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**MAY' 2023**

MONTHLY COMPENDIUM OF  
**CURRENT  
AFFAIRS**



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## NATIONAL AFFAIR

### India's April coal output hits a record 73mn tonnes.

- India's coal production hit a record high of 73.02 million tonnes (MT) in April, rising 8.67% from a year earlier, the Coal Ministry. The largest coal producer, Coal India Ltd reported production of 57.57 MT in April, up 7.7% from April 2022.
- The coal production has made a new record for highest-ever production during the month of April 2023, achieving 73.02 million tonnes (MT) with a yearly growth of 8.67 per cent.
- In April 2022, the total coal output was 67.20 million tonnes.
- Further, the total coal dispatch grew 11.76 per cent from 71.99 MT in April 2022 to 80.45 MT in April 2023. According to the ministry, this is mainly due to the initiatives taken to augment rail connectivity infrastructure for all major mines under 'PM Gati Shakti' to ensure faster evacuation.



### Country's 1st Cable stayed Rail Bridge completed in Jammu & Kashmir's Reasi: "Anji Khad Bridge"

- The total length of the cable strand used in the bridge is 653 km; completed in just 11 months.
- The bridge is part of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla-Rail Link (USBRL) Project in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The bridge connects tunnels T2 and T3 on the Katra-Banihal section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project. This bridge is situated at a height of 331 meters above the riverbed of Chenab at a cost of Rs 37,000 crore.
- In addition, this bridge connects Tunnel T2 towards Katra and Tunnel T3 towards Reasi. Described as a "genuine engineering marvel", work on the bridge began in 2017
- It is the second highest railway bridge after the iconic arch bridge over the Chenab at Kauri, which is the highest railway bridge in the world at 359 meters above the riverbed – 35 meters higher than the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- The total length of the Anji Khad bridge is 725.5 metres. This includes a main bridge with a length of 473.25 metres, an auxiliary bridge with a length of 120 metres, an approach bridge of 38 meters at the Katra end and a central embankment of 94.25 metres. The total deck width of the bridge is 15 metres. The bridge will have a railway line and 3.75 meter wide service road. The design speed of this line is 100 km/h.
- The bridge is designed to withstand heavy storms with a speed of 213 kmph. The Detailed Design and Construction Supervision (DDC) work of this prestigious bridge was entrusted to Italian company "Ferrovie Dello Stato Italiane" and proof checking company COWI, UK.
- Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla train service will be completed by Jan/Feb 2024. Considering the importance of USBRL in providing seamless and hassle-free connectivity to Kashmir, the 272 km long rail link was declared as a "National Project" in 2002.



### India will join the International Civil Aviation Organization climate action in the year 2027.

- India will join the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and Long-Term Aspirational Goals (LTAG) from 2027.
- This announcement was made in the meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry of Civil Aviation under the chairmanship of Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.
- ICAO has adopted several key ambitious targets, including a two percent annual fuel efficiency improvement by 2050, carbon neutral development, and net zero by 2050, all covered under CORSIA and LTAG.
- **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations and its primary function is to coordinate the principles and techniques of international air navigation.
- Established - 7 December 1944
- Headquarters -Montreal, Canada





- **Carbon Offsetting and Mitigation Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)** is a global plan developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to reduce CO2 emissions from international flights.
- It aims to achieve carbon-neutral growth for international flights by offsetting any increase in emissions through the purchase of carbon credits from eligible projects.

### India Became the Top Supplier of Refined Fuel to Europe.

- India has become Europe's largest supplier of refined fuels this month, according to data from analytics firm Kpler. This is while simultaneously buying record amounts of Russian crude, according to data from Kpler.
- Europe's dependency on Indian crude oil products has risen since the ban on Russian oil. Europe's refined fuel imports from India are set to surge above 360,000 barrels a day, edging just ahead of those of Saudi Arabia, according to Kpler's data.
- Russian crude oil arrivals to India are expected to surpass 2 million barrels a day in April, representing almost 44% of the nation's overall oil imports, according to Kpler data.
- Russia emerged as a major supplier to India for the first time in FY23 after it started supplying oil at discounted rates amid the Ukraine war. Despite concerns raised by the West to India's imports from Russia during the war. India has taken a strong stand and said that it looks at all options to achieve energy security.
- Crude imports from Russia in February stood at USD 3.35 billion, followed by Saudi Arabia at USD 2.30 billion and Iraq at USD 2.03 billion.



### Govt. extends date to opt for higher EPF pension to June 26.

- The Union government has extended the time to submit joint options for claiming higher Employees' Provident Fund pension till June 26. The deadline to submit the applications was May 3.
- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) received more than 12 lakh applications so far.
- The date has been extended after sympathetically considering the various demands received from employees, employers and their associations.
- EPF is a government-managed retirement savings scheme for employees in India, and the pension scheme is a part of the EPF program. By submitting a joint option, eligible employees can claim a higher pension amount under the scheme.



### India's first undersea twin tunnel is being built in Mumbai.

- More than two years after a giant Chinese tunnel boring machine, India's first undersea twin tunnels in South Mumbai are complete and set to open in November 2023.
- The tunnel starts near Girgaum (beyond Marine Drive), continues northwards under the Arabian Sea, Girgaum Chowpatty and Malabar Hill, and ends at Breach Candy's Priyadarshini Park.
- The 2.07 km long tunnels are part of the Rs 12,721 crore Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP) being built by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).
- The tunnels have a diameter of 12.19 meters, run 17–20 meters below sea level. About 1 kilometer part is under the sea. The tunnels penetrated Malabar Hill to a depth of 72 meters.



#### Twin Tunnels:

- The boring work of this tunnel started in January 2021, there will be six crossings inside the tunnel - four for pedestrians and two for motorists. Each tunnel has three lanes of 3.2 meters. Yoshin Engineering Company based in South Korea has been given the responsibility for this project.
- Another highlight of the project is the use of 'Mavla', the largest ever Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) in the history of India, manufactured by China Railway Construction Heavy Industry Company Limited (CRCHI). Named in honor of



Shivaji's war experts from the Koli and Kunbi communities, the TBM weighs over 1,700 tonnes and is about 12 meters tall.

### World's largest refinery complex to be built in Maharashtra.

- The Maharashtra government has proposed the Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (RRPCL) project, which is touted as the world's largest single location refinery complex. The refinery will be set up at Barsu village in the coastal Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra.
- The joint venture partners for the project include Saudi Aramco, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited. The capacity of which is expected to be 60 million tonnes per annum
- An estimated Rs 3 lakh crore will be spent on this project. And it will require 6,200 acres of land from 14 villagers in Ratnagiri and neighboring Sindhudurg districts
- By April 2022, India's oil refining capacity is slated to be 251.2 million metric tonnes per annum, making it the second largest refiner in Asia and the fourth largest in the world.
- Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited: This project was started in 2014. Saudi Aramco and ADNOC, according to an agreement signed in 2018, hold a 50% stake.
- The villagers also raised concerns about the potential health hazards posed by the refinery and petrochemical unit, which is expected to emit a large amount of pollutants. Once the project starts, mango orchards, cashew and other plantations in the area will be destroyed within months due to the chemicals.



### 'Vizag Tech Park' to be Adani Group's first integrated data center in the country.

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy laid the foundation stone of Vizag Tech Park on 3 May 2023. Adani Group is setting up two data centers - one of 200 MW and the other of 100 MW at the Rs 21,844-crore in Vizag Tech Park.
- The Adani data center will be the largest such facility in the country and the two data centers are also unique as they will run entirely on green energy.
- The 300 MW data center being set up in Visakhapatnam by the Adani Group will facilitate the laying of a submarine cable from Singapore and help change the future dynamics of broadband services such as increased data speeds and internet bandwidth.
- The chief minister said the data centre, which would include an IT business park, skill development center and entertainment facilities, would boost internet speed and improve connectivity.
- The Vizag Tech Park, which will come up in an area of 190 acres, will include a 200 MW Integrated Data Center at Madhurawada and a 100 MW Integrated Data Center at Kapuluppada with an investment of Rs 14,634 crore and Rs 7,210 crore, respectively.
- The tech park will provide direct employment to 39,815 persons and indirect employment to 10,610 persons in a phased manner over seven years. The data center will also help transform Visakhapatnam into a Tier-1 city. Its entire power requirement will be met from renewable sources.



### First cargo ship for Sittwe Port 'MV-ITT Lion' leaves Kolkata Port.

- Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shantanu Thakur flagged off the first cargo ship 'MV-ITT Lion (V-273)' as part of the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) from Kolkata Port to Sittwe Port in Myanmar on 4 May 2023.
- 'MV-ITT Lion (V-273)' will arrive at Sittwe Port on 09 May 2023 with 20,000 bags of cement.
- The **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project** aims to provide an alternative link to the North East region from Kolkata Port via Sittwe Port.



- Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project was signed in 2008. Under this, Kolkata is being connected to Myanmar through road, river, port etc. and then to the north-eastern states of India through Kaladan river of Myanmar.
- With the commencement of this port, India's Kolkata port will be connected to Sittwe port and goods can be easily transported to landlocked states like Mizoram, Manipur of India.
- The project aims to provide alternative connectivity to the North East region from Kolkata port via Sittwe port to Paletwa in Myanmar by waterways and from Paletwa to Zorinpui in Mizoram by road.

### Centre, JICA ink deal for station area development.

- MoHUA, JICA partner for station development along Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail route.
- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ministry of Railways for the “Station Area Development along Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail”
- In a bid to develop areas flanking high- speed rail stations, the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry and the Railway Ministry have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan International Cooperation Agency ( JICA) for “station area development along Mumbai -Ahmedabad high speed rail (MAHSR) project’ (SMART).
- The MoU was linked for four high- speed stations: Sabarmati and Surat in Gujarat, and Virar and Thane in Maharashtra out of the 12 stations planned in the route.
- The project SMART envisages developing surrounding areas of MAHSR stations to enhance accessibility and convenience of commuters and other stakeholders as well as to promote economic activities in the vicinity of station areas.



### Murmu presents 8 Kirti Chakras, 29 Shaurya Chakras.

- President Droupadi Murmu gave away 8 Kirti Chakras, India’s second highest peacetime gallantry award, to Army and paramilitary personnel, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Sudip Sarkar, constable/GD, Border Security Force
- Rohit Kumar, sergeant constable, Jammu and Kashmir Police
- 1 sub inspector and 2 head constables of Chhattisgarh have been conferred the Kirti Chakra posthumously.
- 3 personnel, including Major Shubhang, Dogra Regiment, 62nd Battalion, from the Army’s Rashtriya Rifles were given the honour.



### The President also presented 29 Shaurya Chakras, including five, posthumously.

- Sepoy Karn Veer Singh (Rajput Regiment) and Gunner Jasbir Singh (Regiment of Artillery), both from the Rashtriya Rifles, are also among those who have been posthumously conferred the Shaurya Chakra
- The other two brave hearts have been conferred this gallantry award posthumously are Constable Mudasir Ahmad Sheikh, Jammu and Kashmir Police (Baramulla) and Naik Jasbir Singh, 6th Battalion, the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.
- The Shaurya Chakra is India’s third-highest peacetime gallantry award after the Ashok Chakra and Kirti Chakra.

### India's first pod taxi project to start in Uttar Pradesh.

- The Yamuna Authority has reportedly approved the revised DPR and bid document of India's first pod taxi project. India will launch its first pod taxi between Noida International Airport and Film City in Jewar, which is expected to transport around 37,000 passengers daily. This route will be spread over 12-14 kilometers and will have 12 stops.
- After getting approval from the government, the pod taxi initiative is expected to be finalized by the end of 2024.
- The project is estimated to cost around Rs 810 crore.



- Pod taxis have already been seen in many other countries like Singapore, London.
- Uttar Pradesh will be the first state in India to get an international transit system.
- Pod Taxi: Eco-friendly and fast, pod taxis are considered to be one of the most advanced modes of transport. They are automatic cars. They require a track to travel on and are powered by electricity.

### Lithium reserves found in Rajasthan can meet 80% of India's demand.

- Lithium deposits were discovered at Rewant hill in Degana, Nagaur district of Rajasthan during G2 survey of Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- Apart from this, there is a possibility of lithium deposits at some other places including Barmer, Jaisalmer. This is more than the 5.9 million tonnes of lithium reserves found in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The discovery of lithium reserves at Degana could challenge China's global lithium monopoly.
- *The British discovered tungsten in 1914 at Revant hill in Degana, where lithium deposits have been found.*
- According to the World Bank report, by the year 2050, the global demand for lithium metal will increase by 500 percent.
- The world's largest lithium reserves of 21 million tonnes are currently in the country of Bolivia.
- Then there are also large reserves in Argentina, Chile and the US.
- India also buys 53.76% of its total lithium imports from China.
- Lithium is a non-ferrous metal, which is used in making mobile-laptops, electric vehicles and other chargeable batteries. Lithium is mainly used in the production of rechargeable batteries. Lithium is the lightest metal in the world, which is needed in every battery powered device.
- It is also called White Gold due to its global demand. Lithium is also the softest and lightest metal in the world. Soft enough to be cut with a vegetable knife and light enough to float when put in water. It stores chemical energy and converts it into electrical energy.



### iDEX-DIO signs 250th contract, first under Mission DefSpace & 100th SPRINT (Navy) contract in New Delhi

- Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), has reached a milestone with the signing of the 250th contract, the first one under the Mission DefSpace, and the 100th SPRINT (Navy) contract.
- The first iDEX contract of Mission DefSpace was exchanged between Additional Secretary (Defence Production), CEO Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) T. Natarajan and CEO InspeCity Arindrajit Chowdhary, one of the winners of the “micropropulsion system for cubesats” challenge,
- “InspeCity is developing a gas--based (compact micropropulsion system) system. This technology can be integrated with other satellites, including the cubesat swarm being developed under Mission DefSpace,”
- Launching Mission DefSpace at DefExpo in October 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the strategic importance of the space realm. The mission intends to support the development of the commercial space industry in India by tackling 75 defence space challenges with the help of the private sector.
- In addition to the Mission DefSpace contract, the signing ceremony also marked the exchange of the 100th SPRINT (Navy) contract. The contract was given to Siliconia Technologies Pvt. Ltd, the winner of the contest aimed at creating a satellite communication system based on a lightweight application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC)-based communication system.
- During the Naval Innovation and Indigenization Organization (NIIO) seminar "Swavlamban" in July 2022, the SPRINT (Navy) initiative was unveiled. Its goal is to integrate at least 75 technologies and products into the Indian Navy by August 2023 as part of the celebrations for the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav."





- Since its launch in 2018, the iDEX framework has received more than 7,500 applications from individual innovators, MSMEs, and start-ups across various challenge categories such as DISC, Prime, and Open Challenge. iDEX has been instrumental in creating job opportunities and luring smart people back to India, in addition to promoting innovation.
- The iDEX project has made significant progress after signing its first and fiftieth iDEX SPRINT contracts under DISC-7, respectively, in October 2022 and January 2023. In a short period of time, the 250th contract was signed, demonstrating the dedication and effectiveness of iDEX in promoting innovation in the military industry.

### India and Bangladesh launched “50-startup exchange programme”

- India and Bangladesh have recently jointly launched the '50 Start-up Exchange Programme' to promote collaboration and exchange between the start-up ecosystems of the two countries.
- The objective of the program is to strengthen bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh by promoting cooperation in start-up and innovation sectors.
- It provides a platform for entrepreneurs, investors and stakeholders from both the countries to connect and collaborate.
- The program provides mentorship and guidance to participating start-ups, connecting them with experienced entrepreneurs, industry experts and investors.
- These Start-ups belong to sectors such as e-commerce, health, transport and logistics, energy, education and skill development.
- Under this programme, 50 Start-ups from Bangladesh and 50 Start-ups from India will exchange visits to each other's countries for exploring partnerships, expanding business relations, sharing experience and knowledge and expanding youth and entrepreneurial cooperation.



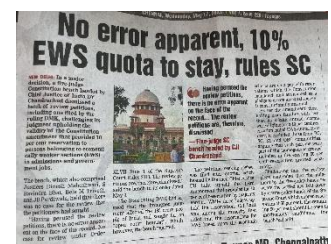
#### Bangladesh:

- Capital: Dhaka
- Prime Minister: Sheikh Hasina Wazed
- President: Mohammad Shahabuddin
- Currency: Taka

### Society for the Rights of Backward Communities vs Janhit Abhiyan and others

[SC rejects petitions seeking review of EWS quota verdict.]

- The Supreme Court has dismissed petitions seeking a review of the November 2022 majority judgment by a Constitution Bench judgment which upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment which introduced a 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in education and public employment.
- A 5 judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, Justice S Ravindra Bhat, Justice Bela M Trivedi, and JB Pardiwala dismissed the review petition.
- The bench stated “Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed”.
- A majority of three judges on the Constitution Bench had held that the 10% quota to the “poorest of poor” among forward castes did not pose any danger to the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
- It is pertinent to note that On November 7, 2022, the 5-judge bench upheld the EWS quota by a 3:2 majority, with the then CJI UU Lalit and Justice Ravindra Bhat dissenting. Since Justice Lalit has retired, the review bench was led by the incumbent CJI Justice Chandrachud.
- The majority view held that the introduction of reservation on the basis of economic criteria was not violative of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- The majority also found that there was nothing discriminatory in excluding persons who are entitled to SC/ST/OBC reservations from the ambit of economic reservations.



- The majority further held that a breach of the 50% ceiling limit by EWS reservation does not violate the basic structure.
- The dissenting judgment authored by Justice Ravindra Bhat held that by excluding the poor among SC/ST/OBC from economically backward classes (on the ground that they have enjoyed benefits), the 103rd Amendment practices constitutionally prohibited forms of discrimination. CJI UU Lalit concurred with Justice Bhat's view.
- Various individuals and organizations like the Society for the Rights of Backward Communities, and All India Backward Classes Forum sought a review of the judgment contending, inter-alia, that the EWS quota in effect works as a reservation for the upper castes and that it was grossly unfair and discriminatory to exclude the bulk of the poor who belong to SC/ST/OBC categories.

### Government launches 'Sanchar Saathi Portal' to deactivate and trace lost mobile phones.

- Union Communications Minister Ashwani Vaishnav inaugurated the citizen centric portal – “Sanchar Saathi” on 16 May 2023 at a function in New Delhi. The first phase of the Sanchar Saathi portal is the CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register).
- Under this, mobile phone users will now be able to block and track their lost or stolen mobile phones across India. The system can also help prevent smuggling of phones. People will be able to block, track and verify the authenticity of a used device before buying it.
- The communication partner has the TAFCOP feature, thereby being able to add the feature to check the use of cloned mobile phones on all telecom networks.
- It has been developed by C-DOT. The government has made it mandatory to disclose IMEI – the 15-digit Unique Numerical Identifier of mobile devices – before sale of mobile devices in India. This will make it easy to track your lost or stolen mobiles by the IMEI number of the device.



### UGC launches new websites, UTSAH portal and PoP portal to promote quality education.

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched a new website, UTSAH (Undertaking Transformative Strategies and Action in Higher Education) portal and Professor of Practice (PoP) portal to promote quality education in India.
- The new website, UTSAH Portal and POP Portal will provide valuable resources to students, faculty and universities and help improve the quality of higher education in India.
- It will monitor and measure outputs and outcomes in key areas including learner-centered learning, digital education, industry institute collaboration, academic research, internationalization and Indian knowledge systems
- Launched with the objective of motivating, implementing and monitoring the implementation of National Education Policy 2020 and progress in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country.
- PoP Portal:
  - Experts in any discipline can register on the POP portal and provide comprehensive information about their expertise, work experience, location and preferred type of work. The PoP portal is designed to help institutions get experienced professional experts.
- The new UGC website is more user friendly and informative, with classified information for students, teachers and universities. The website also has a section on the National Education Policy 2020, which outlines the UGC's vision for higher education in India.
- UGC: On December 28, 1953, the then Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad formally laid the foundation of the University Grants Commission. This commission is a proprietary organization established by an Act of Parliament in 1956 to coordinate, determine and maintain standards of university education. Its headquarters is located in the country's capital New Delhi. It has 6 regional offices at Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bengaluru.



## Tata becomes Apple's first local iPhone manufacturing partner in the country.

- According to 'Trendforce', the Tata group has tied up with Apple to manufacture the upcoming iPhone 15 and 15 Plus in India. This is the first time that Apple has started working with an Indian company on iPhone manufacturing.
- According to the report, Tata is, after this, Apple's fourth iPhone manufacturing partner in the country and the first local Indian manufacturer. Apple's manufacturing partners in India are Foxconn (South Korea), Luxshare (China) and Pegatron (Taiwan).
- Tata Group recently acquired Taiwanese electronics company Wistron, so now it has got the company's iPhone production line in India. The advantage of this will be that the first batch of iPhone 15 will be received in India first.
- The Tata Group has received orders only for the iPhone 15 and iPhone 15 Plus models, and not the iPhone 15 Pro model. The Indian group will assemble 5% of the iPhone 15 series phones, while the major chunk will still be held by Foxconn, Pegatron and Luxshare.



## PM launches railway projects worth ₹8,000 cr. in Odisha.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone and dedicated to the nation several railway projects worth more than ₹8000 crore in Odisha via video conferencing.
- PM Modi flagged off the Vande Bharat Express between Puri and Howrah. The train will pass through Khordha, Cuttack, Jajpur, Bhadrak, and Balasore districts in Odisha and Paschim Medinipur, and Purba Medinipur districts in West Bengal.
- Additionally, the prime minister laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of Puri and Cuttack railway stations. The modernization of these stations will ensure the provision of world-class amenities and services to passengers, significantly enhancing their travel experience.
- PM Modi inaugurated the 100% electrification of the rail network in Odisha, a significant milestone in the region's railway infrastructure. This electrification effort will not only reduce operating and maintenance costs but also decrease reliance on imported crude oil, promoting sustainability and environmental conservation.
- The prime minister also dedicated several other railway projects, including the doubling of the Sambalpur-Titlagarh rail line, the new broad gauge rail line between Angul-Sukinda, the third line connecting Manoharpur-Rourkela-Jharsuguda-Jamga, and the new broad-gauge line between Bichhupali-Jhartarba.
- projects are vital for accommodating the growing traffic demands arising from the rapid development in the steel, power, and mining sectors of Odisha. Moreover, they will alleviate the pressure on passenger traffic and improve the efficiency of rail transportation in these regions.



## 'Dwarka Expressway' work to be completed by year- end.

- Dwarka Expressway, connecting Dwarka in Delhi to Gurugram in Haryana, will be completed by year end, Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said.
- Of the nearly 29 km long access controlled expressway, 18.9 km stretch falls in Haryana and 10.1 km in Delhi.
- Part of the Bharatmala project, the 8-lane access-controlled, Dwarka expressway — the country's first elevated one — is being built as a bypass to decongest the NH8 between Delhi and Gurgaon at a cost of nearly 9,000 crore.
- Divided into four packages, Gadkari said the first, from Shiv Murti near Mahipalpur to Dwarka is about 60% complete. The second package from Dwarka Urban Extension Road (UER) to Bajghera is about 82% complete while the third package from Bajghera to Basai rail overbridge (Delhi-Haryana border) is about 93% complete. The fourth package from Basai ROB to Kherki Daula is about 99%.

70% WORK DONE, SAY OFFICIALS	
Project: Dwarka Expressway	
To connect: Kherki Daula and Shiv Murti on NH48	
Total length: 29km	
18.9km in Haryana	10.1km in Delhi
Cost: ₹9,000 crore	
IN PROGRESS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION
2007: Project announced	2022: Haryana portion likely to be finished by Dec
2019: Construction begins in Haryana section	2023: Delhi section will take at least until middle of the year to be completed
2020: Construction begins in Delhi portion	



- He said 99% of work of the highway falling on the Haryana side, that is, packages 3 and 4, has been completed. While 18.9 km of the section lies in Haryana, 10.1 km lies in Delhi.
- The expressway will intersect Pataudi Road (SH-26) near Harsaru and Farukhnagar (SH-15A) near Basai, and will also cross the Delhi-Rewari rail line near Gurgaon Sector-88 (B) and UER-II at Bharthal. He said it will also connect Gurgaon Sector 21 with Sectors 88, 83, 84, 99, 113 and Dwarka to Global City.



### 'River Bank Religious Tourism Circuit' to be developed on Brahmaputra River in Assam.

- An MoU was signed between the Inland Waterways Authority of India, Sagarmala Development Corporation Limited, Assam Tourism Development Corporation and the Inland Water Transport Department in Guwahati for the development of 'River Bank Religious Tourism Circuit' being developed on the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways & AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal were present on the occasion. This will open a new chapter in Assam river tourism sector.
- The development of the river bank religious tourism circuit is a major achievement for the tourism sector in Assam. Riverside religious tourism circuit is being developed in Brahmaputra under the Sagarmala project.
- 'River Bank Religious Tourism Circuit':
- This MoU will facilitate modern ferry service on 'Hop On Hop Off' with a frequency of 120 minutes between seven (07) historical religious places around Guwahati.
- With the help of this agreement, seven religious places of Kamakhya, Pandunath, Ashwalnata, Daul Govinda, Umanand, Chakreshwar and Auniati Satra will be covered. Apart from this, this circuit will also leave from Hanuman Ghat, Ujan Bazar.
- The waiting room at the ferry terminal provides a comfortable environment for the passengers. Donating will be a modern facility. The project will be completed within 12 months with an investment of Rs 45 crore.



### India launches 'Operation Karuna' to help cyclone-hit Myanmar

- India has launched 'Operation Karuna' on 18 May 2023 to assist the people of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Mocha. Foreign Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that under Operation Karuna, 4 ships of the Indian Navy have reached Yangon with relief material.
- The over 40 tonnes of HADR material brought by INS Shivalik, INS Gharial, INS Kamorta and INS Savitri includes emergency medicines and medical kits, food items, tents, essential medicines, water pumps, portable generators, clothing, and hygiene items.
- India has first started this campaign for the people of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Mocha. Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Vinay Kumar handed over the first batch of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) material to the Chief Minister of Yangon Region.



#### Cyclone Mocha:

- With winds of up to 175 kilometres per hour (109 mph), Super Cyclone Mocha battered Bangladesh and Myanmar over the weekend, killing hundreds of people.

- Rakhine state in Myanmar has been worst affected, while in Bangladesh the cyclone destroyed shelters in the **world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, home to one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar**. Cyclone Mocha was named based on a suggestion made by Yemen.

### UBI Global Ranks Kerala Startup Mission as the World's No. 1 Public Business Incubator.

- Kerala Startup Mission has been ranked as the world's top public business incubator by the UBI Global World Benchmark Study 2021-2022 of Business Incubators and Accelerators, marking a major endorsement of its role in turning Kerala into a vibrant start-up hub.
- Secretary (Electronics & IT), Kerala, Rathan U Kelkar, and KSUM CEO Anoop Ambika, jointly received the honour for KSUM at the UBI Global World Rankings 2021-2022 event held as part of the World Incubation Summit in Ghent, Belgium.
- UBI Global is a Sweden-based innovation intelligence company and community founded in 2013 in Stockholm; specializes in performance analysis of business incubators and accelerators.
- Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), the state government's initiative to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in Kerala, has been ranked as the world's top public business incubator by UBI Global.
- This is a major achievement for the state as it highlights Kerala's robust startup ecosystem and the government's commitment in making sure that entrepreneurship and technological innovation in the region grows.



### TCS-led consortium gets BSNL 4G order worth ₹15,000 crore.

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) announced that a consortium, headed by the prominent IT company, has been awarded an advance purchase order worth more than ₹15,000 crore by the government-owned BSNL.
- The order is specifically for implementing a nationwide 4G network in India. This development takes place amidst Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel's ongoing efforts to expand their 5G infrastructure throughout the country.
- In preparation for the official launch of its 4G services, state-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) introduced pilot-mode 4G services in certain areas of Punjab on April 22. The company has initiated live testing of its 4G services across 135 tower sites, utilising a domestically developed telecom stack.
- Tejas Networks Limited, a part of the Tata Group, earlier announced that it had secured an order valued at ₹696 crore from BSNL. The order pertains to the enhancement of BSNL's nationwide IP-MPLS based Access and Aggregation Network (MAAN).
- The division of the Tata Group, namely Tejas Networks Limited, specializes in the development and production of wireless networking solutions catering to telecommunications service providers, government entities, and defense sectors in more than 75 countries.
- Under the terms of the agreement, Tejas Networks will provide, install, and commission over 13,000 of its advanced 'TJ1400' series access and aggregation routers.



### The Union Education Ministry discontinues two awards.

- The 'Shiksha Puraskar' and the 'Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar' have been discontinued upon implementation of a Home Ministry directive
- The Union Higher Education Ministry has discontinued the 'Shiksha Puraskar', launched by the Centre in 1992 for encouraging original writings in Hindi.
- The 'Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar', an award given to promote writings in Hindi by writers from non-Hindi speaking areas, has also been discontinued.
- Under the 'Shiksha Puraskar', five awards worth ₹1 lakh each are given every year. The 'Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar' carries a cash prize of ₹50,000.
- According to the Ministry, the 'Shiksha Puraskar' is given to books originally written in Hindi by Hindi and non-Hindi-speaking authors in various fields of knowledge such as education policy, method of teaching, Social Sciences,



Philosophy, political thought, culture, communication, moral science, science and technology, medical science, law, Political Science, Environment, and other subjects related to education.

### India gives Bangladesh key rail infra.

- To further strengthen bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh, the Ministry of Railways in India handed over 20 broad gauge locomotives to its eastern neighbour.
- India had also offered Bangladesh the use of the IT system deployed by PM GATI SHAKTI scheme, which has 1,600 layers of information based on satellite imagery.
- These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh.
- In June 2020, India had provided 10 locomotives to Bangladesh as a grant.
- Trade between the countries via rail has seen a consistent growth with interchange of close to 100 cargo trains a month. Approximately 2.66 tonnes of cargo was sent to Bangladesh in the previous financial year.
- Indian Railways are also playing a vital role in improving and strengthening rail connectivity across the border and improving trade between both the countries. As of now, 5 Broad Gauge connectivity are operational, namely Geda-Darsana, Benapol- Petrapol, Singhabad- Rohanpur, Radhikapur- Birol and Haldibari-Chilahati. Work on 2 more cross border rail connectivities, Akhaura-Agartala and Mahihasan-Shahbazpur are progressing well and are likely to be completed and commissioned shortly.
- To enhance people to people contact, presently three pairs of passenger trains between India and Bangladesh, namely, Kolkata-Dhaka Maitree Express, Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express and New Jalpaiguri- Dhaka Mitali Express are running.



### Country's largest High Court building built in Jharkhand.

- The country's largest High Court building has been built in Ranchi, Jharkhand. It is three times bigger than the Supreme Court in New Delhi. President Draupadi Murmu inaugurated the newly constructed state-of-the-art Jharkhand High Court building in Ranchi on 24 May 2023.
- Spread over 165 acres of land, the High Court building has 25 air conditioned courtrooms and two large halls with a seating capacity of 1200 lawyers and 540 chambers for them. It also has a parking capacity of over 200 vehicles.
- An estimated Rs 550 crore is spent on this building project. The High Court building consists of three blocks with a built up area of about 68 acres. The judicial block consists of two floors with a total of 13 courts including the Chief Justice on the first floor, while 12 courts are built on the second floor.



#### High Court Building:

- It has a separate Advocate General's Office, with four Additional Advocates General offices apart from the Advocate General and rooms for 95 Government Advocates.
- The walls of the entrance hall are decorated with photographs of the old High Court building, freedom fighters of Jharkhand and Bhimrao Ambedkar. On one side the entire life of Mahatma Gandhi is displayed through photographs.
- The ultra-modern High Court building is also equipped with a 2000 KVA solar power plant which will meet 60 percent of the total power requirement of the entire complex.
- Along with this, a library of 30 thousand square feet has been made in the new building of the High Court, in which more than five lakh legal books can be kept. A total of 4436 saplings have also been planted to keep the campus green.
- The High Court building complex also houses a post office, a dispensary, a railway booking counter and a crèche. 500 CCTV cameras have also been installed.



## India's AI supercomputer 'Airavat' included in the list of '100 most powerful' supercomputers in the world.

- Airavat, an AI supercomputer set up at C-DAC, Pune, has been ranked 75th in the world.
- This was announced at the 61st edition of the Top 500 Global Supercomputing list at the International Supercomputing Conference (ISC 2023) in Germany.
- ISC 2023 held in Hamburg, Germany from 21 to 25 May 2023. The first ISC conference was held in 1986.



### World's Leading Supercomputer:

- Frontier - Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee, No. 1 in the USA has HPL score of 1.194 exaflop/s.
- Fugaku / Fugaku - Japan's RIKEN Center for Computational Science (R-CCS) has an HPL benchmark score 442 pFLOP/s.
- LUMI System - EuroHPC/CSC in Finland. Its HPL score is 309.1 pFLOP/s With this it remains the largest system in Europe.
- Leonardo Systems - EuroHPC/CINECA in Italy. 4 with a better HPL score of 239 pFLOP/s
- Summit - IBM Power Systems USA.
- AI Research Analytics and Knowledge Dissemination Platform (AIRAWAT) of India:
- Airavat PSAI, with a remarkable speed of 13,170 teraflops (Repeak), stands as India's fastest AI supercomputing system. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "AI for all", this puts India at the forefront of AI supercomputing countries worldwide.
- Airavat is manufactured by Netweb Technologies. Its operating system is Ubuntu 20.04.2 LTS. Currently funded by MeitY and implemented by C-DAC, Pune.
- Apart from this, Param Siddhi is at 131st position, Pratyush Supercomputer at 169th position and Mihir Supercomputer at number 316.

## 'Souvenirs show scepter was given to Mountbatten'

[What is 'Sengol'? Tamil Nadu's historic scepter finds new home in parliament]

- During the upcoming inauguration of the new parliament building on May 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will place the historic 'Sengol' (scepter) near the Speaker's seat, as stated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- Shah emphasised the significance of the golden 'Sengol' as a historical symbol of Independence, representing the transfer of power from the British to the Indians.
- Special souvenirs published after Independence and the first Republic Day by the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam had recorded an account of the matth having handed over a Sengol (scepter) to Lord Mountbatten and later to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, an Adheenam spokesperson said.
- "The souvenirs were published during the lifetime of the then Adheenam, who attained samadhi in 1952. The copy of these souvenirs are available at the Adheenam,"
- According to historical accounts and news reports, the origin of the 'Sengol' can be traced back to a series of events initiated by Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India. It is said that Mountbatten posed a straightforward question to Prime Minister Nehru regarding how the transfer of power would be symbolised once India achieved its independence.
- After being asked by Prime Minister Nehru about a symbol to mark India's transfer of power, he sought advice from C Rajagopalachari, the last Governor General of the country. Rajagopalachari, also known as Rajaji, shared the Tamil tradition of a high priest presenting a scepter to a newly crowned king as a symbolic gesture of power transition. He suggested that this tradition, observed during the Chola dynasty, could serve as a significant symbol of India's freedom from British rule. Consequently, Rajaji took on the responsibility of procuring a scepter for this historic moment.



- Charged with the challenging responsibility of acquiring the sceptre that would symbolise India's Independence, Rajaji reached out to Thiruvaduthurai Atheenam, a prominent religious institution in present-day Tamil Nadu. The spiritual leader of the mutt at that time willingly took on the task.
- The 'Sengol' was crafted by Vummidi Bangaru Chetty, a renowned jeweller in what was then known as Madras. This impressive scepter measures 5 feet in length and features a 'nandi' bull at the top, representing the concept of justice.
- As per reports, a senior priest from the mutt initially presented the scepter to Mountbatten, only to retrieve it shortly afterward. The scepter was then sanctified by sprinkling it with Ganga Jal (holy water). It was carried in a procession to Prime Minister Nehru and delivered to him approximately 15 minutes before midnight, signifying the moment of India's Independence. Accompanying this significant event, a special song was composed and performed as Prime Minister Nehru received the sceptre.

### Only 6 religion options will be enshrined in the next Census form as choice.

- Detailed codes for Sarnaism, the Lingayat religion, etc. were dropped in the final schedule; form to include questions on source of drinking water.
- Despite demands from several communities to be counted as a separate religion, the next Census will only count Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and Jain as options.
- Nature-worshiping Adivasis in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha have been campaigning to include their Sarna faith as a separate religion, while Karnataka's Lingayats have been making a similar demand.
- Though respondents can write the name of any other religion, no separate code will be provided.
- Do you consume “packaged or bottled water”? The Census wants to know. This will be one of the new questions in the next Census, which will also introduce “natural calamities” as a new option when asking about the factors responsible for migration of an individual or a family, besides existing options.
- The details are explained in a report titled, “The Treatise on Indian Censuses Since 1981”, which was released by Home Minister Amit Shah at the inauguration of a new Census building in Delhi on May 22.
- Census 2021, which was to be conducted in two phases, has been postponed indefinitely, with the Central government initially attributing the delay to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The next Census is also set to be the first digital Census, where respondents will have the option to fill in the questionnaire from the comforts of their own homes.
- The 31 questions for the first phase — Houselisting and Housing Schedule — were notified on January 9, 2020. As many as 28 questions have been finalised for the second phase — the Population Enumeration — but are yet to be notified. The final set of questions for both phases were asked during a pre-test exercise in 2019 in 76 districts in 36 States and Union Territories, covering a population of more than 26 lakh.
- The next Census will also record details on whether a person who lives in a rented house owns a house somewhere else or does not own any residential property. On the question of availability of drinking water, it explains that “near the premises” means “within 100 metres in urban areas” and “within 500 metres in rural areas.”
- For the first time, a code directory — containing possible responses and their matching codes for questions involving descriptive and non-numeric entries — has been prepared for the use of enumerators during the second phase of Census 2021. It has codes in respect of Relationship to Head, Mother Tongue and Other Languages Known, Occupation, Nature of Industry, Trade or Service, Birth Place/Place of last residence, and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) etc.



### India sees reduction in stunting; but wasting, obesity are concerns: Joint Malnutrition Estimates.

- 1.6 crore fewer stunted children aged under five in 2022 than in 2012, show “Joint Malnutrition Estimates” released by UNICEF, WHO and World Bank; prevalence of obesity marginally increased during the decade, report says
- India continues to show a reduction in stunting and recorded 1.6 crore fewer stunted children under five years in 2022 than in 2012, according to the Joint Malnutrition Estimates released by UNICEF, the WHO and the World Bank.
- However, wasting continues to remain a concern and so does growing levels of obesity.

- Stunting among children under five years in India dropped from a prevalence rate of 41.6% in 2012 to 31.7% in 2022 with the numbers dropping from 52 lakh to 36 lakh.
- This was accompanied by India's share of the global burden of stunting declining from 30% to 25% in the past decade.
- The overall prevalence of wasting in 2022 was 18.7% in India, with a share of 49% in the global burden. The prevalence of obesity marginally increased in a decade from 2.2% in 2012 to 2.8% in 2022 with the numbers growing to 31.8 lakh from 27.5 lakh, thereby contributing to 8.8% of the global share.
- But the overall classification for obesity is low and much lower than the global prevalence of 5.6%.
- Globally, stunting declined from a prevalence rate of 26.3% in 2012 to 22.3% in 2022.
- There was no improvement on the weight issue worldwide, as its prevalence rate grew from 5.5% to 5.6%. There was a global prevalence of 6.8% in 2022, but there is no comparison available for past years as it is based on national level country prevalence data.
- The JME report says there is insufficient progress to reach the 2025 World Health Assembly global nutrition targets and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 targets and only about one-third of all countries are 'on track' to halve the number of children affected by stunting by 2030. Even fewer countries are expected to achieve the 2030 target of 3% prevalence for overweight.

#### In line with National Family Health Survey (NFHS):

- The decline in stunting in India is commensurate with National Family Health Survey **NFHS-5 (2019--2021)** data which estimated its prevalence at 35.5% as against 38% in NFHS--4 (2016) and 48% in NFHS--3 (2006).
- NFHS--5 showed evidence of continued reduction of stunting and instances of underweight children, though anaemia was disappointing. It also showed an improvement in access to health services, family planning, ante-natal care, deworming, breastfeeding counselling," said Arjan Wagt, Chief of Nutrition and UNICEF India Deputy Representative, Programmes, adding that he remained hopeful of a further improvement in NFHS--6.

### Persisting challenges

The Joint Malnutrition Estimates underscore India's mixed progress in battling malnutrition



- India saw 1.6 crore fewer stunted children under five years in 2022 compared with 2012
- Despite reduced stunting, wasting remains an issue with a prevalence rate of 18.7% in 2022 in India
- Prevalence of overweight children increased from 2.2% in 2012 to 2.8% in 2022 in India
- Global stunting declined from 26.3% in 2012 to 22.3% in 2022, but obesity prevalence increased from 5.5% to 5.6%

### Northeast gets its first Vande Bharata Express.

- The new **Vande Bharata Express from Guwahati in Assam—New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal** gets flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is the first of its kind semi-high-speed train in the North-east region.
- The journey will take five and a half hours. Earlier, the fastest train on the route took 6.5 hours to cover the distance of nearly 400 km.
- Mr. Modi also dedicated 182 route km of newly electrified sections to the nation and inaugurated a DEMU/MEMU shed at Lumding in Assam. **Now, 425 km of railway tracks in Assam and Meghalaya** have been electrified. This will help provide pollution free transportation at higher speeds and less running time.



### India's unemployment rate dips in January--March 2023; 6.80%.

- The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 6.8% during January-March 2023 from 8.2% a year ago, the National Sample Survey Survey (NSSO) showed.
- The latest figures from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) indicate that the rate of unemployment in Indian cities is the lowest since the survey's initiation in 2018-19. The PLFS, which publishes quarterly data for urban areas, measures unemployment in terms of the Current Weekly Status.
- The unemployment rate among men stood at 6.0%, while for women it was 9.2%. In the previous quarter, the rates were 6.5% for men and 9.6% for women.





- The PLFS report also revealed a slight increase in female labour force participation, with the figure rising to 22.7% in Q4 FY23, up from 22.3% in the previous quarter. Male labour force participation remained high at 73.5%.
- The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) introduced the PLFS in April 2017. The survey provides quarterly bulletins with estimates of labour force indicators, including the unemployment rate, Worker Population Ratio (WPR), Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), and the distribution of workers by employment status and industry in the Current Weekly Status.
- Unemployed persons in the Current Weekly Status provide an average representation of unemployment during a short seven-day period within the survey timeframe.
- According to the CWS approach, individuals are classified as unemployed if they have not worked for even one hour during the week but have actively sought employment or were available for work for at least one hour during that period.
- Joblessness was high in January-March 2022, mainly due to the staggering impact of Covid-related restrictions in the country.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR

### Sheikh Mohammed appoints two deputy rulers of Dubai, Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed becomes Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai.

- Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai has appointed Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed as Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai.
- Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed, who was already Deputy Ruler, became the First Deputy Ruler of Dubai.
- The appointments were made by Sheikh Mohammed in his capacity as Ruler of Dubai.
- Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed is chairman of Dubai Media Council.
- Sheikh Maktoum also serves as the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.
- Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Rashid Al-Maktoum, has appointed one of his sons as the country's deputy ruler (king) in 2021 following the death of his brother and previous long-time deputy ruler, Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum.



### The People's Republic of China amended the anti-espionage law.

- Under previous law, threats to national security encompassed state secrets. However, the new provisions broaden the scope of foreign espionage to encompass any action, document, data and material which may be considered a threat to national security by state authorities. The reforms also expand the duties of law enforcement personnel in governing espionage activity, and the definition of spying has been amended to include cyberattacks.
- The reforms follow Chinese President Xi Jinping's emphasis on strengthening national security. Accordingly, Article 1 of the Counter-Espionage Law states, "This Law is enacted in accordance with the Constitution in order to strengthen counter-espionage work, prevent, stop and punish espionage, maintain national security, and protect the interests of the people."



### Cannes Film Festival-2023 will honor 78 years old Michael Douglas with the Honorary Palme d'Or.

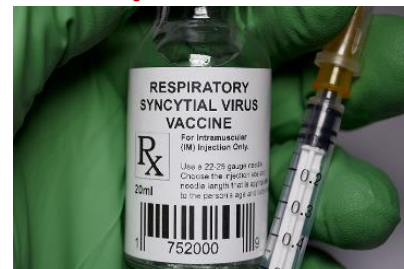
- Cannes Film Festival will honor two-time Oscar winner Michael Douglas with an Honorary Palme d'Or for his outstanding career and contribution to cinema.
- Douglas, 78, is known for an extensive career that has included films such as The China Syndrome, Basic Instinct, Falling Down and Behind the Candelabra, all of which screened at Cannes.
- In 1987, Michael Douglas played the iconic role of banker Gordon Gekko in Wall Street, which won him an Academy Award.



- He has been a worldwide campaigner for nuclear disarmament since 1998 as the United Nations Messenger of Peace and has been a long-time advocate of gun control in the US.
- Past recipients of the Honorary Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival include Forest Whitaker, Agnes Varda and Jodie Foster.
- The festival will take place from 16-27 May 2023 and will feature premieres of highly anticipated films such as the new Indiana Jones and Martin Scorsese films. The opening film will be Jean Du Barry, which marks the return of Johnny Depp to the big screen.

### **US Food and Drug Administration approves world's first RSV vaccine 'Arexvy'.**

- The United States on 3 April 2023 approved British drugmaker GSK Plc 'Arexvy vaccine' against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which causes severe pneumonia and bronchiolitis in infants and the elderly; Arexvy, has been approved for people with age 60 and older.
- The vaccine would cost more than \$120 per shot.
- GSK Plc's vaccine showed an overall efficacy of 82.6% and was nearly 94% effective against severe lower respiratory tract disease associated with RSV infection among participants aged 60 years and older in its late-stage trial.
- According to government estimates, RSV is responsible for 14,000 deaths annually in the United States among adults aged 65 and older.
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover within a week or two, but RSV can be serious, especially for infants and older adults. RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lungs) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children under the age of 1 in the United States.



### **COVID pandemic is no longer an emergency, declares WHO; marking a symbolic end to the devastating coronavirus pandemic that triggered once unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions of people worldwide.**

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) downgraded the Covid-19 pandemic from the status of a global emergency. The UN health agency noted that the viral disease and its spread do not qualify as a Global Emergency anymore.
- The announcement, made more than three years after WHO declared the coronavirus an international crisis. More than three years later, the virus has caused an estimated 764 million cases globally and about 5 billion people have received at least one dose of vaccine.
- The UN health agency first declared the coronavirus to be an international crisis on 30 January 2020, it hadn't yet been named Covid-19 and there were no major outbreaks beyond China.
- However, taking note of the recent spike in cases in Southeast Asia and West Asia, the UN health agency says that even though the emergency phase was over, the pandemic hasn't ended.



### **Xi Jinping, the President of the People's Republic of China, is set to host a 1st meeting with all the leaders of Central Asia.**

- The Chinese president extended the offer to the "first China-Central Asia summit", scheduled for May, in similar telegrams sent to the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping will host a two-day summit with the leaders of five Central Asian nations; China moves to increase its influence in the region.
- Leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are expected to attend the China -Central Asia Summit from May 18 to 19,



- The summit in the historic city of Xi'an on the ancient Silk Road is the first of its kind since the establishment of formal relations 31 years ago, and will focus on strengthening economic and diplomatic ties with Beijing.
- China has invested billions of dollars to tap natural gas reserves in Central Asia.
- Rail links connecting China to Europe criss-cross the region and are key to the success of Mr. Xi's trillion dollar global infrastructure project, the Belt and Road Initiative.
- The authoritarian republics of Central Asia were part of the Soviet Union and have been dominated by Moscow since the mid-19th century.

### **Pakistan and China agree to extend CPEC to Afghanistan.**

- Pakistan, China and Afghanistan Associated Press have agreed to forge closer economic ties by extending the Beijing-based China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan to fully harness the country's potential as a hub for regional connectivity. Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang and Afghanistan's Taliban Appointed acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi held the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, where they also underlined the need to prevent any group from using their territories for terror activities against any nation.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a collection of infrastructure and development projects in Pakistan, which are financed and constructed by China as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The CPEC aims to connect China's northwestern region of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea via a network of highways, railways, and pipelines.
- The CPEC is considered a flagship project of the BRI, and it has a total investment value of around \$62 billion. It includes various projects such as the development of Gwadar Port, construction of highways, railways, and energy projects, and establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) in Pakistan.
- India has expressed concerns about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), which India considers as its integral part. India has maintained that the CPEC violates its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and it has repeatedly raised its objections to the project at various international forums.



### **Arab trains are going to carry Indian goods to Israeli ports, says Israel Foreign Minister.**

- Arab train networks in future would be carrying Indian goods to the Israeli port of Haifa, said Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in New Delhi
- Addressing the India -Israel Business Forum organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Mr. Cohen announced support for increasing the number of Indian employees in Israel and urged for an early conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between New Delhi and Tel Aviv.
- In his remarks, the Israeli foreign minister talked about how Israel, the Arab countries and India can create connectivity to the West.
- The UAE became the first Arab Gulf state to sign an agreement for normalization with Israel in 2020.



### **Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan was arrested from the Islamabad High Court where he appeared seeking bail in multiple corruption cases, triggering demonstrations across the country that saw his supporters vandalize buildings.**

- Arrest warrants issued by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the Al-- Qadir Trust corruption case.
- Al-Qadir case is a corruption case in which Imran Khan allegedly allowed £190 million recovery of the state to be syphoned to a real estate tycoon in return for personal material favours.





- Dated May 1 and signed by NAB chairman Lt. Gen. Nazir Ahmed, Mr. Khan's arrest warrants said he was accused of corruption and corrupt practices under Section 9(a) of the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999.

### Syria will join the Arab League after a decade.

- The foreign ministers of Arab League member states have agreed to restore its membership after Syria's suspension more than 10 years ago, and voted in favour of Syria's return on 7 May 2023 at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo. The process of bringing Damascus back to Arabia has been dubbed the "Jordan Initiative".
- Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011 after a violent crackdown on anti-government protests.
- The move marks a softening of relations between the governments of Syria and other Arab countries and is seen as the beginning of a gradual process to resolve the ongoing crisis in Syria.
- To help Syria achieve these goals, a committee will be established that will include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. It is a call to resolve the crisis arising out of the ongoing civil war in Syria.
- The Syrian crisis has resulted in the displacement of nearly half of its pre-war population of 21 million and the death of more than 300,000 civilians.
- The Arab League, also known as the League of Arab States (LAS), is an intergovernmental pan-Arab organisation of all Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. It was formed on March 22, 1945 in Cairo, Egypt after the adoption of the Alexandria Protocol in the year 1944. It currently includes 22 Arab countries.



### The Parliament of European country Portugal gave legal recognition to Euthanasia.

- The Parliament of Portugal has passed a law by a majority on 12 May 2023 to allow medically assisted dying in certain limited circumstances.
- Under this law, medical professionals will be allowed to assist people to die if they are in extreme pain due to a terminal illness or serious injury and are unable to end their life.
- MPs overwhelmingly voted in favour of the legislation. It was presented in Parliament by Socialist Party politician Isabel Moreira. Almost all members of the governing Socialist Party (PS) supported the law, as did three smaller left-centrist parties and the Liberal Initiative (IL). Several members of the centre right Social Democrats (PSD), the largest opposition party, also supported the bill.
- Most PSD members voted against the bill, as did the Chega party, the third largest party in parliament, and the Communist Party (PCP).
- Euthanasia:
  - Under its provisions, people over the age of 18 will be allowed to request aid in dying if they are seriously ill and in excruciating pain. It will only cover people suffering from "permanent" and "intolerable" pain, unless they are considered mentally fit to make such a decision.
  - The law will only apply to citizens and legal residents and will not apply to foreigners coming to the country to receive aid in dying. Euthanasia is fully legal in Four European countries: Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Apart from this, it is also valid in Australia, Colombia, New Zealand, Canada.
  - The new version of the law now provides that euthanasia is authorized only in cases where "medically assisted suicide is impossible due to the physical incapacitation of the patient".
- In India – The Supreme Court on 9 March 2018 ruled that individuals have the right to die with dignity, with guidelines allowing passive euthanasia. The need to change the euthanasia laws was triggered by the famous Aruna Shanbaug case. The apex court had recognized passive euthanasia in 2011 in the Aruna Shanbaug case.



**Australia cancels Quad meeting in Sydney after U.S. President pulls out.**

- Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has ruled out a Quad summit taking place in Sydney without President Joe Biden, saying the four leaders will talk at the Group of Seven meeting this weekend in Japan.
- Mr. Albanese said on Wednesday he understands why Mr. Biden pulled out of the summit to focus on debt limit talks in Washington since they are crucial to the economy.
- The summit including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida had been scheduled for May 24.
- “The blocking and the disruption that’s occurring in domestic politics in the United States, with the debt ceiling issue, means that, because that has to be solved prior to June 1 — otherwise there are quite drastic consequences for the U.S. economy, which will flow on to the global economy — he understandably has had to make that decision,” Mr. Albanese said.
- Mr. Biden “expressed very much his disappointment” at being unable to come to the Sydney summit and to the national capital Canberra a day earlier to address Parliament, Mr. Albanese said.
- The four leaders will soon be together in Hiroshima, Japan, for the Group of Seven summit and are planning to meet there, he said.
- He said Mr. Modi will visit Sydney next week, noting the Indian leader was scheduled to give an address to the Indian diaspora at a sold out 20,000 -seat stadium on Tuesday. But Mr. Kishida will not visit. “Prime Minister Modi will be here next week for a bilateral meeting with me. He will also have business meetings, he’ll hold a very public event in Sydney,” Mr. Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

**The United States has signed a new security pact with Papua New Guinea as the U.S. continues to jostle with China for influence in the Pacific.**

- Papua New Guinea's location just north of Australia makes it strategically significant. It was the site of fierce battles during World War II, and with a population of nearly 10 million people, it's the most populous Pacific Island nation.
- The new agreement provides a framework to help improve security cooperation, enhance the capacity of Papua New Guinea's defence force and increase regional stability. The full agreement will be made public once politicians in both countries have an opportunity for input, likely in a couple of months.
- Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape said the pact is mutually beneficial and “secures our national interests” in “becoming a robust economy in this part of the world.”
- But the agreement sparked student protests in the second-largest city, Lae. And many in the Pacific are concerned about the increasing militarisation of the region.
- Last year, the nearby Solomon Islands signed its own security pact with China, a move that raised alarm throughout the Pacific. The U.S. has increased its focus on the Pacific, opening embassies in Solomon Islands and Tonga, reviving Peace Corps volunteer efforts, and encouraging more business investment.
- With the defence pact, the U.S. also signed a maritime agreement with Papua New Guinea which will allow the U.S. Coast Guard to partner with the Pacific nation to counter illegal fishing and drug smuggling.
- The U.S. visit coincided with a trip by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was hosting a meeting with Pacific Island leaders to discuss ways to better cooperate.
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and said the two nations had a shared vision for the region.
- U.S. President Joe Biden has placed more importance on the Pacific over concerns about an increasingly assertive China, which is trying to woo nations with an array of diplomatic and financial incentives in return for strategic support.
- PM Marape said that the two agreements will focus on defence co-operation and maritime surveillance.



- These agreements can be renewed every 15 years. They will give the US vital maneuverability in Papua New Guinea's waters which are near to sea routes to Australia and Japan. The US will in return give access to satellite surveillance.
- "It now gives us an opportune time to focus not just on maritime access but satellite access on... illegal activities on the high sea," Marape said.

### EU imposes \$1.3 billion fine on Meta, orders to stop sending data to U.S.

- The European Union slapped Meta with a record \$1.3 billion privacy fine and ordered it to stop transferring users' personal information across the Atlantic by October, the latest salvo in a decade-long case sparked by U.S. cyber snooping fears.
- Meta (META.O) was hit with a record 1.2 billion euro (\$1.3 billion) fine by its lead European Union privacy regulator over its handling of user information and given five months to stop transferring users' data to the United States.
- The fine, imposed by Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner (DPC), came after Meta continued to transfer data beyond a 2020 EU court ruling that invalidated an EU-U.S. data transfer pact. It tops the previous record EU privacy fine of 746 million euros handed by Luxembourg to Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) in 2021.
- The penalty of 1.2 billion euros is the biggest since the EU's strict data privacy regime took effect five years ago, surpassing Amazon's 746 million euro fine in 2021 for data protection violations.
- The battle over where Meta's Facebook stores its data began a decade ago after Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems brought a legal challenge over the risk of U.S. snooping in light of disclosures by former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.
- Meta said in a statement that it will appeal the ruling, including the "unjustified and unnecessary fine that "sets a dangerous precedent for countless other companies." It will also seek a stay of the suspension orders through the courts.



### China surpasses Japan as the world's biggest car exporter.

- China said that it has become the world's biggest exporter of cars after overtaking Japan in the first three months of 2023.
- China exported 1.07 million vehicles in the period, up 58 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2022, the BBC reported.
- At the same time Japan's vehicle exports stood at 954,185, after edging up 6 % from 2022.
- China's exports were boosted by demand for electric cars and sales to Russia.
- In 2022, China overtook Germany to become the world's second largest car exporter.
- According to China's General Administration of Customs, the country exported 3.2 million vehicles in 2022, compared to Germany's 2.6 million vehicle exports, the BBC reported.
- The shift away from fossil fuels has helped fuel the rise of China's motor industry.
- First quarter exports of new energy vehicles (NEVs), which includes electric cars, rose by more than 90 %, compared to a year earlier.
- Tesla's China arm, SAIC, the owner of the MG brand and BYD, which is backed by veteran US investor Warren Buffett, are among China's top exporters of NEVs.
- Elon Musk's electric carmaker Tesla has a huge manufacturing plant in Shanghai which exports to regions including Japan and Europe.
- China has also seen exports to Russia surge since the start of the Ukraine war, as Western countries imposed trade sanctions on Moscow.
- Last year, Chinese carmakers, including Geely, Chery and Great Wall, saw their market share in Russia jump after rivals including Volkswagen and Toyota quit the country following the invasion of Ukraine.





**Animal health emergency imposed in Brazil for 6 months after increasing cases of bird flu.**

- According to Brazilian Agriculture Minister Carlos Favaro, an animal health emergency has been imposed in the country for the next 6 months after increasing cases of bird flu. So far, eight cases of H5N1 have been confirmed in wild birds. These include seven in Espirito Santo state and one in Rio de Janeiro state.
- According to the guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health, meat trade will not be restricted for the time being regarding avian flu H5N1 in wild birds. With annual sales of around \$10bn (£8bn), Brazil is the world's largest exporter of chicken meat.
- As a precaution, a health emergency has been declared in the entire country for the next 180 days.
- An Emergency Operation Center has been created to coordinate, plan and evaluate national actions related to avian influenza.

**Avian Influenza:**

- It is a highly contagious disease that affects many species of domesticated birds and wild birds, including food-producing birds (chickens, turkeys, quail, guinea fowl, etc.).
- This virus, called Influenza-A or Type-A virus, is commonly found in birds, but sometimes it can infect many other mammals, including humans. When it infects humans it is called influenza.
- H5N1, a subtype of avian influenza, has the potential to infect other mammals such as mink, ferrets, seals, domestic cats, and others through contact with infected birds, their faeces, or infected bird carcasses.

**‘China constructing model villages opposite the LAC’**

- China is continuing to expand the network of model villages, or Xiaokang (moderately prosperous) villages, opposite the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Middle and Eastern sectors, according to official sources.
- Opposite Barahoti, the Chinese are building villages at a rapid pace, sometimes 300 to 400 houses within 90 to 100 days, a source said. People’s Liberation Army patrols have been observed every 15 days or so as against once in a season earlier, the source said.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, opposite the Kameng area, two villages have come up in Cuna country consisting of 41 dwelling units and there are about 200 inhabitants from the Menba ethnic community, the source said. There is a military complex adjacent to the village consisting of multi-storey buildings secured by a perimeter wall with CCTVs and watch towers, the source added.
- Villages are under construction all along the LAC, including at the Chumbi valley facing the strategically crucial Siliguri corridor.
- While China continues to expand infrastructure, India too has almost reached parity in terms of roads and other infrastructure in the Middle Sector. There has also been major induction of new technology by the Indian Army along the LAC to augment surveillance and capacity.
- Since the beginning of the stand-off with China in eastern Ladakh in April 2020, there has been a build up of forces by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and transgressions in other areas along the LAC. In August 2021, over 100 Chinese soldiers had transgressed four or five km into Indian territory at Barahoti in Uttarakhand and returned after a few hours.
- Chinese transgressions in the Middle Sector are not new but the number of PLA troops coming in is increasing. The 3,488km long LAC is divided into the Western (Ladakh), Middle (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and Eastern (Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh) sectors.
- The Indian Army has, in the last three years, signed a series of agreements for high technology equipment, which is currently in the process of being inducted in the forward areas, official sources said. New autonomous vehicles will soon replace animal transport for transporting rations and utilities to soldiers in forward locations and snow scooters, laser dazzlers and new generation sniper rifles have also been inducted.



- In another development, official sources said that the PLA has deployed an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or helicopter drone in the Middle sector, which was spotted across the LAC.
- In May 2020, Chinese state media had reported that China's first UAV meant for high altitude areas had made its maiden flight and could be deployed along the country's borders with India. According to Global Times, the AR-500C unmanned plateau helicopter meant for surveillance can take off at an altitude of 5,000 metres, has a ceiling of 6,700 metres, an endurance of five hours and a maximum take-off weight of 500 kg.

### Iran successfully tests ballistic missile 'Kheibar' with a range of 2000 km.

- Iran successfully test-fired the 4th generation Khorramshahr surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Kheibar' which has a range of about 2000 km. The missile is capable of carrying a warhead of 1500 kg.
- The name "Kheibar" refers to Muslim warriors in the early days of Islam who captured a Jewish palace. Iran claims that its weapons can reach the bases of Israel and America.
- Despite opposition from the US and European countries, Iran has said that it will continue to develop the program.
- Tehran signed a nuclear deal with six world powers in 2015, which was terminated by Washington in 2018 under then President Donald Trump. The deal significantly limited Iran's nuclear activities.



### Türkiye - ballistic missile Tayfun (Typhoon):

- Turkey's missile manufacturer company Roketsan has successfully test-fired short-range ballistic missile 'Tayfun (Typhoon)' on 24 May 2023 in the country's Black Sea province of Rize.
- Typhoon is Türkiye's longest-range missile ever. The firm had earlier test-fired the missile in October 2022, when it hit a target 560 km away.

### Ireland is the first country in the world to mandate health warning labelling on alcoholic beverages.

- Ireland has become the first country in the world to mandate health labelling on alcoholic drinks to warn people about calorie content, alcohol content, cancer and liver disease risks and the dangers of drinking while pregnant.
- Created by Irish Health Minister Stephen Donnelly, the new rules will come into effect in three years to give businesses enough time.
- He said the legislation would bring wine packaging in line with other food and drink products, which already carry health information and warnings.
- The move has prompted several of Ireland's major trading partners to raise concerns with the European Commission. Nine EU members, including France, have submitted unfavourable opinions in response to the plans.



### USA approves "Paxlovid", the first antiviral pill for the treatment of COVID for adults.

- The US Food and Drug Administration on 25 May 2023 approved Pfizer's first oral antiviral pill 'Paxlovid' for the treatment of COVID in adults 18 years and older under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. 'Paxlovid' tablet contains two oral medicines - Ritonavir and Nirmatrelvir.
- This permission will allow doctors to have more flexibility in prescribing medicine for adults with severe COVID symptoms. Paxlovid is the fourth drug and the first oral antiviral pill approved by the FDA to treat COVID-19 in adults.



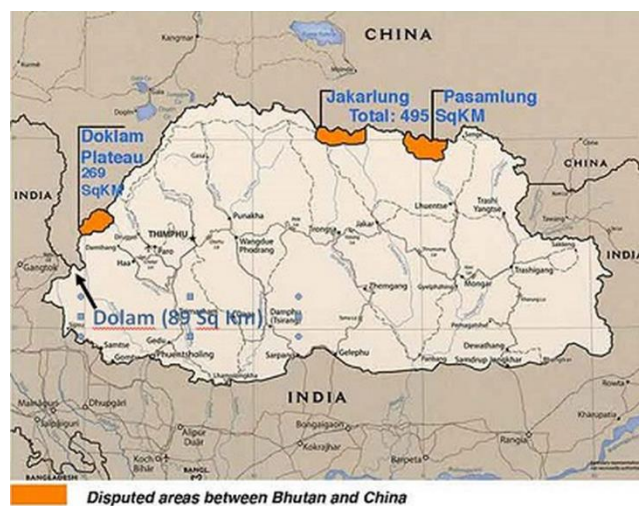
- According to the FDA statement, the efficacy of Paxlovid was primarily supported by the final results of the EPIC-HR clinical trial.
- EPIC-HR was a randomised, double blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial studying paxovid for the treatment of non-hospitalized symptomatic adults with laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- The data presented helped ease safety concerns around a possible rebound in COVID-19 symptoms after a five-day Paxlovid course.

### **Bhutan, China claim progress in boundary expert group talks.**

- Bhutan and China said they had made more progress in implementing a “three -step roadmap” towards resolving their boundary dispute after talks in Thimphu.
- The 12th Expert Group meeting (EGM), that oversees the actual boundary talks was held in the Bhutanese capital just four months after the 11th round of EGM talks were held in Kunming, and stressed on the “importance of increasing the frequency of their meetings.
- However, the meeting didn’t announce any breakthrough in setting a date for the next round or the 25th round of boundary talks, which have not been held since 2016, and were suspended after the military standoff at Doklam, but said they agreed to hold them “as soon as possible at mutually convenient dates.
- China and Bhutan share a 248 miles (about 400 kilometres) long border but do not have diplomatic or economic relations. However, the two nations maintain contact through bilateral visits by their officials.
- The two countries are in dispute over around 295 square miles (about 764 square kilometres) of territory in northern and western Bhutan that comprise Doklam, Sinchulung, Dramana, and Shakhatoe areas.
- Beijing and Thimphu, two Himalayan neighbours, had signed a memorandum of understanding on the roadmap in 2021 “to speed up boundary disputes resolution negotiations”.
- China-Bhutanese boundary negotiations began in 1984 and the two sides have held 24 rounds of talks on the issue besides 12 rounds of meetings at the expert group level.
- It was during the 10th expert group meeting in Kunming City of China, in April 2021 that the two sides agreed on the Three-Step Roadmap that will “build on the 1988 Guiding Principles and help to expedite the ongoing boundary negotiations.”

### **China claims certain territories from Bhutan:**

- In the north - Pasamlung and Jakarlung valleys;
- Both of these places are culturally vital for Bhutan.
- In the west - Doklam, Dramana, and Shakhatoe, Yak Chu and Charithang Chu, and Sinchulungpa and Langmarpo valleys.
- These places are pasture-rich and strategically located in the Bhutan-India-China trijunction, lying close to India’s Siliguri Corridor.
- In 2020, China made new claims on Bhutan’s East in the Sakteng sanctuary.
- Surprisingly, there has been no mention of Eastern Bhutan in the previous rounds of boundary negotiations held between the two countries.
- Hence, addition of Eastern Bhutan in the list of disputed territories has baffled Bhutan.
- This eastern sector of Bhutan has a large Bhutanese population, traditional Dzongs (fortified monastery) and two Bhutanese districts since time immemorial.



### **Why is India keeping an eye on the developments related to the China-Bhutan boundary dispute?**

- India views Chinese presence near Doklam as a major security concern close to the strategic Siliguri corridor.
- China has also staked claim to a wildlife sanctuary in Bhutan near the border with Arunachal.



- This assumes significance as, in December 2022, Indian and Chinese army troops clashed along the LAC in the Tawang Sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **New anti-LGBTQ law in Uganda imposes capital punishment.**

- Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has signed one of the world's harshest anti-LGBTQ laws, including the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality", in defiance of Western condemnations and potential sanctions from aid donors.
- Same-sex relations were already illegal in Uganda, as they are in more than 30 African countries, but the new law further targets lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people.
- It imposes capital punishment for some behaviour including having gay sex when HIV- positive, and stipulates a 20 -years sentence for "promoting" homosexuality.
- U.S. President Joe Biden slammed the draconian law and called for the immediate repeal of the tough new measures. "The enactment of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act is a tragic violation of universal human rights," Mr. Biden said in a statement.



### **UGANDA:**

- **Capital and largest city: Kampala**
- **Currency: Ugandan shilling (UGX)**
- Religion (2014 census)
  - 84.4% Christianity
  - 39.3% Catholicism
  - 32.0% Anglicanism
  - 13.1% Other Christian
  - 13.7% Islam
  - 1.9% Others / None
- President: Yoweri Museveni
- Vice President: Jessica Alupo
- Prime Minister: Robinah Nabbanja
- Independence from the United Kingdom
- Dominion: 9 October 1962
- Republic: 9 October 1963
- Current constitution: 8 October 1995

### **The 350\$ million aid is approved by the Asian Development Bank for Sri Lanka.**

- 350\$ million loan is part of a package of financial assistance anchored by the IMF's Extended Fund Facility for Sri Lanka. The IMF recently extended a nearly \$3 billion bailout to the country.
- In a sigh of relief for the debt-struck island nation, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a \$350 million special loan to Sri Lanka. The loan is a special policy-based monetary assistance. It will provide budget support to Sri Lanka for economic stabilization, said ADB in its statement.
- This financial relief loan is a part of a broader package of financial assistance, announced by the International Monetary Extended Fund Facility for Sri Lanka.
- Sri Lanka is struggling to come out of its worst financial crisis since independence in 1948. It secured a \$2.9 billion bailout from the IMF in March. To receive the sanctioned amount, the country needs to have a debt restructuring framework in place by September.



- Sri Lanka owes around \$7.1 billion to bilateral creditors, with \$3 billion owed to China, \$ 1.16 billion to India and \$2.4 billion to the Paris Club, said ADB.

#### Asian Development Bank:

- Headquarters: Mandaluyong, Philippines
- Founded: 19 December 1966
- Membership: 68 countries
- President: Masatsugu Asakawa

## AWARD AND HONOUR

### Chennai Metro Rail Limited Conferred “Green World Awards 2023” under Carbon Reduction Category.

- The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has won the Green World Awards 2023, hosted in Miami, USA.
- The awards recognize environmental initiatives and their positive impact in order to reinforce healthy environmental practices.
- In its press release, the CMRL stated that the award is a recognition of its sustainable model and environmental initiatives.
- The CMRL won silver under the Carbon Reduction category. The release further stated the Metro rail is contributing towards improving energy efficiency and water management, and ensures a fast, comfortable, and safe traveling experience.



### Russian poet Maria Stepanova won the Leipzig Book Prize 2023.

- The Leipzig Book Prize was awarded to Stepanova for her poetry collection “Girls Without Clothes”, which sensitively addresses the issue of power dynamics that fuel violence and oppression against women.
- Stepanova's novel, "In Memory of Memory", which explores themes of Stalinism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, has earned her a nomination for the Booker Prize in 2021.
- The Leipzig Book Prize has been presented since 1994 for "Progress of Reconciliation" in Europe.
- Stepanova, born in Moscow in 1972, is a Russian-Jewish poet, novelist and journalist who has been an outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin's administration.



### Three Imprisoned Iranian Female Journalists Niloufar Hamed, Elaheh Mohammadi, and Narges Mohammadi Wins United Nations premier prize for press freedom.

- That's correct. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, marked World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2023, by awarding its annual World Press Freedom Prize to three Iranian female journalists who are currently imprisoned in Iran. The three journalists are Niloufar Hamed, Elaheh Mohammadi, and Narges Mohammadi. They were recognized for their work in reporting on human rights abuses in Iran and their commitment to truth and accountability, despite facing significant risks and obstacles.
- Niloufar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi played a crucial role in reporting on the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody, which led to widespread protests in Iran. Narges Mohammadi, the third winner, is a journalist and human rights activist who has been imprisoned multiple times in Iran for her work. She has campaigned for women's rights, children's rights, and against the death penalty in Iran. The recognition of these journalists through the UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize highlights the importance of freedom of the press and the need to protect journalists who face significant risks in reporting on human rights abuses and other issues of public interest.

#### IRAN:

- President: Ebrahim Raisi (since 2021)
- Currency: Iranian rial (IRR)

- Official language: Persian
- Capital city: Tehran

### Rintu Thomas-Sushmit Ghosh's Documentary 'Writing With Fire' Wins Peabody Award in the Documentary category.

- The Indian documentary feature Writing With Fire, which was the first Indian documentary film to score an Oscar nomination in the category, has won the prestigious Peabody Award. The award is given to impactful narratives told in the online, radio and television medium.
- Writing With Fire had been nominated for an Academy Award in 2022 for its unique and rich storytelling that revolved around a group of Dalit women who run a rural newspaper called Khabar Lahariya. The documentary focuses on how despite limited funding and obstacles the women managed to convert the print version of the paper successfully to digital medium. In the course of this transformation, the film also highlights the larger issues of patriarchy and gender violence that the women had to face.



### Kochi Port Receives 'Sagar Shrestha Samman' in TurnAround-Time Category.

- Union Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal has launched the Green Port Guidelines 2023 'Harit Sagar'. It aims to fulfil the overarching vision of achieving the zero carbon emission target.
- The Green Sea Guidelines 2023 envisages ecosystem dynamism in port development, operation and maintenance, aligning with the concept of 'working with nature' and minimising the impact on the biological components of the port ecosystem.
- In addition, major ports were presented with awards for their all time best performance on select operational and financial parameters during FY 2022-23.

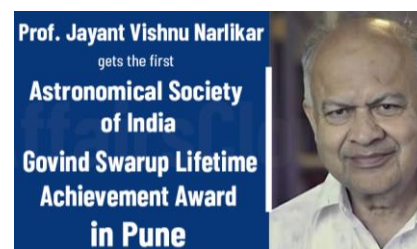
#### Prize:

- Sagar Shrestha Samman: Cochin Port (Performance Shield in Turn Around-Time (Non-Container Port).
- Best Port Award - Paradip Port. (Based on cargo handling, average turnaround time, ship berth output and idle time at berth, operating ratio, pre berthing detention)
- Best Overall Performance Award - Awarded to Deendayal Port, Kandla for highest ever cargo handling of 137.56 MMT.
- Jawaharlal Nehru Port received the award for achieving a major milestone in turnaround time.
- Display Shield at Ship BirthDay Output - Paradip Port, Mormugao Port.
- Pre-Berthing Detention Time - Kamarajar Port.



### Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar receives India's 1st 'Astronomical Society Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award'.

- The first ASI Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award has been conferred on Professor Jayant V. Narlikar, who is also an outstanding astronomer, founder director of IUCAA, Pune and former president of ASI.
- ASI President Prof. Dipankar Banerjee, Personally handed over the award to Narlikar. Pro. Jayant Narlikar has been honoured with this award for the year 2022.
- Prof. Narlikar has devoted his life to the study of the universe, contributing to various aspects of astrophysics, including the Narlikar-Hoyle theory. Professor Narlikar was among the first to start cosmology research in India.
- Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award:





- In the year 2022, the Astronomical Society of India (ASI) instituted the Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award to eminent Indian astronomers for their contributions to the field of astronomy and astrophysics in India during their careers.
- The award is named in honour of Prof. Govind Swarup (1929-2020). Prof. Swarup is widely regarded as the founder of Indian radio astronomy. He envisioned the construction of the Ooty Radio Telescope (ORT) and the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT).
- He was a visionary and one of the strongest early proponents of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA). He was the founder director of the National Center for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), Pune. Professor V.G. Bhide founded the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

### **The film 'Bhagwan Bharose' received the Best Film Award at the UK Asian Film Festival.**

- Shiladitya Bora's directorial debut Bhagwan Bharose has won the Best Film award at the 25th UK Asian Film Festival. Bhagwan Bharose was the closing film of the 25th UK Asian Film Festival and the screening marked the world premiere of the film. The story follows two impressionable kids (Satendra Soni and Sparsh Suman) who struggle with their understanding of God and religion in 90s Jharkhand.
- It is written by Sudhakar Neelmani and Mohit Chauhan. Shiladitya Bora shot his first film in Deogarh, Jharkhand. The film is co-produced by Sri Lankan filmmaker Prasanna Vithanage along with Shiladitya's Platoon One Films.
- UK Asian Film Festival: In the year 1998-99 Dr. Pushpinder Chowdhary and Mrs. Harvinder Nath had established this festival. The award recognizes films that make an impact on society, especially those that deal with complex, challenging issues.
- The documentary 'Gauri' directed by Kavita Lankesh has received the 'Best Long Documentary Award' at the South Asian Film Festival of Montreal 2023. The film is about journalist and activist Gauri Lankesh who was murdered outside her home on 5 September 2017.
- The documentary film "Gauri" has been commissioned by Free Press Unlimited, Amsterdam. The Free Press Unlimited mission stems from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which believes that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- The Kabir Center for Arts and Culture in Montreal is organising the 13th South Asian Film Festival of India (SAFFM) in 2024. Its main objective is to promote cultural unity and understanding among the diverse South Asian community.



### **Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran receives France's highest civilian award.**

- Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran has been conferred with the 'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur', France's highest civilian award, for his contribution to strengthening business ties between India and France.
- The French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Catherine Colonna, presented the award to Chandrasekaran on behalf of the French President.
- Earlier this year, Tata Group-owned Air India signed a multi-billion dollar deal with Airbus to buy 250 aircraft from Airbus, including 210 A320neo aircraft and 40 A350 aircraft.
- In December last year, Tata Technologies inaugurated its innovation centre in Toulouse, France to meet the new age product engineering and digital requirements of the global aerospace and defence sector.
- Chandrasekaran was appointed chairman of Tata Sons in 2017, taking over from Cyrus Mistry, and was given a second term in the role for five years in February 2022. He launched the group's super app - Tata New last year.
- Order of the Legion of Honor:



- France's highest civilian award is the National Order of the Legion of Honour. It was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 and is awarded to French citizens and foreigners for their outstanding service to France in the fields of military, civil and cultural affairs.
- Earlier this year, Kiran Nadar, philanthropist and art collector was awarded France's highest honour "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" by French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain.

### PM Modi Conferred With Highest Civilian Honours By Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.

- PM Modi was conferred with the island nations' highest civilian awards during his recent visit to Papua New Guinea to attend the third India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit.
- PM Modi was conferred with the "The Companion of the Order of Fiji" by his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Rabuka for his global leadership, in a rare honour for a non-Fijian.
- Papua New Guinea conferred its highest civilian order, "Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu (GCL)", on PM Modi for championing the cause of unity of Pacific Island countries and spearheading the cause of Global South.



### Tresind Studio wins two stars at the Michelin Dubai 2023 awards.

[14 restaurants awarded Michelin stars]

- India shone bright at the 2023 Michelin Awards for Dubai, held at the glittering new Royal Atlantis hotel, with Tresind Studio winning two stars this year.
- The prestigious guide, seen as the Oscars of the food industry, was launched in France in the early 1900s and is now in 41 destinations, with Dubai unveiled last year. A total of 14 restaurants won stars this year, with 11 receiving one star.
- Besides Tresind, Ristorante – Niko Romito and Stay by Yannick Alléno got two stars each, retaining their stars from last year.
- Omkar Walve of Avatā-ra, which focuses on vegetarian fine dining and describes its cuisine as 'soulful Indian', won the Young Chef Award, handed to chefs who stand out for their strong culinary personality.
- Avatāra also won its first Michelin star, along with Dinner by Heston Blumenthal and Moonrise, which were added to the list this year.
- The event also recognised three restaurants committed to more sustainable gastronomy, with a green star, which was awarded to Lowe, Boca and Teible.
- Stars tend to have a significant impact on success: a single star denotes excellence, while three stars, the highest accolade, indicate restaurants that are extraordinary, according to the guide.
- One Michelin Star is awarded to restaurants for "high-quality cooking that is worth a stop"; two is for "excellent cooking that is worth a detour"; and three for "exceptional cuisine that is worth a special journey".



#### LIST:

- Two stars
  - Il Ristorante (retained)
  - STAY by Yannick Alléno (retained)
  - Trèsind Studio
- One star (retained)
  - 11 Woodfire
  - Al Muntaha

- Armani Ristorante
- Hakkasan
- Höseki
- Ossiano
- Tasca by Jose Avillez
- Torno Subito
- One star (new):
  - Avatara
  - Dinner by Heston Blumenthal
  - Moonrise

## Georgi Gospodinov Wins International Booker Prize 2023 For Dark Comic Memory Novel 'Time Shelter'.

- Bulgarian author Georgi Gospodinov and translator Angela Rodel won the International Booker Prize for "Time Shelter". £50,000 (USD 62,000) in prize money is split between the author and the translator.
- "Time Shelter" imagines a clinic that recreates the past, with each floor reproducing a different decade. Aimed at helping people with dementia unlock their memories, it soon becomes a magnet for those eager to escape the modern world.
- Gospodinov, 55, said he began writing his book about the "weaponization of nostalgia" in 2016, the year of Donald Trump's election and the UK's Brexit referendum.
- Gospodinov is one of Bulgaria's most translated authors.
- "Time Shelter" has also won Italy's Strega European Prize for Literature in Italian translation.



### The International Booker Prize:

- It was started in 2005 as the Man Booker International Prize.
- Every year in the UK or given for a work of fiction published in Ireland translated into English.
- Last year's (2022) winners were Indian author Gitanjali and American translator Daisy Rockwell for "Tomb of the Sand".
- Its 1st winner, Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, was awarded on 27 June 2005.

## Justine Triet becomes only the third woman to win Palme d'Or at Cannes.

- French director Justine Triet became the third female director to win the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or on Saturday, beating out 20 other films in competition for the top prize.
- Julia Ducournau, who won for Titane in 2021, and Jane Campion, who won for The Piano in 1993, are the only other women to have won the Palme D' or.
- Triet, who had previously been nominated for "Sibyl" in 2019, won the prize over veteran directors like Hirokazu Kore-eda, Ken Loach and Wim Wenders, all of whom have at least one Palme d'Or under their belts.
- She joins New Zealand's Jane Campion and France's Julia Ducournau as only the third woman to have won the competition that this year included a record seven female directors.
- The Grand Prix, the second-highest prize after the Palme d'Or, went to British director Jonathan Glazer's "Zone of Interest," about a family living next to Auschwitz.
- The award for best female actor went to Merve Dizdar, who plays a teacher in an isolated village in Turkey in Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan's "About Dry Grasses."
- Best actor went to Japan's renowned Koji Yakusho, who plays a toilet cleaner in Tokyo who is content to just read books and listen to music in German director Wim Wenders' "Perfect Days."





- French-Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung took home best director for “The Pot-au-Feu,” a food-obsessed French film starring Juliette Binoche and Benoit Magimel as a couple.
- French filmmaker Justine Triet called out President Emmanuel Macron during her acceptance speech for the prestigious Palme d’Or, which is awarded to the best film at Cannes.
- The 44-year-old, who won the prize for her courtroom drama Anatomy of a fall, starring Sandra Huller as a writer trying to prove her innocence in her husband’s death, is only the third female director to receive the honour.
- In a somewhat controversial speech, Triet protested against the French government’s austerity programmes, which have included major cuts to cultural programmes and pension reforms.

### Three Indian UNpeacekeepers will be posthumously honored with the 'Dag Hammarskjold Medal' by the United Nations.

- Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, on behalf of Head Constables Shishupal Singh (Sikar, Rajasthan) and Sawla Ram Vishnoi (Barmer, Rajasthan) and Under Secretary Atul Khare on behalf of Shaber Tahir Ali, working in a civilian capacity, received the Hammarskjold Medal.
- The Dag Hammarskjold Medal, established under Resolution 1121 unanimously passed by the United Nations Security Council in July 1997, is the highest honor awarded to United Nations peacekeepers.
- The medal is named after Dag Hammarskjold, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is awarded posthumously as a tribute to members of peacekeeping missions.
- Along with this, the 'Military Gender Advocate of the Year' award was also given. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that there are more than 87,000 UN peacekeepers working around the world.
- Captain Cecilia Erzuah, a Ghanaian peacekeeper who was deployed in the UN mission in Abyei, the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA), won the 2022 Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.



#### Indian peacekeeper:

- Border Security Force head Constables Shishupal Singh and Sawla Ram Vishnoi lost their lives last year in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Shaber Tahir Ali, who was serving in a civilian capacity with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), had lost his life.
- Since the inception of UN peacekeeping operations in the 1950s, India has been one of the countries contributing to peacekeeping operations.
- India has deployed more than 2,75,000 troops, including a large number of women peacekeepers, in more than 51 UN peacekeeping missions. Additionally, India was the first nation to send an all women contingent to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Liberia in 2007.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Rajnish Karnatak has been appointed as managing director and executive director (CEO) of Bank of India in place of Atanu Kumar Das.

- Rajnish Karnatak is the Union Bank of India's Executive Director at present.
- He would serve as MD & CEO of Bank of India for a term of three years beginning on the day of assumption of office or until further instructions.
- Atanu Kumar Das, whose three-year term ended in January of this year, is replaced by Rajnish Karnatak.

Bank of India named  
Rajneesh Karnatak as  
MD & CEO



## **The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved Debadatta Chand of Odisha as MD and CEO of Bank of Baroda.**

- His appointment is for a period of three years with effect from the date of assumption of office on or after July 1, 2023 or until further orders, whichever is earlier, said a government release.
- Sanjiv Chadha, the incumbent MD and CEO of BoB, is set to retire on June 30, 2023.



## **Vodafone Appointed Finance Chief Margherita Della Valle” as its CEO; first female to hold that position.**

- Della Valle, who has served as CFO since 2018, took over from former CEO Nick Read on an interim basis in December.
- She'll continue in her role as CFO until a replacement is found, Newbury, England-based Vodafone.



## **Santiago Peña of the right-wing Colorado party wins Paraguay's presidential election.**

- Santiago Peña of the right-wing Colorado party has won the new presidential election in Paraguay. He defeated centre-left challenger Efraín Alegre. Economist and former Finance Minister Santiago Peña, won the election with over 42 percent of the vote.
- The main issues for voters in this election were endemic corruption, the growing crime problem and poverty.
- Santiago Peña, an economist and former finance minister, campaigned on a platform of economic growth and job creation. He promised to reduce taxes to encourage foreign investment and encourage economic activity in Paraguay.
- Paraguay ranks 137th out of 180 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.
- Paraguay's GDP is expected to grow by 4.8 percent in 2023 according to the central bank and 4.5 percent according to the IMF - one of the highest rates in Latin America.



## **AK Mohanty becomes the new chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.**

- Ajit Kumar Mohanty, who is a renowned physicist and also serves as the director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC), has been selected as the new chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy. Mohanty replaced KN Vyas.
- Ajit Kumar Mohanty's tenure will be till 10 October 2025.
- Mohanty was appointed as BARC director in March 2019.
- Bhabha Atomic Research Center is India's premier nuclear research facility located at Trombay, Mumbai. It was founded in 1954 by Dr. Homi J. Bhabha, a renowned physicist. It also operates several nuclear facilities including the Dhruva reactor, the CIRUS reactor and the Poornima-2 reactor.



## **Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan becomes 17th Commander-in-Chief.**

- Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan took over as the 17th Commander-in-Chief of the strategically important Andaman and Nicobar Command, India's only tri-services command. He has succeeded Lt Gen Ajay Singh.
- The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the only tri services command in India, is serving as a model for the ambitious theatrisation plan that aims to bring greater synergy between the Army, Navy and Air Force.

### **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC):**

- It is India's first and only tri-service theater command, established in the year 2001. It was built to protect India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Malacca Straits. The Government of India has established a full-fledged naval base INS Kohassa in North Andaman Island.



- It conducts bi-annual Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) with the navies of Thailand and Indonesia, the annual SIMBEX maritime exercise with Singapore and the bi-annual MILAN multilateral naval exercise.

### Mark Nicholas named next president of MCC.

- Ex-Hampshire captain and noted broadcaster Mark Nicholas has been named the next president of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).
- The 65 year old, who was elected as a member of MCC in 1981, will serve a 12- month term, taking up the post on October 1 from Stephen Fry.



### The coronation of King Charles III, the 40th monarch of Britain.

- King Charles III as the 40th monarch of the United Kingdom, who has been waiting for more than 70 years, will have a grand coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey on May 6, 2023. During this ceremony, the King will be crowned alongside Queen Camilla.
- Charles will be crowned in a solemn religious ceremony conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. The ceremony has been named "Operation Golden Orb". The king will be crowned with a solid gold, 17th-century St. Edward's crown.
- Charles's coronation took place 70 years after the coronation of his mother, then 25, who had been enthroned in a grand ceremony on June 2, 1953. A 14-year-old royal chapel named Samuel Strachan will welcome the king.
- The King Charles III coronation event will mark his formal coronation after ascending to the throne in September following the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who held the record for being Britain's longest-reigning monarch.
- King Charles III is, outside Britain, also the monarch of 14 other Commonwealth countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.



### Accenture appoints Ajay Vij as India Managing Director.

- Accenture appointed Ajay Vij as Country Managing Director, a newly created role, and Sandeep Dutta as the lead of its India Market Unit.
- Rekha M Menon, Senior Managing Director and Chairperson for Accenture in India will retire on June 30.
- Accenture CEO: Julie Sweet (Since 1st Sept 2019)
- Established and Founded by : 1989, Hamilton, Bermuda



### Neera Tandon appointed as domestic policy advisor to the US President.

- US President Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American public policy expert Neera Tandon as his domestic policy advisor to help formulate and implement the domestic policy agenda.
- Tandon, 52, will replace Susan Rice as Biden's domestic policy adviser. Tandon will be the first Asian American in history to lead any of the White House's three major policy councils.



### Karnataka DGP Praveen Sood will be the next CBI director.

- Karnataka Director General and Inspector General of Police Praveen Sood will be the next CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) director, his name has been recommended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, and Leader of the Opposition (Congress) in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, for a two-year term.
- The fixed tenure of two years of Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, a 1985 batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, ends on May 25. Another senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who was in the running for the post was Madhya Pradesh DGP Sudhir Saxena.





- Shri Sood is a 1986 batch IPS officer of Karnataka cadre. He was appointed as the DGP of the state three years ago. He hails from Himachal Pradesh and is an alumnus of IIT-Delhi. He was to retire in May 2024 but will now get a fixed tenure of two years and will remain in office till at least May 2025.

### Linda Yacarino appointed as new CEO of Twitter.

- Mr Musk announced that he was hiring Linda Yacarino as the new CEO of San Francisco-based Twitter, now called X Corp.
- Linda will take over Twitter in the coming weeks. Musk said Linda would focus primarily on business operations while he himself would focus on product design and new technology.
- Ms. Yacarino, 60, has worked as an advertising executive for decades. She oversaw the integration of advertising sales platforms at NBCUniversal in 2011. Prior to that, she held a variety of roles at Turner Broadcasting Systems Inc. from 1996 to 2011, including executive vice president and chief operating officer.
- Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams and launched in July of that year. Its former parent company, Twitter, Inc. was based in San Francisco, California. The company's first CEO was Evan Williams.
- On October 27, 2022, business magnate Elon Musk acquired Twitter for US\$44 billion, gaining control of the platform.
- Puma New MD - Karthik Balagopalan
  - Sportswear retailer Puma has appointed Karthik Balagopalan as the new Managing Director of Puma India. He previously served as Global Director Retail and ECommerce in the company. He will succeed Abhishek Ganguly, who worked for PUMA's India business for 17 years and has been the Managing Director of PUMA India since 2014.
  - Puma was founded in 1948 by Rudolf Dassler in Herzogenaurach, Germany. Rudolf was the brother of Adolf Dassler, the founder of Adidas.



### Bollywood Versatile Actor Ayushmann Khurrana Titled Ambassador for Special Olympics, to Support Indian Athletes at Berlin.

- Ayushmann Khurrana has been involved as an Ambassador of the Indian Sports Team which will participate in the June 2023 Special Olympics.
- This global event is for people having intellectual disabilities.
- Germany will be hosting this year's games.
- For the first time, Germany will throw the famous event in the coming month of June 2023. Moreover, Ayushmann Khurrana, an all-rounder actor, widely known for his socially uplifting movies, assumed the position of UNICEF's National Ambassador in February 2023.
- The Special Olympics will be the 16th edition of the championship to be held in Berlin, Germany. It is an eight-day event which is scheduled to begin on June 17 and will conclude on June 25, 2023.

Ayushmann Khurrana Joins Indian Team as Ambassador for Special Olympics Journey to Berlin



• Ayushmann Khurrana as Special Olympics Ambassador, Journey to Berlin

#### Ayushmann Khurrana's previous appointment as a brand ambassador:

- Wakefit: Brand Ambassador
- UNICEF India: National Ambassador of Child Rights
- CoinDCX: Ambassador for 'Future Yahi Hai' Campaign
- UNICEF: Ambassador for Children's Rights Campaign
- Bajaj Allianz Life: Brand Ambassador

## US Senate confirms Indian-American Geeta Rao Gupta to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

- Indian American Geeta Rao Gupta was confirmed by the US Senate by 51 to 47 votes.
- Gupta said Women are frequently at risk of violence and experience daily fear for their safety, which restricts their mobility.
- Gupta believes that women worldwide face numerous inequalities and indignities that prevent them from participating fully in the economy.
- Geeta Rao Gupta, who was born in Mumbai, India in 1956, is a prominent figure in matters of gender, women's concerns, and HIV/AIDS.
- She has held the position of executive director at the 3D Program for Girls and Women, as well as being a senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation since 2017.
- Geeta Rao Gupta is widely recognized for her expertise on issues related to AIDS prevention and the vulnerability of women to HIV.



## Manoj Soni takes charge as Chairman of UPSC.

- Manoj Soni, a former Vice-Chancellor of two universities in Gujarat, sworn in as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- Mr. Soni had already been serving as the Chairman Incharge since April 2022. He had joined the UPSC as a member in June 2017.
- He is a monk of the Anoopam mission, a branch of the Swaminarayan movement.
- Mr. Soni served as the Vice--Chancellor of M.S. University of Baroda from April 2005 to April 2008.
- In 2009, he was appointed Vice--Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Gujarat for two terms till 2015.



### UPSC:

- Formed: 1 October 1926 (96 years ago)
- Headquarters: Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi
- Ministry responsible: Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
- Commission executive: Dr. Manoj Soni, (Chairman)

## Congress leader Siddaramaiah took charge as the new Chief Minister of Karnataka.

- Congress leader Siddaramaiah Karnataka's new CM, DK Shivakumar is deputy CM
- The newly appointed Karnataka Chief Minister took oath on May 20.
- He is a nine-term MLA who won the Varuna constituency by a margin of 46,163 votes in recent elections.
- Siddaramaiah represented the Chamundeshwari constituency in Mysuru in the Karnataka assembly five times - in 1983 as an Independent, in 1985 on a Janata Party ticket, in 1994 and 2004 for the Janata Dal, and in 2006 for the Congress by a lean margin of 257 votes.
- Siddaramaiah hails from the Kuruba community, the third largest caste in Karnataka, and has previously spearheaded the AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits) conventions.
- A former state unit chief of the JD(S), he was sacked from the party and eventually joined the Congress with his followers in 2006.
- Shivakumar to be Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka.
- Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar, who was insistent on securing the top job, will be the Deputy Chief Minister.



- In the recently held elections to the 224-member Karnataka Assembly, the Congress won 135 seats with a vote share of 42.88 per cent. There are 55 more than in 2018.
- The closest the Congress came to this score was in 1999, when it won 132 seats and a vote share of 40.84 per cent.
- Siddaramaiah, 75, joined the Congress party in 2006 after walking out of the JD(S). He made his debut in the Legislative Assembly in 1983. Siddaramaiah was elected from Chamundeshwari on a Lok Dal party ticket. He was the chairman of the KPCC campaign committee for the elections in 2008. Siddaramaiah was born on 12 August 1948 in Siddaramanahundi, a village in Mysore district.

### **Meghwal replaced Kiren Rijiju as Law Minister.**

- The Central government removed Kiren Rijiju as Law Minister and appointed Arjun Ram Meghwal as his replacement.
- Mr. Meghwal, a Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, has been made MoS with independent charge of the Law and Justice Ministry.
- A Rashtrapati Bhavan communique announced the changes, including MoS for Law S.P. Singh Baghel was moved in the same rank to the Health Ministry.
- The changes come at a time when there is a perception that the judiciary and the Centre are on a collision course.
- Rijiju took over as the Minister of Law and Justice on July 8, 2021. Prior to this, he served as the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs and Sports from May 2019 to July 2021. Union Minister Jitendra Singh was holding the charge of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The government versus judiciary clash escalated when Mr Rijiju said last year that the collegium system was "alien" to the Constitution and had no public support.
- Rijiju had grabbed headlines during his tenure as law minister for repeatedly criticising the collegium system for judicial appointments. This is the first time in recent history that the law minister is not of cabinet rank.



### **Dr K Govindaraj becomes the first Indian to be elected as the President of the International Basketball Federation, Asia.**

- Dr. Govindaraj was elected as the President of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), Asia. He is also the President of the Basketball Federation of India and the President of the Karnataka Olympic Association.
- Govindaraj was unanimously named as the President of FIBA Asia. This is the first time that an Indian has been named as the President of FIBA Asia.
- Govindaraj succeeds Sheikh Saud Ali Al Thani of Qatar, who was serving his fourth five-year term as head of FIBA Asia in 2002. In 1960, Ambrosia Padilla of the Philippines became the first FIBA Asia President.



#### **International Basketball Federation (FIBA):**

- The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) is the governing body for the sport of basketball around the world, which was established on 18 June 1932 in Switzerland. Apart from Asia, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has four other regions, namely Africa, the Americas, Europe and Oceania.
- FIBA sets the rules and regulations of the game, promotes the development of basketball globally, and works towards the advancement and promotion of the game at all levels. Additionally, FIBA is responsible for accrediting and organising international basketball referees and coaches.

#### **India Taekwondo Chief - Namdev Shirgaonkar:**

- Namdev Shirgaonkar from Maharashtra was elected unopposed as the President of the Executive Committee of India Taekwondo. Shirgaonkar, who holds a black belt in Taekwondo, is also the general secretary of the Maharashtra Olympic Association (MOA). Twenty-five affiliated state associations participated in the election. All the office bearers were elected unopposed.

#### **India Taekwondo:**



- In the year 1999, Master A.K. Badgujar formed a committee of five people under which the National Taekwondo Federation (NTF), was established. Under this, the Federation organised its first National Championship in 2000 in which only 7 states participated. In 2009 the National Taekwondo Federation India was registered by the Government of India under the Act of 1860. There are sixteen state bodies of the federation through the efforts of the board members.

#### **Swimming Federation of India President – RN Jayaprakash:**

- The Swimming Federation of India has unanimously re-elected RN Jayaprakash as the President of the Swimming Federation of India (SFI) during its Annual General Meeting.
- He was elected as the President of the Swimming Federation of India for the second consecutive term. The association is a non-profit association registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. The association holds elections for its office bearers every four year
- s. Its headquarters is in Ahmedabad.

#### **Sony Sports Network appoints Sania Mirza as tennis ambassador.**

- Sports broadcaster Sony Sports Network announced the appointment of Sania Mirza as the tennis ambassador for Sony Sports Network. According to the company, Mirza will be seen as an expert panellist on the network.
- Arjuna Awardees, Padma Shri, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awardees and Padma Bhushan recipients will be seen on Sony Sports Network starting from Roland-Garros on 28th May 2023.
- Sony Sports Network has launched a campaign called 'Home of Tennis'. As part of the campaign, Mirza will represent Sony Sports Network and the three Grand Slams - the Australian Open, Roland Garros and the US Open - as Sony Sports Network's home of tennis.
- Sony Sports Network is the first broadcaster to telecast the Grand Slam live in multiple regional languages.
- Mirza has won six Grand Slam titles at the Australian Open (2), US Open (2), Roland Garros (1) and Wimbledon (1), including three women's doubles titles and three mixed doubles titles.



#### **TVS Supply Chain's Dinesh assumes office as CII President.**

- TVS Supply Chain Solutions Executive Vice-Chairman R. Dinesh assumed office as the President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for 2023--24; Sanjiv Puri of ITC Limited has assumed the position of president-designate, and Rajiv Memani has been appointed as the vice president.
- Mr. Dinesh is a fourth generation TVS family member. He has been engaged with the CII for many years at the State, regional and national levels. He succeeds Bajaj Finserv Ltd. CMD Sanjiv Bajaj, CII said in a statement.
- Dinesh, a fourth generation of the TVS group assumed office and took over from Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Ltd. He has been associated with the CII for many years, serving at the state, regional, and national levels.
- In 1995, he founded TVS Supply Chain Solutions, formerly known as TVS Logistics, and under his leadership, the company has experienced remarkable growth, becoming a billion-dollar enterprise. Today, it operates across continents, serving customers in over 50 countries.
- A CII statement said Dinesh has won many awards including 'Icon of the Year' from ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu for the year 2018, Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 'Services' category by Ernst & Young in 2017. He is also the recipient of TieCON's "Next Gen Entrepreneur of the Year 2014" award and 'Emerging Entrepreneur' award by CII in 2010.



## Praveen Sood, former Karnataka Director--General of Police (DGP), takes over as CBI Director replacing outgoing director, Subodh Kumar Jaiswal.

- Sood's appointment was announced in an order issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions on May 14, a day after the Congress emerged the winner in the Karnataka Assembly elections.
- The 1986-batch Indian Police Service officer of the Karnataka cadre has held various important positions during his tenure of about 37 years.
- He was the Superintendent of Police of Ballari and Raichur, following which he became Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Bengaluru City, and the Police Commissioner of Mysuru and Bengaluru. He has also worked as an adviser to the Government of Mauritius.
- Sood's name was cleared in a meeting of a high-powered committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.



## New Chief Justices appointed to Madras, Bombay High Courts.

- Justice Sanjay V. Gangapurwala, who is officiating as the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Madras High Court.
- While Justice Ramesh Dhanuka has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, the Law Ministry notified. Justice Dhanuka will have the shortest tenure as head of the Bombay High Court as he is set to retire on May 30.
- Both the names were part of a batch of names that were recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium on April 19 for elevation as Chief Justices of High Courts.

## Recep Tayyip Erdogan returns to the helm in Turkey after winning the run-off.

- Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won re-election, extending his increasingly authoritarian rule into a 3rd decade in a country reeling from high inflation and the aftermath of a devastating earthquake.
- With nearly 99% of ballot boxes opened, unofficial results from competing news agencies showed Mr. Erdogan with 52% of the vote, compared with 48% for his challenger, Kemal Kilicdaroglu.
- Turkey's Erdogan declares victory after a historic run-off election poses the toughest challenge of his two-decade rule.



### Turkey:

- Capital: Ankara
- Currency: Turkish lira
- President: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- Vice President: Fuat Oktay

## President Elect Bola Tinubu vows to unite and secure Nigeria.

- Nigeria's new President Bola Tinubu, sworn in on; has promised to unite Africa's most populous nation and tackle insecurity as "top priority".
- The 71 year old succeeds former Army General Muhammadu Buhari of the same party, who stepped down after two terms in office, leaving a country facing a sea of economic troubles and security challenges.
- Kashim Shettima was sworn in as Vice President of Nigeria's



### Nigeria:

- Capital: Abuja
- President: Bola Tinubu
- Vice President: Kashim Shettima

- Senate President: Ahmed Lawan
- House Speaker: Femi Gbajabiamila
- Chief Justice” Olukayode Ariwoola

### **Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), has been re-elected as the External Auditor of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a four year term from 2024 to 2027.**

- The CAG is already holding this position in the WHO since 2019 for a four- year term from 2019 to 2023.
- The re-election was held on Monday in the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, where the CAG of India was re--elected with an overwhelming majority (114 out of 156 votes) in the first round of voting itself. The CAG is a member of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors.
- Besides WHO, the CAG is currently the external auditor of the Food and Agriculture Organization (2020-2025), the International Atomic Energy Agency (2022-2027) and the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (2021-2023).
- CAG is a Member of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors. He is also a member of the Governing Boards of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and ASOSAI.



### **Srivastava sworn in as Central Vigilance Commissioner.**

- Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava sworn in as the Central Vigilance Commissioner by President Droupadi Murmu, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.
- Srivastava was working as the acting Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) since December last year after completion of Suresh N Patel’s tenure as the chief of the probity watchdog.
- The Central Vigilance Commission is headed by a CVC and can have a maximum of 2 vigilance commissioners. There is a vacancy of a vigilance commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission. Former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Arvinda Kumar is the lone vigilance commissioner.
- Srivastava is a 1988-batch (retired) Indian Administrative Service officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre. He superannuated as secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat on January 31 last year.
- The tenure of a CVC and the vigilance commissioner is of 4 years or till the incumbent attains the age of 65 years.



### **Realme ropes in Shah Rukh Khan as its brand ambassador in India.**

- Smartphone brand Realme has appointed Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan as its brand ambassador. This announcement has been made ahead of the launch of Realme 11 Pro 5G series in the country. The brand said that the first product that Khan will endorse is the Realme 11 Pro 5G series.
- Realme of BBK Electronics is a consumer electronics manufacturer based in Shenzhen, China. It was founded on May 4, 2018 by Li Bingzhong, a former vice president of Oppo. Originally starting off as a sub-brand of Oppo, Realme eventually branched out as a brand of its own.





**Dayananda is the new Police Commissioner of Bengaluru.**

- The Karnataka government posted B. Dayananda as the Bengaluru Police Commissioner. He was previously heading the State Intelligence Bureau. He replaced C.H. Pratap Reddy who has been transferred and posted as the DGP, Internal Security Division. K.V. Sharath Chandra, ADGP, CID, has been transferred and posted as ADGP, Intelligence, in place of Dayananda.
- B Dayananda, a 1994 batch officer, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and hails from Ranebennur in Haveri district. He previously served as the Joint Commissioner of Police, responsible for Crime and Traffic in Bengaluru City.
- The government has promoted MA Saleem, who held the position of Special Commissioner (Traffic) in Bengaluru City, to the post of Director General of Police (DGP), overseeing the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Units, and Economic Offences in Bengaluru.

**OBITUARY****Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, died at the age of 89.**

- He was born on April 14, 1934 in Durban to Manilal Gandhi and Sushila Mashruwala.
- Arun Gandhi is an Indian-American activist, speaker and author, known for his work in promoting nonviolence and social justice. He is the fifth grandson of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.
- Arun Gandhi spent his early years in South Africa, where he experienced racial discrimination and apartheid firsthand. In 1946, at age 12, he moved to India to live with his grandfather, who became his mentor and taught him the principles of nonviolence and satyagraha (the power of truth).
- In 1991, he started the MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. In 2008 the institute was transferred to the University of Rochester, New York.
- Arun started the Gandhi Legacy Tour of India in 1997, the Gandhi Lifescapes Tour of India in 2012 and the Gandhi Satyagraha Tour of South Africa. Arun founded the Gandhi Worldwide Education Institute in 2008, which is headquartered in Chicago.
- Arun Gandhi is the author of several books, including A Patch of White, Legacy of Love: My Education in the Path of Nonviolence, The Forgotten Woman: The Untold Story of Kastoor and The Gift of Anger: And Other Lessons from My Grandfather Mahatma Gandhi.
- He has received several awards for his work, including the Peace Abbey Courage of Conscience Award and the Light of Truth Award from the Dalai Lama.

**Mridangam virtuoso Karaikudi Mani takes the final bow.**

- Karaikudi R. Mani, who dominated the Carnatic music world for more than half a century as a mridangam player and popularized the south Indian percussion instruments across the globe through his troupe Sruthilaya, died, aged 77, in Chennai.
- Mr. Mani and his troupe had collaborated with American singer Paul Simon and one could listen to his konnakol in the album Dazzling Blue.
- Mr. Mani had trained scores of students, played for yesteryear dozens of Carnatic music, including M.S. Subbulakshmi, D.K. Pattammal, M.L. Vasanthakumari, Madurai Somu, T.M. Thiagarajan, D.K. Jayaraman and Lalgudi Jayaraman, as well as present day stars including Sanjay Subramanian, T.M. Krishna and Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna.

**America's 'Godfather of Poker' Doyle Brunson passed away at the age of 89.**

- Doyle Brunson, known as the 'Godfather of Poker', died on 14 May 2023 at the age of 89 in Las Vegas (USA). Doyle won 10 World Series of WSOP poker tournaments in his career. He is second only to Phil Hellmuth's 16 wins for most wins.

- In addition, he also won the World Championships in 1976 and 1977 and was inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame in 1988. Mr. Brunson turned to professional poker after a knee injury ended his college basketball career.
- He was the first American to win \$1m (£800,000) in poker tournaments and amassed over \$6m (£4.8m) in live tournament earnings. The first book, written in 1979, is considered one of the first books to teach poker strategy and has had a lasting impact on the game.

### Basketballer Kiran Ajitpal passes away

- Former national basketball player Kiran Ajitpal Singh passed away on Saturday, following a brief illness. Wife of former hockey captain Ajitpal Singh, Kiran was 69. She is survived by her husband and two sons.
- Hockey legend Ajit Pal Singh has suffered a family tragedy after his wife and national level former basketball player Kiran Ajit Pal Singh died after a brief illness.
- Ajit Pal Singh, a Padma Shri awardee, guided the team to the World Cup title at Kuala Lumpur in 1975.
- Ajit Pal Singh, who played as a halfback, also won two Olympic bronze medals (1968 Mexico City and 1972 Munich) and two Asian Games silver.



### Versatile actor Sarath Babu takes last bow.

- Veteran actor Sarath Babu, who was last seen in Pawan Kalyan's Vakeel Saab, passed away at a private hospital in Hyderabad.
- Sarath Babu (73) was undergoing treatment for multi-organ failure and was on a ventilator.
- Sarath Babu was born in Amadalavalasa, Andhra Pradesh in 1951 and his birth name was Satyanarayana Dixit. He changed his name to Sarath Babu after stepping into the film industry in 1973.
- Sarath Babu made his acting debut with his first Telugu movie called Rama Rajyam. Subsequently, after a span of four years, in 1977, he marked his entry into Tamil cinema with Pattina Pravesam, a film directed by K Balachander.
- Sarath Babu gained popularity after his Tamil film 'Nizhal Nijamagiradhu' in which legend Kamal Haasan was his co-actor.
- His ubiquitous presence in Tamil, Telugu and even some Kannada and Malayalam films, made him a household name in the 1970s.



### S.P. Hinduja, Chairman of the Hinduja Group, passes away at age of 87 in London.

- Srichand Parmanand Hinduja (87), the eldest of the four Hinduja brothers and Chairman of Hinduja Group, died in London on Wednesday. He was unwell for some time.
- The Hinduja family patriarch and his brothers, Gopichand and Prakash, were accused of receiving nearly SEK 81 million in illegal commissions to help Swedish gunmaker AB Bofors secure an Indian government contract.
- The Hinduja empire was started by Parmanand Deepchand Hinduja, who traded goods in the Sindh region of India (now Pakistan) before moving to Iran in 1919. In 1964, S.P. Hinduja distributed Raj Kapoor Starrer 'Sangam' through the Middle-East markets which helped him earn his first million dollars.
- The ₹1,437 crore deal for the supply of 400 units of 155 mm Howitzer guns for the Army was entered into on March 24, 1986. Swedish Radio later claimed that the company had paid bribes to Indian politicians and defence personnel.
- The CBI registered a case against Martin Arbd, the then president of AB Bofors, alleged middleman Win Chann, and the Hinduja brothers. They were exonerated in 2005 due to a lack of evidence.



## FESTIVAL

### The 1st Sinthan Snow Festival 2023 Organised in Jammu & Kashmir.

- The Sinthan Snow Festival-2023 is a two-day event that will be held on April 29th and 30th, 2023 at Sinthan Maidan in Kishtwar. The festival is being organized by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and the Kishtwar Tourism Development Authority, in collaboration with the District Administration Kishtwar, the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages (JKAACL), and the Army.
- The festival will feature a variety of activities and events, including snow sports like skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing, as well as cultural programs showcasing the art, music, and dance of the region. There will also be food stalls offering local delicacies and handicrafts for sale.
- Sinthan Maidan is a picturesque location, situated at an altitude of 12,500 feet above sea level, and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The festival promises to be a unique and exciting experience for visitors, with something for everyone to enjoy.



### Ganga Pushkaralu Kumbh concluded in Varanasi after a gap of 12 Years.

- The 12-day Pushkaralu festival of Telugu-speaking people commenced on April 22 in Varanasi; it ran from April 22 to May 3.
- The festival, in which pilgrims will worship their ancestors and the river Ganga, is being organized in Kashi this year after a gap of 12 years due to a special combination of planetary transits. It is the second event of the recent past to be organized in Varanasi, after the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam.
- Pushkaram is an Indian festival dedicated to the worship of 12 sacred rivers.
- The celebration happens annually, once in 12 years along each river.
- Each river is associated with a zodiac sign, and the river for each year's festival is based on which sign Bruhaspathi (Jupiter) was in at the time.
- It is believed that bathing in the sacred river during Pushkaralu cleanses the devotees of their sins.
- This year's festival involves worshiping ancestors and the river Ganga and is being organized in Kashi after a gap of 12 years.
- In India, we have 12 major rivers such as Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Saraswathi, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Bhima, Tapati, Tungabhadra, Sindhu, Pranhita for which the Pushkaram festival is celebrated for each river according to the zodiac sign of that river.



### 'Bihan Mela' is a seed festival celebrated by the Kondh tribe in Odisha.

- Bihan Mela is a seed festival celebrated by the Kondh tribe in Odisha. Preparations for this festival begin with farmers harvesting Kharif crops, which include seeds of hybrid and indigenous varieties of paddy, millet, maize and sorghum.
- "Bihan Mela: A seed festival aims to help tribal Kondh farmers in Odisha return to their agricultural traditions".
- The women, who are at the helm of this festival, carefully collect the seeds of indigenous varieties and store them in earthen pots.
- The Kondhs are the largest tribal group in the state of Odisha (Scheduled Tribes). They are known for their rich cultural heritage, brave martial traditions and indigenous values that focus on harmony with nature. The Kondhs speak the Kui language and write it in the Oriya script.

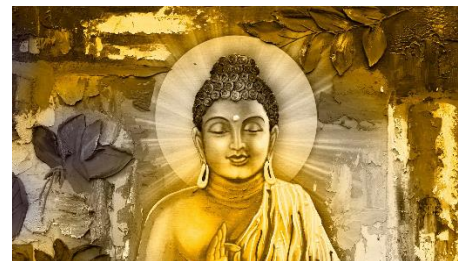




- Bihan Mela: Since the Green Revolution, farmers in the region have abandoned indigenous crops and varieties that are naturally resistant to pests and better suited to the region's climate, thus forcing farmers to rely on their traditional methods of farming such as mixed cropping. Beej Utsav was started to help them return.

### **'Buddha Purnima' was celebrated on May 5, 2023 in the country and abroad.**

- The birth anniversary of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, is celebrated on Buddha Purnima. As per the Hindu calendar, this special day falls on the full moon day in the month of Vaisakh. This year Buddha Purnima, or Buddha Jayanti, was celebrated on 5 May.
- Gautam Buddha was born on the day of Vaishakh Purnima, he attained enlightenment and on this day Buddha's parinirvana took place.
- The United Nations General Assembly, by its resolution 54/115 of 1999, declared United Nations Vaishakh Day internationally. On this occasion, the Ministry of Culture, in association with the International Buddhist Confederation and the Himalayan Buddhist Culture Association, has organized a special event at the National Museum in New Delhi.
- In Bihar, Buddha Purnima is mainly celebrated at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. Buddhists from many countries including Japan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia had reached Bodh Gaya on this occasion.
- Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini around 563 BCE and belonged to the Sakya clan. Gautama attained Bodhi (enlightenment) under a Peepal tree at Bodh Gaya in Bihar.
- Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath village near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as Dharma Chakra Pravartana (spinning of the wheel of law).
- He died in 483 BCE at the age of 80 in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as Mahaparinirvana. He is considered to be the eighth avatar out of the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu.
- Buddhism started in India about 2600 years ago. The core teachings of Buddhism are contained in the Four Noble Truths and the core concept of the Eightfold Path. The essence of Buddhism lies in the attainment of enlightenment or nirvana, which can be achieved in this life. There is no supreme god or goddess in Buddhism.



#### **UNESCO heritage sites related to Buddhism:**

- Nalanda, Bihar Nalanda Mahavihara
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
- Mahabodhi Vihara Complex in Bodh Gaya, Bihar
- Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad (Maharashtra)

### **Kashmiri Pandits celebrate the annual Kheer Bhawani mela.**

- The Annual Mela Kheer Bhawani, the most important festival of Kashmiri Pandits, was celebrated on the occasion of Zyestha Ashtami where thousands of devotees offered pooja and paid obeisance at the famous temple of Ragnya Devi, in the district Ganderbal. Tullamulla and also at Bhawani Nagar, Jammu.
- Nestled in the shade of mammoth Chinar trees in Tullmulla village, every year, thousands of Kashmiri Pandits from across the country throng the Kheer Bhawani temple in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district to celebrate Zyestha Ashtami, on the eighth day of the Hindu calendar's Jyestha month.
- Pertinent to mention here, it is believed that the colour of the sacred spring water which flows below the temple indicates the situation in the Valley. Black or darkish colour of the water is believed to be an indication of inauspicious times for Kashmir. However, this year the colour of the holy spring is clean, which indicates peace.



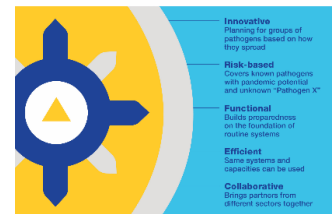
- The over 100-year-old spring temple, built by Hindu monarch Pratap Singh, has over the years been a magnet for the Pandit community. Despite the migration of Pandits, there has been no let-up in the rush of devotees at Mela Kheer Bhawani.

## INITIATIVE/PROGRAMME/SCHEMES/POLICY/CAMPAIGN/MISSION

### “Big Catch Up Initiative” and “PRET Initiative” started by the World Health organization.

- In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, two initiatives – PRET and the Big Catch-up – have been launched to better prepare for future outbreaks of similar scale and devastation, as well as to boost vaccination rates among children.
- The initiative was announced at the Global Meeting for Future Respiratory Pathogen Pandemics held in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) Initiative is aimed at providing “guidance on integrated planning for responding to any respiratory pathogen such as influenza or coronaviruses”.

The Preparedness and Resilience to Emerging Threats (PRET) initiative helps countries prepare for disease pandemics by being:



### Central Govt launches 'Vivad se Vishwas' Scheme for Covid-19 relief to MSMEs.

- The "Vivad se Vishwas I-Relief to MSMEs" scheme has been launched by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, to provide relief to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) during the COVID-19 period. The programme was announced by Union Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2023-24.
- The relief provided under this scheme is in continuation of the efforts of the government in promoting and sustaining the MSME sector.
- The scheme calls for Ministries to reimburse performance security, bid security, and liquidated damages that were lost or reduced due to the COVID-19 epidemic. MSMEs prohibited for failing to execute contracts during the COVID-19 period have also received some relief.



### The Ministry of Finance, through this scheme, decided to give the following additional benefits to eligible MSMEs, affected during the COVID-19 period:

- 95% of the performance security forfeited shall be refunded.
- 95% of the Bid security shall be refunded.
- 95% of the Liquidated Damages (LD) deducted shall be refunded.
- 95% of the Risk Purchase amount realized shall be refunded.
- In case any firm has been debarred only due to default in execution of such contracts, such debarment shall also be revoked, by issuing an appropriate order by the procuring entity.

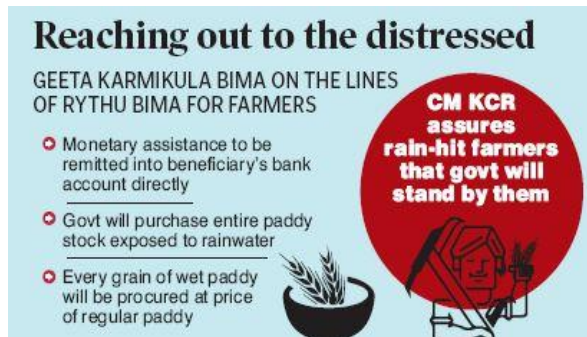
### Delhi govt. to start anti dust campaign from May 8.

- The Delhi government will start an anti-dust campaign from May 8 under the “summer action plan” announced to reduce air pollution.
- Under this campaign, all the departments have been instructed to follow the rules. Along with this, orders have also been issued to the environment department to inspect construction sites and take action on the violation of norms.
- The government has procured 84 mechanical road sweeping machines, 609 water sprinklers and 185 mobile anti-smog guns to curb dust pollution.



**'Geetha Karmikula Bima' Telangana government launches new insurance scheme for Toddy.**

- Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao announced the state government's decision to start 'Geetha Karmikula Bima' (insurance for toddy tappers) on MAY 3, 2023, on the lines of Rythu Bima being provided to farmers.
- Its objective is to provide financial assistance to families of toddy who die due to accidents while collecting toddy from palm trees in the fields.
- Under the new scheme, an insurance amount of Rs five lakh will be deposited directly into the bank account of the family members of the deceased toddy tappers. The insurance amount will be disbursed within a week of the accident, which is much faster than the current ex-gratia process.
- The insurance plan will ensure that the family members of the deceased receive an adequate amount to help them cope with their loss. This will help them with the funeral expenses and other immediate financial needs.
- Toddy tapping is a dangerous business, and there have been many unfortunate incidents of toddy tappers losing their lives due to accidental falls from trees.

**Uttarakhand cabinet approves Chief Minister's Skill Upgradation and Global Employment Scheme.**

- The Uttarakhand government approved the Chief Minister's Skill Upgradation and Global Employment Scheme on May 3, 2023, to help the youth of the state make careers abroad. Under this scheme the selected candidates will be trained in the language, culture and work ethics of the country where they are going to work.
- The candidates selected in the first phase will be trained in the hospitality and nursing sectors by institutions that have expertise in the field and are interested in training the youth of the state.
- Apart from this, the cabinet has approved the setting up of SETU (State Institute for Empowering and Transforming Uttarakhand) in the state on the lines of NITI Aayog. It will work under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister. Its vice-chairman will be the Planning Minister or a minister nominated by the Chief Minister. In this, an external expert will be placed on the post of Chief Executive Officer.
- Chief Minister's Skill Upgradation and Global Employment Scheme: Under this scheme, ANM, GNM pass youth will be provided employment for nursing, elderly care, hospitality in countries like Germany, Japan etc.
- For this, proposals have been received from 11 institutions. The government will bear 20 percent of the total cost of foreign language learning for the selected youth. Apart from this, if the loan is taken for the expenses of training, visa and air ticket, then the government will also bear 75 percent interest of the loan amount up to one lakh.

**Govt. programme for non-communicable diseases renamed.**

- The addition of many new diseases or disease groups and new health initiatives have prompted the Union government to widen and rename its programme for control and prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has also decided to rename the portal which enables population enumeration, risk assessment, and screening for five common non-communicable diseases, including hypertension, diabetes, and oral, breast and cervical cancers of the population above 30 years.





- MoHFW has decided to rename the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke 'NPCDCS' as 'National Programme for Prevention & Control of Non- Communicable Diseases [NPNCDS]'.

### 'Mission Parivartan' started to improve health services in Bihar.

- Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Tejashwi Prasad Yadav launched 'Mission Parivartan' on the lines of 'Mission 60 Din' to improve the health of all medical college hospitals.
- The main objective of this mission is to make hospitals patient friendly, enforce discipline in colleges and arrange treatment on the basis of manpower.
- Apart from this, the mission also includes cleanliness in medical colleges and hospitals, waiting rooms for patients and relatives to sit, installation of signages and setting up of 'May I Help You' desks.
- 611 essential medicines should be available in all medical colleges so that the burden on patients' pockets is reduced.



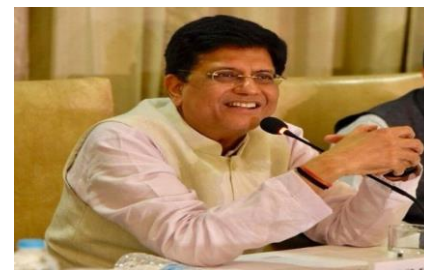
### BizAmp: The first outreach program launched by the Ministry of MSME in the North Eastern Region.

- The Ministry of MSME has organized an outreach program BizAmp in collaboration with NSIC Venture Capital Fund Limited (NVCFL) under its Atma Nirbhar Bharat (SRI) Fund at Dimapur Nagaland.
- BizAmp is the first outreach program in the North Eastern region of the country focused on maximizing capital gains through SRI funds of NVCFL.
- The objective of this program is to empower the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of the North Eastern States and grow their businesses using the benefits under the SRI Fund.
- Government of India launched SRI Fund with an outlay of Rs 10,006 crore, the fund was launched as part of the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' program in India. The fund aims to help develop, become a national and international champion and make India self-reliant by producing relevant technologies, goods and services.



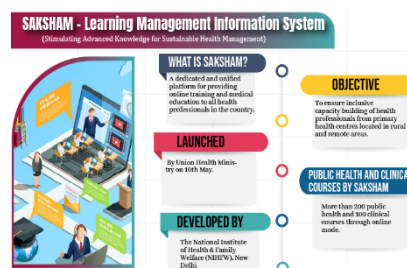
### Goyal co-chaired India-Canada Ministerial trade dialogue.

- India's Piyush Goyal to meet Canadian minister for trade talks in Ottawa.
- The dialogue covered topics such as enhancing bilateral trade relations between India and Canada, investment promotion, cooperation in green transition, including critical minerals, and promoting business-to-business (B2B) engagements.
- Commerce minister Piyush Goyal and Mary Ng, Canada's minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business, and Economic Development, are co-chaired the sixth India-Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI) in Ottawa. The MDTI serves as an institutional framework for discussing a broad range of trade and investment-related issues and areas for cooperation between the two countries.



### The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launches "SAKSHAM" Learning Management Information System.

- The Learning Management Information System (LMIS) of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) launched SAKSHAM (Stimulating Advanced Knowledge for Sustainable Health Management).
- The digital platform was created by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) in New Delhi.
- SAKSHAM is an integrated and exclusive online learning platform aimed at providing medical education and training to all healthcare professionals in India.



### 'Smart School Smart Block' program started in Uttarakhand.

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami inaugurated the 'Smart School Smart Block' program at the auditorium located at Goralchod in Champawat district of the state.
- This partnership of the State Government and Sampark Foundation is an endeavour for the betterment of education to introduce an innovative and first of its kind study program in Government Schools of the State.
- It aims to improve learning outcomes of 5484 children by training 274 teachers from 137 schools in Champawat block of Champawat district in the state.
- After successful implementation for 100 days in Champawat block, the program will be extended to Khirsu block of Pauri district in a time bound manner.
- 'Smart School Smart Blocks' Program:
- The resources provided by 'Sampark' for this program include TV sets for each school, Sampark TV equipment, Sampark Smart Shala application, Maths and English kits with Sampark Didi audio box, 500 lesson plans, 1100 lesson videos, TLM's With 450 activities, the classroom is included.
- It also includes subject wise 2000 worksheets, 3000 questions for assessment in the format of KBC, Sampark Didi questions, videos of songs and experiments on science topics for classes 6 to 8 and a resource book for teachers.
- Sampark FLN TV is an affordable plug and play device for classes 1 to 5, which consists of an Android set top box and a remote. Due to which the classroom becomes a smart classroom.



### For delivery agents, govt.'s EV push brings the burden of transition.

- The 'Motor Vehicle Aggregator Scheme 2023', announced by the Delhi government earlier this week, sets an ambitious target of replacing all conventional fuel -based two-, three- and four- wheeler commercial vehicles with electric vehicles (EVs) within five years.
- While introducing the scheme, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it will "create new employment and economic growth opportunities". However, delivery agents for food and grocery delivery apps, which come under the ambit of the scheme, say they are being forced to shoulder the financial burden of the transition towards EVs.



### The MP government started the 'Mukhya Mantri Seekho Kamao' scheme for unemployed youth.

- The Madhya Pradesh government has launched the 'Mukhya Mantri Seekho Aur Kamao' scheme on 17 May 2023 for the unemployed youth of the state. During the learning process, the youth will get a stipend ranging from Rs 8000 to Rs 10,000 per month. This will help them to become self-reliant.
- For this scheme, natives of Madhya Pradesh in the age group of 18 to 29 years, whose educational qualification is 12th pass students, graduates, postgraduates and diploma holders will be eligible for the scheme.
- A total of 703 functional areas have been identified for training in this scheme. In this, engineering, tourism, hotel management, hospital, railway, ITI, software development, banking, chartered accountant, industry, MSME etc. will be taught.



### Mukhya Mantri Seekho Kamao:

- 12th pass students will get Rs 8000 per month, ITI pass youth Rs 8500 per month, diploma holders Rs 9000 per month and higher degree holders will get Rs 10,000 per month stipend. After learning on the job, either the students will get a job at the place of learning or they will become entrepreneurs. Such students will also get priority in self-employment.

- Registration of establishments willing to teach work to the youth will be started from June 7. Registration of youth will start from June 15 and placement market will start from July 15 and from July 31 there will be an online agreement between the state government and the institutions.

## Madhya Pradesh became the first state in the country to send pilgrims by air under the Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana.

- Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to send senior citizens on pilgrimage by air under the Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana. This first batch of 32 pilgrims took off on 20 May 2023 from Raja Bhoj Airport Bhopal to Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh by Indigo's flight.
- These pilgrims include 24 men and 8 women. Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana is one of the major schemes of the BJP government in the state. At present, under the scheme, 1 member of a family can go on pilgrimage by air.
- From the next visit, arrangements will be made for more than one member of a family to go on pilgrimage, so that elders can accompany their spouses. Travel by rail will also continue under this scheme.
- This scheme was started in the year 2012. Under this scheme, so far 7.82 lakh elderly people have gone on pilgrimage by rail in 782 special trains. An effective action plan has been prepared under this scheme from May to July this year. Under which, along with Prayagraj, such journeys will continue to be organised by aeroplane till Shirdi, Mathura-Vrindavan, and Gangasagar.



## '73% Smart City projects completed'.

- The government said that more than 90% of the funds allocated under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) have been utilised till now, while 73% of the projects have been completed. As of May 1, a total of ₹38,400 crore was released under the mission, of which ₹35,261 crore has been utilised, Union Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri informed a Parliamentary Consultative Committee.
- The SCM has around 7,800 projects worth ₹1.8 lakh crore, of which more than 5,700 projects worth ₹1.1 lakh crore have been completed, Mr. Puri said, adding that all remaining projects were expected to be completed by June 30, 2024.
- The Smart City mission, launched on 25 June 2015, got a year's extension last month. Only 22 out of 100 cities have been able to finish all projects commissioned under it. It aims to enhance the quality of life for citizens by providing core infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment, and implementing smart solutions.
- For each smart city, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) has also been created to plan, appraise, approve, release funds, implement, manage, operate, monitor and evaluate the Smart City development projects.
- Hardeep Singh Puri, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, emphasised the significant role of the 100 Smart Cities in fostering innovation and shaping the future of urban India. He underscored that the country's urban landscape would heavily depend on the advancements nurtured within these smart cities.



## Chhattisgarh Chief Minister launched 'Hamar Sughar Laika Abhiyan'.

- On 21 May 2023, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel launched 'Hamar Sughar Laika Abhiyan' in the 'Bharose Ka Sammelan' program organised at Sankra in Durg district.
- It was told by the concerned officials of the district that the aim of our Sughar Laika Abhiyan is to bring 18 hundred malnourished children identified on the basis of the survey list of the district into the category of well-nourished children soon.





- In this, ANM and Mitnin will go door-to-door to check the hunger of children who come under the category of malnourished. Apart from this, a camp will be organised for the examination of the children.
- After this, families of children falling in the category of malnutrition will be made aware like nutritionists and they will also be given training.
- This is the first program to be launched at the district level in the state. The specialty of this campaign is to manage the growth of children on the basis of hunger tests.
- Under this campaign, the family will be provided training and guidance till the condition of the child improves by establishing harmony with the concerned family.

### The Government of Maharashtra has started 'Shasan Prayog Dari' initiative to make the benefits of government schemes and services accessible to the public.

- The Maharashtra government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, has launched a new initiative called 'Shasan Prayog Dari' (Government at your doorstep). The primary objective of this initiative is to provide citizens easy access to government schemes and documents at one place.
- District administrations have been directed to organise two-day camps in their respective areas to facilitate distribution of benefits to around 75,000 local people. The inaugural program of this campaign will be held in Satara district, the home district of the Chief Minister.
- Individuals have to navigate through various bureaucratic procedures and visit multiple offices to access the schemes that they are entitled to. This new campaign seeks to simplify the process by bringing the government directly to the doorsteps of the people.



#### 'Shasan Prayog Dari':

- A dedicated cell has been set up in the Chief Minister's Office to ensure efficient coordination among the officials involved in the initiative. The cell will facilitate seamless communication and streamline the implementation of the campaign.
- District administrations across Maharashtra have been entrusted with the responsibility of organising the two-day camps in their respective jurisdictions. These camps will serve as centralised hubs where citizens can avail benefits of various government schemes.
- District Collectors have been asked to utilise the funds allocated to various departments like agriculture, rural development, social justice, tribal development, skill development and school education to facilitate the organisation of camps.

### Mr. Giriraj Singh launched 'SAMARTH Abhiyan' to promote digital transactions at Gram Panchayat level.

- Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Shri Giriraj Singh launched 'SAMARTH Abhiyan' to promote digital transactions in 50000 Gram Panchayats under Amrit Mahotsav on 25 May 2023 in Lucknow.
- The initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which celebrates 75 years of India's independence. The campaign started on February 1, 2023 and will continue till August 15, 2023.
- Launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, the campaign aims to promote digital transactions in rural areas with a special focus on empowering women. Around 1000 BC Sakhis from across India participated in the event held in Lucknow.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that in UP alone, 5 crore 57 lakh transactions have been done by BC Sakhis. This helped the banks to save costs on low volume transactions.



- The CM also lauded the BC Sakhis who helped rural masses to redeem government DBT of over Rs 75,000 crore. The CM said that in the digital village secretariat being set up by the government, there would also be a provision to provide services of bank Sakhis in each.

### New writers from Goa get a boost with novel schemes.

- As part of a novel book-sponsorship scheme aimed at promoting young Goan writers, Goa Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai released the first round of books published under the Raj Bhavan's Nayi Pahal programme.
- A total of 5 books in Konkani, Marathi and English languages were unveiled in the presence of Jnanpith Award winner Goan writer Damodar Mauzo.
- The books are by authors Sanjay Ramesh Salelkar (Konkani), Pallavi Polekar (Marathi), Advocate Manohar Adpaikar (Marathi) and two books by Pachu Menon in English, he said.
- The scheme was first announced by the governor in February with the objective of helping talented local writers to get their first books published, with the Raj Bhavan bearing printing expenses.
- The Raj Bhavan plans to publish 100 books in the next one year, while sponsoring books in 22 scheduled languages, the Governor said.



### Telangana achieves 100% coverage under 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana'.

- Telangana State has achieved a significant milestone in financial inclusion by achieving 100% coverage of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).
- As per the Social Security Administration survey, the state has achieved 100% coverage and the benefits of 135 welfare schemes and programs under 20 departments are deposited into these zero-balance bank accounts of the beneficiaries.
- The state of Telangana has more than 1 crore 11 lakh Jan Dhan bank account holders till the middle of May. According to official records, there is a balance of more than Rs 3,000 crore in these accounts.
- Out of these JDY account holders, more than 84 lakh people are availing the services of RuPay card, through which they are able to avail other benefits like credit facilities.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is the National Mission for Financial Inclusion which was launched on 28 August 2014. It ensures easy access to financial services, namely, banking/savings and deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, pension.



## MEETING/CONCLAVE/SUMMIT/EVENT

### China, Russia, Pak. Ministers to attend SCO meet in Goa.

- Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to attend SCO summit in July and G-20 meeting in September; Putin, Shehbaz and leaders of four Central Asian nations are also expected in July
- China's Foreign Ministry confirmed Foreign Minister Qin Gang's trip to Goa, which comes exactly two months after he traveled to New Delhi for the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting, when he also had bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on the sidelines.
- Last week, the Russian Foreign Ministry had announced that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov would also attend the SCO FM's meet, which will prepare the way for the SCO summit, scheduled for July 3 and 4.
- The Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would be traveling to India for the SCO meeting. This is the first visit by a Pakistani Foreign Minister to India since 2011.
- India is hosting the meeting of foreign ministers of the SCO countries in Goa on May 4 and 5.



- The SCO member countries are Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- India and Pakistan were added to the group in 2017. Iran and Belarus are slated to be the next additions.

### Science 20 Engagement Group meeting begins in Lakshadweep.

- Science 20 Engagement Group meeting on Universal Holistic Health began under India's G20 chairmanship in Lakshadweep, Bangaram Island.
- The focus of the two-day event is to work towards better agricultural practices, greater access to nutritious food, healthier eating habits and more opportunities for ecologically conscious and sustainable food products.
- The aim of the event is to develop a holistic approach to health that focuses on promoting wellness and preventing diseases rather than merely treating them.
- It is an effort to bring together scientists, experts and policy makers from different countries to exchange ideas and knowledge on health related issues.

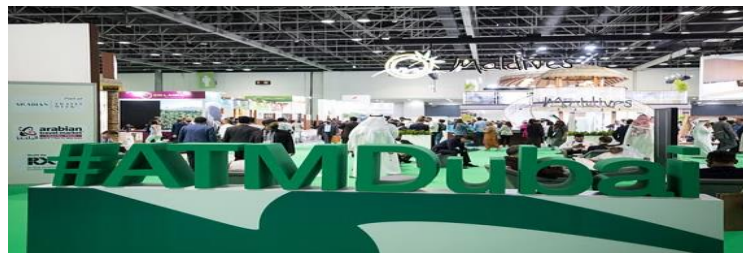


#### About Lakshadweep:

- Formation- 1 November 1956
- Capital- Kavaratti
- Administrator- Praful Khoda Patel
- Largest city- Andrott
- High Court- Kerala High Court
- Bird- Brown Noddy

### 'Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023' held in UAE.

- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has participated in the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023 held from 01 to 04 May in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Arabian Travel Market is one of the leading global events in the travel and tourism industry, attracting visitors and exhibitors from around the world.
- India's participation in the Arabian Travel Market 2023 is a significant step towards promoting India as a preferred travel destination among the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) markets.
- Arabian Travel Market 2023 Dubai is being attended by more than 65 State Tourism Departments/UTs, tour operators, travel agents, representatives of hotel chains and airlines from India.
- During this, the 'Visit India 2023' campaign was launched to provide a comprehensive overview of India's diverse tourism offerings and the country's commitment to sustainable tourism practices.
- The India Pavilion showcased India's rich cultural and natural heritage, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites, wildlife sanctuaries and spiritual heritage sites



### India hosted the SCO foreign ministers' meeting in Goa.

- India has hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Foreign Ministers' meeting on 4-5 May 2023 in Goa. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar held bilateral meetings with several of his SCO counterparts.
- Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto is also among the participants. Bilawal Bhutto has become the first senior leader from the neighboring country to visit India in nearly 12 years.
- The theme of India's SCO chairmanship in 2023 is 'SecureSCO'. India attaches special importance to the SCO in promoting multilateralism, political, security, economic and people-to-people contacts in the region.





- India took over the presidency of the SCO in 2022 at the Samarkand SCO summit. This year, India is hosting several important SCO meetings.
- Since becoming a full member of the SCO in 2017, India has been pushing for the addition of 'English' as the official language of communication. The first such proposal was made in 2020, currently Russian and Mandarin are the only official and working languages.
- SCO countries have not condemned Russia's aggression. However, SCO leaders have repeatedly underlined the inviolability of territorial integrity - a subtle message to Moscow that borders cannot be changed unilaterally. Furthermore, no one has recognized the territories Russia took from Ukraine, not even Crimea.

### **The SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting concludes with several outcomes but is overshadowed by the spat between India, Pakistan over J&K, terrorism.**

- The SCO-CFM Chaired by EAM S Jaishankar, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, Russia's Sergey Lavrov, Pakistan's Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Uzbekistan's Bakhtiyor Saidov were among those who attended the meeting in Goa.
- Calling Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari a “promoter, justifier and spokesperson” of terrorism, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday hit out at Islamabad for its continued support to terror groups.
- Speaking at the end of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council For Foreign Ministers (SCO-CFM) that he chaired, Mr. Jaishankar said Indians felt “outrage” over an incident, referring to the firing in Rajouri in which five Indian soldiers were killed.
- During the meeting, the SCO Foreign Ministers assessed the status of a decision that will be approved at the upcoming SCO meeting in July. The meeting also gave an opportunity to dwell on the state of multilateral cooperation in SCO, to address regional and global issues of interest, talk about the reform and modernisation of the organization, and assess the progress of admitting Iran and Belarus into the SCO as new member states. The 15- point decision document that will be taken forward to the SCO Heads of State Summit due on July 3--4 in Delhi.
- Mr. Jaishankar responded that Pakistan should “wake up and smell the coffee”. “Article 370 is history”, he said, referring to Mr. Bhutto's contention that he made during the press conference as well as in an interview to The Hindu that India must reverse its moves of August 5, 2019. “The only issue over Kashmir up for discussion with Pakistan is over when they will give up their occupation of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK),” Mr. Jaishankar added.



### **Artificial Intelligence based 'Machine Can See 2023' summit held in Dubai.**

- The UAE government organized the one-day 'Machines Can See 2023' summit in Dubai, one of the first international conferences in Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the region.
- The conference is being organized in partnership between the Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications Office and the 'Machines Can See' company.
- The conference aims to bring together experts from around the world to discuss the future of AI and its potential to contribute to the UAE's vision of creating the next Silicon Valley.
- This year, the summit deliberated on the future of computer vision and machine learning with leading experts in 3D computer vision, deep learning, generative AI, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), etc.
- 'Machine Can See 2023': The one-day summit was organized under the auspices of the UAE Ministry for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, and Dubai Future Labs.
- The 'Machines Can See 2023' summit is one of several initiatives taken by the UAE government to promote AI and establish the country as a global leader in the field.



## ISRO to start online training programme for college students: START

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced a new introductory- level online training programme called “Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START)”.
- START is aimed at postgraduate and final year undergraduate students of physical sciences and technology.
- The programme will cover various domains of space science, including astronomy and astrophysics, heliophysics and sun earth interaction, instrumentation and aeronomy. It will be delivered by scientists from Indian academia and ISRO centers.
- The START programme is part of the ISRO’s efforts to enable Indian students to become professionals in space science and technology, as the organization’s space science exploration programme continues to expand into new domains.
- The ISRO’s National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) has also announced two short courses: remote sensing data acquisition and remote sensing data processing.



## NSA Ajit Doval meets his US and UAE counterparts in Saudi Arabia.

- In New ‘Quad’ meet with U.S., Saudi Arabia, UAE, Doval discusses infrastructure plans in the Gulf.
- In what is being billed as another important “Quad” in West Asia, Saudi Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad Bin Salman (MbS) hosted a special meeting of the National Security Advisers (NSAs) of India, the U.S. and the UAE, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The meeting, to consider regional initiatives on infrastructure, was billed last week by the U.S. NSA Jake Sullivan as “unlike anything seen in the region in recent years”. Mr. Doval’s visit is significant as it follows a week after his visit to Iran, which recently agreed to restart ties in a meeting brokered by Beijing.
- During the meeting, [the leaders] discussed means to strengthen relations and ties between their countries in a way that enhances growth and stability in the region.



## 1st ministerial meeting of India-EU Trade and Technology Council to be held in Belgium.

- The first ministerial meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) will be held on 16 May 2023 in Brussels, Belgium to discuss ways to enhance cooperation in strategic technologies, digital connectivity, clean energy, trade and investment.
- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is one of the co-chairs along with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The EU side will be co-chaired by Executive Vice President Mr Dombrowski and Ms Vestager.
- The formation of the TTC was announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi along with Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission in New Delhi in April 2022. India began negotiations for a trade agreement with the European Union in 2007, which is officially called BTIA.



## G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting scheduled for next week in Srinagar.

- The stage is all set for the third G20 tourism working group meeting scheduled to take place in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir from May 22- 24, 2023 under India's presidency.
- Schools at “vulnerable” points have been closed and members of minorities, migrant workers and mainstream politicians are being put on alert in Kashmir, especially Srinagar, ahead of the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting scheduled for next week.



- The third G20 working group meeting on tourism will be held in the region from May 22 to 24 – the first global event there since August 5, 2019 when the Indian government scrapped the special status of J&K.
- India is currently the president of the G20, an intergovernmental bloc comprising 19 countries and the European Union. The group accounts for 80 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).

### PM Modi Participated in the 49th G-7 Summit held in Hiroshima, Japan.

- It is to be known that PM Modi is the Indian Prime Minister since India conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran in 1974. Prior to this, was Jawaharlal Nehru, who visited Hiroshima in 1957.
- The broad terms of the G7 Summit preferences include nuclear disarmament, economic resilience and security, regional issues, climate and energy, food and health and development.
- Including India, Japan has also invited Australia, Brazil, Comoros, Cook Islands, Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam and some international organisations including the UN.

#### G7 Member states and key leaders:

- Canada: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
- France: President Emmanuel Macron
- Germany: Chancellor Olaf Scholz
- Italy: Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni
- Japan: Prime Minister Fumio Kishida
- United Kingdom: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak
- United States: President Joe Biden
- European Union:
- Council President: Charles Michel
- Commission President: Ursula von der Leyen
- Predecessor: Group of Eight (G8) (reversion)
- Formation: 25 March 1973 ("Library Group")
- 1st G6 summit: 15 November 1975
- Founder: "Library Group":
- Founded at: Washington, D.C. ("Library Group")
- Rambouillet: (1st G6 summit)



### Education Ministry hold meet on PARAKH aimed at unifying 60 school Boards

- The Education Ministry organised a workshop in New Delhi with the aim of unifying a network of 60 school examination Boards of various States and Union Territories under one umbrella.
- The main component of this plan is PARAKH, the National Assessment Centre, which has been set up as an organisation under the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- The mandate of PARAKH is to work on bringing the school Boards across States and Union Territories on a common platform.
- A reform outlined in the new National Education Policy, PARAKH will set up assessment guidelines for all boards to help remove disparities in scores of students enrolled with different state boards.
- The Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) will work on setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards. Education Testing Service, which conducts key tests such as TOEFL and GRE, has been chosen by the National Council for Educational Research for setting up the regulatory platform.





- PARAKH has been launched as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 that envisaged a standard-setting body to advise school boards regarding new assessment patterns and latest research, and promote collaborations between them.
- It acts as a constituent unit of the NCERT.
- It is also tasked with holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and State Achievement Surveys.
- It will work on three major assessment areas: large-scale assessments, school-based assessment, and examination reforms.
- PARAKH further aims to facilitate an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach to education, which takes into consideration field experiences, empirical research, stakeholder feedback, as well as lessons learned from best practices.

### Prime Minister Modi extols the value of Pacific island nations at the 3rd FIPIC summit.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a 12-point development agenda for the Pacific Island Nations at the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) summit held at Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. The 12- point development agenda is part of the Act East Policy of India.
- Small island nations of the Pacific Ocean are in fact “large ocean states”, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting the importance of the 14 members of the Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).
- In the opening session of the FIPIC -3 summit in Port Moresby, Mr. Modi spoke in favour of a free and open Indo-Pacific region and focused on India’s commitment to assist the development goals of the member- countries.
- “Climate change, natural calamities, poverty and famine already existed but now new challenges are emerging as supply chains of food, fuel, fertiliser and pharma are facing hurdles.” Said the PM. From vaccines to medicines, wheat and sugar, India has supplied the countries that needed the items,” he said.
- The prime minister also proposed to bring similar Jan Aushadhi Centers to the region.
- "Through the Jan Aushadhi Scheme in India, more than 1800 high-quality generic medicines are being provided to people at affordable prices. For example, anti-diabetes medication is available at up to 90 per cent lower cost at Jan Aushadhi Centers as compared to the market prices," he said.
- The prime minister announced that the Centre of Excellence for Information and Technology (IT) in Papua New Guinea will be upgraded and transformed into a "Regional Information Technology and Cybersecurity Hub."
- The previous two meetings of the India--Pacific Islands Cooperation were held in November 2014 in Fiji, and August 2015 in Jaipur.



### Quad Summit-2023 hosted by Japan.

- The hastily arranged Quad summit in Hiroshima, Japan on 20 May 2023 was a pragmatic step taken by the four leaders, after the summit in Australia was cancelled.
- The summit was scheduled to be held on 24 May 2023 in Sydney, Australia. But US President Joe Biden postponed his trip to Australia because of debt ceiling talks in Washington.
- At the same time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will be happy to host the US, Australia and Japan in the Quad Summit next year. The summit of the year 2024 will be held in India.
- Discussions:
- The Quad underlined its commitment to pursue designations by the 1267 Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council, as appropriate. Also strongly condemned the acts of terrorism including the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai and Pathankot.
- Emphasised the importance of observing international law, particularly as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).



- The summit emphasised on PM Modi's statement that this is not an era of war.
- The East and South China Seas were specifically mentioned and expressed its grave concern over the militarization in the disputed area, the dangerous use of Coast Guard and Marine Militia vessels, and attempts to disrupt offshore resource exploitation activities by other countries.
- The Quad will remain aligned with ASEAN's principles and priorities and will continue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
- The leaders noted that the Quad will continue to cooperate with Indo-Pacific partners to address the region's infrastructure priorities. For this, a new initiative 'Quad Infrastructure Fellowship Program' was also announced.
- To take forward the “Quad Health Security Partnership” formed in March 2021 for COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Union Minister Piyush Goyal hosted the 44th edition of ISO COPOLCO Plenary from 23 to 26 May, by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.**

- The event was held in New Delhi inaugurated by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.
- COPOLCO President Sadie Denton, ISO Secretary General Sergio Mujica and other high ISO officials will also attend the event.
- Organized by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the grand event included interactive sessions and workshops on relevant topics, apart from various activities aimed at enhancing consumer engagement in the standardization process.
- It also features a distinguished presence of leaders from government and business sectors, as well as an international delegation of eminent global stakeholders.
- ISO COPOLCO, known as the Committee on Consumer Policy, is a vital committee under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- It is responsible for advocating consumer interests in the standardisation process and ensuring that standards are developed with consumers' needs in mind.
- It provides a forum for the exchange of information and experience on consumer involvement in ISO's international standardisation work.
- COPOLCO's membership consists of 128 ISO member countries, represented by representatives of these countries' national standards bodies and consumer organisations.
- Themes of the Plenary: 'Challenges and Good Practices for Consumer Engagement', 'Empowering Consumers for a Sustainable Future' and 'Consumer Protection and Legal Framework'.
- International Standards Organisation (ISO) is an international body with 168 member countries; it plays a crucial role in developing standards that impact a wide range of business and social sectors worldwide.



### **Sydney's Harris Park is renamed as 'Little India' during PM Modi's Australia tour.**

- The Australian Government has announced that Harris Park, a suburb of Sydney, will now be known as 'Little India'. The Little India Cultural Complex will help develop Harris Park's business district.
- The first proposal to officially name the area 'Little India' was made in 2015. In the last 10 to 15 years it has become a favourite destination for Indian expatriates.
- Local media reports said the 2021 census showed that 45 percent of Harris Park's 5,043 residents are of Indian origin. Harris Park is a thriving, dynamic, multicultural hub known for its mix of cultures and large Indian population.
- Important agreements were signed between India and Australia on the Migration and Mobility Partnership as well as the establishment of the Green Hydrogen Task Force.



- Additionally, Prime Minister Albanese announced the establishment of a new Australian Consulate General in Bengaluru. PM Modi also unveiled plans to open India's fourth consulate in Queensland state capital Brisbane.
- The oldest Indian consulate was established in Sydney in 1941 as the Trade Commission of India. A 2nd consulate was established in Melbourne in September 2006 and 3rd in Perth in October 2011. There is a High Commission of India in the national capital Canberra. There is also an Honorary Consulate in Brisbane.

### Economics that looks at the lower half of the pyramid.

- The theme at the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin on May 15 and 16 this year, was a new paradigm for the economy. Its backdrop was the rising tensions in the east between the United States and China, and the war in the west between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia.
- Military wars are being couched as wars between democracy and autocracy.
- The G-7, representing 15% of the world's citizens, who are ostensibly on the side of democracy, are autocratically and undemocratically twisting the arms of other governments (representing 85% of the people) to take their side.
- Governance of all countries, whether its leaders are democratic or autocratic, must be for the benefit of common citizens — not to benefit financial investors. Ease of living of the poorest citizens and reduction of precarity in their lives must be the principal measures of good governance; not ease of doing business and reduction of risks of financial investors.
- “Subsidies” for the poor became bad, while “incentives” for investors were good.
- The model of economic growth that has guided national and international policies since the 1990s will not create healthy democracies. Economics needs urgent reform to guide progress towards universal social, and ecological well-being. All Indian political parties must concentrate on the economy for the sake of the people. Indian economists too must rethink the paradigm of economics and concentrate on the requirements of the lower 50% of the pyramid, and not trust wealth to trickle down on its own.



### Government dropped plans to host the SCO summit in Delhi, which will now be in virtual format.

- In a sudden change of plans just a month before the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced that India will now Chair the summit in virtual format, not in person, as planned before.
- “Under India’s first- ever Chairmanship, the 22nd summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in the virtual format on July 4, 2023, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” said an MEA press release, adding that leaders of “all SCO member states”: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been invited to attend the summit via video conference. Turkmenistan is a permanent invitee, while Presidents of Iran, Belarus and Mongolia have been invited as Observer States.
- No reason was given for the change, although the original invitations to SCO leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif and leaders of Central Asian states, had invited them to Delhi. In addition, during the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting in Goa, an official release was issued after a meeting between Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar and SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming had referred to cooperation on “successfully holding the main event, specifically, the SCO summit in New Delhi.”
- Diplomatic sources said the government’s decision to hold the summit via videoconference was only intimated to them just before the MEA announcement. An “urgent” letter sent by India’s SCO National Coordinator Yojna Patel, addressed to all member states and Mr. Ming simply said that the “Indian side hereby conveys that the SCO summit on July 4 will be held in virtual format.”
- Sources told The Hindu that one of the reasons may have been “scheduling difficulties”, and that the government had not received final confirmations from some of the SCO leaders, including China and Pakistan.





- In addition, the continuing war in Ukraine, and recent escalation of drone attacks in Kyiv and Moscow may have cast a shadow over the participation of Mr. Putin.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Russia Launched “GigaChat to compete with “ChatGPT”

- Russia’s largest banking institution announced the release and testing of its AI chatbot Gigachat, the country’s competitor for OpenAI’s ChatGPT
- Russian banking institution, Sberbank announced the release and testing phase of an AI chatbot called Gigachat that will compete with OpenAI’s ChatGPT.
- GigaChat is claimed to be able to communicate more intelligently in Russian than foreign languages and is said to be able to answer questions, hold conversations, and write program code.
- GigaChat is the second AI chatbot to be introduced in Russia, after the country banned ChatGPT, last November, due to fears of disinformation and criminal use.
- Microsoft-backed OpenAI at the time also said it geo-blocked the AI tool to prevent users in Russia from accessing the system.



### Emirates Unveils World's First Robotic Check-In Assistant.

- Emirates, a Dubai-based airline, has introduced the world's first robotic check-in assistant named Sara. Sara is part of a new City Check-in and Travel Store located in Dubai's financial district. It seems that this move is aimed at providing customers with a more seamless and efficient check-in process.
- Sara will match customers' faces with scanned passports, check passengers in, and guide them to the luggage drop area.



### ISRO's first 'Starberry' sensor successfully tested.

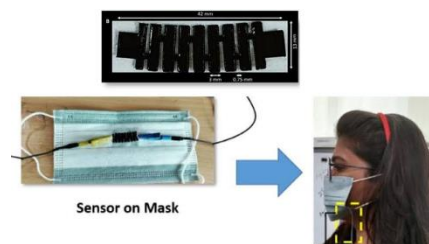
- The 'StarBerrySense' low-cost star sensor developed from off-the shelf components by astronomers of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), which was recently put into space by ISRO's PSLV C-55 on April 22, has started functioning properly during its first space trial.
- The cost of this star sensor is less than 10% of the available in the market. The brain of the device is a single-board Linux computer called the Raspberry Pi, which is widely used among electronics hobby enthusiasts.
- A modified version will be interfaced with the Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) located at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO), Hanle, and Ladakh.
- StarBerrySense was mounted on ISRO's PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM), POEM is a unique initiative of ISRO that uses the fourth stage of PSLV as an orbital platform for scientific experiments.
- StarBerrySense captures images of the sky and identifies stars in the area by comparing their location with an onboard catalog of bright stars.
- Any satellite needs to know where it is located in space, and the equipment used for this purpose is called a star sensor.



### BITS- Pilani Hyderabad develops illness detecting masks with sensors.

- The team, including research scholar P. Ramya Priya, professor Sanket Goel and associate professor Satish Kumar Dubey designed and developed a
- Kirigami Based stretchable, flexible Laser induced Graphene (LIG) a 3-D carbon nanomaterial, for real time attachments with surgical masks.

- LIG is a widely used material for monitoring vital physiological signs such as breath rate (BR) or respiratory rate (RR), body temperature, pulse rate, and blood oxygen saturation.
- Baid Auto Technologies is a startup incubated by the Technology Business Incubator of BITS Pilani Hyderabad. They have developed an IoT based smart facemask for medical conditions such as Covid-19 and pulmonary disorders.
- The facemask is designed to monitor the wearer's breathing patterns and provide real-time feedback on the quality of air being inhaled.
- The smart facemask has sensors that detect changes in the wearer's breathing and send data to a mobile application. The application analyzes the data and provides the wearer with information on the quality of air being inhaled, such as levels of carbon dioxide and pollutants.
- In addition, the smart facemask has a unique feature that allows the wearer to control the airflow through the mask. The wearer can adjust the airflow to ensure that they are getting enough oxygen and that the mask is not causing any discomfort.
- The feature called OBV (Oxy-Breathe Ventilators) is attached along with the smart mask, which helps the user to expel the heat and removes moisture from the mask so it can be worn continuously without causing any discomfort and also reduces the probability of infection caused due to always wearing a mask.
- Another feature for specially designed cotton fabric is the green and eco-friendly filters, i.e. three-layer filters which can be replaced quickly and wash the cotton fabrics.
- This mask helps in not just protecting an individual from being exposed to infection but also monitors their health parameters remotely.



### **Saudi astronauts, including the nation's 1st woman, catch a private flight to the space station.**

- Saudi Arabia's first astronauts in decades rocketed toward the International Space Station on a chartered multimillion-dollar flight on May 21.
- SpaceX launched the ticket-holding crew, led by a retired NASA astronaut now working for the company that arranged the trip. Also on board: a U.S. businessman who now owns a sports car racing team.
- The four should reach the space station in their capsule on May 22 morning; they'll spend just over a week there before returning home with a splashdown off the Florida coast.
- Sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government, Rayyanah Barnawi, a stem cell researcher, became the first woman from Saudi Arabia to go to space. She was joined by Ali al-Qarni, a fighter pilot with the Royal Saudi Air Force.



### **Astronaut mission "Axiom Mission 2" launched for human stem cell and cancer related studies.**

- Axiom Space, a private space company, recently launched its latest mission, Axiom Mission 2 (Ax2), to the International Space Station (ISS). The mission aims to conduct experiments on human stem cell ageing, inflammation and cancer in the unique microgravity environment of space. A deeper understanding of this process could have important implications for improving cancer treatment strategies on Earth.
- The private astronaut missions conducted by Axiom Space align with the goals of the White House Cancer Moonshot Initiative.
- As part of this mission, breast cancer researcher Rayyana Barnawi is the first Saudi woman to travel in space. She was joined by fellow Saudi Ali al-Qarni, a fighter pilot.
- The findings of these experiments will not only contribute to the wellbeing of astronauts, but also have the potential to advance cancer treatment on Earth.



#### **Ax2 Mission:**

- As part of Ax-2, the Axiom space will investigate whether the two inhibitory drugs can reverse regeneration in an organoid model of breast cancer. The aim of this experiment is to shed light on potential strategies to inhibit the growth and progression of cancer cells.
- The experiments are part of the NASA-funded Integrated Space Stem Cell Orbital Research Center. The collaboration includes the University of California-San Diego Sanford Stem Cell Institute, the JM Foundation, and Axiom Space. Data collected during the mission will be analysed at UC San Diego.

### **Navy, ISRO release training plan for Gaganyaan crew.**

- In an important step towards realising India's ambitious Gaganyaan mission to put an Indian in space, the Indian Navy and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) released the Gaganyaan Recovery Training Plan at the Water Survival Training Facility (WSTF) at INS Garuda, Kochi.
- The human flight, after two unmanned flights, is scheduled to be launched in the fourth quarter of 2024.
- "The document outlines the training plan for recovery of the crew module of the mission. It defines overall requirements with respect to training of various teams participating in recovery operations including divers, MARCOs (marine commandos), medical specialists, communicators, technicians and naval aviators," the Navy said in a statement.
- The recovery training is planned in incremental phases starting from unmanned recovery to manned recovery training in harbour and open sea conditions and is being led by the Indian Navy.
- The training document was jointly released by Vice Admiral Atul Anand, Director General of Naval Operations; Dr. Unnikrishnan Nair, Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, (VSSC); and Dr. Umamaheshwaran R., Director, Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) of the ISRO.
- The uncrewed 'G1' mission is targeted to be launched in the last quarter of 2023, followed by the second uncrewed 'G2' mission in the second quarter of 2024, before the final human space flight 'H1' mission in the fourth quarter of 2024.



### **Gaganyaan mission:**

- The Gaganyaan mission is India's ambitious human spaceflight program. It aims to send Indian astronauts into space, making India the fourth country to achieve human spaceflight capability after the United States, Russia, and China.
- Objective: The primary objective of the Gaganyaan mission is to demonstrate India's capability to send humans into space and bring them back safely. It will pave the way for future manned missions and contribute to India's technological advancements in space exploration.
- Spacecraft: The Gaganyaan spacecraft is a crewed orbital vehicle designed to carry a crew of two to three astronauts into space and remain in orbit for a duration of up to seven days. It consists of a crew module and a service module.
- Launch Vehicle: The Gaganyaan mission will utilise the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mk III, India's most powerful rocket, to launch the crewed spacecraft into space. The GSLV Mk III is capable of carrying heavy payloads, making it suitable for human spaceflight missions.
- Launch Timeline: The Gaganyaan mission was originally scheduled for launch in December 2021 but has experienced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and technical challenges. The current target for the first crewed mission is the fourth quarter of 2024.
- Test Flights: Prior to the crewed mission, ISRO plans to conduct two unmanned test flights of the Gaganyaan spacecraft. These test flights will help validate the spacecraft's systems and ensure its readiness for carrying astronauts.
- International Collaboration: The Gaganyaan mission has seen collaborations with international space agencies, including training support from Russia's Roscosmos and the potential use of their Soyuz spacecraft for crew transportation during the early phase of the program.



- The Gaganyaan mission is a significant milestone for India's space exploration efforts and holds great promise for the country's future in human spaceflight. It demonstrates India's commitment to pushing the boundaries of space technology and exploration.

### Gravitational waves: ripples in space-time produced by the universe's celestial phenomena.

- Since time immemorial, humans have looked up at the universe and pondered its secrets. In the past few centuries, many of these secrets have started to unravel.
- One such mystery we began to pry apart very recently is the gravitational wave. Gravitational waves are ripples in space-time produced by some of the most intense phenomena in our universe.
- In 1915, Albert Einstein's theory of relativity predicted the existence of gravitational waves. According to this theory, celestial objects such as black holes and neutron stars could send gravitational energy thrumming through the fabric of space time in every direction, moving off at the speed of light.
- Six decades later, in 1974, two scientists discovered two dead stars orbiting each other. After extensive research, they found that the stars were slowly moving towards one another at the exact rate predicted by the theory — a sign that they were losing energy in the form of gravitational waves.
- These waves contain information about the events that emitted them, so studying them can give scientists a glimpse of distant cosmic affairs.
- To study them, scientists developed the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatories (LIGO) in 1999. They directly observed gravitational waves for the first time in 2015, proving Einstein's theory. A third LIGO will be built in India this decade.



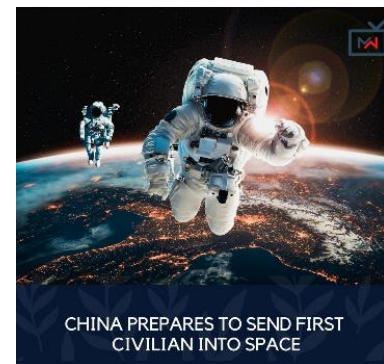
### ISRO set to launch a navigation satellite on board GSLV today.

- Scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) commenced at 7.12 a.m. on Sunday the 27.5 -hour countdown to the launch of a navigation satellite on board a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) rocket from Sriharikota on 29/05/2023.
- The space agency is all geared up to launch the second- generation navigation satellite series, a significant launch which would ensure the continuity of NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) services —an Indian regional satellite navigation system, similar to GPS, providing accurate and real time navigation in India and up to 1,500 km around the mainland.
- NavIC signals are designed to provide user position accurate to better than 20-metres and timing accuracy better than 50 nanoseconds.
- The 51.7 metre tall Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, on its 15th flight, would carry the navigation satellite NVS-01 weighing 2,232 kg from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR) here, about 130 km from Chennai.
- The NVS-01 carries navigation payloads L1, L5 and S bands and in comparison with the previous one, the second-generation satellite would also carry an indigenously developed rubidium atomic clock.
- It is for the first time that an indigenously developed rubidium atomic clock would be used.
- Scientists earlier used imported rubidium atomic clocks to determine date and location. Now, the rubidium atomic clock developed by Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre will be on board.
- ISRO developed the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) system to meet the positioning, navigation and timing requirements of the country, particularly with regard to civil aviation and military requirements. NavIC was earlier known as the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).



### China prepares to send its first civilian into space today.

- China will send its first civilian astronaut into space as part of a crewed mission to the Tiangong space station on May 30 as it pursues its ambitious plans for a manned lunar landing by 2030.
- Until now, all Chinese astronauts sent into space have been part of the People's Liberation Army.
- Gui Haichao is a professor at Beijing's Beihang University, and will manage scientific experiments on the station during the mission said China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).
- His mission will "carry out large-scale, in-orbit experiments ... in the study of novel quantum phenomena, high-precision space time-frequency systems, the verification of general relativity, and the origin of life.
- The world's second-largest economy has invested billions of dollars in its military-run space programme, trying to catch up with the United States and Russia after years of belatedly matching their milestones.



### ISRO's GSLV rocket successfully takes the navigation satellite into transfer orbit successfully.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), launches its advanced navigation satellite GSLV-F12 and NVS-01 on 29/05/2023.
- This spacecraft is part of the NavIC series, a constellation of satellites designed to enhance monitoring and navigation capabilities. NVS-01 marks the beginning of the second-generation satellites in the NavIC series, intending to improve services and introduce innovative features to the system.
- NavIC signals are designed to provide user position accuracy of better than 20 metres and timing accuracy of better than 50 nanoseconds.
- The 51.7-metre tall Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, on its 15th flight, carried the navigation satellite NVS-01 weighing 2,232 kg at 10.42 am from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR) here, about 130 km from Chennai.
- Nearly 20 minutes after the flight, the rocket is scheduled to deploy the satellite in a geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO) at an altitude of about 251 km, ISRO said.
- This mission happened after the debacle during the F10 mission where there was an issue in the cryogenic stage, says ISRO Chairman S. Somanath congratulating the team responsible for the feat.



## EXERCISE

### India--ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations) military cooperation, the maiden ASEAN--India Maritime Exercise (AIME)

- Indian Naval Ships Satpura and Delhi with RAdm Gurcharan Singh, the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet embarked onboard arrived at Singapore on 01 May 2023 to participate in the Inaugural ASEAN India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) scheduled from 02 to 08 May 2023.
- The Harbour Phase of the exercise is scheduled to be held at Changi Naval Base from 02 to 04 May 2023 and the Sea Phase will be conducted from 07 to 08 May 2023 in the South China Sea.
- AIME 2023 will provide an opportunity for Indian Navy and ASEAN navies to work together closely and conduct seamless operations in the maritime domain.
- INS Delhi, India's first indigenously-built guided missile destroyer and INS Satpura, an indigenously-built guided missile stealth frigate are a part of Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam and function under the operational command of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. These ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors. The ships, during their port call at Singapore, will also participate in the



International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX-23) and International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC) being hosted by Singapore.

### Chinese boats cross Indian and ASEAN ships during military exercises.

- Boats belonging to a Chinese maritime militia approached an area where the Navies of India and ASEAN countries were taking part in drills in the South China Sea.
- An independent expert in Vietnam said Beijing appeared to be using the militia to intimidate and disrupt the naval exercise.
- The two-day sea phase of the ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME 2023) began on Sunday with naval ships and aircraft from India, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Brunei taking part.
- They were in the Vietnamese Exclusive Economic Zone when the Chinese boats moved towards them, the Indian sources said. However, the militia boats and naval vessels crossed each other without any face-off.
- Chinese research vessel Xiang Yang Hong 10 had come as close as 10 miles to the participating Vietnamese warship at one point.
- The drill is the first ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) and is co-hosted by the Indian and Singaporean navies.



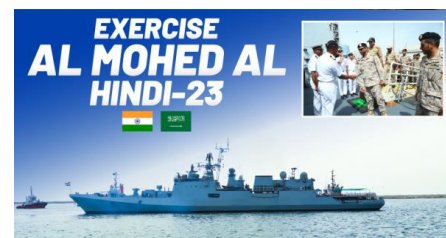
### India-Indonesia's fourth bilateral exercise 'Samudra Shakti-23' concluded.

- The fourth India-Indonesia bilateral exercise 'Samudra Shakti23' was conducted at Batam, Indonesia from 14-19 May 2023.
- INS Kavaratti, an indigenously designed and built ASW corvette, an Indian Navy Dornier maritime patrol aircraft and Chetak helicopters also participated. The Indonesian Navy represented by KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda, CN 235 Maritime Patrol aircraft and AS565 Panther helicopters
- Exercise Samudra Shakti aims to enhance interoperability, connectivity and mutual cooperation between the two navies. The Harbor Phase will include cross deck visits, professional interactions, subject matter expert exchanges and sports fixtures.
- In pursuance of India's Act East Policy, exercise 'Samudra Shakti' was conceived in 2018 as a bilateral IN-IDN exercise. The third edition of 'Samudra Shakti' was held in the Sunda Strait from September 20 to 22, 2021, other exercises with Indonesia – Garuda Shakti (military exercise). The 35th edition of the India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted from 03 to 10 May 2023.



### 2nd naval exercise 'Al-Mohed Al Hindi 2023' started in India and Saudi Arabia.

- The 2nd edition of bilateral naval exercise 'Al-Mohad-Al Hindi23' between Indian Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces is going on at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia from 21 to 25 May 2023.
- In the 2nd edition, India's Offshore Patrol Vessels INS Tarkash and INS Subhadra are participating.
- The 1st edition of the exercise was conducted from 09 to 14 August 2021 at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia and saw the participation of Saudi Arabian Navy Corvette RSNF Badr and Indian Naval Destroyer INS Kochi.
- The exercise is likely to include anti-air and anti-surface firing, helicopter ops, special ops, air defense exercises, maritime maneuvers and communication drills.
- 'Al Mohed Al Hind 2023: The decision on this bilateral exercise was taken at the Riyadh Summit held in 2019. This reflects the growing defense ties between the two countries amid rapidly changing developments in the Gulf region. It will enhance bilateral cooperation and security in the Indian Ocean region.





### Bangladesh-US joint naval exercise 'Tiger Shark 40' begins in Chattogram.

- Joint Bangladesh and US Navy exercise 'Tiger Shark 40' began on 21 May 2023 at BNS Nirvik, Chattogram. This joint exercise will end on June 15, 2023.
- The aim of the exercise is to enhance strategic capabilities of both the countries and gain mutual technical and procedural knowledge. This is being done to improve the existing good relations between the armed forces of both the countries.
- Conducted under the management of Commodore Swords Command, the Special Forces of the Bangladesh Army and Navy and US Special Forces participated in the training exercise.
- On the opening day of the exercise, Rear Admiral Abdullah Al Mamoon Chaudhry, Regional Commander, Chattogram Naval Area was present as the Chief Guest.
- Representatives from the Embassy of the United States of America in Bangladesh participated in the exercise. Officers from the Armed Forces Department, Army, Navy and Chattogram Naval Area and invited guests were present in the exercise.



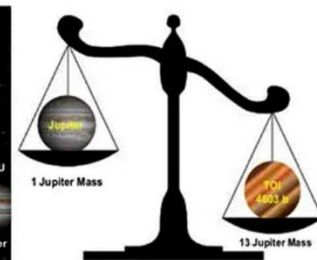
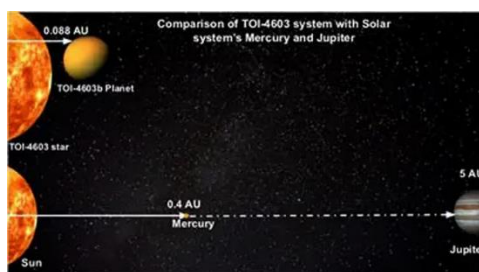
### Indian Army's Sapta Shakti Command conducted 'Sudarshan Shakti Abhyas 2023' on the western border.

- The Sapta Shakti Command of the Indian Army has conducted exercise 'Sudarshan Shakti 2023' along the western borders in Rajasthan and Punjab from 22 to 25 May. This exercise was designed to validate operational plans in a network-centric environment.
- The elements of combat power, combat support and logistics support were exercised in a coordinated application under all enemy threat domains including grey zone warfare as part of high tempo operations.
- Integrated use of force multipliers like Special Forces and deployment of niche technologies covering drones, ammunition as well as key aspects of electronic warfare made it a unique event.
- The exercise was witnessed by Lt Gen BS Raju, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Command and Air Marshal PM Sinha, Air Officer Commanding In-Chief, Western Air Command.



### Scientist team discovers a new exoplanet with mass 13 times that of Jupiter.

- A new Jupiter Sized exoplanet with the highest density known till this date and mass 13 times than that of Jupiter, has been discovered by an international team of scientists led by Prof. Abhijit Chakraborty at the Exoplanet Research Group of the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad.
- An exoplanet is any planet beyond the solar system and the one discovered by scientists from India, Germany, Switzerland and the U.S. is with a density of ~14 g/cm<sup>3</sup>.
- Massive giant exoplanets are those having mass greater than four times that of Jupiter.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said that the discovery of this massive exoplanet was made using the indigenously made PRL Advanced Radial-velocity Abu-sky Search spectrograph (PARAS) at the 1.2 m telescope of PRL at its Gurushikhar Observatory in Mt. Abu by measuring the mass of the planet precisely. The newly discovered exoplanet was found around the star called TOI4603 or HD 245134. NASA's The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite initially declared TOI4603 as a possible candidate to host a secondary body of unknown nature.



- "What sets this discovery apart is that the planet falls into the transition mass range of massive giant planets and low mass brown dwarfs with masses ranging from 11 to 16 times the mass of Jupiter. Only fewer than five exoplanets are currently known in this mass range so far," the ISRO said.

### China sent its 3 astronauts into space from the 'Shenzhou 16' vehicle.

- China has successfully launched the 'Shenzhou-16' or "Divine Vessel" spacecraft with 3 astronauts from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert of northwest China, using a Long March 2F rocket as part of its space program.
- China is the third country to achieve this feat after the United States and Russia.
- Among the Chinese astronauts sent to orbit are payload specialists Gui Haichao, Zhu Yangzhu and Jing Haipeng from Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Jing Haipeng is the mission commander. This is his fourth journey from Earth.
- The crew will remain on the station for about five months, during which they will conduct scientific experiments and routine maintenance. The crew will meet three colleagues from the previous manned Shenzhou-15 flight, the last of 11 missions required to assemble the Tiangong space station.
- China's space dream includes plans for a lunar base and crewed lunar missions by 2030, while the Tiangong space station will facilitate scientific experiments and test new technologies.



#### Tiangong Space Station:

- The Tiangong Space Station is a Chinese space station built in Low Earth Orbit between 340 and 450 kilometres above Earth. China was forced out of the NASA-led International Space Station in 2011. It is part of China's manned space program and the country's first long-term space station.
- China will launch an unmanned module for its permanent space station called "Tianhe" or "Harmony of the Heavens" in 2021, with completion by the end of 2022. The Tianhe Core Module is the first module to be launched from the Tiangong Space Station module.

### SpaceX successfully launches Saudi Arabia's telecommunication satellite 'Arabsat BADR-8.

- SpaceX successfully launched Saudi Arabia's 'Arabsat BADR-8' satellite on a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida on May 27, 2023. This was the 36th launch of the Falcon 9 rocket to date; the BADR 8 satellite will have a life of about 15 years and has spent a total of \$300 million on the program.
- The United Arab Emirates has announced a space mission under which it will launch a spacecraft "MBR Explorer" in the year 2028 which will travel for seven years to land on an asteroid in 2034.



#### 'BADR-8':

- The BADR-8 weighs approximately 9,900 pounds (4,500 kg). The satellite will be placed in a geostationary orbit approximately 22,200 miles (35,700 km) above Earth.
- As a 7th generation satellite, BADR8 is based on Airbus' Eurostar Neo Electric orbit raising platform, which will broadcast TV broadcast and other telecommunication services to Saudi Arabia, Central Africa, Europe.
- Arabsat partnered with Airbus and SpaceX for this launch. The satellite carries the TELEO optical communication payload developed by Airbus.

#### NASA's Tropics Mission's Final Satellite Launched:

- Rocket Lab's Electron rocket launches May 25, 2023, from Launch Complex 1 in Mahia, New Zealand, carrying the last two Tropics CubeSats for NASA. 'Tropics' is a constellation of four identical CubeSats that will provide hourly updates on tropical cyclones, improving on the current six-hour interval, to enhance understanding and forecasting of typhoons.

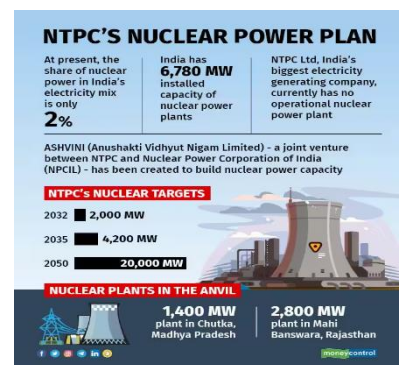
## ENVIRONMENT

**Melanistic tiger dies in Similipal Tiger Reserve.**

- Rare melanistic tiger found dead in Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), Mayurbhanj District.
- The STR first reported the presence of melanistic tigers in 2007. The 2016 tiger census revealed six such tigers in the reserve.
- Similipal Tiger Reserve is the only place in the world to house the rare black tigers. STR was declared one of the nine Tiger Reserves of India in 1973, it is the second-largest biosphere reserve in Asia and is listed under the UNESCO network of biosphere reserves.
- The melanistic tiger - a rare gene pool on which the black stripes are far more prominent than the Royal Bengal Tiger's - are found only in Odisha.

**NTPC and NPCIL to jointly develop the Nuclear Power Plants through a Joint Venture "ASHVINI" Anushakti Vidyut Nigam Ltd.**

- NTPC, India's largest power producer, aims to start generating 2,000 MW of nuclear energy by 2032, 4,200 MW by 2035 and eventually scale up to 20,000 MW by 2050.
- NTPC Ltd. signed a supplementary joint venture (JV) agreement with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) on May 1 for the development of nuclear power projects in the country.
- Initially, the JV company shall develop two pressurized heavy-water reactor (PHWR) projects, Chutka Madhya Pradesh Atomic Power Project (2x700 MW) and Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (4x700 MW), which were identified as a part of fleet mode nuclear projects.
- Apart from capacity addition through pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWR), NTPC is also planning to add nuclear capacity through small modular reactors. It also intends to do fuel tie-ups with Uranium Corporation of India Ltd to ensure requisite feedstock availability.
- These reactors will be set up in 'fleet mode' progressively by the year 2031 at a cost of Rs. 1,05,000 crores.
- A total of 7,000 megawatts (MW) or 7 gigawatts (GW) is expected from these reactors. The 10 reactors will be installed at four locations - two each at Kaiga (Karnataka), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) and Chutka (Madhya Pradesh), while four will be at Mahi Banswara (Rajasthan).
- Of these, the Chutka and Mahi Banswara nuclear projects will be implemented through "ASHVINI" a joint venture between NTPC Ltd and NPCIL. The approximate cost of the Chutka plant will be Rs 25,000 crore and Rs 50,000 crore for the Mahi Banswara plant.
- According to Central Electricity Authority data, India has an installed nuclear power capacity of 6,780 MW, which is just 2 percent of the total energy (thermal, hydro, renewables) mix in the country.
- Nuclear is a zero-emission clean energy source. It generates power through fission, which is the process of splitting uranium atoms to produce energy. The heat released by fission is used to create steam that spins a turbine to generate electricity without the harmful by-products emitted by fossil fuels.

**IMD's warning 'Cyclone Storm Mocha' will wreak havoc in Odisha-West Bengal.**

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) says Mocha, the first cyclonic storm of this year, may cause heavy rains in West Bengal and Odisha this month. According to the Meteorological Department, a cyclone is likely to form in the Bay of Bengal around May 09. Apart from this, an alert has also been issued in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- The name Cyclone Mocha is suggested by Yemen, Mocha originated from the Yemeni city of Mocha (or Mokha) on the Red Sea coast, which has long been known for its coffee trade.





- The IMD has warned that wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas on May 7.
- Odisha has been hit by summer cyclones for the past several years, with the state being hit by Fani in 2019, Amphan in 2020 and Yaas in 2021.

### **Bihar to pay ₹4,000 crore for failure in waste management.**

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has levied ₹4,000 crore environmental compensation on Bihar for failing to scientifically manage solid and liquid waste.
- A Bench of NGT chairperson Justice A.K. Goel directed that the amount be deposited in a ring-fenced account within two months and was to be operated according to the Chief Secretary's directions only for waste management in the State.
- The amount will be used for setting up solid waste processing facilities, remediation of legacy waste and setting up of sewage treatment plants (STP), and faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTP) and septage treatment plants so there remains no gap.
- The NGT noted there was a legacy waste of more than 11.74 lakh metric tonnes as well as unprocessed urban waste of 4,072 metric tonnes per day and the gap in liquid waste generation and treatment was 2,193 million liters per day.



### **'Petersburg Climate Dialogue' organized by Germany and UAE in Berlin.**

- Held in Berlin from May 2–3, 2023.
- Hosted by Germany and the United Arab Emirates.
- It is the 28th meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Discussions began around a possible global target for renewable energy at the next climate conference.
- Petersburg Climate Dialogue (PCD) is an annual high-level political and international forum. This year it was organized for the 14th time. Its central goal is to strengthen trust in multilateral climate negotiations and between states.
- This year the focus included topics such as climate adaptation, climate finance and combating loss and damage, but notably for the first time global stocktake has been included.
- The next climate change conference COP28 will take place from 30 November to 12 December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- The first Petersburg Climate Dialogue was initiated by German politician and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, with the aim of improving communication between leaders and environment ministers after the near-failed negotiations at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15). The meeting took place on April 2–4, 2010, at the Hotel Petersburg, on a hill called "Petersburg" near the German city of Bonn, where the UNFCCC is headquartered.



### **Vistara Airlines Becomes First Indian Company To Operate Commercial Flight Using Sustainable Aviation Fuel.**

- Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines, has become the first Indian airline to operate a commercial domestic flight using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).
- The historic feat was achieved on Vistara's all-new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner flying from Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), Delhi to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai, fueled by 83% conventional jet fuel with 17% mixture of SAF was used.
- In this flight, Vistara was able to reduce approximately 10,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



- Last month, Vistara operated a wide-body aircraft on a long-haul international route for the first time using sustainable aviation fuel.
- A blend of 30% SAF and 70% conventional jet fuel was used on a ferry flight between Charleston International Airport, South Carolina to Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, resulting in a reduction of approximately 150,000 pounds of CO2 emissions.
- The global aviation industry is working towards being carbon neutral or net-zero by 2050.
- In August 2018, SpiceJet became the first Indian carrier to operate a test flight using blended fuel—a mix of 75% aviation turbine fuel and 25% biofuel derived from the Jatropha plant—with a demo flight from Dehradun to Delhi.

### One -stop centres for zero waste to be launched in cities.

[Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation]

- In a step towards cutting down waste generation in urban India, the government will launch one -stop centres where citizens can deposit old clothes, shoes, books, toys and plastic that can be reused or recycled.
- These special “Reduce, Recycle and Reuse” centres are to be launched nationwide on May 20. Individuals, institutions and commercial enterprises can deposit the items at these hubs.
- These ‘RRR’ centres would be set up as part of a nationwide campaign ‘Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Shehar’ (‘My Life, My Clean City’) under the aegis of the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0) to strengthen citizens’ resolve to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- “The 3Rs form the backbone of ‘Waste to Wealth’ and have empowered many craftsmen, recyclers, self help Groups, entrepreneurs, startups, etc. to recycle waste into a host of products,” a senior official in the Urban Affairs Ministry said.
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation:
- Formed: 27 May 2004
- Ministers responsible: Hardeep Singh Puri, Cabinet Minister; Kaushal Kishore, Minister of State Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.



### Cyclone Fabian reaches Category 3 status in the Southwest Indian Ocean.

- Cyclone Fabian has now reached Category 3 tropical cyclone status, making it the strongest cyclone since Cyclone Billie Leela in 1986.
- Currently located at 8.7 degrees south and 74.3 degrees east, Fabian has sustained winds of 115 mph, a pressure of 963 millibars, and is moving to the southwest at 7 mph.
- Tropical Cyclone Fabian moved southeast of Diego Garcia on 17 April 2023. Causing there to be continuous rain, high waves, storm surges, and potentially tropical storm force winds.
- Cyclone Fabian is currently 205 km east-southeast of Diego Garcia, 1,680 km northeast of Port Maturin, 2,190 km northeast of Port Louis in Mauritius, and 2,410 km northeast of Saint Denis in Reunion.



### The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has issued its annual update on its projections for temperature trends in the next decade. The prognosis, expectedly, is worrying. The annual mean global near surface temperature for each year between 2023 and 2027 is likely to be 1.1°--1.8°C higher than the average from 1850--1900.

- There is a 66% chance that the global near surface temperature will exceed 1.5°C above pre industrial levels, in at least one year before 2027 though it is unlikely that the five year mean will exceed this threshold.
- The 1.5°C threshold, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has repeatedly said, is one that is best left unbreached to avoid the disastrous consequences of global warming. While world leaders at climate summits are in

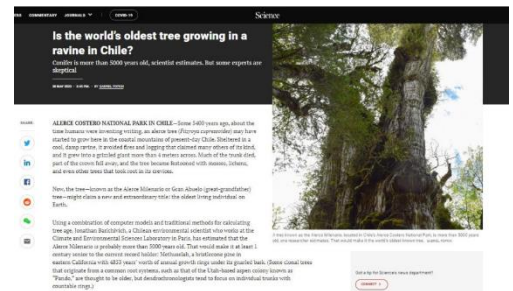
agreement, few of their actions are consistent with keeping temperature rise within this rubicon, with current climate policies poised to heat the globe beyond 2°C by the end of the century.

- At least one of the years, the WMO adds, from 2023 to 2027 will be the hottest on record — exceeding the 14.84°C reported in 2016 (it was about 0.07°C warmer than the previous record set in 2015). The five year mean for 2023-2027 was very likely to be higher than that in the last five years (2018-2022).
- The oceans too are on fire. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is likely to be positive in December to February 2023-24, meaning that the Central Equatorial Pacific Ocean is likely to be at least half a degree, more likely over a degree above what is normal. India is bracing for this El Niño during the monsoon, with the India Meteorological Department already indicating that monsoon rainfall will be on the lower side of ‘normal’. The El Niño “will combine with human induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory”, WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a press statement in the context of the update. Hotter oceans also mean stronger cyclones.
- Cyclone Mocha, which barrelled through Myanmar this week and claimed at least 60 lives and wrought severe damage, ended up being stronger than what was initially estimated. The WMO update does not have specific inputs for India; however, the overall trend in indicators suggests that India, dependent as it is on rain-fed agriculture and with its long coastline, will be severely tested due to changes in the global climate. India’s abilities at forecasting cyclones and weather anomalies have improved but developing resilience is far more challenging. Greater investments in bolstering disaster related infrastructure are the need of the hour.



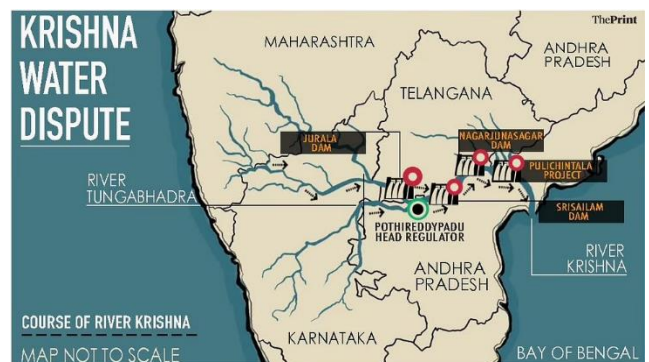
### 5000-year-old 'Great Grandfather' tree that is officially recognized as the World's oldest.

- A 5,000-year-old tree in Chile has been officially recognized as the World's oldest. The tree, a Patagonian cypress, is located in the Alerce Costero National Park and is nicknamed “Great Grandfather.”
- It is estimated to be between 5,000 and 6,500 years old, making it the oldest living organism on Earth.
- The Great Grandfather tree is a massive specimen, measuring 28 metres tall and 4 metres (13 Feet) in diameter.
- Chile President: Gabriel Boric Font
- Chile Capital: Santiago
- Chile Currency: Chilean peso



### Deadlock over sharing of Krishna water to continue.

- With no resolution in sight over sharing of the Krishna river water between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh after the bifurcation, the stalemate is set to continue in the next water year, beginning June 1.
- Telangana has made its stand clear at the recent meeting of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) that it would, under no circumstances, agree for the 34:66 (Telangana :Andhra Pradesh) ratio ‘forced’ upon it since the bifurcation for one more year.
- It highlighted the fact that judicious sharing of river water was one of the main planks of the Statehood movement.
- “Telangana is entitled for 70% share in 811 tmc ft allocated to combine Andhra Pradesh by the KWDT-I Award as per the basin parameters, but the erstwhile A.P. had apportioned it in 512:299 tmc ft (A.P.: Telangana) ratio with-





protecting the in-basin requirements in the fluoride and drought affected areas of Telangana,” Special Chief Secretary (Irrigation) of Telangana Rajat Kumar said.

- KWDT-I had made it clear that in-basin needs to be given preference over the needs of areas outside the basin while taking up new projects too.

#### **Krishna River water dispute:**

- The Krishna River water dispute is a long-standing issue between the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.
- The dispute primarily revolves around the sharing of Krishna River waters among the riparian states. Each state has its own demands and claims over the river's water, leading to conflicts and disagreements. The issues include the allocation of water for irrigation, power generation, and drinking water supply.
- The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT) was established in 1969 by the Indian government to adjudicate the water-sharing disputes among the riparian states.
- The main points of contention in the Krishna water dispute include the construction of dams and reservoirs, the release of water during the monsoon season, and the overall sharing of water resources
- The states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (which was formed after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh) have been particularly involved in disputes over the Krishna River water.

#### **Antarctic sea ice cover hits many record lows.**

- Sea ice in Antarctica shrank to the smallest area on record in February for the second year in a row, continuing a decade-long decline, the European Union's climate monitoring service said.
- On February 16, the ocean surface covered by ice around the frozen continent shrank to 2.09 million square kilometres (800,000 square miles), the lowest level since satellite records began, according to figures provided to AFP by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).
- “Antarctic sea ice reached its lowest extent in the 45-year satellite data record,” said Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of C3S.
- U.S. government scientists have also confirmed a new record last month but indicated an even lower figure of 1.79 million sq km, a difference Copernicus attributed to “different sea ice retrieval algorithms”.



#### **Cheetah cub “Jwala” dies in Kuno Park**

- One more cheetah, this time a cub, died at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh.
- The two month old cub was one of four born to Jwala, who was among the set of eight cheetahs imported from Namibia.
- The likely cause of death, officials said, was “from weakness”, with a press note from the Centre stating that the two month old cub was the “smallest and weakest of the litter”.
- This is the fourth cheetah to have died in India since 20 of the animals were relocated from Namibia and South Africa respectively to the KNP.
- Earlier this month, an adult female, Daksha, died following injuries involving a skirmish among the animals.
- Two other animals, Sasha and Uday, died in February and April, respectively, from a renal infection and cardiovascular problems, respectively.
- Daksha’s death had brought the total number of adult cheetahs to 17.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the eight cheetahs brought from Namibia at Kuno National Park on the occasion of his birthday on September 17, 2022.



- The cheetah was declared extinct from India in 1952 but 8 cheetahs (5 females and 3 males) were brought from Africa's Namibia as part of 'Project Cheetah' and the government's efforts to revitalise and diversify the country's wildlife and habitat.
- Later on, 12 more Cheetahs were brought from South Africa and rehabilitated to Kuno National Park on February 18.
- Under the ambitious Project Cheetah of the Indian government, the reintroduction of wild species particularly cheetahs was undertaken according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines.
- India has a long history of wildlife conservation. One of the most successful wildlife conservation ventures 'Project Tiger', which was initiated way back in 1972, has not only contributed to the conservation of tigers but also to the entire ecosystem.
- Recently the Supreme Court expresses concern over cheetah deaths in Kuno.
- A Bench led by Justice B.R. Gavai noted that the deaths had occurred within two months of their transfer to the KNP. It urged the Centre to “rise above politics” and consider shifting them to Rajasthan.

### Eruption in Mexico's Popocatepetl volcano.

- Popocatepetl volcano has erupted southeast of the Mexican capital. There were fierce explosions in the year 1994, 2000. Since January 2005 there have been continuous activities.
- The 5,425-metre (17,797-ft) mountain is about 70 km (45 mi) southeast of Mexico City and is known as El Popo. Ash spewing from the volcano, which is in the central part of the country, has delayed flights in Mexico City and closed dozens of schools.
- About 25 million people live within a 60-mile radius of the volcano, which is about 45 miles southeast of Mexico City and located between Morelos, Puebla, and the state of Mexico.
- The Mexico National Civil Protection Coordination Agency (CNPC) had told on 21 May 2023 that the danger of this volcano is of 'Yellow Phase 3' level. It is clear from this that 3 million people living in the areas near the volcano should be ready to leave.
- On 28 November 2022, Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano, erupted. This volcano is present in Hawaii.



### Two more cheetah cubs die at Kuno Park; one unwell.

- In another setback to Project Cheetah, two more cubs died and one is unwell inside Kuno National Park in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. One cub died.
- The extreme heat and the lack of adequate nutrition have likely contributed to the death of the two-month-old cubs, say experts associated with the cheetah reintroduction project. With this, only one cub of the litter of four born to the Namibian cheetah Jwala is now alive.
- Three adult cheetahs died since 20 of the animals were relocated from Namibia and South Africa to the park, in an experiment at establishing a community of cheetahs.
- The fatalities take the total number of deaths to six in the past two months. The cubs were found dead in a gasping condition.
- Earlier a day before also one of the four cubs born to Namibian Cheetah Jwala had died.
- The cubs were found dead in a gasping condition. They were reportedly weak and frail from birth, and may not have been getting enough milk from their mother.
- Preliminary investigations suggest that malnutrition was a factor in the cubs' deaths. The monitoring team discovered them at the location where they were previously sighted, while one cub was observed moving around with their mother.
- Formerly known as Siyaya, Cheetah Jwala was brought to India from Namibia in September 2022. She had given birth to four cubs during the last week of March this year.



- 70 years after the extinction of cheetahs, the felines were reintroduced in India last year. On March 27, one of the Namibian cheetahs, Sasha, died due to a kidney-related ailment. Another cheetah, Uday, from South Africa, died on April 13. A South- African cheetah, Daksha, succumbed to the injuries following a violent interaction with a male during May 9 this year.

### World Bank's annual "State and Trends of Carbon Pricing" report released.

- The World Bank's 10th annual "State and Trends of Carbon Pricing" report found that revenues from carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS) reached a record high, at nearly \$95 billion.
- This is despite a challenging context for governments facing high inflation, fiscal pressures and an energy crisis. The good news from this report is that even in tough economic times, governments are prioritising direct carbon pricing policies to reduce emissions.
- Carbon pricing can be an effective way to incorporate the costs of climate change into economic decision-making, thereby incentivizing climate action.
- The "State and Trends of Carbon Pricing" report was launched at Innovate4Climate (I4C), the World Bank Group's flagship climate action event, to be held in Bilbao, Spain this year from 23 to 25 May 2023.



#### State and Trends of Carbon Pricing:

- The World Bank has been tracking carbon markets for nearly two decades and its annual Status and Trends in Carbon Pricing report is now in its tenth year. When the first report was published a decade ago, only 7% of global emissions were covered by a carbon tax, or ETS.
- At present, nearly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions (23%) are now covered by the 73 instruments in the 2023 report.
- An ETS places a limit on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions – it allows low-emission emitters to sell their excess emission units (or "allowances") to higher emitters, thereby establishing a market price for emissions.

### European Union official seeks to allay India's concerns on 'carbon tax'

- European Union will tackle India's concerns on carbon tax, official says.
- The European Union has assured New Delhi it will hold two-way talks to tackle its concerns over tariffs proposed on imports of high-carbon goods such as steel and iron ore from India, the bloc's climate policy chief said.
- Last month, the 27-nation EU approved the world's first plan to impose from 2026 a levy on imports of high-carbon goods ranging from aluminium and cement to power, fertilisers and hydrogen, aiming to reach net zero greenhouse emissions by 2050.
- Indian industry officials estimate that nearly \$8 billion of exports such as steel and iron ore would face tariffs initially, but all goods exported to the EU will be covered by 2034.
- The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is not intended to be "protectionist" and only meant to avoid the problem of 'carbon leakage,' said Frans Timmermans, European Union's chief climate negotiator,
- Indian industries will have nothing to worry if the carbon intensity of goods, for eg. steel, aluminium and iron, made in India and exported to the EU matches that of the goods made in the bloc. "We are now in the trial period of the CBAM and I can assure that the CBAM will be WTO- compliant and will be corrected if it is having unintended effects," he said.
- 'Carbon leakage,' refers to cheaper, more carbon intensive goods making their way into the EU at the expense of domestically manufactured products that have been manufactured using costlier, renewable energy. To check such leakage, the EU brought into force this month the CBAM that, after 2026, will require EU companies to annually declare the quantity of goods imported into the EU in the preceding year and their embedded greenhouse gas emissions and effectively pay for excessive emissions via CBAM certificates that could reflect as taxes paid by importers to the EU.





- Indian manufacturers have raised concerns that the tax will mean a 20-35% tariff on India's exports of steel, aluminium and cement, that currently attract a duty of less than 3%.
- As much as 27% of India's exports of steel, iron and aluminium products, or \$8.2 billion, head to the EU.
- The CBAM will initially apply to imports of certain goods and selected precursors whose production is carbon intensive and at most significant risk of carbon leakage: cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen.
- 28th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled in November in Dubai.

### Antarctic alarm bells over slowing down of 'overturning circulation'.

- Antarctica sets the stage for the world's greatest waterfall. The action takes place beneath the surface of the ocean. Here, trillions of tons of cold, dense, oxygen rich water cascade off the continental shelf and sink to great depths.
- This Antarctic "bottom water" then spreads north along the sea floor in deep ocean currents, before slowly rising, thousands of kilometres away.
- In this way, Antarctica drives a global network of ocean currents called the "overturning circulation" that redistributes heat, carbon and nutrients around the globe. The overturning is crucial to keeping Earth's climate stable. It's also the main way oxygen reaches the deep ocean.
- But there are signs this circulation is slowing down and it's happening decades earlier than predicted. This slowdown has the potential to disrupt the connection between the Antarctic coasts and the deep ocean, with profound consequences for Earth's climate, sea level and marine life.
- Ocean animals, large and small, respond to even small changes in oxygen. Deep-ocean animals are adapted to low oxygen conditions but still have to breathe. Losses of oxygen may cause them to seek refuge in other regions or adapt their behaviour. Models suggest we are locked into a contraction of the "viable" environment available to these animals with an expected decline of up to 25%.
- Melting of Antarctic ice is disrupting the formation of Antarctic bottom water. The meltwater makes Antarctic surface waters fresher, less dense, and therefore less likely to sink. This puts the brakes on the overturning circulation.
- The consequences of a slowdown will not be limited to Antarctica. The overturning circulation extends throughout the global ocean and influences the pace of climate change and sea level rise. It will also be disruptive and damaging for marine life.



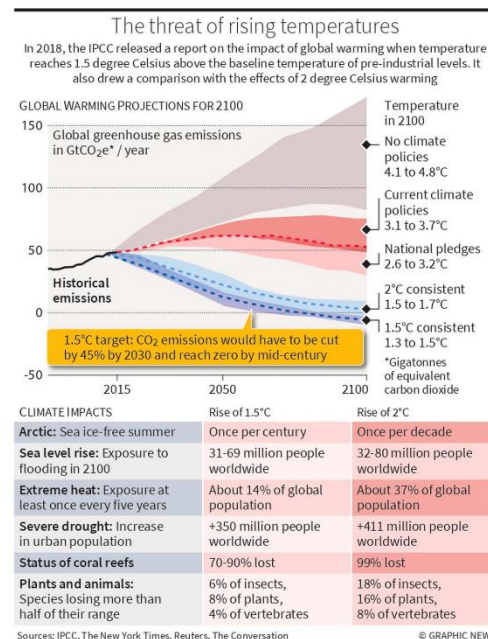
### The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released two reports titled "Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update 2023-2027" and "State of Global Climate 2022."

- The decadal predictions of the WMO said that the annual mean global surface temperature between 2023 and 2027 will be 1.1-1.8 degree Celsius higher than the baseline temperature of 1850-1900 or pre-industrial levels.
- In 2022, it was 1.15 degrees above the baseline, and by 2027, the average will exceed 1.5 degrees, a critical point beyond which there may be no return.
- The 1.5 degree Celsius target is the global climate target that aims to limit warming to said level by 2100, in order to prevent the planet from slipping into further climate crises.
- For decades, 2 degrees was an acceptable level of warming. However, the 2 degree target was unacceptable to small island countries as it implied that their survival was compromised.
- In 2010, at the Cancun COP16, countries agreed to limit the global average warming to below 2 degree Celsius.
- In 2015, the parties to the Paris Agreement pledged to limit the average temperature rise to below 2 degree, while actively aiming for 1.5 degree above pre-industrial levels.
- This was endorsed as a global target by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018 and since then has been pursued in all climate dialogues.
- In 2018, the IPCC released a special report on the impact of global warming when temperature reaches 1.5 degree Celsius above baseline.

- Frequent and intense heat waves, droughts, heavy precipitation, an additional 10-centimetre rise in sea level, destruction of ecosystems and mostly irreversible changes can be witnessed at the 2 degree level.
- However, discussions on the average temperature rise do not imply that the current warming is uniform across the planet. For example, warming greater than the global average is being experienced in the Arctic, with the term ‘polar amplification’ gaining more traction.
- Climate risks and hazards impact human population and the ecosystem depending on exposure, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity.
- It has exacerbated food insecurity, displacement, and deaths.
- Climate change has been affecting crop yield negatively and the risks posed by agricultural pests and diseases have also increased in the past few years.
- Countries like Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Afghanistan are facing acute food shortages resulting in malnutrition and hunger, demanding urgent humanitarian assistance.
- The heatwaves in Pakistan and India in 2022 also resulted in a decline in crop yields.
- The Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya) has been witnessing extreme drought conditions since 2020, while at the same time, western African countries are seeing floods and heavy rainfall which has pushed millions into acute food insecurity.
- Such shortage of food has also led to mass displacement within and across borders. In Syria and Yemen, thousands have been displaced owing to the floods, storms, and heavy snowfall.
- Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems have also not been immune to such changes in climate patterns.
- The population of migratory species has declined in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Additionally, the warming above 1.5 degree Celsius can prove lethal for coral reefs which are already prone to bleaching.

#### Impact on India:

- India has been increasingly facing the brunt of climate change. February 2023 was recorded as the hottest month since record-keeping began in 1901.
- In 2022, India witnessed extreme weather events for 80% of the days. Indian monsoons were wetter than usual last year after recording extreme heat during the pre-monsoon period, resulting in wildfires in Uttarakhand and acute food shortages.
- India's Performance:
  - According to the Climate Change Performance Index 2023, **India ranked 8th with a high-performance after Denmark, Sweden, Chile, and Morocco.**
  - Being an emerging economy with development needs, it is attempting to balance its development needs with ongoing climate action both at the domestic and international levels.
  - With domestic measures like the **Green Hydrogen Mission** and the introduction of **green bonds**, India is performing fairly well despite contributing only a miniscule to cumulative GHG emissions.
  - At the international level, through the **International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**, India can prove to be a responsible climate player keeping in mind that it has a long way to go in very little time.

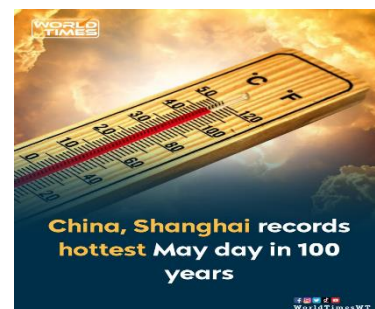


**'Solar capacity addition slid 48% to 1.9 GW in Jan-March'**

- Solar capacity addition in India slid 48% y-o-y to 1.9 GW in January-March, according to Mercom India Research.
- The country had added 3.6 gigawatt (GW) of solar capacity during the same period in 2022, the research firm said in its latest report.
- In 2023, the addition is expected to be lower as commissioning deadlines for several projects have been moved to next year. Besides, a number of projects are facing delays due to land and transmission issues, Mercom India added.

**Shanghai records the hottest May day ever in 100 years.**

- Shanghai on 29/05/2023 recorded its hottest May day in 100 years, the city's meteorological service announced, shattering the previous high by a full degree.
- At 13:09, the temperature at Xujiahui station hit 36.1 degrees Celsius (97 degrees Fahrenheit), breaking a 100-year-old record for the highest temperature in May.
- Later in the afternoon, the temperature at the metro station in central Shanghai climbed even higher to 36.7 degrees Celsius, the meteorological service for the eastern Chinese city said.
- That puts it a full degree above the old record, 35.7 degrees Celsius, which has been recorded four times previously -- in 1876, 1903, 1915 and 2018, according to the weather service.
- In Bangladesh, Dhaka suffered its hottest day in 60 years.

**NTCA constituted a committee headed by Rajesh Gopal to oversee the Cheetah project.**

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has set up an 11- member Cheetah Project Steering Committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Rajesh Gopal, Secretary General of the Global Tiger Forum, has been appointed as its chairman.
- The decision was taken following the death of six cheetahs brought under the translocation project in the last two months. The other 10 members include RN Mehrotra, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Rajasthan; PR Sinha, former director of the Wildlife Institute of India; HS Negi, etc.
- An advisory panel of international cheetah experts will provide advice to Project Cheetah as and when required. The panel, which will be in force for two years and will hold at least one meeting every month, will also give suggestions on community interface and their participation in project activities.
- Under the ambitious programme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the first batch of eight spotted cats from Namibia to Kuno on his 72nd birthday on September 17 last year. In a second such transfer, 12 cheetahs from South Africa have been brought and released.

**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS****According to NITI Aayog, the Indian Economy will grow at the rate of 6.5% in the Financial Year 2023-2024.**

- According to a member of the NITI Aayog, Mr. Arvind Virmani, the Indian economy will expand at a rate of about 6.5% in the current fiscal year, despite rising geopolitical tensions and high oil prices.
- He believes that the banking crises in the US and Europe would have no bearing on the Indian financial system.
- The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank recently forecasted that Indian economic growth could slow to 6.3% to 6.4% due to a slowdown in consumption and tough external conditions.





- The government has directed the central bank to maintain retail inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side.
- According to Mr. Arvind Virmani, India does not pursue an asymmetric policy and can expand at a rate of 6.5-7% without engaging in unfair trade practices.

### April PMI signals services sector had the best expansion in 13 years.

- India's services sector recorded its highest uptick in new business and output levels since June 2010 this April, led by a strong up- turn in the finance and insurance segment, as per the seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index, which rebounded from a decline to 57.8 in March to 62 in April.
- New export orders expanded for the third month in succession and at the fastest pace over this period.



### Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for this fiscal to 6%.

- Rating firm trim outlook from 6.2% projected earlier citing headwinds from elevated inflation, interest rates and subdued global demand; sees India as one of the fastest-growing sovereigns.
- Fitch Ratings has lowered its 2023--24 GDP growth forecast for India to 6%, from 6.2%, citing headwinds from elevated inflation and interest rates along with subdued global demand, with the expansion seen quickening to 6.7% in 2024-- 25, as against the 6.9% projected earlier.
- The rating firm also reaffirmed India's long term foreign- currency issuer default rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. A 'BBB' issuer default rating indicates that expectations of default risk are currently low and payment capacity to meet financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.



### GST e-invoicing to include smaller firms from August 1.

- The government has made it mandatory for small firms with annual turnover of ₹5 crore or more to issue e-invoices for business-to-business supplies from August 1, 2023 to check Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion, reduce disputes over input-tax credit and make compliance easy. Currently, this threshold is ₹10 crore.
- Enthused by the highest ever monthly GST collection at ₹1.87 lakh crore in April 2023, the tax authorities are taking measures to check revenue leakages and reduce compliance burden further through digital technology.
- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), which notified the reduction from the current ₹10- crore level, also rolled out an 'Automated Return Scrutiny Module' for GST returns. The module's implementation has already commenced with the scrutiny of GST returns for the financial year 2019--20.

#### Widening net

Move to lower e-invoicing threshold coupled with rollout of automated return scrutiny aimed at expanding GST tax net

- Module's implementation has commenced with scrutiny of GST returns for 2019-20
- It will enable officers to scrutinise returns of Centre-administered taxpayers selected by data analytics
- Tax experts say moves in line with government's efforts to crack down on fake invoices, GST evasion



### 'Insurers' GDPI to cross ₹3 lakh crore by FY25'.

- The insurance industry is expected to net gross direct premium income (GDPI) of about ₹3 lakh crore by FY25 versus ₹2.4 lakh crore at the end of March 2023, ICRA said.
- Private insurers' combined ratio is likely to improve and Return on Equity (RoE) is expected at 11.2-12.8% in FY24 and 12.5-- 13.9% in FY25,
- Most PSU insurers are expected to witness high combined ratio resulting in net losses, though it would be lower compared with the last few years,

- Moreover, the capital requirement of three PSU general insurers (excluding New India) is estimated at ₹172--175 billion to meet solvency of 1.50 times as of March 2024, assuming 100% forbearance from the regulator.
- The industry's GDPI grew 17.2% YoY in FY23 to ₹2.4 lakh crore with the resumption of economic activity after the waning of COVID-19 infections.
- In absolute terms, the credit rating firm said, the incremental growth in the GDPI was at an all time high of ₹35,000 crore in FY23 (higher than ₹20,000 crore in FY22 and ₹7,000 crore in FY21).



#### ICRA Limited:

- CEO: Ramnath Krishnan
- Owner: Moody's Corporation
- Headquarters: India
- Founded: 1991
- Executive vice president: L. Shivakumar, Jayanta Chatterjee, Anjan Deb Ghosh
- Gross direct insurance premiums (GDPIs) are defined as gross insurance premiums for direct insurance for a reporting country, divided by the population, representing the average insurance spending per capita in the country.

### The United Nations estimates that the Indian economy will grow at a rate of 6.7 percent in the year 2024.

- A United Nations report has projected that India, the largest economy in the South Asian region, will register an economic growth of 5.8% in 2023 and 6.7% in 2024 on strong domestic demand.
- However, the report added that high interest rates and weak external demand will affect the country's investment and exports this year. The report titled 'Global Economic Status and Prospects to Mid-2023' was released by the United Nations.
- It has been said in the report that in 2023 the inflation rate in India will come down to 5.5%. A softening of global commodity prices and a slowing of currency depreciation will moderate 'imported' inflation.
- The report says that India's economic growth will remain 'robust'. However, the prospects for other South Asian countries are 'more challenging'.

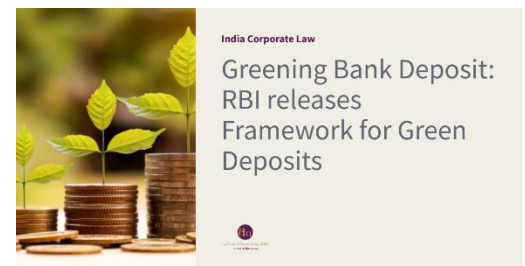


#### Morgan Stanley Report:

- According to a recent report by Morgan Stanley, India's economic reform has gained significant momentum, and the country has established itself as a major contributor to global GDP growth. India is expected to contribute 16% of the global GDP growth in the period 2023-2024.
- India's purchasing managers' index (PMI) has reached a 13-year high, while the manufacturing PMI is near an 11-year high. Notably, passenger vehicle sales have increased to 131% of pre-Covid levels, additionally, actual Goods and Services Tax collections have crossed pre-Covid levels by 35%, and there has been a substantial growth of 84% in services exports since October 2020.

### RBI's framework on Green Deposits to integrate more of ESG factors for NBFCs.

- Green deposits are not very different from the regular deposits that banks accept from their customers. The only major difference is that banks promise to earmark the money that they receive as green deposits towards environment friendly projects. For example, a bank may promise that green deposits will be used towards financing renewable energy projects that fight climate change. A bank may also avoid using green deposits to invest in fossil fuel projects that are considered harmful to the climate. A green



deposit is just one product in a wide array of other financial products such as green bonds, green shares, etc., that help investors put money into environmentally sustainable projects

- The RBI's framework for the acceptance of green deposits lays down certain conditions that banks must fulfill to accept green deposits from customers. Firstly, banks will have to come up with a set of rules or policies approved by their respective Boards that need to be followed while investing green deposits from customers.
- These rules need to be made public on the banks' websites and banks will also have to disclose regular information about the amount of green deposits received, and how these deposits were allocated towards various green projects and the impact of such investments on the environment. A third party will have to verify the claims made by banks regarding the projects in which the banks invest their green deposits as well as the sustainability credentials of these business projects.
- The RBI has come up with a list of sectors that can be classified as sustainable and thus eligible to receive green deposits. These include renewable energy, waste management, clean transportation, energy efficiency, and afforestation.
- Banks will be barred from investing green deposits in business projects involving fossil fuels, nuclear power, tobacco, gambling, palm oil, and hydropower generation.
- The new rules are aimed at preventing greenwashing, which refers to making misleading claims about the positive environmental impact of an activity. For example, a bank may advertise that their green deposits will have a huge positive effect.

### TCS to be levied at 20% on international credit card spends outside India.

- The Center has amended rules in 2023 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), to attract a higher rate of 20% Tax Collected at Source (TCS) on international credit card spends outside India under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). This change will start from 1 July 2023.
- Credit card spending outside India has been brought under the LRS - under which all resident individuals, including minors, can remit up to US\$2,50,000 (about Rs 2.06 crore) abroad per year without prior approval from the Reserve Bank of India.
- TCS was announced in the budget for 2023-24 on credit card transactions under LRS. Till June 30, a TCS of 5% will be levied on such expenditure on foreign tour packages (without limit) or any other category (exceeding the limit of Rs 7 lakh), except for medical and education purposes.

#### CHANGES OR INCREASE IN RATES OF TAX COLLECTION AT SOURCE (TCS)

Purpose of remittance	Till 30 -June-2023		From 1-July-2023	
	Threshold	Rate	Threshold	Rate
Purchase of an overseas tour travel package	Rs 7 lakh	5%	Rs 7 lakh	20%
Investment in bonds, stocks or real estate, gifts to non-residents, etc.	Rs 7 lakh	5%	Nil	20%
Medical treatment	Rs 7 lakh	5%	Rs 7 lakh	5%
For education out of a loan obtained from a financial institution	Rs 7 lakh	0.5%	Rs 7 lakh	0.5%
For education remitting from own funds	Rs 7 lakh	5%	Rs 7 lakh	5%

Source: Ministry of Finance

f t i n o moneycontrol

#### International Credit Card:

- The government has clarified that the changes will not apply to payments for education and medicine, purchase of foreign goods/services from India such as subscription to newspapers, magazines, or online streaming services, including private visits outside India, gifts/ foreign transactions would include charity and going abroad for employment etc.
- In February 2020, the government in the budget announced the imposition of 5% TCS on foreign remittances and the insertion of a new section under section 206C of the Income Tax Act for sale of foreign tour packages. This came into effect from October 2020.
- The use of an international credit card for making payments to meet expenses while living abroad was not covered under LRS till now. Expenses on international credit cards were excluded from LRS under Rule 7 of the Foreign Exchange Management (Current Account Transactions) Rules, 2000. With the new notification, Rule 7 has been removed.



**RBI withdraws ₹2000 note from circulation, to remain legal tender.**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to withdraw ₹2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation in pursuance of its “Clean Note Policy”.
- However, the ₹2,000 notes will continue to be legal tender. A similar withdrawal of notes from circulation was undertaken in 2013--2014.
- It has advised banks to stop issuing ₹2000 denomination banknotes with immediate effect.
- The ₹2000 denomination banknote was introduced in November 2016 under Section 24(1) of RBI Act, 1934, primarily to meet the currency requirement of the economy in an expeditious manner after the withdrawal of legal tender status of all ₹500 and ₹1000 banknotes in circulation at that time.
- The ₹2000 currency note will remain legal tender after 30th September too. RBI expects that 4 month time is enough for people to exchange notes with the banks. Most of the ₹2000 notes that are in circulation will return to banks within the given time frame of 30th September.
- The printing of ₹2000 banknotes was stopped in 2018-19. About 89% of the ₹2000 denomination banknotes were issued prior to March 2017 and are at the end of their estimated life-span of 4-5 years. The total value of these banknotes in circulation has declined from ₹6.73 lakh crore at its peak as on March 31, 2018 (37.3% of Notes in Circulation) to ₹3.62 lakh crore constituting only 10.8% of Notes in Circulation on March 31, 2023.

**All In One policy plan to spread insurance in India.**

- IRDA is devising an affordable product covering health, life, property, accident risks to give citizens protection, expedite claim settlements by linking death registries onto one industry platform.
- In an ambitious bid to expand the poor insurance penetration in the country, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) is devising a new affordable bundled product to give citizens protection against multiple risks, and seeking to expedite claim settlements by linking death registries onto a common industry platform.
- These initiatives are part of a broader overhaul including legislative amendments to attract more investments through differentiated licences for niche players similar to the banking sector with an eye on making insurance “available, affordable and accessible” to all citizens with a “gram panchayat- to district- to State Level' approach.
- ‘UPI -like moment’:
- The regulator believes these changes could double the number of jobs in the sector to 1.2 crore. IRDA chief Debasish Panda said that they are striving to create an “UPI -like moment” in insurance through a plan worked out with general and life insurance firms that he termed “Bima Trinity”.

**Cover drive for the uninsured**

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority is driving multi-pronged changes to expand citizens' safety nets



■ A new bundled insurance product Bima Vistar to provide life, health, accident and property cover through a single, simple policy



■ A Bima Sugam platform as a one-stop shop for customers, integrating insurers and distributors



■ Linking digital death registries to platform so claims can be settled within hours or a day



■ Permitting insurers to sell value-added services with policies; for example, a yoga class bundled with a health scheme



■ Women to lead campaign to spur insurance penetration in each Gram Sabha



■ Roping in States to form insurance committees and expand coverage across districts

■ Move will also allow smaller, micro and regional insurers to reach different strata of society

**Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):**

- Headquarters: Hyderabad
- Founded: 1999
- Type: Statutory corporation; It is an autonomous and statutory body established under the IRDA Act 1999.
- Chairperson: Debasish Panda
- It is the apex body that supervises and regulates the insurance sector in India.
- Objective: To protect the interests of policyholders, to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry in India.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Finance
- Head Office: Hyderabad.
- Composition: IRDAI is a 10-member body- a Chairman, five full-time members, and four part-time members appointed by the Government of India.

## Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI) plans to expand risk protection levels need government backing.

- To offer an affordable bundled insurance product that covers health, life, property, and accident risks.
- To expedite claim settlements by linking death registries onto a common platform
- To create a “UPI-like moment” in insurance, similar to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in the banking sector.
- Plan by IRDA (Bima Trinity of the policy):
- Bima Sugam: The portal will integrate insurers and distributors, providing customers with a one-stop shop for purchasing insurance policies and managing service requests and claim settlements. It will also be integrated with digitized birth and death registries
- Bima Vistar: It will be a bundled risk cover product, which offers defined benefits for each risk and aims to provide faster claim payouts without the need for surveyors.
- Bima Vaahaka: The third component of the plan involves deploying a women-centric workforce called Bima Vaahaka (carriers) in each Gram Sabha (village council) to promote the benefits of insurance products.
- State-level insurance committees: To achieve the goal of providing insurance coverage for all citizens by 2047, the IRDA plans to establish State-level insurance committees and involve State governments in formulating district-level insurance plans.

### Benefits:

- It will provide citizens with an affordable single policy that covers health, life, property and accident
- Settling claims within a short timeframe (potentially within six to eight hours or a maximum of one day)
- Will allow policyholders to easily access their policies and submit death certificates, enabling quick processing and transfer of funds.
- About IRDA
- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (founded 1999; HQ: Hyderabad) is a statutory body (under the IRDA Act 1999) and is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance and is tasked with regulating and licensing the insurance and reinsurance industries in India.
- A 10-member body- a Chairman, five full-time members, and four part-time members appointed by the Government of India.

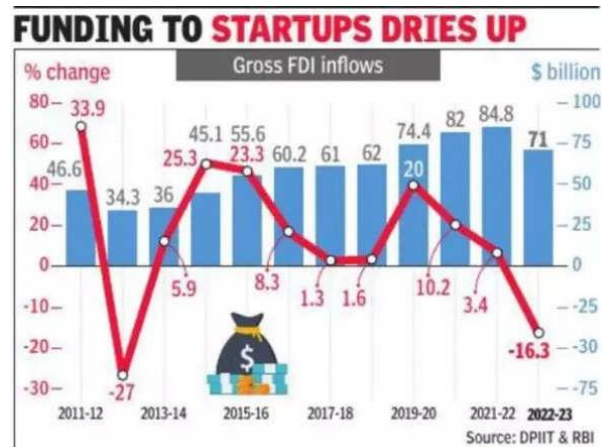
## January--April imports from China rose 4.6% to \$37.86 billion.

- Two Way trade climbs 4.6% to reach \$44.34 billion at the end of April, data from China’s General Administration of Customs shows; India’s exports to China increase by 3.7% but share stays small.
- India’s imports of Chinese goods have continued to rise in 2023, growing 4.6% in the first four months of the year to cross \$37.86 billion.
- Two-way trade climbed 4.5% from the year-earlier period to reach \$44.34 billion at the end of April, data from China’s General Administration of Customs showed. India’s exports to China also rose by 3.7%, but still accounted for a smaller share of the bilateral trade.
- In 2022, bilateral trade with China reached a record \$135.98 billion, driven by a 21% rise in imports into India. The trade deficit crossed \$100 billion for the first time last year.
- In recent years, India’s biggest imports from China have included active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), chemicals, electrical and mechanical machinery, auto components, and medical supplies.
- In the first four months of the year, China’s trade with ASEAN, its largest trading partner, increased 5.6% to \$304.63 billion. Trade with the EU and the United States, China’s second- and third-biggest trading partners that have both been recently highlighting the need to “de-risk” supply chains away from China, however, showed declines. While trade with the EU slid by 3.5% to \$262.53 billion that with the U.S. contracted 11.2% to \$217.92 billion.



**The flow of FDIs into India declines in 2022--23.**

- According to statistics from the RBI, Gross foreign direct investment (FDI) flows fell to USD 71 billion annually in 2022--23 for the first time in ten years.
- "Gross inward FDI flows stood at USD 71 billion in 2022-23, registering a decline of 16.3% on a year-on-year basis," as per an article published in the RBI's latest monthly bulletin.
- Net FDI too declined by nearly 27% to USD 28 billion in 2022-23 as compared with USD 38.6 billion a year ago, mainly due to moderation in gross foreign direct investment inflows and an increase in repatriation, RBI's latest monthly bulletin further added.
- 22% Foreign Direct Investments declined to \$46 billion in 2022--23 from \$58.77 during 2021--22, dragged by lower inflows in computer hardware, software, and automobiles, according to DPIIT data.

**REPORT/RANK/INDEX/LIST****Kerala's Wayanad District tops Swachh Bharat's ODF Plus rankings.**

- Kerala's Wayanad has become the first district in the country to be declared ODF (open defecation- free) Plus.
- Wayanad district has come first in the ODF Plus rankings of the Swachh Bharat Mission in three-star category, followed by Mancheriyal district in Maharashtra and Anuppur in Madhya Pradesh, District Suchitwa Mission sources informed.
- Wayanad has scored 100 points in the ODF ranking. Earlier, the district had won two national awards in the sanitation and waste management sectors.
- ODF Plus is a higher status than complete open defecation free status. Village panchayats have achieved ODF status by ensuring toilets in every house. For Plus status, villages should continue to be free from open defecation and solid and liquid waste management systems should be introduced for all.

**WEF released the Future of Jobs Report 2023.**

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the 'Future of Jobs Report 2023' on 1 May 2023. This is the fourth edition of the report, first launched in 2016. The previous version was released in 2020.
- It aims to analyze how technology adoption along with macro trends is likely to reconfigure labor markets and shape the demand for jobs and skills over the time frame of 2023- 2027. A survey was conducted among 803 companies for the report.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Some 23% of jobs are expected to change over the next 5 years to 2027, with 69 million new jobs created and 83 million eliminated.
- Green change, adoption of technology, increased digital access and localization of supply chains will lead to net job growth.
- The fastest growing jobs are in education, agriculture, digital commerce, AI, machine learning specialist, sustainability specialist, business intelligence analyst and information security specialist.
- The rate of change in employment in the Indian job market is estimated to be 22 percent over the next five years. In this, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and data sections will be on top.
- Big Data is at the top of job creation technologies. Employment of data analysts and scientists, big data specialists, AI machine learning specialists, and cyber security professionals is expected to grow by an average of 30% through 2027.





## Forbes released the list of world's 10 highest earning players'; , cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni is the only Indian to be included in this list.

- The world's ten highest-paid athletes collectively earned \$1.11 billion before taxes and agents' fees over the past 12 months May 1, 2022 - May 1, 2023, according to the latest Forbes highest-paid athletes list in 2023, which is the highest total ever.
- Key Highlights:
- The highest-paid athlete in the world is now Cristiano Ronaldo (\$136 million), followed by Lionel Messi (\$130 million) and Kylian Mbappe (\$120 million), LeBron James (\$119.5 million) and Mexican boxer Canelo Alvarez (\$110 million).
- This is the first time two golfers have made the top 10 – golfer Dustin Johnson at No. 6 with \$107 million and Phil Mickelson at No. 7 with \$106 million.
- M.S. Dhoni has been ranked 23rd on the Forbes list of The World's Highest-Paid Athletes 2015 dropping a notch from his ranking of 22 last year. Dhoni's total earnings stood at \$31 million, including the amount from salary/winnings at \$4 million and endorsements worth \$27 million.

TOP 10	
> 1. Floyd Mayweather,	US, Boxing = \$300m
> 2. Manny Pacquiao,	Philippines, Boxing = \$160m
> 3. Cristiano Ronaldo,	Portugal, Football = \$79.6m
> 4. Lionel Messi,	Argentina, Football = \$73.8m
> 5. Roger Federer,	Switzerland, Tennis = \$67m
> 6. LeBron James,	US, Basketball = \$64.8m
> 7. Kevin Durant,	US, Basketball = \$54.1m
> 8. Phil Mickelson,	US, Golf = \$50.8m
> 9. Tiger Woods,	US, Golf = \$50.6m



## Delta Ranking-2023 released by the Ministry of Jal Shakti under Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin.

- Under this, districts have been divided under front runner, high achiever category, achiever category, performer category and aspirant category.

### Front Runner ( 5 Star ):

- Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman, Diu, Lakshadweep, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Karimnagar, Rajanna Siricilla (Telangana), Nicobar, North and Middle Andaman, South Andaman (A & N Islands).

### High Achiever Category (4 Star):

- ODF+ Score Mangan district of Sikkim - 100 marks
- Jagtial and Peddapalli of Telangana -100-100 marks

### Achiever Category (3 Star):

- Kerala's Wayanad - 100 marks
- Mancherla district of Telangana – 90.45 points
- Anuppur in Madhya Pradesh - 88.79 points

### Performer Category (2 Star)

- Badaun of Uttar Pradesh - 51.56 points
- Maharashtra's Ratnagiri - 49.52 points
- Raigarh of Madhya Pradesh - 55.96 points

### Aspirant Category (1 Star):

- Sikkim Soreng - 51.37 points
- Muzaffarnagar of Uttar Pradesh - 43.81 points
- Kushinagar of Uttar Pradesh – 43.06 points

- Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin 2.0 scheme, which is an extension of the first phase launched in 2014. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Phase-II is being implemented as a Mission with a total outlay of Rs.1,40,881 crore for the period from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

- ODF+ and ODF ++ are aimed at the proper maintenance of toilet facilities and the safe collection, transport, treatment or disposal of faecal sludge and sewage.

- ODF+ focuses on toilets with water, maintenance and sanitation. ODF++ focuses on toilets with sludge and septage management.



## RBI released 'Currency and Finance 2022-23' report.

- According to an estimate made by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its report on currency and finance 2022-23, the cumulative total expenditure for India's adaptation to climate change could reach ₹85.6 lakh crore by 2030.
- It is an annual publication of RBI. The theme of this report is: 'Towards a Greener Cleaner India'. It focuses on the challenges and opportunities of climate change for India and the role of the financial sector in achieving a low-carbon and climate-resilient growth path.
- The report covers four key dimensions of climate change to assess future challenges to sustainable high growth in India – the unprecedented scale and pace of climate change; its wider economic impact; implications for financial stability; and policy options for mitigating climate risks.
- Key Points:
  - Central bank digital currency (CBDC) or e-Rupee, if designed with environmental, social and governance (ESG) objectives in mind, could be more eco-friendly than alternative cashless methods.
  - India needs to establish a broad based carbon pricing system and introduce a carbon tax, in line with emerging global best practices.
  - There is an urgent need for a 'green taxonomy' in India to identify sustainable green assets and activities and limit the potential risk of greenwashing.
  - India should aim for 80% of its energy mix to be renewable energy by 2070-71. This would require a rapid reduction in the energy intensity of GDP by about 5% annually.
  - India's green financing requirement is estimated to be at least 2.5% of GDP annually by 2030.

RBI releases report  
on 'Currency and Finance'  
for the year 2022-23



### USCIRF released the International Religious Freedom Report 2023.

- The Government of India has rejected the recommendations of the 2023 report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as biased and motivated.
- USCIRF's 2022 annual report provides recommendations for increasing the US government's promotion of freedom of religion or belief abroad. USCIRF has been recommending India to be designated as a country of particular concern from the year 2020, but it is yet to be accepted by the US government.
- Key Highlights of the Report:
  - Re-designated countries of particular concern (CPCs) – Burma, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
  - Designated as additional CPCs: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Syria and Vietnam.
  - Special Watch List (SWL): Algeria and the Central African Republic (CAR).
  - Including in SWL: Azerbaijan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Uzbekistan.
  - Organization of "entities of particular concern" (EPCs): AlShabaab, Boko Haram, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Houthis, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State in West Africa Province and Jama'at Nasr Al-Islam Wal Muslimen (JNIM).



U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (USCIRF) REPORT



## India tops the list of 10 countries for global maternal mortality, stillbirth and neonatal mortality.

- A report released by the United Nations said that India tops the list of 10 countries that account for 60% of global maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and 51% of live births globally.
- The tracking report of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA was launched at the “International Maternal Newborn Health Conference” (IMNHC 2023) on 9 May 2023.
- “International Maternal Newborn Health Conference”, a four-day conference commenced on 8 May 2023, hosted by the Government of South Africa and Align MNH (a global initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development ).
- Noteworthy Highlights:
  - It shows that a combined 4.5 million deaths occurred in 2020- 2021 – maternal deaths (0.29 million), stillbirths (1.9 million) and neonatal deaths (2.3 million).
  - India witnessed 7,88,000 maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths in 2020 out of a total of 4.5 million deaths globally. The country also accounts for 17% of global live births, which may account for the large number of maternal deaths, stillbirths, and neonatal deaths.
  - It is followed by Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and China.

### India Tops List of 10 Countries with 60% of Global Maternal Deaths, Stillbirths, and Newborn Deaths: UN Study



• India Tops List of 10 Countries with 60% of Global Maternal Deaths, Stillbirths, and Newborn Deaths: UN Study

[Check Here...!!](#)

## Zimbabwe tops Economist Steve Hanke's 'Annual Misery Index' - 2022.

- Zimbabwe has emerged as the most miserable country on renowned economist Steve Hanke's Annual Misery Index-2022 (HAMI). The African country, which has left behind war-torn nations such as Ukraine, Syria and Sudan, is primarily plagued by skyrocketing inflation, which reached 243.8% last year.
- The Annual Misery Index is compiled by Steve Hanke, Professor of Applied Economics at John Hopkins University. Steve Hanke ranked 157 countries by considering factors such as unemployment, inflation, bank lending rates and changes in GDP.
- Top countries in the list of most miserable countries are Venezuela, Syria, Lebanon, and Sudan.
- Ukraine is now the 8th most miserable country in the world.
- Switzerland (157) had the lowest HAMI score, meaning its citizens are the happiest. It is followed by Kuwait (156), Ireland (155), Japan (154), and Malaysia (153).
- Finland, which has been ranked the world's happiest country for 6 consecutive years by the World Happiness Report, was ranked 109th on the unhappiness index.
- India is ranked 103rd in the list, considering unemployment as a major problem.
- America is at 134th place in this list, unemployment and crime are major problems.
- Pakistan has got 35th position.



## Tata Group, the only Indian company ranked 20th in the list of Boston Consulting Group's Most Innovative Companies.

- One of India's top conglomerates, the Tata Group has been ranked 20th in Boston Consulting Group's survey of the 50 Most Innovative Companies Globally. Tata is the only Indian company to feature in this BCG list released on 24 May 2023.
- Other top companies in the list are - Apple, Tesla, Amazon, Alphabet, and Microsoft.
- Europe and Asia are well represented in the list, and Saudi Aramco, the first oil company from the Middle East, is ranked at number 41.

- BCG's list ranks companies on parameters such as improved performance, higher resilience to shocks and disruptions, and the ability to rapidly exploit innovation for value-creation growth, among other things.

#### Tata Group:

- Undertaking various innovations under the drive "Genovation - Make Tomorrow Green" with netzero emissions by 2045 - which will pave the way for a circular economy through sharing, reuse and recycling and preserve nature and biodiversity and will restore.



#### NITI Aayog's annual 'Health Index' 2020-21 released.

- The Annual Health Index 2020-21 has been released by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Union Health Ministry.
- The 2020-21 (Fifth) Health Index Report was to be released by December 2022, but has not been made public. It was first launched in 2017.
- The health index assesses states and union territories on two parameters - incremental performance (year-on-year progress) and overall performance. States and Union Territories are classified separately as 'Big States', 'Small States' and Union Territories.
- The index measures the performance of states and union territories on a weighted composite score covering 24 health performance indicators. These include indicators such as neonatal mortality rate, total fertility rate, sex ratio at birth, immunisation coverage, proportion of institutional deliveries, notification rate of total tuberculosis cases and proportion of people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy.
- Among the 19 'large states', Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana rank first, second and third, respectively, in terms of overall performance.
- Bihar (19th), Uttar Pradesh (18th) and Madhya Pradesh (17th) are at the bottom of the list in terms of overall performance.
- Among the 8 'smaller states', Tripura has recorded the best overall performance, followed by Sikkim and Goa; Arunachal Pradesh (sixth), Nagaland (seventh) and Manipur (eighth) are at the bottom.
- Lakshadweep has been the best performing union territory. Delhi was at the bottom of the list of union territories.
- In terms of incremental performance, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Odisha emerged as the top three performers in 2020-21 as compared to their performance in 2019-20.

#### SCORECARD

##### Top 5

Rank	2018-19*	2019-20*
1	Kerala	Kerala
2	Andhra Pradesh	Tamil Nadu
3	Tamil Nadu	Telangana
4	Himachal Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh
5	Maharashtra	Maharashtra

##### Bottom 4\*\*

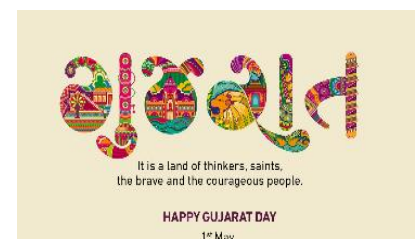
Rank	2018-19*	2019-20*
1	UP	UP
2	Bihar	Bihar
3	MP	MP
4	Jharkhand	Rajasthan

\*According to Reference Year  
 \*\*In ascending order (Lowest first)  
 Source: NITI Aayog Fourth Health Index

#### IMPORTANT DAY/WEEK/YEAR

##### Gujarat Foundation Day on 01 May.

- Gujarat and Maharashtra celebrate their 63rd Foundation Day on 1st May with great fervor.
- The first of May, commonly known as May Day or International Labour Day, is a significant date in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Bombay Reorganisation Act, which was passed on this day in 1960, created both states.
- Gujarat was carved out of the larger bilingual Bombay state, which was divided into Gujarat and Maharashtra.



##### World Veterinary Day 2023: 29th April

- World Veterinary Day is celebrated annually on the last Saturday of April, which falls on April 29th in 2023.
- The day is dedicated to honoring the contributions of veterinarians around the world who work tirelessly to promote animal health and welfare, as well as to protect public health.

- The theme for World Veterinary Day 2023 is “Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness in the Veterinary Profession”.
- The World Veterinary Day (WVD) was established on April 29, 2000, by the World Veterinary Association (WVA).
- World Veterinary Association President: Rafael Laguens
- World Veterinary Association Founded: 1863
- World Veterinary Association HQ: Brussels, Belgium.



### International Labour Day 2023 observed on 01 May.

- International Labour Day, also known as May Day.
- The first International Labour Day was observed on May 1st, 1890.
- It is a day dedicated to celebrating the achievements and contributions of workers around the world.
- In India Labour Day is known by many names such as “Kamgar Din” or “Aantrashtriya Shramik Diwas” in Hindi; “Uzhaipalar Naal” in Tamil and “Kamgar Diwas” in Marathi.
- India Celebrated its 1st labour day in 1923, in the province of Madras (chennai).
- The holiday originated in the late 19th century as a way to commemorate the Haymarket affair, a labor protest in Chicago that turned violent. Today, it is celebrated in many countries with parades, rallies, and other events that highlight the importance of worker rights and fair labor practices.
- On May 1, 1886, labor unions in the United States went on strike and demanded that workers should not be forced to work more than eight hours a day. Bombs explode in Chicago's Haymarket during the May 4 strike.
- This led to the death of several people and police officers and injuries to over 100 people. But it helped in establishing the eight hour working day rule in many countries of the world.
- In 1889 a meeting took place in Paris in which it was decided to observe May Day on an annual basis through a proposal made by Raymond Lavigne. In 1891, May Day was officially recognized as an annual event. Labor Day is celebrated in the United States in September.



### World Press Freedom Day: 3 May

- Every year on 3rd May 'World Press Freedom Day' (WPFD) is celebrated all over the world.
- This day is organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- The theme of World Press Freedom Day this year is “Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights”.
- Following the recommendation of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1991, the United Nations General Assembly had declared World Press Freedom Day in the year 1993.
- The day marks the 'Windhoek' declaration adopted by UNESCO in 1991.
- The 'Windhoek Declaration' of the year 1991 deals with the development of a free, independent and pluralistic press.
- Since 1997, the “Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize” is also given annually by UNESCO on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on 3rd May.
- On the occasion of Press Freedom Day, an organization called 'Reporters Without Borders' releases 'World Press Freedom Index'.
- World Press Freedom Day is celebrated every year on 3rd May all over the world.





- Every year on 3 May, UNESCO celebrates World Press Freedom Day across the world to increase understanding about the importance of the press. The occasion emphasizes the importance of independent journalism and advocates for the fundamental right to freedom of speech.
- World Press Freedom Day is a reminder of the important role of a free and independent media in promoting democracy, human rights and sustainable development.
- In 1991, the UNESCO General Conference proposed the idea of World Press Freedom Day. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to officially declare May 3 as World Press Freedom Day.

### 2023 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize:

- On 3 May, UNESCO celebrated World Press Freedom Day by awarding its annual World Press Freedom Prize to imprisoned Iranian women journalists. Among them, Niloufar Hamidi, Elaheh Mohammadi and Narges Mohammadi were honored for their work in reporting on human rights abuses in Iran and their commitment to truthfulness and accountability.
- Hamidi and Mohammadi were instrumental in breaking the news of the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was in police custody for wearing a headscarf that was too loose. The third winner, Nargis Mohammadi, is a journalist and prominent human rights activist in Iran.
- It is an annual award instituted in the year 1997, and is awarded for outstanding contribution to the defense and promotion of freedom of the press anywhere in the world. It is named after the Colombian journalist Guillermo Cano Isaza, who was assassinated on 17 December 1986 in front of the offices of his newspaper El Espectador in Bogotá, Colombia.

### World Red Cross Day: 8th May

- Every year on 08 May 'World Red Cross Day' is observed all over the world.
- The day highlights the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- This day provides an opportunity to the general public to know about the world's important agency (Red Cross) involved in providing humanitarian aid and its contribution to society.
- This year the theme of World Red Cross Day is “Everything we do comes #fromtheheart”
- The main objective of the Red Cross Society is basically to inspire, initiate and encourage all kinds of humanitarian activities at all times and in all circumstances.
- World Red Cross Day is observed on 8 May on the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, who was the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross.



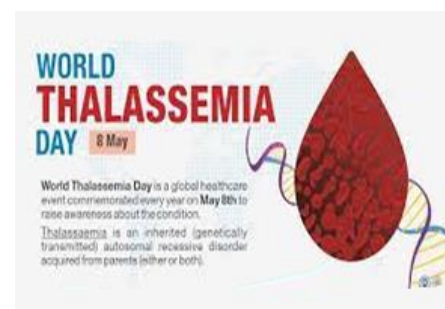
**Jean Henry Dunant was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901.**

**The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded by Jean Henri Dunant in 1863. The 'Indian Red Cross Society' was formed in 1920 in India.**

- The Red Cross Society is based on 7 principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntaryness, Unity and Universality.
- The Indian Red Cross Society is a voluntary humanitarian organization established in the year 1920 to protect human life and health with the help of its network across India.
- It is a part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the world's largest independent humanitarian organization.
- It aims to provide relief in times of disasters and emergencies and also to promote health facilities among vulnerable people and communities.
- The President of India is the President and the Union Health Minister is the President of the Society.

**World Thalassaemia Day: May 08.**

- Every year on May 08, 'World Thalassaemia Day' is organized all over the world.
- Its primary goal is to raise awareness regarding serious genetic disorders like Thalassaemia and the struggle of patients suffering from it.
- The day also honors doctors and other medical personnel dedicated to improving the lives of sufferers and scientists working towards the eradication of the disease.
- The theme of World Thalassaemia Day 2023 is “Be Aware. Share. Care: Strengthening Education to Bridge the Thalassaemia Care Gap”.
- World Thalassaemia Day was started in the year 1994 by Thalassaemia International Federation.
- India has more than one lakh patients suffering from thalassaemia, of which 40 lakh are carriers.
- Thalassaemia is an autosomal recessive disorder inherited from parents (genetically transmitted).
- This permanent blood disorder causes the patient's red blood cells (RBCs) not to make enough hemoglobin, which can lead to anemia and patients need blood transfusions every two to three weeks to survive.
- The severity of the disease depends on the mutations involved in the gene and their interactions.

**National Technology Day: 11 May**

- Every year on May 11, 'National Technology Day' is organised all over India.
- On this day India successfully tested nuclear bombs at Pokhran on May 11, 1998.
- The nuclear missile was tested at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan. This was the second test conducted after Operation Smiling Buddha at Pokhran-I in May, 1974.
- India successfully tested its Shakti-1 nuclear missile in an operation named Pokhran-II, known as 'Operation Shakti', which was led by the then President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.
- The day was first observed on May 11, 1999, with the aim of commemorating the scientific and technological achievements of Indian scientists, engineers. The day was named by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- India's first indigenous aircraft 'Hansa-3' was also tested in Bengaluru on 11 May itself.
- India also conducted a successful firing test of the Trishul missile on the same day.
- Every year the Indian Technology Development Board (a statutory body under the Ministry of Science and Technology) celebrates this day by conferring National Awards on individuals for their contribution to science and technology in India.
- Technology Development Board is a statutory body of the Government of India which functions under the Department of Science and Technology.
- It provides financial assistance to Indian industries and other agencies for commercialization of indigenous technologies or adaptation of imported technologies for wider domestic applications.

**Sikkim Foundation Day: 16 May.**

- Sikkim's foundation day (16 May) took place on 16 May 1975 as the 22nd state of India.
- Sikkim is located in the eastern Himalayas, in the north-eastern part of the country and is one of the smallest states in India.
- Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim.
- The state is bordered by China's Tibet Autonomous Region to the north and northeast, Bhutan to the southeast, the Indian state of West Bengal to the south, and Nepal to the west.

- Sikkim became a protectorate of India in 1950 following the Indo-Sikkim Treaty, in which India assumed responsibility for Sikkim's external relations, defence and strategic communications.
- The Namgyal dynasty ruled Sikkim till 1975.
- Its name is derived from the Limbu (a tribe) word Su Him, which means 'new home'.
- India's highest peak and the world's third highest mountain 'Mount Kanchenjunga' is situated in Sikkim.
- Kanchenjunga National Park (established in the year 1977), the largest of India's high-altitude conservation areas near the peak.
- Kanchenjunga National Park was designated a World Heritage Site in the year 2016 under the category 'Mixed' (site containing elements of both natural and cultural significance).
- Sikkim is of great political and strategic importance to India due to its location along several international borders.



### National Dengue Day: 16 May.

- Every year on May 16, National Dengue Day is organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare all over India.
- The main purpose of organising this day is to create awareness about dengue among common people.
- The main carrier of the dengue virus is the Aedes aegypti mosquito. Dengue thrives in urban poor areas, suburbs and rural areas but can also affect more affluent neighbouring countries in tropical and subtropical countries.
- Dengue transmission is closely linked with three major factors – rainfall, humidity and temperature, which dictate the geographical areas in which dengue spreads and is transmitted.
- Dengue is spread by the bite of two mosquitoes, Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus.
- Currently, Aedes aegypti is more prevalent in the southern peninsula, eastern seaboard, north-eastern states and northern plains.
- Aedes albopictus is active along the eastern and western coastlines, north-eastern states and lower Himalayas.
- Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by dengue virus (genus flavivirus), transmitted by several species of mosquitoes of the genus Aedes, mainly Aedes aegypti.
- This mosquito is also a carrier of Chikungunya, Yellow Fever and Zika Infection.
- Dengue infection is diagnosed by a blood test and there is no specific medicine to treat the infection.
- The National Vector-Borne Disease Control Program is the central nodal agency for the prevention and control of six vector-borne diseases in India, including malaria, dengue, lymphatic filariasis, kala-azar, Japanese encephalitis and chikungunya. It functions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- To prevent this, every person should keep the place around him clean and should not allow accumulation of water anywhere. Coolers should be cleaned at least once a week. People have also been advised to use mosquito nets and mosquito repellents.



### International Day of Light 2023 celebrated on 16th May.

- The International Day of Light is observed on May 16 every year; The day honours the date of physicist and engineer Theodore Maiman's first productive laser operation in 1960.
- UNESCO's International Basic Science Programme (I.B.S.P.) coordinates the day's celebration on behalf of the United Nations.

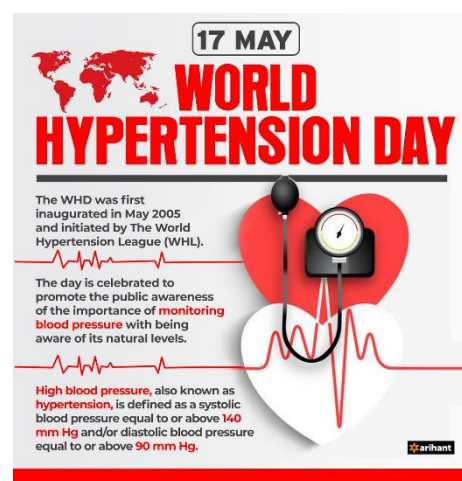


- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally declared 16 May as the International Day of Light.
- The theme for the celebration of IDL 2022 was “International Year of Basic Sciences For Sustainable Development 2022”. Though there is no official announcement for the year 2023 yet.
- In 2015, the International Year of Light was followed by the International Day of Light. The day was proposed by the Russian Federation, Ghana, Mexico, New Zealand, and the Executive Board of UNESCO. In November 2017, the proposal received approval from the UNESCO General Conference. The International Day of Light was declared by the Executive Board of UNESCO during its 200th session (200 EX/Decision 27). In Document 39 C/40, the 39th General Conference endorsed this choice.
- Later on May 16, 2018, the anniversary of the day in 1960 when physicist and engineer Theodore Maiman successfully shot the first laser, UNESCO organised the first International Day of Light event.



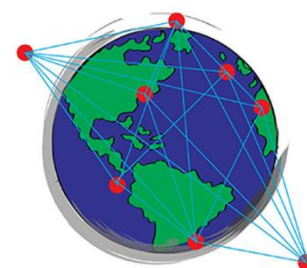
### World Hypertension Day: 17 May

- The primary objective of organising this day is to create awareness among the general public about high blood pressure and encourage people to control it considering its seriousness.
- The theme of World Hypertension Day for the year 2023 is 'Measure your blood pressure accurately, control it, live longer'.
- The primary function of the heart is to filter the blood for the flow of oxygen and energy through the body, and a certain amount of pressure is required for blood to flow through the arteries.
- If the pressure of the blood flow is higher than normal, it puts extra stress on the wall of the arteries. This is called high blood pressure or hypertension (high blood pressure).
- High blood pressure is one of the leading causes of premature death worldwide.
- Noting the seriousness of high blood pressure, it is also called the 'silent killer'.



### World Telecommunication & Information Society Day -WTISD: 17 May

- World Telecommunication and Information Society Day: May 17 marks the anniversary of the creation of the International Telecommunication Union.
- It helps raise awareness about the possibilities that the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), including the Internet, can bring to societies and economies. And how these can bridge the digital divide, a defining feature of the 21st century.
- The theme for this year's celebration is - “Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies”.
- Since 1969, this day has been celebrated as World Telecommunication Day annually.
- However, in November 2005, the UN General Assembly was urged to declare May 17 as World Information Society Day. The General Assembly adopted a resolution in March 2006 and announced that World Information Society Day, too, will be celebrated on this day. In November of the same year, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Turkey decided to celebrate both events on May 17 as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.
- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is an international organisation founded in Paris on May 17, 1865, to regulate and standardise international radio and telecommunications.



World  
Telecommunication  
and  
Information  
Society  
Day

- Its headquarter is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- 'World Telecommunication Society Day' marks the establishment of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in the year 1865, while 'World Information Society Day' marks the ITC outlined by the 'World Summit on the Information Society' (WSIS) Focuses on the importance of ICT and wider issues related to the information society.

### International Museum Day 2023 observed on 18th May

- The 47th International Museum Day, observed on May 18, 2023, is observed with the aim of promoting cultural exchange, enhancing diverse cultures and promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among different communities.
- The International Council of Museums organises it to raise awareness of the importance of museums as important platforms for promoting global harmony and development.
- The theme for the year 2023 is "Museums, Sustainability and Wellbeing". Museums contribute to these goals by collecting, preserving and displaying artefacts that tell the history of our planet and its diverse life forms. It was started in the year 1977 by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the International Museum Expo 2023 at Pragati Maidan in Delhi. During this, he also raised the issue of smuggling of ancient Indian art and antiques. He also urged the people to make conservation of historical artefacts their nature.



### 'International Day for Biological Diversity 2023' observed on 22 May.

- Every year on 22 May, the world observes the International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and encourage conservation of Earth's diverse ecosystems.
- The theme for International Biodiversity Day 2023 is "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity". This theme reflects the urgent need to translate them into tangible actions to restore and conserve biodiversity.
- International Day for Biological Diversity serves as a worldwide platform to emphasise the fundamental importance of biodiversity in sustaining life on our planet.
- May 22, 1992 World leaders recognize the urgent need to tackle the global decline in biodiversity. Under this, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed.
- The United Nations Conference on Biological Diversity (COP15) ended with a historic agreement to guide global action on nature by 2030 in Montreal, Canada, on 19 December 2022. Chaired by China and hosted by Canada, COP 15 adopted the Kunming - Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
- May 21 - National Anti-Terrorism Day
- May 20 - World Metrology Day 2023.



### Nepal designates 2025 as 'Special Tourism Year'.

- During a joint sitting of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, President Ram Chandra Poudel announced that the decade 2080 in the Bikram Samvat calendar would be recognized as the 'Nepal Travel Decade' for the 2080/81 fiscal year and the year 2025 would be recognized as the 'Nepal Travel Decade' for tourism.
- Apart from this, the President announced that foreign nationals who have contributed in promoting the cultural values of Nepal would be conferred with what is called 'Samarmatha Vishesh Samman'.

#### 2025 to be observed as 'special tourism year' in Nepal

- The decade of the 2080s of Bikram Samvat will be marked as 'the Visit Nepal decade' and the year 2025 as the special year for tourism.
- This was announced by the President of Nepal Ram Chandra Paudel while presenting the policies and programmes for the fiscal year, 2080/81 at the joint meeting of the federal parliament.

#### About Nepal

- Capital- Kathmandu
- Currency- Nepalese rupee
- President- Ram Chandra Paudel
- Prime minister- Pushpa Kamal Dahal



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- To further assist in the revival of the country's tourism industry, tourism related laws will be amended, Nepal's tourist destinations will be publicised in the international community and necessary infrastructure will be created accordingly.
- New tourist destinations will be identified in all the seven provinces of Nepal and each province will be converted into a cultural village. New mountains will also be opened for climbing and security arrangements will be significantly beefed up to ensure the safety of climbers and tourists.
- The tourism sector in Nepal had a significant decline due to the COVID-19 crisis, but is slowly picking back up. Recent figures maintained by the Nepal Tourism Board show that since the beginning of 2023, around one lakh tourists are visiting Nepal monthly. In the first four months of this year, Nepal registered over 3.26 lakh foreign tourist arrivals.

### Goa Statehood Day 2023 celebrated on 30th May.

- The smallest state by area, Goa is famous for its beaches and remnants of its colonial past. It attained statehood on 30 May 1987. Therefore, this day is celebrated every year as Statehood Day. This year Goa is celebrating the 36th anniversary of its statehood.
- It was a Portuguese territory since Alfonso de Albuquerque conquered it in 1510 by defeating Adil Shah of Bijapur who ruled the region.
- After it attained statehood, Panaji was given the status of capital of Goa and the Konkani language became the official language. Goa was historically called "Gomantak" in Sanskrit.
- History of Goa:
  - Before 1961, Goa was a colony of Portugal who ruled the region for almost 450 years. After India gained independence in 1947, he requested the Portuguese to leave the Goa territory. However, the Portuguese refused.
  - In 1961, India launched Operation Vijay and Goa and Daman & Diu were annexed to India. Ram Manohar Lohia was another prominent leader of the independence movement of Goa. The Goa Vimochana Sahayak Samiti (All-Party Goa Liberation Committee) formed in 1954 contributed significantly to the independence of Goa.
  - In December 1962, Shri Dayanand Bhandarkar became the first Chief Minister of Goa. A plebiscite was held in the year 1967 and the people of Goa chose to remain as a Union Territory. Later on 30 May 1987, Goa was given the status of 25th full state.



### 'International Everest Day 2023' is celebrated on 29 May 2023.

- Every year on 29 May, the 70th International Everest Day is celebrated to commemorate the 1953 summit of Mount Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa of Nepal.
- Mount Everest is the highest peak at 8,848.86 m above sea level and is located in the Mahalangur subrange of the Himalayas. It is a popular destination for mountaineers and trekkers. International Everest Day is celebrated in a befitting manner in both Nepal and New Zealand.
- The normal route, also called the southeast approach in Nepal, and the northern route in Tibet are the two main routes to reach the top of the mountain.



#### History:

- International Everest Day came into being in 2008, the year Edmund Hillary died. Since then, Nepal has designated May 29 to honor the achievement of Edmund Hillary and Tenzin Norgay.
- Everest is called 'Chomolungma' in Tibetan language. Before the name of Mount Everest, it was known as Peak XV. Later in 1865 it was named 'Mount Everest' in honor of British surveyor Colonel Sir George Everest. In 1956, Nepalese historian Baburam Acharya named it 'Sagarmatha'.



## SPORTS

**Badminton Asia Championships 2023: Satwiksairaj and Chirag Shetty win historic doubles Gold medal in Dubai.**

- Chirag Shetty-Satwiksairaj Rankireddy won India's first title at continental meet since 1965.
- The Indian badminton players beat Malaysia's Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi in the final.
- The previous best performance by an Indian men's doubles pair at the continental event was the bronze medal-finish in 1971 by Dipu Ghosh and Raman Ghosh.
- Overall, this is India's second gold medal at the event. Dinesh Khanna won the men's singles gold in Lucknow in 1965 after beating Thailand's Sangob Rattanusorn.

**Ding Liren becomes China's first world chess champion.**

- Ding Liren has become the 17th world chess champion – the first from China.
- Ding Liren became China's first world chess champion after a rapid-play tie-break victory over Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi in Kazakhstan.
- Ding, 30, takes over as winner of the World Chess Championship from Norway's Magnus Carlsen, who chose not to defend his title after a 10-year reign.
- The prize money of 2 million euros (£1.8m; \$2.2m) will be split 55-45 between the two players.

**Belgium's Brecel wins snooker World Championship title**

- Belgium's Luca Brecel became the first player from continental Europe to win snooker's World Championship as he beat four time champion Mark Selby 18--15 in the final in Sheffield.
- Brecel's victory also meant he joined Canadian Cliff Thorburn (1980), the Republic of Ireland's Ken Doherty (1997) and Australian Neil Robertson (2010) as only the fourth modern-era world champion from outside the United Kingdom at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre.
- Brecel, 28, is just the fourth non-British winner at the Crucible and the first overseas player to triumph since Neil Robertson in 2010.
- The 2023 World Snooker Championship was a professional snooker tournament that took place from 15 April to 1 May 2023 at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England, the 47th consecutive year that the World Snooker Championship was staged at the venue.

**Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Ganemat Sekhon won Gold for India in ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.**

- Shooters Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Ganemat Sekhon won India its first medal in the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt on 30th April.
- They won the gold medal by defeating Mexicans Luis Raul Gallardo Oliveros and Gabriela Rodriguez 6-0 in the skeet mixed team event.
- Italy took bronze through their crack pair of two-time world championship silver medallist Simona Scocchetti and Rio Olympic champion Gabrielle Rossetti.
- Olympian Meraj Ahmad Khan shot 74/75 in the qualifying round to win his 5th Senior ISSF World Cup medal.
- The Indian pair combined for a score of 143 out of 150, equal to Mexico's score.



### Pakistan's first ODI series win over New Zealand in 12 years

- Pakistan registered its first One- Day International series win over New Zealand in 12 years with a hard-fought 26 -run victory in the third match in Karachi. Imam-ul- Haq scored a 107 -ball 90 while Babar Azam made a 62-ball.
- Pakistan, who won the first two matches by five and seven wickets respectively in Rawalpindi, took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.
- Fakhar Zaman hits third successive ton as Pakistan beat New Zealand.
- Pakistan's last ODI series win over New Zealand was in 2011 and since then they had lost six of the seven series, with one drawn.



### Indian archers bagged 14 medals; seven gold, five silver and two bronze — to top the medals tally in a depleted field at the Asia Cup world ranking tournament, Stage-2 in Tashkent.

#### Winning Medals:

- Gold medal - Men's Individual - Abhishek Verma
- Gold medal - Women's Individual - Raginee Markoo
- Gold medal - Men's team - Abhishek Verma, Kushal Dalal and Amit
- Gold medal - Women's team - Pragati, Praneet Kaur and Raginee Markoo
- Gold medal - Mixed team - Parneet Kaur and Abhishek Verma
- Gold medal - Men's team - Jayanta Talukdar, Mrinal Chauhan and Tushar Shelke
- Gold medal - Mixed team - Sangeeta and Mrinal Chauhan
- Silver medal - Men's Individual - Mrinal Chauhan
- Silver medal - Women's Individual - Sangeeta
- Silver medal - Women's team - Sangeeta, Madhu Vedwan and Tanisha Verma
- Silver medal - Men's Individual - Amit
- Silver medal - Women's Individual - Pragati
- Bronze medal - Men's Individual - Kushal Dalal
- Bronze medal - Women's Individual - Praneet Kaur



### Neeraj spears gold with a world leading effort of 88.67m.

- Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra defeated Grenada's World champion Anderson Peters to win the Diamond League season opener in Doha with World -leading 88.67m
- Peters had won the gold in Doha last year with a personal best 93.07m but he has had a string of mediocre throws this season and Neeraj began as the favorite.
- Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch was second with 88.63 while Peters was third with 85.88.



### Babar Azam became the first batsman to score the fastest 5000 runs in ODI cricket.

- Pakistan's captain Babar Azam created history on 05 May 2023 in the fourth ODI against New Zealand. Babar Azam has become the batsman to score fastest 5,000 runs in ODI cricket in the shortest innings.
- Babar Azam crossed the 5,000-run mark in just 97 innings and became the 14th player in the world to achieve this feat.
- Before Babar, this record was in the name of former South African veteran Hashim Amla. Amla completed his 5,000 runs in the ODI format in 101 innings.





- Former West Indies legend Vivian Richards completed his 5,000 runs in ODIs in 114 innings. Former Indian team captain Virat Kohli is also fourth in this list with 114 innings.
- Pakistani captain Babar Azam has become the cricketer to score fastest 18 centuries in ODI cricket. He scored his 18th century in the 4th ODI against New Zealand. Babar took 97 innings to score his 18th ODI century and broke the record of former South African cricketer Hashim Amla who achieved the feat in 102 innings.

### Sabalenka reclaims 21st Edition Madrid Open crown.

- World No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka beat top ranked World No. 1 Iga Swiatek And won the Madrid Open (Women's Singles) for the second time.
- Carlos Alcaraz wins Madrid Open (Men's Singles) against Jan-Lennard Struff to win his fourth ATP Tour trophy of the year and his 10th overall.
- Men's doubles: Karen Khachanov / Andrey Rublev
- Women's doubles: Victoria Azarenka / Brazil Beatriz Haddad Maia

#### Madrid Open:

- Edition: 21st (men)
- Category: ATP Tour Masters 1000 (men)
- Surface: Outdoor Clay
- Location: Park Manzanares, Madrid, Spain



### Praveen breaks National record at a meet in Cuba.

- Indian athlete Praveen Chithravel won the men's triple jump event at an athletics meet in Havana, Cuba, with a national record-breaking mark of 17.37 meter.
- The previous men's triple jump national record of 17.30 meter was set by Renjith Maheswary at the third Indian Grand Prix in Bangalore in 2016.
- Praveen Chithravel achieved his record-breaking mark with his fifth jump at the Prueba de confrontation 2023 with a headwind reading of -1.5m/s. The permissible wind assistance for official records is +2.0m/s.



### Sable, Parul break National records.

- Olympian Avinash Sable broke his own 5000m National record in the Sound Running Track Festival, a World Athletics Continental Tour- Silver event, at Walnut, California, USA,
- Sable clocked 13:19.30s to better his record by more than five seconds while finishing 12th in the men's 5000m.
- Meanwhile, 2019 Asian bronze medallist Parul Chaudhary's shattered 2010 Asian Games silver medallist Preeja Sreedharan's 12 year old women's 5000m National record clocking 15:10.35s for the ninth spot.



### Laureus Awards 2023: Messi scoops individual, team double; Fraser-Pryce honoured.

- Lionel Messi was named the World Sportsman of the Year during the 2023 Laureus Awards ceremony in Paris.
- Argentina and Paris Saint Germain veteran star Lionel Messi scooped a unique double, landing individual and team Laureus awards for his exploits and those of his World Cup-winning nation.
- Messi, 35, finally landed a first World Cup winners medal in Qatar last December after a thrilling penalty shootout final win over France - enough to earn him an





individual accolade while the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner also accepted the team award at a prestigious Paris ceremony.

### 2023 Laureus World Sports Awards- All the winners:

- Lionel Messi- Sportsman of the Year
- **Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce- Sportswoman of the Year**
- Argentina national football team- Team of the Year
- Christian Eriksen- Comeback of the Year
- Carlos Alcaraz- Breakthrough of the Year
- Catherine Debrunner- Sportsperson with Disability
- Eileen Gu- Action Sportsperson
- TeamUp- Sports for Good Award

### Fakhar and Naruemol are ICC players of the month for April.

- Pakistan batter Fakhar Zaman & Thailand skipper Naruemol Chaiwai were named ICC men's and women's players of the month for April respectively, after both produced match- winning performances for their countries in ODIs.
- Fakhar becomes the first Pakistan player to win the monthly accolade since Sidra Ameen in November 2022.
- Naruemol had consistent high scores in Thailand's historic ODI series victory against Zimbabwe.



### Former World No. 1 Murray claims his first title since 2019.

- Former World No. 1 Andy Murray won his first title since 2019 with victory at the Aix-en-Provence Challenger in Marseille.
- The three time Grand Slam champion Murray had gone without a title since he triumphed in Antwerp in October 2019.
- Murray, now ranked 52, defeated top seed Tommy Paul, the World No. 17 from the USA in the final of the clay court event.



### India won 3 medals in Asian Weightlifting Championship 2023.

- Asian Weightlifting Championship 2023 held in Jinju, South Korea.
- India won 3 Silver Medals.
- 1. Medalist Bindaryani Devi (Women's 55kg) - Silver Medal in Overall 2. Bindaryani Devi (Women's 55kg) - Silver Medal in Clean & Jerk 3. Lalrinnunga (Men's 67kg) - Silver Medal in Snatch.
- Ajit Narayan and Achinta Sheuli were the only two Indian lifters to compete in the men's 73 kg category. However, the pair failed to add to India's medal tally.



### Qatar to host the 2027 World Cup in men's basketball.

- FIBA, the international governing body for basketball, announced that Doha, Qatar would host the 2027 men's World Cup. The Middle Eastern nation just hosted the soccer World Cup — the world's largest sporting event — last fall.
- Additionally, FIBA said Berlin, Germany would host the 2026 women's World Cup.
- The 2022 women's World Cup, in Australia, was won by Team USA. Spain is the defending men's World Cup champion.



- No. 89-ranked Qatar team will qualify automatically as hosts, having last played in the event at 2006 world championships, losing all five games.

### Goa to host the National -ranking pickleball tournament.

- The third National Ranking Pickleball Tournament will be organised by the All India Pickleball Association (AIPA) from May 19 to 21.
- AIPA will conduct the tournament in association with the Goa Pickleball Association and Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, Goa.
- The competition will be held at the Fatorda Stadium.
- The previous two editions were held at Pune in 2019 and at Dombivli, near Mumbai in 2021.



### ISSF World Cup Baku 2023

- Sarabjot Singh and T.S. Divya beat World champions Zorana Arunovic and Damir Mikec of Serbia to clinch the mixed air pistol gold in the World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- It was the second medal for India, following the women's air pistol bronze by Rhythm Sangwan. India was second in the medal table behind China which had one gold and one silver.



### Haryana crowned sub -junior National women's champion.

- The 13th Hockey India sub junior women's National concluded in Rourkela with defending champion Hockey Haryana emerging the winner defeating Hockey Jharkhand 3-2. After Sangita Kumari (seventh minute) and Ankita Minz (27th) put Jharkhand ahead, Bhavya (25th and 58th) equalised. Meenakshi (36th) also scored a goal for the champion.



### 3 new rules of cricket announced by ICC.

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has prepared a set of new rules of cricket administration which are to come into effect from 1 June 2023. It has been recommended by the men's cricket committee headed by Sourav Ganguly.
- These new rules aim to address the fundamental features of cricket, whilst also assuring safety and clarity for players and umpires.
- These rules are coming into force from the four-day Test match between England and Ireland starting on 1 June at Lord's. These rules will also be implemented in the World Test Championship final between India and Australia from June 7.



#### New Rules:

1. Umpires no longer need to give a 'soft signal' to the third umpire or TV umpire while recommending something. Now the third umpire is free to take his decision without any bias.
2. Helmets and safety equipment have now been made mandatory for the batsman who is facing the fast bowler, the wicketkeeper standing in front of the fast bowler and the fielders in the closing position.
3. Third Law If the ball hits the wicket on a free-hit chance and the batsman takes a run, it will count as a run scored by the batsman. This is likely to give an edge to the batting team.

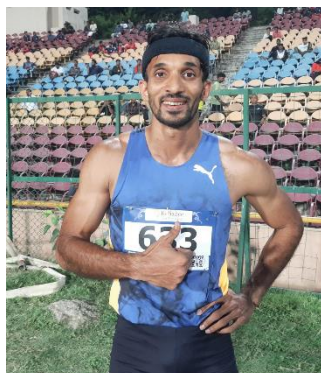


**'South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championship 2023' held in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.**

- South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championship 2023 held in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh from 14 to 17 May 2023. Officials and more than a hundred athletes from 6 countries Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal participated in this championship.
- The championship is organised under the auspices and authority of Asian Table Tennis Union and Table Tennis Federation of India in association with NHPC and Sports Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- On this occasion, Arunachal Pradesh Governor K. T. Parnaik participated in the closing ceremony and presented medals to the winners
- In Under-15 Girls Team Category, Under-15 Boys Team Category and Under-19 Girls Category, Indian players displayed their exceptional skills and won three gold medals
- In the Under-19 boys' singles event, Ankur Bhattacharjee won the gold medal by defeating Payas Jain 4-2
- In the U-19 girls' singles event, Suhana Saini defeated Yashaswini Ghorpade 4-1 in a one-sided final.
- In mixed doubles, Payas Jain and Yashaswini Ghorpade won the gold medal after defeating their Maldivian opponents Akhayar Ahmed Khalid and Fathimath Dhema Ali.

**Abdulla and Jyothi won triple jump and 200m respectively, making the cut for the Asians.**

- Abdulla Aboobacker and Jyothi Yarraji won the men's triple jump and women's 200m gold respectively in the 26th National Federation Cup athletics championships, and made the grade for the Asians to be held in Thailand, here on Thursday.
- Ancy Sojan took the women's long jump gold with 6.56m, Chanda broke Tintu Luka's seven year old meet record in the women's 800m and javelin thrower Rohit Yadav upset D.P. Manu took the title with a personal best 83.40m.

**China lifted their third consecutive Sudirman Cup title with victory on home soil.**

- China clinched their third consecutive Sudirman Cup with a 3-0 victory against South Korea on home soil in Suzhou.
- Chen Yufei defeated world number two An Se Young 21-16, 22-20 in the women's singles to seal victory.
- The tournament is one of badminton's most important, and the stakes are higher than usual this year because performances will count towards qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- China had come through a tricky semi-final against Japan, with the men's doubles pair of Liu Yuchen and Ou Xuanyi saving four match points before finally prevailing.
- South Korea beat Malaysia 3-1 on their way to the final.
- Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong lost the opening game of the mixed doubles but pulled it back in a tense point-for-point second game to eventually triumph 18-21, 22-20, 21-8.





**Italian Open: Rybakina wins title as injured Kalinina retires.**

- Elena Rybakina wins the Italian Open after Anhelina Kalinina retires due to a thigh injury.
- Kazakhstan tennis star Elena Rybakina lifted her second title of the year by winning the Italian Open after opponent Anhelina Kalinina retired due to a thigh injury.
- Reigning Wimbledon champion and World No. 6 Rybakina was leading 6--4, 1--0 when Kalinina called it quits with a left thigh injury.
- The Kazakhstan star became just the 6th woman since the introduction of the WTA 1000 format in 2009 to win a Grand Slam or Masters title on every surface following in the footsteps of Serena Williams, Petra Kvitova, Simona Halep, Garbine Muguruza and Ash Barty.

**The Indian boys and girls' teams have won the Asian under--12 tennis championship in Dhaka.**

- The boys — Vivaan Mirdha, Smit Undre and Rishikesh Mane — won all five league matches 3-0 each against Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal. The team had Indra Kumar Mahajan as coach.
- The girls' team of Karthika Padmakumar, Srishti Kiran and Niesha Enja beat
- Sri Lanka and Bangladesh 3-0 each. It also beat Bhutan 2-1, but lost 1-2 to Maldives. India tied with Sri Lanka and Maldives with three wins each, but emerged champion on the basis of better match- winning percentage. The girls had Asha Sharma as coach.

**Manchester City Won the Premier League title with a 1-0 win over Chelsea.**

- Julian Alvarez scored the only goal in City's 1-0 win over Chelsea.
- Man City extended their winning streak to 12 consecutive victories in the league.
- City have 88 points from 36 matches, 7 ahead of second-placed Arsenal.
- The match, held at the sun-soaked Etihad Stadium, saw Julian Alvarez score an early goal in the 12th minute, securing the win for City in their final home game of the season.
- Having already secured the title when Arsenal lost to Nottingham Forest the day before, City extended their winning streak to 12 consecutive victories in the league. They currently sit at the top of the table with 88 points from 36 matches, seven points ahead of second-placed Arsenal, who have played 37 games.
- Chelsea, managed by interim coach Frank Lampard, currently occupy the 12th position with 43 points and one game remaining.
- Brighton secured European football for the first time in its history with a 3--1 win against Southampton.
- Borussia Dortmund is one win away from its first Bundesliga title in a decade, after two second half goals from Sebastian Haller delivered a 3-0 win at Augsburg.
- Dortmund is now two points clear of Bayern Munich with one match remaining.
- Man City celebrate their fifth Premier League title in six seasons with win vs. Chelsea.

**Medvedev wins the maiden title “the Italian Open” which is played on clay court.**

- In the Italian Open final, world number three tennis star Daniil Medvedev defeated Holger Rune to win his first clay court title.
- In the men's singles final, Daniil Medvedev (Russian player) defeated Holger Rune (20-year-old Danish player).

- This is Medvedev's 5th title of 2023 and the win has lifted him above Novak Djokovic to the second spot in the world rankings.
- He won his 20th career title. He will also be seeded second in the French Open, which begins on 28th May 2023 at Roland Garros.
- Hugo Nieves and Jan Zielinski have captured the men's doubles title in Rome. The Monegasque-Polish pair won their 1st ATP Masters 1000 title by defeating Robin Haase and Botic van de Zandschulp in the men's doubles final.
- The Australian-Belgian pair of Storm Hunter and Elise Mertens defeated top-seeded Americans Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula to become the women's doubles champions.
- Earlier, Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina won her 4th WTA title with a win in the women's singles final.



### Italian Open:

- The Italian Open inception in 1930.
- It consists of five main draw events: Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles.
- The tournament is held at the **Foro Italico sports complex in Rome.**
- The Italian Open hosts both ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) and WTA (Women's Tennis Association) tournaments simultaneously.

### BCCI Ropes In Adidas As Official Kit Sponsor For Indian Cricket Teams, replacing interim sponsor Kewal Kiran Clothing Limited.

- The Adidas contract is likely to start in June of this year and finish in March of 2028.
- Adidas is a German multinational corporation best known for the design and manufacture of athletic footwear, apparel, and equipment.
- It is the largest sportswear manufacturer globally and has a significant presence in cricket, serving as the kit sponsor for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA).



### Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI):

- It is the national governing body for cricket in India and is headquartered near the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.
- The BCCI organises domestic and international cricket tournaments and series.
- Establishment -December 1928
- President - Roger Binny
- CEO - Hemang Amin

### Neeraj becomes numero uno in latest javelin rankings.

- Neeraj Chopra, who became the first Indian to win a gold medal in a track and field event at the Tokyo Olympics, leads reigning world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada by 22 points.
- Chopra began his 2023 season by winning the first Diamond League meeting in Doha on May 6 with a world-leading effort of 88.67m.
- The 25-year-old Indian will next be in action at the Fanny Blankers-Koen Games at Hengelo, the Netherlands on June 4 followed by the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku in Finland on June 13.



### Top 5 in Men's Javelin Throw (as per rankings released by World Athletics on May 16, 2023)

1. Neeraj Chopra (IND) - 1455 points
2. Anderson Peters (GRN) - 1433 points

3. Jakub Vadlejch (CZE) - 1416 points
4. Julian Weber (GER) - 1385 points
5. Arshad Nadeem (PAK) - 1306 points

### Khelo India University Games 2022 started in Uttar Pradesh on 25 May 2023.

- The 3rd edition of Khelo India University Games (KIUG) started from May 23 in Uttar Pradesh. The official opening ceremony of KIUG 22UP took place on 25 May 2023 in Lucknow. KIUG22UP will conclude on 3 June 2023 at Varanasi.
- The edition of KIUG 22UP will see over 4000 athletes representing 207 universities across 21 sports. The University Games will run for 12 days, starting with Kabaddi in Gautam Buddha Nagar.
- The 10-day multi-sport event will be held in Lucknow, Varanasi, Greater Noida and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, while the shooting game will be held in New Delhi.
- Water sports will also start for the first time in this season of University Games, which will be held at Tal Lake in Ramgarh, Gorakhpur. Babu Banarasi Das University in Lucknow has been converted into a sports village for the Khelo India University Games 2023.



#### First and Second Edition:

- The **1st edition** was held in **Odisha** from 2 February - 1 March 2020 and "**Panjab University**" was the winner, whereas the **2nd edition** in 2021 Games were held in **Karnataka** on 24 April 3 May 2022. Its **winner** was "**Jain University, Karnataka.**"
- Jain University swimmer Shiv Sridhar won the most number of individual medals - seven gold and two silver - at KIUG 2021.

#### Khelo India University Games:

- KIUG is part of the Khelo India initiative of the Government of India, which focuses on promoting sports at the grassroots level and identifying young talent from across the country.
- It is organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, as well as the Association of Indian Universities, the Indian Olympic Association and the National Sports Federation.
- Major Sports include Volleyball, Tennis, Football, Shooting, Swimming, Wrestling, Hockey, Rowing, Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Boxing, Weightlifting, Judo, Fencing, and Yogasana.

### India won two medals for the first time in women's skeet competition in 'ShotGun Shooting Competition' held in Kazakhstan.

- India has won two medals in the women's skeet event at the International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup in Shotgun Shooting competition in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was the first time that India won two individual medals in women's skeet at the Senior ISSF World Cup.
- Ganimat Sheikh won the silver medal in this competition. Darshana Rathore participated in senior events for the first time and won her first bronze medal. This is Ganimat's second individual World Cup medal while Darshana has won a medal in her first final at the senior level
- Maheshwari Chauhan, the third Indian woman skeet shooter to compete in the individual event, was eliminated after finishing 26th in a 35-shooter field.
- In the men's skeet, none of the three Indians made it to the finals. Meraj Khan shot 119 to finish 16th while Gurjot Khangura finished 18th with the same score. Anantjit Singh Naruka could get only 118 marks.





### WTC winner to receive \$1.6 million

- The winner of June 2023 World Test Championship (WTC) final between India and Australia will take home \$1.6 million in prize money, while the runner-up will receive \$800,000.
- The championship decider will be played at The Oval, London from June 7-11 with June 12 as the reserve day. The tournament prize money is the same as that for the inaugural World Test Championship Final in 2019-21 -- a total purse of \$3.8 million besides the WTC Mace..
- The Kane Williamson-led New Zealand side was rewarded with \$1.6 million besides the glittering Mace in Southampton two years ago, courtesy an eight-wicket win over India in the six-day final.
- All nine teams will get a share in the \$3.8 million purse with South Africa earning \$4,50,000 for finishing third in the WTC 2021-23 standings.



### The Indian claims his maiden BWF World Tour title with a three game win over Weng; Yamaguchi takes the honours in the women's section.

- Malaysia Masters 2023 Finals, Prannoy defeats Weng, wins maiden BWF World Tour Title.
- Malaysia Masters 2023 tournament held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- India's H. S. Prannoy defeated Weng Hong Yang of China. Prannoy wins his first BWF World Tour Title
- H .S. Prannoy ended a six year long title drought with a three game win over China's Weng Hong Yang in a pulsating men's singles final at the Malaysia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament.
- The win not only helped Prannoy claim his maiden BWF World Tour title but also the first singles crown of the year for India. He was also richer by \$ 31,500 for being the champion.
- This week, Prannoy gave ample display of his physical and mental fortitude as he outfoxed World No. 5 Chou Tien Chen, All England champion Li Shi Feng and Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in three games.
- Women's singles fi-nal, topped by Akane Yamaguchi of Japan defeated Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung.



### New mum Svitolina wins first title since comeback.

- Former world no. 3 Elina Svitolina completed a winning return from maternity leave by lifting her 17th WTA trophy in Strasbourg.
- The Ukrainian, Elina Svitolina, who returned to action last month after more than a year away, swept past Russian Anna Blinkova.
- Blinkova, ranked 66, could find no way past an aggressive and determined Svitolina, who reclaimed the Strasbourg title she won in 2020.



### Dia bests Kazakhstan to clinch volleyball gold.

- India defeated Kazakhstan in the final to clinch gold in the Central Asian Volleyball Associations (CAVA) Volleyball Challenge Cup for Women in Kathmandu. The Indian team was led by Nirmal Tanwar.
- Professor Dr. Achyuta Samanta, MP and president, Volleyball Federation of India (VFI), S. Vasudevan, chairman, VFI, and other office-bearers congratulated the players and the coaching staff.
- Pritam Singh Chauhan was the head coach and Vaishali Phadtare the assistant coach.



## **Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the first Indian with 300 dismissals in T20s with Shubhman Gill (of Gujarat Titans) stumping in IPL 2023 final.**

- Chennai Super Kings captain MS Dhoni became the first Indian to record 300 dismissals in T20 cricket during the IPL 2023 final against Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- Dhoni recorded the feat when he stumped GT opener Shubman Gill off Ravindra Jadeja's bowling. Dhoni's reaction time was clocked at a staggering 0.1 seconds.
- The 41-year-old extended his tally with the catch of Wriddhiman Saha.
- Dhoni is also the first player who has played 250 IPL matches, having captained 226 of them.



## **Magnus Carlsen wins the 2023 Super Bowl Rapid and Blitz Poland.**

- Five-time world chess champion Magnus Carlsen has won the 2023 Super Bowl Rapid & Blitz Poland, the second leg of the Grand Chess Tour (GCT) at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.
- The event was organised from 19-26 May 2023. World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, the Norwegian Grandmaster, finished first with a score of 24/36 and won a cash prize of \$40,000.
- Second was Jan Krzysztof Duda, the defending champion, just one point behind with 23/36.
- Wesley of the United States and Maxime Vachier Lagrave of France tied for third, each with 21.5 points, with Levon Aronian fifth with 20.5.
- The Grand Chess Tour 2023 will feature 2 classical chess tournaments and 3 rapid and blitz tournaments across Europe and the United States.
- The new season SuperBet Chess Classic begins in Romania followed by three rapid and blitz tournaments in Warsaw, Zagreb and St.Louis and the final classical event, the Sinquefeld Cup in December 2023 in St.Louis, USA.



## **Chennai Super Kings beat Gujarat Titans by 5 wickets to win the IPL 2023 title.**

- Chennai Super Kings defeated Gujarat Titans by 5 wickets in the final of 16th IPL 2023 played on 29- 30 May 2023 at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad. Chennai got a target of 215 by GT, but due rain delayed the match the target was reduced to 171 in 15 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis method.
- Dhoni's CSK won the 5th IPL title, Hero of the match Jadeja helped his team win the title by hitting Mohit for a six and a four over long on in the last over. Devon Conway of Chennai was adjudged Player of the Match.
- CSK, who finished ninth last year, equaled Mumbai Indians with their fifth title in the IPL. Captain Dhoni, playing his 11th final, also equaled Rohit Sharma, who won the most titles as captain.
- Earlier, Chennai had won the title in the years 2010, 2011, 2018 and 2021. Mumbai Indians became the winner of IPL 5 times in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020 and Kolkata Knight Riders 2 times in 2012, 2014.

### **IPL 2023:**

- The opening ceremony of the cricket tournament was held on 30 March 2023. The 1st match was played between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on 31 March.
- In 2020 and 2021, the tournament was held in UAE due to Covid. In the year 2022, the tournament was narrowed down to only two venues - Mumbai and Pune.
- Two new teams were added to the Indian Premier League for the year 2022 season – Gujarat Titans and Lucknow SuperGiants.

### **Major Awards:**

- Winner- Chennai Super Kings (CSK) (Rs 20 crore)

- Runner-up- Gujarat Titans (GT) (12.5 crores)
- 3rd place - Mumbai Indians (MI)
- Fourth place - Lucknow SuperGiants (LSG)
- Best venues of the season - Eden Gardens and Wankhede Stadium
- IPL Fair Play Award - Delhi Capitals (DC)
- Orange Cap (890 runs), Most Four Award, Game Changer of the Tournament, Most Valuable Asset of the Tournament - Shubman Gill (GT)
- Purple Cap - Mohammed Shami (GT) 28 wickets
- Fairplay of the Season Award - Ajinkya Rahane
- Super Striker of the Tournament - Glenn Maxwell
- Longest Six Award – Faf du Plessis (115m)
- Catch of the Tournament Award - Rashid Khan
- Emerging Player of the Season - Yashasvi Jaiswal



## BOOKS & AUTHORS

**“Saurashtra-Tamil Sangam Prashasti” book authored by Somnath Sanskrit University has been launched by PM Modi during the closing ceremony of ‘Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam’.**

- Saurashtra-Tamil Sangam was an ancient Tamil merchant guild that operated in the region of Saurashtra, present-day Gujarat, in western India. The guild was known for its flourishing trade and cultural exchanges between the Tamil and Saurashtra regions.
- Somnath Sanskrit University is a state university located in Somnath, Gujarat, India, that offers courses in Sanskrit and other Indian languages.



**Union Culture Ministry Decided to Release a 12-Part Comic Book Series Based On the Themes and People Featured in Prime Minister Modi’s Mann Ki Baat Programme.**

- Mann Ki Baat is a radio program hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where he addresses the nation on various issues and themes. The program has gained immense popularity since its inception in 2014, and the comic book series based on the program's themes and people could be an innovative way to reach out to a wider audience, especially children.
- The special project is being implemented by Amar Chitra Katha, which will release the series in English, followed by translations in 12 Indian languages.
- The Ministry took this decision to mark the 100th episode of the Mann Ki Baat programme which will broadcast on 30th of this month. In addition to the comic book series, the Culture Ministry will also hold projection mapping shows at 13 iconic ASI monuments, including Delhi’s Red Fort and the PM’s Museum, starting 29th April.



**Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released the book “Reflections” by Renowned Banker Narayanan Vaghul in Mumbai.**

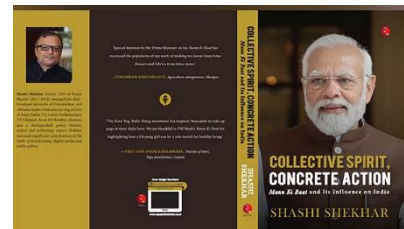
- The book is a vivid account of Mr. Vaghul's experiences in India's financial landscape over the decades.
- Shri KV Kamath, Chairman, National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NABFID), Ajay Piramal, Chairman, Piramal Group, J.P. Kalpana Morparia, former president of Morgan South and SouthEast Asia, was also present during the launch of the book.





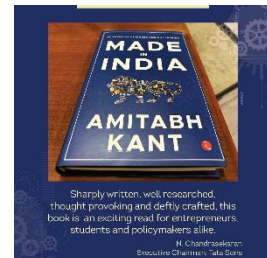
## “Collective Spirit, Concrete Action” book by former Prasar Bharti CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati (2017-2022).

- The book was released during a day-long National Conclave on Mann Ki Baat @100 held in the national capital on April 26.
- “Collective Spirit, Concrete Action” is a literary journey that documents one of the most popular radio programmes, “Mann Ki Baat”.



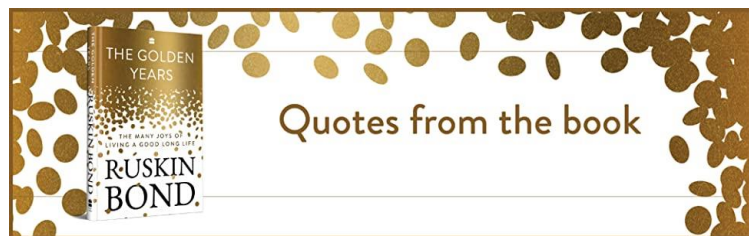
## Amitabh Kant's book "Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise" released.

- Amitabh Kant, a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer who served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) (2016-2022) has authored the book “Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise” published by Rupa Publication India.
- The book coincides with India reaching a significant milestone by becoming the world's 5th largest economy, surpassing its former colonial master, the United Kingdom (UK), after 75 years of independence.
- Other Books by Amitabh Kant: “Branding India – An Incredible Story”, “Incredible India 2.0”, “Editor of – The Path Ahead – Transformative Ideas for India”.



## Ruskin Bond shares details of his new book “The Golden Years”.

- Ahead of his birthday on May 19, author Ruskin Bond recently shared details about his new book. Born on May 19, 1934, Ruskin Bond will turn 89 this month.
- Bond said, "It's called 'The Golden Years' because it's really about the last 20, 30 years of my life, my 60s, 70s and 80s. It's published by HarperCollins India. This time it is not a children's book, nor is it a novel or a collection of short stories.



- Dr. Manoj Kumar's book - “Supreme Court on Commercial Arbitration”
  - The book titled 'Supreme Court on Commercial Arbitration' written by Dr. Manoj Kumar and edited by Shri R.K. Venkataramani, Releasing on 13 May 2023.
  - The book contains compilations of decisions of the Arbitration Act 1940 and 1996 from the years 1988 to 2022. This book was released as the founder's day of “Hammurabi and Solomon Partners”.
  - There are several legal precedents on commercial arbitration established by the Supreme Court in the country which cover several statistical frameworks. This work has been prepared in the form of a three-volume compilation containing major decisions of the Arbitration Act 1940 and the Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996 from the years 1988 to 2022.

## Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria released the book 'Partitioned Freedom'.

- Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria released a book titled 'Partitioned Freedom' written by Ram Madhav at a function in Guwahati.
- Speaking about the book, Governor Kataria said, “India is the oldest civilization in the world and has always been seen as the land of wealth and knowledge.
- India is credited with developing philosophy, mathematics, science and a very high level of technology, which attracted scholars from all over the world.
- Before the arrival of the British, Indian goods were internationally recognized for their quality and craftsmanship. India had a much larger presence in industry and manufacturing than any other country in Europe or Asia.



- The Governor further said that the people of the country are working very hard to reduce the problems arising out of partition and take the country forward by using the ancient glory and heritage of the past.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### First batch of 5 women Army officers commissioned into artillery regiment; 3 posted to units along LAC.

- In a historic first, the Indian Army has inducted five women officers into its Regiment of Artillery and three of them have been posted to frontline formations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.
- Lt Mehak Saini, Lt Sakshi Dubey, Lt Aditi Yadav, Lt Pious Mudgil and Lt Akanksha have joined the Army's premier artillery units after successfully completing their training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai.



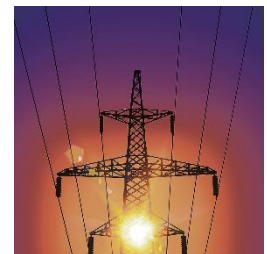
### Trade pact lifts India's FY23 exports to UAE to \$31.3 bn

- India's exports to UAE may reach \$50 bn by FY27.
- Exports from India to the UAE have grown by almost 12% in 2022--23 to hit \$31.3 billion, more than double the 5.3% growth in India's overall exports, following the implementation of the bilateral trade pact (CEPA) last May,
- "During the CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) Implementation period (May 2022 to March 2023), bilateral trade increased from \$67.5 billion a year earlier to \$76.9 billion – an annual increase of 14%," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said.
- While oil continues to dominate trade between the two nations, India's automotive exports to the UAE jumped 42% while imports of aircraft parts from the Emirates surged more than 50-fold — from a mere \$39 million in 2021--22 to almost \$2 billion last fiscal.
- India's imports from the UAE grew 18.8% to \$53.2 billion in 2022--23, faster than the 16.1% increase in its overall import bill.
- In terms of utilization, the CEPA has already surpassed all free trade pacts entered into by India, barring the one with ASEAN, citing the issuance of over 54,100 certificates of origin to traders since its implementation.
- Under the CEPA, the UAE eliminated duties on 97.4% of its tariff lines on goods corresponding to 99% of imports from India. India has obtained immediate duty elimination on more than 80% of its tariff lines corresponding to 90% of India's exports in value terms.



### India's power use dips 1.1% to 130.57 billion units in April

- India's power consumption dipped for the second month in a row by 1.1% to 130.57 billion units in April, as widespread rains prompted people to use fewer cooling appliances. Power consumption was also affected in March due to widespread rains.
- In the year-ago period, power consumption stood at 132.02 billion units (BU), higher than 117.08 BU in April 2021.



### Judgebir Singh @ Jasbir Singh @ Jasbir and others vs National Investigation Agency and others

- If chargesheet is filed on time, No question of Default Bail: SC
- Chargesheet Not Incomplete Merely Because It Was Filed Without Sanction; Accused Can't Seek Default Bail On That Ground : Supreme Court
- The Supreme Court held the accused person would not be entitled to default bail on the ground that the chargesheet filed against them is without a sanction of valid authority and hence is an incomplete charge-sheet.



- SC held that an accused is not entitled to seek default bail on the grounds that the chargesheet, though filed within the requisite period, remains “incomplete” for lack of sanction under Section 167 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Whether the sanction of a valid authority for charge-sheet was required was not a question to be addressed while taking cognisance of an offence, rather, it was a question to be addressed during prosecution and such prosecution started after the cognisance of an offence was taken.
- Once the chargesheet has been filed within the stipulated time, the question of grant of statutory/default bail does not arise. Whether cognisance has been taken or not taken is not relevant for the purpose of compliance with Section 167.
- According to Section 167 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), an accused will be entitled to default bail if the investigating agency fails to file a chargesheet within 60 days from the date of remand. For certain categories of offences, the stipulated period can be extended to 90 days.
- Section 167 of CrPC provides for “default bail” and permits the release of an accused person on bail if the investigation against them is not complete.
- The rationale behind Section 167 is to ensure that the investigation is completed within the period prescribed. As per the provision, the investigation should be completed within the first 24 hours. In terms of Section 167(1), if the investigation cannot be completed within the period of 24 hours is to be transmitted to the Magistrate who is supposed to consider whether the accused be remanded to custody or not.

### Justice T.S. Sivagnanam Appointed as the new Chief Justice of Calcutta HC.

- Justice TS Sivagnanam took oath as the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court. The oath was administered by Governor CV Ananda Bose.
- The central government had notified the appointment of Justice TS Sivagnanam, the senior most judge of the Calcutta High Court, as the Chief Justice of the High Court.
- Until recently, he was serving as the acting Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court.
- Addressing the gathering after the ceremony, the chief justice said he will not leave any stone unturned to ensure the protection of the rights of the people of West Bengal, and uphold democracy and the rule of law, reported news agency PTI.



### Shilpa Sailesh v. Varun Sreenivasan

[SC says it can end wait for consensual divorce]

- SC says it can use its extraordinary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant divorce on grounds of irretrievable breakdown of marriage if separation is inevitable and damage irreparable; which is not yet a statutorily recognised ground.
- The Constitution Bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, A.S. Oka, Vikram Nath, and J.K. Maheshwari pronounced the verdict and also held that the mandatory waiting period of six months for divorce by mutual consent can be dispensed with subject to the requirements and conditions laid down in the previous judgments.
- The conclusion of the judgment is as follows: "This Court, in the exercise of power under Article 142(1) of the Constitution of India, has the discretionary power to be exercised to do ‘complete justice’ to the parties, wherein this Court is satisfied that the facts established show that the marriage has completely failed and there is no possibility that the parties will cohabit together, and continuation of the formal legal relationship is unjustified. The Court, as a court of equity, is required to also balance the circumstances and the background in which the party opposing the dissolution is placed".

### SC says it can end wait for consensual divorce

“The judgment does not mean people can rush straight to the Supreme Court for a quick divorce. It means that the Supreme Court, using great care and caution, can invoke Article 142 to deal with certain cases which come to it by way of transfer petitions or appeals in civil or criminal matrimonial cases.”



### After Bihar, Odisha begins a survey of OBC castes.

- The Odisha government is conducting the survey of people from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) belonging to 210 castes in the State to determine their social and educational status between 01/05/2023 and 27/05/2023.
- The Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) is conducting the survey across 314 blocks and 114 urban local bodies.
- The objective of the survey is to get a picture of the present social and educational conditions of the people belonging to backward classes in Odisha.
- The state government said in a notification that the survey will be carried out under the powers conferred by the OSCBC Act, 1993 and OSCBC (Amendment) Act, 2020.



### Pakistan sees the highest inflation rate in South Asia; Consumer prices rose to 36.4% in April from a year earlier, the highest since 1964.

- Pakistan consumer prices rose a record 36.4% in the year to April, the highest inflation rate in South Asia, up from March's previous record of 35.4%, the statistics bureau said.
- Pakistan's rural areas recorded food inflation of 40.2%. Food inflation for both rural and urban areas reached 48.1%, the highest since FY16 when the bureau started recording the categories separately.
- Pakistan has been in economic turmoil for months with an acute balance of payments crisis while talks with the International Monetary Fund to secure \$1.1 billion as part of a \$6.5 billion bailout have not been successful.
- Inflation in Pakistan surged to a record level in April on higher food prices, weaker currency and rising energy costs.
- Transport prices climbed 56.8% while food inflation quickened 48.1% in April from a year earlier, data showed. Food prices rose 2.4% in April from March, the bureau said.



### The State of Karnataka ranked the most "innovative" State in manufacturing.

- A survey on the degree of innovation among manufacturing firms found that Karnataka, overall, is the most "innovative" State, followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu (DNH & DD), Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.
- Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu had the highest share of innovative firms at 46.18%, 39.1% and 31.9%, respectively.
- Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand reported the lowest share of such firms at 12.78%, 13.47% and 13.71%, respectively.
- The National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22, a collaboration between the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), aims to assess how well manufacturing companies in India perform in terms of innovation.



### The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched CU--Chayan, a unified Faculty Recruitment portal for Central Universities.

- The UGC Chairman M. Jagdish Kumar said, the portal will provide a common platform for listing of vacancies, advertisements and jobs across all Central Universities.
- The applicant can also search for jobs using various filters like the name of the university, location, designation, category, and subject, type of employment, experience and education level.



## Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hands over Two "Made in India" Naval Vessels to the Maldivian defence forces.

- Continuing India's capacity building assistance in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on the second day of his three day visit, handed over a Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) & Landing Craft Assault ship to the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF).
- In Sri Lanka, Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari donated AN-32 transport aircraft propellers to Commander Sri Lanka Air Force at Katunayake Air Base.



## Sharad Pawar steps down as NCP chief, says will not contest polls from now onwards.

- Sharad Pawar, party founder and chief since 1999, announced that he is stepping down from the post and will not contest elections in future said at the launch of the second edition of his autobiography, "Lok Maze Sangati" (People Accompany Me).
- The NCP is a center-left political party that was formed in 1999 by Sharad Pawar, P.A. Sangma, and Tariq Anwar, who had previously been members of the Indian National Congress party.
- The NCP is primarily based in the western state of Maharashtra, but it also has a presence in other states such as Gujarat, Goa, and Manipur.
- Recently, The Election Commission withdrew the national party status of the All India Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been recognised as a national party.
- Sharad Pawar takes back his decision to quit as NCP chief.
- Veteran leader Sharad Pawar took back his decision to resign as the Nationalist Congress Party's national president, stating that he respected the "strong sentiments" his decision had evoked among party cadre and leaders across the country. Earlier, a party committee set up to choose his replacement unanimously rejected his decision.



## India temporarily relocated the embassy from Khartoum to Port Sudan.

- The Indian government on Tuesday said it has decided to temporarily relocate the Indian Embassy to Port Sudan from Khartoum due to prevailing security situation in Sudan, including attacks in the capital city.
- Meanwhile, the 11th outbound flight carrying a group of 328 Indian nationals left from Jeddah for New Delhi. The flight is carrying Indian evacuees from Jeddah to New Delhi under Operation Kaveri.
- In another flight an Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft carrying the 18th batch of 135 Indian evacuees from Port Sudan reached Jeddah, Indian Embassy in Riyadh said.
- Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy turned rival, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.



## Samajwadi Pandit Ramkishan became 'Man of the Century' at the age of 97.

- Former Lok Sabha MP Pandit Ramkishan was recently honored with the title of "Samajwadi Shatabdi Purush" (Man of the Century) in New Delhi for his contribution as a socialist leader.

## Socialist Pandit Ramkishan Becomes "Man of the Century" at 97





- He was given this honor during the birth centenary celebrations of Madhu Limaye, a famous socialist thinker and parliamentarian. Ramkishan is considered to be the most senior and respected figure in Indian socialism.
- Well-known socialist leader Pandit Ramkishan played an active role in the movements led by other socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Lohia. Ramkishan was arrested several times while fighting for the tribals, Dalits and the poor.
- He was jailed several times during the Emergency. Ramkishan also served as a member of the Lok Sabha once in 1977, and was elected to the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly four times, in 1962, 1967, 1974 and 1990.

### **AIR should be referred to as Akashvani, says D-G.**

- All India Radio (AIR) Director -General Vasudha Gupta has directed all departments concerned to ensure that the public broadcaster is referred to as “Akashvani” in accordance with the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, which came into force on November 15, 1997.
- Section 2(a) of the Act says “Akashvani” means all offices, stations and other establishments which are or were under the Director- General All India Radio of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.



### **Rashtra Sevika Samiti wing conducts surveys on LGBTQ+ groups.**

- Samvardhinee Nyas, a wing of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti (the women's organization that parallels the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), is conducting a survey across the country among doctors, allied medical professionals (such as physiotherapists and psychologists), and AYUSH practitioners on their observations on those who identify as queer.
- The responses will be shared with the Supreme Court that is currently hearing the same-sex marriage issue, said Madhuri Marathe, Nyas organising secretary.
- The initial findings from 300+ entries suggest that medical practitioners who took the survey believe sexual affinity towards the same sex is a disorder (60.69%). Many do not recommend marriage rights for the LGBTQ+ community (84.2%).



### **Many killed in riots in Manipur; govt. Issues shoot at sight order.**

- Clashes broke out after a march was taken out by tribes against decision to grant ST status to the majority Meitei community; Army and RAF deployed
- The Manipur government issued a shoot-at-sight order in “extreme cases”, as escalating ethnic violence following a tribal solidarity march displaced over 9,000 people in the State.
- Clashes initially broke out during the course of solidarity march, called by the All Tribal Students' Union, Manipur. The Scheduled Tribe communities, mostly from the Kuki-Zomi group, are protesting against a move to grant a long-standing demand for ST status to the “Meitei community”, which makes up the majority of the State's population.



### **MGNREGA workers may get text messages confirming their attendance.**

- MGNREGA workers protested when the Centre Govt made it mandatory to digitally capture their attendance using a mobile-based application four months ago, complaining that they had no way of confirming whether their attendance had been accurately recorded until their wages landed in their bank accounts.
- In response, the Rural Development Ministry is now considering providing a text confirmation of attendance to workers at the end of each work day or the end of one work schedule.



- The mobile app for attendance replaced physical muster rolls, causing a widespread outcry from many workers enrolled with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme, especially women who comprised 57.4% of workers in 2022-23.
- Many of the aggrieved workers complaining about patchy internet skewing their attendance records, and the opacity of the new system, have been sitting on protest at Jantar Mantar for nearly 60 days.
- This move by the Rural Development Ministry shows a willingness to listen to the concerns of the workers and take steps to address them. Providing a text confirmation of attendance could also help to improve the overall efficiency and accuracy of the attendance tracking system.
- Providing a text confirmation of attendance to workers at the end of each work day or schedule could address their concerns and provide them with greater transparency regarding their attendance records.



### Bangladesh flight makes emergency landing at Patna, Bihar.

- A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight from Dhaka to Kathmandu with 77 passengers on board made an emergency landing at Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport in Patna due to technical problems.
- The flight -BBC 371 was diverted to Patna after the pilot reported technical problems, a senior official of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) at Patna informed.



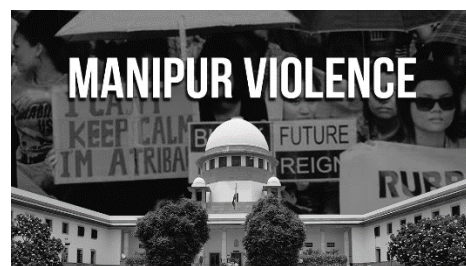
### Prime Minister Modi to attend Bastille Day Parade in Paris, France.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted the invitation from French President Emmanuel Macron to be the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in Paris on July 14.
- A contingent of the Indian armed forces will participate in the parade, which marks “liberty, equality and fraternity”.
- This is the second time that an Indian Prime Minister will be the Guest of Honour for the July 14 celebrations.
- Mr. Modi’s presence in Paris to attend the event is being described as a gesture of special significance as India and France are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership which was launched in 1998.
- The Bastille Day Parade, also known as the French National Day military parade, is an annual event that takes place on July 14th in Paris, France. The parade celebrates the storming of the Bastille fortress during the French Revolution in 1789 and is a display of French military strength and national unity. The parade typically includes marching bands, military units, and displays of military equipment, as well as flyovers by French military aircraft.



### Hill Areas Committee Chairperson and BJP MLA Dinganglung Gangmei has filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court challenging the March 27 order of the Manipur High Court on Scheduled Tribe status for the Meitei community, which is at the center of escalating tensions in the State.

- A Bench of Acting Chief Justice M.V. Muralidaran had directed the State government to submit its recommendation on Meiteis to the Centre. It had also said the State government shall consider the representation for inclusion expeditiously, preferably within four weeks of receiving the order.



### Five soldiers killed in gunfight in J&K's Rajouri.

- Five soldiers were killed and another was injured in a gunfight with militants in the thick jungles of the Rajouri-Poonch sector of Jammu division.
- The encounter took place on a day Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was in Goa to attend the conclave of Foreign Ministers from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India has strongly raised the issue of terrorism during the ongoing meetings of the SCO.



### The Indian government has deployed a significant number of security personnel and resources to Manipur in response to the ongoing violence and unrest in the state. The Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Army, and Indian Air Force have all been involved in this deployment.

- The Centre has “taken over” control of security in violence-hit Manipur by deploying 12 companies, comprising around 1,000 personnel, of the Border Security Force (BSF) and airlifting anti riot vehicles to the northeastern State.
- Around 3,200 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, as well as Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) teams have been deployed also.
- “Article 355” is there so that Centre takes more attention on the affairs of the State and that is why the adviser has been sent,” Manipur’s Director- General of Police P. Doungel confirmed.
- Article 355 empowers the Centre to take all necessary steps to protect a State against internal disturbances and external aggression.
- However, the Ministry of Home Affairs has denied promulgating Article 355, which raises questions about the legal basis for the government's actions.
- The Indian Air Force has been undertaking continuous sorties from two airfields in Assam, with C-17 Globemaster and AN-32 aircraft, to keep a watch over Imphal and other crisis hit areas of Manipur.



### Install CCTV cameras in offices of investigative agencies by July 18, says SC.

- The Supreme Court has given the Centre three months, setting a July 18 deadline, to comply with the directions in its December 2020 judgment to install closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras in the offices of its investigative agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation, the National Investigation Agency and the Enforcement Directorate for the sake of transparency and protection of human rights of accused and undertrial prisoners.
- The Court order noted that only two Union Territories Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Ladakh — as well as the States of Mizoram and Goa have fully complied with the directions, making budgetary allocations as well as actually installing the CCTV cameras.



### Meghalaya party merges with Conrad Sangma's NPP.

- The merger of the regional political party People's Democratic Front has increased the number of MLAs of the National People's Party in Meghalaya to 28. The NPP is three seats short of a simple majority in the 60- member Meghalaya House.
- Led by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, the NPP won 26 seats in the February 27 Assembly election, up from 19 in 2018, while the six year old PDF won two. Mr. Sangma called the merger a marriage between the two parties after romancing for five years, after signing the merger with PDF chief Gavin Miguel Mylliem.





**Coal imports rose 30% in FY23 to 162 mt on demand.**

- India's coal imports increased by 30% to 162.46 million tonnes (mt) in the 2022--23 financial year against 124.99 mt in the year- earlier period, according to a report. The import of coking coal rose 5.44% to 54.46 mt over 51.65 mt in FY22, mjunction said in a report.
- In March alone, non coking coal imports stood at 13.88 mt against 12.61 mt a year earlier. Coking coal imports were 3.96 mt (4.76 mt).
- India is among the top five coal producing countries in the world.
- For coking coal, a key raw material used in steelmaking, India remains heavily dependent on imports.
- The persistently high demand for steam coal in India, coupled with the weakening of seaborne prices led to increased volumes during March. This trend is likely to continue in coming months in view of the above normal average temperature expected this summer, mjunction CEO Vinaya Varma said.
- Along with other varieties of coal like anthracite, pulverized coal injection (PCI coal), met coke and pet coke, total imports in FY23 were at 249.06 mt, up from 200.71 mt in FY22, a rise of more than 24%.

**RBI gold reserves rose by 34 tonnes to 795 tonnes in FY23.**

- The Reserve Bank's gold reserves increased by 34.22 tonnes year on year to reach 794.64 tonnes at Merchant 2023, central bank data showed.
- The Reserve Bank held 760.42 metric tonnes (MT) of gold (including gold deposits of 11.08 MT) at the end of March 2022.
- "As at the end -March 2023, the Reserve Bank held 794.64 metric tonnes of gold (including gold deposits of 56.32 metric tonne)," the central bank said in its Half Yearly Report on Management of Foreign Exchange Reserves: October 2022 to -March 2023.
- While 437.22 tonnes of gold are placed overseas in safe custody with the Bank of England and the Bank of International Settlements(BIS), 301.1 tonnes of gold are held domestically. In value terms, the share of gold in the total foreign exchange reserves increased from about 7.06% at September End 2022 to about 7.81% at Merchant 2023, as per the report.

**DGCA asks Go First to stop selling flight tickets immediately.**

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered Go First to immediately stop selling air tickets, and has also served it a show -cause notice before taking a decision to revoke the airline's permit to offer commercial flights.
- The airline is awaiting an order from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on its insolvency plea and an interim moratorium to protect its aircraft from being re-possessed by lessors due to non payment of dues.
- The airline has 28 out of 54 aircraft grounded due to delays from engine maker Pratt and Whitney in providing spares and servicing, what the airline has called as under performing engines.
- This, it said, led to a loss of over ₹10,000 crore for the airline. The airline has total dues amounting to ₹11,463 to its various creditors.

**Five more cheetahs will be released into the wild at Kuno.**

- They will be released into 'free roaming conditions' before the onset of monsoon in June; twenty big cats have been brought from Namibia and South Africa since September 2022, two have died.



- The environment ministry has announced plans to release an additional five cheetahs into the wild at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh before the monsoon season begins, marking significant progress in the nation's ambitious cheetah reintroduction initiative.
- Five cheetahs—three females and two males—have successfully completed the acclimatization process and are prepared for release into free-roaming conditions ahead of the June monsoon rains. The decision followed a review of "Project Cheetah" by a team of experts under the guidance of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- The cheetah reintroduction program is part of India's broader efforts to restore its natural biodiversity, including endangered and extinct species. The country declared the cheetah extinct in 1952, with the last sighting in the wild occurring in 1947. However, India has been collaborating with South Africa since 2020 to bring back the species, taking advantage of the latter's successful cheetah conservation program.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated his 72nd birthday on September 17 last year by releasing the first batch of eight cheetahs—five females and three males—imported from Namibia into a quarantine enclosure at Kuno. A subsequent translocation in February saw 12 additional cheetahs brought from South Africa and introduced into the park.



### High Court does not have power to direct changes to Scheduled Tribes List; It is a Presidential power to designate a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe: CJI

- Even as the Manipur government and the Union government claimed that the State was returning to normalcy, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud asked why a 23 year old Constitution Bench judgment which clearly held that no court or State had the power to “add, subtract or modify” the Scheduled Tribes List was not “shown” to the Manipur High Court in the first place.
- Violent clashes and deaths followed in the days after a Single Judge Bench of the Manipur High Court, on March 27, directed that the State government shall consider the case of the petitioners for inclusion of the Meetei/Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribe list, expeditiously, preferably within a period of four weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.
- “It is not open to State governments or courts or tribunals or any other authority to modify, amend or alter the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in the notification issued under clause (1) of Article 342,” the Constitution Bench in State of Maharashtra versus Milind had held in November 2000.
- It had held that a notification issued under clause (1) of Article 342, specifying Scheduled Tribes, can be amended only by law to be made by Parliament.
- It is not even permissible to say that a tribe, subtribe, part of or group of any tribe or tribal community is synonymous to the one mentioned in the Scheduled Tribes Order if they are not so specifically mentioned in it,” the Bench had drawn the line.



### The West Bengal government banned the screening of the film The Kerala Story to maintain peace and harmony in the State.

- The government, in a press note, said the decision was taken “fearing that the scenes shown in this film could be dangerous to the peace and order of the State”.
- The Kerala Story:
- Director: Sudipto Sen
- Produced by: Vipul Amrutlal Shah
- The plot follows the story of a group of women from Kerala who converted to Islam and joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.



### Devotee Video Recording In Tirumala Temple Ananda Nilayam.

- Video recording in Tirumala Srivari Temple created a stir. A devotee entered the Srivari temple with a mobile phone after bypassing the three-tier security. The devotee who went with a mobile phone created a ruckus in the Srivari temple. He filmed Ananda Nilayam from all sides of the temple with his phone.
- Tirumala Srivari Temple/Venkateshvara Temple:
- Located at: Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh
- Deity: Venkatesvara(Vishnu)
- The temple is also known by other names like Tirumala Temple, Tirupati Temple and Tirupati Balaji Temple.
- Venkateshvara is known by many other names: Balaji, Govinda, and Srinivasa.
- The temple is run by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which is under control of Andhra Pradesh Government.



### Haryana govt. Announces reservation for Backward Classes in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs’).

- The Manohar Lal government announced reservation for the Backward Classes (Block- A) category in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) after accepting the Haryana Backward Classes Commission’s report on the proportion of reservation for Backward Classes in municipalities across the State.
- The commission, headed by Justice Darshan Singh (retd), found that the Block-A castes are not adequately represented in Haryana and need reservation in local bodies and municipalities for a more representative grassroots democratic set-up, without breaching the Supreme Court Imposed overall cap of 50% reservation.
- There are two categories of Backward Classes, Block- A and Block -B, recognised by the government in Haryana.
- Under Block-A, there are around 72 castes while there are only around half- a -dozen castes under Block- B. The latter are relatively better off, hence reservation has been extended only to the Block- A category.



### Third cheetah dies in Kuno; number of adults down to 17.

- A third cheetah, a female called Daksha, died at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh after it was injured during mating.
- Daksha’s death brings the total number of adult cheetahs in the park to 17. Sasha died in February and Uday in April.
- Since September 2022, 20 animals — eight from Namibia and 12 from South Africa have been translocated from Africa to restore cheetahs in the Indian wilderness. One of the animals has produced a litter of four cubs, all reportedly well.
- The cheetah’s death comes a day after an expert committee, constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, coordinator of Project Cheetah, recommended that five more cheetahs be released from the acclimatization camps into “free roaming conditions” before the onset of the monsoon in June.



### Govt. to start country wide screening for thalassemia.

- The Union government of India is launching a national mission to address thalassemia, a genetically transmitted blood disorder.
- The mission will begin with country-wide screening wherever necessary.
- This effort is aimed at preventing the further spread of thalassemia and providing appropriate treatment to those who are affected by the disease.
- NITI Aayog chief Vinod K. Paul has announced that the screening model used for sickle-cell disease in tribal belts will also be used for thalassemia screening. This will help to identify individuals who are carriers of the disease or those who have thalassemia major or thalassemia intermedia, which are severe forms of the disorder.



- It is also encouraging to note that Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda has announced his government's commitment to working towards thalassemia prevention over the next 25 years. This indicates that the government is taking a long-term approach to address this issue, which is crucial for ensuring sustained progress.

### Traditions have not stopped concept of marriage from evolving: SC Bench

- The Supreme Court said the Constitution has itself been a “tradition breaker”, and though tradition may have created the idea of heterosexual marriage, it has not been able to stop society from evolving and bringing changes to the very concept of marriage.
- Is marrying a fundamental right? That was the Madhya Pradesh government's question. The Supreme Court's counter-question: Is heterosexuality the core of a marriage? Madhya Pradesh government questioned if there was indeed a fundamental right under the Constitution for persons to marry.
- The Constitution has broken the once “hallowed traditions” of caste and religious discrimination, a five -judge Bench said.
- The court is hearing petitions seeking a judicial declaration of the right to same-sex marriage. “To the extent traditions created the institution of marriage, they are there. But we have to also be alive to the fact that the concept of marriage has evolved,” Justice S. Ravindra Bhat observed.
- The observations came in response to a submission by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi that same-sex couples cannot overnight demand the opening of doors into the “social institution of marriage”. They do not have a “fundamental right to marry” under the Constitution.



### SC heard appeal against screening of The Kerala Story.

- The Supreme Court agreed to list on May 15 an appeal filed against the Kerala High Court's refusal to stay the screening of the film The Kerala Story.
- Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, senior advocate Kapil Sibal made a mention for the early listing of the appeal, saying the issues required the urgent attention of the top court.
- Meanwhile, the makers of the film have approached the Supreme Court against the West Bengal government for banning its screening.
- Refusing to stay the release of the movie on May 5, the Kerala High Court had emphasized on “artistic freedom” and the need to strike a balance.
- The Kerala High Court had watched the trailer and found nothing offensive against a particular community. It had said the movie made it clear that it was only “inspired by true events” and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) had already cleared it for public viewing.
- It is interesting to note that The Kerala Story became tax-free in U.P., CM Yogi watched it with the entire Cabinet.



### Common uniform in the Indian Army for officers from the rank of Brigadier from August 1.

- The Army has decided to go for a common uniform for officers of the rank of Brigadier and above from August 1 irrespective of their parent cadre or regiment, military sources said.
- The decision was taken after detailed deliberations during last month's Army Commanders' Conference and extensive consultations with all stakeholders, they said.
- In order to promote and strengthen common identity and approach in service matters amongst senior leadership, beyond the boundaries of regimentation, the Indian Army has decided to adopt a common uniform.





- The headgear, shoulder rank badges, gorget patches, belt and shoes of flag rank, Brigadier and above — will now be standardized in view of the decision,
- The flag rank officers will now not wear any lanyards.
- There will be no change to the uniform worn by Colonels and below rank officers.
- In the Army, officers of the rank of Brigadier and above are mostly posted at headquarters or establishments where those from all arms and services work and function together.

### Assam plans to ban polygamy.

- The Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, has announced that the state government plans to ban polygamy and will form an expert panel to study the issue.
- Assam has decided to set up a panel towards handling a “part of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)” after a crackdown on child marriage –polygamy.
- During the crackdown against child marriage in the state, it was found that many elderly men got married multiple times and their wives were mostly young girls belonging to the poor section of the society.
- A decision regarding the ban on polygamy in the state will be taken through consensus and not by force or aggression.
- The expert panel will examine the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937, along with Article 25 of the Constitution of India.
- Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion subject to public order, morality, and health.
- The panel will likely examine the implications of these legal provisions in the context of polygamy and will make recommendations on how to reconcile the religious and cultural practices with the principles of gender equality and social justice.



### Patna HC rejects early hearing of caste- based survey case

- The Patna HC rejected the pleas by the Bihar government challenging the caste enumeration and economic survey in the State for hearing by the court before July 3.
- While passing the order, the Division Bench directed the State not to share and use the data collected during this period. The State can approach the SC with fresh application.



### Karnataka records 73.19% turnout in Assembly polls.

- Bengaluru records a low turnout of 54.51%; counting of votes for 224 -member House on May 13.
- The Karnataka Assembly election passed off with a turnout of 73.19% as per data, surpassing the 72.36% recorded in 2018.
- Predictably, Bengaluru's turnout in the 28 constituencies that come under it remained dismal at an estimated 54.51%, despite a campaign blitz by several national leaders of all parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and special drives by the Election Commission to enthuse urban voters.
- In stark contrast to Bengaluru, its neighbouring districts with large rural pockets recorded a heavy turnout. Chikaballapura recorded a turnout of 85.83%, followed by Ramanagara at 84.98%,
- Bengaluru Rural at 83.76% and Tumkur at 83.49%.
- After Bengaluru, Kalaburagi at 65.22%,
- Yadgiri at 66.66% and Raichur at 69.79% recorded a relatively lower turnout.



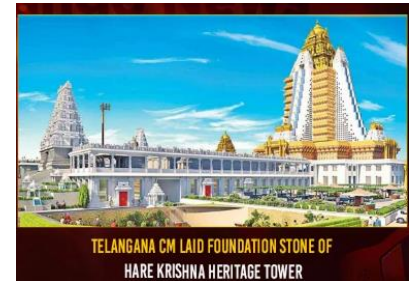
### Kiren Rijiju launched the trailer of the first Tagin language film.

- Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has launched the trailer of the film 'Pahli' in the Tagin language of his home state Arunachal Pradesh.
- The film showcases the culture of the Tagin community to the whole country and the world.
- Based on the Tagin community in Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, the film depicts the vibrant and colourful world of the 90s and is the first film made entirely in the Tagin language.
- Directed by Tapen Natum, the film brings to the national stage the rich culture, tradition and local filmmaking initiatives of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The National Film and Television Institute to be set up at Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh will promote the art and culture of the region.
- Tagin Community: The film highlights the love story of two youths amidst the challenges faced by this community in Arunachal Pradesh during the 1990s. Through this film, viewers can witness the beauty and rich heritage of Tagin culture and traditions
- The Tagin people celebrate various festivals and rituals throughout the year, including the Losar festival, which marks the Tibetan New Year.
- The Tagin language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family and is also known as Tagin-Hilmiri. It is spoken by about 20,000 people in the Tawang and West Kameng districts of Arunachal Pradesh.



### Foundation stone laid for “Hare Krishna Heritage Tower” in Hyderabad, Telangana.

- Chief Minister of Telangana K. Chandrasekhara Reddy laid the foundation stone of the Hare Krishna Heritage Tower in Hyderabad.
- The 400 feet high structure will be constructed on six acres of land at Narsingi in Hyderabad at a cost of Rs 200 crore.
- The tower will have shrines for Sri Radha Krishna and Sri Venkateswara Swamy.
- The tower will be another cultural landmark for Hyderabad and will highlight the Telangana heritage in the form of Kakatiya architectural elements. Accommodation facility for 1,500 devotees will be available at the tower. It will have an Annadanam hall where food will be served to 500 visiting devotees at a time.



### Punjab becomes first state to enforce 'Right to walk' for pedestrians; footpaths, cycle tracks along new roads mandatory.

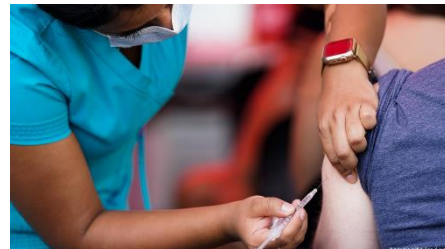
- Amid consistent rise in deaths of pedestrians and cyclists, Punjab has taken the lead among the states and UTs to implement the 'right to walk' by making it mandatory for all road-owning agencies, including the NHAI, to provide footpath and cycle tracks in all future expansion of roads and construction of new ones.
- The state government has issued these directions following two court orders after PILs were filed at Punjab and Haryana HC and another in the Supreme Court.
- Punjab has become the first state in India to implement the 'right to walk' by making it mandatory for all road-owning agencies to provide footpaths and cycle tracks in all future expansions of roads and construction.
- Reason: Every month more than 10 pedestrians/ bicycle riders are killed in road accidents due to encroachment on pedestrian footpaths.



### Mpox no longer a global health emergency: WHO

- The World Health Organization declared that Mpox no longer constitutes a global health emergency, almost exactly a year after the disease formerly known as monkeypox started spreading globally.

- WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the decision was prompted by falling case numbers worldwide, but emphasised that the disease remains a threat, particularly in areas of Africa.
- The announcement comes just a week after the UN agency also declared that Covid-19 no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), its highest level of alarm.
- Mpox: Mpox is a rare viral disease that occurs primarily in remote parts of Central and West Africa, near tropical rainforests. It is similar to human smallpox and is caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox.
- Mpox is transmitted to people from animals, especially rodents and primates, through contact with the animals' blood, bodily fluids, or contaminated materials such as bedding or cages. It can also be transmitted between people through respiratory droplets, bodily fluids, or skin lesions.



### ICMR, AYUSH Ministry sign agreement on Health research in Integrated Medicine.

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Health Ministry and the Ministry of AYUSH signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) to enhance collaboration and cooperation in health research in the field of integrated medicine.
- This move will help Ayush departments in the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences evolve into departments of integrated medicine.
- Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the collaboration would promote high impact integrative research. “Joint efforts will be in place to conduct high quality clinical trials on identified areas/disease conditions of national importance with promising integrative therapies to generate evidence for wider acceptance,” he said.



### L-G does not have sweeping executive powers, says SC

- The Supreme Court clarified that the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) does not have sweeping executive powers over the national capital, and the Centre should be mindful of the unique “asymmetric federal model” of governance adopted for Delhi.
- A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud held that the L-G can exercise executive power on behalf of the Centre only in the three areas of public order, police and land in Delhi as mentioned in Article 239AA(3)(a).
- If the L-G differed with the Council of Ministers of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), he should act in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Transaction of Business Rules.
- However, in case Parliament enacts a law granting executive power on any subject which is within the domain of NCTD, the executive power of the L-G can be modified to the specific extent provided in that law. This means that any change in the L-G’s ambit of power should be supported by a parliamentary legislation which is subject to judicial review by the court.
- The court referred to Section 49 of the GNCTD Act which mandates the L-G and the Delhi Council of Ministers to “comply with particular directions issued by the President on specific occasions”.
- The court noted the sui generis or special status given to Delhi, and said “cooperative federalism” was the key to meaningful governance of the capital.
- The Supreme Court gave the Delhi government power to make laws and wield control over bureaucrats deputed to its departments while declaring that civil service officers are “politically neutral professionals” who serve the people and not parties.
- “A constitutionally entrenched and democratically elected government needs to have control over its administration. The administration comprises several public officers, who are posted in the services of a particular government, irrespective of whether or not that government was involved in their recruitment,” Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud debunked the Centre’s argument that it retained “administrative control” over officers deputed to Delhi.



- “The legislative and executive power of NCTD over Entry 41 shall not extend over to services related to public order, police, and land. However, legislative and executive power over services such as Indian Administrative Services or Joint Cadre services, which are relevant for the implementation of policies and vision of NCTD in terms of the day-to-day administration of the region, shall lie with NCTD,” the Court laid down the law.
- Article 239AA is a provision in the Constitution of India that relates to the special status of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It was inserted by the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991.
- Under Article 239AA, Delhi is designated as a Union Territory with a legislative assembly and a lieutenant governor. The lieutenant governor is appointed by the President of India and acts as the administrator of the Union Territory on behalf of the central government.
- Article 239AA(3)(a): a council of ministers, headed by a chief minister, to aid and advise the lieutenant governor in the exercise of his or her functions, except in matters relating to public order, police and land. The legislative assembly has the power to make laws on all matters except those that fall under the jurisdiction of the central government or those relating to public order, police and land.
- SC rejects Centre’s argument that national interests take priority over local quibbles.
- The Supreme Court dismissed the Centre’s claim of superiority over the elected government of Delhi on the ground that the national capital is the seat of the Union government and “national interests take precedence over and beyond the quibbles of local interests.
- The Centre backed its argument on a narrow interpretation of a phrase “in so far as any such matter is applicable to Union Territories” in Article 239AA (3)(a) of the Constitution.
- The Article, introduced through the Constitution Act, 1991, declared the National Capital Territory of Delhi and its “special provisions”. One of its clauses said the Legislative Assembly of Delhi “shall have power to make laws for the whole or any part of the National Capital Territory with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List or in the Concurrent List in so far as any such matter is applicable to Union territories”.
- The Centre said the phrase meant that the legislative and executive powers of Delhi were limited to that of any Union Territory.
- But the court said “Union Territories were not a homogenous class”. They differed according to the local aspirations of various regions.
- “Article 239AA establishes a Legislative Assembly for NCTD. The seats in the Assembly are filled by a direct election from the constituencies of NCTD... Article 239AA must be interpreted to further the principle of representative democracy,” a Constitution Bench said.
- Addressing the Centre’s apprehensions about “national interests”, the court said “Article 239AA(3) balances between the interest of NCTD and the Union of India”. There are multiple safeguards in place to protect the Centre’s interests in the national capital.
- For one, the Delhi Assembly cannot make laws on public order, police, and land. Second, the Article gives Parliament a “plenary power” to legislate on “any subject in any of the three Lists of the Seventh Schedule for NCTD”.

## L-G does not have sweeping executive powers, says SC

Delhi is unique, follows an ‘asymmetric federal model’ of governance, Centre should remain within its boundaries, says Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud

Krishnasdas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday clarified that the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) does not have sweeping executive powers over the national capital, and the Centre should be mindful of the unique “asymmetric federal model” of governance adopted for Delhi.



A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud held that the L-G can exercise executive power on behalf of the Centre only in the three areas of public order, police and land in Delhi as mentioned in Article 239AA(3)(a).

However, in case Parliament enacts a law granting executive power on any

subject which is within the domain of NCTD, the executive power of the L-G can be modified to the specific extent provided in that law. This means that any change in the L-G’s ambit of power should be supported by a parliamentary legislation which is subject to judicial review by the court.

The court referred to Section 49 of the GNCTD Act which mandates the L-G and the Delhi Council of Ministers to “comply with particular directions issued by the President on specific occasions”.

The court noted the *sui generis* or special status given to Delhi, and said “cooperative federalism”

was the key to meaningful governance of the capital.

‘Unique relationship’  
The NCTD cannot be subsumed as a unit of the Union. “In the spirit of cooperative federalism, the Union of India must exercise its powers within the boundaries created by the Constitution. NCTD, having a *sui generis* federal model, must be allowed to function in the domain charted for it by the Constitution. The Union and NCTD share a unique federal relationship. It does not mean that NCTD is subsumed in the unit of the Union merely because it is not a ‘State’,” the court highlighted.

## Governor’s decision to call floor test wrong: SC; SC invalidates governor’s decision on Thackeray floor test.

- The Supreme Court, in a unanimous judgement, effectively opened the doors for disqualification proceedings against Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde for defection from the Shiv Sena, and held that the then Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari “erred” in calling for a trust vote, which triggered the fall of the Uddhav Thackeray -led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in mid -2022.

- The court also said that Governor Koshyari was right in inviting Mr. Shinde to form the new government as Mr. Thackeray had resigned before the floor test. This means that the Shinde government will continue in power for now.
- The Supreme Court invalidated the Maharashtra governor's decision asking Uddhav Thackeray to face the floor test in June last year but stopped short of reinstalling him as chief minister, as he resigned instead of pursuing the Assembly battle to the end.
- This Court cannot quash a resignation that has been submitted voluntarily. Had Mr Thackeray refrained from resigning from the post of the chief minister, this court could have considered the grant of the remedy of reinstating the government headed by him," said a Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, adding the status quo ante (situation that existed before) cannot be restored after Thackeray chose not to face the floor test.
- Thus, even as it declared that then governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari was "not justified" in asking Thackeray to face the floor test since it had no "objective material" to construe that the MVA government had lost the majority, it found nothing wrong with Koshyari inviting Shinde to form the new government on 30 June on the basis of a letter of support from the Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs.
- After Thackeray resigned, the bench noted that the post of the CM had fallen vacant. "The leader of the party (Devendra Fadnavis) that had returned the highest number of candidates to the state assembly extended support on behalf of the party to Mr (Eknath) Shinde. Thus, the decision of the governor, dated 30 June, inviting Mr Shinde to form the government was justified," it underlined.
- The court also junked Thackeray's contention that Shinde was barred from becoming the CM since there was a disqualification petition pending against him under the anti-defection law when he was invited to form the government. It said that the mere institution of a disqualification petition could not render an MLA ineligible, adding Shinde would cease to be the CM only if the Speaker finally decides the plea against him.
- SC said The communication expressing discontent on the part of some MLAs is not sufficient for the governor to call for a floor test. Once a government is democratically elected in accordance with the law, there is a presumption that it enjoys the confidence of the House. The governor had no objective material on the basis of which he could doubt the confidence of the incumbent government. The court held that floor test could not be used as a medium to resolve internal party disputes by Governors who are not empowered under the Constitution or any law to enter the political arena and play a role in party disputes. In its ruling, the bench stressed that not the legislative party but the political party is the authority to issue whips to its members as well as appoint the leader of the legislative party and the chief whip in the House.
- With the Supreme Court ruling in the Maharashtra political row case that "the Speaker must decide on the disqualification petitions within a reasonable period," all eyes are now on Speaker Rahul Narwekar.

## What the SC said about...

### ...FACTS OF THE CASE

- The Governor's decision asking Uddhav to face the floor test was **unjustified**
- The court **cannot reinstate Uddhav Thackeray** as he resigned voluntarily
- The resignation **can't be quashed** by court
- **There's no infirmity in inviting Shinde to form govt** after Thackeray resigned
- But Shinde's recognition as the leader of Shiv Sena legislature party is bad



- Speaker will recognise chief whip and leader of Sena **afresh**
- Speaker will decide all disqualification petitions

### ...THE LAW

- Governor must have **objective material** to call for a floor test
- Guv **can't use discretionary power** to destabilise elected govt
- **SC can't substitute Speaker's authority** in deciding disqualification petitions
- Speaker can decide disqualification pleas even when his own removal is sought
- Seven-judge bench to review fetters on Speaker's powers

- **MLAs can't be injunctioned** from House proceedings over pending disqualification plea
- **Political party** and not the legislature party **appoints whip and leader of the party**
- Speaker, ECI can concurrently adjudicate disqualification and symbol disputes respectively
- **ECI should look beyond legislative majority** test to decide symbol disputes

### Bail orders should not be too long or come too late as both violate personal liberty: SC

- The Supreme Court has held that orders of courts in bail cases should neither be too long and elaborate nor come too late as both violate the constitutional mandate of personal liberty.
- A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sanjay Karol said judges, while rejecting or granting bail to accused persons, should not slip into extensive deliberations on the merits of the case or evidence involved. Such "long" debates at the stage of bail may prejudice the case itself for the accused.



- The Bench observed Once a case for bail is reserved for orders, the pronouncement of the decision should not take too long. Every day of waiting is a dent on the personal liberty of an undertrial.
- The Bench underscored the importance of brevity in bail orders and the need for promptness in their pronouncement while allowing bail to Kadar Nazir Inamdar, who is an accused in the murder of Shiv Sena leader Rahul Shetty in 2020.

### Cognizant introduces generative AI for firms.

- Cognizant Launches Cognizant Neuro® AI Platform to Help Companies Responsibly Deploy Generative AI at Enterprise Scale.
  - Cognizant announced the availability of a new, enterprise wide platform, Cognizant Neuro AI, designed to provide enterprises with a comprehensive approach to accelerate the adoption of generative AI technology.
  - This industry-first platform is expected to leverage its consulting, advisory, ecosystem partnership, digital studios, solutions, and delivery capabilities, in conjunction with industry experts, to help clients transition seamlessly into the era of generative AI, according to the tech firm.
  - Cognizant's Neuro AI is aiming to increase ROI potential, minimise risks and get to better business solutions faster.
- Cognizant Neuro AI includes a library of reusable generative AI models and agents, development tooling and control components including API and access management, versioning and auditing. The platform is designed to provide meaningful business benefits for clients, including:
- Discovering new business innovation vectors,
  - Creating pathways to differentiated customer and employee experiences,
  - The ability to reimagine and digitise business processes,
  - Reliable governance, visibility, control and compliance,
  - Faster access to a holistic library of curated solutions, and
  - Improved time to market at enterprise scale.



### ICMR will provide research training to Ayush scholars.

- ICMR to help AYUSH researchers with capacity building, access to instruments and knowledge database
- This is part of an initiative which was announced under the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the Ministry of Ayush and ICMR recently.
- The National Institute of Epidemiology, a premier institute of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), will train Ayush researchers in the fundamentals of basic research, under the Union government's integrative healthcare initiative.
- The initiative requires ICMR to lead research building capacity among Ayush researchers by offering basic training, sharing access to advanced instrumentation systems, and creating a joint database.
- ICMR will now lead the research capacity building programme for Ayush researchers while extending online basic research courses for all researchers, faculties, and post graduate scholars of Ayush.
- ICMR is the apex body in India for the promotion of biomedical research.
- Recently, the Ministry of Ayush and ICMR signed an MoU to promote and collaborate on integrative health research.



### Leh airport closed as IAF plane stuck on runway.

- The Leh airport was closed for operations on Tuesday after its runway was blocked by a snag-hit C-17 Globemaster aircraft of the Indian Air Force, leading to diversions and cancellations of several flights.
- Indian Air Force heavy-lifter C-17 Globemaster was facing technical difficulties on the runway.





- Leh, an important defence airport, is close to the Line of Actual Control with China. Due to the high altitude, civilian flights operate only from morning to afternoon.
- Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh is one of the highest commercial airports in the world. The airport is situated at 3,256 m (10,682 ft) above sea level.

### India moves closer to getting its first indigenous vaccine against dengue.

- Drug makers Serum Institute of India and Panacea Biotec respond to calls for Phase 3 clinical trials; according to a senior official, the trials, being done to evaluate efficacy, safety and immunogenicity of vaccines, could start close to August 2023.
- Moving a step closer to developing India's first vaccine against dengue, drug makers Serum Institute of India and Panacea Biotec have submitted their responses to the call by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for an Expression of Interest for collaborative Phase 3 clinical trials for indigenous manufacturers.
- The Phase 3 trial is being done for evaluation of efficacy, along with safety and immunogenicity of tetravalent dengue vaccine candidate developed by Indian manufacturers. Trials could start close to August for the adult vaccine.
- The ICMR says the dengue viral disease causes significant morbidity and mortality across the globe and in India, 2 to 2.5 lakh cases are reported annually.
- In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified dengue to be one among the top 10 global health threats.
- As of now, there is no specific treatment for dengue/severe dengue. "Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop effective vaccines against dengue viral disease," the ICMR said.
- Giving details about the two potential vaccines, Nivedita Gupta, Head of Virology, ICMR, said that the Serum Institute of India's vaccine initiated one/two studies in paediatric population and the plan for Panacea's vaccine is to conduct Phase 3 randomised, double-blind, placebo controlled trial in 10,335 healthy adults (aged 18-80) in 20 sites (ICMR-funded).



#### Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR):

- Predecessor: Indian Research Fund Association
- Formation: 1911 (as IRFA); 1949 Renamed ICMR
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Key people: **Rajiv Bahl**, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (Secretary, GoI - Department of Health Research)
- Parent organisation: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Budget: ₹2,359.58 crore (US\$300 million) (2023–2024)

### Collegium recommends A.P. Chief Justice, senior advocate as SC judges.

- The Supreme Court Collegium recommended that senior advocate K.V. Viswanathan should be appointed as a judge of the top court, highlighting his vast experience and profound knowledge in law as a "significant value addition" to the court.
- The five member collegium also proposed to the government the appointment of Andhra Pradesh Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra as a Supreme Court judge.
- The recommendations have been made to fill two vacancies after the retirement of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and M.R. Shah in May.
- Mr. Viswanathan would be in line to be the 58th Chief Justice of India in August 2030, succeeding Justice J.B. Pardiwala as top judge, if his name is cleared by the government.
- He would also be only the ninth lawyer to be elevated directly to the Supreme Court Bench and the fourth such lawyer to become the CJI.



Just. Prashant K Mishra

Advocate KV Viswanathan

- “On the retirement of Justice Jamshed Burjor Pardiwala on August 11, 2030, Shri Viswanathan would be in line to assume office as the Chief Justice of India till his retirement on May 25, 2031,” the collegium resolution stated.

### The PM visited Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia from May 19 to 24.
- Mr. Modi was in the Japanese city of Hiroshima from May 19 to 21 for the G7 summit.
- The MEA said the Prime Minister spoke at G7 sessions with partner countries on subjects such as peace, stability and prosperity of a sustainable planet; and food, fertilizer and energy security.
- On PM Modi's visit to Japan, the MEA said he traveled to that country at the invitation of Mr Kishida. Japan hosted the G7 summit in its capacity as the current chair of the G7.
- From Japan, PM Modi traveled to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea where he hosted the 3rd summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) on May 22 jointly with Prime Minister James Marape.
- It Was the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Papua New Guinea.
- Launched in 2014, FIPIC involves India and 14 Pacific Island countries -- Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu, Niue, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Palau, Nauru and Solomon Islands.
- On the final leg, Mr. Modi visited Sydney in Australia from May 22 to 24 to attend the Quad summit.
- The Quad summit, being hosted by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, will also be joined by US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio.



#### Papua New Guinea:

- Capital: Port Moresby
- Prime Minister: James Marape
- Currency: Papua New Guinean Kina
- Continent: Oceania

#### Australia:

- Prime minister: Anthony Albanese Trending
- Capital: Canberra

#### Japan:

- Capital: Tokyo
- Emperor: Naruhito
- Prime minister: Fumio Kishida

### Apex court transfers endosulfan case to Kerala High Court.

- The Supreme Court transferred to Kerala High Court the responsibility of monitoring the measures taken by the State to provide medical and palliative care for victims of endosulfan contamination/ victims of toxic pesticide Endosulfan in Kasargod district.
- Endosulfan was used widely on crops like cashew, cotton, tea, and fruits till 2011, after which its production and distribution were banned due to several reports of ill effects on humans.
- A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala said now the issue of releasing Rs 5 lakh as compensation to each of the victims of the pesticide has been settled and the only aspect that remained was to provide medical and palliative care to the affected people.



- The Supreme court directed the Registrar (Judicial) of the apex court to ensure compliance by sending the judicial records of the 2011 PIL to the high court registry which would now treat it as a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution.

### **U.P. govt. hikes DA by 4% for employees, pensioners.**

- The Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) government announced a four per cent hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) to its employees and pensioners, respectively, with effect from January 1, 2023. With this announcement, the DA and DR has been increased to 42% from 38%.
- There are around 27.35 lakh employees and pensioners in Uttar Pradesh; it would benefit 16.35 lakh employees and 11 lakh pensioners in the state.
- Earlier on March 24, the Central Government had increased the DA of its employees and pensioners to 42 per cent.



### **The Supreme Court's exhortation to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) not to create an atmosphere of fear indicates how much the agency needs to temper its zeal in investigating allegations against political opponents of the current regime.**

- Responding to complaints that the ED is harassing employees of the Excise Department in Chhattisgarh in the name of investigating the money laundering aspects of an alleged liquor scandal, a Bench has made the pertinent point that even a bona fide cause would seem suspect if a law enforcement agency conducted itself in a way that created fear.
- The observation is both a caution against transgressing the limits of a lawful investigation and a warning against letting a perception gain ground that the agency would go to any lengths to implicate someone. Given that several leaders and Ministers from States ruled by parties other than the BJP have been summoned by the ED, or arrested and imprisoned, not many will be surprised at the charges levelled on behalf of the Chhattisgarh government that the agency is running amok and that its officers were threatening State officers, in an alleged bid to implicate the State's Chief Minister, Bhupesh Baghel.
- These charges may or may not be accurate, but the core problem is that the number of political adversaries under the agency's adverse notice is unusually high. A major complaint from the Opposition concerns the alleged politicization of investigations and the personnel heading the agency. Some parties fear that the money laundering law is being used for a political witch hunt.
- The list of offences that may attract a money laundering probe, over and above the police investigation into them, is quite long.
- Corruption allegations being quite common against politicians holding public office, each time a scam or a scandal is uncovered, the ED follows closely on the heels of the agency conducting the anti-corruption probe, to register a separate case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.
- While there is no problem with a stringent law on the subject, its executors have to be cautious about excessive zeal and expansive probes without identifying specific payoffs or following a money trail.
- The current Director of Enforcement was appointed for a two year term in 2018, but continues to this day, thanks to extensions and a change in the law governing such extensions. T
- he government has now assured the Supreme Court that he will not continue beyond November 23. The government often says the agency is only doing its duty and holding lawful investigations, but the perception of others is unlikely to be positive in the backdrop of the way it controls the agency's leadership.





**SC gives time till Aug. 14 to SEBI to probe Hindenburg charges.**

- The Supreme Court gave the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) time till August 14 to complete its investigation into the Hindenburg-Adani Group allegations.
- The market regulator SEBI clarified that the “investigation” referred to by Minister Pankaj Chaudhary in Parliament in July 2021 concerns an October 2020 probe into “minimum public shareholding norms and consequential violations”, which happens to be a part of the U.S.-based short-seller’s damning report against the group. SEBI was responding to submissions by petitioners that it had been probing Adani since 2016.

**Union Agriculture Minister Tomar inaugurates Integrated Biological Control Laboratory in Hyderabad.**

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Integrated Biological Control Laboratory at the National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM) Hyderabad.
- This laboratory is an important milestone in promoting sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices.
- The primary focus of the laboratory is on the use of biological control methods.
- These methods involve the use of natural agents such as beneficial insects, predators and parasites for the management of pests and diseases in agricultural crops.
- The laboratory serves as the centre for research and development activities related to biological control.

**'E-chits app' launched in Andhra Pradesh to ensure better regulation of chit fund business.**

- Andhra Pradesh Revenue Minister Dharmana Prasad Rao launched the 'e-chits' application of the Registration and Stamp Department on 15 May 2023. It aims to ensure better regulation of chit fund businesses in the state.
- Keeping in view the increasing number of cases of chit fund companies cheating customers, all chit fund transactions will be done through this application, developed by the Department of Registration and Stamps.
- In addition, the concerned authorities will provide online approval for transactions, for which companies will be required to register for e-chits platforms.
- People looking to subscribe to chit funds can check through the app whether the companies they are looking for are registered or not. They could approach the Assistant Registrar of Chits at each district headquarters.

**PM Modi inaugurated the new Parliament building on May 28.**

- The four storey building has been built at an estimated cost of ₹970 crore. The building has been designed by the Ahmedabad Based HCP Design, Planning and Management and constructed by Tata Projects Ltd.
- Seating capacity: The new building can seat 888 members in the Lok Sabha chambers against the 543 seats in the old building and can accommodate 300 members in the Rajya Sabha compared to the 250 earlier.
- Since the new building does not have a central hall, joint sittings of members of both Houses would be held in the Lok Sabha which would be able to accommodate 1,280 MPs.
- This in effect means that the Monsoon Session of Parliament would be held in the new building.
- The old Parliament building was completed in 1927, which makes it almost 100 years old.
- In the new building, the Rajya Sabha can accommodate 300 members. The joint session of parliament will be held in the Lok Sabha chamber, which can seat 1,280 MPs.



## New Parliament: A fountainhead of the people's hopes and aspirations.

- In its 75th year of Independence, India is set to witness a historic moment with the inauguration of the new Parliament House on May 28.
- After using a Parliament building that is nearly a century old and symbolised a colonial era, we finally have a new structure in independent India.
- It reflects the vision and aspirations of a country that has evolved significantly since 1947.
- Challenges of Parliament House
- The main Parliament House, inaugurated in 1927, consists of the circular shaped structure which is visible from the outside. Two more floors were added to this building in 1956 to accommodate more staff and other offices. The need for yet more office space led to the construction of the Parliament Annexe in 1975. In 2002, the Parliament Library was added to the complex. For similar reasons, an extension of the Parliament Annexe was constructed in 2016. Despite these new constructions in the Parliament complex to suit administrative needs, the need for modern facilities in the main Parliament House remained unfulfilled.
- Apart from the shortage of space inside the Parliament House, there were several other challenges. The existing Parliament House is a majestic structure with a unique architectural style, but it presents a different view from the inside. It had to be retrofitted multiple times, which left little space for further improvements. Swathes of wires are squeezed under covers. The inner ceilings of both the Chambers and the Central Hall were provided with safety nettings to prevent any tiles and plaster from falling down. The multiple wirings for computers, air conditioners and security gadgets gave the complex a highly shabby look. In 2012, the Rajya Sabha proceedings had to be adjourned due to a peculiar stench emanating from AC ducts.
- In 2012, the Speaker, Meira Kumar, stated that the Parliament building was “weeping,” and approved a high-powered committee to look for an alternative complex. In 2015, the Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, wrote to the Minister for Urban Affairs to have a new Parliament building with modern facilities. All this points to the fact that the new Parliament building should have been constructed at least a decade ago, if not earlier. This issue was taken up on priority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A detailed plan to build a start-the-art Parliament was set in motion, and its foundation was laid in December 2020. In just two and half years, this building has been made ready for use. After the work began, India went through three waves of COVID-19. However, the safety of workers was given priority so that construction could continue.
- India is not the first country to have constructed a new Parliament building due to paucity of space and to meet the changing needs. A new Parliament House was constructed in 1988 in Australia in front of the old one. The iconic United States Capitol, which was constructed in 1793, has seen several upgrades. The Parliament building of Israel, built in 1966, was upgraded with new wings in 1981 and again in 1999. The Canadian Senate building was closed recently for major renovation and the sittings were conducted in a makeshift arrangement.



## Tamil Nadu's amended law on jallikattu valid: SC

- The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the State amendments made to the central law Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act by the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra to allow the conduct of animal sports like Jallikattu, Kambala and bull-cart racing in these respective States.
- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court dismissed a batch of petitions challenging constitutionality of these amendments. These amendments were





passed by the States after the Supreme Court in 2014 banned jallikattu and similar activities in the case Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja And Ors.

- The Constitution Bench observed that these laws cannot be construed as "colorable legislations" and that the State legislature had the legislative power to make these amendments as per Entry 17 to List III of the Seventh Schedule.
- The 5 judge bench comprising Justice KM Joseph, Justice Ajay Rastogi, Justice Aniruddha Bose, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, and Justice CT Ravikumar observed that these amendments do not go contrary to the ratio of the judgement in Nagaraja.
- "In A Nagaraja, the sport was held to attract the restrictions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, because of the manner in which it was practiced. The amendment Act and rules substantially minimises pain and suffering to animals...", Justice Aniruddha Bose read out the operative part.
- In this case A Constitution Bench headed by Justice K.M. Joseph upheld the validity of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act of 2017, and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Jallikattu) Rules of 2017. "The Amendment Act has received the Presidential assent. We do not think there is any flaw in the State action," the judgement held. The court also found similar laws passed by Karnataka and Maharashtra, allowing bullock cart races and buffalo racing 'kambala', valid.
- Banned in 2014 Justice Bose said jallikattu was banned in 2014 by the top court in the A. Nagaraja case and called "cruel". But that was before the State passed the Amendment Act in 2017, introducing several measures to prevent any abuse to the participating bulls or loss of human life. "The Amendment Act overcomes the defects pointed out in the A. Nagaraja judgement," the court concluded.
- "Court cannot decide if jallikattu is part of cultural heritage"
- The bench further observed, "We are satisfied with materials that have been in Jallikattu in TN for the last century. Whether this as part of an integral part of Tamil culture requires greater detail, which exercises the judiciary cannot undertake...When the legislature has declared that jallikattu is part of the cultural heritage of TN state, the judiciary cannot take a different view. The legislature is best suited to decide that."

### SC Verdict in jallikattu case upholds cultural sentiment, but animal rights, human safety matter too.

- A rural sport seen by courts for years as one inflicting cruelty on animals has now received judicial imprimatur. An upsurge in popular support for jallikattu led to legislative changes in early 2017, exempting it from the rigours of the law against animal cruelty.
- 6 years after the amendments ended a Court Ordered ban, the Supreme Court has upheld the change made by the Tamil Nadu Assembly, as well as the cultural sentiment behind jallikattu, a traditional sport in which men try to control raging bulls.
- There has been an endless conflict between activists and proponents of the game, which culminated in a 2014 Court judgment banning the sport. The activists argue that any sport involving a physical contest between man and bull violates animal rights, while the other camp contends that none should stop something that is part of the State's tradition and culture.
- The State government responded to the ban by amending the central Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, in its application to the State, and obtained the President's assent. A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has now settled the issue, ruling in favour of jallikattu as a cultural event.
- The verdict of the five judge Bench is anchored to two key findings. That the fresh regulations minimise the game's potential for cruelty and pain formed the basis for the 2014 judgment. Those conditions were no more prevalent.
- Second, the Court has accepted the legislature's view that jallikattu is a sport conducted every year to follow tradition and culture. It has accepted the legislature's wisdom on what constitutes cultural heritage, holding that the Court cannot embark on such an inquiry. However, it does not mean the Court has in any way diluted the part of the earlier Bench's verdict reading into Indian law the full import of international rules in favour of animal rights. Rather, it has deferred to





the cultural sentiment underlying the legislative scheme by which sports such as jallikattu, kambala, a buffalo race in Karnataka, and bullock-cart racing in Maharashtra are not interdicted by the law preventing animal cruelty.

- This means organisers as well as the respective governments, still bear the burden to prevent infliction of pain and cruelty on animals. These sports also pose an undeniable hazard to humans too; to the participants mainly, but sometimes spectators too.
- Cultural assertion, and kindness to animals and adherence to safety norms need not be mutually exclusive.

### Justice that also makes space for animal welfare. (Analyses)

- Animal Welfare Board of India vs Union of India, where, inter se, the validity of a Tamil Nadu law permitting the practice of jallikattu was put to challenge.
- The sport of jallikattu involves men competing against each other by holding on to the humps of agitated bulls that are released into an open arena.
- The Supreme Court, in 2014, had previously declared the practice illegal. There, in A. Nagaraja, a two judge Bench held that bulls could never be performing animals, that they were anatomically ill suited for competition, and were effectively being forced into participating in a practice that caused them unnecessary pain and suffering. Therefore, in the Court's belief, any conduct of jallikattu breached the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
- To overcome the A. Nagaraja judgment, the Government of Tamil Nadu, in 2017, introduced a series of amendments to the 1960 Union law. Through these changes, the State ensured that jallikattu was altogether exempted from the protections that the statute offered. The government said the law (which later received the President of India's assent) was made with a view to preserving the State's tradition and culture. A raft of arguments was made in assailing the amendment.
  - First, petitioners claimed that the law had failed to overcome the verdict in A. Nagaraja, where jallikattu had categorically been found unlawful.
  - Second, they argued that the Government of Tamil Nadu lacked the legislative competence to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in a manner that diluted its safeguards.
  - Third, they asserted that animals too must be treated as persons, and to that end, jallikattu must be seen as impinging on the right to life, guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution.
- The Court's response to these arguments is not only deeply dissatisfactory but is also often contradictory.
- The Court begins by holding that there is no precedent bestowing fundamental rights on animals in India. It would, it says, be an act of judicial adventurism to confer rights on animals that have otherwise been bestowed on human beings. But having said this, the Court then claims that the amending law can still be tested on an anvil of reasonableness that is contained in Article 14 of the Constitution. But that right too, it says, cannot be invoked by any animal as a person, but only "at the instance of a human being or a juridical person who may espouse the cause of animal welfare".

### Defence production value crosses ₹1 lakh crore.

- The value of defence production in FY 2022--23 has crossed the figure of ₹1 lakh crore for the first time ever, according to the Defence Ministry.
- "The value currently stands at ₹1,06,800 crore and it will go further up once the data is received from the remaining private defence industries," a Defence Ministry statement said.
- "The current value of defence production in FY 2022--23 is a rise of more than 12% over FY 2021--22, when the figure was ₹95,000 crore."
- Under the 'Make in India' push, there has been a lot of focus on increasing domestic defence manufacturing, encouraging private sector involvement as well as boosting exports. Policy reforms have been taken to achieve the objective of ease of doing business, including the integration of MSMEs and start-ups into the supply chain.
- Defence industries, including the MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) and start-ups, have been coming forward in design, development and manufacturing of military hardware.



- There is almost a 200% increase in the number of defence licences issued to the industries in the last seven-eight years by the government,” the ministry said.
- The Defence Ministry has set a goal of a turnover of USD 25 billion (Rs 1.75 lakh crore) in defence manufacturing by 2024-25 that included an export target of USD 5 billion (Rs 35,000 crore) worth of military hardware.

### Marriage can be solemnized online, says Kerala High Court.

- Kerala High Court Allows Bride To Appear Through Online Mode For The Solemnization Of The Marriage.
- HC allowed the second petitioner, who is a Canadian citizen with an Overseas Citizen of India Card to appear before the Marriage office in online mode for the solemnization of their Marriage.
- A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court has affirmed a single judge's view that a wedding under the Special Marriage Act can be solemnised online via videoconferencing. The Bench, while answering a reference made by a single judge, observed that the Special Marriage Act should be construed with time in light of the Information Technology Act, 2000. Section 6 of the Act recognised the use of electronic records in government and its agencies.



### NCM team visits Arunachal to look at 'disputed' site.

- A two-member team of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) visited Mechuka in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi--Yomi district to study a religious site disputed by the local Buddhists and Sikhs.
- NCM vice chairperson Kersi K. Deboo and member Rinchen Lhamo held a meeting with representatives of the Buddhist Memba community. No representative from the Sikh community participated in it, officials said.
- Mechuka, a picturesque valley in Arunachal Pradesh, has recently emerged as a centre of contention due to conflicting claims by the Sikh and Buddhist communities regarding the religious site in question.
- During their visit, the NCM delegation paid a visit to the controversial site located in the Neh-Pema Shelpu area of Menchukha.
- In April 2023, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) alleged that a historic gurdwara in Arunachal Pradesh had been converted into a Buddhist shrine.
- The SGPC claimed that the gurdwara was built in the 1980s at the place where Sikh's first master Guru Nanak Dev had visited during one of his Udhasis (travels).
- According to the SGPC, the gurdwara was transformed into a Buddhist place of worship by the Memba community.



### Hindenburg-Adani case: expert panel 'clears' SEBI

- A Six -member expert committee — constituted by the Supreme Court in the Hindenburg -Adani allegations case and headed by former Supreme Court judge, Justice A.M. Sapre — said that the Securities and Exchange Board of India has “drawn a blank” and is in a “chicken and egg situation” in its investigation into the “ownership” of 13 overseas entities, including 12 Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).
- The Supreme Court (SC) on May 19 made public the report of the court-appointed six-member expert panel in the Adani-Hindenburg case, which notably said that capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has "drawn a blank" in investigations into suspected violations in overseas investments in the Adani group

#### Panel's findings

After two months of investigation, the committee headed by Justice (ret'd) A.M. Sapre finds no conclusive evidence



#### Minimum public shareholding:

SEBI had been suspecting 13 overseas entities of having links to Adani Group promoters, but the market regulator had not been “able to make out a case”. Its suspicions cannot be confirmed unless more

investigation is done

#### Related party transactions:

Hindenburg report refers to over 6,000 related party transactions. Committee says SEBI is still investigating the matter

**Price manipulation:** No evident pattern of manipulative contribution to price rise of shares could be attributed to any single entity or group

and its ongoing pursuit of the case could be a "journey without a destination".

- The committee headed by Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre, formerly of the Supreme Court, said in its report that there was no evidence of a "regulatory failure" on the part of SEBI. However, it acknowledged that there is a need for effective enforcement policy.
- The port-to-energy conglomerate's listed companies lost more than \$100 billion in market value earlier this year after US short-seller Hindenburg Research levelled accusations against the Gautam Adani-led group of stock manipulation and financial wrongdoings. The Adani group has since denied wrongdoing, but following that, the top court set up the expert panel on the issue and also directed SEBI to investigate whether there had been a violation of Section 19 of SEBI rules and whether there was any manipulation of stock prices.
- While SEBI is yet to submit its report, the expert panel in its report revealed that SEBI has been investigating the ownership of 13 'opaque' overseas entities or structures, related to Adani since October 2020. "The ultimate chain of ownership above the 13 overseas entities is not clear," it added.
- Despite involving various Indian and overseas agencies in the investigation across multiple countries, "SEBI has drawn a blank", the panel's report said, adding that trying to prove who had invested in foreign portfolio investors (FPI) who then pumped money into Adani and figure out the ultimate beneficial owner could be a massive task.
- "SEBI has found 42 contributories to the assets under management of the 13 overseas entities. Various avenues have been pursued — including ED, CBI and various market regulators in the seven jurisdictions where the contributories are situated. SEBI has drawn a blank". The market regulator has asked the court for more time to complete its investigation.

### India, U.S. to hike technology cooperation; co production of jet engines on the table.

- India and the U.S. are discussing possibilities of co-producing jet engines, long range artillery and infantry vehicles under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) announced earlier this year, and officials said some high technology initiatives are expected to be announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to the U.S. next month.
- Ahead of the visit, the launch of INDUS-X under the iCET to promote partnerships between the two countries' defence innovation ecosystems is scheduled in Washington.
- In the run-up to the visit, these issues were discussed at the 17th meeting of India-U.S. Defence Policy Group (DPG), chaired by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane from India and Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Colin Kahl.
- If the U.S. agrees to transfer jet engine [technology] to India, it sends a very strong message to China
- Among proposals being discussed is to jointly produce a jet engine for India's future indigenous jets for which General Electric is competing with Safran of France and Rolls-Royce of U.K.
- Mukesh Agni, president and CEO of the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), said only four countries make jet engines for planes, and India will be the fifth one if the deal is announced.



### Delhi's quest for administrative autonomy is hostage to BJP AAP rivalry.

- The Centre has through an ordinance overturned a Supreme Court judgement of May 11 that held that the elected government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi had executive and legislative powers over its officials.
- The AAP government in Delhi has decided to challenge the ordinance, while the BJP government at the Centre has moved the Court to review its judgement.
- The National Capital Territory of Delhi Act (NCTD), 1991 created a unique administrative unit, and judicial interpretations have never completely resolved the conflicts between the Centre and the elected government of the NCTD all these years.

#### Empowering the LG

**1 Top court's May 11 order nullified**  
The move has effectively nullified SC's judgment of May 11, wherein a Constitution bench handed over the control of services in the national capital to the Delhi government, excluding those related to police, public order and land.

**2 National Capital Civil Service Authority made**  
Centre introduced a new chapter in the GNCTD Act, Part IVA, to create a new service commission for Delhi for the first time.

**3 LG is strengthened**  
The move makes the LG the final authority who can act on his 'sole discretion' in deciding the matters relating to transfer and posting of bureaucrats.



- The judgement held that Union Territories with a Legislative Assembly of their own are comparable to States, and their government's executive powers would extend to all matters on which they are allowed to make laws.
- In Delhi's case, law and order and land remained with the Centre, unlike other States.
- The Court also pointed out the absence of a law on services, and the lack of oversight by elected representatives over the officials under the present scheme.
- The ordinance purportedly removes the basis of the judgement by creating the National Capital Civil Service Authority.
- The Chief Minister is the chair, with the Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, Home — both appointed by the central government — as members. The Central reclaimed all powers it lost in the judgement.
- National Capital Civil Service Authority empowered to recommend transfers and postings of all Group A and DANICS officers.

### **NCLAT upholds insolvency order in Go First case.**

- The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal upheld the court order admitting Go First's voluntary insolvency and asked the lessors, who had challenged the moratorium on repossession of aircraft, to approach the adjudicating court.
- the NCLAT said in the order that The Appellant(s) as well as IRP [Interim Resolution Professional] are at liberty to make appropriate application before the Adjudicating Authority for declaration with regard to applicability of the moratorium on the aircrafts with regard to which leases in favour of the Corporate Applicant [Go First] were terminated.
- The lessors, SMBC Aviation Capital Ltd., GY Aviation and SFV Aircraft Holdings, moved the NCLAT after the NCLT-Delhi admitted Go First's plea for voluntary insolvency and granted it protection under a moratorium from its planes being seized as well as actions by other creditors over unpaid dues.
- The lessors who had appealed against the order had leased out 21 aircraft to Go First. Lessors have together terminated leases of at least 45 of 54 Go First's aircraft.
- The lessors maintain that the moratorium order was given after termination of leases and requests to the DGCA for de-registration of aircraft and isn't applicable retrospectively.
- However, Go First has said there are payments owed to lessors only due to defective engines supplied by Pratt and Whitney resulting in groundings. The airline has until Tuesday to respond to the DGCA's show cause notice, on the basis of which the regulator will decide whether to revoke Go First's permit to operate flights.



### **Air India, Air India Express to operate special Haj flights.**

- Air India and Air India Express will operate special Haj flights from Jaipur, Chennai, Kozhikode and Kannur, carrying around 19,000 pilgrims.
- The two carriers will fly close to 19,000 pilgrims to Jeddah and Medina in Saudi Arabia from the four cities.
- Air India, in the first phase, will operate 46 flights from Jaipur and Chennai to Medina and Jeddah, respectively. The first flight was operated from Jaipur on May 21 and the services will go on till June 21.
- In the second phase, Air India will bring back the pilgrims to Jaipur and Chennai by operating 43 flights from July 3 to August 2.
- Air India Express will operate flights from Kozhikode and Kannur from June 4 to 22.
- In the second phase, July 13 to August 2, Air India Express will fly back the pilgrims from Medina to Kozhikode and Kannur.



#### **Air India:**

- CEO and MD: Campbell Wilson
- Founder: J. R. D. Tata
- Alliance: Star Alliance

- Founded: 1932, Mumbai

#### **Air India Express:**

- Parent organisation: Air India Limited
- Founded: May 2004, Delhi
- Headquarters: Kochi
- Commenced operations: 29 April 2005

#### **INS Sindhuratna sails for 97 days to India after major refit in Russia.**

- The Navy's Kilo-class submarine INS Sindhuratna which underwent a major upgrade in Russia reached Mumbai after sailing for 97 days and almost 10,000 miles with two port calls — Le Havre, France and Cadiz, Spain — in between.
- The submarine underwent a Medium Refit Life Certification (MRLC) process in Russia which extended its life. However, it faced transportation issues against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine.
- The initial plan was to move it by a transport dock ship directly from Russia which did not materialise, following which the Navy tried to sea transport the submarine to Norway and then via a transport dock to India, which also did not materialise. Following this, the Navy decided to sail it directly on its own.
- The submarine undertook a grueling 97- day return passage through the Norwegian Sea, English Channel and the Mediterranean Sea, and arrived in Mumbai on May 16," the Western Naval Command said.
- The submarine with its modernised weapon and sensor suite will enhance the force level in the Western Seaboard, opening a new & exciting chapter in submarine operations in the Indian Ocean Region.
- The crew was received by Vice-Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command.
- With delays in induction of submarines, the aging SSKs - 209s (German HDWs) and EKM (Russian Kilos) are being put through the MRLC process which will extend their life by 10 to 15 years.



#### **INS Sindhuratna:**

- INS Sindhuratna is a submarine of the Indian Navy. It is part of the Sindhughosh-class submarines, which are diesel-electric submarines built in Russia for the Indian Navy. INS Sindhuratna was commissioned on February 24, 1988.
- Unfortunately, on February 26, 2014, INS Sindhuratna suffered a major accident while on a routine training mission off the coast of Mumbai, India. A fire broke out on board the submarine, resulting in the death of two naval officers and injuries to several others. The submarine was forced to surface, and the crew was evacuated. The fire was eventually brought under control, but the submarine suffered extensive damage.

#### **Hari Budhmagar, the first person to scale the world's highest peak 'Mount Everest' with artificial legs.**

- Former British Gurkha soldier Hari Budhmagar (43), who lost both legs in an IED blast in Afghanistan in 2010, has created history by scaling Mount Everest. He has become the first person to reach the world's highest peak with artificial legs.
- He postponed his plans to scale Mount Everest in 2018 after the government introduced a mountaineering regulation that banned blind, double-amputee and solo climbers from climbing mountains including Everest in 2017.
- A writ petition was filed against the ban and in response the Supreme Court issued an order in 2018 striking down the rule, paving the way for Budhmagar to create history.
- In December 2020, the new height of Mount Everest was announced as 8848.86 metres.
- Hari Budhmagar was born in 1979 in Mirul village of Rolpa district. He has also created another record by becoming the first person to 'skydiving' to reach Everest Base Camp.



- He has previously climbed Mont Blanc (4,810 m, on the Italy-France border), Mount Chyulu (6,059 m, Kenya), Kilimanjaro (5,895 m), and Mira Peak (6,476 m, Nepal).
- Climbed Mount Chuchu (Bolivia) in the year 2017 and became the first double amputee to climb a mountain above 6,000 metres.

### Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of National Academy of Coastal Policing campus in Dwarka, Gujarat.

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone for the permanent campus of the National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) at Okha in Dwarka, Gujarat. The NACP is the first national academy in the country to train police forces to effectively protect the coastline.
- Earlier NACP started functioning in 2018 from the premises of Gujarat Fisheries Research Centre. It caters to the training needs of nine coastal states, five union territories as well as central police forces.
- The aim of this academy is to provide comprehensive training facilities to more than three thousand security personnels annually. 441 crore has been sanctioned for developing NACP.
- India has a vast coastline of 7,516 kilometres touching 13 states and union territories. There are also about 1,197 islands.
- The Academy plays a vital role in enhancing the capabilities and skills of the Marine Police, thereby enabling them to effectively deal with the security challenges in the coastal areas. By providing state-of-the-art training facilities, the National Academy of Coastal Policing aims to strengthen coastal security measures across the country.
- The Academy's efforts contribute to safeguarding national interests, preventing illegal activities such as smuggling, piracy and unauthorised fishing, and ensuring the safety of coastal communities.



### Draft of Digital India Bill to be released in June.

[Centre to release the 1st draft of Digital India Act in early June]

- The new Act is planned as a future-ready legislation to replace the existing IT Act; While a first draft may come in June, the government seems to be aiming for a more concrete version of the law by December.
- The 1st draft of the upcoming Digital India Act (DIA) will be published and opened for industry consultations by the first week of June, minister of state (MoS) Rajeev Chandrasekhar told industry executives at an industry consultation held in Mumbai.
- Bill may significantly undo safe harbour, the principle protecting social media firms from legal liability for content posted by users; law set to overhaul rules governing Internet usage in India.
- Amid the growing threat of AI-related misinformation, the bill is aimed to deal with misinformation and 'high-risk AI' to prevent user harm.
- The first pre-drafting consultation took place in Bengaluru in March. Whereas, another consultation is expected in Delhi soon, ahead of the release of the draft bill in June.
- According to the Government of India, it aims to achieve the goal of the digital economy to cross \$1 trillion by 2025-26.
- The government is also considering the rules and regulations being made globally to balance the growing digital economy to protect users and avoid monopolies by tech giants.
- Talking about the European Union's imposition of a record fine of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) on Meta on May 22, for violating Global Data Protection Regulations on cross-border data transfers, Chandrasekhar highlighted that the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 has similar measures.





### Kerala becomes the country's first e-governed state.

- Kerala will be the first state in India to run its public services entirely on the e-governance platform. Here internet service will be considered as a fundamental right of the citizen.
- Kerala was declared fully e-governance by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on 25 May 2023 at a function in Thiruvananthapuram. Under this, 886 services related to 80 government departments will be benefited.
- This achievement has been achieved through a single window service delivery mechanism called 'e-Sevanam'
- Apart from the 'e-Sevanam' portal, the Kerala IT Mission has also created 'e-Office File Flow', a set of digital platforms and applications. So that it can be taken up to the village office level.
- Kerala is also the first Indian state to declare access to the Internet as a citizen's right through the roll-out of the KFON (Kerala Fiber Optic Network).



#### 'e-Sevanam' portal':

- Instead of running around government offices and waiting for endless hours to meet officials for different services, citizens will have the benefit of a single-stop destination for all government services.
- It will also provide assistance for change of address in application driving licence and crop loss. Apart from this, from admission in college to an excise licence and MGNREGA job card and auction notice can also be submitted online.
- Under this, services will be provided to people with disabilities, senior citizens and people facing different difficulties at their doorstep. At the lowest level are Akshaya Kendras, which are within easy distance of most homes in Kerala.

### Infosys launches generative AI platform 'Topaz'.

- India's leading IT services company Infosys has launched 'Topaz', a comprehensive suite of services, solutions and platforms that harnesses the power of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.
- Topaz is built on Infosys' Applied AI Framework, enabling the development of an AI-first core that enhances the capabilities of individuals and organizations to deliver cognitive solutions and accelerate value creation.
- With an AI-first approach, Topaz aims to unleash the potential of humans, enterprises and communities, enabling them to take advantage of the next wave of opportunities generated by unprecedented innovations, connected ecosystems and increased efficiencies.
- Infosys emphasises its commitment to a "Responsible by Design" approach, ensuring unwavering ethics, trust, privacy, security and compliance within AI-powered solutions.



#### Topaz:

- Infosys Cobalt integrates the capabilities of cloud and data analytics, leveraging their collective power to drive AI-enabled business transformation. A national railway company used Infosys Topaz to build a smart hub to create an agile value-chain, with the most suitable partners from the market, for functions such as first and last mile logistics.
- It works on the concept -A food and beverage chain that leveraged Infosys Topaz to autonomously connect disjointed data signals coming in from new partners to deliver a "superior" off-store consumer experience with over 95 percent accuracy.

### Microsoft launches 'Jugalbandi', a multilingual AI chat bot for rural India.

- Microsoft has launched 'Jugalbandi', a multilingual AI-chat bot for rural India. Jugalbandi is an AI-powered multilingual chatbot accessible through WhatsApp.
- It is specially designed to cover those areas of rural India which are not easily accessible through media.
- This chatbot uses the GPT model through Azure OpenAI service. The chatbot covers ten of the 22 official languages of India. The chatbot has been developed by AI4Bharat in association with IIT Madras.

#### 'Jugalbandi':

- It aims to provide personalised assistance by understanding user queries in multiple languages, either spoken or typed. Upon receiving a question, the chatbot then retrieves information from relevant programs that are often only available in English, and presents it back to users in their local language.
- According to Microsoft, Jugalbandi combines AI models from AI4Bharat and Microsoft Azure OpenAI service, allowing seamless interactions between users and chatbots. These generative AI tools can synthesise large amounts of data to generate text and other types of content.



### **Amid reports of shortage, FSSAI to hold surveillance on milk and milk products.**

- Aimed at curbing adulteration of milk and milk products, in both organised and unorganised sectors in all the districts of the States and Union Territories, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will conduct nationwide surveillance this year.
- The announcement on Thursday comes against the backdrop of the country facing an alleged milk shortage with cooperatives reporting only a 1-2% increase in production this year and the organised and unorganised sector pointing to registering stagnation.
- The sector also continues to grapple with the hit it took during COVID-19 and more recently the lumpy skin disease (which caused the death of 1.9 lakh cattle) and fodder inflation at 30%.
- India is ranked 1st in milk production contributing 23% of global milk production.



### **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):**

- It has been established under Food Safety and Standards, 2006 which consolidates various acts and orders that have hitherto handled food-related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.
- The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) are appointed by the Government of India.
- The Chairperson is in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- Headquarters: Delhi

### **Food Grains, oilseed harvests will break records, says Centre.**

- The Minister says sugarcane production is also likely to hit record levels; estimates reached from crop feedback provided by the States.
- Food grain production in the crop year ending June is likely to hit an all-time high of 330.5 million tonnes against last year's 315.6 mt, according to the agriculture ministry's third advance estimates
- This is mainly because of the estimated record production of wheat, rice and maize.
- The Centre is estimating a record production of paddy, wheat, maize, soybean, rapeseed, mustard and sugar cane, according to the "third advance estimates of production of major crops" released by the Union Agriculture Ministry.
- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar, releasing the estimates, said the country will achieve foodgrain production of 3,305.34 lakh tonnes (lt) in the current agricultural year. He credited farmers, ability of researchers and farmer friendly policies of the Centre for the growth.
- The assessment of production of different crops is done based on the feedback from States. Among foodgrains, the Centre expects cultivation of 1,355.42 lt of rice, 1,127.43 lt of wheat, 111.66 lt of bajra, 547.48 lt of coarse cereals and 359.13 lt of maize.

- In 2021--22, the production of rice was 1294.71 lt and of wheat was 1077.42 lt. The total foodgrain production is likely to be higher by 149.18 lt as against the 2021--22 harvest. The increase in rice could be 60.71 lt and in wheat, it will be 50.01 lt.
- The Centre expects production of 275.04 lt of pulses. The production of moong is estimated at 37.40 lt which is higher by 5.74 lt when compared to the previous year's production. "The production of soybean and rapeseed and mustard is estimated at 149.76 lt and 124.94 lt, respectively, which is higher by 19.89 lt and 5.31 lt, respectively, than the production in 2021--22.
- Total oil seeds production in the country during 2022--23 is estimated at a record 409.96 lt which is higher by 30.33 lt than the previous year's oilseeds production," the Union Agriculture Ministry said in a release.
- Total production of sugar cane is also likely to hit record levels of 4,942.28 lt. "The production of sugar cane is higher by 548.03 lt than the previous year's production," the Centre said.
- The production of cotton is estimated at 343.47 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) and production of jute and mesta is at 94.94 lakh bales (180 kg). The target set by the government for rice and wheat production is 1,305 lt and 1,120 lt, respectively.



### **Why do judges recuse themselves? What is meant by a recusal? Do mass recusals call into question judicial transparency? What rules has the Supreme Court formulated in the past on recusals? How do other countries deal with recusals and judicial bias?**

- Whenever there is a potential conflict of interest, a judge can withdraw from a case to prevent the perception that the judge was biased while deciding a case. This conflict of interest can arise in many ways — from holding shares in a litigant company to having a prior or personal association with a party. Another common reason is when an appeal is filed in the Supreme Court against a High Court judgement delivered by the concerned judge before his elevation. The practice stems from the cardinal principle of due process of law — nemo judex in sua causa, that is, no person shall be a judge in his own case. Another principle guiding judicial recusals is 'justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done' propounded in 1924 in Rex v. Sussex Justices by the then Lord Chief Justice of England.
- By taking the oath of office, judges promise to perform their duties, 'without fear or favour, affection or ill will', in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Constitution. Furthermore, the Restatement of the Values of Judicial Life adopted by the Supreme Court forbids a judge from deciding a case involving any entity where he holds pecuniary interest unless the concerned parties clarify that they have no objections.
- There are two kinds of recusals — an automatic recusal where a judge himself withdraws from the case, or when a party raises a plea for recusal highlighting the possibility of bias or personal interest of the judge in the case.
- The decision to recuse rests solely on the conscience and discretion of the judge and no party can compel a judge to withdraw from a case. While judges have recused themselves even if they do not see a conflict but only because such apprehension was cast, there are also several instances where judges have refused to withdraw from a case. In 2019, while hearing a plea on the plight of inmates in Assam's detention centres, the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi was asked to recuse himself for some adverse oral remarks. Mr. Gogoi refused, saying that the plea had 'enormous potential to damage the institution'. If a judge recuses himself, the case is listed before the Chief Justice for allotment to an alternate Bench. India has no codified rules governing recusals, although several Supreme Court judgments have dealt with the issue.
- The decision to recuse rests solely on the conscience and discretion of the judge and no party can compel a judge to withdraw from a case. Since there are no statutory rules governing the process, it is often left to the judges themselves to record reasons for recusals.
- Sherry George vs Govt. of NCT of Delhi: The Delhi High Court recently ruled that no litigant or third party has any right to intervene, comment or enquire regarding a judge's recusal from a case.





**Reasons for recusal:**

- When there is a conflict of interest, a judge can withdraw from hearing a case to prevent creating a perception of biasness while deciding the case. The conflict of interest can be in many ways:
  - Holding shares in a company that is a litigant;
  - Having a prior or personal association with a party involved in the case.
  - Appeared for one of the parties involved in a case.
  - Ex parte communications with lawyers or non-lawyers.
- In Ranjit Thakur v Union of India, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
  - Judges should look at the mind of the party before him rather than asking himself about the biasness.
- In Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India, Justice Chelameswar held that
  - Where a judge has a pecuniary interest, no further inquiry as to whether there was a ‘real danger’ or ‘reasonable suspicion’ of bias is required to be undertaken.

### **“The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023” (Ordinance); An ordinance, its constitutionality, and scrutiny.**

- The ordinance promulgated under Article 123 of the Constitution to expand the scope of excepted matters in Article 239AA(3)(a) is void ab initio and is liable to be struck down for bypassing constitutional amendment. It “amounts to a colourable exercise of power”. Article 123 is no substitute for Article 368 (amendment of the Constitution) in Part XX.
- In the landmark 7-judge Bench verdict of the Supreme Court in the matter of Krishna Kumar Singh vs State of Bihar (2017) 2 SCC 136, the Court held that the satisfaction of the President under Article 123 is not immune from judicial scrutiny; powers under Article 123 is not a parallel source of law-making or an independent legislative authority.
- “The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023” (Ordinance) negates a Constitution Bench judgement of the Supreme Court of India, which was delivered on May 11, that brought “services” under the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD).
- While interpreting Article 239AA(3)(a), the Court ruled, inter alia, that these were the points: The Legislative Assembly of the NCTD has competence over entries in List II and List III, except for expressly excluded entries of List II (entries 1, 2, 18 are excluded); the executive power of NCTD is co-extensive with its legislative power, that is, it shall extend to all matters with respect to which it has power to legislate; the Union of India has executive power only over three entries in List II over which the NCTD does not have legislative competence (entries 1, 2, 18).
- Thus, essentially, the Court interpreted that out of the 66 entries in List II (the State list), while the executive power of the Government of NCTD covers 63 entries, that of the Union of India is restricted to the remaining three: public order (entry 1), police (entry 2) and land (entry 18)
- Consequently, executive power over “services” (entry 41) can be exercised exclusively by the Government of the NCTD. This interpretation of the Court is consistent with the wordings in Article 239AA(3)(a). But, this interpretation was negated by the Union of India, acting through its Council of Ministers under Article 74, by triggering extraordinary legislative power of the President under Article 123 in the promulgation of an ordinance on May 19.
- What the ordinance did was to read/insert entry 41 of List II (State list) into Article 239AA(3)(a), thereby expanding the scope of excepted matter from three (1, 2, 18) to four (1, 2, 18, 41).
- This could not have been done without amending Article 239AA(3)(a) of the Constitution. The power conferred on Parliament under Article 239AA(3)(b) is to make fresh laws — not to amend Article 239AA(3)(a) of the Constitution.
- Alteration needs a constitutional amendment.



- Similarly, power conferred on Parliament under Article 239AA(7)(a) is to make laws for giving effect to or supplementing the provisions contained in various clauses of Article 239AA and for all matters incidental or consequential thereto. Such a power cannot be pressed into action to amend Article 239AA(3)(a) of the Constitution. Significantly, Article 239AA(7)(b) stipulates that Parliament's law making under Article 239AA(7)(a) shall not be deemed to be an amendment of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 368. No such clause has been stipulated in Article 239AA(3)(a). Therefore, altering the scope of Article 239AA(3)(a) requires constitutional amendment under Article 368; there is not an iota of doubt.

### **Nepal's 53-year-old Kami Rita Sherpa made a world record by conquering Mount Everest for the 28th time.**

- On 24 May 2023, Kami Rita Sherpa (53) of Nepal set a new world record by conquering Mount Everest for the 28th time, breaking his own record of climbing the world's highest peak 27 times.
- Kami Rita climbed Mount Everest for the 27th time on 17-May 2023. Pasang Sherpa of Nepal has climbed Mount Everest 26 times.
- The Sherpa set a new record by completing his second ascent in just one week.
- Sherpa, who lives in Solukhumbu district of eastern Nepal, is fond of mountaineering. On May 13, 1994, Sherpa conquered Everest for the first time.
- Apart from scaling Everest, guides have also climbed Mount K2, Mount Lhotse, Mount Manaslu and Mount Cho Oyu, all these peaks are located at an altitude of 8000 metres or more above sea level.



### **Patna becomes first Municipal Corporation to use CBDC.**

- On 23 May 2023, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Municipal Commissioner of Patna Municipal Corporation of Bihar launched digital currency E-Rupee generated by Reserve Bank of India under which now this digital currency will be used in the entire Patna Municipal Corporation area.
- From payment to other work, e-rupees will also be used. This payment system will be completely adopted in the Municipal Corporation Headquarters Maurya Lok Complex.
- Patna Municipal Corporation is the first Municipal Corporation in India to use CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency). During this, a workshop was also organised for the corporators, where they were informed about the benefits and uses of digital e-rupee.
- Apart from increasing the income of Patna Municipal Corporation through an online payment system, facilities are being made available to the common people sitting at home, free of cost. He said that at present 30 percent online payment is being done in Patna Municipal Corporation; the target is to increase it to 90 to 95 percent.
- Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC): e₹-R in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender. The first pilot of the Digital RupeeRetail segment (e₹-R) was launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on December 01, 2022.



### **Shri Ramcharitmanas became the world's longest song under Guinness World Record.**

- According to the information received from the media on 23 May 2023, Shri Ramcharitmanas has now become the longest song in the world. Dr Jagdish Pillai from Banaras, Uttar Pradesh has lent his voice to the Shri Ramcharitmanas song of 138 hours 41 minutes and 2 seconds.
- State AYUSH Minister Dr. Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu presented the Guinness Certificate to Dr. Jagdish Pillai at his residence.
- It is noteworthy that Dr. Jagdish Pillai, despite not being a Hindi speaker, composed and sang such a long song in Awadhi with bhajankirtan in such a beautiful and soulful way and got it registered in the Guinness Book. It took him four years to complete this work.

- The song of Shri Ramcharitmanas has been aired on more than 100 audio channels across the world. Hence Guinness World Records has recorded Shri Ramcharitmanas as the longest officially released song i.e. the longest officially recognized song in the world.
- Earlier this record was in the name of America and the United Kingdom. Under which the longest song was 115 hours 45 minutes which was sung by Mark Christopher Lee and The Pocket Gods living in St Albans Hertfordshire (UK) on 1 December 2021.
- Dr. Jagdish Pillai has become the Guinness World Record holder for the maximum number of times i.e. 5 times from Uttar Pradesh. For the first time in 2012, Dr. Jagadeesh Pillai registered the name of Banaras in the Guinness Book of World Records. The second record was set for the longest line of postcards with 16,300 postcards.
- He had registered his name in the Guinness record for the third time under the largest poster awareness campaign and for the fourth time under the Yoga Public Awareness Campaign by making the longest envelope. Dr. Pillai, who has done PhD in Vedic Science, is the author of more than 500 books.



### Sedition and its roots in rudeness as an offence.

- On March 30, the Lahore High Court annulled the offence of ‘sedition’ in the Pakistan Penal code.
- Around the same time in India, the police registered a series of complaints in Delhi and in Ahmedabad, and also arrested several people, including owners of the printing presses involved, for posting anti-government (and specifically, anti-Modi) posters across town.
- The detainees were not accused of ‘sedition,’ but were booked for criminal conspiracy to cause public mischief and to deface public property.
- The printing press is alleged to have breached some provision of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.
- The law that was struck down in Lahore is almost identical to India’s Section 124A, which seeks to criminalise words that bring “into hatred or contempt, or excite disaffection” towards the government established by law.
- In India, too, a challenge is pending before the Supreme Court. The law is in abeyance, although not formally struck down.
- Pakistan has a thriving practice in the use of the law of blasphemy, exercised usually on its poorest citizens.
- India, which is secular and does not criminalise blasphemy, has a near approximation in the “hurting of sentiments.”
- The state recently arrested actor Chetan Kumar and remanded him to 14 days in judicial custody, before granting him bail and threatening to revoke his overseas citizenship, for his tweet on Hindutva.
- The Supreme Court pronounced judgment in the Media One case, which addresses the logic of sedition.
- The SC struck down the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting’s decision to not renew the broadcast licence for the channel on grounds that their programming was ‘anti-establishment’, and was a threat to national security.
- The Court said that “the critical views of the channel, Media One, on policies of the government cannot be termed anti-establishment. The use of such a terminology in itself represents an expectation that the press must support the establishment. The action of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting by denying security clearance to a media channel on the basis of the views with which the channel is constitutionally entitled to hold produces a chilling effect on freedom of speech, and in particular on press freedom.” And further, that “the restriction on the freedom of the press compels citizens to think along the same tangent.
- A homogenised view on issues that range from socio economic policy to political ideologies would pose grave dangers to democracy.” The Court specifically decried the cavalier manner in which the state uses ‘national security’ as a catch phrase to censor speech. “The state is using national security as a tool to deny citizens remedies that are provided under the law. This is not compatible with the rule of law [...] we also hold that national security claims cannot be made out of thin air.”
- The judgment speaks to the mutating, resettling logic of the law of sedition. In that sense, it is even more important than a mere striking down of Section 124A.



- Interestingly, In the original act of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860, sedition was not present as an offence. It was the amendment of the year 1870 that introduced sedition to the Indian Penal Code. Sedition was a gag on the voices of freedom and independence in India. It was a weapon of law against Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru, and many others.
- The section of sedition was followed word to word. Many were convicted for invoking ill-will against the government even if there was no violence followed by this. But the scenario changed when the Federal Court (the highest judicial authority in British India) in the case of Niharendu Dutt Majumdar v King Emperor (1942) interpreted sedition as an offence only when it incites public disorder or violence.
- After a while, in the case of King Emperor v Sadashiv Narayan Bhalerao (1947), the Privy Council in Britain took up the issue of the interpretation of sedition. The Privy Council rejected the Federal Court's interpretation. It was held that the application of sedition does not require incitement to public disorder or violence. This interpretation was followed in practice till the reign of the Britishers in India.
- After Independence, the Constituent Assembly dropped sedition from the Constitution of India. This was due to KM Munshi. He proposed to remove sedition as a reasonable restriction on freedom of speech and expression as well.
- In 1951, the first amendment to the Constitution limited the freedom of speech and expression by adding "public order" as a reasonable restriction in Article 19(2).
- Later, the Indira Gandhi government made Section 124A a cognisable offence (where an arrest can be made without a warrant) by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- With the judgment of the Supreme Court in Kedarnath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962), the offence of sedition is applicable only if it is accompanied by incitement or a call for violence. Hence, Section 124A is to be read with Kedarnath Singh's judgment, and sedition will be applied only if it leads or is likely to lead to "public disorder" or "violence."
- Sedition can be summarised into the following points:
  - There must be words, written or spoken, signs, visual representation, or any such act;
  - Such an act should bring or attempts to bring hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection;
  - Such hatred, contempt, or disaffection must be towards any government established by law in India; and
  - It must have led to the incitement of violence or public disorder.

### SC refuses to hear plea against opening of Parliament by PM.

- A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) that asked the Supreme Court to rule that President Droupadi Murmu, and not Prime Minister Narendra Modi, should preside at the inauguration of the new Parliament building was denied by the apex court.
- The Supreme Court refused to entertain a petition challenging the inauguration of the new Parliament building by the Prime Minister, and not by the President.
- A Vacation Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and P.S. Narasimha said it was not "inclined" to hear the petition filed by advocate C.R. Jaya Sukin. When Mr. Sukin urged the Court to permit him to withdraw the petition, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the lawyer may then file it before another court and keep the issue alive. He said the court should record a dismissal of the petition to make it conclusive.
- Mr. Sukin's petition was filed amidst a heated debate between the government and Opposition over the inauguration.
- "What is your interest," the bench asked and commented, "We don't understand why you come with such petitions. We're not interested in entertaining it under Article 32." The petitioner cited Article 79 of the Indian Constitution to which Justice Maheshwari inquired, "How is Article 79 related to the inauguration?"
- The President, per him, should open the building since she is the head of the executive. The President's Special Address is what formally begins each Parliamentary session, according to Article 87, which he emphasised.
- The petition was dismissed by the bench because it was not persuaded by the applicant's arguments as he requested permission to withdraw the case. In the opinion of Tushar Mehta, the Solicitor General, CR Jaya Sukin shouldn't be



permitted to withdraw it since he would make a similar argument in the High Court. The SG argued that these issues should be categorically rejected as not justiciable by the court.

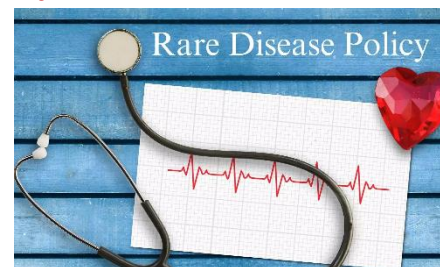
- However, the petitioner asserted that he is withdrawing because he does not intend to appear before the High Court and that he does not want the rejection to serve as a “certificate to the executive.” He decided to abandon the lawsuit after much deliberation because, as the bench noted in the decision, the Court was not inclined to hear the matter.
- The PIL which said, “Lok Sabha Secretariat violated the Constitution by not inviting the President for the inauguration,” was filed in the highest court seeking a direction that the new Parliament building should be inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu.

### **Normalcy in Manipur requires concerted action by govt., civil society.**

- Violence has flared again in Manipur, merely three weeks after conflagrations resulted in scores of deaths and the displacement of people in Churachandpur and Imphal in particular.
- Alarming, what began as protests against an order by the High Court of Manipur, on March 27, seeking the inclusion of the Meitei community into the State’s Scheduled Tribe list, has taken a grotesque turn, with representatives of the Kuki-Zomi community including BJP MLAs seeking a “separate administration”.
- While inter-community relations have occasionally led to flare ups and remained tense for years together, the conflagrations in May mark a degradation in hill valley relations and a complete failure of the government in curbing violence committed by radicals and miscreants present in the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities.
- Partially, this was a consequence of the inability of the State government led by the BJP Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, to rise above the fray and to act in a manner that was unbiased against particular communities. The government’s so-called anti poppy cultivation drives that were seen as moves against the Kuki-Zomi hill dwellers, raised their ire, while the High Court’s single judge Bench ill- throughout order — as the Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud, himself observed as being violative of a 23 -year -old Constitution Bench judgement — exacerbated the situation. The government was unable to prevent the spiralling of violence in Churachandpur and Imphal, suggesting the current regime’s incompetence.
- The State government must get its act together, with the help of the Centre, to bring back normalcy by increasing patrolling of paramilitary and police forces in riot-torn areas, providing relief to displaced people and curtailing the influence of militant sections.
- A plan to allow the return of those displaced to their homes in the medium term must also be put into order with the help of the security forces. Not doing so only plays into the hands of chauvinists from either side who emphasise differences, disharmony and separation — all of which will be disastrous for the State in the long term.
- The Union government cannot remain nonchalant about the turn of events. Manipur, like some of the other north-eastern States, needs to promote a civic consciousness among its citizens that will allow them to rise above ethnic identities to differentiate themselves. With trust fraying between community leaders and State government representatives, it is incumbent upon civil society members, within and outside Manipur, to take up the cause of rebuilding inter-community ties and not letting chauvinist and militant groups hijack the role of representation.

### **Delhi HC sets up a panel to implement the Centre's Rare Diseases Policy.**

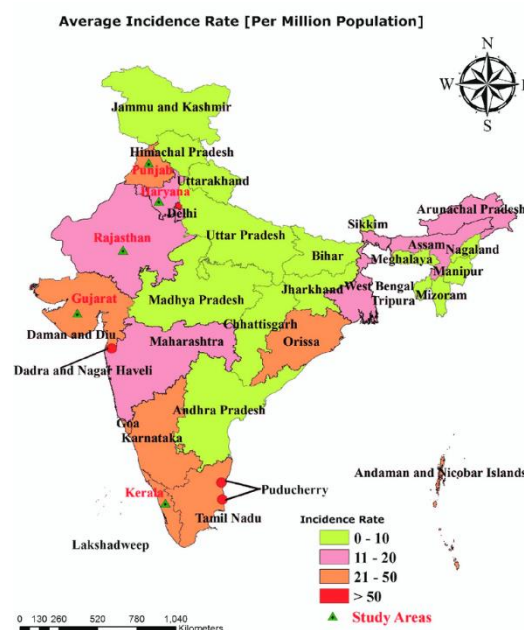
- The Delhi High Court has set up a five member panel to implement the Centre’s rare diseases policy in an efficient manner and ensure that its benefits reach patients.
- The National Rare Diseases Committee will also look into the case of these patients, enrolled with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, and the manner in which their treatment can begin.
- Under the National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021, hundreds of patients, mostly children — are registered with the “digital portal for crowd funding and voluntary donations for patients of rare diseases by the Union Health Ministry.



- However, the government has been unable to fully finance their treatment due to high costs, resource constraints, and competing health priorities.
- Justice Prathiba M. Singh, in her order dated May 15, observed, “...there is a need for some urgent steps to be taken in close coordination between the medical community, the providers of therapies for rare diseases and governmental agencies”.
- “Under the current framework, the Centres for Excellence are not centrally coordinated, leading to lack of timely availability and adequate therapies for patients with rare diseases,” she added.
- The court ordered the panel to explore procurement of therapies and drugs, and the creation of an associated logistical framework to administer treatment. It has been hearing a batch of petitions by rare disease patients and their caretakers, which contend that medicines and therapies are exorbitantly expensive.
- On December 2021, the Delhi HC had urged the Centre to look into the matter, saying that patients identified under the National Policy for Rare Diseases cannot be made to suffer due to lack of funds.
- In its latest order, the High Court ordered the National Rare Diseases’ Committee to take up on an “urgent basis” the immediate requirement of patients to commence the treatment stopped due to lack of funding.

### **‘From prevalence in eight States in 2001, dengue is now a nationwide infection’.**

- Faced with a shortage of entomologists, a trickier vector, increased travel, and less than optimal public participation for prevention, the infection geography of dengue, which was restricted to eight States in 2001, currently covers all the States and Union Territories in India.
- Dengue has now breached the country’s last bastion, Ladakh (with two cases in 2022), senior health officials say.
- As the country gets ready to welcome the south-west monsoon, which is associated with the rise of certain diseases, including malaria, dengue and zika, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) confirmed that dengue’s infection geography has grown.
- “During the past two decades, there has been a significant geographical spread of dengue with an 11-fold increase and repeated outbreaks. ...Rural areas contributed approximately 32% of the total cases in 2015-16 and have increased to 41%--45% now,” experts maintained.
- The World Health Organization estimates the global incidence of dengue has grown over recent decades, with half of the world population now at risk.
- The ICMR said that this risk from dengue, which is now endemic in more than 100 countries, has been propelled by several factors, including climate change, increased urbanisation and increased travel.
- “Day-biting habit, multiple biting, long incubation period, fast transport, eggs retained up to one year, container breeding, human environment, and intermittent water supply and poor waste management at construction sites add to the problem,” said Dr. Himmat Singh, from the ICMR -National Institute of Malaria Research.
- The main carrier of the dengue virus is the Aedes aegypti mosquito. Dengue thrives in urban poor areas, suburbs and rural areas but can also affect more affluent neighbouring countries in tropical and subtropical countries.
- Dengue transmission is closely linked with three major factors – rainfall, humidity and temperature, which dictate the geographical areas in which dengue spreads and is transmitted.
- Dengue is spread by the bite of two mosquitoes, Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus.
- Currently, Aedes aegypti is more prevalent in the southern peninsula, eastern seaboard, north-eastern states and northern plains.
- Aedes albopictus is active along the eastern and western coastlines, north-eastern states and lower Himalayas.
- Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by dengue virus (genus flavivirus), transmitted by several species of mosquitoes of the genus Aedes, mainly Aedes aegypti.





- This mosquito is also a carrier of Chikungunya, Yellow Fever and Zika Infection.
- Dengue infection is diagnosed by a blood test and there is no specific medicine to treat the infection.

### UN peacekeeping mission: India to train women from ASEAN.

- Following Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's proposal last year for an initiative on 'women in United Nations Peacekeeping (UNPK) operations' as part of expanding India-ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) defence cooperation, India is set to conduct two initiatives for women personnel from South East Asia later this year.
- March 29, marks the 75th U.N. Peacekeepers Day and India, one of the largest troop contributing nations to UNPK, currently has around 5,900 troops deployed in 12 U.N. Missions. This is the day when in 1948 the first U.N. peacekeeping mission, "UN Truce Supervision Organisation" began operations in Palestine.
- One of the initiatives under the 'India-ASEAN Initiative for women in UNPK operations' includes conduct of tailor-made courses for women peacekeepers of ASEAN member-states at the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in India this September. 20 peacekeepers, two from each country, would be trained.
- Mr. Singh had made these proposals among others at the inaugural India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting held in November 2022 at Siem Reap, Cambodia, to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of India-ASEAN relations.
- India has contributed approximately 2,75,000 troops to peacekeeping missions so far and 159 Indian Army soldiers have lost their lives across the globe. The day was commemorated by paying homage to the fallen soldiers by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial. Apart from the current deployment, India has pledged one Infantry Battalion Group and a Navy Corvette with Helicopter, as hard power and an Engineer Company and Signal Company as Force enablers, to be deployed at the behest of the U.N., the Army said in a statement.
- In 2016, India and the U.S. had begun an annual training programme for joint training of U.N. peacekeepers from African countries. Three iterations of the joint training were held before it was interrupted due to COVID-19 and a revamped programme was launched in 2021 of which two iterations have been held so far.
- India has deployed Female Engagement Teams in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, which is the second largest women contingent after Liberia. India has also deployed Women Military Police in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and women staff officers and military observers in various missions.



### Rolls-Royce booked on graft charge in aircraft deal.

- The CBI has registered a case against British Aerospace Systems, Rolls-Royce Plc, its then director Tim Johns, two alleged middle-men, Sudhir Choudhrie and his son Bhanu Choudhrie, and unknown Indian public servants, for alleged corruption during 2003--2012 in the procurement of Hawk aircraft.
- The agency had initiated an inquiry on December 15, 2016 against Rolls-Royce Plc, Mr. Sudhir Choudhrie, unknown officials of the Defence Ministry and others. It allegedly discovered that unknown officials conspired with Mr. Jones and others to cheat the Government of India in connection with the aircraft supplied by Rolls--Royce and its associate group companies, the FIR said.
- The charges are criminal conspiracy (IPC section 120B) and offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act.



- According to the CBI, the accused had between 2003 and 2012 conspired with unidentified public servants who “abused their official positions” over the procurement of 24 Hawk 115s for £734.21 million (Rs 7,490 crore at current exchange rates) and an agreement for licensed manufacture of 42 additional aircraft by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- In 2012, media reports alleged corruption in Rolls-Royce operations, leading to an investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, London.
- The cabinet committee on security had on September 3, 2003, approved the procurement of 66 Hawk 115 aircraft and the signing of an inter-government agreement between India and the UK for long-term product support, the CBI official said.
- The memorandum of understanding was signed on March 19, 2004. Two contracts were signed on March 26, 2004, for the direct supply of 24 Hawk aircraft and a technology transfer for 42 others to be manufactured by HAL. They prohibited the use of undue influence and middlemen or agents.

### Araku Valley coffee and black pepper from Andhra Pradesh got an organic certificate.

- Coffee beans and black pepper grown by tribals in Araku Valley Agency, Andhra Pradesh have received organic certification. APEDA, a central government sector organisation, has granted organic certification to tribal cooperative societies Girijan Sahakari Nigam (GCC) for coffee.
- More than 1300 tribal farmers of Gondiparla, Lambasingi and Kappalu clusters of Chintapalli division of Visakha Agency were provided organic certification for coffee and pepper crops grown in about 21 thousand 104 acres.
- The work of getting an NPOP certificate started four years back. Due to this certification, the coffee and black pepper grown by the tribal farmers will get a higher price. This will give economic benefit to the farmers.
- The documentation process for organic certification is cumbersome as it involves third party verification, online verification, geo-tagging and updating information on the APEDA Tracenet.



### Bollywood's Oscars 'IIFA 2023' held in Abu Dhabi.

- The Oscars of Bollywood 'The 23rd International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) 2023' was held on 26- 27 May 2023 at the Etihad Arena, Abu Dhabi on Yas Island.
- It was established in the year 2000 in London.
- The 23rd award show was hosted by Abhishek Bachchan and Vicky Kaushal. Salman Khan, Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon performed at the event.



#### Winners List:

Best Picture	Drishyam 2
Best Performance in a Leading Role Male	Hrithik Roshan (Vikram Vedha)
Best Performance in a Leading Role Male	Alia Bhatt (Gangubai Kathiawadi)
Best Director	R Madhvan (Rocketary: The Nambi Effect)
Best Debut Male	Shantanu Maheshwari (Gangubai Kathiawadi) and Babil Khan (Kala)
Best Debut Female	Khushali Kumar (Dhoya: Round the Corner)
Best Playback Singer Female	Shreya Ghoshal (Rasiya-Brahmastra Part One: Shiva)
Best Music	Pritam Chakraborty (Brahmastra Part One: Shiva)

Outstanding Achievement in Indian Cinema	Kamal Haasan
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Arijit Singh for the song Kesariya from Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva
Best Music Direction Best Lyricist	Amitabh Bhattacharya for the song Kesariya from Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva
Outstanding Achievement in Regional Cinema	Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia D'Souza (Veda)
Outstanding Achievement in Fashion in Cinema	Manish Malhotra

### Unboxing the 'export turnaround' in India's toy story.

- India has recently turned a net exporter of toys, during 2020-21 and 2021-22, ending decades of import dominance. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, toy exports increased from \$109 million (₹812 crore) to \$177 million (₹1,237 crore); imports declined from \$371 million (₹2,593 crore) to \$110 million (₹819 crore), official data show.
- India hardly figures in the global toy trade, with its exports at a mere half-a-percentage point. Between 2014-19, the Indian toy industry witnessed negative productivity growth.
- Historically, Asia's successful industrializing nations promoted toy exports for job creation, starting with Japan about a century ago, China since the 1980s, and currently Vietnam following in their footsteps.

### Maharashtra CM names BandraVersova sea route as 'Veer Savarkar Bandra-Versova Sagari Setu'.

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has announced that the Bandra-Versova sea route in Mumbai will be named as 'Veer Savarkar Bandra-Versova Sagari Setu'. He said this in a program organized on the 140th birth anniversary of Swatantra Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in Mumbai on 28 May 2023.
- He also said that 'Veer Savarkar Shaurya Puraskar' will also be given for incomparable works in the state on the lines of the gallantry award given by the central government.
- Earlier, on the 140th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Veer Savarkar, Eknath Shinde paid tribute and said that it is a matter of pride for every Marathi person that the new building of the country's parliament is being inaugurated on this auspicious day.
- Savarkar, born on May 28, 1883 in Bhagur, Nashik, Maharashtra, was a politician, activist and writer. He developed the Hindu nationalist ideology of Hindutva in 1922 while imprisoned in Ratnagiri. He died on February 26, 1966.







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