



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 FEBRUARY-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.

The PRAVAHINI FEBRUARY -2023 eBook is divided into different sections keeping in mind the need of various exams. The sections covered namely International, National, Economy, Ecology and Environment, Science & Technology, Legal Affairs, Sports, States News Makers and few others.

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

SC TO HEAR ADANI-HINDENBURG ROW

Advocate Vishal Tiwari recently filed a Public Interest Litigation to the Supreme Court to take up the **case of the Adani-Hindenburg row**. The apex court has agreed and will hear the case on Feb 10, 2023. Vishal is a practicing lawyer in the SC.



The **PIL requests the Chief Justice of India to handle the case**. CJI Chandrachud along with other judges of SC PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala will take up the case.

Hindenburg-Adani row

- The Hindenburg Finance research company based in the US released an investigative report on the Adani group. According to the report, the Adani group is manipulating stocks holding fraudulent shell company operations. Following the report, the stock prices of the company fell. The company lost more than 127 crores of rupees.

Why is the SC Stepping in?

- The **Hindenburg-Adani row** which has been in the news for quite some time now is putting India's **reputation at stake**. Before the row, Gautham Adani was the second richest person in the world.

WHAT IS AMRIT DHAROHAR SCHEME?

India lost 30% of its wetlands in the past three decades. Of all Mumbai lost the maximum wetlands. 71% of wetlands in Mumbai were lost between 1970 and 2014. 57% lost in Ahmedabad, 56% in Bengaluru, 55% in Hyderabad, 38% in Delhi, and lots more in other major cities.

The loss of wetlands is mainly due to anthropogenic activities and illegal constructions. **To increase the optimal use of wetlands in the cities and to improve their biodiversity** the GoI launched the Amrit Dharohar Scheme. The scheme was announced by the Finance Minister during her budget speech.



What is the Amrit Dharohar Scheme?

- The scheme will aim to conserve wetlands by promoting their optimal use
- The scheme is to be implemented in the next three years
- The **scheme will increase eco-tourism, and carbon stock**, and also will help the local communities in their income generations

Need for the Scheme

- **To achieve 2030 sustainable development goals**. These goals were adopted by India along with other **UN Members in 2015**. The SDG aims to provide peace and prosperity. The Amrit Dharohar scheme will help India achieve the SDG goals.

NATIONAL DATA GOVERNANCE POLICY

Data governance is **managing data usage, data security, data availability, and data integrity**. During the Union Budget 2023 presentation, the finance minister Smt Nirmala Sitaraman announced that GoI is to launch National Governance Policy.

The policy will create an Indian Data Management Office. The **IDMO will operate under the IT Ministry**. The government of India is to launch a policy to increase access to anonymized data in a safe and secure way.



What is National Data Governance Policy?

- The **policy will increase the availability of data** that are of national importance
- It will increase the awareness of citizens by increasing the availability of open safe and authentic data
- Increase **the overall compliance**
- Enhance the participation of the public
- Secure data **sharing on the internet**
- Streamline privacy standards

WHAT IS THE PM-PRANAM SCHEME?

Green Growth will be one of the major priorities of the Indian Government during 2023-24. To make India free from pollution and increase the use of electric vehicles and achieve green growth, the Indian Government allocated Rs 5,172 lakh crores for FAME Scheme.

Also, **launched the PM-PRANAM Scheme**. This scheme was launched under the GOBAR Dhan scheme.



What is the PM-PRANAM Scheme?

- It stands for PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment, and Amelioration of Mother Earth. Under the scheme, the GoI is planning to promote alternatives to fertilizers. Also, it aims to promote the balanced use of chemicals.
- The main objective of the scheme is to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers.

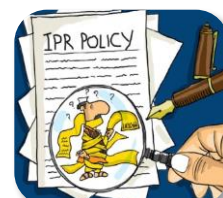
GOBAR DHAN Scheme

- **PM PRANAM was launched under the GOBAR Dhan Scheme.** GOBAR DHAN is Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan. During the Budget, the finance minister announced that 500 new “waste to wealth” plants are to be established under the GOBAR Dhan scheme.

NATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR) POLICY

Since the inception of the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, **both the IPR ecosystem in this country has witnessed many changes.**

However, it appears that the patent establishment of the country overdrive **to prove its patent-friendliness, rather patentee-friendliness.**



- As per the **structural and legislative changes in the IPR**, the dissolution of the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) took place in 2021 and dedicated IP divisions were established in the Delhi High Court to address the issues.

What is the National IPR Policy?

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under the Ministry of Commerce adopted the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy in 2016.
- The main goal of the policy is "Creative India; Innovative India". The **policy covers all forms of IP, seeks to create synergies between them and other agencies**, and sets up an institutional mechanism for implementation and review.
- DPIIT is the nodal department for IPR development in India and the **Cell for IPR Promotion & Management (CIPAM) under DPIIT** is the single point of reference for implementing the policy.
- **India's IPR regime complies with World Trade Organisation's (WTO) agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS).**

GOVT. OF INDIA ALLOCATED 100 CRORES FOR NAMASTE SCHEME

In the Union Budget 2023, the Government of India allocated Rs 100 crores for the NAMASTE scheme. **With this, the GoI aims to mechanize septic tank cleaning and sewer cleaning in towns and cities.**

The **scheme aims to provide an alternate livelihood to sanitation workers.** In addition, NAMASTE will strive to bring behavioral changes to them.



The objective of the scheme

- To **achieve zero fatalities in the sanitation sector**
- **No sanitation worker** will touch or come in direct contact with the fecal matter
- The sanitation workers will be encouraged to form Self Help Groups
- **Ensure the workers have access to alternative livelihoods** as mechanization may bring loss of jobs to few in the industry

WHAT IS JUDICIAL MAJORITARIANISM?

Many people have raised concerns over Judicial Majoritarianism on the **Judgement of the Supreme Court on demonetization** and the minority judgment has been hailed for its challenge to the RBI's (Reserve bank of India) institutional acquiescence to the Central government.

What is Judicial Majoritarianism?

- Numerical majorities are of particular importance to cases which involve a **substantial interpretation of constitutional provisions.**
- The requirement for a majority consensus flows from Article 145(5) of the Constitution which states that no judgment in such cases can be delivered except with the concurrence of a majority. **It also provides for judges to freely deliver dissenting judgments or opinions.**



- In important cases, **Constitutional Benches, consisting of five or more judges, are set up in consonance with Article 145(3)** of the Constitution. Such Benches usually consist of five, seven, nine, 11 or even 13 judges.

WHAT IS FAME-2 SCHEME?

FAME is the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles. It was launched in 2015 to increase the sale of electric vehicles in the country. The scheme was **launched under the National Electric Mobility Mission.**

During the Union Budget 2023, the **GoI allocated Rs 5,172 crores for the fiscal year 2024.** This is 78% higher as compared to the 2022 budget.

History of Allocations

- In 2019, Rs 10000 crores were allocated to take the scheme step by step
- In the fiscal year 2020, **the allocations were increased to Rs 500 crores**
- In 2021, 318 crores were allocated
- In 2022, it was further **increased to 500 crores**
- **In 2023, GoI allocated Rs 2,897 crores**

WHAT IS PM KUSUM?

The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has extended the deadline to install 30,000 MW solar power capacity in rural India to March 2026 under PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Uttham Mahabhiyan).

What is PM KUSUM?

- The PM-KUSUM was launched by the MNRE in 2019, in order to endow installation of off-grid solar pumps in rural areas and reduce dependence on grid, in grid-connected areas.

Components:

- **10,000 MW of decentralized ground-mounted grid-connected** renewable power plants.
- Installation 20 lakh solar-powered agriculture pumps
- Converting 15 lakh agriculture pumps, already connected to the grid, into solar.

Objective:

- It aims to enable farmers to set up solar power
- generation **capacity on their arid lands and to sell it to the grid.**
- It also seeks to increase the income of farmers by allowing **them to sell surplus solar power to the grid.**

E-COURTS INTEGRATED MISSION MODE PROJECT

The **Government of India** has launched the e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project in the country for computerization of District and subordinate courts with the objective of improving access to justice using technology.



What is e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project?

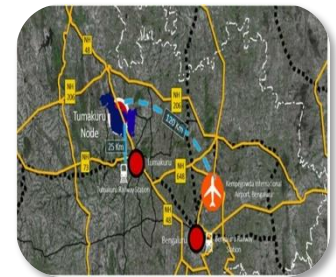
- As part of the **National e-Governance Plan**, the project has been under implementation since 2007 for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) development of the Indian Judiciary.
- The e-Courts project is being implemented in association with the **e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India and the Department of Justice**.

Phases:

- **Phase I:** It was implemented during 2011-2015.
- **Phase II:** It was started in 2015 under which various District & Subordinate courts have been computerized.

SOUTH INDIA'S TUMARKURU INDUSTRIAL TOWNSHIP

In 2021, **PM Modi launched the Gati Shakti Scheme**. The main objective of the scheme is to implement an infrastructure pipeline in the country. Under this, the GoI planned on developing 11 industrial corridors and two defense corridors. Accordingly, PM Modi recently launched the first industrial corridor of **the scheme called Tumkur Industrial Township**.



About the Tumarkuru Industrial Township

- **First industrial corridor** in South India
- It will generate employment for more than 88,000 people
- Attract investment of **Rs 7,000 crores within five to six years**
- Contribute inclusive growth of the country
- **Trigger economic growth and prosperity** in the region
- Spread over 8,500 acres of land
- Launched in Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor
- In line with the objectives of Atma Nirbhar Bharat
- It will address the **issues of multi-modal connectivity**

FIRST CIVIC BODY TO LAUNCH GREEN BONDS

Indore Municipal Corporation has ranked top in cleanliness survey for six consecutive years, has become the country's first civic body to launch green bonds, seeking to raise **Rs 244 crore for a 60-mw solar plant at its water pumping station**.

The **public issues of the green bonds will be open for subscription from February 10-14**. The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange

- The drinking water department of the city administration **spends over Rs 300 crore in annual electricity charges.** Its Juladh pumping station, by the Narmada river falling in the Khargone district, is the biggest pumping station for the city.
- The balance amount will come from the Centre: Rs 41 crore as viability gap funding and Rs 26 crore or 13 per cent special incentives that the Centre offers to municipalities for launching bonds. **The Centre caps this 13 per cent incentive for only up to Rs 200 crore of bond sales.**

What is meant by green bonds?

- A green bond is a debt security issued by an organization for the purpose of financing or refinancing projects that contribute positively to the environment and/or climate. A **green bond is alternatively known as a climate bond.**

WHAT IS DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY PRINCIPLE?

The **post of Chairman of the Competition Commission of India** has been vacant since the retirement of Mr.Ashok Kumar Gupta in October 2022. Also, currently, there are only 2 members in the CCI.

There are many mergers and acquisitions pending before the commission waiting for its approval. To attend to the pending matter, the **Commission is to create a Quorum of three members using the Doctrine of Necessity Principle.**



What is the Doctrine of Necessity Principle?

- The extra-constitutional actions are generally referred to as the Doctrine of Necessity. Under this, an administrative authority can get power to bring back stability.
- Though certain decisions and approvals need the consideration of the Chairman, **the CCI is using the principle to clear the principle.**
- It is using the principle to clear out the pending processes. **Keeping the mergers and acquisitions waiting for approval slows** down the economic growth of the country. Therefore, quick action is required here. And so, the CCI is invoking the Doctrine of Necessity Principle.

VISIT INDIA YEAR - 2023 INITIATIVE

Minister of Tourism G. Kishan Reddy launched the Visit India Year – 2023 initiative and unveiled the logo in New Delhi. Minister of Tourism G. Kishan Reddy kicked off the year of grand plans and activities for promoting tourism in the country.

Minister of Tourism G. Kishan Reddy noted that the launch of the **Visit India Year 2023 logo is taking place in this important year as India is heading to the G20.**



- He also informed that more than one lakh foreign delegates will visit India this year and they will be showcased the **entire gamut of India's culture, including monuments and festivals.**
- Mr. Reddy added that each foreign delegate of G20 will be a brand ambassador of India's culture, heritage, and tourist destinations.

- He further stated that his Ministry is coordinating with Indian missions and other stakeholders to have a conducive environment for foreign visitors this year.
- Harnessing the momentum created by the recovery of the global industry, preferential sentiment from global travelers for exploring India, **and building upon the success in growing tourism in India over the years—the Tourism Ministry** is on a mission to unlock the untapped potential of tourism in India, making India a 365-day destination.

AIRBUS & BOEING DEAL WITH AIR INDIA

The **Government of India recently disinvested Air India to TATA**. Since TATA took over the airlines, many changes were brought in. Air India was merged with VISTARA Airlines.

The company introduced the Coruson software for real-time data acquisition, to learn real-time happenings during the flight. **Now, Air India has signed a deal with Airbus and Boeing**. With this, Air India will acquire 470 aircraft.



How big is the deal?

- PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron attended the deal-signing function. US president Joe Biden, and UK PM Rishi Sunak congratulated India and the company for the deal.

Why is the deal big?

- The **financial terms were not disclosed. However, the deal is worth tens of billions of dollars**. Boeing is to supply 190 of its 737 Max Single-Aisle planes, 10 of its 777X, and 20 of its Dreamliners widebodies. The total deal is around 45.9 billion USD approximately.
- Airbus is a European multinational aerospace corporation. **However, the major business of the company happens through the French**. Most of its manufacturing facilities are in Europe. Boeing is an American company.
- Its headquarters is in Virginia. In 2019, the company produced 390 commercial aircraft and 229 military aircraft. As you see, India is to buy almost half of its annual production!

INDIA'S HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE: PM ABHIM

Recently, the Indian government has signed loan agreements to borrow up to Rs 13,879 crore to strengthen health infrastructure from international agencies.

The loan agreements have been signed to augment PM-ABHIM (Prime Minister-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission) **which was launched in October 2021 (till FY 2025-26)**.



What are the Key Points of the Agreement?

- Loan agreements have been signed with **Asian Development Bank (ADB) for USD 300 million and with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for 50 billion Japanese Yen**.
- The World Bank has approved USD 1 billion IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) for PM-ABHIM. **IBRD is the lending arm of the World Bank**.

What is PM-ABHIM?

- It is one of the largest pan-India schemes for **strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country**. It is in addition to the National Health Mission (NHM). It aims to provide support to 17,788 rural Health and Wellness Centres in **10 'high focus' states** and **establish 11,024 urban Health and Wellness Centres across the country**.

PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATED INDIA ENERGY WEEK

On February 6th, 2023, Indian Prime Minister (PM) inaugurated the India Energy Week (IEW) 2023 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

The PM also launched E20 fuel at 84 Retail Outlets of Oil Marketing Companies in 11 States/UTs and flagged off the Green Mobility Rally **organized by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)**



What is the E-20 Ethanol Fuel and Green Mobility Rally?

- **E-20 Ethanol Fuel:** Ethanol Blending programme has been a key focus area of the Government to achieve Atma Nirbharta in the field of energy.
- E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with petrol. The Government **aims to achieve a complete 20% blending of ethanol by 2025**, and HPCL and other oil marketing companies are setting up 2G-3G ethanol plants that will facilitate the progress.

Achievement So Far:

- Due to the sustained efforts of the Government, Ethanol production capacity has seen six times increase since 2013-14.
- The **achievements under Ethanol Blending Program & Biofuels Program** have not only augmented India's energy security but have also resulted in a host of other benefits including reduction of 318 Lakh Metric Tonnes of CO2 emissions and foreign exchange savings of around Rs 54,000 crore.

SIX NEW GOVERNORS APPOINTED

President Murmu recently appointed six new governors and reshuffled seven others. The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh B D Mishra was made the LG of Ladakh. Ramesh Bais, the Governor of Jharkhand was made the Governor of Maharashtra. In all, the president made 13 appointments. 12 were made in the states and one in the UT. **Of these 13, 2 states Nagaland and Meghalaya are election-bound.**



About the new appointments

- **Lt General Kaiwalya Trivikram** was appointed the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh
- **Lakshman Prasad Acharya** was appointed as the Governor of Sikkim
- **CP Radhakrishnan** was appointed the Governor of Jharkhand
- **Shiv Pratap Singh** was appointed the Governor of HP
- **Chand Kataria** was appointed the Governor of Assam
- **Retired SC Judge Abdul Nazeer** was appointed the Governor of Andhra Pradesh

About the reshuffles

- The **Governor of AP Biswa Bhusan** was appointed the Governor of Chhattisgarh
- **Governor of Chhattisgarh Sushri Anusuiya** was appointed as the Governor of Manipur
- **Governor of Manipur La Ganesh** was appointed as the Governor of Nagaland
- **Governor of Bihar Phagu Chauhan** was appointed the Governor of Meghalaya
- Governor of HP Rajendra Vishwanath **Arlekar** was appointed the Governor of Bihar
- **Governor of Jharkhand Ramesh Bais** was appointed the Governor of Maharashtra
- The **Governor of Arunachal Pradesh** was appointed the LG of Ladakh

DEMAND FOR 'GREATER TIPRALAND'

The **Tipra Motha Party** was founded by **Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barma**. The core demand of the party is "Greater Tipraland". Tipraland is a proposed region for the Tripuris. They are now a part of Tripura state. They demand 68% of Tripura state. Also, the party wants the **Tripuris living outside the region to be added**.

Why is it in the news now?

- The ECI is to conduct Tripura state elections in February 2023. Tripuris are the major tribes in the state. **They constitute more than 50% of the Tripura state population as of the 2011 census**. Therefore, the party gaining their trust has a greater chance to win the elections.
- In 2019, the Tipra Motha Party leader Bikram Manikya Deb Barma was appointed as the president of the **Tripura Congress Committee**. However, he resigned alleging the Congress party is forcing him to include corrupt people.

Constitutional features

- The **Tripuris want to form a separate state as per articles 2 and 3 of the constitution**. Article 2 says that territories acquired or in the possession of GoI shall be converted into a separate state. Article 3 explains the rules and procedures of forming a new state. It also speaks about changing the boundaries of the existing state.

WHAT IS PULWAMA ATTACK IN J&K?

Pulwama district is in Jammu and Kashmir. The Pulwama Attack killed more than 40 CRPF personnel. It occurred on February 14, 2019. The Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack. The **attack was conducted by a vehicle-borne suicide bomber**. The UN and several other countries condemned the attack. This includes China, Russia, and France, the UK, the US, and Israel. In 2023, the CPRF marked the fourth anniversary of its fellowmen.

The consequence of Pulwama Attack: Balakot Airstrikes

- India **launched the Balakot Airstrike in response to the Pulwama attack**. During the airstrike, The IAF dropped bombs into Balakot and blasted the training camps of Jaish-e-Mohammed. Around 300 to 350 terrorists were killed during the operation. **India conducted the strikes crossing the Line of Control!**

WHAT IS VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME?

The **Vibrant Villages Programme** focuses on developing the rural areas in the northern Border States and union territories. More than 663 villages will be developed under the programme.

It is to be implemented for two years, that is, between 2022-23 and 2025-26. The Central Government allocated Rs 4,800 crores for the scheme. **Of this Rs 2500 crores will be used for building roads.** The Cabinet approved the scheme recently.



Key Features of the scheme

- **One – Village – One– Product concept** will be adopted
- Social entrepreneurship will be encouraged by opening growth centers. **These centers will work on “Hub and Spoke model”**
- Skill development programmes for youth and women
- Heritage development and promotion of local traditional knowledge
- **Development of eco-agribusinesses**
- **The NGOs, cooperatives, and Self Help Groups** will be involved in the scheme

KEY POINTS RELATED TO SHINKU LA TUNNEL

The **Shinku La or Shingo La** is a mountain pass located on the border between **HP and Ladakh**. It is at an altitude of 5,091 meters. In 2016, the Border Road Organization built a road to the pass.

However, the road couldn't be accessed during winter and large-wheeled vehicles couldn't pass through. Following this, in 2020, GoI planned to build a 13.5 km tunnel in the pass.

The Union Cabinet recently approved the construction of the tunnel. With the Atal Tunnel and the completion of the Shinku La Tunnel in 2025, the Nimmu – Padum – Darcha road shall be accessed all through the year.



Significance

- The **tunnel will help to boost the Zaskar valley economy.** It reduces the travel time between HP and Ladakh. Currently, one has to travel 101 km on the Manali-Leh road and then take the Darcha road to enter the Zaskar region. **With the tunnel, you can drive from Darcha to Padum.**
- The toughest hurdle is the 15-20 feet of snowfall the region received during winter. Almost all roads are closed during this season. **The Shrink La Tunnel is to make the Zaskar valley accessible 365 days.**
- **Project Yojak:** The Shinku La tunnel is a part of Project Yojak. This project is implemented by BRO. **The main objective of the project is to make sure the Manali – Leh route is accessible all through the year.**

ASI DISCOVERED 1,300 YEAR OLD BUDDHIST STUPA

Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered a 1,300-year-old stupa right in the middle of a mining site in Odisha's Jajpur district at a Khondalite mining site.

It is the place from where Khondalite stones were supplied for the beautification project around the 12th Century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri.



What are the Findings of the ASI?

- The stupa could be 4.5-metre tall and initial assessment showed it may belong to the 7th or 8th century.
- It was found at Parabhadi which is situated near Lalitagiri, a major Buddhist complex, has a large number of stupas and monasteries.
- Lalitgiri Buddhist site is believed to be the most sacred among the three sites (Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri) as it unearthed a massive stupa where a relic of Buddha was discovered inside a stone casket.

What are the Khondalite Stones?

- Khondalite is a type of metamorphic rock that is found in the Eastern Ghats region of India, particularly in the state of Odisha. It is named after the Khondalite Group of rocks, which is believed to have formed around 1.6 billion years ago during the Proterozoic era.

BVR SUBRAHMANYAM APPOINTED AS NEW CEO OF NITI AAYOG

The National Institution for Transforming India is a public policy think tank. It succeeded the Planning Commission in 2015. **The council has all the chief ministers of the state and Lieutenant Governors of UTs** Apart from them, there are temporary members such as four ex-officio members, a CEO, and three part-time members. All the temporary members including the CEO are appointed by the Prime Minister. Recently, **PM Modi appointed BVR Subrahmanyam as the new CEO of NITI Ayog.**

- The previous CEO of NITI Aayog, Parameshwaran Iyer has been appointed as the Executive Director of the World Bank. **And so, Mr Subrahmanyam is moving to his place.**

About BVR Subrahmanyam

- He served as the **Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir**. He was a 1987 IAS officer from the Chhattisgarh cadre. He served as the private secretary of Mr Manmohan Singh during his reign from 2004 to 2008.

SYL CANAL PROJECT IN HARYANA BUDGET 2023

The Haryana Governor recently addressed the Budget session of the state. During the address, he said that the State Government **is very stubborn in implementing the SYL Canal project.**

It is a canal between Sutlej and Yamuna rivers. The canal is a river-sharing mechanism between Punjab and Haryana. **After completion, the states of Punjab and Haryana will share the waters of Ravi and Beas.**



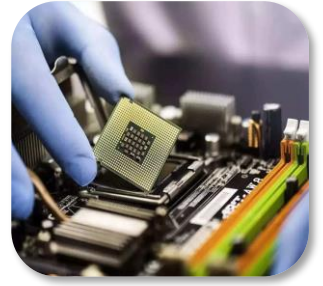
Powers of Parliament

- The central government has the power to make laws on water sharing between the states. **The rivers and the inter-state rivers fall under the union list.**

FIRST SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING UNIT

The **Vedanta group and the Foxconn of Taiwan** have come together to build the first semiconductor manufacturing unit in **Dholera of Gujarat**.

The companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gujarat Government. According to the agreement, **they will invest Rs 1,54,000 crores in this project.**



The **semiconductor plant will be built in the Dholera Special Investment Region in Ahmedabad.** It is a greenfield industrial city.

- The Dholera Special Investment Region Development Authority handles the land and the projects. The **project was started by PM Modi when he was the CM of Gujarat.**

Projects within Dholera Special Investment Region

- ***Ultra Mega Solar Park: generating 4400 MW of electricity***
- An international airport
- Freight transport railway line
- Expressway to connect Ahmedabad. Dholera is 100 km from Ahmedabad

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

SEVERE EARTHQUAKE HITS TURKEY - SYRIA

A **7.8 Richter earthquake hit Turkey – Syria**. More than thousands died. The earthquake is the biggest of the earthquakes recorded so far in the region. Five tremors were felt and more than 60 aftershocks were recorded.

The epicenter was 23 km east of Nurdagi. **It is located in the Gaziantep province**. The depth of the epicenter was 24.1 km. The data was provided by the US Geological Survey.



What are aftershocks?

- **Aftershocks are readjustment processes.** They occur after the earthquake. Sometimes, the aftershocks continue for days or even years. Aftershocks are small earthquakes and have devastating and disastrous effects just like earthquakes.

Why do aftershocks occur?

- Earthquakes are the result of tectonic plate movements. **During earthquakes, rocks push and pull and may even split.** Such events release enormous amounts of energy. The **other nearby rocks cannot withstand this energy and break or even shatter into pieces.**

UAE-FEDERAL PERSONAL STATUS LAW

UAE is a **Muslim country conservative about its religion**. The laws of the UAE are in sync with its religion. In recent times, due to harsh punishments businessmen are turning away from the country.

The **country is losing its international trade markets**. For instance, foreigners have been jailed in the UAE for kissing in public.

- Tourists **were imprisoned for years together for using CBD products.** With the decline in tourism and trade, the country is bringing in changes in its laws. The new laws are expected to invite skilled and highly qualified people from all over the world.
- The **Dirham (currency of UAE) is one of the most stable currencies in the world.** The legal measures are expected to boost UAE's economic growth and appreciate Dirham in the world market.

What legal changes were introduced recently?

- **Article 4:** Both men and women can file a divorce. Earlier women did not have the power to file a divorce
- **Article 5:** Speaks about civil marriages. Both men and women should have attained the age of 21 years. The condition of being related to each other has been removed.
- Also, the condition of getting assent from the bride's father has been removed. Marriage should be registered in the court. **The mandatory requirement of witness has been removed.**

WHAT IS THE ICET INITIATIVE?

India's National Security Advisor held talks with the US counterpart on the first dialogue on **Initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)** in the US. Completing the work on the **long-awaited NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)** earth observation satellite is an excellent example of how the US-India partnership in space can benefit the world.



What is the iCET Initiative?

- The **iCET initiative was launched by India and the US in May 2022**, and is being run by the National Security Councils of both countries.
- Under iCET, the **both countries have identified six areas of cooperation which would include co-development and co-production**, that would gradually be expanded to QUAD, then to NATO, followed by Europe and the rest of the world.
- Under iCET, India is ready to share its core technologies with the **US and expects Washington to do the same**.

CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

Pakistan inaugurated a USD 2.7 billion nuclear reactor under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), **providing some relief as the nation grapples with an energy crisis**.

This is a 1,100 megawatts capacity power plant, which will generate some of the nation's cheapest electricity.



What is the Background?

- Pakistan experienced nationwide power outages recently due to a breakdown in its national grid. The country has struggled with blackouts for years and is **facing surging energy costs, low foreign-exchange reserves, and pressure on its government budget**.
- Pakistan is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout in exchange for increased energy tariffs. **The country's foreign-exchange reserves fell to the lowest in nine years**, as high fossil fuel costs put pressure on the government's budget.

What is CPEC?

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

INDIAN DEFENCE FORCES CONDUCTED FIREPOWER EXERCISE

The **Indian Defense Forces conducted firepower exercises** called the “TRISHAKTI PRAHAR” to synergize the firepower assets and to orchestrate a battle. The exercise is important to keep the forces ready for battle. The exercise was conducted by the Indian Air Force, CAPF, and the Indian Army. **It was a firepower exercise.**



About Trishakti Prahar

- The main objective of **Trishakti Prahar was to refresh battling skills**
- All the latest defense equipment was used during the exercise. This includes helicopters, infantry combat vehicles, **new-generation equipment, mortars, artillery guns, etc.** Equipment made as a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan was also used in the exercise
- **Forces moved and rehearsed across** the regions of North Bengal
- The Indian Army checks if the troops are in battle preparedness through these exercises

PAK FORMER PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF DIES

Pakistan's former president **Pervez Musharraf** passed away in Dubai at the age of 79 due to a prolonged illness. Musharraf, who was admitted to a hospital in Dubai, **was shifted to the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFIC) in Rawalpindi earlier.**

Musharraf, who was in Dubai since March 2016, was undergoing treatment for amyloidosis. It is a rare disease that occurs when an abnormal protein, called amyloid, **builds up in your organs and interferes with their normal function.**



- Musharraf was the **tenth president of the South Asian nation after the successful military coup** in 1999 and 7th top general from 1998 to 2007.

The Charges Against Musharraf:

- Musharraf was facing treason charges for suspending the Constitution in 2007 **over the imposition of an extra-constitutional emergency**, a punishable offense for which he was indicted in 2014.

About Musharraf and his timeline:

- Musharraf was born on August 11, 1943, in Delhi and completed his early education at St Patrick's High School in Karachi. The **former president pursued higher education at Forman Christian College in Lahore.**
- He assumed power after engineering a successful military takeover of the Pakistani government in 1999.
- In 2002, he won a general election which was widely reported as almost certainly to have been rigged. Notably for India, **Musharraf made some strides towards solving the Kashmir question and moving towards peace.** In 2006, he said that Pakistan could be willing to give up its claim on Kashmir if India agreed to a self-government plan.
- Musharraf, who ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008, was **declared a fugitive in the Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing case.**

- When Nawaz Sharif was elected in 2013, he initiated high treason charges against Musharraf who was convicted and sentenced to death in 2019. His death sentence was **eventually struck down by the Lahore high court** which had declared the Sharif government's actions unconstitutional.

BRAZIL & US TO JOIN INDIA LED BIOFUEL ALLIANCE

During the G20 meeting, India is to launch the International Biofuel Alliance just like the International Solar Alliance. To this, the USA and Brazil have agreed to back India.



- India has been taking the lead in several such emission reduction initiatives. The **country allocated 4.3 billion USD during the 2023-24 Budget to accomplish its net-zero targets.**
- The objective of the Biofuel alliance: **To boost the production of Biofuels**

Significance of Brazil and the US

- The **two countries are the largest biofuel markets in the world.** The US ranks number one and Brazil is in second position in Biofuels. They lead in biodiesel and ethanol production. Together they accounted for 84% of the **world's ethanol production and 26% of the world's biodiesel production.**

WHAT IS TRILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE?

In recent times, **India has been increasing its bilateral trade with the UAE.** With CEPA and the Golden Visa program (extension) of UAE, **business relations have increased exponentially.** On the other hand, India has strong defense relations with France.

From fighter jets to drones, the Indian military is using French-made goods. Extending the ties further, India is launching a Trilateral Cooperation Initiative with the countries.



What is the Trilateral Cooperation Initiative?

- Under the initiative, **the countries will work together to design and implement "ENERGY PROJECTS".** The projects will be around energy conservation, climate change and the conservation of biodiversity. The main area of focus is the Indian Ocean Region.
- With **India hosting G20 and UAE hosting COP-28**, the initiative is a great platform to work together on global issues.
- The initiative will bring together agencies and stakeholders working on sustainable projects. Also, the **countries get an opportunity to line up their technological, social, and economic policies.**

INDIA ENERGY WEEK INAUGURATED BY PM MODI

The **India Energy Week** was inaugurated by PM Modi in Bengaluru, **Karnataka**. The event is to focus on energy security and India's energy transition goals.

This includes net-zero emission target achievement by 2070. The **major attraction of the event is the launch of E20 fuel** in more than 84 outlets in 11 states and UTs.



The focus of India energy week

- **PM Modi will launch solar and conventional energy hybrid cooking systems.** It was designed and created by Indian Oil. It is called the Indoor Solar Cooking System.

Launch of 20% ethanol blend petrol, E20

- Launch of "UNBOTTLED" initiative by PM Modi: Aim of the initiative is to phase out single-use plastics
- Indian companies like GAIL, Adnani, HPCL, IOCL, BPCL, ONGC, and **Total gas will demonstrate new products and services**
- Participation of more than 650 business associates from 50 countries
- **GoI plans on achieving 20% ethanol blend biofuels**
- Discussions about the oil companies setting up 2G ethanol plants and 3G ethanol plants.

WHAT IS PARIS CLUB?

The Paris Club, an informal group of creditor nations, will provide financial assurances to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Sri Lanka's debt. **Sri Lanka needs assurance from the Paris Club and other creditors** in order to receive a USD 2.9 billion bailout package from the IMF, following an economic crisis in 2022.



What is the Paris Club?

- The **Paris Club is a group of mostly western creditor countries that grew from a 1956 meeting** in which Argentina agreed to meet its public creditors in Paris.
- It describes itself as a forum **where official creditors meet to solve payment difficulties faced by debtor countries.**
- Their objective is to find sustainable debt-relief solutions for **countries that are unable to repay their bilateral loans.**
- **Members:** The members are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- All 22 are members of the group called **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).**

WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT HELD IN DUBAI

Every year the **World Government Summit is held in Dubai, UAE**. During the summit, world leaders discuss policies and governmental processes. More than 4,000 foreign delegates from at least 100 countries attend the summit.

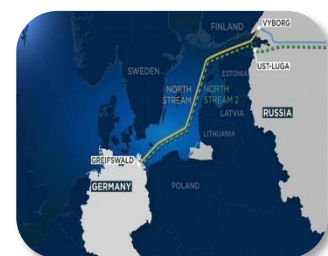
The summit acts as a knowledge exchange hub. Policymakers and the private sectors learn about mutual interests and future requirements.

World Government Summit 2023

- The **2023 summit is to begin in February 2023. More than 20 presidents will attend this year's summit.** This includes Abdel El Sisi of Egypt, African Union chairperson Macky Sall, Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, etc.
- The theme of World Government Summit 2023: **Shaping Future Governments**

WHAT IS NORD STREAM PIPELINE?

The recent claims made by investigative journalists regarding the bombing of the Nord Stream gas pipelines (September 2022) **have ignited intense discussions and controversies.**



What is the Nord Stream Pipeline?

- The Nord Stream pipeline is a natural gas pipeline that runs under the **Baltic Sea, connecting Russia and Germany.**
- The pipeline was built with the aim of transporting natural gas from Russia to Europe, bypassing traditional transit countries such as Ukraine.
- The **first line of the Nord Stream pipeline was completed in 2011 and the second in 2012**, and it has since become a major source of natural gas for Europe.
- Nord Stream 1 is a 1,224 km underwater gas pipeline running from Vyborg in northwest Russia to Lubmin in northeastern Germany via the Baltic Sea.
- **Nord Stream 2, which runs from Ust-Luga in Leningrad (Russia) to Lubmin**, has the capacity to handle 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year once it becomes fully operational.

CANADA'S INDO PACIFIC POLICY

Recently, **India-Canada Foreign minister's bilateral meeting as 'India-Canada Strategic Dialogue'** took place ahead of G20 Foreign ministers' meeting in March in New Delhi.

India welcomed the announcement of **Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy** given the shared vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo pacific.



What is Canada's Indo Pacific Policy?

- Canada released a new Indo-Pacific strategy, focusing on four regions: **China, India, the North Pacific (Japan and Koreas), and ASEAN.**

- The Indo-Pacific region is home to the largest diaspora in Canada, with 1 in 5 Canadians having **family ties to the region and 60% of Canada's international students.**
- The **strategy contains strong words on China's challenge to the international rules-based order and human rights**, while expressing a positive view of India's shared tradition of democracy and pluralism.
- However, Canada also acknowledges its dependence on China as its main export destination and recognizes the need for cooperation with China on issues such as climate change and health.

JAPAN'S REACHING OUT TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Japan has taken the initiative to raise the **Global South to the top of the G7 agenda.**

Japan is hosting the **G7 summit 2023 at Hiroshima.** With India wanting to make the voice of the Global South heard at this year's G20 summit, there is much new room for global political collaboration between Delhi and Tokyo.

What is Global South?

- The **term 'Global South' began by loosely referring to those countries** that was left out of the industrialisation era and had a conflict of ideology with the capitalist and communist countries, accentuated by the Cold War.
- It includes countries that are mostly in Asia, Africa and South America. **Moreover, Global North is defined essentially by an economic division between the rich and poor countries.**
- Global North' refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand. 'Global South' is significant because of its large population, rich cultures, and abundant natural resources.
- **Understanding the Global South** is important for addressing global issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change.

EU PLANS TO BAN SALE OF GAS, DIESEL CARS FROM 2035

The **European Union recently planned to ban the sale of gas and diesel cars.** The ban will come into effect in 2035. The decision was made to increase the use of Electric Vehicles. The main objective is to achieve zero emissions.

To execute the plan successfully, the European Commission will **prepare a report on the progress every two years starting from 2025.** Manufacturers welcome the move. Automakers like Volkswagen have already started producing EVs only.



New Legislation

- The **European Union recently passed a law to reduce emissions.** Under the law, the commission will ban the sale of diesel and gas cars by 2035. Sale is to be banned only in the EU.
- The manufacturers can still make the cars and sell them in other countries! However, the cost of production is to be increased.

WHAT IS BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL?

Ukraine is one of the largest exporters of food grains such as rapeseed, maize, wheat, and sunflower oil. The country has good access to the Black sea ports. Ukrainian ports in the Black sea are the lifelines of the country's trade with Europe and middle-east.

Unfortunately, the Ukraine-Russia war blockaded the ports. To aid Ukraine with its smooth exports, the United Nations and Turkey came forward. Under their brokering, **Ukraine and Russia signed the Black Sea Grain Deal in July 2022.**

What is the Black Sea Grain Deal?

- The deal was to provide a safe corridor for Ukrainian exports, especially food grains on humanitarian concerns. The main objective of the deal was to calm markets and to **reduce increasing food inflation affecting several countries.**

ISRAEL NEW LAW TO STRIP ARAB ATTACKERS OF CITIZENSHIP

The **Israeli Government has been making a series of changes recently.** While the Judicial reforms proposed are creating a ruckus in the country, Knesset recently approved a new law against the Arabs involved in nationalistic attacks.

According to the new law, **the Israel Government is to deport the Arabs** who are convicted of attacks and receive financial support from the Palestinian Government.



Background

- The **main reason for the Knesset to frame the law is age-old Israel – Palestine conflict.** The land over which Israel and Palestine are fighting was once under the Ottoman Empire. After the First World War, it came under British control.
- There were very few Jews here. During Hitler's rule, Jews from **Europe started fleeing here.** According to them, their ancestors lived here. As the Jewish population increased, they started demanding a separate land for their community. Arabs resisted their claim.

Balfour Declaration

- In **1917, the UK which was controlling the land assured that it would help the Jewish people to establish a "National Home for the Jewish".** Arabs did not agree to this declaration. The dispute started with Balfour's declaration. However, the UK succeeded and created land for Jews with the **help of the League of Nations (or prior to the UN) in 1923.**

INDIA-JAPAN DHARMA GUARDIAN EXERCISE

India and Japan recently conducted the Dharma Guardian Exercise. The exercise was held at Camp Imazu of Shiga province in Japan. The Middle Army's Infantry Regiment and the Garhwal Rifle regiment of the Indian Army participated in the exercise.

The armies shared tactics and their best practices with each other. **The exercise will boost the friendship between the armies.**



About Dharma Guardian Exercise

- The **Indian Army and Japanese Army participated in the exercise**. It was held in the Shiga province of Japan. The exercise held in 2023 was the fourth edition. During the exercise, the armies conducted joint tactical drills, employed aerial assets and surveillance grids

I2U2 VICE MINISTERIAL MEETING

I2U2 is a joint initiative of India, Israel, the USA, and the UAE. I2 stands for Israel and India. U2 stands for USA and UAE. The main objective of the initiative is **security cooperation, technological hubs, food security, and other different energy fields.**

The UAE recently hosted the vice-ministerial meeting of I2U2. **It was held in Abu Dhabi.** It was attended by the Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment secretary of the USA, the Prime Minister of Israel, PM Modi, and the UAE President.



- **This is the first meeting of its kind.** During the meeting, the leaders discussed regional cooperation opportunities and investment opportunities among the countries. **They also discussed food insecurity and energy crisis issues.**

Principled Vision of I2U2

- The leaders of the initiative aim to increase private sector investments in the field of clean energy, emerging technologies, and waste treatment. The first summit of the initiative was held in 2022.

US PRESIDENT VISIT TO KYIV AMIDST RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

US President Joe Biden made a surprise visit to Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. Tensions between Ukraine and Russia are still strong with the **first anniversary of the Russian Invasion fast approaching.**



Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

- The US provided **30 billion USD of aid to Ukraine.** **Ukraine disintegrated from the USSR in 1991.** After the disintegration, the US established a diplomatic relationship with the US in 1991.
- The US aims to develop Ukraine into a secure region and integrate the country with the Europeans.

INDIA & UZBEKISTAN DUSTLIK EXERCISE 2023

India and Uzbekistan conducted the fourth edition of the DUSTLIK 2023 military exercise in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. During the exercise, the countries trained their troops in multi-domain operations and shared their skills.

India's GARHWAL Rifles from the Western Command participated in the exercise. And from Uzbekistan, the **North Western Military command** participated in the exercise. The exercise is biennial, meaning conducted once in two years.

- The country ranks 62 in its military power. It is a part of the Turkic world. With more than 65,000 soldiers, the Army of Uzbekistan is one of the largest in Central Asia.

Why is DUSTLIK important?

- **Uzbekistan is important to India for connectivity to Iran and the Central Asian region.** India is trying to expand its trade in the Central Asian region. But the conflicts in Afghanistan are a big hindrance.
- To counter such security issues, India needs the support of other **central Asian countries like Uzbekistan.**

RUSSIA SUSPENDS 'START TREATY'

The **START** is a **bilateral treaty signed between the US and the Soviet Union in 1991**. It came into force in 1994. Under the treaty, the countries agreed to bar 6,000 nuclear warheads and 1m600 ICBMs.

More than 80% of the nuclear warheads were removed in 2001 with this treaty. The treaty expired in 2009. THE NEW START Treaty was signed in 2010. This new treaty applies till 2026. Russia has now withdrawn from the treaty.



Background

- The US and Russia have been at constant war due to the differences in their ideologies. **Russia follows socialism and the US follows capitalism.** The differences affect their trade interests.
- They fight the cold war, the trade war, the space war, the proxy war, and every other war sadly. **Now, they are fighting against each other, placing Ukraine at the center.**

VIVEK RAMASWAMY LAUNCHES US PRESIDENTIAL BID

Vivek Ramaswamy is an Indian American. He is a republican (Joe Biden and Barack Obama are all **from the Democratic Political party**) and an **anti-environment activist.**

Anti-environmentalists are those people who believe that environmental regulation is unnecessary. **He established a company to ban environmental governance initiatives.** He is a biotech investor.



- Former President Donald Trump announced his candidacy already. Also, **Nikki Haley, the Governor of South Carolina** has announced her candidacy for the US elections in 2024.
- The Republican Party will hold primary elections to choose its nominee. **The US constitution does not provide any rule for these elections.** Joe Biden, the current President of the US will also run for the 2024 US President Election. He was the Vice President of the country during Obama's time. In the US, you can contest the presidential elections twice, that is, for two terms.

BIODIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (BBNJ)

India has urged the member nations to stay dedicated to the conservation and preservation of the oceans and its biodiversity during the ongoing session (Feb-March 2023) Of Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) i.e., IGC-5 of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).



India supported the high ambition coalition for the early conclusion of the International Legally Binding Instrument of BBNJ under **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.

What is the BBNJ Treaty?

- The “**BBNJ Treaty**”, also known as the “**Treaty of the High Seas**”, is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction within the framework of the UNCLOS.
- BBNJ encompasses the high seas, **beyond the exclusive economic zones or national waters of countries**.
- According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, these areas account for “almost half of the Earth’s surface”.
- These areas are hardly regulated and also least understood or explored for its **biodiversity - only 1% of these areas are under protection**. Launched at the One Ocean Summit in February 2022, the **High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction** brings together many delegations engaged in the BBNJ negotiations on a common and ambitious outcome at the highest political level.

INDIA & CHINA HOLD WMCC MEETING

India and China recently held the **Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination meeting**. This is the 26th meeting and the first since the Galwan standoff, and the 14th physical WMCC meeting. A virtual WMCC meeting was held during the Ladakh standoff in 2020. **The countries discussed the issues along the LAC on the western border**. Also, they discussed the disengagement of troops in the remaining areas. It was a secretary-level meeting.

Why was the meeting held?

- To bring back normalcy in the bilateral relations between India and China
- To restore **peace along the Line of Actual Control Future Plans**
- The countries have decided to conduct the Senior Commanders meeting soon. This is in accordance with the **bilateral agreements signed between India and China**.

CHINA & JAPAN SECURITY DIALOGUE

China and Japan held a security dialogue for the first time in four years. It was held in Tokyo. During the meeting, the countries agreed to strengthen their security relations and communication. **They will work to gain mutual trust**. Also, they agreed to bring upon a framework of maritime and air liaison.



- If you notice, China recently held the WMCC meeting with India on withdrawing troops on the border. China is planning on holding talks with Australia.
- China has been changing its tone of business in recent days, that is, 30-40 days. **This is because the economy of the country is becoming more and more fragile**.
- And with the dependent population increasing and the working population decreasing in the country because of its birth control policies, **China will face a big setback in its economic growth in the coming days**.

China's policy change

- China was a pro-business market for quite some time in the past. **Meaning, the capitalists were given preference.**
- But lately, the **Chinese Communist Party's (the ruling government) goals are prioritized over business interests.** The case of Jack Ma is the best example of the Chinese policy shift.

DESERT FLAG EXERCISE VIII HELD IN UAE

The exercise **Desert Flag VIII** was held in the UAE air base Al Dhafra. The Indian Air Force participated in the exercise. The other countries that participated were the **USA, Korea, Spain, Morocco, Bahrain, the UK, Australia, Kuwait, France, and UAE.**



- For the first time, **LCA Tejas of India is participating in a military exercise** that was held outside the country. India sent two C-17 transport aircraft and five Tejas to the exercise.

Why is exercise important for India?

- The UAE Air Force is one of the largest air forces in the world. There are more than 4,000 personnel in the UAE Air Force. **In the 1970s-80s, the UAE Air Force was not this strong.**
- It received training from the Pakistan Air Force during those times. **Even today, you can find many retired Pakistan Air Force officers in the UAE.**
- **UAE started building its Air Force in 2007.** Some of the largest procurements began during these days. 3.4 billion USD worth of Mirage 2000, 6.4 billion Lockheed Martin, etc. was purchased. Missiles like AIM-120, AGM Mavericks, etc were also purchased.

PAKISTAN RECEIVES \$700 MILLION FROM CHINA

The **foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan fell to 2.9 billion USD.** It is now slowly rising to 4 billion USD. The cash injection was the need of the moment for Pakistan.



- And China stepped in offering 700 million USD to help its “all-weather” friend. **China Development Bank transferred the funds to Pakistan State Bank.**
- **Pakistan was also asking for help from the IMF. Unfortunately, the talks ended in failure.** The IMF is planning on sending 1.1 billion USD but no decision has been made yet.
- **Taxes are increasing in the country; oil prices are shooting up rapidly,** the rupee value of the country is falling, etc. Pakistan is facing an economic crisis because of ill-planned tax reforms. **Another reason is the weak regulatory system.**

What should Pakistan do?

- The country should introduce structural reforms and economic reforms. Also, Pakistan should try and bring in investments. **When it comes to trade, the country should remove the bias.**

- Public finances should be strengthened; the energy sector reformation, removing biasing the non-agricultural sector and strengthening competition law.

MULTINATIONAL COBRA WARRIOR EXERCISE

The **Cobra Warrior Exercise** is to be held at **Waddington Air Force Base in the UK** in March 2023. It is a multinational exercise. Countries like Singapore, Finland, the USA, South Africa, and Sweden will participate in the exercise.

India is also participating in the exercise. **The IAF will send five Mirage 2000 fighters along with IL-78 mid-air refueling aircraft**, and two C-17 Globemaster.

- The Cobalt Warrior is one of the largest Royal Air Force exercises. During the exercise, the Royal Air Force provides special training to pilots from different countries.
- The exercise has been conducted for more than a decade. The exercises are considered one of the most challenging exercises in the world. Therefore, the participating air forces gain good exposure.
- During the exercise, the Royal British Air Force offers Qualified Space Instructors Courses, surveillance, Multi-Engine Tactics, Qualified Weapons Instructors, etc. To qualify for these war strategies the Air Force crew has to seek **intense training provided by the British Royal Air Force**.

FRANCE UNVEILS NEW STRATEGY FOR AFRICA

- **French President Emmanuel Macron** recently unveiled a new economic and military strategy for Africa. According to the new strategy, the French Government is to **reduce its troops in the African region**.
- Dropping the military approach, France is to boost its economic influence in the region. France refers to the change as the beginning of a “New Era”. France is to bring in a new security partnership. **However, France will not close its military bases. Rather, the bases are to be utilized based on the needs of the African partners.**
- Africa is the **new “field of competition”**. The eyes of developed and developing economies are on the African region.
- The **region is of interest to investors for its rich oil resources, mineral deposits**, and also agricultural potential. But France is still in its age-old style of military dominance while China and the USA have already in the race to capture African markets.



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

RBI, SEBI & NSE ACTIONS ON ADANI ROW

After the Hindenburg report, Gautham Adani who was the second richest person in the world slipped to the 21st position according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

In the last ten days, he lost 108 billion USD. Hindenburg alleged Adani of stock manipulation. With global scrutiny, the stock prices of the company are to fall down further.



RBI actions

- RBI has asked for details from the banks associated with the Adani group. **This includes collateral details Mr. Adani and his cousins used to get a loan.**

Actions of NSE

- NSE put the Adani group under “Additional Surveillance Mechanism”. It means the stock has seen unusual activity and is not safe to purchase the share. This was introduced in 2018.

SEBI actions

- **SEBI is now examining the issue and is preparing a report.** It is also looking into the fraudulent dealings made by the Adani Group as mentioned in the Hindenburg report.

WHAT ARE THE TRANSFER PRICING RULES?

The Income Tax department recently conducted surveys in BBC offices located in Mumbai, Delhi, and in different other cities in the country. According to the IT Department, the **BBC has violated “TRANSFER PRICING RULES”.**

Transfer Pricing is a practice where one company charges another (in the same division). The parent company of both companies is the same.



In Simple Terms Example

- Take two Companies Company A and Company B. Parent Company of both companies are the same. For instance, the parent company of “BBC UK” is in London. **Now assume, Company A is “BBC India” and Company B is “BBC USA”.**
- Now company A is selling XYZ goods and services. **Company B is selling PQR goods and services.**
- **Say company A is selling XYZ in the international market.** It is also selling to Company B. Now, company B is requesting A to provide the goods at a reduced price.
- With the parent company’s (BBC UK) insistence, company A too sells its goods to B at reduced prices. **With this, the profit of company B increases because its cost of raw material decreases.**
- But the profit of company A decreases because it is selling its products at a reduced rate. However, the overall profit of the parent company is the same.

WB PRESIDENT DAVID MALPASS TO STEP DOWN

David Robert Malpass is an economist from the USA. He has been serving as the President of the World Bank since 2019. He served as Economic Advisor to former US President Donald Trump.



- He **recently announced that he is resigning. He has not completed his term yet.** The term of the president of the World Bank is five years.

Why is Malpass resigning?

- He has been criticized by climate activists since September. **He was asked if he agreed that fossil fuel burnings are warming the planet.** Malpass refused to answer.
- Being a physics graduate and an economist, he is well aware of the fact that fossil fuel burnings warm the planet. **Yet he chose to stay silent! This is the criticism placed by climate activists.**
- **About Malpass:** He played a major role during the US financial crisis of 2007-08. **He predicted the crisis and the great recession that followed right.**

RBI ANNOUNCED HACKATHON 'HARBINGER-2023'

The **Reserve Bank of India** recently announced the “**HARBINGER-2023**”. It is a hackathon. The theme of the hackathon is “**Inclusive Digital Services**”. Competitors from 22 different countries will participate in the hackathon. This includes **Israel, the Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, the USA, and the UK.** RBI also received 363 proposals from Indian candidates.



- The hackathon is to be conducted in four segments namely Digital Banking, regulations, transactions, and the use of blockchain in transactions.
- The central bank invited fintech to participate in the Hackathon. They will develop solutions that will aid the differently abled to access digital financial services. Also, fintech will work on increasing the reach of digital currencies of the central bank.

Benefits of HACKATHON

- Participants of the HACKATHON will get opportunities to interact with industrial experts. Some of them will be mentored by them. **Also, new fintech can exhibit their innovative solutions.**

WHAT IS CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT?

- Recently, the **government released data showing that India's exports and imports decreased by 6.59% and 3.63%, respectively,** in January 2023, there are indications that the country's current account deficit (CAD) will moderate despite the global slowdown triggered by the rising inflation and interest rates.



- The moderation in CAD is expected to be aided by the fall in commodity prices, rising workers' remittances and services exports, and abatement of selling pressure by foreign investors.

What is the Current Account Deficit?

- **Current account deficit (CAD)** is when the value of a country's imports of goods and services is greater than its exports.
- CAD and fiscal deficit together make up twin deficits that can impact the stock market and investors. Fiscal Deficit is the gap between the government's expenditure requirements and its receipts. This equals the money the government needs to borrow during the year.

INTEGRATION OF UPI & PAYNOW

Recently, **India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow** have been integrated to enable faster Remittances between the two countries.

Singapore has become the first country with which cross-border **Person to Person (P2P) payment facilities** have been launched.

- The **UPI-PayNow partnership** marks the world's first to feature cloud-based infrastructure and participation by non-bank financial institutions.

What is UPI and PayNow?

- **UPI:** UPI is India's mobile-based fast payment system, which facilitates customers to make round-the-clock payments instantly, **using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) created by the customer.**
- **PayNow:** PayNow is a fast payment system in Singapore. It enables peer-to-peer funds transfer service, available to **retail customers through participating banks and Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NFI)s** in Singapore.

INDIAN ECONOMY TO CONTRIBUTE 15% TO GLOBAL GROWTH

According to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, India will alone contribute **15% of the global growth** in 2023 and continues to **remain a relative "bright spot"** in the world economy.



Which Factors are Most Responsible for India's Economic Rise?

- **Growth Prospects:** India remains a bright spot at a time when the IMF is projecting 2023 to be difficult with **global growth slowing down from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023.**
- **Digitalisation:** According to the IMF, India has turned digitalisation into a **driver of overcoming the pandemic and creating job opportunities**, while the country's fiscal policy has been responsive to economic conditions.
- **Investment in Green Economy:** The country's fiscal responsibility has been translated into a medium-term framework, with a strong anchor to public finances.

- **Capital Spending:** The capital spending has increased, which would amount to 3.3% of gross domestic product, **and will be the biggest such jump after an increase of more than 37% between 2020-21 and 2021-22.**

NEW WORLD BANK PRESIDENT: AJAY BANGA

David Malpass, the former World Bank President resigned before his term was completed due to climate-related controversies.

After his resignation, US President Joe Biden recently nominated the former MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga as the new World Bank President. **Ajay has expertise in handling climate change-related economic issues.**



- He is now serving as the Vice Chairman of General Atlantic, a private firm. **His business experience with the master card is more than 30 years.**
- He is the first Indian-born nominee to serve at the World Bank. **With the recent FBI reports talking about the hate crimes against Sikhs in the country,** the US's political decision on choosing Ajay Banga as the head of the key organization is commendable.
- **Background:** David Malpass was nominated by former US President Donald Trump. **The duo was criticized for their anti-environmental policies.**

AWARD AND HONOUR

GRAMMY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED 2023

The Grammy Awards are presented by the Recording Academy of the US. The awards are presented to recognize the works of the music industry.



Grammy Award Winners 2023

- **Best Song of the Year:** "Just Like That", won by Bonnie Raitt Performed by Raitt
- **Best Pop Solo Performance:** "Renaissance" won by Beyonce
- **Best AMusica Urban Album:** "Un Verano Sin Ti" won by Bad bunny
- **Best Pop, group performance:** "Unholy" won by Kim Petras and Sam Smith
- **Best R&B Song:** "Cuff it", "Blu June", won by Andrews Performed by Beyonce
- **Best Pop Vocal Album:** "Harry's House", won by Harry Styles
- **Best Country Album:** "A Beautiful Time" won by Willie Nelson
- **Best Country Song:** "Till you can't" won by ben Stennis and Matt Rogers; performed by Cody Johnson
- **Best country solo Performance:** "Live Forever", won by Willie Nelson
- **Best country group Performance:** "Never Wanted to be That Girl", won by Ashley Mc Bryde and Carly Pearce
- **Best Latin Pop album:** "Pasieros" won by Boca Livre and Ruben Blades
- **Best Global Music Album:** "Sakura" won by Masa Takumi
- **Best Rap:** "The Heart Part 5" won by Kendrick Lamar

WORLD'S 1ST LIVING HERITAGE UNIVERSITY

Visva-Bharati University, founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921, is set to become the world's first "living Heritage University". The university is expected to receive the heritage tag from UNESCO in April or May 2023.

Normally a heritage tag is given to a dead monument. For the first time in the world, a living university which is **functioning is going to get the heritage tag from UNESCO**.



What are the Key Points Related to Visva-Bharati University?

- **It is located in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India.** When founded in 1921, it was named after Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore until Visva-Bharati Society was registered as an organization in May 1922.
- Rabindranath believed in open-air education and introduced that system at the university, which prevails to date.
- **According to UNESCO, in 1922**, Visva-Bharati was inaugurated as a Centre for Culture with exploration into the arts, language, humanities, music and these are reflected in **diverse institutes that continue in their educational programmes like including Hindi studies, Sino-Asian studies**, humanities, fine arts, and music.

DADASAHEB PHALKE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

The **DPIFF (Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards)** was started in 2012. It is an independent corporate film festival. It is not the same "DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD" presented at the National Film Awards.

The **DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD** is presented in a ceremony organized by the Government of India (Directorate of Film Festivals). But the DPIFF is completely a private ceremony organized by the family members of Dadasaheb Phalke.



- **2023 was organized by his grandson.** Dadasaheb is the Father of Indian Cinema. The award presented in his name at the National Film Award ceremony is one of the most prestigious awards in the country. It is not to be confused with DPIFF.

DPIFF 2023

- Film of the year: RRR
- Best Film: The Kashmir Files
- Best Actress: Alia Bhatt
- Best Actor: Ranbir Kapoor
- Critics-Best Actor: Varun Dhawan
- Critics-Best Actress: Vidya Balan
- Best Director: R Balki
- Best Cinematographer: PS Vinod
- Most Promising Actor: Rishab Shetty (for KANTARA)
- Best Playback singer-Male: Sachet Tandon
- Best Playback Singer-Female: Neeti Mohan
- Best Web Series: RUDRA
- Most versatile Actor: Anupam Kher
- Television Series of the Year: Anupama
- Best Actor in Television series: Zain Imam for Fanaa
- Best Actress in Television Series: Tejasswi Prakash

HARI BALAKRISHNAN AWARDED WITH MARCONI PRIZE

Recently, Computer scientist **Hari Balakrishnan** was awarded the **2023 Marconi Prize**. Dr. Balakrishnan has been cited for fundamental contributions to wired and wireless networking, mobile sensing, and distributed systems.

The Marconi Prize is a top honor for computer scientists and is **awarded by the U.S.-based Marconi Foundation**.



- It is **given to those who have made a significant contribution to increasing digital inclusivity** through advanced information and communications technology.
- The Prize recipients are **recommended by an independent selection committee and approved by the Marconi Society Board**.

SPORTS

SERGIO RAMOS RETIRES FROM INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

Sergio Ramos Garcia is a Spanish Football player. He is popular for his aggressive play. He played for Real Madrid for more than sixteen seasons.

He has won four UEFA championship leagues, two UEFA European championships, and also the 2010 FIFA World Cup. **He was one of the youngest players to reach 100 caps.**



- Cap is awarded to players appearing in the national team. In simple terms, it is the number of times a player plays for the national team. **Till today, Ramos is the most capped player.**
- **Real Madrid:** It is a football club in Madrid, Spain that was started in 1902. The team is one of the most internationally recognized teams in the world. It is the most valuable team in the world and its worth is around 5.1 billion USD.
- The **annual revenue of the team is 640.7 million Euros and is the second-highest revenue-earning team in the world.** Also, Real Madrid is one of the founders of La Liga.

AUSTRALIA WON T20 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

The **2023 T20 Women's world cup was held in South Africa.** The final battle was between South Africa and Australia. The Australian team won the battle.

The **Australian women's team is winning the T20 world cup for the sixth time.** India quit losing to the Australian team during the semi-finals. India was the runner-up in the previous women's T20 world cup.



- Beth Mooney scored 74 runs and topped the match. The name of the **women's T20 cricket team is Southern stars.** The team captain is Meg Lanning.
- The name of the **Indian Women's Cricket Team is Women in Blue or sometimes also called Team India;** the captain is Harman Preet Kaur. It was founded in 1976. The team is governed by the BCCI, that is, the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

BEST FIFA MEN'S PLAYER AWARD

- The **captain of the Argentina football team Lionel Messi recently won the Best FIFA Men's player award.** It is one of the prestigious awards for sports personalities, especially for those in the football game. The award is presented by FIFA.



History of the award

- Earlier he was called the FIFA World Player of the Year. Later in 2010, it was combined with the Ballon d'Or and together it was **called the FIFA Ballon d'Or. FIFA received 13 million pounds to add the tag of Ballon d'Or.**
- The **award was presented in this name for six years, that is, till 2016.** All six years, it was Lionel Messi who won the award. Later in 2016, the Ballon d'Or tag was given up.
- And only the FIFA tag was attached. FIFA dropped the Ballon d'Or because its **relations with the England Football Association were deteriorating.**
- Lionel Messi is an Argentine football player. Currently, he belongs to the "Paris Saint Germain" club.

Dates and Days

WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2023

Wetlands support a wide range of biodiversity and help to maintain natural cycles. They replenish water resources and protect coastlines. They account for 4.7% of the Indian Geographical area. Today 30% of the Indian wetlands have been lost.

- And 35% of wetlands have been lost at the world level. To create awareness about the importance of wetlands and **protect them from degrading, the UN and other international organizations celebrate World Wetlands Day.**
- The theme of 2023 World Wetlands Day: **It is Time for Wetlands Restoration**

History of World Wetlands Day

- The **proposal for marking World Wetlands Day was made in 1997.** However, the resolution was passed in 2021 and the first world wetlands day was celebrated in 2021.

WORLD CANCER DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 4TH

Each year on February 4, **World Cancer Day is celebrated worldwide.** It is believed to have brought everyone together in the fight against cancer.

World Cancer Day seeks to save millions of lives by educating the **public, promoting awareness, and pressuring individuals and governments** around the world to take action every year.

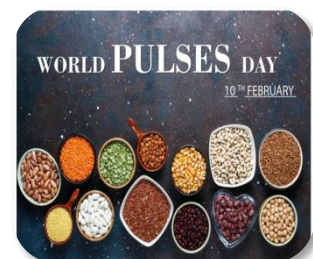


- The World Health Organization, on their initiative, established the **inaugural Cancer Day in 1933 in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- World Cancer Day was established in 2000 during the **first World Summit against Cancer.**
- “Close The Care Gap” has been the **theme for World Cancer Day for the past three years (2022, 2023, and 2024).**

WORLD PULSES DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 10TH

The **UN and several other international organizations** and countries celebrate World Pulses Day on February 10. The **main objective of the celebration is to increase awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses.**

Also, the day aims to promote the environmental benefits of pulses and **how pulses can help countries in achieving their sustainable food delivery goals.**



- The theme of World Pulses Day 2023: **Pulses for a Sustainable future**

About World Pulses Day

- The UN passed the resolution of celebrating World Pulses Day in 2013. It is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization. The fact that cultivating pulses provide employment to rural women is also propagated on this day.

WORLD UNANI DAY OBSERVED ON 11TH FEBRUARY

Hakim Ajmal Khan was a famous Indian Unani scholar. World Unani Day is celebrated on February 11 marking his birth anniversary. **Unani, also called Yunani, is Greek medicine.**

It was mainly developed by the Arabs and Persians. World Unani Day is celebrated to spread the findings of Hakim all over the world.



- The theme of World Unani Day 2023: **Unani Medicine for Public Health**

History

- Hakim invented the Unani Medical system. He worked hard and contributed several advancements to the field of Unani medicine. He founded three Unani institutions such as the **Central College of Delhi, Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College, and Hindustani Dawakhna.**
- All these institutions played a major role in spreading awareness of Unani medicine. In 2017, the AYUSH Ministry decided to celebrate his birth anniversary as Unani Day. In 2017, **the CRIU in Hyderabad celebrated the first Unani day.**

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN SCIENCE

The **United Nations General Assembly** has designated February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science to recognise the significant contribution that women make to the fields of science and technology.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 also lays out gender equality in science as an essential component of the agenda.

International Day Of Women And Girls In Science 2023: Theme

- The **theme** for the 8th International Day of Women and Girls in Science is “Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance (IDEA): Bringing communities Forward for sustainable and equitable development.”
- The **focus of this year’s International Day of Women and Girls in Science** will be on how the Sustainable Development Goals connect to the role of women and girls in science.

INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY DAY OBSERVED ON 13TH FEBRUARY

Epilepsy is a nervous disorder. **It affects brain activity. The disease is identified late among children.** Early symptoms of the disease are left unnoticed. If identified at early stages, it can be cured easily.

To increase awareness of the disease and to identify the symptoms at early stages, International Epilepsy Day is celebrated. **It is celebrated on the second Monday of February every year.**

The theme of International Epilepsy Day 2023

- The celebrations are to focus on “**STIGMA**”. *Stigma means fear or feeling negative reactions.*
- **About the day:** The day is celebrated by the WHO of the UN and several other countries. The members of the UN spread awareness of the disease on this day.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 13TH

India celebrates National Women's Day on February 13. The celebrations commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India. **She stood for women's empowerment. She took an active part in the Indian independence movement. She is popular for her poems on patriotism and other literary works.**



Why do we celebrate National Women's Day?

- **India celebrates National women's day** to honor the achievements of women in the country, **especially in the field of politics, culture, and economy.**

About Sarojini Naidu

- She was a contributor to the Indian Constitution. She served as the **President of the Indian National Congress in 1925**. She was imprisoned for 21 months for participating in the Quit India Movement. She did her higher studies in London. She was born in Hyderabad and died in Lucknow.

International Women Day

- It is **celebrated on March 8 by the UN and other countries of the world**. The day has been celebrated since 1975. The day is marked to honor the achievement of women in the field of politics, culture, and economy.
- (The same reason for which National Women's Day is celebrated). **Also, the celebrations aim to achieve Goal 5 of the SDG, which is, Achieve Gender Equality.**

FINANCIAL LITERACY WEEK: 13TH TO 17TH FEBRUARY

Financial Literacy Week is celebrated between February 13 and February 17.

The celebrations are organized by the Reserve Bank of India. RBI will conduct a mass media campaign to spread financial awareness during the week.

The week has been celebrated by the central bank since 2016. **The main objective of the week is financial education.**



- Theme of Financial Literacy Week 2023: **Good Financial Behaviour – Your Saviour**
- The theme of this year's Financial Literacy Week aligns with the goals of the National Strategy for Financial Education. The plan aims to build a financially resilient India. **Also, it will create financial awareness among the public.**

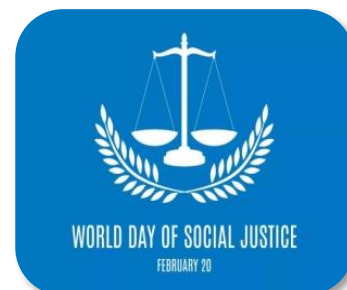
- This **week's celebrations are based on this plan**. In 2023, the RBI will focus on spreading the importance of financial savings, planning, and efficient budgeting.

WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE 2023

Social justice provides equal social, political, and economic opportunities for all.

The World Day of Social Justice is celebrated by the United Nations and several other international organizations on February 20.

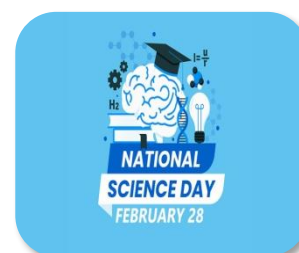
The **main objective of observing world social justice day** is to spread awareness of the relationship between poverty eradication and social justice. **The day also focuses on decent work for laborers.**



- **For instance, manual scavenging is not decent work. The day insists on removing such practices.** The International Labor Organization also celebrates the day with different themes.
- The theme of World Day of Social Justice 2023: **Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice**

NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 28TH

- **India celebrates National Science Day on February 28. National Science Day** is celebrated in the country to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect. Raman discovered the Raman Effect on February 28, 1928, and **received the Nobel Prize for his discovery in 1930.**



History of National Science Day

- The **National Council for Science and Technology 1986 proposed to mark National Science Day** on February 28. The Government of India agreed to the proposal.

The objective of National Science Day

- National Science Day is celebrated to spread the importance of **science in day-to-day life**. On this occasion, the importance of science and achievements in the field are discussed. New technologies are implemented.
- The theme of National Science Day 2023: **Global Science for Global well being**

Raman Effect

- The wavelength of light changes in the air as it is deflected by molecules. This is referred to as scattering. **The sky is blue in color because of the Raman effect.**
- Smaller wavelengths scatter easily. The wavelength of blue is small and is **scattered the maximum as compared to all the other colors**. For this reason, the sky is blue in color.

ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY OBSERVED ON MARCH 1ST

Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated on March 1. The day is mainly celebrated by organizations like UNAIDS. The main objective of the day is to promote equality. The first Zero Discrimination Day was celebrated in 2014. It was launched by UNAIDS. The first Zero Discrimination Day celebrations were conducted in Beijing.



Zero Discrimination Day in India

- In India, activists use the day to speak against discrimination **faced by the LGBT community.**

Section 377 and Zero Discrimination Day

- The day is used by Indian activists to raise voices to repeal section 377. The section was legislated by the Britishers. It penalizes sexual acts that are against nature, that is, homosexual activities.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court dismissed the section from the IPC. **However, Parliament has not yet taken any action on this.**
- So internationally, the code hasn't been repealed in India. **In other former British colonies like Singapore, the act has been completely repealed.**
- Disposal of complaint

REPORT AND INDEXES

WORLD HAPPINESS INDEX 2023

The **World Happiness Index 2023 Report** will mark its **tenth anniversary** with this year's **Globe Happiness Reflect**, which uses data from international surveys to show how people rank their lives in more than 150 countries.

In these dark times, there is a glimmer of optimism revealed by the **World Happiness Index 2023**. The pandemic not only caused anguish and suffering, but it also led to a rise in social assistance and charitable giving.



- **Finland** was named the world's happiest country for the fifth year in a row, according to the World Happiness Report.
- The Sustainable Development Solutions Network of the UN has published a new report, which was made public **two days prior to the yearly International Day of Happiness**.
- It **rates 150 countries (146 in 2023) based on factors** such as GDP, life expectancy, and other indicators of quality of life.
- The ranking, now in its eleventh year, assigns a score between 0 and 10 based on an average of data gathered **over three years and a mathematical formula**.

SCIENCE AND TECH

JUPITER BECOMES PLANET WITH MOST MOONS

Jupiter is the biggest planet in the sun's family. Scientists believed that Saturn had the maximum number of moons. 82 moons have been discovered around Saturn so far. On the other hand, it was believed that Jupiter had 80 moons. However, the latest discovery revealed Jupiter has 12 more moons. **With this, the count of Jupiter's moons increased to 92.** Today Jupiter has the maximum number of moons.



About the new discovery

- The 12 new moons around Jupiter were discovered by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
- Of the 12 moons discovered, nine are distant
- These nine moons take 550 days to orbit Jupiter.
- Also, the nine moons discovered are relatively small
- These nine moons have retrograde orbits. **Meaning their orbiting direction is opposite to that of Jupiter's rotation.** The inner moons of Jupiter have prograde orbits. Meaning, they rotate in the same direction as that of Jupiter.

NASA & ISRO SATELLITE: NISAR

NISAR is an earth-observing satellite planned to be launched in 2024. It stands for NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar. **SAR creates two-dimensional and three-dimensional reconstructions of landscapes.** NISAR is **jointly developed by NASA and ISRO.** Recently, NISAR left the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of NASA located in California to India.

Objectives of the NISAR

- To map the earth
- Monitor water, agriculture, and forest
- Observe land and ice covers

Why is NISAR in the news?

- **NISAR is a three-year mission.** A part of the NISAR satellite is developed on US soil. This part payload is now being transported to India's U R Rao Satellite center in Bengaluru from JPL in California.

JOE ACABA SELECTED AS NASA'S CHIEF ASTRONAUT

In December 2022, **the deputy chief of NASA Drew Feustel became the chief.** However, his services recently ended and he was succeeded by the new chief Joe Acaba.

The **chief of NASA manages the resources of the organization, creates assignments, fixes deadlines, designs crew operation concepts, etc.**



About Acaba

- Joe Acaba has spent more than 306 days in space. He served as a mission specialist and flight engineer. He has also participated in spacewalks. Also, he supported the first resupply spacecraft launched in 2012, the Dragon of SpaceX.

How is the Chief Astronaut of NASA selected?

- He is **appointed by the President of the United States**. The US Senate advises the President on making the appointment. The president has to get the consent of the senate before making the appointment.

QUICK REACTION SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

Indigenous Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to be tested again in April 2023.

A Medium Range SAM is being developed by the DRDO in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). **The maiden launch of MRSAM Army Version** was conducted in December 2020 and its induction is on and is ready for deployment.



What is QRSAM?

- QRSAM is a canister-based system, which means that it is stored and operated from specially designed compartments. In the canister, the inside environment is controlled, thus along with making its transport and storage easier, **the shelf life of weapons also improves significantly**. The system is capable of detecting and tracking targets on the move and engaging targets with short halts.

INDIA'S NUCLEAR POWER CAPACITY

India's nuclear power capacity experienced a significant increase. By 2021-22, it had risen to 47,112 Million Units. In 2017, the government gave simultaneous approval for 11 indigenous **pressurized heavy water reactors with a total capacity of 7,000 MegaWatts**.

What is the Status of India's Nuclear Energy?

- **Nuclear energy is the fifth-largest source of electricity for India** which contributes about 3% of the total electricity generation in the country.
- India has over 22 nuclear reactors in 7 power plants across the country which produces 6780 MW of nuclear power.
- **In addition, one reactor, Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3) has also been connected to the grid in January- 2021**. 18 reactors are Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and 4 are Light Water Reactors (LWRs).
- KAPP-3 is India's first 700 MWe unit, and the biggest indigenously developed variant of the PHWR.

WHAT IS SMALL SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (SSLV)

The **Indian Space Research Organization** successfully launched the **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**. It was launched from Sriharikota. The SSLV-D2 dropped EOS-07, Azzadi SAT-2, and Janus-1 satellites. The satellites were dropped at an altitude of 450 km from the earth within 15 minutes of the launch.

About SSLV-D2 launch

- **SSLV can carry a payload of up to 500 kg.** It is one of the low-cost space crafts of ISRO, can carry more than one satellite, requires very less launch infrastructure, and provides very less turnaround time.
- **ES-07:** It was **developed by ISRO. It weighs 156 kg.** It carries a spectrum monitoring payload and humidity sounder. It is an earth observation satellite.
- **Janus-1:** The satellite was developed by the USA. The weight of the satellite was 10.2 kg. It is a demonstration satellite developed by ANTARIS.
- **Azaadi SAT-2:** It was developed by SpaceKidz India. Around 750 girl students participated in developing the satellite. The satellite has voice and data transmission equipment, a selfie camera, and also UHF and VHF transponders.
- **SSLV-D1:** It was a failure as the rocket did not put the satellites in the right orbit. Recently ISRO released the reasons for the failure of the mission in its analysis report.

SAUDI ARABIA TO SEND FIRST WOMAN IN SPACE

Rayyana Barnawi. The legendary woman is to make history. She **will be the first Arab woman to enter space.**

This is a historical moment for the country that had centuries of restrictions against Muslim women! Rayyana is to travel to the International Space **Station along with Ali Al-Qarni, a fighter jet pilot.** SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket is to carry them. The crews are to be launched from Florida.



Why is it historic?

- **Saudi Arabia has been very conservative about its women.** However, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman brought in several changes. He allowed women to drive. Also, permitted women to travel abroad.

First Arab Muslim to travel to space

- The Royal Prince of Saudi Arabia Prince Sultan Bin Salman was the **first Saudi Arabian to travel to space in 1985.** He too traveled in a US-organized space flight.

NORTH KOREA INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE

The **HWASONG-15 is one of the three major ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) of North Korea.** All the ICBMs of North Korea use liquid propellants. North Korean missiles are of big trouble and great concern to the west for this reason. The liquid fuels used in the ICBMs of North Korean missiles can stay stable only under controlled conditions. **The solid-fueled ICBMs are difficult to detect and NK is now building them.**



- North Korea recently demonstrated the HWASONG-15. The missile had its maiden flight in 2017.

- HWASONG has the capability to reach the mainland of the USA. It can **reach altitudes of 4,475 km and travel 950 km downrange.**

MOON DUST AS SOLAR SHIELD

Recently, a team of Researchers have published a study titled- “Dust as a Solar Shield”, proposing that launching Moon Dust into the stratosphere can slow down Global-Warming.

What was the Proposal?

- **Solar Radiation Management:** They proposed the regular transport of moon dust to a gravity point (Lagrange Point) **between Earth and Sun to temper the ravages of global warming.**
- **Analogy with Volcanic Spew and Moon Dust:** Artificially spraying Moon Dust into the stratosphere has been motivated from the fact that a sufficiently powerful **Volcanic Eruption can spew sulfates and other aerosols** into the stratosphere and thus cool the air there.

MOON, VENUS & JUPITER CONJUNCTION

The **Moon, Venus, and Jupiter are to come to the spot in the sky on February 22, 2024.** Moon will pass very close to Jupiter and Venus immediately after sunset. You can watch this easily even without a telescope. However, without the telescope, the planets will appear like a star.



What is a conjunction in astronomy?

- The conjunction occurs when two or more planets or two or more moons pass close by. **For instance, the sun and moon are in conjunction during new moon days.** Planetary conjunction occurs when two or more planets come close by.

Magnitudes of Venus and Jupiter during the conjunction

- **Venus will be at a magnitude of -4.0. Jupiter will be at a magnitude of -2.1.** And the moon will be at a magnitude of -9.8. Magnitude is the measure of brightness.
- Venus and Jupiter are the brightest planets in the solar system. Jupiter is the brightest for its size. And Venus is the brightest for its gasses and thick clouds in the **atmosphere that reflects most of the sunlight back into space.**

Venus Jupiter conjunction

- **The planets have at least one conjunction every year.** However, the 2023 conjunction is special and unique.
- **Why so?** Usually, the Venus-Jupiter conjunction occurs very close to the sun. The bright light from the sun makes the conjunction invisible. However, this **conjunction is a bit far away and is clearly visible.**

JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE SPOTS 6 MONSTER GALAXIES

The **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** has discovered six Monster galaxies, formed roughly 500-700 million years after the Big Bang, according to a Study.

How were these Galaxies Found?

- Researchers spotted the six monster galaxies using the **Cosmic Evolution Early 44 Release Science programme of JWST**.
- The **programme studies the formation of the earliest galaxies** when the universe was less than 5% of its current age.
- Researchers **turned the telescope to a patch of the sky close to the Big Dipper**, which appears to harbor a group of stars that form a pattern in the night sky. The Hubble space telescope first observed this region in the 1990s.
- The **Big Dipper is an asterism of stars, in the constellation Ursa Major (also known as the Great Bear)**. It consists of seven bright stars, four forming a rectangular "bowl" shape and three forming a "handle".
- It is often used as a navigational tool, a reference point for stargazing, and as a symbol in popular culture.

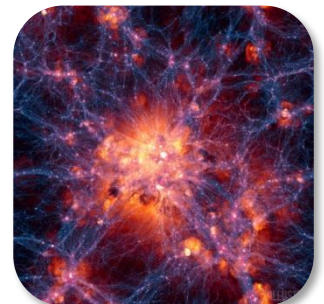


WHAT ARE NEUTRINOS?

- Recently, physicists working with the Kamioka Liquid **Scintillator Antineutrino Detector (KamLAND)** in Japan reported that after analyzing two years' data, they could not find signs that neutrinos could be their own anti-particles.

What was the Experiment?

- KamLAND looks for an event called neutrinoless double beta-decay. **In normal double beta-decay, two neutrons in an atom turn into two protons by emitting two electrons and two electron antineutrinos.**
- In neutrinoless double beta-decay, the anti-neutrinos aren't emitted, which can happen only if anti-neutrinos are just different kinds of neutrinos.



What are Neutrinos?

- **Neutrinos are the second most abundant particles in the Universe after photons (light particles),** produced in copious amounts in the cores of stars.
- **Properties:** Because they are so ubiquitous, their properties are windows into the microscopic structure of the universe.
- For example, one open question about neutrinos is whether they are their own antiparticles. If they were, physicists will have a way to explain why the universe has more matter than antimatter.

MISCELLANEOUS

NEAL MOHAN TO BECOME YOUTUBE CEO

An Indian-American, **Neal Mohan** will become the next **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of **Alphabet-owned YouTube** following Susan Wojcicki's announcement that she will be stepping down from her role as the head of the video-sharing platform.

With this, Mohan will be joining the elite list of global tech chiefs of Indian origin such as **Google parent Alphabet's Sundar Pichai**, **Microsoft's Satya Nadella**, **IBM's Arvind Krishna**, and **Adobe's Shantanu Narayen**.



Why did Susan Wojcicki resign?

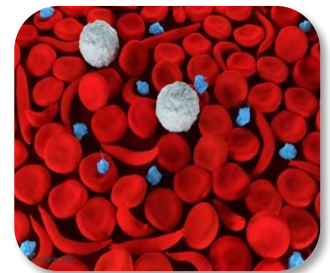
- Wojcicki says she left her role for personal reasons. In her blog post, she said she is starting a new chapter focused on her **family, health and passion projects**.
- She is also mother to five children and has always been open about sharing her experience juggling the demands of her job with motherhood.
 - YouTube Founders: **Jawed Karim, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen**;
 - YouTube Founded: **14 February 2005, San Mateo, California, United States**;
 - YouTube Headquarters: **San Bruno, California, United States**;
 - YouTube Parent organization: **Google**

TARGET TO ELIMINATE SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA BY 2047

Sickle Cell Anaemia affects the **RBCs** in the human body. When a person suffers from the disease his RBCs (usually rod-shaped) deform.

Their shapes are affected. The **primary function of RBC** is to **carry oxygen to different parts of the body**. In a person with sickle cell anemia, the oxygen-carrying capacity of RBCs is affected.

- The **disease creates adverse effects if left untreated**. During the **Union budget 2023**, the Government of India launched the **Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission**. Under the Mission, the GoI is planning to eliminate the disease by 2047.



Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia

- Objective: Eliminate completely by 2047
- Create awareness about the disease
- The mission will screen seven crore people
- People in the **age group 0 to 40 years** are to be screened
- Tribal areas to be targeted

ARMED FORCES & ADULTERY

Recently, the Supreme Court has ruled that armed forces can take action against their officers for **adulterous acts**, while stating the decriminalization of adultery does not apply to Armed Forces.

In **September 2018 Joseph Shine Judgment**, the SC struck down Section 497 of the IPC that criminalized adultery, ruling that it was unconstitutional and violated women's right to equality in treating them as inferior to their husbands.

What is the Recent Ruling?

- The SC clarified that in the 2018 judgment, the SC was **concerned only with the validity of Section 497 of the IPC and Section 198(2) of the CrPC** dealing with adultery, and had “no occasion whatsoever to consider the effect” with respect to the Army, Navy and Air Force Acts.
- Defense personnel of the three wings — the Army, Navy and the Air Force were **governed by special legislation, the Army Act, the Navy Act and the Air Force Act.**
- **These special laws impose restrictions on the fundamental rights of the personnel**, who function in peculiar situations requiring utmost discipline.
- The three laws are protected by Article 33 of the Constitution, which allow the **government to modify the fundamental rights of the armed forces personnel**
- The **Bench delivered the final Order in the case, clarifying that the Joseph Shine Judgment** did not apply to members of the armed forces who are accused of ‘conduct unbecoming’ and dismissed the application.

EARTH LIKELY TO WARM UP 2 DEGREE CELSIUS BY 2050

Recently, a study published titled “contradicted projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)”, states that the planet is likely to warm up by two degrees Celsius by 2050, even under a low-emission scenario.

- The researchers **used artificial intelligence called Artificial Neural Networks (ANN)** to predict the time for reaching the 1.5 °C and 2°C thresholds.
- The world has recorded a 1.1°C rise in temperature compared with the average in 1850-1900.



What are the Key Findings?

- There is a **higher likelihood that 2°C will be reached under the low emission scenario compared with the IPCC AR6 (Sixth Assessment Report)** synthesis assessment, and may fail to uphold the Paris Agreement.
- The Paris Agreement aims to limit the rise to below 2°C while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. The IPCC estimated that the 1.5°C threshold could be **attained as early as the 2030s under all emission scenarios.**

LADAKH'S BIODIVERSITY HERITAGE SITE

Yaya Tso is a lake in Ladakh and is known as the Bird's Paradise. The lake is at an altitude of 4,820 kilometers. The lake is a popular breeding site for black-necked cranes. The lake was recently announced as the "Biodiversity Heritage Site". It is the first biodiversity heritage site of Ladakh.



Who declared?

- Biodiversity Management Committee
- Panchayat of Chumathang Village
- SECURE Himalaya
- Together they declared the lake a Biodiversity Heritage site.

Biodiversity Heritage Sites

- A site shall be notified as BHS by any State
- **Government under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.** The site should be under its jurisdiction. The BHS are sites with high endemism, domesticated species, and rare and threatened species.
- The project mainly aims to conserve Snow leopards in the region. **Also, it addresses threatened livelihood, habitat degradation, and illegal wildlife trade.** Funds for the project come from Global Environment Facility.

GOOGLE'S BARD: NEW AI CHATBOT

Google will soon unveil its new AI chatbot Bard in response to Microsoft's ChatGPT.



What is Bard?

- Bard is based on the Language Model for Dialogue Application (LaMDA), Google's own conversational AI chatbot.
- It will **give in-depth, conversational and essay-style answers just like ChatGPT does right now.** However, the model is currently a "lightweight" version of LaMDA, and the one being "requires significantly less computing power, enabling it to scale to more users.
- **Features:** It is built on Transformer technology, which is also the backbone of ChatGPT and other AI bots. **Transformer technology was pioneered by Google and made open source in 2017.**

CYCLONE GABRIELLE HITS NEW ZEALAND

- **New Zealand announced heavy rain with Cyclone Gabrielle hitting its shore.** Red Heavy rain means the downpours cause an emergency. The rain pour is greater than 30 millimeters and it occurs within one hour! In India, a red alert is issued when the pour is greater than 20 cm within 24 hours.



About Cyclone Gabrielle

- It is a **tropical cyclone**.
 - It is a **Severe Tropical Cyclone** and belongs to Category 3; **Speed of the cyclone ranges between 119 km/hr to 157 km/hr**
 - State of Emergency declared in Auckland
- **Rainy season in Australia:** The Southern Hemisphere summer falls in the months of Dec-March. **Rains are common during 70% of these months. Of all these January is the wettest.**

LIMITING WARMING BELOW 1.8 DEGREE CELSIUS

According to a recent study published in Nature Communications, **limiting global temperature rise to the UN-mandated Paris Agreement target of 2 degrees Celsius** is probably insufficient to prevent an accelerated sea level rise over the next century.

What Does the Recent Study on Rising Temperature Suggest?

- The **study suggests that if global temperatures rise above 1.8°C**, the world could see an irreversible loss of the west Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, leading to a rapid sea level rise.
- Scientists studying **Antarctica's vast Thwaites Glacier (Doomsday Glacier)** say **warm water is seeping** into its weak spots, worsening melting caused by rising temperatures.
- Using an underwater robot vehicle known as Icefin, mooring data and sensors, they monitored the glacier's grounding line, **where ice slides off the glacier and meets the ocean for the first time**. By 2150, global sea level rise is estimated to increase by roughly **1.4, 0.5, and 0.2 metres under high, mid, and low-emission scenarios, respectively**.

LADAKH SETS GUINNESS RECORD PANGONG TSO MARATHON

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council recently launched the Pangong Tso Marathon. The marathon is the first of its kind in India. **It was held on the frozen Pangong Tso lake.**

The marathon was conducted at an altitude of 4,350 meters. **With this, it makes the Guinness record for World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon.** It is the first frozen lake marathon in India.



About the Marathon

- The marathon included a 21 km long run. It began in Luking village. The marathon was organized by the Council of Ladakh along with the Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh.

Pangong Tso Lake

- The lake has saline water and is completely frozen during winter. **Researchers believe that the lake was a part of the Indus river system in early times.** Today, however, the lake lies separated from the Indus river. It is the highest saltwater lake in the world.

WHAT IS DICKINSONIA FOSSILS?

Fossils of an extinct species, **Dickinsonia**, that scientists reported in a discovery from India's **Bhimbetka Rock Shelters in 2021** have been found to be a false alarm.

Researchers after a closer look at the site revealed the Dickinsonia fossil to really be wax smeared on a rock by a beehive.

What is Dickinsonia?

- Dickinsonia is an **extinct primitive animal that inhabited seabeds around Australia, China, Russia, Ukraine**, in the Ediacaran period, 600-500 million years ago.
- It was classified as an animal after the discovery of cholesterol molecules in the fossils. **It is believed to be one of the earliest animals to have existed on earth.**

WHAT IS MAD COW DISEASE?

Recently, **Brazil has halted its beef exports to China** after a case of **Mad Cow Disease** was confirmed in the northern state of Para.

What is Mad Cow Disease?

- Also known as **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)** is **degenerative, transmissible**, slowly progressive, and a fatal infection that affects the central nervous system of adult cattle.
- Causes: BSE is caused by a protein called a prion normally found on cell surfaces, **the normal prion protein changes into an abnormal prion protein that is harmful.**
- After getting altered, these proteins destroy the nervous system tissue- the brain and spinal cord.
- **The body of a sick cow does not even know the abnormal prion is there.** Without knowing it is there, the cow's body cannot fight off the disease.



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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHZTjwt8jFo&list=PLDrM_6OH0o1lcuxmRN-icOWj7UIhevkfl

The thumbnail features a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark polo shirt, standing with his arms crossed. The background is a dark green world map with a grid pattern. Text elements include: 'SUCCESS MANTRA' logo in the top right; 'DAILY' in large white letters on a dark green banner; 'THE HINDU' logo (featuring a lion and elephant) and 'CURRENT AFFAIRS' in white letters on a light blue banner; 'ANALYSIS' in large white letters on a dark green banner; a digital clock showing '09:00 PM' in the bottom right; and social media icons (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram) and the website 'successmantradigital | www.successmantra.in' at the bottom.

Daily Hindu Overview

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