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NATIONAL

PM INAUGURATES DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION AND LAUNCHES TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES FOR SUPREME COURT

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court of India and unveiled key technology initiatives during the event held at the Supreme Court auditorium in Delhi.

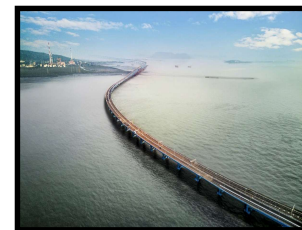


- The occasion marked the beginning of the Supreme Court's 75th year, coinciding with the 75th year of the Indian Constitution.
- PM Modi launched Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), Digital Courts 2.0, and the new bilingual website of the Supreme Court.
- The government has disbursed Rs 7000 crore post-2014 for court infrastructure. An additional Rs 800 crore was approved last week for expanding the Supreme Court Building Complex.
- The Prime Minister emphasized the collective responsibility of citizens towards achieving India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, acknowledging the pivotal role of the Supreme Court in shaping the country's future.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA INAUGURATED THE MUMBAI TRANS HARBOUR LINK (MTHL) OFFICIALLY KNOWN AS ATAL SETU NHAVA SHEVA SEA LINK, A MONUMENTAL 22 KM SEA BRIDGE -

- This mega-infrastructure project aims to revolutionize travel between Sewri and Chirle, promising a significant reduction in travel time.
- Atal Setu is the longest bridge in India and also the longest sea bridge in the country.

- The bridge is about 21.8 km long six-lane bridge having about 16.5 km length over sea and about 5.5 km on the land.



- The bridge has been named after former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- The bridge originates from Sewri in Mumbai and ends at Nhava Sheva in Uran taluka in Raigad district.
- The project is financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), covering 80% of the total project cost, while the remaining portion is shared between the state and central governments.
- According to a study conducted by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and JICA, the MTHL will bring down the average travel time between Sewri and Chirle from 61 minutes currently to less than 16 minutes.
- Close to 40,000 vehicles are expected to use the link every day in the opening year (2024).
- The project is expected to facilitate greater economic integration of Navi Mumbai with Mumbai, with benefits extending to Panvel, Alibaug, Pune, and Goa.
- The bridge also reduces the distance between Mumbai and Pune Expressway.

QATAR COURT DECISION ON RETIRED INDIAN NAVAL PERSONNEL -

- Qatar has commuted the death sentence for eight Indian Navy veterans and turned that into a "varying quantum" of jail terms. The jailed former Indian Navy personnel in Qatar have been given 60 days to appeal against the varying prison terms.
- Commutation of a death sentence refers to the reduction or change of a death penalty to a less severe punishment.
- The eight Indians, whose death sentences are commuted, now qualify for repatriation to India. This

falls under the 2015 Bilateral Agreement with Qatar, permitting prisoners to serve their terms in their home country.

- Qatar, a strong regional player, is a key supplier of energy to India and at least seven lakh Indians form a part of the foreign workforce in the Gulf nation.

FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON WAS THE CHIEF GUEST AT THE 75TH REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION - Major Highlights of India and France Relations-

- After India's 1998 nuclear tests, France was the first country to initiate a Strategic Dialogue with India.
- The year 2023 marked 25 years of India-France Strategic Partnership.
- Trade relations have witnessed steady growth, with bilateral trade reaching \$13.4 Bn in 2022-23.
- France is one of the largest investors in India with FDI inflow of US\$ 659.77 million for FY 2022-23.
- P-75 Scorpene Deal 2005 was an agreement for building six Scorpène submarines under technology transfer at Mazagaon Docks Ltd. in India with French help.
- The procurement of Rafale jets as part of India's air power is a testament to the deep defence ties.
- Joint defense exercises between the Air forces (Garuda series) and the Armies (Shakti), Navies (Varuna) are conducted regularly.
- There's a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over 50 years between ISRO and the French Space Agency, Centre National D'Etudes Spatiales (CNES).
- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by India and France.

ASSAM GOVT UNVEILS MUKHYAMANTRI MAHILA UDYAMITA ABHIYAN -

- The Assam government recently launched a financial assistance scheme, the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan (MMUA), with the aim of empowering rural women entrepreneurs.
- The program is designed to provide financial assistance to women who aspire to embark on their

entrepreneurial journey independently, beyond their association with Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This initiative introduces unique conditions, focusing specifically on the number of eligible children for the beneficiaries.



- The MMUA scheme is designed to promote the development of rural women who are part of self-help groups. It aims to transform them into "Rural Micro Entrepreneurs" with an annual income target of ₹1 lakh per member.
- To qualify for the grant, women from the general and other backward caste (OBC) categories must have no more than three children. However, specific exemptions are made for women from the Moran, Muttock, and tea-tribe communities, who can apply with four or fewer children. For women belonging to Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) categories, the eligibility criteria dictate that they should have no more than four children.

IICF To Build 'Masjid Muhammed bin Abdullah' Mosque In Ayodhya -

- In a significant development, the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) has announced the commencement of the construction of a grand mosque in Ayodhya, starting this May.
- The mosque, named "Masjid Muhammed bin Abdullah" after Prophet Muhammad, aims to foster unity and goodwill among people, transcending religious differences. The initiative comes on the same

day as Prime Minister Narendra Modi presides over the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple.

- The **senior official of the IICF, Haji Arfat Shaikh, revealed that the construction is expected to span three to four years.** The ambitious project is set to redefine the cityscape of Ayodhya and serve as a symbol of communal harmony.
- To finance the construction, the IICF is considering the establishment of a crowdfunding website. This approach reflects a broader outreach strategy, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the creation of a shared cultural space.



NIA ACHIEVED A 94.70% CONVICTION RATE IN 2023 -

- The **Union government enacted the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act after the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in November 2008** and it is presently functioning as the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency in India.

Objectives-

- To be a thoroughly professional investigative agency matching the best international standards.
 - To set the standards of excellence in counter terrorism and other national security related investigations at the national level by developing into a highly trained, partnership oriented workforce.
 - Ensuring effective and speedy trial.
 - Creating deterrence for existing and potential terrorist groups/individuals.
 - To develop as a storehouse of all terrorist related information.
- The law under which the agency operates extends to the whole of India and also applies to Indian citizens outside the country.

RECENTLY, 146 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (MPS) HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED DURING THE WINTER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT 2023 -

- MPs in both Houses faced suspension due to their disruption of Parliamentary proceedings in protest of the recent breach of security in Parliament.

Who Can Suspend a Minister of Parliament-

- The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the Presiding Officer i.e., Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly.
- In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, the Speaker/ Chairman is empowered to force a Member to withdraw from the House.

What are the Rules Under Which the Presiding Officer Suspends MPs-

- **Rule 373-** Rules The Speaker can direct a member to withdraw immediately from the House if he finds the member's conduct disorderly.
- **Rule 374-** The Speaker can name a member who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof.
- **Rule 374A-** Rule 374A was incorporated in the Rule Book in December 2001.

Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Rajya Sabha-

- **Rule 255-** The Chairman of Rajya Sabha is empowered under Rule 255 of its Rule Book to “direct any Member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately” from the House.
- **Rule 256-** Under this rule, the Chairman may “name a Member who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the Council by persistently and wilfully obstructing” business.

Drawbacks of the Suspension of MPs-

- **The suspension of MPs in Parliament is a drastic measure that is taken to maintain the order and decorum of the House.**

- It reduces the scope and quality of debate and discussion on important matters of legislation and policy.

PARLIAMENT PASSES POST OFFICE BILL, 2023, REPLACING 125-YEAR-OLD INDIAN POST OFFICE ACT, 1898 -

- The Indian Parliament recently approved the Post Office Bill, 2023, marking a significant overhaul of the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act, 1898. The new legislation aims to modernize and consolidate the legal framework governing post offices in India.

Key Provisions-

1. Enhanced Powers for National Security- The Bill grants post office employees the authority to open, detain, or intercept any item during transmission in the interest of national security or public safety. However, this power is subject to specific conditions.

2. Immunity for Post Office Employees- While providing immunity for post office employees from liability in delivering services, the Bill includes conditions. Officers are exempt unless they act fraudulently or willfully cause loss, delay, or misdelivery of services.

3. Interception Authority- The Central Government, through notification, can empower officers to intercept, open, or detain items in transit by the post office. This authority extends to situations involving security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergencies, or public safety.

4. Duty Evasion and Prohibited Items- Post office officers can deliver items, suspected of duty evasion or being prohibited by law, to customs or relevant authorities. The handling of such items will follow legal provisions.



5. Liability Exemption- The post office and its officers are exempt from liability for any loss, misdelivery, delay, or damage incurred during the provision of services, except in cases of fraudulent or willful misconduct.

6. Recovery of Sums- The Bill includes provisions for the recovery of sums due in respect of services provided by the post office. Failure to pay charges for services renders the amount recoverable as if it were an arrear of land revenue.

7. Exclusive Privilege and Standards- The post office retains the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps. The Central Government may prescribe standards for addressing items, including address identifiers and the usage of postcodes.

PM MODI UNVEILS VARANASI'S SWARVED MAHAMANDIR, WORLD'S LARGEST MEDITATION CENTER -

- Prime Minister Narendra

Modi marked a historic moment as he inaugurated the Swarved Mahamandir in Umaraha, Varanasi. This newly constructed meditation center stands



tall at seven floors, accommodating an impressive 20,000 devotees at a time for meditation.

- The Swarved Mahamandir is a mesmerizing architectural marvel, seamlessly blending traditional and modern design elements.
- Intricate marble carvings adorn its structure, and towering lotus-shaped domes reflect the rich cultural heritage of Varanasi.
- The seven-floor superstructure stands as a testament to the city's spiritual legacy while embracing contemporary aesthetics.

INTERNATIONAL

TURKEY FINALLY BACKS SWEDEN'S NATO BID -

- Sweden's attempt to join NATO cleared a major hurdle recently after Turkey's parliament supported its membership.
- This move came after Sweden tightened its anti-terror legislation and pledged closer cooperation with Turkey on security concerns.



- For a new country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), **all the existing members have to approve it.** Turkey and Hungary had been opposing Sweden's entry for almost the past two years.
- **Sweden has not fought a war in two centuries, staying neutral through the two World Wars and the Cold War.** However, this neutrality had to be abandoned after Russia invaded Ukraine.
- With public opinion increasingly in favour of joining NATO, **both Sweden and Finland applied for membership in 2022.** While Finland's bid was cleared, Sweden ran into stiff opposition from Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban.
- **Erdogan objected to Sweden's accession, accusing Swedish officials of being too lenient on militant groups, including the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and being a mute spectator when Quran-burning protests were held in Sweden.**

- Hungary's grievances with Sweden include Stockholm's negative remarks about the rule of law and state of democracy under Hungary's Prime Minister Orban. Orban is also more friendly with Russia than other NATO nations.

LITHIUM-DEAL WITH ARGENTINA -

- The Ministry of Mines, Government of India through the state-owned Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL), has entered into a draft exploration and development agreement with Argentinian miner CAMYEN for possible acquisition and development of five-odd lithium blocks.



- The company has also entered into a non-disclosure agreement with Chilean miner ENAMI for "possible exploration, extraction, processing and commercialisation" of the mineral.

- Lithium is an alkali mineral, also called ‘white gold’. It is soft, silvery-white metal, the lightest metal of the periodic table.

Major Properties-

- A. High Reactivity
 - B. Low Density
 - C. Excellent Electrochemical Properties
- Lithium is found naturally in various minerals**, including spodumene, petalite, and lepidolite. It is extracted from these minerals and refined into lithium metal or its compounds.
 - The top producers of lithium are **Australia, Chile, China, and Argentina**. In 2022, Australia was the world leader in terms of lithium mine production. Chile and China ranked second and third.
 - Batteries: Lithium is a crucial component of rechargeable batteries used in smartphones, laptops, electric vehicles, and other electronics.**
 - Medicine: Lithium is used as a mood stabilizer in the treatment of bipolar disorder.**

Lithium in India-

- Massive reserves unearthed in Salal-Haimna areas of Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir (estimated 5.9 million tonnes). Additional reserves identified in Koderma and Giridih regions of Jharkhand.

INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA HAJJ AGREEMENT -

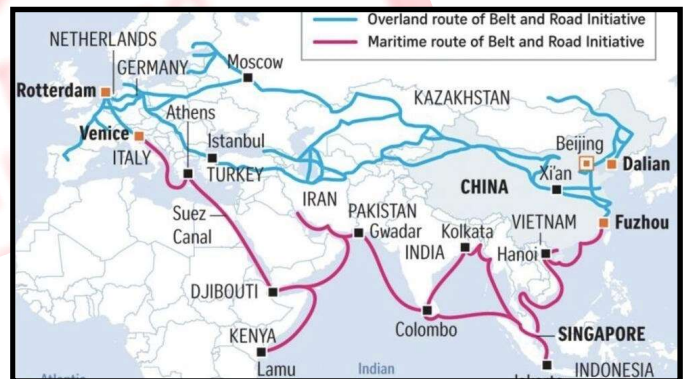
- India and Saudi Arabia signed a **bilateral agreement under which India has been allocated a quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims for the annual Haj pilgrimage in 2024.**
- Out of 1,75,025 pilgrims from India 1,40,020 seats being reserved for pilgrims to proceed through Haj Committee whereas 35,005 pilgrims would be permitted to proceed through private operators.**
- The Haj is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims.**

- It is considered to be a mandatory religious duty for all adult Muslims physically and financially capable of doing so.
- The rites of pilgrimage are performed over five to six days, in Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar.

ITALY HAD RECENTLY WITHDRAWN FROM THE BELT AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE (BRI) -

Why is Italy Pulls out-

- Mounting pressure from the United States and the European Union** since it has joined the BRI.
- European countries are pivoting toward “de-risking” their economies** and are reluctant to deepen economic dependence on China.



- Putin’s actions in Ukraine and China’s implicit alignment with Russia** have engendered skepticism about China’s intentions.
- The BRI has already experienced retrenchment, as countries that once eagerly embraced it grapple with mounting debt. The “debt diplomacy,” as seen in **Sri Lanka in 2017**, where an entire port had to be handed over to China because Sri Lanka could not repay its loans.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO TO LAUNCH INSAT-3DS SATELLITE FROM SRIHARIKOTA, ANDHRA PRADESH

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch its latest meteorological satellite, INSAT-3DS, marking a significant advancement in India's space capabilities.
- This satellite, designed to enhance weather forecasting and disaster management, represents a culmination of rigorous testing and collaboration between ISRO and various stakeholders.
- The run-up to the launch of INSAT-3DS began with ISRO completing exhaustive tests and reviews of the satellite. On January 25, ISRO officially flagged off the satellite to the launch port at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, signaling the commencement of pre-launch activities.
- INSAT-3DS is engineered to provide continuity of services to its predecessors, INSAT-3D (launched in 2013) and INSAT-3DR (2016), while also augmenting the capabilities of the INSAT platform. Its design, based on ISRO's well-proven I-2k bus platform, boasts a lift-off mass of 2,275 kg, making it a robust addition to India's satellite fleet.
- The assembly, integration, and testing of INSAT-3DS were meticulously carried out at the U R Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru, showcasing ISRO's commitment to precision engineering and quality assurance.
- INSAT-3DS comes equipped with advanced capabilities for meteorological observations, enabling



more accurate weather forecasting and disaster management. Its sophisticated instruments enable monitoring of land and ocean surfaces, crucial for predicting and mitigating the impact of natural disasters.

IIT-DELHI MADE THE FIRST HIGH RESOLUTION LANDSLIDE RISK MAP FOR INDIA -

- The 'Indian Landslide Susceptibility Map' is the first of its kind by virtue of being on a national scale, leaving out no locations in the country. It was developed with the help of the Geological Survey of India (GSI)'s extensive collection of landslide data with 'latest techniques'.
- It is available and accessible publicly through the internet, and one doesn't need technical knowledge to interact with the data.
- A national landslide susceptibility map can help the policymakers to assess vulnerability and take appropriate measures for mitigation. It can help identify the most dangerous areas and helps in allocating resources for mitigation strategies better, given the high fatalities due to landslides in India.
- The map acknowledged some well-known regions of high landslide susceptibility, like parts of the foothills of the Himalaya, the Assam-Meghalaya region, and the Western Ghats.

GSAT-20 (GSAT-N2) ABOARD SPACEX'S FALCON-9 -

- The commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) is set to launch GSAT-20 (GSAT-N2), aboard SpaceX's Falcon-9 in 2024.
- Falcon 9 is the world's first orbital class reusable, two-stage rocket designed and manufactured by SpaceX for the reliable and safe transport of people and payloads into Earth orbit and beyond.

- **GSAT-20 is a high throughput Ka-band satellite that provides high-speed broadband internet connectivity**, digital video transmission, and audio transmission.
- **It is being launched to address the growing broadband communication needs of India. It is designed to provide comprehensive coverage across India**, including remote regions like Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.
- **This satellite offers an impressive HTS (High Throughput Satellite) capacity of nearly 48Gbps.** Notably, it comprises 32 beams specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of underserved areas, aiming to bridge the connectivity gap.



JAPAN BECOMES FIFTH COUNTRY TO LAND ON THE MOON SUCCESSFULLY -

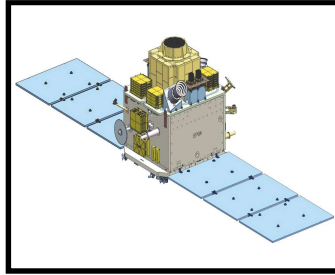
- **Japan has marked a significant achievement in space exploration by becoming the fifth country to successfully soft-land a spacecraft on the Moon.**
- **The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) touched down near the Shioli crater, south of the lunar equator**, utilizing precision technology that allowed it to land closer to its target site than any previous mission.
- **Telemetry data confirmed that SLIM landed in its designated area after a four-month journey from the Tanegashima Space Centre.**
- **Despite the successful landing, a potential setback arose as the spacecraft experienced a power failure.** The solar cells were not generating electricity, and SLIM was operating solely on its battery, which was estimated to last only a few more hours.
- **Hitoshi Kuninaka, vice president of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), stated that SLIM had been communicating with the ground station and responding to commands accurately.**
- **SLIM's primary goal was to achieve an unprecedented landing accuracy of 100 meters, a significant**

- improvement from previous missions.** The spacecraft utilized vision-based navigation technology, imaging the lunar surface as it flew over, and quickly locating itself by matching images with onboard maps.
- **SLIM employed an innovative two-step landing approach.** Unlike previous crafts that landed on four legs simultaneously on a flat area, **SLIM was designed to hit a 15-degree slope outside Shioli crater first with one leg at the back before stabilizing on the four front legs.** Observers suggest that SLIM might have rolled during its touchdown, impacting its solar cells.
- **Two small robots were intended to eject from SLIM before touchdown to capture images of the lander.** Scientists hope to use SLIM's specialized camera to search for a mineral called olivine in the Moon's mantle. If SLIM can recover, it could contribute valuable data about the Moon's history and chemistry.

X-RAY POLARIMETER SATELLITE: ISRO -

- **Recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched its first X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XpoSat) to study X-ray polarisation and its cosmic sources, like Black holes, Neutron stars, and Magnetars.**
- **The mission is propelled by the PSLV-C58 rocket in Low Earth Orbit.**
- **XPoSat is designed to study X-ray polarization in the medium X-ray band**, offering insights into celestial sources' radiation mechanisms and geometry.
- **This study is crucial for understanding the physics behind these celestial bodies.**
- **The satellite carries two main payloads, POLIX (Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays) and XSPECT (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing).** POLIX will observe about 40 bright astronomical sources, while XSPECT will study the electromagnetic spectrum generated by different matter.
- **Entirely built by two Bengaluru-based institutes—** ISRO's UR Rao Satellite Centre and Raman Research

Institute—XPoSat's development began in 2008, with a formal agreement signed with ISRO in 2015.



- **XPoSat is only the world's second mission dedicated to X-ray polarization in the medium X-ray band. NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE), launched in 2021, was the first such mission by a space agency.**
- XPoSat will be India's third space-based observatory, following the recently launched solar mission Aditya-L1 and AstroSat, which was launched in 2015. Its launch is seen as a significant stride for Indian astronomy and space research.

RECENTLY, ISRO PERFORMED A CRUCIAL MANOEUVRE TO BIND ADITYA-L1 INTO L1 ORBIT -

- **Aditya-L1 is the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun.** The solar mission will not see the spacecraft actually go to the sun, it will instead create a space observatory at a point from which the sun can be observed even during an eclipse.
- **The spacecraft will be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1),** around 1.5 million km from the Earth, of the Sun-Earth system.
- **The mission has a life of five years** during which its payloads are expected to provide the information to understand the phenomenon of
- Coronal heating; coronal mass ejection; pre-flare and flare activities and their characteristics;
- Dynamics of space weather; and propagation of particles and fields.
- It is equipped with seven payloads (instruments) on board with four of them carrying out remote sensing of the Sun and three of them carrying in-situ observation.

CHINA BANS EXPORT OF RARE EARTH TECHNOLOGIES -

- **Recently, China has banned the export of technology to extract and separate the Rare Earth Metals, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to national security.** It also banned the export of production technology for rare earth metals and alloy materials as well as technology to prepare some rare earth magnets.
- **The move comes as Europe and the US** try to reduce their reliance themselves off rare earths from China, which accounts for 90% of global refined output.
- Rare Earth Metals are a set of seventeen metallic elements. These include the fifteen lanthanides on the periodic table in addition to scandium and yttrium that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
- The 17 Rare Earths are **cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).**
- These minerals have **unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties and thus are used in many modern technologies, including consumer electronics, computers and networks, communications, health care, national defense, clean energy technologies etc.**
- They are called 'rare earth' because **earlier it was difficult to extract them from their oxides forms technologically.**
- They occur in many minerals but typically in low concentrations to be refined in an economical manner.
- **India, like many other countries, relies on Chinese rare earth exports.** The ban presents an opportunity for India to reassess its dependence and explore diversification strategies.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

INDIAN EQUITY MARKET SURPASSES HONG KONG, RANKS 4TH GLOBALLY WITH \$4.33 TRILLION MARKET CAP -

- India's equity market has outpaced Hong Kong's Hang Seng, securing the fourth position globally with a market capitalization of \$4.33 trillion.
- This milestone, marking India's ascendancy, underscores the nation's robust economic standing. The US remains the largest stock market with a staggering \$50.86 trillion market cap, followed by China at \$8.44 trillion and Japan at \$6.36 trillion.
- India achieved a historic milestone on December 5, crossing the \$4 trillion market cap threshold, propelled by a burgeoning retail investor base, consistent foreign institutional investments (FII), impressive corporate earnings, and resilient domestic macroeconomic fundamentals.
- Over the past four years, the Indian stock market has experienced remarkable growth, settling with gains for eight consecutive years.
- While India thrives, Hong Kong's Hang Seng faces a four-year losing streak, reflecting negative sentiment towards China.
- China's stringent anti-COVID-19 measures, regulatory crackdowns, a real estate crisis, and geopolitical tensions have collectively diminished its position as the global growth engine, causing a substantial dip in the total market value of Chinese and Hong Kong equities.

LIC OVERTAKES SBI TO BECOME THE MOST VALUABLE PSU -

- In a significant turn of events, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has not only staged an impressive comeback but has also surpassed the market capitalization of the State Bank of India (SBI). This article explores the recent surge in LIC's share price, its journey since listing, and the factors contributing to its remarkable revival.

- LIC's share price gained over 2% in morning trades, propelling its market capitalization to cross the ₹5.8 Lakh Crore mark. Touching 52-week highs of ₹919.45 a piece, LIC's market cap now stands higher than that of the State Bank of India (SBI), signalling a significant milestone for the insurance giant.



- Post-listing, LIC faced downward pressure until March 2023, reaching an all-time low of ₹530. However, a remarkable turnaround occurred from November, witnessing a gain of over 50%. December saw an impressive surge of 22.66%, and the positive momentum continued into 2024, with a gain of over 10%.

TCS RANKED SECOND MOST VALUABLE IT BRAND IN GLOBAL LIST -

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a prominent name in the global IT services sector, has achieved a significant milestone by being rated the second most valuable IT services brand in the world, according to the 2024 Global 500 IT Services Ranking by Brand Finance. This achievement underscores TCS's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and global expansion, positioning it as a leader in the technology industry.
- TCS's brand value saw an impressive surge to \$19.2 billion in 2024, up from \$17.2 billion in 2023. This 11.5% year-over-year growth is the highest absolute value growth among the top 25 leading IT firms globally.

- **Industry Leadership:** The company's significant brand value increase reflects its industry leadership and commitment to innovation. TCS has retained its AAA-brand rating, with its Brand Strength Index improving from 82 to 84 .
- TCS's achievement as one of the world's most valuable IT services brands demonstrates its consistent investment in brand strength and market leadership .
- TCS's strategic investments in AI-readiness and sustainability initiatives have been pivotal in enhancing its brand value and market position .
- **The company has actively expanded its global footprint through participation in major industry forums, digital channels, social media, and leadership in industry analyst reports.** These efforts have significantly boosted TCS's global brand recognition .
- TCS has built the world's largest sponsorship portfolio in the technology sector, including 12 marathons and running platforms such as the TCS New York City Marathon and the Tata Mumbai Marathon. This unique marketing approach has contributed to its brand visibility on a global scale .

TAMIL NADU WAS RECOGNISED AS THE 'BEST PERFORMER,' THE TOP CATEGORY IN THE STATES' STARTUP RANKING 2022, RELEASED RECENTLY -

- It was the **4th edition of Startup India Ranking carried out by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.**
- Released by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Objective is to evaluate all of India's States and Union Territories (UT) on their efforts to build an ecosystem conducive to startup growth.
- It aims to evaluate the Indian startup landscape through the eyes of state / UT policy intervention and identify practices that accelerate ecosystem growth and development.
- **The fourth edition of the exercise was launched in 2022 wherein the ranking framework comprised of 7 reform areas with a total of 25 action points with**

score of 85 marks and an overall score of 100 marks including that of the feedback exercise.



- This edition saw the maximum participation across all editions, of 33 States and Union Territories.
 - The states and union territories were divided into **Category-A (Population more than 1 crore) and Category-B (Population less than 1 crore) to establish uniformity and ensure standardization in the ranking process.**
 - The results of the 4th edition of the States' Startup Ranking 2022 on National Startup Day – 16th January 2024 at an event held in New Delhi at Bharat Mandapam.
- Category A States (Population more than 1 crore)**
- Best performer: Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu.
 - Top Performer: Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana.
 - Leader: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand.
 - Aspiring leader: Bihar, Haryana
 - Emerging Ecosystems: Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir
- Category B States (Population less than 1 crore)**
- Best performer: Himachal Pradesh
 - Top Performer: Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya
 - Leader: Goa, Manipur, Tripura
 - Aspiring leader: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Nagaland
 - Emerging Ecosystems: Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Ladakh, Mizoram, Puducherry, Sikkim.

INDIA'S REAL GDP GROWTH IN 2023-24 IS ESTIMATED AT 7.3%, COMPARED TO 7.2% A YEAR AGO, AS PER THE NSO -**Key highlights of the NSO estimates-**

- **GVA growth for the farm sector is estimated to more than halve from 4% a year ago to 1.8% this year, as is the case for Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and Services** whose GVA uptick is estimated to moderate to 6.3% from 14% in 2022-23.
- **The investment rate is likely to pick up to nearly 30% of GDP**, driven by government capex, higher consumption growth is vital for private investments to take on the onus of spurring the economy.
- **Manufacturing GVA growth is estimated to accelerate to 6.5% in 2023-24 from just 1.3% a year earlier**, while mining GVA is expected to rise 8.1%, from 4.6% in 2022-23.
- **Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of ₹171.79 lakh crore**, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2022-23 of ₹160.06 lakh crore, released on 31st May, 2023.

Gross Value Added (GVA)-

- It is a measure of the economic value generated by a sector, industry, or entity within a specific period.
- GVA represents the difference between the value of goods and services produced by an economic unit and the cost of inputs and raw materials used in the production process.

Nominal GDP vs Real GDP-

1. Nominal GDP: – The total market value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a given year, measured in current prices.

- Example: If India produces \$2 trillion worth of goods and services in 2024, its nominal GDP is \$2 trillion.

2. Real GDP: – Nominal GDP adjusted for inflation to reflect the actual volume of goods and services produced.

- Example: If inflation in 2024 is 5%, then India's real GDP would be approximately \$1.9 trillion and not \$2 trillion.

UTTAR PRADESH BECOMES SECOND-LARGEST ECONOMY IN INDIA -

- According to an online blogging platform soic.in, **Maharashtra has emerged as the largest economy of India.**
- It has the **largest share of 15.7% in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**
- It is followed by **Uttar Pradesh (UP) with 9.2% share in India's GDP, and Tamil Nadu (TN) with 9.1%.**
- The above states are followed by **Gujarat (8.2%), West Bengal (7.5%), Karnataka (6.2%), Rajasthan (5.5%), Andhra Pradesh (4.9%), and Madhya Pradesh (4.6%).**

IMF: INDIA EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE OVER 16% TO GLOBAL GROWTH -

- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said India's economic reforms have helped the nation become a star performer, contributing over 16% to global growth.**
- According to which the South Asian country, underpinned by prudent macroeconomic policies, is on track to be one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world this year.
- India's economy has rebounded strongly from the pandemic to become an important driver of global growth.



IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

ON 22ND JANUARY 2024, THE RAM TEMPLE IN AYODHYA WAS INAUGURATED, MARKING THE COMPLETION OF A 200-YEAR-OLD SAGA THAT PROFOUNDLY IMPACTED INDIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE -

- The Ram temple has been designed in the Nagara Style of Temple Architecture.
- The story of Ram is popular from Laos, Cambodia and Thailand in Asia to Guyana in South America to Mauritius in Africa, making Ramayana Popular outside India.



- **Originating in 1751 when the Marathas appealed for control of Ayodhya, Kashi, and Mathura**, the movement gained momentum in the 19th century with judicial records dating back to 1822 mentioning a mosque on the birthplace of Lord Ram.
- Tensions escalated in 1855 with a violent clash near the Babri Masjid between Hindus and Muslims, leading to the capture of Janmasthan by Hindus.
- The year 1949 saw the placement of the idol of Ram Lalla in the mosque, sparking demands for a grand temple.
- In the 1980s, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) initiated a movement for the 'liberation' of Ram Janmabhoomi, Krishna Janmabhoomi, and Vishwanath shrine.

- Legal battles ensued, and in 1986, the locks of the Babri Masjid were opened, allowing Hindus to offer prayers.
- The following years witnessed significant events, including the foundation-laying ceremony in 1989 and the Rath Yatra led by LK Advani in 1990, leading to widespread riots.
- On 6th December 1992, a mob demolished the Babri Masjid, leading to political repercussions and legal proceedings.
- In 1993, Parliament passed the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act, allowing the government to acquire the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land.
- In 2010, a special bench of the Allahabad High Court in its Ayodhya title suit judgment divided the land in a 2:1 ratio, with two-thirds of the 2.77-acre, including the garbha griha, going to litigants for a Ram temple – Shri Ram Lala Virajman and Nirmohi Akhara. One-third of the land was given to the Sunni Central Waqf Board.
- **Legal proceedings continued, and in 2019, the Supreme Court awarded the entire disputed land to the Hindu petitioners for a Ram temple and allocated land for a mosque elsewhere.**
- The culmination of this historic journey occurred on 5th August, 2020, when the Indian Prime Minister performed the Shilanyas of the Ram temple, establishing the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.
- On 22nd January 2024, the Ram temple in Ayodhya, built in Nagara Style, was set to be inaugurated, marking the completion of a 200-year-old saga that profoundly impacted India's socio-political landscape.

NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY 2024 -

- **National Girl Child Day 2024, observed annually on January 24th in India, plays a pivotal role in highlighting the importance of empowering girls and addressing the challenges they face in society.** Initiated in 2008 by the Ministry of Women and Child

Development, this day marks a commitment to promote gender equality, empower girls, and protect their rights.

- **The inception of National Girl Child Day (NGCD) in 2008 was a crucial step in India's journey towards gender equality.** This day emerged from the recognition that girls in India confront numerous challenges, including gender-based violence, child marriage, and restricted access to education and healthcare. These issues not only impede girls' personal development but also negatively affect the nation's progress.
- **The first NGCD was celebrated with the theme "Saving our Girls: Educating our Girls."** Since then, it has been observed annually with various themes, each underscoring the need to empower and address specific challenges faced by girls.



VEER BAL DIWAS IS OBSERVED ON 26TH DECEMBER EVERY YEAR TO COMMEMORATE THE MARTYRDOM OF THE FOUR SONS OF GURU GOBIND SINGH THE TENTH AND LAST SIKH GURU -

- **The four sons were named Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Jorawar Singh, and Fateh Singh.** who fought against the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and his army.
- **Jorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were captured by the Mughals at the age of six and nine respectively after they had defended their fort of Anandpur Sahib from a siege.**
- **They were taken to Sirhind, where they refused to convert to Islam and were sentenced to death by being bricked alive in 1705.**
- **Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh were also captured at Anandpur Sahib, but they managed to escape from Sirhind with the help of some loyal followers. They joined their father in his final battle at Sirhind, where he was wounded by a musket shot.**
- **Guru Gobind Singh's sons sacrificed their lives for the cause of Sikhism and their courage inspired generations of Sikhs.**



AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

INDIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD 2023 -

- Recently, the Union Minister of State for Science & Technology presented the "Indian of the Year Award" for 2023 to Team Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in the category of 'Outstanding Achievement.'

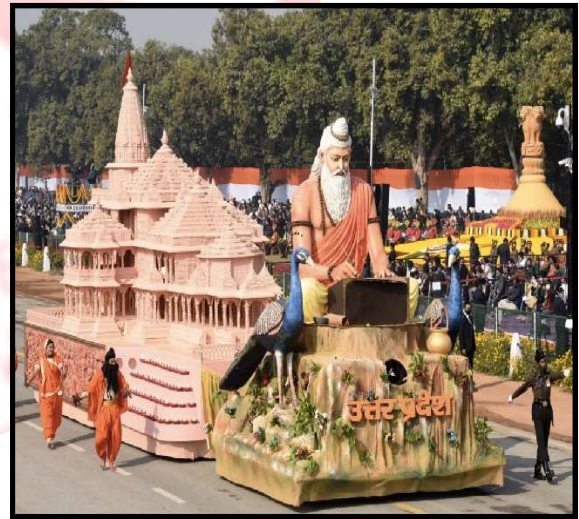


- The award recognized ISRO's contribution to space exploration, particularly highlighting the historic soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon's uncharted South Polar region.
- The remarkable growth of the private space sector was also highlighted in the event, with 190 startups and over Rs. 1,000 crore invested in the current financial year 2023-24.

SELECTION OF TABLEAUX ON THE REPUBLIC DAY -

- Recently, the Ministry of Defence has proposed a rollover plan for the States and Union Territories (UTs) to showcase their tableaux in the Republic Day Parade.
- It comes after a few states' governments have criticized the central government for not allowing it to be a part of the 2024 Republic Day Parade Tableaux.
- 16 States and UTs have been selected for the 2024 Republic Day Parade, **Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.**
- The Government of India organizes the six-day mega event "Bharat Parv" from January 26-31, as part of the Republic Day celebrations. This alternative event takes place at the historic Red Fort.

- The Government has finalized a rotational plan to ensure that every State and Union Territory gets an opportunity to present their tableaux at the Republic Day parade within a three-year cycle (2024-2026).
- The rotational system, agreed upon by 28 States, intends to provide fair opportunities to all regions, mitigating accusations of political bias and fostering a more inclusive celebration.



- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for conducting the parade and coordinating arrangements with States and other agencies.
- The Ministry of Culture collaborates with the MoD in the selection process, given the cultural and artistic nature of the tableaux, supporting in the evaluation and promotion of cultural displays.

PRESIDENT OF INDIA PRESENTS SPORTS AND ADVENTURE AWARDS 2023 -

- Recently, the President of India presided over a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan to bestow the prestigious National Sports and Adventure Awards 2023. The awards are administered by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award-

- **India's highest sporting honor established in 1991-92.** Named after hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.
- Notable awardees include MC Mary Kom, PV Sindhu, Sachin Tendulkar, and Virat Kohli. 2023: Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (badminton).

Arjuna Award-

- **Instituted in 1961**, it was India's highest sporting honor before the Khel Ratna came into being. Named after the Mahabharata character Arjuna.
- First awarded to football Olympian PK Banerjee in 1961. First woman awardee: Hockey player Anna Lumsden. 2023: Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery), Mohammed Shami (cricket), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting), among others.

Dronacharya Award-

- **India's highest sports honor for coaches, instituted in 1985.** Named after Dronacharya, Arjuna's coach in Mahabharata. Awardees receive a bronze statue of Dronacharya, a certificate, and a cash prize. First woman awardee: Athletics coach Renu Kohli in 2002.
- Regular Category: Lalit Kumar (wrestling), RB Ramesh (chess) among others.
- Lifetime Category: Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf), Bhaskaran E (kabaddi) among others.

Major Dhyan Chand Award-

- **Instituted in 2002, honors lifetime achievements in sports.** Recognizes contributions to the promotion of sports in an individual capacity. First awardees include Olympian boxer Shahuraj Birajdar and hockey player Ashok Diwan. 2023: Manjusha Kanwar (badminton), Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey), Kavitha Selvaraj (kabaddi).

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy (MAKA)-

- **Oldest National Sports Award in India, instituted in 1956-1957.** Given to an institution or university for top performance in inter-university tournaments. 2023: Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar-

- **Instituted in 2009.** Awarded to organizations and individuals for sports promotion and development.

- Categories include talent identification, corporate social responsibility, employment of sportspersons, and sports for development.
- 2023: JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Odisha Mining Corporation Limited.

Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award-

- **It has been presented since 1993-1994** and is named after Tenzing Norgay, one of the first two individuals to reach the summit of Mount Everest along with Edmund Hillary in 1953.
- The recipients are honored for their "outstanding achievement in the field of adventure activities on land, sea and air" over the last three years.
- The status of this award is considered to be equivalent to the Arjuna Award conferred in the field of sport.
- 2022: Late Ms. Savita Kanswal (land), Shri Tulsi Chaitanya Mothukuri (water), Shri Anshu Kumar Tiwari (air).

RECENTLY, PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI PARTICIPATED IN PRAN PRATISHTHA CEREMONY OF SHRI RAM LALLA IN THE NEWLY BUILT SHRI RAM JANMBHOOMI MANDIR -

- **Tata Consulting Engineers Limited (TCEL)** is the Project Management Company. **Larsen and Toubro (L&T)** is the Construction Company.



- The Sculptors are **Arun Yogiraj (Mysore), Ganesh Bhatt and Satyanarayan Pandey.**

- Chandrakant Sompura, and his two sons – Nikhil Sompura and Ashish Sompura are the Chief Architects.
- IIT Guwahati, IIT Chennai, IIT Bombay, NIT Surat, Central Building Research Institute Roorkee, National Geo Research Institute Hyderabad, and the National Institute of Rock Mechanics are the design advisors.
- The construction of the Ram Mandir is being supervised by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.
- The trust was set up in 2020 after the Supreme Court's verdict in the Ayodhya land dispute case. It is composed of 15 trustees.
- It is designed in the Nagara Style. Gurjara Chalukya architecture is classified as part of the Nagara style of temple architecture.
- The temple will consist of five mandapas in the middle of the garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) and on the entryway. Ram Lalla Virajman, the infant form of Lord Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, is the presiding deity of the temple.
- The temple will have idols each including the incarnations of Shiva, the 10 Dashavataras, the 64 Chausath Yoginis, and the 12 incarnations of the goddess Saraswati.
- The use of Steel or Iron has been completely avoided in the construction of Ram Mandir. Instead, traditional construction materials have been used in its construction to reflect an alignment with traditional building practices

FARSI AS INDIA'S NEW CLASSICAL LANGUAGE -

- In a noteworthy development aimed at strengthening cultural ties, the Government of India, under the New Education Policy, has decided to include Farsi (Persian) as one of the nine classical languages of India.
- This announcement was made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a two-day visit to Iran, highlighting the cultural, literary, and linguistic connections between Iran and India .
- Farsi, also known as Persian, is an Indo-Iranian language belonging to the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian languages.

- It has a rich historical and cultural significance, not only in Iran but also in the broader Persian-speaking world. The language is known for its extensive literary heritage, with poets like Rumi and Hafez making significant contributions to Persian literature .
- Before Farsi's inclusion, India recognized six languages as classical: Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014). The criteria for declaring a language as 'Classical' include a recorded history of 1500-2000 years, a valuable heritage of ancient literature, an original literary tradition, and distinctness from modern forms or offshoots .



UNESCO RECOGNITION TO GUJARAT'S GARBA DANCE -

- Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), during its 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee in Botswana, officially added Gujarat's iconic Garba dance to its esteemed Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity.
- The Garba dance form is the 15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list. Kolkata's Durga Puja was the last one added in 2021.
- Garba is a form of Gujarati folk dance that is performed during the nine-day Hindu festival of Navratri, which celebrates the victory of good over evil.
- The name Garba comes from the Sanskrit word for womb, implying life and creation.
- The dance also customarily marks a girl's first menstrual cycle and, later, her imminent marriage.



- The dance is performed around a centrally lit lamp or a picture or statue of the Goddess Shakti, who represents the feminine energy of the universe.

GUJARAT'S DHORDO AWARDED UNWTO'S BEST TOURISM VILLAGE 2023 -

- The beautiful village of Dhordo in Gujarat has garnered international recognition after it secured a place on the list of the 54 best tourism villages announced by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his delight at the recognition of Dhordo as the "best tourism village." He lauded the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of the village and emphasized its potentials to attract visitors from around the world. Union Home Minister Amit Shah celebrated the achievement, acknowledging the PM's efforts to transform the area into a world-class tourism site.
- Dhordo village situated in the heart of Gujarat, has come a long way to earn its place on the global stage as a premier tourism destination. It recently hosted the inaugural Tourism Working Group Meeting of the G20, during India's presidency of the influential group. This gathering of global leaders in the enchanting landscapes of Dhordo showcased the village's capacity to host international events and highlighted its growing importance in the world of tourism.
- The UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages 2023 accolade is a tribute to villages leading the way in nurturing rural regions, preserving landscapes, upholding cultural diversity, safeguarding local values, and celebrating culinary traditions. Launched in 2021, this initiative is a vital component of the UNWTO's Tourism for Rural Development program, which aims to promote sustainable tourism practices.
- In its third edition, the UNWTO's initiative selected 54 villages from diverse regions out of nearly 260 applications. The announcement was made during the



UNWTO General Assembly held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from October 16 to 20, where leaders and experts gathered to discuss the future of global tourism.

- Alongside Dhordo, several other villages from around the world achieved recognition, including Barrancas in Chile, Biei in Japan, Cantavieja in Spain, Dahshour in Egypt, Dongbaek in the Republic of Korea, Douma in Lebanon, Ericeira in Portugal, and Filandia in Colombia, among others.

SENIOR IPS OFFICER DALJIT SINGH CHAUDHARY APPOINTED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL -

- Senior IPS officer Daljit Singh Chaudhary has been appointed as the Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). This appointment is a significant development in the administrative reshuffling within India's internal security apparatus.
- The Sashastra Seema Bal, one of India's central armed police forces, is primarily responsible for guarding the country's borders with Nepal and Bhutan. The appointment of Daljit Singh Chaudhary, an experienced officer, is expected to bring in renewed vigour and strategic expertise in managing the crucial border areas, especially in the context of emerging security challenges in the region.
- Daljit Singh Chaudhary, an officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS), has had a distinguished career with various critical responsibilities in the past. His experience and skills are deemed crucial for the role of Director General of SSB, where he will be leading the force in maintaining the security and integrity of India's borders.
- Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Established in 1963, the SSB was originally set up to counter the activities of Chinese troops along the Indo-Nepal border following the Sino-Indian War.



- The primary role of the SSB is to ensure the security of the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders. This involves preventing cross-border crimes, smuggling, and other illegal activities. The force is also engaged in counter-insurgency operations and is responsible for ensuring peace and security in the border areas.

FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON TO GRACE INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY -

- In a testament to the enduring friendship between India and France, **President Emmanuel Macron is set to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi.** This marks the **sixth instance of a French leader gracing this prestigious occasion,** highlighting the significance of the bilateral relationship.
- President Macron follows in the footsteps of his predecessors, with **former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac having been the Chief Guest in 1976 and 1998.** Additionally, **former Presidents Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Francois Hollande have all contributed to this**



tradition in the years 1980, 2008, and 2016, respectively.

- This year's Republic Day celebrations hold special significance as India and France commemorate the 25th anniversary of their Strategic Partnership.
- Under the India-France Strategic Partnership, the two nations collaborate closely in critical areas such as **defence, space, civil nuclear, trade, investment, education, culture, and people-to-people ties.** This multifaceted engagement underscores the shared commitment to mutual growth and global cooperation.

ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI WINS THIRD TERM AS PRESIDENT OF EGYPT -

- Egypt's election authority announced that President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has secured a third six-year term leading the North African nation.
- Sisi won another term with 89.6 percent of the vote, the National Elections Authority said.
- Over 39 million Egyptians voted for the former army chief, who has ruled the nation for over a decade.
- This will be Sisi's final term in office as the Egyptian constitution only allows a president to sit for three terms.



PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

PM MODI LAUNCHES 'PRADHAN MANTRI SURYODAYA YOJANA' FOR ONE CRORE HOUSEHOLDS -

- In a significant move towards sustainable energy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana,' targeting the installation of rooftop solar panels on one crore households.
- The announcement was made on the auspicious occasion of the consecration of life in Ayodhya, reflecting the government's commitment to fostering self-reliance in energy.



- **Goal of Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana:** The initiative focuses on providing electricity to low and middle-income individuals through solar rooftop installations. Additionally, households can generate surplus electricity, contributing to additional income.
- **Financial Assistance under National Rooftop Solar Scheme:** The government's existing National Rooftop Solar Scheme, providing 40% financial assistance for the capital cost of solar rooftop projects, complements the newly announced initiative.
- The significant announcement came as the Prime Minister shared his vision for the 'Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana.' He declared, "The first decision I have taken after returning from Ayodhya is that our government will launch 'Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana' with the target of installing rooftop solar on 1 crore houses.
- Modi presided over a meeting with high-ranking officials from the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

OVER 24.8 CRORE INDIANS ESCAPE MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN 9 YEARS: NITI AAYOG REPORT REVEALS -

- In a significant stride towards poverty alleviation, a recent NITI Aayog report reveals that 24.82 crore people in India have successfully moved out of multidimensional poverty from 2013-14 to 2022-23.
- The decline is remarkable, dropping from 29.17% to 11.28% during this period. The multidimensional poverty index assesses deprivations across health, education, and standard of living using 12 sustainable development goals-aligned indicators.
- At the state level, Uttar Pradesh takes the lead with 5.94 crore people escaping poverty, followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore and Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore.
- All 12 indicators, encompassing nutrition, mortality rates, education, and more, witnessed significant improvements.
- The report suggests that India is poised to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1.2 (reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half), well before the 2030 deadline. The accelerated decline is attributed to various government initiatives targeting specific deprivation aspects.
- Anticipating a continued positive trajectory, the report envisions India reaching single-digit poverty levels by 2024.



OLA ELECTRIC BECOMES FIRST INDIAN EV COMPANY TO GET PLI NOD -

- India's electric vehicle (EV) landscape is witnessing a groundbreaking development as Ola Electric, the IPO-bound electric scooter company, secures eligibility for the government's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. This achievement positions Ola

Electric as a key player in the push towards sustainable transportation.

- In a recent report by ET Auto, it has been disclosed that Ola Electric successfully met the stringent eligibility criteria outlined in the PLI scheme, including a minimum of 50% domestic value addition to its electric vehicles (e2W).



- This accomplishment makes Ola Electric the first Indian e-scooter company to gain approval, paving the way for potential financial benefits ranging from INR 15,000 to 18,000 per unit.
- While Ola Electric celebrates its achievement, it's essential to note that other major players in the Indian automotive industry, including **Hero MotoCorp, TVS Motor Company, and Bajaj Auto, have also applied for the PLI scheme.** To qualify, e-scooter startups are required to invest a minimum of Rs 1,000 crore, indicating a substantial commitment to advancing electric mobility.
- The **PLI-Auto Scheme, approved by the Centre in 2021 with an outlay of Rs 25,938 crore over five years, aims to boost domestic manufacturing of Advanced Automotive Technology products.** These include electric vehicles and their components, offering financial incentives of up to 18% of eligible sales for electric vehicles and related components. This initiative aligns with India's broader goals of promoting sustainable and eco-friendly transportation solutions.

PARLIAMENT PASSES BILLS TO REPLACE BRITISH-ERA CRIMINAL LAWS -

- The Parliament recently passed three pivotal Bills: **Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023; Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023; and Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023.**
- However, their passage was marked by the absence of **97 Opposition members** due to their suspension, creating a contentious backdrop.

- Following their introduction in August, 2023, the bills were referred to a 31-member Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (Second) (BNS2) replaces the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and introduces significant alterations including-

- **Terrorism-** Defined as acts threatening the nation's integrity or causing terror among the populace. Penalties range from death or life imprisonment to imprisonment with fines.
- **Organized Crime-** Includes offenses like kidnapping, extortion, financial scams, cybercrime, and more. Punishments vary from life imprisonment to death, with fines for those committing or attempting organized crime.
- **Mob Lynching-** BNS2 identifies murder or severe injury by five or more individuals on specific grounds (race, caste, etc.) as a punishable offence, carrying life imprisonment or death penalty.
- **Sexual Offences Against Women-** Retaining IPC sections on rape, voyeurism, and other violations, BNS2 raises the age threshold for gangrape victims from 16 to 18 years. Additionally, it criminalizes deceptive sexual acts or false promises.
- **Death by Negligence-** The BNSS elevates the punishment for causing death by negligence from two to five years under Section 304A of the IPC.

The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS2) replaces the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (CrPC) and introduces significant alterations including-

- **Medical Examination-** It broadens the scope of medical examinations, allowing any police officer (not just a sub-inspector) to request one, making the process more accessible.
- **Forensic Investigation-** Mandates forensic investigation for crimes punishable by at least seven years' imprisonment.
- **Court Hierarchy-** The CrPC organizes India's criminal courts hierarchically, from Magistrate's Courts to the Supreme Court. It previously allowed cities with over a

million people to have Metropolitan Magistrates, but the BNSS2 eliminates this distinction and the role of Metropolitan Magistrates.

The Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023 (BSB2) replaces the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (IEA). It retains most provisions of the IEA including those on confessions, relevancy of facts, and burden of proof. However, it introduces significant alterations including-

- The BSB2 broadens the definition of documents to include electronic records alongside traditional writings, maps, and caricatures.
- **Oral Evidence-** The BSB2 permits electronic provision of oral evidence, enabling witnesses, accused individuals, and victims to testify through electronic means.
- **Admissibility of Electronic Records-** Electronic or digital records are granted equivalent legal status as paper records.
- **Amended Explanation to Joint Trials-** Joint trials encompass cases where one accused is absent or has not responded to an arrest warrant, now categorized as joint trials.

RECENTLY, THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATED THE SURAT DIAMOND BOURSE (SDB) IN GUJARAT, MARKING A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIAMOND AND JEWELRY INDUSTRY

- **The SDB stands as the world's largest office complex. It aims to relocate the diamond trading hub from Mumbai to Surat, leveraging Surat's diamond cutting and polishing expertise.**
- A diamond is a rare, naturally occurring mineral made up of pure carbon. The word diamond comes from the Greek word Adamas, which means indestructible.
- **Diamond occurs in two types of deposits, primarily in igneous rocks of basic or ultrabasic composition and in alluvial deposits derived from the primary sources.**

- **Major Diamond Producing Countries:** Russia, Botswana, Canada, South Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- **Russia is the world's largest producer of rough diamonds, mining nearly 42 million carats in 2022.**

Diamond Industry in India-

- **India is the world's largest cutting and polishing center for diamonds, accounting for over 90% of polished diamond manufacturing globally.**
- **According to Indian Minerals Yearbook 2019, diamond fields of India are grouped into four regions-**
- Central Indian tract of Madhya Pradesh, comprising Panna belt.
- South Indian tract of Andhra Pradesh, comprising parts of Anantapur, Kadapa, Guntur, Krishna, Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts.
- Behradin-Kodavali area in Raipur district and Tokapal, Dugapal, etc. areas in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh.
- Eastern Indian tract mostly of Odisha, lying between Mahanadi and Godavari valleys.
- In 2022, **India ranks first among the top exporters in cut & polished diamonds.**

OVER TIME, THE TIGER CONSERVATION INITIATIVE HAS EVOLVED, ESTABLISHING TIGER RESERVES (55) AND IMPLEMENTING CRUCIAL WILDLIFE PROTECTION LAWS -

- Project Tiger is a wildlife conservation initiative in India that was launched in 1973.
- The primary objective of Project Tiger is to ensure the survival and maintenance of the tiger population in their natural habitats by creating dedicated Tiger Reserves.
- **Starting with only nine reserves covering 9,115 sq. km, the project marked a paradigm shift in wildlife conservation efforts.**
- The unreliable pug-mark method of the first tiger census in 1972 gave way to more accurate techniques like the camera-trap method.



- The first tiger census, in 1972, used the unreliable pug-mark method to count 1,827 tigers.
- As of 2022, the tiger population is estimated at 3,167-3,925, showcasing a growth rate of 6.1% per year. India is now home to three-quarters of the world's tigers.
- In 1973, Project Tiger began with nine reserves covering 9,115 sq. km.
- By 2018, it had grown to 55 reserves in different states, totalling 78,135.956 sq. km or 2.38% of India's land area.

INDIA HAS ACQUIRED THE FIVE LITHIUM BLOCKS IN ARGENTINA -

- The Ministry of Mines through Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), signed an agreement with Argentina's State-owned CAMYEN (Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado).
- KABIL was formed in 2019 as a joint venture of state-run miners NALCO, HCL and MECL to source strategic minerals such as lithium and cobalt etc. from abroad. KABIL carries out identification, acquisition, exploration, development, mining and processing of strategic minerals overseas for commercial use and meeting the country's requirement of these minerals.
- The deal will help India strengthen lithium supplies, while developing lithium mining and downstream sectors of both the countries. It will facilitate diversification of the supply chain for critical materials towards achieving Global Net Zero goals.
- Nearly 54% of India's lithium imports are from China, which hogs 80% of global supply.
- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol Li and atomic number 3. It is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal.
- Chile, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and China contain most of the reserves discovered so far globally. Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, also known as the 'Lithium Triangle' contain 54% of the world's Lithium reserves.
- In Argentina the lithium is present in salt pans in the Atacama desert and neighboring arid zones in the region.

- In India, there is some potential to recover lithium from brines of Sambhar and Pachpadra areas in Rajasthan, and Rann of Kutch, Gujarat. Also the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has found lithium resources in Jammu and Kashmir.

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN AWARDS 2023 -

- The President of India conferred Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- Indore and Surat were jointly awarded the cleanest city title. Maharashtra secured the top position among states in the annual cleanliness rankings for urban areas.



- Swachh Survekshan, conducted by the MoHUA since 2016, is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey. It has been instrumental in fostering a spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities to improve their service delivery to citizens and towards creating cleaner cities.
- It has evolved, covering an increasing number of cities each year. The 2023 round encompassed 4,416 urban local bodies, 61 cantonments, and 88 Ganga towns.
- Indore has retained its cleanest city title for the 7th consecutive year. Surat, consistently second

behind Indore in recent years, claimed the top spot for the first time.

The Swachh Survekshan 2023 rankings considered various factors, including:

- A. Door-to-door waste collection
 - B. Source segregation
 - C. Cleanliness of public areas
 - D. Clean water bodies
 - E. Citizens' feedback on city cleanliness
- **Maharashtra claimed the cleanest state award with 89.24% door-to-door waste collection and 67.76% source segregation.** Madhya Pradesh secured the second position in state cleanliness rankings. Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Nagaland, and Tripura were ranked as the bottom five states in cleanliness.
 - **Chandigarh received the Safaimitra Surakshit Shehar award for the city with the best safety standards for sanitation workers.** Varanasi was recognized as the cleanest Ganga town. Mhow Cantonment was declared the cleanest cantonment in the country.

INDIA-NEPAL POWER PACT -

- India and Nepal recently signed a long-term agreement for the export of power. **The agreement was inked during the 7th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission, highlighting the strengthening ties between the two nations.**
- India and Nepal signed a bilateral agreement for the export of **10,000 MW of power in the next 10 years.**
- Three cross-border transmission lines were jointly inaugurated including the **132 kV Raxaul-Parwanipur, 132 kV Kushaha-Kataiya, and New Nautanwa-Mainahiya lines.**

Major Areas of Cooperation Between India and Nepal-

- India and Nepal, being immediate neighbors, enjoy special bonds of friendship and collaboration marked by an **open border and strong people-to-people connections rooted in kinship and culture.**

- Nepal shares a border of over **1850 km with five Indian states – Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.**
- **India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the largest source of foreign investments,** besides providing transit for almost the entire third country trade of Nepal.
- **India accounts for about two-third of Nepal's merchandise trade and about one-third of trade in services.**
- India has been aiding the modernization efforts of the Nepal Army through equipment supply and training provisions. **The joint military exercise, 'Surya Kiran,' at the battalion level, is conducted in both India and Nepal on a rotational basis. In 2023, it was held in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.**
- The Koshi Agreement (1954, revised in 1966) and Gandak Agreement (1959, revised in 1964) were the initial significant agree

COUGH SYRUP SAMPLES FAIL EXPORT QUALITY TEST -

- Recently, **data from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), shows that at least 6% of cough syrup samples from 54 Indian manufacturers failed a mandatory quality test for export.**
- **Gambia, Uzbekistan, Cameroon, and the World Health Organization (WHO) expressed concerns following the deaths of children who had taken these medications.**
- **Indian manufactured syrups were reported to be contaminated with glycol and ethylene glycol toxic substances that can sometimes be fatal, especially for children.**
- **India's pharmaceutical sector contributes around 1.72% of GDP and the industry is worth approximately USD 50 billion with more than half coming from exports.**
- The CDSCO under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is a national regulatory authority of India.

REPORTS & INDICES

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI) HANDED OVER ITS REPORT ON THE GYANVAPI MOSQUE COMPLEX TO THE HINDU AND MUSLIM SIDES -

- The Gyanvapi Mosque is located in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is near the Kashi Vishwanath temple.
- The dispute first reached the courts in 1991, when a petition sought the removal of the mosque from the site and the transfer of possession of the land to the Hindu community.
- The petitioners, which included the Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Trust, claimed that Maharaja Vikramaditya had built the temple more than 2,000 years ago.
- Hindu litigants have claimed that the mosque was built by Mughal ruler Aurangzeb on the site of the original Kashi Vishwanath temple after its destruction in the 17th century.
- The Vishwa Hindu Parishad contends that the Places of Worship Act is not applicable to the Gyanvapi issue, as there was no change to the religious structure since 1947, and that Hindus have always been performing puja at the site.
- The survey began on August 4, 2023, concerning the dispute around the complex. The ASI report concluded that it can be said there existed a Hindu temple prior to the construction of the existing structure, that is the mosque.



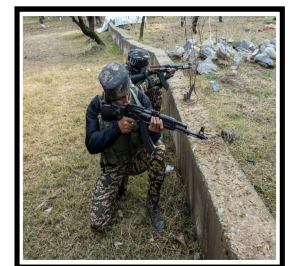
What does the Places of Worship Act say-

- The law was enacted to freeze the status of all places of worship in the country as on August 15, 1947.
- The Act says that no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section. It contains a declaration that a place of worship shall continue to be as it was on August 15, 1947.

- It prohibits any legal proceedings from being instituted regarding the character of a place of worship, and declares that all suits and appeals pending before any court or authority on the cut-off date regarding the conversion of the character of a place of worship shall abate.
- The 1991 Act will not apply in some cases. It will not apply to ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains that are covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- It will also not apply to any suit that has been finally settled or disposed of, any dispute that has been settled by the parties before the 1991 Act came into force, or to the conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence.
- The Act specifically exempted from its purview the place of worship commonly referred to at the time as Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.

US LEADS 2024 MILITARY RANKINGS, INDIA FOURTH, BHUTAN RANKS LOWEST

- The Global Firepower's Military Strength Rankings for 2024 offer a comprehensive assessment of military capabilities worldwide.
- The rankings, encompassing 145 countries, take into account more than 60 factors, including troop numbers, military equipment, financial stability, geographic location, and available resources. The culmination of these factors results in a PowerIndex score, providing a nuanced perspective on global military strength.
- Global Firepower's unique, in-house formula levels the playing field, enabling smaller, technologically advanced nations to compete with larger, less-developed powers.



The use of special modifiers, such as bonuses and penalties, refines the list annually.

- The methodology aims to offer a more holistic understanding of military capabilities by factoring in economic strength, logistical efficiency, and geography. This multi-faceted approach moves beyond raw firepower to paint a more complete picture of the global military landscape.

EXPANSION OF BRICS –

- **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates** have joined BRICS as new full members.



- **It was done as per the decision adopted by the 15th BRICS Summit in 2022.** A proposal to admit six countries, including Argentina, into the bloc with effect from January 1.
- BRICS is an acronym that refers to a group of five major emerging national economies: **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.** The term was originally coined by economist **Jim O’Neill** in 2001.
- **BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing around 41% of the global population, around 24% of the global GDP and around 16% of global trade.**
- Initially, the grouping was termed BRIC as South Africa was inducted in 2010 and from there on it has been referred to as BRICS.

- **New Development Bank:** Formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states.
- The Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- BRICS currently represents around 40% of the world’s population and more than a quarter of the world’s GDP.

APPLE SURPASSES SAMSUNG AS TOP SMARTPHONE MAKER FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2010 -

- In a significant industry shift, **Apple Inc.’s iPhone** has outpaced Samsung Electronics Co. devices, securing the title of the best-selling smartphone series in 2023. This marks the first time since 2010 that Samsung has conceded the top spot in the smartphone market.



- According to research firm IDC, the iPhone claimed a substantial 20% share of the global market, with nearly 235 million shipments in the previous year.
- Samsung, facing a double-digit slump in shipments to 226.6 million, secured the second position, surpassing Chinese competitors like Xiaomi Corp.
- Apple’s dominance over Samsung for an entire year is unprecedented, indicating the Cupertino-based company’s resilience amid an industrywide slowdown.
- While Apple traditionally excels during the holiday quarter, its sustained success throughout the year underscores its ability to weather market challenges better than rivals.
- Apple’s success can be attributed to aggressive offers that attracted consumers towards premium devices.

INDIA, PAKISTAN EXCHANGE LIST OF NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS -

- India and Pakistan exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad.
- The nuclear installations and facilities are covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between India and Pakistan.
- It is the **33rd consecutive exchange of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place on January 01, 1992.**
- It is also known as the India-Pakistan Non-Attack Agreement, that was signed on 31 December 1988 and entered into force on 27 January 1991.
- It provides that India and Pakistan inform each other of the nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the Agreement on the first of January of every calendar year.
- **India tested its first nuclear weapon in 1974, becoming the sixth country to detonate a nuclear weapon, and it has approximately 164 nuclear warheads,** and has land-based, sea-based and air-launch nuclear capabilities.
- India is pursuing membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016. India has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty nor The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- Pakistan became a nuclear power in 1998, becoming the world's 7th state to officially test a nuclear weapon and has approximately 170 warheads.
- Similar to India, Pakistan is not a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

**RECENTLY, THE ETHICS COMMITTEE OF THE LOK SABHA IS BELIEVED TO HAVE RECOMMENDED THE EXPULSION OF****TRINAMOOL CONGRESS (MP) MAHUA MOITRA FROM THE LOK SABHA -**

- The **ethics committee was constituted in 2000.** Its objective is to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of members and examine cases of 'unethical conduct' referred to it.
- The **Committee examines complaints filed against members of the House by other members; outsiders through a member; or referred by the Speaker.**
- The Committee makes a prima facie inquiry before deciding to examine a complaint. It presents its report to the Speaker, who places it before the House for consideration.
- The term '**unethical**' is not defined. It is left to the Committee to decide whether any act is unethical or not.
- While the **Ethics Committee handles cases of unethical conduct, the Privileges Committee, or Special Inquiry Committee, deals with more severe accusations against a member.** These committees have historical precedence, with a special committee in 1951 finding a member guilty of promoting a business interest through questions in return for financial benefits.
- Parliamentary committees are **broadly categorized as Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees.**
- **Standing Committees are permanent and operate continuously, while Ad Hoc Committees are temporary and disband upon task completion.**
- It includes **Financial Committees, Departmental Standing Committees, Committees to Enquire, Committees to Scrutinise and Control, Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business** of the House, and House-Keeping Committees.
- **Ad Hoc Committees are subdivided into Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees.** The Parliamentary committees draw their authority from the constitution.
- **Article 105:** Powers, privileges, etc., of the houses of Parliament and of the members and committees thereof.
Article 118: Each House of Parliament may make rules for regulations, subject to the provisions of this constitution, its procedure and the conduct of its business.

DEFENCE

THE INDIAN ARMY HAS LAUNCHED OPERATION SARVASHAKTI IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR, DEPLOYING FORCES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PIR PANJAL RANGE TO TARGET TERRORISTS

- The operation will focus on locating the terrorists' hideouts in the dense jungles, mountains and the caves.



- The Chinar Corps along with the Nagrota-headquartered White Knight Corps would be carrying out simultaneous operations.
- The operation is reminiscent of Operation Sarpvishay, which was launched in 2003 to eliminate terrorists from the same area.
- The areas south of Mendhar leading to the Pir Panjal range through Hilkaka constitute among the shortest routes of access for infiltrators from across the LoC into the Kashmir valley.
- The dense forests and steep mountain slopes offer both adequate cover and visual domination of the area.

IRAN, PAKISTAN, AND THE BALOCH MILITANCY -

- Recently, the relationship between Iran and Pakistan has taken serious hits over Iranian missiles and drones that struck two alleged bases of the Jaish al-Adl (JAA), an anti-Iran Baloch militant group, in Pakistan's Balochistan province.
- Pakistan reacted strongly to the "blatant breach" of its sovereignty and carried out its own cross-border missile strikes on alleged terrorist sanctuaries in Iran.
- The JAA came under the scanner of Indian security agencies following the abduction of an Indian, Kulbhushan Jadhav. The group allegedly

traded Jadhav to Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

- Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, both countries were firmly allied to the United States and had, in 1955, joined the Baghdad Pact, later known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), a military alliance modeled on NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).



- Iran provided material and weapons support to Pakistan during its wars against India in 1965 and 1971. The Shah of Iran expressed concern about the "disintegration" of Pakistan after the Liberation of Bangladesh.
- The Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the rise of an ultra-conservative Shiite regime under Ayatollah Khomeini. This was concurrent with Pakistan's own Islamization under military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. The two countries found themselves on opposite ends of the sectarian divide.
- Since 1979, has been a major reason for the Iranian distrust of Pakistan, which increased after 09/11 as Islamabad extended unqualified support to the US "War on Terror".

INDIA'S ALL-WOMEN TRI-SERVICES CONTINGENT AT REPUBLIC DAY 2024 PARADE -

- **In a historic first, the 2024 Republic Day Parade in India will witness the participation of two all-women contingents from the defence forces, marking a significant milestone in the country's journey towards gender equality and empowerment in the military.** These contingents will include members from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, showcasing the seamless integration and valour of Indian armed forces.
- **At the forefront of this monumental event is Captain Sandhya, who will lead the all-women tri-services contingent, consisting of 148 members. This team, which includes Agniveers and regular recruits, has undergone extensive preparation in Delhi since early December, following two months of individual practice at their respective bases.** Captain Sandhya, a 26-year-old officer who previously participated in the 2017 Republic Day parade as an NCC cadet, expressed her pride and fortune at being allowed to lead this historic contingent.
- **In addition to the tri-services contingent, the parade will also feature a second all-women contingent from the Directorate General of the Armed Forces Medical Services.** This group will consist of nurses from the military nursing services and will be led by female doctors. This inclusion further emphasizes the Government of India's commitment, under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, to promoting Nari Shakti (women empowerment) within the defence forces.

RECENTLY INS IMPHAL WAS COMMISSIONED INTO THE INDIAN NAVY

- **INS Imphal (Pennant D68), the third of four warships of Project 15B that together form the Visakhapatnam**

class stealth-guided missile destroyers, is commissioned into the Indian Navy.

- **The Visakhapatnam-class destroyers, also classified as the P-15 Bravo class, or simply P-15B, is a class of guided-missile destroyers currently being built for the Indian Navy.**
- **It is built by also known by the name Yard 12706 and was built by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL).**
- **The propulsion system includes combined gas and gas (COGAG) configuration with four gas turbines. The maximum speed is 30 knots and range is 4000 nautical miles.**
- **It is named after the city of Imphal, honoring the strategic and historical significance of the Northeast region.**

MILITARY EXERCISE "VINBAX-2023" -

- **The Indian Armed Forces contingent reached Hanoi, Vietnam to take part in the fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023.**
- **Exercise VINBAX was instituted in 2018 and the first edition was conducted at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **It is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam.**
- **The exercise is to foster collaborative partnership, promote inter-operability and share best practices between the two sides under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations.**
- **The exercise will be conducted as a Command Post Exercise cum Field Training Exercise with focus on deployment and employment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team.**

SPORTS

HARYANA DOMINATES MEDAL TALLY WITH 40 GOLD, 39 SILVER AND 26 BRONZE IN INAUGURAL KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES -

- The Khelo India Para Games 2023 concluded on December 17 in New Delhi, showcasing the remarkable talents of para athletes from across the country.
- The inaugural edition of the event saw Haryana clinched the top spot, securing a total of 105 medals, including 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze. The competition, which began on December 10, featured around 1,450 para athletes representing 32 states and Union Territories.

KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES 2023				
	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
HARYANA	40	39	26	105
UTTAR PRADESH	25	23	14	62
TAMIL NADU	20	8	14	42
GUJARAT	15	22	20	57
MAHARASHTRA	12	7	16	35
RAJASTHAN	10	20	13	43
PUNJAB	8	2	10	20
DELHI	7	10	19	36
KARNATAKA	7	10	13	30
ODISHA	6	1	4	11

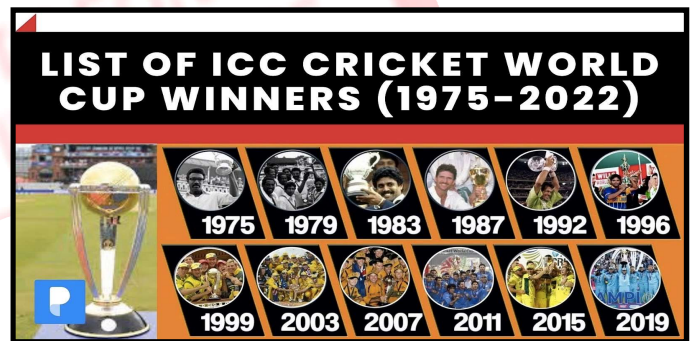
- In a spectacular display of skill and determination, Haryana emerged as the overall winner of Khelo India Para Games 2023. The state’s athletes secured an impressive medal haul, with 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze medals. Among the standout performances was Pranav Soorma’s exceptional achievement in the club throw event, where he not only won gold but also set a new Asian record with an impressive throw of 33.54 meters.
- Khelo India Para Games 2023 is the latest edition to the Government of India’s Khelo India Initiative,

which aims to nurture the sporting culture in the country at the grassroots level.

- The initiative includes various sporting events such as Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games and Khelo India Winter Games. The success of the program, running since 2017, reflects its widespread acceptance and support from every corner of the country.

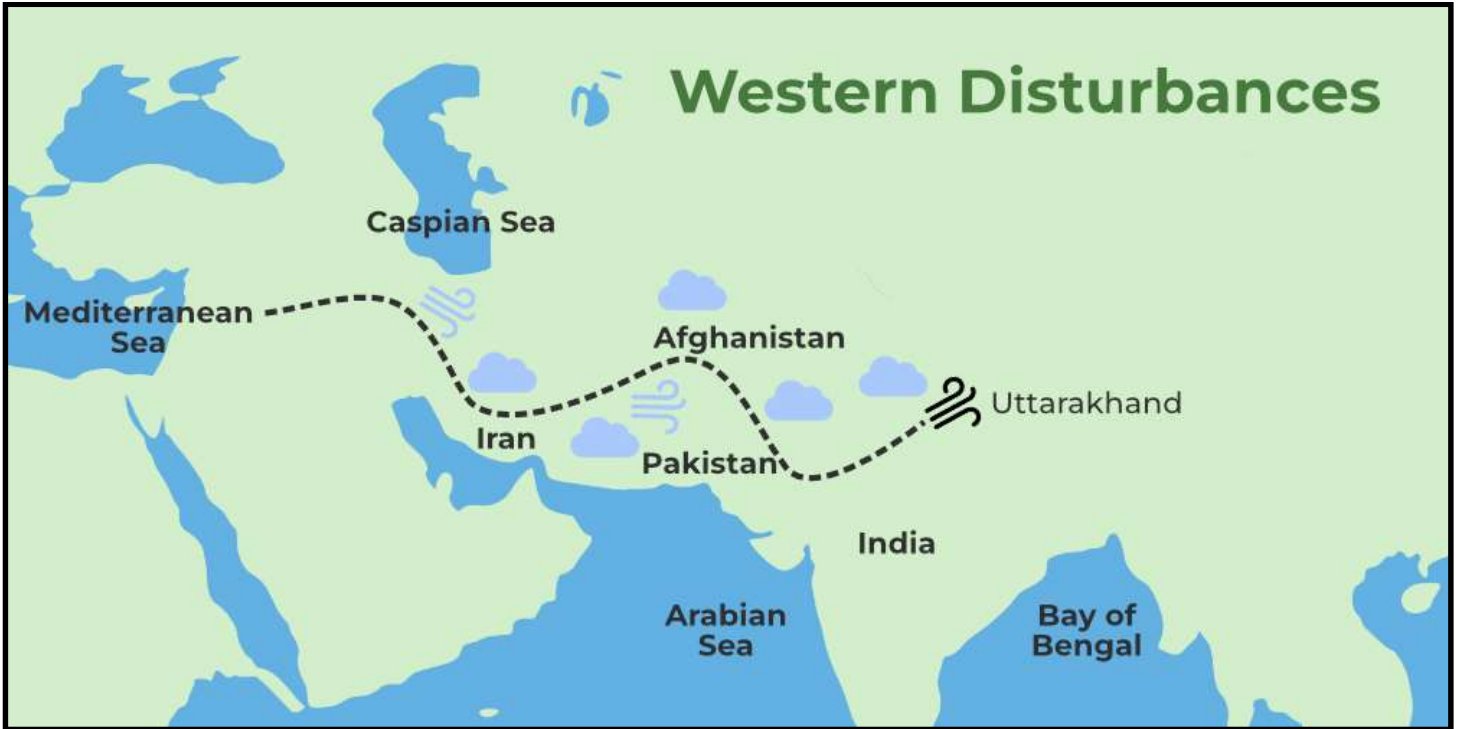
CRICKET WORLD CUP WINNERS LIST (1975-2023), AUSTRALIA WINS 2023 WORLD CUP -

- As we know the ODI Cricket World Cup 2023 is concluded on 19th November 2023 and Australia won the World Cup final.



- The 2023 ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup is the 13th edition of the Cricket World Cup, a quadrennial One Day International (ODI) cricket tournament contested by men’s national teams and organized by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- The inception of this tournament dates back to 1975 when it was first introduced in England. The format involved one-day matches with each team playing for 60 overs.
- In 1987, a significant milestone was reached when the tournament was jointly hosted by India and Pakistan, marking the first time it was held outside of England.

MAPS & ARTICLES





ICJ Proceedings: South Africa vs. Israel

Human rights, genocide, and war crimes are interconnected concepts within the broader framework of international law, specifically focusing on protecting individuals and groups during times of conflict or crisis. Human rights serve as the foundation for the prevention of genocide and war crimes. These rights are enshrined in various international treaties and declarations, such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.

South Africa instituted proceedings against Israel in the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**. In its application, the former argued that the manner in which Israel was conducting its military operations in **Gaza** violated the **International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide i.e., Genocide Convention**.

What is Genocide?

About:

- As per UN, genocide is the intentional and systematic destruction of a particular ethnic, racial, religious, or national group.
- This destruction can occur through a variety of means, including mass killing, forced relocation, and the imposition of harsh living conditions that result in widespread death.

Conditions:

UN says a crime of genocide includes two main elements:

- **Mental Element:** The intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.
- **Physical Element:** It includes the following acts, enumerated exhaustively:
 - Killing members of the group.
 - Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
 - Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life is calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

What is Genocide Convention?

About:

- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is an instrument of international law that codified for the first time the crime of genocide.

- It was the first human rights treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948.
- It signified the international community's commitment to 'never again' after the atrocities committed during the Second World War.
- Its adoption marked a crucial step towards the development of international human rights and international criminal law as we know it today.

Features:

- According to the Genocide Convention, genocide is a crime that can take place both in time of war as well as in time of peace.
- This definition of the crime of genocide has been widely adopted at both national and international levels, including in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Importantly, the Convention establishes on State Parties the obligation to take measures to prevent and to punish the crime of genocide, including by enacting relevant legislation and punishing perpetrators, "whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals" (Article IV).
- This obligation, in addition to the prohibition of committing genocide, have been considered as norms of international customary law and therefore, binding on all States, whether or not they have ratified the Genocide Convention.
- India has ratified this convention.

What is the 'South Africa vs Israel Case' at ICJ?

S Africa's Allegations:

- The killing of Palestinians in Gaza in large numbers, especially children; destruction of their homes; their expulsion and displacement by Israeli forces.
- It also Includes blockade on food, water and medical assistance to the strip; the imposition of measures preventing Palestinian births by destroying essential health services crucial for the survival of pregnant women and babies.

S Africa's Immediate Demands:

- South Africa is requesting that the ICJ move urgently to prevent Israel from committing further crimes in the strip using “provisional measures” – essentially an emergency order that can be applied even before the main case begins.
- It argues that provisional measures are necessary “to protect against further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the Genocide Convention, which continue to be violated with impunity”.

Israel's Stand:

- Israel, which has lambasted S Africa for bringing the case, has promised to defend itself at the court. Israeli officials have called the case “preposterous” and say it constitutes a “blood libel”.
- Israel argues that the killing of more than 23,000 people in Gaza is in self-defence and will present proudly our case of using self-defence under our most inherent right under international humanitarian law.

Stand of International Community:

- Several countries and organisations have backed South Africa's suit. Malaysia, Turkey, Jordan, Bolivia, the Maldives, Namibia, Pakistan, Columbia, and members of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) are among them.
- The European Union has been silent, but Israel has seen support from its number one backer and weapons supplier, the US which states - “allegations that Israel is committing genocide are unfounded, but Israel must prevent civilian harm and investigate allegations of humanitarian crimes.”
- The UK, and France oppose the case, with France even hinting at non-compliance if genocide findings are issued against Israel.

What are the Different Concerns in the ‘S Africa vs Israel Case’?**ICJ as One Forum:**

- Questions arise about the one-sided focus on Israel, but non-state actors like Hamas can't be brought to the ICJ.
- ICC deals with individuals, and the situation has been referred for investigation.

Global Split:

- The divide among nations, tracking colonial and non-colonial histories, adds complexity where Bangladesh and Jordan support South Africa, while Germany backs Israel.
- Germany's stance, previously supporting a broad reading of the Genocide Convention, raises questions about its current position in the South Africa vs. Israel case.
- The split reflects historical power dynamics in the formation of international law.
- The proceedings are seen as challenging the legitimacy of international law itself. France's belligerent statements contribute to this perception.

Note

- ICJ is separate from the International Criminal Court (ICC), which tries individuals in criminal cases, where Israel too can invoke legal actions against Hamas and its members.

What are the Laws and Regulations in India for Genocide?**International Conventions:**

- India does not have any domestic law on genocide, even though it has ratified the UN Convention on Genocide.
- India is a signatory to the UDHR and has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Indian Penal Code (IPC):

- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) provides for the punishment of genocide and related crimes, and sets out the procedures for investigation, prosecution, and punishment.
- Genocide has been defined as a crime under IPC Section 153B, which criminalizes acts that promote enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc. with the intent to cause riots or commit acts of violence.

Constitutional Provisions:

- The Indian Constitution via Article 15 provides protection against discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth;

- Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty etc.

Statutory Provisions:

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India was established in 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
- The act also provides for the establishment of State Human Rights Commissions.

What are the Ways to Prevent Genocides and War Crimes?

Genocide is not something that happens overnight or without warning. Genocide requires organisation and constitutes in fact a deliberate strategy and one that has been mostly carried out by governments or groups controlling the state apparatus. In 2004, on the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, erstwhile UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan outlined a five-point action plan for preventing genocide:

Prevent Armed Conflict:

- As genocide is most likely to occur during war, one of the best ways to reduce the chances of genocide is to address the root causes of violence and conflict: hatred, intolerance, racism, discrimination, tyranny, and the dehumanizing public discourse that denies whole groups of people their dignity and their rights.
- Addressing inequalities in access to resources constitutes a critical prevention strategy.

Protect Civilians:

- When efforts to prevent conflict fail, one of the highest priorities must be to protect civilians. Wherever civilians are deliberately targeted because they belong to a particular community, there is a risk of genocide.
- Over the last decade, the UN Security Council has frequently expanded the mandate of UN peacekeepers so that they can physically protect civilians who are threatened with violence.

End Impunity through Judicial Action:

- To deter people from committing crimes of genocide, those responsible for such crimes need to be brought to justice.
- Fighting impunity and establishing a credible expectation that the perpetrators of genocide and related crimes will be held accountable can effectively contribute to a culture of prevention.

Appointing Special Advisers:

- The tragedies of Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s demonstrated, in the worst possible way, that the UN had to do more to prevent genocide.
- With this in mind, the Secretary General, in 2004, appointed Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.
- The Special Advisers collect information on situations where there may be a risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Swift Actions, including via Military Force:

- When, where, and how to intervene militarily in domestic situations to prevent or respond to genocide or other mass atrocity crimes is to be decided by the Security Council, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.
- In 2005, at the United Nations World Summit, all countries formally agreed that, if peaceful methods are inadequate and if national authorities are “manifestly failing” to protect their populations from the mass atrocity crimes, then:
- States should act collectively in a “timely and decisive manner,” through the UNSC and in accordance with the Charter of the UN.

Conclusion

- The legal proceedings initiated by South Africa against Israel in the ICJ have sparked intense global debate. The case revolves around allegations of genocide in Israel's military operations in Gaza, presenting a complex legal context. The outcome holds significance not only for mitigating the crisis in Gaza but also as a crucial test for the "rules-based international order." The ICJ's decisions in the coming months will play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of the international legal framework.

IMPORTANT MCQ FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS

- Q1. Who has been appointed as the new Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)?
a) Rahul Rasgotra b) Anish Dayal Singh
c) Nina Singh d) Vivek Srivastava
- Q2. Who is the newly appointed Director General of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)?
a) Anish Dayal Singh b) Rahul Rasgotra
c) Nina Singh d) Vivek Srivastava
- Q3. What does the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 provide for?
a) Regulation of social media during elections
b) Appointment, salary, and removal of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners
c) Reducing the voting age to 16 years
d) Introduction of online voting
- Q4. What is the primary aim of the SHRESHTA scheme ?
a) Promoting sports in schools
b) Filling the gap in service-deficient SCs dominant areas through high-quality education
c) Providing employment opportunities
d) Encouraging entrepreneurship among SC students
- Q5. Where has the 11th India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR commenced?
a) Punjab b) Uttarakhand
c) Himachal Pradesh d) Rajasthan
- Q6. Who is set to be posthumously awarded the 'Bharat Ratna'?
a) Kalyan Singh b) Mulayam Singh Yadav
c) Hemananda Biswal d) Karpoori Thakur
- Q7. Which country concluded a groundbreaking free-trade agreement with India after 16 years of negotiations?
a) Germany b) Switzerland
c) France d) Japan
- Q8. Who inaugurated India's first all-girl Sainik School in Vrindavan, Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh ?
a) Rajnath Singh b) Shashi Tharoor
c) Amit Shah d) Smriti Irani
- Q9. Where are the Houthi rebels believed to be based, who are allegedly responsible for the drone attack on the chemical tanker MV Chem Pluto ?
a) Liberia b) Japan
c) Saudi Arabia d) Yemen
- Q10. Which country has recently filed a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice accusing it of genocide?
a) Egypt b) Qatar
c) Iran d) South Africa
- Q11. As per a new report, made along with NITI Aayog, which state had the highest electricity demand in the country in 2023 ?
a) Karnataka
b) Tamil Nadu
c) Uttar Pradesh
d) Gujarat
- Q12. As per the India Skills Report 2024, which state is the most preferred state to work ?
a) Karnataka
b) Telangana
c) Kerala
d) Gujarat
- Q13. The minimum forest cover to maintain ecological balance in the plains is
a) 25% b) 33%
c) 40% d) 50%
- Q14. What is the full form of GAGAN, the satellite-based augmentation system by DRDO ?
a) Geospatial Analysis and Geotagging Access Node
b) Gyroscopic Aviation Guidance and Navigation
c) Graphical Atmosphere Grid and Analysis Nexus
d) GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation
- Q15. Who has recently achieved the historic milestone of becoming the first woman with a \$100 billion fortune, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index ?
a) Francoise Bettencourt Meyers
b) Mary Johnson
c) Elena Rodriguez
d) Sophia Wang

- Q16. Which Indian electric vehicle (EV) company has recently become eligible for the government's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme ?
- Tata Motors
 - Ola Electric
 - Mahindra Electric
 - Ather Energy
- Q17. Which of the following organizations celebrated its 66th Foundation Day on January 1, 2024 ?
- DRDO
 - ISRO
 - HAL
 - IAF
- Q18. Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve is located in which state/UT ?
- Rajasthan
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Gujarat
- Q19. What is the name of the plant which grows on another plant/tree drawing moisture and nutrients not from host?
- Parasite
 - Epiphyte
 - Phorophyte
 - Photophyte
- Q20. The Standard of living in a country is represented by its
- Poverty Ratio
 - Per Capita Income
 - National Income
 - Unemployment Rate
- Q21. In the 'Index of Eight core Industries' which one of the following is given the highest weight ?
- Coal Production
 - Electricity Generation
 - Fertilizer Production
 - Steel Production
- Q22. What decision did the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) make regarding Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Copra for the 2024 season?
- Reduced MSP for both milling and ball copra
 - No change in MSP from the previous season
 - Increased MSP for milling copra by 300 rupees per quintal and for ball copra by 250 rupees per quintal
 - Decreased MSP for milling copra and increased for ball copra
- Q23. According to the Global Peace Index 2023, which country holds the title of the safest country in the world for the 14th consecutive year?
- Denmark
 - Iceland
 - Switzerland
 - Japan
- Q24. In the 2024 Global Firepower Military Strength Rankings, which position did India claim?
- Fifth
 - Second
 - Fourth
 - Sixth
- Q25. Every state and UT will have the chance to present their tableau at the Republic Day parade in three years, according to the new agreement. Approximately how many tableaux are chosen annually for the Republic Day parade from among the States and Union Territories ?
- | | |
|-------|-------|
| a) 14 | b) 15 |
| c) 16 | d) 18 |
- Q26. Which state does Tata Motors want to increase output by 12–18 months by operationalizing Ford's Sanand plant ?
- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| a) Sikkim | b) Odisha |
| c) Rajasthan | d) Gujarat |
- Q27. Which state is home to Lothian Island Wildlife Sanctuary ?
- Uttarakhand
 - Maharashtra
 - Tamil Nadu
 - West Bengal
- Q28. Which state's chief minister was Bhajan Lal Sharma?
- Sikkim
 - Odisha
 - Rajasthan
 - Gujarat

- Q29. Who achieved a historic milestone by defeating World Champion Ding Liren and surpassing Viswanathan Anand to become India's No.1 Chess Player?
a) Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa
b) Gukesh D
c) Arjun Erigaisi
d) P. Harikrishna
- Q30. Which region has become the third-largest for Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs) in India, surpassing Mauritius?
a) Luxembourg
b) Mauritius
c) United States
d) United Kingdom
- Q31. In the 2024 Global Firepower Military Strength Rankings, which position did India claim?
a) Fifth
b) Second
c) Fourth
d) Sixth
- Q32. In which Indian state does the traditional bull-taming festival "Jallikattu" take place?
a) Kerala
b) Karnataka
c) Andhra Pradesh
d) Tamil Nadu
- Q33. Panama Canal, which has been in news, connects which two oceans ?
a) Atlantic Ocean & Pacific Ocean
b) Atlantic Ocean & Indian Ocean
c) Indian Ocean & Arctic Ocean
d) Pacific Ocean & Arctic Ocean
- Q34. Recently, which state was ranked as the Best Performer in the Indian startup ecosystem ranking for 2022 ?
a) Tamil Nadu
b) Bihar
c) Manipur
d) Rajasthan
- Q35. What target has the government set to reduce accidental death by 2030 ?
a) 50 %
b) 40 %
c) 60 %
d) 30 %
- Q36. What is the capital of Belarus ?
a) Malawi
b) Ethiopia
c) Senegal
d) Minsk
- Q37. Shirui Lily Festival is the state festival of __ ?
a) Goa
b) Manipur
c) Assam
d) Himachal Pradesh
- Q38. The International Kite Festival 2023 has begun on 8 January in which state?
a) Gujarat
b) Punjab
c) Uttar Pradesh
d) Maharashtra
- Q39. PM Modi inaugurate the 26th National Youth Festival in which state on January 12, 2023?
a) Gujarat
b) Uttar Pradesh
c) Madhya Pradesh
d) Karnataka
- Q40. The iconic Mughal Gardens in Rashtrapati Bhavan has been renamed as the _____.
a) Amrit Udyan
b) Bharat Udyan
c) Nation Udyan
d) Suryodhaya Udyan
- Q41. On which date is Indian Army Day celebrated every year ?
a) January 14
b) January 15
c) February 1
d) March 10
- Q42. Which country is set to become the world's largest producer of lentils during the 2023-24 crop years ?
a) Australia
b) Russia
c) Canada
d) India
- Q43. What is the capital of Georgia ?
a) Tbilisi
b) Accra
c) Berlin
d) Georgetown
- Q44. Where is the Bamboo Island Wild Life Sanctuary situated ?
a) Andhra Pradesh
b) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
c) Arunachal Pradesh
d) Assam

- Q45. The appointment of Pramod Agarwal as the Chairman of BSE has been approved by which regulatory authority ?
a) Bombay Stock Exchange
b) Coal India Limited
c) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
d) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- Q46. Which annual music festival in Gwalior features the 'Tabla Darbar' performance that set the Guinness World Record?
a) Gwalior Sangeet Mahotsav
b) Malwa Utsav
c) Tansen Samaroh
d) Madhya Pradesh Music Festival
- Q47. What is the main objective of Operation Sarvashakti launched by the Indian Army?
a) Eliminate terrorists
b) Counter cyber threats
c) Provide humanitarian aid
d) Enhance diplomatic relations
- Q48. Which Indian state has initiated a caste-based census, becoming the second state after Bihar to undertake this exercise?
a) Andhra Pradesh
b) Maharashtra
c) Tamil Nadu
d) Karnataka
- Q49. Which organization surpassed the State Bank of India (SBI) to become the most valuable Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) with a market capitalization of ₹5.8 Lakh Crore ?
a) ONGC
b) BHEL
c) LIC
d) IOCL
- Q50. Recently, which state launched the 'My School-My Pride' campaign for education transformation ?
a) Himachal Pradesh
b) Madhya Pradesh
c) Uttar Pradesh
d) Haryana
- Q51. Which country is aiming for lunar success on January 20th with its smart lander mission ?
a) China
b) USA
c) Russia
d) Japan
- Q52. Which year is the first module of the projected Bharatiya Space Station expected to be launched by ISRO and tested for the first time next year ?
a) 2024
b) 2028
c) 2030
d) 2026
- Q53. Which country supplies the Apache attack helicopters to India ?
a) Japan
b) France
c) USA
d) Israel
- Q54. India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility was inaugurated in which state ?
a) Andhra Pradesh
b) Karnataka
c) Uttar Pradesh
d) Maharashtra
- Q55. The term stagflation refers to a situation where ?
a) Growth has no relation with the change in prices
b) Rate of growth is faster than the rate of price increase
c) Rate of growth is slower than the rate of price increase
d) Rate of growth and prices both are decreasing
- Q56. Per Capita Income is Obtained by dividing National Income by
a) Total population of the country
b) Total working population
c) Area of the country
d) Volume of the capital used
- Q57. Rani ki vav or The Queen's Stepwell is located in which of these states ?
a) Rajasthan
b) Gujarat
c) Punjab
d) Andhra Pradesh
- Q58. Ratanmahal Sloth Bear Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in which state ?
a) Delhi
b) Arunachal Pradesh
c) Gujarat
d) Haryana
- Q59. Where did the International Gita Mahotsav – 2023 commence?
a) Delhi
b) Varanasi
c) Kurukshetra
d) Mathura

- Q60. What is the primary objective of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?
a) Empowerment of women artisans
b) Providing financial aid to startups
c) Skill upgradation and support for artisans and craftspeople
d) Offering housing loans to rural artisans
- Q61. What is the primary goal of the SAANS Campaign ?
a) To promote general healthcare
b) To prevent and treat pneumonia
c) To provide resources for COVID-19
d) To inaugurate medical facilities
- Q62. On which date is World Braille Day annually observed?
a) January 3
b) January 4
c) February 2
d) March 1
- Q63. Which communication satellite is set for launch in the historic collaboration between ISRO and SpaceX ?
a) GSAT-20
b) INSAT-4A
c) PSLV-C48
d) Cartosat-2E
- Q64. Which of the national park located in Rajasthan ?
a) Sariska National park
b) Kanha National Park
c) Pench National Park
d) Panna National Park
- Q65. Naypyidaw is the capital city of which of the following country ?
a) Myanmar
b) Bhutan
c) South Korea
d) Namibia
- Q66. Who is the revered poet honoured with the renaming of Ayodhya Airport ?
a) Maharishi Valmiki
b) Tulsidas
c) Kabir
d) Surdas
- Q67. Which project category does INS Imphal belong to among the guided missile destroyers?
a) Project 14
b) Project 15
c) Project 16
d) Project 17
- Q68. Which scheme's enrolments crossed 6 crore, including over 70 lakh in the current financial year ?
a) National Pension System (NPS)
b) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PMSYM)
c) Atal Pension Yojana (APY)
d) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-dhan Yojana (PM-KMY)
- Q69. In the joint military exercise 'Desert Cyclone 2024,' which two nations are collaborating to enhance interoperability ?
a) India and Oman
b) India and UAE
c) India and Saudi Arabia
d) India and Qatar
- Q70. Who has been appointed as the Director General of Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards under the Ministry of Home Affairs ?
a) Rajendra Singh
b) Sudhanshu Sarangi
c) Vivek Srivastava
d) Santosh Kumar Upadhyay
- Q71. Who is the Director General at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) ?
a) Ashutosh Sharma
b) Shekhar C. Mande
c) Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi
d) R. S Nadgauda
- Q72. Charba is a popular folk dance of which state ?
a) Jharkhand
b) Himachal Pradesh
c) Goa
d) West Bengal
- Q73. Who has been appointed as the new Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) ?
a) Rahul Rasgotra
b) Anish Dayal Singh
c) Nina Singh
d) Vivek Srivastava
- Q74. What is the name of the joint air exercise conducted by India, France, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the Arabian Sea?
a) Eagle Strike
b) Aero Falcon
c) Blue Thunder
d) Desert Knight
- Q75. When is National Voters' Day celebrated in India?
a) January 25
b) February 14
c) March 5
d) January 10

- Q76. Which country is set to become a NATO member as its membership bid is approved by Turkey's parliament ?
a) Finland
b) Denmark
c) Norway
d) Sweden
- Q77. In which Indian state is the world's first 'Black Tiger Safari' set to be established ?
a) Assam
b) Odisha
c) Uttarakhand
d) Jharkhand
- Q78. Who has been elected for a second term as Bhutan's Prime Minister in the recent election ?
a) Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
b) Lotay Tshering
c) Dasho Tshering Tobgay
d) Tshering Tobgay
- Q79. Which initiative was recently launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote cleanliness at pilgrimage sites ?
a) Clean Pilgrimage project
b) Swachh Mandir Campaign
c) Swachh Bharat Initiative
d) Sacred Site Hygiene Program
- Q80. Which two countries' scientists joined India's 43rd Antarctic Expedition ?
a) Singapore and Mauritius
b) Bangladesh and Bhutan
c) Mauritius and Bangladesh
d) Nepal and Myanmar
- Q81. Which insect, has been reared in Himachal Pradesh, for pollination of Apple fruit crops ?
a) Italian Bee
b) Moth
c) Dragonfly
d) Beetle
- Q82. What is the Boma technique commonly used in wildlife conservation ?
a) A method for capturing and relocating wild animals
b) A software tool for tracking animal populations
c) A traditional African method for hunting
d) A technique for monitoring bird migrations
- Q83. When did India's population touch 100 crore mark
a) May, 2001
b) May 2000
c) May, 2002
d) May, 2003
- Q84. In India, the state known for its sandalwood is
a) Karnataka
b) Assam
c) Kerala
d) West Bengal
- Q85. Where is the headquarters of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) ?
a) Munich, Germany
b) Lausanne, Switzerland
c) London, England
d) Budapest, Hungary
- Q86. Where is the Veer Savarkar International Airport situated ?
a) Port Blair
b) Tirupati
c) Visakhapatnam
d) Silchar
- Q87. Where did External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar embark on a five-day visit?
a) Beijing, China
b) Moscow, Russia
c) Washington D.C., USA
d) Tokyo, Japan
- Q88. When will the 6th Khelo India Youth Games take place?
a) January 19 to 31, 2023
b) February 19 to 31, 2023
c) January 19 to 31, 2024
d) February 19 to 31, 2024
- Q89. Which region, known for producing the world's costliest spice, saffron, is facing a severe crisis due to the encroachment of cement factories ?
a) Himachal Pradesh
b) Punjab
c) Uttarakhand
d) Kashmir
- Q90. What is the name of the first indigenous medium-altitude long-endurance (MALE) drone recently acquired by the Indian Navy?
a) SkyGuardian
b) Drishti 10 Starliner
c) Falcon Eye
d) Aero Hawk

- Q91. Who has been appointed as India's ambassador to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva ?
 a) Rajesh Kumar Singh
 b) Senthil Pandian C
 c) Anjali Sharma
 d) Prakash Verma
- Q92. Which country recently acquired a significant number of domestically developed reconnaissance and combat drones, showcasing advancements in unmanned aerial vehicle technology ?
 a) Russia
 b) China
 c) United States
 d) Iran
- Q93. In the global ranking of stock markets by market capitalization, where does India stand currently ?
 a) 1st
 b) 2nd
 c) 4th
 d) 6th
- Q94. Recently, India sent 40,000 litres of Malathion to which country to counter the threat posed by locusts ?
 a) Afghanistan
 b) Pakistan
 c) Nepal
 d) Bhutan
- Q95. Nomadic Elephant is a military exercise between India and which country ?
 a) Bangladesh
 b) Mongolia
 c) Sri Lanka
 d) France
- Q96. A Functional factory to produce C295 military transport aircraft is to be set up in which state ?
 a) Gujarat
 b) Karnataka
 c) Andhra Pradesh
 d) Tamil Nadu
- Q97. Which bank recently achieved the milestone of issuing 20 million active credit cards in India ?
 a) ICICI Bank
 b) State Bank of India
 c) Axis Bank
 d) HDFC Bank
- Q98. The concept of Economic planning in India is derived from _____.
 a) Russia
 b) Australia
 c) USA
 d) UK
- Q99. Where is the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 set to take place?
 a) Himachal Pradesh
 b) Ladakh
 c) Uttarakhand
 d) Arunachal Pradesh
- Q100. In the field of brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), which neurotechnology company successfully implanted its first brain chip into a human being?
 a) Neuralink
 b) MindSync
 c) CerebroTech
 d) SynapticConnect

ANSWERS

1- b	2-b	3-b	4-b	5-c	6-d	7-b	8-a	9-d	10-d
11-c	12-c	13-b	14-d	15-a	16-b	17-a	18-a	19-b	20-b
21-b	22-c	23-b	24-c	25-b	26-d	27-d	28-c	29-a	30-a
31-c	32-d	33-a	34-a	35-a	36-d	37-b	38-a	39-d	40-a
41-b	42-d	43-a	44-b	45-c	46-c	47-a	48-a	49-c	50-a
51-d	52-b	53-c	54-b	55-c	56-a	57-b	58-c	59- c	60-c
61-b	62-b	63-a	64-a	65-a	66-a	67-b	68-c	69- b	70-c
71-c	72-b	73-b	74-d	75-a	76-d	77-b	78-d	79- b	80-c
81-a	82-a	83-b	84-a	85-a	86-a	87-b	88-c	89- d	90-b
91-b	92-d	93-c	94-a	95-b	96-a	97-d	98-a	99- b	100-a