

Samyak

An Institute For Civil Services

Monthly Current Affairs

December-2023



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USEFUL FOR ALL COMPETITIVE EXAMS

CURRENT AFFAIRS



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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS DECEMBER : 2023



Near Riddhi-Siddhi Circle, Gopalpura Bypass, Jaipur

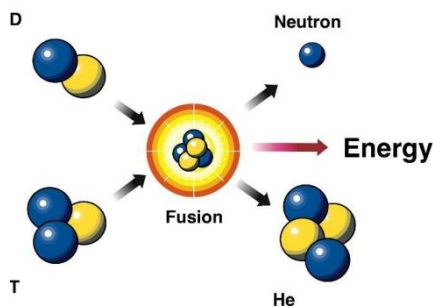
1. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Michong Storm:-

- **Location:** South-West Bay of Bengal.
- **Named by** - Myanmar.
- **Literal Meaning**-Strength and Flexibility.
- This cyclone is the fourth cyclone of the Bay of Bengal and the sixth cyclone in the Indian Ocean in 2023.
- **Affected areas:** Coastal areas like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Puducherry.

Japan: Largest nuclear reactor:-

- Recently pictures of the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor in Naka North (Japan) were revealed.



- It is 6 storeys high and can generate 20 million degrees Celsius of energy.
- The reactor JT – 60 SA is created jointly by the European Union and Japan.

Article 99 of the United Nations Charter:-

- The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres recently implemented Article 99 of the United Nations Charter.
- **Objective** - To alert the United Nations Security Council about the upcoming side effects and dangers of the military actions being taken by Israel in Gaza.
- **Article 99**
 - This article provides the right to draw the attention of the Security Council to potential threats to international peace and security.
 - This is a discretionary power of the UN Secretary General.

Earlier use:-

- 1960 - Republic of Congo Revolution
- 1961 - France-Tunisia military action
- 1971 - Creation of Bangladesh

91st Interpol General Assembly:-

- Organised in - Vienna (Austria)
- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) participated from the Indian side.

Major proposals-

- Resolutions were passed to strengthen mutual cooperation and combat financial crime, corruption and online child sexual exploitation.
- Discussion on integrated strategy to deal with organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering, spread of radical ideology and cyber crimes.
- Adoption of Interpol Vision-2030 and the establishment of the Interpol Future Council were supported.

Interpol:-

- Established in 1923
- Full name - International Criminal Police Organization
- Member countries - 195
- Headquarters - Lyon (France)
- It is an inter-governmental organization.
- India became its member country in 1956.
- Objective: To exchange criminal information at the global level through mutual coordination between police systems across the country.

Operation Prosperity Guardian

- The operation is a multinational coalition led by the United States that was formed in December 2023 to respond to attacks by the Houthi group on shipping in the Red Sea.
- The goal of the alliance is to ensure freedom of navigation and security of maritime traffic in the Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden.
- The alliance currently has more than 20 members, which include the United Kingdom, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore and Sri Lanka.



Why is the Red Sea important?

- It is one of the busiest waterways in the world, providing maritime traffic between Europe and Asia via the Suez Canal.
- It is an important water body from the point of view of international trade, tourism and the rich and diverse marine life it supports.
- It is the gateway to the Indian Ocean and is connected to it from the south through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and the Gulf of Aden.
- More than 10% of sea freight passes through it each year, including most of Asian trade with Europe.

Who are Houthis?

- The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah (Supporters of Allah), are an armed political and religious group based in Yemen.

Origin and belief

- A branch of Shia Islam that emerged in the 1990s as a revival of the Zaidi Shia tradition that holds beliefs distinct from the majority Twelver Shi'ism.
- The Houthi family is notably led by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, its founder and son of Hussein al-Houthi.
- He advocates social justice and economic equality, often portraying himself as a defender of the marginalized against Yemeni elites and foreign powers.

Rise to power and conflict:

- Rose to prominence in the 2000s through an armed rebellion against the Yemeni government, accusing it of corruption and collusion with Saudi Arabia and the US.
- Captured the capital Sana'a in 2014, forcing the internationally recognized government into exile.

- Started a civil war with the internationally recognized government and the Saudi-led military coalition, resulting in a devastating humanitarian crisis.

Current Status:

- Controlling northern and western parts of Yemen, including Sana'a.
- Accused by the international community of human rights violations and attacks on civilian infrastructure.
- Engaged in ongoing peace talks with an internationally recognized government.

India, China working group agrees to hold commanders' meet soon

- India and China recently held "constructive" diplomatic talks on proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh, but there were no signs of a breakthrough.
- Both sides decided to hold the next round of senior commanders' meeting at the earliest to achieve the "objective" and agreed on the need to ensure a stable situation on the ground and avoid any untoward incident.
- The two sides reviewed the situation and engaged in an "open, constructive and in-depth" discussion on proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh.
- The virtual talks took place under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC).

About the latest meet

- Indian Delegation: It was led by Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Chinese Delegation: It was led by the director-general, boundary and oceanic affairs in the Chinese foreign ministry.
- **Agreements:**
 - ✓ The two sides reviewed the situation along the LAC in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas, and engaged in an open, constructive and in-depth discussion of proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh.
 - ✓ They further agreed on the need to maintain peace and tranquillity along

the border areas, ensure a stable situation on the ground and avoid any untoward incident.

- ✓ They also agreed to continue dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and hold the next round of the senior commanders' meeting at the earliest.

Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC)

- Formation: Established in January 2012 after border talks between then National Security Adviser (NSA) Shivshankar Menon and his Chinese counterpart Dai Bingguo.
- Headed by: Joint secretary-level officials from both sides.
- Function: To help the special representative for boundary talks.

US eased sanctions on Venezuela

- With the US easing sanctions on Venezuela, India's crude oil imports from Caracas are set to resume after three years with private sector giant Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) booking three tankers scheduled to load oil from the Latin American country in December and January 2024, as per shipping fixtures shared by trade sources.
- Private sector refiners RIL and Nayara Energy (NEL) were regular buyers of Venezuelan crude prior to imposition of US sanctions on Caracas in 2019. Following the sanctions, oil imports from Venezuela stopped.



Reasons for the crisis in Venezuela

Economic Reason

- The economy of Venezuela is mainly oil-based.
- **Early 2000s:** Oil prices were high & the Venezuelan government used oil profits to reduce inequality and poverty, providing food subsidies.
- **2014:** Oil prices dropped & the government suddenly had to make lots of cutbacks. It led many people to begin buying goods on the black market, causing inflation to rise.
- **2023:** The annual inflation rate in Venezuela has reached 1.3 million% which caused scarcity of basic items such as food and medicines and demonstrations against the government.

Political issues

- Current president of Venezuela took charge after former president Hugo Chávez died in 2013.
- This government has faced the charges of corruption and mismanagement of the economy.
- He was sworn in for a second term but his main opponents either boycotted or were banned from running in the election.
- After the election result, massive protests erupted in Venezuela.

Italy withdraws from China's BRI project

- Italy has withdrawn from China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.
- History of India-Italy relationship
- **Political Relations:** Established in 1947.
- **2020:** 15 MoUs regarding energy, media, finance, ship building were signed.
- **Economic Relations:** Italy is among India's top 5 trading partners in the EU.

Military exercises:

- Milan is a biennial naval exercise between India and Italy.
- INS Tabar earlier also concluded a two-day naval exercise with the Italian Navy in the Tyrrhenian Sea.
- **India - Italy Military Cooperation Group (MCG):** A forum established to boost defence cooperation between India and Italy.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Agreement for cultural cooperation, 1976.

- **Science and Technology:** An Agreement exists since 1978 and India-Trento Programme for Advanced Research (ITPAR), 2003
- **Indian Diaspora:** Indian community is the 5th largest foreign community in Italy.

Belt and Road Initiative

- **Launching:** 2013
- **Aim:** To link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.
- **Earlier name:** 'One Belt, One Road' but renamed as the BRI to convey a more open and inclusive initiative as opposed to a Chinese-dominated one.

2 components:

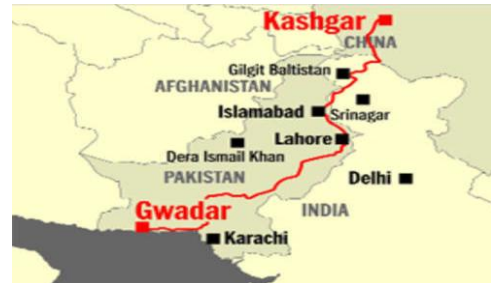
- **Silk Road Economic Belt:** To improve connectivity, infrastructure, and trade links across Eurasia through a network of overland transportation routes.
- **Maritime Silk Road:** Focuses on maritime connections and cooperation in the form of ports, shipping routes, and maritime infrastructure projects.
- **Route:** It begins via the South China Sea going towards Indo-China, South-East Asia and then around the Indian Ocean thus reaching Africa and Europe.

6 Geographic Corridors:

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor.
- China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor.
- China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor.
- China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor.
- China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- **About:** A 3,000-km long route of infrastructure projects
- **Connects:** China's northwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the Gwadar Port in the western province of Balochistan in Pakistan.
- **A bilateral project between Pakistan and China:** It is intended to promote connectivity across Pakistan with a network of highways, railways, and pipelines accompanied by energy, industrial, and other infrastructure development projects.



- **Importance:** It will pave the way for China to access the Middle East and Africa from Gwadar Port, enabling China to access the Indian Ocean and in return China will support development projects in Pakistan.
- Part of the **Belt and Road Initiative**.

India shifts stand, backs UNGA resolution on 'immediate ceasefire' - UNGA resolution on Israel- Hamas War

- Two months after Israel's bombardment of Gaza residents in retaliation for the terror attacks by Hamas, India joined the global call to stop the bombing & voted in favour of a resolution at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) along with 152 other nations.
- The United Nations Secretary-General invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter, urging the UN Security Council to act on the war in Gaza.

Article 99

- **About:** It allows the secretary-general to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

About the UN Resolution

- **Draft resolution:** 'Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations'.
- **Initiating party:** It was initiated by Egypt, at an Emergency Special Session of UNGA with 153 nations voting in favour, 10 against and 23 abstentions.
- **Parties that voted against:** Austria, Israel and the US
- **Parties that abstained:** Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ukraine and the UK
- **Demands under the resolution:**
 - ✓ An immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza
 - ✓ An observance of international humanitarian law
 - ✓ The unconditional release of all hostages by ensuring humanitarian access

India's stand

- **Explained as a matter of principle:** It is a part of India's "zero-tolerance" approach towards terrorism, as the earlier resolution did not contain an "explicit condemnation" of the October 7 attacks.
- **Possible reasons for India voting in favor:**
 - ✓ **High casualty:** Over 18,000 people are dead.
 - ✓ **Hostages:** More than 100 Israeli hostages remain in Hamas custody.
 - ✓ **Homelessness:** More than 80% of the entire population is homeless.
 - ✓ **Indiscriminate use of missiles:** The U.S., Israel's biggest ally, estimates that nearly half of the 29,000 air-to-ground munitions deployed by Israel thus far are "unguided" or indiscriminate missiles.
 - ✓ **International opinion:** International opinion has moved from sympathy with Israel, to horror at the unfolding aftermath.

COP28: Much done, but still not enough- COP 28 outcomes

- The COP28 climate meeting delivered some important outcomes — a first-time acknowledgement of the need to move away from fossil fuels, a first promise to reduce methane emissions, operationalisation and capitalisation of the loss and damage fund, and an agreement on a framework for the global goal on adaptation.



- However, like all previous COPs, it still remained an underachiever, unable to measure up to the expectations, particularly in galvanising more ambitious climate action in the immediate term.

The outcomes	
Fossil fuel phase-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most hotly contested issue at COP28, and the reason for a prolonged deadlock. • The final agreement called upon countries to contribute towards "transitioning away" from fossil fuels, "so as to achieve net zero by 2050". • There were no time schedules and no targets. • Some countries were extremely disappointed that the term "fossil fuel phase-out" had not been used. But even if it was, it would have a similar effect in the absence of any timeline. • Production and consumption of fossil fuels are unlikely to be curbed significantly in the near term, but it is an important, rather unavoidable, measure in the 2050 timeframe.
Tripling of Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COP28 agreement calls upon countries to contribute to tripling global installed capacity of renewable energy, and doubling of annual improvements in energy efficiency. • Together, these two measures have the potential to avoid emissions of about 7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent between now and 2030, more than all the net result of all the other climate actions being currently taken. • Tripling is a global target, and it is not incumbent on every country to individually triple its current installed capacity. • It is thus not clear how this tripling would be ensured.
Phase-down of coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal has received a separate mention in the agreement. This is because coal was already singled out for phase-down in the Glasgow conference in 2021. • There was a move to stipulate that no new coal fired power plants could be opened without an in-built carbon capture and storage facility, but this was strongly resisted by India, China, South Africa and other countries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was dropped, and finally the Glasgow language was reiterated. • There is nothing about how this phase-down is to be measured, or from what baseline.
Methane emission cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreement talks about “accelerating and substantially reducing non-carbon-dioxide emissions globally, including in particular methane emissions by 2030”. • Methane is the most widespread greenhouse gas apart from CO2, accounting for nearly 25% of all emissions. It is also about 80 times more potent than CO2 in causing global warming. • Methane emission reductions can therefore bring substantial benefits. • But several countries, including India, are extremely opposed to any mandate to cut methane emissions, mainly because one of the major sources happens to be agriculture and livestock. • Cutting methane emissions could involve tweaking agricultural patterns which could be extremely sensitive in a country like India.
Loss and Damage Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decision to set up a Loss and Damage Fund was taken last year in Sharm el-Shaikh but it had not been created, and no money had been promised. • COP28 operationalised this fund on the opening day of the conference, and several countries, including hosts UAE, made funding commitments. • By the end of the conference, commitments worth about US\$ 800 million had been made. • The money is meant to provide financial help to countries trying to recover from climate-induced disasters.
Global Goal on Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically, adaptation hasn’t received enough attention, or resources, as compared with mitigation activities, mainly because adaptation is largely a local endeavour. • Its benefits also are mostly local.

India - Australia relations

- Australia recently said it would tighten visa rules for international students and low-skilled workers that could halve its migrant intake over the next two years as the government looks to overhaul what it said was a “broken” migration system.
- Under the new policies, international students would need to secure higher ratings on English tests and there would be more scrutiny on a student’s second visa application that would prolong their stay.

India- Australia Relations	
Historical Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomatic engagement: Australia and India for the first time established diplomatic relations when the Consulate General of India was first opened as a Trade Office in Sydney in 1941. • Deterioration of relations: It touched a historic low when the Australian Government condemned India’s 1998 nuclear tests.
Uranium supply deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014: Australia signed a Uranium supply deal with India, the first of its kind with a country that is a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, in recognition of India’s “impeccable” non-proliferation record.
Shared values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westminster-style democracies • Commonwealth traditions • Strong, vibrant, secular, and multicultural democracies • Free press • Independent judicial system

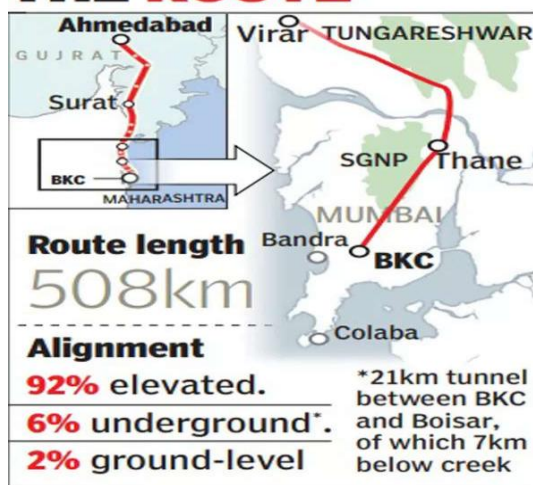
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language
Indian Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 9.76 lakh people in Australia reported their ancestry as Indian origin, making them the second largest group of overseas-born residents in Australia.
Comprehensive strategic Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020: India and Australia elevated bilateral relationship from Strategic Partnership to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit. 2021: The prime ministers of both the countries met during COP26 at Glasgow. 2022 & 2023: India-Australia virtual summit and Foreign Ministers meet.
Defence Ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue The Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Australia visited India in June 2022. Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA): Signed during the Virtual Summit in June 2020 to enhance defence cooperation. Malabar exercises Talisman Sabre exercises
China Angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for tensions in Australia-China ties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia banning Huawei from the 5G network Call for enquiry into the origins of Covid-19 Slamming China's human rights violations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. China imposing trade barriers on Australian exports, and by cutting off all ministerial contact. Both Australia and India support a rules-based international order and they are seeking to forge regional institutions in the Indo-Pacific which are inclusive, promote further economic integration.
Multilateral Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both are members of the Quad, Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development, and have participated in the East Asia Summits. Both countries have also been cooperating as members of the Five Interested Parties (FIP) in the World Trade Organization context. Australia is an important player in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and supports India's membership of the organisation.
Bilateral trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India India is Australia's 9th largest trading partner.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 1 lakh Indian students are pursuing higher education degrees in Australian universities. Indian students are the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia.
Clean Energy Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 2022: A Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy for cooperation to reduce the cost of renewable energy technologies, including ultra low-cost solar and clean hydrogen was signed. India announced Australian Dollars (AUD) 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Both the countries committed USD 5.8 million to the three-year India-Australia Critical Minerals Investment Partnership.

2. NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Country's first bullet train station:-

- The country's first bullet train station is ready in Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
- There are large steel murals of Gandhiji's Dandi march on the station building.
- The Ahmedabad-Mumbai Bullet Train route is 508 km long (448 km elevated, 26 km tunnel, 10 km bridge and 7 km dam).

THE ROUTE



For the first time in the country, women officers on all posts in Legal Services Authority:-

- Recently, for the first time in the country, the state of Bihar set a record for appointing all the officers in 'Bihar State Legal Services Authority' as women.
- It is the first and best step of its kind in the entire country.
- Women are appointed on all important posts like Member Secretary, Joint Secretary, Registrar, Assistant Registrar.
- **State Legal Services Authority:-**
 - These are formed in each state to give effect to the policies and instructions of 'National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)' and to provide free legal advice.
 - They are headed by the Chief Justice of the respective State High Court.
 - A senior most judge of the High Court is appointed as its acting Chairman.

• National Legal Services Authority (NALSA):-

- Established on 5th December 1995
- It was established under the Legal Services Authority Act - 1987.



Poshan tracker

- Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) Abhiyaan is a flagship program of the Government of India that aims to improve nutrition outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, targeted approaches and convergence.
- The program involves inclusive participation of public representatives of local bodies, state government departments, social organizations and the public and private sectors at large.
- It aims to reduce the levels of stunting, undernutrition, anemia and low birth weight infants. This program is not just a program but also a mass movement and participation.
- The program aims to reduce stunting (in children aged 0-6 years) from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
- The program covers high-impact interventions from 18 ministries/departments, especially during the first 1000 days after birth of the newborn.
- Each ministry/department prepares an action plan related to nutrition and integrates it with its ongoing activities.
- The program uses digital infrastructure for last-mile tracking and monitoring of

nutrition delivery through 'Nutrition Tracker' for transparency, efficiency and accountability in delivery of supplementary nutrition.

What is anemia?

- Anemia is a condition that develops when your blood produces fewer healthy red blood cells than normal. Red blood cells carry oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body. If you have anemia, your body does not get enough oxygen. This may make you feel tired, weak, short of breath or dizzy.

Types and causes of anemia.

- Iron deficiency anemia
- Vitamin deficiency anemia
- Aplastic anemia
- Hemolytic anemia
- Sickle cell anemia
- Thalassemia

What is undernutrition?

- Undernutrition is a term used to describe the condition of people whose daily food intake is insufficient to provide the energy needed for a normal, active and healthy life. It is often used interchangeably with the word 'hunger'. Undernutrition is determined solely by the adequacy of energy (calorie) intake and does not consider the quality or variety of one's diet.

What is Stunting?

- Stunting is a condition where a child's growth and development is impaired, usually caused by chronic malnutrition, inadequate health care and poor conditions. It is characterized by the child being much shorter than the average height for his age. Stunting can lead to physical and cognitive impairment, affecting overall health in adulthood.

India International Science Festival:-

- 1st edition- 2015 (New Delhi)
- Implementing agency- Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ministry of Science and Technology.
- Objective- To promote creativity in science, technology and innovation for the progress of India.

- About- This is an annual event to promote public participation in science and technology.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana is a government savings scheme aimed at supporting girls' education and marriage.

Eligibility:

- For girls below 10 years of age.
- One parent per child, two per family.

Investment:

- Minimum Rs. 250, Maximum Rs. 1,50,000 per year.
- Maturity period of 21 years.

Advantages:

- Current interest rate 8.2%.
- Tax-free benefits – principal, interest and maturity.
- Credit transferability across India.
- Interest will continue even after maturity.
- Premature withdrawal allowed after 18 years (50%).

PM eBus Sewa Scheme

- Fearing that the first set of 3,600 electric buses of the 10,000 being inducted under the PM eBus Sewa scheme will be inaccessible for persons with disabilities (PwD), activists have written to the government to reconsider its decision to procure standard floor, as opposed to low-floor buses, The Indian Express has learnt.

PM eBus Sewa Scheme

- **Provisions under the scheme:** 10,000 e-buses will be deployed across cities in the country.
- **PPP model:** Under this scheme, city bus operations will be done on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. This scheme will support bus operations for 10 years.
- **Responsibilities of states:** States/Cities shall be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators.
- **Role of Central Government:** It will support these bus operations by providing subsidies to the extent specified in the proposed scheme.
- **Funding:** It has been allocated a total funding of Rs 57,613 crore. Out of this

financial provision, the central government will contribute Rs 20,000 crore, while the remaining portion will be covered by the state governments.

- **Coverage:** Cities with 3 lakhs and above population and priority will be given to cities not having organised bus services.

2 segments of the scheme:

Augmenting the city bus services	Green Urban Mobility initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-buses will operate under the PPP model • The government will help develop associated infrastructure to provide support for development/upgradation of depot infrastructure • It will also help cities create behind-the-metre power infrastructure for the e-buses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus rapid transport projects would be developed along with non-motorised infrastructure like bike sharing, bicycle lanes. • Innovative projects like National Common Mobility Card, Intelligent Transit Management System, Multimodal Interchange facilities would also be developed.

Dark patterns

In order to protect consumers' interest, the government has banned use of "dark patterns" on e-commerce platforms which intend to deceive customers or manipulate their choices. A gazette notification in this regard as "Guidelines for prevention and regulation of dark patterns" was issued recently by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) which is applicable to all platforms offering goods and services in India, and even advertisers and sellers.

Dark Patterns

- Also known as deceptive patterns, they refer to strategies employed by websites and apps to make users perform actions they did not intend to or discourage behaviours that are not advantageous for the companies.
- Coined by Harry Brignull, a user experience (UX) designer, in 2010.

- Exploit cognitive biases and employ tactics such as false urgency, forced actions, hidden costs etc.
- Can be overtly noticeable tricks or more subtle methods that users may not immediately recognize.

Sec 6A of Citizenship Act

The Supreme Court recently asked the Centre how many people obtained citizenship of the country availing Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, which was introduced in the statute following the signing of Assam accord.

Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955

- **About:** It created a special provision for Assam by which persons who entered between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971, and who are residing in the state, upon being detected as foreigners, will be allowed to register
- **Mechanism:** Upon registration, such a person will have the same rights and obligations as a citizen of India, but will not be entitled to be included in any electoral roll for a period of 10 years.
- **Ordinary resident:** Foreigners who had entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and been "ordinarily resident" in the State, would have all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens including the right to vote

Assam accord (1985)

- **About:** A Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement in New Delhi on 15 August 1985.
- **Importance:** The accord brought an end to the Assam Agitation and paved the way for the leaders of the agitation to form a political party and form a government in the state of Assam soon after.
- **Provisions of the Accord:**
 - ✓ Those Bangladeshis who came between 1966 and 1971 will be barred from voting for ten years.
 - ✓ The international borders will be sealed and all persons who crossed over from Bangladesh after 1971 are to be deported.
- **Lacunae:** Though the accord brought an end to the agitation, some of the key

clauses are yet to be implemented, which has kept some of the issues festering.

SC stamp on J&K Reorganisation Act

Recently, the Supreme Court gave its verdict on the Union government's 2019 move to amend Article 370 of the Constitution. The abrogation had ended the special status conferred to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. The court held the Constitutional order that revoked Article 370 as valid.

Recent Judgement of the Supreme Court

- **Jammu and Kashmir did not Possess Sovereignty:**
 - ✓ **SC's observation:** There is much evidence in Article 370 and the J&K Constitution to show that in regards to Kashmir, a merger agreement was not necessary to surrender its sovereignty.
 - ✓ **Article 370(1):** It applied Article 1 of the Constitution of India (where J&K was listed as a Part III State) with no modifications.
 - ✓ **Section 3 of the J&K Constitution:** It explicitly states that "the State of J&K is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India."
 - ✓ **Section 147:** It prohibited any amendments to Section 3, further making the provision absolute.
- **Article 370 is a Temporary Provision:**
 - ✓ **SC's observation:** The SC relied on the fact that the Constitution framers

placed Article 370 with the temporary and transitional provisions contained in Part XXI.

- ✓ **On Instrument of Accession (IoA):** The IoA made it "abundantly clear" that Article 1 which stated that "India that is Bharat shall be a Union of States" applied in its entirety to J&K.
- **Constitutional Validity of Proclamations Under President's Rule:**
 - ✓ **SC's observation:** The President has the power to make "irreversible changes, including the dissolution of the State Assembly," and that the President's powers are kept in check by "judicial and constitutional scrutiny."
- **The Constitution of J&K Stands Inoperative:**
 - ✓ **SC's observation:** It is no longer necessary for the Constitution of J&K through which only certain provisions of the Indian Constitution applied to J&K, to exist.
- **Set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Address Human Rights:**
 - ✓ **SC's observation:** The Union should set up a "truth and reconciliation Commission" just like South Africa did post-apartheid to investigate human rights violations by both state and non-state actors. The exercise should be time-bound.

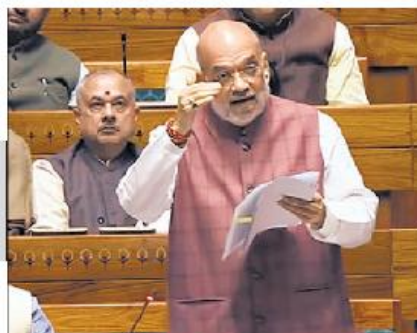
Making changes

A look at the J&K Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill and the J&K Reservation (Amendment) Bill

■ The Reorganisation Bill increases the total number of seats in the J&K Assembly to 114 from 107

■ Nine seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes for the first time

■ It also empowers the Lieutenant-Governor to nominate three members to the Assembly - two members from the Kashmiri migrant



Point of view: Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. PTI

community, with one nominee being a woman, and one member from among the people from PoK who took refuge in India following the wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1965 and 1971

■ The Reservation Bill seeks to replace the term "weak and underprivileged classes (social castes)" in the J&K Reservation Act, 2004 to "other backward classes"

Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- **About:** It seeks to replace the term “weak and underprivileged classes (social castes)” in the J&K Reservation Act, 2004 to “Other Backward Classes” as declared by the Union Territory.
- **2004 Act:** It pertains to reservation in appointment and admission in professional institutions for the members of the SCs, STs, and other Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.
- **Provisions:**
 - ✓ It seeks to change the nomenclature of a section of people who are eligible for quotas in appointments and admissions.
 - ✓ Under the Act, socially and educationally backward classes include:
 - people residing in villages declared as socially and educationally backward by the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir,
 - people residing in areas adjoining the Actual Line of Control and International Border, and
 - weak and under-privileged classes (social castes), as notified.
 - ✓ The government may make inclusions or exclusions from the category of weak and under-privileged classes, on the recommendations of a Commission.
 - ✓ Substitutes weak and under-privileged classes with other backward classes as declared by the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

GPAI Summit

- Recently, representatives from 28 countries and the European Union adopted the ‘New Delhi Declaration’ of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI, pronounced g-pay).
- India is hosting the summit and will chair the GPAI grouping in 2024.

New Delhi Declaration

- **About:** It promises to position GPAI at the front and centre of shaping the future of AI in terms of innovation and creating collaborative AI between partner nations to create applications in healthcare, agriculture, etc.
- **Agreements under the declaration:**
 - ✓ The group would lead global conversations on shaping the future of AI governance as well as keeping it safe and trusted.
 - ✓ GPAI will increasingly focus on including countries from the Global South and making available the benefits of AI, its platforms and solutions to all of the people.
 - ✓ Like-minded countries will have to move faster to ensure that by the time all GPAI countries meet next year in Korea, there are definitive granular regulations that all nations have around AI.
 - ✓ GPAI will now have to be more granular and get down to defining the contours of the rules that will define how users interact with AI.
- **Acknowledged the need to harness new opportunities and mitigate the risks arising from AI:**
 - ✓ Concerns around misinformation and disinformation,
 - ✓ Unemployment,
 - ✓ Lack of transparency and fairness,
 - ✓ Protection of intellectual property and personal data, and
 - ✓ Threats to human rights and democratic values.
- **Significance:** Acknowledged the need for equitable access to resources and build competitive AI solutions.

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

- **About:** An international initiative established to guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in a manner that respects human rights and the shared democratic values of its members.
- **Proposed by:** Canada and France (2018 44th G7 summit)

- **Launched:** (June) 2020.
- **Members:** Initially 15, now 29 member countries.
- **Major countries:** India, the US, the UK, France, Japan, Canada, etc.
- **China:** Not a part.
- **Hosted by:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- **Objectives:**
 - ✓ A multi-stakeholder initiative to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
 - ✓ Brings together engaged minds and expertise from science, industry, civil society, governments, international organisations and academia to foster international cooperation.

Revised criminal reform Bills in Parliament: What has changed, and why

The Centre introduced three revised criminal reform Bills in Lok Sabha recently, withdrawing the previous versions, introduced in August this year.

A committee proposed several key changes to the Bills. Subsequently, the Centre re-introduced the revamped criminal law Bills in Parliament's winter session.

Committee's suggestions and Changes

	Suggestions	Changes
Handcuffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of handcuffs allowed in Clause 43(3) of the BNSS, to prevent the escape of individuals accused of serious offences and ensure the safety of police officers and staff during arrests, was welcomed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs. • It suggested that this should be restricted to select heinous crimes like rape and murder rather than be extended to persons committing "economic offenses." • Because the term "economic offences" encompasses a wide range of offences, from petty to serious. • It recommends that Clause 43(3) may be suitably amended to delete the words 'economic offences' from the clause". • Clause 43(3) of the erstwhile BNSS permitted the use of handcuffs while arresting habitual offenders who escaped from custody or those committing specific offences like human trafficking and counterfeiting, among others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parliamentary panel's recommendation to delete "economic offences" from this provision has been incorporated in the new Bill. • Although the earlier BNSS had an extra line on offences against the state, the new provision simply mandates using handcuffs for committing an "offence against the state." The use of handcuffs for arresting people committing such offences has been made more discretionary. • The new provision extends the use of handcuffs to persons being produced before a court as well.
Mercy Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 473(1) of the erstwhile BNSS allowed convicts undergoing death sentences or their legal heirs or relatives to file mercy petitions while providing the procedure and time frame for the same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Besides changing the provision's numbering from clause 473 to 472, the new Bill has deleted the provision that allowed mercy petitions to be forwarded to the Home Department of the state government or the Centre for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After being informed by jail authorities about the disposal of the petition of a convict sentenced to death, he, his legal heir, or a relative can submit a mercy petition within 30 days to the Governor. • If rejected, the person can petition the President within 60 days. • No appeal against the order of the President shall lie in any court. • The earlier provision also said that prior to submitting the plea before the Governor or the President, it may be presented to the Centre or the state government's Home Department. • However, the panel suggested constituting a quasi-judicial board to deal with commutation and remission matters rather than leaving such judicial functions to the Executive's discretion. • It also proposed that a time frame be provided within which mercy petitions would be heard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review. • The modified Clause 472(7) makes the Governor's orders under Article 161 unappealable, thereby broadening the scope of what cannot be challenged.
<p>Preventive detention powers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 172(2) of the BNSS expanded the police's powers while taking preventive action. • It allowed police officers to detain or remove persons resisting, refusing, ignoring, or disregarding to conform to any direction given by them under sub-section (1) and take them before a Judicial Magistrate or, in petty cases, release them "when the occasion is past." • However, the panel suggested that the time period for such detention should be specified, and the words "release him when the occasion is past" need to be clarified to remove ambiguity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Bill adds a time limit to this provision. • It says the person detained may be taken to a magistrate or, in petty cases, be released as soon as possible, within 24 hours. • Moreover, "judicial magistrate" in the old BNSS has been replaced by "Magistrate" now.
<p>Community Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The erstwhile BNSS had included "community service" as a penal measure for offences like attempting suicide, restraining exercise of lawful power theft, defamation of public functionaries, and appearing in public places while intoxicated and causing annoyance. • However, it was silent on the definition of "community service." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The explanation to Clause 23 of the new BNSS defines "community service" to mean work which the Court may order a convict to perform as a form of punishment that benefits the community, for which he shall not be entitled to any remuneration. • The Bill also adds community service as punishment for unlawfully engaging public servants in trade and non-appearance in response to a proclamation under Section 84.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER OF PARLIAMENTS

- Record number of Member of parliaments (146) were suspended from both the houses of the parliament. The Member of Parliaments in both the houses were suspended for disruption of the parliamentary proceedings.

Procedure of suspension

- The presiding officer (The speaker of Lok Sabha , Chairman Of Rajya Sabha)plays the major role in meting out suspensions.In Lok Sabha,the speaker act in accordance with rules 373,374 and 374A of the rule of procedure and conduct of business rules .In Rajya Sabha the chairman acts as per rules (255 and 256).
- First, the presiding officers can direct the Member of Parliament to withdraw from the house for any disorderly conduct(Rule 373 in Lok Sabha,255 in Rajya Sabha), If that does not work and the said Member of Parliament continues to disrupt the house proceedings, the presiding officer can "name" the legislator (rule 374 in Lok Sabha, 256 in Rajya Sabha).After that the house can move a motion to suspend the Member of Parliament until the end of session.

New Criminal Laws

- President of India, Smt. Draupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, Bhartiya Sakshya Bill.

THREE NEW BILLS

<p style="text-align: center;">Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; font-weight: bold;">TO BE REPLACED BY</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will have 356 sections (instead of 511 sections in IPC) • 175 sections have been amended • 8 sections have been added, and 22 sections have been repealed 	<p style="text-align: center;">Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; font-weight: bold;">TO BE REPLACED BY</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will have 533 sections (instead of 478 sections in CrPC) • 160 sections have been changed • 9 sections have been added, and 9 sections have been repealed
<p style="text-align: center;">Indian Evidence Act, 1872</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; font-weight: bold;">TO BE REPLACED BY</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will have 170 sections (instead of 167 sections in IEA) • 23 sections have been changed • 1 section has been added, and 5 sections have been repealed 	

Bhartiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita,2023

- It will replace Indian Penal Code (1860).
- Now 358 sections (previous 511 sections).
- Defines and adds terrorism as an offence.
- Charges on (Thugee /thugs, criminalisation of homosexuality, adultery) have been repealed. Name change from 'rajdroh' to 'deshdroh'.
- Mob lynching and Hate crimes now a separate offence.

Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita,2023

- It will replace code of criminal Procedure 1973(originally enacted in 1898).
- Now 531 Sections (previous 484 sections).
- Detailed provisions of medical and forensic investigation.
- Zero FIR can registered in nearest police station which will have to be compulsorily transferred in next 24 hours.

Bhartiya Sakshya (Second) Bill,2023

- It will replace Indian Evidence Act,1872.
- 170 sections (Previously 167 sections).
- It classifies electronic records as primary evidence.
- It allows oral evidence to be given electronically.

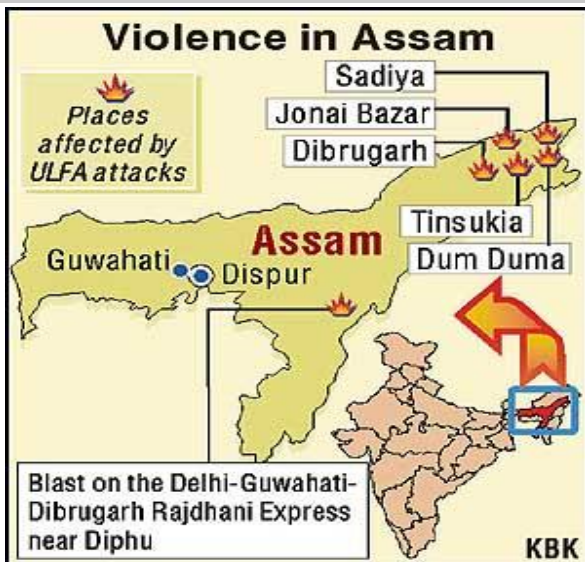
ULFA FACTION SIGNS PEACE AGREEMENT

- Peace agreement between central government, state government (Assam),and pro talks faction of United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)
- Under Ministry of Home Affairs(MHA) a committee will be formed which will work with Assam government to fulfil this agreement

Previous agreements

- In 2019-NLFT Agreements
- In 2020-Bru and Bodo Pacts
- In 2021-Karbi pacts
- In 2023-Assam Meghalaya Border agreement

ULFA :(United Liberation Front of Asom) founded in 1979 and is a major insurgent group in North East India.



GOVERNMENT ALLOWS CANE JUICE TO MAKE INTO ETHANOL

- The food ministry has issued a fresh order reversing ban on the use of sugarcane juice for making ethanol and allowed utilization of the juice as well as B-heavy molasses to produce the green fuel in the 2023-24 supply year.
- Ethanol Blending Petrol Program which was launched in 2003 with a target of 5% Ethanol blending .India achieved Ethanol blending of 10% in 2022 and targets 20% blending by 2025-26.
- E 20 is a blend of 20% Ethanol with petrol (flex fuel).
- Ethanol is a biofuel, naturally produced by fermentation of sugars by yeasts or by petrochemical processes like ethylene hydration.
- 1G (1st generation) bioethanol technology uses starch as a source of sugar the 2G (2nd generation) bioethanol technology uses cellulose and hemicelluloses as a source of sugar.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL 2023

- Bill seeks to replace Indian Telegraph Act (1885),Wireless Telegraph Act (1933),Telegraph wires unlawful Possession Act(1950).
- The bill seeks to simplify current licensing regime for telecom networks.
- Final dispute settlement through TDSAT(Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal).
- It deals with the administrative allocation of spectrum for satellite broadband

services which is the global norm for assigning spectrum to entities.

- Bill empowers the centre to take over control and management of telecommunication services and networks in the interest of national security or in event of war.

INDIAN FOREST AND WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME

- Launched by Ministry of Environment, Forests and climate change (MoEFCC).
- Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme will offer an alternative to the private foreign certification agencies that have been operating in Indian market.
- IFWCS would offer certification for sustainable forest management, plantation, chain of custody, etc.

INDIA'S FIRST WINTER OF ARCTIC RESEARCH

- Himadri India's arctic research station at Ny-Alesund in Norwegian Archipelago of Svalbard in arctic ocean will now remain operational throughout the year.
- Area above Arctic circle , north of latitude 66°34" N is part of eight countries Canada,Denmark,Norway,Finland,Iceland, United States of America,Russia,Sweden which makes up the Arctic council plus the Arctic ocean.
- India signed Svalbard Treaty of paris in 1920.
- Himadri station began operation in July 2008.
- For Antarctica expedition Dakshin Gangotri,maitri,bharti stations are there of which later two are operational.



National Centre for Polar and Oceanic Research (NCPOR):

- It is an autonomous research institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) established in 1998. NCPOR is tasked with planning and executing polar expeditions and scientific research in Antarctica, Arctic, Himalayas and Southern Ocean.
- NCPOR is the nodal agency for planning, promoting, coordinating, and executing the entire gamut of polar and southern ocean scientific research in the country and the associated logistics activities.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- It is a month long programme organised in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)
- Objective of the programme is to celebrate, reaffirm, rediscover the age old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi (Varanasi)-two of the country's most important and ancient sites of learning (civilizational connection between north and south India)
- Organised by Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries.



Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

- Raising questions about the proposed "Walk with Wildlife" is to "make people aware of the existence of the sanctuary, the Delhi High Court called for original file on the proposal, and documents to show that it was planned as per norms.
- The event would involve participants walking and cycling to the forest on the existing track in small groups and is deemed to not cause any kind of disturbance to the wildlife, no new tracks or paths will be made inside, only pre existing tracks will be used.

Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

- The sanctuary covers a 32.71 sq km area on the Southern Delhi Ridge of the Aravalli hill range on the Delhi-Haryana border.
- It lies in Southern Delhi and northern parts of Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana state.
- It is also part of the Sariska-Delhi Wildlife Corridor, which runs from the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan to Delhi Ridge.
- Vegetation is of dry deciduous nature.
- Prosopis juliflora is the dominant exotic species and Diospyros montana is the dominant native species in the sanctuary.
- Major animals found are Golden Jackals, Striped-Hyenas, Indian crested-Porcupines, Civets, Jungle Cats, Snakes, Monitor Lizards, Mongoose etc.

Chillai Kalan

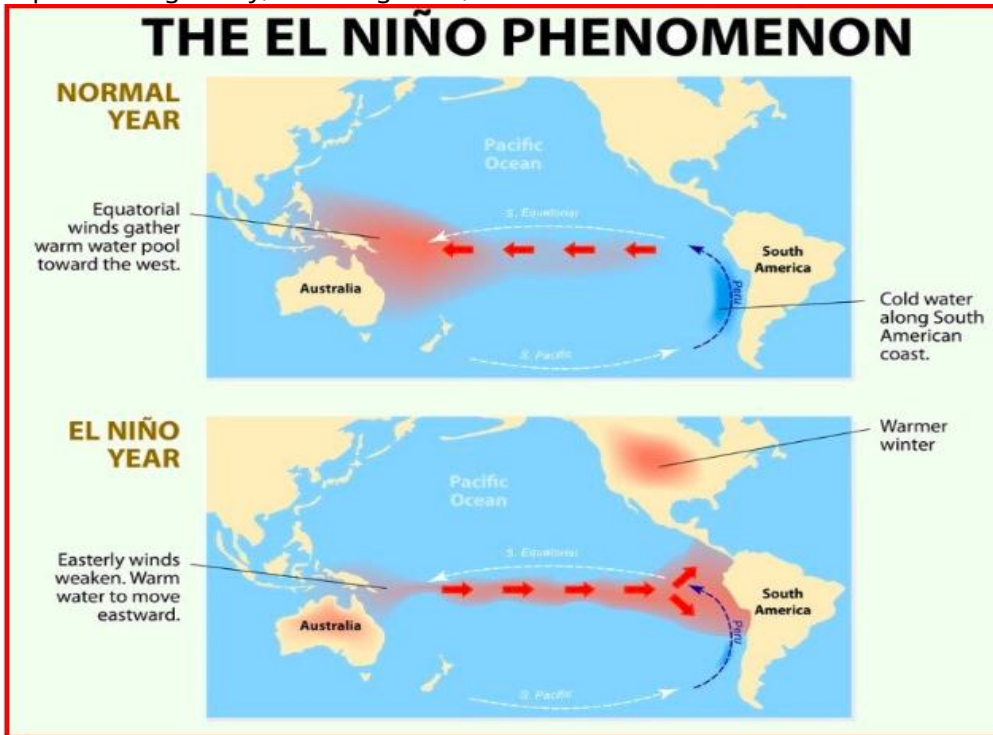
- 'Chillai Kalan' is the name of 40 days long period of extreme cold in Kashmir.
- This is the coldest part of winter, which starts from 21 December to 29 January every year.
- The word "Chillai Kalan" means "extreme cold" in Persian. After Chillai Kalan come Chillai-Khurd and Chillai-Bachcha.
- Chillai-Kalan is traditionally defined as a seasonal period of harsh winter, characterized by an increase in both the frequency and amount of precipitation (usually snowfall).

Other local winds of India:

- **Elephanta:** A strong southern or south-easterly wind on the Malabar coast of India.
- **Loo:** Hot and dry wind blowing in the plains of India and Pakistan. It is experienced in the afternoon and can cause the temperature to rise from 45°C to 50°C.
- **Kali Andhi/ Black Storm:** Black storm: Violent dust storm that occurs before the monsoon in the northwestern parts of the Indo-Gangetic plains of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Monsoon:** Mainly south-westerly winds combined with heavy rainfall in various regions near the equator.

IMD FORECAST AMID ONE OF THE HOTTEST YEARS ON RECORD

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a warm winter season across the country, saying minimum temperature could remain higher than normal. This follows an overall warming trend experienced globally, including India, which witnessed the third warmest November since 1901.



3. Economic Affairs

Global Investors Summit-2023:-

- Launch – 8 December 2023
- Theme –Peace to Prosperity
- Venue – Dehradun (Uttarakhand)
- Inauguration – Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Key Highlights-

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth more than Rs 3 lakh crore.
2. More than 5000 business representatives and foreign ambassadors to participate.
3. Ceremony for investment in projects worth more than Rs 44000 crore.

Indian economy to be third largest by 2030

- S&P Global has projected that India would become the third largest economy in the world by 2030.
- Based on IMF data, India is currently placed at the fifth slot with the size of its economy at over \$3.7 trillion.
- The list has the US (around \$27 trillion) on top followed by China (around \$17.7 trillion), Germany (\$4.4 trillion) and Japan (\$4.2 trillion).

OPS and NPS

The return to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) by a few states would put a huge burden on their finances, restricting them from undertaking capital expenditure to drive the growth, a report released by the Reserve Bank of India said.

Any reversion to OPS by the states will be a major step backwards, undermining the benefits of past reforms and compromising the interest of future generations, the RBI said in State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2023-24.

Old Pension Scheme

- **Provision:** OPS offers pensions to government employees on the basis of their last drawn salary. 50% of the last drawn salary.
- **Benefit:** Assured or 'defined' benefit to the retiree & is so described as a 'Defined Benefit Scheme'.
- **Increase in monthly pay-outs of pensioners:** It increased with hikes in dearness allowance announced by the government for serving employees.
- **Continuity:** The OPS was discontinued by the Central government in 2003.

Difference between Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and National Pension Scheme (NPS)

Old Pension Scheme (OPS)	National Pension Scheme (NPS)
The scheme guarantees a life-long income, post- retirement	It is a participatory scheme, where employees contribute to their pension corpus from their salaries, with matching contribution from the government
Government bears the expenditure incurred on the pension	The funds are invested in earmarked investment schemes through Pension Fund Managers
Under the scheme, a monthly payment is assured, where the amount is equivalent to 50% of the last drawn salary	On retirement, 60% of the corpus, which is tax-free, is withdrawn while the remaining 40% is invested in annuities, which is taxed

Reserve Bank of India approved Razorpay, Cashfree and Open to become payment aggregators.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued guidelines on regulation of payment aggregators and payment gateways and

made Razorpay, Cashfree and Open as payment aggregators.

- The objective of the guidelines is to bring entities carrying on online payment collection business within the regulatory ambit.
- As per the guidelines, online non-bank payment aggregators (PAs) existing as of

March 17, 2020, were required to apply to RBI for obtaining authorization under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSS Act).

- The list of entities seeking authorization to act as Online PA under the PSS Act, along with the current status of their application, has been published on the RBI website.

What is Payment Aggregator?

- A payment aggregator is a third-party service provider that enables businesses to accept electronic payments from customers.
- These institutions act as intermediaries between the merchant (seller) and the financial institution (such as a bank) that processes the payment.
- The payment aggregator enables its customers to accept various payment methods such as debit card, credit card (in partnership with a bank), cardless EMI, UPI, bank transfer, e-wallet and e-mandate.
- Some popular payment aggregators in India:- Paytm, Razorpay, Instamojo, PhonePe etc.

RBI bans investment of banks, NBFCs in Alternative Investment Funds

- As per the recent advisory of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are prohibited from investing in any scheme of Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) which directly or indirectly involves downstream investment. Evergreen their loans.
- The move by RBI is aimed at preventing banks and NBFCs from using the AIF route for 'evergreening' their loans and also about replacement of indirect as well as direct loans through investments in AIFs.

What is AIF (Alternative Investment Fund)?

- It is a type of fund that invests in non-traditional assets or uses complex strategies to generate returns.
- These funds are usually privately pooled and require a high minimum investment amount.

Secondary market trading

- SEBI recently said that to safeguard investors' money from misuse, an ASBA-like facility for trading in secondary markets will be available from January or February.
- This Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility already available for the primary market, ensures that the investor's fund gets moved only when the allotment is completed.

Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)

- **Introduction:** First introduced by SEBI in 2008.
- **About:** A process for making initial public offerings (IPOs) or rights issue subscriptions.
- **A facility provided by banks:** It allows investors to apply for an IPO or rights issue by blocking the application amount in their bank account instead of transferring the money to the issuer.
- **Mechanism:**
 - ✓ Under it, the investor's application money remains in their bank account.
 - ✓ Only a block is created on the funds for the IPO application amount.
 - ✓ This blocked amount remains in the investor's bank account until the allotment process is completed.
 - ✓ Once the shares are allotted to the investor, the block is released, and only the amount for the allotted shares is deducted from the investor's account.
 - ✓ In public issues and rights issues, all investors have to mandatorily apply through ASBA.
- **Importance:**
 - ✓ Convenient and efficient way of applying for IPOs as it eliminates the need for the investor to transfer funds to a separate account for IPO subscription.
 - ✓ Reduces the time taken for refunds in case of unsuccessful allotments.

Secondary market

- ✓ A financial market where securities that have already been issued by companies are bought and sold by investors. .
- ✓ Here existing stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments are traded, as opposed to a primary market where new securities are issued.

Developed India @ 2047 Voice of Youth:-

- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 11 December.
- Its objective is to connect the youth power with the development of the country so that they can lead the country.
- Through this launch, the Prime Minister sought suggestions from the youth on 5 categories like economic development, social progress, environmental protection, good governance and overall development.
- Out of these, 10 best suggestions will be given awards.

4. Rajasthan Affairs

All India Handicraft Fair:-

- **Organizer-** NABARD
- **Event-** 21-26 December 2023
- **Venue:** Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur
- **Objective:** To provide effective marketing of their products to rural artisans, weavers, self-help groups and other entrepreneurs across the country and to increase their reach to urban customers.
- 150 rural artisans from Kashmir to Karel and Gujarat to Manipur will participate.

NABARD (Chhattisgarh)

- Full name- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Established- 12 July 1982

Functions -

- To carry out integrated rural development.
- To provide loans and other facilities for the promotion of economic activities in rural areas.

LAKHPATI DIDI CONFERENCE

Addressing Lakhpati Didi conference in Jaiselmer (Rajasthan) President Droupadi Murmu highlighted the economic contribution of women for their families.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced "Lakhpati Didi" scheme in his independence day speech of 2023.
- Scheme involves skill development training for 2 crore women to encourage them to start micro enterprises.
- Scheme is an initiative by DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna-National Rural Livelihood Mission) where women will be trained in various skills which make them able to earn income through Self Help Groups.

Gemenids Meteor Shower: Alwar

- An astronomical phenomenon called Geminids Shower was witnessed in Sariska (Alwar).
- This incident was seen for 48 hours in Alwar.

Geminids Shower:-

- In simple words it is called rain of broken stars.

Reason-

- From December 19-24, the Earth passed through the debris of an asteroid 3200 Phaethon, whose debris collided with the Earth's atmosphere at a speed of 34 mm per second and burned up, which is called a shooting star.

Rajasthan Election-2023

- **Voting date** - 25 November
- **Result** - 3 December
- **BJP** - 115 seats (41.69% votes received)(2018 - 73 seats)
- **Congress** -70 seats(2018 - 99 seats)
- **Others** - 15 seats(2018 - 27 seats)
- **Oath** - 15 December 2023 (Ram Niwas Bagh, Jaipur)
- **Chief Minister** - Bhajanlal Sharma (Sanganer Assembly)



- **Deputy Chief Minister** - Diya Kumari (Vidyadharnagar Assembly)



Premchand Bairwa (Dudu, Assembly)



- **Biggest victory** - Diya Kumari (71368 votes) She is the BJP candidate from Vidyadharnagar (Jaipur).
- **Smallest victory** - Hansraj Patel (321 votes) He is BJP candidate from Kotputli.
- In Rajasthan, 8 MPs contested the elections, out of which 5 were victorious and 3 faced defeat.

Important facts-

- Senior most MLA** - Kalicharan Saraf (72 years) became BJP MLA from Malviya Nagar for the 8th time and Laxman Meena (72 years Congress candidate from Bassi)
- Most Educated** - Kailash Verma (Bagru, BJP), Premchand Bairwa (Dudu, BJP)
- Least educated** - Balamukundacharya (Hawamahal, BJP) is only literate.

Young MLA-

- Out of 199 seats, only 11% (22 MLAs) are youth whose age is between 25 to 40 years.
- In this, 9 MLAs from BJP, 9 MLAs from Congress, 3 MLAs from Bharatiya Adivasi Party and only 1 independent MLA Ravindra Singh Bhati (Shiv seat) were victorious.

Women candidates:-

- Year 2018 - 24 women
- Year 2023 - 20 Women (Total Candidates-50)
- 9 women MLAs each from Congress and BJP won and 2 independent candidates won.

Youngest MLA- Ravindra Singh Bhati (25 years) (Shiv Assembly seat)

Oldest MLA- 1- Deepchand Khairiya (83 years) (Kishangarh Bal Assembly seat)

2- Harimohan Sharma (83 years) (Bundi Assembly seat)

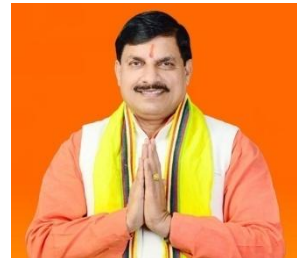
Mizoram

- Total seats - 40
- Majority - 21
- ZPM - 27 seats (2018- 8 seats)
- MNF - 10 seats (2018 - 26 seats)
- BJP - 2 seats (2018 - 1 seat)
- Congress - 1 seat (2018 - 5 seats)
- Chief Minister - Lalduhoma (Zoram People's Movement ZPM)



Madhya Pradesh

- Total Seats:- 230
- Majority - 116 -
- Chief Minister: Mohan Yadav (Malwa Assembly Constituency)
- BJP - 163 seats (2018 - 109 seats) Received 48.5 votes. Won 71 seats.
- Others - 1 seat (2018 - 7 seats)
- Voting date - 17 November 2023
- Result - 3 December 2023



Chhattisgarh

- Total Seats - 90
- Chief Minister - Vishnudev Sai (Kunkuri Assembly Constituency)



- Majority - 46
- BJP - 54 seats (2018 - 15 seats)
- Congress - 35 (2018 -68 seats)
- Others - 1 seat (2018 - 7 seats)
- BJP got its biggest victory here - for the first time BJP has won more than 50 seats.
- Voting: First phase - 7 November
 - Second phase - 17 November
- Result - 3 December

Telangana

- Total seats - 119
- Majority - 60
- BJP - 8 seats (2018 - 1 seat)
- Congress - 64 (2018-19 seats)
- BRS - 39 (2018 - 88)
- Others - 8 seats (2018 - 7 seats)

- Chief Minister – A.Revant Reddy (Congress)

- Voting date – 30 November
- Result - 3 December

Election results

	Rajasthan	Madhya Pradesh	Chhattisgarh	Telangana
Seats	199	230	90	119
Majority	100	116	46	60
BJP	115	163	54	8
Congress	69	66	35	64
other	15	01	01	

RajCopMobile App

- RajCop is a mobile application specially designed for authorized Rajasthan Police officers.
- It is used for various purposes such as Beat Duty tracking, photo and video evidence collection, getting vehicle and owner details by vehicle registration number, and more.
- RajCOMP Info Services Limited is a consultancy organization in the field of information technology which operates under the aegis of the Government of Rajasthan and has developed RajCopapp for Rajasthan Police.

Snake Park, Kota

- Kota's Snake Park is located in the Herbal Park near Bundi Road.
- A total of Rs 7.42 crores have been spent in building this park.
- A special glass room has been built to provide a friendly environment to these rare snakes and for the safety of the visitors.
- In "Snake Park Kota" you will be able to see 33 Indian and American snakes like Indian Cobra, Trinket Snake, Cat Snake, Branded Kukri, Wolf Snake.

5. Science & Technology

Tejas and Prachanda helicopter mega defense deal:-

- Keeping in mind the dual strategic challenges on the border areas of China and Pakistan, the Defense Acquisition Council approved defense purchases worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore.
- 98% procurement will be from indigenous companies.
- Approval was given for the purchase of 97 light combat aircraft Tejas MK-1A from the public sector company Hindustani Aeronautic Limited (BHS).
- Besides, purchase proposals for 156 light combat helicopters Prachanda were also approved.
- Indian field gun will be replaced by towed gun system.
- 155 mm artillery guns were replaced with 155 mm nubless projectiles.
- Approval for purchase of automatic tracker 'Lakshya' for T-90 tanks.



Tejas

- Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is an Indian single-engine, fourth-generation, multirole light fighter designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) in collaboration with the Aircraft Research and Design Center (ARDC) of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- In 2003, it was officially named 'Tejas'.

What is Light Combat Aircraft?

- Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) is a light, multirole jet/turboprop military aircraft designed for light combat engagement.
- It is usually derived from advanced trainer designs and can be used for light attack or strike missions,

reconnaissance, interdiction roles or trainer roles.

- LCA are generally slower than larger multirole or strike aircraft such as the American F-18, F-15E Strike Eagle or Russian MiG-29.
- Most light combat aircraft are only capable of subsonic speeds, although some are capable of reaching Mach 1.
- The LCA Tejas of the Indian Air Force is an example of a light combat aircraft.

Towed Gun System:-

- It is a 155 mm advanced artillery gun system.
- It was manufactured by the Indian Navy to replace the old artillery guns.
- Name- Defense Research and Development Organization
- It works under the aegis of Defense Ministry.
- It was established in 1958.

First survey ship: Sandhyak

- The first Indian Naval Survey Ship Sandhyak was handed over to the Indian Navy on 4 December.
- Manufacturer- Gardenreach Ship Builders & Engineers (Kolkata)
- The contract for 4 survey vessels was signed on 30 October 2018, it is the first of them.

Features-

- Powered by two diesel engines.
- Speed- 18 knots
- It is over 80% indigenous in nature.

JT-60SA

- It is a joint international fusion experiment which is being built and operated by Japan and Europe in Naka (Japan).
- In this, advanced methods of plasma operation will be studied.

What is fusion?

- Fusion means the formation of a new heavy nucleus by the union of two or more lighter atomic nuclei.

INS Imphal Commissioned

- Indian Naval Ship Imphal (Pennant D68) was commissioned into Indian navy.
- It is third of the 4 stealth guided missile destroyer of the INS Vishakhapatnam Class. A guided missile destroyer is a destroyer whose primary armament is guided missiles so they can provide anti-aircraft warfare screening for the fleet.
- Built under project 15-B which will build advanced variants of Kolkata class destroyers (under project 15 A).

List of destroyers under project 15B

- 1ST- INS VISHAKAPATNAM
- 2ND-INS MORMUGAO
- 3RD-INS IMPHAL
- 4TH-INS SURAT

All ships built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders limited (MDSL).

First destroyer named after a North East city of India.



Akash Missile: India is the first country to hit 4 targets with one firing unit.

- Akash is a short-range surface-to-air missile system to protect vulnerable areas and resources from air attacks.
- Akash weapon system can attack multiple targets simultaneously in group mode or autonomous mode.
- It includes Electronic Counter-Counter Measures (ECCM) features.
- The Akash weapon system is configured on a mobile platform i.e. it can be deployed from one place to another by vehicles.
- It has been jointly developed by Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- DRDO has said that India is the first country in the world to have a system

capable of engaging four air targets simultaneously at a distance of 25 km by command guidance using a single firing unit.

What is ECCM?

- Electronic counter-counter measures (ECCM) is a part of electronic warfare that aims to reduce or eliminate the effects of electronic countermeasures (ECM) on electronic sensors mounted on vehicles, ships, aircraft, and weapons such as missiles.

DRDO



- The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is the research and development (R&D) wing of the Government of India in charge of military research and development.
- DRDO was established in 1958 by the merger of the Indian Army's Technical Development Establishment (DMSPC) and Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DST) along with the Defense Science Organization (DMSCO).
- DRDO has more than 50 laboratories to develop technologies in various disciplines such as aeronautics, armaments, electronics, engineering systems, advanced computing, simulation etc.
- DRDO is the most diverse research organization of India.
- Headquarters:- DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi

Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)

- BDL is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defense of the Government of India. It was incorporated on July 16, 1970 in Hyderabad, Telangana as a manufacturing base of guided missile systems and associated equipment for the Indian Armed Forces.

The air defense systems developed by other countries in the world are:-

- THAAD – Terminal High Altitude Area Defense – USA
- Patriot - USA
- S-400 Triumph – Russia
- Rapier - United Kingdom
- Iron Dome - Israel
- David's Sling - Israel
- HQ-9 - China
- HQ-19 - China
- Sayyid-3-Iran
- Hisar-e- Turkey

Robonaut 2

- Since 2011, the Robonaut project has conducted research on robotics technology aboard the International Space Station (ISS).
- In 2014, the original humanoid robot received an upgrade, including climbing manipulators, more powerful processors, and new sensors.
- Robonaut 2 (R2) underwent a post-orbit checkout exercise after the upgrade, while ground-based technology development continued through the Active Reduced Gravity Offload System (ARGOS).
- This system enables full operation of robot testing on the ISS using similar robots at Johnson Space Center.
- R2 returned to JSC in 2018, the project aims to establish a full-featured robotics research platform on the ISS and boost technology readiness for future exploration missions.



Navy plans to get undersea chariots, made in India, for special operations

- The Indian Navy is planning to acquire indigenously-made swimmer delivery vehicles — also known as underwater chariots and midget submarines — as part of efforts to modernise and strengthen the capabilities of its Marine Commandos (MARCOS) for special undersea operations.

Undersea chariots

- **About:** Highly specialised platforms used by almost all advanced navies in the world.
- **Self-propelled vehicle:** They can be launched from ships or submarines, depending on their size and the roles they are to perform.
- **Historical usage:** In World War II, manned human torpedoes were referred to as chariots.
- **Operation:** Majorly in shallow waters.
- **Functions**
 - ✓ Shallow-water surveillance
 - ✓ Attacking the adversary's coastal installations, & their ships in harbour.
 - ✓ Allow marine commandos to access areas close to the adversary's harbour – which submarines are not able to reach due to shallow waters.
 - ✓ Aid transportation of weapons and equipment to areas of operations.

Marine commandos (MARCOS)

- **Official name:** Marine Commando Force (MCF)
- **About:** A special forces unit of the Indian Navy responsible for conducting special operations.
- **Establishment:** February 1987.
- **Operation:** MARCOS are capable of operating in all types of environments; at sea, in air and on land.
- **Latest operations:** The MARCOS regularly undertake specialised maritime operations in Jammu and Kashmir through the Jhelum River and Wular Lake.

South Asia's first and advanced Cyber Knife 'FIM' Robotic Radio Surgery System launched:-

- Recently, Asia's first and advanced Cyber Knife 'FIM' robotic surgery system was launched in India.
- This is being seen as the beginning of a new era of healthcare in India.
- Dr. Apollo Cancer Center (Chennai) became the first recognized center in the country to offer certified fellowship training program in Cyber Knife.

Cyber Knife:-

- It is a system to easily treat cancerous and non-cancerous tumors and other conditions.
- This can be considered an alternative to surgery.
- This treatment is usually done in 1 to 5 sessions.
- It is an external beam radiation therapy system.

Scope:-

- AI based scope for target acquisition and engagement developed.
- It was developed by Lieutenant Colonel 'Nipun Sirohi'.
- Its day camera helps in detecting targets up to 300 meters.
- This AI algorithm helps in hitting the target with accuracy.



Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS): Gaganyaan

- ISRO will indigenously manufacture the environmental control and life support systems for Gaganyaan.
- This decision was taken by ISRO due to lack of cooperation from other countries.
- ISRO chief Somnath said that India is going to develop ECLSS in India with its existing technology and talent.
- The Gaganyaan Mission will be a three-day mission in 2025 with the aim of sending a human group into low Earth orbit at an altitude of 400 km and bringing them back safely.

Environment Control and Life Support System:-

- This system removes carbon dioxide from the cabin air and provides oxygen.
- It filters microorganisms and other particles from the cabin air.

- It regulates and controls the temperature, humidity and pressure of the cabin.
- It recycles water obtained from various sources, purifies it and turns it back into potable water.

Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module returns to Earth's orbit

- The Propulsion Module (PM) of Chandrayaan-3 successfully returned to Earth's orbit, marking a significant step in lunar exploration.
- This manoeuvre was not part of the original mission plan but capitalised on the mission's logistical advantages, including excess fuel.

Gemini AI

- Google's most capable, flexible, and general AI model, Gemini was recently made available to users across the world.

Google Gemini

- **About:** It is multimodal meaning that it is not limited to the type of information it can process and can work, understand and operate across text, code, audio, image and video.
- **Advantageous to ChatGPT:** As it cannot work on video at the moment, at least not natively.
- **Features:** Can "understand, explain and generate high-quality code in the world's most popular programming languages, like Python, Java, C++ and Go", the company claims.

Web 3.0

- This is the third generation of Internet, which is a decentralized system based on block chain service, in which information is divided into different nodes and the person posting the information is the owner of that information. Artificial Intelligence has been used in this.

Difference between Web 1.0, Web 2.0 to Web 3.0:-

- In Web 1.0, information could only be read and it was not possible to use images in it, only text form was used.
- In Web 2.0, along with reading the information, images and effects could be added to it, but the owner of the

information was the platform on which the information was uploaded.

- By removing all these shortcomings, in Web 3.0, the information is not stored on a single server but is divided into separate nodes, the data of which is completely controlled by the information provider and companies require the consent of the information provider to use this data..

VINBEX-2023

- This is a bilateral exercise between India and Vietnam.
- Its fourth edition was held in Hanoi (Vietnam) from 11-21 December.
- This exercise started in the year 2018 and the first edition was held in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh).
- Its third edition was held in Chandimandir Cantonment in 2022.
- This exercise is done to promote mutual cooperation under Chapter-7 of the United Nations Charter on Peace Keeping Operations.

Astrashakti-2023

- Ex Astrashakti 2023 was a military exercise conducted by the Indian Air Force.
- It was organized on December 12, 2023 at Suryalanka Air Force Station in Andhra Pradesh.
- During the exercise, the Indian Air Force demonstrated the capabilities of the Akash Weapon System (AWS).

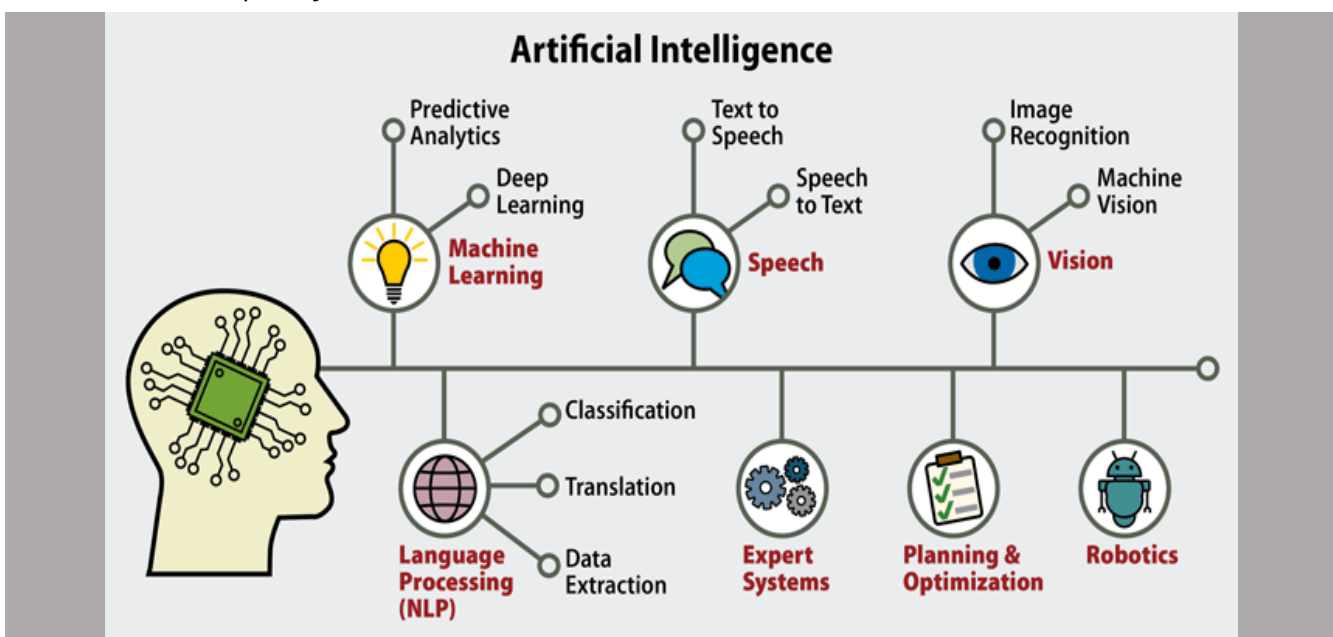
- Apart from this, successful testing of SAMAR (Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation) was also conducted.
- The firepower of the indigenous Akash missile system was demonstrated during the exercise, where a single firing unit simultaneously attacked and destroyed four unmanned targets.

Chamelion Malware

- Chamelion Android malware is a banking Trojan that can disable biometric security and steal PINs and data.
- It tricks people into turning on accessibility services, which then allows attackers to change the phone from a biometric to a PIN lock.
- This effectively bypasses fingerprint unlock and steals your PIN. Please be careful when downloading apps, especially from unofficial sources.

What is Malware?

- Malware is a term that refers to any software that is designed to damage or disrupt a computer, device, or network.
- Malware can have different purposes, such as stealing data, locking the system, destroying files, or using resources without permission.
- Some common types of malware are viruses, worms, trojans, spyware, adware and ransomware.



Mycoplasma Pneumonia

Mycoplasma pneumoniae Guidelines issued on:-

1. This disease is affecting children more than adults.
 2. Cold and fever are its common symptoms.
 3. As a precaution, along with quarantining the patient, arrangements for oxygen availability, anti-biotics and influenza vaccine should be ensured.
- **What are Mycoplasma-** These are prokaryotic organisms which lack a cell wall. These have been included in the Monera class. They can survive without oxygen and become resistant to antibiotics.

Difference between mycoplasma pneumonia and traditional pneumonia:-

- Common pneumonia is spread by micro-organisms whereas mycoplasma pneumonia is spread by a bacteria called amnemonia.
- In normal pneumonia, there is a cough with mucus and swelling in the lungs, whereas in mycoplasma pneumonia, there is a complaint of long dry cough along with fluid or pus in the lungs.

Genome Sequencing

- The researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER Bhopal) recently completed the first-ever genome sequencing of the jamun tree (*Syzygium cumini*).
- This research aimed to gain new functional and evolutionary insights from the jamun genome, which could be responsible for the wide range of pharmacological properties of this species "conferred by the bioactive compounds that act as nutraceutical agents in modern medicine".

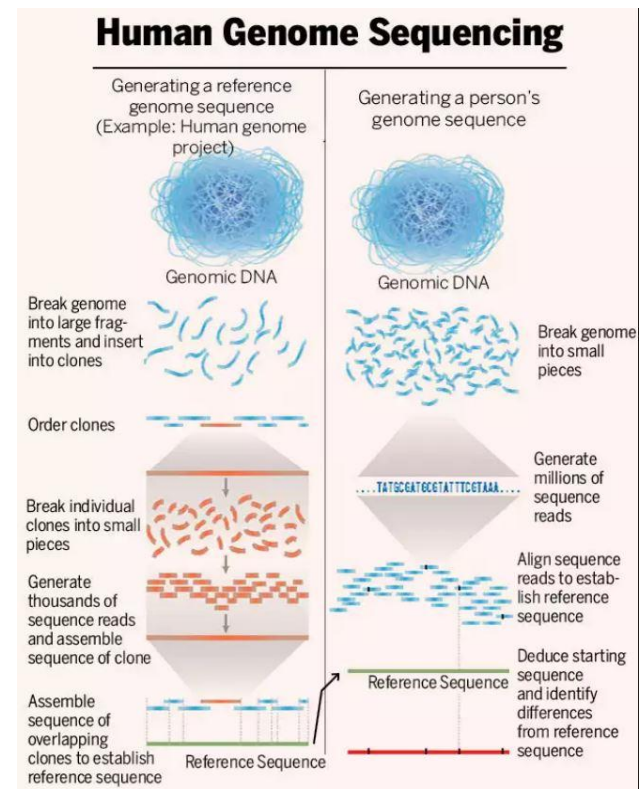
Genome sequencing

- **Differences in genomes:** While the sequence or order of base pairs is identical in all humans, compared to another species, there are differences in the genome of every human being that makes them unique.
- **Genome sequencing:** The process of deciphering the order of base pairs, to

decode the genetic fingerprint of a human.

- **Importance:** Helps in determining the complete DNA sequence of an organism's genome.
- **Next-generation sequencing (NGS):** It allows for rapid, accurate, and cost-effective sequencing of large amounts of DNA.

Human Genome Project (HGP)



- **Initiation:** In 1990, a group of scientists began to work on determining the whole sequence of the human genome.
- **Latest version:** The project released the latest version of the complete human genome in 2023, with a 0.3% error margin.
- **Importance:** It facilitates the reading of a person's individual genome to identify differences from the average human genome.
- **Importance:** These differences or mutations can tell us about each human's susceptibility or future vulnerability to a disease, their reaction or sensitivity to a particular stimulus, and so on.

Anthrax

- It is a highly infectious disease caused by the gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis* which affects animals like cows, sheep, and goats, as well as wild herbivores. It is communicable to humans if they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products. This bacterium occurs naturally in soil as well.

White Lung Syndrome

- Recently the first case of White Lung Syndrome was seen in Ohio (USA).
- It mainly affects children.
- It is identified by taking X-ray of the affected patient in which white spots start appearing in the chest.
- In this disease, distinctive white patches are found on chest X-rays in affected children. It is caused because of various respiratory illnesses like acute respiratory distress syndrome, pulmonary alveolar microlithiasis, and silica-related conditions. It is said to be caused by a combination of bacterial, viral, and environmental factors.

DRESS Syndrome

- Also known as DIHS (Drug Induced Hypersensitivity Syndrome), it is a type of drug allergy that can occur as a reaction to a large variety of medications. It causes a diverse array of clinical symptoms, anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks after initiating the offending drug.

Norovirus/ 'stomach flu'/ 'winter vomiting bug'

- It is a very contagious virus that causes nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea that can infect people of all ages. It is a recurring disease because there are many different types of noroviruses. Infection with one type of norovirus may not give immunity against other types.

Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus

- It is a double-stranded DNA virus that is classified in the family Herpesviridae. It is a major cause of acute, fatal hemorrhagic disease in wild and captive juvenile Asian and African elephants. It is transmitted by direct contact with body fluids of infected elephants (saliva, shedding from skin lesions, etc.) It is fatal for young elephants (between the ages of 1-12).

Pompe Disease

- Nidhi Shirol, India's first Pompe disease patient, passed away last month at the age of 24 years after battling the disease.
- She spent the last six years in a semi-comatose state.

Pompe Disease/ Glycogen Storage Disease Type II

- **About:** A rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme acid alpha-glucosidase (GAA).
- **Importance of the enzyme:** Crucial for breaking down glycogen into glucose within the lysosomes of cells.
- **Prevalence:** Estimates range from 1 in 40,000 to 1 in 300,000 births.
- **Diagnosis:** multi-faceted approach
 - ✓ **Enzyme assays:** To measure the activity of acid alpha-glucosidase (GAA), the deficient enzyme.
 - ✓ **Genetic testing:** To identify mutations in the responsible GAA gene.
 - ✓ **Clinical evaluations:** To consider the patient's symptoms and medical history.

How does Pompe disease affect an individual

- Muscle weakness
- Motor skill delay
- Degenerative impact on bones
- Respiratory complications
- Cardiac involvement
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
- Implications for daily living

6. Index & Reports

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

Report-2022

- Its reports from 36 states and union territories were presented.
- According to this, the overall crime in the country has decreased.
- The total number of criminal cases in 2022 was 25,24,956.
- Compared to 2021, there was a 4.5% decrease in criminal cases in 2022.
- Economic crimes in the country increased by 11.1% compared to 2021 to 1.93 lakhs.
- Rajasthan topped in rape cases, with 4-45 lakh cases reported in 2022 with an increase of 4% compared to 2021.

Status of states in rape crime-

- 1- Rajasthan - 5399 cases
 - 2- Uttar Pradesh - 3690 cases
 - 3- Madhya Pradesh - 3029 cases
- 28545 cases were registered in 2022 with an increase of 9.3% in comparison to 2021.

The order of women insecurity in metropolitan cities:-

1. Delhi - 14,158 cases
2. Mumbai - 6176 cases
3. Bengaluru - 3924 cases

Child crimes-

- Total cases - 1,62,449 (8.7% more than in 2021)

Highest crime category-

- Abduction - 45.7%
- POCSO - 39.7%
- Child crimes per lakh increased by 3% compared to 2021 to 36.6 in 2022.

Suicide cases:-

- Total cases- 13000
- **Status of states-**
 - ✓ Maharashtra - 378 cases
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh - 277 cases
 - ✓ Jharkhand - 174 cases

Cases of crimes against SCs and STs:-

- Crimes against SCs increased by 13.1% from last year to 57582 while in 2021

there were 50,900.

- Crimes against STs- 10064 with an increase of 14.3% compared to 2021.
- Maximum 7554 cases were registered in Rajasthan.

Murder cases:-

- There was a 2.5% decrease in murder cases compared to 2021.
- Total cases of murder registered in 2022 were 28,522.
- The reason behind 3761 murders was revenge or enmity.

Crimes related to agriculture:-

- According to NCRB, 11290 agricultural laborers or farmers committed suicide in 2022.
- Every day 30 farmers lost their lives.
- There has been an increase of 3.7% compared to 2021.

Status of states-

1. First - Maharashtra (38 cases)
2. Second - Karnataka
3. Third - Andhra Pradesh

Corruption:-

- 4139 cases of corruption were registered in the country with an increase of 10.5% compared to 2021.

Status of states-

1. First - Maharashtra (773 cases)
2. Second - Rajasthan (511 cases)
3. Third - Karnataka (389 cases)

Foreign citizen crime:-

- A total of 192 cases were reported, an increase of 20% compared to 2021.

States rankings-

- First- Karnataka (28 cases)
- Second- Maharashtra and Himachal (21 cases)
- Third- Chhattisgarh (16 cases)

Status of Union Territories-

- Maximum 40 cases were registered in Delhi.

Uptick in cybercrime- NCRB Report

- Cyber crime saw a steep 24% rise in 2022, with fraud, extortion and sexual

exploitation accounting for most cases, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, 'Crime in India'.

- Other crimes, such as economic offences, crime against women and senior citizens, also increased in comparison with 2021.

Highlights of the report

- **Increase of 141% in cyber crime cases in the last five years:** The rise has been steady: from 27,248 that year to 44,735 in 2019 to 50,035 cases in 2020.
- **Cyber crimes against women and children :** Cyber pornography/ hosting/ publishing obscene sexual material- accounted for 14,409 cases (21.8%), while 1,823 cyber crimes (2.7%) were reported against children.
- **Max. cases:** Telangana, Kamataka and UP
- **Huge cyber case pending:** Indian cyber cells have more than 69,000 cases to investigate (pending, reported during the year and reopened cases), while the charge-sheeting rate in cyber cases is only 29.3% across states,".
- **Cruelty, abduction, rape increased**
- **Cases of crime against senior citizens:** They increased by 9.3%.
- **Decrease in crime rate:** The crime rate registered per lakh population has declined from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.

WHO report on Malaria cases in India

- As per the WHO World Malaria Report 2023, contrasting the global trend, India continued to witness a decline in malaria cases and deaths in 2022.

Findings of the Report

- There were around 33 lakh malaria cases and 5,000 deaths in India last year.
- It shows a decrease of 30% and 34 % respectively compared with 2021.
- Globally, there were 249 million cases in 2022, 5 million more than in 2021.
- The number of malaria cases globally had plateaued over the last decade or so, down from 243 million in 2000 to 233 million in 2019, and increased during the pandemic.
- In 2020, there were 11 million more cases which remained the same in 2021 only to increase in 2022.
- The number of global malaria deaths was also higher: 608,000 deaths in 2022 compared with 576,000 in 2019.

NAME: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)
A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UN

YEAR OF FORMATION: 1948

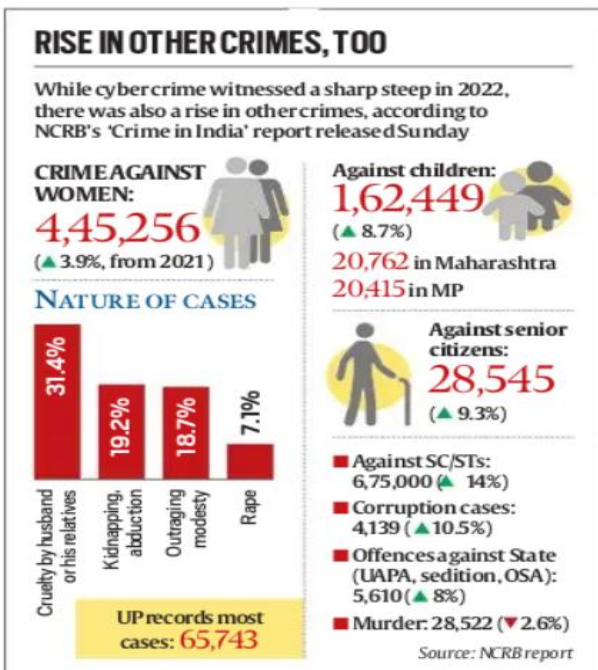
HQ: GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

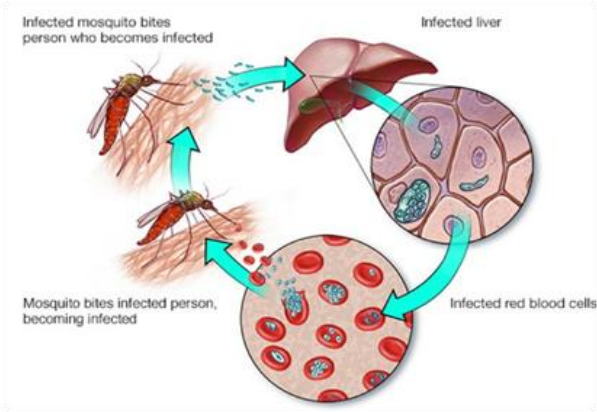
SECTOR: HEALTH

IS INDIA A MEMBER: YES

Malaria

- Malaria is a disease caused by the Plasmodium parasite.
- The parasite can be spread to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes.
- The plasmodium parasite is spread by female Anopheles mosquitoes, which are known as "night-biting" mosquitoes because they most commonly bite between dusk and dawn.





Periodic Labor Force Survey Data:-

- This data was released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) for the September quarter.
- According to this, the urban unemployment of the country remained stable at 6.6%.
- The male unemployment rate increased slightly to 6% from 5.9% in the month of June.
- The female unemployment rate decreased from 9% to 8.6%.
- The unemployment rate among youth aged 15-29 years decreased from 17.6% in June to 17.3%.
- A continuous decline is being seen in urban unemployment after the rate of 12.6% in the June quarter of 2022.
- By September 2023, the participation of women in the total labor force of the country has increased to 24%, which was 21.7% in September last year.
- **National Statistical Office (NSO).**
 - I. It was established by merging the National Sample Survey Office (NSS), Computer Center and Central Statistics Office (CSO).
 - II. It works under the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI)

List of the world's most powerful women released by Forbes:-

- Recently, Forbes released the list of world's most powerful women.

Top among these-

- First- Ursula von der Leyen (Chief, European Commission)
- Second- Christine Lagarde (Chief, European Central Bank)
- Third- Kamala Harris (Vice President,

America)

- Fourth - Giorgia Meloni (Prime Minister, Italy)

Indian women-

- India's most powerful woman- Nirmala Sitharaman (32nd position)
- Other Indian women-
 1. Roshni Nadar Malhotra (BMM of BBS BV) and 60th position.
 2. Soma Mandal (Chairman of SAIL) – 7th position
 3. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw (Founder of Biocon) – 76th position.

QS World Ranking:-

- Recently “QS World University Ranking Sustainability Ranking-2024” report was released.
- 1st place- University of Toronto (Canada)
- Second place – University of California (USA)
- Third place – University of Manchester (UK)

India's situation-

- i. Not a single institute is included in Top-100.
 - ii. Delhi University (220th rank) secured the position in Top-300.
 - iii. Top-400 includes 4 IIT institutes apart from DU.
- This ranking has been released out of 1397 institutions from 95 countries.

Status of judges in the country and report of the Law Commission:-

Why in discussion?

- Recently, Law Minister Arjunram Meghwal answered a question regarding the number of judges.

Key Highlights -

- There are 21 judges per 10 lakh people in the country.
- According to the Law Minister, the Law Commission's 1987 report had recommended 50 judges per 10 lakh population.
- The present sanctioned posts of judges are 25423 and out of them 20026 are filled.

Law Commission:-

- It is a non-statutory body.

- It was established under the notification issued by the Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India.
- The purpose of its establishment is to conduct research and present recommendations in the field of law.
- The first Law Commission of India was formed in 1834 under the chairmanship of Lord Macaulay under the Charter Act of 1833.
- The first Law Commission of independent India was constituted in the year 1955 for three years.

'Global Pension Index-2023':-

- Recently, the 15th annual Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index ranked the retirement income systems of various countries.
- Based on this, global pension ranking was released.
- In this, rankings of total 47 countries were released.
- India's ranking - 45
- India's overall index value was 44.5 in 2022 which increased to 45.9 in 2023.
- This index covers 64% of the world's population.
- This year's included countries and their systems - Botswana, Croatia and Kazakhstan.

Ranking-

1st - Netherlands (85 points)
Second - Iceland (83.5 points)
Third - Denmark (81.3 points)
Last place - Argentina (42.3 points)

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)-2024:-

- This report was released recently during the COP-28.
- Published by: German Watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network International.
- According to this report, no country occupies the top 3 positions.
- Fourth place - Denmark (75-59)
- Fifth place - Estonia (72-01)
- Sixth place - Philippines (70-70)
- 67th (last) place - Saudi Arabia (19-33)

CCPI and India-

- India's position - 7th (70.25)

- India's per capita emissions are relatively low.
- India is on track to achieve the below 2°C benchmark in per capita greenhouse gas emissions.

CCPI:-

- It includes 63 countries and the European Union.
- It uses a standardized framework to compare climate performance that accounts for more than 90% of greenhouse gases.

There are 4 categories of its evaluation and 14 indicators-

- Green House Gas Emissions (40%)
- Renewable Energy (20%)
- Energy use (20%)
- Climate Policy (20%)
- It has been providing analysis of countries' climate protection performance since 2005.

RBI report on state budget:-

- Recently the Reserve Bank of India presented an analytical report on the financial position of the states.

Key Highlights-

- The gross fiscal deficit of the states was 4% of GDP in 2020-21, which increased to 2.8% in 2022-23 and is estimated at 3% for 2023-24.
- Capital outlay increased by 52.6% due to central assistance for investment. The Central Government had made a provision of Rs 1-3 lakh crore for 50 years interest free loan to the states for investment and the growth in revenue expenditure was 8.9%.
- Due to the implementation of GST, the tax collection of the states increased by 4.4% in one year.
- The total liabilities of the states were 31% in 2020-21, which is estimated to reduce to 27.6% in 2023-24.
- The gross fiscal deficit to GDP ratio in the financial year 2023-24 is estimated to be 3.1%, lower than the prescribed 3.5%.
- The gross market borrowing of states will reach Rs 7-58 trillion in 2022-23.
- Net market borrowing increased by 5.4% in 2022-23.
- In 2023-24, the states presented the budget to keep revenue expenditure at

14.4% of gross domestic product and social sector expenditure at 8% of gross domestic product.

- Jharkhand- Education budget expenditure increased 10 times (1080.70%) in one year.
- Rajasthan - Social welfare budget expenditure increased 24 times (2475%) in one year.
- Punjab: Health budget expenditure increased 4 times (395.75%) in one year.
- Maharashtra- Housing budget expenditure increased 3 times (309.96%) in one year.
- The amount deposited in the civil and local funds of the states was Rs 7.32 lakh crore, which is 3.82% more than the previous year.

Report of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization on food security and nutrition:-

- Recently, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization released a report on food security and nutrition.
- The title of this report was - 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)'.

Key Highlights:

- The number of people facing hunger has increased by more than 122 million since 2019 due to pandemic, wars and other climate related events.
- The cost of healthy food in India is the lowest among the BRICS countries and its neighbours.
- 2.4 billion people were not able to get sustained nutritious food in 2022.
- The situation of child malnutrition was also alarming in 2021 where 148.1 million (22.3%) children were stunted, 45 million (6.8%) were wasted and 37 million (5.6%) were overweight.
- The cost of access to healthy food increased by 9% in the Asian continent between 2019 and 2021.

In the context of India-

- India's nutritional cost is lower than BRICS and neighboring countries.
- Regarding Mumbai, it was said in the special report that in the last 5 years the cost of food increased by 65% but the

salary and wages increased by 28% to 37%.

- In 2021, 74% Indians were without access to nutritious food due to which India stood at fourth place in the world.

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization:-

- Established on 16 October 1945
- It includes 194 countries and the European Union.
- Its headquarters is in Rome (Italy).
- Objective: To provide research work and technical assistance with the aim of increasing agricultural productivity and development.

India ranks 11th in the list of world's best dishes

- Indian cuisine has been ranked 11th in the list of "World's 100 Best Cuisine" by Food Guide Taste Atlas, whereas in 2022, India was ranked 5th.
- The ranking was based on the average rating of the top 50 foods for each cuisine and India's score was 4.52 out of 5.
- Italian cuisine tops the list, followed by Japan and Greece.

Taste Atlas

- Taste Atlas is a website that provides information about the best foods and drinks from around the world.
- It lists 40 food items, drinks, sweets and many more recipes from different cuisines and regions.
- In addition, Taste Atlas also publishes annual rankings of the best recipes, food cities, food products and ingredients, as well as lists of famous restaurants and cookbooks.
- The best-rated dish for 2023 is Brazilian Meat Cut Picanha, followed by Malaysian Breaded Roti Canai and Thai Stir Fry Phat Kaphrao.
- Language- English
- Started - 2018 (Annually)
- Headquarter - Zagreb, Croatia

Financial Stability Report

- It is a biannual report released by Reserve Bank of India. It is prepared after taking into account the contributions from all financial sector regulators. The report is based on the

evaluations and findings of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).

Key Highlights of the report

- The Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratios reported to be on a downward trajectory. This signifies a positive trend in asset quality, indicating a reduction in non-performing assets within the financial system.
- The Financial Stability Report underscores the enhanced resilience of the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) sector.
- The Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), a crucial metric for evaluating financial health, has shown improvement. A higher CRAR indicates increased financial resilience and capacity to absorb potential risks.

7. Places in News

Dhordo village

- Dhordo village of Gujarat has been declared the 'Best Tourism Village' for the year 2023 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- The UNWTO Best Tourism Village initiative recognizes villages that are at the forefront of nurturing rural areas and preserving landscapes and cultural diversity.
- The initiative evaluates villages under nine key areas, including cultural and natural resources, economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, tourism development and value chain integration, governance and prioritization of tourism, infrastructure and connectivity, and health, Security included.
- Dhordo is one of the 74 villages that are part of the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Network.



United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- Its headquarters is in Madrid, Spain.
- The Organization is committed to providing its Member States with training and support for the tourism workers of today and tomorrow, giving

them the skills and knowledge they need to meet the changing demands of employment and create a truly resilient and competitive sector.

- UNWTO also promotes education in the tourism sector.
- **Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain
- **Established:** 1 November 1975
- **Parent organization:** United Nations Economic and Social Council
- **Secretary General:** Zurab Pololikashvili

Unveiling of Shivaji's statue:-

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji at Rajkot Fort (Sindhu Durg, Maharashtra).
- The foundation of this fort in Sindhu Durg was laid by Shivaji in 1664.

18th International Tripitaka Singing Festival:-

- Venue:- Bodh Gaya (Bihar)
- Lord Buddha attained Kaivalya in Bodhgaya.
- This festival is related to the Tripitaka text written in Pali language, which is considered the main text of Buddhism.

California Lithium Reserves:-

- California has found deposits of lithium (white gold) under the Salton Sea, notorious for salt water.
- According to the research of Lawrence Burke National Laboratory, there may be reserves of about 3400 kilo tons of lithium under this lake, which is enough to manufacture batteries for about 37.5 crore electric vehicles.



'The Jaigarh Fest':-

- 'The Jaigarh Festival' was organized to commemorate 40 years of tourism of Jaigarh Fort (Jaipur).
- It was organized on 9 and 10 December 2023 at Jaigarh Fort (Jaipur).
- Its objective is based on promoting the conservation of heritage, arts and crafts of Rajasthan.
- Tourism at Jaigarh Fort started in 1983 under the patronage of 'Jaigarh Public Charitable Trust'.

Jakarta (Indonesia):-

- A volcanic eruption occurred in Mount Merapi located in West Sumatra, Indonesia.
- There were 75 climbers present at the time of the incident, out of which 11 died.



Odisha:- Asia's largest trade fair

- Bali Jatra fair was held on the banks of Mahanadi in Cuttack (Odisha).
- It is the largest trade fair in Asia.
- History of celebration:-
 - In ancient times, when people from Odisha used to go to other countries for business, they used to start their journey from Mahanadi, their wives used to bid farewell to them and stood on the banks of Mahanadi waiting for their arrival.

Garba included in the intangible cultural heritage list:-

- Recently Garba dance was given a place in the representative list of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.

Garba dance-

- This is a traditional dance of Gujarat.
- These are dances related to Navratri which are dedicated to the devotion of Goddess Durga.

Maidam included in UNESCO's World Heritage List:-

- Maidam has been nominated by UNESCO for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2023-24.

What is Maidam?

- This is the mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty of Assam. These are pyramid-like structures.



Hornbill Festival:-

- This is a famous festival of Nagaland.
- It was started by the state government in the year 2000.

Objective-

- To revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland.
- To introduce the country and the world to the culture of Naga community.
- Partners – America, Germany, Colombia and Assam.

Hornbillbird:-

- It is a respected bird of the Naga community, its feathers are worn by the Naga people in their caps.

First Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023:-

- India's first Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Red Fort.
- It will be organized from 8th to 15th December.

Objectives-

- To strengthen cultural dialogue between artists, architects, photographers, art experts and the general public.
- To give institutional form to global cultural initiatives in the country.

Nareli (Ajmer):-

- Here the construction of the state's highest 10-storey Jain temple is about to be completed.
- It will be known as Gyanodaya Tirtha.
- Three statues each of 24 Tirthankaras will be installed on its first floor.
- The construction of Nareli Teerth started in 1995 with the inspiration of Muni Sudha Sagar.
- This pilgrimage was named Gyanodaya after Acharya Gyan Sagar.

Mahi Back Water (Banswara):-

- This is the longest back water dead storage of the state.
- It is famous in both Vagad and Rajasthan as a shelter for migratory birds.
- More than 250 species of birds including flamingo, crane, and whistle duck can be seen here.

Approval for establishment of Cheetah Breeding and Conservation Center in Banni Grassland-

- The Union Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change approved the proposal to establish a Cheetah Breeding and Conservation Center in Banni Grassland, a reserved forest area of Kutch (Gujarat).
- This is the second region of the country after the Kuno region of Madhya Pradesh.
- Its objective is to reinstate leopards in Gujarat.
- This area used to be the habitat of leopards, which are extinct today.
- The responsibility of the action plan of this center has been handed over to 'National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

National Tiger Conservation Authority:-

- It was formed in the year 2006 under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- It is a statutory body under the Ministry

of Forest and Environment.

- It is headed by the Minister of Environment.
- Function- To monitor tiger conservation and related schemes and policies.

Lion safari in Nahargarh Biological Park:-

- A safari to see three Asiatic lions together was initiated in Nahargarh Biological Park.
- It includes two female lionesses Tara and Durga and one male lion Shakti.
- In these, Durga and Shakti have been brought from Gujarat.

Nahargarh Biological Park

- It is an adventure tourist destination of Rajasthan located in the Aravali Hills.
- Its construction started in 2013 and it was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje in March 2016.

Morel Dam (Dausa):-

- Located in Lalsot (Dausa), this dam was in the news due to the arrival of the migratory bird 'Dalmatian Pelican'.
- This dam remains a major center of tourism due to the arrival of European birds every year.

Loktak Lake and Sangai Deer:-

- Opposition by the state government to the plan of the Central Government to set up a plant on Loktak Lake under the Hydropower Modernization Scheme in Manipur.

Reason for Centre-State conflict:-

- According to the state government, Keibul Lamjao National Park is situated on Loktak Lake in which Manipur's state animal Sangai Deer (Dancing Deer) resides and currently it is in crisis because its number was 204 in 2014 and it will come down to about 64 in 2022. Are. Thus, the state government is in conflict with the central government for environmental distress.
- **Loktak Lake:-** Located in Vishnupur district, southern district of Imphal, the capital of Manipur, this lake is famous for the world's only floating national park, Keibul Lamjao. In this national park, a caste of fishermen who live in

floating huts (Phumsang). This is a fresh water lake.

- Keibul Lamjao National Park:- It was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1954 and declared a national park in 1977 under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and Manipur Wildlife Protection Rules-1974. It was designated as a Ramsar site in 1990. It is famous for Sangai deer and Loktak lake.

World's largest meditation center: Swarved

- The world's largest meditation center was established in Umrah (Varanasi).
- It is a 7 storey building in which 4000 verses are engraved.
- In this, 7 floors represent 7 chakras.
- The shape of a lotus with 125 petals is carved in it.
- In this, 20 thousand people can meditate together.
- It was built by Saint Sadaphal Maharaj, the founder of Vihangam Yoga Institute.
- Makrana marble has also been used in it.

Surat Diamond Bourse

- Surat Diamond Bourse is a non-profit organization that promotes and establishes the world's largest office building for diamond trading activities in Surat, Gujarat.
- The Bourse has been designed by architecture firm Morphogenesis and is spread over 35 acres with a unique design of interconnected rectangular structures radiating from a central "spine".

- It is the world's largest diamond trading center with a floor area of 660,000 square meters (7,100,000 sq ft) and is also the world's largest office building, surpassing the Pentagon.
- The building has over 67 lakh square feet of floor area and will be a global hub for rough and polished diamonds as well as jewellery.



Villarica

- Villarrica is one of the most active volcanoes of Chile (2860 m).
- It is also known as Rucapillan in the Mapuche language, which means "house of the great spirit" or "house of the demon".
- This is the most vertical of the three large stratovolcanoes, obliquely from west to south-east.
- **Chile's major volcanoes**
 - 1) Ojas-del-Saldo (6893 m) – Active
 - 2) Lullaillaco (6739 m) – Active
 - 3) Incahuasi (6621 m) – Potentially active

8. Person in News

Dr. Akshita Krishnamurthy:-

- She became the first Indian woman to operate a rover on Mars.
- She collected samples of Mars in NASA's scientific laboratory.
- Other Indian women in NASA:-
 - i. Sunita William:- This Indian-origin scientist had made the record of becoming the first woman to go to the International Space Station for 6 months.
 - ii. Kalpana Chawla:- She spent 15 days and 16 hours in space in the year 1997 in the Columbia Space Shuttle.

Captain Geetika Kaul:-

- She is the first woman medical officer to be posted in Siachen.
- Earlier, 'Shiva Chauhan' had become the first army officer to be deployed in Siachen. (January 2023)

Taylor Swift:-

- She is an American pop singer.
- Recently, she was chosen as 'Person of the Year-2023' by the magazine.
- Time magazine has been giving the 'Person of the Year Award' continuously since 1927.

Dansari Anasuya:-

- She left the Naxalite path and became a minister in the Telangana government.

Key Highlights:

- Dansari Anasuya aka Seethakka has emerged as a hope for the Naxalites.
- After leaving the Naxal path, she first did L.L.B. and then obtained P.H.D. degree.
- Currently, she has been elected as an MLA and has reached the post of Minister of State in the Telangana government.

Mohammad Naeem Syed:-

- Recently, 'Mohammed Naeem Syed', popularly known as 'Junior Mahmood', passed away at the age of 67.
- He started working as a child artist in the 1960s and gained fame by working in films like Suhagrat (1968) and Brahmachari.

- He worked in about 250 films.

Aridam Bagchi:-

- Recently he was appointed India's permanent representative to the United Nations.
- He is a 1995 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service.
- He was also the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs in 2020.

Poonam Sapera:-

- Dr. Poonam Sapera won the gold medal as the best conductor on behalf of the Rajasthan Police Band Team in the 'All India Police Band Competition' held in Gujarat.

Thanga Darlong:-

- Tripura's famous rojam player Thanga Darlong passed away.
- He was 103 years old.
- He was considered a skilled player of Rojam.
- Was awarded Padma Shri in 2019.

Dr. Gao Yaojie:-

- China's famous doctor and activist Gao Yaojie passed away at the age of 95.
- He had exposed the corruption of blood selling in rural China, the outbreak of AIDS virus and the inefficiency of the government.

Donald Tusk:-

- Recently Donald Tusk was made the new Prime Minister of Poland.
- He will replace the current Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

Poland:-

- It is a Central European country.
- Its capital is 'Warsaw'.
- Its official currency is 'Polish zloty'.
- The government of Poland is a unitary, parliamentary, representative, & democratic government.

Pratyush Aggarwal:-

- Pratyush Aggarwal from Jaipur received silver medal in 'International General Knowledge Olympiad'.
- Pratyush, a student of class 9, achieved this feat by scoring 59 marks out of 60 in Level-1 Olympiad.
- He was also honored with -
 - i. International Silver Medal
 - ii. Certificate of Outstanding Performance
 - iii. Medal of Distinction.

Upul Tharanga

- Recently, Sri Lankan Sports Minister Harin Fernando appointed former Sri Lankan cricketer 'Upul Tharanga' as the chairman of the Sri Lanka Selection Board Committee.
- This committee has been formed for 2 years.
- Other members - Anjata Mendis, Indika de Saram, Tharanga Paranavitana and Dilruwan Perera.
- These decisions were taken as a result of the Sri Lankan team's miserable performance in the World Cup.

Savitri Jindal:-

- Recently, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Jindal Group Chairman Savitri Jindal has become the richest woman in India.
- She has got 5th position leaving behind Azim Premji (Wipro Group).
- Her total wealth has now reached 25 billion dollars.
- India's top 5 richest people
 1. Mukesh Ambani - 92.3 billion dollars
 2. Gautam Adani - 85.3 billion dollars
 3. Shapoor Pallonji - 33.8 billion dollars
 4. Shiv Nadar - 31.6 billion dollars
 5. Savitri Jindal - 25 billion dollars

Govind Guru:-

- On December 20, the 165th birth anniversary of the great revolutionary of Rajasthan Govind Guru was celebrated.

About:

- Dr Govind Guru was born on 20 December 1858 in a Banjara family of Gaur caste in Bansia village of Dungarpur district.

- 110 years ago, on 17 November 1913, he, along with the Bhils and tribals of Dungarpur and surrounding princely states, called a meeting against the exploitation of the British state and the native princely states.
- **Mangarh Massacre:** On 17 November 1913 (Margashirsha Purnima), an annual fair was being organized on the Mangarh hill, on which British Indian Army open fired and 1500 Bhils were killed. This was called the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of Rajasthan.
- Dr. Govind Guru founded Samp Sabha in 1883 and led the Bhagat movement.
- Famous song - 'Re Bhuretia Ni Manu Re Ni Manu' means - Hey Englishman, I am not going to agree.
- He died on 30 October 1931 in Kamboi village of Jhalod (Gujarat).
- He remained working for the salvation of Bhils and tribals throughout his life.

Rakesh Asthana

- The Centre has appointed seven people, including former Delhi police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana, as 'special monitors' of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

- Fattah al-Sisi became president again after winning the elections for the third time.
- Sisi is an Egyptian politician and retired military officer, serving as the sixth and current President of Egypt since 2014.
- Before retiring as a general in the Egyptian Army in 2014, Sisi served as Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt from 2013 to 2014, as Defense Minister from 2012 to 2013, and as Director of Military Intelligence from 2010 to 2012..

Rebecca Welch

- Rebecca Welch became the first woman to referee a Premier League match by refereeing Burnley's match against Fulham on 23 December 2023.
- She began refereeing in 2010 and in January 2023, she also became the first woman to referee a men's championship game.

- In addition to refereeing the Championship this year, Welsh has also officiated Women's Super League and

Women's Champions League matches and the Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand this summer.

Miscellaneous

- Kuwait's ruling emir (Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah) dies at age of 86, Sheikh Meshal Named as successor.
- China names Dong Jun (Ex-navy chief of china) to be the new defense minister of the country.
- Mohini giri , an icon of women rights movement dies at 86.
- C S Rajan to be part time chief of Kotak Mahindra Bank (He is a 1978 batch IAS officer and also served as chief secretary of Rajasthan)
- Nina Singh 1st woman to head Central industrial Security Force(CISF), She is a 1989 Rajasthan cadre IPS officer



CISF

- Central industrial Security Force is a federal police organisation in India under the ministry of Home Affairs and was formed in 1969

President of France Emmanuel Macron to be chief guest on republic day 2024.

- In 2023 Republic day Abdel Fateh el-Sisi (president of Egypt) was the chief guest.
- First republic day (in 1950) chief guest was Sukarno, President of Indonesia.

9. Sports

Under-17 FIFA World Cup:-

- Event - Jakarta (Indonesia)
 - Winner - Germany
- Runner-up- France
- Germany defeated France 4-3 in penalty shootout.

Amit Panghal:-

- Indian boxer Amit Panghal won gold medal in 51 kg category in the National Boxing Championship.
- He registered victory by defeating Anshul Poonia of Chandigarh by 5-0.
- National Boxing Championship was organized in Shillong (Assam).

World's first Grandmaster siblings:-

- Indian chess grandmaster R Pragyananda and his sister Vaishali Rameshbabu became the world's first brother-sister grandmasters.
- Dr. Vaishali Rameshbabu became India's third woman Grandmaster by achieving 2500 rating in Ellobregat Open (Spain).
- **Three women grandmasters of India-**
 - i. Koneru Hampi
 - ii. Harika Dronavalli
 - iii. Vaishali Rameshbabu

Gold medal for Rajasthan in National Shooting Championship:-

- Rajasthan's 'Abhinav Chaudhary' received gold medal in the men's category of 25 meter rapid fire pistol in the National Shooting Championship.
- National Shooting Championship is being organized in Bhopal.

Next Gen Tennis Title:-

- Winner – Hamad Medjedovic (Serbia)
- DRA Runner-up - Arthur Film (France)
- 20 year old Hamad is the sixth winner to win this title.
- Top players aged 21 years or less take part in this tournament.

Rajasthan aims for gold in senior national boxing:-

- Senior National Boxing was organized in Shillong (Meghalaya).
- Lakshya Chahar, playing for the Indian Services Control Board, won the gold medal in the 80 kg category.
- Lakshya Chahar belongs to Rajasthan.

World Junior Boxing World Cup:-

- Event-Yerven (Armenia), 23 November to 4 December.
- India got a total of 17 medals.
- India won 3 gold, 9 silver and 5 bronze medals.
- All three gold medals of India were won by female boxers Payal, Nisha and Akanksha.

28th All India Federation Cup Carrom Tournament:-

- Event- 10 to 13 December
- Venue – Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)
- Vice President of Tournament Organizing Committee – Suraj Khatri (Rajasthan)

Men's T-20 World Cup 2024:-

- Event - 2024
- Venue – West Indies and America

Why in discussion?

- Recently, BCCI launched the logo for Men's and Women's T-20 World Cup 2024.

Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan:-

- Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan have won the women's doubles gold medal at the 5th Fazza Dubai Para Badminton International 2023.
- Para Asian gold medalist Pramod Bhagat won two silver medals.

Himani Punia

- Jaipur's Himani Punia won two silver medals in the women's singles and women's doubles categories at the Badminton Asia Senior Open 2023 held

in Da Nang, Vietnam from December 11 to 17, 2023.

Mushfiqur Rahim:-

- He is a Bangladeshi cricket player.
- He became the second player to be dismissed for obstructing the field.
- Before this, England's Leonard Hutton (1951) had become the first player to be out in this manner.
- This incident happened in the test match between Bangladesh and New Zealand.

Lionel Messi:-

- Argentina's famous footballer Messi was chosen as 'Athlete of the Year' by Time magazine.
- He is the first non-American player to be given this award.
- This award is given on the basis of the player's contribution on field and off field.

World champion Spain at number-1 in world ranking for the first time

- Spain has been ranked the world's number one football team in the FIFA Men's World Rankings. The ranking system is based on the playing results of men's national teams in football, with the most successful teams ranked highest.
- This ranking system was introduced in December 1992, and eight teams (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain) have achieved the top position, with Brazil having spent the longest period in the top position.
- The FIFA Men's World Rankings is a ranking system for men's national teams in association football, not individual players.

FIFA

- Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is commonly known as FIFA. FIFA is the international governing body for association football, also known as soccer.
- **Established:** 1904, Paris
- **Current President:** Gianni Infantino
- **Headquarters:-** Zurich, Switzerland
- **Structure**
 - ✓ FIFA has 211 member associations.
 - ✓ The supreme governing body of FIFA is the FIFA Congress, which meets annually.
- **FIFA has six regional associations:-**
 - ✓ CAF (Africa)
 - ✓ AFC (Asia)
 - ✓ CONCACAF (North and Central America and the Caribbean)
 - ✓ CONMEBOL (South America)
 - ✓ OFC (Oceania)
 - ✓ UEFA (Europe)

Activities and Responsibilities:-

- FIFA organizes and sanctions the FIFA World Cup (men's and women's) and the FIFA Club World Cup.
- FIFA develops and enforces the rules of the game.

Vijay Hazare Trophy

- Haryana defeated Rajasthan by 30 runs in the final held at Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Rajkot on December 16, 2023.
- The 2023 edition was organized in Bengaluru, Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai, Ranchi, Ahmedabad and the knockout matches were organized in Rajkot.
 - ✓ Player of the match:- Sumit Kumar (Haryana)
 - ✓ Player of the Series:- Sumit Kumar (Haryana)
 - ✓ Prize:- 1 crore cash prize and trophy (winner)
 - ✓ 50 lakh cash prize and trophy (runner-up)

Vijay Hazare Trophy

- It is an annual limited overs domestic cricket competition organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- This competition includes state and union territory teams that participate in the Ranji Trophy.
- This tournament was named after the great Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.
- The tournament was first played in the 1993–94 season as a national under-19 tournament involving zonal teams.
- In 2007, its name was changed from Ranji One Day Trophy to Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- The most successful team of this competition is Tamil Nadu (five times winner).

Jay Shah:-

- Recently, he was honored with the prestigious 'Sports Business Leader of the Year' award at the CII Sports Business Awards-2023.
- He is the first administrator in Indian sports administration to receive this award.
- Jay Shah is currently working as the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Chatru

- Won gold medal in 10 kilometer marathon in World Police and Fire Games (Canada)
- She is a resident of Baytu, Barmer.
- She represented Rajasthan in the Goa National Games.
- She won bronze medal in Chandigarh National Games.

Odisha Badminton Masters, 2023-

- Organised- 12 to 17 December, 2023,
- Edition - 2nd
- Venue- Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium (Cuttack, Odisha)
- Indian players Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila won the mixed doubles title (at Odisha Masters, 2023). The pair defeated Hee Yong Kai Terry and Tan Wei Han Jessica of Singapore in the final.
- Dr Satish Kumar Karunakaran won the men's singles title.
- Nojomi Okuhara won the women's singles final.

Khelo India Para Games, 2023

- The Khelo India Para Games were held from 10 to 17 December.
- In these games, Haryana topped the list by winning 105 medals (40 gold, 39 silver, 26 bronze) followed by Uttar Pradesh (25 gold, 23 silver, 14 bronze),

which stood third with a total of 62 medals.

- Rajasthan won 43 total medals (10 gold, 20 silver and 13 bronze) and stood at 6th position in the medal table.

FIH Award

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has chosen Hardik Singh as the best male player and Savita Punia as the best female goalkeeper for the third consecutive time for the year 2023.

What is FIH?

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) is the governing body for the sport of hockey.
- It is responsible for major international tournaments of field hockey, especially the Hockey World Cup.
- FIH website brings news, schedules, results, rankings and live scores.
- The headquarters of FIH is located in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- The organization was established on January 7, 1924 and is celebrating its centenary in 2024.

Rajasthan netball men's team

- Rajasthan team created history by winning silver medal in the National Netball Championship (men's category).
- **Edition-** 41st
- **Venue -** Bhiwani, Haryana

FIFA Club World Cup 2023

- Manchester City won the 2023 FIFA Club World Cup by defeating Fluminense 4–0 in the final match held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- This was the first time that Manchester City won the FIFA Club World Cup.
- The FIFA Club World Cup 2023 final match between Manchester City and Fluminense was played at the King

Abdullah Sports City Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on December 22, 2023.

Manchester City -

- Location – Manchester, England.
- Established - The club was founded in 1880 as St. Mark's (West Gorton), later becoming known as Ardwick Association Football Club and eventually adopting its current name in 1894.
- Owner - City Football Group
- Records - Manchester City have won many titles throughout their history.

2023 World Tennis League:

- ✓ **Location** - Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- ✓ **Date** - 21-24 December 2023
- ✓ **Edition** - 2nd
- ✓ **Draw** - 4 teams (Eagles, Falcons, Hawks and Kites, four players each)
- ✓ **Surface** - hard
- ✓ **Venue** - Etihad Arena.

- The top two teams faced each other in the final on 24 December 2023. Team Eagles, composed of Daniil Medvedev, Sofia Kenin, Andrey Rublev and Mirra Andreeva, defeated Team Kites (Stefanos Tsitsipas, Aryna Sabalenka, Grigor Dimitrov and Paula Badosa) to win the title.

World Tennis League

- The World Tennis League (WTL) is a global tennis tournament in which the world's top players compete in a knockout format.
- The 2023 edition of the tournament was held from 21 to 24 December 2023 at the Etihad Arena, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi.
- This tournament was a non-ATP/WTA-affiliated exhibition mixed-gender team tennis tournament, and was the second edition of the World Tennis League.

10. Awards, Books, Appointments

United Nations Global Climate Action Award:-

- This award is given for remarkable work in the field of climate change.
- These awards were presented during the BCCI-28 conference in Dubai (UAE).

Award Recipient-

- Michelle Zárate (Mexico)
- Sebastian Mwaura (Kenya)

'Giving Wings to Dreams Awards-2023'-

- Given by: Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.
- Recently this award was given to Sub Inspector 'Geeta Samot' of Central Industrial Security Force for her achievements in the field of mountaineering.
- She registered his name as the fastest Indian to conquer the 4 highest peaks of

Europe, Africa, South America and Australia in 6 months.

Bharat Bhushan Award-2023:-

- Given to - Someshwar Narayan Sharma (Singer and Producer)
- By - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Government of India) and NAHF
- **Venue** - Madhya Pradesh

Sahitya Akademi Award 2023

- The Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honour in India, which the Sahitya Akademi annually gives to writers for outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the 22 languages of the 8th Schedule to the Indian constitution as well as in English and Rajasthani language. Established in 1954, the award comprises a plaque and a cash prize of ₹ 1,00,000.

Language	Book	Writer
Dogri	Daun Sadiyan Ek Seer(poetry)	Vijay Verma
Gujarati	Sairandhree (Poetry)	Vinod Joshi
Kashmiri	Yath Wavah Halis Toong Tsoley Zaley (Poetry)	Manshoor Banhali
Manipuri	Yangkhoibagi Nanglo Hallo(Poetry)	Sorokhaibam Gambhini
Odia	Aprastuta Mrutyu(Poetry)	Ashutosh Parida
Punjabi	Mann Di Chip(Poetry)	Swarnjit Savi
Rajasthani	Palakti Preet (Poetry)	Gaje Singh Rajpurohit
Sanskrit	Shunye Meghghanam (Poetry)	Arun Ranjan Mishra
Sindhi	Hathu Pakidijen (Poetry)	Vinod Asudani
Bengali	Jaler Upar pani(Novel)	Swapnamoy Chakraborti
English	Requiem of Raga Janki(Novel)	Neelum Saran Gour
Hindi	Mujhe Pahachano(Novel)	Sanjeev
Marathi	Ringan(Novel)	Krishnat Khot
Tamil	Neervazi paduvum(Novel)	Rajasekaran (Devibharathi)
Urdu	Rajdev Ki Amrai (Novel)	Sadiqua Nawab Saher
Assamese	Dr. Pranavjyoti Deka Srestha Galpa (Short Story)	Dr. Pranavjyoti Deka
Bodo	Jiu-Safarni Dakhwn (Short Story)	Nandeswar Daimari
Konkani	Varsal (Short Story)	Prakash S.Pariankar
Santhali	Jaba Baha (Short Story)	Taraceen Baskey

Telugu	Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu (Short Story)	T. Patanjali Shastri
Kannada	Mahabharata Anushandhana Bharata (Essay)	Lakshmesha Tolpadi
Maithli	Bodha Sanketan (Essay)	Basukinath Jha
Nepali	Nepali Lokshitya Ra Loksanskritiko Pariyochoa (Essay)	Judhabir Rana
Malyalam	Malayala Novelinete Deshakalangaal (Literature studies)	E.V. Ramakrishnan

National Sports Award

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2023. This year awards have been selected by committee headed by Former Supreme Court Judge A.M.Khanwilkar.

(i) Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023

- It is the highest sporting honour of India .It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. It was instituted in 1992.
- Recipients are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and honoured for their spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports over a period of four years at an international level. The award comprises a medallion, a certificate, and a cash prize of ₹25 lakh.
- This year (2023) award given to Chirag Chandrashekhra Shetty (Badminton) and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (Badminton).

(ii) Arjuna Awards for outstanding performance in Sports and Games 2023

- It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and is the second-highest sporting honour of India which started in 1961
- The award comprises a bronze statuette of Arjuna, certificate, ceremonial dress, and a cash prize of ₹15 lakh
- The recipients are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and are honoured for their good performance in the field of sports over a period of four years at the international level and for having shown qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.
- This year 26 players awarded with Arjuna Award.

Ojas Pravin Deotale	Archery
Aditi Gopichand Swami	Archery
Sreeshankar M	Athletics

Parul Chaudhary	Athletics
Mohameed Hussamuddin	Boxing
R Vaishali	Chess
Mohammed Shami	Cricket
Anush Agarwalla	Equestrian
Divyakriti Singh	Equestrian Dressage
Diksha Dagar	Golf
Krishan Bahadur Pathak	Hockey
Pukhrabam Sushila Chanu	Hockey
Pawan Kumar	Kabaddi
Ritu Negi	Kabaddi
Nasreen	Kho-Kho
Pinki	Lawn Bowls
Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar	Shooting
Esha Singh	Shooting
Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu	Squash
Ayhika Mukherjee	Table Tennis
Sunil Kumar	Wrestling
Antim	Wrestling
Naorem Roshibina Devi	Wushu
Sheetal Devi	Para Archery
Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy	Blind Cricket
Prachi Yadav	Para Canoeing

(iii) Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games 2023

- It is sports coaching honour of the Republic of India. It was 1st awarded in 1985.
- It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Recipients are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and are honoured to have done outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and enabled sportspersons to excel in international events over a period of four years.
- The award comprises a bronze statuette of Dronacharya, a certificate, ceremonial dress, and a cash prize of ₹15 lakh (in lifetime category) ₹10 lakh (in regular category)
- This year 8 coaches awarded with Dronacharya award of which 5 are

awarded under regular category and 3 are awarded under lifetime category.

Regular category

Lalit Kumar	Wrestling
R. B. Ramesh	Chess
Mahaveer Prasad Saini	Para Athletics
Shivendra Singh	Hockey
Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar	Mallakhamb

Lifetime Category

Jaskirat Singh Grewal	Golf
Bhaskaran E	Kabaddi
Jayanta Kumar Pushilal	Table Tennis

(iv) Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime achievement in Sports and Games 2023

- It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Recipients are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and are honoured for their contributions to sport both during their active sporting career and after retirement. It was 1st awarded in 2002
- The award comprises a statuette, a certificate, ceremonial dress, and a cash prize of ₹10 lakh.
- This year 3 sportspersons were awarded

Ms Manjusha Kanwar	Badminton
Shri Vineet Kumar Sharma	Hockey
Ms Kavitha Selvaraj	Kabaddi

(v) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023

- It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It is a rolling trophy awarded to the overall top performing University in sports and promoting competitive sports in University over the preceding year. It was instituted in 1956-57.
- The award for the university securing first position comprises a rolling MAKA trophy and a cash prize of ₹15 lakh. The second- and third-place universities receive cash prizes of ₹7.5 lakh and ₹4.5 lakh respectively.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	Overall winner university
Lovely Professional University, Punjab	1 st runner up University
Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra	2 nd runner up University

1st Differently Abled Sports Awards

- Awarded in 23 different categories.

- Sumit Antil(Javelin), Sheetal Devi(Archery) clinched the prestigious Best male and Best Female athlete titles respectively at the inaugural Differently Abled Sports Awards.
- Sumit Antil won Major Dhyanchand Khel Ratna Award in 2021 and won Padmashree in 2022, while Sheetal Devi won Arjuna Award in 2023.

UNESCO Heritage Award 2023

- In the 2023 round, UNESCO selected a total of 12 projects from China, India and Nepal based on their understanding of the niche, their technical achievements and their sustainability and impact as specified in the award criteria.
- The following Indian cultural initiatives received six awards at the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Prize for Cultural Preservation 2023.
 - Excellence Award - Rambagh Gate in Amritsar
 - Award of Distinction - Karnikara Mandapam at Kunnamangalam Bhagawati Temple, Kerala
 - Award of Merit - Bikaner House, New Delhi
 - Special recognition for sustainable development - Peepal Haveli in Punjab
 - Award of Merit - Church of the Epiphany, Gurugram, Haryana
 - Award of Merit - David Sassoon Library and Reading Room in Mumbai
- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Prize for Cultural Heritage Conservation is a program that recognizes the efforts of individuals and organizations in restoring, preserving and transforming structures and buildings of heritage value in the Asia-Pacific region.
- This program has been recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic properties since 2000.

Meera Chand:-

- She is an 81 year old writer of Indian origin.
- Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam was awarded the prestigious art award 'Culture Medallion' for his literary contribution.
- She was given the award along with novelist Suchen Christine Lim and Malay dance legend Usmad Abdul Hamid.

Mahesh Kumar Sharma:-

- Recently, he was awarded by the Rajasthan Government for his commendable work in the tourism sector.
- His name was included in the state level honor ceremony list released on 15 August 2022.
- In December, he was given the award by Gayatri Rathod, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Archeology Department.
- He is a tourist guide of Jaipur city.

Pushpa Bharti:-

- Recently, writer Pushpa Bharti was selected for the 33rd Vyas Samman-2023.
- He was given this honor for his work 'Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein'.

Vyas Samman Award:-

- It was started in the year 1991.
- This award is given by KK Birla Foundation.
- This award is given for contribution in the field of literature.

Surendra Awana

- Jaipur resident Surendra Awana was honored with the Breed Conservation Award 2023 by ICAR on Kisan Diwas.
- He is also known as 'Tree-Man' of Rajasthan.

Kabir Bedi:-

- Recently, actor Kabir Bedi was honored with Italy's prestigious civilian honor 'Order of Merit of the Italian Republic'.
- This award is known as 'Merito Della Repubblica Italiana'.
- Kabir Bedi was honored with this honor for his acting contribution in Italy.

Karmaveer Chakra Medal- 2023:-

- Recently, Indian scientist Dr. Hemachandran Ravi Kumar was honored with two prestigious awards – 'Karmaveer Chakra Medal' and 'Rex Karmaveer Globe Fellowship'.
- This award was given to him for his incomparable contribution in physical research and development, biological science and microbiological studies.

- Earlier, Dr. Hema has also been given 'Registered Scientist Award-2023' for 'Study of memory activities of cells in Homo sapiens'.

Karmaveer Chakra Medal-

- It is a prestigious civilian honor which is given to individuals who have made special global contributions to human welfare.
- This award is given by PWD (International Confederation of NGOs) in collaboration with the United Nations

First woman Director General of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE):-

- Recently 'Kanchana Devi' became the first woman Director General of ICFRE.
- ICFRE -
 - It works under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - It was established in 1986.

Deven Parekh:-

- Indian-origin Deven Parikh was nominated by President Joe Biden as the director of the International Finance Development Corporation.
- International Finance Development Corporation:-
 - i. It is a financial services provider corporation based in New York.
 - ii. It provides financial and investment facilities on its own or through its associates.
 - iii. This corporation partners with developing countries to provide funding to address challenges facing them.

BOOKS

1. Breaking the mould- Raghuram Rajan
2. Four Stars Of Destiny-Former Gen M M Narwane
3. India's Moment- Dr.Mohan Kumar
4. Roman Stories-Jhumpa Lahiri

11. Important Days & Weeks

National		
Date	day	Specific
1 December	Nagaland Foundation Day	It became the 16th state of India on 1 December 1963 .
2 December	ICC India Arbitration Day	International Chamber of Commerce Celebrating the Centenary of ICC International 2To be organized on December, 2023 .
2 December	National pollution control day	Theme - "Sustainable Development for a Clean and Healthy Planet "
4. December	Indian navy day	Subject, " Operational Efficiency , Readiness and Mission Achievement in the Maritime Domain "
6. December	Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Mahaparinirvan Day	
7. December	armed forces flag day	
14. December	National Energy Conservation Day	The purpose of Energy Conservation Day is to develop awareness among people about the topic like climate change.
19. December	Goa liberation day	Goa joined India on 19 December 1961 , 14 years after the country's independence .
22. December	National Mathematics Day	This day was announced by Dr. Manmohan Singh on 26 February 2012, on the birthday of India's great mathematician Ramanujan .
23. December	National consumer day	Consumer Protection Act 24 December 1986 Was approved by the President. Since then , this day is being celebrated as National Consumer Rights Day to honor this occasion .
25. December	Good governance day	former prime minister every year Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji In 2014 to honor Vajpayee ji on his birth anniversary. Good Governance Day was established by promoting awareness among the Indian people of accountability in government.
25. December	Madan Mohan Malviya Jayanti	
26. December	Brave children's day	Commemorates the bravery and sacrifice of the four sons of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs , Guru Gobind Singh , Jujhar Singh , Zorawar Singh , and Fateh Singh. is celebrated as

International

Date	day	Specific
1. December	International aids day	' Let communities lead ' .
2. December	International Slavery Abolition Day	This day is observed to highlight the importance of eliminating contemporary

		forms of slavery including trafficking in persons , sexual exploitation , child labour , forced marriage etc.is celebrated.
2.December	World computer literacy day	theme - " Literacy rofhuman dertnec - .edivid latigid eht gnigdirb : yrevocer , ,
3.December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	theme,, United in action to save and achieve the SDGs for , with and by persons with disabilitiesIs , ,
4.December	International cheetah day	Objective : To raise awareness about the conservation of cheetahs .
5.December	International volunteer day	Theme – The Power of Collective Action: If Ever Did.
5.December	World soil day	theme Soil and water a source of life.
7.December	Internationalcivil aviation day	
9.December	Internationalanti corruption day	Topic - " UNCAC at 20 : Uniting the World Against Corruption " Is.
10.December	Internationalhuman rights day	The theme isLiberty , equality and justice for' all
11.December	Internationalmountain day	Theme- "Restoring Mountain Ecosyste'ns
11.December	Unicef day	theme- "For every child, everyright"
12.December	Internationaluniversal health coverage day	theme- "Health for All: Time for Action"
18.December	InternationalMigrant Day	Theme- "Act Today".
18.December	Minority rights day	Subject- "Celebration and inclusion of dive'rsity
19.December	Internationalhuman unity day	Theme – ' Advocacy for Change '

Library Day:-

- Organised on – No Bag Day (Saturday)
- Organizer – Education Department, Rajasthan.
- Objective – To benefit the students of government schools from library facilities.
- Fact – 16 lakh 65 thousand books were issued in 65471 government schools.

Farmers Day 2023 (Term-in-News)

- Farmers Day, also known as National Farmers Day, is celebrated every year on 23 December in India.
- Farmers Day is celebrated in honor of the hard work done by our farmers in agriculture and making the country self-reliant in food grains.
- This day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of the fifth Prime Minister of India, Shri Chaudhary Charan Singh.
- He was known for his contribution to the agriculture sector and farmers' welfare. To honor and appreciate all the responsible farmers for their contribution to the society, National Farmers Day is celebrated every year on 23 December.
- This day is popular in the agricultural and farming states of India including Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh.

International Year of the Camel, 2024

- The United Nations has declared 2024 as the International Year of the Camels (2024).
- Alpacas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas and vicuñas support the livelihoods of millions of people in more than 90 countries and also highlight the important contribution of camels.
- Camels contribute to food security, nutrition and economic development and have a strong cultural significance for communities around the world.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is leading the initiative to promote the International Year of the Camels (2024).

12. Gist

KURUKSHETRA

Towards Making Villages Self-reliant - Role of Ministry of Panchayati Raj

Our more than 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, which are responsible for local self-governance in rural India, are the driving forces behind implementing every effort made towards making the villages self-reliant. Gram Panchayats play an important role in the successful implementation of the schemes of the Central Government and State Governments. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is contributing meaningfully towards the creation of self-reliant villages in various ways, like empowering them financially, re-orienting their capacities to generate their own resources, making them digitally friendly, environmentally conscious, preparing for the future to combat climate change for a sustainable future, and the like.

Empowerment with Funds from Central Finance Commission

- The Government of India devolves funds to supplement the financial resources of Panchayats.
- **The grants are in two parts:**
 - ✓ **Untied Grants:** They can be utilised for felt needs on 29 subjects enshrined under Schedule XI of the Constitution of India, except for salaries and other establishment costs.
 - ✓ **Tied Grants:** These are to be utilised for basic facilities, specifically, drinking water and sanitation.



Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG)

- As a signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, India is committed to 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- Given that nearly 68% of India is rural India, attainment of Sustainable Development Goals at the National level requires actions at the grassroots of villages, which is at the Panchayat level.
- In order to do this, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has prepared a roadmap that integrates 17 SDGs into nine thematic areas in order to help Panchayats work together to accomplish sustainable development goals in villages through targeted evidence-based Panchayat Development Plans, particularly Gram Panchayat development Plans (GPDP).
- By localising the Sustainable Development Goals, ~ 2.5 lakh Panchayats of the country have resolved to saturate their villages with local-level determined activities.
- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is re-orienting their capacities to this end by imparting training to them under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) Scheme.

Making Panchayats Financially Self-reliant

- Own Source Revenue (OSR) plays a crucial role in empowering PRIS to make independent decisions.
- Strengthening the Own Source Revenue (OSR) of Panchayats is crucial, involving initiatives to increase revenue generation from local sources like property taxes, fees, fines, and other levies.
- This can be achieved through improved tax compliance, economic activities, and leveraging local resources effectively.
- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has constituted an expert committee on the creation of own revenue sources of local rural bodies.

Leveraging Digital Technology in Panchayats

- Under the National e-Governance Plan (NEGP), e-Panchayat is a meaningful and far-reaching mission made to develop more transparent, accountable, and effective self-governance with greater public participation through technology in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- The objective of this project is to automate the internal work processes of more than 2.5 lakh Panchayats across the country.
- **e-Governance initiatives:**
 - ✓ **Gram Manচিত্রা:**
 - Launched in 2019
 - This application is being integrated with spatial and non-spatial data from various Ministries viz., district hospitals, sub-district hospitals, CSCs, PSCs, and sub centres, banking amenities like bank branches, ATMs, etc.
 - This application is also linked with the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) report, Mission Antyodaya (MA), etc.
 - ✓ **e-Gram SWARAJ:**
 - A work-based accounting software for Panchayati Raj Institutions launched on 24 April 2020.
 - Integration of the accounting module of e-Gram SWARAJ and PFMS (eGSPI) was carried out to provide an interface for the Panchayats to make online payments viz., expenditure incurred under Central Finance Commission.
 - ✓ **eGSPI:**
 - One of a kind interface for GPs to make real time payments to vendors/service providers.
 - ✓ **eGramSwaraj- Government e-MarketPlace (GeM) interface:**
 - Launched on National Panchayati Raj Day on the 24th of April 2023 in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, it will enable the Panchayats to procure their goods and services through GeM, leveraging the e-Gram SWARAJ platform.

Initiatives towards Gram Urja Swaraj

- This vision of 'Gram Urja Swaraj' is an attempt to address the social, economic, environmental, and health concerns of the rural population, along with promoting renewable energy.
- The Ministry will facilitate the preparation of local climate action plans for Panchayats by coordinating with various stakeholders at the central and state level.
- The Ministry has also launched 'Gram Urja Swaraj' dashboard for ascertaining the suitability and inclination of Gram Panchayats towards adopting renewable energy projects.

SVAMITVA Scheme Conferring Property Rights- A Way to Monetise Assets

- Launched on 24 April 2020, the scheme aims to provide the 'record of rights' to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited rural areas and issuance of property cards to the property owners that are backed by State Revenue or Panchayati Raj Acts.
- This would facilitate monetisation of rural residential assets for credit and other financial services.
- Well-planned village development has also been made possible via the SVAMITVA initiative.

Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programmes

India is a multicultural nation of continental proportions, blessed with immense diversity. This richness manifests across languages and lifestyles. However, this variety also gives rise to socioeconomic disparities among citizens. While some regions rapidly industrialised and urbanised, others continue to face backwardness.

Reasons for disparity

- Difficult topographical terrain
- Lack of resources
- Historical injustice
- Social marginalisation and vulnerability
- Inefficient governance
- Civil unrest

Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)

- **Launch:** In 2018 to improve the socio-economic status of 112 aspirational districts across 28 States.

- **Coordinated by:** NITI Aayog with support from Central Ministries and the State Governments.
- **5 Core themes of ADP**
 - ✓ Health & Nutrition (30% weightage)
 - ✓ Education (30% weightage)
 - ✓ Agriculture & Water Resources (20% weightage)
 - ✓ Financial Inclusion & Skill Development (10%)
 - ✓ Basic Infrastructure (10%)
- **Ranking:** The programme ranks districts based on the improvement achieved month-on-month through the Champions of Change dashboard (An online Dashboard).

Institutional framework and core strategy

The States are the main drivers of the programme. For each district, a central Prabhari officer has been nominated. He/she should possess a rank of joint secretary/additional secretary.

- **Strategy of the programme**
 - ✓ Work on the strength of each district
 - ✓ Make development as a mass movement in these districts
 - ✓ Identify low hanging fruits and the strength of each district which can act as a catalyst for development
 - ✓ Measure progress and rank districts to spur a sense of competition
 - ✓ Districts shall aspire from becoming State's best to Nation's best

Significance

- **More autonomy:** State and Local Governments recognize their development challenges better than other institutions, and hence, can design customised policy interventions.
- **Improved governance:** The programme makes use of existing resources more efficiently and achieves better outcomes for less money.
- **Innovative service delivery approaches:** Smart classroom initiative (Banka, Bihar) to improve student learning outcomes, is being replicated in aspirational districts

across Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha & Jharkhand.

- **More public private partnership:** The aspirational district programme has increased the government collaboration with the private sector, philanthropic organisations and technical partners.
- **Competitive federalism:** It has spurred competition among districts by allowing them to regularly assess their position wrt other aspirational districts & the best performing districts in the country.

Achievements

- **Community health:** Model Anganwadi centres have been set up across districts. Poshan App has been developed for real-time health data analytics in Ranchi.
- **Improvement in Education:** The 'Hamara Vidyalaya' model of Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh has fared off the charts in learning outcomes and overall teaching practices.
- **Agriculture:** The programme emphasised improving irrigation facilities, yield and farmer education to create market linkages for products indigenous to the aspirational districts.
- **Infrastructure:** ADP contributed significantly to the development in LWE affected districts by facilitating better connectivity and seamless movement from rural to urban regions.
- **Financial inclusion:** Micro-ATMs have been launched in districts to provide financial assistance to women self-help group members.

Challenges in the implementation of Aspirational District Programme

- **Insufficient budgets:** ADP is plagued by the issue pertaining to insufficient budgetary resources.
- **Multiple commands:** ADP is implemented by multiple ministries which leads to a lack of coordination.
- **High-quality administrative data:** It is critical to strengthening programme implementation and design at the local level.
- **Education quality:** As per the ASER report, the educational standards are showing minimal improvement.

Way Forward

- **Simplified ranking index:** For it, efficient output and outcome measures are required which can cater to the educational standards of India.
- **More financial autonomy** to local governments.
- **Independent surveys:** They can help validate administrative data which can, in turn, help improve data quality.

Lab to Land

According to UN projections, the population of India is expected to reach 1.64 billion by 2050. Qualitative and quantitative feeding of such a huge population is a formidable challenge owing to deteriorating natural resources, shrinking arable land, and the deleterious impacts of global climate change. However, emerging technologies and farm innovations have the potential to be game changers in ensuring food security for all.

Initiatives for efficient and effective outreach to farmers

- **'Lab to Land':** Launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, & covers all activities pertaining to the transfer of technologies, innovations, and information to farmers and fields.
- **Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare:** Apex institution of extension service with supporting nodes in the States and Union Territories.
- **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension' (SMAE):** Implemented by the Agriculture Ministry which focuses on awareness creation and enhanced use of appropriate technologies in agriculture and allied sectors. 4 components:
 - ✓ Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms
 - ✓ Mass Media Support to Agricultural Extension
 - ✓ Kisan Call Centres
 - ✓ Establishment of the Agri-clinics and Agri-business centres
- **Extension Division:** It provides support to Central- and State-level institutions engaged in capacity building of extension functionaries, and skill development of rural youth, farm women and farmers & participates and facilitates organisation of farmer-centric exhibitions, fairs, seminars, etc. at the different levels in the country.
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):** It is the national apex body for agricultural research, education, and extension.
- **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK):** KVKS were introduced in 1974 in Puducherry on a pilot basis for the transfer of agricultural technologies and knowledge to farmers. Functions:
 - ✓ on-farm testing to assess the location specificity of agricultural technologies under various farming systems;
 - ✓ conducting frontline demonstrations to establish the production potential of technologies on farmers' fields;
 - ✓ capacity development of farmers and extension personnel to update their technical knowledge and skill;
 - ✓ acting as a knowledge and resource centre of technologies for improving the agricultural economy of the district;
 - ✓ providing farm-advisories to farmers employing various means and modes
- **Agricultural Technology Information Centres (ATICS):** A single window delivery system to provide technology, information, advisory services, and technological inputs to the farmers.
- **'KSHAMTA' (Knowledge Systems and Homestead Agricultural Management in Tribal Areas):** To boost agricultural production and farmers' income in tribal areas, it has been launched with the support of KVKS.
- **Special awareness programme :**To address the current crisis of burning the paddy crop residues in fields, a special awareness programme is being conducted in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi.
- **Common Service Centres:** For providing technological solutions to the farmers visiting CSCS with agriculture related problems.
- **District Agro-Net Units:** Under MoU with India Meteorological Department, they have been established in the premises of nearly 200 KVKS to provide agro-met

advisory services in local language to the farmers.

- **'Mera Gaon, Mera Gaurav' (My Village, My Pride):** It is a novel Lab to Land initiative by ICAR in which groups of scientists identify/adopt villages for dissemination of technologies, and information to farmers.
- **Project Farmer FIRST (Farm, Innovations, Resources, Science and Technology):** Under it, participatory demonstrations are organised on farmers' fields on different modules of agriculture and allied sectors.
- **ARYA (Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture):** It aims to create job opportunities in rural areas by skilling/training youth in various agro-enterprises.
- **Project NICRA:** KVKs are empowering farmers technically to adopt 'climate-smart' agriculture under project NICRA (National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture).
- **Programme Student READY (Rural and Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana):** In it, undergraduate students in agriculture are exposed to farm-realities to understand the specific problems and enable them to tackle these problems independently.
- **mKISAN:** A portal launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, for quick transfer of knowledge to farmers.
 - ✓ It unleashes the power of mobile /smart phones in the hands of farmers to get information/ advisories as per their preference in the form of text/ voice messages in their own language.
 - ✓ It also allows access to numerous databases of their interest.
 - ✓ It enables Central and State Government organisations engaged in agriculture and allied sectors to release information, services, advisories etc. to farmers by SMS in their language.
- **IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) and Pull SMS:** Value-added services which have enabled farmers and other stakeholders to get web-based services on their mobile phones without having internet.

Towards the Goal of Aatmanirbhar Gaon

India is blessed to have this unique character, which is still preserved and practised in the villages. If this is so, then the essence of India lies in its villages. And, instant rejection of contrary views is an instinct of the Indians.

'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'

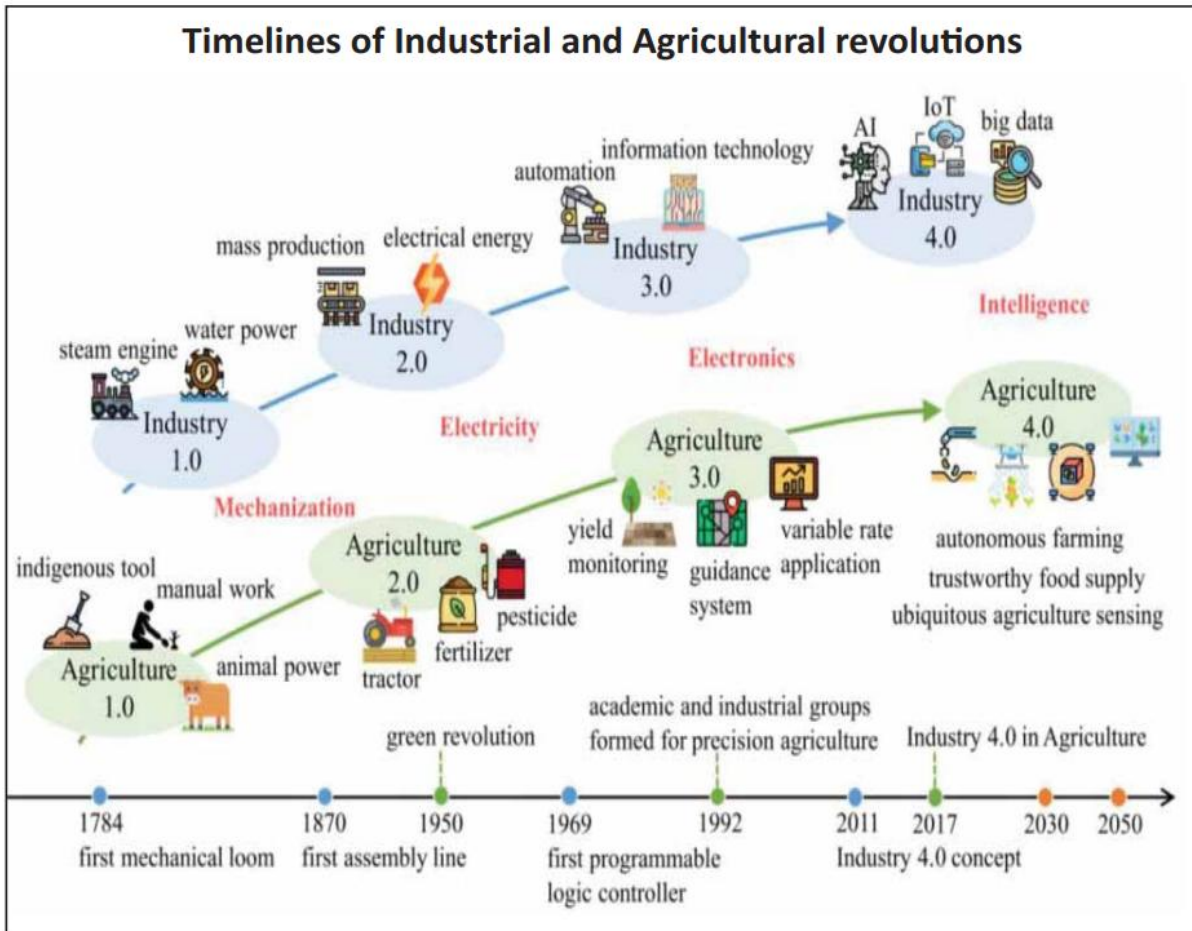
- **About:** A flagship program of the Ministry of Education.
- **Launch:** 2014.
- **Aim:** To link the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a set of at least (5) villages, so that these institutions can improve the economic and social development of these village communities using their knowledge base.
- **Integrates 2 major domains:**
 - ✓ Human development
 - ✓ Material (economic) development
- **National Coordinating Institute (NCI):** Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT, Delhi)
- **Objectives:**
 - ✓ To engage the faculty and students of HEIs in identifying issues in rural areas and finding sustainable solutions.
 - ✓ To identify existing innovative technologies
 - ✓ To enable customisation of technologies
 - ✓ To devise implementation methods for innovative solutions

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0

- **About:** Upgraded version of UBA 1.0.
- **Launch:** 2018.
- **Challenge Mode of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan programme:** In it, all HEIs are required to willingly adopt at least 5 villages.

Empowering Rural India

Predominantly a rural nation, India has about two-thirds of its population residing in approximately 6.49 lakh villages. 'Digitalisation' emerges as a solution, improving agricultural resource efficiency and enriching rural services. This approach also aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, promoting progress in rural areas by addressing interconnected issues like poverty, food security, and climate change.



Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions

- Agricultural sector is embarking on its own revolution known as 'Agriculture 4.0'.
- This paradigm shift is integrating digitalisation, automation, and artificial intelligence to address a spectrum of agricultural and environmental challenges.

Digitally Self-Reliant Village and Transformation

- A Digitally Self-Reliant Village integrates high-tech education, providing internet access, e-content, educational apps, smart classes, and video conferencing for enhanced learning.
- It also offers e-health services through online consultations with specialist doctors and ensures efficient e-governance, including public utility services and social welfare schemes.
- The village is equipped with intelligent ICT infrastructure and eco-friendly amenities, complemented by robust hard infrastructure like all-weather roads, transportation facilities, healthcare centres, well-maintained schools, advanced anganwadi centres, banks, and water supply systems.

Government Initiatives for Digital Empowerment

- **'Digital India' programme, 2015:** It strives to bring government services to every corner of the country through high-speed internet.
- **Bharat Net Project:** It further boosts this effort by enhancing e-banking, e-governance, internet services, and e-education in villages, aiming to connect all Gram Panchayats with 100 Mbps connectivity.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** It promotes financial and digital inclusion in rural India by enabling online transactions through RuPay debit cards, reinforcing the nation's digital outreach.
- **AI for All: NITI Aayog's Initiative for Agri Digitalisation:** NITI Aayog targets 5 key sectors for AI implementation:
 - ✓ Healthcare: increased access and affordability of quality healthcare.
 - ✓ Agriculture: enhanced farmers income, increased farm productivity and reduction of wastage.
 - ✓ Education: improved access and quality of education.

- ✓ Smart Cities and Infrastructure: connectivity for the burgeoning urban population.
- ✓ Smart Mobility and Transportation: smarter and safer modes of transportation and better traffic and congestion problems.
- **Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund empowering MSMEs for Aatmanirbhar Bharat:** The SRI Fund stands as a key initiative in empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India). The fund employs a Mother Fund-Daughter Fund structure, ensuring a sustainable influx of growth capital for MSMEs.
- **Fintech Companies Initiatives for Digital Empowerment:** Fintech companies are diligently establishing digital infrastructure in rural areas, deploying Kiosks, POS devices, and Mobile Vans to facilitate digital bill payments (mobile, electricity, DTH, water) in remote villages.
- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD):** It offers a range of financial services like direct finance, short and long-term loans, promoting financial inclusion in rural India.
- **Entrepreneurial Funnel Framework:** A process innovation derived from the NIFTEM village programme which outlines a step-by-step process to identify potential entrepreneurs within smart villages.

E-commerce for Rural Products

The concept of 'rural e-commerce' is distinct from mainstream e-commerce, providing electronic platforms for rural products. Its purpose is to connect rural areas with urban markets and enhance income levels.

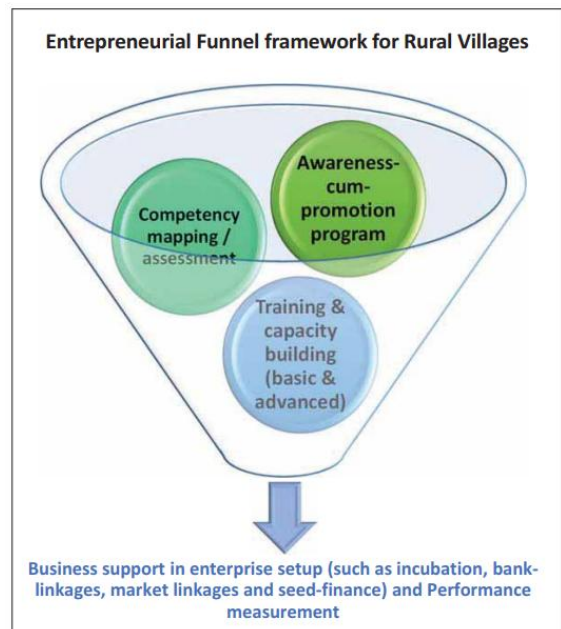
Issues and Challenges faced

- Payment-related Issues.
- Lack of digital infrastructure
- Logistics Challenges including inefficient postal services, etc.
- E-commerce Awareness.
- Business Competence
- Product Quality

- Language Barriers: Many e-commerce websites primarily use English, which poses a language barrier for rural users.
- Currency Challenges

International e-commerce initiatives

- **China:** China has seen growth in rural e-commerce, primarily led by companies like Alibaba and Jingdong. Alibaba, with its subsidiary Taobao villages, has created e-marketplaces for rural e-tailers while also focusing on infrastructure development and digitisation..
- **Japan:** Japan's 'One Village One Product (OVOP)' initiative, initially implemented in Oita prefecture, aims to rejuvenate rural communities and enhance the rural economy following World War II.



- **Republic of Korea:** The Information Network Village (INVIL) project in South Korea aims to empower rural communities with high-speed internet access, bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas.

Way Forward

- **Mobile Apps:** Mobile apps like M-Farm in Kenya have empowered farmers with real-time price information, enabling informed decisions and altering cropping patterns.
- **Agrobots and AI Startup Innovations (AgTech):** These robots are revolutionising farming by assisting with tasks like water management and irrigation optimisation. Eg, Dino Agrobot.
- **AI-driven solutions:** They employ facial and voice recognition, reducing labour

costs and improving efficiency. Using AI, pig farms will reduce pig farmers' labour costs in the range of 30% to 50%, and lower the need for feed

- **Internet of Things (IoT) in Precision Agriculture:** It incorporates guidance systems, Variable Rate Technologies (VRT), and drones. These technologies optimise resource use, reduce costs, and enhance productivity by delivering precise data on planting, fertilisation, and irrigation.
- **Blockchain Technology:** Blockchain ensures food traceability, enhancing transparency, and reinforcing consumer trust.

Accelerating Economic Growth in Villages

The idea of self-sufficiency of the Indian village was first propounded by Sir

Charles Metcalfe in 1830. Mahatma Gandhi conceptualised 'Gram Swaraj' in a realistic manner and envisioned the concept of an ideal village- a complete republic independent of its neighbours for its vital needs. H

Villages are the lifeline of India as 65 per cent of the country's population lives in the rural areas. Rural economy contributes 25-30 per cent to the GDP. Agriculture is the main source of income and employment in rural areas as 47 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood.

Financial Support in the Rural Areas

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):** It provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):** Launched on 25 December 2000, this scheme strives to create all-weather roads that will connect rural areas. Its goal is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural population.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G):** It aims to provide a pucca house, with basic amenities, to all houseless householders and those households living in kutcha and dilapidated houses, by 2022.

- **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM):** A flagship program of the Ministry of Rural Development, it strives to promote poverty reduction through building strong institutions for the poor, particularly women, and enable these institutions to access a range of financial services and livelihoods.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission:** It aims to provide direct water supply in every household, receiving an increased allocation of Rs. 70,000 crore for the FY 2023-24.

Skill Building in Rural Areas

- **MGNREGS:** MGNREGS provide employment opportunities to unskilled workers of all age groups.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY):** Launched in 2014, it is focused on rural youth between 15 - 35 years from poor families and 14.51 lakh candidates have been trained in this programme till date.
- **Skill development through Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETIs):** In it, development support is extended for promoting self-employment in the unemployed rural youth, particularly those below the poverty line, and periodic skill upgradation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** A part of the Skill India Mission and is enabling skill-based training of rural youth.
- **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):** It aims at generating self-employment opportunities through the establishment of micro- enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth.

Smart Villages

- **Role of start-ups:** They are emerging as the major technology generating hubs to make agriculture smart.
- **Major technologies :** Use of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data Analytics, drones for various farm operations, ICT applications, technology for weather forecasting.
- **Agri-tech startups:** They are developing innovative solutions for various aspects of agriculture, including precision farming,

supply chain management, and market linkages.

- **'Villages of Tomorrow':** It is designed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with Trendyol- an e-commerce platform based in Turkey to reduce inequalities and develop gender-sensitive digitalisation in the rural area.
- **'Agriculture Accelerator Fund':** It was introduced to encourage agri start-ups founded by young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- **YONO Krishi app:** To meet farmers' finance, inputs, and advisory needs.
- **ITC MAARS (Meta Market for Advanced Agricultural Rural Services):** To boost farmers' income and efficient procurement of Agri products by providing agricultural and related services to farmers on a digital platform.
- **Concept of Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA):** It calls for urban infrastructure and services to be developed in rural hubs to create economic opportunities outside of urban areas.

Lakhpati Didi - A Unique Initiative

- **Objective:** To enable at least 2 crore Lakhpati Didis soon, from the 10 crore large family of SHG Didis of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- **'Lakhpati Didi':** One who earns a sustainable income of at least Rs. 1 lakh per annum per household.
- **Provisions of the scheme:**
 - ✓ Women will undergo training in a range of practical skills that align with emerging industry demands.
 - ✓ Skills include plumbing, LED bulb manufacturing, and the operation and repair of drones, among others.
 - ✓ Empowering women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)

- **About:** A flagship poverty alleviation program implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

- **Aim:** To reduce poverty by enabling the poor household to access gainful self-employment and skilled-wage employment opportunities, resulting in sustainable and diversified livelihood options for the poor.
- **Approach:** A demand-driven approach that enables the States to formulate their own State-specific poverty reduction action plans.
- **4 core components:**
 - ✓ social mobilisation and promotion and strengthening of self-managed and financially sustainable community institutions of the rural poor;
 - ✓ financial inclusion of the rural poor;
 - ✓ sustainable livelihoods; and
 - ✓ social inclusion, social development, and convergence

Progress made by DAY-NRLM

- **Geographical Coverage:** The mission has covered 7091 blocks spread over 742 districts across all States and UTs (except Delhi and Chandigarh) under the intensive strategy.
- **Social Mobilisation/Institution Building:** 9.54 crore women have been mobilised into 87.39 lakh Self- Help Groups (SHGs).
- **Social Capital:** Community driven approach is the central to the mission's implementation strategy. Nearly 4 lakh Community Resource Persons have been trained in multiple interventions.
- **Capitalisation Support:** Cumulatively, about Rs. 33,497.62 crore has been provided as community investment support under the mission.
- **SHG-Bank Linkage:** Nearly Rs. 6.96 lakh crore of bank credit has been accessed by the SHGs since 2013-14. The NPA at 1.88% is a result of the efforts undertaken at various levels of the mission.
- **SHG members as Business Correspondent Agents (BCAs):** In order to provide last mile delivery of financial services, more than 1,00,000 SHG members have been identified and trained as Business Correspondent Agents/ Digipay points.

- **Livelihoods:** DAY-NRLM promotes sustainable agriculture, livestock, and NTFPs in intensive blocks under the Farm interventions.

- **Custom Hiring Centres / Tool Banks:** These CHCS enable small and marginal farmers to provide access to farm equipment and other services at a nominal rate.

YOJNA

INDIA'S MOONSHOT - Chandrayaan 3 Mission

In the midst of a time when space agencies around the world were vying for space race, the Indian space programme was developed for scientific research and applications in the mid-1960s. Since then, the programme has expanded, with an emphasis on societal benefits and self-sufficiency.

Achievements of ISRO

- **Efficient Launch Vehicles:** ISRO can now launch payloads ranging from 500 kg to 8000 kg into low, medium, or high Earth orbit using its operational launch vehicles.
 - ✓ **PSLV:** It offers exceptionally reliable and cost-effective solutions for commercial users worldwide to launch payloads in the 2t class. The turnaround time is excellent, and it can be set up in a number of ways to meet the needs of individual clients.
 - ✓ **LVM3:** The most adaptable and made-in-India launch vehicle. It was used in Chandrayaan and the OneWeb commercial launches. It is used in the worldwide commercial markets for both LEO and GEO payloads with capacities of 4t and 6t, respectively.
 - ✓ **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):** It was developed in record time to satisfy the requirements of the small satellite launch vehicle market.
- **Early developer of cutting-edge technologies:** ISRO has developed many sensors, inertial navigation, guidance, and control systems. Having in-house optics and opto-electronics expertise has allowed for the creation of a wide range of specialised payloads.
- **Critical space missions and technological developments:** Trisonic wind tunnel, high-altitude test facilities, semi-cryo testing and integration facilities, Gaganyaan facilities, and the ability to

integrate and launch multiple launch vehicles simultaneously with little delay.

- **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS):** It provides accurate real-time positioning and timing services over India and the region, extending approximately 1500 km around the Indian Mainland. The space segment consists of a base-layer constellation of seven satellites in the GEO and GSO planes. The constellation has been augmented recently with the NVS-01 Satellite, which is the first of the second-generation navigation satellite series.
- **AstroSat, India's first space observatory:** It was launched on September 28, 2015, with a lift-off mass of 1515 kg, by a PSLV-C30 (XL) rocket from Satish Dhawan Space Centre Sriharikota.
- **Mars Orbiter Mission:** Launched on 5 November 2013. Over the course of its eight-year lifetime, the mission, which carried a total of five scientific payloads, made major contributions to our understanding of the Martian atmosphere, exosphere, surface features, and so on. The Mars Orbiter Mission lost touch with Earth in April 2022.

Chandrayaan-3 mission

Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission and second attempt at achieving a soft landing on the moon's surface. The mission took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center (SDSC) in Sriharikota on July 14, 2023.

- **Components:**
 - ✓ An indigenous Lander module (LM)
 - ✓ A Propulsion module (PM)
 - ✓ A Rover
- **Objectives:**
 - ✓ To demonstrate Safe and Soft Landing on Lunar Surface
 - ✓ To demonstrate Rover roving on the moon and
 - ✓ To conduct in-situ scientific experiments.

Lander Payloads

RAMBHA-LP
Langmuir Probe
To measure the near surface plasma (ions and electrons) density and its changes with time.

ChaSTE
Chandra's Surface Thermo-physical Experiment
To carry out the measurements of thermal properties of lunar surface near polar region.

ILSA
Instrument for Lunar Seismic Activity
To measure seismicity around the landing site and delineating the structure of the lunar crust and mantle

Rover Payloads

APXS
Alpha Particle X-Ray Spectrometer
To determine the elemental composition (Mg, Al, Si, K, Ca, Ti, Fe) of lunar soil and rocks around the lunar landing site.

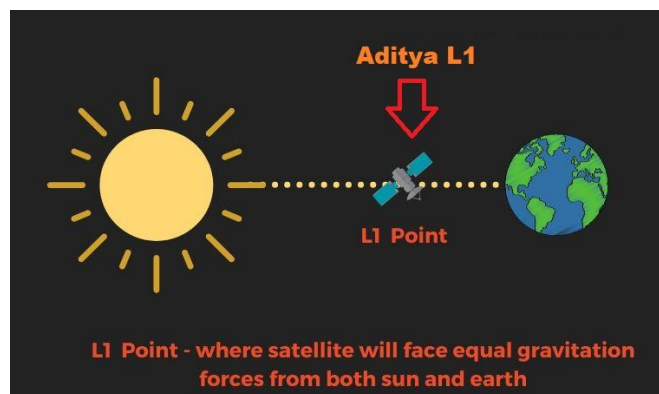
LIBS
Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy
To derive the chemical composition and infer mineralogical composition to further enhance our understanding of lunar surface.

Propulsion Module Payload

SHAPE
Spectro-polarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth
An experimental payload to study the spectro-polarimetric signatures of the habitable planet Earth in the near-infrared (NIR) wavelength range (1-1.7 μm).

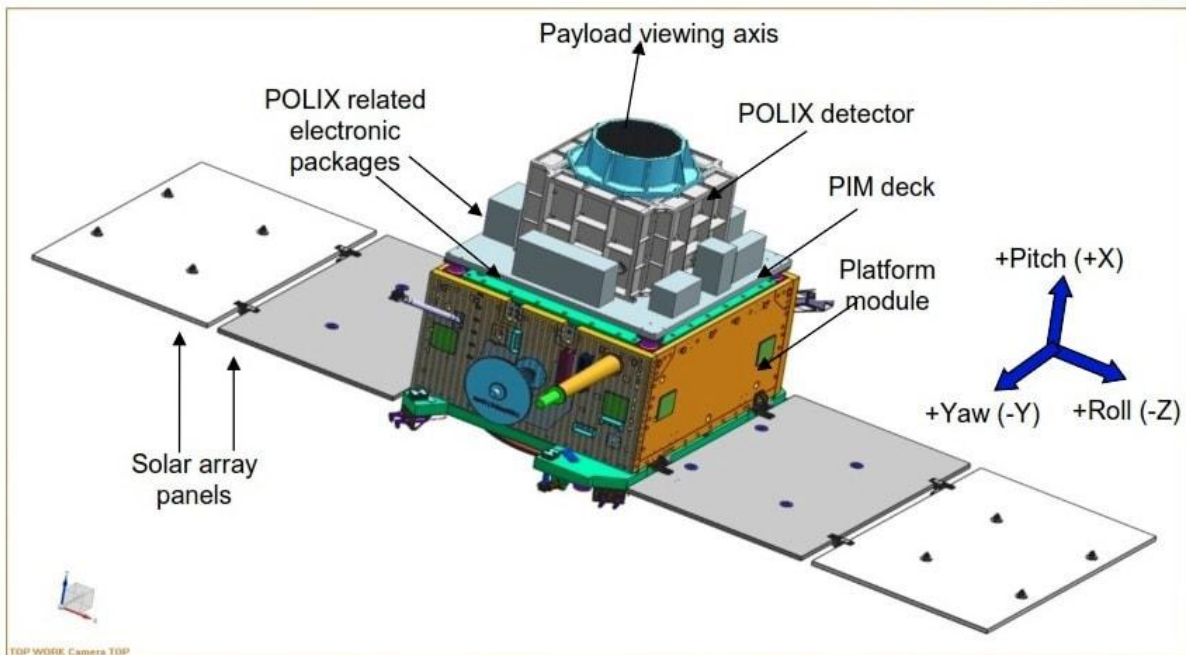
Aditya-L1 mission

- **First space based observatory class Indian solar mission** to study the Sun from a substantial distance of 1.5 million kilometres.
- **It will take approximately 125 days** to reach the L1 point.
- **ISRO's second astronomy observatory-class mission** after AstroSat (2015).
- **The mission's journey** is notably shorter than India's previous Mars orbiter mission, Mangalyaan.



- **Planned to be placed in a halo orbit** around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system.
- **Aim:**
 - ✓ **To provide valuable insights** into the solar corona, photosphere, chromosphere, and solar wind.
 - ✓ **To gain a deeper understanding of the Sun's behaviour**, including its radiation, heat, particle flow, and magnetic fields, and how they impact Earth.

XPoSat



- **About:** India's maiden mission dedicated to analysing the polarisation of X-rays emanating from bright celestial sources in the medium frequency band.
- **2 payloads:** Indian X-ray Polarimeter (POLIX) and X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing (XSPECT).
- **Construction of payloads:** They have been built by Raman Research Institute and UR Rao Satellite Centre, both located in Bengaluru.
- **Placing:** The spacecraft is designated for observation from low earth orbit (~ 650 km, low inclination of ~ 6 degree).
- **Estimated mission life:** ~ five years
- **Function:** To observe sources that emit polarised X-rays. The observations will be done when the magnetars or neutron stars are in transit through the Earth's shadow, eg, during the eclipse period.

INDIA'S GROWING STATURE - A RISING POWER

The Covid-19 pandemic struck a mortal blow to economies around the world. The post-Covid recovery phase, which ought to have seen the global community come together, is instead witnessing deep divisions. The multilateral system, including the Bretton Woods structures, has failed to deliver.

India's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals

- India's Presidency of the G20 was a big success in building consensus on key issues such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), macro-economic stability, digital public infrastructure, climate challenge, a just and equitable green transition, and reforms of multilateral structures.

Indian Global Leadership

- Vaccine assistance programme during the pandemic
- International Solar Alliance (ISA)
- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
- Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)
- Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)
- Green Grids Initiative- One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)

Mission LiFE and Climate Crisis

- India has offered a new moral compass, first expounded in Glasgow by PM Modi through Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which places individual behaviour at the centre of the global climate action debate.
- It intends to propagate a global network of individuals committed to environmentally-friendly lifestyles based on sustainable consumption patterns.

- India is the only G20 country to have achieved its Paris Agreement Goals well before the stipulated target of 2030.

Clean Energy

- India has the world's first fully solar-operated airport.
- India's huge railway system will become net zero in this decade.
- **US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (USISCEP):** It aims to advance energy security and innovation, scale up emerging clean energy technologies, and deploy technical solutions through five key pillars:
 - ✓ Responsible Oil and Gas Pillar
 - ✓ Power and Energy Efficiency Pillar
 - ✓ Renewable Energy Pillar
 - ✓ Sustainable Growth Pillar,
 - ✓ Emerging Fuels and Technologies
- **EU and India Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP):** Established in 2016, it aims to promote clean energy cooperation and the implementation of the Paris Agreement by increasing the deployment of climate-friendly energy sources such as solar and wind energy.

Resilient Supply Chains

- **Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme:** In December 2021, the Government announced this scheme for nearly \$10 billion to encourage chip manufacturing in India.
- **Semicon India programme:** In March 2022, it is launched to develop the semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem.
 - ✓ A primary food crop in semi-arid tropical regions
 - ✓ Has superior nutritional content in comparison to major cereal crops

Sporting Prowess - The year of historic wins

Asian Games 2022

- India bagged its highest-ever medals (107) in 60 years with 75% more gold medals than in Asian Games 2018 and bagged medals in 16 new sporting categories.

- **Trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative:** Launched in collaboration with Australia and Japan, this initiative aims to coordinate and incentivise supply chain diversification away from China and towards the three countries and likeminded partners.

Digital Infrastructure

- **Digital India:** Launched on 1 July 2015, it aims to increase the affordability and accessibility of the internet to Indian citizens and also to improve the digital infrastructure across the country.
- **Real-time digital transactions:** In 2021, India reported 48 billion real-time digital transactions, or 40% of the global total.

Yoga and Ayurveda

- **International Day of Yoga:** It is declared to be celebrated every year on June 21 by UNGA on the request of India.
- **Ayurveda during COVID:** During Covid, the Government promoted Ayurvedic medicine or simple home remedies to boost natural immunity.
- **Other initiatives in medicine:**
 - Vaccine Maitri helped deliver vaccines to 101 countries
 - India has provided open source apps like CoWIN and Arogya Setu to other developing countries

International Year of Millets

- **5 March 2021:** The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- **Importance of Millets:**
 - ✓ Resilient to drought and extreme weather conditions
 - ✓ A viable substitute for staples like wheat and rice
- Women athletes in this tournament clinched around 50% of the total medals of the Indian contingent.
- At these games, the women archers won 3 gold and 2 bronze medals, making our country proud at the international level.

Para Asian Games

- Indian para-athletes too have created history with India's highest-ever medal tally in the Para Asian Games with 111 medals, including 29 Gold medals.

- Previously India had won 14 medals in the 2010 edition, 33 in 2014 and 72 in 2018.
- This is India's best-ever performance since the inception of the Games where India was ranked 5th in the overall medal tally.
- India sent its largest contingent this year, consisting of 303 athletes (191 male & 112 female).

R Praggnanandhaa

- He had become the first Indian after Viswanathan Anand to reach the final of FIDE World Cup and was a victory away from joining the Indian legend at the top.

Khelo India Scheme

- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through its five verticals which promote sports in the entire country including the rural areas. Khelo India is the basic platform to showcase sporting skills and spot talent at the national level. It also provides development pathways for gifted and talented children to achieve excellence.

- Under its 'Talent Search and Development' vertical, Khelo India Athletes are identified, selected, and provided annual financial assistance of Rs 6.28 lakh per annum per athlete, which includes Rs 1.20 lakh as Out-of-Pocket Allowance and Rs 5.08 lakh for other facilities like coaching, sports science support, diet, equipment, consumables, insurance charges, etc.
- The scheme offers pathways to budding sportspersons by providing nationwide platforms. The Ministry in collaboration with relevant National Sports Federations, the School Games Federation of India, and university sports promotion organisations like the Association of Indian Universities, organise national-level multisport competitions, namely, Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games and Khelo India Winter Games.

TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme)

- It is another flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which is an attempt to provide assistance to India's top athletes.

PM Vishwakarma Scheme



It is a central sector scheme launched by the Ministry of MSME, which offers services like market linkage support, skill training, and incentives for digital transactions to artisans and craftspeople engaged in specified trades from FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28).

Components:

- Skill upgradation involving basic & advanced training
- Toolkit incentive of Rs 15,000
- Collateral-free credit support

- ✓ Up to Rs 1 lakh (first tranche)
- ✓ Up to Rs 2 lakh (second tranche)
- Incentive for digital transactions and marketing support
- 18 traditional crafts to be covered under the scheme
- Free registration to Vishwakarmas through Common Services Centres using biometric based PM Vishwakarma portal
- Recognition to artisans and craftspeople through certificate & ID card

Mera Yuva Bharat

An autonomous body being set up by the Government of India to provide an over-arching institutional mechanism powered by technology for youth development and youth-led development. The platform centralises youth volunteering opportunities nationwide without monetary exchanges, serving as a one-stop shop and creating a centralised youth database. This mechanism would provide equitable access to opportunities for youth to actualise their aspirations and build an Amrit Bharat by 2047.

Benefits

- Leadership development through hands-on learning.
- Increased youth investment for community leadership & innovation.
- Fostering youth-led development and active involvement.
- Establishment of a phygital environment for accessibility.
- Enhanced programme effectiveness through integration.
- Central resource for youth and ministries.
- Improved communication between youth, government projects and stakeholders.

India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

The Prime Minister inaugurated the priority section of the Delhi-GhaziabadMeerut RRTS Corridor at Sahibabad RapidX Station in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh on 20 October 2023. He also flagged off the Namoo Bharat RapidX train connecting Sahibabad to Duhai Depot, marking the launch of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in India. He dedicated two stretches of east-west corridor of Bengaluru Metro.

- **RRTS Corridor:** It will connect Sahibabad to 'Duhai Depot' with stations at Ghaziabad, Guldhar, and Duhai on the way. It is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high frequency commuter transit system. In line with PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the RRTS network will have extensive multi-modal integration with Railway stations, Metro stations, Bus services, etc.

Redefining Mobility: Transforming Landscape of Transport Sector

Transport has recorded substantial growth over the years both in the spread of the network and in output of the system. The Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways are responsible for the formation and implementation of policies and programmes for the development of various modes of transport save the railways and civil aviation.

Roads

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways was formed in 2009 by bifurcating the erstwhile Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways into two independent ministries.
- It is the apex body for formulation and administration of the rules, regulations and laws relating to road transport and transport research.
- India has about 62.16 lakh km of road network, which is the second largest in the world.

1. Bharatmala Pariyojana

- Under it, following tasks will be undertaken:
 - ✓ A detailed review of NHs network to develop road connectivity to border areas
 - ✓ Development of coastal roads including road connectivity for non-major ports
 - ✓ Improvement in the efficiency of national corridors
 - ✓ Development of economic corridors, inter corridors, and feeder routes, along with integration with Sagarmala, etc.,.
 - ✓ Development of about 26,000 km length of economic corridors.
 - ✓ ~ 8,000 km of inter corridors and about 7,500 km of feeder routes have been identified for improving effectiveness of economic corridors, GQ and NS-EW Corridors.
 - ✓ Development of Ring Roads/bypasses and elevated corridors

2. Green National Highways Corridor Project

- Launched in 2016, it includes upgradation of ~ 781 km of various national highways passing through

Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

- The project is being run with World Bank aid.

3. National Highways Authority of India

- Set up under the NHA Act, 1988, it has been entrusted with National Highways Development Project (NHDP), which along with other minor projects, has vested in it 50,329 km of national highways for development, maintenance and management.
- The total length of NH (including expressways) in the country is 1,32,499 km while highways/expressways constitute only about 1.7% of the length of all roads. They carry about 40% of the road traffic.

4. National Highways Development Project

- A project to upgrade, rehabilitate and widen major highways in the country to a higher standard that started in 1998.
- This project is managed by NHA under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- It has been subsumed in the ongoing Bharatmala project.

5. PM GatiShakti Plan

- It is a digital platform to bring 16 ministries, including Railways and Roadways together, for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects.

6. Parvatmala Pariyojana–National Ropeways Development Programme

- It is being implemented for development of ropeways to improve accessibility and convenience for passengers and to promote tourism.

Railways

From a very modest beginning in 1853, when the first train steamed off from Mumbai to Thane, a distance of 34 km, the Indian Railways have grown into a vast network of 7,308 stations spread over a route length of 68,043 km. The network is divided into 17 Zones.

1. Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO), Lucknow

- The R&D wing of Indian Railways.
- Functions:
 - ✓ Consultant in technical matters.

- ✓ Consultancy to other organisations connected with railway manufacture and design.

2. Vande Bharat Express

- A semi-high-speed, electric multiple unit train operated by Indian Railways. It was manufactured entirely in India. It began its operations in 2019 when the first of its kind was flagged off between New Delhi-Kanpur- Prayagraj- Varanasi route. By September 2023, 50 Vande Bharat trains were running across the country.

Shipping

- The Ministry of Shipping was formed in 2009 by bifurcating the erstwhile Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways into two independent ministries. Maritime Transport is a critical infrastructure for the economic development of a country.
- It was renamed as the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) in 2020.
- The capacity of the major ports in terms of their berths and cargo handling equipment vastly improved to cater to the growing requirements of the overseas trade and presently stands at 1617.39 MMT.

1. Maritime Development

- India has a long coastline of about 7,517 km, spread on the western and eastern shelves of the mainland and also along the Islands.
- There are 12 major ports and about 200 non-major ports. I
- ~ 95% of the country's trade by volume and 68% by value is moved through maritime transport.

2. Sagarmala Programme

- The Government of India started the Sagarmala Programme to promote port-led development in the country. The vision of the Programme is to reduce the logistics cost of EXIM and domestic trade with minimal infrastructure investment.

3. Inland Water Transport

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) was set up in 1986 for regulation and development of inland waterways for the purposes of shipping and navigation in the country.

- To promote IWT, the Govt declared 111 (including 5 existing and 106 new) National Waterways (NWs) spread over 24 states under the National Waterways Act, 2016, to promote inland water transport in the country.
- 4. Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP)**
- It is being implemented by the IWAI for the capacity augmentation of National Waterway I on the Haldia-Varanasi stretch of Ganga-Bhagirathi Hooghly river system with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank.

Civil Aviation

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation encompasses within its ambit the civil aviation sector in the country which, inter-alia, includes air transport, air space management, noncommercial flying and civil aviation infrastructure. It formulates legislation for carrying out the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944 ('Chicago Convention').
- 1. Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)- Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)**
- It was envisaged in National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016 to facilitate/stimulate regional air connectivity by making it affordable to masses through measures such as concessions by the central government, state governments/UT administrations and airport operators to reduce the cost of airline operations on regional routes; and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to meet the gap, if any, between the cost of airline operations and expected revenues on such routes.
- 2. Airports Authority of India**
- It was statutorily constituted under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994, for administration and cohesive management of airports and civil enclaves where air transport services are operated/intended to be operated and of all aeronautical communication stations for the purposes of establishing or assisting in the establishment of airports and for connected.
- 3. Airports Economic Regulatory Authority**
- It is a statutory body constituted under the Airports Economic Regulatory

Authority Act, 2008 to regulate tariff and other charges for the aeronautical services rendered at airports and to monitor performance standards of airports.

4. DigiYatra policy

- It is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation for providing passengers seamless and hassle-free experience at airports without the need for verification of ticket and ID at multiple touch points. As of October, 2023 it is operational at 13 airports.

5. GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN)

- It is a collaborative system developed jointly by Airports Authority of India and Indian Space Research Organization to improve the accuracy and reliability of GPS signals, specifically for precision approaches in civil aviation.

6. Krishi Udan 2.0

- It was launched in 2021 to ensure seamless, cost-effective, time bound, air transportation and associated logistics for all agriproduce originating especially from North-East, hilly and tribal regions of the country. The Scheme covers a total of 58 airports in the country.

7. Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

- Being in line with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, Ministry of Civil Aviation has published the 'Accessibility Standards and Guidelines for Civil Aviation Sector' to assist people comprehend and understand the Universal Accessibility Standards. This being a significant step in promoting accessibility and inclusivity in air travel would help people providing the services at airports.

India's Industry Sector

PM GatiShakti

Launched in 2021 is a response in that direction, which rests on the premise of a 'whole of government approach'. It has broadly two components:

- **National Master Plan:** A GIS-based technology platform, wherein everything is linked from roads to railways, from

aviation to agriculture, various ministries and departments.

- **Administrative arrangement:** To integrate efforts of various line ministries/ departments for synchronised development of multimodal infrastructure & economic zone through the formation of a 3-tier institutional arrangement.

National Logistics Policy

Launched in 2022, it is envisaged to bring efficiency to logistics services, and human resources through streamlining processes, a regulatory framework, skill development, mainstreaming logistics in higher education, and the adoption of suitable technologies.



Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)

- It is the nodal department for the formulation of the policy on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It is also responsible for maintenance and management of data on inward FDI into India, based on the remittances reported by RBI.

'Make in India' initiative

- It was launched in 2014 to facilitate investment, foster innovation, build best-in-class infrastructure, and make India a

hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for 14 key sectors were announced to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities and exports.

Objectives:

- attracting investments in sectors of core competency & cutting-edge technology;
- make Indian companies and manufacturers globally competitive.

Startup India

Launched in 2016, it aims to foster entrepreneurship and promote innovation by creating an ecosystem conducive to startup growth. 3 major pillars

- simplification and handholding,
- funding support and incentives, and
- industry-academia partnership and incubation

Indian MSME Sector

- The Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector contributes to around 27% of India's GDP, around 44% of India's exports and provides employment to over 11.10 crore people.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission

- It is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of MSME engaged in promoting and developing Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) for providing employment opportunities in the rural areas, thereby strengthening the rural economy.

Chemicals and Petro-chemicals

- The Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, under the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals is entrusted with the responsibility of planning, development and regulations of the chemicals, petro-chemicals and pharmaceutical industry sector.

Geological Survey of India

- It is the premier earth science organisation of the country, and is the principal provider of basic earth science information to the Government, industry, and the geoscientific sector.
- Started in 1851 as a department engaged primarily in research for coal, GSI has expanded its activities manifold

and has been involved either directly or indirectly in almost all areas of nation-building.

Indian Bureau of Mines

- Established in March 1948, it is a multidisciplinary scientific and technical organisation under the Ministry of Mines with statutory and developmental responsibilities for conservation and systematic exploitation of mineral resources other than coal, petroleum, natural gas, atomic minerals and minor minerals.

Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign

- It is a tribute to the Veers and Veeranganas who have made the supreme sacrifice for the country. In the spirit of Jan Bhagidari, the campaign comprises many activities and ceremonies conducted across the country at Panchayat/Village, Block, Urban Local Body, State and National levels.

Agriculture and Rural Development - Key Initiatives & Achievements

Livelihood security and financial empowerment of rural people are key priorities of the Government of India in its path towards Atmanirbhar Bharat. Continuing with its commitment this year, the Government has taken strategic steps to accelerate a transformation in agriculture and rural development sectors.

2023 as the International Year of Millets

- A mission was launched to boost production, processing, and marketing of millets and to position India as the global hub for millets.
- India also renamed Millets as Shree Anna to express its high regard and esteem, especially in a national context.

'World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector'

- The plan entails setting up various types of agri-infrastructure, such as

warehouses, custom hiring centres, processing units, etc. at the level of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS).

PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness Generation, Nourishment, and Amelioration of Mother-Earth' (PM-PRANAM) scheme

It aims to support the mass movement started by States/ Union Territories to save the health of Mother Earth by promoting sustainable and balanced use of fertilisers, adopting alternate fertilisers, promoting alternative farming, and implementing resource conservation technologies.

Govt. IT-based initiatives

1. Kisan Rin Portal

- It is designed to facilitate access to credit services under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC). It will also assist farmers in availing subsidised agriculture credit through the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS).

2. Ghar Ghar KCC Abhiyaan

- To further ensure unhindered access to credit facilities, the Government initiated a special drive called 'Ghar Ghar KCC Abhiyaan' from 1 October to 31 December 2023. It aims to connect around 1.5 crore beneficiaries of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi who are not yet connected to the KCC scheme.

3. WINDS (Weather Information Network Data Systems) manual

- It was launched to provide an in-depth understanding of the portal's functionalities, data interpretation, and effective utilisation.
- It is an effort to establish a network of automatic weather stations and rain gauges at the taluk/block and gram panchayat levels.
- Weather data will help improve crop management, resource allocation, and risk mitigation.

13. EDITORIAL

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)

Why in News?

- ❖ According to the recent 'Crime in India 2022' report of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), questions have been raised on the functioning of UAPA.
- ❖ Reason: In about 50% of the cases registered under this, the charge sheet was filed at least one year after the FIR was filed and the conviction rate has also been low.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 [Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act] 1967]

- ❖ This law was made to prevent activities that violate the sovereignty and unity of India.
- ❖ **Unlawful Activity:** It means activities carried out by any person/organization against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019 [Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act] 2019]

- ❖ It was brought to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- ❖ Under this, the Government of India can declare an organization as terrorist under the following circumstances-
 - commits or participates in a terrorist act,
 - prepares to carry out a terrorist incident,
 - promotes terrorism, or
 - is involved in terrorist activity.
- ❖ This law can also designate any person as a terrorist on the same basis as the Central Government. Earlier, there was no provision in any law of India to declare individuals as terrorists.
- ❖ This amendment allows declaring someone a terrorist only on the basis of due process and sufficient evidence.
- ❖ This amendment empowers the Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to seize the assets of terrorists and their organization.

- ❖ This amendment includes the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005) in the Second Schedule.
- ❖ It empowers the NIA to investigate and prosecute cases registered under UAPA across the country.
- ❖ It provides for death penalty and life imprisonment as the highest punishment for terrorist acts.
- ❖ It allows suspects to be detained without charge or trial for up to 180 days and denies bail to the accused.
- ❖ It clearly defines illegal activity and individual terrorism.

Arguments in favor and against UAPA:

Arguments in favor:

- ❖ It allows individuals and organizations to be designated as terrorists.
 - E.g.: MasoodAzhar, Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-ur-RehmanLavi, Dawood Ibrahim etc.
- ❖ UAPA provides necessary tools to law enforcement agencies to effectively deal with terrorism.
- ❖ This has enabled the government to seize their assets, restrict their travel, and impose sanctions on them.
- ❖ It allows preventive detention of persons suspected of being involved in illegal activities. This allows potential incidents to be prevented before they occur. Like Sharjeel Imam case.
- ❖ UAPA is in line with India's international commitments to combat terrorism.
- ❖ It enables the government to criminalize terrorism financing and restrict and seize suspicious transactions.
- ❖ It allows the use of electronic evidence and other modern investigative techniques, which aids in the conviction of people involved in terrorist activities.

Arguments against:

- ❖ This law may violate the fundamental rights provided by the Constitution (such as freedom of expression or criticism of the government and freedom of association).

- ❖ It can be used on people who raise their voice against the government.
- ❖ The law lacks adequate safeguards and accountability mechanisms to prevent abuse of power by officials.
- ❖ It empowers the central government to designate individuals as terrorists without any opportunity for judicial review or appeal.
- ❖ Under this the accused has to prove his innocence.
- ❖ It may violate the federal structure of the country as it encroaches on the powers of state governments with respect to law and order.
- ❖ The conviction rate under this law has been low which is a question mark on its effective legal proceedings.
- ❖ This amendment gives the government the right to declare any person a terrorist without following the judicial process.
- ❖ There is no definite definition of terrorism in this amendment. Anyone can be harassed by its arbitrary interpretation.
- ❖ Police is a state subject but this law empowers NIA to confiscate property which reduces the jurisdiction of the state police.

Supreme Court side

- ❖ In *Arup Bhuiyan vs. State of Assam* (2011), the Supreme Court ruled that mere membership of a banned organization cannot make a person guilty.
- ❖ The Supreme Court in the case *Union of India vs. K-e-Najeeb* (2021) held that despite restrictions on bail under the UAPA, constitutional courts can allow bail if they feel that the fundamental rights of the accused have been violated.

Suggestions to improve UAPA

- ❖ Amending the law: This should be done to exclude constitutionally protected activities such as peaceful protest, dissent and ideological expression.
- ❖ At present the definitions in the Act are vague and subjective. 'Illegal activity' and 'terrorism' need to be defined broadly.

- ❖ The burden of providing proof or evidence should not be on the accused but on the prosecution.
- ❖ An independent and impartial review mechanism should be formed to monitor and challenge the government's decisions to ban any organization or individual as illegal or terrorist.
- ❖ UAPA should be used only in extremely sensitive situations.

Conclusion

- ❖ UAPA is an effective measure in India's anti-terrorism efforts, but it must also be ensured that the fundamental rights of an individual are not violated.
- ❖ The low rate of conviction in the cases registered under it is a question mark on its functioning which needs to be done by fixing the time limit of the case and disposal of it in stipulated time.

Election Commissioners Appointment Process: Controversies and Solutions

Why in News?

- ❖ Recently the President has approved the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023.

Introduction

- ❖ This Act deals with the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC).
- ❖ The purpose of this law is to bring transparency in the appointment process under a direction of the Supreme Court of India in the *Anoop Baranwal vs. Union of India* case, 2023.

Supreme Court's decision on the appointment of CEC and EC

- ❖ In March 2023, the Supreme Court, while delivering a judgment regarding the process of appointment of Election Commissioners, emphasized the important role of the Independent Election Commission of India (ECI) in ensuring free and fair elections.
- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled to constitute a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha or the leader of

the largest party in the opposition and the Chief Justice of India (CJI) in the process of appointing election commissioners.

- ❖ This decision was given unanimously by a Constitution bench of 5 judges headed by Justice K.M. Joseph. Other judges included Justice Ajay Rastogi, Justice Aniruddha Bose, Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice CT Ravikumar.
- ❖ Under this decision, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) will be appointed by the President on the advice of a high-powered committee.
- ❖ The Constitution Bench also said that until Parliament makes a law on the appointment process of Election Commissioners, the High Powered Committee will continue to advise the President on appointments.
- ❖ It is noteworthy that in the year 2015, AnupBaranwal had filed a PIL challenging the constitutional validity of the practice of appointing members of the Election Commission by the Central Government.
- ❖ **Note:** The Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990) to reform the Election Commission in India and the 255th Report of the Law Commission on Election Reforms (2015) recommended a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Leader of the Opposition for the appointment of the CEC and EC. Suggested.

'Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Tenure) Bill, 2023'

- ❖ This bill was passed by the RajyaSabha on 12 December 2023 and by the LokSabha on 21 December 2023.
- ❖ Under this Bill, provisions have been made related to the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner of India and other Election Commissioners.
- ❖ It replaced the Election Commission (Conditions of Service and Conduct of Business of Election Commissioners) Act, 1991.

Main Provisions

- ❖ Under this Bill, the President will appoint the CEC and other ECs on the basis of the recommendation of the Selection Committee.
- ❖ The selection committee consists of the **Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet minister and the leader of the opposition or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.**
- ❖ The recommendations of this committee will remain valid even in case the committee does not have complete members.
- ❖ Under this, a **search committee headed by the Union Law Minister (earlier the Cabinet Secretary)** will prepare a panel of eligible officers to be appointed to the post of CEC and EC.
- ❖ An officer of the rank equivalent to Secretary to the Central Government will be eligible for the post of CEC and EC.
- ❖ The salary and service conditions of CEC and ECs will be the same as that of Cabinet Secretary. (Earlier it was equivalent to a judge of the Supreme Court)
- ❖ The amended Bill provides protection to the CEC and EC from court cases while discharging their official duties.
- ❖ The CEC can be removed from office in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge. And the EC will not be removed by any method other than the recommendation of the CEC.
- ❖ **Tenure:** The CEC and other ECs will hold office for a term of 6 years or till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

Protection for CEC and EC:

- ❖ The Bill protects the CEC and EC from legal proceedings relating to actions taken during their tenure, provided that such actions are taken in the discharge of official duties.
- ❖ Its purpose is to protect these officers from civil or criminal proceedings relating to their official functions.

Major Issues

Independence of Election Commission

- ❖ The Constitution envisages the Election Commission as an independent body

responsible for conducting free and fair elections.

- ❖ The Supreme Court has said that such an institution should be completely isolated from external pressures from the ruling party.

Government dominance over selection committee

- ❖ The appointment of the CEC and EC under Article 324 is subject to law made by Parliament but as per the new Act the selection committee will consist of the Prime Minister, a Cabinet minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party). Thus, the selection committee has a majority of members from the government of the day, which may weaken the independence of the ECI.

Selection committee's recommendations to be valid even after Vacant Seat

- ❖ The Bill preserves the validity of the Selection Committee, irrespective of any defect or omission in the constitution of the Committee.
- ❖ Upon dissolution of the Lok Sabha, the post of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha may be vacated. Thus, a vacancy may arise even before the general election, and in such a case, the selection committee will consist exclusively of members of the ruling party.

The selection committee can ignore the suggestions of the search committee.

- ❖ Under the Bill, the selection committee selects names from a panel of five people suggested by the Rose Committee.
- ❖ The Selection Committee may proceed from the names suggested by the Rose Committee and select another candidate.
- ❖ This may weaken the role of the Search Committee.

Salary of CEC and EC determined by Central Government

- ❖ Under the new bill, the salary of CEC and EC is equal to that of the Cabinet Secretary of the government. Both the

salaries are currently equal but their regulation is different.

- ❖ The salary of the Cabinet Secretary is decided by the government on the recommendation of the Central Pay Commission. Thus, this Bill may allow greater executive control in determining the salaries of the CEC and EC.

Eligibility criteria are limited

- ❖ Under the Bill, only a person who holds or has held the rank equivalent to Secretary to the Government will be eligible to become the CEC or EC.
- ❖ By limiting the eligibility criteria of CEC and EC to civil servants, the Bill may exclude other eligible persons from such posts.

Lack of uniformity in removal of CEC and EC

- ❖ Under Article 324 of the Constitution, the CEC can be removed from his office only in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge, while the EC can be removed from office only on the recommendation of the CEC.
- ❖ The new Act retains these grounds for removal under the Constitution.
- ❖ The new Act Bill provides equal status for CEC and EC in salary and decision making but it is discriminatory in removal from office.

Measures to improve the Election Commission

Administrative Independence of the Commission

- ❖ The Goswami Committee and the Election Commission (ECI) have recommended an independent secretariat for the ECI on the lines of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Supreme Court and High Courts.
- ❖ The members of the Constituent Assembly also insisted on handing over the responsibility of conducting elections to people free from political influence and local pressure.

The selection committee should be free from the influence of the executive.

- ❖ The Supreme Court and the Legislature should also have an important role in the selection committee for the appointment of CEC and EC. At the same time, it

should also be ensured that it is free from the influence of the executive.

Review of selection committee decisions

- ❖ If the decisions of the selection committee are doubtful, provision should be made to review them so that there is transparency in the selection process.
- ❖ As in the United States, the President appoints members to the electoral body, and appointments require confirmation by the Senate.
- ❖ The double checking system ensures balanced balance and prevents unilateral decisions.

Salary Criteria of CEC and EC

- ❖ It is necessary to remain free from the control of the executive in determining the salaries of CEC and EC.

Widening the eligibility criteria

- ❖ There should also be opportunities for judges or eminent personalities for CEC or EC.
- ❖ In South Africa, the selection process involves prominent figures such as the President of the Constitutional Court,

representatives of the Court of Human Rights and advocates of gender equality.

- ❖ Several committees, including the Supreme Court and the Goswami Committee (1990), have made suggestions to ensure the independence of the ECI. These relate to: (i) the process of removal of the CEC and the EC, and (ii) the administrative independence of the ECI. These suggestions have not been taken into account in the bill.

Conclusion

- ❖ Executive interference in the selection process of commissioners in the Election Commission is not an indicator of empowerment of democracy. Therefore, it is essential to give wide powers and autonomy to the Election Commission of India.
- ❖ This can be ensured by increasing the administrative independence of the Commission, provision of a transparent and fair system for the appointment of commissioners, widening the eligibility criteria and provision of an independent secretariat for the ECI on the lines of the Supreme Court.

14. Terms in News

Black Winged Stilt Bird

- The black-winged stilt is a long-legged heron in the avocet and stilt family.
- Its scientific name is *Himantopus himantopus*.
- It is a large black and white bird with long orange-red legs and a straight black bill.
- It has a black part on the back of the neck, a white collar and a red iris.
- Both sexes are respectful and do not change their plumage throughout the year.

E-Sports:-

- E-sports is short for electronic sports which refers to a form of competition using video games. In the world of e-sports, professional players or teams participate in organized, multiplayer video game tournaments.

Critical Minerals

- Those minerals which are essential for economic development and national security, the lack of availability of these minerals or concentration of extraction or processing in a few geographical locations may lead to supply chain vulnerabilities and even disruption of supplies.

Press mud

- Many times known as filter cake or press cake, it is the agricultural waste obtained when cane juice is repeatedly filtered before being sent for sugar extraction. A tonne of crushed cane produces nearly 3 to 4% of press mud.

SantjordiaPagesi



- A new species of jellyfish, which is found only in the Sumisu Caldera near the Ogasawara Islands, about 600 miles southeast of Tokyo, Japan. The name "Santjordia" refers to Saint George in Catalan signifying its cross-shaped stomach.

StayOrder

- It is defined as the act of postponing any judicial proceeding through the court or legal authorities in India to secure the rights of a citizen. It could lead to the suspension of a case or any specific proceeding within an ongoing case. Till a stay order is in effect, the proceedings of the Court's come at a standstill.

Sub-Neptune planets

- Considered the most commonly observed types of planets in our galaxy, they could be rocky planets with a thick atmosphere of hydrogen and helium, or composed of rock and ice with warm, water-rich atmospheres. The radii of these planets lie between those of the Earth and Neptune.

Cholelithiasis

- It is the condition of having gallstones and is a common hepatobiliary condition that affects mostly Western populations. It poses as a primary risk factor for cholangiocarcinoma, which is a kind of bile duct cancer.

Dopamine

- It is a chemical neurotransmitter that helps in the transmission of signals in the brain and other vital areas & is present in humans as well as animals. It is released when your brain is expecting a reward. When you come to associate a certain activity with pleasure, mere anticipation may be enough to raise dopamine levels.

Vo5G

- Also known as Voice over New Radio (VoNR), it allows voice calls over 5G networks instead of the current standard that uses 4G. It has all the features of 5G – speed, capacity, responsiveness – and applies them squarely to voice.

Anthrobots

- Bio-robots constructed from human tracheal cells that possess self-assembly capabilities & are capable of movement and healing neurons within a laboratory setting. They can fuse together to form a larger structure called a superbot.

Methotrexate

- A widely used anti-cancer drug but its value of more than 10 μM in blood plasma is hazardous if it remains in the system for more than 10 hours. It may result in poisoning effects on the lungs, ulcers of the stomach, and heart stroke. It is highly expensive.

Abelmoschus Odishae

- It is a new plant species of 'wild okra' discovered in a moist deciduous forest in Banspal block in Keonjhar district, Odisha. It can create a better variety with high disease resistance.

FjordPhantom

- It is a new type of malware that propagates through messaging services and combines app-based malware with social engineering to deceive banking customers. It is mainly prevalent in Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

'Group of Companies' Doctrine

- As per this doctrine, a company that is a non-signatory to an arbitration agreement would be bound by the agreement if such a company is a member of the same group of companies that signed the agreement. It deems that the parties to the arbitration agreement mutually intended for such a non-signatory to be bound by it.

Girsu

- Girsu was a city of the Sumer civilization and was fully discovered during the 19th century. The first excavations were conducted in the 1880s by the French archaeologist, Ernest de Sarzec. It first revealed to the world the existence of the Sumerian civilization and highlighted the monuments of Mesopotamian art and architecture.

Potteromyces asteroxylicola

- A 407-million-year-old fungus fossil which is the oldest evidence of fungi causing diseases. It was found infecting the ancient plant *Asteroxylon mackiei*, showcasing a predator-prey interaction that occurred while the plant was alive.

Goldilocks Effect

- It is the idea that people are inclined to seek 'just the right' amount of something. It is based on the ideology that people prefer something that is neither too extreme nor too moderate but falls within an optimal or desirable range, fitting their specific needs or preferences.

Pinna nobilis

- It is a large species of Mediterranean clam, a marine bivalve mollusc in the family Pinnidae. They can grow as much as 1.2 m across and play an important ecological role by filtering sea water and allowing other organisms to flourish.



Red sprite

- A red sprite (Stratospheric/mesospheric Perturbations resulting from Intense Thunderstorm Electrification) is an extraordinary meteorological phenomenon categorised as a Transient

Luminous Event (TLE). It occurs above thunderclouds at altitudes between 40 and 80 kilometres (25 - 50 miles) above the Earth's surface.



Otolith rings

- The otolith is a stony lump in the fish ear and resemble much like tree rings which reveal fish's age. Isotopes of oxygen in otolith indicate the temperature the fish experienced when it was alive. They are also called "earstones," which are hard, calcium carbonate structures located behind the brain of bony fish.

Cassiopeia A

- Cassiopeia A is the youngest remnant of a massive star that exploded some 340 years ago. It belongs to the prototypical type of supernova remnant which spans about 10 light-years and is located 11,000 light-years away in the constellation Cassiopeia. It gives information about the supernovae and its complexities.

Vyom Mitra

- A combination of two Sanskrit words Vyoma (Space) and Mitra (Friend), it is a female robot designed and developed by the ISRO to fly aboard unmanned test missions ahead of the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission. It is a half-humanoid robot as it doesn't have legs.

Mosasaurus

- They were a group of large predatory marine reptiles found in all of the world's oceans during the Late Cretaceous epoch, between 90 and 66 million years ago. They were some of the largest marine organisms of the time and some

of the largest predatory reptiles. They lived near the surface of the water since it breathed air, just like the whales.

Ketamine/ Ketalar

- It is a drug that doctors use to make people not feel pain during surgeries which is derived from a Phencyclidine (PCP), a hallucinogenic drug which blocks the NMDA receptor in the brain and spinal cord, and increases the release of a neurotransmitter called glutamate. It is used to treat depression, anxiety, PTSD, end-of-life distress, chronic pain, drug/alcohol problems, etc.

Bodhicitta

- Literally meaning the "awakening mind" or "thought of enlightenment," it is a commitment to embark on a path of awakening and be a bodhisattva, one dedicated to the liberation of all beings. It is the desire to free all beings from suffering, even those who wish us harm or consider us enemies. As a foundation of the Mahayana tradition, it is woven into many of its teachings.

Watsonx.ai

- It is an Artificial Intelligence tool jointly built by IBM and NASA to monitor the Earth from space, measuring the ongoing environmental changes while also making predictions about the future. A user would need to select a location and a date, and the model will highlight changes in floodwater, reforestation efforts and other relevant factors.

X-ray bursts

- X-ray bursts occur in low-mass X-ray binary systems where a neutron star and low-mass main sequence star are in orbit around one another. When the outburst gets over, the binary system temporarily returns to its quiescent state while the neutron star begins to re-accumulate the helium surface layer.

Fire Ice

- Fire Ice; which is also known as methane hydrate and is found buried in the ocean floor in the frozen form of methane gas.

- A large amount of methane is stored under the oceans in the form of marine methane.
- When the oceans warm, fire ice melts, releasing methane into the oceans and atmosphere, known as sequestered methane, which contributes to global warming.
- Research has revealed that due to climate change, fire ice is on the verge of melting, due to which the risk of its leakage into the seabed has increased.

Oxford Word of the Year:-

- Recently, Oxford declared the popular and popular word 'Ridge' among Gen Z as the Word of the Year.
- Meaning of **द्र रिज** - Style, attractive, romantic and ability to attract partner.
- The word 'Dri Ridge' was first used by Hollywood actor 'Tom Holland'.
- This word is considered to be a short form of the word 'charisma'.

15. Model Questions (December : 2023)

- Where has the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor been established?**
(A) Australia (B) United States
(C) France (D) Japan
- Which European country has recently announced its official withdraws from China's Project 'Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)'?**
(A) Switzerland (B) France
(C) Italy (D) Germany
- Which is India's first bullet train station?**
(A) Mumbai (Maharashtra)
(B) Ahmedabad Gujarat
(C) Mehsana (Gujarat)
(D) Nashik (Maharashtra)
- Which village of India has been declared the best tourist village for the year 2023 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)?**
(A) Yana Village (Karnataka)
(B) Lemayouro Village (Ladakh)
(C) Bandarpooch Village (Uttarakhand)
(D) Dhordo Village (Gujarat)
- How many stations in the country will be redeveloped under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme?**
(A) 1275 (B) 784
(C) 1552 (D) 2520
- Where was the Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) summit held?**
(A) Gurugram (B) New Delhi
(C) Mumbai (D) Ahmedabad
- Who among the following is not included in the selection committee constituted for the appointment of Chief Information Commissioner and other Election Commissioners under the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act 2023?**
(A) Prime Minister
(B) Chief Justice of India
(C) Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister
(D) Leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha
- Where was the All India Handicraft Fair organized by NABARD in Rajasthan?**
with reference to recently appointed Chief Ministers and states?
(A) Mizoram – Shri Pawan Kumar Chamling
(B) Madhya Pradesh – Shri Mohan Yadav
(C) Telangana – Shri Revanth Reddy
(D) Chhattisgarh – Shri Vishnudev Sai
- How many women have been elected in the 16th Assembly of Rajasthan?**
(A) 27 (B) 18
(C) 20 (D) 25
- Which is the first survey ship of the Indian Navy?**
(A) Vikrant (B) Sandhyak
(C) Karanj (D) Airavat
- What is the name of the Advanced Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) model developed by Google?**
(A) Tabanine (B) Vertex
(C) Mutable (D) Gemini
- Stealth Guided Missile Destroyer INS Imphal, which was recently commissioned into the Indian Navy, is related to which project?**
(A) Project 15A (B) Project 15B
(C) Project 17A (D) Project 17B
- Which is the world's first comprehensive organization to reach agreement on Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) rules?**
(A) NATO (B) European Union
(C) BRICS (D) Africa Union
- Who is the most powerful woman of India, according to the list released by Forbes?**
(A) Kiran Mazumdar Shaw
(B) Roshni Nadar Malhotra
(C) Nirmala Sitharaman
(D) Soma Mandal
- What position does India hold in the ranking of Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2024 released by German Watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network International?**
(A) 7th (B) 15th
(C) 12th (D) 5th
- Who has ranked first among Indian cities in the Quality of Life Index 2023 released by Mercer?**
(A) Delhi (B) Pune
(C) Bengaluru (D) Hyderabad

- 18. Where was Asia's largest business trade fair organized?**
(A) Coimbatore (Kerala)
(B) Nagpur (Maharashtra)
(C) Cuttack (Orissa)
(D) Mehsana (Gujarat)
- 19. Which dance has recently been included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list?**
(A) Ghoomar (B) Garba
(C) Rauf (D) Kuchipudi
- 20. India's 'Moidam' has been nominated for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List, which state belongs to it?**
(A) Assam (B) Telangana
(C) Manipur (D) Maharashtra
- 21. Where is the tallest Jain temple of Rajasthan being established?**
(A) Mandore (Jodhpur) (B) Nakoda (Barmer)
(C) Nareli (Ajmer) (D) Delwara (Mount Abu)
- 22. Where has the longest back water dead storage of Rajasthan been established?**
(A) Udaipur (B) Banswara
(C) Kota (D) Chittaurgarh
- 23. What was the position of Rajasthan in the medal tally in Khelo India Para Games 2023?**
(A) Fifth (B) Seventh
(C) Fourth (D) Sixth
- 24. Where was the world's largest office building inaugurated recently in India?**
(A) Gurugram (B) Surat
(C) New Delhi (D) Mumbai
- 25. Who has become the first woman of Indian origin to operate a rover on Mars?**
(A) Dr. Akshita Krishnamurthy
(B) Athira Preeti Rani
(C) Usha Guduri
(D) Yogita Shah
- 26. Who has been appointed as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in Geneva?**
(A) Amitabh Kant
(B) Vinay Mohan Kwatra
(C) Ruchira Kamboj
(D) Arindam Bagchi
- 27. Who is the first woman medical officer of India to be posted in Siachen?**
(A) Shivangi Joshi (B) Avni Chaturvedi
(C) Geetika Kaul (D) Shiva Chauhan
- 28. Who has been honored with the 33rd Vyas Samman?**
(A) Pushpa Bharti (B) Gyan Chaturvedi
(C) Shiva Shankari (D) Damodar Moujo
- 29. Donald Tusk, who was in news recently, has become the new Prime Minister of which country?**
(A) Norway (B) Poland
(C) Sweden (D) Switzerland
- 30. Who has become the first woman Director General (DG) of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)?**
(A) Rashmi Shukla (B) Madhabi Puri Buch
(C) Sonia Narang (D) Neena Singh
- 31. Who has recently won the Under-17 FIFA World Cup title?**
(A) France (B) Germany
(C) Brazil (D) Argentina
- 32. Which team has recently become the winner of India's domestic cricket tournament Vijay Hazare Trophy?**
(A) Mumbai (B) Saurashtra
(C) Haryana (D) Rajasthan
- 33. Which athlete from Rajasthan has won the gold medal in the 10 kilometer marathon in the World Police and Fire Games held in Canada?**
(A) Chatru (B) Manju Bala
(C) Bhavna Jat (D) Gopal Saini
- 34. Which team won the most medals and secured the first position in the Khelo India Para Games 2023?**
(A) Telangana (B) Haryana
(C) Uttar Pradesh (D) Maharashtra
- 35. Who has recently been honored with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2023 for 'Hindi' language?**
(A) Vinod Joshi (B) Sanjeev
(C) Arun Ranjan Mishra
(D) Neelam Saran Gaur
- 36. Who was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award 2023 for 'Rajasthani' language?**
(A) Kamal Ranga (B) Jitendra Kumar Soni
(C) Devilal Mahiya (D) Gajesingh Rajpurohit
- 37. Who has been awarded the Major Dhyanchand Rail Ratna Award 2023?**
(A) Anchat Sharat Kamal
(B) Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty
(C) Rohan Bopanna and Sumit Nagal
(D) Sheetal Devi and Divyakirti Singh

- 38. Who is the first female equestrian of India who has recently been honored with the Arjuna Award 2023?**
 (A) Divyakirti Singh
 (B) Nida Anjum
 (C) Aditi Ashok
 (D) Rupa Singh
- 39. Which of the following is not included in the context of Dronacharya Award (Regular) 2023?**
 (A) Lalit Kumar – Wrestling
 (B) R.B. Ramesh – Chess
 (C) Jaskirat Singh Grewal – Golf
 (D) Mahavir Prasad Saini – Para Athletics
- 40. Recently, which athletes were honored in the male and female categories respectively in India's first Radiant Differently Abled Sports Award?**
 (A) Mariyappan Thangavalu and Bhavina Patel
 (B) Sumit Antil and Sheetal Devi
 (C) Sunder Singh Gurjar and Avni Lekhara
 (D) Krishna Nagar and Avani Lekhara
- 41. Which year has been declared as International Camelids Year by the United Nations?**
 (A) 2028 (B) 2026
 (C) 2024 (D) 2025
- 42. Who has written the recently in news book 'Breaking the Mould'?**
 (A) S. Jaishankar
 (B) General M.M. Naravane
 (C) Om Birla
 (D) Raghuram Rajan
- 43. Sheetal Devi, who was recently awarded the Arjuna Award 2023, is related to which sport?**
 (A) Chess (B) Archery
 (C) Shooting (D) Javelin throw
- 44. Which university has won the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy awarded annually by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and sports?**
 (A) Guru Nanak Dev University (Punjab)
 (B) Lovely Professional University (Punjab)
 (C) Banasthali Vidyapeeth (Rajasthan)
 (D) Kurukshetra University (Haryana)
- 45. Who won the FIFA Club World Cup title?**
 (A) Fraluminescence
 (B) Urawa Red Diamonds
 (C) Al Ahly
 (D) Manchester City
- 46. Where was the International Geeta Mahotsav 2023 organized?**
 (A) Jaipur (Rajasthan)
 (B) Panipat (Haryana)
 (C) Kurukshetra (Haryana)
 (D) Alwar (Rajasthan)
- 47. According to the report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which state ranks first in the country in terms of corruption cases?**
 (A) Rajasthan (B) Karnataka
 (C) Bihar (D) Maharashtra
- 48. Which is the first State Legal Services Authority of India in which all the officials have been appointed women?**
 (A) Karnataka (B) Bihar
 (C) Uttar Pradesh (D) Rajasthan
- 49. Who has been appointed as the first woman Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)?**
 (A) Kanchana Devi
 (B) V.S. Rama Devi
 (C) Deepak Sandhu
 (D) Rashmi Shukla
- 50. Where has the world's largest meditation center 'Swarveda' been situated?**
 (A) Lucknow (B) Bhopal
 (C) Indore (D) Varanasi

December 2023 Current Affairs Answer Key

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
D	C	B	D	A	B	B	D	A	C
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
B	D	B	B	C	A	D	C	B	A
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
C	B	D	B	A	D	C	A	B	D
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
B	C	A	B	B	D	B	A	C	B
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
C	D	B	A	D	C	D	B	A	D

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RANK



VIKRANT SHARMA

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