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## NATIONAL

### ARTICLE 361: IMMUNITY SHIELD UNTIL GOVERNOR IN OFFICE -

- A complaint alleging sexual harassment has been lodged against West Bengal Governor.
- However, Constitutional immunity prevents the police from identifying the Governor as a suspect or conducting an investigation into the matter.
- Under Article 361, the Constitution establishes a total prohibition on prosecuting the Governor. The police can take action only after the Governor ceases to be in office, which is when either the Governor resigns or he no longer enjoys the confidence of the President.
- It states that the President and the Governors shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office or for any act done by him in the exercise and performance of those powers and duties.
- No process for the arrest or imprisonment of the President, or the Governor of a State, shall be issued from any court during his term of office.
- **Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India, 2006**- In this case, the Supreme Court outlined the immunity enjoyed by the Governor even on allegations of personal malafides.
- **Demolition of the Babri Masjid Case**- In 2017, the Supreme Court allowed fresh charges of criminal conspiracy against UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh in the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid. However, the trial did not take place since he was then the Governor of Rajasthan.
- The court held that, being the Governor of Rajasthan, he is entitled to immunity under Article 361 of the Constitution as long as he remains Governor of Rajasthan. The Court of Sessions will frame charges and move against him as soon as he ceases to be Governor.



### CHINESE ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN SHAKSGAM VALLEY -

- India expresses concern over recent Chinese road construction activities in the Shaksgam Valley in the trans-Karakoram tract of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a territory ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963.
- India has consistently rejected the 1963 China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement, which attempted to cede the Shaksgam area to China and assert Shaksgam Valley as its territory.
- The Siachen glacier, a vital piece of Indian territory, is situated adjacent to the Shaksgam Valley and holds strategic importance, particularly amidst the 2020 standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh.
- China's extensive military build-up along the Line of Actual Control, especially in eastern Ladakh, poses threats to Indian positions in regions like Depsang and Daulat Beg Oldie.



### INDIA'S PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTS SURGE TO \$28 BILLION IN FY24 -

- India's pharmaceutical exports witnessed robust growth in the fiscal year 2023-24, reaching \$28 billion, marking a 10% increase compared to the previous fiscal year. Despite a 3% dip in total exports, the pharmaceutical sector demonstrated resilience and significant expansion.



- **Pharmaceutical exports in March soared by 12.73% to USD 2.8 billion, indicating a strong upward trajectory in the sector's performance.**
- Year-on-year, India's drugs and pharmaceuticals exports escalated by 9.67%, totaling USD 27.9 billion in 2023-24, showcasing steady progress.
- The United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Brazil emerged as the top five export destinations. Notably, the US accounted for over 31% of India's total pharmaceutical exports.
- The number of deaths of security forces and civilians in LWE violence has also reduced by 90% in 2022 compared to the high of 2010 (98 in 2022 from 1005 in 2010).
- The States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala are considered LWE affected.
- The Red Corridor is the region in the central, eastern and southern parts of India that experience severe Naxalism–Maoist insurgency.

#### **RECENTLY, TWO DIFFERENT INCIDENTS OF NAXALITES ATTACK WERE REPORTED FROM CHHATTISGARH AND ASSAM -**

- **29 Naxalites were killed in the Kanker area of Chattisgarh** in one of the largest operations by security forces in Chhattisgarh.
- In another incident, **three vehicles of the paramilitary Assam Rifles were ambushed in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district.**
- The term **Naxalism** derives its name from the village **Naxalbari of West Bengal**. It originated as rebellion against local landlords who bashed a peasant over a land dispute.
- The movement soon spread across Eastern India in less developed areas of states such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Left-wing extremists (LWE) are popularly known as Maoists worldwide** and as Naxalites in India.
- They advocate for the overthrow of the Indian government through armed revolution and the establishment of a communist state based on Maoist principles.
- The year **2022 witnessed the lowest number of incidents of violence and deaths in Naxal-hit areas in the last four decades.**
- **Violent incidents in Naxalism-affected States have come down by 77% in 2022** compared to the high of 2010.
- The **number of districts affected dropped from 90 to 45.**

#### **INDIA'S COMMITMENT TO DEBRIS-FREE SPACE MISSIONS BY 2030 -**

- **At the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) annual meet, ISRO Chairman S. Somanath** announced India's pledge to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030. This commitment aligns with global efforts to ensure the sustainability of space exploration.



- Chairman Somanath highlighted ISRO's comprehensive plan for space exploration and utilization, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in future missions.
- **India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by involving all space actors, both governmental and non-governmental, by 2030.** This initiative underscores the nation's commitment to long-term space sustainability.
- **With 54 spacecraft in orbit and numerous non-functional objects,** ISRO has been actively taking measures to dispose of or remove space debris. Efforts include deorbiting spacecraft once their mission is



complete and designing systems to minimize debris creation.

- ISRO emphasizes the importance of developing skills for future explorations beyond Earth’s orbit, including lunar and planetary missions. Additionally, plans for India’s own space station, ‘Bharatiya Antriksh Station,’ by 2035 are underway, with a focus on ensuring the sustainability of space in collaboration with other space actors.

**THE NATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL PRICING AUTHORITY (NPPA) HAS HIKED THE PRICE OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES INCLUDING PAINKILLERS, ANTIBIOTICS AND ANTI-INFECTIVES -**

- NPPA was set up under the Department of Pharmaceuticals is an independent regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.



- Essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority healthcare needs of the majority of the population.
- The essential medicines list needs to be country specific addressing the disease burden of the nation and the commonly used medicines at primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare levels.
- The first country in the world to compose its EML was Tanzania in 1970.
- In India, The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare prepared the first National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) in 1996. Subsequently, the list has been revised.
- Drug Price Control Order, 2013 was issued by the Department of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for fixing the ceiling price of medicines included in NLEM.

**KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND ISSUE -**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi lashed out at the Congress over the controversial Katchatheevu island

that was handed over to Sri Lanka by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1974.

- The debate around the Katchatheevu Island is currently hotting up in the Tamil Nadu politics and beyond ahead of the Lok Sabha Election.



- Katchatheevu is a 285-acre uninhabited speck in the Palk Strait, between India and Sri Lanka, an island located about 14 nautical miles off Rameswaram, India.
- In 1974, Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi of India and Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka signed an agreement that recognized Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka's territory, resulting in a change of ownership.

**INDIA SECURES SITTWE PORT AGREEMENT -**

- India has recently secured rights to operate the Sittwe port in Myanmar after Chabahar Port in Iran.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has given the green light to the proposal for India Ports Global (IPGL) to manage all operations at the port situated on the Kaladan River.
- Kaladan River is a river in eastern Mizoram State of India it also flows through Chin and Rakhine State of western Myanmar.
- In India, the Kaladan River is called the Chhimtuipei River. It acts as the border between India and Burma (Myanmar) .

**DELHI EXCISE POLICY CASE -**

- Recently, a Magistrate Court in Delhi has sent the Chief Minister of Delhi to the Enforcement Directorate’s (ED’s) custody in connection with the Excise Policy Case. The CM of Delhi is accused by the



**ED of being the "kingpin and key conspirator" of the Delhi excise scam.**

- The Delhi Excise Policy Case refers to a case surrounding the formulation and implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22. This policy, which came into effect in November 2021, was subsequently scrapped in July 2022 due to allegations of procedural lapses, corruption, and financial losses to the exchequer.
- The Delhi Chief Secretary's report highlighted arbitrary and unilateral decisions made by Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister and Excise Minister, which allegedly led to financial losses estimated at over Rs 580 crore.
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has alleged that the new excise policy was implemented as part of a conspiracy to provide a 12% profit margin to certain private companies in the alcohol business. It's alleged that a 6% kickback was involved in this arrangement.



### MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (MCC) GUIDELINES FOR LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024 -

- With the announcement of the election schedule by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has been enforced to ensure a fair electoral process in the world's largest democracy.

Here are the specific guidelines to be followed during this period-

- 1. Conduct at Places of Worship-** Campaigning at places of worship (e.g., mosques, churches, temples) is strictly prohibited. No appeals to caste or communal sentiments for securing votes.
- 2. Criticism and Personal Attacks-** Criticism of other parties should be limited to policies, programs, and past records. Avoid personal attacks or criticism unrelated to public activities.
- 3. Prohibition of Corrupt Practices-** Parties and candidates must avoid all forms of corrupt practices such as bribing

voters, intimidation, impersonation, and canvassing near polling stations. Distribution of liquor on polling day or 48 hours before is strictly prohibited.

- 4. Respect for Private Property-** Parties cannot use private property for campaign materials without permission.
- 5. Peaceful Political Activities-** Ensuring peaceful political meetings and processions without obstructing those organized by other parties. No removal of posters issued by other parties.
- 6. Regulation of Rallies-** Procession routes and timings must be adhered to without deviation. Authorities must be informed to ensure proper regulation.
- 7. Traffic Management-** Organizers must ensure minimal disruption to road traffic during processions. Long processions should be organized in manageable segments.
- 8. Prohibition of Effigy Burning-** Carrying and burning effigies representing members of other political parties or leaders is not allowed.
- 9. Regulation of Candidate Camps-** Avoiding large gatherings and serving food at candidate camps near booths. Ruling parties cannot monopolize government facilities or accommodations for campaign purposes.
- 10. Election Manifesto and Freebies-** While election manifestos are not considered corrupt practices, the distribution of freebies can influence voters and should be carefully considered.

- These guidelines aim to maintain the integrity of the electoral process and ensure a level playing field for all participants.

**THE (ECI) HAS, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE LS ELECTIONS, EXTENDED ITS 'VOTE-FROM-HOME' FACILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) AND SENIOR CITIZENS AGED 85 AND ABOVE -**

- **Eligibility Criteria for Vote-from-Home-** Age: Individuals aged 85 and above.
- **Persons with Disabilities-** Those with a disability of at least 40% as certified by the relevant authority.
- **Mediapersons-** Individuals covering polling day activities, provided they carry authorization letters from

the Election Commission.

- **Essential Service Workers-** Including personnel from metros, railways, and healthcare.
- **Service Voters-** Members of the armed forces stationed away from their hometowns, Central Armed Police Forces personnel on duty away from home, and those assigned to poll duties.

#### Process to Avail Vote-from-Home Facility-

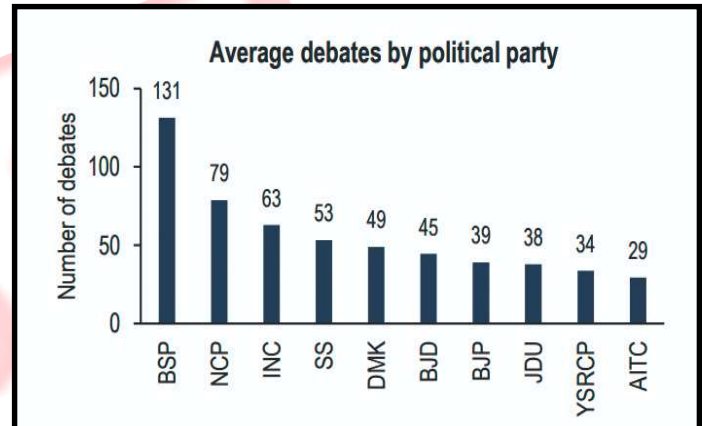
- **The primary document required is Form 12D**, a letter to the Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) explaining the inability to visit the polling station. It can be downloaded from the official website of the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- Alternatively, it can be obtained from the office of the representative district officer of a parliamentary constituency.
- The completed form must be submitted within five days from the date the polling date is announced. **Upon submission of the form, a team comprising two polling officials, a videographer, and a security person will visit the eligible voter's residence. This team will oversee and facilitate the postal ballot voting process.**
- The voter will be informed about the scheduled date and approximate time of the team's visit either via SMS or postal mail. **Two attempts will be made to facilitate home voting.**
- If the voter is not present during the first visit, a second visit will be scheduled. However, if the voter is absent during the second attempt, no further visits will be made.
- Such individuals will become ineligible to vote both at polling stations and through the home voting scheme in that election cycle.

#### THE 17TH LOK SABHA HELD ITS SESSIONS BETWEEN JUNE 2019 AND FEBRUARY 2024 -

- In the five years, Lok Sabha functioned for 88% of its scheduled time, while Rajya Sabha worked for 73%.

#### Key Bills Passed Include-

- The Women's Reservation Bill, 2023, the J&K Reorganisation Bill, 2019, the Appointment of CEC Bill, 2023, three Labour Codes, the Digital Data Protection Bill, 2023, and three Farm laws (which were later repealed).



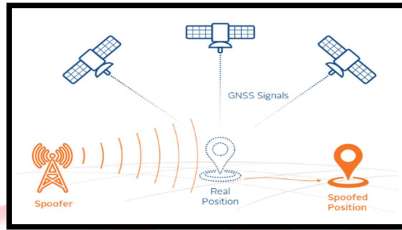
- Three Bills replacing the IPC, 1860, the CrPC, 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 were also passed.
- Over the years, the time spent on budget discussions in Lok Sabha has reduced. The 17th Lok Sabha discussed the annual budget for 35 hours on average (in the Lower House). As per the provision of **Article 79 of Indian Constitution, the House of the People, the Lok Sabha is the lower House of the parliament.**
- Lok Sabha is composed of representatives of the people chosen by direct election on the basis of the adult suffrage.
- **The maximum strength of the House envisaged by the Constitution is 552.**
- At present, the Lok Sabha has 543 seats filled by elected representatives. The term of the Lok Sabha, unless dissolved, is five years from the date appointed for its first meeting.



# INTERNATIONAL

## ISRAEL USES GPS SPOOFING TO COUNTER IRANIAN MISSILE THREATS -

Recent reports indicate that Israel has employed Global Positioning System (GPS) spoofing techniques to defend against Iranian missile attacks, a strategy reminiscent of past instances such as the United States' actions during the Kargil war in India.



Recent reports indicate that Israel has employed Global Positioning System (GPS) spoofing techniques to defend against Iranian missile attacks, a strategy reminiscent of past instances such as the United States' actions during the Kargil war in India.

- **GPS spoofing is a method used to alter GPS signals to mislead receivers, causing them to believe they are in a different location than they actually are.**
- This technique can broadcast false GPS signals or modify authentic ones, leading to inaccurate information about positioning.

**Spoofing can serve various objectives, such as:**

- Tricking enemy navigation systems
  - Guarding against unauthorized tracking
  - Generating false location data for malicious purposes
- **Around 25 years ago, Pakistani soldiers infiltrated India and occupied positions in Kargil in 1999. Despite the Indian military's request for GPS data for the area, the US declined to provide it.**
  - The US initially used a technology known as "selective availability" to deliberately introduce inaccuracies into civilian GPS receivers, preserving the highest accuracy for military purposes.
  - This method was employed to "degrade" GPS accuracy for the Indian military during the Kargil conflict, impeding their operations.
  - **India launched NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation), formerly named the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).**

- NavIC offers precise and secure positioning, navigation, and timing services within India and up to 1500 kilometers beyond its territorial boundary.

## IRAN LAUNCHED DRONES AND CRUISE MISSILES AGAINST ISRAEL UNDER OPERATION TRUE PROMISE (ALSO CALLED "OPERATION HONEST PROMISE") -

- **India issued a statement expressing India's "serious concern" at the escalation of hostilities, and called for "immediate de-escalation".**
- **The Iranian attack was in response to the suspected Israeli strike on an Iranian consular building in Syria's Damascus that killed 12 people.**
- **There are about 18,000 Indians in Israel and about 5,000-10,000 Indians in Iran, about 90 lakh people are living and working in the Gulf and West Asia region.**
- Any conflict that expands will end up posing a risk to the Indian community that is based in the region.
- **The West Asia region contributes to India's 80 percent of oil supplies, which a potential conflict will impact.**
- **India has been able to minimise the impact of oil prices due to the Russia-Ukraine war by buying Russian oil at discounted prices, but this conflict will have an adverse impact on energy prices.**
- **India has invested in a strategic relationship with major Arab countries, Iran, and Israel. India sees the region as its extended neighbourhood, and it has been pushing for the India-Middle-East-Europe Economic corridor, which has strategic as well as economic benefits.**
- **Chabahar in Iran is another strategic economic project, which acts as a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia — since Pakistan denies land transit to Indian goods.**
- India has a very deep strategic relationship with Israel, especially in the context of defence and security partnership.



**RECENTLY, SLOVENIA & SWEDEN BECAME THE 39TH & 38TH COUNTRIES TO SIGN ARTEMIS ACCORDS RESPECTIVELY**

- **Artemis Accords** is a US-led alliance seeking to facilitate international collaboration in planetary exploration and research.

It relates to activities in orbit, on the surface, and in the subsurface of the moon, Mars, comets, and asteroids.

- It also covers the stable orbital points known as the Lagrangian points for the Earth-moon system).
- **Artemis Accords Established by:** It was launched on October 13, 2020 with Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The Accords have been signed by 39 countries till now. **On June 21, 2023 India became the 27th country to sign the Artemis Accords. China and Russia are not part of this initiative.**

**RECENTLY, ISRAEL'S MULTI-LAYERED AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM DEFENDED THE COUNTRY FROM A MAJOR ATTACK, AS IRAN LAUNCHED OVER 300 ARMED DRONES AND LONG-RANGE MISSILES -**

- **Air defence systems** are basically shields against threats from the sky. They are a combination of different technologies that work together to spot, track, and destroy incoming aircraft, missiles, or drones.
- **Israel's air defense system consists of Iron Dome and C-Dome.** Iron Dome is a short-range, ground-to-air, air defence system of Israel. The Iron Dome has three main systems that work together to provide a shield over the area where it is deployed.
- **Radar:** It has a detection and tracking radar to spot any incoming threats.
- **Weapon Control:** It has a battle management and weapon control system (BMC).

- **Missile Fire:** It also has a missile firing unit. The BMC basically liaises between the radar and the interceptor missile.
- **It is used for countering rockets, artillery & mortars as well as aircraft, helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).** It is capable of being used in all weather conditions, including during the day and night. It claims a success rate of over 90%.
- **C-Dome** is a naval version of Israel's Iron Dome air defence system, used to shield against rocket and missile attacks.
- **It was first unveiled in 2014** and declared operational in November 2022. It works similarly to the Iron Dome, except that it is mounted on ships.
- Unlike the Iron Dome, which has its dedicated radar, the C-Dome is integrated into the ship's radar to detect incoming targets.
- It ensures full-circular vessel protection and high kill probability against a full spectrum of modern threats—maritime and coastal.

**RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPERS' WITHDRAWAL FROM NAGORNO-KARABAKH -**

- **Russian peacekeepers have initiated their withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh following Azerbaijan's recapture of the disputed territory from Armenian separatists in September 2023.** The decision for the withdrawal was agreed between Baku (Azerbaijan) and Moscow at the "highest levels."
- **Nagorno-Karabakh, is a mountainous region in the Caucasus (the transcontinental region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea),** internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but predominantly inhabited by ethnic Armenians.



- The conflict began in the late 1980s when the region declared independence from Azerbaijan, leading to a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. A ceasefire in 1994 left Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas under Armenian control, but frequent violations and failed negotiations followed.
- In 2020, Azerbaijan won the Second Karabakh War, regaining control of seven surrounding districts and a third of Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia brokered a peace deal and deployed peacekeepers in the region.
- The conflict has strained relations between Russia and Armenia, as Moscow maintains warm ties with Baku.
- Armenia announced that it has effectively suspended its participation in the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), a defense alliance.

#### APPLE HAS RECENTLY ISSUED URGENT SECURITY ALERTS TO IPHONE USERS IN INDIA AND 91 OTHER COUNTRIES -

- Mercenary spyware attacks are exceptionally rare and highly sophisticated compared to regular cybercriminal activity or consumer malware.



- Unlike common cyber threats, mercenary spyware aims to gain unauthorised access to a user's device.
- If a device is compromised by a targeted mercenary spyware attack, the attacker may be able to remotely access sensitive data, communications, or even the camera and microphone.

- These are strategically aimed, high-cost attacks, historically linked to states, targeting select individuals like journalists, activists, politicians, and diplomats.
- Pegasus, developed by the NSO Group is one of the examples of Mercenary Spyware.

#### RECENTLY, A TERROR ATTACK AT MOSCOW'S CROCUS CITY HALL CLAIMED OVER 137 LIVES, REIGNITING CONCERNS ABOUT THE RESURGENCE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE (IS) -

- Experts believe the attack was likely carried out by IS Khorasan (IS-K), the group's Afghanistan-Pakistan branch.
- IS-K, the Afghanistan-based arm of the IS, has been responsible for recent attacks, including the twin bombings in Kerman, Iran.
- Established in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province in 2015, IS-K comprises Central Asian militants and has gained prominence since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.
- IS-K targets Afghanistan's Shia minority and seeks to recruit radicalised youths from Central Asia and Afghanistan's Tajik and Uzbek minorities.
- IS-K utilises anti-Russian and anti-Iranian propaganda to recruit among Central Asians, Afghans, and Pakistanis.

#### THE ZAPORIZHZHIA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT (NPP) FACED A DRONE STRIKE AMID THE ONGOING CONFLICT BETWEEN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA -

- Russia, in control of the facility, accused Ukraine of launching the attacks.
- The Zaporizhzhya NPP is located near Energodar in south-eastern Ukraine, it ranks as the largest NPP in Europe. The facility is owned and operated by Energoatom, Ukraine's state-owned nuclear energy generating company.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the global nuclear watchdog, provides technical assistance to the plant and conducts inspections to ensure compliance with international safety standards.

## FREE MOVEMENT REGIME (FMR) AGREEMENT WITH MYANMAR -

- India's recent plans to review the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar and fence the India-Myanmar border have initiated discussions, especially in the northeastern states.



- The decision aims to address a complex intersection of historical, cultural, and security considerations.
- Much of India's northeast region was under Burmese occupation until the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 established the current India-Myanmar boundary.
- The Treaty of Yandaboo was signed by General Sir Archibald Campbell on behalf of the British and Governor of Legaing Maha Min Hla Kyaw Htin on behalf of the Burmese.
- It ended the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826).
- However, the border separated communities with shared ethnicity and culture, including the Nagas in Nagaland and Manipur, as well as the Kuki-Chin-Mizo communities in Manipur and Mizoram, without their agreement.
- Currently, India and Myanmar share a 1,643 km border across Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, of which only 10 km is fenced, in Manipur.
- The FMR was established in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy, promoting cross-border movement up to 16 km without a visa. Individuals residing at the border need

a one-year border pass for stays lasting up to two weeks in the neighbouring country.

- Concerns have arisen about the influx of illegal immigrants, particularly the Chin, Naga communities and Rohingyas from Myanmar, potentially straining resources and impacting local demographics.

## 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-** 1. High Reactivity 2. Low Density 3. 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.



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### INDIA'S FIRST MULTI-PURPOSE GREEN HYDROGEN PILOT PROJECT INAUGURATED IN HIMACHAL PRADESH -

- India takes a significant step in renewable energy with the inauguration of its first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project at the 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Himachal Pradesh's



**Jhakri.** Spearheaded

by Satluj Jal Vidyut

Nigam (SJVN), the project aims to produce green hydrogen through renewable energy sources.

- The project features a 20Nm<sup>3</sup>/hr electrolyzer and 25kW fuel cell capacity-based green hydrogen pilot system. It is the nation's first multi-purpose green hydrogen generation plant, serving both electricity generation and the high-velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) coating facility of NJHPS.
- Utilizing renewable energy from SJVN's 1.31 MW solar power plant located in Wadhal, Himachal Pradesh, the project employs an alkaline electrolyzer to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. This integration allows for sustainable hydrogen production.
- During eight hours of operation, the pilot project is set to produce 14 kg of green hydrogen daily, stored in six storage tanks. This green hydrogen will serve dual purposes: facilitating HVOF coating of turbine underwater parts and generating electricity through its 25 kW fuel cell.

### VOLCANIC VORTEX RINGS -

- Mount Etna, the largest volcano in Europe, and among the world's most active volcanoes, has been sending up almost perfect rings of smoke into the air, which is a

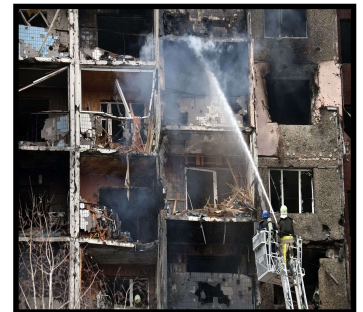
rare phenomenon that scientists refer to as volcanic vortex rings.

- Vortex rings are generated when gas, predominantly water vapour, is released rapidly through a vent in the crater. The vent that has opened up in volcano's crater is almost perfectly circular, so the rings that have been seen are also circular.
- Volcanic vortex rings were first observed at Etna in 1724 and have since been documented at various volcanoes worldwide. These rings can remain in the air for up to 10 minutes but tend to disintegrate quickly if conditions are windy and turbulent.



### UKRAINE REPORTS RUSSIAN USE OF HYPERSONIC MISSILES IN KYIV ATTACKS -

- According to Ukraine's military administration, Russia has deployed five of its new hypersonic Zircon missiles in attacks on Kyiv since the beginning of the year.
- Additionally, Russia has launched 11 Kinzhal missiles, another type of hypersonic weapon known for traveling at speeds several times faster than sound. These reports underscore the increasing use and potency of advanced hypersonic weaponry in the ongoing conflict.
- Hypersonic weapons are fast, low-flying, and highly manoeuvrable, making them challenging for traditional missile defence systems to detect and intercept.





- Operate at speeds faster than five times the speed of sound, approximately 760 miles (1,220 km) per hour at sea level.
- Countries with Hypersonic Capabilities-**
- Advanced Capabilities:** US, China, and Russia, **Research & Development:** India, Japan, Australia, and France, North Korea has claimed successful tests of hypersonic missiles.
- India is progressing towards integrating hypersonic weapons into its military arsenal.
- Milestones, In 2020, India conducted a successful test of its Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) powered by a scramjet engine.**
- The HSTDV serves as a foundational step in developing long-range hypersonic weapons.

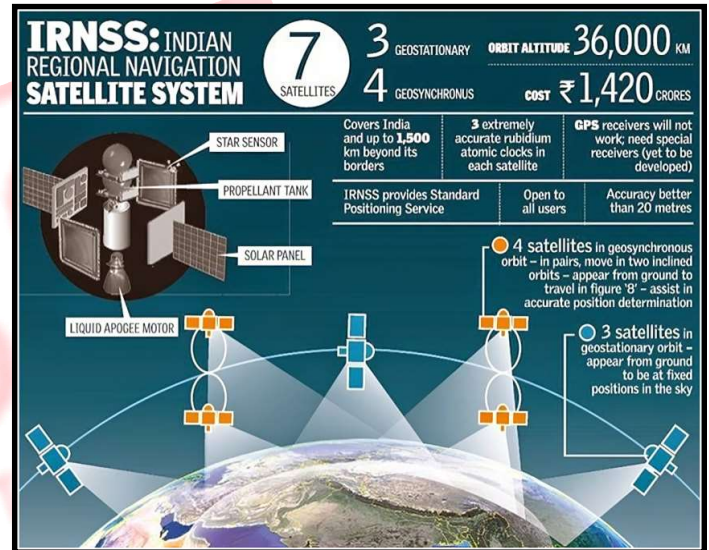
## H5N1 BIRD FLU, A HIGHLY PATHOGENIC VIRUS, HAS BEEN SPREADING GLOBALLY, POSING A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO BIRDS AND WILDLIFE -

- Avian influenza A(H5N1) or H5B1 Bird Flu** is a highly pathogenic virus that primarily circulates among birds but can infect mammals.
- H5N1 originated from a virus outbreak in China in 1996** and rapidly evolved into a highly pathogenic strain.
- Since 2020, it has spread across Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, South America, and even mainland Antarctica. India experienced the first H5N1 **outbreak in the State of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 2015.**
- Wild birds, including endangered species like California condors, have been severely affected by H5N1. The main species affected used to be chicken. Marine mammals, such as sea lions and dolphins, have suffered mass deaths in regions like Chile and Peru.
- Mammals like foxes, pumas, bears in North America, and farmed minks in Spain and Finland, have also been infected.



## ATOMIC CLOCKS FOR ONE-NATION, ONE-TIME -

- India aims to deploy its own atomic clocks across the nation, to enhance its timekeeping infrastructure and national defence capabilities for the future.



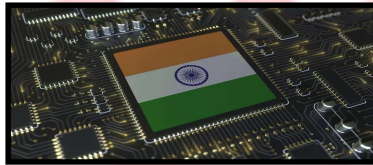
- The deployment of atomic clocks across India aims to synchronise all digital devices with Indian Standard Time (IST), ensuring uniformity.
- These atomic clocks are being installed by the **National Physical Laboratory (NPL)** under the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.
- An atomic clock, is a clock, known for its exceptional accuracy, and functions by utilising specific resonance frequencies of atoms, typically cesium or rubidium. It was invented in 1955 by Louise Essen.
- The extreme precision levels of the atomic clocks can be interpreted by the fact that they will lose one second approximately every 100 million years. **Currently, atomic clocks in India are operational in Ahmedabad and Faridabad.**
- The electronic components of atomic clocks are governed by microwave electromagnetic radiation (EM). Maintaining this radiation's precise

frequency is essential to induce quantum transitions in cesium or rubidium atoms.

- The quantum transition (energy change) of cesium or rubidium atoms is induced solely when the radiation is maintained at an exceptionally specific frequency.
- In an atomic clock, these quantum transitions are then observed and maintained in a feedback loop. The waves generated in these quantum transitions are then counted to arrive at the value of a second.

### RECENTLY, THE TATA GROUP COLLABORATED WITH TAIWAN'S PSMC TO ESTABLISH A 300 MM (MILLI-METRE) WAFER FABRICATION PLANT IN GUJARAT -

- Experts believe the attack was likely carried out by IS Khorasan (IS-K), the group's Afghanistan-Pakistan branch.



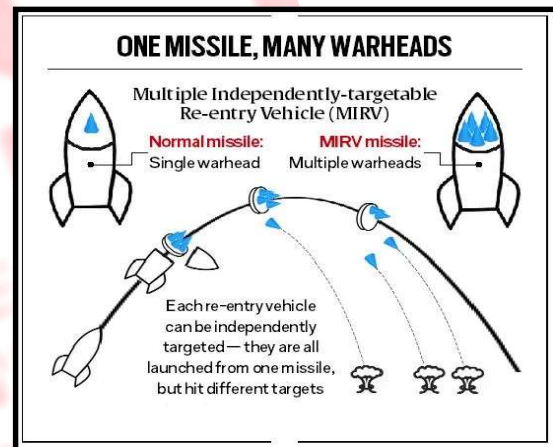
- IS-K, the Afghanistan-based arm of the IS, has been responsible for recent attacks, including the twin bombings in Kerman, Iran.
- Established in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province in 2015, IS-K comprises Central Asian militants and has gained prominence since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.
- IS-K targets Afghanistan's Shia minority and seeks to recruit radicalised youths from Central Asia and Afghanistan's Tajik and Uzbek minorities.
- IS-K utilises anti-Russian and anti-Iranian propaganda to recruit among Central Asians, Afghans, and Pakistanis.

### MULTIPLE INDEPENDENTLY TARGETABLE RE-ENTRY VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY -

- India has recently made a significant advancement in missile technology, joining the select group of nations possessing Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) capabilities.
- This milestone was achieved through the successful flight test named Mission Divyastra, conducted by

the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It marked the first time the indigenously developed Agni-5 missile integrated MIRV technology.

- MIRV technology originated in the United States, with the deployment of a MIRVed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) in 1970.
- MIRV allows a single missile to carry multiple warheads (3-4), each capable of targeting different locations independently.



- MIRV technology enhances the missile's effectiveness by increasing the number of potential targets it can engage. MIRVs can be launched from both land-based platforms and sea-based platforms, such as submarines, expanding their operational flexibility and range.
- Nations possessing MIRV technology include major nuclear powers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and India, while Pakistan tested the technology (Ababeel Missile) in 2017.
- The test flight of Agni-5 marked the first time that the MIRV technology was tested in India, which aims to deploy multiple warheads at different locations in a single launch.
- The Agni-5 weapon system is equipped with indigenous avionics systems and high-accuracy sensor packages, which ensured that the re-entry vehicles reached the target points within the desired accuracy.

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## ECONOMY & FINANCE

**RECENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN A NOTABLE RISE IN THE REJECTION OF INDIAN SPICE SHIPMENTS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES -**

**Faced Allegations-**

- **US Shipment Rejection:** In the past six months, about one-third of Mahashian Di Hatti (MDH) Pvt Ltd's spice shipments to the US were turned away due to salmonella contamination.
- **Hong Kong's Action:** Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety suspended the sale of three MDH spice blends (Madras curry powder, Sambhar masala and curry powder masala) and Everest fish curry masala.
- **Singapore and Hong Kong Suspensions:** Both have suspended the sale of several products from both MDH and Everest Food Products Pvt Ltd due to alleged detection of a cancer-causing pesticide (ethylene oxide) in their products.
- Various countries (including Singapore, Hong Kong and the U.S.) have announced an investigation into possible contamination of spice mixes sold by top Indian brands. **The complaints cite the presence of ethylene oxide, a toxic chemical used as a food stabilizer, beyond permissible limits.**
- The international scrutiny has also raised a demand for the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to ensure stringent quality checks on spices and curry powders sold in domestic markets.
- Controversies also arose for protein drinks, fruit juices, health drinks and imported Nestle baby products, drawing attention to regulatory lapses and heightening health concerns.



- **Spice Board of India has initiated** mandatory testing of products shipped abroad and is reportedly working with exporters to identify the root cause of contamination.
- The FSSAI has directed state regulators to collect samples of major spice brands, including MDH and Everest, to test for the presence of EtO.
- **It also plans to carry out a nationwide surveillance in 2024-25**, for fruit and vegetables, salmonella in fish products, spice and culinary herbs, fortified rice and milk and milk products.
- **India is the world's biggest exporter, producer and consumer of spices**, and its domestic market for the products was valued at \$10.44 billion in 2022.
- **India produces 75 varieties out of 109 varieties**, listed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- The top three importers of India's curry powders and mixtures, in the fiscal year 2022-23, **include the U.S. (₹196.2 crore), U.A.E (₹170.6 crore) and U.K. (₹124.9 crore).**
- These are followed by Saudi Arabia, Australia, Bangladesh, Oman, Canada, Qatar and Nigeria.
- Overall, China, U.S. U.A.E, Bangladesh and Thailand are the top importers of all spices and spice mixes originating from India.
- Beyond MDH and Everest, other major manufacturers include Madhusudan Masala, NHC Foods and consumer giants Tata Consumer Products and ITC.

**GST REVENUE COLLECTION FOR APRIL 2024 -**

- The **Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections hit a record high in April 2024 at Rs 2.10 lakh crore.** This represents a significant 12.4% year-on-year growth, driven by a strong increase in domestic transactions (up 13.4%) and imports (up 8.3%).
- After accounting for refunds, **the net GST revenue for April 2024 stands at Rs 1.92 lakh crore, reflecting an impressive 15.5% growth compared to the same**

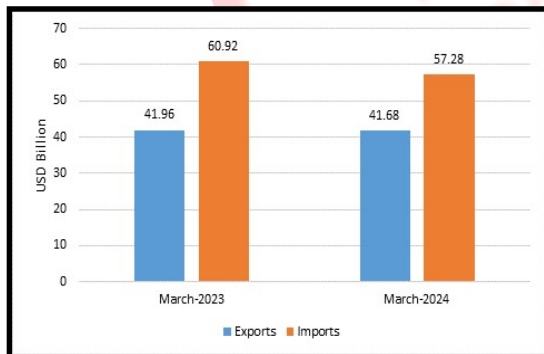


period of 2023. Finance Minister attributed this surge to the strong momentum in the economy and efficient tax collections, with no dues pending on account of IGST (Integrated GST) settlement to the States.

- **GST compensation cess collections also hit an all-time high of Rs 13,260 crore, Introduced for five years to compensate States for revenue losses due to the 2017 switch to the GST regime, the cess is now being used to repay loans taken during the pandemic to compensate States amid a lockdown-triggered collapse in revenues.**
- **Mizoram reported the highest growth at 52%, followed by Assam at 25%, and Delhi, Bihar, and Goa at 23% rise in revenues.**

**INDIA'S MERCHANDISE EXPORTS REACHED A PEAK OF USD 41.68 BILLION IN MARCH 2024 COMPARED TO THE FY 2022-23 -**

- **India's goods exports reached USD 41.68 billion in March 2024 compared to the FY 2022-23, despite a 0.67% decline from last year's tally,**



- **Imports, on the other hand, dropped by 6% to USD 57.3 billion during the same period. The goods trade deficit contracted to USD 15.6 billion, the lowest in 11 months.**
- **Gold imports fell sharply by 53.6% in March to USD 1.53 billion. The drop in non-petroleum, non-gold imports contributed to the overall decline. Interestingly, silver imports jumped to USD 816.6 million.**

- While goods exports averaged USD 35.4 billion in the first ten months, the last two months' spike lifted the full-year export figure to USD 437.1 billion.
- This performance is 3.1% below the record USD 451.1 billion achieved in the previous year.

**Key contributors to merchandise export growth include-**

- Electronic Goods: Exports increased by 23.64% to USD 29.12 billion.
  - Drugs & Pharmaceuticals: Exports rose by 9.67% to USD 27.85 billion.
  - Engineering Goods: Exports grew by 2.13% to USD 109.32 billion.
- **Exports of agricultural commodities, such as tobacco, fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, spices, and oil seeds, exhibited positive growth in FY 2023-24.**
  - The overall trade deficit is estimated to significantly improve by 35.77% to USD 78.12 billion in FY 2023-24.
  - Merchandise trade deficit improved by 9.33% to USD 240.17 billion compared to FY 2022-23.

**INDIA'S TRADE DEFICIT NARROWS TO 11-MONTH LOW -**

- **India's merchandise trade deficit reached a low of \$15.60 billion annually in March, marking a significant reduction in the yearly deficit to \$240.2 billion in FY24. This decline comes as India strategically curtails its overseas purchases.**
- Economists had initially estimated March's deficit to be \$18.55 billion, making this reduction even more noteworthy.
- **In March, India's merchandise exports totaled \$41.68 billion, maintaining a positive trajectory above \$40 billion for the second consecutive month in the fiscal year.**
- Imports for March stood at \$57.28 billion, reflecting a concerted effort to limit overseas purchases.
- **Despite challenges, merchandise exports in FY24 saw a modest decline of 3.11% to \$437.06 billion. Key contributors to export growth included electronic goods, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, iron ore, and cotton yarn/fabric/made-ups.**



- Imports during the same period slipped by 5.41% to \$677.24 billion, showcasing a balanced approach to trade.

## RECORD DIRECT TAX COLLECTIONS EXCEED BUDGET ESTIMATES IN FY 2023-24 -

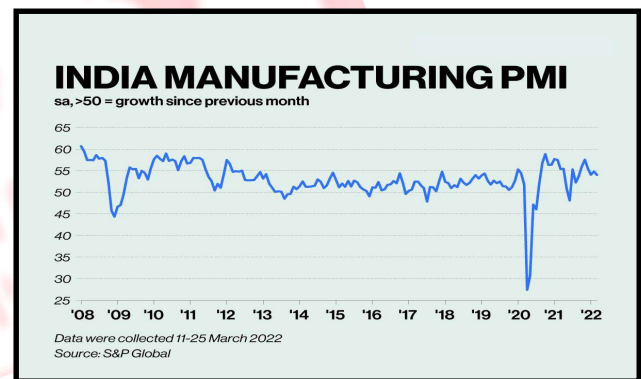
- In a significant development, provisional figures released by the Ministry of Finance reveal that net direct tax collections for the Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 have surpassed Union Budget Estimates by a substantial margin of Rs. 1.35 lakh crore, marking a remarkable increase of 7.40%. The provisional direct tax collections stand at Rs. 19.58 lakh crore, showcasing a robust growth of 17.70% compared to the preceding FY 2022-23.
- The Budget Estimates (BE) for Direct Tax revenue in FY 2023-24 were initially set at Rs. 18.23 lakh crore and were later revised to Rs. 19.45 lakh crore. However, the actual net collections have surpassed both the BE and the Revised Estimates (RE) by 7.40% and 0.67% respectively, underlining the robust performance of direct tax revenue in the fiscal year.
- The provisional gross collection of direct taxes (before adjusting for refunds) for FY 2023-24 stands at an impressive Rs. 23.37 lakh crore, indicating a substantial growth of 18.48% over the previous fiscal year.
- The Gross Corporate Tax collection for FY 2023-24 amounts to Rs. 11.32 lakh crore, demonstrating a commendable growth of 13.06% over the preceding year. Meanwhile, the Net Corporate Tax collection for the



same period stands at Rs. 9.11 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 10.26%.

## MANUFACTURING PURCHASING MANAGERS 'INDEX -

- According to a survey released by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC), India's Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) reached a 16-year peak of 59.1 in March 2024.
- PMI is an economic indicator, which is derived after monthly surveys of different companies. It shows trends in both the manufacturing and services sector.



- A PMI above 50 represents an expansion when compared with the previous month.
- It helps in determining whether the market conditions, as seen by purchasing managers, is expanding, contracting or staying the same. It is used to provide information regarding the current and future business conditions.
- The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global.

## IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

### SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY DAY 2024 -

- U R Rao Satellite Centre (formerly known as ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC)), Department of Space, in Bengaluru recently celebrated Satellite Technology Day (STD) 2024, marking the significant milestone of the 50th anniversary of India's first satellite launch, Aryabhata, on 19th April 1975.



- The event highlighted URSC's achievements along with recent missions like Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1, and X-ray Polarimeter Satellite which garnered national and international recognition.
- The Aryabhata spacecraft, named after the 5th Century CE mathematician and astronomer, was India's first satellite. It was completely designed and fabricated in India and launched from Kapustin Yar, Russia on 19th April 1975.
- On that day, India became only the world's 11th nation to send a satellite into orbit. Aryabhata was built by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to conduct experiments in X-ray astronomy, aeronomics, and solar physics..

### OPERATION MEGHDOOT -

- Recently, Operation Meghdoot has completed its 40th anniversary which resurfaces the achievements of the Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF),
- in the Siachen glacier to secure the heights dominating the Northern Ladakh region. The operation involved the



airlifting of Indian Army soldiers and supplies by the IAF and dropping them on the Siachen glacier.

- The Siachen Glacier has been a bone of contention since the Karachi Agreement in July 1949. Later, during the 1980s, Pakistan started attempts to legitimise its claim on Siachen Glacier leading to Operation Meghdoot by India.
- Operation Meghdoot was launched on 13th April 1984, when the Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) advanced to the Siachen glacier to secure the heights dominating the Northern Ladakh region.
- The operation resulted in India gaining 70 kilometres long Siachen Glacier and all of its tributary glaciers, as well as three main passes of the Salto Ridge namely Sia La, Bilafond La, and Gyong La.

### NATIONAL PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY OBSERVED ON APRIL 24TH EVERY YEAR -

- National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated annually on April 24th to commemorate the establishment of the Panchayati Raj system in India. This decentralized form of governance, introduced by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993, aimed to empower local self-governing bodies, known as Gram Panchayats, at the village level.
- The concept of Panchayati Raj has its roots in ancient Indian tradition, where village councils, or Panchayats, played a crucial role in local administration. However, it

was not until the late 20th century that the system was revived and granted constitutional status.

- In 1957, the Balwantrai Mehta Committee was formed to study the process of democratic decentralization and recommend measures to revive the Panchayati Raj system. The



committee's recommendations led to the establishment of a three-tier system of Panchayats at the village, block, and district levels.

#### NAVROZ 2024 -

- March 20th, 2024, marks the celebration of Navroz 2024, an ancient festival deeply rooted in Persian culture and celebrated by millions worldwide.
- As the first day of spring and the beginning of the year in the Iranian calendar, Navroz holds significant

**cultural and spiritual importance for people of Persian or Iranian descent, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil and the renewal of nature.**

- Navroz, derived from the Persian words “nav” meaning new and “roz” meaning day, is celebrated on March 20th, 2024, aligning with the spring equinox in Tehran, Iran. This date is recognized globally as the International Day of Nowruz by the United Nations, underscoring its cultural significance and widespread observance.
- In India, the Parsi community celebrates Navroz on two dates, adhering to different calendar traditions. While the global celebration occurs on March 20th, 2024, the Indian Parsi community also marks Navroz on August 15th, 2024, according to the Shahenshahi calendar.



# AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

## JIO SURPASSES CHINA MOBILE TO LEAD GLOBAL TELCO INDUSTRY IN DATA TRAFFIC -

- Reliance Jio, the telecom leader in India, has outpaced China Mobile to become the world's largest mobile operator by data traffic consumption. With a subscriber base of 481.8 million, including 108 million on its True5G Standalone network, Jio's dominance underscores its position in the global telecom market.
- In its quarterly results announced on Monday, Jio revealed remarkable achievements, including reaching a total data traffic of 40.9 Exabytes in the January-March quarter, representing a 35.2% year-on-year increase. A significant portion of this traffic, 28%, originates from its 5G subscribers, indicating a swift adoption of next-generation connectivity.
- Jio's subscriber base stands at 481.8 million, a figure that reinforces its stronghold in the Indian telecom landscape. Notably, the company boasts the world's second-largest 5G subscriber base, with 108 million users on its network. This substantial 5G penetration underscores Jio's preparedness for the future of telecommunications.



Vikram Samvat begins with the new moon of the month of Chaitra.



- **Ugadi-** Ugadi marks the commencement of the Hindu New Year and is observed in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka.
- **Gudi Padwa-** Gudi Padwa, also known as Samvatsar Padvo, is observed in Maharashtra and Goa. It marks the beginning of Marathi New Year and is also observed as the first day of Chaitra Month.
- **Cheti Chand-** Celebrated by the Sindhi community. Marks the beginning of the Sindhi New Year.
- **Navreh-** Celebrated by the Kashmiri Pandit community. Navreh is derived from Sanskrit Nava Varsha, meaning the new year.
- **Sajibu Cheiraoba-** Sajibu Cheiraoba, also known as Meitei Cheiraoba, is a traditional festival celebrated in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur.

## NEW YEAR FESTIVALS IN INDIA: VAISAKHI, VISHU, BISHUB, BAHAG BIHU, GUDI PADWA, PUTHANDU -

- Recently, traditional Hindu New Year festivals like Chaitra Sukladi, Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand, Navreh, and Sajibu Cheiraoba were celebrated across India, fostering cultural unity and appreciation.

### Major Traditional Indian New Year Festivals-

- **Chaitra Sukladi-** Celebrated in North India, marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year. The Hindu New Year

## FOR THE FIRST TIME, MEMBERS OF THE SHOMPEN TRIBE, ONE OF THE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGS) IN INDIA TOOK PART IN THE ELECTION PROCESS -

- According to the provisional figures made available, the voter turnout was 63.99%. However, in 2019, the voter turnout was 65.09%
- Shompen Tribe are the indigenous people of the interior of Great Nicobar Island. They are designated as a PVTG within the list of Scheduled Tribes.

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- Shompen Tribe are one of the most isolated tribes. They are semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers. Their main sources of livelihood are hunting, gathering, fishing, and a little bit of horticultural activities in a rudimentary form.



- The estimated population of Shompen Tribe was 229 as per the 2011 Census data. They speak their own language, which has many dialects. Members of one band do not understand the dialect of the other.
- The family is controlled by the eldest male member, who controls all activities of the women and kids. Monogamy is the general rule, although polygamy is allowed too.

#### **GYANESH KUMAR AND SUKHBIR SANDHU**

- The high-powered selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed two retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, as the new Election Commissioners of India. The appointments were made on March 14, 2024, following the recommendations of the panel.
- The other members of the selection committee included Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. The appointments have been made to fill the vacancies created by the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey on February 15 and the surprise resignation of Arun Goel on March 9.
- Gyanesh Kumar, a 1985-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, retired as the Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperation in 2021. He holds a postgraduate degree in Economics from Harvard University and a B.Tech from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. During his tenure in the Union Home Ministry, Kumar played a key role in the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. He also served as the Secretary of

Parliamentary Affairs and was instrumental in setting up the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust.

- Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, on the other hand, is a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre. He retired as the Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand in January 2023, after serving in the post for nearly two years. Sandhu holds an MBBS degree from the Government Medical College, Amritsar, and a postgraduate degree in History from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He has also served as the Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and as Additional Secretary in the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

#### **YUVRAJ SINGH NAMED ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2024 AMBASSADOR -**

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the appointment of Indian cricket legend Yuvraj Singh as an ambassador for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. The announcement comes with just 36 days remaining until the highly anticipated global event for T20 cricket commences.



- Yuvraj Singh's selection as an ambassador holds special significance, as it commemorates his iconic feat of hitting six sixes in an over during India's triumphant campaign at the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007.
- As an ambassador, Yuvraj Singh will participate in a range of exciting World Cup promotional events in the United States, leading up to and during the T20 showpiece. One of the highlights will be his presence at the highly anticipated India versus Pakistan fixture in New York on June 9.

#### **SENIOR IPS OFFICER ANURAG KUMAR APPOINTED AS JOINT DIRECTOR OF CBI -**

- In a significant development in India's law enforcement landscape, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of

senior IPS officer Anurag Kumar as the Joint Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). This move, which comes into effect immediately, underscores



the government's confidence in Kumar's leadership and expertise to serve in this crucial role.

- **Anurag Kumar is a 2004 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre.** Prior to his new appointment, he was serving in the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), a premier organization under the Ministry of Home Affairs that focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces across the country.

#### **KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA RE-APPOINTED AS IMF MANAGING DIRECTOR -**

- **Kristalina Georgieva has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new 5-year term starting on 1 October 2024.** She was the sole candidate nominated for the position this year, and her appointment was made by the IMF executive board.



- **The IMF managing director is appointed by the executive board, which can choose a managing director through either voting or consensus.** In 2004, the IMF adopted a policy of appointing a Managing Director through consensus. Candidates for the MD post can be nominated by an IMF Fund Governor or an Executive Director.
- **The Board of Governors is the highest decision-making body of the IMF, consisting of one governor and one alternate governor from each member country.** The Executive Board, with 24 Directors elected by member countries or groups of countries, handles the

IMF's day-to-day business. The Managing Director serves as the chairman of the Executive Board.

#### **RECENTLY, THE ELECTION COMMISSIONER OF INDIA RESIGNED FROM HIS POST, JUST DAYS AHEAD OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS -**

- **The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.**
- **It was established in accordance with the Constitution on 25th January 1950 (celebrated as National Voters' Day). The secretariat of the commission is in New Delhi.**
- **The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.**
- **It is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate State Election Commission.**

#### **Constitutional Provisions-**

- **Part XV (Article 324-329):** It deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.
- **Article 324:** Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.
- **Article 325:** No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll-on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.
- **Article 326:** Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be based on adult suffrage.
- **Article 327:** Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.
- **Article 328:** Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.



- **Article 329:** Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.

#### Structure of ECI-

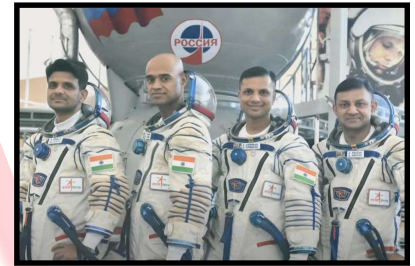
- Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it was made a multi-member body.
- The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the President may from time-to-time fix.
- Presently, it consists of the CEC and two Election Commissioners (ECs).
- At the state level, the election commission is helped by the Chief Electoral Officer.

#### Appointment & Tenure of Commissioners-

- The President appoints CEC and Election Commissioners as per the CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.
- They have a fixed tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- The salary and conditions of service of the CEC and ECs will be equivalent to that of the Cabinet Secretary.
- Under the 1991 Act, it was equivalent to the salary of a Supreme Court Judge.

#### **GAGANYAAN MISSION AND ISRO PROJECTS INAUGURATION BY PM MODI -**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi disclosed the identities of the four pilots currently undergoing training for **India's first human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.**
- **The astronauts, Group Captain P Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander S Shukla, were also awarded 'astronaut wings' by the Prime Minister. Accompanying PM Modi were Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister Muraleedharan, and ISRO Chairman S Somanath.**
- **The Gaganyaan mission marks India's pioneering venture into manned space exploration, slated for launch between 2024-2025. Its objective is to deploy a crew of three individuals into a 400 km orbit for a three-day mission, culminating in a safe return to Earth via landing in Indian sea waters.**





# PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

## CISF PERSONNEL REPLACE DELHI POLICE FOR PARLIAMENT SECURITY -

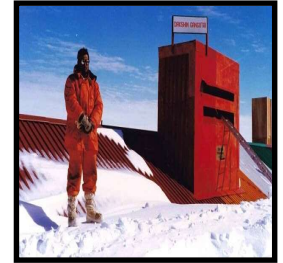
- Following a security breach in December 2023, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has taken over the security of the Parliament complex.
- The CISF personnel have replaced the 150 personnel of the Delhi Police, which included 54 women personnel, who were previously deployed for Parliament security.
- The new Parliament building was inaugurated on May 28, 2023, marking its first official use.
- On December 13, 2023, two individuals carrying colour spraying canisters breached security protocols by entering the Lok Sabha chamber during Zero Hour from the visitors' gallery. The intrusion was reportedly a protest against rising unemployment, ethnic violence in Manipur, and farmers' issues. Six individuals were subsequently arrested and booked under various sections, including terror charges. The police are yet to file a chargesheet in the case.
- Following the breach, eight Delhi Police security personnel responsible for frisking and baggage scanning were suspended.



## RECENTLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OPENED A SECOND BRANCH OF THE POST OFFICE AT THE BHARATI RESEARCH STATION IN ANTARCTICA AFTER ALMOST FOUR DECADES -

- Letters intended for Antarctica will now be addressed with a new experimental PIN code, MH-1718, typical for a new branch. Currently, Maitri and Bharati are the two active research stations that India operates in Antarctica.

- In 1984, India set up its first post office in Antarctica at Dakshin Gangotri (India's first research stations).



- Unfortunately, in 1988-89, Dakshin Gangotri was submerged in ice and was subsequently decommissioned.
- India established another post office at the Maitri research station in Antarctica on 26th January 1990.
- India's two Antarctic research bases, Maitri and Bharati, though are 3,000 km apart but both come under the Goa postal division.
- Letters meant for the post office in Antarctica are sent to the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa.
- The existence of an Indian post office in Antarctica serves a strategic purpose. Typically, an Indian post office operates within Indian territory. Antarctica, being foreign and neutral under the Antarctic Treaty, provides a unique opportunity to assert India's presence on the continent.
- The Antarctic Treaty neutralises territorial claims, prohibits military operations and nuclear tests, and emphasises scientific discovery.
- India's Antarctic Programme is a scientific research and exploration program under the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCPOR). It started in 1981 when the first Indian expedition to Antarctica was made. NCPOR was established in 1998.

## INDIA'S INDIGENOUS BULLET TRAIN: VANDE BHARAT SETS TO REDEFINE HIGH-SPEED RAIL TRAVEL -

- In a significant stride towards advancing India's rail infrastructure, the country is gearing up to launch an indigenous bullet train capable of reaching speeds exceeding 250 kilometres per hour (km/h). This groundbreaking initiative is set to revolutionize high-



speed rail travel in India, showcasing the nation’s engineering prowess and commitment to cutting-edge technology.

- **The Vande Bharat trains, manufactured by the Indian Railways’ Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai,** are at the forefront of this ambitious project. These state-of-the-art trains are designed to operate on the recently announced north, south, and east corridors, reaching a top speed of 220 kmph – faster than any existing train on the Indian Railways network.
- **The National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL),** responsible for executing India’s first bullet train project, has made remarkable progress. It has already completed 300 kilometres of pier work, laying the foundation for the country’s journey into high-speed rail excellence. Additionally, the extensive land acquisition process for the entire 508-kilometre route was successfully completed in January, paving the way for seamless implementation.



**INDIA’S BIGGEST CLIMATE CLOCK -**

- Recently, **the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR),** installed and activated India’s biggest Climate Clock at the CSIR Headquarters in New Delhi as a part of the Earth Day Celebrations.



- The event signifies CSIR’s aim to spread awareness about climate change and to make people energy literate. It was launched in 2015 to provide a measuring stick against which viewers can track climate change mitigation progress.
- **It is a graphic to demonstrate how quickly the planet is approaching 1.5°C of global warming, given current emissions trends.** It also shows the amount of CO2 already emitted, and the global warming to date.
- **The date shown when humanity reaches 1.5°C will move closer as emissions rise, and further away as emissions decrease.** As of 4th April 2024, the current climate temperature is 1.295°C.

**MASSIVE FLOODS IN DUBAI -**

- Recently, **one of the heaviest rainfall was recorded in the United Arab Emirates (UAE),** after a severe thunderstorm hit the country. The storm had initially hit Oman before it landed in the UAE.
- On the other hand, **Mumbai, lying on the other side of the Arabian Sea, has been undergoing a humid heatwave for the past few days, having a high relative humidity of 55%.** UAE lies in the arid regions of the world, so such heavy rainfalls are unusual there.
- On average, **Dubai experiences 94.7 mm of rain in a year.** But this event was historic as it brought more than 142 mm of rainfall that had soaked Dubai over 24 hours.

**Possible Causes of Extreme Rain:**

- **Climate Change-** Climate Change along with multiple factors associated with it like patterns of natural climate variability, **such as El Niño and La Niña,** has contributed to the extreme rain.
- **Global warming-** It has led to higher temperatures causing evaporation of water not only from land but also oceans and other water bodies, causing a warmer atmosphere to hold more moisture. **For every 1 degree Celsius rise in average temperature, the atmosphere can hold about 7% more moisture.**
- **Cloud Seeding-** Cloud seeding is a process in which chemicals such as silver iodide crystals are implanted into clouds to increase rainfall in an

environment where water scarcity is a concern. UAE, located in one of the hottest and driest regions on earth, has been leading the effort to seed clouds and increase precipitation.

- **Thunderstorm-** Thunderstorms are generated by atmospheric imbalance and turbulence caused by a combination of several conditions, including unstable, warm air rising rapidly into the atmosphere; sufficient moisture to form clouds and rain; and upward lift of air currents caused by colliding weather fronts (cold and warm), sea breezes, or mountains.

### INDIA TO RECEIVE ABOVE-NORMAL MONSOON RAINS: IMD -

- **IMD in a press briefing has forecast that the rains in June-September will be 6% more than these months, an annual average of 87 cm.**
- **The forecasts also indicate that “above-normal” rain was likely over most parts of the country except northwest, east and northeast India.**
- **The models indicate a 30% chance of monsoon rains being over 10%, categorized as ‘excess’.** Usually the chances of excess rain in any given year is only a 17%
- **The El Nino is expected to fade away by June and progress to La Nina (a converse cooling effect in the Central Pacific region that is usually linked to surplus rainfall by the second half of the monsoon ie. August and September).**
- **El Nino last year dented India’s monsoon by 6%.**

### GLACIAL LAKES AND GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOODS (GLOFS) -

- **Uttarakhand government has formed expert teams to assess the risk of five glacial lakes prone to Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the Himalayas. NDMA Identifies Five Glacial Lakes of Uttarakhand Are in Highest Risk.**
- **The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has identified 188 Himalayan glacial lakes prone to**

**breaching due to heavy rainfall.** Thirteen of these lakes are in Uttarakhand.



- **These lakes have been categorized into three risk levels: ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘C’, based on their susceptibility to GLOFs.**
- **Five glacial lakes are classified as highly sensitive (‘A’ category) due to their increased risk of GLOFs. These lakes include Vasudhara Tal in the Dhauliganga basin in Chamoli district.**

### GREEN STEEL POLICY -

- **The Steel Ministry is developing a comprehensive green steel policy, encompassing the manufacturing process, required skill set, and funding support, as part of a complete decarbonization strategy.**

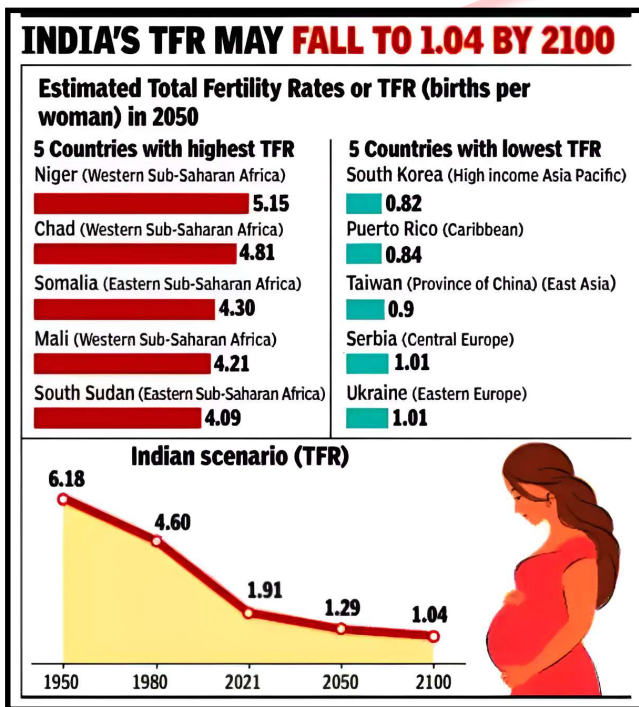


- **Green steel is the eco-friendly production of steel with lower greenhouse gas emissions, possibly reducing costs and enhancing quality compared to traditional methods.**
- **The steel manufacturing process, involving blast furnaces, basic oxygen furnaces, and electric arc furnaces, is a major global source of carbon emissions, primarily due to the high coal and coke consumption in blast furnace operations.**
- **India's domestic steel sector contributes 12% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, with an emission intensity of 2.55 tonnes of CO2 per tonne of crude steel, higher than the global average of 1.9 tonnes of CO2.**

## REPORTS & INDICES

### LANCET STUDY ON DECLINING FERTILITY RATE IN INDIA -

- Recently, A Study Published in the Lancet which flagged India’s total fertility rate (TFR) (representing the average number of children born to each woman will fall to 1.29 in 2050, significantly below the replacement threshold of 2.1.



- **TFR Evolution:** Between 1950 and 2021, the global total fertility rate (TFR) decreased by more than half, dropping from approximately 5 children per woman in 1950 to 2.2 children in 2021.
- **Future Projection:** A continued global decline, with an estimated global total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.83 by 2050 (about 76% of the countries will have TFR below replacement threshold ) and 1.59 by 2100 ( about 97% of the countries will have TFR below replacement threshold).
- In 1950, one-third of global live births were in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania. Since 2011, the majority

has shifted to sub-Saharan Africa, rising from 8% in 1950 to nearly 30% by 2021.

- China’s working-age population surpassed 50% in 1987, coinciding with a period of significant economic growth. However, China’s total fertility rate (TFR) has declined to a record low, leading to a contraction in the working-age population.
- In India, the total fertility rate (TFR) stood at 6.18 in 1950, dropped to 4.60 in 1980, and subsequently decreased to 1.91 by 2021.
- By 2050, one in five people in India will be above the age of 60 in 2050, signaling a transition towards an aging population akin to the demographic challenges currently faced by China.
- Earlier, the UN Population Fund’s (UNPF) ‘India Ageing Report’ also projected the number of elderly in India will more than double from 149 million in 2022 to 347 million by mid-century .

### FOOD WASTE INDEX REPORT 2024 BY UNEP -

- Recently, The Food Waste Index Report 2024 by the UN Environment Programme was released ahead of the International Day of Zero Waste (March 30).
- International Day of Zero waste is celebrated on 30th march every year, it highlights the importance of waste management on the international level, it promotes sustainable practices for consumption and production process.

#### UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024 -

- It monitors the global and national generation of food waste and inedible parts.
- It focuses on waste occurring at the retail and consumer levels, including households and food services.
- This report was a joint study which was authored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), a U.K.-based non-profit organization.



- **Over one billion meals were wasted daily in 2022 globally, despite 783 million people experiencing hunger and widespread food insecurity.**
- **In 2022, approximately 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste were generated, equating to 132 kilograms per capita and nearly one-fifth of all available food.**
- **The majority of food waste, accounting for 60%, happened within households, while food services contributed to 28%, and retail accounted for 12%.**
- **Global Current Situation;** As of now, only four countries in the G-20 group (Australia, Japan, U.K., U.S.) along with the European Union have food waste estimates that are suitable for tracking progress towards the goals set for the year 2030.
- **Food loss and waste contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, with an estimated economic toll of \$1 trillion.**

#### **SUPREME COURT'S STAY ON GOVT'S FACT CHECK UNIT -**

- **Supreme Court had stayed the operation of the amended IT rules which introduced Fact Check Unit (FCU) to identify "fake news" on social media.**

#### **FCU under Public Information Bureau (PIB)-**

- **Launch year-** 2019, **Ministry-** Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It is based in the National Media Centre (New Delhi).
- Its mandate is to **counter misinformation related to government policies, initiatives, and schemes.**
- Its coverage is on matter that does not pertain to the Union Government is not taken up for evaluation or fact-checking by the PIB unit.

#### **Why Supreme Court stayed the operation of FCU-**

- **The petitioners argues that FCU could potentially be misused by the government to control information available to voters, impacting free speech.**
- **Split verdict-** It was delivered by the Bombay High Court about the validity of Rule 3(1)(b)(5) of IT rules 2021, with one judge striking down the rules and another upholding them, a third judge's decision is pending.
- The Supreme Court stayed the FCU operation until

Bombay High Court arrives at a final decision on the challenge to the amended IT rules.

#### **GLOBAL BURDEN OF CANCER: WHO -**

- **On World Cancer Day (4th February), the World Health Organization (WHO)'s cancer agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), released the latest estimates of the Global Burden of Cancer in 2022.**
- **In 2022, there were an estimated 20 million new cancer cases and 9.7 million deaths.**
- **The estimated number of people alive within 5 years following a cancer diagnosis was 53.5 million.**
- **About 1 in 5 people develop cancer in their lifetime.**
- **10 types of cancer collectively comprised around two-thirds of new cases and deaths globally in 2022.**
- **Lung cancer was the most commonly occurring cancer worldwide with 2.5 million new cases accounting for 12.4% of the total new cases.** Female breast cancer ranked second (2.3 million cases, 11.6%), followed by colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, and stomach cancer.
- **India reported 1,413,316 new cases in 2022 with a higher proportion of female patients — 691,178 men and 722,138 women.** Breast cancer had the highest proportion in the country, with 192,020 new cases, accounting for 13.6% of all patients and over 26% in women.
- **In India, breast cancer was followed by lip and oral cavity (143,759 new cases, 10.2%), cervix and uterine, lung, and oesophageal cancers.**
- **A recent study by WHO assessing the cancer burden in Asia, published in The Lancet Regional Health, found that India alone accounted for 32.9% of global deaths and 28.1% of new cases of lip and oral cavity cancer in 2019.**
- **As per the Lancet Global Health 2023, India accounted for 23% of deaths that occurred due to cervical cancer globally.**
- **In India, cervical cancer's five-year survival rate was 51.7%. However, survival rates in India are lower compared to high-income countries such as the United States.**

# DEFENCE

## EXTENSION OF AFSPA IN ARUNACHAL AND NAGALAND -

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in parts of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh for another six months.
- The Act in its original form was promulgated by the British in response to the Quit India movement in 1942. After Independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru decided to retain the Act.
- It is a 1958 law passed by the Parliament that grants the armed forces special authority and immunities in “disturbed areas” to maintain public order. It is only applicable if an area has been deemed “disturbed” under Section 3 of the Act.
- An area can be considered to be disturbed due to differences or disputes among different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government, the Governor of the State, or the Administrator of the Union Territory may declare all or part of the State or Union Territory to be a disturbed region.



### Powers of Armed Forces Under AFSPA-

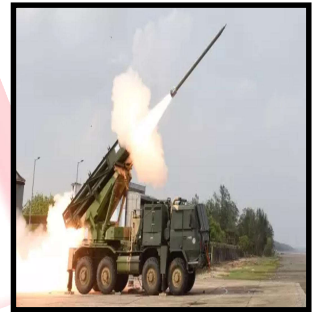
- **Power to Prevent gathering and Open fire:** They have the right to prevent a gathering of five or more people in a specific area, as well as to use force or even open fire after providing adequate warning if they believe a person is breaking the law.
- **Power to Arrest without warrant:** If reasonable suspicion exists, the army may arrest a person without a warrant, enter or search a location without a warrant, and prohibit the possession of firearms.
- **Reporting to the nearest Police station:** Any person detained or taken into custody may be turned over to the

officer in charge of the nearest police station, along with a report outlining the facts behind the arrest.

- **Immunity from Judicial actions:** These armed forces are free from prosecution unless the Union Government authorizes the prosecuting agency.

## INDIA LEADS GLOBAL ARMS IMPORTS AMID SHIFTING DYNAMICS -

The latest data on international arms transfers from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India emerged as the leading arms importer globally during the period from 2019 to 2023.



- During this timeframe, India's imports increased by 4.7% when compared to the period from 2014 to 2018.
- Nine of the 10 biggest arms importers in 2019–23, including the top 3 of India, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, were in Asia and Oceania or the Middle East. Notably, Ukraine also rose as the 4th-largest arms importer globally during this period.
- The United States, the largest arms supplier globally, witnessed a 17% growth in arms exports between the periods 2014 –18 and 2019–23. Concurrently, France ascended to become the world’s second-largest arms supplier. Europe accounted for a third of global arms exports, with a strong military-industrial capacity. In contrast, Russia experienced a significant decline of more than half, with a decrease of -53%.
- Although Russia remained India's primary arms supplier, accounting for 36% of its arms imports, this marked the first five-year period since 1960-64 where Russian deliveries made up less than half of India's total arms imports.

- India is now increasingly turning to Western countries like France and the USA, as well as boosting its domestic arms industry, to meet its growing defence needs.
- **Recent Indian Government Initiatives to Reduce Arms Imports-**
- In the Interim Budget 2024-25, the Defense Ministry received a total allocation of ₹6.2 lakh crore.
- The Department of Military Affairs has recently released the 5th Positive Indigenisation List, which includes 98 items, further bolstering indigenous manufacturing in the defence sector.
- **Increased FDI Limits in the Defence Sector:** It has been increased in 2020 to 74% through the Automatic Route and up to 100% via the Government Route.
- **Defence Industrial Corridors:** Two dedicated Defence Industrial Corridors have been established in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh to boost defence manufacturing.
- **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX):** iDEX aims to create an ecosystem for innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace.

## PARIVARTAN CHINTAN: A TRI-SERVICE CONFERENCE -

- Parivartan Chintan, an upcoming Tri-Service Conference aimed at generating new and fresh ideas, initiatives, and reforms to propel Jointness and Integration efforts, is being held in New Delhi on 8th April 2024.
- It was chaired by Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan. It is the first-ever conference of the Heads of all Tri-Services Institutions.
- The post of CDS was created in 2019 on the recommendations of a committee of defence experts headed by Lt General DB Shekatkar. General Bipin Rawat was the first CDS in the country.

### Key Roles and Responsibilities

- His core function is to foster operational synergy among Indian military branches.
- Acts as Head Department of Military Affairs in the Ministry of Defence.
- Single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister.



- Advisory role in Nuclear Command Authority.

## ARMY DEPLOYS ADVANCED ANTI-DRONE DEFENSE SYSTEMS ALONG CHINA BORDER -

- In response to escalating tensions along the northern borders with China, the Indian Army has initiated significant enhancements to its air defence capabilities. Central to this strategic maneuver is the deployment of cutting-edge Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction Systems (IDD&IS), developed domestically in collaboration between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Bharat Electronics.
- Jointly developed by DRDO and Bharat Electronics, the Mark-1 variant IDD&IS represents a milestone in India's indigenous defence technology.
- These systems offer a multi-layered defence mechanism against hostile drones, combining jamming technology with "hard kill" measures using lasers, thus ensuring comprehensive protection.
- Capable of disrupting drones within a radius of 2 to 5 kilometers, providing immediate countermeasures against potential threats. Employing high-energy lasers,





the system can neutralize drones from distances exceeding 800 meters, ensuring robust defence capabilities.

### INDIA TOPS GLOBAL ARMS IMPORTS, SIPRI REPORT -

- According to the latest data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), **India was the world's top arms importer for the period 2019-2023. India's arms imports witnessed a 4.7% increase compared to the 2014-2018 period.**
- **Despite Russia remaining India's main arms supplier, accounting for 36% of its imports,** the report notes that this is the first five-year period since 1960-1964 when deliveries from Russia (or the Soviet Union before 1991) made up less than half of India's arms imports.
- **Nine out of the ten biggest arms importers in 2019-2023, including the top three of India, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, were from Asia, Oceania, or the Middle East.** Ukraine became the fourth-largest arms importer globally after receiving major arms transfers from over 30 states in 2022-2023.
- **The report highlights a significant 94% increase in arms imports by European countries between 2014-2018 and 2019-2023,** likely influenced by the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- **The United States, the world's largest arms supplier, saw a 17% growth in arms exports between 2014-2018 and 2019-2023.** Simultaneously, France emerged as the world's second-largest arms supplier, with its exports growing by 47%.

### THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON SECURITY (CCS) APPROVED A RS 15,000 CRORE PROJECT TO DESIGN AND DEVELOP INDIA'S FIFTH GENERATION FIGHTER MULTIROLE JET -

- **The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved a Rs 15,000 crore project to design and develop India's fifth-generation fighter multirole jet, the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).**
- **In a related incident, a Court of Inquiry has been initiated to investigate the cause of an Indian Air Force**

**Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas crash during an operational training sortie in Rajasthan.**

- **Fifth-generation (5G) fighters are aircraft capable of operating in heavily contested combat zones,** characterised by the presence of the most advanced air and ground threats, both current and anticipated.
- 5G fighter jets have stealth capabilities and can cruise at supersonic speeds without engaging afterburners. It stands out from fourth-generation (4G) peers due to its multi-spectral low-observable design, self-protection, radar jamming capabilities, and integrated avionics.
- 5G jets are possessed by **Russia (Sukhoi Su-57), China (Chengdu J-20), and the US (F-35).**
- **The IAF currently has around 30 fighter squadrons against the sanctioned strength of 42.** The squadrons of MiG-21s, MiG-29s, Jaguars, and Mirage 2000s are scheduled to be phased out by the middle of the next decade.
- India must enhance its air defences against China and Pakistan, with China possessing 3,304 aircraft, while India and Pakistan have 2,296 and 1,434 aircraft, respectively.
- **India is developing the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), with five prototypes to be collaboratively manufactured by ADA, HAL, and private industries, building on the success of the LCA Tejas.**



### Features-

- **Stealth:** The 25-tonne twin-engine aircraft is set to surpass current Indian Air Force fighters in size, and will feature advanced stealth to outmatch global 5G stealth fighters.
- **Fuel and Weapon:** The aircraft will have a large, concealed internal fuel tank of 6.5-tonne capacity, and an internal weapons bay for a range of weapons, including indigenous weapons.

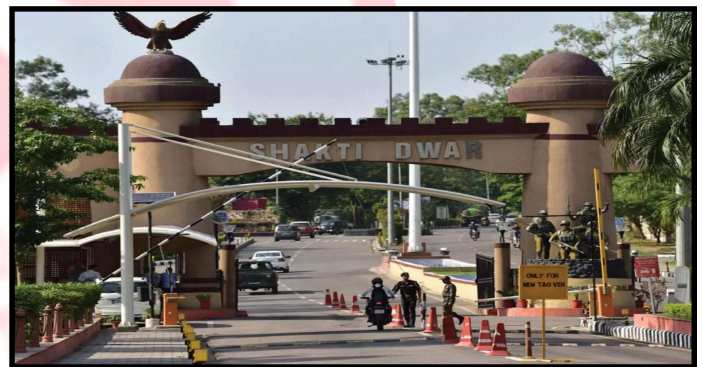
- **Engine:** The AMCA Mk1 will feature the US-built GE414 engine (90 kilo Newton class), while the more advanced AMCA Mk2 will use a more powerful 110 kN engine developed by DRDO's-Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) in collaboration with a foreign defence major.
- **Development Timeline:** The ADA aims for the aircraft's first flight in 4-5 years, with full development expected to take around 10 years; five prototypes will precede HAL's manufacturing, involving the private industry.

### MERGING CANTONMENTS WITH THE STATE MUNICIPALITIES -

- Recently, the Centre has issued a notification to denotify civil areas of 10 cantonments (out of 58) in the country. These areas will be merged with the Concerned State Municipalities (Local Bodies).
- The government plans to exclude certain areas of the said cantonments and merge such areas with the state's local bodies.
- Cantonments are areas primarily designated for housing military personnel and supporting infrastructure. Originating from the French word "canton," meaning "corner" or "district," cantonments historically referred to temporary military encampments.
- However, over time, they have evolved into semi-permanent settlements that provide accommodation, offices, schools, and other facilities for military personnel and their families.
- In India, the history of cantonments dates back to the British East India Company period. The first

cantonment was established in 1765 at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, following the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

- These areas were initially created to station military troops but have expanded to include civilian populations that provide support and logistic services to the military.
- The **Cantonments Act of 1924 in India formalised the governance and administration of cantonments, providing a legal framework for their management, development, and regulation.**
- Cantonments are classified into four categories — **class I to class IV** —depending on the size of the area and population.



- This board is responsible for various aspects of the cantonment's administration.
- The station commander of the cantonment is the ex-officio president of the board, and an officer of the Defence Estates Organisation is the chief executive and the member-secretary.

# SPORTS

## TAKSHVI VAGHANI SETS NEW WORLD RECORD FOR THE LOWEST LIMBO SKATING OVER 25 METRES -

• In a remarkable display of skill, flexibility, and unwavering determination, India's young skating sensation, Takshvi Vaghani, has etched her name in the record books by setting a new world record for the lowest limbo skating over 25 metres.

On April 18, 2024, the 6-year-old prodigy from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, defied the boundaries of human agility, gliding across the 25-meter distance at a mere 16 cm (6.29 in) above the ground.



• Takshvi Vaghani's achievement is a testament to her exceptional talent and rigorous training. With her lithe movements and impeccable balance, she surpassed the previous world record held by Manasvi Vishal from Pune, who had skated the same distance at a height of 16.5 centimeters.

• The young skater's remarkable performance not only showcased her extraordinary flexibility but also her unwavering determination to push the boundaries of what is possible in the world of roller skating.

## WORLD ANTI-DOPING REPORT 2022 -

• The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) anti-doping report, 2022, released by the WADA reveals alarming statistics on global doping violations, emphasising the need for stringent measures to safeguard the integrity of sports.

### India Leads Globally in Doping Offences:

• India emerged with the highest percentage of doping offenders, accounting for 3.26% of tested athletes.

- Out of 3,865 samples tested by India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), 125 returned Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs), making India the only country with over 100 positive results and the highest among nations testing more than 2,000 samples.
- An AAF is a report from a WADA-accredited laboratory that identifies the presence of a prohibited substance and/or its metabolites or markers in a sample.
- Despite being 11th in the number of samples tested, India's doping violations surpassed major sporting nations like Russia, the USA, Italy, and France.
- South Africa followed India with 2.09% of samples testing positive among nations collecting over 2,000 samples.
- China tested the most samples (17,357), producing only 0.25% AAFs, while the USA (84) and Russia (85) closely followed India in the number of positive results.
- WADA reported a 6.4% increase in the total number of samples analysed and reported into its Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (ADAMS) in 2022 compared to 2021, signalling a positive trend towards maintaining the integrity of 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.
- 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



KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES 2023				
MEDAL TALLY	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

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.

# IMPORTANT MCQ FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS

- Q1. In which state was the world's first Om-shaped temple inaugurated ?  
a) Uttar Pradesh  
b) Maharashtra  
c) Karnataka  
d) Rajasthan
- Q2. What is 'Stargate', recently mentioned in the news ?  
a) Black hole  
b) Meteorological satellite  
c) AI Supercomputer  
d) Nuclear powered submarine
- Q3. Mushk Budiji, recently seen in the news, is an indigenous variety of which crop ?  
a) Rice  
b) Wheat  
c) Maize  
d) Jowar
- Q4. Which of the following oceans has the largest number of the world's active volcanoes ?  
a) Arctic Ocean  
b) Atlantic Ocean  
c) Indian Ocean  
d) Pacific Ocean
- Q5. The most ideal region for the cultivation of cotton in India is -  
a) The Brahmaputra Valley.  
b) The Indo-Gangetic Plain.  
c) The Deccan Plateau.  
d) The Rann of Kutch.
- Q6. What does the term "repo rate" refer to?  
a) Rate at which banks borrow from the RBI  
b) Rate at which RBI borrows from banks  
c) Rate at which banks lend to each other overnight  
d) Rate at which RBI lends to the government
- Q7. If Money supply growth is faster than real GDP growth, it results in \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Inflation  
b) deflation  
c) budget surplus  
d) budget deficit
- Q8. In which Indian state is the Gangaur festival celebrated?  
a) Maharashtra  
b) Rajasthan  
c) Gujarat  
d) Uttar Pradesh
- Q9. Which country's Sittwe Port has India gained operational control over, expanding its maritime presence ?  
a) Myanmar  
b) Sri Lanka  
c) Bangladesh  
d) Maldives
- Q10. Where will the Tri-Service conference 'Parivartan Chintan' be held ?  
a) Mumbai  
b) New Delhi  
c) Kolkata  
d) Chennai
- Q11. Which of the following factors is responsible for occurrence of earthquakes ?  
a) Sudden cooling and contraction of Earth's surface  
b) Activity of some dormant volcanoes  
c) Change of water into steam due to internal heat and its expansion  
d) All of these
- Q12. Snow line is  
a) The altitude below which there is no snowfall ever.  
b) The altitude above which there is snowfall but melts almost completely during the summer.  
c) The altitude above which snow lies permanently at any place, and it does not melt throughout the year.  
d) None of these.
- Q13. Which of the following sets of taxes belongs to Central Government ?  
a) Excise duty, Sales tax and Custom duty  
b) Income tax, Custom duty and House tax  
c) Excise duty, Custom duty and Income tax  
d) Custom duty, Entertainment tax and Income tax
- Q14. The major objective of monetary policy is to  
a) increase government's tax revenue  
b) revamp the Public Distribution System  
c) promote economic growth with price stability  
d) weed out corruption in the economy

- Q15. Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has become the President of which country for the third time ?  
a) Netherland  
b) Egypt  
c) Brazil  
d) Finland
- Q16. Who has assumed charge as the Principal Director General of the Press Information Bureau upon the superannuation of Manish Desai ?  
a) Anshika Singh  
b) Maushami Chakraborty  
c) Vasudha Gupta  
d) Sheyphali Sharan
- Q17. In April 2024, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is conducting a 10-day exercise \_\_\_\_\_ to test its capabilities and preparedness for high-intensity operations.  
a) Gagan Shakti-2024  
b) Gagan Mitra Shakti-2024  
c) Gagan Yudha-2024  
d) Mitra Shakti-2024
- Q18. The Democratic Republic of Congo is a Central African country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is Africa's \_\_\_\_\_ largest country by land area and the world's eleventh-largest overall.  
a) 1st  
b) 2nd  
c) 3rd  
d) 4th
- Q19. Which of the following rivers crosses the Equator twice?  
a) Amazon  
b) Congo  
c) Nile  
d) Tigris
- Q20. What is the World Bank's estimated GDP growth for India in FY24 ?  
a) 7.5%                                      b) 6.6%  
c) 6.5%                                      d) 7.0%
- Q21. Government has raised how much rupees via public sector enterprises disinvestment in FY 24 ?  
a) 12,507 crore  
b) 16,507 crore  
c) 66,507 crore  
d) 36,507 crore
- Q22. Caracas is the capital of which country ?  
a) Paraguay  
b) Somalia  
c) Venezuela  
d) Ukraine
- Q23. Sikkari is the folk dance of which state ?  
a) Manipur  
b) Sikkim  
c) Odisha  
d) Assam
- Q24. What percentage increase did India's defence exports witness in FY 2023-24 ?  
a) 22%  
b) 25.5%  
c) 33.3%  
d) 32.5%
- Q25. Which organization has partnered with Panasonic for lithium-ion cell manufacturing in India ?  
a) Indian Oil Corporation Ltd  
b) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd  
c) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd  
d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
- Q26. Which port emerged as India's top cargo-handling port in the fiscal year 2023-24 ?  
a) Mormugao Port  
b) Kandla Port  
c) Mumbai Port  
d) Paradip Port
- Q27. Scientists from which country achieved a new record in sustaining plasma temperatures in a fusion reactor ?  
a) North Korea  
b) South Korea  
c) Japan  
d) United States
- Q28. Which country recently legalized recreational cannabis use, becoming the largest European Union (EU) nation to do so ?  
a) France  
b) Spain  
c) Germany  
d) Italy



- Q29. Where is the headquarter of Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd. situated ?  
a) Mumbai  
b) New Delhi  
c) Hyderabad  
d) Lucknow
- Q30. Thiruvanthapuram is the capital city of which of the following Indian state ?  
a) Assam  
b) Odisha  
c) Kerala  
d) Goa
- Q31. What is the objective of the 'Van Mitra' scheme?  
a) To promote water conservation  
b) To encourage wildlife protection  
c) To encourage community participation in tree planting  
d) To improve air quality in urban areas
- Q32. What is the Raisina Dialogue primarily focused on?  
a) Geopolitics and geo-economics  
b) Environmental conservation  
c) Cultural exchange  
d) Technological innovation
- Q33. When is World Homeopathy Day observed ?  
a) April 10  
b) April 1  
c) April 11  
d) April 20
- Q34. Which country has collaborated with the European Union (EU) to promote startups in EV battery recycling ?  
a) UAE  
b) India  
c) China  
d) Japan
- Q35. Which country provided the Indian Army with the portable Iгла-S Air defence system ?  
a) Russia  
b) China  
c) United States  
d) France
- Q36. The Round Revolution in India is related with the production \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a) Cotton Production  
b) Meat Production  
c) Potato Production  
d) Jute Production
- Q37. Gambit, Stalemate, Grand Master is sports term associated with which game ?  
a) Golf  
b) Badminton  
c) Football  
d) Chess
- Q38. Which country is credited with the origin of the Unani system of medicine ?  
a) India  
b) China  
c) Greece  
d) Egypt
- Q39. Which institution is hosting the 6th Shaastra Rapid FIDE Rated Chess Tournament ?  
a) IIT Delhi  
b) IIT Madras  
c) IIT Bombay  
d) IIT Kanpur
- Q40. Which company acquired a 26% stake in Adani's power project ?  
a) Reliance  
b) Tata  
c) Infosys  
d) Wipro
- Q41. With which company has Tata Motors announced a strategic partnership to establish a nationwide network of 5,000 public charging stations for electric vehicles (EVs) by the end of 2024 ?  
a) Indian Oil Corporation Ltd  
b) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd  
c) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd  
d) Reliance Industries Ltd
- Q42. Where did the trailer and song launch of India's first Artificial Intelligence based film "IRAH" take place ?  
a) Delhi  
b) Chennai  
c) Mumbai  
d) Kolkata

- Q43. Recently, which country has overtaken India as the primary importer of Russian crude oil through sea routes ?
- China
  - Iran
  - Bangladesh
  - Pakistan
- Q44. Recently, which space organization has been directed to establish a time standard for the Moon called Coordinated Lunar Time (LTC) ?
- CNSA
  - JAXA
  - ISRO
  - NASA
- Q45. What is the primary focus of the 'Himalayan Basket' initiative ?
- Textile manufacturing
  - Agriculture products
  - Technology development
  - Tourism promotion
- Q46. The Great Barrier Reef is a
- Coral formation
  - Hill range
  - Manmade wall
  - Tidal bore
- Q47. Which of the following is also known by the name of Sahyadri Range ?
- Eastern Ghats
  - Western Ghats
  - Shivaliks
  - Vindhya
- Q48. Recently, which bank became the first private bank to open a branch in Lakshadweep ?
- Axis bank
  - HDFC bank
  - YES bank
  - ICICI bank
- Q49. \_\_\_\_\_ is a good whose quantity demanded decreases when consumer income rises.
- selective good
  - normal good
  - exclusive good
  - inferior good
- Q50. Which one of the following countries recently signed a new agreement to build Australia's SSN-AUKUS Submarines ?
- Ukraine, France and Germany
  - US, UK, and Australia
  - India, US and China
  - Russia, Australia and Malaysia
- Q51. Which country recently performed the first transplant of a genetically modified kidney from a pig into a living human ?
- US
  - UK
  - India
  - Russia
- Q52. What is the name of the operation recently launched by India to evacuate Indian Nationals from Haiti ?
- Operation Meghdoot
  - Operation Shakti
  - Operation Raahat
  - Operation Indravati
- Q53. Which of the following roles is performed by weeds ?
- They sometimes produce toxic substances which help crop growth.
  - They help to control crop pests and diseases and microorganisms.
  - They reduce crop yield and affect quality by competing for water, minerals, manures and fertilisers and sunlight.
  - All of these
- Q54. Which of the following happens, when a traveller crosses the 180th meridian ?
- He loses a day if he crosses it in winter.
  - He gains a day if he crosses it in summer.
  - He loses or gains a day depending upon the or speed at which he is travelling.
  - He gains or loses a day depending upon the direction in which he travels.
- Q55. When did the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, and its associated Rules come into force in India?
- 2002
  - 2003
  - 2004
  - 2005

- Q56. In a period when an economy is facing price rise, and along with that there is slowing down of economy activities, this is case of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Deflation
  - Stagflation
  - Recession
  - Depression
- Q57. Seng Khihlang Festival is celebrated in which of the following state ?
- Tripura
  - West Bengal
  - Assam
  - Meghalaya
- Q58. Which company has signed an MoU with the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi for co-operation in research and technology, product development, in the areas of semiconductors, quantum technologies, and drones ?
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
  - Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
  - Hindustan Unilever Limited
  - Bharat Electronics Limited
- Q59. French carmaker Citroen has appointed whom as its brand ambassador in India ?
- Virat Kohli
  - Rohit Sharma
  - KL Rahul
  - Mahendra Singh Dhoni
- Q60. World Earth Day, also known as International Mother Earth Day, is observed every year on 22 April. What is the theme of International Mother Earth Day 2024 ?
- Invest in our Planet
  - Restore our Earth
  - Protect Our Specie
  - Planet vs. Plastics
- Q61. Which of the following Tribes in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Cast their First Votes ?
- |            |          |
|------------|----------|
| a) Shompen | b) Bhil  |
| c) Kokna   | d) Munda |
- Q62. Which state's Integrated Test Range (ITR) hosted a successful Indigenous Technology Cruise Missile (ITCM) flight test by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) ?
- Punjab
  - West Bengal
  - Jharkhand
  - Odisha
- Q63. In which year was the first National Civil Services Day commemorated on April 21 at Vigyan Bhavan ?
- 2002
  - 2004
  - 2005
  - 2006
- Q64. What substance, alleged to cause cancer in the long term, led to the banning of certain spice powders in Hong Kong and Singapore?
- Ethylene oxide
  - Sodium chloride
  - Calcium carbonate
  - Potassium sorbate
- Q65. Where have archaeologists recently uncovered significant megalithic monuments, an Iron Age megalithic site, and rock art sites?
- Karnataka
  - Tamil Nadu
  - Maharashtra
  - Telangana
- Q66. Who recently made history as the youngest-ever challenger in the World Chess Championship?
- Gukesh
  - Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa
  - Harikrishna
  - Aravindh Chithambaram
- Q67. What was the name of the mega exercise conducted by the Indian Navy along the East Coast to test maritime preparedness?
- Pralay Abhyas
  - Varuna
  - Poorvi Leher
  - TROPEX
- Q68. Which country tested the Pyoljji-1-2 anti-aircraft missile and the Hwasal-1 Ra-3 strategic cruise missile, escalating tensions in the region?
- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| a) South Korea | b) United States |
| c) North Korea | d) Iran          |



- Q69. Which volcano has recently been producing smoke rings, a rare phenomenon known as volcanic vortex rings?
- Mount Fuji
  - Mount Vesuvius
  - Mount Etna
  - Mount Kilimanjaro
- Q70. What type of bond is specifically issued to fund projects that have positive environmental and climate benefits?
- Treasury Bond
  - Green Bond
  - Blue Bond
  - Corporate Bond
- Q71. Who has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador of SPACE India ?
- Sanjana Sanghi
  - Aamir Khan
  - Rajkumar Rao
  - Vicky Kaushal
- Q72. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) carried out successful trials of the MPATGM Weapon System at Pokhran Field Firing Range, Rajasthan. What is the meaning 'A' in 'MPATGM' ?
- Army
  - Anti
  - Aagni
  - Armour
- Q73. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has introduced Home Voting for the elderly and Persons with Disabilities for the first time in a Lok Sabha Election. Under this voters above \_\_\_\_\_ years of age can choose to vote from home.
- 75 years
  - 80 years
  - 85 years
  - 88 years
- Q74. Recently, Iran has launched hundreds of drones and missiles against Israel under which operation ?
- Operation True Promise
  - Operation False Friend
  - Operation Fake Promise
  - Operation Tit for Tat
- Q75. Which country tested the Angara-A5 space rocket in April 2024 ?
- India
  - Russia
  - Japan
  - USA
- Q76. Defense Ministry has issued a tender worth over Rs 65,000 crore to which company for the purchase of 97 LCA Mark 1A fighter aircraft manufactured in India ?
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
  - Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
  - Big Bang Boom Solutions Private Limited
  - Tata Advanced Systems
- Q77. In April 2024, who has stepped down as the Chef-de-Mission for the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics citing "personal reasons" ?
- Saina Nehwal
  - Nikhath Zareen
  - P. T. Usha
  - Mary Kom
- Q78. Recently, ISRO has decided to achieve debris-free space by which year ?
- 2025
  - 2027
  - 2030
  - 2035
- Q79. Adwaita Nayar has been named Young Global Leader in World Economic Forum's Class of 2024. She is CEO of which company ?
- Meesho
  - Myntra
  - Kia Fashion
  - Nykaa Fashion
- Q80. The India government gifted 35 ambulances and 66 school buses to which country in April 2024 ?
- Sri Lanka
  - Nepal
  - Bhutan
  - Pakistan
- Q81. The minor planets revolving between the orbits of Jupiter and Mars are called
- Comets
  - Meteors
  - Asteroids
  - Noyas

- Q82. A narrow passage of water connecting two large bodies of water known as a/an
- Oasis
  - Strait
  - Isthmus
  - Bay
- Q83. Which bank was banned by the RBI from onboarding new customers on its mobile app due to cyber fraud concerns?
- HDFC Bank
  - Axis Bank
  - Bank of Baroda
  - Canara Bank
- Q84. Which of the following best defines free trade ?
- Imports are discouraged
  - There are no restrictions on exports and imports
  - There are no duties levied on export
  - Imported goods are made duty free
- Q85. Gwalior is a city in Madhya Pradesh. It is situated along the banks of which river ?
- Shipra
  - Narmada
  - Chambal
  - Son
- Q86. Gudi Padwa or 'Chaitra Shukla Pratipada' is mainly celebrated in which state ?
- Maharashtra
  - Uttar Pradesh
  - Madhya Pradesh
  - Gujarat
- Q87. What is the focus of the CDP-SURAKSHA initiative launched by the Indian government ?
- Livestock farming
  - Horticulture
  - Poultry farming
  - Fisheries
- Q88. Which organization is set to launch ESA's Solar Study Mission Proba-3 ?
- NASA
  - ISRO
  - CNSA
  - Roscosmos
- Q89. Which stadium is the first BCCI-accredited venue to install a state-of-the-art 'hybrid pitch' in India ?
- Mumbai
  - Kolkata
  - Dharamshala
  - Chennai
- Q90. Dalip Singh Majithia, who recently passed away at 103, was associated with which branch of the armed forces ?
- Indian Air Force
  - Indian Army
  - Indian Navy
  - Indian Coast Guard
- Q91. Tiranga Barfi, recently got a GI tag, belongs to which city of Uttar Pradesh ?
- Ayodhya
  - Lucknow
  - Kanpur
  - Varanasi
- Q92. Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy is the current chief minister of which Indian state ?
- Tamil Nadu
  - Andhra Pradesh
  - Chattisgarh
  - Madhya Pradesh
- Q93. Where is the headquarter of The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies ?
- Dubai, UAE
  - Geneva, Switzerland
  - Jakarta, Indonesia
  - Brussels, Belgium
- Q94. What country has launched a new gold-backed currency called ZiG ?
- India
  - Zambia
  - Zimbabwe
  - South Africa
- Q95. Which country is deploying its own atomic clocks nationwide to synchronize digital devices ?
- Bhutan
  - India
  - Russia
  - United States

- Q96. What is the milestone achieved by the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) market capitalization ?  
a) ₹200-lakh crore  
b) ₹400-lakh crore  
c) ₹600-lakh crore  
d) ₹800-lakh crore
- Q97. Who is set to become the first Indian pilot to embark on space tourism with Blue Origin's NS-25 mission ?  
a) Om Prakash Sanghi  
b) Satya Pal Shahi  
c) Gopi Thotakura  
d) Rohit Singh
- Q98. In which year did the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre occur?  
a) 1919  
b) 1947  
c) 1924  
d) 1930
- Q99. Where is the Satpura National Park located ?  
a) Jharkhand  
b) Madhya Pradesh  
c) Gujarat  
d) Rajasthan
- Q100. Dublin is the capital of which country ?  
a) Honduras  
b) Ireland  
c) Liberia  
d) Niger
- Q101. What is the allocated budget for the IndiaAI mission approved by the Indian Cabinet ?  
a) Rs 10,371.92 million  
b) Rs 1,037.92 crore  
c) Rs 10,371.92 crore  
d) Rs 10,371.92 lakh
- Q102. Who nominated Sudha Murty to the Rajya Sabha ?  
a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
b) President Droupadi Murmu  
c) Union Home Minister Amit Shah  
d) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman
- Q103. When is National Panchayati Raj Day observed ?  
a) April 24  
b) April 25  
c) May 1  
d) April 15
- Q104. Where was India's largest Climate Clock unveiled for the Earth Day celebration ?  
a) Mumbai  
b) New Delhi  
c) Bangalore  
d) Kolkata
- Q105. What is 'Crystal Maze 2', recently mentioned in the news ?  
a) Ballistic Missile  
b) Asteroid  
c) Earth Communication Satellite  
d) Invasive Plant
- Q106. Recently, which organization has developed India's lightest bullet proof jacket ?  
a) DRDO  
b) ISRO  
c) CSIR  
d) BARC
- Q107. Recently, which country passed the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill ?  
a) United Kingdom  
b) Canada  
c) France  
d) Russia
- Q108. Recently, which organization released the "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2023 Report" ?  
a) NATO  
b) United Nations  
c) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute  
d) World Bank
- Q109. Which of the following statements best defines the Ecosystem ?  
a) A system that studies the volume, intensity and velocity of sound.  
b) A system that governs the radiation of energy from the sun.  
c) A system that classifies organisms.  
d) A system that comprises the physical environment and the organisms that live there in.



- Q110. The Dutch established their first factory in India at  
a) Chinsura  
b) Masulipatam  
c) Surat  
d) Cochin
- Q111. In economic equilibrium \_\_\_\_\_  
a) supply is equal to the demand.  
b) the surplus is larger than the shortage.  
c) elasticity of demand equals elasticity of supply  
d) price elasticity of demand is unity
- Q112. Bilateral monopoly situation is  
a) when there are only two sellers of a product  
b) when there are only two buyers of a product  
c) when there is only one buyer and one seller of a product  
d) when there are two buyers and two sellers of a product
- Q113. India's services exports jumped how much per cent to USD 345 billion in 2023 despite global economic uncertainties, according to the UNCTAD report ?  
a) 10.4%  
b) 11.4%  
c) 12.4%  
d) 13.4%
- Q114. International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day is observed every year on which day ?  
a) 25 April  
b) 26 April  
c) 27 April  
d) 28 April
- Q115. In which year was DRDO established ?  
a) 1957  
b) 1958  
c) 1956  
d) 1955
- Q116. In 2023, India ranked fourth globally in terms of military spending, having spent a total of \_\_\_ billion dollars updating a variety of weaponry and combat systems.  
a) \$82.3billion  
b) \$83.6billion  
c) \$84.7billion  
d) \$85.4billion
- Q117. Recently, who was elected as the Chairman of the Athletes Commission of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) ?  
a) Deepak Punia  
b) KD Jadhav  
c) Narsingh Yadav  
d) Yogeshwar Dutt
- Q118. Which country recently passed Foreign Aid Bill to provide military aid to Ukraine ?  
a) India  
b) Iran  
c) UK  
d) USA
- Q119. Recently, which organization has been conferred the Outstanding Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of the Year award ?  
a) BHEL  
b) ONGC  
c) HAL  
d) IOCL
- Q120. How many AIIMS situated in India ?  
a) 11  
b) 12  
c) 13  
d) 19
- Q121. Prayagraj is situated along the banks of which river ?  
a) Ganga  
b) Yamuna  
c) Saraswati  
d) All of these
- Q122. From which country did palaeontologists announce the discovery of the dinosaur Chakisaurus nekul ?  
a) Brazil  
b) Peru  
c) Argentina  
d) Chile
- Q123. Which country unveiled a new kamikaze drone resembling Russia's Lancet ?  
a) Oman  
b) Iran  
c) Ukraine  
d) Iraq

- Q124. Which organization has sought USD 100 million from the Ministry of Defence to develop the Directionally Unrestricted Ray-Gun Array (DURGA) II ?  
 a) ISRO  
 b) HAL  
 c) BARC  
 d) DRDO
- Q125. Which country recently passed harsh anti-LGBT legislation, imposing up to 15 years in prison for same-sex relations ?  
 a) Iran  
 b) Syria  
 c) Lebanon  
 d) Iraq
- Q126. Recently, which country won the gold medal in the Archery World Cup in the men's recurve event ?  
 a) India  
 b) South Korea  
 c) Malaysia  
 d) Indonesia
- Q127. Recently, which port has been approved as India's first transshipment port by the shipping ministry ?  
 a) Jawaharlal Nehru Port  
 b) Mumbai Port  
 c) Vizhinjam Port  
 d) Kandla Port
- Q128. Ishaq Dar has been appointed as Deputy Prime Minister of which country in April 2024 ?  
 a) Sri Lanka  
 b) Nepal  
 c) Malaysia  
 d) Pakistan
- Q129. Which ministry does Kiren Rijiju belong to?  
 a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
 b) Ministry of Earth Sciences  
 c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
 d) Ministry of Science and Technology
- Q130. According to Jain tradition the first Tirthankara or the founder of Jainism was  
 a) Rishabhadeva  
 b) Gosala  
 c) Parsvanatha  
 d) Vardhamana

**ANSWERS**

1-d	2-c	3-a	4-d	5-c	6-a	7-a	8-b	9-a	10-b
11-d	12-c	13-c	14-c	15-b	16-d	17-a	18-b	19-b	20-a
21-b	22-c	23-b	24-d	25-a	26-d	27-b	28-c	29-a	30-c
31-c	32-a	33-a	34-b	35-a	36-c	37-d	38-c	39-b	40-a
41-c	42-c	43-a	44-d	45-b	46-a	47-b	48-b	49-d	50-b
51-a	52-d	53-c	54-d	55-d	56-b	57-d	58-d	59-d	60-d
61-a	62-d	63-d	64-a	65-d	66-a	67-c	68-c	69-c	70-b
71-a	72-b	73-c	74-a	75-b	76-a	77-d	78-c	79-d	80-b
81-c	82-b	83-c	84-b	85-c	86-a	87-b	88-b	89-c	90-a
91-d	92-b	93-b	94-c	95-b	96-b	97-c	98-a	99-b	100-b
101-c	102-b	103-a	104-b	105-a	106-a	107-a	108-c	109-d	110-b
111-a	112-c	113-b	114-b	115-b	116-b	117-c	118-d	119-c	120-d
121-d	122-c	123-b	124-d	125-d	126-a	127-c	128-d	129-b	130-a