning and valuable certifications.

DID YOU KNOW?

Share of women-owned MSMEs in outstanding MSME credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks stood at **7.09%** as of March 2023.

2.111 Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision (MAKV) 2047

Why in News

- Union Budget 2024 has set ambitious targets to propel India from Rank 18 to the Top 5 in global ship tonnage and shipbuilding by 2047 under the MAKV 2047 initiative.

About MAKV 2047

- Launch Year:** 2023
- Ministry:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways
- Objective:** To position India as a global maritime powerhouse by 2047.
- Features:**
 - Investment of ₹80 lakh crore** in logistics, infrastructure, and shipping over 25 years.
 - Over 300 initiatives and actionable points** aligning with the promotion of Blue Economy.
 - Promotion of **National Logistics Portal-Marine (NLP-Marine)** for digitization and efficiency in maritime logistics.
- MAKV 2047 Targets:**
 - Propel India from Rank 18 in **global ship tonnage to Top 5 by 2047**, creating jobs for Indian seafarers.
 - Push India from Rank 22 in **shipbuilding to Top 5 by 2047**, attracting foreign capital and offering jobs in the manufacturing sector.
 - To boost the share of **Inland Water Transport (IWT) to 5% by 2030 and 7% by 2047**.

2.112 Northeast Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE)

Why in News

- Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER)** launched the **NERACE web portal and mobile app** to benefit the farming community and buyers in the Northeastern region.

Key Highlights

- Objective:** To support agricultural and horticultural products, providing farmers access to larger markets, better negotiation opportunities, premium pricing, and real-time availability updates.
- The app is expected **to bring together 50,000 farmers and 5,000 buyers** over the next 5 years.
- It **operates as a unique Farm to Business (F2B) marketplace**, facilitating price negotiation, bookings, and real-time product availability **across over 50 crop categories**.

DID YOU KNOW?

North-East region boasts 20 exotic, high-value geographical indication (GI) products rich in health benefits.

Miscellaneous Points

- The launch event also included an **address by Professor Mahendra Lama**, chairman of the drafting committee, who presented the **first draft of the North East Region (NER) Vision 2047**.
 - The vision document **outlines 8 goals for the development of the Northeast region**:
 - ✓ Establishing it as a South Asian power hub
 - ✓ Leveraging border areas as opportunities
 - ✓ Promoting it as a green destination
 - ✓ Creating an economic corridor
 - ✓ Becoming a centre for climate studies for the Indian Himalayan region
 - ✓ Developing medical and adventure tourism

- ✓ Serving as a melting pot of youth and culture
- ✓ Achieving a peace dividend

MULTICULTURALISM

2.113 Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) Campaign

Why in News

- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) programme promotes interaction and mutual understanding between people of different States/UTs through various cultural and educational activities.

Key Highlights of EBSB Campaign

- **Announced on 31st October 2015** on the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Culture
- **Participating Ministries/Departments:** 16 Ministries/Departments conduct activities year-round.
- **Areas of Focus:** Language learning, culture, traditions, music, tourism, cuisine, sports, and sharing best practices.
- **Special Initiatives:**
 - **Yuva Sangam:** Educational and cultural exchange program celebrating diversity.
 - **Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS):** Celebrated historic connections between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, with 3,900 Tamil delegates participating in cultural activities.
 - **Ek Bharat Sanskriti Sangam (EBSS):** Social media campaign carried out from July-Oct 2023 to encourage youth (18-30 years) to learn and embrace cultures, traditions and art forms of different States/UTs.
- **Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) Activities:** Various cultural programs in Maharashtra, including Lok Kala Darshan, Tribal Dance Festival, Folk Theatre Festival, and more.

About Yuva Sangam (Phase IV)

- **Launch Year:** 2024
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Education in collaboration with other Ministries\Departments.
- **Developed by:** A government-led program under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.
- During the **cultural-cum-educational tours**, multi-dimensional exposure under 5 broad areas which are Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati

DID YOU KNOW?

The Government of India has set up **7 Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs)** in the country with headquarters at **Patiala** (Punjab), **Nagpur** (Maharashtra), **Udaipur** (Rajasthan), **Prayagraj** (Uttar Pradesh), **Kolkata** (West Bengal), **Dimapur** (Nagaland) and **Thanjavur** (Tamil Nadu) to protect, promote and preserve various forms of folk art & culture throughout the country.

KASHI TAMIL SANGAMAM



- Launch year: **2022** by **Ministry of Education** in collaboration with **Banaras Hindu University** and **IIT, Madras**.
- To revive the living bonds between **Kashi** and **Tamil Nadu** – two important centres of learning and culture in ancient India.
- To bring these two traditions of knowledge and culture closer together while building an understanding of shared heritage and strengthening ties between the people of these two regions.
- To rediscover and strengthen the ancient intellectual, cultural, spiritual and artisanal connection between the two cultures.

(Development), Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect), and Prodyogiki (Technology) is provided to the visiting delegation.

- Youth across 25 states/UTs will **visit their paired counterpart** for 5-7 days (excluding travel days).
- **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (Kerala)** is part of 22 eminent institutions across India that have been identified for Phase IV of Yuva Sangam.
 - **IIM Kozhikode is paired with Guru Ghasidas University**, Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh).
- **Beneficiaries:** Youth aged 18-30 years, primarily students and volunteers.

Miscellaneous Points

- Ministry of Education, Government of India in collaboration with MyGov has developed a mobile app '**Bhasha Sangam**' under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, through Indian Language Learning App Innovation Challenge. The app aims to give users familiarity with a wide range of Indian languages.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

2.114 Mission Parivar Vikas

Why in News

- Union Health Minister discussed family planning and population control, highlighting the success and expansion of Mission Parivar Vikas on World Population Day (11 July) event with the theme "Healthy timing & spacing of pregnancies for the wellbeing of mother and child".

About Mission Parivar Vikas

- **Launch Year:** 2016
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- **Objective:** To increase access to contraceptives and reduce fertility rates in high-burden districts.
- **Features:**
 - One of the successful schemes of the National Family Planning Programme.
 - Initially launched for 146 High Priority Districts in 7 high-focus states.
 - Later expanded to cover all districts in these states and 6 northeastern states.
 - Focuses on reducing maternal, infant, and under-5 mortality rates.
 - Promotes modern contraceptive usage, which increased from 47.8% (NFHS 4) to **56.5%** (NFHS 5).
 - Unmet Need for Family Planning declined from 12.9% (NFHS 4) to **9.4%** (NFHS 5).
 - **31 of 36 states/UTs have now reached replacement level (2.1 children per woman) of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) except UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur.**
 - A multipurpose Family Planning Display Model "Sugam" was introduced to create awareness and promote family planning.

KEY TERMS

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

The average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime.

Unmet Need for Family Planning

The percentage of women who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception.

- Now **expanded to 3 phases**: preparatory phase, community participation and service delivery.

Miscellaneous Points

- States like Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have unique programs such as "**Saas Bahu Sammelan**" and "**Antara Day**" to involve the community and provide injectable contraceptives, respectively.

URBANISATION AND MIGRATION

2.115 Urban Transport System

Why in News

- Central Government is taking steps to revamp the urban transport system with various policies and schemes to support State Governments in planning and developing sustainable urban transport infrastructure.

Key Highlights

- Policies: National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) 2006 (Revised in 2014), Metro Rail Policy 2017, and Transit Oriented Development Policy 2017 guide State Governments for integrated urban transport planning.
- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Notifications:
 - Exemptions for Battery-Operated Transport Vehicles and vehicles running on Ethanol and Methanol fuels from permit requirements.
 - Exemption of Battery-Operated Vehicles from registration fees.
 - Issuance of All India Tourist Permits for battery-operated vehicles without registration fees.
 - Retro-fitment of hybrid electric systems or electric kits to vehicles.

DID YOU KNOW?

Urban planning is primarily a **State subject**, with State Governments responsible for developing urban transport infrastructure.

CHANGES IN INDUSTRIAL AND LABOUR POLICY, SINCE REFORMS OF 1991

2.116 SAMADHAN (Software Application for Monitoring and Disposal, Handling of Industrial Disputes/Claims/General Complaints) Portal

Why in News

- SAMADHAN Portal has been highlighted by Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Key Highlights

- Launched in 2020, for filing industrial disputes by the workmen, employers and trade unions under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
 - A new module was launched in 2022, for filing claims under various acts, including the Minimum Wages Act 1948, Payment of Wages Act 1936, Equal Remuneration Act 1976, Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, and the Maternity Benefit Act 1961.
- Features:
 - Online filing of disputes and claims.

- Status tracking and online notifications.
- Tools for internal monitoring of grievances.
- Integration with the **UMANG app** and **Common Services Centres**.

2.117 eShram Portal

Why in News

- **More than 29.79 crore unorganized workers have been registered** on the eShram portal as of July 2024.

Key Highlights

- Registration counts by gender (As on March 2024):
 - **Female: 15.67 crore**
 - **Male: 13.83 crore**
 - **Others: 6,461**
- Integrated with **National Career Service (NCS) portal** for better job opportunities.
- Integrated with **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) pension scheme**.
- Integrated with **Skill India Digital portal** for skill enhancement and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Integrated with **myScheme portal**.
 - A national platform, **launched in 2022**, for discovering and applying for government schemes based on eligibility.

Note

- Kindly refer to SchemesTap 1st to 31st July 2024 for more information on **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) pension scheme**.
- Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th April 2024** for more information on **National Career Service (NCS) portal**.
- Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 30th June 2024** for more information on **eShram portal**.

2.118 Minimum Wages

Why in News

- **Code on Wages, 2019**, makes minimum wages universally applicable across all employments, moving beyond the restrictive applicability limited to scheduled employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

Key Highlights

- **Minimum Wages Act, 1948:**
 - Minimum wage **includes basic rate of wages and cost of living allowances**.
 - The **Central Government revises the cost-of-living allowance called as Variable Dearness Allowance (V.D.A.)** on basic rates of

e-Shram Portal

Launch

Launched by **Ministry of Labour & Employment** in **2021** To create a first-ever **National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW)**, including migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers.

Aim

To extend social security scheme benefits to unorganized workers and to enable self-registration for workers with **Aadhaar-seeded** details.

Eligibility for Registration

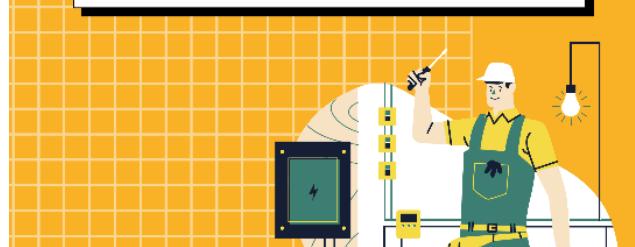
Any unorganized worker between 16-59 years of age and he should **not be an income tax payee**.

Data Collection

Labour Bureau conducted an **All-India Survey on Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers** for socio-economic data collection.

Feature

Allocation of a **12-digit Permanent Universal Account Number (UAN)** to every worker after registration, which allows social security portability with job changes.



KEY TERMS

Variable Dearness Allowance (V.D.A.)

An allowance linked to the Consumer Price Index to protect wages against inflation.

minimum wages **every six months**, effective from April and October, **based on the Consumer Price Index for Industrial workers**.

- **Code on Wages, 2019:**

- Rationalizes and **subsumes provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.**
- **Maintains the provision for cost-of-living allowance** as a component of minimum wages.

2.119 Code on Social Security, 2020

Why in News

- Code on Social Security, 2020, **provides for framing social security measures for gig workers and platform workers, marking the first time** these definitions have been included in Indian legislation.

About Code on Social Security, 2020

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Labour & Employment
- Code provides for **life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old age protection, etc.**, for gig and platform workers.
- Provides for establishment of a **Social Security Fund** to finance welfare schemes for these workers.
- **Section 113** of it provides for the registration of unorganized workers, gig workers, and platform workers.
- The provisions of the Code are **yet to come into effect**.

DID YOU KNOW?

NITI Aayog Report: "India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy" published in 2022 estimated **7.7 million gig and platform workers in 2020-21**, expected to rise to **23.5 million by 2029-30**.

Key Terminologies

- **Gig Workers:** Individuals who engage in income-earning activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationships, often through digital platforms.
- **Platform Workers:** Workers who access work through digital platforms that connect them with clients or customers.

OTHER NEWS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

2.120 UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme

Why in News

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) **designated 11 new biosphere reserves in 11 countries** during the 36th session of the International Coordinating Council.

Key Highlights

- **New Biosphere Reserves:**

KEY TERMS

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

A framework adopted in December 2022 aimed at **protecting 30% of the Earth's land and marine surface and restoring 30% of the planet's degraded ecosystems by 2030**.

- Kempen-Broek Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands)
- Darién Norte Chocoano Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)
- Madre de las Aguas Biosphere Reserve (Dominican Republic)
- Niumi Biosphere Reserve (Gambia)
- Colli Euganei Biosphere Reserve (Italy)
- Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Italy, Slovenia)
- Khar Us Lake Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia)
- yApayaos Biosphere Reserve (Philippines)
- Changnyeong Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea)
- Val d'Aran Biosphere Reserve (Spain)
- Irati Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

- **Additional Information:**

- Belgium and Gambia designated **their first biosphere reserves**.
- **2 transboundary biosphere reserves:** Kempen-Broek (Belgium and the Netherlands) and Julian Alps (Italy and Slovenia).
- **Total area covered by the new reserves:** 37,400 km².

About UNESCO

- Born on **16 November 1945**.
- Headquartered in **Paris (France)**.
- Member Nations: **194**

MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME



- Launched by **UNESCO** in 1971.
- **Objective:** To improve the relationship between **people and their environments** by promoting sustainable development through the conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity.
- **Contributes to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework goals.**
- UNESCO oversees a **network of 759 biosphere reserves** in 136 countries.
- Currently, India has **18 notified biosphere reserves** (12 recognized by UNESCO's MAB).

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA

2.121 Employment Data

Why in News

- India's **employment provisionally grew at 6% in FY24**, as shown by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) KLEMS database.

Key Highlights

- **Country added 46.7 million jobs** in the FY24.
- India's **total employment stood at 643.3 million** in 2023/24.
- The **total number of employed people as a ratio of the total population** increased to **44.2%** in FY24.
- **Unemployment ratio has decreased to 1.4%** in FY24.

DID YOU KNOW?

KLEMS data covers **27 industries** and provides **insights into 5 key inputs in production**: Capital (**K**), Labour (**L**), Energy (**E**), Materials (**M**), and Services (**S**).

- Services sector, excluding construction, is absorbing most of the workforce moving out of agriculture.

As per the latest quarterly bulletin of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in May 2024

- Female unemployment rate declined to 8.5% in January–March 2024.
- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in urban areas increased to 50.2% in January–March 2024.
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 46.9% in January–March 2024.
- Female Worker Population Ratio in urban areas rose to 23.4% in January–March 2024.
- More than 13 million subscribers joined EPFO in FY24

Additional Information

- Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy estimated that the unemployment rate in India rose to 8% in FY24.

INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

2.122 Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) (Amendment) Rules, 2023

Why in News

- Union Consumer Affairs Ministry is planning an awareness campaign for consumers regarding the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) (Amendment) Rules, 2023.

Key Highlights

- The rules mandate direct sellers to provide clear, accurate, and complete offer terms, including payment, return, guarantee, after-sales service, and delivery.
- Direct-selling firms are barred from engaging in misleading, deceptive, or unfair trade practices.
- Consumer Protection Act of 2019 safeguards consumers against defective products, unsatisfactory services, and unfair trade practices.
- Common unethical practices by direct-selling firms include product misrepresentation, pyramid schemes, high-pressure sales tactics, exaggerated income claims, and failure to protect consumer data.
- Approximately 8.6 million people are actively self-employed in the direct-selling industry in India.

KEY TERMS

Direct Selling

A marketing and retailing method that involves selling products directly to consumers in a non-retail environment.

Pyramid Scheme

A fraudulent investment scheme where returns are derived from recruiting new participants rather than from a legitimate business activity.

2.123 National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)

Why in News

- The government reconstituted the NITI Aayog with 4 full-time members and 15 Union Ministers.

Key Highlights

- Number of special invitees increased from 5 to 11.

- Prime Minister remains the Chairperson, and Suman K Bery continues as Vice Chairperson.
- Full-time members include Scientist V K Saraswat, Agricultural Economist Ramesh Chand, Paediatrician V K Paul, and Macro-economist Arvind Virmani.
- BVR Subrahmanyam remains the CEO.
- Ex-officio members include Finance Minister, Home Minister, Agriculture Minister and Defence Minister.

About NITI Aayog

- Launch Year: 2015 by replacing the Planning Commission.
- Objective: To act as the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs.
- It is supported by an attached office, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Organisation (DMEO), a flagship initiative, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and an autonomous body, National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD).

GLOBALIZATION

2.124 EU Council

Why in News

- Hungary has taken over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union for 6 months.

Key Highlights

- The motto of Hungary's EU Presidency is "Make Europe Great Again" focussing on 7 various priorities.
- Functions as Chair:
 - Setting agendas and priorities for the EU Council meetings.
 - Representing the Council in relations with other EU institutions.
 - Coordinating EU policies and legislative processes.
- Hungary will hand over the post to Poland on January 1, 2025.



ASEAN

Evolution of India ASEAN Relations



Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- 1992 — India became a Sectoral Partner
- 1996 — India became a Dialogue Partner
- 2002 — India became a Summit Partner
- 2022 — Commemorated 30th Anniversary of India ASEAN Relations



ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)

Signed in 2009 and came into effect in 2010 to expand bilateral trade based on Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation established in 2003. (Review of AITIGA is expected to conclude in 2025)
Currently, ASEAN holds a share of 11% in India's global trade.

2.125 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

Why in News

- Laos is preparing to host the **57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting**.

2.126 Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

Why in News

- CSC welcomed Bangladesh as its 5th member state at 8th Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA) level meeting.

Key Highlights

- Member states reviewed the progress of the CSC's Roadmap for 2023-2024.

About Colombo Security Conclave

- Started in 2011** as trilateral meetings between NSAs and Deputy NSAs from India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.
- Meetings were suspended between 2014 and 2020.**
- Group was revived in 2020** with expanded focus on maritime cooperation with expanded members and observers.
- Objective:** To expand maritime cooperation and strengthen regional security collaboration.
- Secretariat:** Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Current members of CSC:** India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius (Joined in 2022), and Maldives.
- Observer state:** Seychelles.
- In 2022**, the group adopted an **agenda of 5 pillars:**
 - Maritime safety and security
 - Countering terrorism and radicalisation
 - Combating trafficking and transnational organised crime
 - Cybersecurity and protection of critical infrastructure and technology
 - Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)



Establishment

- 15 June 2001
- Extension of the **Shanghai Five Group** formed on April 26, 1996.

Two Permanent Bodies



Members

- Secretariat - **Beijing, China**
- Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) - **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**



- 10 Full-time members** (China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus)
- 2 Observer states** (Mongolia, Afghanistan) and 14 Dialogue Partners

- Chinese and Russian

Official Languages



Presidency

- 2022 - Uzbekistan
- 2023 - India (India's first ever Presidency of SCO)
- 2024 - Kazakhstan

- 'SECURE-SCO'
- SECURE refers to **Security, Economic cooperation, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Environment**

Theme for 2023



Coordinate Logistics

- Plan logistics for transportation, accommodation, and on-site operations.
- Create contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances.

- Startups and Innovation, Traditional Medicine, Digital Inclusion, Youth Empowerment and Shared Buddhist Heritage

Five new pillars of cooperation & Focus Areas established by India



Significance

- SCO is the world's largest regional organization in terms of geographic scope and population
- covers 40% of the world population**
- contributes to **25% of global GDP**
- covers 22% of the world's total land area**
- India & Pakistan became full time member of SCO in 2017**

2.127 Belarus Joins Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



Why in News

- Belarus has officially become the 10th member state of the SCO during the SCO summit 2024 in Astana (Kazakhstan).

MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY

2.128 Goods and Services Tax (GST) Collection in June 2024

Why in News

- GST collection for June 2024 reached Rs 1.74 trillion, showing a year-on-year growth of 7.7%.

Key Highlights

- In May 2024, GST collection was **Rs 1.73 trillion**, and in April 2024, it was a record-high of **Rs 2.1 trillion**.

Miscellaneous Points

- 7th GST Day (1 July 2024) theme** was "Sashakt Vyapar Samagra Vikas" (empowered trade, overall growth).



2.129 Bank Dividends

Why in News

- 4 public sector banks and EXIM bank presented dividend cheques worth Rs 6,481 crore to the Union Finance Minister for FY 2023-24.

Key Highlights

- Canara Bank (Headquartered in Bengaluru) paid Rs 1,838.15 crore.
- Bank of Baroda (Headquartered in Vadodara) paid Rs 2,514.22 crore.
- Indian Bank (Headquartered in Chennai) paid Rs 1,193.45 crore.
- Bank of India (Headquartered in Mumbai) paid Rs 935.44 crore.
- EXIM Bank (Headquartered in Mumbai) paid Rs 252 crore for FY 2023-24.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

2.130 FPI Sources

Why in News

- Ireland has surpassed Mauritius to become the 4th preferred destination for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) routing funds into India as of June 2024 after US, Singapore and Luxembourg.

Additional Information

- Mauritius and India signed an amendment to the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) in March 2024, aligning with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD)'s Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) proposal.
 - Mauritius introduced the Principal Purpose Test (PPT) to prevent treaty abuse.

- PPT stipulates that if tax benefits are a principal reason for choosing Mauritius, treaty benefits can be denied.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

2.131 GeM Portal

Why in News

- GeM records 136% quarter-on-quarter growth over last year's Gross Merchandise Value (GMV).

Key Highlights

- GeM achieved a GMV of ₹1,24,761 crore at the end of Q1 FY24-25.
- Services segment clocked a GMV of more than ₹80,500 crore, marking a growth of 330% over the corresponding period in FY23-24.
- Procurement by Central Government bodies, including CPSEs, surpassed the ₹1 lakh crore milestone.
- Ministries of Coal, Defence, and Petroleum & Gas emerged as the top procurers.

Miscellaneous Points

- GeM is planning to roll out 'GeM SAHAYAK' program which aims at creating a PAN INDIA network of 6-7000 trained and certified accredited trainers who would then offer their services to potential and existing GeM Sellers in navigating on GeM and enhancing business opportunities.
 - Buyers too will benefit from the services of these SAHAYAKS in terms of creation of bids and other value-added services.
- Reduction in transaction charges for sellers to 0.30% (capped at maximum ₹3 lakh) of the order value for orders above ₹5 lakh.
- Aabhar Collection was launched to promote handcrafted products and the #Vocalforlocal initiative.
- GeM plans to deploy an AI-based chatbot "GeMAI" for improved query resolution and monitoring.

2.132 Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

Why in News



OPEN NETWORK FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE (ONDC)

World's First Initiative to Democratise Digital Commerce

INCORPORATION

Incorporated as a Section 8 company in 2021, with Quality Council of India and Protean eGov Technologies Limited as Founding Members.

MINISTRY

Initiative of Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry

OBJECTIVE

To democratize and decentralize eCommerce, granting inclusivity for SMEs and local businesses while expanding consumer choices and autonomy.

TARGETS & IMPACTS

- Opportunity to include over 12 million sellers in India.
 - Only 0.125% are currently enabled for e-commerce.
- Expected to boost e-commerce penetration in India from 4-5% to 25%.
- McKinsey report predicts a 5-fold rise in India's digital consumption to \$340 billion through ONDC.

- **BranchX, a leading fintech neobank, launched India's first personal loan solution through ONDC to enhance financial inclusion.**

KEY TERMS

Neobank

A type of direct bank that **operates exclusively online without traditional physical branch networks.**

Key Highlights

- The neobank has also introduced **Raja Rani card** (which helps families manage expenses together) and micro-saving products linked to gold investments.

2.133 Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)

Why in News

- **DBS Bank India has launched a pre-shipment financing solution on the TReDS platform to empower MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises).**

Key Highlights

- **DBS Bank India has partnered with Receivables Exchange of India Limited (RXIL) for this.**
- The new **solution allows Indian SMEs to secure funding against purchase orders**, enhancing cash flows before goods are delivered.
- This collaboration is the **first to offer end-to-end supplier financing using platform data for credit assessment.**

KEY TERMS

Pre-shipment Financing

A type of financing where **funds are provided to exporters before goods are shipped to the buyer**, typically to support the production and procurement processes.

About Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)

- **1st transaction on TReDS in India occurred in 2017 through RXIL.**
- **Objective:** To facilitate the collateral-free financing/discounting of trade receivables of MSMEs through multiple financiers.
- **Features:**
 - Ensures no recourse to MSMEs in case of defaults.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 31st May 2024** for more information on **RXIL and TReDS**.

2.134 Framework & Assessment of Logistics Cost in India

Why in News

- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) signed an MoU with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) to develop a framework and assessment of logistics cost in India.**

Key Highlights

- **It includes a comprehensive study to assess logistics cost for the year 2023-24.**
- The study will be conducted by NCAER and the **report will be submitted within a year**.
- The initiative **aligns with the National Logistics Policy (NLP) launched in September 2022**, aiming to reduce logistics costs from 16% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to a global average of **8% by 2030**.
 - It **aims to be among the top 25 countries by 2030 in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI)** (according to the **World Bank Logistics Index of 2018**, India is ranked 44th in logistics cost).

- NLP also aims to **create data driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.**
- To achieve these targets, a **Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP)** as part of the NLP **was launched covering 8 action areas.**
- In line with this, **Logistics Division, DPIIT had earlier launched a report titled Logistics Cost in India: assessment and long-term framework in 2023.**
 - ✓ This report was **prepared by NCAER** where a baseline aggregated logistics cost estimate and a framework for long term logistics cost calculation was prepared.

3. GA + FINANCE

OTHER NEWS

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MARKET

3.1 SEBI Circular on MIIs

Why in News

- SEBI has issued a circular **mandating that market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) levy uniform and equal charges to their members.**

Key Highlights

- The circular **aims to eliminate the volume-based slab-wise charge structure** to ensure fair access to all market participants.
- The circular stipulates that **charges to be recovered from the end client should be "true to label."**
- The Sebi circular will come into **effect starting October 1, 2024.**

KEY TERMS

True to Label

Ensuring that **charges levied on end clients accurately reflect the amount charged by the exchange.**

Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)

Entities such as **stockbrokers, depository participants, and clearing members** involved in the securities market.

3.2 SEBI Circular on Supervisory Body

Why in News

- SEBI granted BSE Ltd recognition under regulation 14 of the RA and IA Regulations to supervise Research Analysts (RAs) and Investment Advisers (IAs) for five years starting from July 25, 2024.

Key Highlights

- BSE will establish **bye-laws, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)** to facilitate the adoption of the **RAASB (Research Analyst Administration and Supervisory Body) and IAASB (Investment Adviser Administration and Supervisory Body) frameworks.**
- Applicants seeking registration or renewal as RAs or IAs will need to pay **administrative fees** specified by the RAASB and IAASB.

KEY TERMS

Research Analyst (RA)

A **professional who analyzes financial data and trends** to provide investment recommendations.

Investment Adviser (IA)

A **professional who provides advice** on investments and financial planning.

- **SEBI revised the fees payable by RAs for registration**, effective from July 25, 2024.
 - The total fees payable for application, registration, and renewal will not exceed the previous fee structure, ensuring a fee-neutral approach.
 - Applications for RA registration received before **July 25, 2024**, will follow the previous fee structure.
- The move **aims to protect investor interests and promote the development and regulation of the securities market**.

Note: Kindly refer to **CurrentTap 1st to 31st May 2024** (Article 3.2) for more information.

3.3 Sebi (Stock-Brokers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024

Why in News

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has **directed stockbrokers to establish an institutional mechanism to detect and prevent fraud and market abuse**, as per the Sebi (Stock-Brokers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024, under **SEBI Act, 1992**.

About Sebi (Stock-Brokers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024

- **Objective:** To prevent and detect fraud and market abuse in the securities market, ensuring fair and transparent practices.
- **Features:**
 - Establishment of **surveillance and internal control systems** by stockbrokers.
 - **Defined obligations** for brokerage firms and their employees.
 - Implementation of **escalation and reporting mechanisms**.
 - Introduction of a **whistle-blower policy**.
 - The **standards for implementation of the same** including operational modalities shall be **formulated by the broker's Industry Standards Forum (ISF)**, in consultation with SEBI.
- **Effective Dates:**
 - **January 1, 2025**, for brokers with >50,000 unique client codes (UCCs).
 - **April 1, 2025**, for brokers with 2,001 to 50,000 UCCs.
 - **April 1, 2026**, for brokers with up to 2,000 UCCs.
 - **August 1, 2024**, for Qualified Stock-Brokers (QSBs).

KEY TERMS

Unique Client Code (UCC)

A **unique identification number assigned to each client by stockbrokers** to maintain a record of their transactions.

Qualified Stock brokers (QSBs)

Stockbrokers with enhanced obligations and responsibilities, such as governance structures and processes, and surveillance of client behaviour.

Whistle-blower Policy

A policy that **allows employees to report any fraudulent or unethical activities within the organization without fear of retaliation**.

3.4 Sebi Guidelines for Credit Rating Agencies

Why in News

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) issued new guidelines to streamline the operations and enhance the ease of doing business for credit rating agencies, applicable from August 1, 2024.**

Key Highlights

- CRAs must communicate ratings to companies within 1 working day of the rating committee meeting.
- Companies have 3 working days to request a review or appeal of the rating decision.
- Press releases on the CRA's website and intimation to the stock exchange or debenture trustee must occur within 7 working days of the rating committee meeting.
- CRAs must maintain records of disclosures for 10 years, which can be shared with debenture trustees upon request.
- The list of non-cooperative issuers must be updated daily.
- Information about ratings not accepted by issuers must be maintained for 12 months.
- Compliance will be monitored through the half-yearly internal audit for credit rating agencies as mandated under the CRA norms.

3.5 World's First Biodiversity Bond in the Financial Sector

Why in News

- BBVA Colombia and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) issued the world's first biodiversity bond in the financial sector.

Key Highlights

- BBVA and IFC issued a \$15 million first tranche of the biodiversity bond, which will total \$70 million.
- The bond aims to finance projects addressing biodiversity loss, including reforestation, natural forest regeneration, climate-smart agriculture, and wildlife habitat restoration.
- BBVA is the issuing bank, and IFC acts as the structurer and investor.
- IFC provides advice on eligibility criteria and reporting indicators for activities that protect or improve biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- IFC will build technical capabilities within BBVA and raise awareness among its clients about financing opportunities for biodiversity in Colombia.

DID YOU KNOW?

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets.

3.6 Passive Mutual Fund Schemes

Why in News

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi revised norms to restrict investments by passive mutual fund schemes in sponsor group companies to 25% of net assets.

Key Highlights

- The new rules do not apply to equity-oriented exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and index funds.
 - Equity-oriented ETFs and index funds can make investments according to the weightage of the constituents of the underlying index but are capped at 35% of the net asset value of the scheme in the sponsor's group companies.
- The revision aims to ensure diversified and prudent investment strategies within mutual fund schemes.

KEY TERMS

Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF)

An ETF is a basket of securities that tracks or seeks to outperform an underlying index.

Passive mutual fund schemes

In a Passive Fund, the fund manager has a passive role, as the stock selection / Buy, Hold, Sell decision is driven by the Benchmark Index and the fund manager / dealer merely needs to replicate the same with minimal tracking error.

Index Funds

A type of mutual fund with a portfolio constructed to match or track the components of a market index.

- To ensure transparency, **Sebi has defined "widely tracked and non-bespoke indices"** as those with collective assets under management (AUM) of Rs 20,000 crore and above, tracked by passive funds or serving as primary benchmarks for active funds.
 - The **Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI)** will update and publish the list of such indices biannually, on April 15 and October 15, based on AUM data as of March 31 and September 30, respectively.
 - **Passive schemes not aligned with these indices will be rebalanced within 30 business days** from the date of issuance of this circular.
 - The **investment committee can extend the timeline** for rebalancing up to 60 business days from the date of completion of the mandated rebalancing period.
 - **In case the portfolios of schemes are not rebalanced** within the period mandated plus extended timelines, Asset Management Companies (AMCs) will not be permitted to **launch any new scheme** till the time the portfolio is rebalanced **and not levy exit load**, if any, on the existing investors of such schemes, it added.

3.7 Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)

Why in News

- **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** simplified the reporting process for businesses transferring unclaimed dividends and shares to the IEPFA.

Key Highlights

- **Businesses are required to provide detailed reports to IEPFA** on unclaimed dividends, which they must maintain in a separate account, and on the transfer of any amount or shares **unclaimed for 7 years** to the investor education fund.
- Amendment to the IEPFA Rules **allows online transfers and merges different forms** for smoother disclosures.
- The **new forms will be processed through the MCA21 portal** under a straight-through process **for automatic approval**.

Miscellaneous Points

- Estimated total balance in IEPF is about **₹5,600 crore as of January 2023**.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021, the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** simplified the process of claiming refunds from IEPF and introduced self-attestation of documents.

FUNCTIONS OF RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

3.8 Brickwork Ratings

Why in News

- Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) has permitted banks to use ratings from **Brickwork Ratings** (a Credit Rating Agency) for calculating risk weights for capital adequacy purposes.

Key Highlights

- Banks can use Brickwork Ratings for new rating mandates for **bank loans not exceeding Rs 250 crore**.
- Brickwork can undertake rating surveillance for existing ratings, especially for larger facilities.
 - For existing ratings of **working capital facilities exceeding Rs 250 crore**, surveillance is allowed only till the next renewal.
- Certificate of Registration granted to **Brickwork Ratings India as a Credit Rating Agency (CRA)** was cancelled by market regulator Sebi in October 2022.
 - After a review of the 2022 circular, the RBI has now permitted.

3.9 Core Investment Company

KEY TERMS

Why in News

- Reserve Bank of India approved the **conversion of Jio Financial Services from a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) to a Core Investment Company (CIC)**.

Key Highlights

- Jio Financial Services is the **demerged entity of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)**.
- The **conversion was mandated by RBI** to comply with the change in shareholding pattern and control due to the demerger.

About Core Investment Company

- **Unlike typical NBFCs, CICs are non-deposit taking financial companies** that have their assets predominantly invested in the equity shares, preference shares, or debt instruments of their group companies.
- A CIC, by regulatory definition, **must have an asset size greater than Rs 100 crore** and **must hold at least 90% of its net assets in investments** such as equity shares, preference shares, bonds, debentures, or loans in group companies.
- As a CIC, the company gains **greater operational flexibility**. It can now focus on core investment activities without engaging in other financial services.

Non-Banking Financial Company

Financial institutions that **provide banking services without meeting the legal definition of a bank**, offering loans, credit facilities, retirement planning, and investment products.

Demerged Entity

A company that has been **split off from a larger parent company to form a new entity**.

FINTECH

3.10 Project Nexus

Why in News

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined "Project Nexus" with ASEAN nations** to establish an instant cross-border retail payments platform.

Key Highlights About the Project

- **A multilateral international effort conceptualized by the Innovation Hub of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS)**.
- Objective: **To link fast payment systems (FPSs) of India, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. (founding members and first mover countries of this platform)**

- **To enhance efficiency and reduce costs in international transactions**, addressing the high costs of cross-border small value transactions, which are estimated to be around **6% by the World Bank**.
- The platform is **expected to be operational by 2026**, with plans for global expansion.
- **Indonesia** is a **special observer** of the project.

About BIS

- Established in **1930**, the BIS is owned by **63** central banks.
- **Headquarters**: Basel, Switzerland
- **Objective**: To support central banks' pursuit of monetary and financial stability through international cooperation, and to act as a bank for central banks.

Quick Revision

- **Full Immunization Coverage for FY 2023-24 under UIP is 93.23%**, targeting 2.6 crore children and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually, with significant achievements including over 90% coverage for most antigens and 83% PCV coverage.
- Union Home Minister launched the **National Narcotics Helpline 'MANAS' with a toll-free number 1933**, a web portal, a mobile app, and UMANG app integration, allowing citizens to anonymously connect with NCB 24x7 for de-addiction, rehabilitation advice, and reporting drug trafficking.
- Ministry of Education will celebrate the **4th anniversary of NEP 2020 with Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam 2024**, featuring the launch of various initiatives like dedicated TV channels for Indian languages, primers in 25 languages, guidelines for 10 Bagless days, career guidance resources, and the National Mission on Mentoring in Braille and Audio Books, along with thematic sessions on education sustainability, STEM promotion, and quality enhancement.
- Union Minister for Education launched the **NATS 2.0 portal**, developed with AICTE and BOAT/BOPT, to democratize apprenticeships and bridge skills gaps, disbursing ₹100 crore stipends via DBT, recognizing Cognizant, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra.
- Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, is celebrating '**Shiksha Saptah**' from July 22 to July 28 to mark the fourth anniversary of NEP 2020.
- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the **Ideas4LiFE portal**, developed with UNICEF YuWaah, for submitting environment-friendly lifestyle ideas under Mission LiFE's 7 themes, recognizing and awarding the best ideas.
- **Ivory Coast became the 10th African nation and 53rd overall to join the 1992 UN Water Convention**, sharing 8 transboundary river basins with 6 neighboring countries.
- Ministry of Science and Technology inaugurated **Asia's first "Pre-clinical Network Facility" under CEPI at THSTI in Faridabad**, housing BSL3 pathogens and one of India's largest small animal facilities.
- **Philippines will host the Board of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage**, granting it legal personality to negotiate with the World Bank as interim trustee and operationalize the Fund, which was established at COP 28 in 2023 to help vulnerable countries recover from climate impacts. The Board comprises 26 members, with 12 from developed and 14 from developing countries, and will function under the guidance of the COP and CMA.
- **India submitted its Third National Communication to the UNFCCC**, highlighting its climate change impacts and mitigation efforts, financed mainly through domestic resources.

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) received \$215.6 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF)** to create a \$1 billion fund for MSME mitigation and adaptation projects, with \$200 million as a loan and \$15.6 million as a grant, supplemented by \$800 million from SIDBI.
- **KLEMS database** reported a significant employment increase in India, with over **6.2 crore net subscribers joining EPFO** from **September 2017 to March 2024**, raising total employment to **64.33 crore in 2023-24**, including 1.3 crore new EPFO subscribers in 2023-24 and an 85 lakh increase in manufacturing sector jobs from 2017-18 to 2022-23.
- **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** highlighted progress on its **Vision 2019-2024 goals**, including the launch of the **e-Sankhyiki Portal** for time series data, the **Online Computer Monitoring System (OCMS) Portal** for monitoring central sector projects, the **e-SAKSHI Portal** for MPLADS project management, and conducting NSSO surveys using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI).
- **MyGov platform celebrated its 10th anniversary**, launched on **July 26, 2014**, as an Independent Business Division under Digital India Corporation to enable participative governance, with **State instances launched in 23 States**.
- The government is set to **implement e-Office in all attached and subordinate offices**, as well as autonomous bodies, **as part of DARPG's 100-days agenda**.
- **IAEA and UNOSSC signed an agreement to enhance collaboration**, with the IAEA joining UNOSSC's 'Data to Policy Network' and 'Solutions Lab' programs, focusing on climate change and launching new joint activities to support sustainable development, highlighted by a joint publication of 20 climate action case studies.
- **India has been elected Vice-Chair of the Supply Chain Council under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**, which, along with 13 other partners, established bodies for supply chain resilience, with the **first in-person meeting set for September 2024 in Washington, D.C.**
- **India is hosting the 46th World Heritage Committee Meeting**, organized by the Archaeological Survey of India, with the **logo inspired by Hampi's stone chariot**, to identify and monitor World Heritage Sites, including **North East India's first Cultural World Heritage Site, the Maidam of the Ahom Dynasty in Assam**.
- **India concluded its 4th periodic review under the ICCPR by the Human Rights Committee** in Geneva, a legally binding multilateral treaty adopted in 1966 with 174 parties, to respect civil and political rights.
- **India and the USA signed their first-ever Cultural Property Agreement (CPA)** during the 46th World Heritage Committee session in New Delhi, aligning with the 1970 UNESCO Convention to prevent the illicit trafficking of antiquities.
- The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) awarded the Taxnet 2.0 project** to M/s Bharti-Airtel Ltd to enhance the digital infrastructure of the Income Tax Department.
- **DGFT announced a cap on interest equalisation at Rs 1.66 crore per IEC for July to August**, extending the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for 2 months to boost outbound shipments, **offering 3% interest benefits on pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit** to MSME manufacturer exporters.
- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry highlighted the benefits of **four FTAs signed in the last 10 years with Australia, Mauritius, EFTA, and the UAE**, including a \$100 billion investment commitment with EFTA, **India's decision to exit RCEP negotiations**, and significant growth in GDP and foreign exchange reserves.

- **SAMADHAN Portal**, highlighted by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**, was launched in **2020** for online filing and tracking of industrial disputes and claims under various labor acts, with new modules added in 2022.
- **SEBI has directed stockbrokers to establish mechanisms to prevent and detect fraud or market abuse under the SEBI (Stock Brokers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024**, with implementation dates varying based on the number of unique client codes (UCCs), **starting from August 1, 2024, for Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) and extending to April 1, 2026, for brokers with up to 2,000 UCCs**.
- **SEBI issued a circular mandating market infrastructure institutions (MIs) to levy uniform and equal charges to all members**, eliminating volume-based charges, and ensuring fair access and transparent client charges, **effective October 1, 2024**.
- **SEBI granted BSE Ltd recognition to supervise Research Analysts (RAs) and Investment Advisers (IAs) for five years from July 25, 2024**, requiring BSE to establish procedures and frameworks.
- **Reserve Bank of India has permitted banks to use Brickwork Ratings** for calculating risk weights for capital adequacy purposes. Banks can use these ratings **for loans up to Rs 250 crore** and for surveillance of existing larger facilities until their next renewal.
- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation launched the "**Swachh Gaon, Shudh Jal-Behtar Kal**" campaign to promote safe water and sanitation in rural areas from July 1st to August 31st, 2024.
- **Established in 2005, PMNCH** is the **world's largest alliance for maternal, newborn, and child health**, governed by a Board and hosted by WHO, focusing on the 2026-2030 strategy and post-2030 UN SDG goals.
- **NITI Aayog launches the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan'** to achieve saturation in 6 key indicators in 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks from **July 4th to September 30th, 2024**.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL launched the SEHER Program** to enhance credit education and financial access for women entrepreneurs.
- **Global IndiaAI Summit 2024**, organized by **MeitY**, promotes responsible AI development in India, featuring the **6th GPAI Ministerial Council meeting** and a new OECD-GPAI partnership on AI principles.
- Union Minister of Cooperation addressed the "Sahkar Se Samriddhi" conference on the **102nd International Cooperative Day**, launching a **nano-fertilizer assistance scheme** and '**Bharat Organic Atta**' by NCOL.
- **Codex Alimentarius Commission** (CAC), established by **FAO and WHO in 1961**, sets international food standards and includes 189 members, with **India joining in 1964**.
- **Hungary takes over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union** for 6 months with the motto "**Make Europe Great Again**," focusing on seven priorities.
- **Sebi directs stockbrokers to implement systems to prevent fraud and market abuse** under the new **Sebi (Stock Brokers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024**.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and ASEAN nations initiated "**Project Nexus**" to create an instant cross-border retail payments platform, aiming for operational status by 2026.
- **Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan has been appointed as the Principal Advisor** at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme.
- **GeM achieved a GMV of ₹1,24,761 crore** at the end of Q1 FY24-25.

- **National Commission for Women and CyberPeace Foundation launched the 5th phase of the Digital Shakti Campaign**, aiming to digitally empower and upskill 10 lakh women and girls in cyberspace.
- **India participated in the 132nd IMO Council session in London**, securing a position in the Joint Tripartite Working Group on seafarers' issues and reiterated its proposal for the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (**SACE-SMarT**).
- **Elisa de Anda Madrazo from Mexico** began her 2-year term as President of the Financial Action Task Force (**FATF**), succeeding Mr. T. Raja Kumar of Singapore.
- The recent **NATO summit, marking its 75th anniversary**, included Sweden as a member for the first time and focused on increasing support for Ukraine, with the **USA meeting IP4 members (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea)**.
- **India hosted the 6th East Asia Summit Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation**, organized with **Australia and Indonesia**, aiming to strengthen the **ASEAN-led EAS** mechanism and support the **EAS Plan of Action 2024-2028**.
- The government is launching the **Rs 750 crore AgriSURE fund to support 85 agri start-ups with investments up to Rs 25 crore each**, managed by **NABVENTURES**, with contributions from the Department of Agriculture, NABARD, and financial institutions.
- **UNESCO designated 11 new biosphere reserves across 11 countries**, including **Belgium and Gambia's first reserves**, covering a total **area of 37,400 km²**, during the 36th session of the International Coordinating Council.
- **India's employment grew by 6% in FY24**, adding **46.7 million jobs**, with total employment at **643.3 million**, an **employment-to-population ratio of 44.2%**, and a reduced unemployment rate of 1.4%, as **reported by the RBI KLEMS database**.
- **DPIIT signed an MoU with NCAER to develop a framework for assessing logistics costs in India**, aiming to align with the National Logistics Policy's goal of **reducing logistics costs to 8% of GDP by 2030**.
- **DBS Bank India launched a pre-shipment financing solution on the TReDS platform** in partnership with RXIL, enabling MSMEs to secure funding against purchase orders and enhance cash flows.
- At the 8th DNSA-level meeting, the **Colombo Security Conclave welcomed Bangladesh as its 5th member** state, reviewing progress on the 2023-2024 roadmap for enhanced maritime cooperation and regional security.
- **On World Population Day**, the Union Health Minister highlighted the success and expansion of **Mission Parivar Vikas**, aimed at increasing contraceptive access and reducing fertility rates in high-burden districts, with notable improvements in maternal and child health outcomes since its **2016 launch**.
- Ministry of Home Affairs will observe '**Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas**' annually on June 25 to honor those who struggled to revive democracy **during the 1975 Emergency imposed by then PM Indira Gandhi**.
- **Thazhakara grama panchayat** published the second volume of its **People's Biodiversity Register**, documenting local biodiversity and traditional knowledge, **becoming one of the first in Kerala to do so**.
- **PSSCIVE reviewed guidelines for Bagless Days** to promote joyful, experiential, and stress-free learning, encouraging students to engage in diverse activities and internships as per **NEP 2020**.

- Union Home Minister inaugurated the **Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence in all 55 districts of Madhya Pradesh**, emphasizing practical skills and multidisciplinary courses **as part of the New Education Policy 2020**.
- **WPI for June 2024 indicates an annual inflation rate of 3.36%**, driven by rising prices of primary articles and manufactured products, despite a **decline in fuel and power prices**.
- India's **G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure** released a **report outlining stages for DPI development** and proposing an annual forum for global experience sharing.
- **Ministry of Earth Sciences is hosting a high-level BIMSTEC workshop in Noida** to enhance scientific capacity, skill development, and regional cooperation.
- **GeM's e-Learning Training Courses are now available in 12 official languages**, with a 4-level Buyer Certification program on its multilingual LMS launched in 2024.
- **Union Budget 2024 sets ambitious targets under MAKV 2047** to position India as a global maritime powerhouse by 2047, aiming to elevate **India to the Top 5 in global ship tonnage** with an **investment of ₹80 lakh crore**.
- **Ministry of DoNER launched the NERACE web portal and mobile app** to enhance market access and pricing for Northeastern farmers, aiming to connect 50,000 farmers with 5,000 buyers in the next 5 years.
- **As of July 2024, the eShram portal has registered over 29.79 crore unorganized workers**, integrating with various platforms like NCS, PM-SYM, Skill India Digital, and myScheme for enhanced job, pension, skill, and scheme access.
- **Code on Wages, 2019, extends the applicability of minimum wages to all employments**, incorporating provisions from the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, including the Variable Dearness Allowance.
- **Code on Social Security, 2020, introduces social security measures** for gig and platform workers in India, including life and disability cover, accident insurance, and the establishment of a Social Security Fund.
- **The government reconstituted NITI Aayog with 4 full-time members, 15 Union Ministers**, and increased special invitees from 5 to 11, with Prime Minister as Chairperson and Suman K Bery as Vice Chairperson.
- **BranchX launched India's first personal loan solution through ONDC**, along with the Raja Rani card and micro-saving products linked to gold investments, to enhance financial inclusion.
- **BBVA Colombia and IFC issued the world's first \$70 million biodiversity bond** to finance projects addressing biodiversity loss, with a \$15 million initial tranche.
- **SEBI revised norms to limit passive mutual fund schemes' investments in sponsor group companies to 25% of net assets**, with specific rules for equity-oriented ETFs and index funds to ensure diversified and prudent investment strategies.