



pravahini

Monthly Compendium

of Current Affairs by **SUCCESS MANTRA** (GTB Nagar)

PREFACE

It gives us great pleasure to release the monthly edition of the PRAVAHINI – Monthly e-Compendium & Weekly e-Periodicals of Current Affairs. The magazine's members have shown considerable cooperation as well as devotion. We at successmantra.in work tirelessly to create this magazine and bring it to you with a great sense of gratitude.

The PRAVAHINI JANUARY-2023 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of July. Current Affairs is a crucial component of any competitive exams including CLAT, AILET, DU- LLB, HM, CAT, IAS, PCS, SSC, Banking, MBA and various other competitive examinations.

Current Affairs play the bigger role in many competitive and government exams. It holds the power of making or breaking your chance of success. Therefore, the candidates should cover the Current Affairs thoroughly and smartly.

We would also be pleased to receive any suggestion that could assist us with the upcoming editions.

Success Mantra (GTB Nagar, Delhi)

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Our Goal

Our goal at Success Mantra is to provide Quality education at rational price and thereby to create an environment that guides students towards the path of the success. Along with designing the curriculum and delivering the lectures, we work upon the ways the students think and approach problems asked.

B.S. Shanti



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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

NEW INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY SCHEME

The **Central Government of India** recently announced the launch of a new integrated food security scheme, which will provide free food grains to 81.35 crore beneficiaries under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA) for the year 2023**.



- The Cabinet has decided to implement this central sector scheme in order to fulfill the vision of “**One Nation-One Price-One Ration**” under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- This commitment of the government is intended to benefit the most **vulnerable 67% of the population, which is 81.35 crore persons** covered under the NFSA.
- **According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs**, the government has a social and legal commitment to ensuring that the people of India have access to food and nutritional security, through the availability of quality food grains.
- The new scheme aims to ensure effective and uniform implementation of the **National Food Security Act**, and to provide accessibility, affordability, and availability of food grains for the poor.
- It will also enable uniform implementation of portability under the “**One Nation One Ration Card**” program, which allows ration cards to be used anywhere in the country.

CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION

The Union Cabinet, **led by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission.



- Mission aims to make India a global hub for the production, utilization, and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.
- The initial outlay for the mission will be Rs. 19,744 crore, including Rs. 17,490 crore for the **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) program**, Rs. 1,466 crore for pilot projects, Rs. 400 crore for research and development, and Rs. 388 crore for other mission components.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission is expected to have wide-ranging benefits, including:

- Creation of export opportunities for green hydrogen and its derivatives
- Decarbonization of the industrial, mobility, and energy sectors
- Reduction in dependence on imported fossil fuels and feedstock
- Development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Development of **cutting-edge technologies**
- **Projected Outcomes by 2030**

By 2030, the National Green Hydrogen Mission is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 million metric tons per year, with an associated **renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW.**
- Over Rs. 8 lakh crore in total investments
- Creation of over 6 lakh jobs.
- Cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports of over Rs. 1 lakh crore
- Abatement of nearly 50 million metric tons of annual greenhouse gas emissions

WHAT IS INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF INDIA?

The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in India** is currently working on a new industrial policy that aims to increase financing options for industry and promote the “Made in India” brand.

- This **policy**, titled the “**Statement on Industrial Policy 2022 – Make in India for the world,**” has been circulated to various ministries for their input and comments.
- It is expected to address the challenges and issues facing industry in India by implementing policy measures that **will foster an innovative and competitive industrial ecosystem.**

The proposed policy has identified six main objectives:

- ***Competitiveness and capability:*** The policy aims to increase competitiveness and capability within the industrial sector in India.
- ***Economic integration and global value chain:*** The policy aims to increase economic integration and move up the global value chain.
- ***Attractive investment destination:*** The policy aims to make India an attractive investment destination.
- ***Innovation and entrepreneurship:*** The policy aims to nurture innovation and entrepreneurship within the industrial sector.
- ***Global scale and standards:*** The policy aims to achieve global scale and standards within the industrial sector.

RAJNATH SINGH INAUGURATED SIYOM BRIDGE

Defense minister **Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated the Siyom bridge in Arunachal Pradesh, along with 27 other infrastructure projects completed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

- Built at a cost of 724 crore rupees, these projects will hugely augment **India’s border infrastructure, mostly along the Chinese border, from Ladakh to Arunachal.**
- **21 other bridges**, three roads and three additional infrastructure projects in **Arunachal Pradesh, J&K, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Punjab and Rajasthan**, were virtually inaugurated by Rajnath Singh from the Siyom bridge site.



About the Siyom bridge:

- The **100-meter ‘Class-70’ steel arch superstructure on the Aalo-Yingkiong** road between West Siang and Upper Siang districts is one of the 28 projects completed by the BRO at a cost of Rs 724.3 crore to bolster border infrastructure.

ASSAM RECORDED ZERO-POACHING OF ENDANGERED RHINO

For the first time in nearly 45 years, **Assam recorded zero poaching of endangered rhinos in 2022**. These animals, known for their valuable horns, were poached 191 times in Assam between 2000 and 2021.



- The highest number of incidents occurred in 2013 and 2014, with 27 rhino deaths each reported. In 2020 and 2021, **two rhinos were killed each year**. The last time no poaching was reported in Assam was in 1977.
- Previously, the forest and police departments worked independently to address wildlife crimes such as poaching.
- The task force was established to coordinate the fight against poachers. **Bhupendra Yadav** reported that the coordinated efforts have been effective, stating, “We have intelligence both from forest and police sources about activities and movements of poachers, which helps in action against them.”

KALASA BANDURI NALA PROJECT

Despite opposition from Goa, **Karnataka Water Resources minister Govind Karjol** announced that the state will proceed with the **Kalasa-Banduri project on the River Mahadayi**.



- The project, which aims to divert water from the Mahadayi to provide drinking water for the districts of Belagavi, Dharwad, Bagalkot, and Gadag, has been the subject of controversy for decades.
- In 2020, the Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal allocated 13.42 tmcft of water from the river to Karnataka, a decision that has been challenged in the **Supreme Court by Goa and Maharashtra**.

What is the Kalasa-Banduri Nala Project?

- The **Kalasa Banduri Nala project** involves the construction of barrages against the Kalasa and Banduri streams, tributaries of the Mahadayi, in order to divert water **towards Karnataka’s parched districts**. The **project was first proposed in the 1980s**, but it has yet to be implemented due to a dispute between Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra.

WHAT IS ASPIRATIONAL BLOCKS PROGRAMME (ABP)?

Recently, the **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)** was launched during the 2nd National Conference of Chief Secretaries held from 5th January to 7th January, 2022.



What is the Aspirational Blocks Programme?

- It is a development initiative aimed at improving the performance of areas **that are lagging on various development parameters**.
- It was announced in the **Union Budget 2022-23**. It will initially cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories, with over half of these blocks located in six states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
- The ABP is based on the **Aspirational District Programme (ADP)**.

What is the Aspirational District Programme?

- **It was launched in 2018** which aims to transform districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas. Aspirational Districts are those districts in India **that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators**. It covers 112 districts across the country.

REVIVAL OF SETHUSAMUDRAM PROJECT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has recently moved a resolution in the state assembly seeking the revival of the Sethusamudram Project, a proposed shipping canal project in India that would connect the **Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait**.



- The project, which has been controversial since its inception, was **put on hold by the Government of India in 2007**.
- The **Sethusamudram Project** aims to construct a shipping canal through the **shallow waters of the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar**, which would reduce the distance and time required for ships to travel between the east and west coasts of India. The project would bypass the traditional shipping route through the **Palk Strait, which is considered a navigational hazard**.

Controversies

- The **Sethusamudram Project** has been met with **opposition from various groups**, who raise concerns about its potential impact on the environment, the Ram Setu, and its economic viability.

PM MODI FLAGGED OFF WORLD'S LONGEST RIVER CRUISE

Recently, the **Prime Minister of India** flagged off the world's longest river cruise, MV Ganga Vilas in Varanasi.



- During the event, the **Prime Minister** also inaugurated **Tent City in Varanasi** and laid the foundation stones for several other inland waterways projects.

Ganga Vilas Cruise: What You Need to Know?

- The cruise will be managed by private operators, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), under which the **Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways (MoPSW)** has supported the project.
- It will explore forty historic sites on the banks of the river Ganga including, **Mahabodhi temple, Hazarduari Palace, Katra Masjid, Bodh Gaya, Chandanagar church, Char Bangla Temple and more.**
- Besides connecting **National Waterway 1 (NW-1)** which includes Ganga and National Waterway 2 (NW-2) on Brahmaputra, the cruise will cross 27 river systems.
- The **Ganga - Bhagirathi-Hooghly River system** between Haldia (Sagar) and Allahabad (1620 km) was declared as NW-1 in 1986.

NOTIFICATION OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The **Delhi government** has suggested that the Centre can grant “migrated minority” status to Hindus who have moved to the national capital from places like Jammu and Kashmir or Ladakh where they are a religious minority.

- The **suggestion is part of a compilation of views collected by the Centre from 24 States** on whether religious and linguistic minority communities should be identified and notified by the Union or the respective States. It is part of an **affidavit submitted by the Centre in the Supreme Court.**
- **Currently, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians (Parsis)** have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the **National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992.**
- **As per the Census 2011**, the percentage of minorities in the country is about 19.3 of the total population of the country. The population of **Muslims is 14.2%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.7%, Buddhists 0.7%, Jains 0.4%, and Parsis 0.006%.**

Migrated Minority Status for Hindus

- The **Delhi government** suggests that “**The followers of Hinduism** are not the religious minority in the NCT of Delhi but the Central government may declare the ‘migrated minority’ status to the followers of Hinduism who are the religious minority in their origin State (i.e., **Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, etc**) and residing in Delhi after migration from their home State,” as per the Centre’s note in court.

WHAT IS 'WOMANIYA INITIATIVE'?

The **Government e Marketplace (GeM)** has launched a new initiative called “**Womaniya on GeM**” to empower women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups (WSHGs) to sell their products directly to various government ministries, departments, and institutions.

- The **initiative aims to develop women entrepreneurship on the margins of society** to achieve gender-inclusive economic growth. It will spur hyper-local economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs and address the goals and objectives of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Womaniya on Government e Marketplace:

- The CEO of GeM, S Radha Chauhan, has released a video to highlight the **essence and benefits of the Womaniya initiative**.
- The Womaniya initiative is particularly important because nearly **80% of women-owned establishments are self-financed and more than 60% of 8 million units** are owned and or led by women entrepreneurs from socially-challenged sections of the society.

INDIAN ARMY ORDERED APACHE HELICOPTERS

The Indian Army had ordered six Apache Helicopters with the Tata Boeing Aerospace Limited (TBAL). So far, six of these helicopters have been delivered and five more are being prepared. The order was placed under the GoI's Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative.

- The initiative aims to make India self-reliant. And therefore, GoI placed its order with the Hyderabad-based TBAL. **The TBAL is a joint venture established to make India a global defense exporter.**

Apache helicopter

- It is **an attack helicopter with a Turbo Shaft engine**. It is armed with chain guns. The helicopter has night vision systems and target acquisition systems. Also, it can carry missiles and rocket pods. The Apache model was designed and developed by the Hughes helicopter for the US Army.

WHAT IS KALASHNIKOV AK-203 ASSAULT RIFLES?

The Indo-Russian joint venture for the manufacturing of Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles is a testament to the **strong partnership relations between the two countries**.

- The move to manufacture these rifles in India through a joint venture not only lends greater firepower to the Indian armed forces **but also serves as a significant step in strengthening military-technical cooperation** between the two nations.

What is the Kalashnikov AK-203 Assault Rifle?

- The **Kalashnikov AK-203 is a type of assault rifle** that is designed and manufactured by the Kalashnikov Concern, a subsidiary of the Russian Rostec State Corporation.

- The AK-203 is part of the **AK-200 series of rifles**, which are based on the traditional **AK-47** design but feature modernized and updated components.

INDIA & RUSSIA BEGUN JOINT PRODUCTION OF AK-203 RIFLES

India and Russia have begun the joint production of AK 203 rifles at a factory in **Amethi, Uttar Pradesh**.



- India and Russia had inked an agreement in December 2021 for procurement of 6,01,427 AK 203 assault rifles through **Korwa Ordnance Factory in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi district**.
- **What are the Key Points of Joint Contract?**
- **More than six lakh rifles** are to be manufactured in India as part of a joint venture — Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited — established between the Indian Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), Kalashnikov Concern, and Rosoboronexport, (both subsidiaries of the Rostec State Corporation).
- The Rs 5,124 crore deal was signed between India and Russia in December 2021. **It is the biggest defense deal between the two nations in recent years.** The deal has a clause for complete technology transfer. The rifles will also be exported to friendly foreign nations. The idea is to **have rifles made of 100 % indigenous components over a period of 128 months.**

COMMISSION OF SUB-CATEGORIZATION OF OBC

In 2017, the **President of India constituted a Commission under Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Justice G Rohini**. The main objective of the commission was to prepare a report examining the OBC subcategories in the country.



- The President formed the commission using his powers under Article 340. **The commission was to submit its report within 12 weeks.** The work is still pending and the commission recently got a 14th extension.

Why sub – categorization?

- Today the Other Backward Castes in the country receive 27% reservation in education and employment. There is a need for subcategorization as most of the reserved seats are grabbed by a few communities.
- **Current Scenario:** In 2018, 10 OBC communities took 25% of the reserved quota on jobs and educational seats. **97% of the total seats reserved for the OBC communities had gone to these 10 communities alone!**

NATIONAL MISSION FOR A GREEN INDIA

India is lagging behind in the targets to increase the number and quality of tree- and forest-cover plantations set in the **National Mission for a Green India (GIM)**.

- States with significant shortfall in tree cover include **Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala**.



How is Tree Cover Different from Forest Cover?

- Tree cover refers to the total area of land that is covered by trees, **regardless of whether or not the trees are part of a forest ecosystem**.
- Forest cover, on the other hand, refers specifically to the area of land that is covered by a forest ecosystem, **which is defined as an area with a tree canopy density of more than 10%** and an area of more than 1 hectare. So, all forest cover is tree cover, but not all tree cover is forest cover.

What is the National Mission for a Green India?

- GIM is one of the **eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change**. It aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to climate change. The **target under the Mission is 10 million hectares (Mha) on forest and non-forest lands** for increasing the forest/tree cover and to improve the quality of existing forest.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change supports the States/Union Territories for carrying out **afforestation activities through this Centrally Sponsored Scheme**. Improving tree cover is critical to sequester carbon and bolster **India's carbon stocks as part of its international commitments** to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

TARGET TO BECOME '1ST GREEN ENERGY STATE'

- The **Himachal Pradesh government intends to make the state as the first Green Energy State** by the end of 2025 by harnessing hydro, hydrogen and solar energy and switching to green products.
- The State is projected as a Power State in the Country and under the **visionary leadership of Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu**, the state government is resolute to promote, develop and harness optimally, the huge energy potential of the State.



Initiative led by Himachal Pradesh

- The **state government would also invest in solar plants and will install 500 MW solar projects** during the year 2023-24, out of this, 200 MW would be installed by HPPCL for which land has been identified for 70 MW capacity and the rest of the sites will be finalized soon.

- Solar projects up to **150 MW capacity would be installed by HIMURJA** through private participation and priority would be given to Himachalis in awarding these projects, he said and added that the capacity of the projects will range from 250 KW to 1 MW.
- The **Government of Himachal Pradesh has received a dividend of Rs. 2355 crore** against the equity contribution of Rs. 1055 crore and 12 percent free power from Nathpa Jhakri and Rampur hydro power projects amounting to around Rs. 7000 crore so far.

WHAT ARE THE MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES?

The concept of mandatory minimum sentences is common in American and Canadian legal systems. Recently, the Canadian Apex court announced that it is to stop pronouncing mandatory minimum sentences.



- Mandatory minimum sentences are judgments that do not leave discretion to the court. **Meaning the punishment cannot be reduced in the future.**

What are Mandatory Minimum Sentences?

- In simple terms, the judgments in which the level of punishment cannot be reduced in the future are called mandatory minimum sentences. Say, a Supreme Court judge pronounced five years of punishment to a convict.
- Usually, the convict may appeal to the court for a reduction in **punishment after a year or after six months of imprisonment**. The court checks if his conduct has changed and based on his realization, it agrees to reduce his punishment. **This is called a mandatory minimum sentence.**

Mandatory Minimum Sentence in India

- The Chief Justice of India recently challenged a petition related to mandatory minimum sentences. The petition requested the **Supreme Court to reduce the punishment of the convicts arrested in a gang rape (of a minor girl of 12 years of age).**

DRAFT NATIONAL ELECTRICITY POLICY

The Standing Committee constituted to work on Electricity issues in India made recommendations to create a new Electricity Policy. Based on the recommendations, the **Ministry of Power constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of Gireesh Pradhan to create the policy.**



- The panel submitted the draft policy in October 2021. Now, the ministry has finalized the policy and is circulating it to the states and the **CEA (Central Electricity Authority) seeking comments.**

About the Draft Policy

- The policy was framed invoking **Electricity Act, 2003**
- **Private parties** shall be invited for distributing power

- Quality power supply in rural areas
- Reduce **dependence on coal**
- Increase hydrogen storage and hydro storage
- Increase investments on mini-grids
- Make metering completely smart
- **Encourage and increase the use of domestic power equipment**

STATUS OF PRISON ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

Recently, the Prime Minister suggested prison reforms to **improve jail management and recommended repealing obsolete criminal laws**, at the 57th All-India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspector General's of Police, organized by the Intelligence Bureau (IB).



What is the Status of Prison Administration in India?

- Prison administration is an important component of the criminal justice system. There is a paradigm shift in social viewpoint towards prisoners in the last century.
- Earlier system of prison with a punitive attitude where inmates were forcibly confined and deprived a variety of freedom as a form of **punishment has changed with a change in social perception towards prison and prisoners.**
- It is now treated as a correction or improvement facility which itself indicates that there is more emphasis on **reformation of prisoners than to punish them.**

Structure of the Criminal Justice System in India:

- The Indian Criminal Justice System is composed of government agencies that enforce the law, adjudicate crimes, and correct criminal behavior.

It has four subsystems:

- Legislature (Parliament)
- Enforcement (Police)
- Adjudication (Courts)
- Corrections (Prisons, Community Facilities)

WHAT IS 'PARAKH' INITIATIVE?

The **Government of India recently launched PARAKH** to assess the performance of secondary and higher secondary students. Different states in the country are following different assessment procedures to evaluate their students.

- Because of the variations, students are facing difficulties during their college admissions. PARAKH will bring uniformity to the analysis procedures.



PARAKH – A Part of National Education Policy, 2020

- The National Education Policy of 2020 brought in several changes to the education system of the country. Major changes were at the school level. PARAKH was one among them.
- The policy aims to achieve inclusion and excellence. PARAKH will help in achieving inclusion. For instance, the state board students face more difficulties to compete with the CBSE school students. This is because of differences in syllabus, exam pattern, and above all the differences in evaluation.

FIFTH KALVARI CLASS SUBMARINE 'VAGIR'

Indian Navy is set to commission the fifth Kalvari class submarine Vagir on 23 Jan 2023. The Chief of the Naval Staff Adm R Hari Kumar will be the Chief Guest for the ceremony.



- These submarines are being built in India by the **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai**, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France. Four of the Kalvari class of submarines has already been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- The **former Vagir was commissioned on 01 Nov 1973 and undertook numerous operational missions including deterrent patrols**. The submarine was decommissioned on 07 Jan 2001 after serving the nation for about three decades.

INDIAN AIR FORCE TO HOLD EXERCISE 'PRALAY'

The Indian Air Force is to conduct a massive military exercise near the **Line of Actual Control**. The Government of India conducts such military exercises on the border to control the infiltrations.



- Infiltrations are common in the Line of Control, India – Pakistan border, and Line of Actual Control, India – China border. During these military exercises, there is a huge movement of artillery and soldiers to the border. **Squadrons move and surround the region during the exercises.**
- This helps to keep a check on the trouble-causing elements at the border. The **PRALAY is to be conducted on the North Eastern border** where Chinese infiltrations are rising these days.

About PRALAY Exercise

- **With PRALAY exercise the Government of India** has decided to exhibit its Air Force power in the region. Therefore, PRALAY will be conducted by IAF. It is to be noted that India recently deployed S – 400 missiles in the region. **PRALAY will see the participation of India's leading fighter jets such as the Rafale and Su-30.**

KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT (KBLP)

Recently, the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** has chaired a meeting on **Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)**, stating that it is the “flagship” project of the national government and it “is crucial for the water security and socio-economic development of Bundelkhand region”.

- In December 2021, the **Union Cabinet approved KBLP at a total cost of Rs 44,605 crore**. In this project. The project has been delayed due to political and environmental issues.



What is the Ken-Betwa Link?

- The **Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)** is the river interlinking project that aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh (MP) to Betwa in Uttar Pradesh (UP) to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
- The region spread across the districts of two states mainly **Jhansi, Banda, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts of UP and Tikamgarh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts of MP**.
- The project involves building a 77-meter tall and a 2-km wide Dhaudhan dam (to be built within Panna Tiger Reserve) and a 230-km canal. Ken-Betwa is one of the 30 river interlinking projects conceived across the country.

WHAT IS AERO INDIA 2023?

The **Defence Ministry has been organizing the Aero – India Show since 1996**. Other organizations such as DRDO, the Indian Air Force, Civil Aviation, and the Department of Space join the ministry to organize the show. The show is one of the largest air shows in Asia.



- Service providers of Indian aerospace and other manufacturers exhibit their products. **Buyers from different countries participate in the show**. It is to be held at the Yelahanka Air Force Base near Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Theme: **The Runway to a Billion Opportunities**

About Aero India 2023

- In 2023, big shots of the aviation sector will participate. This includes Boeing or the USA, Airbus of Europe, and other missile manufacturers from Europe. **The show is a biennial event**. It is held once every two years.

CHINA BUILDING DAM ON MABJA ZANGBO RIVER

Satellite images show that China is constructing a new dam on the **Mabja Zangbo river**, geospatial intelligence researcher **Damien Symon** has claimed.



- The dam will be sitting just a few kilometers north of the **Indian-Nepali-Chinese border trijunction**. Satellite images show work is being done on the Mabja Zangbo River in Tibet's Burang County since 2021.
- **While the construction of the dam is not complete**, it does pose questions regarding China's hegemony on water supplies downstream in the future.
- The **Mabja Zangbo River flows downstream into the Ghaghara or Karnali river before eventually meeting the Ganges in India**. Mabja Zangbo originates from Mount Kailash, but is not a major tributary of the critically important water of the Karnali.
- The **Karnali river is the second biggest tributary by length of the Ganges, after River Yamuna**, and the biggest tributary of the Ganges by volume.
- **The river flows past cities like Ayodhya and Faizabad**, where it is known as the legendary Sarayu River, Bahraich, Barabanki, Basti, Deoria, Barhalganj, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Sitapur, Siddharthnagar, Saint Kabir Nagar, Kamhariya, Rajesultanpur and Tanda in Uttar Pradesh among other settlements in Bihar.

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WHAT IS TITLE 42 & WHY IT WAS IMPLEMENTED?

The **United States recently announced that it will extend COVID-19** pandemic-era restrictions, known as Title 42, to expel migrants from Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti caught crossing the **U.S.-Mexico border back to Mexico**.



- The move would block more nationalities from seeking asylum in the United States, and raises questions about the implications of this policy expansion and its legality.
- **Title 42 is an immigration policy** that was implemented by the U.S. health authorities in March 2020, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The policy was implemented to allow border agents to rapidly send migrants crossing the **U.S.-Mexico border back to Mexico or other countries**.
- The **policy was implemented under Republican former President Donald Trump**, whose administration sought to greatly curtail both immigration.

CROATIA SWITCH TO CURRENCY 'EURO'

Croatia has taken two **major steps towards further integration with the European Union (EU)** by adopting the euro and joining the Schengen zone.



- The country officially became the **20th member of the eurozone on January 1st**, and the removal of land border controls with neighboring Slovenia and Hungary marks its inclusion in the Schengen zone.
- **Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković** hailed the adoption of the euro as a “historic moment” that would better protect Croatian citizens from financial crises.
- The euro was already widely used in the country, with about 80% of bank deposits denominated in the currency and many shops and restaurants in tourist areas accepting payment in euros.
- The adoption of the **euro is expected to improve borrowing conditions in Croatia** and shield its economy at a time when inflation is soaring worldwide. In November, Croatia’s inflation rate was 13.5%, higher than the 10% in the eurozone.

Joining the Schengen Zone

- The **inclusion of Croatia in the Schengen zone**, which allows for passport-free travel between 26 European countries, is expected to boost tourism in the country.
- The tourism industry accounts for 20% of Croatia’s GDP, and the **end of land border controls with Slovenia and Hungary** is expected to make it easier for tourists to visit the country’s popular Adriatic coastline.

CHINA LAUNCHED ASIA'S 1ST HYDROGEN TRAIN

China's CRRC Corporation Ltd. launched a hydrogen urban train, and it is the first in Asia and the second such train in the world. Germany introduced green trains a few months back. The hydrogen trains have a speed of 160 km per hour and the operational range without refueling is 600 km.

- The trains launched by **Germany have a record of 1175 km range set.** The Indian Railway on the other hand is moving fast to induct the 'World's Greenest Train' soon.
- India will get its **first-ever Indigenous Hydrogen trains by December 2023.** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav informed that Indian Railways is working on new environment-friendly trains and the engineers are designing them.

China Becomes First Country in Asia to Launch Hydrogen-Powered Train- Key Points

- The **hydrogen train was developed on the basis of a high-speed platform and includes 4 cars with it.** CRRC also introduced such a shunting locomotive in 2021 and hydrogen trams were produced earlier in the mid-2010s.
- The train will also get Digital solutions from the CRRC including GoA2 automation, component monitoring sensors, and **5G data transmission equipment.**

INDIA & UK YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SCHEME

The **governments of India and the UK marked Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** on January 9, 2023 by launching the Young Professionals Scheme, which allows up to 3,000 degree-holding citizens aged between 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for a period of two years.



- The scheme, **which was announced in November at the G20 summit in Bali,** is part of the India-UK Migration and Mobility Memorandum of Understanding signed in May 2021.
- Successful candidates will be able to search for job, educational, or cultural opportunities in their host country, or simply visit for the two-year period.
- The scheme allows for exchange visas for up to 3,000 individuals per year. It is **not necessary for candidates to have a job lined up when they apply for the visa.**

WHAT IS FREEDOM CAUCUS GROUP?

- On January 4 and Thursday January 5, **Republicans in the House of Representatives** failed to elect a leader, with a faction of holdouts, largely from the ultra-conservative, hard-right Freedom Caucus, refusing to **vote for nominee Kevin McCarthy (R-CA).**
- This marks the first time since 1923 that a nominee of the majority party in the **House hasn't been able to win the first vote for the position of Speaker.**



- The Freedom Caucus, which comprises roughly 30 members and emerged from the Tea Party movement, is known for its fiscally conservative and right-wing populist positions.
- This includes a desire for lower taxes, budget cuts, decentralization of government powers, and opposition to immigration. The caucus has also been labeled “nativist,” “anti-globalist,” and “white supremacist” by observers.
- In 2016, the **Freedom Caucus threw its support behind Donald Trump’s presidential campaign** and has been described as “more populist and nationalist, but less bound by policy principles.” However, despite Trump’s own support for McCarthy as Speaker candidate, many in the Freedom Caucus have opposed McCarthy’s bid.

INDIA TO HOST 'THE VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH' SUMMIT

India will host ‘The Voice of Global South’ Summit on January 12-13, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said. As many as 120 countries will participate in the summit.

- The virtual summit is **significant as India currently holds the presidency of the G20 group** and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier indicated that priorities would be shaped in consultation with developing countries.



Theme of The Voice of Global South Summit:

- The ‘Voice of Global South Summit’ under the theme ‘**Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose**’ envisages bringing together countries of the **Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform.**

PERU FACING WORLD OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE

Peru is currently facing its worst outbreak of violence in over 20 years, as clashes between security forces and protesters have left at least 40 people dead. The protests, which began in December 2022, have been sparked by calls for fresh elections and government accountability.



- The **latest round of protests began in December 2022**, following the impeachment and arrest of former president Pedro Castillo on multiple corruption charges and for an attempted “coup.”
- **Castillo’s impeachment and arrest** was followed by the ascent of his former **vice-president, Dina Boluarte, to the presidency.**
- However, **many Peruvians view Boluarte** as an illegitimate leader, and have called for fresh elections to allow the people to choose their own leader. Boluarte has so far been unwilling to step down, and has only agreed to hold “early” elections in 2024, rather than the scheduled 2026.

Government response adding fuel to fire

- The **Boluarate government's response to the protests** has only served to fuel the anger of the protesters. Allegations of undue and excessive force by the government have been widespread, with reports of live rounds being fired at protesters and smoke bombs being dropped from helicopters.

INDIA BANGLADESH FRIENDSHIP PIPELINE PROJECT

The **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline Project**, signed in 2018, will connect **Siliguri in West Bengal in India and Parbatipur in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh.**



- The Friendship pipeline from India will start supplying diesel to Bangladesh from June. The **131.5 kilometer long pipeline has been constructed for importing diesel from India**, 126.5 km of which is in Bangladesh and 5 km in India.
- The IBFPL project aims to facilitate the transportation of imported fuel oil and reduce its transport costs for Bangladesh

Project Background

- The groundbreaking ceremony for the **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL)** was held in September 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
- The pipeline has a **capacity of one million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA)** and is being built under grant assistance from the government of India. It will enable fuel oil products to be exported from India's Siliguri Marketing Terminal in West Bengal State to Bangladesh.

NAVAL EXERCISE BETWEEN INDIA & FRANCE: VARUNA

The **21st edition of the bilateral naval exercise between India and France, Exercise Varuna**, began on the Western Seaboard on January 16th, 2023.



- The **bilateral exercise, which was initiated in 1993, was named 'Varuna'** in 2001 and has become a defining feature of the India-France strategic bilateral relationship.
- This edition of the exercise will see the participation of the **Indian Navy's indigenous guided missile stealth destroyer INS Chennai**, guided missile frigate INS Teg, maritime patrol aircraft P-8I and Dornier, integral helicopters, and MiG29K fighter aircraft.
- The French Navy will be represented by the aircraft carrier Charles De Gaulle, frigates FS Forbin and Provence, **support vessel FS Marne, and maritime patrol aircraft Atlantique.**

MEXICO IMPOSED WORLD'S STRICTEST ANTI-TOBACCO LAWS

Mexico has recently imposed one of the **world's strictest anti-tobacco laws**, setting in force a total ban on smoking in public places, including hotels, beaches, and parks.

- The new law, **which is part of the country's General Law for Tobacco Control reform**, came into force on Sunday and will also see the total ban on the promotion, advertising, and sponsorship of tobacco products.
- The **new blanket ban extends on an existing federal and state tobacco control law** which came into place in 2008, banning smoking in indoor spaces such as bars, restaurants, and workplaces.
- Mexico — **where the most sold cigarette brand is Marlboro** — now joins nations such as Ireland, Greece, Hungary, and Malta as those with the most stringent smoke-free environments.



GIVING TO AMPLIFY EARTH ACTION (GAEA) INITIATIVE

The **World Economic Forum**, in partnership with over 45 organizations, has launched the **Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA) initiative**.

- The goal of GAEA is to fund and grow new and existing public, private, and philanthropic partnerships (PPPPs) to unlock the \$3 trillion of financing needed each year to reach net zero, reverse nature loss, and restore biodiversity by 2050.



GAEA's Partners and Objectives

- GAEA's growing body of philanthropic partners includes organizations such as the **African Climate Foundation, Bezos Earth Fund, and the Rockefeller Foundation**.
- **Over the next 12 months**, GAEA will work with these partners and McKinsey Sustainability as a knowledge partner, to build momentum around three clear objectives:
- **Convene leaders from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors** to identify and target climate and nature solutions where they are best positioned to play a catalytic role.
- Pilot and refine funding models that can support PPPP interventions. **Scale up funding for targeted climate and nature solutions**, leveraging philanthropy as a catalyst for attracting and deploying other forms of financing.

FIRST MOVERS COALITION LEADERSHIP MEETING

The **World Economic Forum** recently conducted the First Movers Coalition Leadership Meeting deliberating the need for clean energy technologies. **India participated in the meeting.**



First Movers Coalition

- The FMC was launched by US President Joe Biden in 2021. He **launched it at the Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow**. The aim of the coalition is to create a robust market for clean energy technologies.
- The FMC aims to aid high-emitting industries **like aviation, steel, shipping, and chemicals to decarbonize**. This is to be achieved by leveraging their purchasing power.

INDIA'S STAND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 13A

In 1987, **India and Sri Lanka signed an agreement** to implement the 13th amendment of the Sri Lankan constitution. According to the agreement, the Sri Lankan Government will provide powers to the Tamil community in the country.

- Recently, External Affairs Minister Jai Shankar declared that **India ponders the implementation of 13A "CRITICAL"**. According to India, 13A is essential for the Sri Lankan Government to reconcile with the Tamil community in the country.

What is 13A?

- **13A is the 13th amendment of the Sri Lankan constitution**. It will give more power to the Tamil people in the country. Tamilians are the minority in the country of Sri Lanka.
- The Tamil community in the country is demanding a separate state. In 1987, with the Indian Union Government's efforts, the Sri Lankan Government agreed to increase the powers of Tamilians in the country through 13A. However, 13A was not implemented.

EGYPT PRESIDENT AT CHIEF GUEST OF REPUBLIC DAY

Every republic day and Independence Day celebration, India invites chief guests from different countries. Earlier, **that is, between the 1950s and 1970s**, India invited chief guests from the Eastern Blocs and NAM.



- However, the **trend has now changed. We are now inviting our close trade partners and allies to the celebrations**. This year, in 2023, India invited the Egyptian President.

Why the Egyptian President?

- Recently, the ties between India and Egypt have been growing strongly. **The following events prove the point:**

- **5th India – Egypt Joint Trade Committee** meeting held in late 2022.
- Trade between **India and Egypt** increased by 75% in the past year.
- Egypt in 2020-21 became one of the largest investment destinations of India.
- The Indian investments in the country amount to 3 billion USD.
- Defense ties between the countries are growing stronger.
- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** visited the country in 2022 and signed an MoU.
- Cyclone I military exercise was recently conducted between India and Egypt.
- Egypt agreed to import wheat from India in 2022.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

The **eighth India International Science Festival** is to be held in Bhopal. The Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated the festival. According to the Government of India, **the festival is a step in moving towards “AMRIT KAAL”**.

- The theme of India International Science Festival, 2023: Marching Towards AMRIT KAAL with Science and Technology



Significance of the theme

- The theme aligns with and signifies the following:
 - Self-Reliant India
 - G20 vision of India in 2023 (India is hosting the 2023 G20 meet)
 - One Earth One Family One Future

CHRIS KIPKINS AS NEW PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

Chris Kipkins of New Zealand is to succeed Jacinda Ardern as PM. He belongs to the Labour Party of NZ. He is to take charge by February 2023. Currently, Chris serves as the Education minister of the country. He **played a big role as Health Minister during the pandemic**.

Why is New Zealand electing a new PM?

- Jacinda Ardern recently announced that she is to step down as PM. After her announcement, the labor party unanimously voted for Chris. Many believe that his role as health minister during COVID earned him the ranking.

Role of Chris Hipkins

- **Chris was designated as the health minister during COVID** in addition to other portfolios such as education and public service. He also acted as the Leader of the House during that time. **Chris is also looking after the police services** in the country and tackling crime rates.

SCO MEET: INDIA INVITES PAKISTAN & CHINA

The **Shanghai Cooperation Meet** is to be held in **August 2023** under **India's chairmanship**. 2023 is India's year as the country is hosting two major international meets, the SCO and the G-20.



- The Global South looks up to these meetings. **SCO members rotate the chairmanship amongst themselves.**
- And in 2023, the rotating chair will come to India. As a responsible chairperson, India has invited Pakistan and China as they are also members of SCO along with **Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.**
- Theme: SCO meet is to be held under the theme **“FOR A SECURE SCO”**. Here SECURE includes the following concept:
 - S: Security for citizens
 - E: Economic Development
 - C: Connectivity
 - U: Unity
 - R: Respect
 - E: Environmental Protection
- The theme of G-20, as India says is **“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”**, meaning **“World is one family”**. On the G-20 website, the Government of India puts the theme as **“One Earth – One Family – One Future”**

SUCCESS MANTRA

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

RBI LAUNCHED UTKARSH 2.0

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched **Utkarsh 2.0**, the second phase of its medium-term strategy for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms.



- **Utkarsh 2.0** builds upon the foundation laid by Utkarsh 2022, which was launched in July 2019 and covered the period from 2019 to 2022.
- **Utkarsh 2.0 will guide the RBI** over the period from 2023 to 2025 and includes six vision statements that are designed to improve the performance of the RBI's statutory and other functions, enhance its relevance and significance at the national and global levels, and improve its internal governance, infrastructure, and human resources.
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WHAT IS PURCHASING MANAGER'S INDEX (PMI)?

As per the **S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)**, the manufacturing sector in India had its most significant production growth in 13 months in December 2022.



- For the October to December quarter, the PMI averaged 56.3, the highest in a year. It indicates that the manufacturing sector is performing well and may be contributing to job creation.

What is the Purchasing Managers Index?

- It is a **survey-based measure** that asks the respondents about changes in their perception about key business variables as compared with the previous month.
- The **purpose of the PMI** is to provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors. It is calculated separately for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a composite index is also constructed.
- The **PMI is a number from 0 to 100**. A print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction. A reading at 50 indicates no change.

- If the PMI of the previous month is higher than the PMI of the current month, it represents that the economy is contracting. It is usually released at the start of every month. It is, **therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity.**

NATION'S 1ST FULLY DIGITAL BANKING STATE

Kerala has become the first state in India to enable digital banking in all eligible accounts. According to the State-Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), the state now has at least one product enabled digitally in 3.76 crore accounts.



- The state government, led by **CM Pinarayi Vijayan**, has implemented this move under the 'Expanding and Deepening of Digital Payments Ecosystem' scheme of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Thrissur: The First District to Implement Digital Banking

- In 2021, **Thrissur became the first district in Kerala** to implement digital banking under the scheme. This has been a major step towards digitization of the state's economy, and the government is hopeful that this will lead to a significant boost in the state's economy.

Kerala Fiber Optic Network (KFON)

- The **state government has been working on the Kerala Fiber Optic Network (KFON) project**, which is aimed at providing cost-effective internet access to the public.

RBI ISSUED SOVEREIGN GREEN BOND FRAMEWORK

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced its plans to issue Sovereign Green Bonds worth Rs 8,000 crore in two tranches on January 25 and February 9. The proceeds of the bonds will be used to fund public sector projects aimed at reducing the carbon intensity of India's economy.

- The bonds will be sold in two denominations maturing in five years and ten years, worth Rs 4,000 crore each. They **will be issued through Uniform Price Auctions and 5%** of the total amount will be reserved for retail investors.
- The **bonds will also be eligible for Repurchase Transactions (Repo)** and can be used as eligible investments for Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) purposes.

Framework for Sovereign Green Bonds

- In November of last year, the **government released a framework for sovereign Green Bonds**. The framework established a committee headed by the Chief Economic Adviser to select eligible projects for financing.
- The **payment of principal and interest on the bonds will not be dependent** on the performance of the selected projects, meaning that investors will not bear any project-related risks.

- The eligible expenditures for the bonds will be limited to government expenditures that occurred a maximum of 12 months prior to issuance, **with the goal of allocating the proceeds to projects within 24 months of issuance.**

TRADE B/W CHINA & INDIA REACHED ALL TIME HIGH

The trade between India and China reached an all-time high of USD 135.98 billion in 2022, even as New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time, according to data released by the Chinese customs.



- This marks a significant increase from the USD 125 billion recorded in 2021. **Despite border tensions following the military standoff in eastern Ladakh** in May 2020, the trade between the two countries continues to boom.
- The **trade deficit for India stood at USD 101.02 billion**, crossing the 2021 figure of USD 69.38 billion. This is the first time the trade deficit, a serious concern constantly expressed by India, has crossed the USD 100 billion mark.
- According to an **official brief on trade posted on the Indian Embassy website in Beijing**, the rapid expansion of India-China bilateral trade since the beginning of this century has propelled China to emerge as India's largest goods trading partner by 2008.
- **Since the beginning of the last decade**, bilateral trade between the two countries has recorded exponential growth. **From 2015 to 2021**, India-China bilateral trade grew by 75.30 per cent, an average yearly growth of 12.55 per cent.

ALIBABA GROUP SOLD STAKE IN INDIAN DIGITAL FIRM 'PAYTM'

China's Alibaba Group sold a 3.1% stake in Indian digital payments firm Paytm for a total of \$125 million through a block deal. Shares of the company fell as much as 8.8% to 528 rupees in afternoon trading, and were last down 5.8%.



- Alibaba, which held a **6.26% stake in Paytm as of end-September**, sold the **stake at 536.95 rupees apiece**. Paytm's stock has risen about 9% this year up to last close, after reporting strong preliminary figures for the third quarter.
- **It closed 2022 with a 60% loss**, despite the company announcing a share buyback in December. In November last year, **Softbank Group Corp sold a 4.5% stake in the e-payments firm** worth \$200 million. SoftBank had a 17.5% stake in Paytm as of Sept. 30.

About The Paytm's IPO Journey:

- Formally known as **One97 Communications**, Paytm listed in 2021 after a mega \$2.5 billion initial public offer (IPO).
- Since then, the stock has plunged around 75% from its IPO offer price as investors started questioning the company's monetization plans amid worries about sky-high valuations of tech companies and fears of a global economic recession.

53RD EDITION OF WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

The 53rd edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Kicks Off in Davos, Switzerland. **The meeting will continue from January 15th to January 20th.**



- The **WEF meeting provides a platform for global leaders** to share their insights on the prevalent economic conditions across the globe and to discuss the challenges that the world is facing today. It is also an opportunity for leaders to discuss the future of the global economy.
- **WEF 2023 Theme:** The theme for 2023 meet is “**Cooperation in a Fragmented World**.” The theme of this year is particularly important in today’s political and economic climate.
- The world is facing multiple challenges such as economic recession, climate change, geopolitical conflicts and many more. **The WEF is an opportunity for leaders to come together and find solutions to these problems.**
- The **goal of the WEF is to promote innovative solutions and encourage cooperation between governments** and the business sectors to create conditions for a strong and durable recovery.
- According to the WEF’s annual Global Risks Report, the threat of recession, cost-of-living crisis, and debt distress is likely to dominate the outlook for at least two years.

NEW INITIATIVES LAUNCHED AT WEF

The World Economic Forum met at Davos, Switzerland. During their meeting, the world leaders launched more than fifty initiatives focusing on building a resilient and sustainable world. Most of the **initiatives addressed the food crisis issues and economic energy issues.**



- The event is of great significance as economists are expecting an economic crisis due to geopolitical tensions. **Also, recessionary risks have been forecasted.**
- **Pressure on food, inflation, and energy is expected to increase in 2023.** The Ukraine war and US–China relations are to cause income-related crises and global economic runoff. **The initiatives were launched considering the impacts of these issues.**

Giving to Amplify Earth Action

- The **initiative will raise 3 trillion USD for climate and nature.** That is, it will ensure that 3 trillion USD is available for the climate and nature-related actions of WEF.
- HCL Technologies of India is supporting the initiative along with 45 other stakeholders.
- **FireAid initiative:** It aims to manage wildfires using Artificial Intelligence. Under the initiative, scientists will use data and maps to **determine the intensity of wildfires in different parts of the world.**

- **Global Collaboration Village Mission:** The main objective of this initiative is to create a space for discussion. The mission will bring in all stakeholders together to discuss the economic development of the world. It **aims to bring global development.**

WHAT IS ECONOMIC SURVEY 2023?

The **report detailing the financial status of the country is called the Economic Survey.** The survey is released by the Finance Ministry and submitted by the Finance Minister to the Parliament.



- The **finance minister submits the survey report after the President's address.** Every Union Budget session begins with the address of the President.

About Economic Survey

- The report **explains the performance of India in the previous financial year.**
- It talks about the inflation rate
- Trends in major sectors of the country such as **agriculture, infrastructure, and foreign exchange reserves**
- Lists the economic challenges in front of the Government
- Suggests recommendations to overcome the challenges
- **GDP growth is projected**
- Facilitates allocation of funds in the Budget
- Prepared by: The **Department of Economic Affairs** prepares the Economic survey. The department operates under the Ministry of Finance. The Chief Economic Advisor of India supervises the economic survey preparations. The current Chief Economic Advisor of India is Mr Anantha Nageswaran.

HEALTH EXPENDITURE AT 2.1% OF GDP FOR FY23

Health Expenditure has been a major concern for the government since the COVID pandemic. As the pandemic started reducing, the governments were burdened heavily to focus on the lost track of other disease elimination programs.



- For instance, the cases of malaria, AIDS, hepatitis, etc in India and several other countries increased exponentially. **These diseases increased because the governments were forced to pay less attention. The entire attention and complete focus were on the COVID pandemic.**
- Health expenditure was not sufficient to focus on all diseases. In the fiscal year 2022-23, central and state governments spent 2.1% of their GDP in 2023. In 2022, it was 2.2% and in 2021, it was 1.6%.

What did the Economic Survey say about Health Expenditure?

- Health expenditures made on social services increased to 26% in the fiscal year 2023. **It was 21% in the fiscal year 2018-19.**
- The government's share in the total expenditure of the country **increased to 40.6% in the fiscal year 2018-19. It was 28.6% in 2013-14.**
- Out of Pocket Expenditure decreased to 48.2% in the fiscal year 2018-19. **It was 64.2% in 2013-14**

- **Social security expenditure in the health sector** increased to 9.6% in the fiscal year 2018-19.

It was 6% in 2013-14. **The social security expenditure on health includes the following**

- Medical reimbursements the central government makes to the government employees
- Social Health Insurance Programmes
- Health insurance schemes financed by the government



AWARDS & HONOR

WORLD UN-HABITAT'S AWARD 2023

Odisha won the UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023 for Jaga Mission, a 5T initiative of the state.



- The awards recognise and highlight innovative, outstanding and revolutionary **housing ideas, projects and programmes from across the world.**
- The Jaga mission is the land titling and slum upgrading program that aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.

About the Jaga Mission

- Jaga mission is the **world's largest land titling and slum upgrading program** which aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.
- Under the **inspiring leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik**, the Government of Odisha has set itself the ambitious target of becoming the first slum-free state in India and is leading the Jaga Mission programme to upgrade all of the state's 2,919 slums.
- In the **last 05 years of the initiative, 1,75,000 families** have been granted land tenure security. 100% households in 2,724 slums have been provided with pipe water connections, 707 slums transformed fully into Liveable Habitats, 100% households in 666 slums have individual toilets, and 8 cities have become slum-free.

ASSAM HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD 'ASOM BAIBHAV'

The Assam government has recently announced the recipients of three prestigious awards: "Asom Baibhav," "Asom Sourav," and "Asom Gourav" for the year 2022-2023. These awards recognize and honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the state and its people.

- Asom Baibhav is the highest civilian award given by the **Assam government and this year's recipient is Dr. Tapan Saikia.**
- Dr. Saikia currently serves as the Head of Medical Oncology and Research Director at Prince Aly Khan Hospital and the Director of Oncology Sciences at the Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre in Mumbai.
- In addition, **he has worked as an MD and external examiner at AIIMS Delhi and Allahabad University.** The Asom Baibhav award comes with a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs and the recipient is entitled to medical treatment at **government expense for the rest of their life.**

RRR AT 80TH GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS

The **80th Golden Globe Awards** were held on Wednesday in **Beverly Hills, California**. Due to the ongoing pandemic and recent revelations about the lack of diversity and alleged ethical lapses among the awards' organizers, the gala did not have its usual star-studded and raucous atmosphere that typically kicks off the annual movie awards season.



- In the motion picture categories, **Steven Spielberg's The Fablemans won for Best Motion Picture (Drama) and Banshees of Inisherin won for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy.**
- On the television side, **HBO's Game of Thrones prequel House of the Dragon won for Best TV Series Drama**, Kevin Costner won for Best Actor – Television Series, Drama for Yellowstone, and Abbott Elementary won for Best Television Series – Musical or Comedy.

Evan Peters won for Best Actor – Limited Series, Anthology Series or TV Movie for Dahmer: Monster-The Jeffrey Dahmer Story, and Amanda Seyfried won for Best Actress – Limited Series, Anthology Series or TV Movie for The Dropout.

- **Best Director went to Steven Spielberg for The Fablemans**, and Best Picture Non English went to 1985 from Argentina, while RRR was among the nominees in the category.

RRR at the Golden Globes

- One of the films in contention at the Golden Globe awards was **Telugu title RRR, directed by SS Rajamouli.**
- The film ultimately won the award for **Best Original Song for "Nattu Nattu" out of the two categories it was nominated for.** It missed out on the award for Best Non-English Language Film, which was won by Argentina's 1985.

THE KASHMIR FILES SHORTLISTED FOR OSCARS 2023

Vivek Agnihotri's film 'The Kashmir Files' has been shortlisted for Oscars 2023. That means now this **film has qualified to get an Oscar.**

- Actors **Anupam Kher, Mithun Chakraborty, Darshan Kumar and Pallavi Joshi** are also shortlisted for the best actor category.
- The story of **Kashmir Files revolves around the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits** in the year 1990 following systematic killings of people from the community by Pakistan-backed terrorists. The film was released in theaters in March 2022.
- The **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** has announced its list of films that are eligible for a nomination at the Oscars 2023.



Other shortlisted movies:

- **Rishabh Shetty's 'Kantara'**, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', Pan Nalin's 'The Cello Show' and SS Rajamouli's 'RRR' have also made it to the Oscar shortlist.
- **Originally made in Kannada with a budget of less than Rs 16 crore**, 'Kantara' went on to become one of the highest-grossing Kannada films with Rs 400 crore at the box office.
- Marathi films **Me Vasant Rao**, **Sathi Khai Hi**, **Kannada film 'Vikrant Rona'** and **R Madhavan's 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect'** have also been shortlisted for Oscars 2023.
- **The film 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect'** is a biopic of ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan, who was accused of spying for ISRO and was later acquitted.
- Apart from these, **Shaunak Sen and Kartiki Gonsalves' documentary 'All That Breathes'** 'The Elephant Whispers' is also a part of the list.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE: CHARAIDEO MAIDAMS

The Centre has decided to nominate the Charaideo Maidams in Assam for the UNESCO World Heritage Centre this year.



- There is **currently no World Heritage Site** in the category of cultural heritage in Northeast India. The nomination of the Charaideo Maidams has attained significance at a time when the country is celebrating the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit Borphukan.

What is Charaideo Maidams?

- The **Charaideo Maidams**, represents the **late medieval (13th-19th century CE)** mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahom community in Assam.
- It enshrines the mortal remains of the members of the Ahom royalty, who used to be buried with their paraphernalia. After the 18th century, **the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation** and began entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.
- **Out of 386 Maidams or Moidams explored so far**, 90 royal burials at Charaideo are the best preserved, representative of and the most complete examples of mound burial tradition of the Ahoms.

SPORTS

MEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2023

Ahead of Men's Hockey World Cup 2023, Odisha Chief Minister has inaugurated Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium, one of the largest hockey stadiums in Rourkela.

- The 15th edition International Hockey Federation (FIH) **Hockey World Cup 2023** will be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela from January 13 to 29.



What are the Key Points of the Hockey World Cup?

- **Conceived jointly by India and Pakistan** as the premier standalone competition for hockey outside of the Olympics and approved by the **International Hockey Federation in 1969**, it still took 13 long years and four editions of the event to be held in the Indian subcontinent for the first time.
- **While the first edition in 1971** was allotted to Pakistan before being moved to Spain due to political and security issues, India was supposed to host in 1975 before governance issues forced it to be moved to Malaysia.
- While the **initial editions were held every two years, since 1982 the tournament has been held every four years, bisecting the Olympic cycle**. Pakistan was the inaugural World Cup winner, defeating Spain in 1971.
- **The last World Cup hockey was played in 2018**, where Belgium was the winner by defeating the Netherlands.

SANIA MIRZA ANNOUNCED HER RETIREMENT

Indian Tennis Player Sania Mirza (36-year-old), the former doubles World No. 1, has confirmed her retirement from professional Tennis.

- She announced that the **Dubai Tennis Championships, a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 event** in Dubai in February 2023 will be her last match.

Career graph of Sania Mirza:

- She has won six Grand Slam doubles titles
- She won her first grand slam in 2009 by winning the **Australian Open Mixed doubles** title with Mahesh Bhupathi. The pair also won the French Open 2012.
- She won her 3rd mixed doubles title at the US Open in 2014 with **Brazil's Bruno Soares**.
- **Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis of Switzerland** won 3 women's doubles – Wimbledon 2015, the US Open 2015 and the **Australian Open 2016** Mirza became the **first Indian to win a WTA singles title in 2005**.
- She was ranked **India's No 1 in Singles from 2003 till her retirement from Singles in 2013**.

15TH EDITION FIH MEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP

The **15th edition of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup** is set to begin on January 13th in India. The tournament, which is held every four years, will feature 16 teams from around the world competing for the coveted title.

- India, who is the host nation, will be looking to secure a podium finish after a 48-year hiatus. The tournament has a rich history, with Pakistan being the most successful team with four titles, **followed by Netherlands and Australia with three titles each, and Germany with two titles.**
- India has **only won the World Cup once**, back in 1975. The home team will be looking to change that this year and secure a podium finish.
- The Indian team has been preparing for the tournament for the past year and will be looking to make the most of the home advantage.
- The opening match of the tournament will see Argentina take on South Africa, followed by Australia playing against France and England taking on Wales.

INDIAN CRICKET TEAM ACHIEVED HISTORIC VICTORY

- **Indian cricket team achieved a historic victory over Sri Lanka** in the third and final match of the series at the Greenfield Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram. India defeated Sri Lanka by 317 runs, **breaking New Zealand's 15-year-old record for the largest victory margin in ODI cricket.**
- The previous record was held by New Zealand, who achieved a win of **290 runs against Ireland in 2008**. This victory not only secured a 3-0 series whitewash for India, but also solidified their position as a dominant force in the world of ODI cricket.



The top 5 on the list :

- 317 – India vs Sri Lanka, 2023
- 290 – New Zealand vs Ireland, 2008
- 275 – Australia vs Afghanistan, 2015
- 272 – South Africa vs Zimbabwe, 2010

DAYS AND DATESS

STARTUP INDIA INNOVATION WEEK

The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** will be organizing the Startup India Innovation Week from January 10th to January 16th, 2023. This event is part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations and will take place in over 75 locations across the country.

- “**Startup India Innovation Week 2023** aims to engage startup ecosystem stakeholders across the nation during 10 January-16 January and spur the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in India,” the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** said in a release.



Start-up India Scheme

- The **Start-up India scheme** was launched on **January 16, 2016** by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with the goal of supporting and promoting start-ups in India.
- The scheme, which was **inaugurated by the former finance minister Arun Jaitley**, aims to remove restrictive state government policies such as the License Raj, foreign investment proposals, land permissions, and environmental clearances.

WORLD BRAILLE DAY OBSERVED ON JANUARY 4TH

Every year, **World Braille Day** is celebrated on **January 4** by the United Nations and several other international organizations. The day is celebrated to create awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in **the realization of human rights for the blind**.

- The **celebration of World Braille Day** on January 4 is in honor of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system.
- **Braille was born in France on January 4, 1809**, and it was his development of the system that has allowed blind individuals to read and write, increasing their independence and **access to education and employment opportunities**.
- The **first World Braille Day** was celebrated in 2019.



NATIONAL YOUTH DAY OBSERVED ON 12TH JANUARY

- Every year on January 12, **India observes National Youth Day** to commemorate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, one of the country's most influential leaders. This national event honors the **country's youth and encourages them to embrace Vivekananda's ideas and philosophies**.
- This year, the National Youth Day 2023 **theme is “Viksit Yuva-Viksit Bharat**.

Why is National Youth Day Observed on January 12?

- **National Youth Day is observed on January 12** to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, who has always been an inspiration to the country's youth and advocated for the proper use of youth in the country's development.
- The Indian government first declared Swami Vivekananda's birthday, **January 12, as National Youth Day in 1984**. Since then, the day has been observed as National Youth Day throughout the country.

INDIA CELEBRATES ARMY DAY ON JANUARY 15TH

India celebrates **Army Day on January 15** every year to commemorate the achievements of the *first Indian Commanders in Chief of the Indian Army, General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa*.



- This day marks the day when Cariappa, who led Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war, took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the **last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Indian Commanders-in-Chief of Independent India**. The Army Day is celebrated every year to honor Cariappa and the defense forces.
- Until last year, the **main Army Day parade was held at the Cariappa Parade** ground in Delhi where Service Chiefs paid homage to the Indian Army.
- However, this year as part of an initiative to take major events to other parts of the country, away from the national capital region, the **75th Army Day will be held in Bengaluru**. The rationale behind the move is to bring about increased visibility of these events and secure greater engagement with the local population.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION: 24TH JANUARY

- The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed **24 January as International Day of Education**, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.
- Education plays a key role in building sustainable and resilient societies. **Providing quality education for all is of utmost importance for the creation of a peaceful and prosperous world**. Moreover, education gives people the knowledge and skills they need to grow as human beings.
- Recently, **Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay** has decided to dedicate the 2023 International Day of Education (January 24) to Afghan girls and women.
- **Currently, 2.5 million (80%) of school-aged Afghan girls and young women** are out of school, 1.2 million of whom were denied access to secondary schools and universities following the decision of the de facto authorities.
- Since August 2021, **UNESCO has adapted its interventions to support the continuity of education** in challenging circumstances.



- The fifth International Day of Education will be celebrated on 24 January 2023 under the theme “**to invest in people, prioritize education**”.

INDIA TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY

India is to celebrate its **13th National Voters Day on January 25**. The first NVD was celebrated in 2011. The Election Commission of India will host the celebrations.



- ECI has released a logo marking the theme of the celebrations. On NVD, the **President of India is to present the National Awards in the category of Electoral Practices**.
- The theme of National Voters Day, 2023: **Nothing Like Voting. I Vote for Sure**

How does India celebrate NVD?

- The **main objective of celebrating NVD** is to create awareness of voting among the citizens. On NVD, ECI presents EPICs to the new voters. EPIC is an Elector Photo Identity Card.
- The **President will present this award to different categories**. They are state level, central level, district level, etc. The officers are to be awarded for their performances in different spheres such as Security Management, IT initiatives, accessible election, etc.

PARAKRAM DIWAS OBSERVED ON 23RD JANUARY

On the Occasion of Parakram Diwas (23rd January) 2023, 21 unnamed islands of **Andaman and Nicobar have been named after Param Veer Chakra awardees**.



- Netaji's Memorial, a National Memorial dedicated to Netaji will be built on **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep**. Parakram Diwas is celebrated to commemorate the 126th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose.

What is the Purpose of Naming Islands?

- The **islands named after Param Vir Chakra awardees** will be the site of inspiration for generations to come. People are now visiting Andamans to learn India's history.
- **Param Vir Chakra** is India's highest military decoration awarded for displaying distinguished acts of valor during wartime whether on land, at sea or in the air.
- It aims to pay tribute to Indian heroes, several of whom had made the **ultimate sacrifice to protect the sovereignty and integrity of India**. The islands have been named after **Major Somnath Sharma, Subedar and Hony Captain (then Lance Naik) Karam Singh, Nayak Jadunath Singh, etc.**

NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY: JANUARY 24TH

Every year India celebrates National Girl Child Day on January 24. The main objective of the celebrations is to **create awareness about education for girls and provide them with good health and nutrition.**

- Also, the day **aims to eliminate gender biases in the country.** The Ministry of Women and Child Development leads the celebration activities. India has been celebrating the day since 2008.
- The government of India launched several initiatives to raise the status of girl children in the country such as **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.**
- The Government of India has not announced any themes for this year's celebrations. However, earlier the Government had planned to celebrate the day on **"Digital Generation, Our Generation, Our Time is Now, Our rights and Our Future"**

International Girl Child Day

- It is celebrated on October 11 by the United Nations and several other international organizations. The **first International Girl Child Day** was celebrated in 2012.

NATIONAL TOURISM DAY OBSERVED ON 25TH JANUARY

The Government of India is celebrating this year's **National Tourism Day at Pochampally of Telangana.**

- In 2021, the United Nations World Tourism Organization selected the village as one of the Best Tourism Villages in the world, and therefore, the Indian Government is launching its national-level celebrations of the day from this village.



- The **village is famous for its IKAT sarees.** They are unique and hand woven. In 2021, India earned 9 billion USD of foreign exchange earnings from the tourism sector.

National Tourism Day

- The **first National Tourism Day was celebrated in 1948.** In 1948, India formed its first tourism promotion committee called the Tourist Traffic Committee. **In 1958, a separate department was created for tourism under transport.** Today we have a separate minister for the tourism sector.

World Tourism Day

- The United Nations and other international organizations celebrate **World Tourism Day on September 27.**
- The UN **celebrates the day to spread awareness of tourism.** Also aims to create awareness about its role in social, financial, and political fields. **World Agri tourism Day is celebrated on May 15 by the UN.**

DATA PROTECTION OR DATA PRIVACY DAY

Data Protection Day, or Data Privacy Day, is celebrated on January 28. The aim is to create more awareness about the right to data protection and the various ways in which people can keep their data more safe.

- The world is slowly but **steadily moving towards digitisation**, but this also means our data is becoming more vulnerable.
- This year, leading organizations are expected to invest heavily in updating more robust cybersecurity policies and procedures, enabling security automation, and monitoring attack surfaces.
- The theme for this year is **‘Think Privacy First’**. In this digital age, it is pragmatic to prioritize data privacy, both for individuals and businesses.



INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: JAN 27TH

Holocaust means destruction on a large scale. **International Holocaust Day** is marked to commemorate the **Jewish people killed or massacred by Hitler and his army.**

- More than six million Jews were killed during this period. The day is marked on January 27. **The United Nations passed a resolution in 2004 to mark this day.**
- The theme of the 2023 International Holocaust Remembrance Day: Home and Belonging



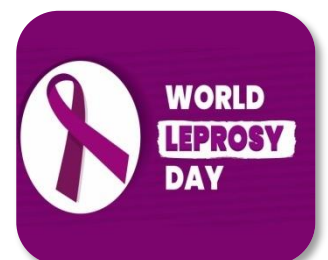
Why did Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader, hate Jews?

- Many are of the misconception that Hitler invented hatred for Jews. No. Hatred of Jews prevailed since the middle ages. **According to his book Mein Kampf, Hitler was prejudiced against Jews.**
- Many of the German nationalists during the Hitler period were anti-jews. But their ideologies were not as cruel as that of Hitler's.
- Most **Germans believe that Hitler developed a hatred for Jews because of the First World War.** Germany lost the First World War. The Jews, communists, and democrats were considered responsible for the defeat of the country in the world war. And for this reason, **Hitler started hating Jews vehemently.**

NATIONAL ANTI-LEPROSY DAY 2023

India is fighting hard to eliminate leprosy. The country has set a target of eliminating the disease completely by 2027. The set target is three years ahead of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- To **aid the fight against Leprosy in the country and to create awareness** about the disease India is marking National Anti-Leprosy Day on January 30.
- The **theme of National Anti-Leprosy Day 2023**



- Let us make Leprosy a History; Let us fight against leprosy

Leprosy and SDG

- The United Nations aims to eradicate leprosy by 2030 by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. **The international organization believes that it can eradicate the disease by following the following goals:**
- Goal 1: End Poverty
 - Goal 3: Quality and affordable health care for all
 - Goal 6: Clean water for all
 - Goal 10: Reduce inequality
- But India is to **eliminate Leprosy three years ahead of UN goals.**
- Disposal of complaint



REPORT AND INDEXS

FAO RELEASED FOOD PRICE INDEX

According to a report released by the **United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** on January 6, world food prices reached a record high in 2022; despite experiencing a ninth consecutive monthly fall in December.



- The **FAO's food price index**, which tracks international prices of the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 143.7 points in 2022, marking a 14.3% increase from 2021 and the highest level since records began in 1990.
- The index had already gained 28% in 2021 from the previous year as the world economy recovered from the impact of the pandemic.
- In December, **the benchmark index fell to 132.4 points, compared with 135.00 points in November**. This decline was attributed to a drop in the international price of vegetable oils, as well as some declines in cereal and meat prices, but was offset by slight increases in sugar and dairy prices.
- Despite this month-on-month decrease, four of the FAO's five food sub-indexes – **cereals, meat, dairy, and vegetable oils** – reached record highs in 2022, while the sugar subindex hit a 10-year high.

INDIA RANKED 85TH IN THE HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX

For frequent travelers, the strength of a passport can mean **more access and mobility to foreign markets and economies**. The latest Henley Passport Index, which ranks passports based on their power and mobility, has some good news for Indian passport holders.



- **India now stands at 85th position**, two places ahead of last year's 87th spot. According to the index, an Indian passport holder now has visa-free access to 59 countries, compared to 60 last year while Iraq and Afghanistan are in the last spot.
- According to the index, the strongest passport is defined by the **number of countries people with a passport can visit visa-free or visa-on-arrival**.
- **The top 10 strongest passports in the world are:**
 - Japan (193)
 - Singapore/South Korea (192)
 - Germany/Spain (190)
 - Finland/Italy/Luxembourg (189)
 - Austria/Denmark/Netherlands/Sweden (188)
 - France/Ireland/Portugal/United Kingdom (187)
 - Belgium/Czech Republic/New Zealand/Norway/Switzerland/United States (186)
 - Australia/Canada/Greece/Malta (185)
 - Hungary/Poland (184)
 - Lithuania/Slovakia (183)

HINDENBURG RESEARCH: ADANI GROUP ROW

The Hindenburg financial research company recently released a research report on the Adani Group. According to the report, the group was involved in stock manipulation. Gautham Adani, his brother, and other family members used tax havens and established shell companies.



- While the shell companies were not operating in reality, the company fraudulently posed itself as blooming in business. **This increased the stock prices of the group by 815% in a few months.**
- After the research report released by the Hindenburg financial research enterprises, **the investors of Adani have lost more than one lakh crore rupees.**

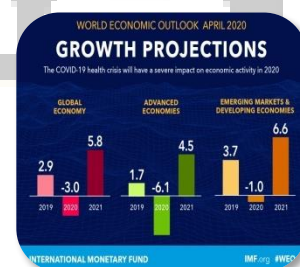
Current Scenario

- **Adani Group released a 413-page reply to the Hindenburg report.** Adani accuses the research company to be unethical and the report as baseless. To this Hindenburg responded that it has released only 30 pages of its evidence.
- **The remaining 330 pages of court records have not yet been released.** According to Hindenburg, the finance researcher holds evidence against irrelevant initiatives of Adani, misuse of female entrepreneurship benefits, etc.

IMF RELEASED WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The International Monetary Forum recently released the World Economic Outlook. According to the report, the Inflation in India is to reduce to 6.8% in March 2023.

- Further by the end of 2023, **the inflation will reduce to 5%.** In 2024, Indian Inflation will be 4%. The report also said that global inflation is to reduce to 6.6% in 2023. It was 8.8% in 2022.



Key Highlights of the report

- The **Consumer Price Index is to decrease in more than 84% of the world's countries**
- Global inflation will fall down to 6.6% in 2023. In 2024, it will further reduce to 4.3%
- In developed economies **like the US, France, and Russia** the average inflation is to reduce to 4.6% in 2023. Further, it will reduce to 2.6% in 2024. It was 7.3% in 2022.
- In developing **economies like East Asian and South Asian countries**, the inflation is to reduce to 8.1% in 2023. Further, it will reduce to 5.5% in 2024. In 2022, the inflation in these economies was 9.9%
- In Low – Income countries the inflation is to reduce to 8.6% in 2024. In 2022, the inflation here was 14.2%

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

EUROPEAN UNION TO LAUNCH THE JUICE SPACECRAFT

The **European Union is to launch the JUICE Spacecraft in April 2023**. The spacecraft is to explore the moons of Jupiter. Specifically, the mission is to study the three major moons of Jupiter namely Ganymede, Europe, and Callisto.

- **Out of the 80 moons of the planet**, these three were selected for their large oceans. The satellite is to be launched from French Guiana. Ariane 5 will carry the satellite. **JUICE is the first satellite from the earth to enter the orbit of Ganymede.**



About JUICE

- JUICE stands for Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer. The satellite was developed by Germany and tested by France.
- The main objective of the mission is to study the microbial life on the icy moons of the planet. It will also **study the Polar Regions and the magnetosphere of the planet.**
- **JUICE will enter the orbit of Ganymede** to study its composition. If launched in April 2023, the satellite is **expected to enter Jupiter orbit by 2034. It will be deorbited in 2035.**

DRACO: NUCLEAR FISSION POWERED SPACECRAFT

DARPA of the USA is working on **nuclear fission-powered spacecraft along with NASA called the DRACO**. DARPA is the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency.

- And DARPA is the research and development wing of the US military. **Just like the DRDO of India. DARPA is to launch the DRACO Spacecraft.** DRACO stands for Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations.
- DRACO is to run on nuclear fission reactions. This is considered a big leap in the space industry as no nuclear rockets have been launched till 2021. **The USA began testing the technology in 1955.** Due to a lack of funds, the project was stalled.



Nuclear Thermal Rocket

- The rocket that uses a nuclear fission reactor to fly is called a nuclear thermal rocket. No country on earth has succeeded in this technology. **China, Russia, and the USA are space racing on technology.** India has not yet started working on the technology.

WHAT IS SKYGLOW?

Recently, a **new study has found that non-natural light had increased the brightness of Skyglow**, by 9.2-10% every year between 2011 and 2022 with significant ecological, health and cultural implications.

- Researchers have analyzed a global database of what the dimmest star visible from a particular location is; the **database had more than 51,000 entries submitted by citizen scientists**.

What is Skyglow?

- The **Skyglow, is an omnipresent sheet of light across the night sky** in and around cities that can block all but the very brightest stars from view. The brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas because of streetlights, security floodlights and outdoor ornamental lights cause the Skyglow.
- This light **floods directly into the eyes of the Nocturnal (active at night)** and also into the skies and misleads their path. 'Skyglow' is one of the components of light pollution.

What is the Scenario of Skyglow?

- The **Skyglow had brightened around 6.5% over Europe, 10.4% over North America**, and 7.7% over the rest of the world. The finding is significant because it disagrees with satellite-based data, which has indicated that the rate of increase has been around 2% per year.

ISRAEL'S ASTROPHYSICS MISSION: ULTRASAT

NASA and Israel will soon sign an agreement on a space mission. Under the agreement, the United States will help Israel in its upcoming Astrophysics Mission called ULTRASAT. The mission is currently **being developed by the Israel Space Agency and Germany**.



- **ULTRASAT will operate in Geostationary orbit.** It is to carry a UV telescope. The main objective of ULTRASAT is to look for UV signatures in space. Precisely it will look for **UV emissions from mergers (collision of neutron stars) and supernova explosions**.

About ULTRASAT

- The weight of the satellite is 1,100 kg
- To be launched in 2026
- Operational time: three years
- Purpose: **To look for gravitational waves**
- Total Cost: **110 million USD**

WHAT IS ADITYA L1 SOLAR MISSION?

The **Indian Space Research Organization** is working on a space project that will study the sun. The **name of the project is Aditya L1**. Recently, the ISRO chairman announced that the spacecraft is to be launched in June or July this year. The Aditya spacecraft will study solar magnetic storms and the impact of the solar atmosphere on the earth.



About Aditya L1

- The spacecraft is to study the following:
 - **Solar Winds:** These winds are created due to the expansion of the sun's plasma
 - Photosphere and Chromosphere of the sun
 - Corona of the sun
 - Energetic particles of the sun
 - Aditya will study corona heating
 - **Coronal Heating:** Scientists are yet to find the solution to the million-dollar question.
- *Why is the temperature of the sun's corona a million kelvins, but the temperature of its core is only thousands of kelvin?*
- This is generally called the corona heating problem. The spacecraft will help Indian space scientists find solutions to the coronal heating problem.

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST LAUNCH PRITHVI-II MISSILE

India **successfully carried out a test launch of the tactical ballistic missile Prithvi-II** from a test range off the Odisha coast on January 10. The missile successfully struck its target with "high accuracy", according to the Defence Ministry.



- The **test validated all operational and technical parameters of the missile**, which is an integral part of India's nuclear deterrence capabilities.
- **Capabilities of Prithvi-II:** Prithvi-II is a short-range ballistic missile, with a range of around 350 kilometers.
- It is a **well-established system that has been an integral part of India's nuclear deterrence**. This missile system will enable India to target enemy's assets with high accuracy, and it will make the country's defense more robust.

WHAT IS 'SKYHAWK' A 5G ENABLED DRONE?

Startup firm IG Drones, which was born out of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) campus in Odisha's Sambalpur has developed a **5G-enabled drone that is capable of vertical take-off and landing**.



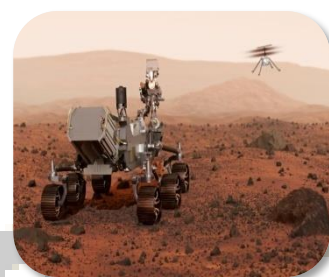
- The drone, named Skyhawk, can be used in defense and medical applications, among other sectors.

Key Features

- **Skyhawk drone can carry a 10 kg payload and has an endurance of around five hours.** As it's a VTOL (Vertical Take-off and Landing), it can be operated from any terrain without the need of a conventional runway.
- With the **addition of Artificial intelligence and thermal imaging capabilities**, the drones can be used in monitoring border intrusion and also during regular patrolling by the defense forces, according to the company.
- It is IP67 rated and can be controlled via a combination of NavIC + GPS navigational satellites which remain connected in the upper range of 50 to 60 in case of failsafe activation.

INDIAN SCIENTISTS MAKE UNIQUE DISCOVERY ON MARS

The first instance of solo electromagnetic waves has been discovered by Indian researchers. The results were established using information from the **Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN)** mission of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



- Using high-resolution electric field data from MAVEN's captured by Langmuir Probe and Waves sensors, **scientists** have detected the lone waves in the Martian magnetosphere.

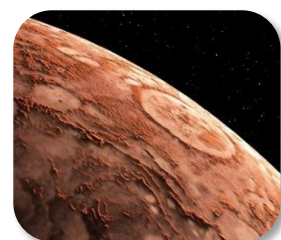
Indian scientists make unique discovery on Mars: Key Points

- Pulses in the Martian magnetosphere cause the solitary waves. Through wave-particle interactions, these fluctuations regulate other particle activities such as **particle energization, plasma loss, and transport**.
- Mars only has a mild magnetic field from its crustal magnetic sources, in contrast to Earth, **which has a strong magnetic field to shield it from the Sun's ionizing solar winds**.
- As a result, single flows can be produced by the solar winds as they interact with the Martian atmosphere. Teams had previously been unable to find these waves, despite scientists' theories that they may be spotted.

EVIDENCE OF SOLITARY WAVES AROUND MARS

Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has found evidence of "solitary waves" in the weak magnetic field around Mars for the first time.

- Scientists used high-resolution electric field data from NASA's MAVEN spacecraft to make the discovery of solitary waves.



What are the Key Highlights of the Discovery?

- Unlike Earth, the **planet Mars does not have any intrinsic magnetic field**. This allows the high-speed solar wind to interact directly with the Mars atmosphere, like an obstacle in flow.

- It has been suggested that even in a weak and thin magnetosphere as that of Mars, frequent occurrences of solitary waves can be observed. However, despite several missions to Mars, the presence of solitary waves in the Martian magnetosphere has never been reported earlier.
- The waves were **found mostly in the morning and evening on Mars, at altitudes of 1000-3500 km**, and their exact cause is still unknown.

What are Solitary Waves?

- Solitary waves are the **distinct electric field fluctuations (bipolar or monopolar) that follow constant amplitude-phase relations.**



MISCELLANEOUS

INDIA'S 1ST UNDERWATER METRO SERVICE

India's first underwater metro service, the Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC) said that the East-West Metro Corridor project is expected to be completed by December 2023. With this, another feather is being added to the crown of Kolkata Metro, the first metro railway in the country.



- Kolkata Metro, which started its journey in 1984, is being expanded to cover the whole city and its outskirts. The underwater metro, which will be running through the Hooghly River, will connect the twin cities of Howrah and Kolkata.

About the project:

- **Kolkata Metro Railway Corporation** has taken up the difficult task of making the tunnel with the help of German machines and the best experts. Work inside the tunnel is still in progress.
- As far as the cost of construction of the underground metro is concerned, it costs about Rs 120 crore per kilometer to build the tunnel but the manufacturing cost of the tunnel underwater, which is deep in the Hooghly river costs increased to around 157 crores per kilometer.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS: 2023

The Government of India has sponsored the proposal for the International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023, which has been accepted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).



- This has given the Indian Government the opportunity to celebrate the IYM and position India as the global hub for millets. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also shared his vision for the IYM to become a "People's Movement".

What are Millets?

- Millets are small-seeded grasses that are often referred to as "Nutri-cereals". Some common types of millets include sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), finger millet (ragi), little millet (kutki), foxtail millet (kakun), proso millet (cheena), barnyard millet (sawa), and kodo millet (kodon).
- These grains are a staple cereal crop for millions of smallholder dryland farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and offer a variety of benefits such as nutrition, income, and livelihood for farmers. They can also be used for food, feed, fodder, biofuels, and brewing.

WHAT IS HONEY MISSION & SWEET REVOLUTION?

Under the Honey Mission, 1 lakh and 75 thousand bee boxes have been distributed so far by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** after providing beekeeping training to 17 thousand 500 beneficiaries across the country.

- As per the **National Horticulture Board (NHB)**, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka were the top ten honey-producing states in 2021-22.



What is a Honey Mission?

- It was launched in 2017 **in line with the 'Sweet Revolution'**. Under the mission, the KVIC under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises provides the farmers or beekeepers – Practical training about the examination of honeybee colonies,
- Identification and management of bee enemies and diseases along with the management of bee colonies in all seasons. Acquaintance with apicultural equipment's and Honey extraction and wax purification.

What is Sweet Revolution?

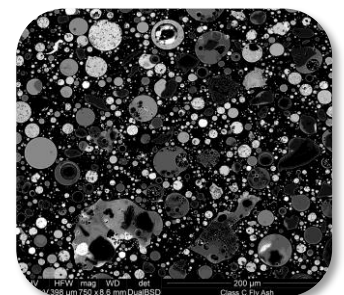
- It is an **ambitious initiative of the Government of India** for promoting apiculture, **popularly known as 'beekeeping'**.
- To provide a booster shot to the Sweet Revolution, the government launched the **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission in 2020** (a central sector scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare) as part of the AtmaNirbhar Bharat scheme.

WHAT IS FLY ASH?

Recently, the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** clarified the compliance dates for the complete utilization of fly ash for **Thermal Power Plants (TPP)** in a new notification.

What is Fly Ash?

- Fly ash is an unwanted unburnt residue of coal combustion in a coal thermal power plant. It is emitted along with flue gases during the burning of coal in a **furnace and collected using the electrostatic precipitators**.
- The fly ash collected with the help of precipitators is converted into a wet slurry to minimize fugitive dust emissions. It is then transported to the scientifically designed ash ponds through slurry pipelines.
- **Composition:** Composition of fly ash depends upon the composition of coal being burnt. It may contain Beryllium, Arsenic, unburnt Carbon, Silicon Oxides, Dioxins, aluminum oxide, ferric oxide, calcium oxide, etc.



RANJAN GOGOI NEW BOOK 'CHIEF MINISTER'S DIARY NO.1'

Former **Chief Justice of India** and **member of the Rajya Sabha** Ranjan Gogoi has released a book titled '**Chief Minister's Diary No.1**' containing the account of events of the first year in office of Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The book featured accounts of daily activities he undertook as a chief minister.

Notably:

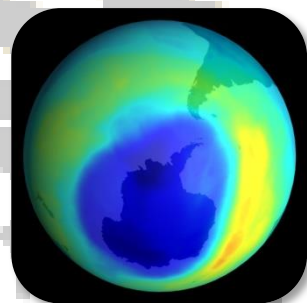
- Ranjan Gogoi is presently a **member of the Rajya Sabha**.
- He served as the **46th Chief Justice of India** for 13 months from 2018 to 2019.

Recent Book:

- Fit At Any Age – Launched Retd. Air Marshal PV Iyer
- Miracles of Face Yoga – Mansi Gulati
- Now You Breathe – Rakhi Kapoor
- A book titled 'Ambedkar: A Life – Shashi Tharoor
- Forks in the Road: My Days at RBI and Beyond – C. Rangarajan
- The Indian Navy@75 Reminiscing the Voyage – Ranjit B Rai and Aritra Banerjee.

RECOVERY OF OZONE LAYER

According to a new U.N. report, **earth's protective ozone layer is slowly but noticeably healing** at a pace that would fully mend the hole over Antarctica in about 43 years.



What are the Findings of the Report?

- While this is an achievement, the scientists warned of the detrimental effects of geoeengineering technologies such as **stratospheric aerosol injection on the ozone layer**.
- **Aerosol sprays, like other commonly used substances** such as dry-cleaning solvents, refrigerants and fumigants, contain **Ozone-Depleting Substances (ODS)** including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), halons, methyl bromide, carbon tetrachloride, and methyl chloroform.

INDIA SURPASSED CHINA IN TERMS OF POPULATION

In a significant development, India may have already surpassed China as the world's most populous country. **According to projections from the World Population Review (WPR)**, India's population was 141.7 crore as of the end of 2022.

- That's a little more **than 50 lakh more than the 141.2 crore declared by China on January 17**, when there was the first fall since the 1960s, according to official announcements.
- India, a country where 50 percent of the population is under 30, is anticipated to have the world's fastest-growing major economy.

- The **milestone was supposed to be reached later this year, according to the UN**. According to WPR, India's population increased to 142.3 crore people as of January 18. WPR predicts that, though India's population growth has slowed, it will still climb until at least 2050.
- The most recent figure for India is 142.8 crore, according to a different estimate from the research platform Macrotrends. **After postponing population surveys due to pandemic disruptions in 2021**, the nation did not release its once-every-ten-year census statistics.



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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHZTJwt8jFo&list=PLDrM_6OH0o1lcuxmRN-icOWj7UIhevkfl

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