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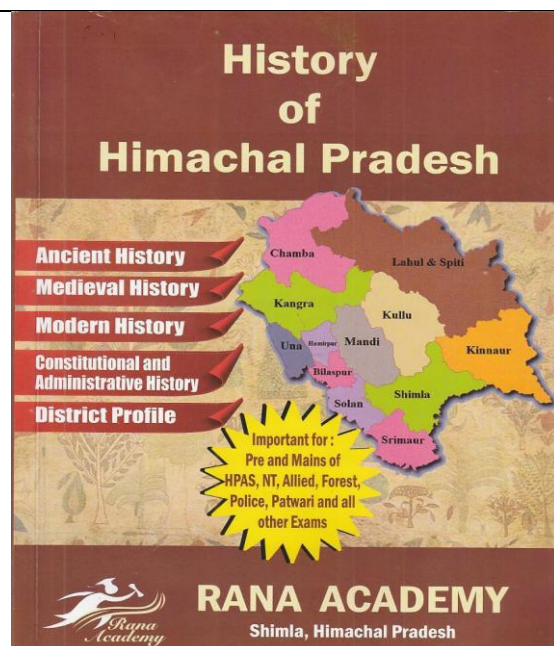
AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2024

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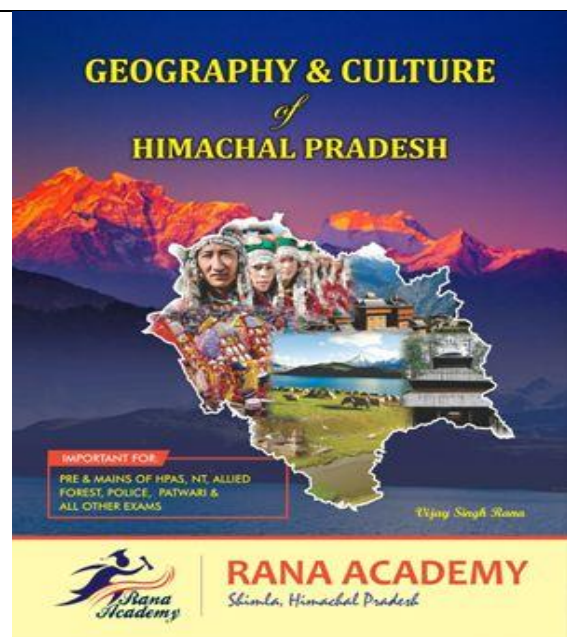
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INTERNATIONAL / WORLD NEWS

1st BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi

- Held at: **New Delhi** on 06-08 August 2024.
- Hosted by: Ministry of External Affairs of GOI in association with Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).
- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry highlighted the need for member countries and business leaders to reassess priorities regarding the proposed BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- About BIMSTEC FTA: The Framework Agreement on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area was signed in **Phuket, Thailand on 08 February 2004** and came into force on 30 June 2004.
- Note: Thailand was India's largest trading partner within the BIMSTEC bloc, followed by Bangladesh.

Germany joins UNC as 18th member

- Germany recently joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea, making it the 18th member. This move shows Germany's commitment to global security and its belief that stability in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region are connected.
- Note: Germany's inclusion in the UNC has faced criticism from China and North Korea, who have historically opposed the command. North Korea views the UNC as a tool for U.S. confrontation, while China is concerned about NATO's growing influence in Asia.
- The **UNC was established in 1950** to help restore peace during the Korean War and enforce the armistice agreement. Although it was created under the United Nations, it operates independently and serves as a communication link with North Korea. The command is mainly led by the U.S. military commander in South Korea.

India-US Cultural Property Agreement

- Recently, Cultural Property Agreement was signed at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi between India & USA.
- Objective: *to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities between India and the USA.*
- The agreement aligns with the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.
- The agreement restricts the importation into the USA of certain archaeological and ethnological materials.
- The Designated List includes items ranging from 1.7 million years ago to 1947 CE. The USA will return any forfeited objects on the Designated List to India.
- Significance: The agreement is seen as a significant step towards preserving India's rich cultural heritage and historical artifacts. Under India's G20 Presidency, the protection and promotion of cultural property emerged as a main priority. The Kashi Culture Pathway, endorsed by the G20 Culture Working Group emphasizes strengthened global efforts to fight the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India

- In 2023, **Qatar** remained the largest supplier with shipments in 2023.
- However, **United States** emerged as India's second largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), surpassing the United Arab Emirates, delivering 3.09 million tonnes (MT) in 2023.
- About LNG: LNG is natural gas cooled to a liquid state at about -260°F, reducing its volume by 600 times, enabling long-distance transport to markets not connected by pipelines. At terminals, LNG is converted back to gas and distributed via pipelines. Natural gas is a cleaner and more economical alternative to conventional hydrocarbons, comprising 70-90% methane, crucial in India's transition to greener energy.

Lingshui 36-1 gas field in the South China Sea

- **China** has announced the discovery of the Lingshui 36-1 gas field in the South China Sea, marking it as the world's first large, ultra-shallow gas field in ultra-deep waters. This significant find could intensify the already existing geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea as the sea is contested by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan against China's claims.
- The Lingshui 36-1 gas field is estimated to contain over 100 billion cubic meters of natural gas.
- As the world's largest natural gas importer, spending approximately USD 64.3 billion on gas in 2023, China aims to enhance its energy security with this discovery.

Lithium in Chile

- Chile has the world's largest lithium reserves (36%) and is the **second-largest global producer** (32%). It contributes about 36% to global trade. Chile is a part of the "lithium triangle" along with Argentina and Bolivia.
- **Australia and China** are the first and third largest producer,
- In News: Coal India Limited (CIL) is planning to explore and extract lithium from the salt flats (areas of flat land covered with a layer of salt) in Chile.

India-Maldives

- India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar concluded a crucial visit to the Maldives. He asserted that the Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.

Key Outcomes of the Visit

- Water and Sewerage Network: Mr Jaishankar and the Maldivian Foreign Minister jointly inaugurated India's Line of Credit (LoC) assisted project of water and sewerage network in 28 islands of Maldives.
- Capacity Building: A memorandum of Understanding on the capacity building of additional 1,000 Maldivian civil servants in India was signed.
- Launch of UPI: Both countries agreed to the introduction of UPI in Maldives
- Community Development Projects: Six High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) under grant assistance by India in the areas of mental health, special education, speech therapy and street lighting were jointly inaugurated.
- 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' Initiative: Indian EAM planted a sapling at the Lonuziyaaraiy Park as part of Prime Minister Modi's 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' initiative and President Muizzu's 5 Million Tree Project.
- Greater Male Connectivity Project: EAM visited the India-assisted Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) site and announced India's commitment to the progress of this flagship development project.
 - It will connect Male with the adjoining islands of Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.
- Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project: EAM inaugurated the Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project and Addu Detour Link Bridge Project.
- The recent inauguration of a new runway at **Hanimadhoo International Airport** and the launch of the **RuPay card** in the Maldives signify a pivotal moment in the evolving relationship between India and the Maldives.

India-Vietnam

- In News: A bilateral meeting was held recently between the Indian Prime Minister and the Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in New Delhi.
 - History: Mahatma Gandhi and President Ho Chi Minh exchanged messages during their independence struggles.
 - India established diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1972. Relations were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016.
 - The development of India-Vietnam relations is currently guided by a "Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People" adopted in 2020.

What are the Key Highlights of the Bilateral Meeting?

- New Plan of Action: India and Vietnam agreed on a new plan of action for their comprehensive strategic partnership established in 2016, which will be implemented over the next five years (2024-2028). Objectives of the plan include strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Enhancing collaboration in technology and development, and fostering partnerships in defence and security.
- Digital Payment Connectivity: The PM of India announced that the central banks of both countries reached an agreement to establish digital payment connectivity, enhancing financial transactions between the two nations.
 - Like India, Vietnam is also embracing digital payments, including developing cross-border payment connectivity for retail transactions with other ASEAN countries.
- Credit Line Extension: India will extend a USD 300 million credit line to Vietnam to support its military security and development projects. The inauguration of an **Army Software Park in Nayachang**, funded by an Indian grant, and increased cooperation on terrorism and cyber security were highlighted.
- MoUs Signed: Six Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed, covering various areas including Agricultural Research, Customs capacity building, Law and justice, Radio & television, and Traditional medicines.
- Trade and Economic Goals: Vietnam proposed raising annual bilateral trade to USD 20 billion from the current USD 14.8 billion.
 - The two countries agreed to expedite the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement to enhance trade.

- Vietnam welcomed Indian investments in IT, manufacturing, textiles, semiconductors, and renewable energy.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Both countries committed to strengthening cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, focusing on maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea.
 - They emphasised the peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982.
- **Economic Diplomacy Dialogue:** A new economic diplomacy dialogue will be established at the deputy foreign minister level to address trade and investment issues.

Pangong Tso Lake

- **In News:** China has completed and operationalised a bridge connecting the north and south banks of the Pangong Tso lake in Eastern Ladakh.
- It allows China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to significantly reduce the time needed to mobilise its troops and tanks. It will give Chinese troops and tanks faster access to the lake's southern banks, including **Rezang La**, where Indian forces outmanoeuvred them in 2020. The Indian Army captured **key heights** on the southern bank of Pangong Tso lake in 2020. The new Chinese bridge was built in response to this.

Pangong Lake Dispute

- Pangong Tso is a long, narrow, deep, endorheic lake at over 14,000 ft in Ladakh in trans-Himalayas.
- India and China have around one-third and two thirds of Pangong Tso Lake respectively. The eastern end of Pangong Tso lies in Tibet. It is a tectonic lake formed when India came out of Gondwanaland and pressed against Asia to create a Himalayan mountain range while occupying the space that originally was the Tethys Ocean.

Disputed "Fingers" Area:

- The northern bank of the lake has spurs known as "fingers." India claims the LAC runs through Finger 8 but controls up to Finger 4, while China claims the LAC is at Finger 2.
- Recent tensions have led to Chinese forces blocking Indian soldiers from moving beyond Finger 2.



Recent Key Defence Agreements Signed Between India and the US

Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA):

- The Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) is an agreement between the US and India.
- India is the **18th SOSA partner** of the US after Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. It allows both nations to prioritise each other's goods and services for national defense, ensuring supply chain resilience during emergencies.
- Under SOSA, US defense contractors can request expedited deliveries from India and vice versa. Although not legally binding, SOSA operates on mutual goodwill, with **Indian companies prioritising US orders** and the US offering assurances through its Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS), managed by the Department of Defence (DoD) and the Department of Commerce (DOC).

MoU on Liaison Officers:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aims to enhance information-sharing between India and the US by establishing a system of Liaison Officers.
- It will start with India's deployment of an officer to the US Special Operations Command in Florida.
- This initiative builds on previous agreements, including the September 2013 Joint Declaration on Defence Cooperation and the 2015 Framework for US-India Defence Relations, reflecting a commitment to strengthen bilateral defense ties.

India-Ukraine

- India's Prime Minister paid a visit to Ukraine at the invitation of Ukraine's President. It was the **first Indian head of state to visit Ukraine since its independence in 1991**.
- The visit focused on cooperation in defence as India operates a large inventory of military equipment of Ukrainian origin.

- India's PM emphasized that India has never been neutral in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and has always stood for peace.
- **Intergovernmental Commission:** An Intergovernmental Commission between India and Ukraine has been established to restore and deepen bilateral trade and economic relations to pre-conflict levels.
- **Signing of Four Key Agreements:** Both signed four agreements covering areas such as agriculture, the food industry, medical product regulation, and cultural cooperation.
- **Bhishm Cubes Gifted to Ukraine:** India gifted four Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri (BHISHMA) cubes to Ukraine, designed to provide emergency medical care through mobile hospitals. These cubes are part of Project Aarogya Maitri, a program to offer crucial medical supplies and ensure rapid deployment of medical facilities in crisis situations.

India- Poland

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India's visit to Poland marked a significant milestone as India and Poland celebrated the **70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations**.
- During this historic visit, both nations elevated their bilateral relationship to a **"Strategic Partnership,"** committing to deepen cooperation across various sectors.
- The two sides agreed to develop and implement a five-year Action Plan for 2024-2028, focusing on the following priority areas for bilateral collaboration: Political Dialogue and Security, Trade and Investment, Climate and Technology, Transport and Connectivity, Counter-Terrorism Efforts.
- **Dobry Maharaja Memorial:** PM of India paid tribute at the Dobry Maharaja Memorial in Warsaw. The memorial commemorates the deep respect and gratitude of the Polish people and government for the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar (Jamnagar in Gujarat), Shri Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja, who provided shelter to over a thousand Polish children during World War II, earning him the title "Dobry (Good) Maharaja" in Poland.
- **Kolhapur Memorial:** The PM of India also visited the Kolhapur Memorial. The memorial is dedicated to the generosity of the princely state of Kolhapur in providing shelter to around 5,000 Polish refugees, including women and children, during World War II.
- **Monument to the Battle of Monte Cassino:** The PM of India laid a wreath at this monument, recognizing the shared sacrifices of soldiers from Poland, India, and other nations during World War II. The monument commemorates the Second Polish Corps' soldiers who fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II.

St. Martin's Island

- Recently, Sajeeb Wazed, son of former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina, has dismissed the report claiming that Sheikh Hasina could have stayed in power by handing over Bangladesh's St. Martin's Island to America.
- St Martin's Island is located in the northeastern region of the Bay of Bengal, close to the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar. It is nine kilometres away from the southern tip of Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula.
- The 7.3 km long island is at an elevation of 3.6 metres above the mean sea level.
- **History:** The island was once part of the Teknaf peninsula around 5,000 years ago, but gradually got submerged into the sea. Around 450 years ago, the southern suburbs of present-day St Martin's Island resurfaced, and the northern and rest of the parts of the island rose above sea level in the following 100 years.
- The Arab merchants were among the first to settle on the island, arriving in the 18th Century. They initially named it **"Jazira"** (meaning "the island" or "the peninsula") and later changed it to **"Narikel Jinjira"** or **"Coconut Island"**.
- In 1900, British India annexed the island during a land survey. During which the island came to be known as St Martin's Island, named after then Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong- Martin.
- After the partition of British India in 1947, it became part of Pakistan and subsequently, a part of independent Bangladesh after the 1971 Liberation War.
- **Environmental significance:** It is **Bangladesh's only coral island** and is also a **breeding ground for sea turtles**.
- **Strategic Significance:** The island's proximity to both Bangladesh and Myanmar. It's position in the Bay of Bengal, makes it strategically important in regional geopolitics.
- **Cultural significance:** The island has a mixed cultural heritage, with influences from both Bengali and Rakhine communities, as well as the early Arab settlers.

India-Japan

- India and Japan recently held their **third 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi**.
- The discussions, which took place against the backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions and China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, focused on deepening bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

- **About 2+2 Meetings:** 2+2 meetings are high-level diplomatic dialogues involving the foreign and defence ministers of two countries. This format facilitates in-depth discussions on strategic, security, and defence issues, aiming to enhance bilateral relations and address mutual concerns, which can help in resolving conflicts and building stronger partnerships.

India's 2+2 Partners:

- **United States:** The US is India's oldest and most prominent 2+2 partner. The first 2+2 dialogue between India and the US occurred in 2018. This dialogue replaced the previous Strategic and Commercial Dialogue and was intended to deepen strategic cooperation and address shared concerns.
- **Russia:** The inaugural 2+2 meeting with **Russia** took place in 2021. Both countries share similar views on a multipolar world order and use this platform to discuss a broad range of regional and international issues.
- **Others:** In addition to the US and Russia, India has engaged in 2+2 meetings with **Australia, Japan, Brazil** and the **United Kingdom** to bolster defence and security cooperation, enhance strategic depth, and align on a multipolar world order.

3rd Voice of Global South Summit 2024 (VOGSS)

- India hosted the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit on 17th August 2024, in virtual format, with the overarching theme, "*An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future*".
- Note: India had hosted the 1st VOGSS on 12-13th January 2023, and the 2nd VOGSS on 17th November 2023, both in virtual format 123 countries participated in the 3rd VOGSS. However, **China and Pakistan were not invited**.
- **Global Development Compact (GDC):** Prime Minister of India put forward a proposal for a comprehensive four-fold Global Development Compact (GDC) comprising four elements: Trade for development, Capacity building for sustainable growth, Technology sharing, Project specific concessional finance and grants.

Global South

- American academic **Carl Oglesby** coined the term "Global South" in 1969 to denote a set of countries beset by the "dominance" of the Global North through political and economic exploitation. The phrase "Global South" refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania separated by the **Brandt line**. It denotes regions **outside Europe and North America**, mostly **low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised**.
- China and India are the leading proponents of the Global South.
- The Brandt line is a visual representation of the world's economic divide between the rich north and the poor south, based on GDP per capita. It was proposed by Willy Brandt in the 1970s and encircles the globe at a latitude of roughly 30° North.



India-Malaysia

- Recently Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim visited India.
- The existing **Enhanced Strategic Partnership** between India and Malaysia, which was established in 2015, was upgraded to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

TAPI Pipeline

- The TAPI pipeline is a major infrastructure project designed to transport natural gas from the **Galkynysh gas field in Turkmenistan** through **Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India**. The pipeline will span approximately **1,814-kilometres** and is expected to deliver around 33 billion cubic metres (BCM) of natural gas annually.

- It will supply gas to Afghanistan (5%), Pakistan (47.5%), and India (47.5%) during its 30-year operational period.
- The pipeline is also known as the ‘**Peace Pipeline**’ due to its potential to foster regional cooperation and stability.
- The project’s origins trace back to the 1990s, with significant progress made in 2003, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). **India joined the initiative in 2008**, marking a major milestone in its development.
- The TAPI Pipeline Company Limited (TPCL), is responsible for the construction and operation of the pipeline. The company is a joint venture of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, each holding shares in the project.

Council of Europe (COE)

- The Council of Europe (COE) is an international organisation founded in 1949 and headquartered in Strasbourg, France.
- It is distinct from the European Union (EU) and consists of 46 member states, including most European countries.
- The COE’s primary mission is to uphold and promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across its member states.

China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit

- Recently, the China hosted Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in **Beijing**, attended by **53** African nations, showcased China’s evolving approach amidst economic pressures and its efforts to strengthen its partnership with Africa.
- **FOCAC was established in 2000** to formalise the strategic partnership between China and African nations, with a summit conducted every three years, with host alternating between China and an African member.
- Participants: The FOCAC counts 53 African nations as its members, with the **exception of Eswatini**, which has diplomatic ties with Taiwan against China’s “One China” Policy.

UN Summit of the Future 2024, New York

- The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, recently addressed the UN Summit of the Future 2024, and called for urgent reforms to outdated UN institutions related to global peace, security, and finance.
- The theme of the Summit is ‘**Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow**’.
- The Prime Minister of India also participated in the summit. India calls for **reforms** in the UN and Security Council to ensure relevance, advocating for expanded permanent membership, including itself and African nations.
- The Summit concluded with the adoption of an outcome document - A Pact for the Future, along with two annexes, Global Digital Compact and A Declaration on Future Generations.
- **Pact for the Future**: It is aimed at accelerating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement for climate action. Includes commitments to a just transition from fossil fuels and ensuring a sustainable and peaceful future.
- The Global Digital Compact promotes equitable access to technology, ensuring it benefits everyone.
- The “Declaration on Future Generations” focuses on long-term thinking by urging current decision-makers to consider the interests of future generations.

6th Quad Leaders’ Summit

- Held at: **Wilmington, Delaware (USA)**.
- It was the 4th in-person Quad Leaders’ Summit.
- New initiatives like the **Quad Cancer Moonshot**, has been announced for treatment of cervical cancer.
- The United States has pledged over USD 84.5 million to enhance infectious disease prevention and response capabilities across fourteen Indo-Pacific nations.
- MAITRI: The Quad has introduced the Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) to enhance regional maritime security capabilities.
- A first-ever Quad-at Sea Ship Observer Mission is planned for 2025, to enhance interoperability.
- **Quad, or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**, is a diplomatic partnership among **Australia, India, Japan, and the US**. It focuses on stability and prosperity in the Indo Pacific region, promoting an open, stable, and resilient environment.

Globe Network

- Genesis: Established in 2021 at UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption (UNGASS).

- It is an initiative launched under G20 framework. Earlier, Riyadh Initiative for creation of GlobE network was approved by G20 in 2020.
- Objective: Operational law enforcement authorities with an anti-corruption mandate can join forces to counter transnational corruption cases.
- Governance: Governed by its members and supported by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime /UNODC (Its secretariat).
- Members: Includes 121 member countries and 219 law enforcement authorities.
- Ministry of Home Affairs serves as Central Authority for GlobE Network in India.
- While CBI and ED represent India as member authorities.
- In News: India has been elected to steering committee of GlobE (Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities) network.

44th and 45th ASEAN Summits

- The 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits were held in **Vientiane, Laos**, under the Chairmanship of the Lao PDR.
- Theme: "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience."
- Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith emphasized the need for member countries to promote peace, stability, and sustainable development.

About ASEAN

- Full Name: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- Established: August 8, 1967
- Founding Members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand
- Current Membership: 10 countries, including Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam
- Headquarters: Jakarta, Indonesia

21st 'ASEAN-India Summit'

- Indian Prime Minister (PM) participated in the 21st ASEAN-India Summit in Lao PDR
- The PM with ASEAN leaders reviewed the progress of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and charted the future direction of cooperation.
- Leaders agreed to create a new ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2026-2030) to realize the full potential of the ASEAN-India partnership and adopted two joint statements.
- PM announced a 10-point plan aligning with summit theme-Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience.

Joint Statement on Strengthening ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

- Accelerate review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to enhance trade, simplify processes, and cooperation.
- Welcome the launch of the ASEAN-India Fund for Digital Future to support joint activities.

Joint Statement on Advancing Digital Transformation

- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI): To share best practices in DPI development, implement joint initiatives for regional integration, and address challenges in Health etc.
- Financial Technology: Explore collaboration on cross-border payment systems through innovative digital solutions.
- Cybersecurity: To enhance cybersecurity cooperation for the digital economy and welcomed the ASEAN-India Track 1 Cyber Policy Dialogue.

Major points announced in 10-point plan

- Celebrating the year **2025 as ASEAN-India Year of Tourism** and celebrating decade of Act East Policy through several people centric.
- Review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement by 2025.

19th East Asia Summit (EAS)

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India attended the 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) in **Vientiane, Lao PDR**.
- Indian PM advocated for a development-oriented Indo-Pacific approach over expansionism. He reiterated support for Nalanda University and invited EAS members to the Heads of Higher Education Conclave. Indian PM conveyed his wishes to Malaysia on presiding as the new Chair of ASEAN (2025) and expressed India's full support to it. The present chair of ASEAN is Lao PDR (2024).
- East Asia Summit: It is a regional forum that brings together countries from South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and beyond to discuss strategic, political and economic issues.
- EAS was started in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It comprises **18 countries**- 10 ASEAN Countries + 8 Dialogue Partners (India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and US).
- India's Act East Policy: It was launched by PM Modi in 2014, with the objective to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with counties in the Indo-Pacific region. It is the

successor to the Look East Policy of 1992 and focuses on the extended neighbourhood in the Indo-Pacific region, with ASEAN as its core.

- Year 2024 also marked 10 years of India's Act East Policy that was announced in 2014 to strengthen India-ASEAN ties in trade, security, and connectivity in the Indo-Pacific.

2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation

- Hosted by: India in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- It was concluded with the adoption of the **Delhi Declaration**.
- The 80th anniversary of the founding of the ICAO coincided with the Conference.
- It saw participation from delegates of 29 countries, ministers, policymakers, and 8 international organisations including ICAO.
- Note: India has emerged as the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world, after the US and China.
- Note: The ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) founded in 1944 and is headquartered in Montreal, Canada. It was established by the Chicago Convention (Convention on International Civil Aviation) which is an international treaty that governs international aviation.

Civil war in Sudan

- The **Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)** launched a major offensive against the paramilitary **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** in Khartoum and Bahri. Thus, the war which was quiet for a few months has gained momentum again.
- Power rivalry between SAF and RSF: The civil war in Sudan erupted from a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), two major military factions, each led by influential commanders.
- The Conflict which started in **capital city of Khartoum** has spread to Omdurman, Bahri, Port Sudan, El Fasher and the Port Sudan cities, as well as the Darfur and Kordofan states.
- In August, the UN declared famine in the Zamzam camp in North Darfur which hosts nearly 5,00,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- Role of ethnic tensions in the war: It began as a military rivalry has now evolved through ethnic lines, involving several regional ethnic militias. **Arab militias took sides with RSF** however **non-Arab militias with SAF**.
- The SAF claims to be the legitimate government, with the UN just about recognizing their claims, although it came to power through a coup in 2021.
- The RSF, a former Arab militia known as *Janjaweed*, seeks alliances from several Arab countries to support its claim to power.
- Source of arms: Despite a UN arms embargo, both the SAF and RSF have accessed advanced weaponry, including drones and missile systems, from international sources such as China, Iran, Russia, Serbia, and the UAE. This has perpetuated the conflict and enabled both sides to sustain their military operations.
- Affecting neighboring countries: The war has driven over two million refugees into neighboring Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, straining resources and exacerbating regional tensions. Ethnic violence has spilled over into border areas, disrupting local communities and increasing regional instability.
- Peace measures: Nine rounds of U.S.-Saudi ceasefire efforts failed; recent talks saw no attendance.

Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

- It is a regional security grouping comprising **India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Mauritius**.
- The CSC's core objective is to promote regional security by addressing transnational threats and challenges of common concern to the Member States.
- Origin: The CSC, initially known as the NSA Trilateral for Maritime Security Cooperation.
 - It was established between **India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives in 2011**.
 - It was an **initiative of Sri Lanka** to enhance *maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region*.
- It came to a standstill after 2014 due to rising tensions between India and the Maldives.
- It was revived and re-branded as the CSC in 2020.
- Members: **India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives** were its founding members. **Mauritius** joined the conclave in 2022 while **Bangladesh** joined in 2024. **Seychelles is an observer state**.
- CSC brings together National Security Advisors (NSAs) and Deputy NSAs of the member countries.
- Cooperation under the conclave focuses on five pillars: maritime safety and security; countering terrorism and radicalization; combating trafficking and transnational organised crime; cyber-security and protection of critical infrastructure; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- Note: In November 2021, India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives conducted **Exercise Dosti XV** in Maldives.
- In news: Member states of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) recently signed the Charter and the MoU for the **establishment of the CSC Secretariat in Colombo**.

India-Maldives

- Recently, Maldives President **Mohamed Muizzu** paid a four-day state visit to India and called New Delhi a valued partner.
- The visit is significant as President Mohamed Muizzu earlier focused on capitalising on anti-India sentiments and his ministers' derogatory remarks against the Indian Prime Minister.
- Both countries agreed to transform the relationship into a *Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership*.
- Jan Aushadhi Kendras will be set up across the Maldives to supply affordable generic medicines from India.
- Both sides acknowledged the importance of completing the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) 'Ekatha' harbour project at Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF), funded by India, which will boost MNDF's operational capabilities.
- Both countries decided to establish consulates in Bengaluru (India) and Addu City (Maldives) to promote people-to-people interactions.
- Emergency Financial Assistance: India provided Treasury bills (T-bill) worth USD 100 million to address its urgent financing needs. In addition, India extended a USD 400 million and Rs 30 billion bilateral currency swap agreement to further support the Maldives in managing its financial difficulties.
- Maldivian President acknowledged India's continued role as the '**First Responder**' of Maldives in times of need. E.g., **water crisis in 2014** in Male and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- India has been the Maldives' primary security partner, demonstrated by historical operations like "**Operation Cactus**" (1988), where India intervened to stop a coup attempt.

India-Jamaica

- Recently, Jamaica Prime Minister **Andrew Holness** visited New Delhi at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking his first-ever visit to India.
- It is first ever bilateral visit of a Prime Minister of Jamaica to India.
- About Jamaica: it is an island country of the West Indies and third largest island in the Caribbean Sea, after Cuba and Hispaniola. The national capital is **Kingston**. Its population being of African ancestry, descended from slaves brought by European colonists. Jamaica gained independence from the UK in 1962 and remains a Commonwealth member.
- History: India was among the first nations to recognize Jamaica after its independence, establishing diplomatic relations in 1962, and setting up a resident mission in Kingston in 1976 following PM Indira Gandhi's visit.
- Jamaica is home to a 70,000-strong Indian diaspora, one of the **Girmitiya countries**, serving as a vital connection between the two nations.
- The Girmitiya countries are countries where Indian indentured labourers settled, such as Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Reunion Island.
- Note: Both India and Jamaica are members of international organizations like the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and G-77.

Tripartite agreement to facilitate cross-border electricity trade

- Recently, **Nepal, India and Bangladesh** signed a tripartite agreement to facilitate cross-border electricity trade.
- Under the agreement, Nepal will export its surplus electricity to Bangladesh from 15th June to 15th November each year.
- India will facilitate the transmission of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh.
- In the first phase, Nepal will export **40 MW** of hydroelectric power to Bangladesh through Indian territory at the rate of 6.4 cents per unit.

About International Energy Efficiency Hub (IEEH)

- Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved India's membership to the Energy Efficiency Hub
- IEEH is a global platform dedicated to fostering collaboration and **promoting energy efficiency worldwide**.
- It was **established in 2020** as the successor to the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC), in which India was a member,
- It brings together governments, international organizations, and private sector entities to share knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions.
- Member countries: **16 countries** have joined the Hub (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Russia, Saudi Arabia, United States and United Kingdom).
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has been designated as the implementing agency for the IEEH on behalf of India.

- By joining IEEH, India will gain access to a vast network of experts and resources, enabling it to enhance its domestic energy efficiency initiatives.

16th BRICS Summit

- Held in: **Kazan, Russia.**
- In January, 2024, the alliance added four new members – **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE.**
- Saudi Arabia is yet to formalise its BRICS membership, however its foreign minister attended the summit.

Kazan Declaration:

- **Stand on Geopolitical Conflicts:**
- **On Ukraine:** Emphasized mediating a peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy.
- **On West Asia Crisis:** Expressed deep concern over the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza Strip and West Bank. Condemned the loss of civilian lives and infrastructure damage from Israeli attacks in Southern Lebanon.
- **On Western Sanctions:** emphasized the disruptive effects of unlawful unilateral coercive measures, including illegal sanctions, on the global economy, international trade, and the achievement of SDGs.
- **On BRICS Grain Exchange:** Explored the establishment of a grain trading platform within BRICS, known as the BRICS Grain Exchange, with plans for future development that may include other agricultural sectors.
- **Financial Integration Support:** The summit emphasised the need for greater financial integration among member countries. **Key Aspects Highlighted:**
 - Importance of trade in local currencies.
 - Facilitating smooth cross-border payments.
 - India's UPI was highlighted as a successful model.
 - BRICS-led payment system to rival SWIFT
- **On Big Cats:** Supported the efforts of member countries to preserve rare species, particularly big cats, and notes India's initiative to create an International Big Cats Alliance.
- BRICS countries are encouraged to collaborate further on conservation efforts for these vulnerable species.
- **Note:** On the sidelines of the Summit, the PM welcomed the recent agreement with China for "***complete disengagement and resolution***" of 2020 border issues, marking their first bilateral meeting since 2020.
- **Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented unique, handcrafted artifacts representing different regions of India to leaders of various countries. These gifts, also include **Jharkhand's Sohrai painting** and **Maharashtra's Mother of Pearl Sea Shell Vase and Warli Painting.**

Deterioration of India-Canada relations

- The assassination of **Hardeep Singh Nijjar**, a Khalistani leader, in British Columbia (Canada) has led to accusations from the Canadian Prime Minister that Indian officials were involved, which India denied.
- Diplomatic relations have deteriorated sharply, with both countries expelling each other's diplomats and froze consular services. Canada has invoked the **Vienna Conventions**, emphasizing the need to protect its diplomatic staff and citizens in India amid heightened tensions.
- **Support from Five Eyes Alliance:** Canada has enlisted the Five Eyes intelligence alliance to gain international support amid rising diplomatic tensions with India over serious allegations.
- The **Five Eyes** is an **intelligence alliance** comprising nations including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the US. These countries are parties to the multilateral UK-USA Agreement, a treaty for joint cooperation in signals intelligence.
- **Vienna Conventions:** The **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)** establishes the framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries. It outlines the rights and responsibilities of diplomatic missions and their personnel.

World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the inaugural sessions the International Telecommunication Union – World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi.**
- It is first time the WTSA was hosted in the Asia-Pacific region

About WTSA:

- **Frequency:** Held every four years, with the first assembly in 2002.
- **Role:** Governing conference for the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), setting work programs, working methods, and study group structures.
- **Significance:** Sets global telecommunication standards to ensure interoperability and promote innovation.
- **WTSA 2024:** first time hosted in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Focus Areas:** 6G, AI, IoT, big data, cybersecurity, machine-to-machine communications, and quantum technologies.

About International Telecommunication Union (ITU):

- Establishment: Founded in 1865 as the International Telegraph Union, became a UN specialized agency in 1947.
- Mission: Coordinates global standardization and development of telecommunication and ICT services.
- Membership: Comprises 193 countries and over 1,000 companies, universities, and international organizations.
- Headquarters: Located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Israel as 69th member of ADB

- Israel officially joined the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as its 69th member and 20th non-regional member, boosting its global strategic ties and economic reach.
- About ADB: Established in **1966**, ADB is a regional development bank that supports its members and partners through the provision of loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments aimed at advancing social and economic development.
- **India is a founding member** of ADB and the bank's **fourth-largest shareholder**.
- Headquarters: **Manila, Philippines**

Other International News:

- Recently at the 19th India-Africa Business Conclave, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi India has unveiled an ambitious plan to **double its exports to African countries to USD 200 billion by 2030**.
- **Mexico** became the **world's first country to allow voters to elect judges at all levels** after protesters invaded the upper house and suspended debate on the issue.
- **Nepal** has become the **101st country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** as a full member.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi became first Indian Prime Minister to visit Brunei since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations on May 10, 1984.
- **Algeria** has been officially authorized to join the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a significant address at the 79th U.N. General Assembly session, themed "**Summit of the Future**," held in New York on September 22, 2024.
- Recently, in a significant labour reform, **Australia** granted the **legal right to "disconnect" from work** outside of their designated hours. This reform allows Workers to refuse to monitor, read, or respond to work-related communications outside their official hours unless such refusal is deemed unreasonable.
- Recently, Prime Minister of India's visits to **Brunei Darussalam** and **Singapore** have marked significant advancements in India's diplomatic and strategic engagements in Southeast Asia.
- The American Association for Cancer Research, the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to cancer research, has recognized **September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**.
- The Namibia government is planning to kill 723 wild animals, including 83 elephants, to feed the country amid a severe drought and hunger crisis. The move aims to provide food and reduce human-wildlife conflicts due to scarce resources.
- Recently, several people were killed and hundreds injured in **Lebanon** following explosions of hand-held radios like walkie-talkies and pagers used by Hezbollah at multiple locations. These pagers, chosen by Hezbollah to evade detection through cell phones, were covertly modified with **Pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN)**.
- Recently, the **Australian** Prime Minister has announced a plan to implement a minimum age for social media usage, aiming to protect children from potential online harms.
- Recently, China has expressed its opposition to the **Taiwanese government establishing the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) in Mumbai**. It is Taiwan's third office in India, following the openings in New Delhi (1995) and Chennai (2012). China's official stance is that there is only one China, which includes Taiwan as an inseparable part, with the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legitimate government.
- Recently, the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met with Sri Lanka's newly elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo, during which he pledged India's full support for the country's economic recovery and growth.
- Recently, during the **India-France Strategic Dialogue**, the French President praised India's peace efforts in a meeting with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and highlighted India's role in global diplomacy.
- Hizbollah: It is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant organisation located in Lebanon, known for operating as "a state within a state." Its paramilitary wing, the Jihad Council, commands the most powerful armed force in Lebanon. Since its inception it aimed to eliminate the state of Israel.
- Blue Line: The Blue Line extends 120 km along Lebanon's southern frontier and Israel's northern border. It is **not a border, but a line of withdrawal**. It was set by the United Nations in 2000 for confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the south of Lebanon.

- Recently, The Vice-President of India addressed the participants of the inaugural International Strategic Engagement Programme (IN-STEP), in New Delhi.
- Recently, India and Uzbekistan signed a **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)** to assure appropriate protection for investors from both countries. It assures a minimum standard of treatment and non-discrimination while offering independent arbitration for dispute resolution.
- India participated in the 44th session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) in Germany, contributing significantly to global food safety and nutrition standards.
- Recently, a 19th century “**horned Naga skull**” was withdrawn from an auction in the UK following significant backlash from authorities in Nagaland and India, bringing attention to the sensitive issue of Indigenous human remains and the broader debate surrounding colonial legacies. The sale of Indigenous human remains, particularly those stolen during colonial rule, was strongly condemned as an ethical violation.
- Recently, **India’s** Prime Minister and **Germany’s** Federal Chancellor co-chaired the **7th round of India Germany Intergovernmental Consultations (7th IGC)** in New Delhi.
- **Bhutanese PM Tshering Tobgay’s recent visit to India** highlighted the strong diplomatic relations and cooperation between Bhutan and India. Several key events and meetings took place during his visit, which underscored their shared commitment to sustainability, green energy, and deepening bilateral ties.
- Recently, India’s External Affairs Minister had an informal interaction with Pakistan’s Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in **Islamabad, Pakistan**. The Shanghai cooperation organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Governments is the second-highest council after the SCO Council of Heads of States.
- Recently, India’s President visited **Malawi and Mauritania**. This is the first-ever visit by an Indian President to Malawi and Mauritania (both in Africa). She also visited **Algiers**.
- President Droupadi Murmu, on her three-nation tour, received an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science from Sidi Abdellah Science and Technology Pole University in **Algiers** on October 14.
- India took part in the **BRICS Literature Forum 2024**, which began in **Kazan**, Russia on 11th September 2024.
- On September 12-13, 2024, India participated in the **G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting in Cuiabá, Brazil**.
- A commemorative joint postal stamp marking **75 years of diplomatic relations between India and Romania** was released.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has taken a significant step to support Pakistan’s struggling economy by approving a new \$7 billion loan.
- **Thailand** will be (in January 2025) the third place in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to allow **same-sex marriage**.
- Israel has banned UN chief António Guterres from entering Israel for “failing” to condemn Iran’s missile attacks on Israel.
- China is systematically increasing pressure on Taiwan through a multifaceted strategy that military officials describe as the “**Anaconda Strategy**,” aimed at compelling Taipei to accept reunification as inevitable. Chinese military activities are intensifying, with a marked increase in air and naval incursions near Taiwan, raising concerns about a potential blockade or cyber warfare aimed at crippling Taiwan’s economy and communications.
- Nicaragua has officially severed diplomatic relations with Israel, and has condemned Israel’s actions in the ongoing Gaza conflict and labeled its government as “fascist and genocidal.”
- Israel Defense Forces (IDF) killed **Yahya Sinwar** (Hamas chief), during a targeted ground operation in Rafah, located in southern Gaza.
- The US Justice Department has charged former Indian intelligence officer **Vikash Yadav** with orchestrating a plot to assassinate **Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Khalistani terrorist** residing in New York.
- Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** recently addressed the **149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)** held at the IPU headquarters in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **Pakistan** enacted the Constitution (26th Amendment) Act, 2024, **limiting the Chief Justice’s tenure to three years** and establishing a special commission for appointing the top judge from three senior-most Supreme Court judges.
- **Egypt** is officially declared ‘**malaria-free**’ by the World Health Organization (WHO). This achievement makes Egypt the **second country in the world** to receive this certification in 2024, following **Cabo Verde** (Africa).
- The Election Commission of India signed an agreement for electoral cooperation with Uzbekistan’s central poll body. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar served as an international observer in the elections held there.
- In a significant diplomatic decision, **Brazil has chosen not to join China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, becoming the **second member of the BRICS bloc, after India**, to opt out of Beijing’s ambitious multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project.

GOVERNANCE , SOCIAL JUSTICE, SCHEMES and Programmes in News



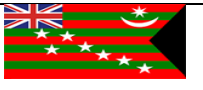



Har Ghar Tiranga (HGT) Campaign 2024: 3rd edition

- The 3rd edition of the HGT campaign was celebrated from 9th to 15th August 2024 as part of the Independence Day celebrations. It aims to instill a spirit of patriotism and national pride among citizens by encouraging every Indian to hoist the national flag.
- It was first launched under the aegis of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in 2022** and has grown into a people's movement. Other outreach activities being organized are Tiranga Concerts, Street Plays (Nukkad Nataks), Exhibitions on the Evolution of Tiranga etc.
- Recently, the Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launched the "**Har Ghar Tiranga, Har Ghar Khadi**" campaign to increase the use and trade of Khadi clothes through hoisting national flags made of Khadi.
- Special national flags of **3X2 feet** made of **Khadi/ Polyester** are available at Khadi stores across the country at a special price of **Rs 198**.
- PM Narendra Modi has also appealed to the countrymen to join the **Tiranga Yatra campaign** on Independence Day and buy Khadi clothes.

Iconic Flag of 1947 Displayed at Fort St. George

- The Fort St. George Museum in Chennai displays a **12x8 feet Indian flag** (made of pure **silk**), one of the first hoisted on 15th August 1947, and the only surviving flag from that date.

Evolution of the Indian Flag:

It is believed that the first Indian National Flag in India was hoisted on August 7, 1906 , in the Parsee Bagan Square (Green Park) in Calcutta.	
The second Indian flag was raised by Madame Bhikaji Cama (Parsi revolutionary woman) in Paris in 1907 .	
In 1917 , during the Home rule movement, the third flag was raised by Lokmanya Tilak and Dr. Annie Besant.	
In 1921 , Bezvada session of the 'All India Congress Committee,' Pingali Venkayya designed a flag made up of two colors, red and green signifying the two main communities -Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi recommended the addition of a white stripe to symbolize the remaining communities of India and the spinning wheel to signify the development of the Country.	
In 1931 , a resolution was approved accepting a tricolor flag as our National Flag. This flag had three stripes- saffron, white and green with spinning wheel of Mahatma Gandhi in the middle.	
On July 22, 1947 , the Constituent Assembly embraced the Indian flag with three trips and Asoka chakra in the middle. Consequently, the tricolor flag of the Congress Party ultimately became the tricolor flag of Independent India.	

- Fort St. George:** It was established in 1639 in Chennai. It is the first English fortification in India. It was briefly under French control from 1746 to 1749 and later returned to the British by the Treaty of Aix la-Chapelle (1748) after 1st Carnatic War. It serves as an administrative hub for Tamil Nadu's legislative assembly and houses a garrison. The Fort Museum, maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), showcases relics from the Raj era, including portraits of Madras Governors.

Controversy regarding Preamble omission from NCERTs

- Media reports have highlighted the fact the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has dropped the Preamble to the Constitution from several Class 3 and 6 textbooks issued in 2024.
- The NCERT has rejected such allegations and clarified that the organisation is now focusing on various aspects of the Indian Constitution, including the Preamble, fundamental duties, fundamental rights, and the National Anthem for holistic development as per National Education Policy 2020.

West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs)

- Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) government granted **proprietary rights** to West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs) and individuals displaced during the 1965 India Pakistan war.

- West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs) are individuals who migrated from West Pakistan to the erstwhile State of J&K (now UT) during the partition in 1947, primarily settling in the Jammu, Kathua, and Rajouri districts of the Jammu Division. Earlier, WPR families were considered “non-state subjects” and couldn’t vote in Jammu and Kashmir due to not being residents at the time of the 1947 Partition. *They were granted domicile status and voting rights following the abrogation of Article 370 on 5th August 2019.*

Donor Agreement between Ayush Ministry and WHO

- The Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed a Donor Agreement during a signing ceremony organised at WHO Headquarters in Geneva in July 2024.
- It outlines the financial terms for implementing the activities of the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** in **Jamnagar, Gujarat**. It acknowledges the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre as a major source of knowledge for evidence based Traditional Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM), aiming to improve the health and well-being of people and the planet.
- Through this collaboration, **India will donate USD 85 million** over a period of **10 years** (2022-2032) to support the operations of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC) in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat is the first and only global out-posted Centre (office) for traditional medicine across the globe.
- Note: India has six recognised systems of traditional medicine i.e., Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy and Homeopathy.

CPGRAMS:

- CPGRAMS is an **online platform available to the citizens 24×7** to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. It was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions. It is a single portal connected to all the Ministries/ Departments of Government of India and States. CPGRAMS also provides an appeal facility to the citizens if they are not satisfied with the resolution by the Grievance Officer.
- **In news:** Recently, the Centre has issued revised guidelines for timely redressal of public grievances raised on the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) portal.
- The maximum time for resolving public grievances has been **reduced to 21 days from the previous 30 days**. If more time is needed, an interim reply must be provided, indicating the reason and expected timeline for resolution. Ministries with high grievance volumes should appoint a **nodal officer** with sufficient rank to ensure timely and quality resolution

Bharatmala Vs Sagarmala

- Bharatmala project aims to improve road connectivity, enhancing freight and passenger movement, Sagarmala project focuses on modernising ports and promoting coastal shipping to boost trade and maritime activities.

Jan Poshan Kendras

- Recently, the Indian government has launched a pilot project to rename and transform 60 Fair Price Shops (FPS) across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh into “Jan Poshan Kendras.”
- This move aims to enhance the nutritional offerings available to beneficiaries under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**.
- The project also includes the introduction of several new digital tools and support systems designed to enhance transparency and operational efficiency.
- Under Jan Poshan Kendra Initiative, FPSs will begin selling **additional items beyond subsidised grains to address the income challenges faced by ration dealers** while improving the nutritional offerings available to beneficiaries under the PMGKAY.
- **About PMGKAY:** it is a significant initiative by the Central Government under the Atmanirbhar Bharat program introduced in 2020 to alleviate the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on low-income households by providing free food grains, in addition to regular allocations under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

'Bhavishya

- Recently, to address delays, clerical errors, and financial loss in pension processing, the DOPPW (Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare) introduced 'Bhavishya,' a centralized pension processing software for all central government Ministries/Departments.
- "Bhavishya" became mandatory for all central ministries and at present 99 ministries/departments are on board.
 - It ranked 3rd in NeSDA(National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment), 2021.

One Nation One Location

- Recently, the Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways announced plans to centralize all transportation systems —**roadways, railways, airways, waterways, and ropeways**—into single hubs and terminals across India to streamline and enhance passenger convenience.
- These terminals will serve as a **one-stop solution for connecting various modes of transport**, catering to **87% of passenger traffic** that moves via roads in the country.

'Vigyan Dhara'

- The Union Cabinet approved the continuation and merger of various schemes of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) into three major components under a unified central sector scheme named 'Vigyan Dhara'.
- All programs under '**Vigyan Dhara**' will be aligned with DST's 5-year goals toward realising the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana

- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **13 February 2024**
- It is a central scheme to promote the adoption of solar rooftop systems by providing substantial financial subsidies and ensuring ease of installation.
- Objective: It aims to provide free electricity to one crore households in India, who opt to install rooftop solar electricity units. The households will be able to get 300 units of electricity free every month.
- Implementation Agencies: The scheme will be executed at two levels:
 - National Level: Managed by the National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA).
 - State Level: Managed by State Implementation Agencies (SIAs), which are the Distribution Utilities (DISCOMs) or Power/Energy Departments of the respective states or UTs.
- Subsidy Structure: The scheme provides subsidies to reduce the cost of installing solar rooftop systems.
- The subsidy is capped at a maximum of 3kW capacity.
 - 60% subsidy for solar systems up to 2kW capacity.
 - 40% subsidy for systems between 2kW to 3kW capacity

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY)

- launched on 12th September 2019
- Eligibility: The scheme has been started to provide social security to all landholding Small and Marginal Farmers (farmers whose land holdings are upto two hectares of land in the country).

7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah

- Recently, the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched the **Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024** in **Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh** on 1st September 2024. Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024 began with a nationwide plantation drive titled "**Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam**".
- POSHAN Abhiyaan** was launched in March 2018 to address malnutrition by focusing on the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children up to 6 years old. It is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It targets to reduce stunting, under nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.

Mission Mausam

- Prime Minister has launched 'Mission Mausam' during the 150th foundation day celebration of the India Meteorological Department.
- It aims to boost India's weather- and climate-related science, research, and services and make India a '*Weather-ready and Climate-smart*' nation. It will improve monitoring and early warning systems in agriculture, disaster management, and defence, while optimising energy and water resource management.
- Funding: cabinet has approved an outlay of Rs 2,000 crore over two years.
- Implemented by: India Meteorological Department, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting.

About India Meteorological Department (IMD):

- IMD was established in **1875**. Its headquarters is in New Delhi.
- It is the National Meteorological Service of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects. The Director General of Meteorology is the Head of the IMD.
- There are 6 Regional Meteorological Centres, each under a Deputy Director General with headquarters at Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur, and Guwahati.
- At present, IMD is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

AgriSURE Fund and the Krishi Nivesh Portal

- The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development recently launched the AgriSURE Fund and the Krishi Nivesh Portal at PUSA, New Delhi.
- **AgriSURE Fund:** it is a new initiative by the Indian government aimed at supporting agricultural start-ups and rural enterprises. It aims to provide comprehensive support to agripreneurs by establishing a financing ecosystem that offers both equity and debt options, enhancement of the farm produce value chain, creating rural infrastructure, generating employment, and supporting farmers' producer organizations.
 - **Funding Pattern**– The initial corpus of ₹750 crore, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, NABARD, and other financial institutions, is managed by NABVENTURES, a wholly owned subsidiary of NABARD.
- **Krishi Nivesh Portal** is an Integrated, centralized one stop Portal for all Agri- investors to avail benefits from various Government schemes.

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- It is aimed at promoting electric mobility in India having a financial outlay of Rs 10,900 crore over two years. It has been launched to replace FAME II (2019-2024).
- FAME I was from 2015 to 2019.
- **Scope:** It offers fiscal incentives to around 25 lakh electric two-wheelers, 3 lakh electric three-wheelers, and 14,000 electric buses through demand incentives.
- Automakers can claim reimbursements for eligible electric vehicle (EV) sales, similar to the previous FAME-II scheme. However, electric cars are notably excluded from the subsidy.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA)

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved PMJUGA for **improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities**.
- PMJUGA is a centrally sponsored scheme for the welfare of tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts. It will cover 549 districts and 2,740 blocks spread across all tribal majority villages across 30 States/UTs. It will cover around 63,000 villages benefitting more than 5 crore tribal people.

Bio-RIDE Scheme

- Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE) scheme.
- **About Bio-RIDE:** Its aim is to foster research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in biotechnology, positioning India as a global leader in this field. To make India a **USD 300 billion bioeconomy by 2030** and achieve the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**. The proposed budget for the scheme's implementation is ₹9,197 crore for the 15th Finance Commission period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

BHASKAR Digital Platform

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is launching the **Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR)**.
- It is a digital platform aimed at **boosting India's startup ecosystem**.
- It is part of the Startup India program, and seeks to centralize and streamline collaboration among stakeholders such as startups, investors, mentors, service providers, and government bodies.
- **Need for BHASKAR:** India is home to over 1,46,000 DPIIT-recognized startups. This makes India a global startup hub. BHASKAR aims to leverage this potential by providing a one-stop digital platform that addresses the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and investors. **Unique BHASKAR ID** will be issued for each stakeholder.
- **Note:** India ranks 3rd globally in the startup ecosystem.

'Trade Connect ePlatform' launched by govt

- It is **a portal to provide all kinds of information related to exports and imports**.
- It is developed in collaboration with the *Ministries of External Affairs and MSME, EXIM Bank, IT major TCS, and the Department of Financial Services (DFS)*.
- It will connect a large number of Import-Export code (IEC) holders, Indian Mission officials, Export Promotion Council Officials, officials from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (D+GFT), and Anti-Submarine Warfare Launch the Department of Commerce.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-IV (PMGSY-IV)

- Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister has approved the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV between FY 2024-25 to 2028-29.

- It aims to enhance **rural connectivity by constructing 62,500 km of new all-weather roads**.
- **Coverage:** The initiative will connect 25,000 unconnected habitations with populations of over 500 in plains, over 250 in Northeast and hill states, and over 100 in Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts.
- The scheme is designed to create **40 crore human-days of work employment**.
- **Financial Assistance:** Total outlay will be Rs 70,125 crore (Centre's share Rs 49,087 crores and State's share Rs 21,037 crores).
- **Technological innovation:** PMGSY-IV will employ global best practices for road construction such as Cold Mix Technology, Waste Plastic, panelled cement concrete, Cell filled concrete, full depth reclamation, use of construction waste and other wastes such as fly ash, steel slag etc.
- **Integration with PM Gati Shakti Portal:** PMGSY-IV road alignment planning and DPR (Detailed project report) preparation will be undertaken through PM Gati Shakti portal.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Note:** PMGSY is a central government scheme launched in 2000 to provide all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations. The scheme was originally a 100% centrally-sponsored initiative, but starting from the financial year 2015-16, the funding has been shared between the Central and State governments in a 60:40 ratio.

NPS Vatsalya scheme

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has introduced the NPS Vatsalya, **an online platform for the new pension scheme designed for young subscribers**.
- This scheme allows parents or guardians to start saving for their **minor children**, with the option to convert the account into an NPS Tier 1 account when the child reaches adulthood.
- Managed by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (**PFRDA**), NPS Vatsalya offers a **long-term investment option for Indian citizens, including NRIs**.
- Legal guardians can also open accounts for minors, which must be registered in the child's name. Upon registration, a **Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) card** will be issued to each minor subscriber.
- As proposed in the 2024-2025 Union Budget, the scheme allows parents or guardians to contribute to the account until the child turns 18.
- **Eligibility:** Minors under 18 with a PAN card can join the scheme.
- **Minimum Investment Amount:** Rs 1,000 annually with no upper limit on contributions.
- **Contributors:** Parents or guardians can contribute on behalf of the child.
- **Transition at 18:** Once the child turns 18, the account can be converted to a standard NPS account by providing the necessary KYC documents.

How To Open An NPS Vatsalya Account?

- NPS Vatsalya accounts can be opened through Points of Presence (POPs), including major banks, India Post, pension funds, and through the online platform, e-NPS.

Cyber initiatives

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the first Foundation Day program of the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** and launched key initiatives for prevention of cyber crime.
- During the event, four platforms of the I4C were launched;
 1. **Cyber fraud mitigation center (CFMC)**; It serves as a “war room” to monitor high-priority cybercrime cases involving large financial transactions.
 2. **Samanvaya Platform**, for cybercrime data repository, sharing, mapping, and analytics, as well as a coordination tool for law enforcement agencies.
 3. **The cyber commandos programme**: The government has planned to train and prepare **5,000** cyber commandos over the next five years to enhance cybersecurity. These cyber commandos will be trained in IT infrastructure security, digital forensics, and incident response.
 4. **Centralised Suspect Registry**: It is a centralised database of suspicious bank accounts and related persons. It will be securely accessible to banks, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies.

Cyber Fraud Statistics 2023:

- In 2023, a total of 1,128,256 cybercrime incidents were reported across India on the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting Management System (CFCFMS), a key component of I4C.
- Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of complaints at 197,547, while Maharashtra reported the highest amount of fraud at Rs 9.9 billion.

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

- I4C was established in **2018** under the Central Sector Scheme within the Cyber and Information Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It provides a framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to deal with Cybercrime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner

PM Internship Scheme

- Recently, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has launched the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme, which was announced in the Union budget 2024.
- AIM:** To harness the potential of India's youth population by providing them with 12 month paid internships in top companies of India. It seeks to provide internships to 1 crore young people over the next five years.
- Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- Beneficiaries:** Individuals aged 21 to 24 who are currently not enrolled in any full-time academic program.
- Benefits**
 - Applicants will get a monthly stipend of ₹4,500 from the government, and an additional ₹500 by companies as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives consisting of one year.
 - A one-time grant of ₹6,000 will be provided upon enrollment,
 - 12 months real-life experience in India's top companies
 - Insurance coverage for every intern under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.

Kutcha House Survey under PMAY-G

- Recently, the Indian government has taken significant steps to enhance its rural housing scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) by initiating a survey of kutcha houses nationwide and launching the ***Awas Sakhi mobile app***.
- This initiative aims to identify new beneficiaries for pucca (all-weather) homes, helping families with inadequate housing.

About PMAY-G

- Launch:** Initiated in 2016, PMAY-G aims to provide secure housing for the poorest communities.
- Beneficiary Selection Process:** A comprehensive three-stage validation, including the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, Gram Sabha approvals, and geo-tagging, ensures that aid reaches those most deserving.

Benefits for PMAY-G Beneficiaries

- Financial Assistance:** **Rs 1.20 lakh** for families in plain areas.
 - Rs 1.30 lakh** for families in hilly regions, including northeastern states and union territories.
- Support for Sanitation:** An additional **Rs 12,000 for toilet construction**, aligned with the Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin or MGNREGS.
- Employment Opportunities:** Provision of **90/95 days** of unskilled wage employment through **MGNREGA** for house construction.
- Access to Basic Amenities:** Connections for water, LPG, and electricity facilitated through relevant schemes.
- Cost Sharing Structure:** Expenses are shared in a 60:40 ratio for plain areas and a 90:10 ratio for northeastern states and selected Himalayan states.
 - The Centre covers 100% of costs for other Union Territories.
- Target:** The government aims to construct 2.95 crore houses.
 - Progress / Current Status:** As of August 2024, 2.94 crore houses have been sanctioned, with 2.64 crore completed, enhancing living conditions for millions in rural areas.

Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) launched

- Originally named the **PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA)**, is an umbrella scheme to implement existing schemes across 63,000 Scheduled Tribe-majority villages.
- Dharti Aaba** refers to Birsa Munda, a 19th-century tribal leader and anti-colonial icon from Jharkhand.
- The initiative aims to address critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood through 25 interventions implemented by various 17 Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.

Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)

- PM-JANMAN was launched on **15th November 2023**, on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, **to improve the socio-economic welfare of PVTGs**. It is implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the State governments and the PVTGs communities.
- It encompasses various sectors, including safe housing under the PM-Awas Scheme, access to clean drinking water, improved healthcare, education, nutrition, road and telecommunications connectivity, as well as opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

NAMASTE Scheme:

- The National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), focusing on **eliminating manual scavenging** and promoting sanitation worker safety.

Samajik Adhikarita Shivar

- The Samajik Adhikarita Shivar (Social Empowerment Camps) are a series of distribution camps organised to provide assistive devices to people with disabilities and senior citizens. It has been in operation since 1981.
- Organisers: These are organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (**DEPwD**) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with ALIMCO (Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation) and the District Administration.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

- EMRS is a scheme for making model residential schools for **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** across India. It started in the year **1997-98**. Its nodal ministry is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- These schools are being developed to provide quality education to tribal students, focusing on academic as well as overall development. The EMR Schools generally follow the CBSE curriculum.
- The scheme aims to build schools similar to *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas* and *Kendriya Vidyalayas*, with a focus on state-of-the-art facilities for preserving local art and culture, as well as providing training in sports and skill development.

Anna DARPAN

- The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has selected Coforge Limited to lead a digital transformation project called Anna DARPAN.
- Coforge will handle everything from designing to developing, implementing, and maintaining the Anna DARPAN system. The team at Coforge will use the latest technology to build a cloud-based platform for the system.
- Anna DARPAN is a **new system designed to simplify and boost Food Corporation of India (FCI) operations** at different levels to enhance productivity and efficiency by creating an interactive and user-friendly interface.
- The system will use data analytics to help FCI in making better strategic and operational decisions. The FCI can analyze data trends and patterns for making smarter choices about food distribution and storage.
- Anna DARPAN will connect with both internal and external systems to allow for smoother communication and data sharing, ensuring that everyone involved in the supply chain is on the same page.
- The project will focus on a mobile-first approach. This means that the system will be designed to be used on smartphones and tablets, making it accessible anytime and anywhere. Farmers, suppliers, and employees can check information and manage tasks anytime.

RCS-UDAN

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated three airports under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS-UDAN) in **Rewa** (Madhya Pradesh), **Ambikapur** (Chhattisgarh), and **Saharanpur** (Uttar Pradesh).
- These airports aim to enhance air travel accessibility and will soon commence flights, furthering the mission of improving infrastructure in underserved regions.
- Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016. The scheme connects remote areas, promoting tourism and economic growth, and has facilitated over 144 lakh passenger travels in its seven years. It supports last-mile connectivity and addresses unserved air routes. The first RCS-UDAN flight was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in 2017, connecting Shimla to Delhi.

Jal hi Amrit (JHA) initiative launched under AMRUT 2.0

- It is being launched under AMRUT 2.0 reforms.
- Aim:
 - To incentivize States /UTs for efficient management of Sewage Treatment Plants (**STPs**), also termed Used Water Treatment Plants (**UWTPs**).
 - To produce a continuous supply of high-quality treated water that meets environmental standards and supports sustainable water recycling practices
 - To promote a circular economy of water by enabling reuse for various purposes like construction, industry, and irrigation.
 - Note: STPs purify water by removing sewage and contaminants, making it suitable to be released into natural water sources.
- Purpose: To foster inter-city competition, build treatment facility capacities, and incentivize high-quality treated water discharge through systematic improvements.

- Strategy of rating-based incentives: UWTPs will be awarded **Clean Water Credits through a Star Rating** system. **Incentives** will be provided to urban local bodies (ULBs)/Parastatal agencies based on a comprehensive evaluation process.
- Rationale of JHA: Recycling and reusing treated used water are the cornerstones of ensuring sustainable management of water resources and reducing the stress on freshwater resources.

	AMRUT 1.0	AMRUT 2.0
Launch Year	2015	2021
Duration	Mission period from 2015-2020	Mission period from 2021-2026 (5 years)
Coverage	500 cities and towns	All statutory towns in the country
Focus Areas	Water supply, sewerage and septage management, storm water drainage, green spaces and parks, non-motorized urban transport	Universal coverage of water supply through functional taps to all households in all the statutory towns in the country, coverage of sewerage/ septage management in 500 cities.

BharatGen

- “BharatGen” world’s **first government-funded multimodal Large Language Model (LLM)** initiative launched by the Ministry of Science & Technology.
- It focused on creating Generative AI systems that can generate high-quality text and multimodal content (audio and imagery) in various Indian languages.
- Implementation: By IIT Bombay under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).
- Timeline: Project is expected to be completed in two years (July 2026).
- Bharat Data Sagar: A core part of BharatGen, it aims at establishing a vast repository of India-centric data that ensures the AI models are deeply rooted in the country's unique context.

10 years of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

- It was launched on 2nd October 2014 by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. It was also divided into **SBM-Gramin** for rural areas and **SBM-Urban** for urban centers.
- Aim: It aimed to make India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** by constructing individual and community toilets, and to implement waste management systems in school and anganwadi toilets.
 - An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
- Achievements: Under the mission, 10 crore toilets were built, and almost 6 lakh villages have been designated as ODF on 2nd October, 2019.
- Upon completing five years in **2021**, the government launched **SBM 2.0** focusing on creating garbage-free cities, managing faecal sludge, addressing plastic waste, and improving greywater management. Urban India has become ODF, with all 4,715 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) completely ODF.

3 years of PM GatiShakti National Master Plan

- The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, launched in October 2021 is a transformative Rs. 100 lakh crore initiative aimed at revolutionising India’s infrastructure over the next five years.
- It has been developed as a Digital Master Planning tool by **BISAG-N (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics)**.
- It has been prepared in a dynamic Geographic Information System (GIS) platform wherein **data on specific action plans of all the Ministries/ Departments have been incorporated within a comprehensive database**. The plan seeks to accelerate project completion, reduce timelines, and enhance India’s global competitiveness by breaking down inter-ministerial obstacles.
- Need: Lack of coordination leads to repeated road excavation for laying cables, gas pipes, and water lines by different departments independently, causing continuous public disruption and wasteful expenditure.

Amended rules for issuing disability certificates

- Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of India introduced the *Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Rules, 2024*.
- Authority Requirement: Only a designated medical authority at the district level can issue disability certificates.
- Colour-Coded UDID Cards: Color-coded Unique Disability Identity (UDID) cards—**white, yellow, and blue**—were introduced to indicate disability levels. Blue represents a disability level of 80% or higher.
- Online-Only Applications: New norms make it mandatory to apply for the disability certificate online.

- **Extended Processing Time:** The issuance period for disability certificates has been extended from one month to three months.
- **Reapplication Requirement:** If no action is taken on a disability certificate application within two years, the applicant must reapply.

SATHI Portal

- SATHI stands for *Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory*.
- **Developed by:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in partnership with the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- **Aim:** To digitalise the entire Seed Retail Chain- from Seed Producing Agency, distributors, dealers, retailers to farmers to prevent the circulation of spurious or substandard seeds.

Key Features:

- Centralised online portal for seed traceability, authentication and inventory.
- **QR coded seed packets:** Each certified seed packet will carry a QR code. Farmers can scan the code to view the entire history of the seed- origin, grower, certifying agency, etc. The seeds would be certified under the supervision of State Seed Certification Agencies (SSCAs).
- **Seed DBT integration:** Centrally registered farmers could buy seeds from valid licensed dealers at market prices, and receive the subsidy directly into their bank accounts.
- **Implementation Challenges:** There is an inherent **3-year lag** in the seed certification cycle. So, even if a new seed variety is approved by the government today, it will only reach the farmers after 3 years. That means the data currently visible on the portal will mainly reflect older seed varieties, and the newly approved varieties will appear gradually over time.

eShram-One Stop Solution

- Union govt has launched the **eShram-One Stop Solution**, a platform designed to **streamline access to various social security and welfare schemes** for unorganized workers in India.
- **e-Shram was launched on August 26, 2021**, to provide a comprehensive database of unorganized workers and serve as a platform for accessing welfare schemes. It aims to register unorganised workers such as construction workers, migrant labourers, street vendors, and domestic workers.

Karmayogi Saptah

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated the 'Karmayogi Saptah' – National Learning Week (NLW) at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.
- **Mission Karmayogi - National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPSCCB)** was launched in September 2020. It aims to create a future-ready civil service rooted in Indian values with a global perspective. It has made substantial progress since its inception.

Fortified rice

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved the continuation of free fortified rice distribution under various government schemes from July 2024 **until December 2028**.
- Free Fortified Rice will be supplied under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** and other welfare schemes.
- Rice fortification involves adding **Fortified Rice Kernels** (containing micronutrients like Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12) to normal Rice (Custom Milled Rice) as per standards prescribed by FSSAI.
- Fortification is the addition of key vitamins and minerals to staple foods such as rice, wheat, oil, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content and combat malnutrition.
- Fortification aligns with WHO guidelines and is crucial as 65% of India's population consumes rice daily.
- India's rice fortification program started in 2019 as a pilot program and scaled up in a 3 phased manner.
- **PMGKAY** aimed at providing each person who is covered under the **National Food Security Act 2013** with an additional 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain already provided through the Public Distribution System (PDS)

DigiLocker Partners with UMANG

- The **National e-Governance Division** has announced the **integration of the UMANG app with DigiLocker**, allowing citizens to access a wide range of government services through a single platform.
- This collaboration aims to simplify user experience by bringing together multiple services under one digital interface.
- The **UMANG mobile app** is an all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app. It provides access to high impact services of various organizations of the Union and States.

- **DigiLocker** is a digitization service provided by the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under its Digital India initiative.

'Rangeen Machhli'

- Recently, the union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying launched the "**Rangeen Machhli**" **mobile app** at ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhuba.
- It is designed to meet the growing needs of the ornamental fisheries sector, providing crucial knowledge resources for hobbyists, aquarium shop owners, and fish farmers.
- It is **developed by ICAR-CIFA** with support from the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Other news:

- **PARIVESH 2.0** is a web-based application for online submission and monitoring of Environmental, Forest, Wildlife, and Coastal Regulation Zone clearances.
- Recently, the Prime Minister (PM) virtually addressed the **second International Conference on Green Hydrogen 2024** (ICGH-2024) being held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- Recently, the Union Cabinet expanded the scope of Rs. 1 lakh crore **Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF)** to provide financial support for Farmers' Producers Organisations (FPOs) to improve their financial security and creditworthiness.
- An expert group constituted by NITI Aayog has recommended a new **Public Health Emergency Management Act (PHEMA)** to deal with the public health crisis. PHEMA aims to create health cadres at national and state levels and also empower public health agencies to take urgent action. It would cover epidemics, non-communicable diseases, disasters, and bio-terrorism.
- Recently, the Prime Minister launched the '**Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari**' initiative from Surat, Gujarat. It focuses on water conservation and aims to construct approximately 24,800 rainwater harvesting structures in Gujarat.
- Recently, Mega Oil Palm Plantation Drive 2024 was conducted under the National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP). Under this over 17 lakh oil palm saplings were planted across 15 states in India benefitting over 10,000 farmers.
- **10 years of 'Make in India' initiative:** it was launched on **25th September 2014**, completes a landmark decade of empowering India to become a global manufacturing hub.
- Recently, the Minister for ports, shipping, and waterways is preparing a **Shipbuilding Mission** to create a robust global shipbuilding industry by 2047, driven by the Make in India initiative. India currently holds less than 1% of the global market share in shipping-related activities.
- The **20th Maritime State Development Council (MSDC)** concluded recently in **Goa** with significant advancements in India's maritime sector.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **SEMICON India 2024** in **Greater Noida**, emphasizing India's strategic push to become a global semiconductor hub.
- Recently, the Union Home Minister inaugurated the **National Security Strategies Conference (NSSC) 2024** in New Delhi.
- Recently, Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has developed an online portal **Food Import Rejection Alert (FIRA)** to notify the food import rejections at Indian borders to food safety authorities. FSSAI is an autonomous statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, of 2006.
- The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, C.R. Patil, has launched the **2.0 version of the 'FloodWatch India' mobile app**, developed by the Central Water Commission (CWC). This upgraded app provides an enhanced and detailed overview of flood conditions across the country.
- The **Department of Post** under the Union Ministry of Communication has launched the **Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana** to promote research and scholarship in philately among students across India.
- The Indian Army has launched the first phase of **Project NAMAN**, aimed at providing dedicated support and services to Defence pensioners, veterans, and their families.
- The Union Cabinet has extended the **benefits of the Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** to all senior citizens aged 70 and above, irrespective of their income.
- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, launched the '**Jan Sunwai portal**', which is an online platform of the Department of commerce, designed to streamline communication between stakeholders and authorities.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the **Civil Registration System (CRS) mobile application**, aimed at integrating technology into governance and simplifying the registration of births and deaths.
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurated the revamped eMigrate V2.0 web portal and mobile app in Delhi, aiming to enhance safe and legal migration for Indian citizens.

POLITY (Articles or Sections in News)

Missing Provisions for Unnatural Sex in BNS 2023

- Issue: The newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, which replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 excludes the penal provisions for unnatural sex and sodomy. The Delhi High Court has raised concerns over the exclusion and has directed the Centre to expeditiously take a decision on it within six months.
- Note: BNS came into effect on 1st July 2024, replacing the IPC.
- About unnatural sex: In India, “unnatural sex” refers to sexual activities considered against the order of nature. Section 377 of the IPC defines “unnatural offenses” as voluntary carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman, or animal (Bestiality).
- Does Previous law (IPC 1860) contain the penal provisions for unnatural sex?
 - Yes, under Section 377 of IPC, non-consensual unnatural was a criminal offence.
- Implications of excluding penal provisions non-consensual unnatural sex:
 - The exclusion has raised concerns about the protection of the LGBTQ community, male victims of sexual assault and other vulnerable groups.

What needs to be done?

- Since Supreme Court in 2018 had decriminalized homosexuality, the exclusion of penal provisions for consensual unnatural sex makes sense but *there should be penal provisions for non-consensual unnatural sex* i.e. between two adults, sexual activities against minors, and bestiality.

SC Launches Special Lok Adalat Drive

- The Supreme Court commenced special Lok Adalat drive to amicably settle long-pending disputes as a part of Supreme Court’s 75th anniversary celebrations. Cases including matrimonial disputes, property disputes, motor accident claims, land acquisition, compensation, service and labour, pending before the apex court will be listed before the Lok Adalats for speedy disposal.
- About Lok Adalats: Lok Adalat is one of the **alternative dispute redressal mechanisms**. It is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably.
- Article 39 A: With 42nd Amendment Act of Constitution of 1976, Article 39-A, has been inserted which requires the State to secure that the operation of the legal system:
 - Promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity,
 - Provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way,
 - Ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.
- Legal status: Lok Adalats have been given **statutory status** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- Decision of the Lok Adalat: Under the said Act, the award (decision) made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is **final and binding** on all parties and **no appeal against such an award lies before any court of law**.
- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat though there is no provision for an appeal against such an award, but they are free to initiate fresh litigation by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.

Right to Be Forgotten

- The right to be forgotten allows individuals to request the removal of their personal data from digital platforms when it is outdated, irrelevant, or harmful to their privacy.
- This right, also known in European privacy law as the “**right to erasure**,” pertains to an individual’s ability to remove their digital footprint from public view when it violates their privacy.
- Current Status in India: **India does not have a specific statutory framework** for the right to be forgotten. However, the concept has been referenced in the context of privacy and digital rights. The 2017 ruling in **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India** recognised the **right to privacy** as a fundamental right under the Constitution, which implicitly includes the right to be forgotten.

Appointment of Governors

- Article 153: There shall be a Governor for each state.
 - A single person can be appointed as the Governor for two or more states (recommended by the Sarkaria Commission).
- Article 155: The Governor of a State shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
 - Note: The Governor is appointed by the President and is a nominee of the Central Government.
- Articles 157 and 158: Specify the eligibility requirements for the post of Governor.

- Article 163: There is a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except in some conditions where discretion is allowed.

SC Allows for Sub-Classification of SCs and STs

- The Supreme Court of India in review judgement of Punjab and Haryana High Court, delivered a landmark verdict allowing states the authority to sub-classify reserved category groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), for the purpose of reservations.
- The **seven-judge Bench** ruled that states can now sub-classify SCs within the **15% reservation quota** to provide better support for the most disadvantaged groups.
- This **6-1** majority decision overturns the 2004 ruling in **E.V. Chinnaiah vs. State of Andhra Pradesh**, fundamentally altering the landscape of reservation policies in India. The Supreme Court's decision reverses the E.V. Chinnaiah ruling, which had previously held that SCs and STs were a homogeneous group and thus could not be subdivided for reservation purposes by the states and unconstitutional under Article 341 of the Indian Constitution.
 - The Chief Justice of India stated that the new ruling on sub-classifying Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes does not violate Articles 14 or 341 of the Constitution.
- The Court clarified that 100% reservation for any sub-class is not permissible. **State decisions on sub-classification are subject to judicial review** to prevent political misuse.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that the '**creamy layer**' principle, previously applied only to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (as highlighted in Indra Sawhney Case), **should now also be applied to SCs and STs**. This means states must identify and exclude the creamy layer within SCs and STs from reservation benefits. The judgement responds to the need for a more nuanced approach to reservations, ensuring that benefits reach those who are truly disadvantaged.
- The court stated that Reservation has to be limited only to the first generation. If any generation in the family has taken advantage of the reservation and achieved a higher status, the benefit of reservation would not be logically available to the second generation.

Impact on State Laws:

- The ruling upholds various state laws that had previously been struck down, such as those in **Punjab and Tamil Nadu**, allowing states to create sub-categories within SC and ST groups. The Punjab government's 1975 notification, which divided its SC reservation into categories for **Valmiki and Mazhabi Sikhs**, was initially upheld but later challenged following the E.V. Chinnaiah judgment.
- Future of Reservations: States will now have the authority to implement sub-classification policies, which could lead to more nuanced and effective reservation strategies. The decision sets a new precedent for how reservations can be administered, potentially influencing similar cases and policies across the country.

Arguments For Sub-Classification	Arguments against Sub-Classification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Enhanced Flexibility</u>: Sub-classification allows both central and state governments to design policies that better address the needs of the most disadvantaged within SC/ST communities. • <u>Alignment with Social Justice</u>: Supporters argue that sub-classification helps achieve the constitutional goal of social justice by providing targeted benefits to those who need them the most. • <u>Constitutional Provisions</u>: Article 16(4) of the Constitution, this provision permits reservations for backward classes who are inadequately represented in state services. • Article 15(4) empowers the state to create special arrangements for promoting the interests and welfare of socially and educationally backward classes of the society such as SC and STs. • Article 342A supports the flexibility of states in maintaining their lists of socially and economically backward classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Homogeneity of SCs and STs</u>: Critics argue that sub classification could undermine the uniform status of SCs and STs as recognised in the Presidential list. • <u>Potential for Inequality</u>: There are concerns that sub-classification could lead to further division and potentially exacerbate inequalities within the SC community.

23rd Law Commission

- Recently, the Ministry of Law and Justice set up the 23rd Law Commission for a three-year term, from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2027.
- Chairman of the 23rd Law Commission: **Justice Dinesh Maheshwari**, a former Supreme Court judge.
- Law Commission: It is a non-statutory body established through a notification from the Government of India's Ministry of Law and Justice to carry out research in the field of law for legal reforms. It is established for a fixed tenure and works as an advisory body.

- The **first law commission** was established in 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833 under the chairmanship of **Lord Macaulay**.
- The **first Law Commission of Independent India** established in **1955** with the then Attorney-General of India, **M. C. Setalvad**, as its chairman. Since then, 23 Law Commissions have been appointed, each with a three-year term.

50 years of Supreme court

- Recently, the President unveiled the new flag and insignia of the Supreme Court (established - 26th January 1950) to mark the 75th year of its establishment. The flag features the Ashoka Chakra, the Supreme Court building and the book of the Constitution of India.
- Also, the Prime Minister released a commemorative postage stamp celebrating 75 years of the Supreme Court of India.

Tripura's NLFT and ATTF signed peace pact with Govt

- Recently, the Central Government, the state government of Tripura, and two major insurgent groups namely the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) signed a peace agreement to end violence in the state.
- This agreement will end a 35-year-long conflict in the state, renouncing violence and committing to build a prosperous and developed Tripura.
- **National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)** was formed in 1989. The purported objective of the NLFT is to establish an 'independent' Tripura through an armed struggle following the liberation from 'Indian neo-colonialism and imperialism' and furtherance of a 'distinct and independent identity'.
 - The NLFT split into two groups in February 2001, one headed by Biswamohan Debbarma and the other by Nayanbasi Jamatiya.
- **Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF)** was founded in 1990. It demands removal of illegal migrants from electoral rolls and implementation of the 1949 Tripura Merger Agreement.

New flag and insignia of the Supreme Court

- President Droupadi Murmu unveiled the new flag and insignia of the Supreme Court of India during the two-day National Conference of District Judiciary held in New Delhi.

About Flag and Insignia of Supreme Court

- **Conceptualised by: National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi.**

New Flag	New Insignia
	
<p>The newly unveiled flag features symbols central to India's legal and cultural heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Ashoka Chakra, the Supreme Court building, and the booklet of Constitution of India. • The new Supreme Court flag is blue in colour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The insignia has 'Supreme Court of India' and 'Yato Dharmastato Jayah' (in Devanagari script) inscribed on it. • Yato Dharmastato Jayah is a Sanskrit term which means "Where there is Dharma, there is victory" . • This phrase encapsulates the essence of justice and righteousness that the Supreme Court strives to uphold.

New statue of Lady justice

- Recently, the Lady Justice statue was unveiled at the Supreme Court, on the directions of the Chief Justice of India.
- New statue symbolizes a move towards decolonization and represents Indian traditions.
- New vs old statue
- The new 'Lady Justice' statue is dressed in a **saree**, replacing the western attire of the original statue, aligning with Indian traditions. It reflects a departure from colonial influences like replacing colonial-era laws like the IPC and CrPC.
- The statue's **eyes are open**, replacing the blindfold, to represent that justice in India is not blind but sees everyone equally.

- It holds the **Indian Constitution in one hand**, symbolizing the supremacy of the Constitution in Indian jurisprudence, replacing the traditional sword. The sword historically represented the authority of the law and its power to punish wrongdoing.
- The scales of justice are retained (same as in old statue), symbolizing impartiality in delivering judgments.
- This change emphasizes that the law should consider India's social diversity and the upliftment of underprivileged sections.
- The move reflects India's effort to shed colonial symbols and build a justice system more relevant to its own cultural and constitutional values.



Historical significance of 'Lady Justice'

- The 'Lady Justice' symbol originates from Roman mythology, representing Justitia, the goddess of justice. She is typically depicted with a blindfold, scales, and a sword.
- Addition of blindfold was done during the Renaissance period (14th century): as a satire on the corrupt state of legal systems with judicial institutions turning a blind eye.
- Enlightenment period (17th-18th century): blindfold came to be reinterpreted as representing impartiality.
- This symbol became prominent in India during British rule and was placed outside courtrooms.
- British introduced Lady Justice in India, 1st in Calcutta High Court in 1872

SC set new standards for Preventive Detention

- Preventive detention means detention of a person without trial. **Article 22(3)** allows the authorities to detain individuals for preventive reasons, such as the maintenance of public order or national security.
- In News: In **Jaseela Shaji vs Union of India case (2024)**, the Supreme Court highlighted the rights of detenu (detained person) to make an effective representation against preventive detention.

Highlights of the Judgment

- Detenu has the right to be furnished with the grounds of detention along with the documents relied on for such detention. If there is failure or even delay in furnishing those documents, it would amount to denial of the right to make an effective representation under Article 22(5) of the Constitution.
- Article 22(5) mandates that detaining authority must:
 - Inform detenu as soon as practicable of grounds on which detention has been made.
 - Provide detenu the earliest opportunity of making a representation against detention order.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

- The Supreme Court ruled that the **14-day timeline for granting sanctions** under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) is **mandatory**, not discretionary, requiring strict adherence by both central and state governments. This includes both the independent review (7 days) and government decision (7 days).
- The ruling stressed that any delay in the sanction process could undermine the very purpose of the anti-terrorism law, which is designed to combat terrorism and unlawful activities with efficiency and accountability.
- Non-compliance with the 14-day timeline could result in severe legal consequences, such as the quashing of criminal proceedings.
- The court clarified that this ruling applies prospectively and is aimed at ensuring that the procedural rights of the accused are upheld.

Creamy layer concept to SCs and STs

- Recently, the **Telangana government** has initiated the process of categorizing Scheduled Castes (SCs) into four distinct sub-groups: A, B, C, and D.
- This development follows the Supreme Court's landmark judgment which **granted states the authority to sub-classify (Subcategorize) reserved categories**, including Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), for reservation purposes.

- **Supreme Court Ruling:** The Supreme Court, in a review-judgment of Punjab and Haryana High Court, **allowed states to sub-classify SCs and STs under Article 14 of the Constitution** based on varying levels of backwardness. It ruled that the **‘creamy layer’ principle, previously applied only to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (as highlighted in Indra Sawhney Case), should now also be applied to SCs and STs.**
- It also held that reservations are applicable solely to the first generation; if a family member has availed of the benefits, the second generation becomes ineligible.

SC upheld Section 6A of citizenship act

- A five-judge bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud has upheld Section 6A of citizenship act with a 4:1 majority.

Relation between Section 6A of citizenship act and Assam Accord

- Section 6A was introduced through Citizenship Amendment Act, 1985, following the Assam Accord of 1985.
- The **Assam Accord** of 1985, is an agreement between the Rajiv Gandhi government and the All Assam Students’ Union. This accord aimed to address the influx of migrants by setting a cut-off date for citizenship.
- Section 6A of the Citizenship act codified the Assam Accord of 1985.
- The broad provisions of the section 6A of the citizenship act are mentioned below-
 1. Identification of Foreigners- It set January 1, 1966 as the base date for identification of “foreigners” and their removal from electoral rolls.
 2. Application for Indian Citizenship- Section 6A allows migrants of Indian origin who entered Assam between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971, to apply for Indian citizenship.
 - **Note:** Anyone entering after **March 24, 1971**, is classified as an illegal immigrant.

- **Section 6B introduced by the CAA, 2019:** it was added by the CAA, 2019. It introduces another group specific provision in the Citizenship Act. It sets December 31, 2014, as the cut-off date of citizenship for Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Jain Migrants from the Muslim majority countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.
- **Note:** **Section 6B cut-off date could clash with the March 25, 1971 cut-off date in Assam, which has been upheld by the Supreme Court in Section 6-A verdict.**

Grounds for challenge:

- Petitioners, including NGOs like Assam Public Works and Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha, argued that Section 6A is discriminatory and violates the equality clause of the Constitution.
- They contended that it sets a different standard for citizenship in Assam compared to the rest of India, which is July 1948.
- Concerns were raised that granting citizenship to migrants would infringe upon the cultural rights of indigenous Assamese people under Article 29(1) of the Constitution.

Defence of Section 6A:

- The government defended Section 6A by citing Article 11 of the Constitution, which empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship matters.
- The Centre argued that if Section 6A were to be struck down, a vast number of residents would risk being rendered stateless after enjoying citizenship for over five decades.
- The Centre highlighted that Assam has historically been a diverse state, with demographic changes influenced by various geopolitical factors.

SC's Ruling Regarding Section 6A of the Citizenship Act:

- CJI stated that Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution pertain solely to the citizenship rights at the time of the Constitution's inception. In contrast, Section 6A addresses individuals not covered by these articles.
- The Parliament has the authority to define citizenship criteria based on unique circumstances.
- Unique circumstances justified the differentiation: The situation in Assam (particularly the demographic impacts of migration) warranted a specific legal framework, which did not violate the right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution.
- Cultural rights: The mere presence of diverse ethnic groups does not undermine cultural rights and Section 6A embodies the “spirit of fraternity”.
- On cutoff date of 24 March 1971: It is reasonable because the Pakistani Army launched Operation Searchlight to curb the Bangladeshi nationalist movement in East Pakistan on 26 March 1971.
- Migrants after this date were considered to be migrants of war and not partition.

Election Expenditure in India

- **Expenditure Limit on Candidates:** The election expenditure limit for candidates is set at:
 - Rs 95 lakh for Lok Sabha seats and Rs 40 lakh for Assembly seats in larger states,
 - Rs 75 lakh and Rs 28 lakh respectively in smaller states.

- **Political Party Spending:** Currently, there are no expenditure limits imposed on political parties during elections, allowing them unrestricted spending.
 - **Note:** In the 2024 Lok Sabha Election, the cost of a single vote in India has amounted to around Rs 1,400 and total expenditures reached approximately Rs 1 lakh crores.
- **Transparency Measures:** Political parties are required to submit annual contribution reports to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for donations exceeding Rs 20,000. They must also provide Annual Audited Accounts (AAA) and election expenditure reports within 75 days post-election.
- **Funding Sources:** The vast majority of political funding comes from corporate entities and businesses, creating a strong nexus between donors and politicians.

Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951:

- **Section 77** of the RPA requires candidates to keep a detailed and accurate account of all expenses related to their campaign from the day they file their nomination until the election day.
- **Section 78** mandates that every candidate submit their election expense account to the District Election Officer within 30 days of the result declaration.

Companies Act, 2013:

- A non-government company with at least three years in operation may contribute up to 7.5% of its average net profits from the last three years to political parties registered under the RPA.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010:

- Political parties, candidates, and election-related entities in India are prohibited from receiving foreign contributions. This includes funds, gifts, donations, and any financial support from foreign sources.

Adulteration in Tirupati Laddu (Prasadam)

- **Tirumala Venkateswara (Tirupati Balaji) Temple:** It is situated in Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh, on Venkata Hill, one of the seven hills (Saptagiri) of the Tirumala Hills. It is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu
- **Beginning of controversy:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu made public statements on 18th September, 2024, alleging that animal fat, including beef fat and fish oil, was used in the preparation of laddus (prasadam) during the previous YSRCP government's tenure.
- The allegations were based on a laboratory report from the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) regarding ghee samples.
- Following the controversy, the Andhra Pradesh government constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on 26th September, 2024, to investigate the matter.
- The Supreme Court later constituted an **independent Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by CBI Joint Director Viresh Prabhu** replacing the existing state-appointed SIT, emphasizing that an independent body would inspire greater confidence.

How are the Places of Worship Managed in India?

Hindu Temples:

- **Government Control:** A majority of Hindu temples are managed under state regulations, with many states enacting laws that grant government authority over temple administration. For example, the Andhra Pradesh government oversees and appoints the head of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the Tirupati Temple.
- **Income utilization:** Revenue from major temples is often allocated for the maintenance of smaller temples and social welfare initiatives, such as hospitals, orphanages, and educational institutions.
- **Legal Framework:** The power for state intervention is derived from **Article 25(2)** of the Indian Constitution, which allows regulation of economic and social activities related to religious practices to ensure accountability.

Muslim and Christian Places of Worship:

- **Community Management:** Muslim and Christian places of worship are typically overseen by community-based boards or trusts, functioning independently of government control, which promotes a decentralised management approach.

Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist Temples:

- The management of Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist temples is subject to varying levels of government regulation based on the state, while community involvement plays a crucial role in their administration.

State Legislation and Intervention:

- **Religious endowments** and institutions are listed under the **Concurrent List** of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, allowing **both the Centre and states** to legislate on the subject. This has led to diverse regulatory frameworks across states.

Criticism of Govt's control over temples

- Government control over Hindu temples is seen as discriminatory, as similar controls are not imposed on other religious places of worship.

- Temples are cultural centres, and their management should reflect the interests and traditions of the local community, not the state.
- Article 26 of the Constitution guarantees the right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs, and excessive state intervention is seen as a violation of this right.

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord

- **Assam Accords:** The Assam Accord, signed in 1985, was a tripartite agreement between the Central Government, the Assam State Government, and leaders of the Assam Movement, aimed at stopping the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh. It led to the introduction of Section 6A into the Citizenship Act, of 1955, exclusively for Assam.
- **Clause 6 of the accord** promises Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, to preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people. The main aim was to protect the indigenous identity of the Assamese people. The clause was added in response to changes in population ratios and the influx of migrants from Bangladesh.

Biplab Sarma Committee Report

- In July 2019, the Union Home Ministry constituted a 14-member committee to suggest ways to implement Clause 6 of the accord. The committee was chaired by retired Assam High Court Justice Biplab Kumar Sarma and included judges, retired bureaucrats, writers, AASU leaders, and journalists.
- **Definition of Assamese:** The committee completed its report in February 2020, and recommended that the definition of “Assamese people” should include: *Indigenous Tribals; Other Indigenous Communities of Assam; Indian citizens residing in Assam on or before January 1, 1951, and their descendants; Indigenous Assamese people.*
- **Recommendations:** The 52 recommendations primarily focus on safeguards related to language, land, and cultural heritage.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010

- FCRA 2010 was enacted by the Parliament, after repealing FCRA (1976), to regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contribution by certain individuals or associations or companies.

How FCRA Regulates NGOs Receiving Foreign Funding?

- **Monitoring FCRA:** The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) monitors the implementation of the FCRA. Through the FCRA, the ministry **regulates foreign donations to ensure that such funds do not adversely affect the country's internal security.**
- **Registration Requirement:** Any association, group, or NGO intending to receive foreign donations must register under the FCRA. This registration allows NGOs to receive contributions for social, educational, religious, economic, and cultural programs.
- **Five-Year Validity of Registration:** Once an NGO registers under the FCRA, the registration is **valid for five years**. After this period, the NGO must apply for a renewal to continue receiving foreign contributions.
- **2010 Legislation and 2020 Amendments:** The original FCRA Act, 1976 was repealed and replaced by new legislation in 2010 to modernise the law governing foreign contributions. 2020 amendment to FCRA put some additional restrictions such as prohibiting the domestic transfer of foreign funds, limiting the administrative expense of organizations receiving foreign funds to 20%, etc.
- **Purpose-bound Utilisation:** Foreign funds must be used only for the purpose for which they were received, as stipulated under the Act.
- **Transfer Restrictions:** Registered NGOs are prohibited from transferring foreign funds to other NGOs.
- **SBI Bank Account:** Registered entities must open a dedicated bank account in the State Bank of India, Delhi, for receiving foreign funds.
- **Annual Returns:** NGOs are required to file annual returns, ensuring transparency in the use of foreign contributions.
- **Prohibited Entities:** The FCRA prohibits candidates for elections, journalists, media companies, judges, government servants, members of the legislature, political parties, and organisations of a political nature from receiving foreign contributions.
- **Government's Right to Cancel:** The government can cancel an NGO's registration if found violating FCRA provisions. Reasons for cancellation include false statements, inactivity for two years, violations of certificate terms, or acts against national interest.

In news:

- Recently, the government has cracked down on **five major NGOs** under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA) due to concerns over their financial activities and objectives. These NGOs include Oxfam India, Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Environics Trust (ET), Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE), and Care India Solution for Sustainable Development (CISSD).

- Note: In the recent past, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) criticised India's FCRA for being repressive and should be revised.

What needs to be done to Better Regulate NGOs?

- Clarity in Definitions: The government should clearly define terms like public interest and national security before restricting foreign funding to NGOs. It could reduce the risk of the law being misused against civil society organisations (CSOs) genuinely involved in welfare works.
- Independent Oversight: Establishing an independent regulatory body to oversee the foreign funding of NGOs will ensure transparent procedures in their functioning.
- Aligning with International Standards: Revise the FCRA to align it with international treaties and human rights obligations, such as those outlined by the United Nations Human Rights Council. It will allow for a fair balance between national security concerns and the need for civil society to access international funding.

Discrimination in prisons

- Recently, the Supreme Court ruled that **caste-based division of labour in prisons is "unconstitutional,"** marking a key step towards eliminating institutional biases in India's correctional system.
- The SC invalidated several provisions in State prison manuals that upheld caste distinctions, declaring them a violation of prisoners' fundamental rights.
- West Bengal Jail Code: The court highlighted Rule 404 of the West Bengal Jail Code, which states that a convict overseer may only be appointed as a night guard if they do not belong to tribes considered to have a "strong natural tendency to escape," such as wandering tribes.
- Tamil Nadu Prison: The segregation of Thevars, Nadars, and Pallars into separate sections at the Palayamkottai Central Jail in Tamil Nadu was a caste-based segregation of barracks.
- Rajasthan Prison: The Rajasthan Prison Rules, 1951, assigned latrine duties to the "Mehtar" caste, a Scheduled Caste community, while Brahmins or high-caste Hindu prisoners were placed in kitchens.
- Note: Assigning cleaning and sweeping jobs to lower castes, while allowing higher castes to perform tasks like cooking, is a clear example of direct discrimination under **Article 15(1)**.
- The SC highlighted prison rules that mandate food be cooked by a "suitable caste" or assign "menial duties" to certain communities, classifying these practices as untouchability, which is prohibited under **Article 17**.

Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)

- FTSCs are judicial bodies established in India **to expedite the trial process for cases pertaining to sexual offenses**, particularly those involving rape and violations under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act).
- Establishment: The Central Government enacted the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2018**, introducing stringent penalties, including the death penalty for perpetrators of rape.
 - Following this, FTSCs were instituted to facilitate the swift adjudication of such cases.
- The initiative to establish FTSCs was formalized in **August 2019** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, in accordance with directives from the Supreme Court of India.
- Reasons for Establishing FTSCs: The FTSCs was established in response to the alarming rise in sexual offenses and the prolonged duration of trials in conventional courts, which led to significant delays in delivering justice to victims.
- Extension of the FTSCs: The FTSCs Scheme, originally launched for one year in 2019, has been extended by the Union Cabinet for an additional three years, **from 2023 to 2026**.

Misuse (abuse) of Laws

- Recently, the Supreme Court observed that **Section 498A** Indian Penal Code (now Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) and Domestic Violence Act 2005 are among the most abused laws.
- Both the Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and Section 498A are sometimes misused by filing false complaints to harass husbands and their families. These provisions are exploited as tools for personal vendetta or to gain leverage in matrimonial disputes, including property settlements, maintenance claims, or custody battles.
- In several instances, false cases are used to coerce husbands and their relatives into making large financial settlements or paying alimony.
- The stigma associated with domestic violence allegations can cause irreparable harm to the social standing, mental health, and professional life of the accused.
- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC): deals with the criminal offence of cruelty against a married woman by her husband or his relatives. The section was introduced in 1983. Section 84 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS) deals with the same provision. The offender can face up to three years in jail and may also be liable to pay a fine. A complaint must be filed within three years of the alleged incident. It is a non-bailable and cognizable offence, leading to immediate arrests without the need for prior investigation.

- **Domestic Violence Act 2005:** it was enacted to provide a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of women against domestic violence, recognizing violence in both physical and psychological forms within familial settings. It covers all women in domestic relationships, including wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and live-in partners. It protects women from violence by husbands, male partners, relatives, or other members of the household.

Last case of 'Sati' in India

- British Governor-General William Bentinck declared the practice of sati illegal and punishable by criminal courts under the Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829.
- On **4 September 1987**, an 18-year-old **Roop Kanwar** is said to have committed sati. After Roop Kanwar's 24-year-old husband, Maal Singh Shekhawat, died of illness, relatives and the local community allegedly pushed her into following a practice
- Recently, nearly four decades later, eight persons were acquitted by a court in connection with glorifying the act. The court deemed the evidence against them inadequate for a conviction.
- This Roop Kanwar case led to the enactment of the **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987** by the Union government. Under Section 5 of the legislation, anyone held guilty of glorifying sati is liable for a jail term of not less than a year, which may extend to seven years, along with a fine ranging between Rs 5,000 and Rs 30,000.

Industrial alcohol

- Recently, the Supreme Court's nine-judge Constitution bench held in a 8:1 ruling that **states have the authority to regulate industrial alcohol**, reversing a 1990 decision (*Synthetics & Chemicals Ltd v. State of Uttar Pradesh Case, 1989*) that favored central government control.
- **Article 145(3):** The minimum number of judges required for deciding cases involving substantial constitutional questions or references under Article 143 is **five**.
- Industrial alcohol is essentially impure alcohol that is used as an industrial solvent. Mixing chemicals such as benzene, pyridine, gasoline, etc. in ethanol (a process called denaturation) turns it into industrial alcohol, significantly lowering its prices and making it unfit for human consumption. It is used in pharmaceuticals, perfumes, cosmetics, and cleaning liquids.

Child Betrothals

- The Supreme Court highlighted that marriages arranged during a child's minority infringe upon their "free choice" and "childhood," and **urged the Parliament to outlaw child betrothals**.
- Under **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006**, the legal age for marriage is set at 18 for women and 21 for men. This act criminalised child marriage but the practice of **betrothal is not explicitly prohibited under the Act**.
- Child Betrothal involves a promise of marriage between children or between a child and an adult, intended to take place later when they are older.

Pre-Independence legislations regarding child marriages:

- The British government introduced legislative measures to curb the practice, notably the **Age of Consent Act of 1891**, which raised the age of consent for marriage to 12 years.
- The **Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929)**, also known as the **Sarda Act**, set the minimum age for marriage at 14 for girls and 18 for boys, marking the first legal intervention to control child marriages.

OTHER POLITY NEWS:

Recently, the Madras High Court observed that, an **idol in the temple must be treated as a Living Person (juristic personality in law)**. The court emphasized the responsibility of the administration to prevent the illegal closure of temples and ensure adherence to worship rights.

The Delhi High Court has ruled that a first information report (FIR) must be mandatorily registered in cases of alleged fake encounters, reinforcing legal accountability for police actions.

Recently, The Bombay High Court (HC) struck down the Amended Information Technology Rules, 2023 which empowered the Centre to set up a **Fact Check Unit (FCU)** to identify fake, false and misleading information about the government on social media.

The high-level committee, chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind, submitted its report on the 'one nation, one election' plan. The committee recommended that the constitution should be amended to enable simultaneous elections (Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies and Local govts).

Recently, the Supreme Court condemned the **Punjab government's decision to expand the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) quota (15%) in medical colleges to include distant relatives of NRIs**, such as uncles, aunts, and cousins. The SC referenced the PA Inamdar vs. State of Maharashtra Case, 2005, which highlighted the necessity to prevent

misuse of the NRI quota.

Recently, the Supreme Court affirmed that **“socialist” and “secular” are integral to the Constitution’s Basic Structure**, rejecting a petition to remove these terms from the Preamble.

Abetment of suicide is an offence under Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) (Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)). The punishment for this crime is up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine.

Madras High Court has declared **Section 77-A of the Registration Act, 1908** unconstitutional.

Section 77-A, introduced to the Central enactment by way of a 2022 State amendment, granted District Registrars the power to cancel documents related to immovable property if they were found to have been registered through fraud or on submission of forged revenue records.

ECONOMY and AGRICULTURE NEWS

NaBFID as fifth AIFI

- Recently, the Government of India in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) as a “public financial institution” under the Companies Act, 2013 aiming to boost infrastructure financing in the country.
- This notification enhances NaBFID’s capacity to fund large-scale infrastructure projects, strengthening the national infrastructure finance system.
- **NaBFID**, established in 2021 by the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act (2021) as India’s fifth All India Financial Institution (AIFI) to support long-term infrastructure financing, including the development of bonds and derivatives markets.
- **Other four AIFIs are:** EXIM, NABARD, NHB, SIDBI.

Pusa Basmati 1979 and Pusa Basmati 1985

- The two are **non-transgenic** varieties of **herbicide-tolerant (HT)** basmati rice.
- **In News:** Recently, the Indian government for the first time allowed the **commercial cultivation** of these 2 varieties.
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
- **Aim:** to promote sustainable paddy cultivation practices that conserve water and reduce carbon emissions.
- **Transgenic vs Non-Transgenic:** Unlike Transgenic or Genetically Modified Organism (GMO), non-Transgenic does not involve inserting any foreign DNA.
- **Issue with the normal rice plants:** Farmers used to spray **Imazethapyr (herbicide)** to control weeds but this chemical fails to distinguish between the rice crop and the weeds. As a result, in normal rice plants, the herbicide binds to the ALS enzymes, inhibiting amino acid production and hence affects rice plant. The ALS gene in rice encodes an enzyme responsible for synthesising amino acids essential for the crop’s growth and development.
- **How these non-transgenic varieties become herbicide-tolerant (HT)?**
 - These new varieties contain a **mutated AcetoLactate Synthase (ALS) gene** which prevents the ALS enzymes from having binding sites for Imazethapyr, ensuring that amino acid synthesis remains unaffected. The ALS gene in rice encodes an enzyme responsible for synthesising amino acids essential for the crop’s growth and development.
- **Significance:** These HT rice varieties offer several benefits such as eliminating the need for nursery preparation, puddling, transplanting, and field flooding, reducing methane emissions, a major greenhouse gas by supporting Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR).
- **Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR):** it is an agricultural method where pre-germinated rice seeds are sown directly into the field by a tractor- powered machine, bypassing the traditional process of transplanting **seedlings from nurseries**. This technique reduces labour and water requirements, making it a more sustainable and cost-effective option compared to conventional methods. It also reduces methane emissions due to a shorter flooding period. It also shortens the crop cycle, which can lead to earlier harvests and potentially allow for multiple cropping cycles in a year.
- **Facts about Rice:** It is a kharif crop that requires high temperature (above 25°C) and high humidity with annual rainfall above 100 cm. India is the second-largest producer of rice after China. About one-fourth of the total cropped area in India is under rice cultivation. Leading producer states are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab however the High Yielding States are Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana.
- Basmati rice is India’s top agricultural-export produce. Basmati’s distinctive fragrance is attributed to 2-acetyl-1-pyrroline (2-AP), an organic compound produced during maturation that gives this rice grain its nutty and fragrant aroma.
- The State of **Andhra Pradesh** is known as the **rice bowl of India**.

Kasturi Cotton Bharat

- The ministry of textiles has empowered cotton ginner across the country to produce Kasturi Cotton Bharat brand, based on the QR code certification technology, as per stipulated protocol.

About Kasturi Cotton Bharat:

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Textiles, Textile Trade Bodies, and Industry with the objective of creating premium value for cotton grown in India as per benchmarked specifications.
- It is a pioneering effort in traceability, certification, and branding of Indian cotton.
- It was formalised through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Cotton Corporation of India and the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council on 15 December 2022.
- To provide complete traceability of Kasturi Cotton Bharat-tagged bales across the supply chain, QR-based certification technology are being used at each stage of the processing, and a Block-chain based software platform will provide end-to-end traceability and transaction certificates.
- In this regard, **Microsite with QR code verification and Block Chain technology** has been developed.
- The Kasturi Cotton Bharat programme is operational at the national level, and its promotion is being made at national and international platform. Hence, the allocation of funds is not at state level.
- Ginners across the country have been empowered to produce Kasturi Cotton Bharat brand as per stipulated protocol.
- Cotton is a vital crop in India, contributing to **25% of global production** and is known as “**White-Gold**” for its economic value. It thrives in hot, sunny climates and various soil types but is sensitive to waterlogging.
- **Ginning**: it is the process to get the cleaned cotton by separating or removing the seeds, dust, or any other foreign particles, so that better cotton can be offered for the cotton spinning mills. It was traditionally done by hand, but nowadays, machines are used.

Bank's High Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio

- RBI has told banks to bridge the gap between credit and deposit growth and reduce CD ratio.
- CD Ratio is a financial metric representing the %age of loans a bank has issued relative to its total deposits.
- The credit-deposit ratio has **reached its highest in 20 years**, with bank deposits growing at 11.1% year-on-year compared to credit growth of 17.4%. The growth of bank deposits has not kept pace with the surge in loan demand, creating a widening gap between credit and deposit growth.
- CD ratio has been rising since September 2021 and peaked at 78.8% in December 2023.
- Over 75% of the banks with C-D ratios above 75% are private sector banks.

Key Reasons for high CD ratio

- **Higher credit growth**
 - Rising retail credit (includes vehicle loans, personal loans, etc.).
 - From April 2022 and March 2024, bank lending to the retail sector grew at a CAGR of 25.2%.
 - Increasing loans to businesses and MSMEs.
- **Slower deposit growth:**
 - Banks are facing stiff competition with each other.
 - Additionally, customers are transitioning from savers to investors. Households are moving their savings from bank deposits to mutual funds, stocks, insurance, and pension funds.

Impact of High CD Ratio: Bank may face:

- **Liquidity risk**: Banks' may be unable to timely meet payment obligations.
- **Credit risk**: Borrowers could default on their contractual obligations

Bad banks

- Bad banks are asset reconstruction companies that buy, manage, and recover bad loans and manage NPAs from commercial banks to liquidate the transferred assets. It provides a safety net for banks, allowing them to offload bad loans and focus on healthier lending activities.
- **In News**: The National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (**NARCL**), the government-backed bad bank, has set an ambitious target to acquire Rs 2 trillion in stressed assets by FY26.
- **NARCL**: it was announced in the Union Budget 2021-22 to handle large loans of over Rs 500 crore.
 - Initial delays occurred due to the Reserve Bank of India's dissatisfaction with the proposed structure, leading to a revised plan.
 - Under the new structure NARCL acquires and aggregates bad loan accounts from banks. India Debt Resolution Co. Ltd (**IDRCL**) handles the resolution process, operating under an exclusive arrangement with NARCL.
 - **Role of NARCL**: Purchase bad loans from commercial banks. Manage these distressed assets. Sell them in the market through bidding methods like Swiss Challenge to recover funds and liquidate the transferred assets.

Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

- The Union Cabinet approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which will provide government employees with assured pension after retirement.
- The scheme will be effective from **1st April, 2025** with central government employees shifting to UPS from the current National Pension System (NPS).
- State governments will also have the option to adopt the Unified Pension Scheme.

What are the Provisions of the Unified Pension Scheme?

- **Assured Pension**: This would amount to 50% of the employee's average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before retirement for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.
- The amount would proportionately go down for a smaller service period, up to a minimum of 10 years of service.
- **Assured Minimum Pension**: In the case of retirement after a minimum 10 years of service, the UPS provides for an assured minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month.
- **Assured Family Pension**: Upon a retiree's death, their immediate family would be eligible for 60% of the pension last drawn by the retiree.
 - **Inflation Indexation**: Dearness relief will be available on the above mentioned three kinds of pensions. Indexation will be calculated based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers.
- **Lumpsum Payment at Retirement**: In addition to gratuity, employees will receive a lump sum payment at retirement equivalent to 1/10th of their monthly emoluments (pay+DA) as of the retirement date for every completed six months of service. This payment will not affect the amount of the assured pension. Gratuity is an amount paid by an employer to its employees for rendering their services.
- **Choice for Employees**: The employees can still opt to remain under the NPS. However, an employee can only opt for once. once opted, the option can not be changed.
- **National Pension System (NPS)**: NPS was a market-linked contribution scheme introduced by the Central Government to help the individuals have income in the form of pension to take care of their retirement needs.

White Revolution 2.0

- The Ministry of Cooperation launched White Revolution 2.0 on September 19, 2024.
- **Objective**: Increase milk procurement, ensure market access to dairy farmers, generate employment, and women's empowerment.
- Dairy cooperatives are projected to procure 100 million kilograms of milk daily by the end of the 5th year of the initiative.
- It aims to increase procurement led by cooperatives from the present 660 lakh litres per day to 1,000 lakh litres.
- Margdarshika (SOPs) has been launched to form 200,000 new multipurpose primary agricultural cooperatives (MPACs).
- **Women Empowerment**: Maximum women are engaged in the dairy sector, generating business worth Rs 60,000 crore in Gujarat alone.
- **Tackling Malnutrition**: With the increase in availability of milk, the biggest benefit will pass on to the poor and malnourished children.
- **Note**: White Revolution 2 is in line with White Revolution launched in 1970 by **Dr. Verghese Kurien** that transformed the dairy-deficient nation into the global leader in milk production. White Revolution is also known as '**Operation Flood**'.
- **Note**: **India is the world's top milk producer**, with production having reached 231 million tonnes during 2022-23. In 1951-52, the country produced just 17 million tonnes of milk.
- **The top five milk producing states** are UP (15.72%), Rajasthan (14.44%), Madhya Pradesh (8.73%), Gujarat (7.49%), and Andhra Pradesh (6.70%), which together contribute 53.08% of the country's total milk production.
- **The national per capita availability of milk** is **459 grams/ day**, which is higher than the global average of 323 g/day. However, it varies from 329 g in Maharashtra to 1,283 g in Punjab.
- Almost **31.94%** of the total milk production in India comes from indigenous buffaloes, followed by 29.81% from crossbred cattle. The share of goat milk is 3.30%, and that of exotic cows, 1.86%.

Minimum Support Prices

- The Indian government has recently approved an increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for six Rabi crops for the 2025-26 marketing season.
- **Recent revision in MSP for Rabi crops**: Wheat, Rapeseed & Mustard, Lentil (Masur), Barley, Gram, and Safflower.
- **Definition**: MSP is the guaranteed price paid to farmers for their produce when purchased by the government, ensuring they receive a minimum income.

- **Determination:** MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) based on factors like cost of production, demand and supply, and market trends.
- **Approval process:** final declaration of MSP is by **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** based on the recommendations of the **Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.
- **Coverage of Commodities:** **22 commodities**, which comprise **7 cereals** (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi), **5 pulses** (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil), **7 oilseeds** (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, sesamum, sunflower, safflower, Niger seed), and **3 commercial crops** (copra, cotton and raw jute).

How are the MSPs fixed?

- MSP is fixed at 1.5 times the cost of production.
- **Approaches to measure the cost of production:**
 - A2 Approach, which includes the cost of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, labour.
 - A2+FL Approach, which includes A2 and the implied cost of family labour (FL).
 - C2 Approach, which includes the implied rent on land and interest on capital assets and A2+FL.
- **Note:** Presently, **India follows A2+FL approach** to declare **MSP at 1.5 times** the cost of production.

Difference between FRP and MSP:

- **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** for Sugarcane is declared under Sugarcane control order 1966 issued under Essential commodities Act, 1955 and hence it **enjoys legal status**. It means that it is legally binding for the sugarcane Industries to purchase sugarcane from farmers at FRP, else it would be considered illegal.
- **However, MSP does not enjoy statutory recognition**. This means that there is no onus on the traders to buy crops at MSP.

Debate about Legalisation of MSP:

Arguments in favour of Legalization of MSP	Arguments against Legalization of MSP
<p>Price assurance in the form of legal guarantee for MSP would reduce volatility in prices and would encourage investment by farmers.</p> <p>Prevents exploitation by Middlemen and Traders as they would be required to pay MSP fixed by the Government.</p> <p>Encourage crop diversification by encouraging farmers to grow Pulses, Millets and Oilseeds.</p> <p>Ensure Food security by encouraging farmers to grow multiple crops.</p> <p>Double Farmers' income by providing farmers with remunerative prices.</p> <p>Multiplier Effect: Increase in Farmers' income would stimulate economic activity in rural areas, reduce distress migration to urban areas, boost food processing sector</p>	<p>Goes against Interest of Farmers: In the event of bumper harvest, prices of the commodities would fall below MSP. During such times, the private sector may not procure the commodities fearing penalty.</p> <p>Goes against Interest of Agriculture as it would not solve structural problems such as lack of irrigation, higher post-harvest losses, lower R&D investment in seeds & Fertilizers, vulnerability to climate change etc.</p> <p>Adverse Impact on Economy: Higher costs of procurement due to a statutory MSP will increase the food prices, leading to inflation. Higher prices of commodities would also adversely affect exports of agricultural commodities</p> <p>Financing needs: According to some estimates, if the Government were to procure all the 22 crops at MSP, it would amount to half of the Government's Budget.</p> <p>Unsustainable Food grain Management Policy: The Food subsidy bill has already become quite unsustainable at around Rs 2 lakh crores. Legalization of MSP would further worsen the scenario.</p> <p>Administrative Challenge: lack of government machinery to the procure all crops that are under the MSP system accompanied by increase in judicial burden.</p> <p>Violation of WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA): Legalization of MSP would further violate the limit on the subsidies under AoA and it can be challenged by other countries. India's quest for Permanent solution on Public stockholding could be in jeopardy.</p>

Coffee Production in India

- India is the 6th largest coffee producer and 5th largest exporter globally, accounting for 3.14% of global coffee output.
- 70% of India's coffee produced is exported, while 30% is consumed domestically. India is renowned for its high-quality coffee varieties.
- **Coffee Varieties in India:** **Arabica** (grown at higher latitudes) and **Robusta**.
- **Karnataka** is the largest producer accounting for about 70% of the total coffee production, followed by Kerala at 23%.
- The head office of the **Coffee Board of India** is located in **Bengaluru**, Karnataka.

Asset Monetization (AM)

- **Genesis:** The idea of AM was first suggested by a committee led by economist **Vijay Kelkar** in 2012.
 - AM was announced in the **Union Budget 2021-22** through the **National Monetisation Pipeline**.
- **Definition:** AM is the process of creating new sources of revenue for the government and its entities by unlocking the economic value of unutilised or underutilised public assets.
 - A public asset can be any property owned by a public body, roads, airports, pipelines, etc.
- **Authority:** An authorised Core Group of Secretaries on Asset Monetisation (**CGAM**) has been constituted under the chairmanship of the **Cabinet Secretary** to implement and monitor the project.
- **Process of Asset Monetisation (AM)**

- AM involves the **license/lease** of a government-owned asset to a private sector entity for a specific period.
- The transfer of rights in exchange for payments is governed by a concession agreement that facilitates balanced risk-sharing between the public authority and the private party.
- **In news:** Recently, the NITI Aayog has increased the asset monetisation target for 2024-25 (FY25) by Rs 23,000 crore to Rs 1.9 trillion. With this, NITI Aayog moved closer to the overall Rs 6 trillion (Rs 6 lakh crore) target set under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) for a four-year period (FY 2022-25).

CAT bonds

- **Catastrophe bonds** or CAT bonds are financial instruments that pay high returns to investors in exchange for bearing the risk of significant disasters. These bonds are typically issued by insurers, or governments to obtain additional coverage for catastrophic events like hurricanes, earthquakes, or floods.

CBAM and EUDR norms of European union

- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** It is the EU's tool to put a fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries. It ensures that the carbon price for imports matches the carbon price applied to EU-produced goods, maintaining fair competition. Initially, CBAM applies to high-risk carbon leakage goods such as cement, iron and steel, aluminum, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen. Over time, CBAM will capture more than 50% of emissions from sectors covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) e.g., oil refineries, shipping etc.
- **European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR):** Operators or traders exporting to EU market must prove their products do not come from recently deforested land or contribute to forest degradation. The primary objectives include: Prevention of Deforestation, Carbon Emission Reduction, Combating Forest Degradation caused by agricultural expansion related to these commodities. It focuses on commodities such as cattle, wood, cocoa, soy, palm oil, coffee, rubber, and related products (e.g., leather, chocolate, tires, furniture).

India's concern related to EU's CBAM and EUDR:

- CBAM could result in tariffs of up to 35% on imports of carbon-intensive goods like cement, aluminium, iron, and steel from India, acting as a unilateral trade barrier. This is a significant issue, as over a quarter of India's exports of these materials in 2022 were directed to the EU.
- EUDR mandates that importers of commodities like cattle, soy, palm oil, coffee, and wood certify that their products do not come from recently deforested land or contribute to forest degradation. India views this regulation as another form of **protectionism** and a non-tariff barrier (NTBs).

OTHER ECONOMY NEWS:

- Housing Finance Companies / HFCs are specialized entities established under the Companies Act 1956, initially regulated by the National Housing Bank (NHB). However, in 2019, the regulatory authority over HFCs was transferred to the RBI.
- Recently, opposition leaders demanded the withdrawal of the **18% GST** on health and life insurance premiums.
- Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, led by the Prime Minister has approved **eight National High Speed Corridor projects** under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model.
- Recently, the Union Government in the Budget 2024-25 announced a reduction of the import duty on gold from 15% to 6%.
 - India is the **world's second-largest consumer of gold, after China**. India's gold imports increased by 30% in 2023-24, reaching USD 45.54 billion.
- Recently, India has restarted the **import of Tur dal / arhar dal (Pigeon pea) from Mozambique** after it was disrupted by an "anti-India" group. This *dal (pulses)* is a vital legume crop and protein source in India.
 - India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world. The top 5 pulses-producing states are Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.
- Recently, **India's** push towards increasing ethanol production, particularly Corn (Maize) -based ethanol, has transformed the country from Asia's top maize exporter to a **net importer**.
- Recently, the government upgraded four Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)—Railtel Corporation of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India, SJVN (Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited), and NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) —to '**Navratna**' status. This increases the total number of Navratna CPSEs in India to **25**.
- The sharp rise in **ammonium nitrate (NH₄NO₃) imports from Russia** has raised concerns for India's domestic fertiliser industry, which faces competition from cheaper imports. Its high nitrogen content makes it extensively used in agriculture.

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (**APEDA**) plans to promote both the Indian alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages globally targeting USD 1 billion in export revenue over the next few years, as part of the 'Make in India' initiative. As part of India's push to enhance its global beverage footprint, **Godawan Single Malt Whisky**, an artisanal whisky made in Rajasthan, India, is set to launch in the United Kingdom.
- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have accumulated about USD 1.1 trillion in Indian securities, highlighting India's increasing attractiveness to global investors. The **primary sources of FPI inflows into India are the US, Singapore, and Luxembourg**.
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has increased the **transaction limits for tax payments using UPI (Unified Payment Interface), by allowing people to send 5 lakh in a single transaction**. Acquiring entities must ensure that the classification of their merchants within MCC-9311 strictly adheres to the tax payments only.
- India's foreign exchange reserves reached a record high of \$692.3 billion as of September 2024.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been upgraded to the status of Maharatna, making it the 14th Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) to receive this prestigious classification from the Government of India.

HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Estampage method used by ASI

- Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has taken an initiative to copy significant stone inscriptions found at the **Thalishwarar temple** in the *Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu*.
- Estampage is a traditional method used in epigraphy to create accurate copies of inscriptions. It involves placing a special paper over the inscription, applying ink, and then pressing the paper to capture the details of the engraving. This technique allows epigraphists to study and analyze inscriptions without damaging the original stone or metal surface.

Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray

- Recently, 2nd August was commemorated as the birthday of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray.
- Often referred to as the **"Father of Indian Chemistry,"** Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944) was a distinguished Indian scientist and educator, recognized as one of the earliest modern chemical researchers in India.
- He is credited with discovering the stable compound **Mercurous Nitrite** in **1895**.
- A staunch nationalist, Ray was committed to advancing Bengali enterprise and established the **Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works in 1901**. He was an active supporter of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 and considered the use of foreign articles a crime of treason against India.

105th birth anniversary of Vikram Sarabhai

- Vikram Sarabhai was born on August 12, 1919 in Ahmedabad.
- He was instrumental in forming India's future in astronomy and setting up the country's space research facilities. He is the father of India's space program and mentor to A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- Based on his persuasion, the Indian government agreed to set up the *Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR)* in 1962. He was the first chairman of the committee.
- The INCOSPAR was restructured and renamed as Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) in 1969.
- Sarabhai founded the **Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad** in 1947. The laboratory started its operation from RETREAT, Sarabhai's residence in Ahmedabad. Its first topic of research was cosmic rays.
- He also set up **India's first rocket launch site in Thumba**, a small village near the Thiruvananthapuram airport in Kerala.
- Vikram Sarabhai was also responsible for bringing cable television to India. His constant contact with NASA paved a way for the establishment of **Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE)** in 1975.
- Sarabhai was the mastermind behind building India's first satellite, **Aryabhata**.
- He was one of the founding members of the **Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA)**.
- Vikram Sarabhai received the **Padma Bhushan in 1966** for his contribution to India's progress. He was also awarded the **Padma Vibhushan in 1972**, posthumously.

Porja, Bagata, and Konda Dora tribes

- The plight of tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh, who played a crucial role in constructing the **Lower Sileru Hydro-Electric Project (LSP)**, has recently gained attention. Despite their crucial contributions in the 1970s, villages nearby Visakhapatnam settled by the *Porja, Bagata, and Konda Dora* tribes continue to face severe shortages of electricity and clean water.

Muradabad ki Pahadi

- It is a historical site in Delhi, named after the 14th century **Sufi saint Syed Murad Ali**.
- The site features two mosques from the Tughlaq and Lodi dynasties, reflecting their distinct architectural styles.
- Tughlaq-era mosque known as **Qasai Wala Gumbad**.
- Lodhi-era mosque known as **Shahi Masjid**, features a lotus kalash.
- Syed Murad Ali's tomb is situated here, adorned with intricate arches and ornate doorways.
- The site now houses the Abdul Mannan Academy, a madarsa that serves the community and continues to preserve the site's heritage.

Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur

- He was born on 19th August 1908 in Tripura, also known as the "**Modern Architect of Tripura**".
- He established the first higher educational institution, advocated for land reforms, and reserved land for the indigenous people, leading to the formation of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).
- He was the first ruler of Tripura to visit Europe and America (1931-1939).
- Agartala airport, earlier known as Singerbhill Airport, was renamed after Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur in July 2018.
- Recently, PM highlighted his significant contributions to Tripura's development and his dedication to empowering the poor and tribal communities.

8th Dharma Dhamma conference

Recently, the 8th Dharma Dhamma conference was organised by the India Foundation in collaboration with Gujarat University in **Ahmedabad**.

- Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar was the **chief guest** for the event.
- The theme for the 2024 conference is "Cosmology in Dharma and Dhamma."
- The conference seeks to facilitate the exchange of ideas and foster harmony between Hindu and Buddhist civilisations, emphasising their relevance over millennia.

Veer Abdul Hameed

- Recently, a chapter titled '*Veer Abdul Hameed*' and a poem titled '*National War Memorial*' have been included in the NCERT curriculum of Class VI.
- It honours Company Quarter Master Havildar (CQMH) Abdul Hameed. He is a **war hero from the India-Pakistan war 1965** who was awarded the Param Veer Chakra posthumously.
- Abdul Hameed was stationed near Chima village on the Amritsar-Khem Karan road, leading a detachment of Recoilless Guns to target enemy tanks. On 10th September 1965, he spotted four Pakistani Patton tanks, destroying three and damaging one. He was subsequently killed by fire from another tank. The site of his death is now part of a war memorial.

Battle of Saragarhi

- September 12 marks the 127th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi.
- Saragarhi was the communication tower between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan. The two forts in the rugged North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now in Pakistan, were built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh but renamed by the British.
- Though Saragarhi was usually manned by a platoon of 40 soldiers, on that fateful day, it was being held by only 21 soldiers from the 36th Sikh regiment (now 4 Sikh) of the British Indian Army and a non-combatant **called Daad, a Pashtun** who did odd jobs for the troops. The post was led by Havildar Ishar Singh.
- The purpose of this post was to maintain communication between the two forts using **heliograph**, a signalling device that used flashes of sunlight to transmit messages.
- On 12 September 1897, a massive force of around **10,000 Afghan Afridi and Orakzai tribals** attacked Saragarhi, trying to cut communication between the forts.
- Despite being heavily outnumbered, the 21 Sikh soldiers decided to fight rather than surrender.
- Havildar Ishar Singh and his men held their ground for several hours, engaging in fierce combat, fought till their last breath, killing 200 tribals and injuring 600.
- Queen Victoria awarded the 21 dead soldiers the Indian Order of Merit (comparable with the Victoria Cross) for their bravery.
- In 2017, the Punjab government declared 12th September a public holiday to commemorate Saragarhi Day.
- To this day, the Khyber Scouts regiment of the Pakistani army continues to honour the Saragarhi memorial near Fort Lockhart with a guard and salute.

Sri Vijaya Puram

- India recently renamed Port Blair, the capital of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar(A&N) Islands, as Sri Vijaya Puram.
- The new name, Sri Vijaya Puram, reflects a break from the colonial legacy and it symbolises the victory in India's freedom struggle and the islands' unique historical role.
- The Andaman Islands served as a strategic naval base for the **Chola Empire under Rajendra Chola I** in the 11th century, who attacked the Srivijaya Empire (present-day Indonesia), marking a unique military event in India's history. The Chola invasion of Srivijaya was seen as an attempt to expand Chola dominance and safeguard trade routes.
- Port Blair, named after Archibald Blair, a British naval officer, became significant during British rule as a penal colony and a symbol of oppression, especially after the Revolt of 1857.
- With the strengthening of the Indian Independence Movement, a huge cellular jail known as **Kaala Paani** was established in 1906, housing several freedom fighters, including Veer Damodar Savarkar.
- On 30th December 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted the national flag for the first time on Indian soil, at Port Blair.

5 more languages got the status of Classical languages

- In 2004, the Indian government began recognizing certain languages as “classical languages” of India to highlight their historical importance.
- **Tamil (2004)** was the first language to receive this status.
- Over time, other languages such as **Sanskrit (2005)**, **Telugu (2008)**, **Kannada (2008)**, **Malayalam (2013)**, and **Odia (2014)** were also recognized.
- Recently, in **October 2024**, the government conferred the classical language status to 5 new languages **Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit**.
- This decision brings the total number of classical languages in India to **11**.

Criterion for qualification for classical language status

- It was revised in 2005 and 2024 on the recommendations of Linguistic Experts Committees (LEC) under Sahitya Akademi.
- Revised criteria in 2005 are as follows:
- Early texts and recorded history spanning 1,500–2,000 years.
- Ancient Literature: Possession of a body of ancient literature/texts considered valuable heritage by generations.
- Knowledge Texts: Presence of an original literary tradition not borrowed from another speech community.
- Distinct Evolution: The classical language and literature are distinct from modern, there can also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.
- **In 2024, criteria for declaring a language as classical were revised. Under which**
- **“Knowledge Texts: Presence of an original literary tradition not borrowed from another speech community”** was replaced by **“Knowledge texts, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence”**.

Benefits:

- Languages designated as ‘classical’ receive various government benefits aimed at promoting their study and preservation.
- Two international awards are given annually to scholars who have made notable contributions to the research, teaching, or promotion of classical Indian languages. These are the **Presidential Award of Certificate of Honour** and the **Maharshi Badrayan Samman Award**.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) supports the creation of Professional Chairs in central universities and research institutions to focus on classical Indian languages.
- To safeguard and promote these linguistic treasures, government established the **Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages** at the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysore.

Chenchus Tribe

- The Chenchus are an aboriginal tribe residing in the **Nallamala Hills**, part of the Nagarjuna Sagar Tiger Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh. They are one of the **12 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** in Andhra Pradesh.
- The tribe's origin is linked to Lord Malikarjuna of the Srisailem temple. They also have smaller populations in Tamil Nadu and Odisha.
- The Chenchus live in small villages known as **“Penta,”** consisting of several huts grouped based on kinship patterns. Their traditional way of life has been based on hunting and food gathering. They also craft leaf cups and plates from tobacco leaves and sell items like tamarind and mahua flowers in local markets, which are in high demand. Honey forms a significant part of their diet.

- The Chenchu society is divided into clans, with 26 gotras found within their community. Marriages within the same gotra are prohibited.
- The Chenchus worship Bhagwan Taru, a sky god who oversees their well-being, and Garelamai Sama, the goddess of the forest who protects them from danger.
- They speak Chenchu language which have a Telugu accent.
- **In news:** The Chenchus of *Penukumadugu* who are long residents of the dense Nallamala forests, facing growing difficulties as a result of the discontinuation of the MGNREGS Chenchu Special Project, which has negatively impacted their livelihoods, food security, and access to essential services such as healthcare and education.

Mankidia community

- Recently, the Mankidia community became the **6th particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG)** to get habitat rights over forests in Odisha.
- The Mankidia community is an Austro-Asiatic community that ekes out a living mainly from the forests.
- They constitute a semi-nomadic section of the Birhor tribe.
- They have been identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Odisha.
- Occupation: They are primarily a food gathering and hunting community.
- They wander inside forests in small bands and stay at different *tandas* — the temporary makeshift settlements consisting of temporary dome-shaped leaf huts known as Kumbhas.
- Language: They speak a form of Munda language and some of them are also conversant in Odia.
- They believe in both malevolent and benevolent spirits and Gods. **Logobir** and **Budhimai** are their supreme deities. They worship their ancestors for the purpose of enjoying health and achieving success in hunting and collecting forest produce.
- They are mainly found in Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

Kartarpur Corridor

- Recently, India and Pakistan have extended the Kartarpur Corridor agreement **until 2029**, ensuring visa free movement of Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur Sahib.
- Kartarpur Corridor: It **connects the Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in the Narowal district of Pakistan with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in the Gurdaspur district in India's Punjab province**. It is located on the east bank of the Ravi River in India, around 1 km from the Indo-Pakistan border.
- It was built to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev on 12th November 2019.

Pillbox

- Pillboxes are small, concrete defense structures used during World War II, equipped with loopholes for firing weapons. They are named after early 20th-century medicine containers ("pillboxes") due to their compact, circular design. The pillboxes were designed to blend into the landscape, making them difficult for enemies to detect. They functioned as tactical posts, allowing soldiers to defend the coastline while providing secure cover for firing at enemies.
- **In news:** Due to the monsoon, Visakhapatnam's beaches have shifted, revealing **World War II pillboxes** that were buried in the sand, offering a look into the city's forgotten maritime history.
- **Note:** Visakhapatnam was a significant target during the war, as it is one of India's key naval bases with a deep natural harbor.

Rosh Hashanah / Yom Hadin (Day of Judgment)

- Recently, Prime Minister wished the Prime Minister of Israel and greeted Jewish community on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year and is among the most sacred days in the Jewish faith).
- It is believed by the Jewish community to be the day when God created the world, including Adam and Eve.

Lothal

- It is one of the southernmost sites of the Harappan civilization, located in the Bhal region of Gujarat. It is believed to have been built in 2,200 BC. Lothal had the **world's earliest known dock**, connecting the city to an ancient course of the **Sabarmati River**.
- Lothal was nominated in April 2014 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Lothal was discovered in 1954 by SR Rao.
- **In news:** Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the development of the **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat**. It will be developed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterway (MoPSW) to showcase 4,500 years old maritime heritage of India.

- The Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) under MoPSW will fund the construction of a Lighthouse Museum, which is set to be the tallest in the world.
- Earlier, India and Vietnam have partnered to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat, reflecting their deep maritime connections.

Other news about 'History and culture:

- Recently, the **Gingee Fort** in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district has been nominated for UNESCO's World Heritage Site list as part of the Maratha Military Landscapes proposal, which includes 11 other forts.
- Recently, a **35-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, unveiled at Rajkot Fort in Malvan in Sindhudurg district, collapsed** in less than a year. It is in contrast with the Sindhudurg Fort (Maharashtra), built by Shivaji Maharaj 357 years ago, remains resilient and has played a significant role in military activities such as the Surat raids. A major portion of Sindhudurg Fort was financed by Surat raids.
- The Union Budget 2024-25 revealed plans to develop corridor projects for the Vishnupad Temple at Gaya and the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya in Bihar. Modelled after the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, these projects aim to enhance both temples as major pilgrim and tourist destinations.
- Recently, a collection of **copper plate inscriptions** featuring **two leaves** from the 16th Century CE was discovered at the Sri Singeeswarar temple in Mappedu village, Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. The two leaves of the copper plates strung together using a ring featuring the seal of the Vijayanagara Kingdom.
- **Abhidhamma Divas** (17 October) commemorates the day when Lord Buddha descended from the celestial realm, Tāvātimsa-devaloka, to Sankassiya (now Sankisa Basantapur) in Uttar Pradesh.
- In a groundbreaking discovery, archaeologists have uncovered the **world's oldest solar calendar** at the renowned archaeological site of **Göbekli Tepe in southern Turkey**. This site, dates back nearly 13,000 years.
- **Kumbh Mela**, recognised by the UNESCO as an '**Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**,' is regarded as the world's largest peaceful gathering of pilgrims.

APPOINTMENTS

Person	Appointed as
Jay Shah	Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) . He has become the youngest ever to reach this position. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He became the fifth Indian to become ICC chairman after Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan and Shashank Manohar.
Muhammad Yunus	took oath as the chief adviser of interim government of Bangladesh . Earlier in January 2024, under Sheikh Hasina's govt, he was sentenced to six months in jail by a Bangladesh court for violating labour laws but later on granted bail. He had faced charges, including corruption and fund embezzlement. The court found his company, <u>Grameen Telecom</u> , guilty of labour law violations. <u>Contribution:</u> through his innovative microcredit & microfinance model, particularly with the establishment of Grameen Bank , he has made significant contributions to reduce poverty. His approach of providing small, collateral-free loans to the poor, especially women, has empowered millions of entrepreneurs who wouldn't qualify for traditional bank loans. For his work, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 . <u>Other such international examples:</u> There are several other Nobel Peace prize winners who headed their countries later on e.g. Lester B. Pearson (former Canadian PM), Lech Wałęsa (former Polish PM), Aung San Suu Kyi (former State Counsellor of Myanmar), Nelson Mandela (first black President of South Africa), José Ramos-Horta (Current president of East Timor).
TV Somanathan	appointed as the new Cabinet Secretary , succeeding Rajiv Gauba. Earlier as <u>Finance Secretary</u> , Somanathan was noted for his careful management of finances and contributed to Production Linked Incentive Schemes and initiatives like PM Garib Kalyan and Atmanirbhar Bharat. The Cabinet Secretary is the highest-ranking civil servant in the Government of India, ex-officio chairman of the Civil Services Board, the Cabinet Secretariat. Appointed for a fixed two-year term, the Cabinet Secretary ranks eleventh in the Indian order of precedence and is directly accountable to the Prime Minister. The Cabinet Secretary's tenure can be extended up to four years, with an additional extension of up to three months possible, as per the amended All India Services (Death-Cum-Retirement-Benefits) Rules, 1958.
Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Succeeded TV Somanathan as new Finance Secretary .

Omar Abdullah	Sworn in as the first Chief Minister of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir . He belongs to National Conference (political party). Oath of Office: As per Article 164(3), the CM and other ministers are administered the oath of office by the Governor (or LG in Union Territories).
Smt. Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar	9th Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Commission for Women (NCW) is an autonomous and statutory body established in 1992 under the <u>National Commission for Women Act, 1990</u>.
Justice Sanjiv Khanna	51st Chief Justice of India (CJI). His appointment follows CJI DY Chandrachud's recommendation and was confirmed by President Droupadi Murmu. Justice Khanna will serve as CJI until his retirement on May 13, 2025, holding a tenure of approximately 183 days.
Deepak Agarwal (IAS)	Managing Director (MD) of the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED).
Randhir Singh	elected as the president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) .
Arun Goel	appointed as India's next Ambassador to Croatia, succeeding Raj Kumar Srivastava.
Dr. Neena Malhotra	Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Sweden.
Challa Sreenivasulu Setty	Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI).
Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair	first woman to be appointed the Director General of Medical Services.
Ashok Raj Sigdel	Sworn in as the 45th Chief of the Army Staff (CoAS) of the Nepali Army.
Mr. R. Ravindran	India's ambassador to Iceland.
Atishi Marlena (AAP Party)	8th Chief Minister of Delhi. She has become the youngest ever CM of Delhi at an age of 43. She is Delhi's 3rd woman CM after <u>Sheila Dixit (INC)</u> and <u>Sushma Swaraj (BJP)</u> . She is 17th women CM in Indian History. She has replaced the AAP supremo and party chief Arvind Kejriwal.
Vipin Kumar (IAS)	Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI).
Anura Kumara Disanayake	Sri Lanka's newly elected president. He secured 42% of the vote in the country's first election since the 2022 economic collapse. The 55-year-old leader of the National People's Power (NPP) coalition defeated his main rival, opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, who garnered 23% of the vote.
Shigeru Ishiba (LDP Party)	Prime minister of Japan. He succeed Fumio Kishida, who stepped down following scandals that damaged his tenure.
Udhayanidhi Stalin	Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He is the son of incumbent Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. K. Stalin.
Nayab Singh Saini	sworn in as Haryana's Chief Minister for the second time , marking BJP's third consecutive term in power in the state.
Justice Manmohan	Chief Justice of Delhi High-court.
Claudia Sheinbaum	Mexico's first female president.
Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin	first woman officer to take over as the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS).
Prabowo Subianto	President of Indonesia. He has unveiled Indonesia's largest-ever Cabinet, comprising 109 members. Named the "Red and White Cabinet" after Indonesia's flag.
Luong Cuong	Vietnam's parliament elected army general Luong Cuong as the new state president.
Yahya Afridi	Chief Justice of Pakistan.
Noel Tata	appointed as chairman of this Tata Trusts (philanthropic arm of Tata), following the death of his half-brother, Ratan Tata.

- India has been elected as the Vice-Chair of the Supply Chain Council under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).
- Ms. Sheetal Devi and Shri Rakesh Kumar (bronze medal winners in Archery at the Paris Summer Paralympics 2024), are appointed as national icons for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Type 1 vs Type 2 Diabetes

- A recent study from India has highlighted the potential benefits of using **sucralose**, a non-nutritive sweetener, as a substitute for sucrose (table sugar) among individuals with Type 2 Diabetes. The study contrasts with the WHO's recent caution against Non-Nutritive Sweeteners (NNS) for weight control in non-diabetics.
- **Type 1 Diabetes:** In this, the pancreas does not make insulin, because the body's immune system attacks the islet cells in the pancreas that make insulin. It affects about 5-10% of people with diabetes, typically developing before age 30, though it can occur later in life. It cannot be prevented.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** In this, the pancreas makes less insulin and the body becomes resistant to insulin. Type 2 diabetes is more common but typically begins after age 30 and increases with age. It can be prevented with lifestyle changes.

Ransomware

- Recently, a ransomware attack severely disrupted the operations of at least 150-200 **cooperative** banks and **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** in India.
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) identified the attack, which primarily affected banks serviced by **C-Edge Technologies Ltd.**, a joint venture between Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) and State Bank of India (SBI).

How has the Ransomware Attack Affected the Banks?

- The ransomware attack targeted C-Edge Technologies Ltd., impacting their ability to provide services to cooperative banks and RRBs.
- Customers of the affected banks were unable to access payment systems, including Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Aadhaar-enabled payment systems (AePS).
- Some RRBs, depending on their sponsor banks, continued to function normally as they use different technology service providers.

What is Ransomware?

- Ransomware is a type of malware that encrypts a victim's data or locks their device, demanding a ransom for the decryption key or to regain access.
- **Early Attacks:** Initially, ransomware attacks focused on encrypting data and demanding a ransom (money) for the decryption key.
- **Modern Tactics:** Recent ransomware attacks have evolved to include double-extortion and triple-extortion tactics:
 - **Double-extortion:** Attackers threaten to leak stolen data online if the ransom is not paid.
 - **Triple-extortion:** Attackers use stolen data to target the victim's customers or business partners.

Types of Ransomware:

- **Encrypting Ransomware (Crypto Ransomware):** Encrypts the victim's data, demanding a ransom for the decryption key.
- **Non-encrypting Ransomware (Screen-locking Ransomware):** Locks the victim's entire device, displaying a ransom demand on the screen.

Criticality to 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

- Recently, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has officially granted permission for the "First Approach to Criticality" of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at **Kalpakkam**, Tamil Nadu, **India's first indigenous PFBR**.
- **Note:** Criticality in a nuclear reactor is when enough neutrons are produced by fission to replace those lost through leakage or absorption, ensuring the number of neutrons remains constant.

Leptospirosis outbreak in Kerala

- A severe Leptospirosis outbreak has emerged as a major public health concern across Kerala.
- Leptospirosis, also known as "rat fever", is a rare bacterial infection that affects people and animals.
- The disease is caused by a **bacterium** called *Leptospira interrogans*, or Leptospira.
- It is most common in tropical areas and warmer climates with lots of rainfall each year.
- **Transmission:**
 - The carriers of the disease can be either wild or domestic animals, including rodents, cattle, pigs, and dogs.
 - Infected animals spread the bacteria through their **urine** (pee). They may continue to urinate the bacteria into the environment for several months or years.

- The bacteria can survive in contaminated water or soil for weeks to months.
- It does not spread from person to person, except in very rare cases.
- **Symptoms:** It generally takes 2-30 days to get sick after having contact with the bacteria. Leptospirosis may occur in two phases.
 - In the first phase, people may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, or diarrhea. The person may feel better for a while but become ill again.
 - Some people may suffer a more severe second phase with **Weil's syndrome** (dysfunction of the kidneys and liver), or inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord (**meningitis**).
- **Treatment:** It can be treated with antibiotics, including *penicillin*, *doxycycline* and *ceftriaxone*.

Subclinical Tuberculosis

- Subclinical TB refers to a form of TB infection where individuals do not exhibit the typical symptoms of the disease, such as a persistent cough. This makes it harder to detect compared to active TB, which presents with more apparent symptoms.
- **Detection:** It is often identified through imaging techniques like **chest X-rays or molecular tests**, as it may **not be noticeable through routine symptom based screenings**.
- Subclinical Tuberculosis (TB) is a growing concern in India, contributing to the slow decline in TB incidence rates despite advances in detection and treatment.

About Tuberculosis

- TB is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, that mainly affects the lungs. It spreads through the air when infected people cough, sneeze or spit.
- The **Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine** helps prevent TB outside the lungs but not in the lungs

SLIM Moon mission

- Recently, Japan's space agency, JAXA, has concluded operations of its Moon lander, the **Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)**, also known as the "**Moon Sniper**," after losing communication with it. This operation was halted after the failure of multiple attempts to establish connection with the SLIM spacecraft.

Neuromorphic computing

- This system is capable of storing and processing data in 16,500 states using molecular film.
- Neuromorphic computing is a process designed to mimic the structure and function of the human brain using artificial neurons and synapses. It represents a significant shift from traditional binary computing to neuromorphic computing, allowing systems to learn from the environment.
- **In news:** Recently, the researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a neuromorphic or brain inspired analog computing.

RHUMI-1

- India recently launched its **first reusable hybrid rocket**, RHUMI-1, developed by the Tamil Nadu-based start-up Space Zone India, to collect data for research purposes on global warming and climate change.
- The rocket, carrying 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites, was launched into a suborbital trajectory using a mobile launcher.
 - **Cube satellites** are nano satellites that weigh between 1 to 10 kg.
 - **Pico satellites** are smaller satellites, with weights ranging from 0.1 to 1 kg.

Reusable Launch Vehicles (RLVs)

- RLVs are spacecraft designed to be launched, recovered, and launched again multiple times.
- **Advantages:** Cost Savings: Up to 65% cheaper than building a new rocket for every launch.
 - **Reduce Space Debris:** By minimising discarded rocket components.
 - **Increased Launch Frequency:** Lesser turnaround time enables the rocket to be used more frequently.

Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT)

- FMT involves the transfer of fecal material from a healthy donor into the gastrointestinal tract of a patient with an imbalanced or unhealthy gut microbiota.
- **Benefits:** The human gut is home to a diverse community of microorganisms that play crucial roles in digestion, immune function, and protection against harmful pathogens.
- FMT helps to correct disruptions in the gut microbiome, often caused by factors such as antibiotics, steroids, or infections like *Clostridium difficile* (a bacterium that can cause diarrhoea, colitis, and serious bowel problems). By introducing healthy bacteria, FMT aims to restore balance and enhance overall gut function.
- **Challenges and Limitations:** FMT is not yet regulated by central health authorities like the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which raises concerns about standardisation and safety.

- The process requires stringent donor screening to avoid risks, including infectious diseases and microbiome diversity.
- The ‘yuck’ (disgust) factor linked with fecal material remains as a barrier for many patients, despite the treatment’s efficacy.

BioE3 / Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment Policy Initiative

- The Cabinet has approved the BioE3 proposal, aimed at *boosting biotechnology manufacturing*.
- The BioE3 is aimed at fostering high-performance biomanufacturing, which involves the **production of bio-based products across various sectors**.
- The policy aligns with broader national goals such as achieving a ‘*Net Zero*’ carbon economy and promoting sustainable growth through a circular bioeconomy.
- Though the budget is not yet specified, the initiative seeks to harness biotechnology for economic growth and environmental benefits.
- Since 1986, India’s Department of Biotechnology has been key in advancing vaccines, diagnostics, and biological products, helping establish the country as a global leader in vaccine production.

The BioE3 initiative encompasses six strategic verticals:

- Bio-Based Chemicals and Enzymes: Development of sustainable chemicals and enzymes derived from biological sources.
- Functional Foods and Smart Proteins: Creation of foods with enhanced health benefits and proteins with advanced functionalities.
- Precision Biotherapeutics: Innovations in targeted therapies for personalized medicine.
- Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Agricultural practices and technologies designed to withstand climate change.
- Carbon Capture: Technologies aimed at capturing and reducing carbon emissions.
- Futuristic Marine and Space Research: Exploration of biotechnology applications in marine environments and outer space.

Saturn’s rings

- Recently, NASA confirmed that Saturn’s rings will briefly disappear in March 2025 due to their alignment with Earth, making them appear edge-on from earth.
- This optical phenomenon occurs every 13 to 15 years, with the last occurrence in 2009.
- Saturn takes about 29.4 Earth years to complete one orbit around the Sun and is tilted at an angle of 26.73 degrees so rings appear to change orientation. In March 2025, only the edges of the rings will be visible, reflecting minimal light.
- It has a ring system, made up of ice and rock, which is the most complex among all planets. The planet has 7 primary rings. Each ring orbits Saturn at different speeds.

Asteroid 2024 PT5

- A recent study indicates that Earth’s gravitational field is expected to temporarily capture a small asteroid, called 2024 PT5, by late September 2024. It was detected by NASA. This phenomenon is rare, as in most cases, asteroids either miss the planet or burn up upon entering Earth’s atmosphere.
- Mini-Moon: It refers to small asteroids that are temporarily captured by Earth’s gravitational pull, resulting in short-term orbital paths around the planet. These celestial bodies are typically minute in size and often elude detection. Some mini-moons may contain valuable metals, making them attractive for future mining if they are captured by Earth’s gravity.
- Only four mini-moons have ever been discovered, and none are still orbiting Earth.

BepiColombo

- BepiColombo is a **joint mission** by the European Space Agency (ESA) and Japan’s JAXA to study Mercury.
- Launched on October 20, 2018, it’s named after Italian scientist Giuseppe “Bepi” Colombo.
- The spacecraft has two components: ESA’s Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) to study Mercury’s surface and composition, and JAXA’s Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter (MMO) to investigate its magnetic field. The mission aims to explore Mercury’s geological history, magnetic field, exosphere, and test principles of general relativity.
- In news: BepiColombo made its closest flyby of Mercury, capturing detailed black-and-white images of the planet’s cratered surface. This flyby provided the first clear view of **Mercury’s south pole** and its unique crater structures, like the peak ring basins.

- The spacecraft, launched in 2018, will begin orbiting Mercury in 2026, with the mission aimed at studying the planet's composition, geology, and magnetic field. Despite delays, scientists are excited about the mission's potential to uncover Mercury's many mysteries.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

- ANRF has been established under the Anusandhan National Research Foundation Act, 2023 to seed, grow, and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout the country.
- In news: Recently, the first meeting of the governing board of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) was **chaired by the Prime Minister**. It focused on initiatives to enhance India's research capabilities and establish a strong research culture across institutions.

Cholera

- It is a water-borne disease primarily caused by the **bacteria *Vibrio cholerae***.
- It is an acute diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine. The infection is often mild or without symptoms, but sometimes can be severe.
- Symptoms: It includes severe watery diarrhoea, vomiting, leg cramps, and weakness, and can lead to death through dehydration if untreated.
- Transmission: A person may get cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the cholera bacterium. The disease can spread rapidly in areas with inadequate treatment of sewage and drinking water. Vulnerable populations, particularly malnourished children and individuals living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are at a higher risk of mortality.
- Vaccine: Currently there are 3 WHO pre-qualified Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCV)- **Dukoral, Shanchol, and Euvichol-Plus**. All three vaccines require two doses for full protection.
- In news: Recently, Cholera, a preventable and treatable disease, has experienced a resurgence, leading to approximately **4,000 deaths in 2023**, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Trachoma

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially **recognized India for eliminating Trachoma** as a public health issue.
- Trachoma is a **contagious bacterial eye infection** caused by ***Chlamydia Trachomatis***, which can lead to irreversible blindness if left untreated.
- It spreads through contact with the eyes, eyelids, nose, or throat secretions of infected individuals.
- It is categorised as a neglected tropical disease and affects around 150 million people globally, with 6 million at risk of blindness.
- Trachoma was a leading cause of blindness in India during the 1950s-60s. India launched the National Trachoma Control Program in 1963, which was later integrated into the National Program for Control of Blindness (NPCB).

Space Based Surveillance (SBS) Mission

- The project involves launching **52 spy satellites in low Earth and geostationary orbits**.
 - 21 satellites will be built by ISRO and the remaining 31 by private companies.
- Aim: to enhance India's space surveillance capabilities for national security.
- Managed by: The National Security Council Secretariat and the Defence Space Agency under the Ministry of Defence are managing the SBS mission.
- Each branch of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force) will have dedicated satellites for their specific operations.
- In news: Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has approved phase 3 of the Space Based Surveillance (SBS) mission.

Previous Phases of SBS:

- SBS 1 was launched in 2001 with four satellites, such as Cartosat 2A, Cartosat 2B, Eros B and Risat 2.
 - It was initiated in 2001 under Vajpayee government.
- SBS 2 was introduced in 2013 with the launch of six satellites like Cartosat 2C, Cartosat 2D, Cartosat 3A, Cartosat 3B, Microsat 1 and Risat 2A.

X-band radar:

- Recently, the Ministry of Earth Sciences approved an X-band radar to be installed in **Kerala's Wayanad district** after devastating floods and landslides. Radar is a device that uses radio waves to detect and locate objects by measuring the reflection of the waves. Radar stands for radio detection and ranging.

- **X-Band Radar:** An X-band radar is radar that **emits radiation in the X-band** of the electromagnetic spectrum (8-12 GHz) corresponding to wavelengths of around 2-4 cm (this is in the microwave part of the spectrum.) It uses radiation of lower wavelengths to observe smaller particles like rain droplets or fog.
- The smaller wavelengths allow the radar to produce images of higher resolution but X-band radars have a relatively shorter range.
- Role of X-Band Radar in Wayanad: It will monitor soil particle movements, assisting in the issuance of landslide warnings.

Kala-azar

- Kala-azar is the second deadliest parasitic disease after malaria in India.
- Cause: Kala-azar (**visceral leishmaniasis** or **Black fever**) is caused by a protozoan parasite *Leishmania donovani*.
- Transmitted by: the bite of an infected female sandfly. If untreated, it is fatal in over 95% of cases.
- India aimed to eliminate kala-azar by 2020, while the WHO targets global elimination by 2030 as part of its Neglected Tropical Disease roadmap.
- To receive WHO certification for eliminating kala azar, a country must maintain less than one case per 10,000 population at the sub-district level for three consecutive years. A country must demonstrate that local transmission has been interrupted for a set period and a system is in place to prevent disease re-emergence.
- In News: India is close to achieving the elimination of Kala azar as a public health problem, meeting the World Health Organization (WHO) certification criteria.
- With this, India can become the 2nd country in the world after Bangladesh to eliminate Kala-azar.

Hyperuniformity

- It is a property of certain substances where the density fluctuations in the long-wavelength range decay to zero.
- Density fluctuations refer to the variations in the number of particles per unit volume in a fluid or plasma, or to small variations in the density of matter in the universe.
- Hyperuniform disordered materials have been observed in a variety of settings, such as in quasicrystals, large-scale structures of the universe, soft and biological emulsions and colloids, etc.
- Feature: One of the most striking characteristics of such a state is that mass fluctuations are greatly suppressed as the system size grows.
- Applications:
 - Hyperuniform materials have distinctive characteristics that could have technological or biological applications.
 - The mechanism of hyperuniformity could be used to control various physiological functions in cells, and energy-efficient photonic devices (such as photonic band-gap materials)
 - It could be used for optical data transmission and communications.

World's First Private Spacewalk

- **Polaris Dawn Mission** is a privately funded and operated mission planned by **Jared Isaacman** with SpaceX.
- Polaris Dawn is the first non-governmental mission to conduct a spacewalk, reaching an unprecedented altitude of approximately **700 kilometres** (435 miles) above Earth. This altitude surpasses that of the International Space Station (ISS), which orbits at about 400 kilometres.
- Polaris Dawn has travelled through Earth's regions of high radiation, i.e., **South Atlantic Anomaly and Van Allen Radiation Belt**, to study space radiation's impact on human health.
- Note: The billionaire entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, has previously financed and flew on SpaceX's Inspiration4 mission, the first civilian mission to orbit Earth.

Second Indian citizen to travel space

- **Gopichand Thotakura**, **India's first civilian space tourist**, received a warm welcome in Delhi upon his return on August 26, 2024.
- Thotakura made history by joining **Blue Origin's New Shepard-25 (NS-25) mission**, founded by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, becoming the second Indian citizen to travel to space after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 mission.
- His trip lasted about ten minutes, reaching a maximum altitude of 105 km.

Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (Lupex)

- India's National Space Commission has officially approved the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (Lupex), marking the country's fifth lunar mission.
- Lupex is a collaborative endeavor between **India's ISRO and Japan's JAXA**, aimed at exploring the Moon's resources, particularly water in its polar regions.

Europa Clipper Mission:

- It is a **NASA mission to study Jupiter's icy moon Europa**.
- The mission was launched on October 14, 2024, aboard a **SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket**.
- The mission will place a spacecraft in orbit around Jupiter in order to perform a detailed investigation of Europa.
- Europa Clipper aims to find out if the ice-encased moon Europa could be habitable.
- The spacecraft extends 100 feet (30.5 meters) from one end to the other and about 58 feet (17.6 meters) across.
- It is the largest spacecraft NASA has ever developed for a planetary mission.
- Europa Clipper will orbit Jupiter and conduct 49 close flybys of the moon to gather data needed to determine whether there are places below its thick frozen crust that could support life.
- The spacecraft carries nine science instruments and a gravity experiment that uses the telecommunications system.
- The spacecraft has large solar arrays to collect enough light for its power needs as it operates in the Jupiter system.

OTHER SCIENCE NEWS:

- Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched the **Tanager-1 satellite** to detect major emitters of carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Iran** launched its **Chamran-1 research satellite** into orbit.
- Amid the growing tension in the Middle-East, **Iran** for the first time has showcased the **Shahed 136B drone** and **Jihad ballistic missile**. Iran presented this new kamikaze drone as part of its military modernization program, in a context marked by growing instability in the region
- The Indian Army has recently inducted **100 robotic Multi-Utility Legged Equipment (MULE)** for use in forward (combat) areas, especially in high altitudes. It will help the Indian army to enhance surveillance capabilities without risking human lives and to ensure critical supplies reach frontline soldiers.
- Recent research highlights that **melting polar ice caps** due to climate change are **causing the Earth to spin more slowly**, leading to minute changes in the duration of a day. The melting of polar ice sheets causes water to flow towards the equator, increasing the Earth's oblateness and moment of inertia. This phenomenon, while not immediately noticeable in daily lives, could have significant implications for technology reliant on precise timekeeping.
- The recent outbreak of **Marburg virus in Rwanda** has raised significant alarm, marking the first reported cases in the country.
- **Antarctica's Deep Winter Heatwaves:** Antarctic sea ice has reached historically low levels, reducing its ability to reflect solar energy and act as a barrier between cold air and warmer waters. This loss contributes to rising global temperatures.
- Recently, the phenomenon of the "**blue moon**" occurred in August 2024. A blue moon is the second full moon that occurs within a single calendar month. The next Blue Moon will occur on 31st May 2026.
- Recently, scientists have found frost atop Mars' tallest volcano, Olympus Mons, indicating the presence of a sparse but active water cycle on the Red Planet for the first time.
- China is close to launching its first batch of satellites for a mega constellation aimed at rivaling US company SpaceX's Starlink Internet network. As reported by Xinhua, state-run Shanghai Spacecom Satellite Technology (SSST) launched the first components on the network. SSST's constellation has been named "**Thousand Sails**".
- **Zinc-Ion Battery:** A Zinc-Ion Battery is a type of rechargeable battery that uses **zinc ions** as the **charge carrier** instead of lithium and sodium ions. Zinc-ion batteries are considered **safer** and offer **stable** performance across temperature ranges.
- India is set to invest USD 15 billion for the second phase of **chip manufacturing incentive policy** (under India Semiconductor Mission). It had previously committed USD 10 billion for the first phase of the scheme. A **Semiconductor Chip is a tiny electronic device** made of semiconductor material (usually **silicon or germanium**) which serves as the basic building block of most electronic circuits.
- Recently, India has developed an indigenous Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing kit for detecting **Mpox** (previously known as monkeypox). These kits are developed by Siemens Healthcare, Transasia Diagnostics, and JITM C Genes which are approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO). The new RT-PCR kits provide results in 40 minutes, compared to traditional methods, which take one to two hours.
- OpenAI is expected to release its most advanced AI model, codenamed **Project Strawberry**, between September and November 2024. This model might be integrated into the upcoming ChatGPT-5, the new version of OpenAI's chatbot.

- **Zyklon B:** On 3rd September 1941, Nazis first used Zyklon B to kill Jews at the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. Zyklon B is the commercial name of hydrogen cyanide (HCN). It was developed as a pesticide and rodenticide in the early 1920s in Germany.
- An **Extremely Large Telescope (ELT)** is under construction atop the Cerro Armazones Mountain in the Atacama Desert in Chile.
- According to a recent study, there is a correlation between night time light pollution and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease. Exposure to light at night disrupts natural circadian rhythms and impairs sleep, thereby increasing susceptibility to the disease. light pollution excessive or inappropriate use of artificial lighting.
- Recently, the Prime Minister virtually launched three **PARAM Rudra supercomputers** showcasing India's commitment to self-reliance in high-performance computing (HPC). These supercomputers have been deployed in Pune, Delhi, and Kolkata. PARAM Rudra supercomputers are part of the *National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)*.
- **Open science** is a set of principles and practices that aim to make scientific research accessible to everyone, ensuring that the production of knowledge is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. It encompasses principles such as free access to publications, availability of datasets, open-source software utilisation, and citizen science engagement. The legal issues, such as intellectual property and data privacy concerns, hinder the widespread adoption of open science.
- **Neuralink**, founded by Elon Musk in 2016, focuses on developing brain chip interfaces that could help restore vision, aid in movement, and facilitate communication for patients with disabilities.
- Two **NASA astronauts** (*Sunita Williams* and *Barry "Butch" Wilmore*) aboard **Boeing's Starliner** will remain on the International Space Station (ISS) for an extended period due to a faulty propulsion system, which has been affected by **helium leaks**. Past missions affected by helium leaks include ISRO's Chandrayaan 2 and ESA's Ariane 5.
- **Mpemba Effect:** It is a counterintuitive phenomenon where a **hot liquid cools or freezes faster than a cooler liquid**. It was first noted by Aristotle in his book Meteorologica and rediscovered in the 1960s by Erasto Mpemba, a Tanzanian schoolboy. It could lead to diverse applications, such as improved thermal control in devices, enhanced cooling strategies etc.
- The term **greenwashing** was first used in 1986 by Jay Westerveld, an American environmentalist and researcher. It refers to any deceptive or misleading practice involving exaggeration, omission, or false environmental claims. Recently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) released guidelines to regulate greenwashing and misleading environmental claims. This initiative seeks to ensure transparency and consumer trust in eco-friendly marketing practices.
- **Cadaver donation** involves donating the entire body to science after death, primarily to help train doctors in understanding human anatomy and practising surgery. Anyone above 18 years can legally consent to donate their body. In case of no prior consent, next of kin can donate. Bodies of organ donors or those with infectious diseases like tuberculosis, HIV, or sepsis, and bodies involved in medico-legal cases may be rejected. Unlike organ donations, there is no national organisation to monitor whole-body donations.
- Recently, Union Cabinet has approved an **\$11 billion chip fabrication plant in Gujarat**, led by *Tata Group and Taiwan's Powerchip*, boosting India's goal to become a key global **semiconductor** player.
- The **Haber-Bosch process** is an industrial method for synthesizing ammonia by combining nitrogen from the air with hydrogen, significantly contributing to **fertiliser production**.
- After years of construction, **China's Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO)** is set to begin data collection on neutrinos. This cutting-edge particle physics experiment aims to greatly enhance our understanding of the subatomic particles.
- Recently, a fire caused by a blast wiped out three hectares of 80 year old pine trees at the **Sviati Hory national park in eastern Ukraine**.
- **Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO)** is a proposed particle physics research mega project with the objective to study neutrinos in a 1,200-metre deep cave. The project is proposed to be set up at **Pottipuram village in Theni district in Tamil Nadu**.
- **Precision Medicine:** It is an innovative strategy for treating and preventing diseases that considers individual differences in genetics, environment, and lifestyle. It emphasises tailoring medical care to the unique characteristics of each patient rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. This method enables healthcare professionals and researchers to more accurately forecast which treatments and preventive measures are effective for specific groups of individuals.
- Recently, **Elon Musk's SpaceX** used a pair of giant robotic arms named **Mechazilla** to grab Starship's booster Super Heavy, mid-air after separation from the Starship rocket.
 - **Starship** is a two-stage heavy lift vehicle comprising a booster (called Super Heavy), and an upper section (the Starship spacecraft). It is the largest rocket ever (120 metres), taller than even the Saturn V (111 metres), which took Neil Armstrong to the Moon.

- **Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPEs) and Nonylphenol (NP):** These are **surfactants** that contribute to environmental pollution, particularly causing **frothing in the Yamuna River**, indicating high levels of pollutants. These are recognised as an **endocrine-disrupting chemical**, toxic to aquatic life, and detrimental to human health, affecting reproductive and developmental processes.
- **Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems** are found in **tropical and temperate regions** at depths between **100 and 490 feet**. Key organisms in these ecosystems include corals, sponges, and algae, which provide structural habitat. These ecosystems **may help replenish shallow coral reefs** and serve as essential habitats for fish species crucial for spawning, breeding, and feeding.
- Recently, researchers discovered that a **brown dwarf Gliese 229B** found in 1995 is **actually two (binary) brown dwarfs (Gliese 229Ba and 229Bb) orbiting closely around each other** while circling a small star. Brown dwarfs are celestial objects between planets and stars, too small for nuclear fusion but larger than the biggest planets like Jupiter.
- India has announced the selection of two astronauts, Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla** and Group Captain **Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair**, for the upcoming **Axiom-4 mission** to the International Space Station (ISS). This mission represents a significant step in strengthening human spaceflight cooperation between ISRO and NASA, as well as advancing India's own human space program.
- The **Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat**, India, has **reached full operational capacity** with its second 700 MW nuclear reactor, KAPS-4, which started operating at full power on August 21, 2024.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the development of **Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)**, which will be a significant step towards the Government's vision of exploring and studying Venus, beyond moon and mars.
- Earth is set to welcome a temporary "**mini-moon**" in the form of a **small asteroid named 2024 PT5**, which will orbit our planet from September 29 to November 25, 2024.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of a **new missile testing range in Nagayalanka, Andhra Pradesh**.
- On October 4, 2024, Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, inaugurated the **Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) Observatory in Hanle, Ladakh**. This monumental facility is the **largest imaging Cherenkov telescope in Asia and stands as the highest of its kind in the world**, located at an altitude of approximately 4,300 meters.
- Recently, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, has inaugurated **India's first Demonstration Facility for Biopolymers at Jejuri in Pune** in October 2024.
- Aerospace startup **Space Kidz India** has launched the **ShakthiSAT mission**, aiming to train 12,000 girls aged 14-18 from 108 countries in space technology, targeting a satellite launch under ISRO's Chandrayaan-4 mission in 2026.

DEFENCE

Exercise Eastern Bridge

- The 7th edition of the bilateral air exercise between **Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Oman Air Force** was held at **Masirah, Oman**.
- The first edition was held between the two Air Forces at Thumrait, Oman in 2009.
- **India's Other Military Exercise with Oman:**
 - **Naseem Al-Bahr:** Between Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman.
 - **AL Najah:** Between Indian and Royal Army of Oman.

Exercise VARUNA

- Recently, the 22nd edition of the India-France bilateral naval exercise VARUNA took place in the Mediterranean Sea.
- **INS Tabar**, a frontline stealth frigate, ship borne Helicopter and LRMR Aircraft P8I participated from the Indian side.
 - **Other Indo-French Joint Exercises:** **Desert Knight-21** and **Garuda** (Air exercise),
 - **Shakti** (Army exercise).
- **Note:** **Indian Naval Ship Tabar** also conducted a **Maritime Partnership Exercise(MPX)** with the **Spanish Navy ship Atalaya** in the Mediterranean Sea.

Exercise YUDH ABHYAS-2024

- **20th edition** of the **India-USA Joint Military Exercise** YUDH ABHYAS-2024 was held at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

- Exercise YUDH ABHYAS has been held annually since 2004, alternating between India and the USA.
- This year's exercise focuses on counter-terrorism operations in a semi-desert environment.
- Major Exercises Between India- USA: Ex VAJRA PRAHAR (Army), SALVEX (Indian Navy), Cope India (Air Force) and Malabar Exercise (Quadrilateral naval exercise of India, USA, Japan and Australia).

Exercise KAZIND-2024

- The 8th edition of the **India-Kazakhstan Joint Military Exercise KAZIND-2024**, held in Uttarakhand.
- This exercise was initiated as '**Exercise PRABAL DOSTYK**' in 2016.
- After the second edition, it was upgraded to a company
- y-level exercise and renamed 'Exercise KAZIND'.

Exercise "Udara Shakti 2024"

- It is a bilateral air exercise between the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the Royal **Malaysian Air Force (RMAF)**, recently hosted by the RMAF at its base in Kuantan, Malaysia.

Exercise Mitra Shakti

- It is an annual military exercise between the **Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army**.
- This year's exercise, held at the Sri Lankan Army Training School in Maduru Oya.

Exercise Malabar 2024

- This is the 28th edition of the MALABAR maritime exercise.
- Place: Visakhapatnam port and the surrounding waters.
- Initiated in **1992** as a bilateral naval exercise between **India and the US**, this multilateral war gaming exercise expanded in 2007 to include **Japan and Australia**.
- It supports India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

Other Military Exercises:

- SALVEX: India and USA.
- Sea Dragon: India, USA, Japan, Canada and South Korea.
- Ex Veer Guardian: Air Exercise between India and Japan.
- Exercise Kakadu: A biennial exercise (hosted by Australian Navy) between Malabar countries.

Exercise Naseem Al Bahr

- It is **Indo-Oman Naval Exercise** held off the coast of **Goa** from 13 to 18 October 2024.
- Exercise Participants: INS Trikand and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft of Indian Navy and Vessel Al Seeb of Royal Navy of Oman participated.
- Other Exercises between India and Oman:
 - Army exercise: **Al Najah**.
 - Air Force exercise: **Eastern Bridge**.

Exercise Ulchi Freedom Shield 24

- Annual joint military exercise between the **United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK)** aimed at strengthening the alliance and enhancing combined defense capabilities.

Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)

- The **Indian Navy and German Navy** recently completed their inaugural Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) in the **Indian Ocean**.
- SIMBEX, which initially began as '**Exercise Lion King**' in **1994**, is now a key component in the longstanding relations between the two countries.

Exercise SIMBEX

- The **31st edition** of the **Singapore-India** Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) held at the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) in Visakhapatnam.

Exercise Tarang Shakti

- It is a major multinational air combat exercise organized by the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, marking **India's largest international air combat event**.
- The theme for the exercise is "Collaborative Approach to Facilitate Air Domain Awareness Towards Enhancing Regional Security."
- It aimed at enhancing interoperability and operational coordination among Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs).

- Participants: it involves air forces from various nations for joint training, tactical skill development, and defense cooperation.
- Over 50 delegates from 27 nations participating in Exercise Tarang Shakti.

IDAX-24

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the India Defence Aviation Exposition (IDAX-24) at **Jodhpur** on September 12, 2024.
- The IDAX-24, showcases significant advancements and contributions of the Indian aviation industry.
- This major event coincides with Exercise Tarang Shakti-24, one of the largest multinational air exercises hosted by the Indian Air Force.

INS Arighat

- Recently, India commissioned its **second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN)**, INS Arighat (S-3) built under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project.
- INS Arighat will now join its forerunner, INS Arihant, which became fully operational in 2018, to strengthen the country's 'nuclear triad'- the capability to fire nuclear weapons from the land, air and sea.
- INS Arighat, despite matching INS Arihant in size and displacement, **can carry more K-15 missiles**.
- Power: 83 MW pressurised light-water reactors, developed with Russian assistance.
- Arighat has four large vertical launch system (VLS) tubes that carry the Sagarika SLBMs (K-15) - a hybrid propulsion, two-stage, solid-propellant missile with a range of more than 700 km

INS Mumbai

- Recently, India's guided-missile destroyer, **INS Mumbai** and **three Chinese warships** visited **Colombo port** in Sri Lanka on the same day. INS Mumbai is on its first port of call in Sri Lanka.
- A port of call is an intermediate stop for a ship on its scheduled journey for cargo operation or transporting supplies or fuel.

Agni-4

- The Agni-4 missile was successfully launched from the Integrated Test Range in **Chandipur, Odisha**.
- It was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command (SFC). It is developed by the **DRDO**.
- Agni-4 It is an intermediate-range ballistic and surface to-surface missile, designed to be launched from the ground or sea to hit targets on the ground or sea.
- The Agni-4 missile has a range of 4,000 kilometres, a length of 20 metres, and can carry a payload of 1,000 kg.

Navika Sagar Parikrama II

- Recently, the Indian Navy announced the second women circumnavigation expedition and unveiled the expedition logo.
- Two Indian Navy women officers, **Lt Cdr Roopa A** and **Lt Cdr Dilna K**, will embark on a globe-circumnavigating expedition known as Navika Sagar Parikrama II, onboard **INSV Tarini**.
- Women Navy officers are being guided by Cdr Abhilash Tomy (Retd.), a renowned circumnavigator and Golden Globe Race hero.

VINETRA Commissioned at INS Satavahana, Visakhapatnam

- "Vinetra" refers to the **Kalvari Submarine Escape Training Facility** commissioned by the Indian Navy at INS Satavahana in Visakhapatnam.
- The facility, meaning "Trainer" in Sanskrit, is designed to enhance the escape capabilities of crew members from distressed Kalvari-class submarines.

S4*: India's 4th Nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN)

- India's fourth nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), referred to as S4*, was launched into water at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam.
- S4* features about **75% of indigenous content**.
- It is armed exclusively with **Kalam-4 (K-4) nuclear ballistic missiles**, which have a range of 3,500Km.
- The K-4 will be mainstay of India's undersea **nuclear** deterrence as it provides standoff capability to launch nuclear weapons while submerged in Indian waters.
- Currently, India has two SSBNs operational: **INS Arihant** (commissioned in 2016) and **INS Arighaat** (commissioned in 2024).
- The third SSBN **Aridhman** is undergoing sea trials and is expected to be commissioned into service next year.

- **Note:** Since national security planners named India's first leased nuclear attack submarine INS Chakra as S1, INS Arihant was named S2, INS Arighaat S3, INS Aridhaman S4 and hence the newly launched one is the last of its class, S4* with the formal name yet to be given.
- **Note:** **INS Chakra** (meaning "wheel" in Sanskrit) is a name used for two nuclear-powered submarines in the Indian Navy, both acquired from Russia. The first, INS Chakra, was a Charlie-class submarine leased from Russia in 1987 and returned in 1991. The second, INS Chakra II, was an Akula-class submarine leased from Russia in 2012 and returned to Russia in June 2021. The Indian Navy is also awaiting the delivery of a third nuclear-powered attack submarine, INS Chakra III, which is planned to be inducted in 2025.

INS Malpe and INS Mulki

- These are **two anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft vessels**, launched by the Indian Navy at Cochin Shipyard. These are the fourth and fifth indigenously built vessels of this type.
- They belong to the **Mahe Class** and will replace the Navy's Abhay Class ASW Corvettes.
- The vessels are designed for anti-submarine operations, mine-laying, sub-surface surveillance, and search and rescue in coastal waters. They are 78 meters long, can reach speeds of 25 knots, and have an endurance of 1,800 nautical miles. They feature state-of-the-art SONAR, torpedoes, and advanced weapon systems.

Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD)

- THAAD is an **advanced US anti-ballistic missile system** designed to intercept and destroy short, medium, and intermediate-range missiles. It uses a "hit-to-kill" approach where an interceptor missile destroys its target by directly colliding with it, using sheer impact force rather than explosives. However, **it cannot detect low flying objects like drones**.
- Development History: The US developed THAAD after Iraq's Scud missile attacks during the 1991 Gulf War, where many American soldiers were killed.
- Deployment of THAAD: In 2008, the US deployed an early missile warning radar, a part of the THAAD system to Israel. Similar deployments were also made in 2012 and 2019 to boost Israel's ability to intercept missiles.

Dragon Drones

- Dragon drones are **deadly UAVs equipped with thermite** and rain down fire from sky.
- Thermite is a mixture of aluminium and iron oxide, developed to weld railroad tracks.
- Working Mechanism of Dragon Drones: Thermite is ignited by an electrical fuse and triggers a self-sustaining reaction that is incredibly difficult to extinguish. It can burn various materials, including military vehicles, trees, and even underwater.
- Deployment in the Russia-Ukraine War: Ukrainian forces used them to ignite the vegetation that Russian troops use for cover exposing them to direct attack. Russia soon adopted the use of dragon drones in retaliation.

MQ-9B Drone Deal

- Recently, India signed a defence deal worth USD 3.5 billion with the US to acquire **31 MQ-9B Predator armed drones** for its armed forces.
- General Atomics, the manufacturer of the drones, will set up a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility in India.
- These **high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) drones** are capable of remaining airborne for over **35 hours** and can carry four Hellfire missiles (short-range tactical missile) and around 450 kgs of bombs.

Abhay: Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship

- India launched the **7th Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC)**, Abhay.
- The Abhay class ships **will replace the existing Abhay class ASW Corvettes**, strengthening India's maritime security in shallow waters.
- Purpose: Specifically designed for anti-submarine warfare in coastal waters, Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), and mine-laying operations.
- Dimensions and speed: Approximately 77 meters long, 10-meter-wide with a top speed of 25 knots and an endurance of 1800 nautical miles.
- Indigenous content: Over **80% of the ship's components are sourced from Indian manufacturers**, supporting the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- Contract and builder: Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) under an April 2019 contract with the Ministry of Defence.
- Significance: Reflects India's growing self-reliance in defense manufacturing, creating employment and advancing local shipbuilding capabilities.

Border security

- The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has approved five key road stretches in Ladakh (four of which pass through Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary), including a route to Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO).
- The NBWL approved the road stretches with conditions to implement wildlife passage plans to protect species in the Karakoram sanctuary.
- The move significantly aids the Ministry of Defence, enhancing infrastructure development along the LAC in response to the 2020 India-China clashes in Galwan Valley.
- National Board for Wildlife: it is a statutory Board constituted officially in 2003 under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. It replaced the Indian Board for Wildlife, established in 1952.
- The NBWL is **chaired by the Prime Minister** and is responsible for promotion of conservation and development of wildlife and forests. The board is 'advisory' in nature and can only advise the Government on policy making for conservation of wildlife. It serves as an apex body for the review of all wildlife-related matters and for the approval of projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.
- The standing committee of NBWL is chaired by the Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change. It approves all the projects falling within protected wildlife areas or within 10 km of them.

62 years of Battle of Walong

- The Battle of Walong, fought between 14 and 16 November 1962, was the **only counterattack launched by India during the India-China war of 1962**.
- The battle took place in **Arunachal Pradesh's Walong**, the easternmost town near the Tibet region.
- The Indian Army's **6 Kumaon Battalion** launched the counterattack with limited resources, ammunition, and manpower. Despite being heavily outnumbered, Indian troops managed to hold back the Chinese forces for over 20 days.

OTHER DEFENCE NEWS

- **Dassault Aviation**, the renowned French aircraft **manufacturer famous for its Rafale fighter planes**, has taken a significant step towards expanding its presence in the Indian market. The company announced the establishment of a new subsidiary dedicated exclusively to military Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) operations in India.
- The Indian Army has conducted a strategic military exercise, '**Parvat Prahaar**', in **Ladakh**, focusing on high-altitude warfare and operations. This exercise is crucial for maintaining the readiness and effectiveness of the Army in the region, which is close to the India-China border.
- The Indian Coast Guard successfully conducted the **coastal security exercise 'Sagar Kavach'** on October 16-17, covering Gujarat, Daman & Diu, as well as Goa and Maharashtra.
- The Army's **Sudarshan Chakra Corps** of the Southern Command is currently conducting '**Exercise SWAVLAMBAN SHAKTI**' at the Babina Field Firing Ranges near Jhansi, with the primary objective of enhancing combat capabilities through the integration of niche and emerging technologies.
- Indian Navy's frontline frigate, **INS Tabar**, participated in the 328th Russian Navy Day Parade celebrations in St. Petersburg, Russia.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on August 13, 2024 successfully carried out the maiden flight test of the **long-range glide bomb (LRGB) Gaurav** from a **Su-30 MK-I fighter jet** of the Indian Air Force.
- **North Korean leader Kim Jong Un** recently unveiled a new type of "**suicide drone**," which are designed to carry explosives and crash into enemy targets like guided missiles.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has taken a significant step in international aviation diplomacy by dispatching its renowned **Sarang Helicopter Display Team** to participate in the inaugural Egypt International Airshow.
- In a groundbreaking initiative to inspire and educate the youth about the rich history and heroic deeds of the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari has launched the **first comic book** in a series dedicated to IAF heroes.
- India's **DRDO**, along with researchers of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) **Delhi** has developed Light Weight Bullet Proof Jackets named **ABHED** (Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat).
- In a significant move towards enhancing maritime security and cooperation in Asia, the Indian Coast Guard participated in the 20th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) held in **Incheon**, South Korea.
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) successfully conducted the preliminary automotive trials of the **Indian Light Tank, Zorawar**.
- The first shipment of 100 land-based **Harpoon anti-ship missile systems** ordered from the United States has reportedly arrived in Kaohsiung, **Taiwan**.

- The **Indian Naval Ships Tir and Shardul**, along with the **Indian Coast Guard Ship Veera**, from the First Training Squadron (ITS) of the Indian Navy, have successfully arrived in Muscat, Oman, as part of their long-range training deployment.
- **Kaksar Bridge** (Kargil) was renamed **Capt. Amit Bhardwaj Setu** to honor the sacrifice of Capt. Amit Bhardwaj during the Kargil War.
- Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched two indigenous fast patrol vessels, **Adamyia and Akshar**, designed for the Indian Coast Guard, on 28th October. These vessels are intended to enhance the protection of offshore assets, island territories, and conduct surveillance operations.
- In line with its focus on enhancing the welfare of Naval Civilians, the Indian Navy has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance. This initiative is a key highlight of 2024, declared as the “Year of Naval Civilians.”

RANKING AND REPORTS

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

- Released by: Union Ministry of Education (MoE).
- The rankings, reflecting the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, assess higher education institutions (HEIs) in India across five broad parameters: *Teaching, Research, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach & Inclusivity, and Perception*.
- This edition saw the inclusion of new categories such as State Public Universities, Open Universities, and Skill Universities, expanding the total ranking categories to 16.
- **IIT Madras** retained its top position in the Overall and Engineering categories.
- **IISc Bengaluru** topped the Universities and Research Institutions categories.
- **IIM Ahmedabad** led in Management, while **AIIMS New Delhi** topped the medical category.
- **Hindu College in Delhi** secured the 1st position among colleges for the first time, replacing Miranda House.

“World Development Report 2024: The Middle Income Trap” (name of report)

- Released by: World Bank
- India is among 100 countries, including China, at risk of falling into the “middle income trap,” where countries struggle to transition from middle-income to high-income status. India’s aim to become a developed nation by 2047 requires a comprehensive approach that enhances overall economic performance, rather than focusing on isolated sectors.
- **Middle Income Trap**: The middle-income trap refers to a situation where a country, after reaching a middle-income status, struggles to transition to high-income status. This typically happens when economic growth slows down after an initial period of rapid progress, and the country remains stuck at a middle-income level without advancing further to high-income levels.
 - According to the World Bank, the Middle Income Trap refers to the economic stagnation that countries encounter when their GDP per capita reaches about 10% of the United States level, or around USD 8,000 currently.

“Strategy for the development of Seaweed Value Chain”- (name of report)

- Released by: NITI Aayog
- In this report, NITI Aayog has laid down a comprehensive roadmap to promote seaweed cultivation in India.
- **Seaweeds**: They are the primitive, **marine non-flowering algae** without root, stem and leaves and play a major role in marine ecosystems. Large seaweeds form dense underwater forests known as kelp forests, which act as underwater nurseries for fish, snails and sea urchins. It is classified into green (Chlorophyta), brown (Phaeophyta), and red (Rhodophyta) groups.

Hema Committee Report

- Recently, the Hema committee report on the Malayalam film industry was released. It has revealed alarming instances of sexual abuse, gender discrimination, and inhuman treatment of women in the Malayalam film industry.
- It was led by retired Kerala High Court judge **Justice K Hema**, with members including veteran actor Sharada and retired IAS officer K B Valsala Kumari.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report 2023-24

- Released by: National Statistical Office (NSO) .
Key findings

- **Unemployment rate: 3.2%** in 2023-24, unchanged from 2022-23, the first time no year-on-year decline has been observed since the survey began in 2017-18.
- **Labour force participation Rate (LFPR):** Increased to 60.1% in 2023-24 (from 57.9% in 2022-23). Rural LFPR rose to 63.7%, and urban LFPR increased to 52%.
- **Worker population ratio (WPR):** WPR stood at 58.2%, with 76.3% for males and 40.3% for females.
- **Unemployment by gender:** Female unemployment increased to 3.2% (from 2.9%), while male unemployment slightly declined to 3.2% (from 3.3%).
- **Urban-rural divergence:** Rural unemployment increased slightly to 2.5% from 2.4%, while urban unemployment improved, falling to 5.1% from 5.4%.
- **Increase in self-employment:** The share of self-employed individuals rose to 58.4%, from 57.3% in 2022-23.

'The State of the World's Mangroves 2024' - (name of report)

Released by: Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA) on World Mangrove Day (26 July).

- The GMA is the preeminent alliance of 100-plus members driving the conservation and restoration for the world's mangroves.
- Southeast Asia holds about one-third of the world's mangroves, with Indonesia alone accounting for 21%.
- In India West Bengal holds the largest mangrove area followed by Gujarat, majorly located in the Gulf of Kutch and Gulf of Khambhat.

State-wise economic performance

- **The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** released a report on the economic performance of Indian states from 1960-61 to 2023-24.
- **Economic Performance:** Maharashtra remains the largest GDP contributor at 13.3%, but its share has declined from over 15%.
- Southern states (Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu) have emerged as major contributors to India's GDP, accounting for 30% by March 2024.
- West Bengal's GDP contribution has decreased from 10.5% in 1960-61 to 5.6% in 2024.
- **Per Capita Income Data:** Delhi, Telangana, Karnataka, and Haryana had the highest relative per capita income in 2023-24. Delhi's per capital income is at 250.8% of the national average. Gujarat (160.7% of the national average) and Maharashtra (150.7% of the national average) have maintained above-average incomes since the 1960s.

STATE	1960-61	2023-24
DELHI	218.30%	250.80%
TELANGANA	-	193.60%
KARNATAKA	96.70%	180.70%
HARYANA	106.90%	176.80%
TAMIL NADU	109.20%	171.10%

STATE	1960-61	2023-24
BIHAR	70.30%	32.80%
JHARKHAND	-	57.20%
UP	82.40%	50.80%
MANIPUR	50.30%	66%
ASSAM	102.90%	73.70%

5th edition of Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024

- **Published by:** International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- The GCI 2024 evaluated 194 countries and highlighted threats such as ransomware attacks, breaches in critical industries, system outages, and privacy violations.
- Since 2021, countries have increasingly prioritised cybersecurity, raising the global average score to 65.7/100.
- GCI 2024 placed 46 countries in Tier 1, compared to 30 in the previous edition.
- Most countries (105) are ranked in Tiers 3 and 4.

India's Performance in GCI 2024

- India ranks in Tier 1 with countries like the US, Japan and Australia. z India scored 98.49/100, an improvement from 97.5 in the 2020 edition due to its robust legal framework like the Information Technology Act (2000), the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023).

Report on Atrocities Against SCs and STs in 2022

- The conviction rate under *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989* has declined from 39.2% in 2020 to 32.4% in 2022, indicating a troubling trend in judicial outcomes

- In 2022, there were 51,656 cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 9,735 against Scheduled Tribes (STs). Notably, 97.7% of SC cases and 98.91% of ST cases were concentrated in just 13 states.
- States with Highest Incidents:
- **For SCs:** Following 6 States accounted for nearly 81% of the total cases.
- Uttar Pradesh: 12,287 cases (23.78%) > Rajasthan: 8,651 cases (16.75%) > Madhya Pradesh: 7,732 cases (14.97%).
- **For STs:** Madhya Pradesh: 2,979 cases (30.61%) > Rajasthan: 2,498 cases (25.66%) > Odisha: 773 cases (7.94%).

Living Planet Report 2024

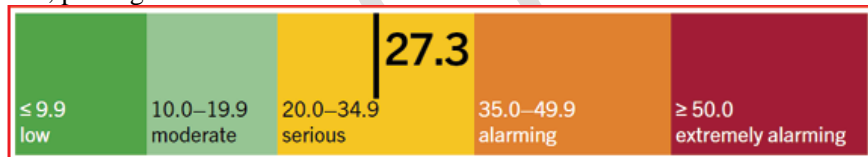
- Released by: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- Findings: there has been a catastrophic 73% decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations in just 50 years (1970-2020). The highest decline was reported in freshwater ecosystems (85%), followed by terrestrial (69%) and marine (56%).
- Main threats to wildlife: Habitat loss, degradation, over-exploitation, invasive species, and diseases.
- Data source: Living Planet Index (LPI) provided by the Zoological Society of London, covering trends from 5,495 species and nearly 35,000 population records.

Global Innovation Index 2024.

- India secured **39th** position among 133 global economies in 2024
- In 2023, India ranked 40th rank out of 132 economies.
- Global Innovation Index is published annually by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** and acts as a valuable benchmarking tool for policymakers, business leaders, and other stakeholders.
- WIPO is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, comprising 193 member states.

Global Hunger Index 2024

- Released by: Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
- India's Hunger Situation in 2024: It indicates that **India faces a 'serious' hunger situation.**
- India scores **27.3**, placing at 105th out of 127 countries.



- On this scale, a score under 9.9 represents low hunger levels, 10-19.9 signifies moderate hunger, 35-49.9 is alarming, and scores above 50 are classified as extremely alarming.

Indicators Used for Ranking:

Indicators	Status
Undernourishment	13.7% of India's population has inadequate caloric intake.
Child Stunting (children under 5 years who have low height for their age)	35.5% of children under five are stunted, indicating chronic undernutrition.
Child Wasting (children under 5 years who have low weight for their height)	India has the highest global rate , with 18.7% of children under five experiencing wasting (low weight relative to height).
Child Mortality (Children who die before their fifth birthday)	2.9% of children do not survive past their fifth birthday.

- **Note:** The Ministry of Women and Child Development criticized the absence of data from their Poshan Tracker, which reportedly indicates a much lower child wasting rate of 7.2%.
- The Indian government expressed doubts about the accuracy of the "Proportion of Undernourished Population" indicator, as it is based on a small sample size opinion poll.

Emissions Gap Report (EGR)

- It is an annual report published by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).**
- The EGR series tracks our progress in limiting global warming well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C in line with the Paris Agreement.

findings

- Greenhouse-gas(GHG) emissions rose to a new high of 57 gigatons(Gt) of CO₂ equivalent in 2023 (1.3 % increase from 2022).
- **India ranks 3rd in total GHG emissions** with 4,140 MtCO₂e compared to China (1st) & US (2nd).
- Large disparities in Current and historic GHG emissions: Six largest GHG emitters accounted for 63 % of global GHG emissions while least developed countries accounted for only 3 %.
- Six top emitters are: **China (1st), USA, India, European Union, Russian Federation and Brazil (6th).**

Recommendations for limiting global warming to 1.5°C:

- Nations must collectively commit to cut 42 % off annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 57 % by 2035 in next NDCs.
- NDCs must include all gases listed in Kyoto Protocol, cover all sectors, and set specific targets.
- Increased deployment of solar photovoltaic technologies and wind energy could deliver 38 % of total emission reduction potential in 2035

About Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

- These are national climate action plans by each country to reduce GHG emissions.
- Paris Agreement requires that NDCs are updated every five years with increasingly higher ambition, taking into consideration each country's capacity.
- After original NDCs in 2015, and second round in 2020/2021, next round of NDCs – “NDCs 3.0” are due in early 2025.

International Religious Freedom Report 2024

- Published by: US Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF).
- The report called for **India** to be designated as a “**Country of Particular Concern**”(CPC).
- Countries that commit systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom are designated as a CPC by the US State Department.
- The report states that vigilante groups killed, assaulted, and lynched individuals, while religious leaders were unjustly arrested, and homes and places of worship were destroyed.
- It also criticized the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, Uniform Civil Code, and state-level anti conversion and cow slaughter laws.
- India has rejected this Report of USCIRF, labeling it a biased organization with a political agenda.
- USCIRF is a US federal commission established in **1998** under the International Religious Freedom Act, with commissioners appointed by the President and congressional leaders from both parties.

Environmental Ship Index (ESI)

- It is a system designed to evaluate and reward ships for their environmental performance.
- ESI identifies seagoing ships that perform in reducing air emissions **better than** the current International Maritime Organization (IMO) emission standards.
- It assesses the emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulphur oxides (SO_x) released by ships.
- It was initiated in 2011 and is administered by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH).
- In News: Recently, **Mormugao Port Authority (MPA), Goa** became the first Indian port to be listed on the Environmental Ship Index (ESI) portal for MPA's **Harit Shrey programme**.
- Note: there are 12 major ports in India.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report, 2024

- Published: jointly by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).
- About: The report overlays violent conflict data with multidimensional poverty data to better understand their interlinkages across countries and over time with the theme “Poverty Amid Conflict”.

Key finding:

- Countries at war have higher deprivations compared with non-conflict settings across all ten indicators of multidimensional poverty.
- Across 112 countries, 1.1 billion people (~18%) live in acute multidimensional poverty.
- With 234 million, India was the country with the largest number of people in extreme poverty.
- The five countries with the largest number of people living in poverty are **India** (234 million), **Pakistan** (93 million), **Ethiopia** (86 million), **Nigeria** (74 million) and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (66 million). Together, these five countries account for nearly half (48.1 percent) of the 1.1 billion poor people.
- Child Poverty (Under 18): Approximately 584 million children are living in extreme poverty, making up 27.9% of all children globally.
- Adults: 13.5% of adults are living in extreme poverty.

About MPI

- The index utilizes **10 indicators across these 3 dimensions** (*education, health, and living standards*):

Dimension	Indicator
Health	Nutrition and Child & Adolescent Mortality indicators.
Education	Years of Schooling and School Attendance indicators.
Standard of Living	housing, household assets, type of Cooking Fuel, access to Sanitation, Drinking water and Electricity

- If a person is deprived of 1/3rd or more of (weighted) indicators, they are identified as ‘MPI poor’.
- Genesis: Launched in 2010.
- MPI advances Sustainable Development Goal 1, i.e., ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

India’s National MPI (NMPI)

- It was introduced in 2021 by NITI Aayog
- Retained the 10 original indicators of the global MPI model and has added two indicators, viz., Maternal Health and Bank Account.

Other Reports:

- The UN General Assembly has launched the **“Multidimensional Vulnerability Index” (MVI)**, a new tool to help small island and developing nations access low-interest financing. Though use is voluntary, the UN urges its adoption. Initially advocated by small island states, it includes factors like import dependency, climate risks, and social resilience.
- A recent study published in the journal Nature has revealed that **India is the highest contributor to global plastic pollution**. India accounts for approximately one-fifth of the total plastic waste generated worldwide.
- Recently, the National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates 2021-22 was released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as per which **Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) dropped to 39.4%** of total health expenditure (THE) in 2021-22, down from 48.8% in 2017-18.
- The **“Free to Think 2024”** annual report by the Scholars at Risk (SAR) Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reveals a concerning decline in academic freedom in India over the past decade. The report stated that India’s academic freedom index score dropped from 0.6 to 0.2 points between 2013 and 2023.
- According to the Asia Power Index 2024, India surpassed Japan to become the third-largest power, reflecting its increasing geopolitical stature.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA) in its **World Energy Outlook 2024** highlights the rapid transition toward clean energy, projecting that more than half of the world’s electricity will come from low-emission sources by 2030.
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) recently released its **Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI)** for 2024. India has secured the **39th position** among 119 countries in the 2024 TTDI.
- The **Hurun India Rich List 2024** has unveiled a significant shift in the landscape of wealth distribution across Asia, with **Mumbai** emerging as the **new “billionaire capital of Asia”**.
- Madhya Pradesh topped overall for having AYUSH doctors (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa rigpa and Homeopathy) facility in the Primary health care centers (PHCs) in all over India.
- Kerala has once again secured first position in the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2024, marking the second consecutive year that the southern state has claimed the spot.
- The **World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2023** reveals that **India ranks 79th** out of 142 countries, reflecting a continuing decline in the rule of law globally.
- Lahore has once again claimed the title of the most polluted city globally, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring to alarming levels.
- As of October 2024, Abu Dhabi has been recognized as the richest city globally regarding sovereign wealth funds, boasting an impressive \$1.7 trillion in capital.

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Neelakurinji (Strobilanthes kunthiana)

- It is a flowering shrub that blooms once every 12 years, is now classified as **Vulnerable** (Criteria A2c) on the IUCN Red List. The species was not previously evaluated under IUCN standards due to its unique blooming cycle and ecological challenges.
- It is an endemic shrub of three metre height, seen only in the high-altitude **shola forests** of the **Western Ghats** in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu at an elevation of 1,340–2,600 m. they are also found in Shevaroy Hills of Eastern Ghats. The **purplish-blue flower** blossoms only once in 12 years, and gave the Nilgiri Mountains range its name as *nil* (blue) + *giri* (mountains).

Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP)

- The Government of India and the World Bank have signed an agreement for the construction of Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP) in **Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh**, with loan assistance of USD 500 million. The project aims to show how highways can be **safe and eco-friendly** by using green technologies and focusing on climate resilience. It includes:
 - Conservation of natural resources using cement treated sub base/reclaimed asphalt pavement
 - Promote use of local/ marginal material such as lime, fly ash and waste plastic
 - Use of bio-engineering measures for slope protection like hydroseeding, shotcrete crib wall with vegetation, bamboo plantation, hedge brush layer etc.
- The scheduled date of completion of the GNHCP project is by May 2026.

Omkareshwar project

- **Madhya Pradesh** has commissioned the **largest floating solar project in central and north India, generating 90 MW energy**. It is located at Omkareshwar in District Khandwa, MP.
- The floating power plant was developed on the backwaters of Omkareshwar dam (it is a gravity dam on the Narmada River). This project was developed under the *Union Ministry of Renewable Energy*.
- The project is executed by **SJVN Green Energy Limited (SGEL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of SJVN, a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh.
- Total project Cost is Rs. 646 crores. On commissioning, it will reduce 2.3 lakh tons of carbon emissions and will significantly contribute to the Government of India's mission of **net zero carbon emissions by 2070**.
- The project will also help in water conservation by reducing water evaporation.

Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam

- The Union Environment Ministry's recent approval to Cairn India for exploratory oil and gas drilling in **Assam's** eco-sensitive zones has raised concerns about the potential threat to the **endangered hoolock gibbons**.
- This sanctuary is renowned for its unique biodiversity, particularly its status as the sole habitat for gibbons in India.
- Gibbons, the **smallest and fastest apes**, live in Asia's tropical and subtropical forests.
- Two distinct hoolock gibbon species are found in India's northeastern region: the **eastern hoolock gibbon** (*Hoolock leuconedys*) and the **western hoolock gibbon** (*Hoolock hoolock*).

Pyrocumulonimbus clouds (pyroCbs)

- Recently wildfires raging in the United States and Canada are so intense that they have created pyrocumulonimbus clouds (pyroCbs), which have the potential to spit out thunder and spark more fires.
- Pyrocumulonimbus clouds are thunder clouds created by intense heat from the Earth's surface. They are also called **fire clouds**. They are formed similarly to cumulonimbus clouds, but the intense heat that results in the vigorous updraft comes from fire, either large wildfires or volcanic eruptions.
- Conditions for its Formation: Pyrocumulonimbus clouds form under extreme heat (like wildfires). Not every wildfire produces these clouds, temperatures need to **exceed 800°C**, as seen in the 2019-2020 Australian bushfires.
- Intense heat from the fire causes hot air to rapidly rise, carrying water vapour, smoke, and ash that condense into pyrocumulonimbus clouds as they cool. These clouds can reach up to 50,000 feet and form thunderstorm systems with lightning and strong winds.
- Impacts and Characteristics: Pyrocumulonimbus clouds can produce **lightning** that may ignite new wildfires several kilometres away. They generally generate **minimal rain, aiding wildfire spread rather than suppression**. These clouds can trigger strong winds, accelerating and complicating wildfire management.

Gumti river

- Bangladesh has recently faced severe floods, leading to concerns that the water might be coming from the Dumbur dam in Tripura, India.
- However, the Indian government has clarified that the flooding is caused by heavy rainfall in the larger catchment areas of the Gumti River, which flows through both nations, rather than the dam's water release.
- **Gumti River:** It is also known as Gomti, Gumati, or Gomati, which originates in Tripura and flows through the district of Comilla in Bangladesh.
- **Dumbur Dam** is built upon the Gumti river in Tripura. It is 30 metres in height and generates power that feeds into a grid. Bangladesh draws 40 megawatts (MW) of power from Tripura.
- **Dumboor Lake** is situated in Gandacherra, near Agartala and is near the Tirthamukh Hydel Project, the source of the Gomati River.

Varuna River

- Varuna river is a minor tributary of the Ganges River in Uttar Pradesh, India. It originates at Phulpur in the Prayagraj district and merges into the Ganges near Sarai Mohana in the Varanasi district.
- In News: Recently, the Green Strategic Partnership between **India** (IIT-BHU) and **Denmark** has led to the creation of the **Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) in Varanasi**. SCLR aims to rejuvenate the Varuna River **using sustainable methods**.

Cyclone Asna

- Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported that Cyclone Asna has formed over the Kutch coast in Gujarat and adjoining areas of Pakistan.
- It caused torrential rain in Gujarat, leading to 26 deaths, the relocation of 18,000 people, and the rescue of 1,200 from floods.
- Cyclone Asna, named by Pakistan, means “*the one to be acknowledged or praised.*”

Samudra Pratap

- Recently, the **first indigenously built Pollution Control Vessel** Samudra Pratap was launched in Goa.
- The Ship has been built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- It is for the first time that these vessels are being designed and constructed indigenously.
- The vessel will help to check the oil spillage in the country's sea coast.

Typhoon Yagi and operation Sadbhav

- Recently, Typhoon Yagi has caused severe damage across Southeast Asia, affecting the Philippines, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and particularly Vietnam.
- It originated as a tropical storm (wind speed upto 63 kmph) in the western Philippine Sea but became Category 5 typhoon with winds of 260 kmph.
- It is the strongest tropical cyclone Asia has encountered till September 2024 and the second most powerful globally after **Hurricane Beryl** (Atlantic Ocean).
- Note: The **Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale** categorizes tropical cyclones from Category 1 (119-153 kmph) to Category 5 (252 kmph or higher).
- Storm systems with winds of 119 kmph and above are classified as hurricanes, typhoons, or tropical cyclones.”
- Note: India launched **Operation “Sadbhav”** to provide aid and urgent supplies to Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar.
- Note: Higher sea surface temperatures drive marine heat waves and increased evaporation, leading to more intense typhoons that form closer to coastlines and intensify rapidly.
- Note: A **typhoon is a form of cyclone that has wind speeds of 119 kmph** and above and develops over warm ocean waters near the equator.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)

- It is a multilateral treaty aimed at **halting and reversing biodiversity loss globally by 2030**.
- It was adopted in December 2022 during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP).
- It supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and builds upon the achievements and lessons learned from the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020.
- Purpose and Goals: It ensures that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration.
- It has **23 action-oriented global targets** for urgent action over the decade to 2030 which will enable achievement towards the outcome-oriented goals for 2050. It is important to note that this target refers to collective global efforts rather than a requirement for each country to allocate 30% of its land and water areas.
- Long-Term Vision: The framework envisions that by 2050, there will be a collective commitment to living in harmony with nature, serving as a foundational guide for current actions and policies on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use

Greenhushing

- Greenhushing occurs when firms under report or strategically withhold information about their environmental goals and achievements. Greenhushing firms don't advertise their green credentials or deliberately remain silent about their future commitments to environmental sustainability.
- Reason: In the US, public companies may face lawsuits if they are seen as prioritising sustainability over shareholder profits. This legal risk discourages companies from openly discussing their environmental initiatives.

Hirakud Dam

- It is a multipurpose scheme conceived by Er. M. Visveswaraya in 1937, after a recurrence of devastating floods in the Mahanadi River.
- Built around 1952-53, the Hirakud Dam is one of India's first major multipurpose river valley projects post-independence.
- It holds the title for the **longest major earthen dam globally**, stretching **25.8 km** across the Mahanadi River.
- It was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957.
- Hirakud Dam forms the Hirakud Reservoir, also known as Hirakud Lake, is one of the largest artificial lakes in Asia. Hirakud Reservoir was declared a Ramsar site in 2021.

PKC-ERCP river link project

- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between **Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh** to implement the Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (PKC-ERCP) river link project.
- **Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal (PKC):** It is a river-linking initiative designed to divert **surplus water from the Parbati, Newaj, and Kalisindh rivers to the Chambal River**.
- It is part of the 30 links in the National Perspective Plan (1980), formulated by the Central Water Commission and the Union Ministry of Irrigation.
- **Ken-Betwa River Link Project (KBLP):** It is the first project under the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for the interlinking of rivers. The KBLP involves transferring water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa River in Uttar Pradesh, both of which are tributaries of the Yamuna River.

National Perspective Plan for Interlinking Rivers

- The River Interlinking Project, also known as the National Perspective Plan (NPP), formulated in 1980 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti is a large-scale civil engineering project that aims to transfer water from surplus basins to deficit basins in India. It involves the creation of artificial channels to connect rivers and water bodies.
- It has 2 Components: Himalayan and Peninsular Rivers Development Component
- Projects Identified: A total of 30 link projects have been identified, with 16 under the Peninsular Component and 14 under the Himalayan Component.
- Key Projects Under Peninsular Component: Mahanadi-Godavari Links, Godavari-Krishna Links, Par-Tapi-Narmada Link, and Ken-Betwa Link (first project under the NPP to begin implementation).
- Key Projects Under Himalayan Component: Kosi-Ghagra Link, Ganga (Farakka)-Damodar-Subernarekha Link, and Kosi-Mechi Link.
- Note: **National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA)** is a proposed independent body that will replace the **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)**.

Tsangyang Gyatso Peak

- Recently, a peak in Arunachal Pradesh was named 'Tsangyang Gyatso Peak' after the **6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso** (for his contributions to the Monpa community- an ethnic group native to the Tawang region).
- China condemned the naming of the peak calling it an illegal operation in "Chinese territory".
- China claims the entire Arunachal Pradesh as "**South Tibet**". Beijing calls the region "Zangnan" in the Chinese language.
- Tsangyang Gyatso was born in Tawang and lived during the 17th-18th century CE.

Sahara Desert

- It is the world's largest hot desert having a length of approximately 4,800 km and a maximum width of 1,800 km. It occupies about 31% of the entire African continent. It stretches among 11 North African nations including Algeria, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Western Sahara, Tunisia, Chad, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, and Sudan.
- Recently, a rare deluge of rainfall has flooded palm trees and sand dunes of the Sahara desert in Morocco.
- The rain was triggered by the northward shift of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), which has moved further north than usual, resulting in equatorial-like downpours in the Sahara.

Cyclone Dana

- Severe Cyclonic Storm Dana made landfall on the Odisha coast on the night of October 24. The storm made landfall at a speed of 100 to 110 kmph gusting at 120 kmph.
- It is the third cyclone to form in the North Indian Ocean region and the second to make landfall along the Indian coast in 2024 after **Cyclone Remal**.

- **Cyclone Dana was named by Qatar.** In Arabic, “Dana” signifies ‘generosity’ and also refers to ‘the most perfectly sized, valuable, and beautiful pearl.’
- **Note:** Landfall is the event of a tropical cyclone moving from water onto land, specifically when the storm’s center (eye of the cyclone) crosses the coast.

56th tiger reserve

- On the advice of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Chhattisgarh government notified the areas comprising the **Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary** as the 56th TR of India.
- Now Chhattisgarh has 4 TRs, other 3 are: Indravati TR, Udanti-Sitanadi TR & Achanakmar.
- TR is notified by State Governments under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 on advice of NTCA.
- It’s the **3rd largest** TR after Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem TR (A.P) and Manas TR (Assam).

OTHER ENVIRONMENT NEWS

- Recently, **Typhoon (Cyclone) Shanshan** has hit **Japan** bringing heavy rains and strong winds, prompting airlines and railways to cancel multiple services.
- **Typhoon Bebinca** made landfall in **Shanghai, China**. It is the **strongest storm to hit Shanghai in 75 years**. It is rare for Shanghai to get a direct hit from strong typhoons, which tend to make landfall further south in China.
- **Hurricane Oscar** made landfall in the **Bahamas** before crossing Cuba’s eastern coast, leaving at least six dead and causing widespread destruction.
- Uttar Pradesh CM inaugurated the **Jatayu Conservation and Breeding Centre in Bharivaisi**, Campierganj Range of the Gorakhpur Forest Division. It is the **world’s first dedicated conservation and breeding center for the Asian King Vulture**, also known as the red-headed vulture
- Recently, Researchers studied river channels in the Ganges delta in Bangladesh. They discovered a paleochannel (ancient river channel) indicating the Ganga had changed its course abruptly about 2,500 years ago due to an earthquake.
- Recently, three underwater structures in the Indian Ocean were named as **Ashoka, Chandragupt, and Kalpataru** (wish-fulfilling tree), which reflect India’s growing influence in marine science and its commitment to exploring and understanding the Indian Ocean. This naming was proposed by India and approved by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).
- Ocean temperatures in the **Great Barrier Reef** hit their highest level in 400 years over the past decade. The reef suffered mass coral bleaching events between 2016 and 2024. The GBR is the **world’s largest coral reef** system. It’s located in the Coral Sea off the coast of **Queensland, Australia**. The GBR is a UNESCO World Heritage site and was inscribed in 1981
- Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) is located in the Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh, within the Vindhya hills.
- Recently, the **Shiveluch volcano** in Russia erupted after a 7.0 magnitude **earthquake** struck the eastern coast of the country.
- **Orcas, or killer whales**, are the **largest member of the dolphin family**. They use echolocation to communicate and hunt. (**Echolocation** is a technique used by bats, dolphins and other animals to determine the location of objects using reflected sound).
- Recently, **India’s first study on ‘teal carbon’** was undertaken at **Keoladeo National Park (KNP) in Rajasthan’s Bharatpur district**. **Teal carbon refers to carbon stored in freshwater (non-tidal) wetlands**, including vegetation, microbial biomass, and dissolved and particulate organic matter.
- **Salt pans** are low-lying tracts of land where seawater periodically flows in, leaving behind deposits of salt and minerals.
- **Permafrost** is ground that remains frozen at or below 32°F (0°C) for at least two years, commonly found in high-latitude and high-altitude regions. **Global warming** leads to permafrost thaw (the melting of permanently frozen soil or rock), causing fluctuations and potential ground collapse, which can affect infrastructure.
- **Kumki** is a term used in India to refer to **trained captive Asian elephants**. They can capture, rescue, and treat injured wild elephants, as well as to drive them away from human settlements. They participate in forest patrolling to support conservation initiatives. **Note:** Asian elephants (Indian) are classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Elephants have a gestation period of about 22 months, the longest of any land animal.
- In recent times, **Tuvalu, a Pacific island nation** with 11,000 residents, faces severe **existential threats from rising sea levels**. Tuvalu is building seawalls and expanding artificial land to delay the impacts until 2100. NASA projects that by 2050, half of its main atoll, Funafuti, will be submerged by daily tides. Saltwater has contaminated groundwater, damaging crops and forcing reliance on rainwater tanks and a central raised garden for food.
- **Legacy waste** refers to waste that has been **improperly collected and stored for years**, often found in landfills, abandoned mines, and industrial sites. It poses several challenges, including radiological characterization, safety

issues, leachate management, and fire control. Processing methods include *bioremediation*, *biomining*, *stabilisation*, and *screening*. Legacy waste dumpsites have been created by Municipalities in India in city outskirts due to the lack of solid waste handling facilities.

- Swachh Bharat Mission Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 was launched in 2021, with a vision of achieving “Garbage Free Status” for all cities by 2026.
- Recently, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered classifying **Nainital** town into prohibited, regulated, and development zones. This zoning aims to limit the environmental impact of unchecked urbanisation and manage development responsibly.
- Recently, the **Tamenglong district administration in Manipur** imposed an immediate ban on hunting, catching, killing, and selling **Amur falcons** (*Falco amurensis*) in preparation for their arrival. Amur Falcon are small and agile birds (raptors) locally known as ‘*Kahuaipuina*’ in Manipur and ‘*Molulem*’ in Nagaland (Amur Falcon capital of the world).
- Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways inaugurated **Oxygen Bird Park (Amrit Mahotsav Park) in Nagpur**, Maharashtra. It is an eco-initiative developed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) along the Nagpur Hyderabad National Highway-44. It has fast-growing, oxygen-producing trees aimed to combat air pollution and foster a healthier environment.
- The Antarctic peninsula has experienced a 10-fold increase in vegetation from less than 1 square km in 1986 to almost 12 square km by 2021.
- **Bhutan is the world’s first carbon-neutral country**. Bhutan is best known for promoting Gross National Happiness (GNH) over Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Recently, **auroras were sighted in lower-latitude regions** (below 66.5 degrees north and south latitudes) like India (Hanle and Merak in Ladakh), Mexico and Germany. Their occurrence in lower-latitude regions is an indication of **heightened solar activity**.
- Recently, a team of arachnologists (those who study spiders and other arachnids) has identified a new genus of jumping spiders named ‘**Tenkana**,’ found throughout southern India. They also introduced a new species, ***Tenkana jayamangali***, discovered in Karnataka. It is named after the Jayamangali River in Karnataka, where it was initially observed.
- Recently, a **Great Indian Bustard / GIB** (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the state bird of Rajasthan, successfully hatched an offspring through artificial insemination in Jaisalmer district, marking a significant milestone in conservation efforts. Official estimates indicate that fewer than 150 GIBs are left in the wild in India, with 90% residing in the desert regions of Rajasthan and the remainder found in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka.
- A team of scientists has discovered a new species of snake in the Western Himalayas, naming it ***Anguiculus dicaprio*** in honor of Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio, recognizing his significant contributions to wildlife conservation.
- The central government has given its in-principle approval for Bihar’s second tiger reserve in Kaimur district. This decision follows a proposal from the Bihar government to develop the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary (KWLS) into a tiger reserve. Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) in West Champaran was the only tiger reserve in Bihar until now.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

President Murmu receives Grand-Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste

- Recently, President Horta of Timor-Leste awarded Indian **President Droupadi Murmu** the Grand-Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste, recognizing her contributions to public service, education, and women’s empowerment.
- President Murmu and Prime Minister Gusmão observed the signing of three MoUs covering Cultural Exchanges, the collaboration between Prasara Bharati and Timor-Leste Radio & Television (RTTL), and visa exemptions for diplomatic, official, and service passports.
- **Timor-Leste or East Timor** is a country in Southeast Asia. Its capital is **Dili**. It was colonised by Portugal in the 18th century and was annexed by Indonesia in 1975 after Portugal withdrew, leading to a long struggle for independence. In a 1999 UN-supervised referendum, East Timorese voted for independence, which led to further violence until peace-keeping forces intervened, and the country was officially recognized by the UN in 2002.

President of India Receives Fiji’s Highest Civilian Award

- President Droupadi Murmu was on a three-nation visit to **Fiji, New Zealand and Timor-Leste** from the 5th to 10th of this month. She became 1st Indian head of the state to visit the Fiji, an archipelago nation.
- During her visit, "President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere of Fiji conferred the **Companion of the Order of Fiji** upon President Droupadi Murmu recognising the strong India-Fiji ties. This is the highest civilian award of Fiji.

- The President of India acknowledged the contributions of the Indian diaspora, particularly the **Girmitiya laborers**, and emphasised the importance of overseas Indian communities. The word 'girmitiya' is derived from 'girmit', meaning 'agreement'. Indian indentured labourers transported to places like Fiji and Mauritius were known as 'girmitiyas'. Though girmitiyas were not technically slaves, they were subjected to "blackbirding" (deceiving or tricking people to work as slaves or poorly paid labourers).
- **About Fiji:** Fiji, a country and archipelago in the **South Pacific Ocean**. It surrounds the Koro Sea north of Auckland, New Zealand. It comprises over 300 islands, with only about 100 inhabited. It is known as the "**soft coral capital of the world**," Fiji boasts over 4,000 square kilometres of vibrant coral reefs. Sugarcane was a major economic driver for Fiji for many years. Fiji is a parliamentary democracy, its population is a mix of Indigenous Fijians, Indians, Europeans, and other ethnicities. Fiji is home to the largest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere, the **Sri Siva Subramaniya Swami Temple**. The capital of Fiji is **Suva**.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2022

- **Awarded to:** **Mithun Chakraborty**, the actor and former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (MP).
- He is **54th recipient** of the DadaSaheb Phalke Award.
- It was awarded to him by Hon. President Draupadi Murmu during award ceremony of 70th National Film Awards.
- **About Dadasaheb Phalke Award:** It is the country's **highest film honour introduced in 1969**, conferred for "Outstanding contribution for the growth and development of Indian cinema".
- It was awarded for the first time to **Devika Rani**, "the first lady of Indian cinema". This award includes a 'Swarna Kamal,' a cash prize of INR 10 lakh, a certificate, a silk roll, and a shawl. It is presented by the President of India.
- **About Dhundiraj Govind Phalke:** He was an Indian producer, director, and screenwriter, who directed India's first feature film **Raja Harischandra (1913)**. He is known as the "**Father of Indian Cinema**".

70th National Film Awards

- Recently, the winners of the 70th National Film Awards for 2022 were announced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- **Best Feature Film:** Aattam (The Play), directed by Anand Ekarshi.
- **Best Non-Feature Film:** Ayena (Mirror), directed by Siddhant Sarin.
- **Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment:** Kantara.
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role:** Rishab Shetty for Kantara.
- **Best Actress in a Leading Role:** Nithya Menen for Thiruchitrambalam.
- **Best Supporting Actor:** Pavan Raj Malhotra.
- **Best Supporting Actress:** Neena Gupta.
- **Best Film in AVGC** (Animation, Visual Effects Gaming & Comic): BRAHMASTRA-PART 1: SHIVA.
- **Best Book on Cinema:** "Kishore Kumar: The Ultimate Biography", authored by Anirudha Bhattacharjee & Parthiv Dhar.

National Geoscience Awards (NGA) 2023

- Recently, the President of India conferred the National Geoscience Awards (NGA) 2023 to 21 geoscientists.
- **Prof. Dhiraj Mohan Banerjee** received the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his pioneering work in phosphorites and Precambrian geology.
- Dr Ashutosh Pandey was honoured as the National Young Geoscientist for his research on the Eastern Dharwar Craton.
- **National Geoscience Awards:** It is one of the oldest and most prestigious honours in the field, established by the Ministry of Mines in 1966. Prior to 2009, these awards were known as the National Mineral Awards.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) 2024

- The RVP is a prestigious set of awards that recognize and encourage significant achievements by scientists, technologists, and innovators of Indian origin, including **Persons of Indian Origin (PIO)**, whether working in India or abroad.
- These awards honour individuals who have made distinguished contributions through impactful research, innovation, or discovery that benefits Indian communities or society.
- The RVP is being introduced for the **first time in 2024**. It was established to replace the existing science awards, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize, to provide a more inclusive and updated recognition system.
- These awards shall be announced on 11th May (National Technology Day) every year. The Award Ceremony for all categories of awards will be held on National Space Day (23rd August).

- RVP is awarded in various categories such as *Physical Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, and Engineering Sciences.*

Categories of the Awards:

- **Vigyan Ratna (VR):** It honours lifetime achievements and substantial contributions in any field of science and technology. Up to 3 awards are given each year.
 - Eligibility: Distinguished scientists and technologists with a career of significant achievements.
- **Vigyan Shri (VS):** It recognizes distinguished contributions in any field of science and technology. Up to 25 awards are given each year.
 - Eligibility: Individuals with notable achievements in their respective scientific or technological domains.
- **Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB):** It recognizes and encourages young scientists under 45 years of age who have made exceptional contributions. Up to 25 awards are given each year.
 - Eligibility: Young scientists who have demonstrated exceptional research or innovation.
- **Vigyan Team (VT):** It awards a team of three or more scientists, researchers, or innovators for exceptional collaborative contributions. Up to 3 awards for teams of three or more.
 - Eligibility: Teams with outstanding achievements in any field of science and technology.
- **Benefits of the Award:** Each awardee receives a Sanad (Certificate) signed by the President of India.
- A brochure with the citation and photograph of the awardees is released on the ceremony day. Decorations are given to the next of kin in case of posthumous awards.

Key Awardees of the 2024 Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

- **Vigyan Ratna:** Awarded to **G. Padmanabhan**, who is recognized for his lifetime achievements in biological sciences, particularly for his work on malaria parasites. He is a former director of the Indian Institute of Science and has previously received the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan.
- **Vigyan Team: Chandrayaan-3** Team was awarded with Vigyan Team for their successful mission landing India's first spacecraft on the Moon in 2023, a landmark in India's space exploration history.
- **Vigyan Shri:** Annapurni Subramaniam (formation and evolution of star clusters and galaxies), Jayant Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (biology), Naba Kumar Mondal (particle physics).
- **Vigyan Yuva:** Vivek Polshettiwar (carbon capture technologies), Urbasi Sinha (quantum research), Roxy Mathew Koll (climate science).

Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award 2024

- The Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award, 2024, was presented to the best performing National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP) cities in three categories based on population. The winning cities are:
 - Category-1 (population over 10 Lakhs): Surat, Jabalpur, and Agra.
 - Category-2 (population between 3-10 Lakhs): Firozabad, Amravati, and Jhansi.
 - Category-3 (population under 3 Lakhs): Raebareli, Nalgonda, and Nalagarh.
- The Municipal Commissioners of the winning cities were awarded with cash prizes, trophies, and certificates.
- **About Swachh Vayu Survekshan (SVS):** SVS is a new initiative by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to rank cities on the basis of air quality and implementation of activities approved under the city action plan (NCAP) in 131 non-attainment cities.
- Cities are declared non-attainment if over a 5-year period they consistently do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10 or NO2. The categorisation of cities has been based on the 2011 population census.

National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024

- Recently awarded by the President of India to 15 nursing professionals, recognizing their exemplary contributions to healthcare and public service.
- The National Florence Nightingale Award was instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to honour outstanding nursing personnel in various settings. A total of 15 awards are given in the category of Registered Auxiliary Nurses & Midwife, Registered Nurses and Midwife and Registered Lady Visitor. The award is given to outstanding nursing personnel employed in Central, State/UTs and Voluntary Organizations.
- Each award consists of a **Certificate of Merit, Cash Award of Rs.100000/- and a medal.**

Florence Nightingale

- Florence Nightingale was an English social reformer, statistician and the founder of modern nursing.
- She came to prominence while serving as a manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War (1854-56), in which she organised care for wounded soldiers at Constantinople. Her efforts to formalize nursing education led her to establish the first scientifically based nursing school—the Nightingale School of Nursing, at St. Thomas' Hospital in London.

SASTRA Ramanujan Prize

- It was established in 2005 and given by the Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) University, Tamil Nadu. It includes a cash prize of **USD 10,000**. It is awarded annually to mathematicians aged 32 or below for exceptional contributions, particularly in areas inspired by the work of Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- 2024 Prize: it was awarded to **Alexander Dunn** from the Georgia Institute of Technology, US.
- Dunn has made significant breakthroughs in the study of modular forms, half-integral weight forms, metaplectic forms, and their relationships with prime numbers and integer partitions.

2024 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

- The European Parliament has announced that **María Corina Machado** and **President-elect Edmundo González Urrutia** will be the recipients of the 2024 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.
- This prestigious award recognizes their **relentless efforts to restore democracy and freedom in Venezuela** amidst severe political and economic challenges.

OTHER AWARDS

- Also, the Ministry of Women and Child Development received the **National Award for e-Governance 2024** (Gold) for the *Poshan Tracker initiative*.
- Rohit Sharma**, the captain of the Indian men's cricket team, was bestowed with the coveted **CEAT International Cricketer of the Year Award** for his exemplary performance in the 2023-24 season.
- Olympic Order in gold**: President **Emmanuel Macron** of France was awarded the **Olympic Order in gold** by International Olympic Committee (IOC) in recognition of his unwavering support for the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and his commitment to the Olympic ideals championed by Pierre de Coubertin.
- In a momentous recognition of his contributions to the world of animation and storytelling, **Hayao Miyazaki**, the renowned Japanese film director and co-founder of Studio Ghibli, has been awarded the esteemed **Ramon Magsaysay Award for 2024**. This honor, often referred to as "Asia's Nobel Prize," underscores Miyazaki's profound impact on both the art of animation and global cultural discourse.
- Prasanthi Ram**, who was an Indian origin lecturer from the University of Nanyang technological University won the Singapore literature prize for English fiction for her short story - '*Nine Yard Sarees*'.
- Dhruvi Patel**, a Computer Information System student from the USA, has been declared the **winner of Miss India Worldwide 2024**, the longest running Indian pageant outside of India.
- Rhea Singha**, a 19-year-old model from Gujarat, was crowned Miss Universe India 2024 in Jaipur. She will represent India at the global Miss Universe competition in Mexico.
- The **Republic of Fiji** has bestowed its highest civilian award, the "**Honourary Officer of the Order of Fiji**," on Gurudev **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**.
- Dr. S. Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has been honored with the prestigious International Astronautical Federation (IAF) World Space Award. This accolade was awarded in recognition of the remarkable success of Chandrayaan-3, India's lunar mission that made history with its soft landing on the Moon's South Pole.

BOOKS and Authors

Book	Author
Call of the Gir	Rajya Sabha Member Parimal Nathwani
'75 Great Revolutionaries of India,'	Bhim Singh (an MP)
"Modi's Governance Triumph: Reshaping India's Path to Prosperity"	Tarun Chugh (BJP General Secretary)
:The Scientist Entrepreneur: Empowering Millions of Women"	An autography written by Dr. Kalpana Sankar.
"From Oil to Lithium: Navigating the Future of Energy"	Kuldeep Gupta
Five Decades in Politics (an autobiographical account of Sushil Kumar Shinde's life).	Rasheed Kidwai (senior journalist)
"Sri Rama in Tamilagam – An Inseparable Bond"	Dr. D.K. Hari and Dr. D.K. Hema Hari
War	Bob Woodward
Mountain Mammals of the World	M.K. Ranjitsinh

OBITUARY / DEATHS

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (1944-	He was CM of West Bengal from 2000 to 2011 from Communist Party of India (Marxist). He became the CM of West Bengal, succeeding Jyoti Basu.
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2024)	<p>He served as CM until 2011 when Trinamool Congress ended the Left Front's 34-year rule. During his tenure, the Left Front government adopted a relatively open policy towards business despite following communism.</p> <p>He was behind the idea of setting up a <u>Tata Nano plant in Singur</u> and planning a special economic zone in <u>Nandigram</u>. However, the plan was abandoned after protests by local political parties on the issue of land acquisition.</p> <p>During his regime, West Bengal saw investments in sectors of IT and IT-enabled services.</p> <p><u>Awards:</u> In 2022, the central government announced the Padma Bhushan award to him but he refused to accept it because Marxists are generally reluctant to accept awards for public service.</p>
Ratan Naval Tata	<p>He was respected Indian businessman and former chairman of Tata Group.</p> <p>He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2000 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2008.</p> <p>He graduated in architecture from Cornell University before returning to India in 1962 to join the Tata Group, founded by his great-grandfather, Jamsetji Tata.</p> <p>He was a licensed pilot, known for his quiet demeanour, relatively modest lifestyle and philanthropic initiatives.</p>
Anshuman Gaekwad	former Indian cricketer and coach.
Yamini Krishnamurthy	India's classical dancer, known for her mastery over Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, and Odissi.
Dr. Ram Narain Agarwal	a renowned Indian scientist and the driving force behind India's missile program. Known affectionately as the ' Father of Agni Missiles '.
General Sundararajan Padmanabhan (Retd).	Former general of Indian Army, who led the Army during the crucial period of ' Operation PARAKRAM '.
Keki N. Daruwala	former IPS officer and renowned poet .
Dame Maggie Smith	celebrated British actress renowned for her roles in Harry Potter and Downton Abbey.
Natwar Singh	Former External Affairs Minister.
Tsung-Dao Lee	Chinese-American physicist, who in 1957 became the second-youngest scientist to receive a Nobel Prize. His work advanced the understanding of particle physics.
Graham Thorpe	former England cricketer and coach.
Dr. P. Venugopal	former Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and a celebrated cardiac surgeon who is known for conducting <u>India's first heart transplant</u> and performing over 50,000 heart surgeries throughout his illustrious career.

SPORTS

Paris Olympics 2024 (33rd Summer Olympic Games 2024)

- Venue: Held from 24 July to 11 August 2024 in France.
 - **Paris** was the host city of these games. Additionally, Tahiti, an island within the French overseas country of French Polynesia was a sub-site for surfing.
 - It was the **third time** that Paris hosted the Olympics, with previous editions in 1900 and 1924.
- Official motto: **Games Wide Open**.
 - The original Olympic motto is made up of three Latin words: *Citius - Altius - Fortius*. These words mean Faster - Higher - Stronger.
- The official mascot of the 2024 Paris Olympics is the '**Phryge**', a representation of the *Phrygian hats*, a symbol of liberty and allegorical figures of the French Republic.
- The **logo** for the Paris Olympics 2024 uniquely combines three symbols. These are the *gold medal, the Olympic flame, and Marianne* (a personification of France).
- Paris Olympics 2024 saw the participation of 10,714 athletes, from 206 nations, in 329 events in 32 sports.
- New sports: **Breaking (breakdancing)** debuted at the Paris Summer Games, while sport climbing, surfing and skateboarding made their second Olympic appearances.
- Abhinav Bindra selected as torchbearer for the 2024 Paris Olympics;
- Gagan Narang Appointed as India's Chef-De-Mission for Paris Olympics 2024;
- Top 5 Countries in Medal Tally: **USA** (40 gold, 44 silver and 42 bronze medals), **China** (40 gold, 27 silver and 24 bronze medals), **Japan, Australia and France**.
- Due to single gold medal (in javelin throw by **Arshad Nadeem**), Pakistan ranked 62nd, ahead of India (71st).

India's Performance:

- total 117 athletes from India participated. Indian athletes competed in 69 medal events across 16 sports, such as archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, equestrian, golf, hockey, judo, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and tennis.

- India finishing **71st** in the medal tally, a decline from its 48th place in Tokyo 2020 (held in 2021 due to Covid).
- Indian flag bearers of opening ceremony: **PV Sindhu** (Badminton) & **Achantha Sharath Kamal** (Table tennis).
- Indian flag bearers of closing ceremony: **PR Sreejesh** (Hockey) & **Manu Bhaker** (Shooting).

Indian Medal Winners at Paris Olympics 2024

Indian athletes	Medal	Event
Manu Bhaker	Bronze	Women's 10m air pistol event
Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh	Bronze	10m air pistol mixed team event Note: Manu Bhaker became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal. She also became the first athlete from independent India to win two medals in a single Games by clinching a medal in both individual and mixed team events.
Swapnil Kusale	Bronze	Men's 50m rifle 3 positions Note: It is India's first-ever Olympic medal in the 50m rifle 3 positions. Note: India won three shooting medals in this Olympics. It is the highest tally for India in shooting at the Olympics.
Indian hockey team	Bronze	Men's hockey
Neeraj Chopra	Silver	Men's Javelin Throw (throw of 89.45m) Note: this was his second Olympic medal, making him India's fifth two-time Olympic medallist.
Aman Sehrawat	Bronze	Wrestling Men's 57kg freestyle event

Other facts:

- Lakshya Sen became the first Indian to reach the semi-finals in men's badminton at the Olympics, finishing 4th.
- Wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** after reaching the final in the women's 50 kg category, Phogat was disqualified for being overweight by 100 grams.
- To date, India has won a total of 41 Olympic medals. Notable milestones include Norman Pritchard's Silver Medals (1900 Paris), KD Jadhav's Bronze (1952 Helsinki), Karnam Malleswari's Bronze (2000 Sydney), Abhinav Bindra's Gold (2008 Beijing), and Neeraj Chopra's Gold (2020 Tokyo).
- To date, India's Men's Hockey has won 13 medals, including 8 golds, and Wrestling has won 8 medals.
- India's best ever Olympic performance was at Tokyo 2020 (held in 2021), with seven medals, including one gold. India's second-best performance was in the 2012 London Olympics when it won six medals (two silver and four bronze).
- 2028 Summer Olympics will be held in **Los Angeles, USA**.

Paris Paralympic Games 2024

- Athletes competed in 22 sports.
- Mascot: The Paralympic **Phryge**, inspired by the Phrygian cap, was the mascot for Paris Paralympic Games 2024. It symbolises liberty and freedom.
- Overall Performance: **China finished on top** with 94 gold medals. Great Britain finished second with 49 golds while the United States came third with 36 golds.
- India's performance: India sent a delegation of 84 para-athletes, competing in 12 disciplines (Tokyo 2021- 9 disciplines). Para Cycling, para-rowing, and blind judo were new additions.
- Performance: India secured **29 medals** comprising 7 golds, 9 silvers, and 13 bronzes. India finished in 18th position. India also crossed the milestone of 50 medals in the history of the competition.
- Gold in Javelin Throw: India's **Navdeep Singh** was awarded a gold medal in the men's javelin throw F41 final after Iran's Beit Sayah Sadegh was disqualified. He had originally won silver. This is India's first-ever gold medal in the men's javelin F41 category. F41 Category is a competition class for field athletes with short stature.
- Gold medal-winning archer Harvinder Singh and sprinter Preeti Pal have been chosen to carry the Indian flag during the closing ceremony of the Paris Paralympics.
- Note: Satya Prakash Sangwan, the vice president of Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), was appointed as the Chef de Mission (CDM) for the Indian team.

Distinguished Performance by Indians

- Mona Agarwal made history at the 2024 Paralympics by securing a bronze medal in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 event.
- Rubina Francis won a bronze medal in Paris Paralympics in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event.
- Para Athlete Preethi Pal won two bronze medals in the women's 100m and 200m T35 race events and created history by becoming the **first Indian woman to win two medals in track and field events at Paralympic Games**.
- Nishad Kumar secured a silver medal in the men's T47 high jump final.

- Indian duo of Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar claimed the bronze medal in the mixed team compound archery competition.
- Indian para-badminton star Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj won silver medal in the men's singles SL4 category.
- Indian para-badminton players Thulasimathi Murugesan and Manisha Ramadass clinched silver and bronze medals, respectively.
- Sharad Kumar and Mariyappan Thangavelu secured silver and bronze medals respectively in the men's high jump T63 event.
- Deepthi Jeevanji, the 20-year-old world champion sprinter from India, has secured a bronze medal in the women's 400m T20 event.
- Sumit Antil won (defended) gold medal in the men's javelin throw F64 class.
- Harvinder Singh won India's first-ever Paralympic gold medal in archery.
- Sachin Sarjerao Khilari won a silver medal in the men's shot put F46 event.
- Kapil Parmar won India's first-ever medal (bronze) in judo at the paralympic.
- Hokato Hotozhe Sema has clinched the bronze medal in the men's shot put F57 class at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.
- Indian para-athlete Praveen Kumar has won a gold medal in the men's high jump T64 final.

Asian Champions Trophy 2024

- Recently, the **Indian men's hockey team** won the 5th Asian Champions Trophy 2024 **in China** by defeating China 1-0 in the final.
- India has won the most Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy titles with 5, while Pakistan has won 3, including one shared with India.
- India's Harmanpreet Singh is the second-highest goal scorer in the Asian Champions Trophy with 7 goals, trailing behind Korea's Jihun Yang, who has scored 8 goals.

Women Asian Champions Trophy 2024

- Took place in **Rajgir**, Bihar.
- Mascot: 'Gudiya,' inspired by Bihar's state bird, the sparrow.
- The Indian hockey team beat the People's Republic of China 1-0 in the final.

Commonwealth Games 2026

- The **23rd edition** of the Commonwealth Games will be held in **Glasgow, Scotland** from 23rd July to 2nd August 2026, marking a return to the city 12 years after the 2014 Games.
- In the Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2026 Glasgow, **6 of the 12 sports in which India won medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games have been excluded**. The games that are excluded are Badminton, cricket, hockey, squash, table tennis, and wrestling. India strongly protested the exclusion of key sports from the Glasgow Games, as they are India's top performing events.
- The CWG is a **quadrennial** (every 4 years) international multisport event contested by athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations. It is managed by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).
- The first Commonwealth Games were held in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in August 1930.
- The Commonwealth of Nations is a group of **56** countries composed mostly of former British colonies. It was established by the London Declaration in 1949.

SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) U-20 Championship football tournament

- Host nation: Nepal
- Winner: **Bangladesh** has emerged as the new champion for first time by defeating the host nation, Nepal.

SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) Men's U-17 Championship

- The Indian Men's Football U-17 (Under 17) defeated Bangladesh in the finals held in **Thimpu, Bhutan**.

133rd edition of Durand Cup 2024

- Guwahati-based **NorthEast United Football Club** clinched their maiden Durand Cup title.
- In a penalty shootout, they defeated the defending champions, **Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG)**, 4-3.
- The match took place at the iconic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on August 31, 2024.
- **About Durand Cup**: It is Asia's oldest and the world's third oldest football tournament, in which top Indian football clubs from across the country participate.
- The inaugural edition took place in **Annadale, Shimla in 1888**, when it started off as an Army Cup, open only to the British Indian Army troops in India.

- The tournament is named after its founder Sir Henry Mortimer Durand.

US Open 2024 (Lawn Tennis Grand Slam)

- The 2024 US Open, held from August 19 to September 8 at Flushing Meadows, Queens, New York City, concluded with groundbreaking victories in both the men's and women's singles categories.

Event	Winner (Nationalities)
Men's Single	Jannik Sinner (Italy)
Women's Single	Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)

- Note:** Jannik Sinner, the current World No. 1, made history by becoming the **first Italian man in the Open Era** to win the US Open men's singles title. It is his **second Grand Slam title**. Earlier in the year, he claimed the 2024 Australian Open singles title.
- Aryna Sabalenka had previously won the Australian Open women's singles title in both 2023 and 2024. This US Open victory marks Sabalenka's **third** Grand Slam title.

China Open 2024

- Carlos Alcaraz from Spain beat the World No.1 Jannik Sinner from Italy in the final game and won the title.

The 4th Intercontinental Cup men's football championship

- Syria defeated the defending champions **India** in the finals in GMC Balayogi Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Hall of the Fame

- In a historic recognition, former Indian cricketer **Neetu David**, along with England's **Alastair Cook** and South Africa's **AB de Villiers**, has been inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame for 2024.
- Note:** Neetu David becomes the second woman from India to receive this honor, following Diana Edulji's induction in 2023.

2024 Ballon d'Or

- 68th annual ceremony of the Ballon d'Or held in Paris.
- It was presented by *France Football* that recognized the best footballers in the world in the 2023–24 season.
- Men's Ballons d'Or: **Rodri** (footballer from Spain)
- Women Ballons d'Or: **Aitana Bonmatí** (footballer from Spain)
- For the first time, both the men's and women's Ballons d'Or were awarded to players from the same country-Spain.

OTHER SPORTS NEWS

- The recent boxing match at the Paris Olympics 2024 between **Algeria's Imane Khelif** and **Italy's Angela Carini** has ignited a significant controversy, particularly concerning gender and eligibility in women's sports. Khelif's quick victory led to a wave of criticism, with many accusing her of being a **"biological man** (due to disorders of sex development)" despite official confirmation of her gender identity as female. Critics accused Khelif of having an "unfair advantage".
- Recently, Indian Chess men's and women's teams won the **gold medals** at the Chess Olympiad held in Budapest.
- In an extraordinary accomplishment, **IPS officer Anita Roy**, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in Puducherry, has become the first IPS officer to secure a gold medal at the Commonwealth International Classic Bench Press Competition, 2024.
- Lieutenant Colonel **Kabilan Sai Ashok**, a serving Indian Army Officer, has become the **youngest Olympic referee in boxing from India** at the Paris Olympics 2024.
- Novak Djokovic of Serbia secured his first Olympic gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- American sprinter **Noah Lyles** clinched gold in the men's 100-meter sprint at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- former Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik has been named the brand ambassador for the SA20 (South Africa-T20) League.
- Hockey India (HI) has officially announced that **retiring goalkeeper PR Sreejesh** will be the **new head coach for the Indian junior men's hockey team**. This decision follows India's recent bronze medal victory at the 2024 Olympics.
- Diana Pundole**, a teacher and mother from Pune, has made history as the first Indian woman to win the national championship in the saloon category at the MRF Indian National Car Racing Championship 2024 held in Chennai.

- Indian cricket's prolific white-ball opener, **Shikhar Dhawan**, has officially announced his retirement from international cricket at the age of 38.
- The prestigious **Lord's Cricket Ground in London** is set to make history by hosting the **final of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC)** from June 11 to June 15, 2025.
- Moeen Ali, the versatile England all-rounder, has officially announced his retirement from international cricket.
- In a significant development for traditional Indian sports, **Yogasana** has been officially included as a **demonstration sport in the upcoming 2026 Asian Games**, set to take place in **Aichi-Nagoya, Japan**.
- **Deepali Thapa** became the first-ever schoolgirl champion at the Asian Youth Boxing Championships held in Al Ain, UAE.
- **Saleema Imtiaz** has made history by becoming the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC International Panel of Development Umpires, according to an announcement by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).
- India's 17-year-old **Anmol Kharb** clinched her first international title in women's singles as she beat Denmark's Amalie Schulz in a hard-fought final in the Belgian International badminton tournament.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that men's and women's cricket teams will receive equal prize money in all World Cup events.
- **Jasprit Bumrah** has become the 10th Indian bowler to reach the illustrious milestone of 400 international wickets.
- The **Duleep Trophy final** between India-A and India-C concluded in dramatic fashion, with **India-A** emerging victorious by a margin of 132 runs.
- **Irani cup: Mumbai won the Irani Cup for the 15th time**, 27 years after their last triumph, on October 5 in Lucknow. Tanush Kotian's sensational second-innings hundred helped Mumbai draw the five-day game against Rest of India at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium. Mumbai was adjudged the winner of the match by virtue of the first-innings lead.
- Commonwealth Heavyweight champion **Sangram Singh** has made an unforgettable entrance into the world of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). The Indian wrestler's debut at the Gama International Fighting Championship in Tbilisi, Georgia, has set a new benchmark for Indian fighters in international MMA competitions.
- India's **Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan** and **Vijay Sundar Prashanth** clinched the **men's doubles title at the 2024 Hangzhou Open** (open Tennis) after a thrilling final against Germany.
- To expand the cricketing infrastructure, **BCCI** has inaugurated the new state of art facilities which are called the Centre Of Excellence in the outskirts of the **Bengaluru** city. Which is also called **New National Cricket Academy**.
- **Ngangom Bala** has become the first Indian woman to score 50 international goals (football).
- **Virat Kohli completed 27000 international runs** and became the **fastest cricketer** to reach that milestone and broke the record of Sachin Tendulkar who earlier held the record.
- **China's Liu Yukun**, was honored as the **male athlete of the year** by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). Also, **Korea's Yang Ji-in**, was named the **female athlete of the year**, recognizing her remarkable achievements in the sport.
- In a remarkable achievement, **Deepika Kumari**, a four-time Olympian from India, secured the **silver medal** in the women's recurve event at the **2024 Archery World Cup Final** held on October 20, 2024, in Tlaxcala, Mexico.
- **Kagiso Rabada** has become the **fastest bowler to reach 300 Test wickets based on balls bowled**, achieving the milestone in just 11,817 deliveries. The South African pace sensation is now among the greats, surpassing legends like Waqar Younis (12,602 balls) and Dale Steyn (12,605 balls).
- **Zimbabwe's cricket team** made new record of **highest runs in T20 by scoring 344/4 against Gambia**. This score surpassed the previous highest total of 314/3 set by Nepal against Mongolia in 2023.
- In a prestigious recognition, **Maria Sharapova and twins Bob and Mike Bryan** were named to the International Tennis Hall of Fame's Class of 2025.
- Indian women's hockey legend **Rani Rampal** officially announced her retirement from international hockey. Known as the "**Queen of Indian Hockey**," Rani played 254 international matches and scored 120 goals, leading India to numerous milestones, including the famous fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
- **Ravichandran Ashwin** surpassed Australian spinner **Nathan Lyon** and become the **highest (189) wicket-taker in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC)**.
- The **Pro Kabaddi League (PKL)** proudly received the prestigious '**Best Sports League of the Year**' award at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Sports Business Awards 2024.
- Veteran Australian wicketkeeper-batter **Matthew Wade** has officially **retired** from international cricket.
- **Chirag Chikkara** made history by becoming only the third Indian wrestler to win the Under-23 World Championship.

IMPORTANT DAYS

31 July: World Ranger Day

- This day is dedicated to recognizing the dedication of rangers who protect natural and cultural treasures.
- Theme 2024: “**30 by 30**” aligns with the 2022 *UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15)*, which sets a goal to conserve at least 30% of the planet’s land and marine areas by 2030.

3 August: Indian Organ Donation Day (IODD)

- It is observed annually since 2010 to augment awareness about brain stem death and organ donation, dispel myths and misconceptions associated with organ donation and motivate and encourage the citizens of the country to donate organs and tissues after death.
- In 2024, “**Angdaan Jan Jagrukta Abhiyaan**” was launched for various awareness activities. Under the Abhiyaan, the month of **July** was observed as the **Organ Donation Month**.
- A person after his death can give new life to up to 8 people by donating vital organs namely *Kidney, Liver, Lung, Heart, Pancreas and Intestine* and improve quality life of many more by donating tissues like *cornea, skin, bone and heart valve* etc.

6 August: Hiroshima Day 2024

- On August 6, 1945, during World War II, the US dropped an atomic bomb called “**Little Boy**,” on **Hiroshima** using the B-29 bomber Enola Gay. Approximately 70,000-80,000 people were killed instantly, with many more dying later from injuries and radiation.
- On August 9, 1945, the US dropped a second atomic bomb, “**Fat Man**” on **Nagasaki**. This led to Japan’s surrender and marked the end of World War II.
- Note: In December 1941, the US government launched the Manhattan Project to develop the bomb under the leadership of J. Robert Oppenheimer.

7 August: 10th National Handloom Day

- Theme for 2024: “**Weaving Sustainable Futures**.”
- This day has been celebrated since 2015 and marks the launch of the Swadeshi Movement on 7th August 1905, part of the independence struggle promoting domestic handloom products.

8 August: August Kranti Day (August Revolution Day)

- It commemorates the historic launch of the QIM in 1942, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.
- In 2024, India celebrates the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India Movement (QIM).

9 August: International Day of Indigenous Peoples

- Theme for 2024: “Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact”.
- Note: the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has been entrusted to train tribal students under Semiconductor Fabrication & Characterization Training for tribal students as part of Tribal Research Information, Education, Communication and Events (TRI-ECE). The project seeks to provide specialised training to tribal students to foster advanced technological skills.

10 August: World Lion Day

- It was established by ‘Big Cat Rescue’ and celebrated for the first time on 10 August since 2013. It highlights the urgent need for lion conservation due to threats like habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, and poaching.
- Project Lion: Launched on 15th August 2020, ‘Project Lion’ aims to secure the future of Asiatic lions through habitat improvement, advanced monitoring, and addressing human-wildlife conflict.
- Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat, which is the primary habitat of the Asiatic lions, has the population of 674 individuals (in year 2020).
- The IUCN Red List categorizes **African lions as 'Vulnerable'**, while the **Asiatic lion is considered 'Endangered'**.

10 August: World Biofuel Day

- It aims to raise awareness about non-fossil fuels as sustainable energy alternatives and to highlight government initiatives that support the biofuel industry.
- The day also commemorates the successful operation of an engine on peanut oil by German engineer Sir Rudolf Diesel on 9th August 1893.

- **Biofuels** are the fuel derived from the biomass of plants or animal wastes. It is commonly produced from corn, sugarcane and animal waste like cow dung. These come under renewable sources of energy.

Most common biofuels:

- **Ethanol:** It is produced by fermentation of crop residues such as corn and sugarcane. After fermentation, the ethanol is mixed with petroleum, diluting it and reducing emissions. The most common blend is Ethanol-10, which contains 10% ethanol.
- **Biodiesel:** It is a renewable, biodegradable fuel made from used cooking oil, recycled restaurant grease, yellow grease, or animal fats. Its production involves burning the oil or fat with alcohol in the presence of a catalyst

12 August: World Elephant Day

- Theme for 2024: “Personifying prehistoric beauty, theological relevance, and environmental importance”.
- India is home to about 60% of the world’s Asian elephant population, with an estimated 27,312 individuals as per the 2017 census and 138 identified elephant corridors.
- Elephants have a gestation period of about 22 months, the longest of any land animal.

14 August: Partition Horrors Remembrance Day (Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas)

- Declared by Government since 2021, this day is observed to honour those who lost their lives or were displaced during the partition.

23 August: National Space Day

- Recently, India celebrated its first National Space Day on 23rd August 2024. It is celebrated to mark the safe and soft landing of Vikram Lander of Chandrayaan-3 mission, on the lunar surface on 23rd August 2023.
- The Department of School Education & Literacy, in collaboration with NCERT, launched the e-magazine ‘Sapno ki Udaan.’

29 August: National Sports Day (NSD) 2024

- This day marks the birth anniversary of **Major Dhyan Chand**, a prominent hockey player in India’s pre-independence period. He is famously known as the “*Wizard of Hockey*” and “*The Magician*” due to his stick work and understanding of the game. He played a key role in *India’s first hat-trick of Olympic gold medals*, winning at the 1928, 1932, and 1936 Summer Olympics.
- **Note:** Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has inaugurated a Sports University in **RHajgir** on National Sports Day.

5 September: Teachers’ Day (India)

- This day marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). He served as first Vice President of India (1952-62) and later the second President of India (1962-67).
- On this day, the President of India confers **the National Teachers’ Award (NTA)** to honour teachers and recognise their contributions in empowering and educating society. NTA carries a certificate of merit, a cash award of Rs. 50,000 and a silver medal. It is given by the Ministry of Education. In 2024, 82 teachers were selected for NTA. Only regular teachers and heads of schools with a minimum ten years of services are eligible.

8 September: as International Literacy Day

- ILD 2024 Theme: “*Promoting multilingual education: Literacy for mutual understanding and peace.*”

7 September: International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies / (Swachh Vayu Diwas)

- It is celebrated to raise awareness and facilitate actions to improve air quality.
- It was declared so by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2019.

10 September: World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)

- World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) is observed annually on 10th September to increase global awareness that suicide is preventable and to encourage open conversations about mental health.
- The triennial theme for World Suicide Prevention Day from 2024 to 2026 is “*Changing the Narrative on Suicide*”. The first WSPD was launched in Stockholm on 10th September 2003, as an initiative by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

14 September: National Hindi Diwas

- Year 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of Hindi’s adoption as the official language of the country.
- The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation released a commemorative postage stamp to mark the completion of 75 years of Hindi as an official language.

- On 14th September 1949, the Constituent Assembly designated Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union of India.
- The **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**, a compromise between K M Munshi and N Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, resulted in **Article 343** of the Constitution adopting Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union, while allowing English to continue for official purposes for fifteen years.
- Official Languages Act 1963, upheld English as an official language alongside Hindi.

15 September: National Engineers Day

- Sir **M. Visvesvaraya's** birth anniversary is celebrated annually as Engineers Day in India to honor his legacy and contributions to the field of engineering. Born in Karnataka, he was an eminent engineer, scholar, and statesman. He is widely recognized as an early advocate and practitioner of Economic Planning in India, called the Visvesvaraya Plan, which he presented in a book titled "*Planned Economy in India*".
- In 1955, he was awarded India's highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna, for his exceptional service to the nation.

16 September: Ozone day

- Theme 2024: "*Montreal Protocol: Advancing Climate Actions*".
- In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed September 16 as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the signing date of the Montreal Protocol in 1987.

22 September: World Rhino Day 2024

- It is celebrated annually on September 22 to raise awareness about the five endangered rhino species: *Javan, Sumatran, Black, Greater One-Horned, and White rhinos*.
- Theme for 2024 – *Keep the Five Alive*, emphasising the importance of protecting all five rhino species.

23 September: International Day of Sign Languages

25 September: Antyodaya Diwas

- It is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. He focused on Antyodaya which means upliftment of the last person and address the needs of the most disadvantaged individuals in society. He was the co-founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which later evolved into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In 2018, the Mughalsarai Junction railway station in UP was renamed Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction. He died near Mughal Sarai in 1968.

26 September: The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

- It is celebrated every year to raise awareness about the threat of nuclear weapons and to promote their elimination. It was declared by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2013.

26 September: World Maritime Day 2024

- Theme 2024: "*Navigating the Future: Safety First!*"

27 September: World Tourism Day

- Theme: "Tourism and Peace."

28 September: World Rabies Day

- Theme 2024: "*Breaking Rabies Boundaries,*"

29 September: International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFWL)

- A 2023 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reveals that about 30% of global food production is lost or wasted, which could feed the hungry.

1 October: International Day of Older Persons 2024 on 1st October 2024.

- Theme for 2024: *Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide*.
- Note: The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) aligns with SDG-3 on Good Health and Well-Being.
- As of December 2023, India has 153 million elderly individuals (60+), projected to rise to 347 million by 2050, making up 20.8% of the total population.

2 October: International Day of Non-Violence

- This day coincides with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

5 October: World Teachers' Day**6 October: World Cerebral Palsy Day**

- Theme 2024: "Uniquely CP", (it emphasizes that a person's disability does not define their entire identity).

7 October: World Cotton Day

- Theme 2024: Cotton for Good.
- The Indian government aims to achieve a textile export target of USD 100 billion by 2030.
- India is the world's largest producer of cotton, accounting for about 23% of the world's cotton production.
- India is the world's second-largest exporter of cotton, after the United States.
- India's major cotton importers include Bangladesh, China, and Vietnam.

World Habitat Day 2024

- Theme for 2024: 'Engaging Youth to Create a Better Urban Future,'
- In 1985, the UN designated the first Monday of October each year as World Habitat Day.
- This year (2024), it falls on **7 October**.

8 October: Indian Air Force (IAF) Day

- Theme 2024: "Bhartiya Vayu Sena: Saksham, Sashakt, Atmanirbhar" (Potent, Powerful, and Self-Reliant).
- This day commemorates the founding of the IAF in 1932 and highlights its vital role in safeguarding the nation's airspace and supporting ground operations.
- The 92nd anniversary of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was celebrated at Marina Beach, Chennai, featuring an airshow.
- The motto of IAF is Touch the sky with Glory (Nabhah Sparsam Diptam) which has been taken from the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

9 October: World Post Day

- Theme 2024: "150 years of enabling communication and empowering peoples across nations".
- The Department of Posts has released commemorative stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

About Universal Postal Union / UPU

- UPU is a United Nations specialised agency and the postal sector's primary forum for international cooperation.
- It was established on 9th October 1874, in Berne, Switzerland and India joined UPU in 1876.
- It has played a crucial role in standardising international postal regulations, facilitating seamless mail exchange.
- It is headquartered in **Berne** and is the 2nd oldest international organisation worldwide after International Telegraph Union (1865).

Postal Service in India:

- 1852: Issuance of "Scinde Dawk," India's first postage stamp.
- 1854: Establishment of India's first post office in Bombay. **Year 2024 also marks 170 years of establishment of India Post** which was founded in 1854 during the tenure of Lord Dalhousie.

10 October: World Mental Health Day (WMHD)

- Theme of WMHD 2024: Mental Health at Work.
- WMHD was first initiated in **1992** by the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH).
- The Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) has introduced the **"TeleMANAS"** (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) **toll-free helpline**, providing counseling services for individuals experiencing mental distress.

October 11: International Day of the Girl Child

- Theme 2024: "Girls' Vision for the Future".
- On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme**: It was launched in January 2015 with the aim to address sex selective abortion and the declining child sex ratio (0-6 years) which was at 919 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011. This is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

and Ministry of Human Resource Development. The programme is being implemented across 640 districts in the country.

12 October: World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)?

- It is a biannual global event observed on 11 May and 12 October in 2024.
- Theme 2024: “Insects for Birds”.

16 October: World Food Day

- Theme 2024: *Right to Food for a Better Life and a Better Future*.

23 October: International Snow Leopard Day

- It came into being in 2013, following the adoption of the **Bishkek Declaration** in Kyrgyzstan where **12 countries** that host snow leopard populations agreed to collaborate in their conservation efforts.
- Countries Hosting Snow Leopards: Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The estimated population in different Indian states are as follows: Ladakh (477), Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9).
- **Hemis National Park in Ladakh** is called the Snow Leopard capital of the world.

24 October: United Nations Day

- **UN Charter** was signed on 26th June, 1945, in San Francisco at the end of the UN Conference on International Organisation and came into force on 24th October 1945.
- India is one of the founding members and ratified the UN charter on 30th October, 1945.

24 October: World Polio Day

- Poliovirus, the cause of polio, is a life-threatening virus that can lead to paralysis and, in severe cases, death.
- There are three types of wild polioviruses: Wild Poliovirus Type 1 (WPV1), Wild Poliovirus Type 2 (WPV2), and Wild Poliovirus Type 3 (WPV3).

24 October: 63rd ITBP Raising Day

- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is one of India's five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
- It was raised on **24th October, 1962** during the India China War and is a border guarding police force specialising in high altitude operations.
- Motto: “Shaurya-Dridhata-Karma Nishtha”.
- Currently, it is posted in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ITBP also conducts relief and rescue operations as ‘*First Responders*’ for natural calamities in the Himalayan region.

27 October: Indian Army Infantry Day

- This day marks the landing of the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment at Srinagar airfield in 1947, a pivotal moment in the defense of Jammu and Kashmir against invading forces.

31 October: National Unity Day

- This year marks the 149th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Patel was India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.
- National Unity Day serves as a reminder of the values Patel embodied—**unity, integrity, and inclusiveness**.
- On 31st October 2018, the **Statue of Unity**, the world's tallest statue at 182 meters (600 feet), was inaugurated at **Kevadia, Gujarat**, honouring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- In 2020 India's Statue of Unity was included in the list of eight wonders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

STATE'S NEWS

Himachal Pradesh

- Recently, the Himachal Pradesh (HP) Assembly passed the ***Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024***, which aims to raise the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21 years. It seeks to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA 2006) to advance gender equality and encourage higher education among women.

- Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has unveiled a transformative state government initiative named ‘**Sankalp**’, marking a significant step in Himachal Pradesh’s fight against drug trafficking and addiction.

Kerala

- Landslide in Wayanad:** The Indian Army’s Madras Engineer Group assembled a 190-foot **Bailey bridge in Chooralmala, Wayanad, Kerala** to facilitate the movement of vehicles and machinery following devastating landslides. A **Bailey bridge** is a type of modular bridge whose parts are pre-built, so they can be put together quickly as needed. Donald Coleman Bailey an english civil engineeris credited with inventing it during World War II.

Ladakh:

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs Minister granted “in-principle approval” for the formation of five new districts in Ladakh, increasing the Union Territory’s total number of districts from two (**Leh and Kargil**) to seven. The five new districts are **Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang**.

Madhya Pradesh

- The state of Madhya Pradesh, under the leadership of Dr Mohan Yadav, has launched a scheme to provide cash directly to adolescent girls for purchasing sanitary napkins.
- In a pioneering move aimed at enhancing the safety of women in healthcare settings, **Madhya Pradesh has installed ‘pink alarms’** at the government-run district hospital and medical college in Datia. This initiative addresses growing concerns about the safety of female staff in public hospitals.
- The Madhya Pradesh government, has approved a groundbreaking scheme named ‘**Brindavan Gram**’ which aims to transform selected gram panchayats into model villages, focusing on cow protection and rural development.

Other states:

- Recently, Uttarakhand became the 1st state in the country to assign monetary values to its natural resources, including air, water, forest, and soil and termed it as the Gross Environment Product (GEP).
- The Uttarakhand Madrasa Education Board (UMEB) has proposed making **Sanskrit** a compulsory subject in 416 madrassas across the state.
- Recently, the **Delhi Police** launched ‘**Operation Kavach-5.0**’ in a major crackdown against drug trafficking, resulting in significant arrests and seizures across the national capital.
- Recently, the **Delhi** government launched a **21-point winter action plan** to combat air pollution, featuring real-time drone surveys and a special task force.
- Recently, 17th September 2024 marked the 76th anniversary of the accession of Hyderabad to independent India. **Operation Polo** was launched to prevent Hyderabad from becoming a security threat to the Indian Union.
- The Telangana government plans to build an **AI City** with the aim to become a global hub for Artificial Intelligence. Additionally, an **AI School** will be established within the city to cultivate expertise and foster education in AI.
- The **Jujumara region** in Odisha’s Sambalpur district is home to one of the first Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) in the state dedicated exclusively to **floriculture**, transitioning from traditional paddy farming. Floriculture involves the cultivation of flowering and ornamental plants for various purposes, such as direct sale, cosmetics, perfume, and pharmaceutical industries.
- Recently, communal violence erupted in **Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh**, during a religious procession, leading to death and multiple injuries.
- Goa** CM Pramod Sawant has launched the ‘**Goem Vinamulya Vij Yevjan**’ scheme, aligning it with the Prime Minister’s Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The initiative is aimed at enhancing solar rooftop installations in Goa.
- The government of **Jharkhand**, has launched **Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana**, a significant welfare initiative aimed at empowering women in the state.
- The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government has launched the ‘**Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin yojna**’. This initiative aims to provide **₹1500 every month** to more than one crore women across the state.
- The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to scrap the two-child norm for contesting local body elections in view of the declining fertility rate in the state.
- Telangana becomes the third state to initiate a caste-based headcount, following Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.
- India’s First Rice ATM:** **Odisha** has introduced India’s first round-the-clock grain dispensing machine, known as the Annapurta Grain ATM, designed to transform the Public Distribution System (PDS) for ration cardholders.
- The “**Mera Hou Chongba**” festival was celebrated in **Manipur** amidst ongoing ethnic tensions between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities.
- Odisha** govt launched “**SUBHADRA**” scheme which is aimed at empowering women through financial support, enhanced digital literacy, and access to social safety nets.
- An outbreak of **bird flu**, caused by the **H5N1 strain** of avian influenza, has been reported in **Pipili town, Puri district, Odisha**.

- Maharashtra govt will establish the tribal university for the development of tribal students and for their better future in the Nashik district of Maharashtra.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Banjara Virasat Museum in Pohardevi, Washim, Maharashtra, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Banjara community.
- Shri Piyush Goyal, as he inaugurated the Akurli bridge on the Western Express Highway in Mumbai.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Park (**PM MITRA**) in Maharashtra's **Amravati**.
- Mizoram's CM Lalduhoma officially launched the **Hand Holding Scheme (Bana Kaih)**, which is designed to provide financial assistance and support to entrepreneurs and farmers across the state, promoting economic growth and self-sufficiency through a range of targeted programs.
- Tripura CM Dr. Manik Saha officially launched the **CM-SATH scheme** to boost the educational prospects of the state's brightest students. The scheme, designed to provide financial support to meritorious students for their higher education, reflects the state government's commitment to quality education.
- Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Shri. L. G. Saxena launched the **Dust Free Drive** across the cities to combat the Air Pollution.
- Conrad K Sangma, Meghalaya CM, launched the **GREEN Meghalaya Plus (GMP) Scheme** for conservation and enhancement of forest cover.
- Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma officially launched **Mission Basundhara 3.0** to empower indigenous communities by providing them with formal land rights, ensuring greater security and recognition of their holdings.

MISCELLANEOUS (in News)

India's first 'Writer's village' inaugurated in Dehradun

- Located in Thanu village, about 24 km from Dehradun, the 'Writer's village' is the brainchild of former chief minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, a distinguished writer himself.
- Nishank claims that in this village, writers will get a calm and creative environment necessary for the creation of their works.

Teghbir Singh, a five-year-old boy from Ropar, Punjab, has become the youngest Asian to successfully scale **Mount Kilimanjaro**, Africa's highest peak, standing at an impressive 5,895 meters above sea level.

India aims to become a "**developed nation**" by 2047 under the banner of "**Viksit Bharat 2047**."

India has **surpassed the UK** to become the **fifth largest economy** globally. Analysts from Morgan Stanley project that India could overtake Japan and Germany to reach the third spot by 2027.

Recently, the **fifth anniversary of the revocation of Article 370**, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was observed. On **5th August 2019**, the Government of India revoked Article 370.

The Supreme Court (SC) ruled that the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi can nominate "aldermen" to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) without needing advice from the Delhi Government's Council of Ministers. Alderman refers to a member of a city council or municipal body.

Education received the highest share of **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** expenditure in FY23, with Rs 10,085 crore. India is the first country to make CSR spending compulsory under clause 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, with a framework for identifying potential CSR activities.

Recently, India has been elected as **Vice-Chair** of the Supply Chain Council which is one of the three bodies set up by the **14-member Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** bloc.

Project ASMITA: The project ASMITA aims to produce 22,000 books in Indian languages within five years.

The historic **Jaisalmer Fort** in Rajasthan experienced a collapse of its walls following heavy rainfall. This fort called **Sonar Quila** or "Golden Fort" because it is constructed from yellow sandstone that changes colour with sunlight. It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It is India's only 'living' fort, with residents living within its walls. Built in 1156 AD by Raja **Rawal Singh**, the fort was an important trade centre along the Silk Route, connecting India with Central Asia.

Recently, India's External Affairs Minister's (EAM) visited Vientiane (Laos) for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meetings.

A "**Lakhpati Didi**" is a member of a SHG who has successfully achieved an annual household income of Rupees One Lakh or more.

Recently, the **Wayanad district of Kerala** has witnessed one of the **most devastating landslide-related disasters** due to extreme rainfall and fragile ecological conditions.

Recently the Union Finance Minister addressed the **high attrition rates in Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)**, urging these institutions to adopt more employee-friendly policies.

24 July 1860: This day commemorates the **introduction of income tax in India** by Sir James Wilson, a British economist in 1860 to meet the losses from the 1857 Military Mutiny.

Lateral entry scheme: Lateral entry refers to the process of appointing individuals from outside the government

directly to mid-level and senior positions. It aims to bring in domain-specific expertise and fresh perspectives to enhance governance. These 'lateral entrants' are appointed on contracts for **3 years**, which can be extended to a **maximum of 5 years**.

Glass Ceiling: It refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women and other marginalised groups from advancing to senior positions in their careers, despite having the qualifications and capabilities to do so.

According to National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), in 2023, India reached a significant milestone by surpassing 1,000 deceased organ donors in a single year for the first time, breaking the record set in 2022.

The government has established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for clinical research organizations to ensure the safety of clinical trials. These updated regulations are part of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

Oilzapping is the new technique of using bacteria to get rid of oil spills.

Recently, some big tech companies including Google signed agreements to purchase nuclear energy to meet rising electricity demands for Artificial Intelligence data centres.

20th September 2024, marked 100 years since the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization, which was announced by archaeologist Sir John Marshall on 20th September 1924.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA): NPPA was formed in 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers. An independent regulator that sets drug prices and ensures their availability and accessibility. It derives authority from the Drugs Prices Control Order, 2013, and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Recently, a 2,492-carat diamond, the **second-largest in the world**, was discovered at the **Karowe Diamond Mine** in **Botswana**. The largest diamond ever found remains the Cullinan diamond, weighing 3,106 carats, which was discovered in South Africa in 1905.

Whitetopping is the process of applying an 100-200 mm overlay of cement concrete (bonded or unbonded) to existing bituminous roads (made using a mixture of asphalt and aggregate materials) for rehabilitation or structural strengthening.

Recently, the 450th **Jyoti Jot Diwas** (passing away day) of Sri Guru Amardas Ji, the third Sikh Guru, was marked.

Recently, the Border Security Force (BSF) has started using beekeeping as an innovative strategy to deter cross-border infiltration and smuggling activities from Bangladesh.

Recently, 22nd August 2024 marked the 130th foundation year of Natal Indian Congress (NIC) which was the first Indian Congress established, founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894 to fight against discrimination faced by Indian in Natal (province of South Africa).

As of 2024, India has 18% of the world's population but only 4% of its freshwater resources, making it one of the most water-stressed countries globally.

India has hosted the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) in New Delhi from August 2-7, 2024, marking a 66-year hiatus since its last hosting in 1958.

Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai and his wife Anjali Pichai were honoured by their alma mater, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur.

India's first Constitution Museum, named "*The Constitution Academy and The Rights & Freedoms Museum*," is set to be inaugurated by OP Jindal Global University, Haryana on November 26, 2024. This initiative celebrates the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution.

Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, has officially inaugurated the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi Abu Dhabi campus**. This momentous occasion marks the first time the prestigious IIT brand has established a full-fledged campus outside India, signifying a major leap in international academic collaboration.

India has surpassed the United States to become the **world's second-largest market for 5G smartphones**.

The Quality Council of India (QCI) has provisionally approved National Test House (NTH), Ghaziabad, as a certification body for type certification of drones under the Drone Rules 2021.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated the 132nd anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's landmark speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, delivered in 1893.

In a heartwarming gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced a newborn calf, '**Deepjyoti**', born at his official residence at Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi. Sharing a video on X, PM Modi revealed that the calf, with a unique light-like mark on its forehead, inspired the name 'Deepjyoti', which translates to 'light of the lamp'.

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum organized the third edition of the India-US Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit at Stanford University on Sept 9-10, 2024. The summit focused on leveraging private investment to advance defense innovation and will feature top policymakers, panel discussions, and a tech expo.

In a significant move to boost religious tourism and cultural heritage, the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have announced plans to develop a new religious circuit called the '**Shri Krishna Gaman Path**'.

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) has organized the **World Water Week** on 25-29 August 2024.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the **new GST Bhawan in Udaipur**, located in the Hiran Magri area.

Union Minister Chirag Paswan was on August 25 re-elected as the national president of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) for the next five years.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first Namo Bharat Rapid Rail on September 16, 2024, which will operate between Ahmedabad and Bhuj . Known as the Vande Metro , this new train covers a 360-kilometre distance in 5 hours and 45 minutes.
Union Minister of Textiles, Shri Giriraj Singh has launched the India-specific fashion trend book " Paridhi 24x25 ," a bilingual web portal of VisioNxt , and an AI Taxonomy e-book .
VisioNxt , launched by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), is a <u>fashion forecasting initiative</u> aimed at fostering global competition and elevating Indian culture and design.
India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) appointed Manu Bhaker , the double Olympic medal winner, as a brand ambassador .
The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, organized the International WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Conference during the 8th India Water Week from 17th-19th September 2024 in New Delhi .
Cambodia's Angkor Wat has been recognized as the most photogenic UNESCO World Heritage site in Asia by Times Travel.
Megastar Chiranjeevi has been officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the most prolific actor/dancer in the Indian film industry. Over 45 years, he has performed an astonishing 24,000 dance moves in 537 songs across 156 films.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gifted US President Joe Biden a silver train model made by master artisans from Maharashtra and First Lady Jill Biden a Pashmina shawl in a papier mache box .
The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan , a groundbreaking initiative by the Central Government of India, has chosen Mana village in the Joshimath block of Chamoli district for implementation. This selection marks a significant step towards improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities in the region.
The foundation stone for India's first of its kind CO2-to-Methanol pilot plant was laid at Thermax Limited premises in Pune , Maharashtra.
Maharashtra government approved a proposal to name Pune airport as Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj Pune International Airport .
The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with the Southern Command of the Indian Army, has organized a two-day national symposium, ' Exercise AIKYA ', <u>on disaster management</u> . It aims to improve disaster preparedness and response through collaboration between various stakeholders.
Shankh Air , India's latest airline , is poised to make its debut by the end of 2024 after receiving approval from the civil aviation ministry. This marks a significant development for Uttar Pradesh as Shankh Air aims to become the <u>state's first scheduled airline</u> , establishing hubs in Lucknow and the upcoming Noida International Airport.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) in Mumbai , aiming to enhance youth employability and create an industry-ready workforce for Industry 4.0.
HDFC Bank has officially opened its first branch in Singapore as part of its strategy to expand its international operations.
Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been awarded an A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Cards 2024, marking his second consecutive year of recognition. This accolade was presented by Global Finance during an event in Washington, D.C.
The iconic Shah Alam Stadium of Malaysia was demolished because of safety concerns.
State-owned BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Limited) has been awarded a contract worth ₹866.87 crore by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) to design, manufacture, and commission India's first indigenously built bullet trains.
An 18-year-old Nepali mountaineer, Nima Rinji Sherpa, made history on Wednesday by becoming the youngest person to summit all 14 of the world's 8,000-meter (26,246-foot) peaks.
Founded in 1988 , this year (2024) year marks the 26th anniversary of Google .
Recently, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) launched the ' Digital Memorial of Valour ' in New Delhi, a heartfelt initiative dedicated to honoring the sacrifices of its brave personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty.
Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh launched the 21st Livestock Census , which will be conducted until February 2025 at a cost of ₹200 crore.
A cyber-espionage operation allegedly orchestrated by a Chinese hacking group known as " Salt Typhoon " has reportedly targeted the phone data of former President Donald Trump, his running mate JD Vance, and various Democratic figures, including staff from Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign.

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