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1. The website of the **18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention** was jointly launched by **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**.

Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh also joined the launch ceremony.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is a flagship event of the Government of India. It provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indian Diaspora.

The 18th PBD Convention will be **organized from 08-10 January 2025 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha,** in collaboration with the State Government of Odisha.

The theme of the PBD Convention for 2025 is **"Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat".** It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

A Youth edition of PBD will be held in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

President Smt. Droupadi Murmu will confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards and preside over the Valedictory Session.

The launch of the PBD website marks the commencement of online registration for participation in the PBD Convention 2025. The website will also facilitate the reservation of accommodation in Odisha and provide detailed information on PBD 2025.

2. **The Indian Coast Guard** conducted the **11th edition** of the **National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2024)** off the **Kochi coast**

The exercise was conducted on November 28-29, 2024.

The exercise was held under the aegis of the **National Maritime Search and Rescue Board** in **Kochi, Kerala.**

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Director General & the National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordinating Authority, **S Paramesh** inaugurated the event.

The theme of the event was '*Enhancing Search and Rescue Capabilities through Regional Collaboration'.*

The event featured various programs, including tabletop exercises, workshops & seminars involving the participation of senior officials from government agencies, Ministries & Armed Forces, various stakeholders, and foreign delegates.

An MoU was signed with Indian Ocean Rim Association member states for coordinating SAR in the Indian Ocean Region and ICG is the implementing agency.

3. The Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, **Prof Ajay K Sood**, chaired the **2nd All S&T (Science & Technology) Clusters' Meet** held on 25–26 November 2024 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The meeting was hosted by the **Bhubaneswar City Knowledge and Innovation Cluster Foundation (BCKIC).**

The meeting coincided with the **25th Anniversary of the Office of the PSA (OPSA)** on 25 November 2024.

The S&T Cluster Initiative, launched by the **OPSA** in **2020,** has established eight vibrant clusters across the country:
- Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone (AMTZ) - Vizag,
- Bengaluru Science and Technology (BeST),
- Bhubaneswar City Knowledge and InnovaJtion Cluster Foundation (BCKIC),
- Delhi Research Implementation and Innovation (DRIIV),
- Jodhpur City Knowledge and Innovation Cluster (JCKIC),
- Punjab University – IIT Ropar Regional Accelerator for Holistic Innovations (PI-RAHI),
- Pune Knowledge Cluster Foundation (PKCF), and
- Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH).

These clusters bring together academia, industry, local government, and startups to collaboratively address regional challenges through innovative S&T interventions.

During the meeting, all eight clusters presented their accomplishments and ongoing initiatives, showcasing the tangible benefits of collaborative efforts.

Six thematic compendiums on (i) Healthcare, (ii) Energy and Environment, (iii) Agritech and Nutrition, (iv) STEM Education, (v) Livelihood through S&T Interventions, and (vi) North East India Impact and Industry 4.0, were released during the meeting.

Prof Ajay K Sood also inaugurated the **Atal Tinkering Labs' Student Innovation Fair** organized by BCKIC under its "Catch Them Young" program. The fair provided a platform for school students and startups to present innovative ideas and products, and interact with Prof. Sood. He also inaugurated the cluster dashboard that will track and highlight the progress of cluster activities.

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4. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the selection of **eight** pioneering **Startups** for support under the Department of Science and Technology's newly formulated guidelines.

These startups, chosen under the **National Quantum Mission (NQM)** and the **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NMICPS),** represent the forefront of innovation in this rapidly evolving field.

The list of startups is as follows:

- Bengaluru-based **QNu Labs** is spearheading advancements in quantum communication by developing end-to-end quantum-safe heterogeneous networks. Similarly,
- **QPiAI India Private Ltd.** from Bengaluru is working on building a superconducting quantum computer, marking a milestone in quantum computing.
- **Dimira Technologies Pvt. Ltd**., based at IIT Mumbai, is focusing on Indigenous cryogenic cables essential for quantum computing, while
- **Prenishq Pvt. Ltd**. from IIT Delhi is developing precision diode-laser systems that are vital for the sector's growth.
- **QuPrayog Pvt. Ltd**. from Pune is innovating optical atomic clocks and related technologies.
- **Quanastra Pvt. Ltd**. from Delhi is developing advanced cryogenics and superconducting detectors.
- Ahmedabad's **Pristine Diamonds Pvt. Ltd**. is creating diamond materials for quantum sensing.
- Bengaluru's **Quan2D Technologies Pvt. Ltd**. is advancing superconducting Nanowire Single-photon Detectors.

These Startups were meticulously chosen after a rigorous evaluation process, reflecting their alignment with NQM's vision of fostering cutting-edge research, innovation, and industrial applications to place India at the forefront of quantum technology on the global stage.

5. A **High-Level Committee**, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, **Amit Shah** has approved **Rs.1115.67 crore** for disaster mitigation and capacity-building projects for various states.

The committee, comprising the Finance Minister, Agriculture Minister, and Vice Chairman NITI Aayog as members, considered the proposal to mitigate Landslide Risk in 15 States, for funding from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) and another proposal for training and capacity building of Civil Defense volunteers in all States and UTs under Preparedness and Capacity Building from the funding window of National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

The Committee has approved the **National Landslide Risk Mitigation** project in **15 States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal)** at a total cost of **Rs. 1000 crore.** The committee approved **Rs. 139 crore** for Uttarakhand, **Rs. 139 crore** for Himachal Pradesh, **Rs.378 crore** for eight North East States**, Rs.100 crore** for Maharashtra, **Rs.72 crore** for Karnataka, **Rs. 72 crore** for Kerala, **Rs.50 crore** for Tamil Nadu and **Rs.50 crore** for West Bengal.

It also approved another project for training and capacity building of civil defense in all States/UTs at a total outlay of **Rs.115.67 crore**.

Earlier, the committee had approved **Urban Flood Risk Mitigation Projects** in **seven cities** at a total outlay of Rs 3075.65 crore and GLOF Risk Management in 4 states at a total outlay of Rs. 150 crores from NDMF.

Note:

Rs.21,476 crore has already been released to the states during this year. This includes Rs.14,878.40 crore from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to 26 States, Rs.4,637.66 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to 15 States, Rs.1,385.45 crore from State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) to 11 States and Rs.574.93 crore from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to 06 States.

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6. The Tiger population has increased as per the **All-India Tiger Estimation** done in **2022,** with an estimated number of **3682 (range 3167-3925)** as compared to the **2018** estimation of **2967 (range 2603-3346)** and 2014 estimation of 2226 (range 1945-2491).

It is increasing at a rate of **6% per annum** in India when consistently sampled areas are compared.

The Government of India, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority, has advocated a three prolonged strategy to manage human-wildlife negative interactions as follows: -

- **Material and logistical support:** Funding support through the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger. These are solicited by tiger reserves through an Annual Plan of Operation (APO) every year which stems from an overarching Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP), mandated under **Section 38 V** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Restricting habitat interventions:** Based on the carrying capacity of tigers in a tiger reserve, habitat interventions are restricted through an overarching TCP. In case tiger

numbers are at carrying capacity levels, it is advised that habitat interventions should be limited. Further, in buffer areas around tiger reserves, habitat interventions are restricted such that they are sub-optimal vis-à-vis the core/critical tiger habitat areas.

- **Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs):** The National Tiger Conservation Authority has issued the following three SOPs to deal with human-animal conflict, which are available in the public domain:
  - To deal with emergencies arising due to the straying of tigers in human-dominated landscapes
  - To deal with tiger depredation on livestock
  - For active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at the landscape level.

Note: The top three states with the highest population of tigers are Madhya Pradesh (785), Karnataka (563), and Uttarakhand (560).

7. **Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan** unveiled the **TeacherApp** in New Delhi.

The app is an innovative digital platform designed to revolutionize education in India by equipping educators with future-ready skills to meet the demands of 21st-century classrooms.

The Platform has been developed by **Bharti Airtel Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of **Bharti Enterprises.**

The theme of the event was **"Elevating Teachers, Elevating India".**

Other dignitaries present were Vice Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, Rakesh Bharti Mittal & CEO of Bharti Airtel Foundation, Mamta Saikia.

This app will significantly empower teachers through continuous capacity building, leveraging innovative course content, technology, and community-building features.

Key Features of the App:

- This user-centric, free app developed with direct inputs from teachers is accessible across the Web, iOS, and Android, ensuring seamless access for educators nationwide.

- The platform offers over **260 hours of high-quality resources**, both created and curated including courses, learning bytes, short videos, podcasts, and interactive webinar formats such as thematic fests, webinars, competitions, and quizzes, all designed to foster future readiness, elevate pedagogical practices, and enhance student engagement in classrooms.

- The app also features **live expert sessions** that provide practical classroom strategies and aims to build a community of teachers by highlighting their exceptional impact stories.

- The app combines tech innovation with partnerships across **12 states** to transform education.

- This platform has a unique section called **Teaching Kits** comprising content of **900 hours.**

- This feature is designed to support teachers with tools Including teaching videos, project-based learning activities, worksheets, lesson plans, and question banks, among others for classroom delivery.

- The TeacherApp not only supports teachers' growth but also empowers schools' leaders and administrators. Aligned with the **National Education Policy 2020**, the app aims to build future-ready educators equipped to meet the evolving needs of education.

8. The **Ministry of Culture**, along with its autonomous bodies and Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs), launched targeted initiatives focused on the preservation, conservation, and promotion of India's diverse cultural heritage, encompassing regional languages, traditional art forms, and performing arts that are endangered.

   The list is as follows:

- **Sahitya Akademi (SA)** works for the promotion of literature in 24 recognized languages and various unrecognized and tribal languages. It organizes language conventions and awards the Bhasha Samman to scholars for their contributions to unrecognized languages.
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA)** and **Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA)** undertake initiatives to preserve endangered performing arts and visual arts, respectively, by organizing workshops, exhibitions, and residencies, and creating platforms like the Museum of Performing Arts and the **PARI project** to showcase regional art and talent.
- Several other initiatives like Kala Deeksha, Kala Dharohar, Museum of Performing Arts, Kala Pravah (Temple Festival Series), Jyotirgamaya, camps for puppetry, Dokra Casting, Mask Making, Rangoli Workshop, Tribal art conclave, have been undertaken by these autonomous bodies for the preservation of the dying and rare performing art forms across the country.
- **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** focuses on documenting endangered languages and art forms through films, texts, digital archives, and workshops.
- **National Mission on Manuscripts** undertakes the works of conserving manuscripts to tap into the vast potential of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and to make rare manuscripts accessible to scholars, researchers, and the general public.
- Other notable initiatives include Theatre Rejuvenation, which supports stage shows and workshops, **Shilpgram,** which promotes rural crafts and organizes fairs, and the **National Cultural Exchange Programme (NCEP),** which fosters cross-cultural understanding.

   Note: Project PARI (Public Art of India) is a Ministry of Culture initiative that aims to create public art that draws inspiration from India's artistic heritage while also incorporating modern themes and techniques. The project is being executed by the National Gallery of Modern Art and Lalit Kala Akademi, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture.

9. The Ministry of Culture has signed **Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs)** with various countries to disseminate Indian art and culture across the globe.

   As of date, the Ministry of Culture has CEPs under negotiation with **144 countries.** There are valid signed CEPs with **84 countries.**

These programs aim to enhance India's soft power and foster inter-cultural relations with other nations.

Cultural exchanges cover diverse areas, including Music and Dance, Theatre, Museums and science museums, Libraries and archives, Protection and conservation of historical monuments and archaeological sites, Literature, research, and documentation, and Festivals and cultural events.

The **Festival of India (FoI)** abroad seeks to promote India's rich cultural heritage and enhance India's image in the global arena in a concerted manner.

FoIs are organized to have a lasting impact on the people of the country where FoI is held. This approach is expected to benefit India in the fields of **tourism, health, education, commerce, etc**., and provide strategic depth to the growing influence of India.

This would ultimately lead to more tangible results in terms of trade and commerce, inbound tourism, medical tourism, Ayush, etc. Broadly, Festivals of India abroad are conducted with the objectives to:
- Promote Indian Culture abroad.
- Strengthen the bonds of foreign countries with India.
- Promote bilateral cultural contacts.
- Project India's cultural image abroad.
- Promote inbound tourism.

Since 2013-14 till date, 62 Festivals of India in 59 countries have been held.

10. **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh** launched the **VISION Portal (Viksit Bharat Initiative for Student Innovation and Outreach Network)** in New Delhi.

The portal was developed by the **Utsav Foundation**, a non-profit organization based in Gurugram.

The portal aims to uplift underprivileged youth through education, skill development, and sustainable livelihoods.

The VISION Portal aligns with the Vision India 2047 framework.

Portal's Goals:
- **Student Innovation:** Funds and mentors school, ITI, and college students for entrepreneurial projects addressing societal challenges.
- **Skill Development:** Empowers youth with internships and training to enhance problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Focuses on projects promoting technological advancements and societal impact.

During the event, the Minister highlighted the **Indian Startup Ecosystem**. India's biotech startups grew from 50 in 2014 to 9,000 in 2024, propelled by the **Bio-E3** policy for economic, employment, and environmental sustainability.

11. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Cooperative Conference 2024** at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi.**
    The conference provides a platform for leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to address issues, share practices, and strategies for advancing the cooperative movement.

    The major dignitaries present were:
    - The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah
    - Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dasho Tshering Tobgay
    - Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji, Manoa Kamikamica
    - President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Ariel Guarco

    The six-day-long ICA Global Cooperative Conference and ICA General Assembly were organized in India for the **first time** in the **130-year-long history** of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) from 25th to 30th November 2024.

    The theme of the conference was **"Cooperatives Build Prosperity for All".**

    Key Highlights:

    - The Conference was hosted by **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)**, in collaboration with **ICA** and the Government of India, and Indian Cooperatives **AMUL** and **Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO).**
    - The event featured discussions, panel sessions, and workshops on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, and sustainable economic growth.
    - During the conference, the PM launched the **United Nations' International Year of Cooperatives 2025,** centered on the theme **"Cooperatives Build a Better World."**
    - It was highlighted that the year 2025 will be a global initiative aimed at showcasing the power of cooperative enterprises in addressing the world's most pressing challenges.
    - A commemorative postal stamp featuring a **lotus** was launched. The **five petals** of the lotus represent the five elements of **nature (Panchatatva)**, highlighting cooperatives' commitment to **environmental, social, and economic sustainability**.

    International Cooperative Alliance:

    The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is a non-governmental cooperative organization founded in **1895** to unite, represent and serve cooperatives worldwide.

    The **ICA** has over **306 member organizations** across **105 countries**.

    Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium

12. An **Implementation Agreement (IA)** was signed between the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **the Australian Space Agency (ASA)** to strengthen cooperation in space activities between Australia and India.

The IA enables cooperation between both space agencies on crew and crew module recovery for **Gaganyaan missions**.

The IA was signed by **DK Singh,** Director, **HSFC** on the ISRO side at Bengaluru, and **Jarrod Powell,** General Manager, Space Capability Branch, on the ASA side at Canberra.

13. The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **WinZO**, India's largest social gaming and interactive entertainment platform.

The MoU was signed for over two years.

This collaboration will focus on building a robust ecosystem of **over 2,000 startups**, innovators, and students, providing them with mentorship, industry insights, and access to global opportunities.

Under this collaboration, WinZO will establish a Center of Excellence (CoE), in sync with DPIIT.

The CoE will serve as a launchpad for startups and entrepreneurs, focusing on critical aspects such as building a skilled, industry-ready workforce.

The MoU will expand WinZO's flagship **Tech Triumph Program (Bharat Edition),** a platform for identifying and mentoring India's top game developers.

This program showcased India's gaming talent at global forums such as the Game Developers Conference (GDC) and Gamescom LATAM, and will now scale its impact through DPIIT's support.

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14. **Manohar Lal, Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs**, flagged off **NTPC's green hydrogen buses** at **Leh.**

This is an initiative under the **Green Hydrogen Mobility Project.**

The green hydrogen mobility project at Leh comprises an in-situ **1.7 MW** solar plant, a green hydrogen filling station with 80 kg/day capacity, and five hydrogen intra-city buses.

Each bus can cover **300 km** per single filling of **25 kg hydrogen**.

This is also the world's highest altitude **(3650m MSL)** Green Hydrogen Mobility Project that is designed to operate in low-density air, sub-zero temperature, and can fill hydrogen at **350 bar pressure.**

This station shall mitigate the carbon emissions of approx. **350 MT/year** and contribute **230 MT/year** of pure oxygen into the atmosphere which is equal to planting of approx. 13000 trees.

The potential of green hydrogen mobility solutions in Ladakh is very strong considering the high solar irradiance with low temperature.

NTPC is setting up more hydrogen mobility projects across India in addition to the deployment of various green hydrogen technologies.

15. The induction ceremony of the **sixth Missile Cum Ammunition Barge, LSAM 12 (Yard 80)** was held at **Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.**

The ceremony was presided over by **Cmde Abhirup Majumdar**, Command Refit Officer, Headquarters Western Naval Command.

These barges will facilitate transportation, embarkation, and disembarkation of articles or ammunition to Navy platforms both alongside jetties and at outer harbors.

The contract for the construction of **eight MCA Barges** was concluded with **M/s SECON Engineering Projects Pvt. Ltd.,** Visakhapatnam, in February 2024.

The barges have been built according to the relevant Naval Rules and Regulations of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) and are aligned with Make in India and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives.

These Barges will provide impetus to the operational commitments of the Indian Navy (IN) by facilitating **Transportation, Embarkation, and Disembarkation of articles/ ammunition** to *IN* platforms both alongside jetties and at outer harbors.

16. Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the **'Odisha Parba 2024'** program at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.

Odisha Parba is a flagship event conducted by Odia Samaj, a trust in New Delhi. The event is engaged in providing valuable support for the preservation and promotion of Odia's heritage.

This year Odisha Parba was organized from the 22nd to 24th of November.

It showcased the rich heritage of Odisha displaying colourful cultural forms and exhibiting the vibrant social, cultural, and political ethos of the State.

The event was first organized in the year 2017 at India Gate, New Delhi.

Odia Samaj:

Odia Samaj was established on **27th February 2017** as a non-profit organization. Odia Samaj has been relentlessly working to create a platform for Odia to stay connected to each other and their culture and heritage.

17. The **6ᵗʰ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)** Joint Committee was held in New Delhi.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Additional Secretary, **Department of Commerce**, **Rajesh Agrawal**, and Deputy Secretary General (Trade), Ministry of Investment, Trade & Industry, **Malaysia**, **Mastura Ahmad Mustafa.**
The leads and delegates from all **10 ASEAN** countries, **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand & Vietnam** participated in the meeting.

Key Highlights:

- There are 8 sub-committees under the AITIGA Joint Committee that negotiate various technical, legal, and institutional terms.

- 5 Sub-Committees met physically on the sidelines of the meeting.

- This round of AITIGA review negotiations was preceded by two high-level meetings, the 21st ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Meeting in September 2024 and the 21st ASEAN-India Summit in October 2024, both in Vientiane, Laos. The conclusion review will be held in 2025.

- Bilateral meetings with **Thailand** and **Indonesian** teams were held to discuss bilateral trade issues.

ASEAN is one of the major trade partners of India with about 11% share in India's global trade. The bilateral trade in 2023-24 was USD 121 Bn and reached USD 73 Bn during April-October 2024 with a 5.2% growth.

ASEAN:

The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (**ASEAN**) was established on **8 August 1967** in **Bangkok, Thailand**, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).

Note: The next meeting of the AITIGA Joint Committee is scheduled in February 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

18. The **Embassy of India in Brussels, Belgium** hosted the **second** edition of the **Indian Seafood and Wine Tasting Event.**

The event was organized in collaboration with the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), New Delhi**, and the **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Kochi.**
The event was graced by the Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union (EU) Saurabh Kumar.

Key highlights:

- India's total exports reached **USD 433.09 billion in 2023-2024** with marine exports accounting for **USD 7.36 billion** (22% of agricultural exports) across 132 countries.

- **India's seafood exports** have **doubled**, reaching **USD 7.3 billion** in value and **17.81 lakh metric tons** in volume.
- Exports of **Vannamei shrimp** have **quadrupled,** firmly establishing it as a high-quality seafood product.
- With **500 EU-approved firms**, the EU is India's **second-largest seafood** market, with annual purchases of USD 0.95 billion.
- The event featured five premium Indian seafood varieties: **Vannamei shrimp, Black Tiger shrimp, Kingfish (Surmai), Tilapia,** and **Squid.**
- The event also celebrated India's rising prominence in the global spirits and wine markets. With over 24 prominent brands, Reds such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, and Sangiovese, along with whites like Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, and Viognier, were highlighted.

19. **Air India Limited** is the **first Indian airline** to receive Design Organisation Approval (DOA) from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the CAR 21 regulations.

    This certification will allow it to make design changes and interior modifications in-house.

    This approval was handed to Air India's CEO and MD, Campbell Wilson, by DGCA's Director General, D.C. Sharma.

    The full-service carrier collaborates with Tata Technologies to enhance the interior of its aircraft fleet.

    This collaboration will help Air India reduce maintenance time and keep its fleet ready to fly safely, ensuring smoother and more comfortable journeys for its passengers.

    Note: Singapore Airlines and Vistara were merged into Air India Limited in November 2024.

20. **Hockey India** has announced the beginning of a grand, year-long celebration marking the **100th anniversary** of Indian Hockey.

    This centenary year is a tribute to a century of unparalleled excellence and a forward-looking vision for the future of hockey in India, marked with the grand relaunch of **Men's HIL (Hockey India League)** after a break of seven years and the historic inauguration of the **Women's HIL.**

    On **November 7, 1925**, Hockey India, the first national body for hockey was formed in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.**

    Over these 100 years, the Indian Men's Hockey team has won 8 gold medals,1 silver, and 4 bronze medals. The list is as follows:

    - **Gold: 1928, 1932,1936, 1948, 1952, 1956,1964 & 1980.**
    - **Silver: 1960**
    - **Bronze: 1968, 1972, 2021 (Tokyo) & 2024 (Paris)**

21. **The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation** launched the nationwide campaign **"Hamara Shauchalay: Hamara Samman" (HSHS)** on **November 19, World Toilet Day.**

The campaign ran till **Human Rights Day**, **December 10, 2024,** emphasizing the critical link between sanitation, human rights, and dignity.

World Toilet Day was first celebrated in **2001** by the **World Toilet Organization.** The day has been an annual United Nations observance since **2013.**

It raises awareness of people living without access to safely managed sanitation.

Key Campaign Activities:

- The campaign involved a variety of activities aimed at reinforcing sanitation practices and fostering pride in clean and functional toilets.
- Competitions held to identify and reward the best-maintained household toilets (IHHLs) and community sanitary complexes (CSCs) at every administrative level.
- Community outreach played a vital role, with initiatives like **"Ratri Chaupals"** and WASH clubs that will bring together people and inspire change.
- Sanitation workers were celebrated through special dignity camps, ensuring their inclusion in welfare programs, and honoring their role in maintaining cleanliness.
- Citizens were encouraged to share their sanitation success stories through social media platforms including MyGov using hashtags #ToiletsForDignity and #MyToiletMyPride.
- Participation from all levels of governance, with Chief Ministers and State Ministers leading state-level events, while District Magistrates and elected representatives oversee district-level programs.

The campaign highlighted that while India achieved **ODF (Open Defecation Free)** status in **2019, Phase II** of the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)** was launched to focus on the creation of ODF Plus Model villages, where the first criterion is sustaining ODF achievements.
Note: Sanitation for all by 2030 is one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6).

22. A Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) was signed at the Embassy of India, Tokyo on 15 November 2024 between **India and Japan**, for the co-development of a **Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) mast** for fitment onboard Ships of the Indian Navy.

The MOI was signed between the **Ambassador of India to Japan**, **Sibi George**, and **Ishikawa Takeshi**, Commissioner of Acquisition Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) under the Japan Ministry of Defence (MoD) in a ceremony in **Tokyo.**

The Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) is a mast with Integrated Communication systems that will help improve the stealth characteristics of Naval Platforms.

It will be co-developed by **Bharat Electronics Limited** in India with Japanese collaboration.

This would be the first case of co-development / co-production of defense equipment between India and Japan.

23. The **UNESCO South Asia Regional Office**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, has hosted a stakeholder consultation on **'Safety and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI)'** at UNESCO House, New Delhi.

   The implementing agency was **Ikigai Law.**

   This event marked the launch of a series of five consultations under the AI **Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM)**, an initiative by UNESCO and MeitY aimed at crafting an India-specific AI policy report.

   The consultation was aligned with India's AI ecosystem with ethical principles in UNESCO's Global Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, emphasizing transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness.

   Advancing Responsible AI Governance in India – This mission was highlighted with **the INDIAai Mission** (with funding of **Rs. 10000 Crore**). The mission is aimed at the Safe and Trusted AI pillar, which underscores the commitment to ensuring safety, accountability, and ethical practices in AI development and deployment.

   As part of MeitY's Safe and Trusted AI Pillar, two prominent projects were featured during the event.

   - Avinash Agrawal, Deputy Director General, Telecommunication Engineering Center, DoT, presented the **AI Ethical Certification Project**, which focuses on developing frameworks and tools to ensure fairness in AI models.
   - Ranjitha Prasad, Assistant Professor, IIIT-Delhi, showcased the **Privacy Enhancing Strategy Project,** which is dedicated to establishing privacy-preserving machine learning standards to enhance the robustness of AI models.

24. Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav announced the **Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve**, **Chhattisgarh**, as the **56th Tiger Reserve** of the country.

   It would be the **3rd largest tiger reserve** in the country with a spread of around **2829.38 sq km.**
   - Largest - **Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve**, Andhra Pradesh
   - Second largest- **Manas Tiger Reserve**, Assam

   It is located across **Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Korea, Surajpur,** and **Balrampur** districts of Chhattisgarh.

   It includes a core/critical tiger habitat of 2049.2 sq. km, comprising the Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary, and has a buffer of 780.15 sq. km.

   It is contiguous with the **Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve** in Madhya Pradesh forming a landscape complex of nearly **4500 sq. km**.

   The tiger reserve is connected to the **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve** in Madhya Pradesh to the **West** and **Palamau Tiger Reserve** in Jharkhand to the **East.**

A total of 753 species, including 365 invertebrates and 388 vertebrates, have been documented from Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve by the **Zoological Survey of India.**

The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** had accorded final approval for notifying the tiger reserve in **October 2021**.

Note: Chhattisgarh has now 4 Tiger reserves, Indravati (in Bijapur district), Udanti-Sitanadi (Gariaband), and Achanakmar (Mungeli).

25. The **25th** Anniversary of the **Dragon Palace Temple** was celebrated at **Kamptee**, **Nagpur**.

During the event, the **Ogawa Society of Japan** was represented by around 50 monks from Japan.

Key Highlights:

- The special prayer at the main monastery was led by Ven. Nichiyu (Kansen) Mochida from Japan.
- The **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** co-partnered with the Dragon Palace Temple in organizing the event. Several international monks from different parts of India attended the event on behalf of the IBC. Around 5000 people from Kamptee and other parts of Nagpur attended the event.
- Union Minister of Culture & Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju participated in the event.
- It is the second major Dhamma event in India.

26. The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** commemorated its **72nd** Foundation Day at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi on 15th November 2024.

It was established in the year 1952 & headquartered in New Delhi.

The Union Minister for Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the event.

Since its inception, the number of establishments has reached **7.8 lakh** with over **7.6 Crore** beneficiaries.

Key Highlights:

- "**Ek Tukda Muskaan"**, a booklet sharing the stories of EPFO members, was released.
- **The Pension and EDLI (Employees Deposit Linked Insurance) Manual** was also released.
- **State Profile Booklet 2024**, offering insights into regional offices was released.
- A legal bulletin, titled **'Adyatan,'** was also unveiled.

During the event, the **Bhavishya Nidhi Awards 2024** was also presented. The list of winners is as follows:

- **Best Regional Office (Large)** - RO Raipur

- **Best Regional Office (Small)** - RO Rohtak
- **Best District Office** - DO Palakkad
- **Best Remote Office -** RO Port Blair
- **Best Zonal Office -** ZO Telangana
- **Best Office in Grievance Management -** RO Hyderabad (Barkatpura)
- **Best Office in Pro-Active Settlement -** RO Ahmedabad
- **Best Performance in Jeevan Pramaan -** RO Tirunelveli
- **Best NAN 2.0 Campaign -** RO Delhi (East)
- **Bhavishya Nidhi Swachhata Award 2024 -** RO Rajamahendravaram
- **Best Innovation -** RO Hubli
- Best Tech Intervention - Satyabhama, JD(IS)
- Best Achievement in Capacity Building - Gaurav Srivastava, Altamash Ali, Naveen Juneja, Archana Janu, Nadeem Ahmed, Nikunj Meena, Saurabh Kumar
- **Best Exempted Trust -** M/s Reliance Industries Ltd
- Outstanding Sports Achievements - ZO Chennai & Puducherry
- Sportsperson of the Year -Female - Radhika Gupta, SSSA, RO Kandivali East
- Sportsperson of the Year – Male - Clement Augustine, SSSA, RO Kottayam   and P. Shiva Kumar, SSSA, RO Chennai North

Note: In September 2024, the withdrawal limit for new subscribers from their Provident Fund (PF) accounts was increased from **Rs.50000** to Rs.**1 lakh.**

27. **The Supreme Court of India's five-judge Constitution bench** ruled that a person holding a driving license for a **light motor vehicle (LMV)** is entitled to drive a transport vehicle under a gross weight of **7,500 kg** without the need for additional authorization under the **Motor Vehicle Act, 1988.**

    The bench was headed by former Chief Justice DY Chandrachud.

    The top court upheld its 2017 verdict which permitted light motor vehicle license holders to drive transport vehicles weighing up to 7500 kilograms.

    The bench clarified that the additional requirements under the Act are applied only to vehicles exceeding the threshold weight of 7500 kg.

28. **Union Minister for Power and Housing and Urban Affairs**, **Manohar Lal Khattar**, jointly inaugurated the **power flow** from **Nepal to Bangladesh**, along with Md. Fouzul Kabir Khan, Adviser, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Government of Bangladesh, and Mr. Dipak Khadka, Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal through a virtual event hosted by the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal.

    This historic occasion marks the **first trilateral power transaction** that has been carried out through the **Indian grid.**

The power transaction from Nepal to Bangladesh, through the **Indian grid**, will export up to **40 MW** of power.

A tripartite power sales agreement between **NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam**, **the Nepal Electricity Authority, and the Bangladesh Power Development Board** was signed in October 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

This initiative was announced in June 2023 during the visit of former Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" to India.

The start of this power flow from Nepal to Bangladesh through India is expected to boost sub-regional connectivity in the power sector.

29. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has formally submitted a 'Letter of Intent' to the International Olympic Committee's Future Host Commission to host the **2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games.**

India is contemplating **Ahmedabad** as the host city for the 2036 Olympics.

India will have to wait until the IOC elections in 2025 and also face competition from 9 other nations, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Mexico, Indonesia, Poland, Egypt, South Korea, etc which are positioning themselves as strong contenders to host the event.

India has previously hosted an international multi-sport **Commonwealth Games** in **2010.**

30. The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** completed the flight tests of the **Guided Pinaka Weapon System** as part of Provisional Staff Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) Validation Trials.

The tests have been conducted in three phases at different field firing ranges.

The various parameters of PSQR including ranging, accuracy, consistency, and rate of fire for multiple test target engagement in a salvo mode were examined.

These tests involved **12 rockets** from each production agency from two in-service Pinaka launchers upgraded by the launcher production agencies.

Guided Pinaka Weapon System:

- It is named after Lord Shiva's divine bow 'Pinak'.
- It has replaced the **Russian Grad B-21** rocket launcher for the Indian Army.
- A Pinaka MBRL unit consists of 18 launchers, each of which fires at the enemy from 12 launcher tubes.
- Firing in rapid succession, these 216 launcher tubes can rain down seven tonnes of high explosives in just **44 seconds** covering a target area of 700*500 meters.
- The latest Pinaka has a demonstrated range of **75 km** and the ability to strike within **10 meters** of its target.

- The precision strike variant for the Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System is an indigenous weapon system designed and developed by the **Armament Research and Development Establishment** in association with **Research Centre Imara**t, Defence Research and Development Laboratory, High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, and Proof & Experimental Establishment.

- **Munitions India Limited and Economic Explosives Limited** are production agencies for ammunition and **Tata Advanced Systems Limited and Larsen & Toubro are** Pinaka launchers and Battery Command Post.

31. Former India President **Ram Nath Kovind** inaugurated **India's first 'Writer's Village'** in **Thano village**, about 24 km from **Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**

    The inauguration was attended by Uttarakhand, **Governor** Lt Gen **Gurmeet Singh** (retd), Chief Minister **Pushkar Singh Dhami**., and Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) Chairman, Prasoon Joshi.

    The 'Writer's Village' is the brainchild of former chief minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank**, a distinguished writer himself.

    The event coincided with the '**Sparsh Himalaya Mahotsav-2024**", a three-day International Literature, Culture, and Art Festival.

    During the event, the book **"Ram in the Himalayas"** authored by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank was also released.

    The village includes several facilities such as:

    - Lekhan Kutir (Writing Cottages)
    - Sanjeevani Vatika (Healing Garden)
    - Nakshatra and Navgrah Vatika (Astrological Gardens)
    - Library and Art Gallery
    - Yoga and Meditation Centre
    - Discussion Centre and Auditorium
    - Ganga and Himalaya Museum

32. Scientists from **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have identified a new method to understand the virology of **monkeypox virus (MPV).**

    MPV is a **double-stranded DNA (dsDNA) virus**.

    Currently, the disease is detected via Polymerase chain reaction (PCR), relying on the amplification of double-stranded DNA (dsDNA), which also employs fluorescent probes for quantifying amplification.

    G-quadruplex (GQ) is one such unusual noncanonical conformation observed in guanine (G)-rich nucleic acid sequences where four guanines interact through hydrogen bonding forming a planar G-tetrad plane, and the stacking of multiple G-tetrads results in GQ formation.

The team identified and characterized highly conserved **GQ** -- a four-stranded unusual and characteristic DNA structure within the MPV genome. They specifically detected a specific GQ sequence using a tailored fluorescent small-molecule probe, enabling precise detection of MPV.

The new findings can help develop diagnostic tools for the deadly infection.

It has been declared a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) twice** by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in the last three years.

The 2024 global outbreak saw the disease spread to about 15 countries in Africa, and three out of Africa.

33. The Ministry of Culture, on the **125th birth anniversary** of **Harekrushna Mahtab,** organized a special commemoration program on 21st November 2024 in New Delhi.

The event was graced by the President of India, Draupadi Murmu.

Harekrushna Mahatab (Harekrushna Das) was born on **21st November 1899** in the village **Agarpara, Bhadrak** district, **Odisha.**

He was the leader of the **Indian National Congress**, a freedom fighter, and the **first Chief Minister of Odisha** from **1946 to 1950** and again from **1956 to 1961**. He was popularly known as the **"Utkal Keshari".**

He actively participated in events such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, Salt Satyagraha, etc. He won the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in **1983** for **'Gaon Majlis'.**

He also served as the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and was elected to the Lok Sabha unopposed in 1962.
He was also known as the **'Utkal Keshari.'**

Key Highlights:

- During the event, a special exhibition by Lalit Kala Akademi was displayed.
- The exhibition was created by a group of over 15 artists from Odisha as a tribute to Dr Harekrushna's life and contributions.
- A short film was also presented, illuminating the life of Harekrushna Mahtab.
- On the occasion, the President released a commemorative stamp and coin celebrating the 125th birth anniversary.
- In addition, the following books were released:
  - **Harekrushna Mahtab:** A Monograph in Odia by Baishnaba Charan Samal, published by **Sahitya Akademi.**
  - **Gaon Majlis:** English translation by Tarun Kumar Sahu of Dr. Mahtab's Sahitya Akademi Award-winning Odia essays.
  - **Gaon Majlis:** Hindi translation by Sujata Shiven of the same work.

34. **Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL), Kolkata,** under the aegis of the 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative of the Government of India, launched the **fourth 25T Bollard Pull Tug Yuvan** on 17th November 2024.

The Tugs are being built under the classification rules of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).

These Tugs will be operated by the Indian Navy at the **Andaman and Nicobar Command and Eastern Naval Command.**

Cmde Ceasar Basu, Group Commander NCC, Kolkata presided over the ceremony.

During the event, the keel laying of the **fifth** and **sixth** Tugs (**Ojas** and **Sabal**) was made.

These Tugs will be delivered to the Indian Navy in 2025.

25T Bollard Pull Tug:

The 25-ton Bollard Pull (BP) Tug is a naval vessel built for the Indian Navy to support berthing, un-berthing, and maneuvering of ships and submarines. These are also capable of firefighting and limited search and rescue operations.

The names of all six tugs are as follows: **Mahabali, Bhism, Bahubali, Yuvan, Ojas,** and **Sabal.**

These tugs is being built by the **Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL), Kolkata.**

35. **CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR)** and **Gurugram University** jointly hosted the **International Conference on Communication and Dissemination of Traditional Knowledge (CDTK-2024)** at Gurugram University, **Gurugram** on 13-14 November 2024.

The Chief Guest of the event was **Padma Bhushan Prof Anil P. Joshi**, **HESCO, Dehradun.**

Key Highlights:

- The various sessions and discussions on AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy) and their traditional knowledge were held.
- **"Paramparik Gyan Sanchar: SVASTIK** workshop was also held during the event.
- The session on **"Jal, Paristhitiki Evam Paryavaran"** was held which focused on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and its applications in biodiversity, forest conservation, and sustainable practices.
- The session on **"Reviving Ancient Healing Traditions and Integration into Modern Healthcare: Yoga, Homeopathy & Sowa Rigpa"** was chaired by Dr. A. Raghu, Deputy Director General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with Dr. Yogita Munjal, Director, Directorate of AYUSH, as co-chair.
- A panel discussion on Scientific Validation of Traditional Knowledge: Challenges and the Way Forward was also conducted.

- The release of the Souvenir and Abstract Book, along with two digital flipbooks: "Treasure of Indian Traditions: A Journey through Scientifically Validated Indian Traditional Knowledge" in Hindi and Punjabi languages.

36. The **83rd meeting of the Network Planning Group (NPG)** was held in New Delhi on 18th November 2024.

The meeting was chaired by the Additional Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), **Rajeev Singh Thakur**.

The NPG evaluated all **eight projects** based on the principles of PM GatiShakti.

The evaluation and anticipated impacts of these projects are detailed below:

Projects of the Ministry of Railways (MoR):

- **Wardha - Balharshah 4th Line:** This 134.52 km Brownfield project addresses critical congestion on the Delhi-Chennai High-Density Corridor passing through the Wardha and Chandrapur districts in Maharashtra.
- **Itarsi - Nagpur Quadrupling:** This Brownfield project involves the construction of a 4th rail line along the 297.05 km Itarsi-Nagpur corridor. Connecting Narmada Puram, Betul, and Nagpur districts, Multi-Model International Passenger and Cargo Hub Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN), power plants at Sarni and Koradi, and clusters in Pithampur.
- **Gondia - Balharshah Doubling**: It is about 240 km through the Gondia, Bhandara, Gadchiroli, and Chandrapur districts. The route links iron-ore mines in Kelzar and coalfields in Chandrapur. It is also expected to benefit power plants like Koradi and industries in Nagpur's MIHAN SEZ.
- **Aluabari - New Jalpaiguri Quadrupling:** This 56.60 km quadrupling project seeks to enhance rail connectivity in North Bengal and Bihar, linking New Jalpaiguri and Aluabari Road. The corridor will support passenger and freight movement, critical for transporting agricultural produce, cement, and industrial goods.
- **Ballari - Chikjajur Doubling:** The 185 km doubling project aimed to connect Ballari, Chitradurga, and Anantapur districts, facilitating the movement of iron ore, coal, cement, and food grains. It will support industrial hubs like Jindal Steel, which will expand production to 24 MTPA.
- **Hosur - Omalur Doubling:** This 147 km rail line doubling project aimed to connect the agro-industrial region of Hosur with the commercial hub of Salem in Tamil Nadu. The route will support critical sectors such as cement manufacturing, agro-processing, and automobile logistics while maintaining strong linkages to Bangalore's electronics and IT corridor.
- **Secunderabad - Wadi Quadrupling:** The 173.18 km project aimed to construct 3rd and 4th lines between Secunderabad and Wadi, a critical freight and passenger corridor in South Central India. It will serve industrial hubs such as Tandur (cement), Sedam, and Nagulapalli (steel), facilitating the movement of coal, cement, and food grains.

Project of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)

- **Imphal - Kakching - Lamkhai Road on NH-137A:** This 44.517 km road improvement project aimed to connect Imphal, the state capital, with Kakching, an emerging agricultural and trade hub. Strategically located within Manipur's Indo-Myanmar corridor, the project will enhance access to the Moreh border trade point and integrate with the Asian Highway Network.

37. The **President of India, Droupadi Murmu** accepted credentials from the Ambassadors/ High Commissioners of **six nations** at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 18th November 2024.

   The nations were **Switzerland, Jordan, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Myanmar** and **Egypt.**

   Those who presented their credentials were:

   - Maya Tissafi, Ambassador of Switzerland
   - Yousef Mustafa Ali Abdel Ghani, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
   - Vincent Sumale, High Commissioner of Papua New Guinea
   - Anil Sooklal, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa
   - Zaw Oo, Ambassador of the Republic of Union of Myanmar
   - Kamel Zayed Kamel Galal, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt

38. The **11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus** was held in **Vientiane, Lao PDR**. The meeting was conducted from November 20-22, 2024.

   On the sidelines of the 11th ADMM-Plus meeting, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh attended bilateral meetings with participating counterparts from Australia, China, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and the USA.

   These meetings were aimed at further enhancing bilateral defense cooperation with these countries.

   ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN.

   ADMM-Plus:

   - It is a platform for ASEAN member states (**Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam**) and its **eight** Dialogue Partners (**India, US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia** and **New Zealand**) to strengthen security and defense cooperation.
   - India became the dialogue partner of ASEAN in **1992** and the inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi, Vietnam on October 12, 2010.
   - Since **2017,** ADMM-Plus Ministers met annually to bolster the cooperation.

39. A technology for targeted better detection of **HIV-genome**-derived **G-quadruplex (GQ),** a **four-stranded** unusual and characteristic DNA structure, was developed using a **fluorometric test** that offers increased reliability of diagnosis.

The **human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1),** a **retrovirus** responsible for **Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS),** remains a persistent global threat to human health.

Current nucleic acid-based diagnostics are prone to false positives due to general DNA sensing probes that fail to distinguish between nonspecific and target amplicons.

A team of scientists at **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, an institution of the Department of Science and Technology has developed a novel diagnostic technology known as the **GQ Topology-Targeted Reliable Conformational Polymorphism (GQ-RCP)** platform.

Sumon Pratihar, Vasudhar Bhat S V, Krithi K. Bhagavath, and Thimmaiah Govindaraju, from JNCASR developed this technology.

Initially, it was designed for the fluorometric detection of pathogens like SARS-CoV-2.

It is developed through a method called **reverse transcription** and **amplification of a 176-nucleotide-long genomic segment.**

The study published in **Analytical Chemistry** was the demonstration of a pH-mediated, facile, single-step quantitative transition of dsDNA into the GQ conformation, which forms the target for detection with remarkable selectivity using a designed **benzothiazole-based fluorescent probe (TGS64)**.

This platform can be practically adopted for the detection of various DNA/RNA-based pathogens including bacteria and viruses.

40. **The Indian Army** conducted the Multilateral Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise, **'Sanyukt Vimochan 2024'** at **Ahmedabad** and **Porbandar** on 18-19 November 2024.

The exercise was conducted by the **Konark Corps of Southern Command** of the Indian Army.

The Chief of the Army Staff, **General Upendra Dwivedi** attended the event.

Key Highlights:

- A Table Top Exercise, focusing on the theme of 'Cyclone in Coastal Region of Gujarat' was held.
- Representatives from **the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), Meteorological Department,** and **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** attended the event
- A Multi-Agency Capability Demonstration was held at Chowpatty Beach at Porbandar. This event highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Indian Coast Guard, National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force & other Central & State Agencies in addressing natural disasters.

- **15** Senior officials and representatives from **nine** friendly foreign countries from the **Gulf Cooperation Council, Indian Ocean Region,** and **South East Asia** attended this significant event.

41. **Union Minister for Science & Technology**, **Jitendra Singh** inaugurated **India's first** Biomanufacturing Institute, the **"BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute" (BRIC-NABI)** at **Mohali, Punjab.**

The institute is aimed at enhancing India's agri-food sector through advanced biotechnology.

The institute was created through the strategic merger of **NABI** and **the Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB)** by combining expertise from both biotechnology and bioprocessing.

During the event, the **Bio E3 (Biology for Economy, Environment, and Employment)** policy was highlighted, which is focused on the implementation of science and technology in the agri sector to improve the economy.

It was also noted that India is among the first nations to implement an exclusive biotechnology policy.

The **BioNEST (Bioincubators Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies) Incubation Center** was also launched to empower local youth, women, and farmers by supporting startups in agriculture, food, and bioprocessing, bridging research with industry for faster commercialization of agri-food innovations.

To advance bio-manufacturing, a **Bio-Manufacturing Workshop 1.0** was also announced, which is to take place in December 2024.

42. The **Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms**, **Ministry of Textiles,** in coordination with **Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC),** organized the **"GI and Beyond-2024"** summit on 25th November 2024 in New Delhi.

The objective of the event is the brand promotion of GI handloom and Handicraft products among the broad spectrum of stakeholders including overseas buyers, exporters, MNCs, etc.

The event had representation from 13 countries spread across 4 continents and witnessed around 20 overseas buyers, 50 exporters & MNCs, 70 GI authorized users and 40 officials from various departments including state governments.

Chief Guest of the event: Giriraj Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles

During the event, he distributed GI certificates to 10 artisans from various parts of the country.

Geographical Indication Tag:

The Geographical Indication (GI) tags are official markers given to products with a specific geographic origin and distinct qualities. In India, the **Geographical Indications of Goods**

(Registration & Protection) Act, 1999, enacted in **2003,** aims to safeguard producers' interests, prevent exploitation of GIs, and boost marketability.

Attempt SBI PO 2024 Free Mock test

43. **Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry** entered into a **tripartite** Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU)** with **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** and the **Ministry of Education** to provide enhanced funding and technical support to the **Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), BHU.**

The MoU was signed on **22nd November 2024** in New Delhi.

This MoU enables the provision of grant in aid to IMS, BHU by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the lines of the new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) set up under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (**PMSSY**).

Under the MoU, the Health Ministry will provide technical and financial support to IMS to enhance the availability of affordable state-of-the-art secondary and tertiary health care services to people of the region and reduce referrals by enhancing the delivery of clinical care services.

The MoU will deepen academic and research collaborations, and facilitate student, faculty, staff, and research professionals' exchanges between MoHFW, AIIMS, and IMS BHU.

Background:

IMS is a prestigious Institute of BHU with **four full-fledged** constituents namely, the **Faculty of Medicine**, **Faculty of Ayurveda**, **Faculty of Dental Sciences**, and **College of Nursing.**

An MoU was signed between All Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, and the Institute of Medical Science, Banaras Hindu University on 19th June 2018 to facilitate exposure to the latest developments and best practices in health care, medical education, and research.

The mutually agreed action plan for future engagement under the said MoU of 2018 includes:

- Sharing of experience and expertise in the upgradation of clinical facilities.
- Cooperation & collaboration in the areas of teaching & learning for UGs, PGs   Nurses, and Allied Health Professionals.
- Technical Support in establishing & operating a 'State of the Art Skill Lab' facility.
- Training & mentorship for starting Robotic Surgery facilities.
- General academic collaboration, including the exchange of educational resource materials and publications that are of mutual interest.
- Development of student & staff exchange programs, visiting scholars programs, research fellowship programs, etc.
- Collaborative basic and applied, research, including joint grant applications.
- Support in the implementation of key Governance reforms.
- Any other mutually agreed areas which may be identified from time to time for the holistic growth of AIIMS New Delhi & IMS BHU.

44. The **11th Asia Fire Protection Inspection Council (AFIC)** Meet was organized by the **Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), DRDO** in collaboration with the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** in New Delhi on Nov 21, 2024.

The AFIC is the **Fire Protection organization** of **11 Asian countries** for technical exchange and fostering of knowledge in the field of fire safety for the development of Asian Fire Protection Technologies and Standards.

Twenty-one international delegates from Six Asian countries participated in the three-day meet from 21 - 23 Nov 2024.

On the sideline of the AFIC meeting, an International Seminar on **"Latest Trends in Fire Safety and Future Perspectives"** and the **Asian Fire Safety Expo (AFSE) 2024** were also being organized by the CFEES.

More than 100 delegates working in the field of fire safety from state fire services, Army, Navy, Air Force, BSF, DRDO & CAPF attended the event.

The **AFSE 2024** was being held as a Focused Show at India Industry Expo 2024, where the **Republic of Korea** participated as a **Country Partner.**

The event aligns with several key objectives, like encouraging innovation and self-reliance, building advanced capabilities, fostering industry collaboration, promoting technology transfer and domestic manufacturing, and strengthening national security.

45. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully launched its most sophisticated communications satellite **GSAT 20** on board **SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket** from Cape Canaveral in the USA.

This is the first major commercial partnership between SpaceX and ISRO.

The satellite will provide broadband services in remote areas and in-flight Internet in passenger aircraft.

It will remain in operation for **14 years.**

This is the first time that ISRO has launched a satellite on a SpaceX rocket through its commercial arm **New Space India Limited (NSIL).**

GSAT-20, weighing 4,700 kg, is one of India's heaviest communication satellites.

The GSAT-20 is too heavy for India's own rocket LVM-3, popularly known as 'Bahubali' to carry.

It is operating in the Ka-band with a capacity of 48Gbps.

SpaceX's heavy-lifter Falcon-9 rocket can launch payloads of 8,300 kg or 8.3 tonnes to geostationary transfer orbit.

SpaceX and ISRO have also signed another agreement to send an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station (ISS) for $60 million.

46. **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** Secretary (East) Jaideep Mazumder and **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)** Secretary General Indramani Pandey signed an agreement to establish the BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) in **Bengaluru, Karnataka.**

The agreement was signed officially on 8th November 2024.

The energy center will function as the Secretariat of the BIMSTEC Grid Connection Coordination Committee (GICC).

The BEC will manage a regional energy database, conduct feasibility studies for intra-BIMSTEC projects, and enhance cooperation by preparing a framework for networking among national agencies of BIMSTEC member states.

It will promote energy security through grid interconnections, renewable energy development, and the realization of energy efficiency.

The Centre will foster capacity building, cross-border investments, and infrastructure development for training in the energy sector.

BIMSTEC comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

47. The **National Power Committee (NPC),** in consultation with RPCs, prepared the **Uniform Protection Protocol** for Indian Grid users for implementation on a pan-India basis.

The same was approved in the **15th National Power Committee Meeting** held at Nagpur, Maharashtra under the chairmanship of Ghansyam Prasad, Chairperson, CEA.

As per IEGC, 2023, a uniform protection protocol should be established for the grid users to ensure proper coordination of the protection system.

The uniform Protection protocol aims to ensure Grid stability, reliability, and security and also greatly supports the Government of India's vision for the integration of **450 GW of Renewable Energy** into the **National Grid by 2030** and an ambitious target of **2100 GW of Renewable energy by 2047.**

Key features of the Uniform Protection Protocol:

- **Applicability:** The Uniform Protection Protocol shall be applicable to all Regional entities, State/Central/Private Generating Companies/ Generating Stations, SLDCs, RLDCs, CTU, STUs, Transmission Licensees, and RPCs, connected at 220 kV (132 kV for NER), and above.
- **General Philosophy of Protection System:** The General Philosophy of Protection System covers the Objective, Design Criterion, and other details.

- **Protection Schemes:** This Protocol addresses the protection requirements for thermal and hydro generating units, renewable energy generations (REGs), battery energy storage systems (BESS), substations, transmission lines, and HVDC terminals.
- **Disturbance Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting:** The Purpose is to ensure that adequate disturbance data is available to facilitate Grid event analysis.
- **Protection Audits:** As per the Central Electricity Authority (Grid Standards) Regulations, 2010, IEGC Grid Code Regulations 2023 and approved SOP for Protection System Audit.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Monthly submission of protection performance indices by users/entities to RPCs and RLDCs.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Non-compliance is reported to RPCs, and unresolved violations are escalated to the Commission for suitable directions.

48. Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, **Anupriya Singh Patel** addressed the **4th Ministerial High-level Global Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** in **Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**.

The theme of the conference was *'From Declaration to Implementation - Accelerating Actions Through Multisectoral Partnerships for the Containment of AMR'.*

During the event, she highlighted AMR is a global health threat requiring urgent action through a 'One Health' approach that fosters cooperation across human, animal, and plant health, as well as environmental and other relevant sectors."

India supports the creation of the **AMR Multi-partner Trust Fund** and the establishment of an **Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR** by the quadripartite organizations in **2025.**

The global target of reducing **AMR-related deaths by 10%** was committed in the **UNGA Political Declaration.**

The 'Jedda Commitments' issued resolved to translate the Political Declaration from the UNGA HLM on AMR into practical commitments for urgent action and committing to creating national AMR multi-sectoral coordinating bodies respecting the multipronged One-Health challenges.

49. Scientists have identified a novel gene that plays a crucial role in the **development of stamens (male reproductive structure)** including **pollen grain** and **seed formation,** in *Arabidopsis* flowering plants related to **cabbage** and **mustard.**

The pollen development process adds valuable information for subsequent manipulation in crop production.

"Pollen germination speed" and "pollen tube growth" are the two important characteristic features of healthy pollens that have evolved with the evolution of flowering plants **(Angiosperms).**

Prof. **Shubho Chaudhuri's** lab at **Bose Institute, Kolkata**, an autonomous institution of the **Department of Science and Technology**, identified a novel gene named **HMGB15**, a non-

histone protein that restructures chromatin, which plays a crucial role in the development of stamens (male reproductive structure) in *Arabidopsis*.

Molecular analysis indicated that several developmental pathways like biosynthesis of **phytohormone jasmonic acid (JA),** apoptosis of tapetal cells, and actin polymerization dynamics have been severely affected in the HMGB15 loss of function mutants.

This discovery opens new possibilities for improving crop fertility and seed production.

The studies have been published in reputed plant journals namely, **Plant Physiology (Sachdev et al., 2024) and Plant Reproduction (Biswas et al., 2024).**

The financial support for this work was provided by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), India.

50. **Sagarmanthan - The Great Oceans Dialogue**, South Asia's largest Maritime Thought Leadership summit, was organized in **New Delhi, India**.

It was organized by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)** in association with the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a Delhi-based global think tank.**

It aimed to foster knowledge on the maritime sector and provide a premier global platform for global leaders, policymakers, business moguls, thought leaders, and visionaries to share, learn, and shape actionable insights toward effective decisions for a future-ready, sustainable, and efficient marine sector.

'Sagarmanthan - the Great Oceans Dialogue' was designed around four central themes which are **New Frontiers, Blue Growth Partnerships for Progress, Green and Blue,** and **Coasts & Communities.**

- The New Frontiers explores subjects around connectivity, infrastructure, and development in a dynamic world.
- The second theme, Blue Growth, fosters partnerships for progress.
- The Green & Blue theme dabbles at important issues of sustainability, technology, and innovation.

The discussion hovers around maritime governance and social impact, which is covered under the Coasts and Communities theme.

The Dialogue featured participants from **60 countries** across the globe including ministers, former heads of state and government, journalists, and experts.

By 2047, India targets a port handling capacity of 10,000 million metric tons per annum, leveraging strategic trade routes through initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) and the International North-South Transport Corridor.

51. The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** has launched a **Compliance-Cum-Awareness Campaign for Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25** to assist taxpayers in accurately completing Schedule Foreign Assets (**Schedule FA**) and reporting income from foreign sources (**Schedule FSI**) in their Income Tax Returns (ITR).

Compliance with Schedule FA and FSI is mandatory under the **Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015,** which requires the full disclosure of foreign assets and income.

As part of this campaign, informational messages will be sent via SMS and email to resident taxpayers who have already submitted their ITR for AY 2024-25.

These messages are intended for individuals identified through information received under bilateral and multilateral agreements, suggesting that they may hold foreign accounts or assets, or have received income from foreign jurisdictions.

The purpose is to remind and guide those who may not have fully completed Schedule Foreign Assets in their submitted ITR for AY 2024-25, especially in cases involving high-value foreign assets.

This initiative aligns with the vision of *Viksit Bharat* and highlights the Income Tax Department's commitment to using technology to simplify taxpayer compliance and reduce human interaction.

52. **AM Green Kakinada Cluster** has joined the **World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Transitioning Industrial Clusters Initiative'** aimed at improving collaboration to drive economic growth, and employment and reduce CO2 emissions.

    With over **$3 billion** in initial investment, the cluster is expected to create over **10,000** direct and indirect jobs.

    Starting with a production capacity of **1 MTPA** of **Green ammonia**, the Kakinada cluster will also include a 2 GW electrolyzer manufacturing plant. The plant is expected to set up by mid-**2026.**

    The cluster will be powered by **24/7 Carbon-Free Energy** enabled through pumped storage projects and offer integrated utilities like green steam, desalinated water, and effluent treatment facilities.

53. **Bengaluru-**based Indian space startup **Pixxel** has unveiled 'Fireflies', the world's highest resolution hyperspectral satellite constellation.

    The Fireflies are a constellation of **six next-generation** hyperspectral satellites that will launch early next year.

    The Fireflies offer precision in earth observation with five-meter resolution, **150 spectral bands,** and a **40-kilometre wide** swath that enables the constellation to access any part of the globe daily.

    The satellite constellation will deliver critical data across various applications, from early detection of crop diseases and pinpointing water stress to real-time deforestation monitoring and tracking ocean pollution.

The company plans to expand the constellation to 24 satellites and aims to make hyperspectral data widely accessible.

54. **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)** welcomed its **9th** batch of postgraduate scholars with a traditional orientation program, **'Samskara 2024'**.

   The 15-day program commenced with a swearing-in ceremony, where **85** newly admitted students took the **Shishyopanayan Pledge.**

   The Chief guest of the event was Prof. (Dr.) Tanuja Manoj Nesari, former Director of AIIA.

   The students selected from across India who cleared the All-India AYUSH Postgraduate Entrance Test (AIAPGET) conducted by the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.

   AIIA has treated over 27 lakh patients and attends to more than 2000 patients daily.

55. The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** and **Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC)** introduced the **'One Day One Genome'** initiative to showcase the enormous microbial potential of India.

   Amitabh Kant, India's G-20 Sherpa and **Former CEO of NITI Aayog**, announced the launch of 'One Day One Genome Initiative' on the **1st foundation day** of **BRIC** held in the National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi on 9th November 2024.

   The 'One Day One Genome' initiative highlights the unique bacterial species found in our country and emphasizes their critical roles in the environment, agriculture, and human health.

   Genome sequencing will allow the visualization of the hidden potential of the microbial world to the community at large.

   Research in this field will lead to the benefit of better protection and management of our environment, development in agriculture, and improvement in human health.

   This initiative is coordinated by **Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (BRIC-NIBMG),** an institute of the Department of Biotechnology.

56. **VIVIBHA 2024**, a three-day national conference, was organized by **Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal (BSM) at SGT University, Gurugram.**

   The theme of the conference was **"Vision for Viksit Bharat".**

   The event celebrated India's rich cultural legacy while highlighting pioneering research and innovations that are shaping a self-sustaining nation.

   During the event, the **IIT Ropar TIF- AWaDH** was awarded the **Best Stall in the Academia category,** recognizing the excellence and societal impact of its presented research.

As part of the **"Research to Realisation"** exhibition, the **IIT Ropar Technology and Innovation Foundation - AWaDH Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub** showcased its transformative technologies that promote sustainable solutions in agriculture, water management, and environmental conservation.

Key innovations on display included:

- **Moohsense:** An AI-driven livestock management system;
- **Digital Entomologist:** A biodiversity monitoring tool;
- Nanobubble Technology for Water Purification;
- **Air Sense:** Advanced air quality sensors, and
- Soil Health Monitoring System: Precision farming tools for improved productivity.

VIVIBHA 2024 was focused on integrating Bharat-centric research with India's vibrant cultural heritage closely aligns with AWaDH's mission.

57. The **Department of Posts (DoP)**, under the **Ministry of Communications,** Chennai City North Division, commemorated the **121st anniversary of Madras Veterinary College (MVC).**

The DoP released a special cover on India Post at the MVC campus in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The special cover signified the rich heritage and achievements made by MVC and also the image feature of the iconic building together with the cancellations based on the logo of the institution.

MVC:
- The MVC was founded on October 1, 1903, as the 3rd Veterinary College of India and is also recognized as the South Regional Postgraduate Institution.
- It was the first veterinary college to get affiliated with a university i.e. Madras University in 1935.
- It became a constituent unit of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Science University (TANUVAS), the first veterinary university in India and Southeast Asia in 1989.
- The university ranked 12th among all the institutions in the category of agriculture and allied sectors and 1st among the veterinary universities under the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2023.

58. The **22nd Hindustan Times Leadership Summit 2024 (HTLS 2024)** was held in **New Delhi** from November 14 to 16, 2024.

On the last day of the event, PM Modi attended the event.

During the event, he released a commemorative **postage stamp** of **Rs.5** to celebrate **100 years of Hindustan Times** which was founded in the year **1924** by **Mahatma Gandhi.**

He also highlighted the roadmap to focus on '**Development with Dignity'** aiming that progress benefits all citizens.

Hindustan Times Leadership Summit:

The Hindustan Times Leadership Summit was launched in **2003** to enhance the level of discourse on critical issues, encourage interaction among leaders in important areas, and present international quality thought- platforms aimed at solutions.

The audience included senior politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, business executives, thinkers, commentators and analysts.

Two successful editions of the Summit have also been hosted in Singapore.

The postage stamp was designed by known artist **Sankha Samanta.**

It depicts the journey of Hindustan Times from 1924 to 2024 and its design incorporates the HT's tagline, **"First Voice, Last Word".**

59. The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM),** under the aegis of NITI Aayog, launched its fourth cohort of **Community Innovator Fellows (CIFs).**

The program is implemented by the SRF Foundation in collaboration with the AIM and Capgemini and includes 15 fellows hosted at Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) that provide a supportive environment for innovators.

Key Highlights:

- As part of the launch, AIM organized a two-day intensive boot camp to provide the CIFs with the skills and knowledge required to scale their innovations.
- This initiative is in line with AIM's broader goal of nurturing grassroots innovation and promoting an entrepreneurial ecosystem, especially in **underserved regions** of the country.
- The CIF program is a **one-year,** initiative aimed at equipping aspiring innovators from diverse socio-economic backgrounds with the infrastructure, training, and mentorship needed to scale their ideas and build sustainable businesses.
- The program's role is to empower innovators from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- Each Fellow is hosted at an Atal Community Innovation Center, where they receive tailored training in entrepreneurship, SDG-focused solutions, and life skills to address their community's unique challenges.
- Each fellow receives a grant of **1 lakh rupees** from Capgemini for their innovations.
- ACIC is focused on supporting innovators in unserved and underserved areas, driving progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

60. India has released the second tranche of **$2.5 million** to the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).**

The annual contribution of India is **$5 million** for the year 2024-25.

India has provided financial support of **$40 million** for the UN Agency's core programs and services, including education, healthcare, relief, and social services provided to Palestinian refugees.

Along with financial assistance, India continued to provide humanitarian assistance and medicines to UNRWA to assist the Agency in meeting its responsibilities toward the welfare of Palestinian refugees.

India supplied **30 tons** of **medical supplies** comprising essential life-saving and **anti-cancer drugs** to Palestine in October this year.

Note: Palestine's Day is observed on November 15 annually. It was started in 1988 by the Palestinian National Council (PNC).

61. The **9th edition** of the **India-Indonesia** Joint Special Forces Exercise, **GARUD SHAKTI 24**, was held from November 1 to November 12, 2024, at Cijantung in Jakarta, Indonesia.

    The Indian Army contingent, consisting of 25 skilled personnel from **The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces)**, participated in the exercise.

    The Indonesian contingent comprised 40 personnel represented by **Indonesian Special Forces Kopassus**.

    The aim of Exercise GARUD SHAKTI 24 was to acquaint both sides with each other's operating procedures and enhance mutual understanding, cooperation, and interoperability between the Special Forces of both armies.

    The Exercise was designed to develop bilateral military cooperation and strengthen the bond between the two armies through the conduct of discussions and rehearsal of tactical military drills.

    The exercise also involved jointly practising **Special Forces Operations in Jungle terrain**, strikes on terrorist camps, and a **Validation Exercise** integrating basic and advanced special forces skills apart from gaining an insight into the lifestyle and culture of both countries to foster military cooperation.

62. Engine manufacturer **General Electric** announced that its **LM2500 marine engines** have been chosen to power the Indian Navy's **Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV)** being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited.

    The six Next Generation Missile Vessels are being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited and deliveries are scheduled to commence from March 2027.

    The engines, known for their reliability and performance, will be assembled and tested by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bangalore, India, as part of a long-standing partnership between GE Aerospace and HAL that dates back to 1986.

    The LM2500, known for its reliability and superior performance, is set to become the core of the propulsion system for the Indian Navy's highly sophisticated NGMVs. These missile vessels, designed for speed and stealth, will be capable of reaching speeds of up to 35 knots and equipped with a range of anti-surface weaponry.

The Cochin Shipyard Limited signed the contract to manufacture 6 NGLVs with the Indian Navy in 2023.

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63. The **International Solar Alliance**, in collaboration with **the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Solar Energy Society,** organized the **third edition** of the high-level Conference on New Technologies for Clean Energy Transition.

The Conference was introduced in **2022** to drive real-world change and make significant progress toward achieving global climate goals.

The event took place under the aegis of the **Seventh** Session of the **ISA Assembly** in New Delhi. During the event, discussions were focussed on solar's role in accelerating equitable economic, social, and environmental development.

Key Highlights:

The main highlight was the launch of the **third edition of the World Solar Report series**. It was first launched in **2022**, and it provides a concise overview of global advancements, challenges, and trends in solar technology, markets, and investments.

Key findings from the 2024 edition include:
- **Rise in Solar Capacity**: 1.22 GW in 2000 to 1,418.97 GW in 2023 with an annual growth rate of 40%.
- Solar Manufacturing to Exceed Demand with Over **1,100 GW** by **2024**
- **Solar Industry Employment Boom**: The clean energy industry now has **16.2 million jobs**, with **solar** leading the charge at **7.1 million** 44% rise from 2022's 4.9 million. And **86%** of these jobs are concentrated in just **ten** countries.
- Global solar capacity is set to be between **5457 and 7203 GW by 2030**, driven by **Paris Agreement** commitments.
- **Exponential Growth in Energy Investments**: Global energy investments are set to increase from $2.4 trillion in 2018 to a projected **$3.1 trillion in 2024** at nearly 5% annually. **Global clean energy investment** now nearly **doubles** that of fossil fuels, set to leap from $1.2 trillion in 2018 to **$2 trillion by 2024.**
- **The Solar Investment Surge**: Investments in solar represented ~ **59%** (USD 393 billion) of all RE investments (USD 673 billion).
- **APAC leads global solar investments:** Region-wise, APAC is at the top with **USD 223 billion** into solar in 2023**. EMEA** has modest solar investment growth, with **USD 91 billion**, followed by **AMER** region with solar investments of **USD 78 billion.**
- Solar Manufacturing now uses **88% Less Silicon per Watt Peak** than in 2004.
- **Record-Breaking Solar PV Panel Efficiency**: Solar **PV monocrystalline** modules have a record-breaking **24.9% efficiency.**
- **Utility-Scale PV Costs Hitting New Low-** The global weighted average LCOE for utility-scale Solar PV **dropped by 90%-** falling from USD 0.460/kWh in 2010 to USD 0.044/kWh in 2023. At the **country level,** the drop ranges from **76%-93%** over the same period.

During the event, the **'Readiness Assessment of Green Hydrogen African Countries' report by ISA and Denmark** was released. The main points of the report are as follows:

- This report is the **first project** under the MoU for the green hydrogen partnership between the **Embassy of Denmark and the International Solar Alliance.**
- The objective is to conduct a readiness assessment of the target countries, **Morocco, Namibia, and Egypt**.
- The report focused on three categories, **country-specific parameters, financing requirements, and possible financing methods**.

Under the partnership, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark** will also support **ISA** with **three years** of content, focusing on green hydrogen policy, regulation, and other components of the green hydrogen value chain.

Mr. Pralhad Joshi, Minister of New and Renewable Energy & **President of the ISA Assembly**, **Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA,** and **Ms. Viktoria Martin**, **President,** of **the International Solar Energy Society** graced the event.

64. The **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** has announced to honor four Indian cinematic legends in their centenary year namely **filmmaker Raj Kapoor (Dec 14), director Tapan Sinha (Sep 20), actor Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR) (Oct 2),** and **playback singer Mohammed Rafi (Dec 24)** at its upcoming 55th edition to be held from 20th November to 28th November 2024 in Panaji, Goa.

In a special tribute to these icons, IFFI will present versions of their timeless classics restored by NFDC-NFAI. This includes Raj Kapoor's movie *Awaara (1951),* the classic *Harmonium(1976)*, directed by Tapan Sinha, Akkineni Nageswara Rao's *Devadasu (1953),* and the classic *Hum Dono(1961)* which contains songs sung by Mohammed Rafi.

Along with the above several events are also announced:

- **Launch of MY STAMP**: As a special gesture a unique MY STAMP is dedicated to these four luminaries, symbolizing the imprint they have left on Indian culture and cinema.
- **Bilingual Brochures**: Special bilingual brochures, highlighting each icon's achievements.
- **Caravan of Songs**: A musical journey featuring 150 songs associated with Raj Kapoor and Mohammed Rafi, and 75 songs associated with Tapan Sinha and ANR.
- **Curated Exhibition**: A curated exhibition featuring rare memorabilia, photographs, and artifacts from the lives of all four displayed.
- **Thematic Activities:** On the days dedicated to each personality, thematic activities are planned throughout the Entertainment Arena.
- **Sand Art Illustration:** As part of the centenary celebrations, a Sand Art illustration created in Kala Academy by Padma Shri Awardee and famous Sand Artist, **Shri Sudarshan Pattnaik.**

65. Deputy Director General (Policy & Plans), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Inspector General (IG) Anand Prakash Badola laid the foundation stone for **the Tier-III Data Centre of Project Digital Coast Guard (DCG) at Mahipalpur, New Delhi.**

The Center is equipped with the latest technology and will be used to monitor and administer all the applications & vital IT resources, thereby providing critically important support to the administrative functioning of ICG.

Project DCG, being executed by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited, includes the construction of a state-of-the-art Data Centre in New Delhi, 'Disaster Recovery Data Centre' at New Mangalore, Karnataka & Pan-India connectivity among ICG locations including ships, and also implementation of an 'Enterprise Resource Planning' application.

The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) on 8 December 2023, at a total cost of Rs 588.68 crore, for the acquisition of the Digital Coast Guard (DCG) project, under the Buy (Indian) category.

The project also leverages secured MPLS/VSAT connectivity, propelling itself to the forefront of cutting-edge defense technology.

66. **Coal India Limited (CIL)**, under the Ministry of Coal, marked its **50th Foundation Day** which came into being on **1st November 1975** as an apex holding company of the nationalized coking coal (1971) and non-coking mines (1973).

    The celebration was graced by Union Minister of Coal and Mines**, G. Kishan Reddy**, as the chief guest, and **Vikram Dev Dutt**, Secretary of the Ministry of Coal, as the guest of honor.

    During the event, the Golden Jubilee logo was launched, and the mascot **"Angara"**, which is inspired by the **Royal Bengal Tiger** unveiled.

    The logo symbolizes CIL's pivotal role as the backbone of India's energy sector, reflecting the company's commitment to innovation, progress, and sustainability. The mascot embodies the strength and resilience of coal miners.

    India achieved coal production of 997.83 million tonnes (MT) in 2023-24. CIL's production reached 773.81 MT, with a growth of 10.04%.

    In the year 2022-23, the total import of coal was 237.668 MT compared to 208.627 MT in 2021-22, thus showcasing an increase of 13.92% over 2021-22.

    Union Minister released the Strategy Report on Coal and Lignite Exploration, inaugurated the Mine Closure Portal, and announced the development of a **50 MW solar power plant at the Nigahi project of Northern Coalfields Limited**, involving an investment of ₹250 crores. This solar initiative is expected to generate 49 million units of electricity.

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67. **The 'Kaveri Meets Ganga'** festival, under the aegis of the **Amrit Parampara** series of the Ministry of Culture, was held from 2nd - 5th November 2024 at Kartavya Path and CCRT Dwarka campus in New Delhi.
    The event was graced by **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Culture and Tourism.**

The event highlighted India's cultural diversity, and traditional and folk arts in the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

This festival, jointly organized by **Sangeet Natak Akademi, Kalakshetra, and CCRT**—brought together the best of South Indian music and dance to North India, and also celebrated artistic traditions from the North.

The festival is inspired by **Chennai's** revered **Margazhi Festival** and reflects the diversity of Indian culture with traditional and folk arts. Various classical music and dance performances from different parts of the country were presented during the festival at both Kartavya Path and CCRT, Dwarka.

Amrit Parampara:

- Amrit Parampara aims to celebrate traditional arts and art forms of India with a special focus on declining and dying art forms.
- The Amrit Parampara series has been designed to promote the continuity of India's cultural legacy through four key pillars: the foundation of Bharatiya Sanskriti, a blend of cultural education and entertainment, the synthesis of diverse ideas, and a multi-sensory experience.

68. The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYAS) has changed the name of the Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement to the **Arjuna Award Lifetime** to rationalize sporting honors.

    Instituted in 2002, the Dhyan Chand Lifetime Award, named after hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand, is given to individuals in disciplines that are part of the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games, among others.

    The Award includes a cash prize of 10 Lakh Rupees, a certificate, a ceremonial, and a statue of Dhyan Chand.

    The Ministry also announced to recognize the Khelo India scheme, the Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy would be given to the University for Overall Top Performance in the Khelo India University Games.

69. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal launched **EEPC India's 70th-anniversary** celebrations and unveiled the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) India logo in New Delhi.

    During the event, various milestones achieved by EEPC India over the years were highlighted such as:

    EEPC India's support for manufacturers and exporters contributed to the sector's $109 billion in exports in FY24 and advanced the Make in India initiative in automotive, electronics, and medical devices.

    Its membership has grown significantly over the decades, reaching 9,500 members in 2024 from just 40 in 1955.

EEPC India's goal is to reach exports of US$300 billion in the next 5-6 years.

70. Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, unveiled the brochure and film for the global mobility event, **"Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025"** in New Delhi.

    The expo is to be organized from 17–22 January 2025 across three separate venues viz. Bharat Mandapam (ITPO), New Delhi; Yashobhoomi (India International Convention and Expo Center), Dwarka, New Delhi and India Expo Center & Mart, Greater Noida.

    The theme of the Expo is, 'Beyond Boundaries: Co-Creating the Future of the Automotive Value Chain.

    This is the world's second-largest mobility show. It is going to be spread across more than 200,000 sq. meters and will host over 9 shows and 500,000 visitors. It will host 15+ conferences dedicated to the mobility value chain.

    The event will showcase exhibitions such as the Auto Expo Motor Show, the Auto Expo Components Show, a Mobility Tech Pavilion, an Urban Mobility and Infrastructure Show, a Battery Show, a Construction Equipment Expo, a Steel Pavilion, a Tyre Show, and a dedicated Cycle Show.

    Various industry bodies and partner organizations are SIAM, ACMA, IESA, ATMA, ISA, NASSCOM, ICEMA, AICMA, MRAI, ITPO, Invest India, IBEF, CII, Yashobhoomi and IEML.

71. The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)**, the telecom R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has signed an agreement with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Roorkee)** for the development of a **"Millimeter Wave Transceiver for 5G Rural Connectivity "**.

    The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme of the Department of Telecommunications.

    The project focuses on the development of millimeter wave backhaul technology in which only a small number of SBSs (Small cell-based Stations) are connected to the gateway through fiber.

    This method would achieve the desired output of reduced overall size and decreased cost and also encourage small and medium-scale industries to set up their manufacturing units in India boosting employment.

    The project also aimed to contribute to generating Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and develop a skilled workforce to support the emerging millimeter wave/Sub-THz technology for 5G/6G.

72. The Department of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has notified the **Development of Tuna Cluster in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands** under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer a prime opportunity for fisheries development, with around 6.0 lakh square km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) rich in under-exploited sea resources, particularly Tuna and Tuna like high-valued species, estimated at 60,000 metric tons.

The initiative will help in focusing on critical investments such as organizing investor meetings to foster partnerships with tuna-fishing nations and implementing training and capacity-building programs, along with exposure visits for the stakeholders.

The Department of Fisheries has already identified three locations as priority areas for development that are Hazaribagh District in Jharkhand for pearl culture, Madurai District in Tamil Nadu for ornamental fisheries, and UT of Lakshadweep for seaweed.

73. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, inaugurated the **'Anti-Terror Conference-2024'** organized by the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** in New Delhi.

The two-day conference was a meeting point for operational forces; technical, legal, and forensic experts, and agencies engaged in counter-terrorism.

The key focus of the conference was on coordinated action against the menace of terrorism in the spirit of the 'Whole of the Government approach' and to present substantive inputs for future policy formulation.

The conference was attended by senior police officers from States/UTs, officers from Central agencies/Departments dealing with issues related to Counter Terrorism, and experts from related fields such as law, forensics, technology, etc.

74. The **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL)**, a CPSE under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, and **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide internship opportunities to Undergraduate (UG)/ Post Graduate (PG) students.

The MoU was jointly signed by Shri Nitin Sharma, Executive Director, NHIDCL, and Dr Buddha Chandrasekhar, Chief Coordinating Officer, AICTE.

This program aims to offer experiential learning opportunities to UG and PG students nationwide, especially in the North-Eastern Region, UTs of J&K and Ladakh, and A&N Islands.

During the event, an online portal for the internship program was also launched.

The MoU was signed for a period of **five years.**

AICTE will provide technical support for the platform, while NHIDCL will oversee programmatic and non-technical support for the program.

75. **Indian Railways** set a new record of **over 3 Crore passengers** traveling in Indian Railways in a single day on 4th November 2024.

On this day Indian Railways carried a record number of 120.72 lakh non-suburban passengers. This included 19.43 lakh reserved passengers and 101.29 lakh unreserved non-suburban passengers. Similarly, the suburban traffic reached a record 180 lakh passengers, making it the highest single-day passenger figure of the year.

Approximately 6.85 cr passengers traveled to Bihar, Eastern UP, and Jharkhand during the period of 1st October to 5th of November through scheduled trains this is more than twice the combined populations of countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

Indian Railways has run over 7,600 special trains during this festive season (October 1st to November 30th), which is 73% more than last year.

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76. Agencies under the Election Commission have seized **Rs 558 crore** worth of cash, freebies, liquor, drugs, and precious metals to stop any inducement of voters in ongoing elections in **Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and by polls.**
The operations in the state of Maharashtra alone have yielded about **Rs. 280 crores** since the announcement of elections. Another **Rs. 158 crores** worth of seizures from Jharkhand so far.
It was a 3.5-time increase compared to the 2019 assembly elections. Maharashtra recorded seizures worth Rs.103.61 crores while for Jharkhand it was Rs.18.76 crores in 2019.

- Real-time reporting of interceptions and seizures with the ECI's Election Seizure Management System (ESMS) has led to regular and precise reviews on expenditure monitoring by the Commission and agencies.
- The **eVIGIL App** has also been an effective tool in the hands of citizens to flag election code violations. 9681 complaints have been resolved through this app. Through this app, action is taken within a 100-minute timeline.
- The Commission also has upgraded its **SUVIDHA app** empowering parties and candidates to apply for campaign-related permissions through the SUVIDHA mobile app, which was earlier possible only through the web portal.

77. Aerospace startup **Space Kidz India** has launched **"ShakthiSAT",** a global mission to train about **12,000 girls** across **108 countries** on space technology, aiming for a satellite launch under **ISRO's Chandrayaan-4 mission**, fostering international collaboration in space exploration.
The mission is led by **Dr. Srimathy Kisan**. and is aimed at building the world's first lunar satellite constructed by 108 young girls from 108 different countries as part of ISRO's Chandrayaan 4 mission in 2026

The mission includes **120 hours** of online training for high school girls students (aged 14-18) to teach them about various aspects of space technology, payload development, and spacecraft systems.
Participating nations include the **UK, UAE, Brazil, Kenya, Australia, France, Greece, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan,** among others.

78. **The Ministry of Women and Child Development** observed **Adoption Awareness Month 2024** during **November 2024** to promote legal adoptions in the country.
The theme for Adoption Awareness Month 2024 is *"Rehabilitation of Older Children through Foster Care and Foster Adoption"*.

Various activities were organized during the month to engage the larger public, disseminate information about adoption, and foster adoption.

Key Highlights:

- Adoption Awareness Month is an **annual** event where the **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** and all its stakeholders come together to raise awareness about the legal process of adoption.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, celebrated the occasion at Lucknow on 21st November 2024, Uttar Pradesh.
- Awareness events were organized in Ladakh, Assam, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, West Bengal, and many other states.
- In collaboration with the **MyGov India platform**, CARA launched a special campaign for online events.

79. Union Minister of State of Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh felicitated **21 trainees** nominated by the **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) headquarters in **New Delhi**.
The candidates had completed two months of training at MoES institutes on deep-sea mineral exploration of **Polymetallic nodules (PMN) and Polymetallic sulfides (PMS).** The trainings were aimed at capacity building for developing countries and enhancing international cooperation as per India's ongoing contracts with ISA on deep-sea mineral exploration in the Indian Ocean.

The trainings were conducted by two MoES autonomous institutions–**the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, and the National Centre for Ocean and Polar Research (NCPOR), Goa.**

NIOT conducted the *at-sea* training on PMN for nominees from Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Nigeria and Ghana.

NCPOR conducted *on-land* training on PMS for participants from Ghana, Madagascar, Jamaica, and Nigeria.

The participants also visited other MoES institutes (Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad; National Centre for Earth System Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram; and Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology, Kochi).

The programs were **academically supported** by **CSIR institutes** (National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, and Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology, Bhubaneshwar).

80. **The Department of Fisheries** under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) and the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB),** organized a **Workshop on the Application and Demonstration of Drone Technology in Fisheries and Aquaculture**. The event was held at **ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, Kerala,** and was attended by various eminent Scientists, State Fisheries Officials from Kerala, fishermen, and fisherwomen.

During the event, **George Kurian**, Hon'ble Minister of State, Department of Fisheries and Ministry of Minority Affairs announced the development of **100 climate-resilient coastal fishermen villages** under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), with **₹2 crore** allocated per village to enhance infrastructure and promote sustainable livelihoods. This initiative aims to improve resilience against climate change by providing facilities like fish drying yards, processing centers, and emergency rescue facilities, while also supporting climate-resilient practices such as seaweed cultivation and green fuel initiatives.

The Minister highlighted the role of drone technology in monitoring aquaculture farms and fisheries infrastructure, especially during disasters, and revealed plans to equip one lakh fishing vessels with transponders for real-time tracking, weather alerts, and communication, with an investment of ₹364 crores.

The distribution of **"Cadalmin BSF PRO**," a specially formulated fish feed designed to support sustainable aquaculture practices to fish farmers was done.

A booklet, titled "**EG Sailas Center of Excellence**," was launched, highlighting key advancements and contributions to the field.

The session also marked the launch of the **Marine Biological Association of India (MBAI) National Symposium**, an event aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among Marine Science Professionals across the nation.

The Department of Fisheries with the technical support of DG Shipping, Ministry of Shipping, Ports, and Waterways organized a '**One-Day Interactive Workshop to deliberate on the issues of Registration, Survey, and Certification of Fishing Vessels**.

The Workshop on Application and Demonstration of Drone Technology provided a unique platform to showcase innovative technological advancements, emphasizing the transformative role of drone technology in the fisheries sector to maximize its potential. Many fishermen, fisherwomen, scientists, entrepreneurs, students, and other delegates participated in the event.

81. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the **Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection, and Utilization of Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Amendment Rules, 2024** on 06 November 2024.

These Rules revise the rates of Environmental Compensation (EC) to be imposed for stubble burning.

Area of Land (in Acres)	Earlier rates	After Amendment
Less than 2 acres	2,500/-	5,000/-
Above 2 but less than 5	5000/-	10000/-
Above 5	15000/-	30000/-

The Commission has authorized all Nodal / Supervisory Officers appointed by the respective Governments in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, State of Punjab, State of Haryana, NCR areas of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to impose and collect Environmental Compensation from farmers causing air pollution by stubble burning, as per the revised rates.

82. **Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Vikram Dev Dutt**, inaugurated the new **Mine Opening Permission module** on the **Single Window Clearance System (SWCS) portal.**
This transformative initiative aims to simplify and accelerate the approval process for opening coal mines. By leveraging digital solutions, the module enhances transparency, improves efficiency, and reduces processing time.

This step significantly promotes the ease of doing business, creating a more investment-friendly environment and supporting faster approvals.

This new module will drive growth in the coal sector, strengthen India's energy security, and contribute to the nation's vision of self-reliance and sustainable development.

83. **Vajra Shot**, an India-made handheld Anti Drone Gun, was exhibited at the **'Swavlamban 2024',** Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) Seminar, held at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi.
The '**Vajra-Shot** is developed by **Chennai-based Big Bang Boom Solutions**. It is deployed in the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

   About Vajra Shot:

   - Its weight is **3.3 kg.**
   - It features a **radar system** capable of detecting drones from **four kilometers** of distance.
   - It is capable of jamming the drone's communication frequency.
   - It includes a simple Light Emitting Diode (LED) which provides real-time monitoring.
   - It has a long battery life, capable of **9 hours** of uninterrupted operations.

84. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has invited proposals for setting up **Centers of Excellence for Research and Development** under the **Research and Development (R&D) Scheme** of the National Green Hydrogen Mission.
The objective is to establish world-class Centres of Excellence for Green Hydrogen in India to foster innovation, promote sustainability, thereby enhancing energy independence in the long term. These CoEs will accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy by advancing Green Hydrogen production, storage, and utilization technologies.

The CoEs will act as focal points for cutting-edge research, skill development, and knowledge dissemination.

These CoEs will also facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, including industry, academia, and Government in order to drive innovations in Green Hydrogen technologies, leading to improved process efficiencies and new product development.

These centres will aggregate and leverage expertise and resources to advance the entire Green Hydrogen ecosystem in the country.

The Government has allotted Rs 100 crores for setting up such Centres.

85. **The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** banned animal testing for makeup products and manufacturers and importers on **5th November 2024**. The regulator, issuing instructions for importing cosmetics, also banned imports of cosmetics containing **hexachlorophene** and those that have been tested on animals after **12 November 2014.**

DCGI has issued a new code for drug inspectors to make their inspections, sample collections, and permits uniform, predictable, and accountable.

Hexachlorophene is a topical antibacterial cleanser, used to clean the skin before surgery to prevent the spread of infection. It is banned for cosmetic use.

According to industry estimates, India's cosmetic market was valued at $8.1 billion in 2023 and is expected to reach $18.4 billion by 2032.

86. **The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has revised the timings for the release of the monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data.
The timing for the data release has been shifted to **4 p.m**. on the **12th** of every month, as compared to the earlier release time of **5:30 p.m**. In the case of the 12th falling on a holiday, the data release will be shifted to the next working day for CPI. While it will shift to the previous working day for IIP.

The changes will be effective from **November 2024**, i.e. the CPI and IIP data release for October 2024 will be available on **November 12 at 4 p.m**. on MoSPI's official website.

87. The **15th edition** of India- US joint Special Forces **Exercise Vajra Prahar** commenced on 2nd November 2024 at the Orchid Combat Training Centre in **Idaho**, **USA**.
It is a military collaboration between India and the United States.

The exercise was organized from 2nd to 22nd November 2024.

The exercise participants were **45 personnel** from each country's Special Forces. The Indian Army was represented by its **Special Forces units**, while the **US Army** was fielding its elite **Green Berets**.

The training was focused on enhancing cooperation, joint operations capability, and the mutual exchange of special operations tactics, particularly in desert and semi-desert environments.

The last edition was held in Umroi, Meghalaya, in December 2023.

This is the second exercise of the year between India and the US Army, the previous being Exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2024, conducted in Rajasthan in September 2024.

88. The **third edition** of the high-level virtual interaction *MAHASAGAR* was conducted, during which **Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff** interacted with Heads of Navies/ Maritime Agencies and Senior Leadership from Indian Ocean Region littorals viz., **Bangladesh, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Tanzania**.
The interaction's theme was '*Training Cooperation to Mitigate Common Maritime Security Challenges in IOR*', which highlights the need for mitigation of common maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

MAHASAGAR is the Indian Navy's flagship outreach for high-level virtual interaction between **M**aritime **H**eads for **A**ctive **S**ecurity **A**nd **G**rowth for **A**ll in the **R**egion. It is conducted **bi-annually** and has garnered wide acceptance among the participating nations ever since its inception in **2023.**

89. **The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated the **first Asian Buddhist Summit**, organized by the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India, in collaboration with the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** in New Delhi.

The two-day summit was held with the theme, **"Role of Buddha Dhamma in Strengthening Asia"**.

The summit revolves around five thematic sessions that highlight various aspects of Buddhist influence and philosophy:

- **Buddhist Art, Architecture, and Heritage:** Highlights the rich cultural legacy of Buddhist landmarks like Sanchi Stupa and Ajanta caves.
- **Buddha Cārikā and Dissemination of Buddha Dhamma:** Focuses on Buddha's travels (Buddha Cārikā) and his role in spreading teachings across India.
- **Role of Buddhist Relics and its Relevance in Society:** Buddha relics inspire devotion and mindfulness, support local economies through pilgrimage tourism, and promote peace and compassion.
- **Role of Buddhist Literature and Philosophy in the 21st Century:** Demonstrates Buddhism's enduring relevance in modern philosophical discourse.
- **Buddha Dhamma in Scientific Research and Well-being:** Integrates Buddhist principles with scientific research to enhance mental and physical health.

A special exhibition titled **"India as the Dhamma Setu (Bridge) Connecting Asia"** highlighted India's role in spreading Buddhism across Asia.

The summit supports India's Act East Policy and Neighborhood First Policy, focusing on collective, inclusive, and spiritual development in Asia.

90. **A nine-member South African Navy (SAN)** delegation, led by **RAdm (JG) Nevielie Kurt Howell**, visited Headquarters Sea Training (HQST) at **Southern Naval Command (SNC), Kochi** from 21st -31st Oct 24.

The visit was aimed at enhancing bilateral Naval training cooperation between the two Navies through **Operational Sea Training (OST)** of ships and submarines conducted by the **Indian Navy's FOST Organisation.**

The visit focused on understanding various facets of the conduct of Work Up through exposure to Harbour and Sea training activities undertaken by the Indian Naval Work Up Team at Kochi. It also included visits to various training schools and establishments under SNC.

91. The **3rd edition** of joint military **Exercise AUSTRAHIND** was held at the **Foreign Training Node in Pune, Maharashtra from 8th November to 21st November 2024.**

It is an annual event conducted alternatively in India and Australia.

The **2nd edition** was conducted in Australia in **December 2023.**

The Indian contingent comprising 140 personnel was represented by a battalion of the **DOGRA Regiment** and 14 personnel from the Indian Air Force.

The Australian Army contingent comprised 120 personnel represented by the **13th Light Horse Regiment** of the 10th Brigade of the 2nd Division.

The exercise was conducted in two phases i.e. combat conditioning and tactical training phase and validation phase.

Exercise AUSTRAHIND aims to train in semi-urban environments in **semi-desert terrain** under **Chapter VII of the UN mandate**. The exercise focuses on a high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, and joint tactical drills.

92. **The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu** interacted with a group of women achievers in the Indian Aviation Sector at Rashtrapati Bhavan on November 4, 2024.
The meeting took place under the initiative **"The President with the People"** which aims to establish a deeper connection with people and recognize their contributions.

During the event, the President appreciated women's contribution to the aviation field. i.e. **15 % of Air Traffic Controllers, 11% of flight dispatchers, and 9% of aerospace engineers are women**. Also, **18 % of pilots** who received commercial licenses in 2023 were women.

93. **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has revamped & introduced **170 Seed categories** on the portal. These new categories feature nearly **8,000 seed varieties** that can be procured by Central/State PSUs and other governing bodies for further dissemination across the country.
The seed categories on the GeM portal offer a ready framework for seed procurement, incorporating the extant rules & regulations by the Government of India and necessary parameters, easing the entire process for procuring authorities.

94. **Union Minister for Jal Shakti Shri C R Patil** inaugurated **Ganga Utsav 2024** at **Chandi Ghat in Haridwar**.
Ganga Utsav 2024 is organized by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** to mark the anniversary of declaring the Ganga River as the National River.

The primary aim of this festival is to promote the conservation of the Ganga River, emphasize its cultural and spiritual importance, and raise public awareness about cleanliness.

Key Highlights:
- This edition was celebrated across **139 districts** in the Ganga basin states. Each state hosted a main event organized by **District Ganga Committees**.
- During the event, an initiative related to water conservation *Jal Sanchay, Jan Bhagidari,* was discussed.
- Discussions with spiritual leaders and gurus present in the Utsav under a session titled "**Ganga Samvad**" were held, for river conservation and rejuvenation.
- This 50-day long expedition concludes at Ganga Sagar, Kolkata traversing through 9 major cities & towns across the Ganga River.
- The National Book Trust (NBT) Bus was flagged off as part of Ganga Utsav 2024. The NBT bus with literature regarding river Ganga carries out **'Ganga Pustak Parikrama'** with the theme *'Ganges through the ages: A Literary Bioscope'.* The bus will travel through major 10 cities in the 5 riparian states along the Ganga River basin.
- Several cities participated under River City Alliance, an organization that includes 145 river cities nationwide.
- The festival featured a "Ghat Par Haat" market along with stalls from local departments to highlight various aspects of the Namami Gange initiative.

95. **The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)'s** student film "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know" has qualified for the **2025 Oscars (97th Academy Awards**) in the **Live Action Short Film Category.**
The film was directed by FTII student **Chidananda S Naik**.

Earlier, the film had won the **first Prize** at the **Cannes Film Festival's La Cinef Selection** 2024.

It has also won the **Best Indian Competition award** at the **Bengaluru International Short Film Festival**

It is a **Kannada-language** project inspired by **Indian folk stories and traditions**.

Other key people related to this film are **Suraj Thakur (Cinematography)**, **Manoj V (Editing),** and **Abhishek Kadam (Sound Design).**

"SUNFLOWERS WERE FIRST ONES TO KNOW" is a story of an elderly woman who steals the village's rooster, which throws the community into disarray. To bring the rooster back, a prophecy is invoked, sending the old lady's family into exile**.**

96. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh attended the **65th Foundation Day of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK).**
As part of the celebrations, IIT Kanpur hosted a special event on defence innovation, aligning with the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat.'

Key Highlights:

- During the event, **IIT Kanpur** signed MoUs with **BEML** and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to drive advancements in **military logistics & defence innovation** and a partnership with Kanpur University to strengthen incubation efforts.
- Secretary of DDR&D and DRDO Chairman Dr Samir V Kamat presented sanction letters for six transformative DRDO projects, while SIDBI's Matching Offer for iDEX-funded start-ups further boosted essential funding support.
- The event also included key discussions about the **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** initiative which provides a grant of Rs1.5 crore to innovators and start-ups. **Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with the iDEX (ADITI)** scheme was launched to promote innovations in critical and strategic defence technologies, wherein start-ups are eligible to receive grant-in-aid of up to Rs 25 crore for their research, development, and innovation endeavours in defence technology.
- The Defence Minister visited a Defence Research, Product, and Incubation Showcase organized by the **Start-up Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC)** at IIT Kanpur, which highlighted pioneering solutions from 23 SIIC-incubated start-ups.
- Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar, **Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat, Director of IIT Kanpur Prof Manindra Agrawal** attended the event.

97. The **55th edition** of the **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** introduced a **new award category: 'Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film'** which will showcase five remarkable

debut films that highlight new perspectives, diverse narratives, and innovative cinematic styles from across India.

The Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film will be awarded with Certificate and cash prize of Rs 5 Lakh.

Each of these films brings unique narratives and regional perspectives, highlighting India's cultural and linguistic diversity. The list is as follows:

S.No.	Original Title of the Film	Director	Language
1.	Boong	Lakshmipriya Devi	Manipuri
2.	Gharat Ganpati	Navjyot Bandiwadekar	Marathi
3.	Mikka Bannada Hakki (Bird of a Different Feather)	Manohara K	Kannada
4.	Razakar (Silent Genocide of Hyderabad)	Yata Satyanarayana	Telugu
5.	Thanupp (The Cold)	Rajesh Narayanan	Malayalam

The winner of the award will be announced at the Closing Ceremony of the IFFI on November 28, 2024.

98. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, inaugurated infrastructure projects at the **Chennai Port Authority (ChPA) and Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL).**
These initiatives, launched with a combined investment of **Rs.187.33 Crores**, are set to strengthen port infrastructure, streamline trade operations, and advance India's green port initiatives.

Key Highlights:

- He also inaugurated the construction of four new EXIM godowns at Chennai Port, with a project cost of Rs. 73.91 Crores, covering an area of 18000sq m. This project, fully funded under the Sagarmala scheme,
- A newly constructed road for cargo transport and container movement to the Second Container Terminal (CITPL) at Chennai Port was also inaugurated which is 350 meters in length and 12 meters in width developed for Rs. 4 Crores.
- He also inaugurated the **Doubling of Southern Railway Connectivity** at **KPL,** with a total investment of Rs. 88.91 Crores. This expansion adds 2.65 km of railway line to accommodate growing EXIM trade demands. It includes three new rail bridges over the Kosasthalai River and Buckingham Canal and the conversion of unmanned level crossings to interlocked crossings. This project will increase the port's rail handling capacity from 22 to 44 rakes per day.
- The Minister also inaugurated a Shore Power Supply Facility for coal vessels at KPL, established for Rs. 20.51 Crores. the facility offers shore power at berths CB1 and CB2.
- The Minister also officiated the renaming of '**Clive Battery Quarters** to '**Ramanujan Quarters'** under the **Panch Pran initiative**, highlighting the Ministry's focus on building a resilient and inclusive port environment.

99. The **Maha Kumbh Mela**, a sacred pilgrimage that is celebrated four times over 12 years, is to be organized in **Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh** from **January 13 to February 26, 2025.**
This sacred event rotates between four locations in India-Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj-each situated by a holy river, from the Ganges to the Shipra, the Godavari, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati in Prayagraj.

Participants include ascetics, such as Sadhus and Naga Sadhus, who practice intense spiritual discipline.

Kumbh Mela was recognized as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by **UNESCO** in **2017**.

100. The Keel Laying ceremony of **Yard 3037 and 3038**, the 1st & 2nd **Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV)** (**ex-GRSE**), was held at **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd, Kolkata**.
The NGOPVs with an approximate tonnage of **3000T** are envisaged for Coastal Defence & Surveillance, Search & Rescue operations, Protection of Offshore Assets, and Anti-Piracy missions.

The contracts for the Indigenous design and construction of 11 NGOPVs were concluded in March 23 between the Ministry of Defence MoD and GSL, Goa for seven ships and GRSE, Kolkata for four ships.

101. The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** announced the **Create In India Challenge - Season 1 (CIC)**, a precursor to the **World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES).**
CIC is aimed to have a profound impact on India's Creators' Economy, empowering content creators, and innovators to showcase their talents to enhance India's soft power, globally.

CIC, launched on August 22, 2024, has garnered significant traction nationwide and globally, with 27 challenges, including Truth Tell Hackathon, Comics Creator Championship, Esports Tournament, Trailer Making Competition, Theme Music Competition, XR Creator Hackathon, A.I. Avatar Creator Challenge, Anime Challenge, among others.

These challenges are spread across various sectors of the Media and Entertainment industry notably Broadcasting, Advertising, Music, AVGC-X, Digital Media, Social Media, Films, Emerging Technologies, and more.

102. **The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** organized awareness programs about the importance of prosthetic and orthotic devices and their role in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with limb loss or physical disabilities, through its **National Institutes and Composite Regional Centers** (CRCs) across India.
These programs were organized on the occasion of **International Prosthetics and Orthotics Day (IPOD)** (**5th November).**

Key activities held include:

- **Awareness Rally and Educational Activities by NILD:** Students of the National Institute for Locomotor Disabilities (NILD) organized a rally, street plays, and educational sessions, highlighting the importance of prosthetics and orthotics in promoting mobility and inclusion.

- **Awareness Camp by CRC Chhatarpur:** An awareness camp was organized, where assistive devices were distributed to over 50 beneficiaries, contributing to improved mobility in their daily lives.
- **Online Webinar by CRC Rajnandgaon:** The center conducted a free online webinar on 'The Role of Prosthetics and Orthotics in Enhancing Quality of Life', emphasizing the essential support these devices offer in daily activities.
- **Offline Awareness Program by CRC Tripura:** An offline awareness event was held, including motivational speeches, race competitions, and a musical chair contest to inspire the community.
- **Public Awareness Program by CRC Gorakhpur:** CRC Gorakhpur organized a mass awareness event where motorized tricycles were distributed to a significant number of Divyangjan, enhancing their ease of movement and promoting self-reliance.

103. **IndiaAI and Meta** launched the **Center for Generative AI, 'Srijan' (सृजन)**, at **IIT Jodhpur**, alongside the "**YuvAI initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building"** in partnership with the All India Council for Technical Education (**AICTE**), for the advancement of open source artificial intelligence (AI) in India.

Srijan:

- This center is named after the Hindi word "Srijan" which means "creation".
- Meta will support the establishment of the Center for Generative AI, Srijan, (सृजन) ("GenAI CoE") at IIT Jodhpur.
- This GenAI CoE aims to advance research and development in AI while fostering the growth of responsible and ethical AI technologies in India. It will support and enhance open science innovation across the AI technology landscape.

YuvAI initiative:

- Meta, in collaboration with MeitY and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), also launched the "YuvAi initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building."
- This program aims to bridge the AI talent gap in the country by empowering 100,000 students and young developers aged 18-30 to leverage open-source large language models (LLMs) to address real-world challenges.
- This will include the establishment of a Gen AI Resource Hub with courses, case studies, and open datasets; an LLM for Young Developers Course designed by Meta; and Master Training Activation Workshops to introduce participants to foundational AI concepts.
- The program also features Unleash LLM Hackathons, where students will submit AI solutions to address real-world problems, with top ideas receiving mentoring, seed grants, and market support.
- The AI Innovation Accelerator will identify and support 10 student-led startups experimenting with open-source AI models, offering incubation and visibility.
- The program includes launching a Gen AI Resource Hub offering courses, case studies, datasets, hackathons, and accelerator programs to support student-led startups.

104. **India and Pakistan** have extended the **Kartarpur Corridor agreement until 2029,** ensuring visa-free movement of Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara in Pakistan for five more years.

Under the agreement, there is no restriction on the faith of the pilgrims who travel through the corridor, and up to 5,000 pilgrims can visit the gurdwara through the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor each day.

The original agreement was signed on **October 24, 2019.**

India has requested to waive the **USD 20 service charge** that is charged to each pilgrim. Kartarpur border is around 4 Km long and connects Gurdwara Sahib in **Narrowal, Pakistan** with the Dera Baba Nanak Shrine in **Gurdaspur**, India.

It was inaugurated in **November 2019** on the occasion of Guru Nanak Dev's **550th** birthday anniversary.

105. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has constituted a team to enquire into the death of **ten elephants** in **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh.**
The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has also constituted a **five-member** State level committee, to enquire and submit the report to the Government.

The five-member committee is headed by **APCCF (Wildlife).** The committee has members from civil society, scientists, and veterinarians. The matter is also being enquired into by the Head of **State Tiger Strike Force (STSF).**

The patrolling staff of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve detected the death of four elephants in Salkhania beats of Pataur and Khiatuli range of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh on 29th September 2024.

On further combing of the adjoining areas, six more elephants were found sick or unconscious in the vicinity.

As per the preliminary information shared by the concerned officers from the State of Madhya Pradesh, the death of the elephants may be because of poisoning.

The final cause of death shall only be ascertained after through enquiry, detailed Postmortem reports, results of histopathological and toxicological reports and other corroborative evidences.

106. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh announced that India is set to launch the **European Union's Proba-3 Space Satellite** in the first week of **December 2024.**
This was announced during the event of **Indian Space Conclave 3.0**, which was organized by the **Indian Space Association (ISpA)** in **New Delhi** from 5th -7th November 2024.

Proba-3:

The Proba-3 satellite, which arrived at pòłSriharikota, is aimed at observing the **Sun** and reflects equal collaboration between India and other major space powers.

The Proba-3 satellite is India's third such launch for the EU, with previous missions supporting the Proba-1 and Proba-2 satellites.

Proba-3 will provide valuable insights into solar corona dynamics, adding to ISRO's portfolio of ambitious scientific ventures, which recently included the groundbreaking Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission.

Indian Space Conclave 3.0:

- During the event, the EU Ambassador to India and Bhutan, Mr. Herve Delphin, emphasized the significance of the Indo-European partnership in space.
- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled **SPADE,** an innovative product developed by **Suhora Technologies,** and presented the prestigious **ISpA Space Industry Awards.**
- India's various space programs were discussed such as **Gaganyan,** and to establish India's own space station by **2035** with a vision of space tourism by **2040**.

107. The Union Government has released the **Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Grants** during the financial year 2024–25 for the Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) of **Haryana, Tripura,** and **Mizoram.**
Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)/ RLBs of Haryana have been given Untied grants amounting to **Rs.194.867 crores** as part of the 1st installment. These funds have been disbursed for 18 eligible District Panchayats, 139 eligible Block Panchayats, and 5911 eligible Gram Panchayats in the state that fulfilled the mandatory conditions for release.

While for Rural Local Bodies in Tripura, the 1st installment of Untied grants amounting to **Rs.31.40 crores** and 1st installment of Tied grants amounting to **Rs.47.10 crores** has been released. These funds are for all the 1260 Rural Local Bodies [including Traditional Local Bodies viz. 1 TTAADC (Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council), HQ; 40 Block Advisory Committees; and 587 Village Committees).

The XV FC has released funds for PRIs/RLBs of Mizoram, being the 2nd installment of Untied grants of the financial year 2022–23, amounting to **Rs.14.20 crores** and 2nd installment of Tied grants of the financial year 2022–23 amounting to **Rs.21.30 crores.** These funds are for all 834 village councils including Autonomous District Council areas.

Tied and Untied Grants:

The Untied grants are utilized by Rural Local Bodies for location-specific felt needs, under the Twenty-Nine (29) Subjects enshrined in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, except for salaries and other establishment costs.

The Tied grants can be used for the basic services of (a) sanitation and maintenance of ODF status, and this should include management and treatment of household waste, and human excreta and fecal sludge management in particular and (b) supply of drinking water, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling.

108. **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA),** led by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved an equity infusion of **₹10,700 crore** in the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This financial push is aimed at enhancing FCI's working capital for FY 2024-25, reducing short-term borrowing needs, and lessening government subsidy expenses.

This infusion (of equity) will help to lower the interest burden and will ultimately reduce the subsidy of the Government of India. This is the second approval of equity for FCI, a similar equity of **₹21,000 crore** was infused earlier.

This infusion will reduce FCI's dependency on short-term borrowing, lowering interest costs.

Background:

- FCI was established in **1964** with an initial authorized capital of **₹100 crore** and equity of ₹4 crore.
- FCI's authorized capital was raised from ₹11,000 crore to ₹21,000 crore in February 2024.
- FCI's current equity increased to ₹10,157 crore in FY 2023-24.
- The state-owned FCI, distributes grains to nearly 800 million beneficiaries free of cost under the National Food Security Act 2013.

109. **The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)** under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying facilitated the designation of the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar (ICAR-NRC Equine) as a World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Reference Laboratory for Equine Piroplasmosis.**

The official designation will be formally announced at the **92nd WOAH General Session and World Assembly of Delegates** in **May 2025.**
ICAR-NRC Equine is the **fourth laboratory** in India to receive this status, the previous three are as follows:

- ICAR- National Institute of High-Security Animal Disease, Bhopal (Avian Influenza)
- Veterinary College, Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bangalore (Rabies)
- ICAR- National Institute for Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics, Bangalore (PPR and Leptospirosis).

As per the 20th Livestock Census, India possesses around 0.55 million **Equines** (**horses, ponies, donkeys, mules**) with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana having the highest concentrations.

Equine Piroplasmosis disease:
Equine piroplasmosis is caused by the **tick-borne protozoan parasites *Babesia caballi* and *Theileria equi,*** affects **horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras, and** poses a serious threat to the health of these animals. Its prevalence rate is **15-25%** in India and can reach up to 40%, resulting in high economic losses.

110. The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT),** the Telecom R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has signed an agreement with the **C R Rao Advanced Institute of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science (AIMSCS**) for the development of " Side Channel Leakage Capture Infrastructure and Analysis (SCLCIA) Solution ".
The agreement is signed under the **C-DOT Collaborative Research Program (CCRP)** for Indian start-ups/organizations/research and academic institutions to collaborate on the development of Side Channel Leakage Capture Infrastructure and Analysis (SCLCIA) led by C-DOT.

The project includes the development of infrastructure (software and related hardware development) for capturing side channel data leakages through real-time Power Usage Change from an FPGA while running a cryptographic algorithm.

111. The **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)** and **Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority** have partnered to develop integrated manufacturing clusters in Agra and Prayagraj.
The official signatories were Rajat Kumar Saini, CEO & MD, NICDC, and Mayur Maheshwari, CEO, UPSIDA.

The agreements will lead to the creation of Integrated Manufacturing Clusters (IMCs) in Agra and Prayagraj.

These clusters are designed to become engines of industrial and economic growth under the **Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor.**

IMC Agra:

- It is located across 1,058 acres along the city's Inner Ring Road, connected to both Delhi NCR and the Agra-Lucknow Expressway.
- The project is anticipated to bring in over INR 3,400 crore in investment.

IMC Prayagraj:

- This cluster covers an area of 352 acres, with an investment of 1600 crores it is designed to focus on industries such as e-mobility, food processing, leather, garments, cycle manufacturing, and packaging.

112. NTPC Ltd celebrated its **50th Raising Day** on **7th November 2024.** The event was organized at the Engineering Office Complex (EOC), Noida, and the NTPC Flag was hoisted by **CMD Gurdeep Singh.**
NTPC is India's largest integrated power company, completes 1/4th power demand of the country, and targets to generate 130 GW by 2032. It was established in **1975.**
During the event, **Hydrogen-fuel buses** which are set to be operated in **Leh** were launched.
Various achievements of NTPC were discussed and highlighted:
- The complete synthesis of CO_2 captured from flue gas with hydrogen produced from a PEM electrolyzer which is then converted into methanol at NTPC's Vindhyachal plant was highlighted. Both the CO2 capture plant and the CO2-to-methanol plant are the **first** of their kind in the world.
- NTPC has also developed and tested the '**first indigenous catalyst'** for **Methanol Synthesis.**
- It has also been working on Gen-4 ethanol, green urea, and Sustainable Aviation Fuel.
Some new IT applications were launched, and a special comic book on NTPC's **Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM)** was released.

113. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, in collaboration with the '**Rays of Wisdom Society'** and supported by the **Ministry of Culture**, organized the **8th** edition of the **International Ancient Arts Festival and Symposium** from 8th to 10th November 2024 at IGNCA.

This event featured an exhibition titled '*Metaphysical, Symbolic, and Healing Themes in Visual Arts'*, alongside a conference on *'Art, Religion, and Healing'*.

During the event, Dr. Reela Hota presented '*Antar Yatra'*, a dance performance exploring the journey of consciousness through yogic philosophy.

The '**International Ancient Arts Conference'**, organized by the **Rays of Wisdom** Society in collaboration with the Religion, Consciousness, and Spirituality Group (nurtured by the Foundation for Creative Social Research), gathered esteemed scholars to examine the healing potential of ancient art forms.

The special guest of honor at the inaugural session of the conference was Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi.

114. Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs Manohar Lal unveiled the **'EV as a Service'** program of **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**, a subsidiary of **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium.

EV as a Service model aims to boost e-mobility in *government offices, by deploying 5,000 E-Cars in government departments over the next two years.*

It aligns with India's goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2070 and recently launched the PM E-Drive scheme.

It aims to promote the use of electric vehicles in Central and State Government ministries/departments, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), and other government institutions.

It allows flexible procurement of different EV models based on operational needs, promoting environmental sustainability.

CESL has already deployed nearly 2,000 EVs and is working on 17,000 E-Buses.

115. A special issue of the research publication of the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**, Ministry of Ayush, the **Journal of Drug Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (JDRAS)**, was released by **Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush** in the presence of Prof. Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS, and senior officials.
The special edition of JDRAS is dedicated to the emerging field of *Ayurveda Aahara.*

The studies featured in this special issue emphasize how integration with scientific methods enriches the Ayurvedic perspective on nutrition, offering a unique blend of tradition and evidence-based health solutions.

Ayurveda Aahar:

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), in consultation with the Ministry of Ayush, introduced the **Food Safety and Standards (Ayurveda Aahara) Regulations, 2022.**

- These regulations, were officially notified on May 5, 2022, formally defined **"Ayurveda Aahara"** as food prepared according to the recipes, ingredients, or processes described in authoritative Ayurveda texts**.**

- FSSAI has also launched a unique logo for Ayurveda Aahara, on June 7, 2022.

- The regulations aim to safeguard the identity and authenticity of Ayurveda-based dietary practices, preserving the original principles of Ayurveda food preparation.

Note: Ayurveda Day was celebrated on October 29, 2024, with the theme "Ayurveda Innovation for Global Health".

116. Union Minister for Communications, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia has inaugurated the **25th Meeting** of the **South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council** (SATRC-25) in **New Delhi**.

The event was a three-day meeting held from 11th-13th November 2024.

The theme of the event was **"Accelerating Telecommunication and ICT Development for Growth and Inclusiveness."**

The event was organized by the **Asia-Pacific Tele community (APT)** and hosted by the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).**

The event was attended by the Heads of Regulators and affiliate members from all nine SATRC member countries i.e. **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.**

During the event, the Minister of Communications highlighted India's digital infrastructure, the digital economy now comprises 10% of the country's overall economic landscape and will reach an astounding 20% by 2026-27.

He also discussed New technological advancements i.e. **Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs)** which present a transformative opportunity to extend telecom coverage to the most remote corners of our nation.

The meeting reviewed the progress of implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase IX Progress on the work on different work items which were reported by the Chairs of the SATRC Working Groups. The meeting also reviewed the activities and the budget implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase IX for the year 2025.

SATRC:

- The South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) was formed in **1997** by an initiative of APT and ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. At present, SATRC consists of **nine** South Asian countries.
- The SATRC is responsible for the discussion and coordination of all the issues relating to regulations in telecommunication and ICT in South Asian countries.

117. Defence Space Agency of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff conducted the **first-ever** Space exercise **Antariksha Abhyas -2024** in **New Delhi**.

The three-day Exercise was held from 11 - 13 November 2024. The inaugural event was attended by the *Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.*

It is a first-of-its-kind exercise to help secure national strategic objectives in space and integrate India's space capability in military operations.

The Space Exercise aims to provide an enhanced understanding of space-based assets and services and to gain an understanding of operational dependency on space segments between stakeholders. In addition, it intends to identify vulnerabilities in the conduct of operations in the event of denial or disruptions of space-based services.

118. Solid State Physics Laboratory, a DRDO laboratory, has successfully developed indigenous processes for growing and manufacturing 4-inch diameter **Silicon Carbide (SiC)** wafers and fabricating **Gallium Nitride (GaN) High Electron Mobility Transistors (HEMTs)** up to **150W & Monolithic Microwave Integrated Circuits (MMICs) up to 40W for applications up to X-band frequencies**.

This advanced technology offers improved efficiency, reduced size and weight, and enhanced performance and can be used in combat systems, RADARS, electronic warfare systems, and green energy solutions.

Indigenous GaN on SiC-based MMICs with limited production capability has been successfully established at the Gallium Arsenide Technology Enabling Center (GAETEC), Hyderabad.

These state-of-the-art multifunctional MMICs cater to wide applications in next-generation strategic systems, space, aerospace and 5G/satellite communications.

Attempt SBI PO 2024 Free Mock test

119. The National Test House (NTH) has successfully conducted a unique customized test on the **"LED Tower Mast Light",** specifically designed for challenging environmental conditions, such as sub-zero, high-altitude environments, and extremely hot, dusty deserts.
The test was executed in Darjeeling, West Bengal.

The tests were conducted by the Lamp and Photometric laboratory of NTH (ER), Kolkata analysing the photometric, electrical, and ingress protection (IP) testing parameters on these samples, adhering to IS: 16106-2012, IS 10322: Part-I -2014, and specific customer specifications.

A significant component of the testing was the High-Altitude Test, which verified the functionality of the LED Tower Mast Light along with the Generator set, at altitudes over 1800 meters above sea level.

National Test House:

- It is a scientific and technical institution established in **1912**. It operates as a subordinate office under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- It is India's largest multi-location and multidisciplinary Central Government Testing Laboratory. It is the only government-controlled laboratory offering these specialized services. It has achieved ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation from NABL.

120. A research team from the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, led by Prof. Kannan Pakshirajan,** has developed a unique method to remove **ammonium** from **wastewater** by using a combination of microalgae and bacteria.

The team had designed a photo-sequencing batch reactor (PSBR), where microalgae produce oxygen during photosynthesis, which is then utilized by nitrifying bacteria to convert ammonium into nitrate, followed by denitrification under anoxic conditions using denitrifying bacteria to form nitrogen as the end product.

The research was supported by the **Department of Science and Technology Fund for Improvement of S&T Infrastructure (DST-FIST)** program.

It has been published in the **Chemical Engineering Journal.**

The paper was co-authored by **Prof. Pakshirajan** and **Prof. G. Pugazhenthi** from the Department of Chemical Engineering, alongside post-doctoral and research scholars Dr. Arun Sakthivel, Dr. Surjith Ramasamy, and Sumeet Kheria at IIT Guwahati.

The new method will reduce energy consumption compared to traditional wastewater treatment methods.

121. **The Authority Holding Sealed Particulars (AHSP)** of the **P-7 Parachute System** was handed over to the **Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA)** by the **Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra**, a DRDO laboratory.

The ceremony was held at DRDO Bhawan in New Delhi on November 11, 2024.

ADRDE has successfully designed, developed, and qualified the P-7 Parachute System.

Fabrication of the Parachute system has been done by Gliders India Limited (Ordnance Parachute Factory), GIL (OPF), Kanpur.

The P-7 heavy drop system comprises of Parachute system and a Platform system. The parachute system is designed to airdrop a payload ranging from **5 tons to 9.5 tons.**

It is capable of safely dropping payloads of up to 9.5 tons from IL -76 Aircraft at an altitude of up to four kms.

Indian Army can rapidly deploy their **Light Field Gun** & **Jeep** at the border and conflict areas by air dropping with this system.

Indian Army has placed an indent on GIL (OPF), Kanpur for the supply of 146 P-7 Heavy Drop Parachute System.

122. **The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)** organized a symposium on **"Green Transition in States"** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The knowledge partner was the ISEG Foundation.

The symposium included presentations from states on their green initiatives, panel discussions, and remarks from prominent officials.

The symposium consisted of 2 Best Practises Sessions with presentations from States, private firms, and think tanks.

During the event, NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Power** and the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**, launched the **ASSET platform - "Accelerating Sustainable Solutions for Energy Transition".**

The platform will assist in formulating state energy transition blueprints along with aiding in its implementation, preparing a pipeline of bankable projects, showcasing best practices across states as well as upcoming technology and innovations in critical sectors like BESS, Green Hydrogen, Energy efficiency, e-mobility, offshore wind, etc.

123. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah has approved the **1st all-women battalion** of the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** to empower women and enhance their role in national security.

The Mahila Battalion will shoulder the responsibility of protecting the nation's critical infrastructure, like airports and metro rails and providing VIP security as commandos.

The proposal for the creation of all-women battalions in the CISF was initiated on the 53rd CISF Day i.e. in the year 2022.

The number of women in CISF is more than 7% at present. The addition of a Mahila battalion would encourage more aspiring young women across the country to join CISF and serve the nation.

124. The **Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** organized a two-day 'Chintan Shivir' at ITC, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The event focused on strategies to achieve the target of **500 GW by 2030** and progress toward the next goal of **1800 GW by 2047**.

Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, has inaugurated the event.

The Union Minister emphasized the need to install 288 GW of renewable energy capacity over the next six years, requiring a substantial investment of Rs. 42 lakh crore, including transmission infrastructure.

The MNRE will organize hackathons for startups in the RE sector, with assured offtake to promote the indigenization of renewable energy technologies and solutions.

A new Joint Centre of Excellence for R&D will also be established in collaboration with the Ministry of Power to foster innovation and technological advancements in the RE sector.

A 6,000 MW manufacturing capacity for production of solar modules, solar cells & ingot-wafer at Dhenkanal District, Odisha with an expected investment of around Rs. 9,000 crore is being set up by an agency.

Another agency is setting up a 1,000 MW manufacturing capacity for the production of solar modules & cells, at Infovalley-II, Khorda, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, with an expected investment of around Rs. 730 crore.

The PM Surya Ghar Yojana will achieve over 5 lakh installations by the end of November 2024.

A dedicated task force with all stakeholders will be set up by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in collaboration with the Ministry of Power to achieve the goal of 500 GW by 2030.

125. Dr. V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, inaugurated the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Health Pavilion** at the **43rd India International Trade Fair (IITF)** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**.

This year's pavilion is centered around the theme of **'One Health'** – a comprehensive approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and ecosystem health.

The pavilion presented the Ministry's major accomplishments like the **U-WIN App,** which facilitates **free vaccination for pregnant women and children**, to the **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)** which now includes senior citizens **over 70 years** with an additional **₹5 lakh** top-up cover.

The pavilion also featured innovative installations like the **BHISHM Cube**, **an indigenous mobile hospital** showcasing its design and utility in real-world settings.

126. The **'Durgesh Aranya Zoological Park'** at **Bankhandi** in **Kangra, Himachal Pradesh** would become **India's first zoo** to receive certification from the **Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** for its sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives.
The entire project with a total outlay of **₹619 crore** aims to establish the park for boosting the tourism sector in Kangra.

The first phase of the zoological park project will cover an area of 25 hectares with an estimated cost of ₹230 crore. It is to be completed by the third quarter of **2025.**

Central Zoo Authority to establish **34 animal enclosures** within the **Van Vaibhav Path** and **Biodiversity Court** of Durgesh Aranya Zoological Park as part of the project's first phase.

73 animal species, including Asiatic lion, hog deer, monitor lizard, crocodile, gharial, and various bird species would be available in this zoo.

The Zoo will also include:
- A Nocturnal house for observing rarely-seen feline species.
- A Wetland Aviary designed to resemble the natural habitats of local birds.

<u>**India Green Building Council:**</u>

It was established in 2001 as a part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) & India's premier body for certification of green buildings. Its headquarters is in Hyderabad, Telangana.

127. **The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW)** under the Ministry of Personal, Public Grievances and Pensions released a regulation outlining guidelines for maintaining records of a government pensioner's family information.
As per the new rules, the name of the **daughter** cannot be removed from the list of family members eligible for government servant's family pension.

<u>**Key Highlights:**</u>

- A daughter is officially recognized as a family member once her name is submitted by the government employee using the designated **Form 4.**
- A daughter (unless affected by a mental or physical disability) qualifies for a family pension until she marries, remarries, or becomes employed.
- **Unmarried, widowed, or divorced daughters above 25 years** of age may also receive a family pension, provided all other children in the family are either over 25 or are financially independent.
- If a child has a disability, they have the primary entitlement to the family pension.
- **Pending divorce or legal proceedings:** Female government servants/pensioners involved in ongoing divorce proceedings, or those who have filed cases against their husbands under relevant protective acts, may formally request to have their children receive the family pension in the event of their death.
- **Family pension disbursement order:** If no eligible child exists at the time of the woman's death, the family pension will be payable to the surviving widower.
- If minor children or children with disabilities are present, the pension will initially go to the widower, provided he remains the child's guardian. If the widower ceases to be the guardian, the pension will be paid through the legal guardian.
- For children who have reached the age of majority, but remain eligible for the family pension, the pension will be transferred directly to them.
- Once all eligible children have ceased to qualify under Rule 50, the family pension reverts to the widower until his death or remarriage.

128. **The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** conducted the first-ever flight test of **the Long-Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM)** from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), **Chandipur, Odisha** on November 12, 2024, from a mobile articulated launcher.

The missile performance was monitored by sensors like Radar, Electro-Optical Tracking System, and telemetry deployed by ITR at different locations to ensure complete coverage of the flight path.

LRLACM is a Defence Acquisition Council-approved, Acceptance of Necessity-sanctioned, Mission Mode Project.

It has been developed by the **Aeronautical Development Establishment, Bengaluru** along with contributions from other DRDO laboratories and Indian industries.

Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Hyderabad, and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bengaluru are the two Development-Cum-Production-Partners for LRLACM and they are engaged in the missile development and integration.

It is configured to launch from the ground using a mobile articulated launcher and also from frontline ships using a universal vertical launch module system.

Attempt SBI Clerk 2024 Free Mock Test

129. The 10th Mission Steering Group under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Textiles, Giriraj Singh, has approved **12 research projects** of value **Rs.13.3 Crores** under the **National Technical Textiles Mission.**

The research projects were approved across key strategic areas of geotextiles, sustainable and smart textiles, composites, etc.

The approved projects were proposed by eminent research bodies and institutions including **IITs, NITs, CRRI**, etc.

The total number of approved research projects under the Mission is **168** with a total value of approx.**Rs.509 Crores**.

National Technical Textiles Mission: It is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Textiles focused on developing the research and development capabilities of the local industry, especially in the areas of high-performance fiber development.

130. Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, AOC-in-C CAC, has inaugurated the **IAF C-295 Full Motion Simulator (FMS)** facility at **Air Force Station, Agra**.

The simulator enables pilots to train in a near realistic environment by simulating various missions like tactical shift, paradropping, paratrooping, medical evacuation, and disaster relief.

It will allow pilots to hone their skills in handling high-risk emergencies that require time-critical decisions, thereby enhancing the overall flight safety of military operations.

The C-295 is a versatile 5-10 tonne transport aircraft with modern technology, designed for tactical and varied mission capabilities.

Note: The Tata-Airbus aircraft facility in Vadodara was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez in October 2024.

131. The Supreme Court restored the **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)'s** authority to issue Customs recovery notices under **Section 28** of the **Customs Act, 1962.**

The decision bench comprising Chief Justice **D Y Chandrachud** and Justices **J B Pardiwala** and **Manoj Misra** overturned the apex court's 2021 ruling, penned by the then **CJI S A Bobde**, i.e. *Canon India Private Ltd vs Commissioner of Customs.*

This decision revives tax demands totaling ₹20,000-23,000 crore against major companies like Vedanta, Vodafone Idea, Adani Enterprises, Canon, TVS Motors, and over 95 other firms with substantial import-export activities.

132. Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, addressed the **57th** convocation of the **Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)** in New Delhi.

During the convocation, degrees were conferred to more than 650 students from various programs, including the flagship MBA (International Business), MA (Economics) with specialization in International Trade and Finance, Ph.D. in Management and Economics, and Executive Programmes, underscoring IIFT's commitment to training students in the fields of International Business, Economics, and Trade.

During the event, the Union Minister launched **IIFT's campus in Dubai**, featuring a negotiation center and case studies from Indian sources, improving students' trade and FTA capabilities.

During the event, he called for joint efforts to reach India's ambitious **USD 2 trillion** export goal by **2030**. In the previous fiscal year 2023-24, India's goods and services exports were projected at USD 778 billion.

IIFT's rank has risen by twelve positions to the **15th** spot in the management category in the NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework) ranking for 2024.

133. 'Brat', newly defined in 2024 as 'characterized by a confident, independent, and hedonistic attitude', has been named **Collins' Word of the Year 2024.**

Inspired by the Charli XCX album, 'brat' has become one of the most talked about words of 2024.

The dictionary is published by **HarperCollins.**

Originally the word Brat meant a 'term for a misbehaving child' and is now redefined as a symbol of *confidence, independence, and hedonism.*

Collins dictionary noted that "Brat" has become more than a word. After the **sixth** album of British singer **Charli XCX (Charlotte Amma Aitchison)** which described 'Brat' as a girl who is a little messy and likes to party.

134. The **Flight Safety Seminar (FSS) and Annual Naval Flight Safety Meeting (NFSM)** for the year 2024 were successfully conducted at **INS Dega, Visakhapatnam** under the aegis of the Headquarters Eastern Naval Command.

The Chief guest was **Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar**, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command.

The representatives from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Coast Guard, and prominent defense organizations such as HAL also attended the event.

The theme of the seminar was, **"Emerging Threats and Challenges - Naval Air Operations and Compliance with Flight Safety."**

It was focused on contemporary topics, including Advancements in Counter-UAV/ UAS Technologies and Tactics, Cyber Security Risks in Aviation Operations, and Countermeasures for Aircraft Systems.

Safety concurs across the Indian Navy were elaborated upon with the aim of operational risk management to ensure safe flying while meeting all operational missions.

The discussions included the latest trends in bird and animal hazard mitigation.

135. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **first Bodoland Mahotsav** on **15th November 2024** at the SAI Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, **New Delhi.**

The theme for the Mahotsav was **"Peace and Harmony for Prosperous Bharat".**

The two-day Mahotsav was a mega event on language, literature, and culture to sustain peace and build a vibrant Bodo society.

It aims to integrate the indigenous Bodo people residing in Bodoland and other parts of Assam, West Bengal, Nepal, and the international border areas of the Northeast.

The Bodoland Mahotsav also seeks to celebrate the journey of recovery and resilience ever since the signing of the **Bodo Peace Accord** in **2020**.

The session on "The Rich Bodo Culture, tradition and Literature Contributing towards Indian Heritage and Traditions" witnessed deliberations on a range of the rich Bodo culture, traditions, language, and literature.

Another session on "Challenges and opportunities of mother tongue medium-of-instruction through National Education Policy, 2020" was also held.

The gathering included more than 5,000 cultural, linguistic, and art enthusiasts who attended the event from the **Bodoland region**, **Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh,** other parts of India, and also from neighbouring **Nepal** and **Bhutan.**

136. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has released its latest data, highlighting substantial growth in **India's renewable energy sector** from October 2023 to October 2024. This progress underscores India's commitment to achieving its clean energy targets in line with the 'Panchamrit' goals set by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

The Panchamrit goals are as follows:

- Increase non-fossil fuel energy capacity to **500 GW by 2030**
- Meet **50%** of energy requirements with renewable energy by **2030**
- Reduce total projected carbon emissions by one billion tons from 2023 to 2030
- Reduce the carbon intensity of the economy by **45% by 2030**, compared to 2005 levels
- Achieve net zero emissions by **2070.**

India's total renewable energy installed capacity increased by a staggering **24.2 GW (13.5%)** in a year, reaching **203.18 GW** in October 2024 from **178.98 GW** in October 2023. This significant rise aligns with India's ambitious targets in the field of the RE sector. Including nuclear energy, the total non-fossil fuel capacity rose to **211.36 GW** in 2024, compared to 186.46 GW in 2023.

Solar and Wind Power Surge:
- **Solar Power:** The solar sector saw a remarkable increase of 20.1 GW (27.9%), growing from 72.02 GW in October 2023 to 92.12 GW in October 2024. The combined total solar capacity, including projects under implementation and tendered, now stands at 250.57 GW, a significant rise from 166.49 GW last year.
- **Wind Power:** Wind energy also demonstrated steady growth, with installed capacity increasing by 7.8%, from 44.29 GW in October 2023 to 47.72 GW in 2024. Total capacity in the pipeline for wind projects has now reached 72.35 GW.

Capacity Additions:

From April to October 2024, India added 12.6 GW of renewable energy capacity. In October 2024 alone, 1.72 GW was installed, marking an accelerated shift towards renewable energy.
The renewable energy projects under implementation and tendered saw significant expansion, with 143.94 GW under implementation and 89.69 GW tendered as of October 2024. This is a notable increase from 99.08 GW under implementation and 55.13 GW tendered as of October 2023, ensuring consistent progress towards India's clean energy targets.

Hydro and Nuclear Contributions:

As of October 2024, large hydro projects contributed 46.93 GW to India's renewable portfolio, while nuclear power capacity contributed 8.18 GW. These contributions strengthen the diversity and resilience of India's renewable energy mix, supporting the country's comprehensive approach to green energy transition.

137. **The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** organized an Official Language award distribution ceremony to felicitate the winners of the competitions organized during the ''Hindi Pakhwada''.

The program was chaired by the Secretary (DAHD). Joint Secretary (O.L.), Director (O.L.)

The **second edition** of the department's official language magazine, **'Surabhi,'** was also released.

The magazine serves as a platform for showcasing efforts in promoting Hindi within the department and features articles, poetry, and essays written by employees.

138. The **58th Executive Committee** meeting of the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** was held in New Delhi.
It was chaired by Rajeev Kumar Mittal, Director-General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga.

Various projects were approved during the event:

- A project for assessing the Environmental flow of the **Chambal, Son, Damodar,** and **Tons** rivers has been approved by the Executive Committee. The budget of this project is 11 crore.
- The project titled **'Advancing Rescue System for the Protection of Stranded Ganges River Dolphins'** with an estimated budget of **Rs.1 crore** was also approved for the conservation of Ganga River Dolphin. 'Dolphin Ambulance' will be developed in this project.
- A project for the conservation of endangered **turtles** in the **Ganga basin** in **Uttar Pradesh** was also approved.
- **Three** highly endangered species will also be introduced in the above project alongside establishing a Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool at the **National Chambal Sanctuary.** The project cost is 78.09 Lakh.
- The rehabilitation of the 50 MLD STP (Million liters per day Septage Treatment Plant) at Keorapukur in Kolkata has been approved with a revised budget of Rs. 114.27 crore, up from the initial Rs. 67.06 crore.
- An Integrated Septage Treatment Plant project in West Bengal was also approved.
- During the meeting, the third season of the "**Rag-Rag Mein Ganga - Ek Jeevan Dhara**" was approved.

139. The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC),** India in collaboration with the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** organized a six-day **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Executive Capacity Building Programme** for senior officers of the **National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)** from 11th– 16th November 2024.

The participants from NHRIs of **eight** countries including **Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand,** and **Jordan** attended the event.

The program aimed at enhancing the promotion, protection, and strengthening of human rights across diverse regions.

The initiative is a part of NHRC's ongoing outreach efforts to enhance understanding and appreciation of various aspects of human rights and help in building capacity among senior functionaries of NHRIs.

The Commission has previously organized a residential capacity-building program for the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives in 2023.

140. The team at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar has developed a **Completely Mechanical Passive Motion Machine for Knee Rehabilitation** that has been awarded a patent.

The device utilizes a piston and pulley system, which stores air as the user pulls a handle, enabling smooth and controlled motion to aid in knee rehabilitation eliminating the need for electricity, batteries, or motors, making it both lightweight and portable.

Continuous passive motion (CPM) is an important therapy for patients recovering from knee surgeries, helping to improve joint mobility, reduce stiffness, and speed up recovery.

The mechanical CPM machine offers a promising alternative to costly electric machines that are often out of reach for many patients, especially in rural areas with unreliable electricity supply.

141. Scientists from the **Agharkar Research Institute (ARI)**, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), have discovered a new species of Dicliptera, named **Dicliptera Polymorpha** in the Northern Western Ghats of India.

The discovery was made by the team led by **Dr. Mandar Datar**, including Talegaon-Dabhade-based botanist Adittya Dharap and Bhushan Shigwan of Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, under the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

This species is taxonomically unique, with inflorescence units (cymules) that develop into spicate inflorescences. It is the only known **Indian** species with this spicate inflorescence structure, with its closest ally being found in **Africa.**

The species' novelty was confirmed by leading global expert Dr. I. Darbyshire from Kew Botanic Garden, London. A research paper detailing this species was recently published in the prestigious journal **Kew Bulletin.**

The first specimens were collected in 2020.

Dicliptera polymorpha thrives on slopes in open grasslands of the northern Western Ghats in extreme climatic conditions. The species bloom twice a year, the first phase (November to March/April) and the second phase (May/June).

142. Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan met with a high-level delegation led by **Ronald J. Daniels**, **President of Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Baltimore, Maryland, USA.**

The delegation also included officials from Gupta Klinsky India Institute (GKII), an internal unit of JHU.

The discussion centered on strengthening academic and research collaborations between JHU and premier Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The delegation actively discussed establishing an offshore JHU campus in India.

143. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) organized the **Shilp Samagam Mela 2024** at Delhi Haat, New Delhi.
The fair was organized from 5-15 November 2024 by the Corporations under the Ministry - National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward

Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCDFC), and National Safai Karmachari Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).

The fair showcased traditional handicrafts from 16 states across 105 stalls. The products include metal crafts, wooden artifacts, cane and bamboo products, pottery, handloom items, jewellery, leather goods, and various attractive textiles.

During the event, **'TULIP' (Traditional Artisans Upliftment Livelihood Programme)** was inaugurated by Union Minister Virendra Kumar.

- The goal of TULIP is to empower marginalized artisans by providing them with a platform for global exposure and sales of their products through e-marketing.
- Under the TULIP brand, artisans from Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), sanitation workers, and persons with disabilities will have an e-platform to market their products.

144. The **5th edition** of the **Vietnam Indian Bilateral Army Exercise "VINBAX 2024**" was conducted at **Ambala, Haryana**.

For the first time, the exercise includes personnel from both the Army and Air Force of India and Vietnam, increasing the scope of the exercise.

VINBAX-2024 aims to enhance the joint military capability of both sides in the employment and deployment of Engineer Companies and Medical Teams to undertake engineering tasks as part of the United Nations Contingent in Peacekeeping Operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The Indian Army contingent was comprised of 47 personnel.

It included a 48-hour validation exercise including a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) demonstration and equipment exhibition.

Note: VINBAX is an annual exercise started in 2018 and was first conducted at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

145. The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, has inaugurated the **Swami Vivekananda Vidya Mandir, Zanda Chowk**, and addressed a public function at **Silvassa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli** and **Daman and Diu**.

During the event, she highlighted the state's upliftment efforts in the education field.

The Government Engineering College was started in 2018 to provide quality technical education to students, and NIFT was established in 2022 in the Union Territory.

146. In November 2024, the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** issued a comprehensive guideline to address the issue of misleading advertisements in the coaching sector.
A committee chaired by the then Chief Commissioner CCPA was constituted on Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in Coaching Sector and included the representatives from

the organizations namely **Central Consumer Protection Authority**, **Department of Personnel & Training**, **Ministry of Education**, **Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (as a special invitee), National Law University (NLU) Delhi, Law firm and Industry stakeholders.**

Based on the suggestion of the committee the CCPA placed the Draft Guidelines for public comments on 16th February 2024.

In this regard, CCPA has issued **45 notices** to various coaching centers for misleading advertisements. The CCPA has imposed a penalty of **Rs. 54,60,000** on **18** coaching institutes and directed them to discontinue the misleading advertisements.

Department of Consumer Affairs through the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)** has successfully intervened at a pre-litigation stage to ensure justice for students and aspirants who enrolled for the UPSC Civil Services, IIT, and other entrance examinations.

Key Highlights of the Guidelines:

- **Regulation of Advertisements**: The guidelines explicitly prohibit coaching institutes from making false claims related to the courses offered, their duration, faculty qualifications, fees, and refund policies. selection rates, success stories, exam rankings, and job security promises. assured admissions, high exam scores, guaranteed selections or promotions.
- **Truthful Representation:** Misleading representations about the quality or standard of their services are strictly prohibited. Coaching institutes must accurately represent their infrastructure, resources, and facilities.
- **Students' Success Stories:** guidelines reportedly will prevent coaching centers from using students' names, photos, or testimonials in advertisements without their written consentand importantly, this consent must be obtained only after the student's success.
- **Transparency and Disclosure:** Coaching centers will need to disclose important information, such as the name, rank, and course details alongside the student's photo in an advertisements.
- **No Creation of False Urgency:** The guidelines will reportedly target the common tactic used by any person engaged in coaching i.e. creating a false sense of urgency or scarcity, such as implying limited seats or exaggerated demand, to pressure students into making immediate decision.
- **Convergence with National Consumer Helpline:** Every coaching center will be required to partner with the National Consumer Helpline, making it easier for students to raise concerns or complaints regarding misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices.
- **Fair Contracts:** The guidelines are also said to address the issue of unfair contracts that students are often enter into with coaching centers.
- **Enforcement and Penalties:** Any violation of these guidelines will be treated as a contravention of **the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.

147. The Indian Navy has organized the **fourth edition** of the **'Pan-India'** Coastal Defence Exercise **'Sea Vigil-24'** on 20 & 21 November 2024.

The fourth edition of Ex Sea Vigil spanned an unprecedented scale, both in terms of geographical reach and the magnitude of participation, with the involvement of 06 Ministries and 21 Organisations/ agencies.

The Coastal Defence & Security Readiness Evaluation (CDSRE) phase of the exercise was conducted by the Naval Officer-in-Charges of all coastal states and UTs (including Lakshadweep & A&N Island) since the end Oct 24, where in thorough audit of complete coastal defence and security infrastructure was carried out.

This year, **National Security Council Secretariat officials** were part of Indian Navy-led CDSRE teams for the first time, along with personnel from the State Marine Police, Coast Guard, Customs, Fisheries, etc.

The exercise focussed on strengthening the security of coastal assets like ports, oil rigs, Single Point Moorings, Cable Landing Points, and critical coastal infrastructure including the coastal population.

This year participation by other Services (Indian Army and Air Force) and planned deployment of a large number of ships and aircraft have enhanced the tempo of the exercise.

Sea Vigil serves as a precursor to the **Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX)** and has been conducted biennially since 2018. It was designed to validate and enhance measures adopted to bolster Coastal Defence, post the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

148. **The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DAPRG)**, under the **Ministry of Personnel Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPP&P)** in collaboration with the **International Institute of Administrative Sciences ((IIAS)** announced that the IIAS-DARPG India Conference, 2025 will be hosted at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi** from February 10-14, 2025.

It is the flagship event of IIAS and is held annually in different regions of the world.

The theme for the 2025 conference is, "*Next Generation Administrative Reforms – Empowering Citizens and Reaching the Last Mile*."

The website for the IIAS-DARPG India Conference, 2025 was launched on 02nd October 2024.

More than 500 domestic as well as international delegates from many countries are expected to participate in the conference.

149. Three organizations of the **Ministry of Mines** namely **Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL), Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL),** and **Jawaharlal Nehru Aluminium Research Development and Design Centre (JNARDDC)** have been felicitated by the Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh for their exceptional performance during NLW (National Learning Week) in the valedictory ceremony held by Capacity Building Commission (CBC).

These three organizations have bagged one award each competing with all the central government organizations throughout the nation in achieving the **"Minimum 4-hour Learning Goal",** a goal set by CBC wherein each employee of any individual organization had to complete at least of 4 hours of iGOT courses during National Learning Week.

The organization's award and category are as follows:

Organization	Rank	Category (XL, L, S, XS)
HCL	3rd	M
MECL	1st	S
JNARDDC	2nd	XS

This recognition underscores the Ministry's commitment towards Mission Karmayogi- a flagship program of the Government of India for training of civil servants, which intends to transform the Civil Services from "Rule-Based" to "Role-based" way of functioning and citizen-centric.

150. **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** in partnership with the **National Housing Bank (NHB)** organized a national workshop on **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban 2.0- Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) vertical.**
The event was held in **New Delhi** on **14th November 2024**.

It was participated by more than 250 participants from various Banks, Housing Finance Companies (HFCs), Primary Lending Institutions (PLIs), and other financial institutions.

The workshop provided a platform for participants from various sectors to come together to deliberate and strategize on the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0, discuss its modalities, and identify ways to strengthen the affordable housing initiative.

PMAY-U 2.0:

- **The 'PMAY-U 2.0 – Housing for All'** Scheme was launched in September 2024.
- Under the Scheme, financial assistance will be provided to **poor and middle-class families** to construct or purchase a **pucca house** in **urban areas.**
- It will be implemented through **four verticals** with beneficiaries having the flexibility to choose one vertical as per their eligibility criteria.
- **ISS** is one among the four verticals of the Scheme, under which interest subsidy will be provided to **EWS/LIG/MIG beneficiaries** on home loans.
- ISS vertical of PMAY-U 2.0 is being implemented by designated Central Nodal Agencies (CNAs) such as NHB, HUDCO, and SBI to channelize the subsidy to the beneficiary accounts through identified PLIs.
- A **unified web portal** designed and developed by **MoHUA** to effectively execute the scheme was also introduced.
- **MoUs** were signed between **NHB** and 147 different PLIs for implementation of the Interest Subsidy Scheme.

151. The **Department of Health Research** and the **Indian Council of Medical Research (DHR-ICMR)** hosted the **DHR-ICMR Health Research Excellence Summit 2024** in New Delhi.

The event marked **ICMR's 113th Foundation Day.**

Key Highlights:

- The DHR-ICMR Health Research Excellence Summit underscores our unwavering commitment to fostering an environment where impactful research flourishes.
- During the event, the **Research Infrastructure Sharing Ecosystem (I-RISE) Policy** was launched, which is a platform to expand ICMR's extensive laboratory and research network to foster healthcare innovation.
- The I-Drone initiative which was launched recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also demonstrated.
- The Summit also saw the launch of the **ICMR History Book**, a comprehensive chronicle detailing over a century of ICMR's achievements and contributions to India's healthcare landscape.
- The new guidelines on **Intellectual Property Policy**, **CSR Funds**, and **Technology Transfer** were introduced, establishing a robust framework to drive innovation, encourage collaboration, and optimize resource allocation.
- Recognitions were given to individuals and teams for Best Research Paper, Best Innovation, Best Team Research, Best Ph.D. Student, Best ICMR Institute, Best Extramural Institute, Best Multi-Disciplinary Research Unit, Best Model Rural Health Research Unit, Best Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, and Best Health Technology Assessment Centre.

152. **Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports**, **Mansukh Mandaviya**, launched a nationwide call to action to strengthen the fight against doping in sports, urging athletes, coaches, and the entire sporting community to adopt the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** India's '**Know Your Medicine (KYM)'** app.
The KYM app is a part of NADA India's broader mission to raise anti-doping awareness and education, equipping athletes with essential information to stay clean.

The app allows users to easily verify whether a specific medicine or its ingredients contain any substances listed as prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Unique Features of App:

- **Image and Audio Search:** Allows users to search for substances by uploading images or audio inputs, enhancing accessibility.
- **Sport-Specific Information:** Users can select their sports category and access tailored information related to their specific needs.
- **Convenience:** Ensures athletes and coaches can effortlessly verify medicines and stay informed on banned substances.

153. Professor Abhay Karandikar, Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, launched **Operation Dronagiri**, a pilot project under National Geospatial Policy 2022 to demonstrate the potential applications of geospatial technologies and innovations in improving the quality of life of citizens and ease of doing business.

The event was organized at the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi.

In the first phase, Operation Dronagiri will be implemented in the states of **Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Assam, Andhra Pradesh & Maharashtra.**

It will be demonstrated to showcase the potential applications of integration of geospatial data and technology in 3 sectors **Agriculture, Livelihoods, Logistics & Transport**.

An important component of the project is the **Integrated Geospatial Data Sharing Interface (GDI).** This platform enables seamless access and sharing of spatial data. It will follow a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

The activities under Operation Dronagiri will be overseen by IIT Tirupati Navavishkar I-Hub Foundation (IITTNiF).

The Geospatial Innovation Accelerators (GIAs) at IIT Kanpur, IIT Bombay, IIM Calcutta. IIT Ropar will act as the operational arm of Operation Dronagiri.

The entire implementation process will be driven by the Geospatial Innovation Cell, Department of Science and Technology.

154. The **third edition** of the **Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting** between **India and Tanzania** was held in **Goa.**

The Indian delegation, led by **Joint Secretary Amitabh Prasad**, included senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. The High Commissioner of India to Tanzania Bishwadip Dey also attended the meeting.

The Tanzanian delegation was led by **Land Forces Commander Maj Gen Fadhil Omary Nondo.**

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of areas of cooperation, including growing training partnerships and service-to-service, maritime & defence industry collaboration.

The two sides also reviewed the progress on decisions taken during the previous JDCCs and explored new areas to further expand bilateral defence cooperation.

As part of the tour, the Tanzanian delegation also visited Goa Shipyard Ltd to get first-hand experience of India's capabilities in port development and shipbuilding.

The delegation also visited INS Hansa and the National Institute of Hydrography in Goa.

155. **New Delhi** hosted the **"GI & Beyond 2024"** Summit. The summit was organized by the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, in collaboration with the Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC).

The summit highlighted the exceptional skills of artisans who manufactured India's Geographical Indication (GI) tagged handloom and handicraft products and their global significance.

Chief Guest: Shri Giriraj Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles

During the summit, the Union Minister distributed GI certificates to 10 artisans from various parts of the country.

Notably, India received its 1st GI certification in 2004.

The summit had representation from 13 countries spread across 4 continents and witnessed around 20 overseas buyers, 50 exporters & MNCs, 70 GI authorized users and 40 officials from various departments including state governments.

The technical session on various domains of the trade emphasized the integration of traditional handwoven and handcrafted skill with modern business practices to enhance the global appeal of India's traditional textiles and craft.

During the event, overseas buyers and domestic exporters interacted with the authorized users of Geographical Indications (GI).

A special thematic display showcased an array of GI-tagged handloom and handicraft products across India, with participation from GI holders and authorized users.

Attempt SBI PO 2024 Free Mock test

156. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** under its Digital India Vision plans implements its capacity-building initiatives in Digital Governance.

As part of the Capacity Building initiative, a 5-day training programme on '**Managing Large Digital Transformative Projects'** has been organized at the **Indian Institute of Management, Visakhapatnam** from 25-29 November 2024 by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), MeitY for the officials of Central and State Governments across the country.

A total of 24 officers from various Central Line Ministries and States/UTs, including New Delhi, Maharashtra, Chandigarh, Karnataka, Haryana, Odisha, Assam, Hyderabad, Nagaland, and Punjab participated in the programme.

The objective of this programme is to resolve challenges in managing large digital transformative projects, to make large projects a success and create a shared vision for Digital India.

The programme also aims to enable participants to explore the concept of Government as a platform and navigate the complexities of Digital Public Infrastructures (DPIs). It offers insights into Digital Product & Design Thinking, Digital Marketing of Public Services, IT Project Management, and Government Process Reengineering.

The Capacity-Building scheme under the Digital India Programme intends to build adequate and relevant capacities at all government levels and provide need-based training to conceptualize, lead, design, and implement e-Governance projects. Vigorous efforts have been made to reach a large number of government officials and train them in relevant skills.

157. The **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL),** a constituent board of the **Quality Council of India (QCI),** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI)** during the Silver Jubilee celebration of CREDAI in New Delhi.

The MoU aims to recognize temporary site testing laboratories for civil engineering projects.

The aim of this MoU is to enhance the quality and reliability of temporary site testing laboratories in civil engineering projects.

By implementing NABL's recognition scheme, this collaboration seeks to ensure that materials used in construction are tested accurately on-site, fostering trust in their quality.

This initiative will contribute to the overall improvement of construction standards, ensuring safer and more durable structures across India.

The MoU was signed by Mr. N. Venkateswaran, CEO of NABL, and Mr. Shekar G. Patel, President-Elect of CREDAI, along with Mr. Jaxay Shah, Chairman of QCI; Mr. Manoj Gaur, Chairman of CREDAI; and Mr. Boman Irani, President of CREDAI.

158. The **Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE)**, on behalf of the **Indian Army**, and the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)**, have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** at **MCTE, Mhow**.

This initiative is designed to accelerate research and development in cutting-edge technologies tailored for military applications.
This MoU underscores the commitment to develop indigenous solutions in emerging domains, including Quantum Computing, Cyber Security, Wireless Communication, Digital Twin, Sensory Augmentation, and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

Key highlights of the MoU:

- Establishing a Centre of Excellence at MCTE as a hub for innovation and knowledge-sharing.

- Collaborative R&D efforts to address critical military problem definitions and operational challenges.

- Development and testing of field-ready prototypes in identified technology verticals.

- Organizing workshops, seminars, and executive training programs to enhance skill development.

- Leveraging C-DAC's state-of-the-art R&D capabilities and MCTE's operational expertise for real-world application testing.

Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE):

The Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE) is the engineering training establishment for the Corps of Signals of the Indian Army.

- **Established:** 1911
- **Headquarters:** Mhow, Madhya Pradesh

159. Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju has inaugurated the **Conference of Chairpersons of State and UT Haj Committees** in New Delhi.

The conference, organized by the Haj Committee of India under the Ministry of Minority Affairs, marked the launch of the **Haj Suvidha App 2.0**.

The new version of the app introduces key features such as the selection process, boarding pass and air travel details, a navigation system with Mina maps, and medical history and health advisories for Indian pilgrims.

160. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah attended the **Diamond Jubilee Celebrations** of the **National Federation of State Co-operative Banks Limited (NAFSCOB)** and the national meeting of Rural Cooperative Banks at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

- In 1964, Dr. Dhananjayrao Ramchandra Gadgil and Maganbhai Patel established NAFSCOB with a vision to examine the problems related to cooperative credit, banking and to formulate strategies for their solution.
- NAFSCOB has guided and helped the district and state-level banks of the country.
- NAFSCOB is the only institution that keeps authorized data of 100 basic parameters of state-level, and district-level banks, and thousands of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), based on which the agricultural loan blueprint is drawn across the country.

Presently, NAFSCOB has 34 state cooperative banks, 352 district-level cooperative banks, and 1,05,000 PACS, of which about 65,000 are operational.

161. India has signed a **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)** with four European countries—**Switzerland, Iceland, Norway,** and **Liechtenstein** forming the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA).**

This agreement is expected to provide India access to **99.6% of EFTA's market,** generating **$100 billion i**n foreign direct investment (FDI) and creating **1 million direct jobs** over the next **15 years.**

Key Highlights:

- The TEPA grants India extensive market access, with EFTA offering **92.2%** of its tariff lines, covering 99.6% of Indian exports.
- TEPA will expand India's service exports, particularly in IT, business, and educational services, by improving access to EFTA countries.
- The deal facilitates technological collaboration, offering India access to advanced technologies in precision engineering, health sciences, and renewable energy.

162. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the **PAN 2.0 Project** with a financial outlay of **Rs.1435 crores**, an upgrade of the current PAN/TAN system.

It is a part of the government's Digital India vision and is aimed at streamlining and digitizing PAN services, enhancing taxpayer registration and service delivery.

Key Features of PAN 2.0:

- All PAN/TAN-related services will be hosted on a **single unified portal** of the Income Tax Department **(e-Filing Portal, UTIITSL Portal, and Protean e-Gov Portal** will be unified).
- The Portal would host all end-to-end services related to PAN and TAN like an allotment, updation, correction, Online PAN Validation (OPV), Know your AO, AADHAAR-PAN linking, verifying your PAN, request for e-PAN, request for re-print of PAN card, etc.
- Complete the online paperless process as against the prevailing mode.
- Allotment/updation/correction of PAN will be done free of cost, and e-PAN will be sent to the registered mail ID.
- For a physical PAN card, the applicant has to request along with the prescribed fee.
- The current valid PAN cards will remain fully operational under PAN 2.0 unless holders request an update or correction.
- Under PAN 2.0, the **QR code** facility will be enhanced with a dynamic QR code displaying the latest data from the PAN database.
- It ensures compliance with key ISO certifications for quality, security, and service management.

PAN:

Permanent Account Number (PAN) was introduced in **1972.**

It is designed as a unique **10-digit alphanumeric** identifier.

It links an individual or entity's financial transactions, such as tax payments, TDS/TCS credits, and income returns, to the Income Tax Department.

Section 272B of the Income-tax Act imposes a penalty of Rs. 10,000 for taxpayers who fail to comply with PAN-related provisions.
As per the Income-tax Act, no individual is allowed to hold more than one PAN.

TAN:

TAN (Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number) is a **10-digit alphanumeric** code issued by the Income Tax Department for entities responsible for TDS/TCS.

It is mandatory for filing returns, making payments, and issuing TDS/TCS certificates.

TAN cannot be replaced with PAN except under specific provisions like **Section 194-IA.**

Note: The Income Tax Act was passed in the year 1961 and came into effect on 1st April 1962.

163. **Cyclone Fengal** made landfall near Puducherry on 30th November 2024, bringing heavy rainfall and gusty winds to Tamil Nadu's coastal belt, including Chennai and Puducherry.

This is the second cyclone to impact India's east coast after Cyclone Dana.

Cyclone Fengal, initially stagnant, intensified as it moved closer to land, reaching about 120 km east of Puducherry and 110 km southeast of Chennai before landfall.

The cyclone made landfall between Mahabalipuram and Karaikal with wind speeds of 70-80 km/hr, gusting to 90 km/hr. Heavy rainfall and gusty winds disrupted public transport, with buses, trains, and flights affected.

The name "Fengal" was proposed by **Saudi Arabia** and is of Arabic origin.

- Cyclones are named from a list created by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

- Each member state contributes 13 names, which are used in rotation and not reused once assigned.

164. **Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** inaugurated the **12th edition** of the **International Tourism Mart (ITM),** in **Kaziranga, Assam.**

The ITM took place from November 26th to 29th, 2024 in the Northeast region renowned for its diverse topography, rich flora and fauna, vibrant ethnic communities, ancient traditions, festivals, and abundant arts and crafts.

Kaziranga National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to the majestic one-horned rhino.

During the event, a Coffee Table Book on Assam **"Guwahati and Around"** published by **Assam Tourism Development Corporation Limited** was also launched. The book takes a comprehensive look at the rich heritage, culture and diversity of Guwahati and its picturesque surroundings.

The event also aligns with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Kaziranga being declared a national park.

Note: In July 2024, 'Moidams of Charaideo' was declared as the 43rd UNESCO World Heritage Site from India.

165. The Ministry of Defence has signed a **Rs.1207.5 crore** contract with state-run **Cochin Shipyard Limited** for short refit and dry docking (SRDD) of **INS Vikramaditya.**

This project is an important step towards the development of Cochin Shipyard Limited as a Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) Hub for supporting the industrial ecosystem of India.

The project envisages the involvement of nearly 50 MSMEs and would lead to employment generation for more than 3500 personnel.

INS Vikramaditya:

It is an Indian Aircraft Carrier commissioned in the Indian Navy in **November 2013.** After completion of the Refit, it will join the active fleet of the Indian Navy with upgraded combat capability.

166. The two-day **48th Meeting** of the **National Committee of Archivists (NCA)** was held at the **Statue of Unity, Kevadiya (Ekta Nagar), Gujarat.**

The meeting was jointly organized by the National Archives of India, the Government of India, New Delhi, and Gujarat State Archives.

It was the second occasion that the NCA held its meeting in Gujarat. Earlier, on 7 June 1982, the 32nd Meeting of the NCA was held at Gandhinagar.

Arun Singhal, Director General of Archives, National Archives of India & **Chairman of NCA** inaugurated the occasion.
On this occasion, the following three books were launched:

- **The Royal Heritage of Gujarat,** by the late **Prof Makarand Mehta,** published by Gujarat State Archives;
- **The Diary of Manu Gandhi: 1946-1948**, ed. By Prof **Tridip Suhrud,** published by the National Archives of India and Oxford University Press, and
- **Descriptive List of Mutiny Papers", Vol.9,** ed. By **Muzaffar-e Islam,** published by the National Archives of India and Yatra Books.

NCA:

- It is an all-India body of professional archivists from all states/UTs to meet and discuss professional and technical problems being faced by Archives Departments in their day-to-day functions.
- It was set up in **1953** and the Committee is headed by the Director General of Archives, National Archives of India.
- Its first meeting was held in Hyderabad in 1954.

167. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Foundation for Science, Innovation and Development, IISc Bangalore have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the **Headquarter Maintenance Command of the Indian Air Force (IAF).**

This collaboration aims to address critical challenges in the maintenance and servicing of radar, aircraft, IT, and communication platforms by jointly identifying problem areas and developing a strategic roadmap.

It is aligned with the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

This partnership will not only enhance self-reliance in defence technology but also encourage startups, MSMEs, and industrial setups to actively contribute to defence indigenization programs.

168. The **18th NCB International Conference & Exhibition on Cement, Concrete, and Building Materials** was held at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi.

During the event, the Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), **Arti Bhatnagar** presented the **National Awards for the Indian Cement Industry.**

She also released the **Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya (BND)**, an **Indian Certified Reference Material of Gypsum Standard** produced by **NCB** in collaboration with **NPL, NMI of India.**

She also released a short film on 200 Glorious Years of Cement and Concrete Construction Industry, a Conference Souvenir, Conference Proceedings, a Compendium titled "The Cement Industry-India 2024" and a publication on Alternative fuels and raw materials.

The NCB will be quantifying the carbon footprint of the conference with the help of NCB incubated StartUp **"Zero Carbon"** and will be offsetting the CO2 emissions.

The awards emanated from the suggestion at the **1st NCB International Seminar** in **1987,** and at the instance of the Ministry of Industry, **the scheme of the National Award for Energy Efficiency** was started in the year **1986-87.**

The conference was organized by the National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCB), an apex R&D organization under the administrative control of **DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.**

169. The **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Chennai,** under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has signed a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement for its cutting-edge technologies, **NLOS VICINITY** and **ILLUMINATE**, with **Nav Wireless Technologies Pvt. Ltd.**

The agreement was formalized at Electronics Niketan, New Delhi, by. D. Ethirajan, Scientist F and Centre Head, C-DAC Chennai, and Hardik Raval, Head of the Embedded Department at Nav Wireless Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

The C-DAC, Chennai has developed two Visible Light Communication enabled solutions, namely,

- **A Non-Line Of Sight Approach for Visible Light Communication-based Indoor PosITioning SYstem (NLOS-VICINITY)**
- **VIsibLe Light CommUnication enabled Smart Indoor LightiNg And Control SysTEm (ILLUMINATE).**

NLOS-VICINITY represents a leap forward in indoor positioning technology ideal for smart proximity advertising, indoor location-based services, and indoor navigation.

ILLUMINATE takes indoor lighting control to a new level of intelligence and sustainability for use in RF-free zones.

These products have been developed under the scope of an R&D project titled "Visible Light Communication based LED Lighting Solutions" funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Visible Light Communication (VLC)/Light Fidelity (Li-Fi) uses light waves instead of traditional radio waves to transmit data, offering unprecedented advantages such as faster speeds, enhanced security, and greater energy efficiency.

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170. ASIFA India, a **UNESCO-recognized global NGO** promoting animation, is hosting **WAVES Awards of Excellence** as part of the Create in India Challenge.

These awards are held in collaboration with the **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting,** to celebrate exceptional achievements in **Animation, Visual Effects, and XR,** reinforcing India's creative leadership on the global stage.

The awards will culminate at the **World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025** at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi.**

WAVES Awards of Excellence:

The Awards, for students and professionals, include categories such as Best Character Animation, Best Visual Effects, and Best Short Film are awarded.

Winners receive mentorship, networking opportunities with industry leaders, and recognition as part of India's creative revolution, aligning with the Government's 'Create in India' initiative. **Note:**

ASIFA India organized International Animation Day in Hyderabad from 16-17 November 2024 & participated in the Bhopal Design Festival on 21st November to inspire creators to participate in the upcoming WAVES Awards of Excellence.

ASIFA India:

ASIFA India is a non-profit organization established in **2000** to promote the art, craft, and profession of VFX, Animation & Gaming in India.

It has been working tirelessly to create a platform for creators including- Animators, VFX & Gaming artists, students, and professionals to network, learn, and showcase their work.

ASIFA:

Founded in **1960** in **Annecy, France,** and actively building community in India for 24 years. ASIFA is renowned for its contributions to fostering talent and innovation.

171. Minister of State for Textiles, Pabitra Margherita announced the establishment of Northeast's **first Government Skill University** in **Mangaldoi, Assam.**

During the event, he highlighted the initiatives of the Ministry of Textiles including the SAMARTH Scheme, which provides training to enhance the employability and productivity of the candidates to meet the demands of the evolving textiles sector.

He highlighted Textiles Ministry is working very hard to implement the **Samarth Yojana** and 3.48 lakh beneficiaries have been trained, out of which 79% have been provided placement and a total of 3.6 lakh women beneficiaries have been trained.

In the Samarth Program, Textile Ministry also working for **Dakshta Aur Kushalta Vikas,** and 88% are women beneficiaries, including 26%, i.e., 90320 persons are from Scheduled Caste, 12%, i.e. 42,857 persons from the ST community.

Ministry of Textiles has set a target of employing 10 crores by 2030.

172. The **Indian Army** has launched the **'Eklavya'** platform, an online digital platform for **officers' training** in line with its theme for 2024, i.e., "Year of Technology Absorption.

The platform was launched by General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS).

The platform was developed under the aegis of Headquarters Army Training Command with Army War College as the sponsoring agency.

It was developed through the **"Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics" (BISAG-N), Gandhinagar** with support from the Directorate General of Information Systems.

A total of 96 courses by 17 Category 'A' Training Establishments of the Indian Army have already been hosted on the platform.

There are three categories of courses hosted on the Eklavya platform:

- Pre-Course Preparatory Capsules
- Appointment/Assignment-Related Courses
- Professional Development Suite

173. The **Ministry of Railways** has launched the **'Sanraksha'** mobile application for safety training and capacity building for its frontline employees.

The innovative app was introduced by the South East Central Railway (SECR) to provide critical operational training to thousands of employees, giving instant evaluation of the learning and ensuring on-demand access to resources.

It was launched by Ravinder Goyal, Member Operations and Business Development, Railway Board.

The app is designed by **Dilip Singh,** an **IRTS officer** from the 2013 batch, who is currently the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager at Nagpur, South East Central Railway.

It was first implemented in Nagpur division.

Key Features:

Rail Madad Portal: Provides immediate assistance to passengers who make complaints on the portal or through the 139 Helpline number integrated with ERSS (Emergency Response Support System).

CCTV Surveillance: Enhanced security through CCTV cameras installed in coaches and railway stations.

Social Media Interaction: Regular engagement with passengers on social media platforms to address security concerns and enhance overall safety.

Special Drives: Regular drives against the entry of male passengers into women's compartments, with legal action taken against offenders.

Initially rolled out in 16 divisions across various railway zones with plans for nationwide implementation.

174. **India** has been re-elected to the **United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)** for the **2025-2026 term,** reaffirming its pivotal role in international peace efforts.

The announcement was made by **India's Permanent Mission** to the UN.

It highlights India's dedication to promoting global stability as a founding member and major contributor to UN peacekeeping.

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC):

- It is an intergovernmental advisory body established in **December 2005,** and headquartered in **New York.**
- It acts as a bridge between the UN General Assembly and the Security Council to enhance coordination and ensure the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies globally.
- The PBC is composed of **31 Member States**, elected from the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. The top financial contributing countries and the top troop-contributing countries to the United Nations system are also members.

175. The **13th edition** of Joint Military Exercise **AGNI WARRIOR (XAW-2024),** a bilateral exercise between the Indian Army and **Singapore** Armed Forces, concluded at Field Firing Ranges in **Devlali, Maharashtra**.

The three-day exercise, conducted from 28th to 30th November 2024, witnessed participation by the Singapore Armed Forces contingent comprising 182 personnel from the Singapore Artillery and the Indian Army contingent comprising 114 personnel from the Regiment of Artillery.

The aim of XAW-2024 was to maximize mutual understanding of drills and procedures to achieve jointness as a multinational force under the United Nations Charter.

The exercise showcased joint firepower planning, execution, and use of New Generation Equipment by the Artillery of both Armies.

The event was witnessed by **Lieutenant General Adosh Kumar**, Director General of Artillery, **Lieutenant General NS Sarna**, Commandant, School of Artillery, and Colonel **Ong Chiou Perng**, Chief Artillery Officer, Singapore Armed Forces.

The Exercise involved extensive joint preparation, coordination, understanding of each other's capabilities, procedures, and evolution of a common interface between Indian and Singapore Artillery procedures.

It marked the culmination of successful training by Singapore Armed Forces troops exposing them to the intricacies of Fire Power planning.

STATES AFFAIRS

176. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the construction of two hydropower projects worth Rs 3,689 crore in Arunachal Pradesh.

The CCEA has sanctioned **Rs 1,750 crore for the 186 MW Tato-I Hydro Electric Project** and **Rs 1,939 crore for the 240 MW Heo Hydro Electric Project** in **Shi Yomi District, Arunachal Pradesh**. These projects will improve the state's power supply and contribute to balancing the national grid.

The estimated completion period for the project is **50 months.**

The projects will be implemented through a Joint Venture Company between **North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. (NEEPCO)** and the **Government of Arunachal Pradesh.**

The project with an installed capacity of 186 MW (3 x 62 MW) would produce 802 Million Units (MU) of energy.

The project with an installed capacity of 240 MW (3 x 80 MW) would produce 1000 Million Units (MU) of energy.

The central government will provide budgetary support of Rs 77.37 crore for roads, bridges, and associated transmission lines for the Tato-I project, along with Rs120.43 crore as Central Financial Assistance towards the state's equity share.

For the Heo project, Rs 127.28 crore will be allocated for infrastructure and Rs130.43 crore for equity support.

177. The **Assam government** launched a semiconductor plant in 2024 to boost the region's technological capabilities. The plant is located in **Jagiroad, Morigaon district**.

The plant is a joint venture between the Assam government and Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test Pvt Ltd (TSAT).

The total investment of the project is **Rs. 27,000 crores** and is expected to produce up to **48 million semiconductor chips per day.**

The facility will provide essential sectors such as automotive, electric vehicles, telecommunications, and consumer electronics, and is projected for completion by **mid-2025.**

It will generate 15,000 direct and 11,000-13,000 indirect jobs.

Semicon India program:

- It was launched in **2021** with a financial outlay of **₹76,000 crore.**
- Under the program, four schemes have been introduced namely **Modified Scheme for setting up of Semiconductor Fabs in India, Modified Scheme for setting up of Display Fabs in India, Modified Scheme for setting up of Compound Semiconductors/ Silicon Photonics/ Sensors Fab/ Discrete Semiconductors Fab and Semiconductor ATMP/ OSAT facilities in India,** and **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.**

Note:

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of new facilities by **Tata Electronics in Dholera, Gujarat,** and **CG Power in Sanand, Gujarat.** Additionally, **Kaynes Semicon Pvt Ltd** was approved to set up a unit in **Sanand.**

178. **Meghalaya** celebrated the**" Year of Legends"** as the **Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival 2024**.

The festival was organized at the RDSA Sports Complex, Bhoirymbong, Shillong from 15th to 16th November 2024.

The festival hosted Akon and the theme was "Year of Legends".

Key Highlights:

- The festival was launched in **2016** and is the **first** autumn cherry blossom festival in the world.
- The festival is a mix of culture, nature, and music.
- The 2024 festival showcased the beauty of Cherry blossoms and witnessed performances from both international and local artists.
- The total financial outlay of the festival was Rs.2 Crores.
- **Japan** was the partner country for this year's festival.
- The festival recorded an all-time highest number of visitors with a number more than 50000.

Note: Japan has a tradition of celebrating 'Hanami' (Cherry Blossom) for over 1000 years.

179. On the occasion of **Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas** on **15th November 2024,** the Governor of Madhya Pradesh, **Mangubhai Patel**, and Chief Minister **Mohan Yadav** unveiled a commemorative postage stamp dedicated to **"Sickle Cell Eradication - 2047"** at PG College, Dhar.

The Sickle Cell Eradication - 2047 initiative aims to create a healthier future for tribal communities.

The essential measures include the setup of AIIMS Bhopal's specialized lab for newborn testing, prenatal diagnostics in partnership with **Sankalp India**, and a robust **mobile app** and **National Sickle Cell Portal** for effective tracking and reporting.

The Sickle Cell Eradication Mission was launched in phases, initially covering districts like Alirajpur and Jhabua and later expanding to 17 states across India.

This commemorative stamp honors the State's initiative to combat the high prevalence of sickle cell anemia in tribal regions and highlights the commitment to eradicate this hereditary disease by 2047.

180. The communities of **24 Tsunami-prone coastal villages** of **six districts** in **Odisha** have been recognized as Tsunami Ready by **the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (IOC-UNESCO)** during the **2nd Global Tsunami Symposium** held in **Indonesia**.

Key Highlights:

- The Tsunami-prone villages are located in the **Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri,** and **Ganjam** districts of Odisha.
- The villages were recognized by the National Tsunami Recognition Board.
- The **Tsunami Ready Recognition Certificates** have been renewed for two already tsunami-recognized villages of Odisha--**Noliasahi** of **Jagatsinghpur** district and **Venkatraipur village** of **Ganjam** district. These villages were recognized as Tsunami Ready by the IOC-UNESCO in 2020.
- The recognition certificates were presented by **Vidar Helgesen, Assistant Director General of UNESCO and Executive Secretary, IOC-UNESCO to E. Pattabhi Rama Rao, scientist, INCOIS**, who represented India during the symposium held in Indonesia.
- The members of the National Tsunami Ready Recognition Boards (NTRB) comprised of scientists of INCOIS, Hyderabad, and officers of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- Now, Odisha has **381 Tsunami prone villages and habitations.**
- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) works towards making coastal regions Tsunami ready.
- The Tsunami Ready villages are **Jagannathpur, Jayadevkasabapahi, Sahapur and Kanyanagari in Balasore; Mohanpur, Adhuan, Badahabelisahi and Sanakrushnapur in Bhadrak; Kantilo, Tantiapal Sasan and Kaitha in Kendrapara; Bagheipur, Dhanuharbelari, Sahadabedi and Bhuyanpal in Jagatsinghpur; Keutjanga, Narasinghpatana, Khalakatapatana and Chhotipada in Puri; and Uppulaputti, Prayagi, Kantiagada and Markandi in Ganjam.**

181. **Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh** celebrated their State Foundation Day on **1st November.**

Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh celebrated their **69th** foundation day. They all were established on 1st November 1956.

Meanwhile, **Punjab and Haryana** celebrated their **59th** foundation day, they were parted in the year **1966.**

It was the **26th** foundation day of **Chhattisgarh.** It was parted from **Madhya Pradesh** in the year **2000.**

182. Telangana government has declared **'Sadar Sammelan'** as the **State Festival of Telangana.**

The order was issued by the Chief Secretary to the state government Santhi Kumari.

As per the order, the state government requested the Commissioners, GHMC (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation), and all District Collectors (except Hyderabad District) to celebrate Sadar Sammelan as a State Festival every year.

The expenditure shall be incurred by the Youth Advancement Tourism and Culture Department from the budget allotted to them for the said purpose.

The 'Sadar' is a festival that is celebrated after Diwali and is organized by the **Yadav community of Hyderabad**. This festival features a procession of adorned buffaloes. The festival is organized for two days.

183. **Assam Chief Minister, Hemanta Biswa Sharma**, launched Mission Basundhara 3.0 to provide land rights to Indigenous people, digitize land-related services, and publish maps to help state residents.

The initiative aims to improve transparency and efficiency in land-related processes. It simplifies the process of granting land rights by implementing new rules and recognizing community-specific exceptions.

Mission Basundhara 3.0 also focuses on digitizing land services and publishing land maps for public benefit.

During the event, CM also launched the **Revenue Department's Digidoc,** which is a digital directory for non-registerable and optional registerable documents for streamlining services, reducing processing time, and enhancing efficiency.

Under this phase, members of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Adivasi, Tea Tribes, and Gorkhas will be recognized as" **Son of the soil".**

Note: Mission Basundhara was launched in the year **2021** during which Assam disposed of 8 lakh applications within 9 months.

The second phase Mission Basundhara 2.0 was launched in 2022, and granted land rights to over 2 lakh people in a year.

184. **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu,** has launched the Deepam 2.0 Scheme.

In this initiative, **3 LPG Cylinders per year** to eligible women will be provided free of cost.

The scheme is effective from 31st October 2024.

This scheme is one of the "super six" poll promises made by the **Telugu Desam Party** (TDP) ahead of the 2024 elections.

The first cylinder can be applied for before 31st March 2025, 2nd cylinder can be booked from 1st April 2025 to 31st July 2025, and 3rd cylinder from 31st August to 30th November 2025.

The total outlay of the scheme for 5 years is **Rs.13,423 crores** approximately.

185. Uttarakhand, referred to as the "**Land of the Gods (Devbhumi),**" observed its **24th Foundation Day** on **9th November 2024.**

The state of Uttarakhand was formed on **November 9, 2000,** by the Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000, after getting separated from **Uttar Pradesh** due to cultural, geographic, and administrative differences.

Originally known as **Uttaranchal,** it formed the **27th** state of India, with the name being officially changed to Uttarakhand in **2007**.

186. **The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC),** the Government of Bihar, and the **Bihar Industrial Area Development Authority (BIADA)** have signed the State Support Agreement (SSA) and Shareholder Agreement (SHA) for the establishment of an **Integrated Manufacturing Cluster (IMC)** in **Gaya**.

This agreement was signed under the **Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC).**

IMC Gaya, located 39 km south of Gaya International Airport, will cover **1,670 acres** with a project cost of **INR 1,339 crore.**

The cluster will include extensive infrastructure like a **29.89 km internal road network**, 220/33 KV and 33/11 KV electrical substations, 162 MVA assured power supply, and a **19 MLD water supply system** to support industrial operations and workforce needs.

The cluster will also have **'Plug n Play'** infrastructure facilities like the Common Effluent Treatment Plant, Sewage Treatment Plant, Water Treatment Plant, Solid Waste Management, Stormwater drainage, and green landscaping to ensure environmental compliance.

It is expected to create approximately **1,09,185 jobs** in industries of various sectors.

Key project benefits and connectivity:

The strategic location of IMC Gaya offers excellent connectivity and access to key transportation hubs as NH-19 (Golden Quadrilateral) is just 10 km away, while NH-22 is 2 km away, proximity to Gaya Junction (40 km) and the upcoming New Paharpur Railway Station under EDFC (45 km) makes access to rail easier.

Gaya International Airport is also 30 km away, Patna International Airport (135 km), and Ranchi Airport (150 km) with access to ports and terminals like Haldia Port in Kolkata (550 km), and Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) terminals at Gaighat, Patna (145 km), and Ramnagar, Varanasi (210 km).

Three greenfield road projects have been proposed to further strengthen IMC Gaya's accessibility.

187. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the All India Medical Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Darbhanga in Bihar.

It is being established at a cost of **Rs.1264 Crore** on 187 acres of land located at **Ekmi-Shobhan bypass** in **Darbhanga, Bihar.**

It will have:

- A 750-bed super-specialty Hospital/AYUSH BLOCK,
- A Medical College with 125 seats,
- A Nursing College with 60 seats,
- A night shelter for patients and their attendants, Residential facilities for doctors, students and staff, etc.

It will provide medical facilities to the people of Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Sitamadhi, Madhubani, Saharsa, Purnia, Khagadia, Katihar, etc, and also to the nearby districts of West Bengal and Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

A total of **22 AIIMS** have been approved under the scheme **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).** AIIMS Darbhanga will be the **second AIIMS** in Bihar after **AIIMS Patna** under this scheme.

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188. The state of Jharkhand observed its 24th State Foundation Day in 2024 on **November 15.** The date marks the day when the state of Jharkhand was officially carved out of Bihar in the year 2000 and became the **28th state of India.**

November 15 also marks the birth anniversary of **Birsa Munda**, also known as **Bhagwan Birsa, a tribal leader.** The day is also celebrated as **"Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas".**

The year 2024 marks the **150th** birth anniversary of Birsa Munda.

Jharkhand also referred to as the "land of forests", is currently made up of the forests of Santhal Pargana and Chhotanagpur Plateau.

Birsa Munda:

- He was born on **November 15, 1875,** in **Ulihatu village** of present-day **Chhattisgarh.**
- He belonged to the *Munda* tribe.
- He was a prominent **tribal leader** and freedom fighter.
- He dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of indigenous communities against colonial repression. He is known for **"Ulgulan"** or **"The Great Tumult"** which is also known as the Munda rebellion.

189. Meluri, inhabited by the **Pochury Naga tribe,** has officially been declared as the **17th district of Nagaland.**

The state government has announced the elevation of Meluri Sub-Division, currently part of Phek District, to a full-fledged district, with immediate effect.

The new district also shares an international border with **Myanmar.**

The new district is expected to facilitate better administration and development initiatives tailored to local needs.

190. The Gujarat government, led by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, launched the country's first **'Gujarat Semiconductor Policy 2022-2027'.**

This ambitious policy aims to solidify Gujarat's position as a leader in semiconductor self-reliance, supported by the newly created 'Gujarat State Electronics Mission.'

The development aligns with PM Modi's vision for a Viksit Bharat@2047.

It aligns with the central government's **'India Semiconductor Mission'**, launched in **2021** with a budget of **Rs 76,000 crore** to support domestic semiconductor manufacturing.

Key Highlights:

- As a part of the policy, the state offers a 100% one-time refund of stamp duty and registration fees.
- Incentives like Rs 2 per unit subsidy for high-quality electricity supply and Rs 12 per cubic meter rate for quality water supply are planned.
- This initiative attracted 4 leading companies to invest a total of 1.24lakh crore Rs.
- The foundation stone for **Micron's advanced semiconductor ATMP plant** was laid in **Sanand**, for an investment of over **Rs 22,500 crore.**
- In **Dholera,** known as '**Semicon City'**, **Tata Electronics Private Limited (TEPL)** and **Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC)** are collaborating to build India's **first AI-enabled semiconductor** fabrication plant, an investment exceeding **Rs 91,000 crore.**
- India's semiconductor market, which was valued at $15 billion in 2020, is projected to surpass $63 billion by 2026.

191. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary announced that **Sultanganj railway station** in the Bhagalpur district will be renamed after the revered Hindu shrine, **Ajgaibinath Dham.**

A proposal for this change has already been passed by the municipal council and will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities for approval.

Ajgaibinath Temple, an ancient site dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located in Sultanganj and is notable for its intricate carvings and stone inscriptions.

It is situated along the banks of the holy Ganga River.

192. **Karnataka** has celebrated the **Bali Padyami festival** to commemorate the return of the Asura king, Bali Chakravarty, from Pathala Loka to Bhuloka, a journey made possible by the boon granted to him by Lord Vishnu during his Vamana Avatar.

The festival marks the fourth day of Deepawali.

In 2024, the festival falls on **2nd November.**

The festival fosters a sense of community, with families and neighbors participating in decorations, rituals, and celebrations, reinforcing cultural ties.

Houses display triangular images of King Bali, made from clay or cow dung and adorned with flowers, symbolizing prosperity and welfare.

Temples are decorated with colorful rangoli, and thousands of lamps are lit at night. Special Abhisheka rituals with milk and auspicious ingredients are performed for the deity.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

193. The voters of **Gabon** approved of a new constitution by 91.8 percent votes proposed by the country's military rulers. The voter turnout was found to be 53.5% approximately.

The Military officers seized power in August 2023 ousting former President Ali Bongo Ondimba and military rulers tentatively scheduled a handover to the civilian government for the summer of 2025.

Key Changes:

- **Presidential Term Limits:** The proposed new constitution introduces a limit of two terms on the presidency, while also increasing the length of terms from five to **seven years.**
- The Presidential candidates are to be **exclusively Gabonese,** with at least one Gabon-born parent, and to have a Gabonese spouse.
- The new constitution contains 173 articles.

- The role of the prime minister would be replaced by a new **"Vice President of the Government"** appointed by the President (thus meaning there would be two vice presidents in total, with the other known as the Vice President of the Republic).
- Elections for the presidency must take place within 3 months of the end of the term.
- The working language of Gabon will continue to be French.
- The national holiday of August 17 is complemented by a "liberation day" on August 30.
- The requirement of Presidential candidates was amended to require a person:
  - be born Gabonese to one Gabonese parent
  - not possessing dual citizenship within 3 years of standing for election
  - (if applicable) have a spouse that conforms to the prior two guidelines
  - have resided within the territory of Gabon for at least 3 years before the election
  - speak at least one national language
  - not be a spouse or descendant of a current President
  - be physically and mentally fit
  - not be in a state of having their political rights suspended

194. **Armenia** became the **104th full member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** on November 21st, 2024.

Armenia handed over the Instrument of Ratification of its ISA membership during a meeting between Ambassador Vahagn Afyan of Armenia and Abhishekifs, Joint Secretary (ED&MER) and Head of Depository, in New Delhi.

The ISA, established in 2015, aims to scale up solar energy adoption, reduce costs, and facilitate innovation.

ISA's goal is to mobilize USD 1,000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030 while delivering energy access to 1,000 million people using clean energy solutions and resulting in the installation of 1,000 GW of solar energy capacity.

Note:

India is the current president of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) for the term 2024–2026. France is the co-president of the ISA for the same term.

Under India's leadership of ISA, numerous solar projects have been launched across member nations:
- Solarisation of Malawi's Parliamentary building.
- Solar-powered healthcare centers in Fiji.
- Solar-powered cold storage facilities in Seychelles.
- Solar PV rooftop systems in Kiribati

195. The **United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) 2024, COP 29**, was held in **Baku, Azerbaijan** from 11th to 22nd November 2024.

Key Highlights:

- A new draft of a deal was signed to fund **$250 billion** by **2035** from developed countries to developing ones. The amount is more than double the previous goal of $100 billion a year set 15 years ago, but it's less than one-fourth of the number requested by developing nations.

- The developing countries' need for external climate finance at around USD 1 trillion a year by 2030 & USD 1.3 trillion by 2035.

- Renowned **Punjabi musician Shubh** has been named the **Global Ambassador** for the **UNFCCC Digital Climate Library (DCL).**

- India rejected the paltry **$ 300 billion** climate finance package for the Global South as it is far less than the demanded $ 1.3 trillion.

- The nationally determined contributions (NDCs) would reduce emissions by 2.6% by 2030.

- A pledge was taken to collectively reduce emissions by nearly 78 billion tonnes by 2050.

- According to the 2023 UNEP Global Cooling Watch Report, which establishes the science behind the Global Cooling Pledge, passive cooling measures alone could cut cooling demand by 24% by 2050, avoiding 1.3 billion tons of CO2 emissions annually.

- 17 Pledge signatories have now developed plans with 4 additional under preparation with financial support from Denmark, CCAC, and ClimateWorks.

196. The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** launched a new app "PAAT" to help frontline officers assess radiation alarms triggered by people at airports, border crossings, and other points of entry and ease delays.

The full form of **PAAT** is the **"Personnel Alarm Assessment Tool."**

This app is available in four languages **Arabic, English, French,** and **Spanish.**

PAAT is added to the IAEA suite of science and technology tools available to support countries in implementing nuclear security measures.

The app aims to improve nuclear security by distinguishing between potential security threats and harmless radiation signals caused by medical procedures, ultimately minimizing disruptions to travellers.

The app includes a database cataloging 70 radiopharmaceuticals commonly used in nuclear medicine, making it easier to identify the source of radiation.

The application tool gives a **red, yellow, or green signal** and provides important and immediate support for frontline officers in the assessment of the radiation source.

PAAT allows for a fast and accurate assessment to reduce unnecessary delay for the person who has undergone a medical procedure and minimize the impact of innocent alarms on normal operations of busy places like airports.

The idea behind PAAT is similar to the **Tool for Radiation Alarm and Commodity Evaluation (TRACE)** mobile application, launched by the **IAEA in 2017**. The difference is that PAAT is about alarms caused by people, while TRACE is used in cases of alarms caused by vehicles carrying commodities passing through radiation detection portals.

197. The **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** released the 4ᵗʰ edition of the Tourism Villages recently.

In this fourth edition, **55 villages** from all regions received the recognition, chosen from over **260 applications** from more than **60 UN Tourism Member States**.

Another **20 villages** were chosen to join the **Upgrade Programme**.

The Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism initiative was launched in 2021 to advance tourism's role in rural areas, preserving landscapes, cultural diversity, local values, and culinary traditions.

The villages were evaluated under **nine key areas**:

- Cultural and Natural Resources

- Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources

- Economic Sustainability

- Social Sustainability

- Environmental Sustainability

- Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration

- Governance and Prioritization of Tourism

- Infrastructure and Connectivity

- Health, Safety, and Security

The initiative comprises **three pillars:**

Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism: Recognizes outstanding rural tourism destinations with accredited cultural and natural assets, a commitment to preserving community-based values, and a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Upgrade Programme: Supports villages on their journey to meet recognition criteria, helping them improve in areas identified as weaknesses during evaluation.

The Best Tourism Villages Network: A space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learning, and opportunities among its members, and it is open to contributions from experts and

public and private sector partners engaged in the promotion of tourism as a driver for rural development.

The 55 Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism 2024 are:

- Abo Noghta Castles & Historic Tabab, Saudi Arabia

- Abu Ghosoun, Egypt

- Aínsa, Spain

- Amagi, Japan

- Anogeia, Greece

- Azheke, China

- Bo Suak, Thailand

- Capulálpam de Méndez, Mexico

- Caviahue-Copahue, Argentina

- Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza, Mexico

- El Tambo, Ecuador

- El Valle de Antón, Panama

- Esfahak, Islamic Republic of Iran

- Gaiman, Argentina

- Gharb Suhayl, Egypt

- Grand Baie, Mauritius

- Guanyang, China

- Huancaya, Peru

- Jardín, Colombia

- Jatiluwih, Indonesia

- Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus

- Leymebamba, Peru

- Mindo, Ecuador

- Mura, Spain

- Nishikawa, Japan

- Óbidos, Portugal

- Ormana, Türkiye

- Palizada, Mexico

- Pissouri, Cyprus

- Portobelo, Panama

- Pueblo de Maras, Peru

- Quinua, Peru

- Ralco, Chile

- Roches Noires, Mauritius

- Romoos, Switzerland

- Ruboni, Uganda

- San Casciano dei Bagni, Italy

- San Juan del Obispo, Guatemala

- San Rafael de la Laguna, Ecuador

- Santa Cruz da Graciosa, Portugal

- Shibadong, China

- Sibayo, Peru

- Splügen, Switzerland

- St. Johann in Tirol, Austria

- Taoping, China

- Tra Que Vegetable Village, Viet Nam

- Trevelin, Argentina

- Uaxactún, Guatemala

- Urych, Ukraine

- Villa Tulumba, Argentina

- Vorokhta, Ukraine

- Wukirsari, Indonesia

- Xiaogang, China

- Xitou, China

- Yandunjiao, Chin

Seven villages from the **Best Tourism Villages Upgrade Programme** have achieved recognition as Best Tourism Villages. These outstanding villages include **Capulálpam de Méndez**

(Mexico), Grand Baie (Mauritius), Kalopanagiotis (Cyprus), Pissouri (Cyprus), Ruboni (Uganda), Bo Suak (Thailand), and Trevelin (Argentina).

One of the villages among 20 villages selected for the Upgrade Programme for the year 2024 is **Dhudmaras, Chhattisgarh India.**

198. The **352ⁿᵈ Governing Body meeting of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)** was held in **Geneva (Switzerland)** from 28 October to 7 November 2024.

The Indian Delegation was headed by **Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment.**

During the meeting, she highlighted India's commitment to improving living standards reflected in significant initiatives covering all dimensions of poverty that have led to 248 million individuals escaping multidimensional poverty in the last nine years as measured by the multidimensional poverty index.

She also stated the employment growth within the country adding around 170 million persons in economic activity during 2016-17 and 2022-23 as per provisional estimates.

She also spoke about Government initiatives like PM Jan Dhan Yojana, which bridged the financial gap for the unbanked, while PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana offered offer affordable life and accident insurance.

She also stressed on India's remarkable transformation over the past decade in terms of financial inclusion and prioritizing access to financial services for vulnerable populations.

199. The **fourth edition** of the **AIM-ICDK Water Innovation Challenge 4.0** successfully concluded at the **2024 Next Generation Digital Action (NGDA)** in Copenhagen, **Denmark.**
The challenge brought together key collaborators, including Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, Innovation Centre Denmark (ICDK), and DTU Skylab under the DTU Next Generation Action Program, alongside invaluable support from the International Centre for Clean Water (ICCW), the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the Embassy of Denmark, Denmark's Environmental Protection Agency, and the DANIDA Fellowship.

Key Highlights:

- The Indian delegation included **five startup teams** that participated in the global Next Generation Digital Action program, engaging with young talents from leading universities and innovation hubs in 10 countries.
- The three university teams, **Clim8 (VIT Vellore), Checkmate (VIT Vellore), and Qualgrip (IIT Madras)** along with early-stage **startups Navmarg and Scrapify**, developed promising solutions that tackle critical global water challenges.
- Clim8, a team of **three** young innovators from **VIT Vellore**, won the **Acceleration Award** for the challenge posed by **South Africa** on **'Leveraging Machine Learning and AI for Infrastructure Pricing'.** They were also recognized with the **Best Startup Award** in the **national category**.

- Additionally, the participating teams attended intensive boot camps and pitch sessions, at the Digital Tech Summit held from October 30-31, 2024, in Copenhagen.

200. **India-Qatar Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs)** joined hands to enhance cooperation between the two countries in fighting the menace of **money laundering and financing terrorism**.
The meeting was held in New Delhi in November 2024.

A **nine-member** delegation, headed by **Mr. Sheikh Ahmed Al Thani**, Head of Financial Intelligence Unit-Qatar (**FIU-Qatar**), visited Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) in the presence of **Shri Vivek Aggarwal**, **Head,** of **FIU-IND.**

The two FIUs discussed the use of IT systems and tools, public and private partnerships, strategic analysis, and virtual digital assets.

Key Highlights:

- Both parties discussed current practices in the AML/CFT regime as well as possible areas of future collaboration between the two organizations.
  - Discussion went upon various areas such as the IT systems used by respective jurisdiction, the Public-Private Partnership initiative of FIU-IND (FPAC), Private-Private Partnership for Alliance of Reporting Entities in India For AML/CFT (ARIFAC).
  - FIU-Qatar highly appreciated the **IT system (FINNET 2.0)** used by FIU-IND.

201. **Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal**, successfully concluded his visit to the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.**

During the visit, he participated in the **Plenary Session of the 8th Edition of Future Investment Initiative (FII),** with representatives from global Governments and the industry.

He highlighted the critical role of international partnerships and economic diplomacy in fostering global cooperation, innovation, technological advancement, and investment.

He also attended the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Economy and Investment Committee under the **India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)** along with Minister of Energy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud.

The SPC was established in 2019.

The Committee reviewed the progress achieved by the four Joint Working Groups: **Agriculture and Food Security; Energy; Technology and Information Technology; and Industry and Infrastructure**.

Key Highlights:

- Many bilateral agreements have been formalized between India and Saudi Arabia, covering sectors such as food exports, pharmaceuticals, electrical interconnectivity, energy, small and medium enterprises, digitization, and electronic manufacturing.
- Both countries are also exploring collaboration in emerging fields like fintech, new technologies, energy efficiency, clean hydrogen, textiles, mining, etc.

- During the event, the **Lulu Wali Diwali Festival** was launched at the Lulu Hypermarket. 10,000+ Indian products including Ghee from Uttarakhand, Ladakh Apple, Indian Cavendish banana, Dragon Fruit from Maharashtra, a new range of millet-based breakfast cereals, and Qaadu Organic beauty products were unveiled.
- **One District, One Product (ODOP)** Wall was unveiled at the Indian Embassy in Riyadh as a part of the Government of India's "Vocal for Local" campaign.

202. An Indian Delegation, led by Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, **Dr. PK Mishra**, participated in the **G-20 Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG) Ministerial Meeting** from 30th October to 1st November 2024, held in **Belem, Brazil.**
The **first DRR WG** was established on India's initiative during its Presidency of G20 in 2023.

India's proactive strategy for disaster risk reduction (DRR) emphasizes five key priorities outlined during its G20 Presidency: Early warning systems, Disaster resilient infrastructure, DRR financing, Resilient recovery, and Nature-based solutions.

Indian Delegation also participated in Troika meetings with the Ministers of Brazil and South Africa and held bilateral meetings with ministers from the host country Brazil and other countries.

Note: South Africa will host the G20 Presidency in 2025 while Brazil is hosting for 2024.

203. India has gifted **Mozambique** with **two** water-jet-propelled **Fast Interceptor Crafts (FIC)** as part of its capacity-building activities with friendly foreign nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The FICs were transhipped from India by *INS Gharial.*

The handing-over event was held in Mozambique and was attended by the High Commissioner of India in Mozambique, Robert Shetkintong, India's newly appointed Defence Adviser at Maputo, Colonel Puneet Attri, and the Commanding Officer of INS Gharial, Commander Rajan Chib.

The two FICs will be used to combat maritime terrorism and ongoing insurgency in the Cabo Delgado province.

Key features:

- The Fast Interceptor Craft are water-jet-propelled vessels capable of reaching a speed of 45 knots (51 miles/83 kilometers per hour).
- The boats can accommodate a crew of five and are equipped with machine guns and bullet-resistant cabins.
- The vessels support search and rescue missions, special forces operations, and intercepting and boarding of high-speed ships.

The Government of India gifted two large Interceptor vessels to Mozambique in 2019, followed by two FICs of the same class in Jan 2022.

204. The world's first wood-paneled satellite '**Lignosat**' was launched by **Japan** into space on November 5 to test the reliability of timber as a renewable building material for future space travel. It was launched from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Kennedy Space Center.

It was developed to test the use of wood as a sustainable building material for space exploration. It will also help determine if wood can withstand the extreme conditions of space and reduce the amount of space junk.

Lignosat:

- It is made from **honoki** wood and was assembled using traditional Japanese crafts techniques. It also includes some traditional aluminum structures and electronic components.
- It is 4 inches (10 centimeters) on each side and weighs 900 grams.
- The 10 cubic centimeter satellite was designed by researchers at Kyoto University and homebuilder Sumitomo Forestry in Japan.
- The satellite was sent to the International Space Station (ISS) on a SpaceX mission. The satellite will be positioned at 400km above the earth's surface.
- The project was led by **Takao Doi,** a former astronaut and now professor at Kyoto University.

205. **Russia** has successfully placed 55 satellites into orbit on November 5, 2024. Those include Iran's two domestically manufactured satellites **Kuwar** and **Hodhod.**

The satellites were launched from the Vostochny Cosmodrome spaceport in eastern Russia using a **Soyuz 2.1 rocket**.

For the first time, Russia has launched privately built Iranian satellites and this was the 13th launch of Russia in 2024.

The payload included 51 Russian satellites, one jointly developed by Russian and Chinese teams, and another Russian-Zimbabwean satellite, along with two privately manufactured Iranian satellites.

The two Iranian satellites, Koswar and Hodhod, were designed and built by Omid Faza Company, a private Iranian firm. These imaging and communication satellites are expected to assist with environmental monitoring and communications in remote areas.

206. **Australia** has become the **first country** to implement a nationwide ban on social media platforms for children under 16.

This landmark legislation, passed by the Australian Parliament, seeks to protect young people's mental health and well-being from the potential harms of excessive online activity.

The law imposes fines of up to **AUD 50 million** for non-compliance.

Prohibition on using government-issued IDs or digital identification for verification.

The law was passed by the Senate with a 34-19 vote. It was approved by the House of Representatives by 102-13 votes.

207. **The 19th G20 Summit 2024**, officially known as the Summit Rio 2024, was held on 18-19 November 2024 in **Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.**

The summit was held under the theme, "Building a Just World and Sustainable Planet".

Key Highlights:

Rio De Janeiro Declaration:

The declaration aimed at addressing major global challenges and crises and promoting strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth.
The declaration was based on 3 key priorities-
- Social inclusion and the fight against hunger and poverty.
- Sustainable development
- Reform of global governance institutions.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva launched the **Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty** to reduce hunger and poverty worldwide.

- The key target is to reduce hunger (SDG 2). reduce poverty (SDG1) by 2030, and to reduce inequalities (SDG10).
- At present, it includes **82 countries** as members while **European Union** and **African Union** are its founding members.
- The Global Alliance includes **24 international organizations** such as FAO, the Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) etc.
- It includes **9 Financial institutions** like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). World Bank Group, New Development Bank (NDB) etc.
- It also includes 31 philanthropic foundations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- The Alliance has constituted a policy basket that includes over 50 policy instruments.
- It has highlighted **six "Sprints 2030"** which include school meals, cash transfers, smallholder and family farming support programs, socio-economic inclusion programs, integrated maternal and early childhood interventions, and water access solutions.
- It is estimated that annually USD 2 to 3 million will be required for alliance.
- Temporarily alliance base is located at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

G20 Troika (India, Brazil, and South Africa) Joint Agreement for Digital Public Infrastructure and AI for Governance:

The declaration has recommended for a technology-neutral approach which will help to foster competition and innovation, reduce digital economic asymmetries, and ensure fair deployment of DPI and AI.

G20 Session on Social Inclusion and Fight against Hunger and Poverty:

- Indian **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the session on Social Inclusion and Fight against Hunger and Poverty.
- He highlighted India has lifted **250 Million** people over poverty in the last decade and was distributing free food grains to **800 Million** all over the country.

- The government of India has provided financial assistance to 110 million farmers of USD 40 billion.

Italy- India Joint Strategic Plan 2025-29:

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni** strengthened bilateral ties during their meeting at the G20 Summit in Brazil, advancing the **India-Italy Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29.**
- Both leaders agreed to boost trade and investment in sectors such as transportation, green technologies, pharmaceuticals, and advanced manufacturing through the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation and the Working Group on Food Processing.
- A new **Indo-Italian Innovation and Incubation Exchange Programme** has also been introduced to foster academic and industrial collaboration, particularly involving startups and SMEs.
- The partnership includes the 2025-27 Executive Programme for Scientific and Technological Cooperation.
- In the space sector, enhanced ties between ISRO and ASI include plans for an Italian delegation visit to India in 2025.
  - Energy transition efforts include organizing **"Tech Summits"** and strengthening alliances like the **Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance.**
  - Defence cooperation will grow with annual **Joint Defence Consultative (JDC)** meetings, the creation of a Defence Industrial Roadmap, and collaboration on cybersecurity.
  - It also includes the implementation of the 2023 Executive Programme of Cultural Cooperation.

India-Australia Summit:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia held the 2nd India-Australia Annual Summit on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 19 November.
- The 1st Annual Summit was held on 10 March 2023 in New Delhi during the State Visit of Prime Minister Albanese to India.
- They discussed cooperation in the areas of defense and security, trade and investments, education, skills and mobility, renewable energy, space, sports, and people-to-people ties.
- The Prime Ministers also welcomed the launch of the Renewable Energy Partnership.
- Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. They also reiterated their commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific Region, based on respect for international law.

Brazil handed over the G20 Presidency to **South Africa** on the concluding day.

208. The **10th International Conference on Traditional and Complementary Medicine (INTRACOM) 2024** was held at the **National Institutes of Health (NIH), Setia Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.**

The meeting was organized by the **World Health Organization.**

The conference was focused on the transformative role of digital technologies in modernizing healthcare practices in Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM).

Key Highlights:

A delegation led by **Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha Secretary** of the **Ministry of Ayush** from India attended the event.

The Ministry of Ayush highlighted India's initiatives, including developing a National Digital Health Ecosystem under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the Namaste Portal, which facilitates seamless integration of TM practices into mainstream healthcare.

The conference also provided a platform for deliberations on transliteration, translation, and future maintenance of TM2 entities, along with mapping these with national standards like the NAMASTE Portal.

REPORTS & INDICES

209. **Union Minister, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Rajiv Ranjan** Singh released the annual publication of **'Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2024'** of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying on the occasion of **National Milk Day** on **26th November 2024.**

The BAHS - 2024 is based on the outcomes of the **Integrated Sample Survey conducted for the period from 1st March 2023 to 29th February 2024.**

This survey, unique in the country, generates crucial data on the production estimates of **Major Livestock Products (MLPs)** such as **Milk, Eggs, Meat,** and **Wool**, which play a pivotal role in policy formulation in the livestock sector.

Integrated Sample Survey (ISS) is conducted across the country in three seasons i.e., Summer (March-June), Rainy (July-October), and Winter (November-February).

Key Highlights:

Milk Production:

- The total Milk production in the country is estimated as **239.30 million tonnes** during 2023-24 registered a growth of 5.62% over the past 10 years which was 146.3 million tonnes in 2014-15.
- It has increased by **3.78%** during 2023-24 over the estimates of 2022-23.
- The top five milk producing States during 2023-24 was **Uttar Pradesh** with a share of **16.21 %** of total milk production followed by **Rajasthan (14.51 %)**, **Madhya Pradesh (8.91 %), Gujarat (7.65 %),** and **Maharashtra (6.71 %).**

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- In terms of annual growth rate (AGR), the highest AGR was recorded by **West Bengal** (9.76%) followed by Jharkhand (9.04%), Chhattisgarh (8.62%) and Assam (8.53%) over the previous year.

Egg Production:

- The total Egg production in the country is estimated as **142.77 billion nos.** during 2023-24 and registered a growth of 6.8% growth over the past 10 years as compared to the estimates of 78.48 billion numbers during 2014-15.
- It has increased annually by 3.18% during 2023-24 over 2022-23.
- The top five states are **Andhra Pradesh** with a share of **17.85 %** of total Egg production followed by **Tamil Nadu** (15.64 %), **Telangana** (12.88%), **West Bengal** (11.37%), and **Karnataka** (6.63 %).
- In terms of AGR, the highest growth rate was recorded by **Ladakh (**75.88%) followed by Manipur (33.84%) and Uttar Pradesh (29.88%).

Meat Production:

- The total production in the country is estimated at **10.25 million tonnes** during 2023-24 and registered a growth of 4.85 % over the past 10 years as compared to the estimates of 6.69 million tonnes in 2014-15.
- It was increased by 4.95 % in 2023-24 over 2022-23.
- It is further stated that the major contributors are **West Bengal** with a **12.62 %** share followed by **Uttar Pradesh** (12.29%), **Maharashtra** (11.28 %), **Telangana** (10.85 %), and **Andhra Pradesh** (10.41 %).
- In terms of annual growth rate, the highest Annual Growth Rate (AGR) was recorded in **Assam** (17.93%) followed by Uttarakhand (15.63%) and Chhattisgarh 11.70(%).

Wool Production:

- The total Wool production in the country is estimated as **33.69 million kg** during 2023-24 registering a slight growth of 0.22% over last year.
- It was 36.76 million kg during 2019-20 and 33.61 million KG in the previous year.
- The major contribution to the total Wool production comes from **Rajasthan** with a share of **47.53%** followed by **Jammu & Kashmir** (23.06%), **Gujarat** (6.18%), **Maharashtra** (4.75%), and **Himachal Pradesh** (4.22%).
- In terms of annual growth rate, the highest AGR has been recorded by **Punjab** (22.04%) followed by Tamil Nadu (17.19%) and Gujarat (3.20%).

Note: India is first in milk production globally whereas second in Egg production.

Attempt SBI PO 2024 Free Mock test

210. **Union Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Jitendra Singh** launched the **Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI) 2023** on 18h November 2024.

GRAI was conceptualized and designed by the **DARPG,** Govt. of India based on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to present an organization-wise comparative picture and provide

valuable insights about strengths and areas of improvement regarding grievance redressal mechanism.

The first edition of **GRAI 2022** was released on **21 June 2023.**

Key Highlights:

- **Eighty-nine** Central Ministries and Departments were assessed and ranked based on a comprehensive index in the dimensions of **(1) Efficiency, (2) Feedback, (3) Domain, and (4) Organisational Commitment** and corresponding **11 indicators**.
- Data between January and December 2023 was used from the Centralised Public Grievance Redressal and Management System (CPGRAMS).
- Out of 89 Ministries and Departments, 85 Demonstrated a positive trend in their GRAI Scores in 2023 over 2022.
- Approximately 10% of the Ministries/Departments achieved over 50% growth in their overall GRAI scores, While 28% recorded 25-50% growth.
- A Majority, 57%, exhibited incremental growth of up to 25% in their scores.
- As part of GRAI, Ministries and Departments are grouped in three groups based on the number of grievances registered in calendar year 2023 at CPGRAMS i.e.

Group	Registered Grievance Range	No. of Ministries/Departments
A	Above 10000	28
B	Between 2000 to 9999	33
C	Below 2000	28

Top rankers in Group A: Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare followed by the Department of Posts and Ministry of Cooperation.

Top Rankers in Group B: Comptroller General of India followed by Department of Land Resources and Niti Aayog.

Top Rankers in Group C: Department of Investment & Public Asset Management followed by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and Department of Pharmaceuticals.

The GRAI 2023 report presents a clear roadmap with an advisory for the Ministries and Departments to leverage CPGRAMS and its features like IGMS 2.0, TreeDashboard, etc., to enhance grievance redressal.

211. The report, *How Tax Simplification Has Given a Necessary Fillip to ITR Filing,* released by the **State Bank of India** noted that **Maharashtra** has the highest share in Direct tax revenue in FY 24 i.e**. (38.9%)** followed by **Karnataka (11.9%)** while **Delhi** at third place contributing 10.4%.

This is the first time in at least seven years that Karnataka has contributed more in income and corporate taxes than Delhi, which had held the second spot from 2017-18 to 2022-23.

Tamil Nadu and Gujarat remained in fourth and fifth place, respectively.

The **70%** of India's Direct Tax collection was done by the above five states.

The report also highlighted direct tax contributed **56.7%** of the total revenue generated. This is the highest contribution in the last 14 years.

The number of tax filings has increased drastically from 7.3 Crore in FY23 to an expected 9 Crore in FY24.

The return filings topped in Maharashtra, followed by UP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu.

212. The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) has released the **16th World University Rankings: Asia 2025**. This ranking assesses 984 institutions across 25 countries in Eastern, Southern, South-Eastern, and Central Asia.

China's Peking University (Beijing) topped the ranking with a score of 100, followed by Hong Kong University (Hong Kong) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) at 2nd and 3rd place.

A total of 22 universities from India are featured in the Asia region.

India's **seven institutions** are in the top 100 and two in the top 50.

Key Highlights:

- **The Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT-D)** leads Indian institutions at **44th** place, followed by **IIT Bombay** at **48th**. The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) saw a major leap, advancing 70 spots to 148th.
- Additional top 100 placements include **IIT Madras (56), IIT Kharagpur (60), IISc Bangalore (62), IIT Kanpur (67), and the University of Delhi (81).**
- Other institutions in the top 150 include **IIT Guwahati, IIT Roorkee, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Chandigarh University (120), UPES (148), and Vellore Institute of Technology (150).**
- IIT Delhi moved to 44th place from 46th last year with an employer reputation score of 99%.
- IIT Bombay had an employer reputation score of 99.5% and an academic reputation score of 96.6%.
- University of Delhi improved its rank from 94th to 81st with a score of 96.4% in the International Research Network.
- Anna University achieved a perfect score of **100 in the Papers Per Faculty** indicator.
- 15 universities scored above 99% in the staff with PhD indicator.
- North Eastern Hill University and University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore attained a perfect score of 100 in the faculty-student indicator.
- Inclusion of **46** Indian institutions in the 2025 edition compared to just 11 in the 2015 edition showcasing a **318 per cent** increase in the last 10 years among G20 nations.

QS World University Rankings: Asia 2025 is based on key indicators i.e. Research and Discovery, Learning Experience, Employability, Global Engagement, Sustainability, etc.

213. The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** has published the World Intellectual Property Indicators (WIPI) 2024. The report shows the growth and changes in five different intellectual property rights i.e. patent, industrial design, trademark, plant variety, and utility models. **China** (1.64 million), **the US** (518,364), **Japan** (414,413), the Republic of Korea (287,954), and **Germany** (133,053) are the top five countries in global patent filings.

A record of **3.55 million** patent applications were filed worldwide in **2023,** up **2.7%** from 2022. This increase was largely driven by residents in **China, the United States, Japan, South Korea,** and **India.**

Offices located in Asia received approximately 2.44 million applications in 2023, constituting 68.7% of the world's total.

The Top three countries with filing applications in different offices are as follows:

- **Patent: China** (1st), **USA** (2nd), and **Japan** (3rd)

- **Trademarks: China** (1st), **USA** (2nd), and **Russian Federation** (3rd)

- **Industrial Design: China** (1st), **EUIPO (EU Office)** (2nd), **and UK** (3rd)

- **Plant Varieties: China** (1st), **Community Plant Variety Office, EU** (2nd), and **US** (3rd).

- **Utility Models: China** (1st), **Russian Federation** (2nd), and **Germany** (3rd).

 India specific:

- India, for the **first time** placed in the top 10 **(sixth)** across the three main intellectual property rights.
- **India (64,480)** saw a **15.7%** increase in patent applications and is placed at **sixth** position. It is the **fifth** consecutive year of double-digit growth.
- India is the first country with resident filings accounting for over half of all submissions (55.2%).
- Both patent and industrial design applications have more than doubled between 2018 and 2023 and trademark applications increased by 60%.
- The Indian patent office granted **149.4%** more patents in 2023 compared to 2022.
- India's industrial design applications rose by **36.4%** this year. The top three sectors were Textiles and Accessories, Tools and Machines, and Health and Cosmetics which made up almost half of all design filings.
- India ranked **fourth** globally in **trademark filings**, with a 6.1% increase in 2023. Nearly 90% of these filings were by residents, with key sectors including Health (21.9%), Agriculture (15.3%), and Clothing (12.8%) leading the way.

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214. The **World Justice Project (WJP)** released the **2024 Rule of Law Index**, which assesses eight indicators: government constraints, corruption absence, open government, fundamental rights, security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.

For the seventh year in a row, the rule of law has declined globally in a majority of countries (57%).

The top-ranked country in the 2024 WJP Rule of Law Index is **Denmark**, followed by Norway (2), Finland (3), Sweden (4), and Germany (5). The top five ranked countries remain unchanged from 2023.

The bottom-ranked countries are **Venezuela (142)**, Cambodia (141), Afghanistan (140), Haiti (139), and Myanmar (138).

The countries with the biggest rule of law decline in the past year are **Myanmar, El Salvador, and Nicaragua**, while the countries that improved their rule of law score most from 2023 to 2024 are **Poland, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka**.

India's performance:

- India ranks **79th** out of 142 countries in the index with an overall rule of law score of 0.50%.
- India performs moderately in government constraints (60) and open government (44), reflecting its focus on governance.
- Poor scores in fundamental rights (102), security (98), and criminal justice (82) highlight issues with policing, rights protection, and delayed justice systems.

215. The World Health Organization (WHO) has released the **WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2024.**
The top five countries that contributed 56% of the global TB burden are, **India (26%),** Indonesia (10%), China (6.8%), the Philippines (6.8%), and Pakistan (6.3%).

Key Highlights:

- The report showed a **decrease in the number of deaths** caused by TB from 1.32 million in 2023 to 1.25 million in 2024.
- WHO African and European regions have made significant progress in terms of net reduction of TB incidence rates of 42% and 38% respectively.
- The WHO End TB Strategy, which seeks to eliminate TB as a public health problem by 2035, had set 2025 milestones of a 50 percent reduction in TB incidence rate and a 75 percent reduction in the number of TB deaths as compared to 2015.
- Globally, 8.2 million new TB cases were reported in 2023 compared to 7.5 million in 2022.
- As per the report, lower and middle-income countries account for 87% of the total TB burden.
- The rate of global coverage of TB was 75% in 2023, and it is set to achieve 90% by 2027.

India Specific Findings:

- India is estimated to have had **27 Lakh** TB cases in 2023.
- The treatment coverage in India has improved from 72% in 2015 to **89%** in 2023.
- India has recorded a **17.7 percent** decline in tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 in 2023, which is more than double the global decline of 8.3 percent.

216. The **Network Readiness Index 2024** has been released by the **Portulans Institute** and the **Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford.** The index ranks 133 economies (countries) based on their citizens' access to and use of information and communications technology (ICT).

The index evaluates 133 economies using 54 variables across **four key pillars** namely Technology, People, Governance, and Impact.

Global:

- The **United States of America** led the Network Readiness Index for the third consecutive year with a score of 78.96, followed by Singapore with a score of 76.94 and Finland with a score of 75.76.

- Yemen ranked 133rd with a score of 20.24.

Top 3 Countries by Income Group

High-Income Countries	Upper-Middle Income Countries	Lower-middle Income Countries	Low-Income Countries
1. United States of America (1)	1. China (17)	1. Vietnam (45)	1. Rwanda (91)
2. Singapore (2)	2. Malaysia (36)	2. India (49)	2. Uganda (118)
3. Finland (3)	3. Thailand (40)	3. Philippines (63)	3. Malawi (119)

Top 3 Countries by region

Africa	Arab States	Asia & Pacific	CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)	Europe	The Americas
1. Mauritius (60)	1. UAE (28)	1. Singapore (2)	1. Russian Federation (41)	1. Finland (3)	1. USA (1)
2. Seychelles (71)	2. Saudi Arabia (35)	2. Korea, Rep. (5)	2. Kazakhstan (61)	2. Sweden (4)	2. Canada (11)
3. South Africa (72)	3. Qatar (38)	3. Japan (12)	3. Armenia (66)	3. Netherlands (6)	3. Brazil (44)

India's performance:

India has climbed **11 positions** to rank **49th** in the Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2024, up from 60th in 2023. India's score improved from **49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024,** indicating substantial progress in various digital metrics and innovations.
India secured global rankings across key sectors:

- **1st Rank:** AI Scientific Publications**,** AI Talent Concentration and ICT Services Exports

- **2nd Rank:** FTTH (Fiber to the Home) / Building Internet Subscriptions, Mobile Broadband Internet Traffic within the Country, International Internet Bandwidth

- **3rd Rank:** Domestic Market Scale

- **4th Rank:** Annual Investment in Telecommunication Services

217. The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2025 was released by **Germanwatch, New Climate Institute,** and **Climate Action Network International.**

This was the **20th** edition of this index and it was released during COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan.
The climate mitigation performance is assessed in four categories: **GHG Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use, and Climate Policy.**

It covers 63 countries and the European Union.

Key Highlights:

- The first **three places** have been kept **empty** followed by **Denmark (fourth place).**
- The **Netherlands** and the **UK** have been ranked at number **five** and **six.**
- **Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE,** and **Russia (big oil and gas producers)** rank at the bottom.
- India was ranked at **10th position** with an overall score of **67.99.**
- India receives a *high* ranking in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories, *medium* in Climate Policy, and *low* in Renewable Energy.
- The **UK** and **India** are the only two G-20 countries that are among the top climate performers.
- China has been placed at **55th** position with the largest Greenhouse Gas emissions, followed by the USA.

The top three performers list is as follows:

Rank	Country	Score
4	Denmark	78.37
5	The Netherlands	69.60
6	The United Kingdom	69.29

Note: India was ranked 7th in CCPI 2024.

218. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently released the **"World Food and Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2024".**

The report was released at the **fifth edition** of the **United Nations World Data Forum (UNWDF) 2024** which was held in **Medellin**, **Columbia** from November 12-15 2024.

The report is divided into four thematic chapters namely:
- The Economic Dimensions of Agriculture

- The production, trade, and price of commodities
- Food security and nutrition
- Sustainability and environmental aspects of agriculture

Key Highlights:

- Hunger affected **9.1 percent** of the world population in **2023,** which is far above the 7.5 percent estimated for 2019
- The alarming trend underscores the mounting challenge of achieving UN-mandated **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2** of **Zero Hunger** by **2030**
- Asia was home to **52 percent** of the world's undernourished people.
- The number of people facing hunger in Asia declined by two million between 2022 and 2023, it still went up to 79 million between 2019 and 2023 to 385 million.
- The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) was highest in **Africa**, followed by Asia.
- Over the last two decades, the global agriculture value has increased by **89%** in real terms i.e. USD **3.8 trillion** in 2022.
- Agriculture's share in global GDP has been stable at around **4%** since 2000.

- The countries with the largest agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors added in 2022 are **China, India**, and the **United States of India (USA).**
- The global production of primary crops reached **9.6 billion tonnes** in 2022, an increase of 56 percent compared to 2000.
- Meat production increased by **55 percent** from 2000 to 2022, with chicken accounting for the largest share of this rise.
- Obesity rates were also rising, particularly in high-income regions.
- Over **25 percent** of adults in the America, Europe, and Oceania were obese
- Production of vegetable oils increased by **133%** from 2000 to 2021, with a significant increase in palm oil.
- The usage of inorganic fertilizers has increased by **37%** and reached **185 million tonnes** in 2022.
- Nitrogen accounted for **58%** of the inorganic fertilizers used in 2022.
- Greenhouse gas emissions have been increased by 10% between 2000 and 2022.

219. The **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** released the **State of the World's Children 2024 (SOWC 2024).**

The report examines the forces and trends shaping Children's future by 2050.

The title of the report was "*The Future of Childhood in a Changing World".*

The report has been published annually by UNICEF since **1980.**

The report highlights three megatrends shaping children's lives by 2050 i.e., **demographic shifts, climate crises, and frontier technologies.**

India Specific:

Child Population: By 2050, India is expected to have the largest child population, with about **350 million children**, making up **15%** of the global total.

India, China, Nigeria, and **Pakistan** together are expected to account for more than **one-third** of the world's population of children by 2050.

The report highlighted that up to **34 million** people in **India** could be impacted by extreme flooding by the **2040's.**

The report highlighted **three** megatrends shaping children's lives by 2050 i.e., **demographic shifts, climate crises**, and **frontier technologies.**

Child survival and life expectancy:

Global newborn survival rates stand at over **98%**, while the likelihood of a child surviving to age 5 stands at **99.5%.**
Life expectancy increased from 70 years for girls and 66 for boys born in the 2000s, to 81 years and 76 years, respectively.

Climate and environmental hazards:

Children are projected to be exposed to extreme weather events at significantly higher rates: 8 times more to heatwaves, 3.1 times more to river floods, 1.7 times more to wildfires, 1.3 times more to droughts, and 1.2 times more to tropical cyclones.

Socioeconomic conditions:

23% of the world's children are projected to live in the 28 countries currently classified as low-income, more than double the share in these countries in the 2000s (11%).

Education:

The global education gap between girls and boys is expected to narrow, with more girls completing upper secondary education in some regions.

Gender Equality:

By the 2050s, gender inequality is expected to reduce in children's lives globally.

However, many children are projected to live with high gender inequality in **Eastern and Southern Africa and West** and **Central Africa.**

Conflict Exposure:

The number of children living in conflict-prone areas is projected to drop from more than 833 million in the 2000s to 622 million in the 2050s.

Urbanization:

Nearly 60% of children globally are projected to live in urban areas in the 2050s, up from 44% in the 2000s.

Key findings about the three megatrends are as follows:

Demographic Shift: By 2050, the global child population is expected to stabilize at **2.3 billion.** Child populations will grow in South Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa.

Africa's child population share is expected to fall **below 40%** (from 50% in the 2000s), while it will drop below 19% in East Asia, Western Europe, and North America.

Climate Crisis: Nearly **1 billion** children live in countries with high exposure to climate hazards, such as pollution, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss.

Children's developing bodies are particularly vulnerable to pollution and extreme weather, with their brains, lungs, and immune systems at risk even before birth.

Since 2022, 400 million students around the world have experienced school closures due to extreme weather.

Frontier Technologies: Artificial intelligence (AI), neurotechnology, next-generation renewable energy, and **mRNA** vaccine breakthroughs could significantly improve childhood in the future.

However, while over **95%** of people in high-income countries are internet-connected, only 26% in low-income countries have access.

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GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

220. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the launching of the **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** as a standalone **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.**

Key Highlights:

- The scheme has a total outlay of **Rs.2481 crore (Government of India share – Rs.1584 crore; State share – Rs.897 crore)** till the 15th Finance Commission **(2025-26).**
- NMNF aims to promote NF practices for providing safe & nutritious food for all.
- In the next two years, NMNF will be implemented in 15,000 clusters in Gram Panchayats, which are willing, & to reach 1 crore farmers and initiate Natural Farming (NF) in a 7.5 lakh Ha area.
- The preference will be given to areas having a prevalence of practicing NF farmers, SRLM / PACS / FPOs, etc.
- The need-based 10,000 Bio-input Resource Centres (BRCs) will be set up to provide easy availability and accessibility to ready-to-use NF inputs for farmers.

- Around **2000 NF Model Demonstration Farms** shall be established at Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Agricultural Universities (AUs), and farmer's fields, and shall be supported by experienced and trained Farmer Master Trainers.
- 30,000 Krishi Sakhis/ CRPs will be deployed for awareness generation, mobilization, and handholding of willing farmers in the clusters.
- Real-time geo-tagged & referenced monitoring of NMNF implementation shall be done through an online portal.

221. The **Department of Consumer Affairs** announced the successful nationwide implementation of the **E-Daakhil portal**. It is now operational in every state and union territory of India.

This milestone is marked by the recent launch of the E-Daakhil portal in Ladakh on 22nd November 2024.

E-Daakhil Portal:

- E-Daakhil is an innovative online platform designed to streamline the consumer grievance redressal process, providing an efficient and convenient way for consumers to approach the relevant consumer forum, dispensing the need to travel and be physically present to file their grievances.

- The E-Daakhil portal was first launched on **7th September 2020** by the N**ational Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission**. By the end of **2023,** it was launched in 35 States/UTs **except Ladakh.**

- The portal offers an intuitive and easy-to-navigate interface, allowing consumers to file complaints with minimal effort. From filing complaints to tracking their status, E-Daakhil ensures a paperless and transparent process with respect to the filing of cases.

- Any consumer or Advocate can sign up on the e-Daakhil platforms with the required authentication by receiving an OTP on their registered cell phone or an activation link on their registered email address.

- At present more than **2,81,024** users have registered on the E-Daakhil portal, and **1,98,725** cases have been filed out of which **38,453** have been disposed of.

222. The **Digital Bharat Nidhi** (previously USOF) was established under the **Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003** w.e.f. 1st April 2002.

As per **'The Telecommunications Act of 2023',** the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)** has become the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN).

The DBN has a mandate to support universal service by promoting access and delivery of telecommunication services in underserved rural, remote, and urban areas.

The balance to the credit of DBN, collected as Universal Access Levy, does not lapse at the end of the financial year.

223. The **5th** anniversary of the web portal of the **National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS)** was celebrated on 26th November 2024.

The portal of the **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs** was launched by the then-President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, on **26th November 2019.**

In the past five years since its inception, more than 1,00,000 students have already taken part in the NYPS portal through various activities.

The portal was developed to expand the outreach of the Youth Parliament Programme of the Ministry to all the recognized educational institutions of the country. It gave an opportunity for the students to associate themselves with our great democratic values.

On **11th September 2024**, **NYPS 2.0** was introduced so that all the citizens of the country can participate in the portal through:

(a) Institution Participation:

Through institutional participation, all the educational institutions of the country can now participate on the portal for conducting their Youth Parliament sittings. There are two categories of students for Institution participation, viz.
- Kishore Sabha - class VI to XII
- Tarun Sabha - Undergraduate/ Post Graduate students
- The head of the Institution/Teacher in charge shall get a 'Certificate of Appreciation' and every participating student shall also get a 'Certificate of Participation'.

(b) Group Participation:

The Leader of the Group shall get a 'Certificate of Appreciation' and every participant in the Group shall also get a 'Certificate of Participation'.

(c) Individual Participation:

All the citizens of the country can participate in the Quiz on the theme of "Bharatiya Democracy in Action"

224. The **Ministry of Tourism** has undertaken various promotional activities in important and potential tourist-generating markets.

The main objective is to showcase India's tourism potential and promote tourism in the country. Details of promotional activities are as follows:

- The **Chalo India initiative** has been launched by the Ministry to encourage the huge Indian diaspora to become Incredible India ambassadors and encourage their **five non-Indian friends to visit India,** every year.

- A **Chalo India portal** has also been developed for registration of the Indian diaspora. Further gratis e visa to one lakh foreign tourists, visiting India under the referral program was announced.
- **Participation in international travel fairs** and **exhibitions** such as World Travel Market (WTM) London, Feria Internacional de Turismo (FITUR) Madrid, International Travel & Hospitality Show (MITT) Moscow, Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) Sydney, Internationale Tourismusbörse (ITB) Berlin, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Dubai, International Meeting Exchange (IMEX) Frankfurt, International & French Travel Market (IFTM) Top Resa Paris, Japan Expo, Internationale Tourismusbörse Asia (ITB Asia), Singapore etc.
- The Ministry launched the **Incredible India Content Hub** on the revamped Incredible India digital portal on 27th September 2024.
- The Incredible India Content Hub is a comprehensive **digital repository** of high-quality images, films, brochures, and newsletters that can be easily accessed by industry stakeholders.
- The Hospitality Programme of the Ministry invites media personalities, tour operators, and opinion makers to visit the country.

225. The Ministry of Tourism under its **'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive' (PRASHAD) Scheme** provides financial assistance to the State Governments and Union Territories Administration for the development of Tourism Infrastructure at the Pre-Identified Pilgrimage destinations/Heritage Cities.

The scheme was launched in the year **2014-15.**

The projects identified under this scheme shall be implemented through the identified agencies by the respective State/ UT Governments.

The Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned **46 projects** under its PRASHAD Scheme including **3 projects** in **Andhra Pradesh.** A total of 29 sites are identified for development under the PRASHAD Scheme including 2 sites in Andhra Pradesh.

226. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the **One Nation One Subscription,** a new **Central Sector Scheme** for providing country-wide access to scholarly research articles and journal publications.

A total of about **Rs.6,000 crore** has been allocated for the scheme for **three** calendar years, **2025, 2026,** and **2027.**

This is in line with the goals of Viksitbharat@2047, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF).**

This will supplement the ANRF initiative to promote research and development and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout government universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.

The benefits of the scheme will be provided to all higher educational institutions through a national subscription coordinated by a central agency, namely the **Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET),** an autonomous inter-university center of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

This list covers more than 6,300 institutions, translating into nearly 1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers.

The initiative will expand access to scholarly journals to a vast diaspora of students, faculty, researchers, and scientists of all disciplines, including those in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

Access to journals will be provided through a national subscription coordinated by the **Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET),** an autonomous inter-university center of the University Grants Commission (UGC) through an entirely digital process.

The Department of Higher Education will have a unified portal **"One Nation One Subscription"** through which the institutions will be able to access the journals.

The ANRF will periodically review the usage of One Nation One Subscription and publications of Indian authors of these institutions.

A total of 30 major international journal publishers have been included in One Nation One Subscription. All of the nearly 13,000 e-journals published by these publishers will now be accessible to more than 6,300 government Higher Education Institutions and central government R&D institutions.

227. Union Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the **third edition** of **Nayi Chetna – Pahal Badlaav Ki** on 25th November 2024 in Rang Bhawan Auditorium, New Delhi.

It is a national campaign against gender-based violence and was first organized in the year 2023.

The campaign's slogan, **"Ek Saath, Ek Awaaz, Hinsa Ke Khilaaf,"** embodies the call for collective action through convergence efforts, adopting a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach.

It is a month-long campaign, organized by the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Rural Development.**

Campaign duration: **25th November to 23rd December 2024.**

This initiative, led by the extensive SHG network of DAY-NRLM, embodies the spirit of Jan Andolan.

Key Objectives:

- Raising awareness about all forms of gender-based violence.
- Mobilizing communities to speak out and demand accountability.
- Facilitating access to support systems for timely intervention and assistance.
- Empowering local institutions to take decisive action against violence.

Goals for Nayi Chetna 3.0:

- Generate widespread awareness about gender-based violence.
- Foster collective action at the grassroots level.
- Drive convergence among government ministries and community stakeholders.
- Create a sustainable and informed movement for gender equality and women's empowerment.

228. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a health insurance program for all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of their income, as part of the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** on **October 29, 2024.**

He also introduced the **Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card**, further enhancing the initiative's offerings for the elderly population.

Within three weeks of its inception, the enrolment for Ayushman Vaya Vandana Yojana has reached **10 lakhs.**

Around 4 lakh enrolments are from females.

Treatment worth over **Rs 9 crore** has been authorized since the launch of the card, benefitting more than 4800 senior citizens, including over 1400 females.

Ayushman Vaya Vandana Scheme:

- The Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card is universal and there is **no restriction** on income, be it poor, middle class, or upper class.
- Regardless of their financial status or income, all people **70 years of age and above** are eligible.
- Free health coverage of up to **Rs 5 lakh annually** is provided under this scheme.

Note:

Ayushman Bharat—Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) was launched on September 23, 2018, in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

229. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the **PM Vidyalaxmi scheme**, a new initiative under the Central Sector aimed at providing financial support to meritorious students.

- The scheme will provide financial support to meritorious students for higher education without financial constraints.
- The financial outlay of the scheme is **Rs.3600 crores** from **2024-25 to 2030-31.**
- Students having **annual family income** of up to ₹8 lahks shall be eligible to get **3% interest subvention** on education loans up to ₹10 lakh and loans up to ₹7.5 lakhs shall be eligible for **a 75% credit guarantee**.

- PM Vidyalaxmi will facilitate students securing admissions in the top **860 (Higher Educational Institutions) HEIs** of the country based on **NIRF rankings**. This will cover more than **22 lakh students every year**.
- **PM-Vidyalaxmi portal** for loan applications and interest subvention. Interest subvention through e-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets.
- PM Vidyalaxmi complements the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL) under PM-USP, supporting full interest subvention for students with family income up to ₹4.5 lakh on loans up to ₹10 lakh for approved technical/professional courses.

230. Union Minister for Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a review meeting on revamping of Shram Suvidha and Samadhan portal in New Delhi. **Shram Suvidha and Samadhan Portal's** revamped version is focused on efficiency, effectiveness, and ease of use by upgrading technology and technical features. This revamped version was announced by the Finance Minister during the **Union Budget 2024-25.**

The new portals will also offer supportive features such as video and audio tutorials, and interactive chat support, among others. It will also allow for online filing of applications for intimation/permission for layoffs, closures, and more. Daily proceedings of cases in the Central Government Industrial Tribunals (CGIT) will also be accessible on the portal.

The enhanced portal will also facilitate improved data sharing between enforcement agencies.

Shram Suvidha portal:

Shram Suvidha Portal, launched by the Government on 16th October 2014, caters to four major Organisations under the *Ministry of Labour & Employment, namely Office of Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), Directorate General of Mines Safety, Employees' Provident Fund Organization and Employees' State Insurance Corporation.* The main features of the Portal are as follow:

- Allotment of Unique Identity i.e. Labour Identification Number (LIN) for effective, efficient and real-time governance in Labour Administration

- To bring transparency and accountability in enforcement of labour laws through Online Inspection System and Filing of Online Inspection Report

- Common Online Registration and Filing of Self-Certified and Simplified Single Online Annual Return for multiple labour laws to ease the complexity of compliance

- Unified ECR under EPFO/ESIC to encourage compliance by reducing transaction costs and promoting ease of business.

Samadhan Portal:

SAMADHAN Portal is a digital initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India. The Portal was launched pan-India on 17th September 2020 for filing industrial disputes under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

231. The Government of India has approved the Central Sector Scheme **'Namo Drone Didi'** for providing Drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) under **DAY-NRLM**, with an outlay of **Rs.1261 Crores**.

The scheme aims to empower women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with drone technology for agricultural services (e.g., pesticide and fertilizer application).

The scheme aims to provide drones to **15,000 women Self Help Groups (SHGs)** during the period **2024–25 to 2025–2026** for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purposes.

The scheme is a collaborative venture between the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Department of Rural Development, and Department of Fertilizers, along with Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs) and other supporting entities.

This initiative is expected to generate an additional income of at least **Rs.1 lakh per year** for each SHG.

Major components of the scheme are:

- The Scheme will be governed at the Central level by the Empowered Committee of the Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Department of Rural Development, Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The Implementation and Monitoring Committee headed by the Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development and having representation from all other stakeholders will be responsible for effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of the scheme and it will provide overall advice and guidance to all technical matters related to the implementation of the scheme.
- Under the scheme, a Central Financial Assistance @ 80% of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges up to a maximum of ₹ 8.0 lakhs will be provided to the women SHGs for purchase of drones as a package.
- The Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) of SHGs/SHGs may raise the balance amount (total cost of procurement minus subsidy) as loan under National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF). Interest subvention @ 3% on the AIF loan will be provided to the CLFs/SHGs.
- The CLFs/SHGs shall also have the option to access loans from other sources/programmes/schemes of Ministry of Rural Development.
- Under the scheme, not only the drones but, drones as a package will be supplied. The package will consists of basic drone with spray assembly for spraying liquid fertilizers and pesticides, Drone carrying box, standard battery set, downward facing camera, dual-channel fast battery charger, battery charger hub, anemometer, pH meter and 1 year onsite warranty on all items.
- The package also includes 04 spare battery sets, one spare propeller set (each set contains 6 propellers), nozzle set, dual channel fast battery charger, battery charger hub, 15 days training for drone pilot and drone assistant, one year comprehensive insurance, 2 years annual maintenance contract and applicable GST. The additional sets of batteries will ensure continuous drone flying which can easily cover 20 acres in a day.
- One of the members of the women SHGs will be selected for 15 day training comprising of mandatory drone pilot training and additional training for agriculture purpose for nutrient and pesticide application. The other member/ family member of the SHG with inclination to take up repairs of electrical goods, fitting and mechanical works will be trained as drone

assistant. The drone manufacturers shall provide these trainings as a package along with the supply of drones as per the training schedule indicated in the Operational Guidelines.

- The Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs) responsible for the States will be the implementing agencies of the scheme at the State level and they will establish necessary coordination with the State Departments, Drone manufacturers, Cluster Level Federations of SHGs/SHGs and the farmers/beneficiaries etc. The drones will be procured by the LFCs through a fair and transparent process and the ownership of drones will be placed with the CLF of SHGs or SHGs.

- Implementation of the scheme hinges on rightful selection of the area/cluster and SHG group where there is demand for drone to provide agriculture services. As the introduction of drones in agriculture is at nascent stage, the States will closely monitor the interventions, provide handholding support to the women SHGs and help them in getting the business to cover an area of at least 2000 to 2500 acres in a year. The State Departments of Agriculture & State Mission Directors of DAY-NRLM will have a very strong convergence and they will take the ownership of the scheme for its successful implementation at the ground level with the help of State Level Committee.

- Effective monitoring of the scheme will be through an IT based Management Information System (MIS) i.e. Drone Portal which will act as end-to-end software for service delivery and monitoring, funds flow and disbursement of funds. The portal will also track operations of each drone and provide live information on drone usage.

232. Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, JP Nadda launched the **Scheme for Strengthening the Medical Device Industry**, with a total outlay of **Rs.500 crores**.
The scheme is a comprehensive scheme that targets critical areas of the medical device industry, covering manufacturing of key components and accessories, skill development, support for clinical studies, development of common infrastructure, and industry promotion.

It consists of five sub-schemes which are as follows:

- **Common Facilities for Medical Devices Clusters**: With an outlay of Rs.110 crores, it will be used for creating infrastructure such as R&D labs, Design and Testing Centre, Animal Labs, etc. Grant of up to Rs. 20 Crore will be provided for Common Facilities and up to Rs. 5 crore for Testing Facilities.

- **Marginal Investment Scheme for Reducing Import Dependence**: The financial outlay is Rs.180 crores. This sub-scheme aims to reduce dependence on imported components and to enhance the MedChain supply in the country. It offers a one-time capital subsidy of 10-20%, with a maximum cap of Rs10 crore per project.

- **Capacity Building and Skill Development for Medical Devices**: The fund for this sub-scheme is Rs.100 crores. It targets to develop skilled technical workforce. The Central Government will offer financial support for running various Master' and short-term courses. Support of up to Rs.21 crore for Masters' courses in central government institutions; Rs. 10,000 per candidate for short-term courses and Rs. 25,000 per candidate for Diploma courses to NCVET-approved institutes will be available.

- **Medical Device Clinical Studies Support Scheme**: Total financial support is **Rs.100 crores**. It is designed to assist both established companies and start-ups in conducting clinical studies. Financial support of up to Rs 2.5 Crore will be provided for animal studies.

For clinical investigation of investigational devices and post-market clinical follow-ups on approved devices, a maximum of Rs 5 Crore is available to generate clinical data. And, up to Rs 1 Crore can be granted for clinical performance evaluations of new in-vitro diagnostic products.

- **Medical Device Promotion Scheme**: The total allocation of funds is **Rs.10 Crores**. It aims to support industry associations and export councils by providing financial assistance to organize conferences and other events that promote medical device-related activities. It will also support the conduct of surveys and studies.

Note: India's medical device market is valued at approximately $14 billion and is expected to grow to $30 billion by 2030.

233. The Government of India (GoI) aims to expand the reach of the e-Shram portal by encouraging self-employed individuals particularly those running micro-enterprises, shops, hawkers, and vendors to register as unorganized sector workers.

The initiative is aimed to bring 200 million additional unorganized sector workers, especially self-employed, onto the e-Shram platform.

e-Shram Portal:

- It was initiated in **August 2021** as a national database for unorganized workers, under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- It is the first-ever national database of unorganized workers including **migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers, etc.**
- It is seeded with **AADHAR** and includes details like **names, occupations, addresses, educational qualifications, and skill types, etc** of workers.
- Over 303 million unorganized workers across 400 occupations are currently registered on this portal.
- Various ministries that collaborated **are Finance, Health, Housing, Skill Development, Road Transport, and Rural Development**.
- By connecting with the **Gati Shakti Portal**, the database supports targeted workforce allocation, helping reduce skill mismatches and fulfill labor demands.

234. The **One Rank One Pension scheme**, officially implemented on **November 7, 2015**, was launched to address disparities in pension benefits among **military veterans**, ensuring that personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service receive equal pensions, regardless of retirement date.

Key Points:

- The implementing agency is the Department of Ex-Serviceman Welfare under the Ministry of Defence.
- The government allocated **₹1,000 crore** for its implementation.

- Pensions are re-fixed based on the rates for those who retired in 2013, effective from July 1, 2014, and are revised every **five years** to keep pace with changes in pay structures.
- Arrears of pension were to be paid in equal half-yearly installments, although the arrears for family pensioners and gallantry awardees were paid in a single installment.
- For personnel drawing pensions higher than the average, their pensions are protected, ensuring that they do not lose out on the benefits of OROP.
- The order covered all personnel who retired up to June 30, 2014, and provided a robust framework for revising pensions for all ranks, including family pensioners.

235. **M. Nagaraju**, **Secretary, Department of Financial Services** (DFS), chaired a meeting with all stakeholders to carry out a fresh **Know Your Customer (re-KYC)** process for the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** account holders, in New Delhi.

During the meeting, he suggested all the Banks use all means for doing re-KYC — such as fingerprints, face recognition, and taking declarations where no change in KYC documents occurred — through all channels like ATM, mobile banking, internet banking, and other available digital channels.

PMJDY:

The PMJDY was launched in **2014** and is the National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, basic savings & deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, and pension affordably.

Under the scheme, a basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account can be opened in any bank branch or Business Correspondent (Bank Mitra) outlet, by persons not having any other account.

Benefits under PMJDY:

- One basic savings bank account is opened for unbanked persons.
- There is no requirement to maintain any minimum balance in PMJDY accounts.
- Interest is earned on the deposit in PMJDY accounts.
- Rupay Debit card is provided to PMJDY account holders.
- Accident Insurance Cover of **Rs.1 lakh** (enhanced to Rs.2 lakh for new PMJDY accounts opened after 28th August 2018) is available with a **RuPay** card issued to the PMJDY account holders.
- An overdraft (OD) facility up to **Rs.10,000** to eligible account holders is available.

- PMJDY accounts are eligible for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Atal Pension Yojana (APY), Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Bank (MUDRA) scheme.

236. The **Ministries of Women and Child Development and Rural Development**, in collaboration with **UN Women**, has launched a nationwide campaign **"#AbKoiBahanaNahi"** in New Delhi. The campaign aims to combat **gender-based violence** across India.

- The campaign's primary objective is to mobilize public action against gender-based violence, which encourages individuals, government bodies, and organizations to take concrete steps toward this goal.

- The initiative seeks to raise awareness and promote accountability among citizens.

- The campaign aligns with the United Nations' **"No Excuse"** initiative, which addresses the growing issue of violence against women.

The campaign was launched in conjunction with the 'Nayi Chetna 3.0 campaign,' organized by the Ministry of Rural Development, reaffirming the national commitment to end all forms of gender-based violence.

At the launch event, a film on #AbKoiBahanaNahi was showcased, highlighting the need for accountability from all stakeholders, including citizens, to pledge against ending gender-based violence.

Note: Globally, every year, from 25th November, which is observed as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10th December, which is observed as the Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism campaign is observed by civil society to raise awareness on ending gender-based violence.

237. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of its flagship initiative, the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, under the aegis of NITI Aayog, with an enhanced scope of work and an allocated budget of **Rs.2,750 crore** for the period till **March 31, 2028.**

AIM 1.0 focused on creating new innovation infrastructure to bolster India's emerging ecosystem. In contrast, AIM 2.0 aims to pilot new initiatives to address gaps in the ecosystem and scale successful models through collaboration with central and state governments, industry, academia, and community.

AIM 2.0 is designed to strengthen India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in three ways:

- by increasing input (i.e., ushering more innovators and entrepreneurs)
- by improving the success rate or 'throughput '(i.e., helping more startups succeed)
- by improving the quality of 'output' (i.e., producing better jobs, products and services)

Two programs target increasing input to the ecosystem:

- The Language Inclusive Program of Innovation (LIPI) to build innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in India's 22 scheduled languages for lowering the entry barrier confronting innovators, entrepreneurs, and investors who don't speak English. 30 Vernacular Innovation Centers will be established in existing incubators.

- The Frontier Program to create customized templates for the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Ladakh, the North Eastern states (NE), Aspirational Districts and Blocks where 15% of India's citizens live. 2500 new ATLs will be created for template development.

Four programs target improving the throughput of the ecosystem:

- The Human Capital Development Program to create a system for producing professionals (managers, teachers, trainers) to build, operate, and maintain India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. The pilot will produce 5500 such professionals.

- The Deeptech Reactor to create a research sandbox for testing ways of commercializing research-based deep tech startups that require significantly longer time and deeper investment to get to market. A minimum 1 Deeptech Reactor will be piloted.

- The State Innovation Mission (SIM) to assist states/UTs with building a strong innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem that focuses on their areas of strength. SIM will be a component of the NITI Aayog's State Support Mission.

- The International Innovation Collaborations program to take India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem international. Four areas of intervention are identified: (a) an Annual Global Tinkering Olympiad (b) creation of 10 Bi-lateral, multilateral engagements with advanced nations (c) as a knowledge partner, helping the United Nation's World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) spread the models of AIM and its programs (ATL, AIC) to the countries of the global south, and (d) anchoring the Startup20 Engagement Group of the G20 for India.

Two programs target improving the quality of output (jobs, products, and services):

- The Industrial Accelerator program to increase industry involvement in scaling up advanced startups. A minimum 10 Industry Accelerators in critical sectors will be created in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

- The Atal Sectoral Innovation Launchpads (ASIL) program to build iDEX-like platforms in central ministries for integrating and procuring from startups in key industry sectors. A minimum 10 launchpads will be built across key ministries.

Note: Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was set up in 2016.

238. The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annapurna Devi, has launched the national campaign **"Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat"** in New Delhi to eradicate child marriage and empower young girls across the nation. The campaign was launched on **27th November 2024.**

- The campaign seeks to inspire collective action against child marriage.

- The campaign aligns with the Prime Minister's vision of a **Viksit Bharat** by 2047, focusing on the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls in all spheres of life. A coordinated effort between the government and society is crucial to eliminating child marriage and unlocking the potential of every girl.

- The campaign aims to raise awareness on the issue and eliminate child marriages across the country with a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Society' approach.

- This campaign targets **seven high-burden states:** West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh.

- The focus areas include 300 districts where child marriage rates exceed the national average.

- The goal is to **reduce the prevalence of child marriages to below 5% by 2029.**

- The campaign advocates for legislative changes to ensure 18 as the minimum age of marriage without exceptions. It provides legal protection for children and aims to prevent child marriages effectively.

- It will help monitor Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) with better supervision and evaluation.

- The campaign will strengthen the legal framework to prevent and punish child marriage, including stricter enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act.

As part of the campaign, the Union Minister also inaugurated the **Child Marriage Free Bharat Portal**, an innovative online platform that enables citizens to report child marriage incidents, file complaints, and access information about **Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs)** nationwide.

The portal is a significant step in empowering citizens and enforcing the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**.

Note: According to the latest data, child marriages in India have halved from **47.4% in 2005-06 to 23.3% in 2019-21.**

239. **Yuva Sangam (Phase V)** commenced with two tours between **Bihar and Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.**

It started on 24th November 2024 when 44 delegates from Bihar initiated their journey to Karnataka.

Another group of 50 delegates from Andhra Pradesh began their tour of Uttar Pradesh on 25th November 2024.

<u>**Yuva Sangam:**</u>

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Education** in **2023.** It is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at strengthening people-to-people connections among youth across different States and Union Territories.
- It is organized collaboratively with the support of participating Ministries/Departments/Agencies and State Governments. This includes M/o **Home Affairs, Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, Information & Broadcasting, Department for Development of North-East Region (DoNER),** and **Railways.**
- The program promotes unity in diversity by facilitating meaningful interactions, cultural immersion, and knowledge sharing.
- The participants, **aged 18 to 30,** include students, NSS/NYKS volunteers, and young professionals from various walks of life.
- Twenty eminent institutions across India have been selected from the state for Phase V of Yuva Sangam during which participants from these states/UTs, led by the nodal HEI of the state/UT, respectively, will be visiting their paired state/UTs.

- During Yuva Sangam tours, multi-dimensional exposure under five broad areas- the 5 Ps viz; **Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati (Development), Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect), and Prodyogiki (Technology)** will be provided to the visiting delegation over a period of 5-7 days (excluding travel days).
- Till now, 4,795 youth across India have participated in 114 tours in various phases of Yuva Sangam (including the pilot phase in 2022).

240. The **Ministry of Port, Shipping, and Waterways** launched the **Cruise Bharat Mission** on 30th September 2024.

The aim was to provide a whole government approach by involving various Central and State Government agencies.
Currently, **six** Major Ports have cruise Terminals.

These are:

- Vishakhapatnam Port in Andhra Pradesh
- Mormugao Port in Goa
- New Mangalore Port in Karnataka
- Cochin Port in Kerala
- Mumbai Port in Maharashtra
- Chennai Port in Tamil Nadu

The target of the mission is to increase sea cruise tourists to 10 lakh by 2029.

It will be implemented in three phases, beginning from 1 October 2024 up to 31 March 2029.

- **Phase 1** (01.10.2024 – 30.09.2025) will focus on **conducting studies, master planning,** and forming cruise alliances with neighbouring countries. It will also modernise existing cruise terminals, marinas, and destinations to enhance the potential of cruise circuits.

- **Phase 2** (01.10.2025 – 31.03.2027) will concentrate on **developing new cruise terminals, marinas,** and destinations to activate high-potential cruise locations and circuits.

- **Phase 3** (01.04.2027 – 31.03.2029) will focus on **integrating all cruise circuits** across the Indian Subcontinent, marking the maturity of the cruise ecosystem while continuing the development of cruise terminals, marinas, and destinations.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

241. USA-based defence company, **Shield AI** has teamed up with Mumbai-based company, **JSW Defence**, a part of the JSW Group, to indigenize and manufacture its V-BAT, a Group 3 Unmanned Aerial System (UAS).

Under the strategic partnership, JSW Group will invest around **USD 90 million** over the next two years, including **USD 65 million** in the first year, to establish JSW's global compliance program, manufacturing facility for licensed production, workforce training, etc.

This would enable JSW Group to create a local supply chain to manufacture, assemble, and test V-BAT unmanned aircraft at scale to meet Indian Armed Forces needs and serve as a global production hub for Shield AI.

The partnership will enable the company to produce V-BAT systems at scale and provide operator training and end-to-end maintenance, repair, and overhaul services to the Indian Armed Forces.

242. The Competition Commission of India has approved a transaction involving the subscription of shares of **Flipkart Private Limited** by **Shoreline International Holdings LLC.**

The proposed transaction comprises:
- Investment through subscription of shares of Flipkart Private Limited (Target) by Shoreline International Holdings LLC (Acquirer); and

- An arrangement between an affiliate of the Acquirer and Target's subsidiary for the provision of certain services.

The Shoreline International Holdings LLC.:

- It is a wholly owned subsidiary of **Alphabet Inc.** (collectively with all its subsidiaries, Google).
- It is a holding company and does not own or operate any Google products or services. Google, however, offers various products and services.

Flipkart Private Limited:

- It is a subsidiary of **Walmart Inc.** and ultimately belongs to the Walmart Group.
- It is principally an investment holding company, which, along with its direct and indirect subsidiaries, is primarily engaged in the business of wholesale cash and carry of goods and providing marketplace-based e-commerce platforms to facilitate trade between customers and sellers in India.

243. Mumbai-based **Larsen & Toubro** acquired a **21%** stake in cloud services provider **E2E Networks Ltd** for **Rs1,407.02 crore.**

L&T invested Rs1,079.27 crore for a 15 percent stake through preferential allotment and Rs 327.75 crore for an additional six percent stake through secondary acquisition.

The acquisition of the stake in E2E Networks is likely to be completed by December 31.

L & T will not acquire control in E2E Networks and will be a minority shareholder with certain protective rights.

E2E Networks Ltd is a Delhi-based Indian cloud company offering public cloud services to its customers.

244. The Global Rating Agency, **Moody Ratings** released the "**Global Macro Outlook for 2025-26"** report.

The report featured a macroeconomic analysis of Indian and Global scenarios.

India Specific:

- It forecasted a **7.2%** growth rate for the Indian economy in **2024** due to a rebound in household consumption and moderating inflation.
- For the calendar year **2025,** it estimated a growth rate of **6.6%** for India and **6.5%** for **2026.**
- India's retail inflation surged to a **14-month** high at **6.21 %** in October 2024.
- The report also attributed geopolitical tensions and extreme weather events as potential inflation risks.

Global Scenario:

- The report estimated the G-20 economies will grow by **2.8% in 2024**, which is down from **3.0%** in the year **2023.**
- Further, it will reduce to **2.6%** and **2.5%** in **2025** and **2026** respectively.
- The report highlighted that the tensions between the USA and China are a significant risk to the global economy.

245. Indian industrialist **Gautam Adani**, along with **Sagar Adani** and **six** other defendants, has been charged by the **United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** in an alleged bribery and fraud scheme worth **$265 million.**

The other six defendants are:

- Ranjit Gupta – Former chief executive officer (CEO) of Azure Power Global
- Rupesh Agarwal – Former chief strategy and commercial officer of Azure Power Global
- Cyril Cabanes – Former member of the board of directors at Azure Power Global
- Vineet Jaain – Executive at Adani Green Energy
- Saurabh Agarwal
- Deepak Malhotra

The case alleged that Adani and others conspired to pay about **$265 million** in bribes to Indian government officials to secure **solar energy contracts** for **Adani Green Energy,** the renewable energy arm of the Adani Group.

The SEC alleged that the incident occurred during a **September 2021** offering by Adani Green that raised **$750 million**, including **$175 million** from **US investors**.
The SEC's civil action coincided with a criminal indictment by the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, which included similar allegations of securities fraud and conspiracy.

246. **IREL (India) Limited, (IREL)**, a CPSU under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Govt. of India and **Ust-Kamenogorsk Titanium and Magnesium Plant JSC, (UKTMP JSC) Kazakhstan** have signed an agreement to establish **Indo-Kazakh** joint venture company (JVC): **IREUK Titanium Limited** for production of **Ti Slag** in India.

The Agreement was signed by **Dr. Deependra Singh**, Chairman and Managing Director of IREL (India) Limited, and Ms. **Assem Mamutova**, President of UKTMP JSC.

Key Highlights:
- The JVC will act as a catalyst in developing the Titanium value chain within India. It shall benefit low-grade Ilmenite into high-grade Titanium Feedstock and also result in employment opportunities in the State of Odisha.
- The offtake arrangement by UKTMP JSC shall be instrumental in bringing valuable forex for the country and aid UKTMP JSC in raw material security.
- UKTMP JSC shall provide the technology for producing Ti Slag and shall offtake the agreed quantities for input to their Ti sponge plant.
- The joint venture company aimed to establish the plant in the titanium value chain for producing Titanium Slag by utilizing IREL's Ilmenite from Odisha.

247. The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** held its **45th Central Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting** where States and Union Territories urged to ramp up surveillance at popular tourist destinations to ensure heightened safety standards in preparation for the peak tourist season from November through March.
The committee emphasized training Food Business Operators (FBOs) in all States/UTs under **Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC)** to ensure food safety and hygiene for all citizens.

States/UTs were urged to train **25 lakh food handlers** by **March 2026**, including those in university, college, and hostel canteens. Authorities were asked to Increase surveillance at warehouses of E-Commerce platforms.

Over 60 officials actively participated in the meeting, including Commissioners of Food Safety (CFS), representatives from States and UTs, senior FSSAI officials, etc.

248. **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT),** under the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT),** has signed an agreement with **CSIR- Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute (CEERI),** for the development of *"Multiport Switch with Tuneable Impedance Matching Network for a Single Broadband Antenna to Cover 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G Bands."*
The project is funded under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme of the Department of Telecommunications. This scheme, designed to fund Indian startups, academia, and R&D institutions, is a crucial enabler for designing, developing, and commercializing telecommunication products and solutions. It will focus on developing a Microelectromechanical technology-based switching network to cover multiple communication bands with enhanced antenna performance.

The project is aligned with the "Bharat 6G Vision".

The developed technology can be used to cover all the bands like 2G, 3 G, 4G, 5G, and beyond in a
single antenna without noise.

249. **National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC)**, India's largest iron ore producer, recorded its best-ever October performance since its inception.
The company's impressive production of 4.07 million tonnes (MT) and sales of 4.03 MT of iron ore surpassed previous October records, marking a 3.8% increase in production and 17.15% growth in sales compared to last year's corresponding period.

This remarkable achievement brings NMDC's cumulative figures for FY25 to 21.55 MT for production and 23.84 MT for sales, underscoring its commitment to meeting the country's growing demands for iron ore.

NMDC is a **Navratna** PSU that works under the **Ministry of Steel.**

250. **The Competition Commission of India** has approved the acquisition of shares of **STT GDC Pte. Ltd** by **Ruby Asia Holdings Pte. Ltd. (Ruby Asia)** and **Singtel Interactive Pte. Ltd. (Singtel)** subject to compliance with certain voluntary commitments submitted by the parties.
Singtel:

Singtel is a wholly owned subsidiary of Singtel Telecommunications Limited, a public listed company incorporated in Singapore. The Singtel Group is an Asian communications technology group, operating connectivity, digital infrastructure, and digital businesses, and has a presence in Asia, Australia, and Africa.
Ruby Asia:

Ruby is a special purpose vehicle indirectly wholly owned by investment funds, vehicles, and/or accounts advised and managed by various subsidiaries of KKR & Co. Inc.

STT GDC:

STT GDC is a wholly owned subsidiary of **Singapore Technologies Telemedia** Pte Ltd, a **Singapore-headquartered** group active in communications and media, data centers, and infrastructure technologies businesses globally. In India its indirect subsidiary is present, STT Global Data Centres India Private Limited (**STT GDC India**).

251. According to the IMF's latest **Regional Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific**, India remains the world's fastest-growing economy with investment and private consumption driving growth.
Key Highlights:

- IMF has projected India's GDP growth for **FY25** as **7%** while for **FY26** it's **6.5%.**
- Revised growth estimates were slightly increased (by 0.2%) due to stronger rural consumption (helped by a good agricultural season) and ongoing public infrastructure investments.
- Growth for the Asia Pacific region in 2024 has been revised up marginally **by 0.1 %** points up to **4.6%**.
- Asia and Pacific region is expected to contribute roughly 60% to global growth in 2025.
- IMF highlighted a shift in Asia from manufacturing to modern, tradable services, suggesting this could drive future growth and productivity.

- The services sector has grown, with half of the workforce in Asia now employed there, up from 22% in 1990.
- International trade in services (like finance, ICT, and business outsourcing) is accelerating, with notable contributions from countries like India and the Philippines.

252. Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (HUDCO), a Navaratna central public sector enterprise, has granted a loan of **Rs 11,000 crore** for the construction of Amaravati greenfield capital city in Andhra Pradesh.
Out of the total **Rs 26,000** crore needed for constructing Amaravati Phase-1, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) came forward to lend **Rs 15,000 crore,** and Rs 11,000 crore loan given by HUDCO.

253. NTPC Ltd and **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** have created a **50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC)** focused on **renewable energy** and new energy initiatives.
The JV will be formed by the companies' green energy subsidiaries NTPC Green Energy (NGEL) and ONGC Green Energy (OGL) in an equal partnership.

The new company will venture into various renewable energy and new energy opportunities including solar and wind energy, both onshore and offshore, and green molecules such as green hydrogen, green ammonia, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), and green methanol.

254. The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), an R&D institution under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has signed an agreement with Linearized Amplifier Technology Services Pvt. Ltd.

The agreement is signed under the **Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)** scheme of the Department of Telecommunications.

Under this project, the Linearized Amplifier has collaborated with **Vedang Radio Technology Pvt Ltd.** to focus on the development of an innovative **'Millimeter Wave Power Amplifier Chips IP Core,'** specifically designed for the 5G FR2 frequency bands.

The project aims to develop and validate the mm-wave Power amplifier IP cores for 5G FR2 frequency bands (26 GHz and 47 GHz) using commercial foundry services.

The project will use the standard process design kits (PDKs) in the design and hardware validation process underscoring a commitment to producing commercially viable, industry-ready IP cores.

This project is in line with the National Semiconductor Mission.

The signing ceremony was attended by **Dr. Pankaj Kumar Dalela**, Director, **C-DOT**.

255. Larsen & Toubro Ltd. (L&T) Energy CarbonLite Solutions division has secured an order from the **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd**. to set up thermal power plants in **Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.**

The overall project's cost is more than **Rs.15000 Crore.**

The plants include the **2x800 Mw Stage-II** thermal power plant at **Gadarwara** in Madhya Pradesh and the **3x800 Mw Stage-II** thermal power plant at **Nabinagar,** Bihar

The contract involves extensive work, including the design, engineering, manufacturing, supply, construction, and commissioning of critical components like boilers, turbines, electrostatic precipitators, and auxiliaries, along with mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, and civil works.

Note: Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has signed an agreement with NTPC to build a 3x800 megawatt (Mw) Stage-II supercritical thermal power plant in Telangana**.**

256. The **International Copper Association (ICA)**, a non-profit organization, selected **Hindalco Industries Limited**, a firm of the Aditya Birla Group, as its new member.

This collaboration would enhance the value chain of the copper for supporting the World's net zero transition.

International Copper Association:

The International Copper Association (ICA), headquartered in Washington DC, is the organization that promotes copper and protects its markets, it has 33 countries as its members in six continents i.e. US, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

President & CEO: Juan Ignacio Díaz

Hindalco Industries Limited:

It is the metals flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group. It is operating since 1958.

A $26 billion metals powerhouse, Hindalco is the world's second-largest copper rods manufacturer (outside China).

Hindalco is India's largest copper producer, serving more than half the country's copper requirements. Its copper facility in Gujarat, India, comprises a world-class copper smelter and refinery complex, downstream facilities, and a captive jetty.

257. Reliance Power and Reliance NU BESS Ltd have been debarred from participating in **Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd (SECI)** tenders for **three years** for submitting "fake documents".

It allegedly submitted a fake bank guarantee document for an SECI tender in June 2024.

SECI's June tender was for 1 GW of solar and 2 GW of standalone battery storage; R-Power, via subsidiary Maharashtra Energy Generation Limited, was a successful bidder with a competitive rate of ₹3.81/unit.

SECI found discrepancies in the bank guarantee from **FirstRand Bank (Philippines),** supposedly endorsed by SBI's Delhi branch, which SBI denied and flagged the email used as fake.

258. The Ministry of Finance revoked an 8-year-old mandate requiring **central public sector enterprises (CPSEs)** to get approval from **NITI Aayog** before forming financial **joint ventures (JVs) or wholly owned subsidiaries (WoS).**

The decision grants more independence to Maharatna, Navratna, and Miniratna CPSEs. These enterprises no longer need NITI Aayog's clearance to form JVs or WoS, aiming to simplify and expedite their investment decisions.

Background:

- Previously, CPSEs needed clearance from both NITI Aayog and the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to exercise delegated powers for JVs/WoS.
- CPSEs are still required to obtain DIPAM approval for capital restructuring, capital management, and JV/WoS formation.
- **2016 Mandate:** The original circular required CPSEs to seek NITI Aayog's approval to ensure that public fund investments were in line with strategic needs, fiscal prudence, and government policies.
- **Shift in 2021**: Since the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) moved under the Finance Ministry in 2021, the need for NITI Aayog's involvement has been reassessed and removed.
- The current status of CPSEs is as follows:
  - **Maharatna: 14 companies**
  - **Navratna: 24 companies**
  - **Miniratna: 62 companies**
- A 2019 parliamentary committee recommended empowering CPSE Boards with independent experts to improve decision quality, governance, and speed.
- The Finance Ministry's FY24 report highlighted the government's efforts to enable CPSE Boards to exercise autonomy over staffing and internal policy decisions within set policy guidelines.

259. **Cairn Oil & Gas**, part of Vedanta Group, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the **United Nations Environment Programme's** flagship methane reporting and mitigation initiative - **Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0.**

The company signed an MoU with UNEP in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

It is the **first** oil and gas producer in India to commit to the effective reduction of emissions of methane.

Under this MoU, Cairn will establish a **5-year** methane reduction target and transparently report its progress to OGMP.

Through this partnership, Cairn reaffirms its commitment to accelerate its efforts towards becoming **Net Zero Carbon by 2030.**

Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0:

- It is an initiative of the **United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP).
- OGMP 2.0 covers over **40 percent** of global oil and gas production empowering companies to improve the quality and accuracy of emissions data for effective methane reduction.

- It emphasizes accurate measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) of methane emissions to drive reductions effectively and supports the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Global Methane Pledge - a commitment by over 150 countries to reduce global methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030.

260. **The Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation** has released the retail inflation data for October 2024.
The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to a **14-month** high of **6.21%.** The CPI for September was 5.49%.

Key Highlights:

- October's inflation exceeds RBI's upper target of 6%.
- Food inflation reached **10.87%** year-on-year in October, with significant price increases in vegetables (42.18%), fruits (8.43%), oils and fats (9.51%), and cereals (6.94%).
- For rural and urban areas, CPI came in at 6.68% and 5.62%, respectively, while food inflation was reported at 10.69% for rural areas and a higher 11.09% for urban areas.
- **Core inflation**, excluding food and fuel, climbed to **3.67%,** influenced by telecom tariff hikes and higher gold prices.

Note: The Reserve Bank of India targets retail inflation at **4%**, with a tolerance level of two percentage points on both sides i.e. upper limit is **6%** while the lower is at **2%.**

261. **The Department for Promotion Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT),** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry,** published the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** inflation data for October 2024.
Wholesale price inflation (WPI) surged to a **four-month** high of **2.36%** mainly due to an increase in food items prices.

Key Highlights:

- The WPI was 1.84% in September 2024 while it was (-0.26%) in October 2023.
- Food inflation surged to 13.54% in October 2024 from 11.53% in September 2024.
- The fuel and power sector experienced a deflation of 5.79% in October 2024 from 4.05% in September 2024.

Note: Wholesale Price Index (WPI) represents the price of goods at a wholesale stage i.e. goods that are sold in bulk and traded between organizations instead of consumers. The base year for the WPI index is 2011-12.

262. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved **Jongsong Investments Pte. Ltd.'s** proposed acquisition of shares in **Rebel Foods Private Limited.**

The proposed combination envisages the subscription to certain compulsorily **convertible preference shares** and the **acquisition of equity shares** of Rebel Foods Private Limited (Rebel Foods) by Jongsong Investments Pte. Ltd. (Jongsong).

Rebel Foods Private Limited:

Rebel Foods is the world's largest internet restaurant company, having over 450 kitchens across 70 cities. It currently operates over 45 brands across multiple countries.

It was founded in 2011 by Jaydeep Barman and Kallol Banerjee,

It is engaged in the organized food services business and, inter alia, operates cloud kitchens, restaurants, food courts, and cafes.

Jongsong Investments Pte. Ltd.

Jongsong, an investment holding company, is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Temasek Holdings (Private) Limited (Temasek).

Temasek is an investment company headquartered in Singapore. Temasek's global portfolio covers a broad spectrum of industries.

263. **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)**, a Maharatna company, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **John Cockerill India Limited (JCIL)** to integrate green technology in the steel sector.

The MoU was signed by Anil Kumar Tulsiani, Director (Finance), SAIL, and Michael Kotas, Managing Director-Metals Division, John Cockerill India Limited.

The focus areas of this collaboration will be Cold Rolling and Processing for Carbon Steel, Green Steel, and Silicon Steel — specifically CRGO (Cold Rolled Grain Oriented) and CRNO (Cold Rolled Non-Oriented) steels.

The MoU aims to integrate green technologies into iron and steelmaking processes and incorporate advanced steelmaking technologies to enhance efficiency and sustainability.

John Cockerill India Limited is the Indian arm of the global John Cockerill Group in Mumbai.

264. The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of **Fosroc Top One Limited, Fosroc Top Two Limited, and Fosroc Supply FZE** by **Starcin Holding France SAS (Starcin).**

The Proposed Combination involves the acquisition of **100%** of the issued shares of Fosroc Top One Limited, Fosroc Top Two Limited, and Fosroc Supply FZE.

Starcin is a wholly owned subsidiary of **Compagnie de Saint-Gobain S.A. (Saint-Gobain).**

The Target Companies are wholly owned subsidiaries of **Fosroc Group Holdings Limited (Fosroc).**

Saint-Gobain:

Saint-Gobain's business lines include the production and sale of products, solutions, and services for construction and housing, including building glass, plaster boards, ceilings, insulation products,

mortars, building chemicals, and pipes. Saint-Gobain also manufactures high-performance solutions such as:

(a) automotive glass; (b) ceramics; (c) abrasives; and (d) performance plastics.

Fosroc:

Fosroc is an international manufacturer and supplier of high-performance, low-volume chemicals for the construction industry.

Fosroc Top One and Fosroc Top Two are holding companies incorporated in the United Kingdom and Fosroc Supply is a trading company incorporated in the United Arab Emirates.

265. The **National Statistics Office (NSO)**, **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the Quarterly Estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the July-September Quarter (Q2) of the Financial Year (FY) 2024-25.

Key Highlights:

- **Real GDP** has been estimated to grow by **5.4%** in Q2 of FY 2024-25 over the growth rate of 8.1% in Q2 of FY 2023-24. Despite sluggish growth observed in Manufacturing (2.2%) and Mining & Quarrying (-0.1%) sectors in Q2 of FY 2024-25, real GVA in H1 (April-September) has recorded a growth rate of 6.2%.
- **Real GVA** has grown by **5.6%** in Q2 of FY 2024-25 over the growth rate of 7.7% in Q2 of the previous financial year. Nominal GVA has witnessed a growth rate of 8.1 % in Q2 of FY 2024-25 over the growth rate of 9.3% in Q2 of FY 2023-24.
- Agriculture and Allied sector bounced back by registering a growth rate of 3.5% in Q2 of FY 2024-25 after sub-optimal growth rates ranging from 0.4% to 2.0%, observed during the previous four quarters.
- In the Construction sector, sustained domestic consumption of finished steel has resulted in 7.7% and 9.1% growth rates respectively in Q2 and H1 of FY 2024-25.
- **Tertiary sector** has observed a growth rate of **7.1%** in Q2 of FY 2024-25, as compared to the growth rate of 6.0% in Q2 of the previous financial year. In particular, Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication & Services related to Broadcasting has seen a growth rate of 6.0% in Q2 of FY 2024-25 over the growth rate of 4.5% in Q2, 2023-24.
- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has witnessed a growth rate of 6.0% and 6.7% respectively in Q2 and H1 of the FY 2024-25 over the growth rate of 2.6% and 4.0% in Q2 and H1 of the previous financial year.
- Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) has rebounded to a growth rate of 4.4% after observing either negative or low growth rates in the previous three quarters.

BANKING & FINANCE

266. The asset book of the **IFSC Banking Unit (IBU)** of **Axis Bank** at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar has doubled to **USD 4 billion** from USD 2 billion in 2019.

In terms of size, it is the largest in the GIFT City.

Similarly, on the liability side, Axis Bank has a USD 1 billion deposit, which once again is the highest in terms of deposits as well.

Axis Bank is also among one of the few banks having a standalone treasury at GIFT IFSC.

GIFT City is India's first international financial services center, providing world-class banking services locally and reducing reliance on offshore financial hubs.

267. **DBS Bank India** has launched an enhanced wealth management offering, providing Indian customers with unified access to **cross-border** treasury services across Asian countries, including **Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia,** and **China.**

This offering targets high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and non-resident Indians, abroad.

The bank also announced the launch of a digital account process for NRIs which will allow them to complete the process, excluding document submission within an hour.

DBS Treasures is the bank's premium banking service for customers with a total relationship value exceeding 30 Lakhs.

268. **Sa-Dhan,** a self-regulatory organization for microfinance institutions, has collaborated with the **Indian Institute of Banking & Finance (IIBF)**, to develop a certification course for job aspirants in the microfinance sector.

The course is open to all those who have passed the 12th class. It is an online course where the candidates can log on to the IIBF website, register, and take the course.

IIBF will conduct quarterly examinations and award the certificates to those qualifying for the exam. Sa-Dhan would compile the list of candidates qualifying for the course and make a state-level list to be provided to the MFIs.

269. **SBI Funds Management Limited,** a joint venture between the State Bank of India and Amundi, Europe's largest asset manager, has announced the appointment of **Nand Kishore** as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company.

He succeeds Shamsher Singh.

Nand Kishore has more than 34 years of rich experience working with the State Bank of India across major banking verticals such as branch banking, international operations, treasury operations, investment banking, corporate banking, and retail operations.

He has held several key positions, including Chief Dealer at SBI New York, Deputy General Manager and Chief Operating Officer at Corporate Accounts Group in Delhi, Deputy General

Manager (Interest Rate Markets) at Global Markets in Mumbai, General Manager at Corporate Accounts Group in BKC, Mumbai, and Chief General Manager, Bengaluru Circle.

He was serving as Deputy Managing Director of State Bank of India.

270. **Paytm, owned by One97 Communications,** has launched **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Lite automatic top-up facility for daily payments.**

It will allow users to automatically recharge their UPI Lite balance when it falls below a set limit, ensuring seamless small-value transactions without the need for a PIN.

Payments of up to **Rs 500** can be made per transaction, with a **daily limit of Rs 2000**, for recurring daily payments.

The company has also introduced a UPI statement download feature, enabling users to view and download detailed records of all UPI transactions, including those made via Paytm UPI Lite.

It offers UPI Lite for small-value transactions, RuPay Credit Card linking on UPI, and an auto-pay service, enhancing the overall payment experience.

The platform now supports international UPI payments at foreign locations where UPI is accepted, including the **UAE, Singapore, France, Mauritius, Bhutan, Sri Lanka,** and **Nepal.**

271. The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the acquisition of the standard unsecured personal loans portfolio of **Standard Chartered Bank**, India Branch, by **Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited.**

The Proposed Transaction includes a total loan outstanding amounting to approximately **Rs 4,100 crore (~$490 million)**. These loans are categorized as **"Standard Loans"** in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The transaction is anticipated to be finalized within the next three months, contingent upon obtaining regulatory approvals, meeting other necessary conditions, and obtaining approval or waiver of customary closing requirements.

Standard Loans: A standard loan is a loan with a fixed interest rate and level monthly payments over its amortization period.

272. The **11th SBI Banking and Economics Conclave 2024** was held in **Mumbai, Maharashtra.** It was also the celebration of the **100th year** of the **SBI Horniman branch** and the launch of **volume 5 of SBI's evolution book.**

During the event, SBI Chairman, C S Shetty highlighted various plans and future scenarios of SBI.

State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to add **300-400 branches annually** to its existing network in the medium term to increase penetration of financial services in the country.

The bank did an extensive micro market survey this year (FY25) to find out areas, which are yet to be covered. And then this plan came out.

SBI branch count stood at **22,640** at the end of **September 2024**, up from 15,870 in March 2014.

The bank is currently in the 17th position in terms of market capitalization worldwide.

According to BSE data, the State Bank of India's market capitalization is **Rs 7.26 trillion ($ 86 billion).**

273. **The Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved the acquisition of additional securities of **DMI Finance Private Limited** by **MUFG Bank, Ltd.**

After the acquisition, MUFG Bank's shareholding will increase to **20.0%** of the share capital of DMI Finance.

MUFG Bank Ltd.

It is a prominent banking institution based out of Japan with its headquarters in Marunouchi, Tokyo, Japan. MUFG Bank is wholly owned and controlled by **Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc.**, which is a financial service and holding company incorporated in **Tokyo, Japan.**

DMI Finance Private Limited

- DMI Finance is a private limited company registered as a middle layer 'systematically important non-deposit accepting' Non-Banking Financial Company with the Reserve Bank of India.
- It is engaged in the provision of loans and lending services in India including the provision of personal loans, loans to micro, small and medium enterprises, and consumption loans.

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274. Mumbai-based **HDFC Standard Life Insurance** Co bought **0.4%** shares of New Delhi-based **PNB Housing Finance** worth **Rs 90 crore** through an open market transaction.

It purchased a little over **10 lakh** shares or 0.4 percent stake in PNB Housing Finance.

The shares were picked up at an average price of Rs 900 apiece.

After the transaction, **Asia Opportunities V's** holding in PNB Housing has come down to 0.94 percent from 1.34 percent.

275. The **Department of Financial Services (DFS)** under the Ministry of Finance has launched a performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for **senior executives** at public sector banks on 20th November 2024.

The earlier PLI scheme was restricted only to Whole-Time Directors (WTDs) – MD & CEOs and Executive Directors. But the revised scheme is also applicable to senior executives in the rank of **Chief Manager and above.**

A committee, headed by the **Secretary (DFS)** and comprising the Additional Secretary (DFS), Joint Secretary (Baking), and Chief Executive of IBA (Indian Banks Association) as its members, will assess the governance mechanism in PSBs for the PLI.

After the assessment, the committee will list the banks eligible to be considered under the PLI Scheme. It may also decide on (in) the eligibility of officer(s) for the PLI scheme.

This scheme will bridge the disparity between senior executives of PSBs and private sector banks (PvSBs).

Eligibility Criteria:

- Positive return on assets (ROA) and **net non-performing asset (NPA)** should not be more than **1.5 percent**.
- And if Net NPA is more than 1.5 percent then a reduction of **25 basis points** or more in the opening net NPA of the financial year.
- **Cost to income ratio (CIR)** should not be more than **50 percent** or if it is more then there should be at least a year-on-year improvement in CIR.
- Capital to risk-weighted assets ratio as per the minimum regulatory requirement plus **200 basis points** or more.

The PLI ceiling for MD, CEO, and ED of nationalized banks and Chairman, MDs, and Deputy Managing Directors of State Bank of India has been kept at 100 percent of their annual basic pay.

The PLI ceiling for senior executives in the rank of Chief General Manager, General Manager; and Deputy General Manager and Assistant General Manager is kept at 90 percent and 80 percent, respectively, of their annual basic pay.

For the Chief Manager, the ceiling is at 70 percent.

Banks' performance will be evaluated based on an evaluation matrix comprising four equally-weighted evaluation parameters – efficiency, business, asset quality and Financial Inclusion (including Enhanced Access and Service Excellence reforms).

276. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** raised **₹10,000 crores** at a coupon rate of **7.23 percent.**

It was SBI's seventh infrastructure bond issuance.

The bonds are payable **annually** and its total tenure is **15 years.**

The proceeds of bonds will be utilized to enhance long-term resources for funding infrastructure and the affordable housing segment.

SBI also concluded the issue of **$500 million Senior Unsecured Fixed Rate Notes** having maturity of **5 years** and coupon of **5.125 percent** payable **semi-annually.**

The bonds were issued through SBI's London branch and listed on the **Singapore Stock Exchange** and **India International Exchange, GIFT City**.

277. **Karnataka Bank Ltd**. has introduced two student-focused financial products, 'KBL Peak' and 'KBL Genius', aiming to support students in achieving their academic goals and managing their finances efficiently.

These products were launched on **World Prematurity Day** i.e. on **17th November 2024.**

KBL Peak:

- Loan up to **₹2 crore** for higher education in India and abroad. Covers tuition, accommodation, travel, books, laptops, etc. Pre-admission sanction letter included.
- Special interest rate concession for female students pursuing **Science Technology Engineering & Management (STEM)** courses.

KBL Genius:

- Student-specific savings account with two variants: '**KBL Genius Signature'** and '**KBL Genius Advantage'**. Includes free cyber insurance and exclusive benefits.
- Students enjoy special privileges with their debit cards, promoting financial literacy and ease of use.

278. Digital payments fintech **Phi Commerce** received the **National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI)** certification to offer **UPI Switch** for its enterprise customers, primarily to sustain high transaction volumes.

This will enable them to offer a broad range of payment options to their customers almost instantly and, thereby launch products and services at a faster pace.

UPI Switch:

- UPI Switch distributes traffic across multiple servers, preventing system overloads and reducing processing times.
- It handles billions of transactions with sub-second response times. It also supports API-based integrations, enabling connectivity with various financial institutions and fintech platforms.
- It monitors if there's anything unusual or suspicious transaction using real-time fraud monitoring algorithms.

Phi Commerce:

- Phi Commerce offers enterprises omnichannel payment solutions that enable smooth and flexible payments across all consumer touchpoints — browser, mobile, in-store, and remote.
- A payment aggregator payment gateway (PAPG) license holder from the Reserve Bank of India, Phi Commerce offers a unified omnichannel digital payment platform catering to both B2B and B2C payment requirements for businesses worldwide.

279. **SBI Ventures Limited**, a unit of the **State Bank of India,** has planned to raise a fund of **Rs.2000 crores ($237 million)** through its **third climate fund** to investors.

The fund will be raised after the approval from the Company's Board.

The fund will invest in small and mid-sized companies that are focused on recycling waste and curbing emissions among other initiatives, and obtain equity partnerships.

280. **Federal Bank** raised **₹1,500 crore** through its maiden issue of **10-year infrastructure bonds** on a private placement basis at a coupon rate of **7.76 percent**.

The bond issuance comprised a base issue of ₹750 crore and a greenshoe option of a similar amount.

The bonds were listed on the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE).

Greenshoe Option: A greenshoe option is a provision in an underwriting agreement that grants the underwriters the right to sell additional shares of an IPO if demand conditions warrant.

281. **The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has sold more than a **2.02%** stake in **Tata Power Company Ltd**. The sale amounted to approximately **Rs.2,888 crore**.

This sale has reduced LIC's shareholding in Tata Power to **3.88%.**

The company sold total shares of over 6.47 crore.

The average sale price per share was Rs 446.402 making a total sale value of Rs 2,888 crore.

The transactions were made between June 20, 2024, and November 11, 2024.

282. Fintech platform **Rio** teamed up with **Yes Bank** and **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to launch a **co-branded credit card** - the **YES Bank Rio RuPay Credit Card.**

Benefits and charges:

- The card is available to individuals **21 to 60 years** of age and is open to both salaried employees with a minimum salary of **Rs.25000** and self-employed or an annual Income Tax Return of **Rs 5 lakh.**
- Existing YES BANK credit cardholders are not eligible.
- The card offers various benefits, but specific transactions may incur charges.
- Utility payments exceeding Rs 15,000 in a month will be subject to a 1% fee plus GST, with a maximum cap of Rs 3,000 per month.
- Education fees paid through third-party apps such as CRED or PhonePe will also carry a 1% fee plus GST starting October 2024, capped at Rs 5,000 per calendar month.
- Fuel transactions above Rs 10,000 per transaction will incur a 1% fee plus GST, capped at Rs 5,000 per month.
- For example, a fuel purchase of Rs 20,000 will result in a charge of Rs 200 plus taxes.
- The card's integration with UPI caters to the needs of younger users and individuals in semi-urban areas managing daily expenses.

- The credit card comes with a lifetime free membership, no joining fee.

283. **State Bank of India (SBI)** has launched the **SBI Innovation Hub** in partnership with **APIX,** a global collaborative innovation platform for financial institutions and fintechs.

The launch was announced during the **Singapore Fintech Festival**, held on November 6-8 2024.

It is to provide dedicated space for fintech, startups, and innovators worldwide to design next-generation financial solutions tailored to meet the digital needs of SBI's diverse customer base.

The hub allows participants to leverage SBI's 250+ financial service Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to develop customized solutions within a secure sandbox environment.

284. **German lender Deutsche Bank** has announced that it has infused an additional capital of **Rs 5,113 crore** into its India operations.

This is the largest capital allocation to India in recent years and will be used for expanding across business lines, including corporate banking, investment banking, and private banking.

The bank has been present in India for the last 45 years and the balance sheet size stood at Rs1.45 lakh crore as of March 31, 2024, making it one of the largest foreign banks in the country. It has 17 branches in the country.

The new investment is a **33% increase** in the capital buffer from 2023.

The bank has previously invested Rs.2700 Crores in 2020 and Rs.3800 Crores in 2019.

285. Non-banking lender **Northern Arc** has secured a loan of **$65 Million** for its maiden **climate fund** through its fund management arm, **Northern Arc Investments IFSC Trust.**

The Chennai-based NBFC has received debt commitments of **$50 Mn** from the **United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** and **$15 Mn** from **OeEB,** the **Development Bank of Austria.**

The GIFT City-based climate fund will focus on providing debt financing to growth-stage companies operating in sectors such as commercial, industrial, and residential **solar energy, energy efficiency, green buildings,** and **sustainable agriculture.**

286. Cashfree, a fintech company, has launched a pilot with select merchants that will tap customers who are based outside India and want to make payments in the country.

The beneficiaries will be users who solely transact using the **RuPay credit** and **debit** card platforms and the **UPI systems** which are not recognized for international purchases.

Cashfree has tied up with **Swiggy, Nykaa, Bookmyshow, Redbus, Zepto, Nature's Basket,** and **Vedantu** among others to tap international customers.

Note:

Cashfree was the **first company** to secure the **payment aggregator-cross border license (PA-CB).**

The other companies that have secured the cross-border payment aggregator license from the RBI, include payment company BillDesk, Amazon Pay, and global payments major Adyen.

287. **GenWise** announced the launch of UPI payments on its app for **senior citizens.**

GenWise UPI will enable India's elders to scan and make payments while shopping, transfer money to friends and family, and pay utility bills, among other transactions.

This is the industry's **first-ever** introduction of UPI for elders, offering a **simple user interface, enhanced security,** and **cyber fraud awareness.**

It has been developed in collaboration with **Axis Bank**, which is acting as the **sponsor bank** for facilitating transactions.

288. **Profectus Capital**, a non-banking finance company focused on **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs),** raised **USD 25 million (approximately Rs 205 crore)** through the issuance of **non-convertible debentures (NCDs)** to the **International Finance Corporation (IFC),** a member of the World Bank Group.

This is IFC's first investment to finance energy-efficient (EE) machinery for MSMEs in India.

The proceeds will be used to fund **green assets**.

The NCDs have been labeled as green bonds, and **Profectus Capital** has developed **a green bond framework** in line with the International Capital Market Association's green bond principles.

289. **HDFC Securities**, the stock broking and research arm of **HDFC Bank**, announced its entry into the wealth advisory space with the launch of **HDFC Tru**, targeting the burgeoning family offices and wealthy investors.

With the launch, HDFC Securities wants to capture market share at a time when household financial assets are expected to see a multi-fold jump in the next five to ten years, especially from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

This new offering will provide financial solutions to **corporate treasury, ultra-high-net-worth investors (HNIs),** and family offices in the over **Rs 50 crore** investment segment. The main target is those with revenue ranging from **18 crore to 400 crore.**

The product offerings will be in equity, debt, alternates, private markets, and global opportunities along with real estate funds, REITs, and InvITs.

290. **The Government of India** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed a **$200 million loan** to help upgrade water supply, sanitation, urban mobility, and other urban services in the state of **Uttarakhand.**

The agreement was signed by Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Ms. Mio Oka, Country Director of India Resident Mission, for ADB.

The project is named the **Uttarakhand Livability Improvement Project**. The project includes:

- The development of **16 km** of climate-resilient roads, the establishment of an intelligent traffic management system, deployment of compressed natural gas buses, and pilot electric buses in **Haldwani, 'the economic hub of the state'**.
- The construction of **36 km** of stormwater and roadside drains to improve flood management and implement an early warning system.
- A green-certified administrative complex and bus terminal will be built to improve the delivery of public services.
- It will improve water supply delivery in four cities - **Champawat, Kichha, Kotdwar, and Vikasnagar.**
- The project aims to increase water service coverage to 100% by constructing 1,024 km of climate-resilient pipelines with smart water meters, 26 tube wells, new reservoirs, and a **3.5 million-litre-per-day water treatment plant** in the above four cities.
- Sanitation coverage in Vikasnagar will be improved by sewage treatment facilities that will benefit around 2,000 households.
- Introduction of initiatives for women, such as livelihood skills training on driving buses, bus ticketing, and the operation of electric charging stations.

The **European Investment Bank** is co-financing the project with **$191 million** simultaneously.

291. **The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has appointed **Chitra Jayasimha** as the Chairperson of the Board of National Pension System (NPS) Trust w.e.f. October 17.
She has been the Trustee of the NPS Trust Board since December 2020.

She succeeded Venkata Rao Yadakini who was chairman since December 2023.

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292. **Kotak Mahindra Bank** will acquire the **personal loan book of Standard Chartered Bank India**, which has a total outstanding of around **Rs. 4100 crore**, to strengthen its position in the Retail Credit market.
As of September 30, 2024, the Proposed Transaction comprises a total loan outstanding of around ₹4,100 crore (equivalent to ~$490 million).

The acquisition consists of loans classified as **"Standard Loans"** according to the Reserve Bank of India **(RBI) guidelines.**

The acquisition will be completed in over three months. It is subject to regulatory and related approvals and the satisfaction or waiver of customary closing conditions.

293. **The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** has partnered with the **Indian Bank's Association (IBA)** to utilize the **eBKray** platform for auctioning assets. This centralized platform would enhance bidder participation by providing detailed asset information and streamlining the liquidation process.

The pilot mode started on **November 1, 2024**, with a full rollout planned after adjustments based on user feedback.

The initiative is aimed at increasing transparency, bidder participation, and maximizing returns for creditors. The **eBKray** is a centralized platform offering detailed information on corporate debtor assets.

The platform is currently owned and managed by **PSB Alliance Private Limited**, a group of **12 public sector banks**. eBKray has been conducting asset auctions under the **SARFAESI Act** for **five** years.

294. The Finance Ministry initiated the **4th phase** of consolidation of **Regional Rural Banks,** and the number of banks to be reduced from **43 to 28.**
The aim is to create stronger RRBs with enhanced business volumes, operational efficiency, and streamlined management structures.

Among states that will see a consolidation of RRBs include Andhra Pradesh, which has the maximum number of RRBs (4), Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (3 each), and Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan (2 each).

These banks were formed under the **RRB Act, of 1976**, to provide credit and other facilities to small farmers, agricultural laborers, and artisans in rural areas. The Centre had initiated structural consolidation of RRBs in **2004-05** which resulted in a reduction of such institutions from **196 to 43 till 2020-21** through **3 phases** of amalgamation.

Note:

The Centre holds 50% of RRBs, while 35% and 15% are with the concerned sponsor banks and state governments, respectively.

295. The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** has formally approvedF a **Euro 300 million loan** for the under-construction **Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP).**
Key Highlights:

- BSRP is proposed to be implemented on an equity-funded model with equal contribution from the **Centre (20%), the state government (20%),** and the remaining amount **(60%)** raised from **multilateral agencies**.
  - The total length of the railway project will be **149 km**. It will include **four rail corridors** connected to the various parts of the city.
  - **58 Stations** and **two Depots** will facilitate the smooth operation and maintenance of the railway services.
  - The Bengaluru suburban railway network includes design features to enhance access**, safety, and security for women, and supports women's participation in construction works**. The project will be fully operational in **2029** and the estimated daily ridership will be approximately 4,00,000 trips per day and is expected to increase to about 1.4 million trips per day in 2040.

Note: EIB has already granted a Euro 500 million loan to build the 23 km-long Bengaluru Metro R6 line.

296. **Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (FIMMDA)** held a meeting with bankers to discuss transitioning India's interest rate derivatives market from the current uncollateralized **Mumbai Interbank Offer Rate (MIBOR)** benchmark to a collateralized framework, similar to the **Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR).**

This meeting was held for feedback on the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) MIBOR Committee** report released on October 1 and sought feedback from the market by November 15. It recommended changes in the methodology of MIBOR while proposing a shift to a new benchmark for derivative products.

The banks proposed a new benchmark for the interest rate derivatives market with a balanced **50-50 weighting** between **TREPS (Tri-Party Repo)** and **CHROMs (Collateralised Borrowing and Lending Obligations in the Overnight Money Market).**

SOFR: It is a benchmark interest rate that reflects the cost of overnight borrowing, collateralized by **US Treasury securities**. It was introduced as an alternative to the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), which had long been used globally across multiple currencies and financial contracts.

MIBOR: It is the rate at which banks borrow unsecured funds from one another in the interbank market. At present, it is used as a reference rate for floating rate notes, corporate debentures, term deposits, interest rate swaps, and forward rate agreements. The pricing of overnight indexed swaps, a type of overnight interest rate swap used for hedging interest rate risk is based on overnight MIBOR.

297. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has released its financial performance report for Q2 FY-25 i.e. (**July-September 2024**).

- Net Profit increased by 27.92% year-over-year to **₹18,331.44 crore**, for the quarter ended September 30, 2024 (Q2FY25).
- Net Interest Income (NII) grew 5.4% year-over-year to ₹41,620 crore.
- Gross NPA improved to 2.13%, down 42 basis points year-over-year.
- Net NPA decreased to 0.53%.
- Loan loss provisions nearly doubled to **₹3,631 crore**.
- Deposits grew 9.13% to ₹51.17 trillion while the Current and Saving Accounts ratio decreased to 40.03%.
- Total Advances increased 14.93% to ₹39.2 trillion, with retail loans up 12.3% and corporate advances up 18.35%.
- SBI is planning to raise ₹20,000 crore through infrastructure bonds.

298. Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched the **National MSME Cluster Outreach Programme**, organized jointly by the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)**, Ministry of Finance, and **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).** It aims to support the growth and financial inclusion of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across India.
Around 150 MSME Clusters were connected virtually.

Key Highlights:

- During the event, **six** new SIDBI branches were inaugurated in **Karnataka** at Tumakuru, Raichur, Shivamogga, Kalaburagi, Mangaluru, and Vijayapura.
- **Four** new **Nari Shakti** branches of **Union Bank of India** were opened in Bengaluru, Chennai, Jaipur, and Vishakhapatnam, specifically focused on empowering women entrepreneurs.
- The Learning Centre of Canara Bank was launched in Bengaluru.
- During the event, **SIDBI** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with the **Peenya Industries Association** strengthening the collaboration to support MSMEs through capacity building, credit facilities, and knowledge-sharing.
- The Finance Minister announced that a target for Scheduled Commercial Banks and NBFCs has been set to provide additional **MSME credit** of **Rs. 1.54 lakh crore** in **FY 2024-25**.
- She also distributed sanction letters to 11 MSME customers of SIDBI, aggregating Rs.25.75 crore, and 2 sanction letters to MSME customers of the Nari Shakti Branch of Union Bank of India aggregating Rs.11 crore.

299. **The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)** in collaboration with **the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)** and the **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** organized a workshop on *"Digitalisation of Financial Education: A Modern Approach for Investor Protection and Capital Market Development".*

The workshop took place at the BSE International Convention Hall in **Mumbai, Maharashtra.**

The workshop focused on enhancing financial literacy, protecting investors, and fostering sustainable growth in the capital markets.

300. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved the appointment of **Pranav Chawda** as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the **JP Morgan Chase Bank India**.

He is appointed for **three years**.

He has replaced **Prabhdev Singh**, who resigned in June 2024 before the completion of his tenure.

He will lead the company's corporate banking division.

He joined JP Morgan in the year 2019, as the head of client banking and specialized industries.

301. The **World Bank** has approved a loan of **USD 200 Million** to support farmers in **Kerala** to adapt to climate change and promote agri-entrepreneurs.

The loan is financed by the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, an arm World Bank.

The loan period is 23.5 years with a grace period of 6 years.

Around USD 9 Million will be used to support small businesses and food processing activities.

The loan will support agri-based SMEs especially women who currently own only 23% of MSMEs in the state to gain access to commercial finance by providing training for business plans and to strengthen their commercial viability.

302. Bengaluru-based fintech startup **Slice** has merged with **North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB)** with effect from October 27 after receiving all requisite shareholder and regulatory approvals.

The merged entity will now roll out a range of banking products and services and will establish technology with an improved financial position.

Slice received the RBI's approval to merge with the beleaguered NESFB in October 2023, after which it applied to multiple regulatory bodies for the merger.

The Competition Commission of India's nod came in March 2024 and the National Company Law Tribunal approved the merger in August 2024.

303. The **Global Finance Magazine** of the United States of America (USA) has named the **State Bank of India (SBI)** as the **Best Bank of India for 2024.**

The award recognizes the bank's commitment to exceptional services and financial inclusion nationwide.

The **31st Annual Best Bank Awards** event was held on the sidelines of the Annual Meetings of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank** in Washington DC.

The award was received by the **Chairman of SBI**, **CS Shetty**.

304. The **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** has chaired the review meetings of the **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** for the **first half of FY 2024-25.**
The meetings were attended by the Chief Executives of PSBs.

Key Findings:

- The aggregate business stood at **Rs.236.04 lakh crore** (**11% YoY growth**).
- **Global credit** and **deposit** portfolio grew by **12.9%** and **9.5% YoY** and stood at Rs.102.29 lakh crore and Rs.133.75 lakh crore respectively.
- The Operating and Net Profit for the first half of FY25 was Rs.1,50,023 crore (14.4% YoY growth) and Rs.85,520 crore (25.6% YoY growth).
- The **Gross** and **Net NPA** stood at **3.12%** and 0.63% as of Sep-24 (Gross and Net NPA declined by 108 bps and 34 bps respectively YoY).
- The **Capital to RWA assets ratio (CRAR)** stood at **15.43%** in Sep-24 against the regulatory requirement of 11.5%.
- PSBs have also shown significant progress in adopting new-age technologies like AI/ cloud/ Blockchain etc, and the upgradation of existing digital infrastructure to tackle cyber security risks.

305. **The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** invited bids from prospective bidders to participate in the tendering process for the **PFRDA-Connect Request for Proposal (RFP)** as part of the **Technology Architecture (TARCH)** project**.**

The goal of the PFRDA-Connect project is to significantly enhance the digital presence of PFRDA and to improve user experience.

This will include a comprehensive future development roadmap and will be hosted on a MeITY-empanelled Virtual Private Cloud (VPC) provider.

The System Integrator will be responsible for studying the existing website and providing design, development, customization, implementation, and maintenance services for PFRDA-Connect.

306. **TATA AIG General Insurance Company** has launched **five new riders** aimed at enhancing its retail health insurance products. These riders respond to the increasing medical expenses and evolving consumer demands.

Each plan targeted specific health needs such as mental wellness, women's health, cancer care, and outpatient expenses. Each rider offers more than 60 benefits.

The riders are as follows:

- **EmpowerHer** (Women's health infertility or gyanec issues)
- **Mental Wellbeing** (Preventive mental health screening)
- **CanCare** (Cancer protection)
- **OPD care** (Outpatient expenses)
- **Flexi Shield** (Protection against rising medical costs)

These all provide policyholders with comprehensive coverage.

307. **The International Finance Corporation (IFC),** a member of the **World Bank Group,** has partnered with **Bajaj Finance Limited (BFL)**, a non-banking finance company to invest **USD 400 million** out of a **USD 1 billion** fundraising exercise by BFL.

The funding aims to help improve and expand access to climate finance for electric vehicles (EVs) and energy efficient consumer goods (EECG) as well as support women-owned microenterprises and women micro-borrowers in India.

IFC's loan will enable BFL to expand access to finance for customers opting to buy EVs, including 2-wheelers, 3-wheelers, and 4-wheelers, and strengthen its presence in the EECG space.

308. **The Asian Development Bank (ADB)** released the **first edition** of the report, titled **'Asia Pacific Climate Report 2024: Catalyzing Finance and Policy Solutions'.**

The report highlighted the climate conditions of the Asia-Pacific region and its future impact.

Key Highlights:

- Climate change could lead to a **17% GDP** drop across Asia and the Pacific region by **2070** under a high-end emissions scenario, which could rise to 41% of GDP by the end of the century.
- The ADB climate change perception survey conducted in 2024 finds that **91%** of respondents in **14 economies** view climate change as a serious problem.

- Annual investment needs for climate change adaptation by regional countries are estimated between $102 billion and $431 billion far more than the approximate $34 billion of adaptation finance mobilized in the region in 2021-2022.
- Although most countries have prepared **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)** and included adaptation in their NDCs, they can still better integrate adaptation into medium-term development plans and expenditure frameworks.
- The emissions intensity of the region's economies has decreased by over **50%** since **2000.**
- However, the region still generated about **half** of global **greenhouse gas** emissions in **2021,** driven by rising domestic consumption, energy demand, and production.
- This increase in greenhouse gas is mainly due to developed nations, **China** accounts for **66%** of this emission followed by **South Asia (19.3%)** and **Southeast Asia (15.4%).**
- The report highlighted region is home to **40%** of the world's total population.
- The report has outlined that **carbon pricing** is critical to reducing emissions cost-effectively.
- It was noted that six nations have developed national Emissions Trading Systems (ETS).

309. **The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Shillong**, through its **IIM Shillong Foundation for Incubation and Enterprise (IIMSFIE),** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI),** to launch an **entrepreneurship and incubation program.**

Under this MoU, IIMSFIE will launch the **Skill to Enterprise Model (STEM) Programme** in association with SIDBI. The program is designed to equip budding entrepreneurs with essential skills, knowledge, and mentorship to turn their innovative ideas into successful ventures.

The STEM Programme will provide practical training, mentorship, and incubation support, ensuring entrepreneurs have access to the necessary resources throughout their business journey.

The 18-month intensive program will be offered to 30 selected participants, combining rigorous classroom instruction, hands-on training, incubation opportunities at IIMSFIE, and personalized mentorship.

The program's core focus will be on developing innovative, sustainable enterprises and empowering participants to create meaningful livelihoods.

310. The **Jammu & Kashmir Bank** has launched a **virtual Automated Teller Machine (ATM)** facility in collaboration with **Paymart Private Limited.**

The facility was inaugurated by the **Bank's MD and CEO, Baldev Prakash** at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters in **Srinagar.**

Through these Virtual ATMs, customers can be reached at their doorsteps in ATM-deficient areas.

The cash withdrawal can be made through the enrolled merchants of Paymart India by generating digital tokens using the bank's mobile application **mPay Delight +.**

311. **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** issued a circular regarding changes in security deposit requirements during a public issue. The circular was issued under **Section 11 (1) of** the **SEBI Act, 1992.**

The circular abolished the previous **mandatory 1% security deposit requirement when a company issues its shares** as a **public issue.**

The change was formalized with an amendment to **Regulation 38 (1)** of the SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2018, (ICDR Regulations) on 17th May 2024.

The amendment resulted in the withdrawal of the previously outlined process for issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the release of a 1% security deposit for public issues.

312. The **Government of India** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** have signed a **USD 98 million** loan agreement to improve horticulture crop farmers' access to certified disease-free planting materials, which will boost their crops' yield, quality, and resilience to climate impacts.

The signatories to the loan agreement, part of the **Building India's Clean Plant Programme,** were Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Kai Wei Yeo Officer-in-Charge of ADB's India Resident Mission, for ADB.

It will be implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** through the **National Horticulture Board** and **the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.**

The project aligns with the Government of India's Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme (CPP), which focuses on improving plant health management.

It will help develop a regulatory framework and institutional systems to effectively implement the CPP for horticulture in India.

The project will involve close consultation with private nurseries, researchers, state governments, and growers' associations to ensure its success and sustainability.

313. **State Bank of India (SBI)** has launched a nationwide drive to raise awareness about the importance of inoperative account activation.

A savings or a current account is treated as inoperative if the customer has no transaction in the account for **over two years.**

Activation of these accounts requires **Re-KYC**.

The main aim is to maintain PMJDY accounts in active status and enable customers to conduct transactions seamlessly.

314. The **Finance Ministry** issued a host of suggestions about the **'Transfer Policy'** of **public sector banks** to promote greater transparency.

The **Department of Financial Services** asked lenders to incorporate advice suitably in their respective **'Transfer Policy'** with the approval of their boards and take immediate action for its implementation and compliance from **2025-26.**

The transfer policy has been reviewed to promote greater transparency and ensure the formulation of a uniform and non-discretionary policy.

The advised changes are:

- Women employees be transferred as far as possible to nearby places, stations, and regions.
- Transfer timelines are clearly defined and strictly adhered to and transfer exercises may be completed before June, every year.
- Mid-year transfers may be avoided as far as possible except in the case of promotions and administrative exigencies.
- Banks to accommodate officers up to Scale III in the respective linguistic region to ensure seamless customer service to the extent possible, considering various factors including availability of vacancies, administrative exigencies, etc.
- Designate certain regions as 'Difficult areas' and the employees posted there be given preference for transfer after completion of their tenure.

315. Public sector banks (PSBs) have proposed to the Finance Ministry their plan to raise **Rs 54,800 crore** through **Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) and Tier-2 bonds** in the current financial year **(FY25)**.

The amount is 37 percent more than the Rs 39,880 crore raised in FY24.

Both AT-1 and Tier-2 bonds are regulatory capital instruments used by banks to meet capital adequacy requirements under Basel III norms, but they differ in risk and structure.

SBI and **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** aim to raise **Rs 10,000 crore** each, while **Canara Bank** plans cumulative issuances worth **Rs 8,500 crore**, and **Bank of Baroda** and **Bank of India** intend to issue **Rs 7,500 crore** each.

Additional issuances in FY25 are planned by **Union Bank of India (Rs 4,000 crore), Bank of Maharashtra (Rs 2,500 crore), Indian Bank (Rs 2,000 crore), Central Bank of India (Rs 1,800 crore), and Indian Overseas Bank (Rs 1,000 crore).**

So far in FY25, only State Bank of India (SBI) and Canara Bank have issued AT-1 bonds, raising Rs 5,000 crore and Rs 3,000 crore respectively.

RBI IN NEWS

316. The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the license of **Vijayawada-based The Durga Co-operative Urban Bank** as the lender does not have adequate capital and earning prospects under the **Banking Regulations Act 1949**.

The bank has been operational for the last 95 years.

The bank ceases to carry banking business, with effect from the close of business on November 12, 2024.

The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Andhra Pradesh, has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator.

Every depositor would receive a deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to **Rs 5 lakh** from **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).**

317. The Reserve Bank of India held **a Conference in Mumbai of the Directors on the Boards of Private Sector Banks** on the theme **'Transformative Governance through Sound Boards'.**

This is the **second** annual Conference organized by the Reserve Bank with the Boards of Private Sector Banks as part of a series of engagements with Boards of RBI's Supervised Entities.

The conference had the participation of over 200 directors of private sector banks, including chairmen and managing directors (CMDs) & chief executive officers (CEOs)

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, deputy governors **Swaminathan J** and **M Rajeshwar Rao**, and other senior officials of the central bank participated in the conference.

The conference was focused on cyber security as a key concern.

The RBI has asked the banks to allocate sufficient resources for **cybersecurity-**related issues. The regulator has emphasized outsourced entities and the need for banks to keep a check on such entities so that they do not become a source of risks.

On the issue of the expected credit loss framework, RBI indicated that draft norms on this will be out soon, and based on the feedback, final guidelines will be released.

318. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has increased the transaction limit for **UPI 123Pay** from **Rs 5,000** to **Rs 10,000.** The updated transaction limits are effective from 21st November 2024.

The NPCI has set **January 1, 2025,** as the final deadline for banks, public sector banks (PSBs), and service providers to implement the necessary changes.

Key changes to be implemented:

- **Increased transaction limit:** UPI 123Pay's transaction limit will rise from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000.
- **Aadhaar OTP Onboarding:** Aadhaar OTP will be mandated for onboarding users in UPI 123Pay transactions.
- **Wallet balance limit:** Raised from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000.
- **Per-transaction limit:** Increased from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000.
- **A new purpose code (86)** is introduced for UPI 123Pay transactions. All financial and non-financial transactions must include this code in the purpose = " " tag.
- The previous initiation mode (31) will no longer be valid.

- **UPI Numeric ID Mapper Integration:** Members must integrate with the UPI numeric ID mapper to enable UPI number functionality.

UPI 123Pay:

UPI 123Pay facilitates digital payments on feature phones, enabling users to access UPI services without an internet connection. It supports four payment methods:

- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) numbers
- Missed calls
- Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) -embedded apps
- Sound-based technology

319. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released data on the net buying and selling of foreign currency through the spot market during **April- September 2024.**

Key Highlights:

- It was a **net buyer** of dollars in the first half of the current financial year (April-September) with **$8.52 billion.**
- During the period, it bought a total of **$28.9 billion**, while it sold **$19.2 billion** of foreign currency.
- It has been a net seller of dollars for three months — **April, June,** and **August.**
- During the current financial year, the RBI bought the highest net amount in **September i.e. $ 9.6 billion.**
- As of November 8, 2024, India's foreign exchange reserves stood at **$ 675.7 billion.** It reflected a decline from the all-time high of **$705.8 billion** recorded at the end of September 2024.
- Till 8th November 2024, India has added **$53.2 billion** to its reserves, which is the second-largest increase among Asian economies.

320. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the timeline for banks to implement the **cassette swap mechanism** in ATMs to **March 31, 2025.**

The RBI had originally set a deadline of March 31, 2021, but extended it multiple times due to banks citing various constraints: availability of an adequate number of cassettes, the readiness of cash replenishment agencies to deal with cassette swap, costs, and installation cost.

The **cassette swap mechanism** is a lockable mechanism that uses cassettes filled with banknotes to replenish cash in ATMs. It eliminates the need for open cash replenishment. The cost of each cassette is Rs. 15000 to Rs 20000.

The RBI has also exempted **cash recycler machines (CRMs)** and banks that don't use outsourced agencies for cash replenishment from the cassette swap requirement.

Note:

- The first ATM in the world was introduced by **Barclays Bank** in **1967.**

- In India, the first ATM was started by **HSBC Bank** in **1987**.
- **First Mobile ATM** in India was introduced by **ICICI Bank.**
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) controls the ATMs in India.

321. **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** decided to expand the reporting requirement of forex transactions and include **foreign exchange spot deals** in the **trade repository (TR)** of the **Clearing Corporation of India.**

Transactions in **foreign exchange cash; foreign exchange tomorrow (Tom); and foreign exchange spot** shall now be reported to the TR.

However, money-changing transactions are not in the scope of the latest directions.

The effective date for the implementation of these guidelines is **February 10, 2025.**

Presently, authorized dealers report **all over-the-counter (OTC)** foreign exchange derivative contracts and foreign currency interest rate derivative contracts undertaken by them directly or through their overseas entities.

This change will bring transparency and data completeness to all foreign exchange instruments.

Spot Deal: A foreign exchange spot deal refers to the trade where both parties transact at the spot exchange rate of the day on the foreign exchange market, and settle the foreign exchange on the second business day after the trading date (T +2).

322. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has designated **10-year Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs),** which will be issued in the second half of **FY2024-25**, as **'specified securities'** under the **Fully Accessible Route (FAR)** for **non-resident investments.**

The government will raise **₹6.61 lakh crore,** including **₹20,000 crore** via **four SGrB** issuances: **two bonds of 10-year tenor** and **two of 30-year tenor**, each valued at **₹5,000 crore.**

This aligns with the global inclusion of Indian Government Securities (G-Secs) in international bond indices, such as **JPMorgan Chase's GBI-EM GD index, Bloomberg EM Local Currency Government indices,** and **FTSE Russell's EMGBI.**

Fully Accessible Route:

The FAR was introduced by the RBI in **2020** in consultation with the Government to provide a separate investment channel for non-residents. Eligible investors, such as foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), and other permitted entities, can invest in specified Government of India securities without any investment ceilings.

Note:

The RBI has issued **Rs.36000 crores** in green bonds since 2022-23.

323. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has barred **Asirvad Micro Finance Ltd, Arohan Financial Services Ltd, DMI Finance,** and **Navi Finserv** from sanctioning and disbursing loans for violation of multiple rules, including excessive pricing of loans. The ban is effective from 21st October 2024.

In addition to usurious pricing, these NBFCs were variously found to be in non-adherence with the regulatory guidelines on assessment of household income and consideration of existing/proposed monthly repayment obligations in respect of their microfinance loans.

The action was taken by using authority under **Section 45L(1)(b)** of The **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.**

324. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the **withdrawal** of ₹2000 denomination banknotes from circulation on **May 19, 2023**. The status of withdrawal of ₹2000 banknotes is periodically published by the RBI.
The total value of Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 6,970 crore on October 31, 2024.

Thus, **98.04 percent** of the Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have since been returned

The facility for exchange of the ₹2000 banknotes has been available at the **19 Issue Offices** of the Reserve Bank (RBI Issue Offices) since May 19, 2023.

From October 09, 2023, RBI Issue Offices are also accepting ₹2000 banknotes from individuals/entities for deposit into their bank accounts. Further, members of the public are sending ₹2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts.

The ₹2000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

Earlier, the facility for deposit and/ or exchange of the Rs 2,000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country up to October 7, 2023.

325. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recognized the **Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE)** as a **self-regulatory organization for fintech (SRO-FT)** and is in the process of examining two other applicants.
The fintech ecosystem in India is the **third largest** in the world, with an estimated **10,000** registered firms that operate across financial services.

Role of SRO-FT:

- The SRO-FT will develop baseline standards for governance, risk management, and cybersecurity, although establishing these standards will be complex due to the diverse nature of fintechs.
- Monitoring unethical practices is crucial to maintain the integrity of the fintech ecosystem. The SRO-FT will take action against suspicious practices to protect the community's reputation.
- SRO-FT is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the fintech ecosystem in India, supporting both regulatory compliance and the growth of member firms.

326. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has guided non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), especially upper-layer NBFCs, to maintain **at least 25 percent** of their overall borrowings from capital market instruments such as **commercial papers, non-convertible debentures (NCDs), external commercial borrowings (ECBs).**
This has been done to diversify NBFC's liability base to reduce reliance on bank loans. Currently, the majority of NBFCs have a higher share of bank borrowing.

According to the RBI's latest sectoral credit deployment data, banks' loans to NBFCs grew by **12 percent year-on-year** (y-o-y) to ₹15.22 lakh crore as on August 23, 2024, sharply lower than the 21 percent y-o-y growth seen in the same period last year.

327. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have introduced a framework for converting **Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)** into **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** when FPI holdings in a company exceed regulatory limits.

Under the **Foreign Exchange Management Authority (FEMA)** guidelines, FPIs are allowed to hold up to **10%** of a company's total **paid-up equity**. Exceeding this limit triggers new reclassification rules.

Key Points of the New Framework:

- FPIs exceeding the 10% threshold can either reduce their holdings or reclassify the investment as FDI.
- FPIs must secure government approval and the investee company's concurrence to reclassify excess investments as FDI.
- FPIs have **five days** post-trade settlement to decide on reclassification.
- Once reclassified as FDI, the investment will remain as such, even if holdings drop below 10% later.
- Sectors with FDI restrictions cannot utilize this reclassification facility.
- Additional approvals are required for investments from countries sharing a land border with India, ensuring adherence to FDI guidelines (sectoral caps, pricing, and entry rules).
- FPIs and custodians are responsible for reporting reclassification accurately. Once reporting is verified, custodians can proceed with the reclassification and unfreeze the investments.
- The breach date will be considered the reclassification date for compliance and reporting.
- Reclassified investments might be treated as FDI for tax purposes, which could make tax deducted at source (TDS) applicable on the sale of reclassified assets. However, clarification from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is awaited.
- FPIs now have more options to establish longer-term, strategic ties with Indian firms, improving their investment stability and impact on the Indian market.

328. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the revision of the June 2019 criteria for **Central Counterparties (CCPs).**
A Central Counterparty (CCP) is a system provider that uses a novation to act as an intermediary between participants in transactions accepted for settlement. It acts as the buyer to every seller and the seller to every buyer, facilitating the settlement of their transactions.

RBI has announced the following revisions:

- Any entity looking for recognition or authorization as a CCP should have a minimum net worth of **Rs.300 Crore** at the time of application.
- Every authorized CCP would have to provide a certificate from an **official auditor** showing its net worth at the end of the financial year, which must be submitted **within six months** after the financial year ends.
- Shares of the authorized CCP must be owned by those who use its services. CCP must make sure that anyone who is no longer a user, should sell their shares.
- A regulatory compliance committee chaired by an **independent director** should be established in every authorized CCP.

329. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the **State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank,** and **ICICI Bank** as **Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) for 2024**.

The list is given below:

- Bucket 4: **SBI – 0.80% CET1** (effective April 1, 2025; up to March 31, 2025, at present it is **0.60%** of its risk-weighted assets)
- Bucket 2: **HDFC Bank – 0.40% CET1** (effective April 1, 2025; up to March 31, 2025, at present it is **0.20%** of its risk-weighted assets)
- Bucket 1: **ICICI Bank – 0.20% CET1** (effective April 1, 2025; up to March 31, 2025).
- Bucket 3 is empty.

330. According to the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI),** India's forex reserves declined by **$1.31 billion** to **$656.582 billion** for the week ending 22nd November 2024.

This decrease was primarily due to a significant drop in Foreign Currency Assets. Despite a rise in gold reserves overall reserves saw a dip.

The value of gold reserves rose by $1.828 billion, reaching **$67.573 billion.**

Special Drawing Rights (SDR) holdings dipped by $79 million to **$17.985 billion**, while the IMF's reserve position fell by $15 million to **$4.232 billion.**

The foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the reserves decreased from $3.043 billion to **$566.791 billion.**

331. The Reserve Bank of India has released the data on sectoral deployment of bank credit for October 2024.

Banks' credit to **industry** grew by **8 percent** in October 2024 compared to 4.8 percent in 2023.

Credit to agriculture and allied activities registered a growth of **15.5 percent** year-on-year (y-o-y) in October 2024, compared to 17.4 percent seen in the same month of last year.

Credit to 'chemicals and chemical products', 'petroleum, coal products and nuclear fuels', and 'all engineering' recorded higher growth in October 2024 as compared to their respective growth rates a year ago.

Credit growth to the **services sector** was at **14.1 percent** in October 2024 (20.4 percent a year ago).

Personal loan growth **decelerated** to **15.8 percent** (y-o-y) in October as compared to 18 percent recorded a year ago.

Non-food bank credit in October 2024 grew by **12.8 percent**, as compared to 15.5 percent a year ago.

The data was collected from 41 select commercial banks, accounting for about 95 percent of the total non-food credit deployed by all scheduled commercial banks.

332. The Reserve Bank of India devolved **70%** of a new **10-year green bond** at an auction on 29th November 2024.

The RBI sold around 15 billion rupees ($177.53 million) worth of **10-year green** bonds to investors at a **6.79% coupon** but devolved nearly **35 billion rupees** worth of the note.

This is the first such devolvement since February 2023.

Bidding was in the range of 6.78%-6.84%, above the prevailing 10-year bond yield.

The RBI sold less than 30% of the planned quantum of green bond sales in a similar auction in August 2024.

The central bank also completely withdrew its green bond sale in May 2024. The central bank wanted some sort of "greenium" to sell these bonds

Greenium:

A greenium is a term used for the lower yields that investors are willing to accept for these securities, which are intended to finance environmentally sustainable projects.

Note: In fiscal 2023, the government raised 160 billion rupees through green bonds, sold at around 5-6 bps below government bond yields. The government raised 200 billion rupees in fiscal 2024 at 1-2 bps below the prevailing yield.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

333. The **Indian Chemical Council (ICC)** won the **2024 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Hague Award** at a ceremony held in the Hague, Netherlands.

The ceremony was held during the **29th Session** of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The delegates from the **193 States Parties** and experts from the global chemical industry from around the world were present.

This is the **first** time that the Award recognized the efforts of a chemical industry body.

The Director-General of OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the Mayor of the Municipality of The Hague, Mr Jan van Zanen presented the Award.

D. Sothi Selvam, Director General, ICC received the award on behalf of the Council.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC):

- It came into force in 1997 and presently has 193 States Parties. OPCW, with its Secretariat in The Hague, is the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention. The mission is to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.
- India is an original signatory to the Convention. NACWC is the national authority responsible for implementing the Convention in India.

OPCW:

- In **2013,** OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.
- The OPCW established the **'OPCW-The Hague Award'** in collaboration with the Municipality of The Hague in 2014.
- The Award recognizes individuals and organizations that play a significant role in advancing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Indian Chemical Council (ICC):

- ICC is India's premier body representing the chemical industry.
- It was established in **1938.**
- It represents more than 80% of the Indian chemical Industry which is valued at $220 billion.
- ICC has launched various initiatives such as Chemical Weapons Convention Helpdesks, Nicer Globe, 'Responsible Care' (RC) program.

334. Professor **Projit Bihari Mukharji** of Ashoka University, Sonipat, Haryana won the 2024 **Pfizer Award** for his book, **"Brown Skins, White Coats: Race Science in India, 1920–66".**

The book was published by the University of Chicago in 2023.

The award recognizes his pioneering research on the intersections of race, science, colonialism, and nationalism in India.

The **History of Science Society (HSS)**, founded in 1924, presents the award annually to recognize books that make significant contributions to the history of science.

Pfizer Award:

- It was established in 1958 by Pfizer Inc. recognizes exceptional books on the history of science.
- The award consists of a medal and a cash prize of USD 2500.
- The award recognizes the book published in English during the three calendar years immediately preceding the year of competition.

335. The **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** awarded the winners of the **National Gopal Ratna Awards (NGRA) 2024.**

This is one of the highest National Awards in the field of livestock and dairy sector. These are awarded under the **Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM).**

The awards were given on the occasion of **National Milk Day** celebrations on **26th November 2024** at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
The Awards to the winners were conferred by Union Minister, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

National Gopal Ratna Awards:

- The National Gopal Ratna Awards are conferred to recognize and encourage all individuals like Farmers rearing indigenous animals, AI Technicians, and Dairy cooperative societies / Milk Producer Companies / Dairy farmers Producers Organizations working in the sector of animal husbandry and dairying**.**
- The Award is conferred in three categories, namely,

    Best Dairy Farmer Rearing Indigenous Cattle/buffalo Breeds,

    Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) and

    Best Dairy Cooperative/ Milk Producer Company/ Dairy Farmer Producer
- From this year onwards, a Special award for North Eastern Region (NER) States is incorporated in all three categories under the National Gopal Ratna Awards, to encourage and boost the dairy development activities in NER.
- The Award consists of a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs for 1st rank, Rs. 3 lakhs for 2nd rank, Rs. 2 lakhs for 3rd rank, and Rs. 2 lakhs for Special Award for North Eastern Region, along with a Certificate of merit and a memento in the first two categories i.e., Best Dairy Farmer and Best DCS / FPO/ MPCs.
- In the case of the Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) category, the National Gopal Ratna Award-2024 consists of a Certificate of merit and a memento.

List of Winners:

S.No.	Category	Winners with Rank

1	Best Dairy farmer rearing Indigenous cattle/buffalo breeds	**1st:** Smt. Renu, Jhajjar, Haryana, **2nd:** Shri Devendra Singh Parmar, Shajapur, Madhya Pradesh, **3rd:** Smt. Surbhi Singh, Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, **Special Award in the category for NER:** • Ms. Juna Tamuli Barman, Bajali, Assam • Mrs Junuma Mali, Morigaon, Assam
2	Best Dairy Cooperative Society/Milk Producer company/ Dairy Farmer Producer organization	**1st:** The Gabat Milk Producers Cooperative Society Limited, Aravali, Gujarat **1st:** Milk Producer Cooperative Society Limited Bisanal, Bagalkot, Karnataka **2nd:** Pratppura Dugdh Utpadak Sahakari Samiti Limited Pratppura, Bhilwara, Rajasthan **3rd:** TND 208 Vadapathy MPCS Ltd, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu **Special Award in the category for NER:** • Kamdhenu Dugdha Utpadak Samabay Samitee Ltd Nityananda, Bajali, Assam,

| 3 | Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) | 1st: Shri Bhaskar Pradhan, Subarnapur, Odisha
1st: Mr. Rajender Kumar, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan
2nd: Mr. Virender Kumar Saini, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan
3rd: Shri V Anil Kumar, Annamayya, Andhra Pradesh
Special Award in the category for NER:
• Shri Md. Abdur Rahim, Kamrup, Assam |

Rashtriya Gokul Mission:

RGM was launched in 2014 to conserve and develop indigenous breeds under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development (NPBBDD).

NPBBDD has two components:

- National Programme for Bovine Breeding (NPBB): Conservation and development of recognized indigenous breeds.
- National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD): Creating infrastructure related to production, procurement, processing, and marketing by milk unions/federations.

336. The President of India, Droupadi Murmu attended the sixth edition of the Sahitya Aaj Tak literary festival and presented the Aaj Tak Sahitya Jagriti Samman in New Delhi.

The three-day celebration of literary excellence was held at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium from November 22 to 24.
The awards recognize the contributions of established luminaries and emerging talents in the literary world.

List of Winners:

- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Lifetime Achievement Award - Gulzar**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Udeeymaan Lekhika Samman - Siniwali**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Udeeymaan Lekhak Samman - Amresh Dwivedi**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Bharatiya Bhasha Pratibha Samman - Bharat Kheni**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Lokpriya Lekhak Samman - Yatindra Mishra**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Bharatiya Bhasha Samman 2024 - Pradeep Dash**

- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Sarvashreshth Rachna Samman 2024- Shivmurti (Author - Male)**
- **AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Sarvashreshth Rachna Samman 2024 - Usha Priyamvada (Author - Female)**

Under the 'Aaj Tak Sahitya Jagriti Samman', winners in various categories were honored with one lakh rupees (fifty thousand rupees in the emerging talent category), a memento, and a certificate of honor, which included creators of Hindi and Indian languages.

The recipient of the AajTak Sahitya Jagriti Lifetime Achievement Award is honored with a prize of Rs 11 lakh, a commemorative plaque, and a citation.

Gulzar:

Gulzar (born Sampooran Singh Kalra; 18 August 1934) is an Indian Urdu poet, lyricist, author, screenwriter, and film director known for his works in Hindi cinema.
He was awarded with:
- The **Sahitya Akademi Award** - Hindi in **2002.**
- The **Padma Bhushan** in **2004**, the third-highest civilian award in India.
- The **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** in **2013,** the highest award in Indian cinema.
- In April **2013,** Gulzar was appointed as the **Chancellor of Assam University.**
- In **2024,** Gulzar was awarded the **Jnanpith,** India's highest literary award.

337. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has conferred with the **Grand Commander of the Order of Niger,** the nation's highest award for his contributions to strengthening bilateral ties.

The award was conferred by the **President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**, H.E. **Bola Ahmed Tinubu** in **Abuja.**

He is the first foreign leader to be given the award since **1969.** Also, he is the first Indian PM to visit the West African country in 17 years.

British Queen Elizabeth is the only foreign dignitary who was awarded the honor in 1969.

He appreciated Nigeria's role as chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its contribution to multilateral bodies.

During the event, both countries signed three MoUs on a **cultural exchange program, customs cooperation, and survey cooperation.**

338. **GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL)** received global recognition at the '**Airport Excellence Awards'** during the **Saudi Airport Exhibition 2024** on 12th November 2024.

The event was held at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Key Highlights:

- GHIAL's **'Digital Twin'** technology earned accolades in two categories, **Innovation and Technology**, and **Facility Management**.

- The technology creates a virtual replica of the airport, integrating real-time data from sensors, CCTV, and IoT devices, allowing for better resource management, improved terminal functionality, and enhanced passenger flow.
- GHIAL's '**Smart Shopping Trolley'** was awarded as the **runner-up** in the **Airport Revenue Management** category.
- The trolley aims to provide a seamless shopping experience for passengers while boosting the airport's revenue.

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) is operated as a joint venture involving the GMR group, the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the government of Telangana, and Malaysia Airports Holding Berhad (MAHB).

339. **Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** conferred the **Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar** for the years **2022** and **2023** to **82** young artists at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, Janpath, New Delhi.

The award ceremony was presided over by Dr Sandhya Purecha, Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi, and Smt. Uma Nanduri, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar:

- **Sangeet Natak Akademi** instituted the UBKUP in the name of **Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan** for young performing art practitioners up to the age of **40 years** in **2006.**
- This award is given annually in the fields of **music, dance, drama, folk & tribal arts,** and **puppetry.**
- The Yuva Puraskar carries prize money of **Rs 25,000**, **a plaque**, and **an angavastram.**

Distribution of awards in various fields (each year) is as follows:
- Music - 10
- Dance - 10
- Theatre - 8
- Other Traditional/Folk/Tribal Dance/Music/Theatre and Puppetry - 11
- Overall Contribution/Scholarship in Performing Arts – 1

Anuthama Murali in overall contribution to performing arts (2022)
Laxminarayan Jena in overall contribution to performing arts (2023)

340. **Sylvanie Burton**, **President of the Commonwealth of Dominica,** conferred the highest National Award-the **"Dominica Award of Honour"** on **Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**

The award ceremony was held on 20 November 2024, on the sidelines of the **Second India-CARICOM (Caribbean Community) Summit** in **Georgetown, Guyana.**

The event was graced by:

- **Prime Minister** of **Dominica** Roosevelt Skerrit**,**
- **President** of **Guyana**, Irfaan Ali,
- **Prime Minister** of **Barbados,** Mia Amor Mottley,
- **Prime Minister** of **Grenada,** Dickon Mitchell,

- **Prime Minister** of **Saint Lucia,** Philip J. Pierre
- **Prime Minister** of **Antigua and Barbuda,** Gaston Browne.

The award was given for his statesmanship, support to Dominica during the COVID-19 pandemic, and his commitment to strengthening India and Dominica ties.

Second India- Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Summit 2024:

- The Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Republic of India met in **Georgetown, Guyana**, the Headquarters of the Caribbean Community, on 20th November 2024.
- The Meeting, **co-chaired** by the Chair of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, **Dickon Mitchell**, Prime Minister of Grenada, and **Narendra Modi**, Prime Minister of India.
- The Leaders reviewed the existing trade and investment relationship between CARICOM Member States and India, and sectors of energy, agriculture, ICT, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals.
- They also agreed on collaboration between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and institutions such as the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) to boost efforts under the coordination of the CARICOM Ministerial Taskforce on Food Production and Food Security.

CARICOM:

CARICOM came into existence on **4 July 1973** by signing the **Treaty of Chaguaramas.**
The treaty was later revised in 2002 to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a grouping of **twenty- one countries**: **fifteen Member States** and **six Associate Members.**

341. **The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2023** was presented to **classical pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim** and **Palestinian peace activist Ali Abu Awwad.**

The awardees were selected by a distinguished jury headed by former **Chief Justice of India T S Thakur.**

The award was presented virtually on Indira Gandhi's birth anniversary on 19th November 2024.

Daniel Barenboim:

Daniel Barenboim is an Argentine-born distinguished classical pianist and conductor, renowned for performing with and directing some of the leading orchestras in the world.

He is also known for his relentless endeavor to use music to foster harmony in West Asia.

Ali Abu Awwad:

Ali Abu Awwad is an eminent Palestinian peace activist who has been working tirelessly with the people of Palestine and Israel for a peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development:

This was established in **1985** and from **1986** onwards it has been conferred by the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust**. It consists of a cash prize of 25 Lakh along with a citation.

342. **Diving** coach **Jane Figueiredo (Zimbabwe/Portugal)** and **pole vault coach Vitaliy Petrov (Ukraine)** have won the **International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards 2024.**

   Jane Figueiredo: A diving coach from Zimbabwe and Portugal who has guided her athletes to four golds, five silvers, and four bronzes.

   She started her journey in sport as an athlete, diving for Zimbabwe at the 1982 World Aquatics Championships and representing Portugal at the Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984 and the 1986 World Aquatics Championships.

   After retiring from diving, she was head diving coach at the University of Houston (USA) from 1990 to 2014. She has been the head diving coach for Great Britain's Olympic team since 2014.

   Vitaliy Petrov: A pole vault coach from Ukraine who has helped his athletes win six Olympic medals, including three golds.

   He started his career as a professor at the University of Physical Education in Kharkiv, Ukraine, before embarking on a coaching career that spans more than 60 years.

   His dedication to coaching has been instrumental in shaping the careers of numerous athletes, including Sergii Bubka, whom he coached to an Olympic gold medal and two world titles in pole vault.

   IOC Climate Action Awards:

   Imogen Grant, Lina Taylor, the Swiss Olympic, and the International Hockey Federation won these awards for their sustainability efforts in sports.

343. British author **Samantha Harvey** has won the **2024 Booker Prize** for her novel *'Orbital'*, a short, wonder-filled novel set aboard the International Space Station.

   This book has become the first book in space set to win this prize.
   The winner was announced by the Chair of the 2024 judges, Edmund De Waal, at a ceremony held at Olds Billingsgate in London.

   She became the first woman after 2019 to win this Prize.

   She was awarded a cash prize of 50000 Euro and a trophy which was presented to her by Paul Lynch, winner of the Booker Prize 2023.

Orbital:

- Orbital is the second-shortest book to win the prize in its history; it is four pages longer than Offshore by Penelope Fitzgerald, which won in 1979. Asked whether the panel's choice is a vote in favor of short books.
- It was the highest-selling book on the shortlist in the run-up to the winner announcement, with 29,000 copies sold in the UK this year. The book, which follows its characters over a day as they experience 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets, is a "finely crafted meditation on the Earth, beauty, and human aspiration".
- It is Harvey's fifth novel and sixth book which takes readers on a journey to the International Space Station where a crew of six astronauts from the world- America, Russia, Italy, the UK, and Japan.

344. The South Pacific nation of **Fiji** has conferred its highest civilian honor upon **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**, the global spiritual master and humanitarian leader, for his tireless contribution to the upliftment of the human spirit and bringing diverse communities together in peace and harmony.

He was given the title of **'Honourary Officer Of The Order of Fiji'** by the **President of the Republic of Fiji, HE Ratu Wiliame M Katonivere.**

345. The Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala became the **first Indian city** to win the **United Nations Global Award for Sustainable Development**.

The award is also known as the **Shanghai Awards**.
The award ceremony was held in Alexandria, Egypt on the occasion of **World Cities Day 2024** i.e**. 2nd November.**

The award was received by **Mayor Arya Rajendran** & **CEO** of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Ltd, **Rahul Sharma.**

Five cities around the globe were selected for this year's award. The other four are **Agadir** (Morocco), **Melbourne** (Australia), **Doha** (Qatar), and **Iztapalapa** (Mexico).

The award highlights remarkable progress in delivering quality housing, empowering youth, promoting innovative development, and fostering climate resilience and achievements of cities globally in implementing the SDGs.

Some of the important sustainable development projects undertaken by the Thiruvananthapuram municipal corporation are as follows:

- Installation of 17000 KW solar panels.
- 2000 Solar lights
- Conversion of all streetlights into LED (Light Emitting Diode)
- 115 Electric buses and delivery of 100 e-autos to unemployed youth.
- 35 e-scooters for commercial use.

Shanghai Awards:

This award was initiated in 2023. It is an initiative of UN-Habitat and Shanghai municipality
The award is dedicated to recognizing the outstanding progress and achievements of cities and
municipalities in the implementation of the "2030 Agenda" as well as "The New Urban Agenda".

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346. The **52nd International Emmy Awards** were held in **New York City**, and hosted by Indian
comedian **Vir Das.** The awards celebrated television excellence from **21 countries** across **14
categories.**

The event was presented by the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (IATAS).
This year's Emmy Awards featured 56 nominations.

India's series **'The Night Manager'** has been nominated in the Drama Series category, which
features Anil Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapoor, and Sobhita Dhulipala, among others.

The full list of winners is as follows:

S.No.	Category	Winner
1.	Arts Programming Award	Pianoforte
2.	Best Performance by an Actress Award	Aokbab-Chutimon Chuengcharoensukying, in Hunger
3.	Non-Scripted Entertainment Award	Restaurant Misverstand - Season 2 (The Restaurant That Makes Mistakes)
4.	Sports Documentary Award	Brawn: The Impossible Formula 1 Story
5.	Short-Form Series Award	Punt de no retorn (Point of no return)
6.	Kids: Live-Action Award	En af Drengene (One of the Boys)
7.	Kids: Factual & Entertainment Award	La Vida Secreta de tu Mente (The Secret Life Of Your Mind)
8.	Kids: Animation Award	Tabby Mctat
9.	TV Movie/Mini-Series Award	Liebes Kind [Dear Child]
10.	Comedy Award	División Palermo
11.	Best Performance by an Actor Award	Timothy Spall in The Sixth Commandment
12.	Telenovela Award	La Promesa (The Vow)

| 13. | Documentary Award | Otto Baxter: Not A F***ing Horror Story |
| 14. | Drama Series Award | Les Gouttes de Dieu (Drops of God) |

BOOKS & AUTHORS

347. Former IAS Officer **Thomas Mahew** released his new book titled, "**Ratan Tata: A Life",** a biography of industrialist Late Ratan Tata.

The book is published by **HarperCollins** Publications.

The book has been prepared by taking insights from over 130 interviews, and significant stories from people who were touched by Tata's influence.

The book explored Ratan Tata's journey from his childhood to his top position at Tata & Sons.

348. The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu** released **three publications of the Supreme Court of India** at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

During the event, former Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Union Minister of Law Arjun Meghwal were also present.

The Publications released were:
- **Justice for Nation:** Reflections on 75 years of the Supreme Court of India
- **Prisons in India:** Mapping Prison Manuals and Measures for Reformation and Decongestion; and
- **Legal Aid Through Law Schools:** A Report on Working of Legal Aid Cells in India.

The publications released would help realize the objectives of free legal aid and prison reforms, besides educating the people about the exceptional role played by the Supreme Court in India's journey as a Republic.

Note: Justice Sanjeev Khanna is the Chief Justice of India.

349. Financial expert and CEO & Managing Director of TGI SME Capital Advisors LLP, **Ajay Thakur** launched his book titled **"Vision to Victory: Unleashing India's SMEs Platform"**.

He is the former Head of SME& Startup at BSE and has an experience of more than 30 years in the capital market.

The book is published by **Invincible Publications Private Limited**.

The book is about the 2008 financial crisis, the growth of SME platforms, and the recovery after Covid 19.

350. Dr Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director of the UK-based QS World University Rankings, presented his book **'Modialogue: Conversations for a Viksit Bharat'** to former President Ram Nath Kovind

The book was launched at the Pradhanmantri Sanghrahalay in New Delhi.

The book highlights PM Modi's radio show, **Mann Ki Baat.**

Title Modialogue is a fusion of both "Modi" and "Dialogue" which highlights the unique communication approach that has bridged the gap between citizens.

The book also includes an analysis of a nationwide survey with responses from over 4,200 people, highlighting the overwhelmingly positive impact of Mann Ki Baat across diverse demographics.

351. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar launched his new book, **Why Bharat Matters,** at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Library in **Dubai, UAE.**

The core theme of the book is the importance of self-reliance in assessing global challenges and opportunities.

The book touches upon global transformations, India's internal progress, and the importance of self-reliance in assessing global challenges.

It also juxtaposes India's evolution with the Ramayana.

He outlined how 2024 will be turbulent due to geopolitics but India can face challenges given its strength.

PERSON IN NEWS

352. Shriya Pilgaonkar has been appointed as the **Goodwill Ambassador** for the **All-Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) 2024.**

She joined ALT EFF in 2023 and is still dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues like wildlife conservation and climate change.

Along with her, Bollywood actress and producer **Alia Bhatt** is also appointed as the Goodwill Ambassador for ALT EFF 2024.

The fifth edition of ALT EFF is a platform dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues and has taken place from November 22 to December 8 across India.

The All-Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) was launched in **2020.** It is a platform that uses films to raise awareness about environmental issues and inspire climate action.

353. **Vipin Kumar** has been officially appointed as the **Chairman** of the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation.**

He is a 1996 IAS Officer from Bihar Cadre.

He has previously served as an Additional Secretary in the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education.

He has worked on Projects like the **Samagra Shiksha Scheme** under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI school).

He succeeded **M. Suresh,** who has been serving as interim Chairman after Sanjeev Kumar, the former Chairman who was appointed as Defence Secretary in the Ministry of Defence in August 2024.

354. **Alix Didier Fils-Aime** has been sworn in as the **Prime Minister** of the Caribbean country **Haiti.**

- He has previously served as the **President** of the **Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI).**

- He was the Minister of Planning and External Cooperation (MPEC) during the administration of President Jovenel Moise. from 2017 to 2020.

- He replaced **Garry Conille,** who was appointed as the PM in May 2024 and was dismissed by the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) due to continuous political instability.

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355. The **Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC),** chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has appointed **Deepak Agarwal** as the new **Managing Director** of the **National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED)** for a period of **five years.**

He is a 2000-batch IAS Officer from Uttar Pradesh.

He replaced **Pankaj Kumar Bansal,** who is a joint secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation and was assigned additional charge of MD in September 2024 for three months or till the appointment of a regular incumbent to the post.

356. Bharti Airtel has announced that **Chief Operating Officer (COO) Shashwat Sharma** will take charge as the next **managing director (MD) and CEO** of the company on January 1, 2026.

After taking charge, he will be responsible for the end-to-end customer business.

He will succeed **Gopal Vittal,** who is presently serving as MD & CEO and will be promoted to Vice Chairman position on **January 1, 2026.**

357. **Rachel Gupta** has won the **12th edition** of the **Miss Grand International (MGI) 2024**. She is from Jalandhar, Punjab. The event was held at MGI Hall, Bangkok, Thailand.

She became **the first** Indian and **third Asian** to win this title.

She also won the **Grand Pageants Choice Award 2024.**

After this win, she became the **second** woman after **Lara Dutta** to win most global pageant crowns by an Indian.

She also won "Miss Super Talent of the World" at the 15th edition pageant held in Paris, France in 2022.

Thae Su Nyein from Thailand was crowned as the first runner-up.

358. Indian musicians **Ricky Kej** and **Anoushka Shankar** are nominated for the **67th Grammy Awards in 2025** for their work on albums in the **Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album** category.

Ricky Kej, a three-time Grammy winner, received his fourth Grammy nomination for his album **Break of Dawn** in the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category.

Anoushka Shankar, the renowned sitarist and composer, is nominated in the same category for her album **Chapter II: How Dark It Is Before Dawn**, a reflection of her distinctive fusion of traditional and contemporary sounds.

Other nominees in this category are "Warriors of Light" by Radhika Vekaria and "Triveni" by entrepreneur and musician Chandrika Tandon, created in collaboration with flautist Wouter Kellerman and cellist Eru Matsumoto.

The **67th Grammy Awards** will take place on **February 2, 2025,** at the Crypto.com Arena in **Los Angeles.**

359. Kondru Sanjay Murthy took over as the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** of India. He is the **15th CAG** of India.

He succeeded **Girish Chandra Murmu.**

He is a **1989** batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the **Himachal Pradesh cadre**, and the **first Telugu** to be appointed to the key position.

He will hold the position till the year 2029.

He played a key role in the implementation of the **New Education Policy** of the Government of India.

He was on central deputation between 2002 and 2007, and he served in the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

Comptroller Auditor General:

- CAG is appointed by the **President of India** under **Article 148** of the Constitution of India.

- Articles 148, 149, 150, and 151 define the powers and duties of CAG of India.
- The CAG holds office for a term of **6 years** or till the age of **65**, whichever comes earlier.

360. **Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake** has reappointed **Harini Amarasuriya** as Prime Minister of the country.

She was first appointed as the prime minister in September 2024 to serve in the interim government after Anura Kumara Dissanayake won the presidential election.

She is the first woman to head the national government in 24 years.

361. The **73rd Miss Universe** crown was won by **Victoria Kjaer Theilvig of Denmark**. She is 21 years old**.** She won among 125 hopeful contestants.

Mexico's María Fernanda Beltrán emerged as the first runner-up, while Nigeria's Cnidimma Adetshina finished as the second runner-up.

The event was held at the Arena CDMX in Mexico City.

Rhea Singh from **Gujarat** represented India and made it to the top 30 finalists.

Miss Malta Beatrice Njoya at the age of **40** became the oldest contestant to compete in the pageant.

Miss Egypt **Logina Salah** became the first contestant with **vitiligo.**

362. Actor **Rashmika Mandanna** has been appointed as the **national brand ambassador** of the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to combat cybercrimes.

Last year, Rashmika Mandanna was a victim of the DeepFake video, which sparked discussions about digital safety.

She will oversee nationwide initiatives aimed at educating the public about various cyber threats, including online fraud, deepfake videos, cyberbullying, and malicious AI-generated content.

363. **Senior bureaucrat Rajesh Kumar Singh** has been appointed as the new **Defense Secretary** on 1st November 2024.

He succeeded **Giridhar Aramane,** a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who superannuated, on 31st October 2024.

He is a **1989-batch IAS** officer from **Kerala cadre**, who had assumed the charge of the Officer on Special Duty (Defence Secretary-designate) on August 20, 2024.

He previously held the post of **Secretary** in the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, from April 24, 2023, to August 20, 2024.

Before that, he was Secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

364. **Duma Boko**, the presidential candidate of the **Umbrella for Democratic Change** (UDC), was declared Botswana's **sixth** president.
His Umbrella for Democratic Change, a coalition of Botswana National Front and the Alliance for Progressives won **36 parliamentary seats out of 61** parliamentary seats.

He defeated incumbent President **Mokgweetsi Masis** of the Botswana Democratic Party (**BDP**). BDP has been the ruling party since Botswana's independence in 1966.

365. Former U.S. President and Republican Party candidate **Donald Trump** won a **second** term in office on **November 6, 2024,** defeating **Vice-President Kamala Harris**, the Democratic nominee, to become the **47th President of the United States.**
He succeeded **Joe Biden.**

He is only one of two Presidents elected to a non-consecutive second term, and he will also become the **oldest** President at the time of entry into office.

The president of the United States is widely regarded as the most powerful government official and is elected to a four-year term under the electoral college system.

Note: Stephen Grover Cleveland was the first President of the USA who got elected for two non-consecutive terms i.e. 22nd (1885-1889) & 24th (1893-1897).

366. Additional Director General (Retd) **VD Chafekar**, formerly of the Indian Coast Guard, has been appointed as the **seventh** Executive Director of the **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC)** in **Singapore.**
He was appointed as the Executive Director by the Governing Council of ReCAAP ISC for the period from **April 01, 2025 till March 31, 2028.**

About ReCAAP ISC:
- The **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** was formalized on **11 Nov 2004**. It is the first and only regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation to suppress piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.
- **21 Contracting Parties**: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

367. The Governing Board of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has appointed **Dr. Himanshu Pathak** as Director General-designate of ICRISAT. He will take charge in 2025.

He currently serves as Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Stanford Blade, currently the Deputy Director General (Research) at the institute, will lead the institute until the new Director General, Himanshu Pathak, assumes the position next year.

368. The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet announced the appointments across various departments.

S. Gopalakrishnan, a 1991 batch IAS Officer, has been appointed as the **Chairman of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC).**
He is currently the Director General of the National Productivity Council (NPC).

He replaced **Rakesh Ranjan** (1992 IAS Officer), who took voluntary retirement from service on 31st October 2024.

He was set to take the charge till May 2029.

Other Key Appointments:

- **Subrata Gupta**, a 1990-batch IAS officer from the West Bengal cadre, has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. He replaced Anita Praveen upon her superannuation on November 30.

- **Puneet Kumar Goel**, the current Chief Secretary of Goa and a 1991-batch AGMUT cadre officer, has been appointed as the Secretary of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

- **V Umashankar**, a 1993-batch Haryana cadre IAS officer, has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, succeeding Anurag Jain.

- **Tanmay Kumar,** a 1993-batch Rajasthan cadre IAS officer and Special Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), has been promoted to the same ministry's top post, replacing Leena Nandan upon her retirement on December 31.

- **Vikram Dev Dutt**, a 1993-batch AGMUT cadre officer, has been appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Coal. He was previously serving as Director General of Civil Aviation.

- **Surendra Kumar Bagde**, a 1993-batch Maharashtra cadre officer, has been appointed Director General of the National Centre for Good Governance in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. He was earlier an Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

- **Neerja Sekhar**, a 1993-batch Haryana cadre IAS officer and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, has been promoted in-situ as Special Secretary.

369. **Navin Ramgoolam**, leader of the Alliance of Change coalition, has become the **Prime Minister of Mauritius**.

Mauritius held its 12th parliamentary elections since independence on November 10, 2024. The total number of parliamentary seats in Mauritius is 62.

He replaced **Pravind Jugnauth**, leader of L'Alliance Lepep**.**

It is his **third term** as Prime Minister, he has served from 1995 to 2000 and 2005 to 2014.

370. **Bollywood actor Pankaj Tripathi** has been selected as **Madhya Pradesh tourism** brand ambassador.

He will lead campaigns encouraging travelers from around the world to experience the magic of Madhya Pradesh.

The tourism development corporation in Madhya Pradesh has introduced its initial television advertisement showcasing its recently appointed brand ambassador. The advertisement for Madhya Pradesh tourism called *'MP ki maya ne iss baar sach me moh liya re!* (Madhya Pradesh has truly cast its charm this time), highlighted the state's stunning ancient temples, picturesque landscapes, and wildlife sanctuaries.

371. The former Indian Cricket Team Captain **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** was appointed as the brand ambassador for **Jharkhand Assembly Elections** by the Election Commission of India.

He will help to raise awareness about voting through the SWEEP (Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation) program, aiming to encourage more people to vote by using his popularity.

372. **Maiya Sandu** became the President of **Moldova** for the **second** term. She has been the President of Moldova from **2020** to **2024.**

She defeated **Alexandr Stoianoglo** and won with 55.26% of the votes.

She served as an economist at the World Bank Office in Chisinau, Moldova.

She also served as the Advisor of the Executive Director of the World Bank in Washington from June 2010 to July 2012.

She was appointed as the **Prime Minister of Moldova** from June 2019 to November 2019.

373. The **Ministry of External Affairs** has announced the appointment of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer **Dinesh Bhatia** as the next **Ambassador of India to Brazil.**

He is a 1992 batch IFS Officer.

He has served as India's Ambassador to **Argentina,** a position he assumed on August 21, 2019.

His accreditation also extended to Uruguay and Paraguay until February 2022.

He has key positions in Indian missions abroad, including Madrid, Spain, Kathmandu, Nepal, and Kuwait.

He has authored *Devi Purana—A Rendition of Srimad Devi Bhagavatam*, published by Bloomsbury in 2023, and *Physics for Civil Services Prelims*, published in 1994.

374. **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha** leader **Hemant Soren** took oath as the **14th Chief Minister** of Jharkhand at the Morabadi Ground in Ranchi.

This is his **fourth term** as Jharkhand's CM.

He had previously served in the office from **2019 to 2024** and **2013 to 2014.**

He was sworn in as Chief Minister of Jharkhand on 4 July 2024 for the third time after getting bail from jail.

Jharkhand's **Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar** administered the oath of office and secrecy to him.

The JMM-led alliance achieved a notable victory in the Jharkhand polls by securing **56** of the **81 seats** in the state Assembly. JMM saw its highest-ever election tally, winning 34 of the 43 seats it contested.

375. **Mithali Raj,** the former captain of India's women's cricket team, has been appointed as the mentor for **Women's Cricket Operations** by the **Andhra Cricket Association (ACA).**

In her new role, she will focus on scouting and nurturing young cricket talent across the state. The post is for a period of three years.

She retired from international cricket in 2022.

ACA is also setting up a dedicated High-Performance Academy in **Anantapur** for women cricketers.

80 girls from different age groups will be selected for the academy, where they will receive training throughout the year (365 days).

Regular matches for Under-15 players against state teams to build confidence and skill.

376. **Dr. Jaiteerth Raghavendra Joshi** has been named the new **Chief of BrahMos Aerospace**, the India-Russia joint venture known for producing supersonic cruise missiles.
He has over 30 years of experience in India's missile development programs, including contributions to the Prithvi and Agni missile systems.

He previously served as Programme Director for the Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM) and Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) systems, which are integral to India's defence capabilities.

Under his leadership, the LRSAM was integrated into the Indian Navy's fleet, including its Indigenous Aircraft Carrier.

He has served as the Chairman of the Indian Society for Non-Destructive Testing (ISNT).

BrahMos Aerospace:

BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between **India** and **Russia,** responsible for developing the BrahMos missile, widely regarded as the world's most potent supersonic cruise missile system.

The name "BRAHMOS" is derived from two rivers: **Brahmaputra (India)** and **Moskva (Russia).**

377. **Gintautas Paluckas,** a representative of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party-Political Group, has been appointed as **Prime Minister of Lithuania.**

He was elected by the Seimas, Parliament of Lithuania, and out of 128 Members of Parliament (MPs) 88 MPs supported him.

He will replace the incumbent PM Ingrida Simonyte from the Conservative Fatherland Union.

378. Actor **Pankaj Tripathi** has been appointed as the festival ambassador for the **Arunachal Rang Mahotsav 2024.**

His appointment as the festival ambassador is a reminder of the importance of nurturing the arts in all forms, and the event itself provides a platform for these artistic expressions to thrive.

The Arunachal Rang Mahotsav, the largest of its kind in Northeast India was conducted from November 29, 2024, to December 5, 2024, in Arunachal Pradesh.

The festival featured theatrical performances, cultural exchanges, and a celebration of diverse artistic expressions.

The festival aims to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the state and its remarkable theatre traditions.
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OBITUARIES

379. Indian billionaire and co-founder of the Essar Group, **Shashikant Ruia,** has passed away in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

In **1969,** Shashikant and his younger brother, Ravi Ruia, founded the **Essar Group.**

The company began as a construction and engineering firm, delivering critical infrastructure projects such as bridges, dams, and power plants.

Essar manages a diverse portfolio, including a 10 million tonne per annum refinery in the UK, vast hydrocarbon reserves in India and Vietnam, and significant renewable energy ventures.

He also held prominent positions in national and international organizations:

- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

- The Indo-US Joint Business Council as a member of the Indo-US CEO Forum and

- India-Japan Business Council

In 2007, Shashi Ruia joined a circle of global changemakers supporting The Elders, a group of prominent leaders, including Kofi Annan and Desmond Tutu, dedicated to addressing complex global issues.

In 2012, Forbes named the Ruia brothers as the world's richest Indians with a net worth of US$7 billion.

380. **Justice Giridhar Malaviya**, grandson of Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, passed away at the age of 88 on 18th November 2024.

- He was born on 14 October 1936 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

- He was a graduate of Political Science & Law from the Banaras Hindu University.

- He was the former judge of the Allahabad High Court.

- He was actively engaged in the **Ganga cleaning mission**.

- He was the chairperson of the committee constituted to prepare a draft of the Ganga Act.

- He was also the chairperson of **Ganga Mahasabha.**

- In November 2018, he was elected unanimously as the **Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University** by the University Court.

381. **Famous Mridangam Scholar Varadarao Kamalkara Rao** passed away at the age of **88** in **Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh.**

He was a disciple of Palghat Mani Iyer.

He was born in 1937 in Andhra Pradesh.

He received various prestigious awards including the **Central Sangeet Natak Academi** Award and, the President Medal from then-President **Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.**

He has played in the United Nations Hall in New York and also various programs on radio and Doordarshan.

382. Physicist Rohini Godbole has passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka at the age of 71. She was born in Pune, Maharashtra on 12th November 1952.

She was a professor at the Centre for High Energy Physics, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

She worked extensively on different aspects of particle phenomenology over three decades, in particular on exploring different aspects of the Standard Model of Particle Physics (SM) and the physics beyond it (BSM).

She co-edited the book **Lilavati Daughters (The Women Scientists of India) 2008**, with Ram Ramaswamy,

She was awarded **Padma Shri** in **2019,** the Ordre National Du Merite (French National Order of Merit) in 2021, and Karnataka's Lifetime Achievement Award in Science and Technology.

383. Noted folk singer Sharda Sinha, known as 'Bihar Kokila,' has passed away at the age of 72 in New Delhi. She was suffering from multiple myeloma and died at AIIMS, New Delhi, on the first day of Chhath Puja. She was born on October 1, 1952, in Bihar's Supaul district.
She was initiated into classical music by **Pandit Raghu Jha**, an eminent khayal singer of **Panchgachiya Gharana**.

She was a **Nritya Visharad** (**Manipuri**) and also held a master's degree in Indian classical music-vocal and a Ph.D.

She was also called **'Begum Akhtar of Mithila'.**

She has sung extensively in **Maithili, Bhojpuri**, **Hindi,** and **Magahi** languages.

She received various honors including the **Rashtriya Devi Ahiliya Samman**, **Bihar Kala Puraskar**, **Bihar Ratna**, **Bhojpuri Ratna**, and **Mithila Vibhuti Samman.**

She was also a recipient of **Padma Bhushan** in **2018**. In **1991,** she was also awarded the **Padma Shri** and the **Sangeet Natak Akademi award** in **2000.**

384. Renowned Economist **Bibek Debroy**, who was the Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) during the Pandemic phase, passed away at the age of 69 in New Delhi. He was born on 25th January 1955, in Shillong, Meghalaya.

- He had worked at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), Pune (1983-87) and at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi (1987-93).

- He was the Director of the Ministry of Finance and worked at the UNDP Project on legal reforms from 1993 to 1998.
- He also served as a member of the National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI Aayog**) from **2015 to 2019.**
- He was honored with **Padma Shri** in **2015** for his contribution to the literary and education field.
- He was also honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by US-India Business in 2016 and the Lifetime Achievement Award by Australia-India Chamber of Commerce in 2022.
- He has written, edited, translated, and co-authored more than **50 books** including various fields namely economics, philosophy, and academics.
- Some of his famous works include Vishnu Purana (1992), Indian Economy on a Fast Track (2004), Foreign Trade Policy and Devaluation (1992), Economic Freedom of the States of India (2011), The Book of Limericks (2018).
- He wrote his obituary**: 'There is a world outside that exists. What if I am not there? What indeed?',** four days before passing away.

385. **Ganesan Mahadevan,** known by his stage name **Delhi Ganesh**, passed away at the age of **80** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.

He was born on August 1, 1944, in Keezhapavur, Tamil Nadu.

Before joining the film industry, he served in the **Indian Air Force** from **1964 to 1974**.

He made his cinematic debut in 1976 with K. Balachander's film **Pattina Pravesam.**

He received the **Tamil Nadu State Film Award Special Prize** for his performance in **Pasi (1979)** and was honored with the **Kalaimamani Award** in **1994.**

He has appeared in more than 400 films including Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.

386. **French-Indian** writer and researcher **Dr. Prithwindra Mukherjee** died at the age of 88.

He was born on 20th October 1936 in **Kolkata, West Bengal.**

He had a multifaceted personality and was also passionate about music and poetry.

He was a researcher in the **Human and Social Sciences Department (Ethnomusicology)** of the **French National Centre of Scientific Research** in **Paris.**

He has also authored several books and other publications on various subjects.

He has been awarded with various honors as follows:

- In **2009**, the Minister of Culture of France appointed Prithwindra Mukherjee to the rank of chevalier (Knight) of the Order of Arts and Letters.
- The French Academy (Belles Lettres) selected Prithwindra Mukherjee for its **Hirayama Award (Prix Hirayama) 2014.**

- In **2015**, the French Prime Minister appointed him to the **rank of chevalier (Knight) of the order of Palmes académiques (Academic Laurels).**
- He was also a recipient of India's highly prestigious award **Padma Shri** in **2020** for his work in the field of literature and education.

SPORTS

387. The **Indian Women's hockey team** won the **Women's Asian Hockey Championship 2024** by defeating **China** in the finals at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium in Bihar.

- India defeated China by 1-0 in the final match.

- Indian player **Deepika Kumari** scored the decisive goal in the penalty shootout and was the highest scorer of the tournament with **11 goals**.

- This victory marked India's third ACT championship, following the previous wins in **2016 & 2023.**

- Also, the Indian team is now the most successful in the tournament history along with **South Korea**, both having won **three titles.**

- Japan secured the third position by defeating Malaysia 4-1.

388. The **Indian Men's Junior team,** led by captain Amir Ali and playing under coach PR Sreejesh, defeated **New Zealand** to win the bronze at the **12th edition** of **"The Sultan of Johar Cup Junior Hockey Under 21 Tournament 2024".**

This was India's second consecutive bronze at this tournament.

The event was held in **Malaysia.**

Participating countries in the tournament were India, New Zealand, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Malaysia.

In the final match, **Great Britain's U21 team** defeated Australia to win the Gold medal.

389. Spanish Tennis player **Rafael Nadal** announced his retirement after the Netherlands defeated Spain in the **Davis Cup** Quarterfinals.

He ended his 23-year-long career by winning **22** Grand Slam titles.

He won the **second-highest** number of Grand Slams after Novac Djokovic, Serbia (24).

He started his career in **2001** at the age of **14** years.

In 2004, he won his first ATP title. He also won **Gold** at the **2008 Beijing Olympics**.

The major titles he won include:
- 4 Davis Cup
- 22 Grand Slam singles (2 Australian Open, 14 French Open, 2 Wimbledon, and 4 US Open)

390. The **2024 Tata Steel Chess India Open Rapid & Blitz tournament** was held at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium in **Alipore, Kolkata** from November 13–17, 2024.

This was the 86th edition of this tournament.

Magnus Carlsen won the **Tata Steel Chess India Open Blitz tournament** with 13 points after defeating Arjun Erigaisi and Wesley.

Wesley from the USA was the first runner while Arjun Erigaisi finished as second runner up.

In the women's section, three-time world blitz champion **Kateryna Lagno** won the tournament after defeating Valentina Gunina.

391. Indian Badminton playersThe Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) has officially announced the dates and logo for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup 2025.

- The **first-ever Kho-Kho World Cup** will be held at the **Indira Gandhi International Stadium** in New Delhi from **January 13 to 19 2025.**
- The event will be organized by the Kho-Kho Federation of India (KKFI).
- The World Cup's official logo and tagline is **#TheWorldGoesKho**.
- The tournament will feature teams from **24 nations**, with both **men's** and **women's** teams competing for supremacy.
- The tournament includes **16 teams** in each division.
- The most interesting feature of the matches will be the introduction of **'Wazir'** who is free to run either left or right in the wing but cannot cross the center line and will have to always get a perfect Kho otherwise he will get a foul.

392. The Paris 2024 Olympics champion in the Men's 50-meter rifle 3-position **Liu Yukun** of **China** and **Yang Ji-in** of **South Korea**, the women's 25-meter sports pistol Olympic champion, have been named the **ISSF Athlete of the Year 2024.**

The winners were announced at the ISSF World Cup Final at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.

Yang Ji In:
- She is a gold medalist of the Paris Olympics and she has also won gold medals in the 25m Asian Pistol/Rifle Championships, Jakarta, and in the 2024 ISSF World Cup in Baku.
- She won the bronze medal at Asian Games 2022, held in China.

Liu Yukun:
- He made a record of 594 in qualification in the Olympics.
- He also won the ISSF World Cup in Baku in the Men's 50m rifle 3 positions.

393. **Deepika Kumari** won the silver medal in the women's recurve event at the Archery World Cup Final 2024 with a **0-6** loss against **Chinese Li Jiaman** in the final in **Tlaxcala, Mexico**. It was her **sixth** World Cup Final medal.
It was the **18ᵗʰ edition** of the Archery World Cup organized by World Archery.

She defeated Yang Xiaolei of China in the Quarterfinals and Alejandra Valencia of Mexico in the Semis.

394. Indian women's hockey legend **Rani Rampal**, who led India to a **fourth-place** finish at the **Tokyo 2020 Olympics**, announced her retirement at the age of 29.
She represented India in 254 international matches and scored 120 goals throughout her career.

She will be seen coaching and nurturing the future stars of the sport, as she was named the coach of India's under-17 team by Hockey India in 2023.

Rani Rampal:

- She was born in village Shahbad, Haryana
- She was the youngest player (14 years) who represented India at the senior level in 2008 at the Olympic qualifiers in Kazan.
- She made her World Cup debut at just 15, the youngest for India, scored five of India's seven goals in the 2010 edition, and won the 'Young Player of the Tournament' award.
- She was part of the Indian team that won a silver medal at the Asia Cup in 2009 and a bronze at the Asian Games in 2014.
- She was part of India's Women's Asia Cup-winning team in 2017. She became captain in 2018, and the Indian team won a silver medal at the Asian Games, quarter-finals at the World Cup, and fourth place at the Commonwealth Games.
- She was awarded the **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna** and **Padma Shri** awards in the year **2020.**
- She became the **first Indian woman hockey player** to have a stadium named after her in 2023.
- The Indian Railways' Modern Coach Factory Stadium in **Raebareli** was renamed **Rani's Girls Hockey Turf.**
- She was named coach of India's under-17 team by Hockey India in 2023. In 2024, she also took on the role of coach and mentor for the Soorma Hockey Club in the Hockey India League.
- In honor of Rani Rampal's contributions to Indian hockey, Hockey India (HI) retired her iconic No. 28 jersey.

395. **Pankaj Advani** was crowned as **Billiards champion** as he won the **World Snooker Championship 2024**.

The championship was held in **Doha**, **Qatar.**

He defeated **Robert Hall** of **England** at the International Billiards & Snooker Federation (IBSF) World Snooker Championship 2024.

It is his **28th** World title and **seventh title in a row,** i.e. started in **2016**.

He was born on 24 July 1985 in Pune, Maharashtra. He is also known as the "Prince of Pune".

396. The Badminton World Federation (BFW) **Japan Para-Badminton International 2024** tournament was held in **Tokyo, Japan**. It was a level 2 category Para-Badminton tournament.

Indian squad won a total of **24 medals (6 Gold, 9 Silver, and 9 Bronze).**

List of Indian Gold Winners

Category	Winner
Men's Singles (MS) SL4	Sukant Kadam
Men's Singles (MS) SH6	Sivarajan Solaimalai
Women's Singles (WS) SU5	Manisha Ramdass
Men's Doubles MD SU5	Hardik Makkar & Ruthick Raghupati
Men's Doubles (MD) SL3 SU5	Umesh Vikram Kumar & Surya Kant Yadav
Men's Doubles (MD) SH6	Sivarajan Solaimalai & Sudarshan Saravankumar Muthuswamy

397. **The International Hockey Federation (FIH)** announced the **FIH Hockey Stars Awards 2024** at the **49th FIH Statutory Congress** which was held in **Muscat, Oman.**

During the event, the Indian Hockey Team Captain **Harmanpreet Singh** won the **Men's Player of the Year Award** while **Parattu Ravindran (PR) Sreejesh,** the former goalkeeper of the Indian Hockey Team was awarded **Men's Goalkeeper of the Year**.

The complete winner's list of the FIH Star Awards 2023-24:

Award	Player
Men's Player of the Year	Harmanpreet Singh (India)
Women's Player of the Year	Yibbi Jansen (Netherlands)
Men's Goalkeeper of the Year	PR Sreejesh (India)
Women's Goalkeeper of the Year	Ye Jiao (China)
Men's Rising Star of the Year	Sufyan Khan (Pakistan)
Women's Rising Star of the Year	Zoe Diaz (Argentina)
Men's Coach of the Year	Jeroen Delmee (Netherlands)
Women's Coach of the Year	Alyson Annon (China)
Men's Umpire of the Year	Steve Rogers (Australia)
Women's Umpire of the Year	Sarah Wilson (Scotland)

Note: The inaugural edition of FIH Hockey Nations Cup 2 (Men) will be held in Oman in February 2025.

398. The 2024 Las Vegas Grand Prix was held in the United States of America.

George Russell of **Mercedes** won the Championship with teammate **Lewis Hamilton** finishing **second.**

Dutch Formula 1 driver **Max Verstappen** secured his **fourth consecutive Drivers' Championship title,** despite finishing fifth in the Las Vegas Grand Prix. He became the **sixth driver** in history to win **four or more titles.**

Max Verstappen joins an elite club of Formula 1 legends who have won four or more world titles:

- Michael Schumacher (Germany): 7 titles
- Lewis Hamilton (Great Britain): 7 titles
- Juan Manuel Fangio (Argentina): 5 titles
- Alain Prost (France): 4 titles
- Sebastian Vettel (Germany): 4 titles
- **Max Verstappen (Netherlands): 4 titles**

IMPORTANT DAYS

399. India observes **National Cancer Awareness Day** annually on **7th November** to raise awareness about the growing cancer burden in the country and inspire action towards prevention, early detection, and treatment.

India is the **first** country in the world to officially recognize National Cancer Awareness Day.

The date was chosen not only to honor the birth of **Nobel Laureate Madame Marie Curie**, who **discovered radioactivity** and whose work has had a profound impact on cancer treatment but also to reflect India's commitment to addressing cancer as a public health priority.

According to estimates from the **National Cancer Registry Programme** in India approximately 800,000 new cancer cases are expected each year, with tobacco-related cancers accounting for as much as 35–50% of all cancers in men and 17% in women.
Tobacco consumption, whether through smoking or chewing, is the single most significant contributor to cancer in India. It is responsible for an estimated **40–50%** of cancer cases in men and 20% in women.

400. International Day for Biosphere Reserves is celebrated on **November 3** annually worldwide to highlight the importance of biosphere reserves in protecting the environment and raising awareness about sustainable development.

The day is an invitation to take inspiration from the solutions already implemented in these spaces to build genuinely sustainable development everywhere, with full respect for nature and for the living world. It was proclaimed by the **UNESCO General Conference** in its **41st session,** in the year **2021.**

Note: The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently has **759 sites** spread across **136 countries.**

401. The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** declared **6 November of each year** as the **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict** in the year 2001. This day was first observed in **2002**.

Background:

- On 5 November 2001, the UN General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.
- On 27 May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted resolution UNEP/EA.2/Res.15, which recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict.
- **Six** United Nations agencies and departments **(UNEP, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, PBSO, DPA, and DESA),** coordinated by the UN Framework Team for Preventive Action, have partnered with the **European Union (EU)** to help countries identify, prevent and transform tensions over natural resource as part of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs.
- The Environmental Law Institute (ELI), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Universities of Tokyo and McGill initiated a **4-year global research program** to collect lessons learned and good practices on managing natural resources during post-conflict peacebuilding.
- The first outcome of the collaboration is a joint policy report, **"Women and Natural Resources Unlocking the Unleashing Potential".**

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402. **World Tsunami Awareness Day (WTAD)** is observed annually on **November 5** to promote tsunami awareness and preparedness worldwide.

This year's World Tsunami Awareness Day theme aligns with the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Summit of the Future, focusing on "youth and future generations."

This year marks the **20th anniversary** of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of December 2004.

In December 2015, **the United Nations General Assembly** adopted by consensus a resolution, co-sponsored by 142 countries (including Japan), to designate November 5 as "World Tsunami Awareness Day" in order to raise awareness of and promote countermeasures against tsunami risks.

403. **National Education Day** is celebrated on **11th November** every year to honor the birth anniversary of **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, the **first Education Minister of India**. This day highlights the importance of education in shaping India's future.

The Government of India declared November 11th National Education Day in **September 2008** to commemorate Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's contributions to the country's education system.

- He was a freedom fighter, educationist, scholar, and senior leader of the Indian National Congress.
- He was born on 18th November 1888 in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
- He was the founder of the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** and **the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).**
- Under his direction, several educational establishments were founded, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Sahitya Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sangeet Natak Academy, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- He also founded the **first I**ndian Institute of Technology, IIT Kharagpur.
- He became the president of the Indian National Congress on two occasions—in 1923 and 1940.
- He was posthumously awarded **Bharat Ratna**, the highest civilian award in the country, in **1992.**

404. **World Diabetes Day** is observed annually on **November 14** to raise awareness about diabetes, a chronic health condition affecting millions globally.

The theme for World Diabetes Day 2024 was "***Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps***," which emphasizes the need for equitable, accessible diabetes care.

World Diabetes Day was established in the year **1991** by the **International Diabetes Foundation** and **the World Health Organization** it gained recognition in 2006 as an Official United Nations Day.

405. **World Immunization Day** is observed annually on **10th November** to remind governments and individuals of the critical role that vaccines play in preventing deadly diseases.

The day was first observed in **2012** by the **World Health Organization (WHO).**

This day aims to increase vaccination rates around the world and achieve universal immunization coverage.

406. **National Naturopathy Day** is observed on **18th November** every year.

The **7th** edition of this day was celebrated this year (2024).

On this occasion, the **National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN),** under the **Ministry of Ayush**, launched a pan-India campaign focusing on the theme ***'Healthy Ageing and Longevity.'***

The campaign highlighted the importance of fostering compassion, promoting good nutrition, adopting healthy lifestyles, and addressing emotional and mental health challenges.

The Motto of the campaign was '**Turn to Nature for Physical Health'** and '**Return to Community for Emotional and Mental Health**,' which reflects the necessity of connecting with nature and fostering community bonds for holistic health.

This year, the Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN), New Delhi organized the 7th Naturopathy Day celebration at **Central Research Institute of Yoga & Naturopathy (CRIYN), Nagamangala, Karnataka** between November 18th to 20th 2024.

Naturopathy Day was **first** declared by the **Ministry of Ayush** in **2018** to reaffirm its commitment to empowering individuals through health.

On this day, Mahatma Gandhi became the **lifetime Chairman** of the **All India Nature Cure Foundation Trust** in **1945.**

407. World Television Day is observed annually on **21st November,** to recognize that television plays a major role in presenting different issues that affect people.

In December 1996, the United Nations proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day commemorating the date on which the first World Television Forum was held in 1996.

Philo Tyalor Farnsworth invented the first electronic television in 1927. The first Colour TV was introduced in 1954. In India, the first TV channel was introduced by **Doordarshan** in **1959.**

408. International Students Day is observed annually on **17th November** all around the globe.

It reminds all individuals of the importance of knowledge and the contributions of students worldwide.
This year, it was the **84th** International Students Day.

The day marks the anniversary of the events that followed the **Nazi invasion of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic in 1939.**

Background:

- The first-ever International Students Day was observed on 17th November **1941.**
- It was observed by the International Students Council in London, United Kingdom.
- This day is also marked as Freedom and Democracy Day in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

409. The **National Cadet Corps (NCC)**, the largest uniformed youth organization in the world raised in 1948, celebrated its **76th raising day** on 24 November 2024.

On this occasion, **Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh** laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes on behalf of the entire NCC fraternity at the National War Memorial, India Gate, New Delhi.

He also mentioned that efforts are being made to increase the strength of cadets by 3 lakhs and will be touching the strength of 20 lakhs in coming years**.**

As per tradition, NCC day was celebrated across India and a pan-India **'Blood Donation Camp'** was being organized.

The quantum of blood donation this year exceeded 50,000 blood units.

A tree plantation drive, Cleaning of Statues, Swachhta hi Sewa, Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan, etc were also organized.

NCC cadets have also been overhauled with a specific aim and desired outcome in consonance with various government initiatives like **Skill manthan, I4C (Cyber Awareness),** Ideas & Innovation, Trg with NDRF/SDRF.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
World Vegan Day	1st November		World Vegan Day was established in 1994 by Louise Wallis, then Chair of The Vegan Society in the United Kingdom, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the organization.
All Saints Day	1st November		
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists	2nd November		
International Biosphere Reserve Day	3rd November		
World Jellyfish Day	3rd November		
World Tsunami Awareness Day	5th November		
International Day for Preventing the Exploitation	6th November		The day was first observed in 2002.

of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict			
Infant Protection Day	7th November		
National Cancer Awareness Day	7th November		India is the first country to officially observe this day.
World Urbanism Day	8th November	Homes Start with Planning	Also known as World Town Planning Day.
International Day of Radiology	8th November	'Radiographers: Seeing the Unseen'	The day was first observed in 2012. On 8th November Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered the existence of x-rays in 1895
National Legal Services Day	9th November		On November 9, 1995, the Legal Services Authorities Act was created
International Week of Science & Peace	9th to 15th November		The week was first observed in 1986.
World Science Day for Peace and Development	10th November	Youth at the forefront	It was first initiated by UNESCO in 2001
World Immunization Day	10th November		It was first launched in 2012 by the World Health Organization (WHO)
World Usability Day	Second Thursday of November (14th November 2024)	Designing For A Better World.	The day was first observed in 2005.
National Education Day	11th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first education minister of independent India.
World Quality Week	11th to 15th November 2024	Quality: from compliance to performance	

World Pneumonia Day	12th November	Every Breath Counts: Stop Pneumonia in Its Track	
Public Service Broadcasting Day	12th November		The day celebrates the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi's first live broadcast in 1947.
World Kindness Day	13th November		The day was first observed in 1998.
World Diabetes Day	14th November	Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps	World Diabetes Day was established in the year 1991 by the International Diabetes Foundation and the World Health Organization it gained recognition in 2006 As an Official United Nations Day.
National Children's Day	14th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of India's 1st Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (2024 marks the 135th birth anniversary of him)
International Day Against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property 2024	14th November		Organized annually by UNESCO
Tribal Pride Day	15th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda (2024 marks the 150th birth anniversary of him)
National New Born Week	15th to 21st November	Optimizing Antimicrobial Use to Prevent Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in Newborns.	
International Day for Tolerance	16th November		The day was first observed in 1997. UNESCO created a prize for the promotion of tolerance and non-violence: the

			UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize.
National Press Day	16th November		Press Council of India (PCI) began its operations in 1966 on this day.
All India Cooperative Week	14 to 20 November	Role of Cooperatives in Building Viksit Bharat	The week was first observed in 1953.
National Epilepsy Day	17th November		
International Students' Day	17th November		
World Prematurity Day	17th November	Over 13 million babies are born prematurely every year. Access to quality care everywhere!	
World Philosophy Day	Third Thursday of November (21st November 2024)	Philosophy: bridging social gaps	
National Naturopathy Day	18th November	Healthy Ageing and Longevity	Naturopathy Day was first declared by the Ministry of Ayush in 2018. On this day Mahatma Gandhi became the lifetime Chairman of the All India Nature Cure Foundation Trust in 1945.
World Day for Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence	18th November		This day was started in the year 2022 by the General Assembly of the UN.
World Antimicrobial Awareness Week	18th to 24th November	Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together	
World Heritage Week	19th to 25th November	Discover and Experience Diversity	
World Toilet Day	19th November	Toilets – A Place for Peace	The day was first observed in 2013.
International Men's Day	19th November	Positive Male Role Models	
National Integration Day	19th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of

			India's first woman Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
Women's Entrepreneurship Day	19th November		
World Children's Day	20th November	Listen to the Future	It marks the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Child
Africa Industrialization Day	20th November		The United Nations General Assembly, in December 1989, proclaimed 20 November "Africa Industrialization Day
World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day or World COPD Day	Third Wednesday of November (20th November 2024)		Organized by the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD)
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	Third Sunday of November (17th November 2024)	Remember. Support. Act	
World Television Day	21st November	Accessibility	First observed in the year 1996
World Fisheries Day	21st November	India's Blue Transformation: Strengthening Small-Scale and Sustainable Fisheries	
World Conjoined Twins Day	24th November		The UN General Assembly passed a resolution on 1st July 2024 to observe this day.
Shaheedi Diwas of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji	24th November		
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	25th November	Every 10 Minutes, a woman is killed. #NoExcuse. UNiTE to End Violence Against Women	
International Meatless Day	25th November		
National Milk Day	26th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of the Father of India's White

			Revolution, Dr Verghese Kurien.
Constitution Day	26th November		Indian Constitution was adopted on 26th November 1949.
National Cadet Corps (NCC) Day	Fourth Sunday of November (24th November 2024)		The year 2024 marks the 76th raising day of NCC.
World Sustainable Transport Day	26th November		The day was first observed in 2023.
Aviation Safety Awareness Week	25th November to 29th November 2024		
International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	29th November		It was first observed in the year 1947
Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare	30th November		