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PRATIYOGITA DARPAN
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FEBRUARY 2024 YEAR 18 ISSUE 209

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The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

For a layman only something that is concrete has value and significance. That which cannot be seen or that which has only symbolical significance has no value for him. Erroneous view is, therefore, held by some people that the sword is mightier than the pen. They actually do not understand the meaning of pen. Understood literally pen has no power when compared with the striking power of the sword. But here we have to use the word 'pen' in a symbolical way. Pen stands for expression, for literature, for what comes out of a writer's pen. And it is true that literature or writing wields far more power than the arms can ever wield Battles are fought over a certain period of time and within a particular area. They certainly affect and influence events but in a limited way. On the other hand, the effect of pen or literature is wide; sometimes it is universal.

The messages of Buddha, Christ, Confucius, Gandhi and Marx are universal in their appeal. There is a galaxy of writers, poets, philosophers and spiritual men and women whose messages are valid for all times. The sword has a physical effect, it hardly affects the mind and the spirit, while the pen affects the mind, the intellect and the spirit. The latter can shape the minds, hearts and the spirit of people in a desired way if only the wielder has the mastery of its use in the required measure. Arms represent violence and they have in most cases a destructive effect. The pen or literature must exercise a positive effect. The sword cuts, the pen may also cut by the use of irony and satire, but while the sword lacks the restorative effect, the pen may exercise a healing power also. The superiority of the pen also lies in the fact that even where the sword is used and success is attained, the use of pen is necessary to consolidate that success.

The fact of superiority of the pen over the sword should not lead us to believe that the sword has no value. Arms also have changed history. When everything fails, when persuasion, negotiations etc. fail, the use of arms is left the only alternative. Rama had ultimately to use force to teach Ravan a lesson. Arms were used to ensure the victory of the good over the forces of evil. If the great war of Mahabharat had not been fought, the forces of evil which the Kauravas represented would have continued to plague the kingdom and the rule of justice and righteousness could never have been established. Lord Krishna, therefore, induced Arjun to fight a violent war to destroy the forces of evil and rehabilitate the rule of the right. In Indian mythology, there are numerous references to violence committed with a view to safeguarding good and justice and honour by killing the demons and Rakshasas. Many subject people resorted to arms to regain their freedom from the colonial masters. The use of the sword proves effective in controlling rebellious and recalcitrant sections of people upon whom all persuasion has fallen flat. The strength of a country is measured by the strength of its army and its arsenal. The super powers are feared and respected because they possess the power of the sword in a greater measure than any other country of the world. India cannot have its voice heard in the comity of nations unil it commands viable military power. Its voice can be heard only when it is delivered from a position of strength. China has succeeded in earning respect and attention of such a mighty country as the United States of America because it has been able to develop its military potential in a fair measure.

Even now we will do well if we realise sooner than later that the only way to keep India's freedom and sovereignty and territorial integrity intact is to have strong and unbreakable and invincible swords, that is, to strengthen itself militarily.

The above description of the importance and power of the sword should not, however, blind us to the immense end unspeakable power possessed by the pen. The American Revolution of 1776 was the product of the writings of a host of political philosophers and statesmen. The very slogan of liberty equality and pursuit of happiness raised in their writings by the American revolutionaries and almost the identical slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity raised in the writings of French revolutionaries not only did much to change the history of these two countries, but also revolutionized the very thought and outlook of the people about the role of the state all over the globe. It is a matter of common knowledge for a student of history that what Benjamin Franklin, Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in America and Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu in France, could do by their writings could never have been achieved by a Robespiere, a Napoleon or a Hitler. True that the Russian Revolution was an outburst of the centuries old people's grievances, but the background for it had been prepared by the writings of a host of creative writers as well as statesmen like Trotsky and Lenin. What Gandhi could achieve by the use of his pen could never have been achieved by thousands of emperors ruling by force of their arms.

And then, there is the power of the Press. What a mighty power the press wields now-a-days can hardly be described, so much so that it has come to be treated as the Fourth estate. The journalist sometimes proves to be more powerful than a minister. Krishna Menon tendered his resignation in the wake of the Chinese aggression on India, Richard Nixon resigned the Presidentship of the United States of America, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had to revoke the state of Emergency and order fresh elections in 1977, all this because of the pressure mounted on them by the Press. In the modern times also there are a good number of examples of the Press forcing many powerful politicians to submit their resignations. Thus, while it is true that sword wields power, it is equally true that the pen wields more power and in the present world when the means of communication are so convenient and quick and Press material finds access everywhere within a very short time, the pen has come to play an unusually powerful role both in national and international fields.

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To Our Readers

Dear Readers,

It is with a sense of great delight and pleasure that we are presenting the February issue of your favourite magazine **Pratiyogita Darpan.** As usual, present issue of the magazine contains useful material relevant to competitive examinations. Our editorial board and the team of highly qualified and experienced authors take painstaking efforts to present the study material, keeping in view the requirements of our esteemed readers. We are sure that if you read it intelligently and wisely, it will go a long way in equipping you with knowledge to face the gruelling battle of the examination and bring you the desired success.

We always try to understand the demands and requirements of our readers, their suggestions and changes in the pattern and content of the competitive examinations. We make all efforts to include them, as far as possible, in successive issues of the magazine. It gives us great satisfaction to know that our readers have unanimously endorsed the utility of the magazine.

In the present issue, a number of core articles on important national and international events, contributed by reputed authors, have been given. Some of the representative articles in the present issue of this magazine are : ECI Declares General Assembly Poll Results for Five States; Gujarat's Garba Dance Included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List; Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023; National Sports Awards 2023; Taylor Swift Named Time Magazine's Person of the Year 2023; World Athletics Awards 2023; Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes Inducted into International Tennis Hall of Fame; Haryana Wins Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023; Vaishali Rameshbabu Become Chess Grandmaster.

The most important section of the Magazine contains a number of question papers selected from various competitive examinations. They have been solved with relevant hints in short, but clear-cut explanations. All efforts are made to give their error-free solutions. A careful study of and practice session with these papers will be very useful to face any competitive examination.

The columns **Divya Darpan, Compendium, Test Your Knowledge, Memorable Points** and **Concentric Quiz** have been widely appreciated as trusted tools for the benefit of our readers. An intelligent study and memorizing of their content will be highly useful in solving questions in any future examination.

Pratiyogita Darpan gives you the best guidance and reading material. It is upto you to make the best use of it for a bright success in any competitive examination.

Read Pratiyogita Darpan regularly and intelligently. It gives you the power to master your career and shape your destiny.

With best wishes for your brilliant success and bright future.

Sincerely yours,

RAHUL JAIN
(Editor)

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Nation This Month

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- *'Swarved Mahamandir', the World's Largest Meditation Centre*
- *Lok Sabha Passes Bill on CEC, EC Appointment*
- *Amplifi 2-0*
- *Kashi Tamil Sangamam*
- *Central Tribal University in Telangana*
- *Three Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships for Indian Navy Launched*
- *Pilatus PC-7 Mk II Trainer Aircraft*
- *Section 6A of Citizenship Act*
- *Inauguration of Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB)*
- *News in Brief*

Parliament Security Breach

On 13th December, 2023, two young men jumped into the Lok Sabha gallery from the visitors' gallery, shouted anti-establishment slogans and opened canisters that let out yellow smoke. They were soon subdued by MPs and security. A case under anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was registerred against all of them. The matter is being investigated by anti-terror unit special cell.



About Security Lapses

- **Screening of Visitors :**
  - The breach happened all along the various layers of security set up for the personal screening of visitors to Parliament.
  - The door frame and handheld metal detectors check for metals in one's possession. There is personal frisking—a body search for hidden items.
  - But neither door frame metal detectors nor handheld metal detectors can check for plastic or rubber, especially when hidden in one's shoes as it was in this case and shoes are never checked in Parliament.
  - The screenings were following the usual standard operating procedure, which failed.
- **Visitor's Gallery :** Security personnel in the visitor's gallery were insufficiently vigilant, and marshals in the House, accustomed to carrying MPs out, failed to apprehend the two men crossing the benches.
- **Procedure for Entrance for 'Strangers' :**
  - A member can apply for the issue of visitors' cards only for those they know personally and thoroughly.
  - Members applying for a visitor card are also mandated to provide a certificate.
  - This certificate should say, "I know the visitor personally, and I am responsible for them. They are my relative or personal friend."
  - The visitors' cards are usually issued to a member for a particular day for fixed hours.
  - There are two types of galleries–public and Speaker's in Lok Sabha.
  - While a member can facilitate the entry of four people on a daily basis in the public gallery, he/she is entitled to facilitate the entry of two people in the Speaker's gallery.
  - Visitors must also carry a photo ID with them.
- **Security Deployment in Parliament Complex**
  - The Union Home Ministry has sanctioned the deployment of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for ensuring security in the Parliament complex.
  - The decision is part of a broader effort to strengthen security and ensure the safety of key government institutions.

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'Swarved Mahamandir', the World's Largest Meditation Centre

On 18th December, 2023, PM Modi inaugurated the world's largest meditation centre Swarved Mahamandir in Varanasi, contributing to the spiritual and cultural landscape of Varanasi. The centre aims to provide a serene space for meditation and disseminate teachings from the Swarveda, enhancing spiritual awareness globally.

About the Swarved Mahamandir

- The temple is named after the Swarved, a spiritual text authored by Sadguru Shri Sadafal Deoji Maharaj, an eternal yogi and the founder of Vihangam Yoga.
- Swarved Mahamandir aims to "illuminate humankind with its magnificent spiritual aura and engulf the world in a state of peaceful alertness."
- The temple promotes the teachings of Swarveda, emphasizing Brahm Vidya—a body of knowledge empowering spiritual seekers to maintain a state of consummate Zen, characterized by unwavering constancy in peace and happiness.
- The temple advocates the principles of Swarveda, placing a special emphasis on Brahm Vidya—a comprehensive knowledge that empowers spiritual seekers to attain a state of complete tranquility, marked by steadfast peace and happiness.
- The walls are adorned with pink sandstone, and the grandeur is further enhanced by a beautiful garden featuring medicinal herbs.

About Vihangam Yoga

- Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj established Vihangam Yoga in 1924.
- The name Vihangam Yoga combines 'Vihag' (bird) and 'Yog' (union), symbolizing the soul's journey to freedom from earthly attachments.
- Emphasizes achieving a state of true, free nature, akin to a bird soaring high in the sky, and uniting individual consciousness with universal consciousness for permanent peace and bliss.

Lok Sabha Passes Bill on CEC, EC Appointment

Recently, the Lok Sabha has passed a bill amending the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.

The amendment is being made in the wake of SC court ruling that the selection panel should comprise the Prime Minister, the LoP in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India. Till the Supreme Court ruling, Election Commissioners and Chief Election Commissioners (CECs) had been appointed by the President after recommendations by the government.

Key Changes in the Act :

- The move addresses the absence of a clause related to the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs) in the existing act.
- According to the Bill, the search committee, headed by the Law Minister and comprising two Union Secretaries, will shortlist five names for consideration of the selection committee for appointment as the CEC and ECs.
- The selection committee, will be headed by the Prime Minister and comprise a Union Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, and the leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, will select members of the Election Commission.
- In case there is no LoP in the Lower House, the leader of the single largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha will be deemed to be the LoP.
- The selection panel will have the power to consider even those not shortlisted by the search committee.

Amplifi 2·0

Recently, the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched Amplifi 2·0 (Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-ready urban India) portal. It aims to make raw data from Indian cities available on a single platform for academics, researchers, and stakeholders to help data-driven policy-making.

About Amplifi 2·0

- The portal provides data on a range of information for several cities, including total consumption, number of samples tested for water quality, average annual expenditure on healthcare, number of slum dwellers and road accident fatalities.
- The initiative also provides the opportunity to create new frameworks based on open data. The 14 sectors are demography, economy, education, energy, environment, finance, governance, health, housing, mobility, planning, safety and security, solid waste management, and water and sanitation.

About Urbanisation in India

- India has been witnessing rapid urbanisation over the past few years.
- By 2030, India is projected to have 60 crore (40%) of the population living in urban areas compared with 37·7 crore (31%) in 2011.
- The 2011 Census shows that urban India contributed 63% to the country's GDP, and this is projected to increase to 75% by 2030.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

On 17 December, 2023, the Prime Minister inaugurated Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

About Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam was a month-long programme in 2022 organized by the Ministry of Education, Government of India to celebrate, reaffirm and rediscover the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi.

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- The programme aims to provide an opportunity for people from all walks of life including scholars, students, philosophers, traders, artisans, artists etc. from the two regions to come together, share their knowledge, culture and best practices and learn from each other's experiences.
- More than 2500 delegates from Tamil Nadu will be visiting Kashi. They will participate in seminars, site visits etc. to interact with local people of similar trade, profession and interest.
- A month-long exhibition of handlooms, handicrafts, ODOP products, books, documentaries, cuisine, art forms, history, tourist places etc. of the two regions will also be put up in Kashi.
- The endeavour is in sync with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge. IIT Madras and BHU are the two implementing agencies for the programme.

Central Tribal University in Telangana

Recently, the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023, has been passed by the houses to get the assent of President. The Bill amends the Central Universities Act, 2009, which establishes central universities for teaching and research in various states.

- The Bill establishes a Central Tribal University in Telangana, as promised in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.
- It will be named the 'Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University'.
- Its territorial jurisdiction will extend to Telangana.
- It will provide avenues of higher education and research facilities primarily for the tribal population of India.

Three Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships for Indian Navy Launched

On 30 November, 2023, the first of the three ships in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) shallow water crafts being built by the Cochin Shipyard for the Indian Navy were launched. The ships will be named INS Mahe, INS Malvan and INS Mangrol upon commissioning into the Navy.



Key Points :

- These Mahe class of ships will replace the Navy's in-service Abhay class ASW corvettes.
- They are designed for anti-submarine operations in the coastal waters, low-intensity maritime, mine laying and sub-surface surveillance operations.
- They are also capable of coordinated ASW operations with aircraft, and search and rescue.
- They are equipped with light-weight torpedoes, ASW rockets and mines, close-in weapon system (30 mm gun) and 12·7 mm stabilised remote control guns.
- Their endurance is 1,800 nautical miles and has been designed to fit indigenously-developed sonars for underwater surveillance.
- Each vessel would carry 57 personnel, including seven naval officers.

SC Asks Government to Set up Fresh Delimitation Commission

Recently, the Supreme Court ordered the formation of a new delimitation commission based on the argument that denying SCs and STs adequate representation in legislative bodies would violate a legislative domain reserved for Parliament, which is meant to legislate proportionate representation for all communities, including those that are Scheduled Tribes. This plea primarily addressed the Limbu and Tamang tribal populations in the Assemblies of Sikkim and West Bengal.

Supreme Court's Order

- The Supreme Court has ordered the Centre to form a new delimitation commission. Assuring equitable representation for communities classified as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) is the goal of this commission.
- The directive comes in response to concerns that the current delimitation process does not adequately represent these communities and fails to reflect their growing populations, particularly in the assemblies of Sikkim and West Bengal.
- The Court observed that it might be interpreted as entering a legislative area without the reservation—one that the Court cannot oversee—if these groups are excluded from proportional representation.
- The Court emphasized the necessity for the Centre to exercise its powers under the Delimitation Act, 2002, to readjust the allocation of seats in state assemblies and ensure compliance with Articles 332 and 333 of the Constitution.
- This action is deemed essential to address the proportional representation of Scheduled Tribes, especially in light of the reported increase in their population in the states of Sikkim and West Bengal.
- The directive also clarified that the Court's decision should not interfere with the timing of elections to Parliament or state Assemblies.

About Delimitation Commission

Redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies to reflect population changes is known as delimitation, and it is done using the results of the preceding Census carried out by a Delimitation Commission, whose orders have the force of law and cannot be questioned before any court.

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- Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.
- Its members are a serving or retired Supreme Court judge, Chief Election Commissioner or an Election Commissioner nominated by CEC and Election Commissioners of the respective state.
- Its function is to determine the number and boundaries of constituencies, to identify seats reserved for SC/ST.
- It is a high power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court.
- Delimitation Commissions have been set up four times : 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 82 :** This provides the Parliament with the authority to enact a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Article 170 :** This provides for the States to get divided into territorial constituencies as per the Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Article 332 :** It deals with the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States. It specifies the manner of such reservation and aims to provide adequate representation to these communities in state governance.
- **Article 333 :** It allows for representation of the Anglo-Indian community in the Legislative Assemblies by nomination if the Governor feels that the community is not adequately represented.

The Supreme Court made it clear that the timing of elections for state Assemblies and Parliament should not be affected by its ruling; these elections must take place on time. The court's ruling emphasizes how crucial it is to uphold constitutional mandates for proportional representation and the inclusion of underrepresented groups in legislative bodies.

Pilatus PC-7 Mk II Trainer Aircraft

On 4th December, 2023, two Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots killed after their Pilatus PC-7 Mk II trainer aircraft crashed during a routine training sortie from the Air Force Academy at Dundigal, Telangana.

About Trainer Aircraft

A trainer aircraft is designed for pilot and aircrew training, as modern military aircraft are difficult for rookie pilots to master. These aircraft are forgiving, slower, and less complex, making them more affordable and suitable for bulk training. They are also much cheaper, allowing air forces to buy them in bulk to train cadets.

About Pilatus PC-7 Mk II

- Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. is an aerospace manufacturer located in Stans, Switzerland, which specialises in producing short take-off and landing aircraft, as well as trainer aircraft for air forces across the world.
- The PC-7 is a low-wing, turbo-prop aircraft with tandem seating (the cadet sits in the front, the instructor behind him). While the original aircraft has been in service since the 1970s.
- Mk II version was introduced in the 1990s, with a newer airframe and more advanced avionics. Powered by a Pratt & Whitney turbo-prop engine, it has a maximum speed of 412 km/h and can fly to a height of slightly more than 10,000 m.
- It has a range of 1,200 km without external tanks, which translates to slightly more than 4 hours of flying time.
- Currently, there are 75 Pilatus PC-7 Mk II aircraft in service with the IAF (including the one which crashed. These are used for basic training, the first stage in a rookie cadet's flight training.
  - After this, cadets graduate to the HAL Kiran, an intermediate jet-powered indigenously developed trainer aircraft, followed by the BAE Hawk, a British jet-powered advanced trainer aircraft. Currently, the IAF has 78 Kiran and 102 Hawk aircrafts in its fleet.
  - India has also signed a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd to procure 70 HTT-40 at a cost of over ₹ 6,800 crore. The HTT-40 is a basic trainer aircraft powered by a four-bladed turbo-prop engine (PC-7 is three-bladed). The aircraft will have an air-conditioned cockpit, modern avionics, hot refuelling (with engines running), and zero-zero ejection seats.

'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' to Address Human Rights Violations in J&K

On 11th December, 2023, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the abrogation of Article 370 by the Centre in 2019, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, the senior-most judge on the bench, recommended setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, along similar lines as in South Africa, to look into human rights violations by both state and non-state actors in J&K.

About Truth and Reconciliation Committee

- The setting up of an impartial Truth and Reconciliation committee will investigate and report on the violations of human rights both by the State and non-state actors at least since the 1980s and recommend measures for reconciliation.
- Justice asked the Commission to be set up before memory escapes. The exercise must be time-bound. There is an entire generation of youth that has grown up with a feeling of distrust and it is to them that we owe the greatest day of liberation.
- The Commission, once constituted, should not turn into a criminal court and must instead follow a humanized and personalized process enabling people to share what they have been through uninhibitedly.
- The commission should be based on dialogue, allowing for different viewpoints and inputs from all sides'.

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However, such commissions have been set up in many countries of Latin America and Africa and are meant to probe human rights abuses and restore peace between communities following internal armed conflicts. India's neighbours Sri Lanka and Nepal have also set up truth commissions in the past. These commissions prioritise collecting information and evidence from both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, rather than on prosecution and punishment for crimes.

Section 6A of Citizenship Act

On 7th December, 2023, the Supreme Court directed the Union Government to furnish data on the number of immigrants who were conferred Indian citizenship through Section 6A(2) of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

The petitioners, including Assam Public Works and others, argued that the special provision was in violation of Article 6 of the Constitution which fixed the cut-off date for granting citizenship to immigrants at July 19, 1948.

About Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955

Section 6A is a special provision inserted into the 1955 Act in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the 'Assam Accord' signed on August 15, 1985 by the then Rajiv Gandhi government with the leaders of the Assam Movement to preserve and protect the Assamese culture, heritage, linguistic and social identity. The Accord came at the end of a six-year-long agitation by the All Assam Students Union to identify and deport illegal immigrants, mostly from neighbouring Bangladesh, from the State.

Reasons for Section 6A Under Challenge

The Petitioner's core argument is that by establishing a **different cut-off date for Indian citizenship** in Assam than in the rest of India which is July 1948—Section 6 A is "discriminatory, arbitrary and illegal" and violation of the rights of "indigenous" Assamese people.

About Citizenship Act

The Citizenship Act, 1955 was enacted to regulate the matters of citizenship in India. It has been amended six times since its enactment. The amendments were made in the years 1986, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2015, and 2019.

Articles 5 to 11 in Part II of the Constitution of India deal with the aspects of citizenship, such as acquisition of citizenship by birth, descent, naturalization, registration, and relinquishment of Citizenship by renunciation, and termination.

The latest amendment was made in 2019, which granted citizenship to certain illegal migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014.

Inauguration of Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB)

On 17th December, 2023, the PM Modi inaugurated the **Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB)**—the "world's biggest workspace" aimed at shifting the entire diamond trading business out of Mumbai, to Surat.

About Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB)

It is built on an area of 66 lakh sq ft at DREAM (Diamond Research and Mercantile) City, a Greenfield project designed as a township spread over nearly 700 acre, the bourse, has nine 15-storey interconnected towers, and offices ranging from 300 sq ft to 7, 5000 sq ft.

Key Features of the Surat Diamond Bourse :

- According to a document by Delhi-based Morphogenesis, which designed the bourse, it is bigger than the biggest office space in the world, The Pentagon in the United States.
- Morphogenesis has also designed the BSE tower in GIFT City, Gandhinagar, and the Zydus Corporate Park in Ahmedabad.
- The Surat Diamond Bourse has the capacity of about 4,200 offices ranging from 300 square feet to 7,5000 square feet each. The bourse has nine towers, each with ground plus 15 floors.
- All diamond-related activities and infrastructure, such as sale of rough diamonds and polished diamonds, diamond manufacturing machineries, software used in diamond planning, diamond certificate firms, lab-grown diamonds, etc. will be available in the bourse.
- Apart from this, 27 retail outlets of diamond jewellery will also be opened, for international and national buyers.
- Over 4,000 CCTV cameras have been installed at different locations inside and outside the SDB, given the high-security product. A member of the SDB management committee says bio-metric details of employees will be taken, after which they can access the complex with a 'wave of their hand'.

News in Brief

Navy Day

On December 4, 2023, the Navy Day will be held at Sindhudurg Fort on the western seaboard, built in 1660 by Chhatrapati Shivaji. It is located 550 km from Mumbai and about 135 km from the naval station at Goa. The operational demonstration witnessed the participation of 20 warships along with 40 aircraft comprising MiG 29K and LCA Navy, along with combat beach reconnaissance and an assault demo by the Marine Commandos. This is the first time that the Navy has organized a mega event that has not taken place at any major naval station. December 4 is observed as Navy Day to commemorate the Navy's daring attack on Karachi harbor during the 1971 War under 'Operation Trident'.

ISRO to Launch Chandrayaan-4

During a recent briefing to the Indian President regarding the space agency's Vision 2047, S. Somanath, the Chairperson of the ISRO, informed about the plans to launch Chandrayaan-4, which will bring back samples from the Moon in four years.

While Chandrayaan-2 and Chandrayaan-3 missions after Russia backed out, for a sample-return mission. ISRO is developing technologies such as robotric arm to collect samples, mechanisms for docking in the Moon orbit and Earth orbit, transfer of samples, re-entry into the atmosphere without burning up.

Continued on Page 71

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India 2023

- Congress Bharat Jodo Yatra led by party MP Rahul Gandhi culminates in Srinagar after traversing nearly 4,000 km since its launch from Kanyakumari,**Jan 30**



- Delhi Dy. CM Manish Sisodia arrested by CBI in liquor policy case,**Feb 26**
- Pro-Khalistan activist Amritpal Singh arrested after a month-long manhunt from Moga district in Punjab,**Apr 23**
- India surpasses China as the world's most populous country,**April 24**



- RBI announces withdrawal of 2000-rupee notes by September end,**May 19**
- PM Modi inaugurates new Parliament building,**May 28**



- Deadly accident involving three trains in Odisha's Balasore district leaves over 290 people dead and about 1,200 injured,**Jun 2**



- Ajit Pawar sworn in as Maharashtra Dy. CM after his faction breaks away from Sharad Pawar-led NCP and supports the Shiv Sena-BJP govt; **Jul 2**
- Group of 26 parties join hands under the banner 'INDIA' to take on the BJP-led NDA in 2024 Lok Sabha election, **Jul 18**



- A video of two women being paraded naked and subjected to blatant acts of sexual assault by a group of men in Manipur goes viral in the backdrop of deadly ethnic violence in the state, triggering nationwide outrage,**Jul 20**



- Rahul Gandhi's Lok Sabha membership reinstated following the staying of his conviction by SC, **Aug 7**; he was disqualified as MP in January after a Surat court sentenced him to a two-year jail term in a criminal defamation case



- Chandrayaan-3 makes history by becoming the first spacecraft to soft-land near the Moon's south pole,**Aug 23**



- ISRO launches Aditya-L1, country's first solar observation mission,**Sep 2**
- G20 Summit, under the theme of One Earth, One Family, One Future held in New Delhi,**Sep 9-10**
- Historic bill allocating 33% seats for women in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies passed in Parliament,**Sep 21**
- SC refuses to legalise same-sex marriage, saying it is up to Parliament,**Oct 17**



- 41 construction workers rescued from a collapsed tunnel in Uttarakhand after being trapped for 17 days,**Nov 28**

- SC upholds abrogation of Article 370 that conferred a special status to Jammu and Kashmir,**Dec 11**



- Security breach in Parliament on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 terror attack on Parliament; two people jump into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery and release yellow smoke from canisters shouting slogans,**Dec 13**
- Union Sports Ministry suspends newly-elected committee of Wrestling Federation of India amid strong protests by several prominent wrestlers against outcome of WFI elections, **Dec 24**; some of them had earlier levelled allegations of sexual harassment against former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh



Assembly Election Results

March

- NPP falls short of majority, forms govt for a second time with support of BJP and other parties in Meghalaya
- NDPP-BJP coalition secures second straight win in Nagaland
- BJP-IPFT alliance retains power in Tripura



May

- Big win for Congress in Karnataka

December

- BJP sweeps Hindi heartland states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
- Congress wrests power in Telangana
- ZPM storms to power in Mizoram

Sports



Asian Games: India contingent comes back with a record haul of 107 medals (28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze) at the Asian Games in Hangzhou

Asian Para Games: India contingent finishes the Asian Para Games with a tally of 111 medals (29 gold, 31 silver and 51 bronze)

Athletics: Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra creates history as he becomes the first Indian to win a gold medal at the World Athletics Championships with a best throw of 88.17 m in the mens javelin final



Badminton: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty become the first Indian doubles pair to reach the World No.1 in rankings



Cricket: India win the first edition of ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup; Virat Kohli becomes the first batter to score 50 ODI centuries surpassing Sachin Tendulkars record; India host the World Cup, remaining unbeaten in the tournament till losing the final to Australia

IPL:MS Dhoni leads CSK to their fifth IPL title after they beat reigning champions Gujarat Titans by five wickets



Deaths

- Prominent socialist leader and political stalwart Sharad Yadav, Jan 12
- Noted Bollywood actor and director Satish Kaushik, Mar 9
- Industry doyen Keshub Mahindra, Apr 12
- Five-time former Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal, Apr 25
- Hinduja Group chairman SP Hinduja, May 17
- Renowned theatre actor and director Aamir Raza Hussain, June 3
- Veteran cartoonist Ajit Ninan, Sep 8
- Father of India's Green Revolution MS Swaminathan, Sep 28
- Legendary spinner and former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi, Oct 23
- Hospitality industry icon PRS Oberoi, Nov 14
- Sahara Group founder Subrata Roy, Nov 14

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World This Month

- *A Call for Safer and Healthier Working Environments : Report by ILO*
- *The Global Climate 2011-2020 : A Decade of Acceleration Report by WMO*
- *India Backs UN Resolution Against Israel for not Leaving Syrian Golan*
- *Interpol Meets in Vienna*
- *UAE Announces $ 30 Billion Fund to Boost Climate Investment*
- *Angkor Wat Temple : The 8th Wonder of the World*
- *Bihar Receives Global Acclaim at COP28 for Afforestation Initiatives*
- *US Launches Multinational Push to Safeguard Red Sea Commerce*
- *US House Approve Impeachment Inquiry into President Biden*
- *India-Oman Bilateral Relation*
- *News in Brief*

A Call for Safer and Healthier Working Environments : Report by ILO

Recently, The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released a report titled "A Call for safer and healthier working environments." The report will be discussed at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work.

Key Findings :

- Nearly 30 lakh workers die every year globally due to work-related accidents and diseases, according to a new report prepared by the International Labour Organization (ILO). More than 63% of these deaths are reported from the Asia-Pacific region.
- Exposure to long working hours (55 hours or more per week) was the biggest 'killer', with almost 7·45 lakh people dying of it in 2016, followed by exposure to occupational particulate matter, gases, and fumes (4·5 lakh deaths) and occupational injuries (3·63 lakh deaths).
- Citing the data on the fatal occupational injury rate, the report said mining and quarrying, construction, and utilities sectors were the three most hazardous sectors globally.
- The report said that so far 79 out of the 187 member countries have ratified the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155), while 62 countries have ratified the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006. India has not ratified both the conventions.
- The majority of these work-related deaths, 26 lakh, were attributed to work-related diseases, while work accidents resulted in 3·3 lakh deaths.
- The diseases that caused most work-related deaths were circulatory diseases, malignant neoplasms and respiratory diseases.
- The attributable fraction of work-related deaths is estimated to be highest in Africa (7·39%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (7·13%) and Oceania (6·52%).
- The report said that the rate of trachea, bronchus, and lung cancers attributable to occupational exposure to chromium doubled between 2000 and 2016.
- Mesothelioma, attributable to asbestos exposure, has risen by 40%. The rate of non-melanoma skin cancer increased by over 37% between 2000 and 2020.
- Deaths due to exposure to asthmagens and particulate matter, gases, and fumes decreased by over 20%.

Recommendations of the Report

The report recommended five categories of "Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work" for ensuring safety and health at work :

- Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour.
- Abolition of child labour, elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- A safe and healthy working environment.

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About ILO

The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it's based on social justice. In 1946, the ILO became a specialized agency of the United Nations. HQ-Geneva, Switzerland.

Its unique tripartite structure gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments providing a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men. Other reports published by ILO :

- World Employment and Social Outlook
- Global Wages Report
- World Social Protection Report.

23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work

The ISSA hosted the World Congress, together with the International Labour Organization (ILO), since its inception in 1955. The 23rd World Congress is hosted by Safe Work NSW, Australia.

The World Congress on Safety and Health at Work is the world's leading event for prevention. It has developed into a global forum where over 3000 participants exchange ideas, discuss research and best practices, and look at practical solutions on critical issues in the area of occupational safety and health. The motto of the 2023 World Congress is Shaping Change.

In line with the core principles of the two fundamental Conventions, a sound and resilient national occupational safety and health (OSH) framework, built on social dialogue and participation, is essential for the realisation of the fundamental right to a safe and healthy working environment.

The Global Climate 2011-2020 : A Decade of Acceleration Report by WMO

Recently, the report by WMO, "The Global Climate 2011–2020 : A Decade of Acceleration," highlighted several aspects of climate change.

- The 2011-2020 decade, though warmest ever recorded in history.
- The report says that this was the first decade that the depleted ozone hole visibly showed recovery.
- Glaciers that were measured around the world thinned by approximately 1 metre per year on an average between 2011 and 2020.

  Greenland and Antarctica lost 38% more ice during the period than during the 2001-2010 periods.
- The report further underlined that human-caused climate change significantly increased the risks from extreme heat events.

India Backs UN Resolution Against Israel for not Leaving Syrian Golan

On 28th November, 2023, India has voted in favour of a draft resolution in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) against Israel for not withdrawing from the Syrian Golan. The Syrian Golan is a region in southwest Syria that was occupied by Israeli forces on June 5, 1967.

The 193-member UNGA voted on the draft resolution 'The Syrian Golan' under agenda item 'The situation in the Middle East'. The resolution, introduced by Egypt, was adopted by 91 votes in favour, eight against and 62 abstentions. Australia, Canada, Israel, the UK and the US voted against it.

The resolution also stressed the illegality of the Israeli settlement construction in the Golan.

Background

Israel captured the Golan Heights in the 1967 Middle East war and formally annexed the territory in 1981. This unilateral annexation was not recognized internationally, and Syria demands the return of the territory. However, Syria tried to regain the Golan Heights in the 1973 Middle East war, but was foiled. Since 1974, Israel and Syria signed an armistice the Golan Heights had been relatively quiet. In 2000, Israel and Syria held their highest-level talks over a possible return of the Golan and a peace agreement. But the negotiations collapsed and subsequent talks also failed.



Situation in Golan Heights

- More than 40,000 people live on the Israeli-occupied Golan, more than half of them Druze residents.
- The Druze is an Arab minority who practice an offshoot of Islam and many of its adherents in Syria have long been loyal to the Assad regime.
- After annexing the Golan, Israel gave the Druze the option of citizenship, but most rejected it and still identify as Syrian. About another 20,000 Israeli settlers also live there, many of them working in farming and tourism.

Israel's Arguments for Golan Heights

- Israel keeps arguing that the Syrian civil war forced the need to maintain the plateau as a buffer zone between Israeli cities and destabilization in neighbouring countries.
- Israel's government also argues that Iran, an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, is seeking to establish itself permanently on the Syrian side of the border in order to launch attacks on Israel.
- Both sides covet the Golan's water resources and naturally fertile soil.

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Interpol Meets in Vienna

On 28 November, 2023, 91st General Assembly of the Interpol began in Vienna, the Indian team held detailed discussions on matters of police cooperation with delegations from US, UK, Austria, UAE, Nepal, Brazil, Australia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Japan, Switzerland, Bangladesh, Singapore and Zambia.

Highlights :

- Indian delegation led by CBI Director Praveen Sood and NIA Director General Dinkar Gupta, also stressed on the need to adopt coordinated strategies to curtail operations of transnational criminal organisations.
- India has emphasised the need to deny any safe havens for crime, criminals and proceeds of crimes and sought 'concerted action' through Interpol channels to combat and prevent, on a real-time basis, transnational crimes such as terrorism, online radicalisation and cyber-enabled financial fraud.
- It also celebrated the centenary year of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), which was formed in 1923.
- India also proposed the creation of the Interpol Future Council, a council of experts to ensure that further development and implementation of the 'Interpol Vision-2030' takes into account the evolving needs of law enforcement in member countries.

About International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)

- Interpol is an inter-governmental organization. It have 196 member countries, and it help police to work together to make the world a safer place.
- The General Secretariat coordinates our day-to-day activities to fight a range of crimes. Run by the Secretary General, it is staffed by both police and civilians and comprises a headquarters in Lyon, a global complex for innovation in Singapore and several satellite offices in different regions.
- In each country, an INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) provides the central point of contact for the General Secretariat and other NCBs.
- An NCB is run by national police officials and usually sits in the government ministry responsible for policing.
- The General Assembly is our governing body and it brings all countries together once a year to take decisions.
- India had joined the Interpol in 1949, and has been an active member of the organisation. It has hosted two General Assemblies.

Last year, India hosted the 90th General Assembly which saw the participation of delegations from 168 countries. During the assembly, a resolution was adopted to strengthen collaborative response to disrupt financial crime and corruption, combat menace of online child sexual exploitation and promote diversity within the Interpol. The Interpol also launched its presence in the Metaverse during the 90th General Assembly.

PD/February/2024/15

UAE Announces $ 30 Billion Fund to Boost Climate Investment

On 1st December, 2023, amidst the gathering of global leaders at COP28, the United Arab Emirates, the COP28 Presidency declared an unprecedented $30 billion commitment to ALTÉRRA, a climate-focused investment vehicle.

About ALTÉRRA

- With the $ 30 billion pledge, ALTÉRRA now stands as the world's largest private investment vehicle dedicated to climate action, with a targeted mobilization of $ 250 billion globally by 2030.
- The primary focus is to guide private markets toward climate investments and bring transformative change to emerging markets and developing economies, where traditional investments face perceived higher risks.
- This initiative aims to revolutionize international climate finance, prioritizing equitable access for the Global South.
- ALTÉRRA's investments will be guided by four key pillars aligned with the COP28 Action Agenda to tackle the climate crisis :
  - Energy Transition
  - Industrial decarbonisation
  - Sustainable living
  - Climate technologies

Angkor Wat Temple : The 8th Wonder of the World

Angkor Wat, located in Cambodia, is now considered the eighth wonder of the world, beating Italy's Pompeii. It was built by king Suryavarman II in the 12th century, Angkor Wat was first a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu but later transformed into a Buddhist temple. The intricate carvings on its walls tell stories from Hindu and Buddhist myths.

Key Facts :

- It's a massive religious monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site, covering about 500 acres.
- Originally dedicated to Hindu god Vishnu, it later became a significant Buddhist temple.
- Angkor Wat's central part is known for its balanced design and large moat. The carvings on its walls are like an ancient picture book, showing scenes from Hindu stories, historical events, and daily life in the Khmer region.
- Angkor Wat is not just impressive in its design; it's also culturally and spiritually significant. It's an active religious place, where Buddhist monks and devotees come to pray and meditate.
- Beyond its beauty, Angkor Wat is a symbol of Cambodia's rich history, inviting people to explore its mix of Hindu and Buddhist heritage.

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Bihar Receives Global Acclaim at COP28 for Afforestation Initiatives

On 2nd December, 2023, the Bihar government received praised from the international community at the ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-28) in Dubai for the actions undertaken in the field of afforestation, particularly through the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan (Rural Development Department).

Salient Features of Bihar's Afforestation Schemes Discussed at COP28

- Focus on indigenous plants.
- The active involvement of JEEVIKA (a state-run Self-Help Group of Women) in plantation and nursery raising.
- Large-scale agroforestry on farmers' land.
- The integration of afforestation activities with soil moisture conservation measures to facilitate forest regeneration.

US Launches Multinational Push to Safeguard Red Sea Commerce

On 19th December, 2023, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced the creation of a multinational operation to safeguard commerce in the Red Sea following a series of missile and drone attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis.

Joint patrols of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden will be conducted by USA and other participating countries under Operation Prosperity Guardian to address the threat. The participating countries include—UK, Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles and Spain.

About Red Sea

The Red Sea, spanning nearly 2,000 km, connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal, significantly reducing travel time and resources.



The attacks have huge impact on the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal, accounting for 9·2 million barrels per day of oil flows, plays a crucial role in global trade, with about 12% depending on it.

Key Points :

- **Houthis' Motivation**
  - The Houthis claim their attacks on vessels in the Red Sea are in protest against Israel's military offensive in Gaza following an attack by Hamas.
  - Houthi militants hijacked an India-bound ship named Galaxy Leader in November, reflecting their involvement in the region's conflicts.
- **Houthis and the Israel-Hamas Conflict**
  - The Houthis, in power in northern Yemen, have been engaged in a civil war with the Yemeni government for almost a decade.
  - Sectarian factors, including Zaydi Shia beliefs and support from Iran, contribute to the Houthis' role in regional conflicts.
- **Economic Impact on World**
  - Rising fears about shipping disruptions have led to an increase in oil prices.
  - Rerouting through Africa could extend journeys by two weeks, impacting global shipping and logistics.

US House Approves Impeachment Inquiry into President Biden

On 13th December, 2023, the US House of Representatives voted to formalize an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden, escalating Republicans' battle with Democrats ahead of the 2024 election.

About Impeachment Enquiry at USA

- The US Constitution empowers Congress to impeach federal officials including the President for treason, bribery and "other high crimes and misdemeanors." A President can be removed from office if the House approves articles of impeachment by a simple majority and the Senate votes by a two-thirds majority to convict after holding a trial.
- Although three US Presidents have been impeached-Andrew Johnson in 1868, Bill Clinton in 1998, and Trump in 2019 and 2021 none has ever been removed from office by the Senate.

India-Oman Bilateral Relation

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister held bilateral talks with the Sultan of Oman at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, aiming to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two nations. Sultan Haitham bin Tarik is on his first visit to India since becoming Oman's head of State in 2020.

Key Highlights :

- Sultan Haitham bin Tarik took charge in 2020 after the demise of Sultan Qaboos who was known as the "architect of special ties between India and Oman". Sultan Qaboos was posthumously honoured with the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019 by India.
- The two sides signed on five documents that included an agreement between the Financial Intelli-

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gence Unit of India and the National Centre for Financial Information to prevent money laundering.

- As a gesture to celebrate the ancient relation between India and Oman the two sides also took up a proposal by the Ministry of Culture to recreate maritime voyage of a stitched ship which is expected to sail from Mandvi in Gujarat to Muscat during 2025 to '26.
- They affirmed their commitment to enhancing cooperation to combat terrorism and underscored the significance of fostering the universal values of peace, moderation, coexistence and tolerance.
- The two sides have agreed on a vision document titled 'A Joint Partnership for the Future' that covers several sectors vital for upgrading the relationship.
- Digital connectivity, medical tourism, maritime security, hospitality, agriculture, and food security are some of the areas that the vision document has focused on.
- The leaders appreciated the announcement of the third tranche of the Oman-India Joint Investment Fund and said the fund has the potential to galvanise investments from Oman and the Gulf region into the fastest growing sectors of the Indian economy.

Important Facts

Defence Cooperation :

- The Ministries of Defence of both countries review their relations annually under the aegis of Joint Military Cooperation Committee meeting. Both Air Force and Navy undertake staff talks on a regular basis which has been the catalyst for new areas of cooperation.
  - The JMCC is the highest forum of engagement between India and Oman in the field of defence.
  - The JMCC is expected to meet annually, but could not be organised since 2018 when the meeting of the 9th JMCC was held in Oman.
- India and Oman conduct regular biennial bilateral exercises between all three services :
  - The Army exercise : Al Najah
  - The Air Force exercise : Eastern Bridge
  - The Naval Exercise: Naseem Al Bahr

India-Oman Economic and Commercial Relations :

- Major items of India's exports to Oman include mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; articles of iron or steel; electrical machinery and equipment, textiles and garments, chemicals, tea, coffee, spices, cereals and meat products and seafood.

Indian Community in Oman

- Indian community in Oman is organized under the Indian Social clubs in Muscat, Salalah, Sohar and Sur.
- The clubs have a number of sub-groups called linguistic wings which cater to the cultural and social needs of their members, for example, Indian Social Club in Muscat has 25 linguistic wings catering to all social requirements of Indian community.
- There are 19 Indian schools offering CBSE syllabus catering to the educational needs of about 45,000 Indian children. The Board of Directors is responsible for managing of Indian Schools in Oman.

News in Brief

Bhutan to have Massive Green City Along Assam Border

On 17th December, 2023, Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck announced plans to build a massive international city (Gelephu Smart city Project) in an area of over 1,000 sq. km. on its border, with Assam pitching the project as an "economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's north-eastern States".

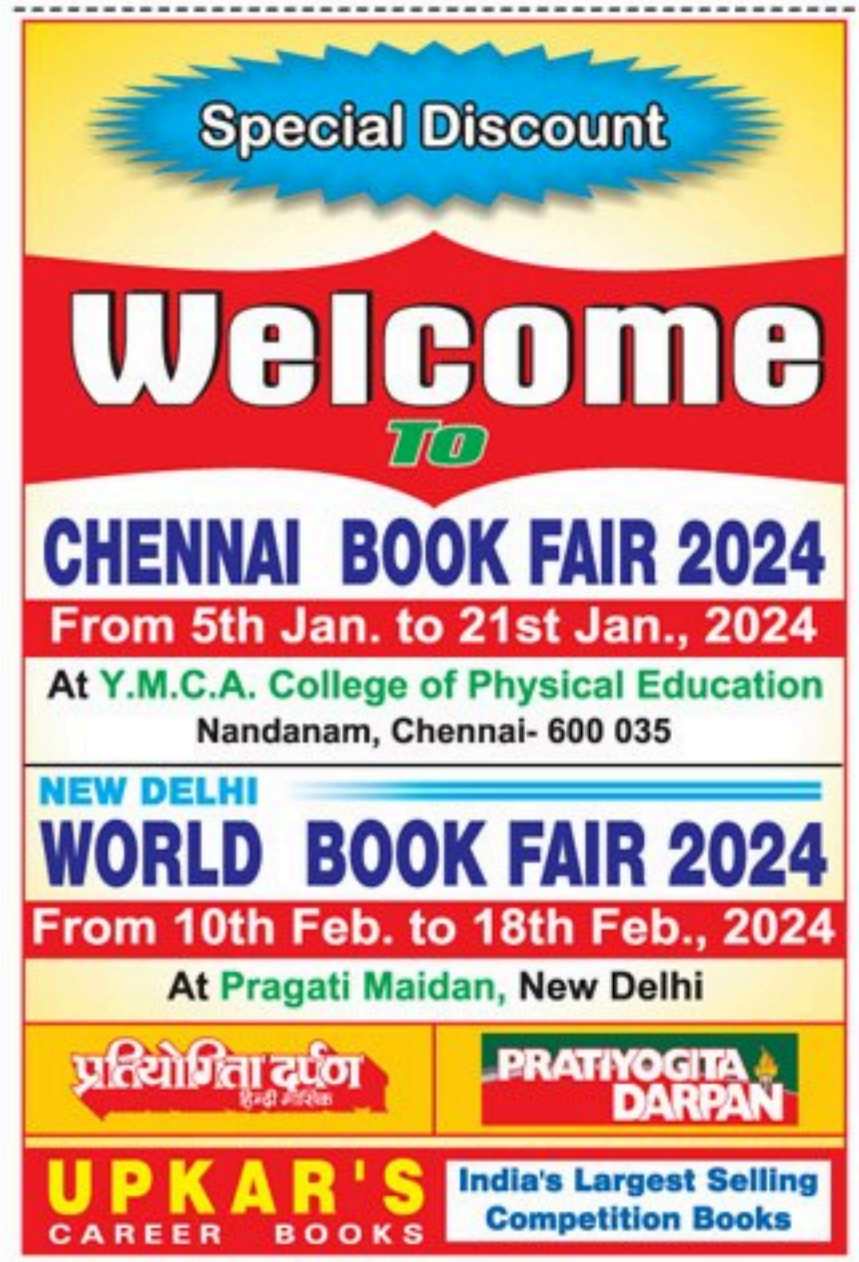
Colorado Supreme Court Disqualifies Donald Trump from Presidential Ballot

On 19th December, 2023, the Colorado Supreme Court disqualified former President Donald Trump from holding the presidency under the Constitution's insurrection clause. The court also demanded that the secretary of state exclude Trump's name from the state's Republican presidential primary ballot. The court has found Trump not eligible to return to the White House considering his role in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack. He is disqualified under the clause, Section 3 of the 14th Amendment.

About Section 3 of the 14th Amendment :

- Enacted after the Civil War, the 14th Amendment aimed to extend liberties and rights to formerly enslaved individuals.
- Section 3 specifically addresses individuals who participated in insurrection or rebellion, stating that they cannot hold government office again.

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World 2023

January

1 Croatia adopts the euro and joins the Schengen area



8 Unrest in Brazil as former President Jair Bolsonaros supporters storm Congress in attempt to oust President Lula da Silva

February



4 US fighter jet shoots down giant Chinese balloon suspected of spying on key military sites across America

5 Cyclone Freddy, longest lasting tropical cyclone in history, forms in the Indian Ocean. Over 1,400 killed in southeastern Africa

6 Turkey and Syria struck by a catastrophic earthquake that kills about 60,000 people

March



10 Xi Jinping re-elected Chinese President for a record third five-year term



10 Iran and Saudi Arabia agree to resume diplomatic ties after seven years during talks brokered by China



17 The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin for unlawfully deporting children from occupied areas of Ukraine to Russia

April

4 Finland becomes the 31st member of NATO, doubling the alliance's border with Russia



20 SpaceX's Starship, the largest and most powerful rocket ever built, explodes four minutes into its first flight test

24 India surpasses China as the world's most populous country

May

5 WHO ends its declaration of COVID-19 pandemic being a global health emergency

6 Coronation of Charles III and Camilla as King and Queen of the UK held in London



28 Recep Tayyip Erdogan wins third term as Turkish president

June



2 A train collision in the Indian state of Odisha leaves over 290 dead

7 Millions of Americans warned to stay inside as wildfire smoke from Canada blankets eastern states

18 All five occupants of Titan, submersible exploring the wreck of the Titanic, killed following an implosion



23 Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group clashed with Russian forces before withdrawing the next day after a Belarus-brokered peace deal. Prigozhin died in a plane crash 2 months later



July



4 Earth records hottest day ever, with the average temperature reaching 17.18° C

23 Elon Musk rebrands Twitter as X

26 Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum toppled in a coup

August



5 Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan arrested following conviction in a case involving sale of state gifts

23 India's Chandrayaan-3 makes history by becoming the first spacecraft to land near the Moon's south pole





24 Donald Trump becomes first former US president to get his mug shot taken while being booked at an Atlanta jail

30 Gabon President Ali Bongo overthrown in military coup, ending his family's 56 years in power

September

8 Devastating earthquake in Morocco leaves about 3,000 people dead

9-10 G20 Summit held in New Delhi, the African Union is announced as its 21st permanent member



10 Over 4,000 killed as Storm Daniel hits the Libyan city of Derna



12 North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrives in Russia by armoured train for a summit with President Putin



18 Canadian PM Justin Trudeaus allegation of potential Indian involvement in Sikh separatist leaders killing sparks diplomatic row; India hits back by calling allegation absurd and motivated, accuses Canada of giving space to anti-India elements

October



3 Kevin McCarthy becomes the first Speaker of the US House of Representatives to be voted out of the job



7 Earthquakes leave about 2,000 people dead in Herat, Afghanistan



7 Hamas launches surprise missile attacks and incursions into Israel from the Gaza Strip leading to about 1,200 deaths and over 240 hostages being taken; a stunned Israel vows to 'destroy' Hamas and formally declares war leading to a complete blockade of Gaza and a humanitarian crisis

November

1 Collins Dictionary announces AI as the most notable word in 2023

14 Chinese president Xi Jinping visits the US for the first time since 2017 to hold a key summit with President Joe Biden



19 Right-wing libertarian Javier Milei elected Argentina's President



22 Geert Wilders' far-right Party for Freedom wins most seats Netherlands elections

December

13 COP28 climate summit in Dubai reaches a landmark deal that for the first time calls on all countries to "transition away" from fossil fuels



18 Abdel Fattah el-Sisi sweeps to a third term as President in Egypt

22 Gaza death toll crosses 20,000 in Israel-Hamas war

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Updates National and International

ACRONYMS

CPCB	—	Central Pollution Control Board
IWF	—	International Weightlifting Federation
NCEL	—	National Cooperative Exports Limited
NCRB	—	National Crime Records bureau
WPL	—	Women's Premier League

APPOINTMENTS

Anish Shah President of FICCI

Anish Shah assumed the post of president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the term of 2023-24 on December 9, 2023.

Anish Shah is currently serving as the group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mahindra Group and Managing Director (MD) of Mahindra and Mahindra Limited.



Anish Shah

He is also a member of the United Kingdom (UK) Investment Council and the chair of the World Economic Forum's Automotive Governor's Council.

Commander Prerana Deosthale First Woman to Command Naval War Ship

First Lieutenant Commander of Warship INS Chennai Prerana Deosthale was appointed as the commanding officer of INS Trinkat based in Goa in December 2023.



Prerana Deosthale

Deosthale is appointed as the first woman commanding officer of an Indian Naval Ship. She hails from Mumbai and joined the Indian Navy in 2009.

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi President of Egypt

The President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi won election of the President again in December 2023 for a third term of six years. el-Sisi was first elected as President in June 2014, then re-elected in 2018.

He was Field Marshal in the Army and was involved in the military coup that removed then President Morci from the office on July 3, 2013. On March 26, 2014, in response to calls from supporters to run for the presidency, el-Sisi resigned from the post of Army as Field Marshal and announced that he would run as a candidate in the 2014 presidential election.



Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

Andry Nirina Rajoelina President in Madagascar

Andry Rajoelina assumed the presidency of Madagascar on December 16, 2023. He previously served as President of Madagascar from 2019 to 2023.

Rajoelina, then Mayor of Antananarivo,was appointed as President of the High Transitional Authority of Madagascar by a military council in 2009. He held the presidency until general elections were held in 2013, and stepped down in 2014. He won the 2018 presidential election and assumed the post of the President on January 19, 2019.



Andry Nirina Rajoelina

Samir Shah to Head BBC

The UK government has named Indian-origin media executive Dr. Samir Shah as its preferred candidate to take over as the new chairman of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in December 2023.

Samir Shah was previously the head of current affairs and political programmes at the BBC. He is a media executive with over 40 years of experience in Television production and journalism.



Dr. Samir Shah

The 71-year-old Samir was born in Aurangabad and moved to England in 1960.

DEATHS

Former US Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger

Former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger died at the age of 100 on November 29, 2023 at his home in Connecticut in the US.

He served as American top diplomat and national security advisor during the President Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administration in 1969-77. He joined the Nixon White House in January 1969 as national security adviser and, after his appointment as secretary of state in 1973, kept both titles, a rarity. When Nixon resigned, he stayed on under President Gerald R. Ford.

Kissinger, born in Germany, came to the United States in 1938 as a Jewish refugee fleeing Nazi persecution. He served in the US Army during World War II. After the War he was educated at Harvard University. He also served as professor in the university.

Kissinger played a significant role in the foreign policy of the US between 1969 and 1977. He helped Washington open up to China, forge arms control deals with the Soviet Union and end the Vietnam War.

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He was awarded the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize with Le Duc Tho for withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam for peace in Vietnam.

Communist Leader Kanam Rajendran

Kanam Rajendran, a member of the Communist Party of India, died on December 8, 2023 at the age of 73 in Kochi. Kanam was born in Koottickal, a village in Kottayam district on November 10, 1950. Kanam represented Vazhoor constituency in the Kerala Legislative Assembly from 1982 to 1991.

Actor Junior Mehmood

Actor, singer and director Junior Mehmood died on December 8, 2023 at the age of 67 in Mumbai. Naeem Sayyed is known professionally as Junior Mehmood. The name Junior Mehmood was given to him by Mehmood Ali.

Poet Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah

British poet, musician, professor and actor Benjamin Zephaniah died on December 7, 2023 at the age of 65.

Over a four-decade career, Mr. Zephaniah was the author of at least 30 books. He was widely considered to be among the first poets to address the climate crisis. His work was also taught in classrooms in England, making him a recognizable name there.

Women Rights Activist Dr. V. Mohini Giri

Renowned women's rights activist Dr. V. Mohini Giri died on December 19, 2023 at the age of 86.

Mohini Giri was the chairperson of the National Commission for Women from 1995 to 1998. She established the War Widows Association, New Delhi in 1972.

She was chairperson of the Guild of Service, a New Delhi based social service organisation which was established in 1979. The organisation provides advocacy for rights of children and women. She was also chairman of the Delhi Social Welfare Advisory Board (1987-90).

Her publications include Kanya-Exploitation of Little Angels, Emancipation and Empowerment, Living Death, Deprived Devis-Women's Unequal Status in Society and Several Articles in Newspapers and Magazines .

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait

Emir of Kuwait Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabeh died on December 16, 2023, at the age of 86.

Nawaf was nominated as crown prince on February 7, 2006, during the reign of his half brother Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He was Emir of Kuwait from September 2020 to December 2023.



Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

He held the post of the Governor of Hawalli, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence and Deputy Prime Minister of Kuwait.

Kuwait's new emir, Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, has been formally sworn in before parliament on December 20, 2023 to begin his rule over the wealthy Gulf Monarchy.

Actor Andre Braugher

Hollywood actor Andre Braugher died on December 11, 2023 at the age of 61.

Andre Braugher, starred as Captain Raymond Holt in the hit comedy Brooklyn Nine-Nine and as Detective Frank Pembleton in Homicide : Life on the Street. He won two Critics Choice Awards for best supporting actor in a comedy series and received four Emmy nominations for his performance as Holt, the precinct's no-nonsense, Black and gay boss.

US Supreme First Woman Judge Sandra Day O'Connor

First woman judge of the United States Sandra died on December 1, 2023 at the age of 93 in Phoenix, Arizona, US.

President Ronald Reagan formally nominated Sandra on August 19, 1981. On September 21, Sandra's appointment was confirmed by the U.S. Senate. She served the Supreme Court from September 25, 1981 to January 31, 2006.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Abdullahi Mire Gets UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award 2023

Abdullahi Mire, a former refugee championing education for displaced children and youth, was on November 28, 2023 honoured with the UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award 2023. Abdullahi who himself has been a refugee child from Somalia, got the honour for his work championing the right to education for displaced children. Mr. Mire spent 23 years living in the Dadaab complex himself, from the early 1990s, and eventually went on to graduate with a diploma in journalism and public relations in 2013 from Kenya's Kenyatta University.

UNHCR also Announced the Regional Winners to be Honoured this Year :

- **Elizabeth Moreno Barco (Americas) :** a human rights defender who advocates for communities affected by armed internal conflict in Colombia.
- **Asia Al-Mashreqi (Middle East & North Africa) :** founder and chairperson of the Sustainable Development Foundation, which has assisted nearly two million individuals in Yemen affected by conflict.
- **Abdullah Habib, Sahat Zia Hero, Salim Khan and Shahida Win (Asia-Pacific) :** four Rohingya storytellers documenting the experiences of stateless Rohingya refugees.
- **Lena Grochowska and Władysław Grochowski (Europe) :** a Polish couple whose hotel chain and foundation provide shelter and training to refugees

The Nansen award has been named after the Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat and humanitarian **Fridtj of Nansen.**

Kabir Bedi Honoured With Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Merito della Repubblica Italiana)

Seasoned actor Kabir Bedi was on December 11, 2023 awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic

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(Merito della Repubblica Italiana), the highest Italian civilian award at an event in Mumbai. This award, the most prestigious Italian honorific one, ultimately recognizes his unconditional feeling and passionate dedication to Italy. Established on March 3, 1951, the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Merito della Repubblica Italiana) is bestowed to individuals who have made significant contributions to various fields, including arts, literature, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities.

Taylor Swift Named Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023

American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift was named Time's Person of the Year for 2023 in December 2023, making her the first woman to appear twice on a Person of the Year cover since the franchise began in 1927. Swift was also named Person of the Year in 2017. She is the first person to be selected because of her achievement in the arts, and is only the fourth individual selection who was born in the last 50 years. As the first woman to be recognized more than once, Swift joins a small group of repeat designees, along-side several US Presidents and world leaders.



Taylor Swift

Only recently, Swift was crowned as Spotify's Global Top Artist of 2023. The 33-year-old singer reigned across various charts and emerged as the year's most-streamed artist.

Pushpa Bharati's Memoir, *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein* Selected for 33rd Vyas Samman 2023

Eminent Hindi writer Pushpa Bharati's 2016 memoir, *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein*, was on December 11, 2023 selected for the 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023 by the KK Birla Foundation. Instituted in 1991, the award is given to an outstanding Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries a cash prize of ₹ 4 lakh, a citation and a plaque. After considering the works published during 2013-22, a selection committee headed by eminent litterature Prof Ramji Tiwari picked Bharati's *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein* for the prestigious award. In the memoir *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein*, Bharti gives the readers a glimpse into her cherished memories and life lessons through captivating anecdotes as she reflects on the joys, challenges, and transformative moments that shape a life.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023

Sahitya Akademi announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 in 24 Languages on December 20, 2023. Nine books of poetry, six novels, five short story collections, three essays and one literary study have been selected for the Sahitya Akademi Awards this year. The award, in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl, and one lakh rupees will be presented at the award presentation function on 12th March next year. The awards relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award, that is between January 2017 and 31st December, 2021.

The Awards, recommended by distinguished Jury members in 24 Indian languages, were approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi which met on 20th December, 2023 under the Chairmanship of Sri Madhav Kaushik, President, Sahitya Akademi. Tamil author Rajasekaran has been chosen for his novel Neervazhi Padooum, Telugu writer Patanjali Sastry for his short story collection and Malayalam litterateur EV Ramakrishnan for his literary study Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangal.

Sahitya Akademi Awards, 2023

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Dr. Pranavjyoti Dekar Srestha Galpa (Short Stories)	Pranavjyoti Deka
Bengali	Jaler Upar Pani (Novel)	Swapnamay Chakrabarti
Bodo	Jiu-Safarni Dakhwn (Short Stories)	Nandeswar Daimari
Dogri	Daun Sadiyan Ek Seer (Poetry-Ghazal)	Vijay Verma
English	Requiem in Raga Janki (Novel)	Neelum Saran Gour
Gujarati	Sairandhree (Epic Poetry)	Vinod Joshi
Hindi	Mujhe Pahachaano (Novel)	Sanjeev
Kannada	Mahabharatha Anusandhanada Bharathayatre (Essays)	Lakshmisha Tolpadi
Kashmiri	Yeth Waweh Halay Tsong Kous Zalay (Poetry)	Manshoor Banihali
Konkani	Varsal (Short Stories)	Prakash S. Parienkar
Maithili	Bodha Sanketan (Essays)	Basukinath Jha
Malayalam	Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangal (Literary Study)	E.V. Ramakrishnan
Manipuri	Yachangba Nang Hallo (Poetry)	Sorokkhaibam Gambhini
Marathi	Ringan (Novel)	Krushnat Khot
Nepali	Nepali Loksahitya Ra Loksanskritiko Parichaya (Essays)	Judhabir Rana
Odia	Aprastuta Mrutyu (Poetry)	Ashutosh Parida
Punjabi	Mann Di Chip (Poetry)	Swarnjit Savi
Rajasthani	Palakati Preet (Poetry)	Gaje Singh Rajpurohit
Sanskrit	Shunye Meghganam (Poetry)	Arun Ranjan Mishra
Santali	Jaba Baha (Short Stories)	Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey)
Sindhi	Hathu Pakidijain (Poetry Ghazal)	Vinod Asudani
Tamil	Neervazhi Paduvum (Novel)	Rajasekaran (Devibharathi)
Telugu	Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu (Short Stories)	T. Patanjali Sastry
Urdu	Rajdev Ki Amrai (Novel)	Sadiqua Nawab Saher

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Finland's International Gender Equality Prize 2023 Conferred on Afghan Women Skills Development Center

The Afghan Women Skills Development Center (AWSDC), an NGO in Afghanistan was on December 11, 2023 honoured with the International Gender Equality Prize for 2023 given by Finland as Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo presented the EURO 300,000 Prize to Mahbouba Seraj, the Executive Director of the AWSDC in Tampere, Finland on 11 December, 2023. The organization Afghan Women Skills Development Center does important humanitarian work to promote the safety of Afghan women.

Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad Declared Joint Winners of Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2023

Argentine-Israeli maestro Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian peace activist Ali Abu Awwad were on December 14, 2023 jointly awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2023 for promoting amity among the Israeli and Palestinian people. Daniel Barenboim is a classical pianist and conductor, whose work focuses on fostering harmony in West Asia through music. Ali Abu Awwad is a Palestinian peace activist who co-founded a local Palestinian-Israeli initiative called Roots. He contributed greatly to the launch of a Palestinian non-violence movement called Taghyeer, which sought to forge a nonviolent solution to the conflict with Israel. Barenboim and Awwad, whose work focuses on the use of non-violent tools of music, dialogue and peoples' participation, were chosen by an international jury chaired by former Chief Justice of India, TS Thakur.

World Athletics Awards 2023

The World Athletics Awards 2023 were conferred in different categories on December 11, 2023 in a ceremony in Monaco. **Noah Lyles of America** was declared the best male track athlete at a ceremony held in Monaco on 11 December, 2023. **Kenya's Faith Kipyegon** was declared the best female track athlete. American athlete Noah Lyles won three gold medals at the World Athletics Championships in 2023. That included individual gold medals in the 100 m and 200 m and gold medals as part of the 4×100 m relay team.

Kenyan athlete Faith Kipyegon has won two gold medals this year with making world records. Faith Kipyegon won gold medals in the 1500 m and 5000 m World Athletics Championships in 2023. Other winners included Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa (World Athlete of the Year - Women's Out of Stadia); Venezuela's 'Queen of the Triple Jump' Yulimar Rojas (World Athlete of the Year - Women's Field); Sweden's Armand Mondo Duplantis (World Athlete of the Year - Men's Field); and Kenya's **Kelvin Kiptum** (World Athlete of the Year - Men's Out of Stadia).

Kenya swept the Rising Stars of the Year awards with **Faith Cherotich** and **Emmanuel Wanyonyi** picking up the honours.

FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023; India's Hardik Singh Chosen as Men's FIH Player of the Year

Indian hockey team midfielder Hardik Singh was declared the Men's FIH Player of the Year for 2023 as the FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023 were announced on December 19, 2023. Hardik played vital role in India's bronze medal success in Tokyo Olympics 2020. Indian women's hockey team captain Savita Punia won the best goalkeeper of the year award. Savita has won the women's goalkeeper of the year award for the third time in a row. Dutch player Xan de Waard, meanwhile, won the FIH Women's Player of the Year honour. The awardees were determined through a voting process involving a panel of experts, national associations represented by their team captains and coaches, as well as fans and media.

National Sports Awards 2023; Chirag Chandrashekhar Shetty and Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj Get Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023

Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on December 20, 2023 announced the National Sports Awards 2023 for outstanding achievements in different sport fields.

National Sports Awards 2023; Winners List :

- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for 2023 :** Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (badminton).
- **Arjuna Awards for 2023 :** Ojas Pravin Deotale (archery), Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery), Murali Sreeshankar (athletics), Parul Chaudhary (athletics), Mohameed Hussamuddin (boxing), R. Vaishali (chess), Mohammed Shami (cricket), Anush Agarwalla (equestrian), Divyakriti Singh (equestrian dressage), Diksha Dagar (golf), Krishan Bahadur Pathak (hockey), Sushila Chanu (hockey), Pawan Kumar (kabaddi), Ritu Negi (kabaddi), Nasreen (kho-kho), Pinki (lawn bowls), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting), Esha Singh (shooting), Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (squash), Ayhika Mukherjee (table tennis), Sunil Kumar (wrestling), Antim (wrestling), Naorem Roshibina Devi (wushu), Sheetal Devi (para archery), Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy (blind cricket), Prachi Yadav (para canoeing).
- **Dronacharya Award (regular category) for Outstanding Coaches :** Lalit Kumar (wrestling), R.B. Ramesh (chess), Mahaveer Prasad Saini (para athletics), Shivendra Singh (hockey), Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar (mallakhamb).
- **Dronacharya Award (life-time category) for outstanding coaches :** Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf), Bhaskaran E (kabaddi), Jayanta Kumar Pushilal (table tennis).
- **Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement :** Manjusha Kanwar (badminton), Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey), Kavitha Selvaraj (kabaddi).
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023 :** Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (overall winner university); Lovely Professional University, Punjab (1st runner-up), Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (2nd runner-up).

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COMMITTEE

Women's Premier League Committee

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) formed an eight-member committee led by its President Roger Binny to accentuate the growth of the Women's Premier League (WPL) on December 7, 2023.

Other members of the committee are : Arun Dhumal (IPL Chairperson), Rajeev Shukla (BCCI Vice-President), Ashish Shelar (BCCI treasurer), Devajit Saikia (BCCI joint secretary), Madhumati Lele and Prabhtej Bhatia. BCCI secretary Jay Shah has been named as its convenor.

MEETING/CONFERENCE/ EXHIBITION

2023 World Radiocommunication Conference

The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) took place in Dubai from 20 November to 15 December, 2023. The conference was hosted by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Over 3,900 delegates from 163 Member States attended WRC-23, including 88 ministerial-level participants. Women made up 22 per cent of all WRC-23 delegates, an increase from 18 per cent at WRC-19 in 2019.

The World Radiocommunication Conference revised the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations to support spectrum sharing and technological innovation and updated treaty allocation new spectrum for broadband connectivity, safety of life, space and Earth observation.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialised agency for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), driving innovation in ICTs together with 193 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organisations.

First Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale

Pradhan Mantri Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 at Red Fort, New Delhi on December 8, 2023. He unveiled seven research publications on the occasion. The Prime Minister also inaugurated Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design.

The one week conference was designed to initiate a holistic conversation between artists, architects, designers, photographers, collectors, art professionals and the public to strengthen the cultural dialogue.

The conference also provides avenues and opportunities to expand and collaborate with the creators of art, architecture and design as part of the evolving economy.

Global Partnerships on Artificial Intelligence Summit

The 2023 The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit took place in New Delhi, India, on 12-14 December, 2023.

29 member nations of the global partnership on Artificial Intelligence unanimously adopted the New Delhi Resolution, which aims to promote collaborative effort of the member countries on Artificial Intelligence.

The event brought together engaged minds and expertise from science, industry, civil society, governments, international organisations and academia to foster international cooperation on AI-related priorities.

Launched in June 2020, GPAI ('gee-pay') is a multi stakeholder initiative bringing together leading experts from science, industry, civil society, international organisations and government that share values to bridge the gap between theory and practice on Artificial Intelligence (AI) by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities. All the GPAI member countries will meet next year in Korea.

DEFENCE

Indian Air Force Test Fired SAMAR Air Missile Defence System

The Indian Air Force successfully test fired its SAMAR (Surface-to-Air Missile For Assured Retaliation) air defence missile system during exercise Astra Shakti-2023 in December at Surya Lanka Air Force Station, Andhra Pradesh. SAMAR has been developed by a unit under the Indian Air Force Maintenance Command.

The missile system successfully achieved firing trials objectives in different engagement scenarios.

The system can engage aerial threats with missiles operating at a speed range of 2 to 2·5 Mach. The system consists of a twin-turret launch platform with the capability of launching two missiles in single and salvo mode.

Akash Missile Weapon System Test Fired Against Four Aerial Targets Simultaneously

The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted a test wherein four medium-range surface-to-air missiles hit four aerial targets at a range of 25 kilometres using the Akash Missile Weapon System.



IAF conducted the test during the Air Force Exercise Astra Shakti-2023 at Surya Lanka Air Force Station, Andhra Pradesh on December 12, 2023.

India became the first country to demonstrate the capability of engagement of four aerial targets simultaneously at 25 km ranges by command guidance using a single firing unit.

The Akash Weapon System is indigenously designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

India Conducted Trial of High Speed UAV

India successfully conducted a flight trial of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator—an indigenous high speed Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), from Aeronautical Test Range based in Karnataka city of Chitradurga on December 16, 2023.

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INS Tarmugli Recommissioned in Indian Navy

Indian Navy commissioned INS Tarmugli, a Fast Attack Craft FAC, at an impressive ceremony held at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) on 14 December, 2023.

INS Tarmugli, originally INS Tillanchang, Trinkat class patrol vessel was commissioned into the Indian Navy on March 17, 2001.

She was given to the Maldivian Coast Guard on April 16, 2006 as MCGS Huravee and served there till its decommissioning in May 2023. The Huravee was replaced by a new INS Tarmugli (T91) in Maldives service.

The former TIllanchang was recommissioned into the Indian Navy as INS Tarmugli in memory of the vessel donated.

The warship is fitted with MTU engines, the latest communication equipment, a 30 mm gun and an advanced Radar system and it will be extensively used for coastal surveillance in areas along the East Coast of India.

Indian Air Force C-17 Aircraft Airdrops Heavy Platform

A C-17 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force airdropped in a military zone in Agra an indigenously developed heavy platform that can carry a maximum load of 16 tonnes on December 7, 2023.

It is for the first time that an ADRDE developed Type-V platform having a dimension of 24 feet by eight feet with 16 tonnes load capacity was airdropped from an IAF plane, showcasing indigenous innovation with the efforts of dedicated teams from the IAF, Indian Army, and ADRDE.

IAF Set to Overhaul Mi-26 Helicopters with Russian Assistance

In Service since 1985, the first Mi-26 was grounded in 2013, followed by the other two in 2014 and 2017. After remaining grounded for years for want of overhaul, the IAF's fleet of Soviet-origin Mi-26 heavy lift helicopters is finally in for a fresh lease of life.

The helicopters will now be overhauled at No. 3 Base Repair Depot (BRD) in Chandigarh with Russian assistance.

The helicopters form part of No. 126 Helicopter Unit, the Featherweights, based at Chandigarh, which also operates the recently acquired US-made CH-47 Chinook heavy lift helicopter.

Indian Coast Guard Conducted 9th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-IX)

ICG's ninth National Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX) was held in the Gulf of Kutch off Vadinar coast near Jamnagar on November 25, 2023.

NATPOLREX is a biennial drill that Indian Coast Guard (ICG) organises to assess its preparedness to respond to oil spill events in sea that can cause marine pollution.

Surveyor Ship INS Sandhayak Delivered to Navy

The largest survey vessel ever—INS Sandhayak was handed over to the Indian Navy on 4 December, 2023. The INS Sandhayak has been built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd. in India.

The INS Sandhayak is a reincarnation of another vessel with the same title that was also deployed as a survey vessel. The latter was commissioned into the Navy's fleet in 1981 and decommissioned in 2021.

Training Launch of Short Range Ballistic Missile Agni-1

Training launch of Short-Range Ballistic Missile Agni-1 was carried out successfully from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha on December 7.

The defence ministry in its statement said that The user training launch, carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, successfully validated all operational and technical parameters. Agni-1 is a proven very high precision missile system.

India-Vietnam Armed Forces Exercise VINBAX-2023

India and Vietnam Armed Forces exercise VINBAX-2023 was conducted at Hanoi, Vietnam from 11 to 21 December, 2023.

The Indian contingent comprises 39 personnel from an Engineer Regiment of Bengal Engineer Group and 6 personnel of Army Medical Corps. The Vietnam People's Army Contingent was represented by 45 personnel.

Missile Destroyer INS Imphal Commissioned

INS Imphal, the indigenously-built stealth guided missile destroyer equipped with BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles commissioned into the Indian Navy on December 26, 2023 in Mumbai. Upon commissioning, INS Imphal joined the Western Naval Command.

It is the first warship to have been named after a city Imphal from the Northeastern region Manipur, the approval for which was accorded by the President in April 2019.

INS Imphal's keel was laid on May 19, 2017 and the ship was launched into water on April 20, 2019. INS Imphal was delivered to the Indian Navy on October 20,2023 after completion of a rigorous and comprehensive trial programme both in the harbour and at sea.

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

Malaria Vaccine R21/Matrix-MTM Granted Prequalification by WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on December 21, 2023 that it has prequalified the R21/Matrix-MTM malaria vaccine to prevent malaria disease in children caused by the P. Falciparum parasite in endemic areas. Prequalification status enables United Nations agencies to procure the vaccine for eligible countries and will enable global rollout of the vaccine.

The vaccine is developed by the University of Oxford and Serum Institute of India. The Serum Institute already

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established production capacity for 100 million doses per year, which will be doubled over the next two years.

To date the R21/Matrix-MTM is approved for use by regulators in Ghana, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

Japanese Experimental Nuclear Fusion Reactor Inaugurated

The world's biggest nuclear fusion reactor in operation was inaugurated on December 1, 2023 in Japan. JT-60SA, the world's largest and most advanced nuclear fusion reactor started its official operations in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture on December 1, 2023. JT-60SA is a joint initiative between the European Union and Japan.

The experimental nuclear fusion reactor is quite a new technology. However, some say that it is the answer to humanity's future energy needs by establishing nuclear fusion as a clean energy source.

Fusion differs from fission, the technique used in nuclear power plants, by fusing two atomic nuclei instead of splitting one.

The goal of the JT-60SA reactor is to investigate the feasibility of fusion as a safe, large-scale and carbon-free source of net energy with more energy generated than is put into producing it.

SPACE/AVIATION

India Launched its First X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite(XPoSAT)

The first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSAT) WAS Launched on January 1, 2024. The mission life of the satellite is expected to be 5 years. The aim of the satellite is to investigate the polarisation of intense X-Ray sources.

The XPoSAT mission is capable of simultaneous studies of temporal, spectral and polarisation features of the bright X-Ray sources involving black holes, active galactic nuclei and non-thermal supernova remnants. The XPot spacecraft is designed for observation from Low Earth Orbit (non-sun synchronous orbit of 650 km. altitude, low inclination of 6 degree).

The satellite has two payloads aboard including the primary scientific payload that is Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays (POLIX) and secondary payload X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing (XSPECT). ISRO began working on the XPoSAT project in September 2017.

China Launched Satellite for Egypt

China launched a remote-sensing satellite MISRSAT-2 for Egypt on December 3, 2023 from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert using a Long March-2C carrier rocket.

According to China National Space Administration the satellite will assist Egypt's work on land and resource utilisation, water conservancy, agriculture and other fields.

"The MISRSAT-2 is a landmark project of deep cooperation between China and Egypt in the field of aerospace high-tech, and is of milestone significance in aerospace cooperation between the two countries," according to the China National Space Administration.

DISASTERS/ACCIDENT

Volcano Erupted in Iceland

A volcanic eruption occurred at the Sundhnukur crater chain north of the town of Grindavik, Iceland on December 18, 2023. The eruption, which broke out on the Reykjanes peninsula of south-west Iceland, comes after weeks of intense earthquakes and tremors. The intensity of the eruption and accompanying seismic activity decreased early on December 19. The eruption ended on December 23.

The eruption was described as the largest in the Reykjanes Peninsula since the beginning of the eruption activity in 2021.

Sundhnukur is a crater row and currently active volcanic fissure that is a part of the Reykjanes Peninsula rift zone. About 4,000 people were evacuated last month from Grindavik, a fishing town threatened by the lava flow.

6·2 Magnitude Earthquake in China

The earthquake, with a magnitude of 6·2 according to China Earthquake Networks Center and 5·9 according to the U.S. Geological Survey, occurred near the boundary between Gansu and Qinghai provinces of China on December 18, 2023. The shallow depth of 10 kms added to the severity of the impact.

Cyclone Michaung in Bay of Bengal

Cyclone Michaung originated as a low pressure area in the Gulf of Thailand which crossed into the Bay of Bengal and became a deep depression on December 2, 2023 and made landfall near Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh on December 5.

The most affected area was the city of Chennai. The rivers including Cooum and major lakes overflowed in Chennai causing further water logging in the low areas along the banks.

At least 17 people were killed and 41000 people were evacuated and temporarily relocated in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Chennai International Airport closed its operations on December 4 due to flooding in the runways. Schools and offices were also Closed.

7·5 Magnitude Earthquake in Philippines

An earthquake of at least magnitude 7·5 struck Mindanao in the southern Philippines late on December 2, 2023, triggering evacuation orders for some areas and southwestern Japanese coasts because of warnings of tsunami waves of a metre or more. The epicentre was located 25 kms deep.

The tsunami warning led to immediate evacuations in coastal areas. Although the waves were minimal, and the alert was cancelled, over 659 aftershocks, including several with magnitudes ranging from 1·4 to 6·2, have rattled the region since the quake.

Cyclone Jasper in Australia

Cyclone Jasper was a powerful and long-lived tropical cyclone that impacted northern Queensland, Australia with torrential rainfall during December 2023.

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Jasper originated from an area of low pressure located in the South Pacific Ocean. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology upgraded the system to a category 1 tropical cyclone on the Australian scale and named it Jasper. The storm intensified into category 4 on December 7 and approached northern Queensland. Jasper than weekend and last noticed on December 21. Jasper was the wettest tropical cyclone to impact Australia on record.

Volcano Mount Etna Eruption

Europe's largest active volcano, Mount Etna, attracted attention with an eruption of lava on December 1, 2023. According to the Italian Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, in Catania, the fountain of lava rose up to 6000 metres above sea level and lit up the night sky in Eastern Sicily in the evening and calmed down at 9-35 pm. Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, in the Metropolitan City of Catania, between the cities of Messina and Catania.

Etna is one of the tallest active volcanoes in Europe, and the tallest peak in Italy South of Alps with a current height of 3,357 metres. It varies in height, increasing from deposition during eruptions and decreasing from the periodic collapse of the crater's rim.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Skull of 150 Million Old Sea Monster Found

The skull skeleton of a Pliosaur, a ferocious sea monster, has been found from the cliffs of Dorset's Jurassic Coast in the United Kingdom. The 2 metre long fossil is one of the most complete specimens of its type ever discovered.

It was a marine reptile that terrorised the ocean about 150 million years ago. The Pilosur was 10-12 metres long with four powerful flipper-like limbs to propel itself at high speed. It was the apex predator in the ocean.

2000 Year Old Copper Coins Discovered at Ancient Site of Mohenjo-Daro

Archaeologists in Pakistan have discovered a remarkably unusual cache of 2000-year-old coins within the remains of a Buddhist shrine (Stupa) constructed at the historic site of Mohenjo Daro (Pakistan).

The copper coins, that were discovered are thought to date back to the Kushan Empire. The coins bear resemblance to earlier discoveries from the 1920s and 1930s,

The Buddhist temple that yielded these coins is today situated within the extensive remnants of Mohenjo Daro, a site that goes back to approximately 2600 BC in south-east Pakistan. Mohenjo Daro used to be the largest settlement of the Indus Valley Civilisation. The stupa was built on the ruins of Mohenjo Daro 1600 years after its fall.

DISEASES

WHO Declared New Variant of Covid JN-1 as Standalone 'Variant of Interest'

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced the new COVID-10 variant JN-1 as a standalone 'variant of interest' on December 18, 2023 due to its rapidly increasing spread in the world. Variant of Interest is a category below the more worrisome.

JN-1 represents the vast majority of BA. 2·86 descendent lineages. According to who "while there is a rapid increase in the cases, available limited evidence does not suggest that the associated disease severity is higher as compared to other circulating variants."

Coronavirus vaccines are also expected to work on JN-1. Current vaccines continue to provide protection against severe disease and health, including against JN-1.

MUSEUM

Hump World War 2 Museum in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated 'The Hump WWII Museum' alongside the US ambassador in India, Eric Garcetti in the town of Pasighat on November 29, 2023.

India paid tribute Wednesday to the hundreds of US servicemen killed during World War II with the opening of a museum near its strategic border with China honouring the dramatic Himalayan airlift dubbed 'The Hump'.

Pilots nicknamed the dangerous route over the ice-covered eastern Himalayan mountains 'The Hump', a giant airlift to supply Chinese troops battling Japanese forces after they cut off the overland route through Burma, today's Myanmar during the Second World War.

Allied pilots flew the perilous route to supply Chinese forces, including 80-year-old rusting wreckage and machine guns of some of the 590 planes that crashed into the jungle hills and jagged mountains of Arunachal Pradesh.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. **Hot Stage** —Anita Nair
2. **PRANAB, MY FATHER : A Daughter Remembers** —Sharmistha Mukherjee
3. **Burning Roses in My. Garden** —Taslima Nasreen
4. **Welcome to Paradise** —Twinkle Khanna
5. **Roman Stories** —Jhumpa Lahiri

IMPORTANT DAYS/WEEKS/YEARS

February 2024

National

February	24	Central Excise Day
February	28	National Science Day

International

February	2	World Wetlands Day
February	4	World Cancer Day
February	6	International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation
February	20	World Day of Social Justice
February	21	International Mother Language Day
February	22	World Scout Day

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Regional News

BIHAR

Bihar Business Connect 2023 Successfully Organized in Patna

In a bid to attract investment in Bihar from India and abroad, the two-day Bihar Business Connect 2023 was successfully organized in Gaya Bhawan, Patna, the state capital on December 13 and 14, 2023.

On the inaugural day of the summit, the first session discussed the textile and leather sectors, during which MoUs were signed with eight major firms for investments of ₹ 554·40 crore.

Notable among the proposed investments are ₹ 274 crore by Savi Leathers, ₹ 100·50 crore by Komal Texfab, ₹ 94 crore by Maa Prabhawati Textile Mills, ₹ 52 crore by Cosmus Lifestyle Private Limited and ₹ 15 crore by Bharti Exim Private Limited. During the two-day event Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth ₹ 50,530 crore was signed with about 300 companies from various sectors. Adani Enterprises Director Pranab Adani said that it has been decided to invest ₹ 8,700 crore in various sectors including cement manufacturing, logistics and agro industry in Bihar.

CHHATTISGARH

Bharatiya Janata Party Registers A Landslide Victory in Chhattisgarh Assembly Polls 2023; Vishnu Deo Sai is New CM of Chhattisgarh

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a landslide victory in the Chhattisgarh General Assembly polls 2023 by winning 54 assembly seats out of 90 with a vote share of 46·27%. BJP's main rival in the polls –the Indian National Congress (INC) finished far behind BJP both in terms of assembly seats and vote share as well. INC could secure victory on just 35 seats with a vote share of just 42·23%. Gondvana Gantantra Party (GGP) won the remaining one seat of the 90 member assembly in the state. NOTA vote share remained at 1·26% in the polls.

Chhattisgarh Assembly Polls 2023 : Results in Brief

(Total Seats : 90)

Party	Seat	Vote Share (In per cent)
BJP	54	46·27
INC	35	42·23
GGP	01	—
NOTA	—	1·26%

Senior BJP leader in Chhattisgarh Vishnu Deo Sai became the new Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh after the BJP leadership declared his name for the post. Vishnu Deo Sai was on December 13, 2023 sworn in as the Chief Minister of the state by Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan in Raipur in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and many other leaders and dignitaries. Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma were sworn-in as Deputy Chief Ministers. Vishnu Deo Sai, a prominent tribal leader of BJP in the state won Kankuri assembly seat with a total of 87,604 votes. He served as the state president of the party for Chhattisgarh from 2020 until 2022. He was the Union Minister of State for Mines and Steel in the first PM Modi cabinet.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chhattisgarh Governor, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnudeo Sai, Chhattisgarh Dy. Chief Minister Arun Sao, Chhattisgarh Dy. Chief Minister Vijay Sharma and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Aditya Nath at Oath taking ceremony of Chhattisgarh CM and D.CMs on December 13, 2023.

GUJARAT

Gujarat's Garba Dance Included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List

The UNESCO on December 6, 2023 approved the inclusion of 'Garba', Gujarat's most popular folk dance form, in its Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity at the 18th session of the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held at Kasane in Republic of Botswana. With inclusion of Garba in the list, 15 elements from various parts of India have been inscripted to UNESCO's representative list of ICH. The 14 other elements from India that have been inscripted to UNESCO's representative list of ICH are Ramlila; yoga; vedic chanting; Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre of Kerala; Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas; Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala; Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan; Chhau dance of eastern India; Buddhist chanting of Ladakh; Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur; traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making in Punjab; Nawrouz; Kumbh Mela and Durga Puja in Kolkata.

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The chief of the committee's evaluation body referred to garba as : "ritualistic and devotional dance that is performed on the occasion of the Hindu festival of Navaratri, which is dedicated to the worship of the feminine energy." Garba is a 'ritualistic and devotional dance' that is performed on the occasion of the festival of Navratri which is dedicated to the worship of the feminine energy or 'Shakti'. The dance takes place around a perforated earthenware pot lit with an oil lamp, or an image of the mother goddess Amba. The dancers move around the centre in a counter-clockwise circle, using simple movements while singing and clapping their hands in unison.

MADHYA PRADESH

BJP Retains Power in Madhya Pradesh with A Comprehensive Victory in General Assembly Polls 2023 in MP; Mohan Yadav is New CM

The Bharatiya Janata Party's victory chariot continues to run in Madhya Pradesh as BJP retained power in Madhya Pradesh with a comprehensive victory in the General Assembly polls in the state, routing opposition Indian National Congress (INC) again. BJP secured victory over 163 assembly seats out of 230 with a vote share of 48·55%. BJP easily attained more than two third assembly seats this time, giving one of the worst assembly poll drubbings to the INC in the state. The INC got only 66 seats with a vote share of 40·40%. Bharat Adivasi Party – BHRTADVSIP won the remaining one seat of the MP assembly. NOTA vote share remained at 0·98%. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) secured 3·40% votes in the polls.

Madhya Pradesh Assembly Polls 2023 : Results in Brief

(Total Seats : 230)

Party	Seat	Vote Share (In per cent)
BJP	163	48·55%
INC	66	40·40%
BHRTADVSIP	01	—
BSP	—	3·40%
NOTA	—	0·98%



First Cabinet expansion of Madhya Pradesh : 18 Cabinet Ministers, 6 Minister of State (independent charges) and 4 Minister of state sworn in.

Mohan Yadav, the former higher education minister and three time Ujjain MLA, was elected unanimously as the BJP legislative party leader. Later Mohan Yadav was sworn in as the 19th Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on December 13, 2023 in Bhopal as Governor Mangubhai C. Patel administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Yadav in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President JP Nadda along with other senior leaders, including Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Jyotiraditya Scindia and UP CM Yogi Adityanath. BJP leaders Jagdish Devda and Rajendra Shukla were also sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers.

MP Governor Mangubhai Patel administered the oath of office to 28 ministers, including six ministers of state (independent charge) and four state ministers. In the first-ever expansion of the Mohan Yadav government's cabinet, BJP stalwarts Kailash Vijayvargiya and Prahlad Singh Patel took oath as Madhya Pradesh ministers on December 25, 2023.

Apart from Vijayvargiya and Prahlad Singh Patel, Rakesh Singh, Rao Uday Pratap Singh, Karan Singh Verma, Nagar Singh Chauhan, Samapatiya Uike, Eidal Singh Kansana, Pradyuman Singh Tomar, Inder Singh Parmar, Nirmala Bhuria, Tulsi Silawat, Vijay Shah, Vishwas Sarang, Govind Singh Rajput, Narayan Singh Kushwaha, Rakesh Shukla and Chetan Kashyap took oath as cabinet ministers.

Krishna Gaur, Dharmendra Lodhi, Dilip Jaiswal, Gautam Tetwal, Lakhan Patel and Narayan Panwar took oath as minister of state (independent charge). Radha Singh, Pratima Bagri, Dilip Ahirwar and Narendra Shivaji Patel took oath as minister of states.

MIZORAM

Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) Storms to Power in Mizoram; Lalduhoma is New CM of Mizoram

Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) stormed to power in Mizoram by winning 27 assembly seats in 40 member Mizoram Legislative Assembly with a vote share of 37·86%. Mizo National Front (MNF) could win only 10 seats this time with a vote share of 35·10%. The BJP won two seats with a vote share of 5·06% while INC won only 1 seat 20·82% votes. NOTA got 0·40 %.

Mizoram Assembly Polls 2023 : Results in Brief

(Total Seats : 40)

Party	Seat	Vote Share (In per cent)
ZPM	27	37·86%
MNF	10	35·10%
BJP	02	05·06%
INC	01	20·82%

ZPM leader Lalduhoma was on December 8, 2023 sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Mizoram as Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati administered the oath of

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office and secrecy to Mr. Lalduhoma in a simple oath ceremony in Aizwal. Lalrinpuii is the lone woman minister in the 12-member council of ministry. Seven of the 12 ministers are first time winners. Sapdanga was sworn in as the Deputy Chief Minister.



Pu Lalduhoma, was sworn in as the sixth Chief Minister of Mizoram at Raj Bhawan in state capital Aizawl on December 8, 2023. The oath was administered by governor Hari Babu Kambhampati.

RAJASTHAN

Bharatiya Janata Party Forms Government in Rajasthan

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a splendid victory in the Rajasthan Assembly polls 2023 by winning 115 seats out of 199 seats contested in 200 member assembly in Rajasthan. BJP secured 41·69% votes share to oust the Indian National Congress (INC) from the power in the state. The INC could win only 69 seats with a vote share of 39·53%. Bharat Adivasi Party (BHRTADVSIP) won 3 assembly seats while Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) secured win over 2 seats with a vote share of 1·82%. NOTA vote share remained at 0·96%.

Rajasthan Assembly Polls 2023 : Results in Brief

(Total Seats : 199)

Party	Seat	Vote Share (In per cent)
BJP	115	41·69%
INC	69	39·53%
BHRTADVSIP	03	—
BSP	02	1·82%
NOTA	—	0·96%

BJP's first time MLA Bhajan Lal Sharma became the new Chief Minister in Rajasthan as the party top leadership endorsed his name for the post in the state. Bhajan Lal Sharma, an MLA from Sanganer, was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Rajasthan on December 15, 2023 in Jaipur. Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Bhajan Lal Sharma as the CM in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President JP Nadda and other leaders. Alongside him, Diya Kumari, the MLA from Vidhyadhar Nagar, and Prem Chand Bairwa, the MLA from Dudu, were also sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers of the state.



Dy. Chief Minister Rajkumari Diya Singh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor of Rajasthan Kalraj Mishra, Dy. Chief Minister Prem Chand Vairva at Oath taking ceremony on December 15, 2023.

TELANGANA

Indian National Congress Registers an Impressive Victory in General Assembly Polls 2023 in Telangana

Indian National Congress emerged victorious in the General Assembly Polls 2023 in Telangana by winning 64 assembly seats out of 119 member assembly in the state. The INC easily crossed the majority mark in the Telangana assembly with a vote share of 39·40%. Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BHRS) won only 39 seats with a vote share of 37·35% while Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered victory over 8 assembly constituencies with a vote share of 13·90%. All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) won 7 seats in this poll.

Telangana Assembly Polls 2023 : Results in Brief

(Total Seats : 119)

Party	Seat	Vote Share (In per cent)
INC	64	39·40%
BHRS	39	37·35%
BJP	08	13·90%
AIMIM	07	2·22%
NOTA	—	0·73%

Senior Congress leader Anumula Revanth Reddy was on December 7, 2023 sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana by Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan at the L.B. Stadium in Hyderabad, while Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka was sworn in as the Deputy Chief Minister. N Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Ponnam Prabhakar, Dasari Anasuya, Damodar Raja Narasimha, D Sridhar Babu, Thummala Nageshwara Rao, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Konda Surekha, and Jupally Krishna Rao also took the oath and joined the Telangana cabinet. Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi,

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Priyanka Gandhi, party President Mallikarjun Kharge were in attendance at the oath taking ceremony.



A Revanth Reddy, the second Chief Minister of the youngest state of India, Telangana, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, and other Ministers after the oath taking at Lal Bahadur Stadium in Hyderabad on 7 December, 2023.

UTTARAKHAND

PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023

The two-day Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023 was organized at Forest Research Institute, Dehradun on December 8 and 9, 2023. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023 on December 8. Prime Minister Modi also launched a book Sashakt Uttarakhand and the brand House of Himalayas during the inaugural session of the event. The theme of the Summit is **'Peace to Prosperity'**. Thousands of investors took part in the event. Notable among them are Pranav Adani, Director Adani Group and Managing Director (Agro, Oil & Gas), Sajjan Jindal, Chairman and Managing Director of JSW, Sanjiv Puri, Managing director of ITC, Founder of Patanjali and Yoga Guru Shri Baba Ramdev and others. Pranav Adani said that Uttarakhand has become one the most attractive destinations for private sector investment because of the state's approach to its growth and development in recent times with an unbeatable combination of single-point clearances, competitive land prices, affordable power and efficient distribution, highly skilled manpower and proxymity to the national capital and a very stable law and order environment.

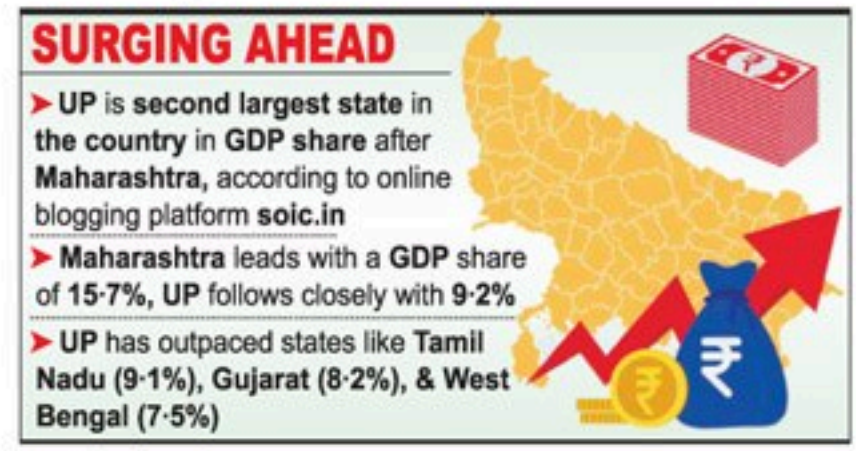
Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023 is a step towards establishing Uttarakhand as a new investment destination.

UTTAR PRADESH

Uttar Pradesh Outpaces Tamil Nadu to Become the Second-Largest Economy in India

In a big booster for the government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the second-largest economy of India. Highlighting the efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath towards making Uttar Pradesh the leading state in terms of economy, a report by prominent online blogging platform soic.in, which keeps track of investments and the stock market, has revealed that UP is the second largest state in the country in GDP share after Maharashtra. According to official statistics, Uttar Pradesh was third in GDP share.

In a creative shared on the social media platform X, Uttar Pradesh is depicted as securing the second position in terms of GDP share. As per this, while Maharashtra leads with a GDP share of 15·7 per cent of the country's total GDP, Uttar Pradesh follows closely with a GDP share of 9·2 per cent.



In the context of GDP share, Uttar Pradesh has outpaced states such as Tamil Nadu (9·1 per cent), Gujarat (8·2 per cent), and West Bengal (7·5 per cent). States like Karnataka (6·2 per cent), Rajasthan (5·5 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (4·9 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (4·6 per cent) are significantly behind Uttar Pradesh.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, UP has also jumped from the 14th to the second position in the 'Ease of Doing Business' rankings.

Additionally, due to improvements in law and order, connectivity, and infrastructure, the state has received investment proposals of over ₹ 40 lakh crore through Global Investor Summit (GIS) 2023, which are likely to be implemented on the ground soon. This will create more than one crore employment opportunities in the state.

Currently, the state is exporting goods worth nearly ₹ 2 lakh crore. The loan-deposit ratio of banks has increased from 42-43 per cent to 56 per cent, while work is being done to increase it to 60 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh is now a revenue surplus state, with 56 per cent of its population employed. Moreover, around 96 lakh MSME units have been established. Currently, the state is exporting goods worth nearly ₹ 2 lakh crore. The loan-deposit ratio of banks has increased from 42-43 percent to 56 per cent, while work is being done to increase it to 60 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh is now a revenue surplus state, with 56 per cent of its population employed. Moreover, around 96 lakh MSME units have been established.

CM Yogi has placed Uttar Pradesh, once considered a BIMARU state, at the forefront in the race for development. These achievements will not only make UP the growth engine of the country but also contribute to achieing the goal of making the state a $ 1 trillion economy.

PDarpan

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Employment And Career News

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

Invites online applications from eligible candidates for Combined Defence Services Examination (I), 2024.

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications : January 9, 2024.

Age Limits, Sex and Marital Status :

(i) **For IMA**—Unmarried male candidates born not earlier than 2nd January, 2001 and not later than 1st January, 2006 only are eligible.

(ii) **For Indian Naval Academy**—Unmarried male candidates born not earlier than 2nd January, 2001 and not later than 1st January, 2006 only are eligible.

(iii) **For Air Force Academy**—Age : 20 to 24 years as on 1st January, 2025 *i.e.*, born not earlier than 2nd January, 2001 and not later than 1st January, 2005 (Upper age limit for candidates holding valid and current Commercial Pilot Licence issued by DGCA (India) is relaxable upto 26 yrs. *i.e.*, born not earlier than 2nd January, 1999 and not later than 1st January, 2005 only are eligible.

Note : Candidate below 25 years of age must be unmarried. Marriage is not permitted during training. Married candidates above 25 years of age are eligible to apply but during training period they will neither be provided married accommodation nor can they live with family out of the premises.

(iv) For Officers' Training Academy—(SSC Course for men) unmarried male candidates born not earlier than 2nd January, 2000 and not later than 1st January, 2006 only are eligible.

(v) For Officers' Training Academy—(SSC Women Non-Technical Course) Unmarried women, issueless widows who have not remarried and issueless divorcees (in possession of divorce documents) who have not remarried are eligible. They should have been born not earlier than 2nd January, 2000 and not later than 1st January, 2006.

Essential Educational Qualifications :

(i) For I.M.A. and Officers' Training Academy, Chennai—Degree of a recognized University or equivalent.

(ii) For Indian Naval Academy—Degree in Engineering from a recognized University/Institution

(iii) For Air Force Academy—Degree of a recognized University (with Physics and Mathematics at 10+2 level) or Bachelor of Engineering.

Scheme of Examination : There will be a written examination followed by Interview, Physical Standard Test (PST), Medical Examination etc. The written examination will consist of objective type multiple choice questions only.

FORTHCOMING COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS, 2024

- State Bank of India P.O. (Main) Exam., 2023 (Jan.)
- State Bank of India Junior Associates (Customer Support & Sales) Preliminary Exam., 2023 (5, 6, 11 & 12 Jan.)
- Bihar Sipahi (Constable) Recruitment Exam., 2023 (6-7 Jan.)
- Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Entrance Exam., 2024 (For Class-VI) (20 Jan.)
- Rajasthan SSC Information Assistant Direct Recruitment Exam., 2023 (21 Jan.)
- All India Sainik School Entrance Exam., 2024-25 (21 Jan.)
- Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) Jan. 2024 (21 Jan.)
- IBPS Bank Specialist Officer Main Exam., 2024-25 (28 Jan.)
- Uttarakhand SSSC Group 'C' Exam., 2023 (31 Jan.)
- State Bank of India Junior Associates (Customer Support & Sales) Mains Exam., 2023 (Feb.)
- Rajasthan SSC Contract Women Health Worker Recruitment Exam., 2023 (3 Feb..)
- Rajasthan SSC Junior Accountant and Tahsil Revenue Accountant Combined Direct Recruitment Exam., 2023 (11 Feb.)
- Chhattisgarh P.S.C. State Services Preliminary Exam., 2023 (11 Feb.)
- Haryana Civil Services Preliminary Exam., 2023 (11 Feb.) (**Online Closing Date :** 21 Feb., 2024)
- Uttar Pradesh Police Constable Recruitment Exam., 2024 (11 Feb.) (**Online Closing Date :** 16 Jan., 2024)
- SSC Central Armed Police Forces, SSF Constables (GD) and Rifleman (GD) Assam Rifles Exam., 2024 (20-29 Feb & 1-12 March)
- Rajasthan SSC Computer Direct Recruitment Exam., 2023 (3 March)
- Madhya Pradesh P.S.C. State Service Main Exam., 2023 (11-16 March)
- Rajasthan S.S.C. Animal Attendant Direct Recruitment Exam., 2023 (April–June)
- National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Exam. (I), 2024 (21 April) (**Online Closing Date :** 9 Jan., 2024)
- Combined Defence Services Exam. (I), Exam., 2024 (21 April) (**Online Closing Date :** 9 Jan., 2024)

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How to Apply : Candidates are required to apply online by using the website upsconline.nic.in. It is essential for the applicant to register himself/herself first at One Time Registration (OTR) platform, available on the Commission's website, and then proceed for filling up the online application for the examination. OTR has to be registered only once in life time. This can be done anytime throughout the year.

Invites online applications from eligible candidates for National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination (I) 2024.

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications : January 9, 2024.

Age Limits, Sex and Marital Status : Only unmarried male/female candidates born not earlier than 2nd July, 2005 and not later than 1st July, 2008 are eligible.

Essential Educational Qualifications :

(i) For Army Wing of National Defence Academy—12th Class pass of the 10+2 pattern of School Education or equivalent examination conducted by a State Education Board or a University.

(ii) For Air Force and Naval Wings of National Defence Academy and for the 10+2 Cadet Entry Scheme at the Indian Naval Academy—12th Class pass with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics of the 10+2 pattern of School Education or equivalent conducted by a State Education Board or a University.

Scheme of Examination : There will be a written examination based on objective type questions. For more details visit the detailed advertisement.

How to Apply : Candidates are required to apply online by using the website upsconline.nic.in. It is essential for the applicant to register himself/herself first at One Time Registration (OTR) platform, available on the Commission's website, and then proceed for filling up the online application for the examination. OTR has to be registered only once in life time. This can be done anytime throughout the year.

Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB)

Invites online applications from eligible candidates for Combined Examination 2023 for Assistant Teacher (Nursery).

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications : February 7, 2024.

How To Apply : Candidates are required to apply online using the website https://dsssbonline.nic.in.

Invites online applications from eligible candidates for recruitment to the post of Lower Division Clerk, Junior Assistant, Stenographer Grade-II, Junior Stenographer (Hindi/English), Lower Division Clerk-cum-Typist, Jr. Stenographer, Stenographer & Asstt. Grade – I.

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications : February 7, 2024.

Age Limit (As on February 7, 2024) : Between 18 to 27 years. But for some posts the upper age limit will be 30 years. Relaxation in the upper age limit will be given as per the government norms.

How to Apply : Candidates are required to apply online using the website https://dsssbonline.nic.in. Before submitting online applications, candidate must ensure that he/she is registered on DSSSB's portal *i.e.*, https://dsssbonline.nic.in.

Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board

Invites online applications from eligible candidates for recruitment to the post of constable in civil police.

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications : January 16, 2024.

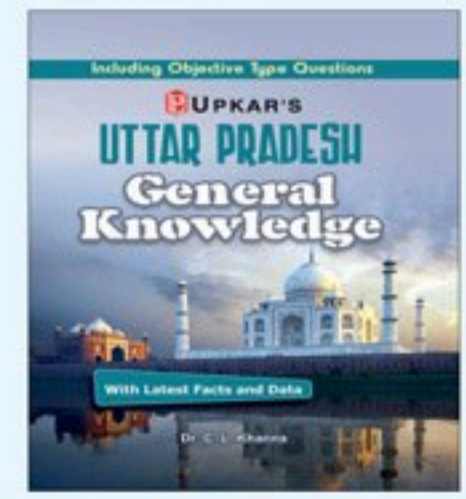
Age Limit (As on July 1, 2023) : The age of the candidates should not be less than 18 years. But the upper age limit for male candidates will be 22 years while for female candidates it will be 25 years. Relaxation in the upper age limit will be given as per the government norms.

Essential Educational Qualifications : Intermediate—

Scheme of Examination : There will be a written examination based on objective type multiple choice question carrying 300 marks. Candidates will have to clear Physical Standard Test (PST), Physical Efficiency Test (PET), medical examination prior to final selection.

How To Apply : Candidates are required to apply online using the website https://uppbpb.gov.in.

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Sports World

CRICKET

Haryana Wins Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023

Haryana on December 16, 2023 won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 after beating Rajasthan in the final by 30 runs at the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) Stadium in Rajkot. It also happened to be Haryana's maiden triumph in the history of the tournament. Rajasthan, on the other hand, finished as the runners-up for the second time after the 2006-07 edition of the championship.

Batting first Haryana set 288 runs target for Rajasthan in the final. In reply Rajasthan could score only 257 runs and lost the final by 30 runs and the coveted trophy as well.

- Ashok Menaria was the skipper of Haryana.
- Earlier, Haryana defeated Tamil Nadu in the semi-final while Rajasthan secured its place in the Vijay Hazare final with a semi-final victory over Karnataka.

India Wins Bilateral T20I Series 4-1 Against Touring Australia

Host India clinched the five match T20I series against touring Australia 4-1 by winning the fifth and final T20I by 6 runs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on December 3, 2023. Batting first India set the target of 161 before Australia but it could score only 154 runs in reply.

India beat Australia by two wickets in first T20 International of five-match series in Visakhapatnam on November 23, 2023. Batting first Australia set 209 runs target for India which achieved it on the final ball of the match at its 8 wickets cost and took 1-0 lead in the series. India took a 2-0 lead in the T20I series against Australia after handing the visitors a 44-run defeat in the second game at Thiruvananthapuram on November 26, 2023. Indian bowlers Prasidh Krishna and Ravi Bishnoi claimed three wickets each as they restricted the Australians to 191/9 as they chased a hefty target of 236 runs in the match. Glenn Maxwell's fiery unbeaten hundred carried Australia to a five-wicket win over India in the third T20I in Guwahati on November 28. With this win, Australia managed to cut India's series lead to 2-1 in the five-match rubber.

India beat Australia by 20 runs in the fourth T20I of the 5 match series on December 1, 2023 at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium in Raipur and took 3-1 unbeatable lead in the series. Host India set 175 runs target for Australia and restricted the visitors at 154 only to win the game by 20 runs. India ended the series 4-1 with 6 runs victory in the fifth T20I.

- Surya Kumar Yadav was the captain of the Indian team in the series while Matthew Wade led the Australian side as the skipper.

India-South Africa Bilateral T20I Series Ends 1-1

The three T20I India-South Africa Bilateral Series ended in a draw (1-1) as India won the third and final T20I of the series by 106 runs on December 14, 2023 at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg. Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav scored a powerful century and stitched a 112 run partnership for the third wicket with Yashasvi Jaiswal to help India set a target of 202 runs for South Africa in the third T20I. Later India bundled out South Africa for 95 runs in 13-5 overs as Kuldeep Yadav took a fifer. With this win, India leveled the three-game T20I series 1-1.

Earlier the first T20I of the series was washed out due to rain. In the second T20I host South Africa emerged winner to take the 1-0 lead in the series. But India leveled the Series 1-1 by winning the third T20I. Suryakumar Yadav led the Indian team as the captain in the Series. He was also adjudged the Player of the Series.

India Wins India-South Africa Bilateral ODI Series 2-1 in South Africa

India defeated South Africa by 78 runs in the third and final ODI of the three-match series, at the Boland Park in Paarl on December 21, 2023. The win helped India clinch the series 2-1. Chasing 297, South Africa were bowled out for 218 in 45·5 overs, despite a knock of 81 runs off 87 balls by Tony de Zorzi. Meanwhile, Arshdeep Singh took four wickets for the visitors to help India restrict host South Africa on just 218 runs.

Earlier India took 1-0 lead in the three match ODI Series by winning the first ODI by 8 wickets in Wanderers on December 17, 2023. Batting first South Africa could score only 116 runs in the match. India chased down the 117 runs target at its 2 wickets cost in just 16·5 overs. South Africa leveled the series 1-1 by winning the second ODI by 8 wickets on December 19 at the St George's Park in Gqeberha. Chasing a target of 212 runs set by India, host South Africa got it at its 2 wickets cost with 45 balls remaining and took the series to the decider in third and final ODI of the series. But India won the third ODI and sealed series 2-1. Indian skipper KL Rahul became only the second Indian captain after Virat Kohli to lead India to an ODI series win in men's cricket in South Africa. As many as 7 captains, including Rahul, have led Indian teams in ODIs in South Africa, which has been one of the toughest places to visit for touring sides.

FOOTBALL

Lionel Messi Named Time Magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023

Argentina's world cup winning football star Lionel Messi was named the Time magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023 in December 2023. The

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news comes after Messi won the 2023 Ballon d'Or for a record-extending eighth time, further elevating his status in football folklore. Messi played a key role in guiding Argentina to their first World Cup title in 36 years when they beat defending champions France in the final in December last year.

Simone Biles, LeBron James and the United States women's soccer team have won the award in recent years, with Aaron Judge of the New York Yankees winning in 2022.

Manchester City Wins Football Club World Cup 2023

Manchester City emerged champion of the Football Club World Cup 2023 as the British club trounced the Brazilian side Fluminense 4-0 in the final on December 22, 2023 in Saudi Arabia. Having already won the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup and Super Cup, the British side now boasts five trophies this calendar year, becoming the first English club to ever hold all those titles simultaneously.

HOCKEY

Punjab Wins 13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023

Punjab emerged champion of the 13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023 on November 28, 2023, beating defending champion Haryana 9-8 on the penalty shootout in the final at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium, Chennai. Both the finalists scored 2-2 in the regular time. Punjab started the match strong, scoring the first goal in the 13th minute by Harjeet Singh. However, Haryana's Sanjay (25') scored from a penalty corner to level the score. In the second half, Punjab's Captain Harmanpreet Singh (42') scored a powerful drag flick from a penalty corner to put his team in the lead. But Haryana's Rajant (50') scored again to equalize and took the game to penalty shootouts. But Punjab proved to be superior to Haryana in the penalty shootout to take the title.

- Tamil Nadu overcame Karnataka in penalty shootouts to claim the Bronze Medal and third place in the tournament.
- It was Punjab's fourth title in 13 edition of Hockey India Senior Men National Championships.

TENNIS

Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes Inducted into International Tennis Hall of Fame

Indian tennis legends Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes made history on December 14, 2023 as they became the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. This landmark achievement also makes India the 28th nation to be represented in the prestigious institution. Leander Paes, an 18-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles, has earned his place in the Player category, while Vijay Amritraj is honored in the Contributor category, evaluated every two years.

Vijay Amritraj, a successful broadcaster and promoter following his illustrious playing career, has used his platform to popularize tennis in India and across Asia. His impact was significant in the 1970s and 1980s, with notable success on the ATP circuit. A key figure in India's Davis Cup history, Amritraj led the team to its only two Finals appearances in 1974 and 1987. His role in India's boycott of the 1974 final against South Africa, protesting against apartheid, showcased his commitment to principles beyond the court.

Leander Paes, one of the greatest doubles players in history, achieved the No. 1 ranking in doubles and boasts 8 doubles titles and 10 mixed doubles titles. He represented India in various prestigious events, including the Olympics, Grand Slams, and Davis Cup, spanning three decades. Paes also clinched an Olympics Bronze in Singles in 1996.

Richard Evans, a well-known tennis journalist and historian, is inducted in the same category as Vijay Amritraj. The Class of 2024 will be officially enshrined into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday, July 20, 2024, in Newport, Rhode Island. Evans has reported on tennis since 1960, covering more than 200 Grand Slam tournaments and other events, and authored more than 20 books. He was one of the founding members of the International Tennis Writers' Association and was its president from 2001-04. Li Na, a Chinese woman who won two Grand Slam singles titles, became the first Asian member of the International Tennis Hall of Fame when she was inducted in 2019.

BILLIARDS/ SNOOKER

Vidya Pillai Wins IBSF 6-Red Snooker Women's World Championship 2023 Title

Noted cueist Vidya Pillai emerged champion of the IBSF 6-Red Snooker Women's World Championship 2023 in November 2023 in Doha as she prevailed over compatriot Anupama Ramachandran by 4-1 frames in the final. Vidya earlier defeated top seed Bai Yulu of China by 4-3 frames in semi-final round to secure her place in the final of the world snooker event. In the semifinal clash against Bai Yulu, Vidya showcased her expertise with a notable run of 33 in the second frame and an impressive clearance of 63 in the fourth.

CHESS

Vaishali Rameshbabu Becomes Chess Grandmaster; Third Indian Female to Achieve the Milestone

Indian chess player Vaishali Rameshbabu became the chess grandmaster by crossing 2,500 International Chess Federation (FIDE) ranking points at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain on December 1, 2023. Earlier having fulfilled three GM norms, Vaishali completed the one final requirement of 2500 ranking points in Spain. She is the third female player to attain the grandmaster title, besides Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli. She has now joined the company of over 80 Indian chess players who have been given this title, including legendary Vishwanathan Anand, Humpy, Dronavalli, Dibyendu Barua, Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa etc. Vaishali is also the sister of young 18-year-old chess

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Memorable Points

NATIONAL

- Who has been appointed new DG of ICFRE ? **—Kanchan Devi**
  - ☞ Kanchan Devi, a 1991 batch Indian Forest Service officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, was appointed as the director general of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) Dehradun on December 3, 2023. She is the first lady IFS officer to hold this prestigious position. Devi has more than 30 years of professional experience in different areas of forestry, including forest management, forest administration, education, HRD and research and extension in the state of Madhya Pradesh and Government of India including as a faculty member at Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun. ICFRE operates under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.
- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated world's largest meditation centre in **—Varanasi**
  - ☞ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 18, 2023 inaugurated the world's largest meditation centre Swarved Mahamandir in Varanasi. Verses of the Swarved have been carved upon the walls of the Mahamandir—a seven-floor superstructure. Situated in the Umaraha area, approximately 12 km from the Varanasi city centre, the Swarved Mahamandir covers an expansive area of 3,00,000 square feet. The temple boasts a stunning design with 125-petal lotus domes and an impressive 20,000-seating capacity, making it one of the largest meditation centers in the world.
- Who has been named PETA India Person of the Year 2023 ? **—Dia Mirza**
  - ☞ Bollywood actress Dia Mirza was on December 13, 2023 named 'Person of the Year 2023' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India. The animal rights non-profit organization conferred the title upon the actress to recognize her commitment to ending the use of animals for circuses' and more. Mirza had joined PETA India's campaign to end the killing of reptiles and other wild animals for their skins. Former recipients of the PETA India Person of the Year Award include former Supreme Court Justice KS Panicker Radhakrishnan, cricketer Virat Kohli, comedian Kapil Sharma, and actors Alia Bhatt, John Abraham, Anushka Sharma, Sunny Leone, Sonakshi Sinha, R Madhavan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Hema Malini, and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja.
- Which City was declared the Safest City in India by NCRB this year ? **—Kolkata**
  - ☞ The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released its annual report on crime in India for the year 2022 in December 2023 and Kolkata has emerged as the safest city in India for the third consecutive year. Kolkata was adjudged the safest city in the country by NCRB as it recorded the least number of cognizable offenses per lakh population among all the metropolises in India. According to the NCRB's annual report for the year 2022, Kolkata reported 86·5 cases of cognizable offenses per lakh population, a remarkable feat that places it ahead of Pune (280·7 cases) and Hyderabad (299·2). Cognisable crimes are those for which cases are registered under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and SLL (Special and Local Laws).
- Which Bank has been named Bank of the Year in India for 2023 ? **—Federal Bank**
  - ☞ Federal Bank, a leading financial institution, was on December 7, 2023 recognized as 'Bank of the Year (India)' for 2023 by Financial Times owned The Banker, one of the only three global awards that considers the work of banks spanning 120 countries. This prestigious recognition is a testament to the Bank's unwavering commitment to innovation, customer-centric services, and its outstanding contributions to the banking industry over the past year.
- What is India's rank in the Climate Change Performance Index 2024 ? **—7th rank**
  - ☞ India has ranked 7th in the 2024 Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released in Dubai during the global climate talks COP28 on December 8, 2023. According to a report released during the global climate conference (COP-28) in Dubai, India maintained its top 10 position for the fifth year in a row. India's past performance in the CCPI ranking shows significant improvement from 31st rank in 2014 to seventh in 2023. The Index evaluates the climate mitigation efforts of 63 countries and the European Union, covering over 90 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Who has been honoured with the 6th Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize ? **—Sukrita Paul Kumar**
  - ☞ Poet-critic Sukirta Paul Kumar was on December 18, 2023 honoured with the 6th Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for her book, 'Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems'. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding literary work from around the globe, promoting world peace, literature, art, education, and human rights. She received a cash prize of USD 5,000, a Tagore statue, and a certificate acknowledging her significant contribution to literature. In recognition of his exceptional contributions to social welfare, Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee was awarded the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for Social Achievement. Founded in 2018 by US-based publisher Peter Bundalo, the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize has established itself as a valuable platform for celebrating literary excellence and championing human rights and world peace.
- Who became the third female Chess Grandmaster of India ? **—Vaishali Rameshbabu**
  - ☞ Indian chess player Vaishali Rameshbabu became the chess grandmaster by crossing 2,500 International Chess Federation (FIDE) ranking points at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain on December 1, 2023. Earlier having fulfilled three GM norms, Vaishali completed the one final requirement of 2500 ranking points in Spain. She is the third female player to attain the

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grandmaster title, besides Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli in India. She has now joined the company of over 80 Indian chess players who have been given this title, including legendary Vishwanathan Anand, Humpy, Dronavalli, Dibyendu Barua, Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa etc. Vaishali is also the sister of young 18-year-old chess sensation Praggnanandhaa, making them the first-ever grandmaster siblings pair in the game's history.

- Which team won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 ? **—Haryana**

  ☞ Haryana on December 16, 2023 won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 after beating Rajasthan in the final by 30 runs at the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) Stadium in Rajkot. It also happened to be Haryana's maiden triumph in the history of the tournament. Rajasthan, on the other hand, finished as the runners-up for the second time after the 2006-07 edition of the championship. Batting first Haryana set 288 runs target for Rajasthan in the final. In reply Rajasthan could score only 257 runs and lost the final by 30 runs and the coveted trophy as well.

INTERNATIONAL

- Who became the new Prime Minister of Poland ? **—Donald Tusk**

  ☞ Pro-EU leader Donald Tusk was on December 13, 2023 sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Poland after Members of the Polish Parliament backed Donald Tusk to become Poland's Prime Minister in a vote after current leader Mateusz Morawiecki lost a confidence vote in the country's Parliament on December 11. Tusk got 248 votes in support while 201 went against him. Tusk's election put an end to eight years of right-wing populist rule. He had previously served as Polish Prime Minister in 2007-2014.

- Which Indian social activist has been named as International anti-corruption champion by the US government ? **—Nikhil Dey**

  ☞ Nikhil Dey, an Indian social activist, was in December 2023 named as the International Anti-Corruption Champion for 2023 by the US State Department. He has been acknowledged for his noteworthy support of social movements that oppose corruption in government welfare programs in India by encouraging transparency and accountability, public audits, and participatory democracy. Dey's efforts as a co-founder of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) contributed to anti-corruption and transparency reforms in India, assisting the state of Rajasthan in establishing public policies that promote accountability and transparency. Apart from Nikhil, 10 others have been declared the International anti-corruption champions.

- Who has been named Time magazine's CEO of the Year 2023 ? **—Sam Altman**

  ☞ Sam Altman was on December 6, 2023 named the 'CEO of the Year' for 2023 by Time magazine for his contributions to the tech industry. The award underscores Altman's significant contributions as the CEO of OpenAI, a prominent research company specializing in artificial intelligence. It pointed out that ChatGPT gathered over 1 million users within 5 days of being launched in November 2022. It currently has 100 million users, a benchmark that Facebook reached in 4·5 years.

- Who has been named Time magazine's Person of The Year 2023 ? **—Taylor Swift**

  ☞ American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift was named Time's Person of the Year for 2023 in December 2023, making her the first woman to appear twice on a Person of the Year cover since the franchise began in 1927. Swift was also named Person of the Year in 2017. She is the first person to be selected because of her achievement in the arts, and is only the fourth individual selection who was born in the last 50 years. As the first woman to be recognized more than once, Swift joins a small group of repeat designees, alongside several US Presidents and world leaders.

- Who has been crowned Miss India-USA 2023 ? **—Rijul Maini**

  ☞ Rijul Maini, a medical student from Michigan,was crowned Miss India USA 2023 at the annual pageant held in New Jersey on December 12, 2023. Greeshma Bhat of Virginia was declared first runner-up and Ishita Pai Raikar of North Carolina was the second runner-up. The title of Miss Teen India USA was awarded to Saloni Rammohan of Pennsylvania, while Mrs India USA was won by Sneha Nambiar of Massachusetts.

- Who were honoured with the UN Global Climate Action Awards 2023 ? **—Michelle Zárate Palomec of Mexico and Sebastian Mwaura of Kenya**

  ☞ Michelle Zárate Palomec of Mexico and Sebastian Mwaura of Kenya were on December 8, 2023 honoured with the UN Global Climate Action Awards 2023 during the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai for their outstanding efforts to make their communities more sustainable, resilient and equitable places to live. Zárate Palomec, age 27, leads efforts within an organization called Espacio de Encuentro de las Culturas Originarias to provide access to clean and sufficient water for highly marginalized indigenous communities in the state of Oaxaca. Mwaura, age 35, is the co-founder of Yna Kenya, whose primary objective is to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles by providing a robust charging network that is powered by renewable energy sources.

- Which two Indian legends were inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame this year ? **—Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes**

  ☞ Indian tennis legends Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes made history on December 14, 2023 as they became the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. This landmark achievement also makes India the 28th nation to be represented in the prestigious institution. Leander Paes, an 18-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles, has earned his place in the player category, while Vijay Amritraj is honored in the Contributor category, evaluated every two years. Richard Evans, a well-known tennis journalist and historian, is inducted in the same category as Vijay Amritraj. The class of 2024 will be officially enshrined into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on July 20, 2024, in Newport, Rhode Island.

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Economic Scenario

- *Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2023*
- *Cabinet Approves Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan*
- *Cabinet Approves Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission*
- *Cabinet Approves Central Sector Scheme for Providing Drones to the Women Self-help Groups*
- *GDP Growth Rate in Q2 of FY 2023-24 Remained at 7·6%*
- *Pact to Tripling Global Renewable Energy Capacity by 2030*
- *Tap Water Supply Reaches 13·69 crore (71%) Rural Households*
- *Production of Bio-CNG*
- *Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar Project*
- *Fifth Monetary Policy of the Financial Year 2023-24*
- *Italy Leaves from China's Belt and Road Initiative Project*
- *Contribution of MSMEs to the Country's GDP*
- *Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme*
- *Foreign Tourists Arrival in India*

Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2023

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Shri Parshottam Rupala released the Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2023 (milk, egg, meat and wool production 2022-23) based on Animal Integrated Sample Survey (March 2022-February 2023) during the National Milk Day event at Guwahati on November 28, 2023. The main features of the Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics are :

Milk, Egg, Meat and Wool Production 2022-23

Production of Milk, Egg, Meat and wool in the country is estimated annually based on the results of Integrated Sample Survey (ISS) which is conducted across the country in three seasons *i.e.*, Summer (March-June), Rainy (July-October) and Winter (November-February). The estimates of milk, egg, meat and wool for the year 2022-23 have been brought out and the outcomes of this survey are summarised below :

Milk Production : Total Milk production in the country is estimated as 230·58 million tonnes during 2022-23 registered a growth of 22·81% over the past 5 years which was 187·75 million tonnes in 2018-19. Further, the production has increased by 3·83% during 2022-23 over the estimates of 2021-22. In past, the annual growth rates were 6·47% in 2018-19; 5·69% in 2019-20; 5·81% in 2020-21 and 5·77% in 2021-22.

Highest milk producing State during 2022-23 was Uttar Pradesh with a share of 15·72% of total milk production followed by Rajasthan (14·44%), Madhya Pradesh (8·73%), Gujarat (7·49%), and Andhra Pradesh (6·70%). In terms of annual growth rate (AGR), the highest AGR recorded by Karnataka (8·76%) followed by West Bengal (8·65%) and Uttar Pradesh (6·99%) over the previous year.

Egg Production : Total Egg production in the country has estimated as 138·38 billion nos. during 2022-23 registered a growth of 33·31% growth over the past 5 years as compared to the estimates of 103·80 billion numbers during 2018-19. Further, the production has increased annually by 6·77% during 2022-23 over 2021-22. In past the annual growth rate was 9·02% in 2018-19; 10·19% in 2019-20; 6·70% in 2020-21 and 6·19% in 2021-22.

Major contribution in the total Egg production comes from Andhra Pradesh with a share of 20·13% of total Egg production followed by Tamil Nadu (15·58%), Telangana (12·77%), West Bengal (9·94%) and Karnataka (6·51%). In terms of AGR, the highest growth rate was recorded by West Bengal (20·10%) and followed by Sikkim (18·93%) and Uttar Pradesh (12·80%).

Meat Production : Total Meat production in the country is estimated as 9·77 million tonnes during 2022-23 registered a growth of 20·39% over the past 5 years as compared to the estimates of 8·11 million tonnes in 2018-19. Further, the production was increased by 5·13% in 2022-23 over 2021-22. In the past the growth rate was 5·99% in 2018-19; 5·98% in 2019-20; 2·30% in 2020-21 and 5·62% in 2021-22.

Major contribution in the total meat production comes from Uttar Pradesh with 12·20% share and followed by West Bengal (11·93%), Maharashtra (11·50%), Andhra Pradesh (11·20%) and Telangana (11·06%). In terms of annual growth rate, the highest Annual Growth Rate (AGR) has recorded in Sikkim (63·08%) followed by Meghalaya (38·34%) and Goa (22·98%).

Wool Production : Wool production in the country is estimated as 33·61 million kg during 2022-23 registered a negative growth of 16·84% over the past 5 years as compared to the estimates of 40·42 million kg

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during 2018-19. However, the production has increased by 2·12% in 2022-23 over 2021-22. In past the growth rates were – 2·51% in 2018-19; – 9·05% in 2019-20, – 0·46% in 2020-21 and – 10·87% in 2021-22.

Rajasthan with a share of 47·98% followed by Jammu & Major contribution in the total Wool production comes from Kashmir (22·55%), Gujarat (6·01%), Maharashtra (4·73%) and Himachal Pradesh (4·27%). In terms of annual growth rate, the highest AGR has recorded by Arunachal Pradesh (35·75%) followed by Rajasthan (6·06%) and Jharkhand (2·36%).

Cabinet Approves Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan

The Union Cabinet on November 29, 2023 has approved Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) with total outlay of ₹ 24,104 crore (Central Share : ₹ 15,336 crore and State Share: ₹ 8,768 crore) to focus on 11 critical interventions through 9 line Ministries. The Prime Minister announced the Abhiyan on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas from Khunti.

As announced in the Budget Speech 2023-24, "to improve socio-economic conditions of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Pradhan Mantri PVTG of Development Mission will be launched. This will saturate PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. An amount of ₹ 15,000 crore will be made available to implement the Mission in the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes (DAPST)."

India has ST population of 10-45 crore as per 2011 census, out of which 75 communities located in 18 States and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). These PVTGs continue to face vulnerability in social, economic and educational fields.

S.No.	Activity	No. of Beneficiary / Targets	Cost norms
1	Provision of pucca houses	4·90 lakh	₹ 2·39 lakhs /house
2	Connecting roads	8000 KM	₹ 1·00 crore/km
3a	Piped Water Supply/	All PVTG habitations including 4·90 lakhs HHs to be constructed under the mission	As per schematic norms
3b	Community water supply	2500 Villages/habitations with population of less than 20 HHs	As per actual cost arrived
4	Mobile Medical Units with medicine cost	1000 (10/district)	₹ 33·88·00 lakhs/MMU
5a	Construction of hostels	500	₹ 2·75 crore/hostel
5b	Vocational education & skilling	60 Aspirational PVTG blocks	₹ 50 lakhs/block
6	Construction of Anganwadi Centers	2500	₹ 12 lakhs/AWC
7	Construction of Multi-purpose Centers (MPC)	1000	₹ 60 lakhs/MPC Provision of ANM and Anganwadi worker in each MPC
8a	Energization of HHs (Last mile connectivity)	57000 HHs	₹ 22,500/HH
8b	Provision of 0·3 KW solar off-grid system	100000 HHs	₹ 50,000/HH or as per actual cost
9	Solar lighting in streets & MPCs	1500 units	₹ 1,00,000/unit
10	Setting up of VDVKs	500	₹ 15 lakhs/VDVK
11	Installation of mobile towers	3000 villages	As per schematic norms cost

The PM-JANMAN (comprising Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes) to focus on 11 critical interventions through 9 Ministries including Ministry of Tribal Affairs which are as follows :

Other than the interventions mentioned above, the following intervention of other Ministries will be part of Mission :

1. Ministry of Ayush will set up Ayush Wellness Centre as per existing norms and Ayush facilities will be extended to PVTG habitations through Mobile Medical Units.
2. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will facilitate skill and vocational training in PVTG habitations, Multi-purpose centres and hostels as per the suitable skills of these communities.

Cabinet Approves Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission

The Union Cabinet on November 29, 2023 has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission.

The Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission will be notified in due course of time. The 16th Finance Commission's recommendations, upon the acceptance by the government, would cover the period of five (5) years commencing April 1, 2026.

Article 280(1) of the Constitutions lays down that the modalities for setting up of a Finance Commission to make recommendation on the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Union and the States, allocation between the States of respective shares of such proceeds; grants-in-aid and the revenues of the States and measures needed to sup-

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plement the resources of the Panchayats during the award period.

The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on November 27, 2017. It made recommendations covering the period of six years commencing on 1st April, 2020 through its Interim and Final Reports. The recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission are valid upto the financial year 2025-26.

Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission

The Finance Commission shall make recommendations as to the following matters, namely :

1. The distribution between the Union and the States of the net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them under Chapter I, Part XII of the Constitution and the allocation between the States of the respective shares of such proceeds;
2. The principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to the States by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues under article 275 of the Constitution for the purposes other than those specified in the provisos to clause (1) of that article; and
3. The measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State.

The Commission may review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives, with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005), and make appropriate recommendations thereon.

The Commission shall make its report available by 31st day of October, 2025 covering a period of five years commencing on the 1st day of April, 2026.

Background

The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 27.11.2017 for making recommendations for a five-year period of 2020-21 to 2024-25. On 29.11.2019, the ToR of the 15th FC was amended requiring the Commission to submit two reports, namely a first report for financial year 2020-21 and a final report for an extended period of 2021-22 to 2025-26. As a result, the 15th FC made its recommendations for a six-year period from 2020-21 to 2025-26.

The Advance Cell of the 16th FC was formed in Ministry of Finance on 21.11.2022, to oversee preliminary work, pending formal Constitution of the Commission.

Cabinet Approves Central Sector Scheme for Providing Drones to the Women Self-Help Groups

The Union Cabinet on November 29, 2023 has approved Central Sector Scheme for providing Drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), with an outlay of ₹ 1261 Crore for the period from 2024-25 to 2025-26.

The scheme aims to provide drones to 15,000 selected women SHGs during the period 2023-24 to 2025-26 for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purpose.

The highlights of this scheme are as under :

1. The scheme approves holistic interventions by converging the resources and efforts of Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW), Department of Rural development (DoRD) and Department of Fertilizers (DoF), Women SHGs and Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs).
2. Appropriate clusters where usage of Drones is economically feasible will be identified and progressive 15,000 women SHGs in various States in the identified clusters will be selected for providing drones.
3. Central Financial Assistance @ 80% of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges up to a maximum of ₹ 8 Lakh will be provided to the women SHGs for purchase of drones. The Cluster Level Federation (CLFs) of SHGs may raise the balance amount (total cost of procurement minus subsidy) as loan under National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF). Interest subvention @ 3% on the AIF loan will be provided.
4. One of the members of the women SHGs who is well qualified, 18 and above years of age will be elected by the SRLM and LFCs for 15 day training comprising of 5 day mandatory drone pilot training and additional 10 day training for agriculture purpose of nutrient and pesticide application. The other member / family member of the SHG with inclination to take up repairs of electrical goods, fitting and mechanical works will be selected by the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) and LFCs who will be trained as drone technician/assistant. These training shall be provided as a package along with the supply of drones.
5. Considering the difficulties which SHGs may face in procuring the drones, repair and maintenance of drones through drone companies, the LFCs will act as a bridge between drone supplier companies and SHGs.
6. LFCs will also promote use of Nano Fertilizers such as Nano Urea and Nano DAP by the drones with SHGs. SHGs will rent out the drone services to the farmers for Nano fertilizer and also for pesticide applications.

It is envisaged that the approved initiatives under the scheme will provide sustainable business and livelihood support to 15,000 SHGs and they would be able to earn additional income of at least ₹ 1 lakh per annum.

GDP Growth Rate in Q2 of FY 2023-24 Remained at 7·6%

The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on November 30, 2023 released the estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the July-September quarter (Q2) of 2023-24, both at Constant (2011-12) and Current Prices.

- Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q2 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of ₹ 41·74 lakh crore, as against

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₹ 38·78 lakh crore in Q2 2022-23, showing a growth of 7·6 per cent as compared to 6·2 percent in Q2 2022-23.

- Nominal GDP or GDP at Current Prices in Q2 2023-24 is estimated at ₹ 71·66 lakh crore, as against ₹ 65·67 lakh crore in Q2 2022-23, showing a growth of 9·1 per cent as compared to 17·2 per cent in Q2 2022-23.
- GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in April-September 2023-24 (H1 2023-24) is estimated at ₹ 82·11 lakh crore as against ₹ 76·22 lakh crore during the corresponding period of previous year, showing a growth of 7·7 per cent in H1 2023-24 as against 9·5 per cent in H1 2022-23. GDP at Current Prices in H1 2023-24 is estimated at ₹ 142·33 lakh crore as against ₹ 131·09 lakh crore during the corresponding period of previous year, showing a growth of 8·6 per cent in H1 2023-24 as against 22·2 in H1 2022-23.
- Agriculture and services have slowed down. Uneven movement of monsoon could be responsible for the slowdown in the farm sector.
- The below par growth in the agriculture sector implies that the rural demand is under stress which is preventing the consumption demand to be broad-based. The growth of the trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting (4·3 per cent y-o-y) and financial services (6 per cent y-o-y) pulled down the services sector growth to a six-quarter low in 2QFY24.

Pact to Tripling Global Renewable Energy Capacity by 2030

At the COP28 climate negotiations in Dubai on December 2, 2023, 118 countries signed a pledge to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030. Though, this is a global pact, it is seen as a victory for India, which championed the idea through its G-20 presidency.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), tripling the world's renewable energy capacity means raising it from around 3,400 GW at present to over 11,000 GW by 2030 about 1,000 GW a year. In 2022, the world added about 300 GW of renewable energy capacity.

At Cop28 22 Countries Signed a Deal to Triple Nuclear Energy Capacity by 2050

At COP28 negotiations 22 countries signed a declaration to triple nuclear energy capacity on December 2, 2023. Global nuclear capacity now stands at 370 GW, in 31 countries.

Those that signed the declaration are the United States, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ghana, Hungary, Japan, Republic of Korea, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom.

In the text, there was a hint at 'small modular reactors', which India is also keen on. On this, the declaration text says, "new nuclear technologies could occupy a small land footprint and can be sited where needed, partner well with renewable energy sources, and have additional flexibilities that support decarbonisation beyond the power sector, including hard-to-abate industrial sectors."

Tap Water Supply Reaches 13·69 crore (71%) Rural Households

To enable every rural household in the country, to have assured potable water, in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on regular and long-term basis, through tap water connection by 2024, since August, 2019, Government of India in partnership with States, is implementing **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) - Har Ghar Jal.**

To achieve the objective of the mission, following components have been envisaged under JJM :

1. Development of in-village piped water supply infrastructure to provide tap water connection to every rural household.
2. Development of reliable drinking water sources and/ or augmentation of existing sources to provide long-term sustainability to water supply system.
3. Bulk water transfer, treatment plants and distribution network.
4. Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue.
5. Retrofitting of completed and ongoing schemes to provide FHTCs at minimum service level of 55 lpcd.
6. Grey water management-treatment and reuse; and
7. Support activities and capacity building of communities.

At the time of announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission on 15th August, 2019, 3·23 crore (17%) rural households were reported to have tap water connections. So far, as reported by States/UTs as on 29.11.2023, around 10·46 crore additional rural households have been provided with tap water connections. Thus, as on 29.11.2023, out of 19·24 crore rural households in the country, around 13·69 crore (71%) households are reported to have tap water supply in their homes. State/UT-wise details of tap water connections as on 30.9.2023 and as on 29.11.2023 .

9 States/ UTs Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Telangana, A&N Islands, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu and Puducherry had reported that they had provided tap water connection to all rural households in the respective state/UT as on 30.09.2023.

Production of Bio-CNG

Government has taken various measures, including incentivisation and supporting research and development, to promote production of Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) from different feedstock, including agricultural and municipal waste, and its use in transportation sector. These measures, inter-alia, include :

1. Central financial assistance for setting up of plants for generation of Biogas/Bio-CNG from urban, industrial and agricultural waste.
2. Concession on custom duty for import of machinery and components required for initial setting up of projects for generation of Power and Bio-CNG.
3. Additional Central Assistance for Municipal Solid Wastes (MSW) based CBG plants under Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2·0.

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4. Remunerative CBG procurement price and indexing the same with CBG Retail Selling Price (RSP).
5. Policy guidelines for co-mingling of CBG with Natural Gas in CGD network for improving offtake.
6. Approval of scheme to provide financial assistance to CBG producers for the procurement of biomass aggregation equipment.
7. Introduction of phase wise mandatory blending of CBG in CNG (Transport) & PNG (Domestic) segments of CGD sector from FY 2025-26.
8. Inclusion of CBG projects under Priority Sector Lending.
9. Inclusion of CBG projects under 'White Category' by CPCB on case to case basis.
10. Market Development Assistance @ ₹ 1500/MT on Fermented Organic Manure produced from CBG projects.
11. Support for procurement of biomass aggregation machinery under crop residue management scheme and submission on agricultural mechanization.
12. Permission for usage of bio-compressed natural gas (bio-CNG) for motor vehicles as an alternate composition of the compressed natural gas (CNG).
13. Exemption of excise duty on amount of GST-paid on compressed bio gas contained in the blended CNG.
14. Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme to develop indigenous technologies and manufacturing for widespread applications of new and renewable energy.
15. Capacity building by National Institute of Bio Energy (NIBE), Kapurthala through M. Tech program on Renewable Energy in joint collaboration with NIT Jalandhar.

Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar Project

The Government of India has decided to map and document all villages under Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Programme. This National Mission on Cultural Mapping is conducted in coordination with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture. A web portal on MGMD was launched on 27th July, 2023. The MGMD seeks to compile comprehensive information detailing the life, history, and ethos of Indian villages and to make the same available to virtual and real-time visitors. Under the MGMD, information is collected under seven broad categories as given below :

- Arts and Crafts Village
- Ecologically Oriented Village
- Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India
- Epic Village linked with Ramayana, Mahabharata and/or Puranic legends and oral epics
- Historical Village linked with Local and National History
- Architectural Heritage Village

Fifth Monetary Policy of the Financial Year 2023-24

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das unveiled the fifth monetary policy of the financial year 2023-24 on December 8, 2023 after a two-day review, amid strong macroeconomic fundamentals and resilient domestic markets. Key features of the Monetary Policy are following :

- Repo rate unchanged at 6·5 per cent.
- The MPC maintained the policy stance of 'withdrawal of accommodation' by the majority of 5 out of 6 members.
- UPI transaction limit for specific categories such as payments to hospitals and educational institutions has been enhanced from the current ₹ 1 lakh to ₹ 5 lakh.
- Limits for e-Mandates for making payments of a recurring nature have been raised to ₹ 1 lakh for mutual fund subscriptions, insurance premium subscriptions, and credit card repayments.
- RBI have decided to allow reversal of liquidity facilities under both Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) even during weekends and holidays with effect from December 30, 2023.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is projected at 5·4% for 2023-24, with Q3 at 5·6% and Q4 at 5·2%. CPI inflation for Q1 : 2024-25 is projected at 5·2%; Q2 at 4·0%; and Q3 at 4·7%.
- The real GDP growth for 2023-24 is projected at 7% from 6.5% earlier. Q3FY24 GDP growth forecast is projected at 6·5% against the estimate of 6% earlier. Q4FY24 GDP growth forecast is projected at 6% against the earlier estimate of 5·7%. Real GDP growth for Q1 : 2024-25 is projected at 6·7%; Q2 at 6·5%; and Q3 at 6·4%.

Key Rates and Ratios (As on December 8, 2023)

Rate/Ratio	In %
Repo Rate	6·50
Standing Deposit Facility Rate	6·25
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	6·75
Bank Rate	6·75
Reverse Repo Rate	3·35
Cash Reserve Ratio	4·50
Statutory Liquidity Ratio	18·0

Italy Leaves from China's Belt and Road Initiative Project

Italy has withdrawn from China's vast Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, more than four years after becoming the only G7 nation to sign up. Italy, a member of the European Union, the G7 grouping of advanced economies and NATO, signed up in 2019 under the government of then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.

The non-binding memorandum of understanding struck with China contained broad undertakings for cooperation in logistics, infrastructure, financial and environmental sectors.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has long been opposed to Italy's participation in an initiative viewed by many as an attempt by Beijing to buy political influence and whose benefits to Rome were limited. The deal was due to automatically renew in March 2024 unless Italy opted out by the end of this year.

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Statewise Primary Level Cooperative Societies, as per the National Cooperative Database with their Membership

(As on dated : 24.11.2023)

S.No	State/UT	Total no. Cooperatives	Total no. of Members
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	2204	144470
2	Andhra Pradesh	17659	9592641
3	Arunachal Pradesh	1166	87549
4	Assam	11075	4322019
5	Bihar	26640	16012043
6	Chandigarh	476	49721
7	Chhattisgarh	8971	4750760
8	Delhi	5943	1569276
9	Goa	5439	1578444
10	Gujarat	80992	16823572
11	Haryana	32384	5460788
12	Himachal Pradesh	5095	1825071
13	Jammu & Kashmir	8608	893241
14	Jharkhand	11407	2092444
15	Karnataka	44024	33317652
16	Kerala	6103	27325326
17	Ladakh	267	27138
18	Lakshadweep	35	84393
19	Madhya Pradesh	51702	13422641
20	Maharashtra	222158	58014708
21	Manipur	5580	471887
22	Meghalaya	2647	239822
23	Mizoram	1224	49365
24	Nagaland	8118	310933
25	Odisha	6606	8645178
26	Puducherry	457	463777
27	Punjab	19032	3416779
28	Rajasthan	36816	11638406
29	Sikkim	3789	116097
30	Tamil Nadu	21219	23490179
31	Telangana	60122	14299542
32	The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	529	46622
33	Tripura	3142	511878
34	Uttar Pradesh	43439	18474836
35	Uttarakhand	5288	1601208
36	West Bengal	31191	9590131
	Total	**791547**	**290760537**

Sr. No.	Types of Cooperative Society	Total No. Cooperative Societies
1	Primary Cooperative	791547
2	Block/Taluka/Mandal Federation	242
3	Regional Federation	42
4	District Federation	357
5	State Federation	164
6	National Federation*	19
7	Multistate Cooperative	1585
8	State Cooperative Banks	32
9	District Cooperative Banks	338
10	Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDB)	526
11	State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (SCARDB)	14
	Total	**794866**

PD/February/2024/46

China's Game Plan

- 150 countries stretching from Uruguay to Sri Lanka have signed up to the initiative, a central pillar of President Xi Jinping's bid to expand China's clout overseas.
- China has inked over two trillion dollars in contracts around the world, from high-speed rail tracks crisscrossing South East Asia and massive transport, energy and infrastructure works through Central Asia.

Contribution of MSMEs to the Country's GDP

As per the latest information received from Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in all India Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the share of MSME manufacturing GVA in all India Manufacturing GVA are as follows :

Share of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises' GVA (%) in

Year	All India Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	All India Manufacturing GVA
2019-20	30·48%	40·67%
2020-21	27·24%	40·30%
2021-22	29·15%	40·83%

As per the information culled out from the Data Dissemination Portal of Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS), the share of export of MSME specified products in all India exports are as follows :

% Share of Export of MSME Related Products in Total Exports

Year	% Share
2019-20	49·77%
2020-21	49·35%
2021-22	45·03%
2022-23	43·59%
2023-24*	45·56%

* upto September 2023.

As on 6.12.2023, the total employment recorded on the Udyam Registration Portal (since inception 1.7.2020 to 6.12.2023) is 15·50 crore.

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The Expert Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, constituted by Reserve Bank of India in December, 2018 has estimated the overall credit gap in the MSME sector to be in the range of ₹ 20 to ₹ 25 trillion. The Government has taken various measures including ongoing schemes to ensure sufficient financial accessibility and seamless credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Some of these include the following :

- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) which is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment;
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojna (PMMY) for providing loans up to ₹ 10 lakh, to non-corporate, non-farm micro/small enterprises;
- Strengthen credit delivery system and to facilitate the flow of credit to the Micro and Small Enterprise sector without the hassles of collateral and third party guarantee, up to a maximum of ₹ 5 crore through Credit Guarantee Scheme;
- ₹ 50,000 crore equity infusion through Self Reliant India (SRI) Fund;
- Launch of Udyam Assist Platform on 11.1.2023 to bring Informal Micro Enterprises (IMEs) under the formal ambit of MSME for availing the benefits under Priority Sector Lending;
- Inclusion of Retail and Wholesale traders as MSMEs for the purpose of availing Priority Sector Lending benefits, w.e.f. 02.07.2021;
- Non-tax benefits extended for 3 years in case of an upward change in status of MSMEs;
- Trade Receivable Discounting System (TReDS) to facilitate the financing of trade receivables of MSMEs from corporate and other buyers including government departments and public-sector undertakings (PSUs) through multiple financiers electronically
- ₹ 5 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), for businesses, including MSMEs was announced during the COVID-19 pandemic to fulfil the credit gap in MSMEs. The scheme was in operation till 31.03.2023.

Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on December 11, 2023 has launched the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme. This national forest certification scheme offers voluntary third-party certification designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country. The scheme includes

I. Forest management certification,
II. Tree outside forest management certification, and
III. Chain of custody certification.

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme can provide market incentives to various entities that adhere to responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations. This includes state forest departments, individual farmers, or Farmer Producer Organizations engaged in agroforestry and farm forestry, as well as other wood-based industries in the value chain.

The Forest Management certification is based on the Indian Forest Management Standard, consisting of 8 criteria, 69 indicators and 254 verifiers, which is an integral part of the National Working Plan Code 2023, launched earlier this year. A separate Trees Outside Forests Standard, is now introduced as a part of the newly launched Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.

The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme, will be overseen by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council, which will act as a multistakeholder advisory body. The Council is represented by members from eminent institutions such as Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Forest Survey of India, Quality Council of India, Indian Institute of Forest Management including representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State Forest Departments, Forest Development Corporations, and representatives from wood-based industries.

Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal will act as the scheme operating agency and will be responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.

Foreign Tourists Arrival in India

Ministry of Tourism promotes India as a holistic destination in the tourism generating markets to promote various Indian tourism products and tourism destinations of the country to increase India's share of the global tourism market.

The above objectives are met through an integrated marketing and promotional strategy, and a synergized campaign in association with the Travel Trade, State Governments and Indian Missions. The Government continuously engages with industry experts and other relevant stakeholders and take their suggestions and feedback for promotion of varied tourism products of India. In order to boost visitor arrival, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has declared "Incredible India! Visit India Year 2023".

In order to increase the footfall of international tourists in India, Ministry of Tourism, participated in various International travel fairs during the Year 2023 such as FITUR 2023, Madrid, Spain (18-22 January, 2023); ITB Berlin (7-9 March, 2023); Arabian Travel Market 2023, Dubai (1-4 May, 2023); IMEX Frankfurt (17-19 October, 2023); OTDYKH Leisure, Moscow, Russia (12-14, September, 2023); TOP Resa, Paris, France (3-5 October, 2023); PATA Travel Mart 2023 (4-6 October, 2023) in New Delhi; ITB, Asia, Singapore (25-27 October, 2023); JATA, Osaka, Japan (26-29 October, 2023); WTM London (6-8 November, 2023).

Foreign Tourists Arrival (FTAs)

Year	FTAs in India (in million)
2019	10·93
2020	2·74
2021	1·52
2022	6·44
2023 (Jan.–Sept.)	6·43

Foreign Exchange Earning (FEEs)

Year	Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) (in crore)
2019	216467
2020	50136
2021	65070
2022	139935
2023 (Jan.–Sept.)	1,66,660

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Environment, Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change Round-up

Climate Change Performance Index 2024

The current IPCC synthesis report is clear : global emissions must peak by 2025 to keep the 1·5°C goal in reach. Moreover, emissions must be halved by 2030 (vs. 2020) levels. Despite the urgent need to decarbonise all sectors, global greenhouse gases increased in 2022 and atmospheric CO_2 is now 50% higher than pre-industrial levels. Collectively, the countries the CCPI covered are responsible for more than 90% of all GHG emissions.

CCPI
Climate Change Performance Index 24

Rankings are based on each country's overall score. This is calculated from the individual scores in four categories, consisting of 14 indicators. Click on a country name for greater detail. No country performs well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating. The first three overall positions therefore remain empty.

The results show that, even if all countries were as committed as the current frontrunners, efforts would still be insufficient to prevent hazardous climate change. The countries with high rankings also have no reason to ease up. Even greater efforts and actions by governments are needed to set the world on track to keep global warming well below a 2°C increase. Top 10 countries are listed in the table :

Key Results :

The table on the right details the performance of all countries surveyed in the CCPI in the four indicators comprising the GHG Emissions category :

- Philippines, Sweden, and Chile are at the top, receiving a high rating in this category.
- United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are the worst-performing countries.
- Seven G20 countries are among the very low performers, including the United States, Canada, the Republic of Korea, and China. Most G20 countries receive a low or very low rating. Saudi Arabia remains the worst-performing G20 country.
- The EU rates medium for its overall performance, but it drops three ranks to 29. Sweden is the best-performing EU country, at 5th, though Luxembourg, Romania, Denmark, and Portugal rate high. For the first time, no EU country receives a very low rating in this category—the Czech Republic and Ireland are the worst performers.

G20 Performance

- With India (7th), Germany (14th), and the EU (16th), only three G20 countries/regions are among the high performers in CCPI 2024. Fifteen G20 countries receive an overall low or very low. The G20 is particularly responsible for climate mitigation, as its members account for more than 75% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Canada, Russia, the Republic of Korea, and Saudi Arabia are still the G20's worst-performing countries.

EU Performance

- Overall, the EU rises three spots, to 16th, and now has a high overall ranking.
- Fourteen EU countries are among the high and medium performers, with Denmark (4th) and Estonia (5th) leading the overall ranking.
- The Netherlands improves its performance in three o the four CCPI categories, up five spots to 8th and at a high level. Italy, however, plunges 15 spots to 44th, mainly due to its poorer showing in the Climate Policy category vs. the previous year.
- Poland (55th) is the remaining EU country receiving a very low rating. If the new Polish government will increase its ambition regarding renewables, the country should have a better showing next year.

Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score
1	----	----	6	Philippines	70·70
2	----	----	7	India	70·25
3	----	-----	8	Netherlands	69·98
4	Denmark	75·59	9	Morocco	69·82
5	Estonia	72·07	10	Sweden	69·39
Top 3 remain empty as countries must speed up implementation.					

Project ARTH Ganga Launches

Arth Ganga an initiative launched by the Indian government, is the part of the Namami Ganga Program launched by the Government in 2014.

अर्थ ganga
बहती गंगा, बढ़ता जीवन

On 14th December, 2019, it was decided in the meeting of National Ganga Council (NGC) to launch a new concept as the name Arth Ganga, which is a sustainable and viable economic development model to strengthen the river-people connect

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through an economic bridge. It was added as a vertical of Namami Ganga Program, in addition to the 4 verticals—Nirmal Ganga, Aviral Ganga, Jan Ganga and Gyan Ganga.

Key Facts :

- Six pillars of Arth-Ganga identified are : Promotion of Natural Framing on 5 kms band either side of river Ganga; Monetisation and reuse of Treated water and sludge from the STPs; Improvement of Livelihood opportunities, particularly for women; Promotion of Tourism and Cultural heritage; People's Participation and Building of capacities and institutions. Implementation of these initiatives is aimed to develop sustainable development model with focus on economic activities related to river Ganga. Several activities under Arth Ganga have been taken up by National Mission for Clean Ganga in coordination with various ministries/departments and other stakeholders, to achieve the goal.
- While no specific short-term goals have been set, however, the long-term objective of Arth Ganga is to link people and Ganga through the economic bridge in line with river rejuvenation, by garnering people's participation for Ganga conservation and promoting sustainable development.

Government of India Provisions for Conservation of Marine Species

The Indian government set to provisions In order to conserve marine species. Government of India has notified 130 Marine Protected Areas across the Coastal States and Islands and 106 coastal and marine sites have been identified and prioritized as Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas (ICMBAs) to conserve marine species. Many threatened marine species have been listed as Scheduled animals in Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972. According to the Government of India, some of the rare and threatened marine species are :

1. The marine turtles (all 5 species),
2. humpback whale and
3. Dugong

These species are for assessing country wide population status and monitoring under the scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat (IDWH).

Dugong and Sea Grass Conservation

Under the Endangered Species Recovery Program (ESRP), the marine mammal Dugong has received special attention with a country wide effort towards conservation of Dugongs and their habitat conservation and about 450 sq km area in the Palk Bay has been declared as Dugong Conservation Reserve to conservation of Dugongs and seagrass associated marine species.

Marine Turtle Conservation

The Ministry has released a National Marine Turtle Action Plan with the aim to conserve marine turtles and their habitats in India. In addition, under the Project Dolphin, Ministry is expending to include marine dolphins for species monitoring and conservation of marine biodiversity. Also, more species including marine invertebrate will be added for population monitoring/recovering under the IDWH or Endangered Species Recovery programme.

Conservation and Management Plans of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019, promulgated under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, has specific focus on conservation and management plans of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) which are as :

1. Mangroves,
2. Sea grasses,
3. Sand dunes,
4. Corals and Coral reefs,
5. Biologically active mudflats,
6. Turtle nesting grounds, and
7. Horse shoe crabs' habitats and prohibit developmental activities and disposal of wastes in the fragile coastal ecosystems.

Key Facts :

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is granting funds under the centrally sponsored schemes to maritime States for the conservation of Corals and Mangroves.
- Project Dolphin is the Government initiative to conserve both oceanic and riverine dolphin species launched in 2021.
- In order to conserve and manage the declining populations of Dugongs in India, the MoEFCC under the Government of India constituted a 'Task Force for Conservation of Dugongs' to look into the entire gamut of issues related to conservation of Dugongs and implementation of the 'UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU' in India and also to facilitate the country to act as the leading nation in the South Asia Subregion with respect to Dugong conservation.
- The Ministry under the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds the conservation of Dugongs and their habitats in India.
- The Ministry funds the monitoring and conservation of marine turtles, marine dolphins and humpback whale under the PAN India: Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat (IDWH) scheme.
- CMLRE is implementing a national R&D programme on Marine Living Resources (MLR) with an inbuilt component on Societal Services to support the fisher folks of Lakshadweep Islands.
- The Government also provides financial assistances to Universities/Research Institutes through research projects that are aimed at conservation of marine species.

Quarter of World's Freshwater Fish at Risk of Extinction–IUCN

On 11th December, 2023, according to the assessment of IUCN, nearly a quarter of the world's freshwater fish are at risk of extinction due

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to global heating, overfishing, pollution and other anthropogenic activities. Nearly a fifth of all threatened freshwater species are affected by climate change, from impacts such as falling water levels, shifting seasons and seawater moving up rivers. Of the assessed species, 3,086 out of 14,898 were at risk of vanishing. The latest assessment many different species in different category which are as follows :

- The saiga antelope from the critically endangered category to near threatened (the population increased by 1,100% in just seven years, mainly in Kazakhstan).
- From the large-toothed Lake Turkana robber in Kenya to the Mekong giant catfish in south-east Asia - At risk of extinction.

The Reintroduction of the Scimitar-Horned Oryx

The reintroduction of the scimitar-horned oryx - the world's fourth largest mammal - in Chad is another success story. The mammal was once common across the Sahel but disappeared in the 1990s after it was overhunted. Reintroduction efforts from captivity have led to the population growing to 140 mature animals in the Ouadi Rimé-Ouadi Achim faunal reserve in Chad. It is classified as vulnerable to extinction and scientists say it is threatened by the climate crisis.

Myanmar Becomes World's Biggest Producer of Opium

According to the United Nation report which was released by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Myanmar became the world's biggest producer of opium in 2023 and overtaking Afghanistan because the Taliban government's ban on poppy cultivation. Myanmar produced an estimated 1,080 metric tonnes of opium – essential for producing heroin. The opium production in Afghanistan slumped an estimated 95% to about 330 tonnes after the Taliban's ban on poppy cultivation in April 2022. India is the only country authorised by the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) to produce gum opium.



The Opium poppy plant

About Opium (Papaver Somniferum L.)

The word 'opium' is derived from Greek word 'Opion'. In Arabia it was known as Afyun, in Sanskrit the ancient Indo-aryan language it is known as 'Aahi Phen' meaning snake venom. In the North-East part of India, it is referred to as 'Kani'. The opium poppy (Papaver Somniferum L.) belonging to the family Papaveraceae, is an annual medicinal herb. It contains many alkaloids that are frequently used as an analgesic, antitussive and anti-spasmodic in modern medicine. Besides, it is also grown as a source of edible seed and seed oil.

The 'Golden Triangle' Border

The 'Golden Triangle' border region between Myanmar, Laos and Thailand has long been a hotbed of illegal drug production and trafficing, particularly of methamphetamine and opium. The total estimated value of Myanmar's 'opiate economy' rose to between $ 1 billion and $ 2·4 billion the equivalent of 1·7% to 4·1% of the country's 2022 GDP. In 2022, an estimated 790 metric tonnes of opium was produced in Myanmar, it said. Myanmar's legal economy has been gutted by conflict and instability since the military seized power in 2021, driving many farmers to grow poppy.

Key Facts :

- Poppy cultivation in Myanmar was becoming more sophisticated, with increased investment and better practices including improved irrigation and possible use of fertilisers pushing up crop yields.
- Afghanistan has seen cultivation collapse after the Taliban authorities vowed to end illegal drug production.
- Poppy crops accounted for almost a third of the country's total agricultural production by value last year, but the area used for poppy shrank from 233,000 hectares in late 2022 to 10,800 in 2023.
- In Myanmar, the main cultivating area is Shan state, the northern part of which has been convulsed by fighting in recent weeks after an alliance of ethnic minority armed groups launched an offensive against the junta and its allies.
- Shan state occupies almost a quarter of Myanmar's land mass and is dotted with ravines and jungle-clad hills.
- The UN said cultivation had also increased in northern Kachin state and in Chin state on the border with India.
- During the crop cutting experiment in 1993-94 in Uttar Pradesh one poppy crop was affected by downy mildew and the opium yield stopped after the second lancing.

Solar and On-shore Wind Provide Cheapest Electricity-CSIRO

The report released by the CSIRO, electricity generated by solar and on-shore wind is the cheapest in Australia. Estimates of costs to build small modular nuclear reactors—a technology supported by the Coalition but not expected to be commercially available until at least 2030 have risen dramatically and would provide the most expensive power. Australia's electricity networks were designed for large coal-fired power stations but these ageing plants are being closed down because renewable power is cheaper and Australia cannot meet its climate targets by continuing to rely on coal.

Key Facts :

- Replacing coal with renewables will see more sources of generation spread across the country creating a distributed energy system requiring expensive transmission lines and other technologies, including storage, to keep the grid reliable while keeping costs down.

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- CSIRO's previous GenCost report was attacked by some critics this year for not including these integration costs until the year 2030, by which time billions of dollars would have been spent on storage and transmission projects to integrate renewables that were not costed in the report.
- Renewables remained the lowest-cost technology that would allow Australia to meet its climate goals.
- The latest report revealed that 2030 a theoretical nuclear small modular reactor had the second highest cost range of all available technologies. The most expensive would be power from a peaking plant run on hydrogen. The capital costs of different technologies due to inflation.
- The government has a target to have 82% of electricity generated from renewables by 2030 and last month expanded a taxpayer scheme to underwrite projects after concerns that progress was too slow.

News in Brief

Protection of Black Tiger

Melanistic tigers have been recorded only in the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha. As per the 2022 cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation, 16 individuals were recorded at Similipal Tiger Reserve, out of which 10 were melanistic.

A Standard Operating Procedure issued by the NTCA for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at the landscape level. Based on genetic composition, the Similipal Tiger Reserve has been identified as a distinct genetic cluster for conservation. Funding assistance is provided under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-IDWH) to the Similipal Tiger Reserve for conservation of tigers, raising awareness on tiger & other wildlife conservation, habitat management, protection, eco-development, human resource and infrastructure development, voluntary village relocation, as per sanctioned Annual Plan of Operation of the Tiger Reserve which emanates from a statutory Tiger Conservation Plan.

India Achieves two Targets of Nationally Determined Contribution

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, India submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the year 2015 comprising, inter-alia, of following two quantifiable targets :

- To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level; and
- To achieve about 40 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

As on 31st October, 2023; the cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources is 186·46 MW, which is the 43·81% of the total cumulative electric power installed capacity. As per the third national communication submitted by India to the UNFCCC in December 2023, the emission intensity of its GDP has been reduced by 33 per cent between 2005 and 2019. In August 2022, India updated its NDC according to which target to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP has been enhanced to 45 per cent by 2030 from 2005 level, and the target on cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources has been enhanced to 50% by 2030.

Per Drop More Crop Scheme Launches

On 12th December, 2023, The Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare implemented the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) in the Country from the year 2015-16 to 2021-22 as a component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

From the year 2022-23, the scheme implemented under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). PDMC scheme focuses on enhancing water use efficiency at farm level through Micro Irrigation, namely, Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation systems.

Farmers are encouraged to take advantage of the PDMC Scheme by giving wide publicity to the scheme through press & print media, publication of leaflets/booklets, organization of workshops, exhibitions, farmer fairs, information on State/Government of India web portals etc.

To facilitate the States in mobilising resources for expanding coverage of micro irrigation, Government of India has created Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF) with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) with initial corpus of ₹ 5000 crore. States can avail loan from MIF for taking up special and innovative projects for expanding coverage of Micro Irrigation and also for incentivising micro irrigation beyond the provisions available under PDMC Scheme to encourage farmers. Government of India provides interest subvention @3% on the loan availed by the States which is met from PDMC Scheme.

An area of 83·06 lakh hectare has been covered under Micro Irrigation in the Country under PDMC from 2015-16 to 2023-24 (till date). State-wise details and percentage of coverage is given at Annexure I.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed cost effective, location specific scientific technologies *viz.* rainwater harvesting and recycling, multiple use of water, conjunctive use of rain, surface and groundwater resources, smart and precision technologies for irrigation and farming practices, optimum irrigation scheduling, resource conservation technologies, development of land drainage and reclamation of problem soils to enhance irrigation water efficiency and water productivity thereby promoting sustainable agriculture and increasing income of farmers.

An area of 30·55 lakh hectare has been covered under Micro Irrigation in the Country through PDMC Scheme. The Micro Irrigation helps in water saving as well as reduced fertilizer usage through fertigation, labour expenses, other input costs and overall income enhancement of farmers.

An amount of ₹ 18714·69 crore has been released as Central Assistance to the States under PDMC Scheme from 2015-16 till date.

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UPSC CSE Personality Test 2023 has the Power to Transform Your Fortunes

—Atul Kapoor

The toughest and perhaps even more grueling than any other open competitive examination in country, Civil Services Examination (CSE) is really a craze among aspiring young Indians.

It is evident that it is extremely challenging and difficult for each one of them who appear in this examination and those who endures till end, there exists an opportunity to get in to coveted Indian Civil Services.

Opportunity knocks the door for the candidates who just got to know the outcome of Mains 2023.

Civil Services (Main) Examination 2023 Result Announced

Here comes the opportunity for the courageous youth who just got a chance to move to the final level – Personality Test by emerging victorious in recently announced results for the Civil Services (Main) Examination 2023.

Don't get surprised if I used word 'courageous' taking the first step to dream about making career in Civil Services, decision to take a plunge into the UPSC CSE, having enough patience to go through this grueling competition, going through difficult times without giving up and overcoming fear of failure is no small feat. Every step needs courage and commitment that these successful candidates have demonstrated at each stage of the exam.

Out of 10 lakh plus applicants for the Preliminary Examination to reach among 2500-odd candidates for inter-view clearly speaks about the courage and commitment these candidates have shown and makes a bold statement about their mettle.

You decided your goal, make plans to achieve it. Sometime things work in right direction, sometimes do not. Appearing in a Civil Services Examination is one such plan and for some lucky ones, the recent result of Main Examination 2023 has opened doors to a big success.

Handling the uncertainties of Prelims and then staying afloat in the Mains with patience and perseverance are the keys to success. Now, at the final stage it is real 'YOU' that is in focus.

The dream career seems in sight now as 'one good 30-minutes performance' can help you transform your fortune.

Your Future Depends Upon the Side You Find Yourself

Success or failure; diverse path for different outcomes. If successful you find yourself inching closure to your dream career; any disappointing result means, you are to start a fresh. And I tell you there will be practically no time to prepare for next Prelims when you will come to know the final outcome as the results are announced when you are left with less than a week's time before ensuing Prelims.

For some it is opportunity, but setback for many; as the exam-plan is, at each stage there are less successes and disappointments are much higher in comparison.

Main Examination is no exception. No doubt, Main Exam (Written) is tough and an intense competition results in limited successes, but setbacks are multifold.

It is most satisfying to find your name in the list of successful candidates reaching the next level. For some it would have been a show of confidence; at the same time this result would have sprung some pleasant surprises for many candidates who were dissatisfied with some average performance in any particular paper.

Personality Test : A Step Closer to Your Dream Destination

When one commences preparation for UPSC CSE, the dream about cracking each step with flying colours is the biggest motivation. Finally, your dream has come true; with the upcoming Interview session you have a chance to make it happen.

The last stage of Civil Services Examination, Interview is not a mere knowledge and awareness test; it is about you, your personality, your thought process and suitability for the post that gets evaluated by the esteemed panel of experienced individuals drawn from diverse career streams.

From Prelims to Main Examination, everything you have done so far has led you to this place. The experiences and skills that landed you at Personality Test (Interview) are not so effective now as Personality test is more of a psychological assessment. In fact, you will need a new set of skills to continue being efficacious as it is your life learning that is at test.

They judge your mental skills and your attitude. They test your temperament and patience.

Understand the Arithmetic Behind it

Out of aggregate 2025 marks, Mains (Written) accounts for 1750 marks and the 275 marks attached to Interview have a big role to play in securing a place in the merit-list and even in getting the post/service of your choice.

See, the very purpose of this interview is to look and evaluate your overall personality. Accordingly, everyone prepares for Personality Test; but, for each candidate, outcomes can be unpredictable.

As observed, candidates get better chance to score at Interview level in comparison to Mains (Written) where barring some exceptions, scores of majority of candidates are in a range.

Fetching high marks in Interview is easier; you can say it is more probable to score much better. Scoring even 50%+ in Mains (Written) is tough; but in Interview scoring as high as 75% marks is quite possible.

The impact of the interview marks in the aggregate can make or mar your dreams.

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Interview Preparation : At What Stage ?

If you understand the exam-plan and the intent of UPSC, the preparation for Civil Services Examination should be made in the reverse order. First, the Personality test, next the Mains (Written) and Prelims in the last.

I feel this gives conviction to the advice that one should prepare for Civil Services Examination in the reverse order *i.e.*, first look at the Interview (Personality Test), then at Main Examination requirements and last, Preliminary Examination.

If you are able to understand the UPSC's intent, it becomes easier for you to handle the pressure and achieve desired success in the first attempt itself.

Before you decide how to prepare for facing the interview board, it is necessary to understand the requirements and the UPSC's intent - the very soul and nature of the Interview sessions.

Learn to think logical and analyze things rationally.

As the interview board to looking for originality, integrity and leadership qualities through communication skills and on the basis of that an assessment of your overall personality is made.

What All Interview Board Evaluate ?

"You don't get a second chance to make a first impression."

Though, your interview preparation should commence with your preparation, still immediately after Mains (Written) is over, your interview preparation should start. You can work on some predictable questions and develop clarity in your answers and should reflect balanced approach.

Your personality is at test and the experienced interview board members analyze your communicative skills, check your presence of mind, assess your decision-making skills, problem-solving capabilities and on top of all this, they explore originality.

Awareness on national and world-affairs is tested in a natural course. You never know how and when the board members enter your mind and explore your mental alertness and the critical power of assimilating facts.

Your sensitivity on social issues, truthfulness and moral integrity should reflect traits that the board is searching for in the candidates.

Many candidates fail to realize how scores are given and talk of subjectivity involved in 'Personality' evaluation within few minutes of conversation.

It is little difficult for candidates to understand the way marks are awarded in Personality Test but, the very purpose of this interview is to look and evaluate your overall personality and, on that basis, marks are awarded.

Understand the Significance of Personality Test

The IAS interview is not that easy as many candidates think. Take your interview seriously, it requires valiant efforts and beforehand preparation would certainly keep you afloat. Having excellent academic records or satisfactory performance in Main Examination does not guarantee that you will do well in the interview.

You can make your dreams come true if you have the right mindset, put in the right effort, and approach it rationally.

Prepare and practice for a variety of questions as your interview is going to be driven by your Detailed Application Form (DAF) and you are not sure whether it will surround your personal information or educational qualifications or may be current affairs; sometimes it may be some hypothetical/situational questions just to check your potential in dealing with some tricky situations, out of the box thinking, analyzing all dimensions/possibilities and create solutions showing decisive approach. It may be combination of all or some components.

Each Opportunity is Distinctive; Facing First Interview is a Unique Experience

Civil Services Interview is exceptional; a very different from the regular interview sessions.

In my opinion, each one of you going to appear in IAS Interview 2023 is sailing in the same boat.

It is going to be an exceptional experience for those who are getting opportunity to appear in IAS Interview for the first time. It is not that easy to impress the interview board. You can find it to be tough as you may not know what to expect and have not experienced anything like it before.

It is not that who have faced IAS Interview earlier would be at ease; each interview is distinctive in nature. Candidates, who have faced interviews earlier when they appear in Personality Test again, range of questions and diverse situations force them to be rational in approach.

Even if it is a next chance to face the interview board, it's not a surety that your performance is going to be better or you will be awarded better marks.

This examination is such that sometimes you encounter some unbelievable outcomes that surprises you.

No doubt, each interview gives you confidence, you come with increased knowledge and better awareness and expected to show improved interviewing skills.

Personality Test : Key Observations

All I wish to say is that be ready to face the last hurdle confidently and emerge as winner.

You need to understand the exam set-up and how your performance in Mains (Written) and in Personality Test determine your final result.

1. Aim to score high marks in Interview : Yes, this is the mindset you require when you get ready to face Personality test. By no means you can take it lightly. Each incremental mark makes chance of your success and even in getting the top ranks that ensures post of your choice.

2. It is said that good performance in Mains reduces dependance on Interview : Yes, if you are assured about your Mains performance, that will add to your confidence. But when you face Interview Board, neither you are aware of your marks nor the Interview board. So, in this scenario how can you take it for granted that you are going to get high marks in Mains (Written) ?

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3. No place for showing complacency : After succeeding in Mains, many candidates contemplate that there is no need to seriously prepare for the interview, they are ready to cross the last hurdle and all they need is some brush-up and that's it.

Interview can be the most rewarding experience, but as a matter-of-fact candidates prepare the least for Personality Test.

4. Toppers' Interview Transcripts Reveal some common questions that are asked : Often, candidates become more complacent after reading the experiences of the candidates interviewed earlier as some common questions give an impression that it is easy to handle.

Yes, toppers' interview transcripts give some useful insights, but this will not suffice the purpose.

5. The interview boards follow a set template : Don't make any mistake; each interview is only one of its kind.

Enthusiasm is the key, but the mastery in presenting the accumulated knowledge and awareness is very critical.

6. It is easy to score 170+ marks : It has been observed, the range of marks obtained in Personality Test has been in wide range. A glance over last few years' result reveal marks obtained by candidates in range of 110-210 and the difference is really huge.

7. Sometimes, it is easy to maneuver the Interview : Don't make a mistake here and you have to respect the knowledge, experience, skill and integrity of the board members. As such, Interview Boards remain friendly and cordial and most of the times, opening is with modest questions just to make candidates comfortable. Do not take it as complete picture, it is just the beginning.

How to Prepare for Interview ?

The Interview stage of Civil Services Examination is not a complex concept; you just need to figure out what the Interview Board expects and how you prepare yourself to face it confidently.

It is all about your mindset and while preparing for Civil Services Examination during last so many months, you gradually prepare yourself to face the Interview Board and now, when you really need it; your mindset is going to stimulate your performance as well as the outcome.

Be it current affairs, contemporary issues, optional subject related rationalized understanding and even something relating to your academic background—prepare clear, concise, practical and applicable explanations for everything you need to know.

What Counts the Most ?

Success in Civil Services Examination is tough and there are no quick fixes; it takes hard work and the refusal to give up.

At the Interview stage there is no real secret to succeeding—it's just a matter of learning the habits and skills you need. Personality Test is nothing but a conversation carried out in a very comfortable setting to bring out the best in the candidate with a very dignified and graceful mannerism.

Fresh approach : It is a juncture where your earlier performance in Prelims and Mains does not have any role to play in deciding the course of your Interview.

Go through the process confidently : The Interview Board does not get influenced by your past performance in the Civil Services Examination, but they go by the information your fill in the Detailed Application Form that you fill and the way you give finish touch to your endeavour gets decided in 30-odd minutes when you go through this process.

Be honest : The truth exhibits the strength and enhances your confidence. The object of the interview is to assess the personal suitability and judge your mental caliber. Your attitude and a positive mind-set display your mettle and by showing humility, you can prevail even in some adverse situations.

Control that 30-odd minutes : It is just a matter of 30-35 minutes of conversation that unwrap your thoughtfulness, decision making capabilities and clear-cut opinion about yourself, your surroundings and some of the current developments.

A somber start : Invariably the interview starts with some simple questions based on your Detailed Application Form (DAF) to find out more about you so that you are comfortable and stress free to take it further.

No real secret to succeeding : While observing, the presence of mind, mental awareness, balance of perception, leadership qualities, moral and intellectual traits are keenly noted and at the same time any personality flaws, if any is noticed, that also gets taken into account.

Answer should reflect clarity : As they move forward, it is done in such a way that your attention, curiosity and concerns about some issues and happenings around are measured with the knowledge of facts, information and understanding; while range and depth of ideas and opinion you share with the interview board that matters the most.

Understand the purpose and intent : When you understand the purpose and intent, it becomes quite easy to prepare yourself to face the challenge confidently. I sincerely hope that you will take the full advantage of reaching the Interview stage and will fulfil the promises you have made to yourself.

They read your mind : Think before you speak; your facial expressions and eyes can be read by the experienced board members. While answering, be precise; your answers should be concise and complete that can satisfy the Interview Board members.

Listen carefully : If you have not understood the question, ask again to please repeat the question.

Don't Flip-flop : If you don't know the answer, accept it and be straightforward to say that you have absolutely no idea or don't know about it.

Never enter an area where you cannot defend. If the board member asks you to make a guess or explain in your own words, try to explain it in a very concise manner.

Be truthful and you will find in most of the cases, board members update you and share the answer.

Don't forget to acknowledge that gesture and thank the board member when they reveal the information pertaining to that particular question.

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Divya Darpan

Mandatory Blending of Compressed Biogas in CNG, Piped Gas from 2025-26

Context

Recently, the government has announced the mandatory blending of compressed biogas (CBG) with piped gas delivered to households and compressed natural gas (CNG) for the transpire sector in an effort to increase the consumption of biofuels.

Relevance

Prelims : About CBO and CBG.

Mains : *General Studies-III* : Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

CBG Blending Obligation (CBO) will promote production and consumption of Compressed Biogas (CBG) in the country. In a major step towards enhancing use and adoption of CBG, the National Biofuels Coordination Committee (NBCC), chaired by Union Petroleum Minister announced the introduction of phase wise mandatory blending of CBG in CNG (Transport) & PNG (Domestic) segments of CGD sector.

CBG Blending Obligation (CBO)

- CBO will be voluntary till FY 2024-25 and mandatory blending obligation would start from FY 2025-26.
- CBO shall be kept as 1%, 3% and 4% of total CNG/PNG consumption for FY 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 respectively. From 2028-29 onwards CBO will be 5%.
- A Central Repository Body (CRB) shall monitor and implement the blending mandate based on the operational guidelines approved by Minister, PNG.

Key Objectives :

- CBO are to stimulate demand for CBG in CGD sector, import substitution for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), saving in Forex, promoting circular economy and to assist in achieving the target of net zero emission etc.
- It will encourage investment of around ₹ 37500 crores and facilitate establishment of 750 CBG projects by 2028-29.

About Compressed Biogas (CBG)

Compressed Biogas (CBG) is a blend of hydrocarbon gases and vapours that is mostly made up of gaseous methane, which is formed during the breakdown of plant and animal waste and is then compressed, cleaned, and used as fuel for automobiles and other industrial purposes.

Components of Biogas

- Bio methane (CH_4)
- Carbon dioxide (CO_2)
- Water Vapour (H_2O)
- Hydrogen Sulphide (H_2S)
- Ammonia (NH_3)

Significance of Compressed Biogas (CBG)

- India's natural gas production stands at 34,000 million standard cubic metres of gas (MMSCM), while its consumption is at 64,000 MMSCM, resulting in a significant deficit of 30,000 MMSCM. This deficit, accounting for 47 per cent of the total consumption, is met through imports.
- Compressed biogas (CBG) can help plug this gap. Over the past few years, CBG has emerged as a viable alternative to imported fossil natural gas, offering nearly net-zero emissions and enhancing energy security. Various waste and biomass sources, such as cattle dung, agricultural waste, and distillery spent wash, press mud, organic fraction of municipal solid waste and sewage treatment plant sludge, undergo anaerobic decomposition to produce biogas.
- The biogas is then turned into a gas that is primarily methane (more than 90 per cent) through purification, which involves removing carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulphide and moisture. This gas is further compressed to high pressure (250 bar) to produce CBG.

Key Challenges :

- One of the primary challenges in establishing CBG plants is the lack of a reliable and consistent supply of feedstock, which renders the projects financially unviable.
- Establishing a bio-CNG plant requires a significant amount of capital investment.
- At present, oil marketing companies acquire bio-CNG from plants based on a 'best endeavor' approach, which puts plant owners at a dis-advantage as they may be left with unsold product.
- Inefficient source segregation of municipal solid waste is a problem for biogas plants because it can lead to the contamination of the feedstock used in the biogas production process.
- Most of the equipment and machinery required for bio-CNG plants, such as digester fabrics, biogas upgrading units, storage tanks, compressors, dispensers, and monitoring and control systems or software, are often imported and may have limited availability.
- The absence of a long-term bioenergy strategy with no clear mandates and obligations can create significant barriers for the growth and development of the biogas industry. For example, policies like SATAT have their tenure ending in 2023, with no clear roadmap in place about what to do after it.

Possible Recommendation Made by Experts

- Linking bio-CNG plants with city gas distribution networks is crucial for their expansion and success.

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- It is essential to implement a policy which mandates fertilizer companies to procure CBG plant fertilizer at a fixed price, similar to the SATAT program for CBG procurement.
- There is an urgent need to install a pool of advanced and decentralized biomass management equipment at the village level, along with mechanisms to regulate feedstock prices.
- Sustainable financing and timely regulatory approvals are absolutely necessary to achieve CBG installation targets.

Various Global and Government Initiatives

- **SATAT (Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation) Scheme :** It is launched by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. It aims to establish an ecosystem for producing Compressed Biogas (CBG) from various waste/ biomass sources and promote its use along with Natural Gas.
- **The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) Scheme :** It was launched by the Government of India to convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to Bio-CNG (CBG) and compost.
- **Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran) Yojana :** Viable Gap Funding (VGF) for 2G bioethanol using lignocellulose biomass and other renewable feedstock.
- Western countries like Germany, Italy, the UK, France, and Switzerland promote biogas usage by supporting legal frame-works, education schemes, and the availability of technology.
- It is the global trade association for the biogas, landfill gas and anaerobic digestion (AD) sectors, dedicated to facilitating the adoption of biogas globally.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas has flagged the issue of slow progress on CBG on various occasions. The panel had observed that schemes like SATAT were 'burdened' by a lack of clarity and procedural hurdles and were unable to attract investors and entrepreneurs. The committee had also recommended financial assistance to entrepreneurs willing to set up CBG units and called upon the public sector oil and gas companies to build CBG plants from their own funds to demonstrate the viability of such projects and instil confidence among potential investors.

Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023

Context

Recently, WHO released a report, 'The *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023'*, showing that the number of annual road traffic deaths has fallen by 5% to 1·19 million. India, however, registered a 15% increase in fatalities.

Relevance

Prelims : About the report and its key findings.

Mains : *General Studies-III* : Infrastructure : Roads.

General Studies-II : Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

The WHO Global status report on road Safety 2023 is the fifth in a series measuring progress in reducing road traffic deaths. This report covers progress between 2010 and 2021 and sets a baseline for efforts to meet the United Nations Decade of Action 2021–2030 target to halve road traffic deaths by 2030.

Key Findings :

- Road traffic deaths fell by 5% to 1·19 million annually worldwide between 2010 and 2021, with 108 United Nations member countries reporting a drop.
- The report shows that 28% of global road traffic deaths occurred in the WHO's South-East Asia Region, 25% in the Western Pacific Region, 19% in the African Region, 12% in the Region of the Americas, 11% in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and 5% in the European Region.
- The total number of road traffic fatalities in India went up to 1·54 lakh in 2021 from 1·34 lakh in 2010, the 'Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023'.
- Ten countries succeeded in reducing road traffic deaths by over 50%. These are Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Denmark, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.
- Thirty-five countries made notable progress, reducing road traffic deaths by 30% to 50%.
- As of 2019, road crashes were the leading cause of deaths among children and youth aged five to 29 years, and were the 12th leading cause of deaths when all ages are considered. Two-thirds of deaths occurred among people of a working age.
- In the past decade, a 5% reduction in absolute numbers of road traffic fatalities was accompanied with a growth in the global population by nearly 14 billion, or roughly 13%.
- This translates into the road fatality rate declining from 18 per 1 lakh people in 2010 to 15 per 1 lakh in 2021, which represents a 16% decline in the road traffic death rate since 2010.
- The report also noted that during the same period, the global motor vehicle fleet grew 160%. Therefore, annual fatality rates per 1 lakh vehicles fell from 79 deaths to 47 deaths, which is a 41% reduction.
- Nine in Ten deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and fatalities in these countries are disproportionately higher when set against the number of vehicles and roads they have. The risk of death is three times higher in low-income than high-income countries, yet low-income countries have just 1% of the world's motor vehicles.

Major Reasons for Road Traffic Accidents in India

- **Over Speeding :** Most of the fatal accidents occur due to over speeding. A vehicle moving on high speed will have greater impact during the crash and hence will cause more injuries.

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The ability to judge the forthcoming events also gets reduced while driving at faster speed which causes error in judgment and finally a crash.

- **Drunken Driving** : Consumption of alcohol to celebrate any occasion is common. Alcohol reduces concentration. It decreases reaction time of a human body. Limbs take more to react to the instructions of brain. All these factors while driving cause accidents and many a times it proves fatal.
- **Distraction to Driver** : Though distraction while driving could be minor but it can cause major accidents. Distractions could be outside or inside the vehicle. The major distraction now a day is talking on mobile phone while driving.
- **Red Light Jumping** : It is a common sight at road intersections that vehicles cross without caring for the light. The main motive behind red light jumping is saving time. The common conception is that stopping at red signal is wastage of time and fuel. Studies have shown that traffic signals followed properly by all drivers save time and commuters reach destination safely and timely.
- **Avoiding Safety Gears Like Seat Belts and Helmets** : Use of seat belt in four-wheeler is now mandatory and not wearing seat belt invites penalty, same in the case of helmets for two wheeler drivers. Wearing seat belts and helmet has been brought under law after proven studies that these two things reduce the severity of injury during accidents.
- **Road Engineering** : Bad designing of junctions, inadequate signage and road markings.

Various Factors of Roads Contribute in Accidents

- **Drivers** : Over-speeding, rash driving, violation of rules, failure to understand signs, fatigue, alcohol.
- **Pedestrian** : Carelessness, illiteracy, crossing at wrong places moving on carriageway, Jaywalkers.
- **Passengers** : Projecting their body outside vehicle, by talking to drivers, alighting and boarding vehicle from wrong side travelling on footboards, catching a running bus etc.
- **Vehicles** : Failure of brakes or steering, tyre burst, insufficient headlights, overloading, projecting loads.
- **Road Conditions** : Potholes, damaged road, eroded road merging of rural roads with highways, diversions, illegal speed breakers.
- **Weather Conditions** : Fog, snow, heavy rainfall, wind storms, hail storms.

Initiatives Taken by Government to Prevent Road Accidents

- **Education** :
  - The Ministry implements a scheme for undertaking publicity measures and awareness campaigns on road safety to create awareness among road users through the electronic media, print media, NGOs etc.
  - Observance of National Road Safety Month/Week every year for spreading awareness and strengthening road safety.
  - A Certification Course for Road Safety Auditors has been commenced in Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE).

Engineering (Both of Roads and Vehicles)

- **Road Engineering** :
  - High priority to identification and rectification of black spots (accident prone spots) on national highways.
  - Road safety has been made an integral part of road design at planning stage.
  - Ministry has delegated powers to Regional Officers of MORTH for technical approval to the detailed estimates for rectification of identified Road Accident black spots.
  - Guidelines for pedestrian facilities on National Highways for persons with disabilities have also been issued to all States / UTs.
- **Vehicle Engineering** :
  - Safety standards for automobiles have been improved in respect of Airbags, Anti-Breaking System (ABS), Tyres, Crash test, Whole Vehicle Safety Conformity of Production (WVSCoP) etc.
  - Ministry has notified fitment of Speed Limiting devices on all transport vehicles.
  - Scheme for setting up one model Inspection & Certification Centre in each State/UT with Central assistance for testing the fitness of vehicles through an automated system.
- **Enforcement** :
  - The recently passed motor vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides for strict enforcement through use of technology and further provides for strict penalties for ensuring strict compliance and enhancing deterrence for violation of traffic rules.
  - Issue of Guidelines for protection of Good Samaritans and draft rules as per MV (Amendment) Act, 2019 has been published.
- **Emergency Care** :
  - The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides for a scheme for the cashless treatment of victims of the accident during the golden hour.
  - The National Highways Authority of India has made provisions for ambulances at all toll plazas on the completed corridor of National Highways.
  - Further, out of this, 297 ambulances have been upgraded to Basic Life Support as per AIS125 and up gradation for the remaining is under process.

However, the implementation of policies should be affirmative to prevent the road accident. There must be a strong public focus on

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wearing rear-seatbelts, the other is that road accidents are usually multi-causal and the road environment plays a critical role and should be improved. A well-designed highway for example should facilitate high mobility while safely segregating the slower-moving traffic and its merging with urban roads should be methodical as well. If countries with much higher speed limits than India have far fewer road fatalities, one reason is definitely that their highways don't come up haphazardly but are well-designed.

Khavda Renewable Energy Park

Context

India aims to build the world's largest renewable energy project at Khavda in Gujarat in three years. Encompassing solar panels, wind turbines, and spanning 726 sq km, it's a pivotal initiative estimated to cost $ 2·26 billion, aligning with goals discussed at COP28 to triple global renewable energy while reducing fossil fuel usage.

Relevance

Prelims : About Khavda renewable energy park.

Mains : *General Studies-III* : Science and Technology-developments and their application Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

The solar and wind energy project will be so big that it will be visible from space, according to developers of what is called the Khavda renewable energy park, named after the village nearest to the project site. Shifting to renewable energy is a key issue at the ongoing COP28 climate summit. Some leaders have voiced support for a target of tripling renewable energy worldwide in final agreement while curbing use of coal, oil and natural gas, which spew planet-warming gases into the atmosphere. So this project will be of great importance to India. The Indian government has contracted this project with Adani Green Energy Limited, the renewable energy arm of the Adani Group.

About the Site

The project is taking place in the middle of the Rann of Kutch in western India's Gujarat state. The Rann is an unforgiving salt desert and marshland at least 70 kms (43·5 miles) from the nearest human habitation but just a short army truck ride away from one of the world's most tense international borders separating the two South Asian nations.

Significance of Khavda Renewable Energy Park for India

- It will supply 30 gigawatts of renewable energy annually, enough to power nearly 18 million Indian homes.
- As India aims to install 500 gigawatts of clean energy by the end of the decade and to reach net zero emissions by 2070, this project site will likely contribute significantly to the world's most populous country's transition to producing energy from non-carbon spewing sources.
- It aligns with the discussions and goals set forth at the ongoing COP28 climate summit, where shifting to renewable energy remains a key issue.
- Upon completion, the Khavda project will stand as the world's largest green energy park, as India combats climate change and lead by example in the international community.

Challenges Associated with the Project Site

- Lack of basic infrastructure.
- The site is highly prone to earthquake.
- The Rann of Kutch is a vast salt desert and marshland.
- Overall harsh conditions of sites present a formidable task for workers.

Concerns Raised by Experts

- Indias decision to allow clean energy projects without any environmental impact assessments is bound to have adverse consequences.
- With renewable energy projects exempt from environmental impact assessments, "There is no system in place" to determine the best places for them.
- The salt desert is a unique landscape that is "rich in flora and fauna," including flamingos, desert foxes and migratory bird species that fly from Europe and Africa to winter in this region.
- Dairies and other local businesses in the region might be impacted by large-scale projects.

Advantages for the Locals

- It will promote the tourism in the region.
- There will be various opportunities of businesses.
- It will also provide new employment opportunities.
- Communication channels will improve in the region in the coming days.

There is a problem of security, and most of the people in the border areas used to migrate. But now it will be resolved to some extent with the deployment of forces in the region.

The Kutch district is as big as Denmark, spread over 45,000 square kilometres, and is India's largest district. Meanwhile, long-time residents are still waiting to see how this huge project near their village will affect them. However, it will benefit more than it will cause problems. It will be a great benefit to the youth in Kutch. Today, India is giving direction to the world and leading in the fight against climate change, which will benefit India in the long term.

Biosphere : Pockets of Hope

Context

Recently, on the eve of 2nd anniversary of World Biosphere Reserve Day, UNESCO successfully wrapped up the 10th South and Central Asian Biosphere Reserve Network Meeting (SACAM) in Chennai, India.

Relevance

Prelims : Structure of Biosphere & Biospheres in India.

Mains : *General Studies-III* : Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

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Under the theme 'Ridge to Reef', SACAM served as a forum for sharing expertise and nurturing partnerships in the domain of sustainable environmental practices within the South and Central Asia region. The SACAM was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Govt. of India, and the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management.

Structure of Biosphere

- **Core Zone :** In the centre lies the strictly protected core zone, providing habitat for flora and fauna, and protecting water, soil, air, and biota as a whole ecosystem.
- **Buffer Zone :** This surrounding the core zone, where people live and work in harmony with nature; scientists can study nature here.
- **Transition Zone :** The outermost edge is the transition zone where communities practise sustainable human activities.

How are Biosphere Characterised Internationally ?

- Biospheres are designated by UNESCO to promote the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development, and research.
- They are also supported by other United Nations agencies, for example the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- These reserves have a positive influence on the lives of over 250 million individuals in 134 countries, with as many as 12 million of them located within India.

Significance of Biosphere Reserves

- Biosphere reserves are vital for the future of our planet. They are a living testament to the resilience of nature, that even amidst human activity, finds a way to flourish.
- They are home to a wide variety of ecosystems from tropical rainforests to alpine deserts, and thereby provide home to countless unique and endangered plants and animals species.
- In addition to playing a vital role in the protection of biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources, they also provide opportunities for sustainable economic development.
- In recent years, biosphere reserves have become crucial in our fight against climate change, as these areas are home to many of the world's carbon sinks helping to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Carbon sinks, like forests and the ocean, provide solutions in implementing adaptation strategies to fight climate change.

Status of Biosphere Reserves in India

- According to UNESCO, there are currently 748 biosphere reserves across 134 countries. 12 sites can be found in India.
- There have been significant advancements in the conservation of biosphere reserves on the local level. For example, in the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve in India, local communities are working together to manage mangrove forests and protect the biodiversity of the region.
- In the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve in India, local communities, including women, are contributing towards conservation efforts by forming self-help groups, while the youth are getting engaged in eco-tourism.
- Recently recognised with the UNESCO Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management 2023, the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust has also introduced the concept of 'plastic checkpoints'.
- Community members check all vehicles and tourists for plastic waste, which is collected, recycled and used for the construction of roads.

Threats to BRs

- Habitat destruction-Habitat destruction (coral reefs, seagrass, and mangroves) is the most serious threat to the long-term viability of the Park's globally significant resources.
- Over-harvesting of marine resources-coral mining, though it is illegal, has stopped from 2005. Sea grass beds are damaged by inappropriate bottom trawling practices.
- Potential localized land based marine pollution–Localized pollution outside of the southern tip of the buffer zone represents a potential threat to the Reserve's biological diversity.
- Deforestation.
- Invasive species.
- Increasing urbanisation and constant growth of the world population leading to exploitation.

Global Initiatives to Conserve Biosphere

- UNESCO in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change **and the** National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, concluded the 10th South and Central Asian Biosphere Reserve Network Meeting (SACAM).
- The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme aims to improve livelihoods, safeguard ecosystems, and promote sustainable economic development.

In times of global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainable development, the role of biosphere reserves becomes even more important. Despite these sites being the most vital ecosystems protecting nature, these oases are not without threats such as deforestation, invasive species and land use changes such as mining. With increasing urbanisation and constant growth of the world population, exploitation by humans is ever increasing. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to take more affirmative initiative to conserve biosphere.

PDarpan

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Inspiring Youth

"Firm belief in myself, strong support system, smart planning and concentrated hard work are the secrets of my success."

Anup Das

Topper—Civil Services Exam., 2022 (38th Rank)

'Pratiyogita Darpan' arranged an exclusive interview with Shri Anup Das who has been selected in Civil Services Examination, 2022 conducted by UPSC. He deserves high admiration and our heartiest congratulations on his glorious success. This important, thought-provoking and highly inspiring interview is being presented here in its original form.

PD—Achieving top slot in the coveted Civil Services Examination is no small feat; accept our heartiest congratulations on your splendid success.

Shri Anup—Thank you so much Sir !

PD—Success is sweet; were you confident of your success with top rank and how did you react to this news ?

Shri Anup—I was expecting my selection with a good rank. This has been a pleasant news that has reaffirmed my faith in my abilities.

PD—In how many attempts have you achieved this success ?

Shri Anup—This was my fourth attempt.

PD—You achieved this desired success in this attempt; how do you visualize your previous attempts ?

Shri Anup—I gave my 1st attempt in 2017. In my second attempt, CSE 2018, I was doing my masters then so I didn't qualify Prelims.

In 2019 attempt, I secured AIR 120 and was allotted Indian Revenue Service. After which I undertook training and was posted in Delhi as Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax in 2022 and that is when I did this attempt and secured 38th rank.

PD—What was your Optional Subject and give the basis of selecting the optional subject ?

Shri Anup—Zoology was my optional subject.

I chose zoology because in optional subjects, I feel that there are 2 things that one has to keep in mind, one interest in the subject so that you are able to read it properly and have depth of knowledge to tackle the question, secondly you should be confident that you'll be able to score in it.



Perseverance opens up the treasures of eternal joy.

—Anup Das

Zoology has been my graduation and post-graduation subject and I've been university topper in Delhi University. I already had interest and advantage in Zoology as a subject. So I had to invest less time. Secondly, zoology answers require lots of diagrammatic representation and I've been pretty good with it, because of these things I knew I would be good at Zoology in a short period. My improvement of rank from 120 to 38 has been predominantly contributed by Zoology optional.

PD—What preference in services have you opted for and any particular reason for that priority ?

Shri Anup—IAS was my first preference.

PD—'Time Management' is a key factor; how did you manage things ?

Shri Anup—Yes, I did take various mock tests at my home so as to ensure that I was able to manage my time.

PD—The first step is the most difficult; from where did you get the right advice ?

Shri Anup—My initial inspiration was my father who has been giving me advice on how people prepare for civil services exam. For current attempt, I got advice from my batchmates who were there in my 2020 attempt and they guided me in the best possible way.

I got my advices from my family, friends and some of the other bureaucrats and some teachers as well.

PD—What was your approach towards Paper I (General Studies) and Paper II (Aptitude Test) during Preliminary Examination preparation ? How much time and effort did you divide for each ?

Shri Anup—My prelims strategy, I am very much focused on the time management so I only go by 2 iterations, in first iteration if I know the answer, I mark it immediately and then I go towards the end. Meanwhile I circle those questions which I think I know but I am not able to recall and put a star mark on the questions that I don't know at all. In my second iteration I went through encircled questions I focussed on them more because there I am not doing pure guesswork rather an educated guesswork. When it comes to star marked questions which I don't know, if I get to take an educated guess I do otherwise I leave them.

PD—How did you manage to tackle the 'Negative Marking' in Prelims ?

Shri Anup—Indeed, pure guesswork I have not done if I have some basic education in terms of 1-2 options within the question then only, I make an attempt.

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PD—What shift did you adopt in your strategy for Main Examination (Written) ?

Shri Anup—I kept mains as a target and I had prepared my notes properly, gone through all the basic informations properly, I focused on the basic material more and more and incorporated current affairs material in the process. Secondly, I focused on lots of practice, self-evaluation and 3rd person evaluation, I always gave my papers to others for them to check and criticise as much as possible. There was a continuous improvement that involved my mains preparation.

Bio-Data

Name—Anup Das

Father's Name—Shri Nrusingh Charan Das

Mother's Name—Smt. Madhusmita Das

Educational Qualifications—

10th—2011, CBSE, Kendriya Vidhyalya, Paradip Port, Odisha (CGPA-10/10)

12th—2013, CBSE, BJB Junior College, Bhubaneswar, Odisha (89·33%)

B.Sc. (Hons.)—2016, University of Delhi, Hansraj College (94·86%)

M.Sc.—2018, University of Delhi, Dept. of Zoology (81·67%)

Previous Selection—AIR 120; CSE 2019

PD—Was there any special effort for effective preparation for Essay Paper ?

Shri Anup—I used to prefer philosophical paper because it gives me the freedom to write, I am not biased for data, I don't have a good memory which is pretty much required for writing a factual essay. I always prefer philosophical essays which are opinion based and, in that scenario, if you have a greater knowledge of the interlinking of topic and decent writing skill then you can link paragraph-to-paragraph and topic-to-topic and score good in philosophical essay.

PD—How did you prepare yourself for Interview (Personality Test) ?

Shri Anup—I had already given interview in my 3rd attempt so I was pretty much aware about what happens in interview.

I prepared for interview by reading about what I mentioned in my DAF, discussing about it with my friends, faculties, teachers and trying to understand more and more. For example, I was working as an income tax officer in Delhi, so I was talking to my seniors, how the problems are in the department, what are the benefits, what we can do and tried to inculcate that in my understanding of the topic.

Questions were asked about my career related information, my state related information.

PD—What is the secret of your success ?

Shri Anup—Three reasons: firstly, support system. Second aspect is hard work, Third thing is the smart planning.

PD—To whom would you like to give the credit for your success ?

Shri Anup—Definitely my family, my mother and younger brother, they have been immensely supportive and I would also extend it to all my close friends who have been there throughout my preparation.

Personal Qualities

Favourite Person—My parents.

Strong Point—I have clarity of thought, I am pretty decisive about what I need to do and what I don't need to do.

Weak Point—Need to achieve perfection leads to mental stress, that has been my constant weakness.

Hobbies—Love to paint, love to learn scripts of languages, I am fascinated by art, museums, music, dance.

PD—Any suggestion/advice you would like to give to the future aspirants.

Shri Anup—Reiterate my secret of success, what I believe is pretty much important. I know most of the candidates are already doing hard-work, there's no substitute to it even if you are very smart. Secondly have a good understanding of yourself and plan pretty well, smart preparation is also equally important. Thirdly, have some people in your life whom you can rely unconditionally on. Lastly, UPSC is not an end or litmus test of anyone's credibility, a person can contribute to society through any means.

PD—Thank you very much and wishing you all the best for your future endeavours. PDlargan

Continued from Page 38

sensation Praggnanandhaa, making them the first-ever grandmaster siblings pair in the game's history.

Grandmaster is the highest title or ranking that a chess player can achieve. The Grandmaster title and other chess titles is awarded by the International Chess Federation, FIDE (acronym for its French name Fédération Internationale des Échecs), the Lausanne-Switzerland-based governing body of the international game.

FORMULA-1 RACE

Max Verstappen Wins Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2023

F1 World Champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull team capped his historically-dominant 2023 Formula 1 campaign by claiming victory at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2023 on November 26, 2023 at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi. Verstappen completed the race in 1 hour, 27 minutes and 2·624 seconds, beating Charles Leclerc of Ferrari team, the runner-up in the race by whopping more than 17 seconds. It was the 54th F1 victory of Verstappen's career and 19th of this season. Verstappen was also the pole position holder in the race.

MISCELLANEOUS

Centre Government Suspends Newly-Elected WFI Body

The Union Sports Ministry on December 24, 2023 suspended the newly elected executive committee (EC) of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and directed the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to form an ad-hoc committee to run the federation's operations. The decision comes after WFI President announced under-15 and under-20 nationals in UP's Gonda without notifying participants, a violation of WFI's constitution.

WFI was suspended by the centre for violating the rules and making hasty decisions related to the organisation of wrestling nationals. The ministry stated that the fedeation didn't follow rules and organised the U-15 and U-20 nationals 'without following due procedure and not giving sufficient notice to wrestlers' for preparations PDlargan

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Inspiring Youth

"Strong will, planned approach and constant hard work are the secrets of my success."

Jyoti Bhagchandani

Topper—Himachal Pradesh Judicial Services Exam., 2023 (1st Rank)

'Pratiyogita Darpan' arranged an exclusive interview with Ms. Jyoti Bhagchandani who has been selected in Himachal Pradesh Judicial Services Exam., 2023. She deserves high admiration and our heartiest congratulations on her glorious achievement. This important, thought-provoking and highly inspiring interview is being presented here in its original form.

PD—Achieving top slot in the Judicial Services Examination is no small feat; accept our heartiest congratulations on your splendid success.

Ms. Jyoti—Thank you very much.

PD—Were you confident of your success in this examination and how did you react to this news of your success ?

Ms. Jyoti—Due to the nature of the exam, no one can predict the results but I have always been determined and with an attitude of never giving up. I had promised myself that there would be a day when I'd be a judicial officer, howsoever long time it may take. I have always hoped for a positive results.

It was an unbelievable moment for me. My mother and I were in tears of joy after knowing the result.

PD—In how many attempts have you achieved this success ? How do you visualize your preparation/ previous attempts ?

Ms. Jyoti—This was my first attempt in Himachal Pradesh Judicial Services. My previous attempts in other States worked as a launch pad for me.

PD—Can you recall the exact moment when you realized the importance of Judicial Services ?

Ms. Jyoti—There was no exact moment. I have always considered this as my calling due to some verdicts like ban on smoking in public places, regulating the sale of acids, preserving the rights of under-trials.

PD—Finally, at what point of time did you make up your mind to make career in 'Judicial Services' ?

Ms. Jyoti—It was in 9th standard that I decided to make my career in judicial service. I was awestruck by the active role played by a judge in the lives of people.



..."Justice is the sum of all moral duties."

—Jyoti Bhagchandani

PD—You must have read Toppers' interviews in newspapers/ magazines; what inspired you the most ?

Ms. Jyoti—Yes, I used to read them in Pratiyogita Darpan. In all the interviews, few things remain constant which are hard-work, consistency, discipline and positive attitude. They help in building up confidence.

PD—Was JSE your planned decision or your parents' wish ?

Ms. Jyoti—It was a collective and a planned decision.

PD—Did you keep in mind some time-frame, for the examination preparation and number of attempts ?

Ms. Jyoti—There was no pressure regarding a particular time frame or the number of attempts. Although my target was to clear the exam in the year 2023.

PD—What was your first step when you were really serious about making a career in Judicial Services ?

Ms. Jyoti—After 12th standard, I got into a good law college for 5-year integrated BA-LLB course. When it was time to get into preparations, then the next step was to get myself enrolled in the esteemed Rahul's IAS, Delhi. It is an institute which prepares aspirants for Judicial Service Examination.

PD—What was your approach towards Preliminary Examination preparation ?

Ms. Jyoti—The approach can be divided into four steps :

1. Bare Act reading and learning.
2. Conceptual clarity.
3. Solving a lot of questions.
4. Analysing the mistakes.

PD—How did you manage to tackle the 'Negative Marking' in Prelims?

Ms. Jyoti—There is no fixed strategy to tackle the negative marking. One has to strike a balance between the accuracy and the number of questions attempted.

PD—What shift did you adopt in your strategy for Main Examination (Written) ?

Ms. Jyoti—Since Main examination is descriptive, I shifted my attention from reading to more answer writing practice. Answer writing practice can immensely improve the results. I used to solve mains tests provided by my institute.

PD—Was there any special effort for effective preparation for Language Paper (Essay, Translation and Précis Writing) ?

Ms. Jyoti— For essay, I referred PD monthly issues and newspaper.

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For translation, I practised from monthly Rahul's IAS magazines, newspapers and Champak Hindi English comic books. For précis writing, my institute notes were sufficient.

Bio-Data

Name—Jyoti Bhagchandani

Father's Name—Mr. Kishor Kumar

Mother's Name—Mrs. Pooja

Educational Qualifications—

10th—2013-14, CBSE, Vishwa Bharati Public School (9·8 CGPA) (93·1%)

12th—2015-16, CBSE, Vishwa Bharati Public School (95%)

BA-LLB (H)—2016-21, Amity Law School, Delhi Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University (84·9%)

PD—Were you preparing for other career opportunities as well while preparing for your ultimate goal *i.e.*, Career in Judicial Services ?

Ms. Jyoti—No. I always wanted to devote my full attention to this exam.

PD—While the changing economic environment offers immense lucrative career opportunities in various sectors, still what kept you motivated towards Judicial Services ?

Ms. Jyoti—As Hon'ble Justice Murlidhar (retd) has said that judicial service is more than a mere salaried job. It is an experience which enables a person to have a broad perspective and to look at things from 360 degrees. It is a selfless job.

PD—What's important that needs attention and what's not? Share your thoughts and opinions.

Ms. Jyoti—It very important to have a constant eye on your goal just like an eagle finds its prey among many things. The things which become a cause of distraction must be left behind. Identify the areas where you lack and work upon them. Always pay attention to the larger purpose behind your aim.

PD—'Time Management' is a key factor while making preparations as well as in writing examination papers. Did you come across such a problem during this period ? If yes, then how did you manage things ?

Ms. Jyoti—Every aspirant faces the same problem of time management. I was no exception. I had tried and tested many methods and eventually boiled down to making flexible time tables with minimum rigidity. Setting up realistic daily targets can help you to end your day on a good note. Lastly, answer writing practice in a time bound manner with that very pen which you are going to use on the exam day, will help you to complete your paper in time.

PD—How did you prepare for General Knowledge/Current Affairs Paper. List some of the Magazines, News papers, Books etc. that you referred to.

Ms. Jyoti—Pratiyogita Darpan monthly issues, Newspaper and Rahul's IAS magazine.

PD—How did you prepare yourself for Interview (Viva-voce) ?

Ms. Jyoti—My interview lasted fairly long. The Board was cordial. I was asked practical questions and they tested the analytical skills and rationality. They started by asking questions about myself and then proceeded to law of Contract, Constitution, Evidence, Criminal Procedure, Civil Procedure, Transfer of Property, Specific Relief Act, etc. Some questions pertained to general knowledge and about State of Himachal Pradesh in particular.

PD—About Interview Boards, many candidates have set impressions. Do you consider such thoughts help or hinder one's performance in Interview ?

Ms. Jyoti—Pre-conceived ideas often obstruct us from growing and adapting to the surroundings. Thus, set impressions may have a bad effect on one's performance in the interview. One should remain calm, confident, and humble throughout the interview. Faith on oneself is the most important factor.

Personal Qualities

Strong Points—Responsible, Self-motivated and high morale. Adaptability.

Weak Points—Being too much of self-critical.

Hobbies— Badminton, Drawing and painting, Reading non-fictions.

PD—What is the importance of medium of examination for exams like JSE ?

Ms. Jyoti—Some Judicial Services Exams like those in Delhi and Himachal Pradesh are conducted only in English. Whereas Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh etc. also provide Hindi as a medium of examination. One should always choose the medium in which one is comfortable and is able to express oneself better.

PD—Does the educational, financial and demographic status of the family of an aspirant have any impact on the preparation?

Ms. Jyoti—It is true that educational, financial and demographic status of the family of an aspirant has have an impact on the preparation and make a difference but that difference can be covered with sheer hard work, dedication, courage and perseverance. Undoubtedly, aspirants from humble and modest backgrounds are doing wonders.

PD—Pratiyogita Darpan, the largest read Career & Competition magazine, has been the top choice of aspirants; what is your opinion about it ?

Ms. Jyoti—PD helped me throughout my exam journey. It is a wholesome magazine which can be an asset in every exam.

PD—What is the secret of your success ?

Ms. Jyoti—There is no secret as such. The various ingredients were hard-work, support, determination, regularity etc.

PD—To whom would you like to give the credit for your success ?

Ms. Jyoti—I give the credit of my success to my parents, other family members, friends and teachers for their strong support, motivation and good wishes.

PD—Any suggestion/advice you would like to give to the future aspirants.

Ms. Jyoti—My mother always says that one should be true to oneself. I would also say the same that never cheat yourself. Never give up and fight until the last breath. However, life is bigger than the exam. Take care of your mental and physical health.

PD—Thank you very much and wishing you all the best for your future endeavours.

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Inspiring Youth

"Firm belief in myself, intelligent planning and devoted efforts are the secrets of my success."

Kushagra Mishra

Topper—Uttar Pradesh Judicial Services Exam., 2022 (94th Rank)

'Pratiyogita Darpan' arranged an exclusive interview with Shri Kushagra Mishra who has been selected in Uttar Pradesh Judicial Services Exam., 2022. He deserves high admiration and our heartiest congratulations on his glorious achievement. This important, thought-provoking and highly inspiring interview is being presented here in its original form.

PD—Congratulations on your success in the UP Judiciary Exam ! Please introduce yourself to our readers.

Shri Kushagra—Thanks a lot, I am Kushagra Mishra and I feel deeply honoured and privileged in talking to you. I am a resident of Vrindavan in district Mathura and completed my basic schooling from Vrindavan Public school, Vrindavan. I graduated in Mechanical and Automation engineering from Amity University, Noida in 2016 and afterwards I did my L-L.B. from Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi and passed out in 2020.

PD—What did motivate you to choose judiciary as a career ?

Shri Kushagra—For me, biggest motivation came from home only, my grandfather was a lawyer and his library was invigorating for me. My father told me the story of King Vikramaditya's throne of justice and in emancipation I also realised my grandfather's dream of having a judge from family. All these combined factors made me inclined towards the post of judicial officer.

PD—What's the current pattern of the Uttar Pradesh Judicial Services Examination ?

Shri Kushagra—The examination is conducted in three phases. **Firstly,** the preliminary test where a candidate is required to take two tests comprising general knowledge and law respectively. **Secondly**, after qualifying the Preliminary test, the Mains examination is conducted, it comprises of 6 papers. **Lastly,** being the Interview-cum-Personality Test.



Struggle is the opportunity to do something and become something.

—Kushagra Mishra

PD—What was your strategy for UP Judiciary Prelims ?

Shri Kushagra—In the UP Judiciary prelims after the extension of syllabus for preliminary examination, I evolved my strategy to complete the syllabus. The basic thing, which I followed, was to read the Bare Acts in full around 4-5 times and kept on revising bare acts only and tried to inculcate the gist of every provision. I also referred to law journals like SCC and Manupatra for the latest law updates and read the landmark Hon'ble Supreme Court decision in full. While for General Knowledge Exam I focused to complete the current affairs first and referred to monthly Pratiyogita Darpan magazine and the quarterly issues, religiously. For the static GK part, I referred to exam series books by Upkar and Pratiyogita Darpan. For both the prelims papers I constanly tested myself by solving topic wise multiple choice questions.

PD—What was your strategy for the Uttar Pradesh Judiciary Mains exam ?

Shri Kushagra—We got around 3 months to prepare for Mains examination. Due to the vastness of syllabus I prepared for all 6 papers simultaneously. The basic source of preparation was the previous years mains questions, the Bare Acts and the landmark and latest judgements of Hon'ble Supreme Court and Hon'ble Allahabad High Court. I continued the momentum that I had built for the preliminary examination, and I focused more on retaining the key phrases from bare act provisions and learnt the sections by breaking it in to parts, executing this exercise the Case materials which I studied in Campus Law Centre, DU and the classical text books of law helped me a lot, whenever I faced any difficulty, I consulted my father who is also a practicing advocate, my teachers from CLC and my friends. I followed blog for regular law updates from the perspective of a student. For language I referred to the editorial in The Hindu of which Hindi translation is made available on their website. For general knowledge portion of history, I tried to read as much I could for atleast 2 hours a day, while I continued with the Pratiyogita Darpan English magazine religiously and current affairs related questions which became cakewalk for me, the articles in the Pratiyogita Darpan magazine helped me to prepare for essays alongwith the articles from The Hindu.

PD—How did you prepare for the Interview ?

Shri Kushagra—Generally, the Interview doesn't have any defined

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Syllabus, so I focused on revising the syllabus for mains examination and tried to brush up my concepts of law, as there were hardly 15 days between the announcement of mains result and interview date. Thus, I tried to remain calm and composed during that period and did yoga and meditation to win over the anxiety.

Bio-Data

Name—Kushagra Mishra

Father's Name—Mr. Ashutosh Mishra

Mother's Name—Mrs. Nita Mishra

Date of Birth—August 24, 1994

Educational Qualifications—

10th—2009, CBSE, Vrindavan Public School, Vrindavan, U.P. (87·6%)

12th—2011, CBSE, Porter Burchard Methodist Senior Secondary School, Vrindavan, U.P. (67·4%)

B.Tech—2016, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh (82·1%)

L-L.B.—2020, University of Delhi (63·7%)

PD—How was your interview and what questions were asked by the Board ?

Shri Kushagra—I was asked if being a mechanical engineer I have read Motor Vehicles Act in full. After this the nature of questions was utility oriented and I was asked many questions on the application of evidence and Intellectual property laws. While the questions from Constitutional law were based on my understanding of basics of constitution and I was also asked the latest Constitution bench judgements of Hon'ble Supreme court such as Janhit Abhiyan(EWS), Subhash Desai *Vs* Governor of Maharashtra and GNCTD *Vs* UOI.

PD—Can you tell something to students and youth readers about the usefulness of Pratiyogita Darpan Magazines for preparations of a competitive exams and enhancement in their knowledge ?

Shri Kushagra—The Monthly and Quarterly Pratiyogita Darpan Magazines are boon for the aspirants. For me, the magazines came in handy at all stages of my preparation of judicial services and even when I switched from engineering to law, these magazines only helped me to cover the current and static parts for my DU L-L.B. entrance examination. I can speak for myself that the compendium and the multifarious articles help in building the basic general knowledge and improves the imagination and writing pattern of the reader, which helps in the essay writing and in answering the current affairs-based questions in pre and mains both. The news section covers all news of national and international importance precisely and even if someone has missed on reading newspapers, the Pratiyogita Darpan magazines help him/her cover the lost part efficiently.

PD—Pratiyogita Darpan releases its very useful Year Book and other 27 Special Issues on Various Subjects *i.e.*, Economics, Public Administration, Civics, Geography, History, etc., which are very useful for students to prepare a competitive exam, what is your recommendation for these special issues ?

Shri Kushagra—I would say that if one needs to grasp the concepts proficiently he/she must refer to these books and if one has read classical books on history, geography, polity etc. then these books are handy for revision and give the overview of exam oriented syllabus to the aspirants.

PD—Can you share your book list for all subjects/parts (prelims and mains) for the UP Judicial Exam ?

Shri Kushagra—Law-Bare Acts of every act in the syllabus

- The Singhal publication MCQ book for law in 4 volumes (for prelims)
- Constitution—V.N. Shukla
- IPC—Sir H.S. Gaur
- Evidence-Woodroffe and Ameer Ali
- CrPC—Sohoni's CrPC
- CPC—Mulla
- Partnership and contract—Avtar Singh
- Hindi Essays—Pariksha Manthan legal essays and Nibandhmala
- Property Law—V.P. Sarathi
- Tort law—Ratanlal and Dhirajlal
- Along with the latest and landmark cases

And I also referred to the case material provided by my teachers in Campus Law Centre, DU along with Short law books by A.K Jain for quick revision.

PD—Had you taken coaching from anywhere ?

Shri Kushagra—No, I have not taken any coaching. I did the self-preparation under the aegis of my Campus law centre teachers and my father.

PD—Anything else you'd like to tell our readers who are preparing for the Judicial Services Examination.

Shri Kushagra—The goal to become a presiding officer of the court must fascinate you, because in my opinion cracking the civil services examination is more of a psychological battle. There will be many downhills but never leave your grit, persevere and have faith in Almighty and in the hard work of your parents because we as students can fail but the faith reposed in us by our family and friends will never allow us to quit.

PD—Are you appearing in any other competitive exam and if yes, which are in your target list ?

Shri Kushagra—No, I am not appearing in any other competitive exam. I am happy after clearing UPJS.

PD—To whom you would like to give credit, who inspired you to start and continue your preparation ?

Shri Kushagra—I give the credit of my success to my grand father and my father who had been the sources of my motivation.

PD—Who is your Role model ?

Shri Kushagra—My role model is my grandfather, he walked the rope of service with utmost integrity and compassion.

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Focus 1

Supreme Court's Judgement on the Abrogation of Article 370 and 35(A) in Jammu & Kashmir : A Right Move Towards Constitutional Integration

—Dr. S.S.S. Chauhan

The seven decade old system of 'two flag, two head and two constitution' ended with the historic judgment, pronounced by the five member Constitution Bench of the Spreme Court on December 11, 2023 and established the concept of 'ek rashtra, ek nishan, ek vidhan' as was perceived by the founder of Bharteeya Jansangh Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. For Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the proponent of "one flag, one head, one constitution", nothing was above the national interest. His sacrifice and struggle for the integrity of India kept Kashmir and Bengal an integral part of the country. Dr. Mukherjee was a strong supporter of indigenous policies in national reconstruction. With freedom from Article 370 and 35-A, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's resolve of 'One Nation, One Constitution and One Head of the nation' became a reality after 70 years of Independence.

After applying all the Central Laws in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union territory of Ladakh, 890 Central Laws applied, 205 State laws repealed and 130 State laws modified in UT of Jammu-Kashmir in line with the Constitution of India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rightly commented at this juncture, "In its verdict on December 11, the Supreme Court has strengthened the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat". It has reminded us that what define us are bonds of unity and a shared commitment to good governance. Today, every child in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh is born with a clean canvas, where he or she can paint a future full of vibrant aspirations. Today, the dreams of the people are no longer prisoners of the past but about possibilities for the future. After all, development, democracy and dignity have replaced disillusionment, disappointment and despondency."

Supreme Court's decision ended a chapter that started with the ascension of Jammu & Kashmir to India in 1947 at a time when the region's political future was uncertain, the judges declared the abrogation to be a perfectly valid exercise of power by the President, ruling that Article 370 was always meant to be a temporary provision.

Thus, the process of constitutional integration, which started on August 5, 2019 with the abrogation of Article 370 and 35(A) by the President of India and duly approved by the Parliament, completed through this landmark judgement.

The judges were in unison about the validity of the two constitutional orders (COs) issued in August 2019 by the President in applying all provisions of the Indian Constitution to J&K and the cession of Article 370, declaring that the President was not required to obtain the approval of the J&K constituent assembly (which was dissolved in 1957) or the J&K legislative assembly before notifying under Article 370 that "this article shall cease to be operative".

"The declaration issued by the President in exercise of the power under Article 370(3) is a culmination of the process of integration. Thus, we do not find that the President's exercise of power under Article 370(3) was mala fide," held the court.

Concept of Constitutional Integration

According to Betul Aslan, "The constitutional integration means the legal harmony among all legal rules according to the whole constitutional norms and no legal conflict against the constitutional aims in legal theory and practice. The quality of legal harmony does not imply the same establishment of legal norms".

Constitutional integration can be achieved with the following tools :

1. **Constitutional explanation of legal rules :** It makes the constitution stronger in its legal meaning with the explanation of legal norms including constitutional rules on the axis of the internal and external constitutional norms. Therefore, escaping from the constitution is hindered by constitutional norms and the situation is supported by other legal norms created by constitution due to the realisation of constitutional openness providing the known duties of the authorities. Implementation of the Constitution in its letter and spirit depends upon the clarity of the terms and their references.
2. **Compensation of legal deficiencies against constitutional rules :** It is clear that it reflects constitutional aims within other legal norms. But the tool of completion is restricted by the scope of the related norms because the norms have the special scope and they order the legal life within their scopes permitted under the constitutional rules.
3. **Cooperation among all legal norms :** The external view of constitutional integration is a mission of cooperation among all legal norms. The unity of many factors also creates the constitutional solidarity by the constitutional norms and the constitutional integration of the legal rules.

Background

Article 370, which came into effect in October 1949, granted Kashmir autonomy of internal administration, allowing it to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications. Government of India legally allowed a separate constitution and a separate flag its own Prime Minister for Jammu & Kashmir. Outsiders were denied property rights in the State.

Article 35A, a further provision added to Article 370 in 1954,

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empowered state lawmakers to ensure special rights and privileges for permanent residents of the state. So many laws, enacted for whole of the country, were not applicable in the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

As per the provisions of Article 370, the Parliament had the right to enact laws with regard to defence, external affairs and communication for Jammu & Kashmir; but to make laws related to any other subject, the Central government had to seek the consent of the state. The Parliament of India could enact laws only on limited subjects in connection with Jammu & Kashmir. Due to Article 370, most of the sections of the Constitution of India did not apply to the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The people of other states could not purchase land in Jammu & Kashmir. Similarly, the provision of financial emergency as enshrined in Article 360 of the Constitution of India did not apply to Jammu & Kashmir. The Central Right to Information Act, 2005 also did not apply to Jammu & Kashmir. The tenure of the Legislative Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir was 6 years, whereas the tenure of Legislative Assemblies of other States is 5 years.

Key Facts of Supreme Court's Judgement on the abrogation of Article 370 and 35 (A)

A five member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, on December 11, 2023 unanimously upheld the power of the President to abrogate Article 370 in August 2019, leading to the reorganisation of the full-fledged State of Jammu and Kashmir to two Union Territories- Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and denuding it of its special privileges. There were three judgements, one by the CJI (for himself), Justice B.R. Gavai, and Surya Kant. Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sanjiv Khanna penned separate and concurring verdicts on the issue.

Key Facts of the Judgement are following :

- The President had power to abrogate Article 370 if "special circumstances warrant a special solution".
- Introduction of abrogation of Article 370 is not malafide. It is a valid exercise of power.
- The court cannot sit in appeal over the decision of the President on whether the special circumstances which led to the arrangement under Article 370 have ceased to exist.
- The abrogation of Article 370 was the culmination of a 'gradual and collaborative exercise' spread over the past 70 years between the Centre and the State to integrate Jammu and Kashmir with the Union. The objective of the integration process was to make the entirety of the rights and obligations enshrined in the Indian Constitution applicable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The court declared the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution 'redundant' and 'inoperative'.
- The Constitution of India is a complete code for constitutional governance.
- The Court directed the Election Commission of India to hold the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections by September 30, 2024.
- The court found it unnecessary to examine whether the reorganisation of the State into the two Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir had been even permissible. The Bench further upheld the carving out of the Union Territory of Ladakh from the State of Jammu & Kashmir.
- "In view of the statement, we do not find it necessary to determine whether the reorganisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir is permissible under Article 3," the CJI said.
- The CJI added, "However, we uphold the validity of the decision to carve out the Union Territory of Ladakh in view of Article 3(a) read with Explanation I which permits forming a Union Territory by separation of a territory from any State."
- Every decision taken by the Centre on behalf of the state during Presidential Rule can't be challenged.
- The Court observed, "Even if this court holds that the Proclamation could not have been issued under Article 356, there would be no material relief which can be given in view of the fact that President's Rule was revoked in the State of Jammu and Kashmir on October 31, 2019."
- Jammu & Kashmir had divested itself of "any element of sovereignty" after the execution of the Instrument of Accession to the Union in October 1947.
- The State of Jammu and Kashmir does not have 'internal sovereignty' distinguishable from the powers and privileges enjoyed by other States in the country.
- At most, the special privileges and even a separate Constitution for Jammu and Kashmir was merely a "feature of asymmetric federalism and not sovereignty".
- Article 370 was only a "temporary provision" to ease the accession of the then princely State to the Union at a time of internal strife and war.
- The power of the Parliament or the President to abrogate Article 370 did not cease to exist with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir in 1957.
- When the Constituent Assembly dissolved, only the transitional power recognised in the proviso of Article 370(3), which empowered the Constituent Assembly to make its recommendations, ceased to exist. It did not affect the power held by the President under Article 370 (3).
- Only the power of the J&K Constituent Assembly to recommend abrogation of Article 370 ceased to exist with its dissolution. The power of the President under Article 370 (3) to abrogate Article 370 had continued to prevail.
- The President did not have to secure the concurrence of the Government of the State or Union Government acting on behalf of the State Government under the second proviso to Article 370(1)(d) while applying all the provisions of the Constitution to Jammu & Kashmir because such an exercise of

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power has the same effect as an exercise of power under Article 370(3) for which the concurrence or collaboration with the State Government was not required

Thus, the Supreme Court's judgement established constitutional sovereignty for whole of the country. Now, no part of the country is above the Constitution, national flag and emblem. The people of the Jammu & Kashmir now enjoy the same rights and privileges as are being availed by the rest of the citizens of India. In fact this judgment is a lesson to divisive forces of the country who on and often talk about the independence of the state. Basically, India is a quasi-federal state in which states enjoy the rights and obligations as have been defined in the three lists of Seventh Schedule of the constitution of India along with the legislative, executive and judicial system.

Supreme Court's Ruling tilts Federal Balance in Favour of the Union

The present judgement has legalized the supremacy of the Union Government over the states in terms of creation of new state/UT by bifurcating the existing state. In ruling that Parliament can, effectively, unilaterally change the status of a state to a Union Territory if the state is under President's rule, the Supreme Court, in upholding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, seemed to tilt the federal balance in favour of the Union.

Normally, the President of India necessarily refers such a law to the State Legislature concerned for 'expressing its views', as has been mandated in Article 3 of the Constitution, that deals with formation of new states and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing states. In the case of Jammu & Kashmir, the President of India referred the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019, to Parliament for its views since the state was under President's rule. Under the President's rule, Parliament exercised the 'powers of the Legislature'.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019 adopted the following resolution in this regard.

"That the President of India has referred the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019 to this House under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India for its views as this House is vested with the powers of the State Legislature of Jammu and Kashmir, as per proclamation of the President of India dated 19th December, 2018. This House resolves to express the view to accept the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019."

In future, any powerful government (with required majority in both the Houses of the Parliament) can misuse this power under the pretext of the Supreme Court's ruling, to create new state or a new Union Territory through the bifurcation or merger of any state as per its political promises. It may weaken the federal corrector of the Constitution as well as the country.

Key Points from the Judgment

- The Supreme Court uphold validity of decision to carve Union Territory of Ladakh out of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Supreme Court hold exercise of Presidential power to issue constitutional order abrogating Article 370 of Constitution as valid.
- Article 370 of Constitution was temporary, President's power to revoke it still exists.
- J&K does not have internal sovereignty different from other states of the country.
- J&K became integral part of India, this is evident from Articles 1 and 370 of the Constitution.
- The Supreme Court hold the President seeking concurrence of union and not state as valid, all provisions of the Indian constitution can be applied to Jammu & Kashmir.
- When Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir ceased to exist, special condition for which Article 370 was introduced ceased to exist.
- Recommendation of Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir was not binding on President of India.
- The Supreme Court directed that restoration of statehood in Union Territory of J&K should be done at the earliest.

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Focus 2

Accelerating Climate Action : Key Outcomes of COP 28

—Dhiraj Pandey

Against the backdrop of controversy, geopolitical conflicts and increasing extreme weather events, the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference from 30 November to 12 December, 2023, concluded at Expo City, Dubai. Delegates from nearly 200 countries, business and finance leaders, and civil society representatives gathered for the COP28 climate conference aimed at accelerating the transition to a clean-energy future.

In this article, we are going to explore key decisions taken at COP28 and their respective highlights and lowlights.

A brief description of COP 28 is being provided below before describing the key decisions taken at COP28 and their respective highlights and lowlights.

What is a COP ?

COP stands for 'Conference of the Parties', where the 'parties' are the countries that signed up to the original UN climate agreement in 1992.

To put it simply, the COP is where the world comes together to agree on ways to address the climate crisis, such as limiting global temperature rise to 1·5 degrees Celsius, helping vulnerable communities adapt to the effects of climate change, and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Institutional Background : The United Nations Earth Summit, held in Rio in 1992, established the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which provided a legal framework for international cooperation to combat climate change. These are high-level conferences that bring together states, regional organizations and non-state actors. There are 198 official Parties, comprising 197 countries, plus the European Union. Any meeting between the Parties in a convention is officially a COP, although the acronym is more typically used in reference to the UN Climate Summit, an annual gathering and the world's highest decision-making body on climate issues. The COP is responsible for the Paris Agreement, the landmark climate treaty of 2015.

The COP conference has been held every year since 1992, except for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is for governments to come to an agreement on policies that will limit global temperature rises and adapt to the impacts that come with climate change.

Evolution of COPs over the years : COPs were traditionally limited to a small group of government negotiators. Today, they are global mega-events that attract tens of thousands of political leaders, businesspeople, sectoral experts, climate activists, and members of the public. COPs are critical platforms for both government and non-government entities to discuss, debate and ideate their climate efforts, build networks, and make deals.

Priorities for the COP28 Presidency

It is time to Unite the world and Act together to Deliver actionable solutions to the climate crisis. The COP28 Action Agenda is guided by a single North Star; keeping 1·5C within reach. To do this, the Global Stocktake showed we must reduce 22 gigatons of emissions before 2030.

COP28's Action Agenda was focused on four key areas :

1. Fast-tracking a just and orderly transition
2. Fixing climate finance
3. Focusing on nature, lives and livelihoods
4. Fostering inclusivity for all.

Key Outcomes of COP28 Climate Summit :

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) concluded with an agreement that signals the 'beginning of the end' of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just and equitable transition, underpinned by deep emissions cuts and scaled-up finance.

In a demonstration of global solidarity, negotiators from nearly 200 Parties came together in Dubai with a decision on the world's first 'global stocktake' to ratchet up climate action before the end of the decade – with the overarching aim to keep the global temperature limit of 1·5°C within reach.

Negotiators from around the world worked day and night to deliver a new plan for addressing the mounting crisis posed by human-caused climate change. An agreement between nations has been reached to provide funding for those who are most impacted by climate change (loss and damage) and to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems.

1. Loss and Damage : A landmark agreement was made at COP28 to assist vulnerable nations facing the most severe consequences of climate change.

These can include :

- The development of national response plans.
- Addressing insufficient climate information and data, and
- Promoting equitable, safe and dignified human mobility in the form of displacement, relocation, and migration, in cases of temporary and permanent loss and damage.

A board with diverse geographical backgrounds will be established, and the World Bank will initially take over management of the fund. The fund, which currently stands at over $ 650 million, was supported by the first pledges made from wealthy nations in Dubai.

2. Global Goal on Adaptation : Continuing a theme from COP27, this COP saw emphasis put on supporting strategies for adapting to the impacts of climate change. The final text retains calls for doubling adap-

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tation funding and strategies for assessing and monitoring adaptation needs in the future. It is a positive development that an explicit date for 2030 has been integrated into the text for targets on water security, ecosystem restoration, and health. However, language was weakened around a commitment to closing the adaptation finance gap. Much of the funding language was transferred from the adaptation section to the implementation section of the COP text. Additional details on financing expectations and targets are needed at COP29.

3. Global Stocktake and Fossil Fuels : The Global Stocktake was the most studied document of COP28. After strong opposition to weakening language on emissions and fossil fuels, several improvements were made to the final document. It refers to the projection of global peak emissions from 2020 to 2025. The focus is set on reducing emissions in line with the goal of limiting global warming to 1·5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and reaching net zero by 2050.

The final document also called on countries to take a range of measures to reduce emissions. It also announced its intention to "accelerate and significantly reduce non-CO_2 emissions around the world, includeing in particular methane emissions, by 2030". Unfortunately, some linguistic aspects were also reflected in the final draft. This includes watering down the Coal Declaration from "rapidly phasing out unabated coal-fired power generation" or simply referring to commitment to the unabated phase-out of coal-fired power generation.

It included setting 'permission limits' for One paragraph also mentions the role of 'transition fuels', *i.e.*, gas (and possibly oil), in the energy transition. The central language of fossil fuels calls for 'transition' rather than exit. In particular, it is directly related only to the use of fossil fuels in the energy system.

4. Climate Finance Target : Finally, progress was made on new collective quantitative goals (NCQGs), building on $ 100 billion pledged by developed countries to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries. Notably, it has not yet reached its $100 billion goal (although it appears to be on track this year) and is far short of its needs.

At the COP, it was agreed to formulate financial targets for 2025 and beyond by COP29. This is progress, but as with last year's losses and damages, the details will not be resolved until next year.

5. Carbon Markets : Another closely watched area in Dubai was carbon markets. Carbon markets are systems that allow countries and companies to buy and sell carbon credits, which represent reductions in greenhouse gases, to meet climate goals.

These markets can encourage cost-effective emissions reductions by providing financial incentives for emissions reduction projects. However, these markets are also plagued by reliability concerns.

Negotiators sought to more precisely define credit market monitoring and consideration of different types of loans. As no agreement has been reached, key issues regarding the permanence of the requested reductions/deletions will need to be addressed at COP29. This is a disappointing outcome for those aiming to build dynamic and highly integrated carbon markets.

6. Other Key Themes (Just Transition and Nature) : The final COP text included some important call-outs about the importance of deli-vering a just transition. The just transition was an important focus in the Global Stocktake, Global Goal on Adaptation, climate finance, and implementation agreements. But further research will be needed on what a just transition means in quantitative terms, from emissions trajectory to commitments to climate finance.

Nature was also mentioned directly in the Global Goal on Adaptation, which spoke of "accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions," and there is growing recognition that climate goals demand nature-positivity. A promising 2030 deforestation goal was also part of the final text.

COP29 Host

Baku in Azerbaijan will host COP29, avoiding an extension of the UAE presidency and a conference location in Bonn, Germany. This agreement was reached after Armenia and Russia dropped their objections.

Why was the COP28 Event in Dubai Controversial ?

- The UAE is one of the world's top 10 oil-producing nations.
- It appointed the chief executive of the state-owned oil company, Sultan al-Jaber, President of the COP28 talks.
- Oil - like gas and coal is a fossil fuel. These are the main causes of climate change because they release planet-warming greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide when burned for energy.
- Mr. Jabbar has previously argued that he is particularly suited to revitalize the oil and gas industry, having also overseen the expansion of clean technologies such as wind and solar power as chairman of renewable energy company Masdar.

Why was COP28 Important ?

- COP28 will help maintain the goal of limiting long-term global temperature rise to 1·5°C. Almost 200 countries agreed to this in Paris in 2015.
- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN's climate change agency, the 1·5°C target is critical to avoiding the most harmful effects of climate change.
- Long-term warming is currently about 1·1 or 1·2 degrees Celsius higher than the pre-industrial period, before humans started burning fossil fuels on a large scale.
- However, although the exact numbers are unknown, recent estimates suggest that the world is expected to experience a warming of approximately 2·4-2·7 degrees Celsius by 2100.
- As a result, the UN says the window of opportunity to keep the 1·5 degree limit within reach is 'rapidly narrowing'.

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COP28 has concluded with a final consensus that lays out an ambitious response to the Global Stocktake and puts forward a plan to close the gaps to 2030. It calls on parties to transition away from fossil fuels to reach net zero and includes a new specific target to triple renewables and double energy efficiency by 2030. The parties agreed on a landmark text named The UAE Consensus that sets out an ambitious climate agenda to keep 1·5°C within reach.

Overall, the UAE hosts effectively managed the logistics of the largest COP in history. The conference reached landmark agreements on loss and damage and a clear ambition to transition away from fossil fuels. However, in the final accounting, much of the agreement feels like incrementalism. Against the urgency of the moment, during the hottest year on record, when giant leaps are needed, small steps are not enough. Despite significant progress, COP28 did not deliver the decisive action on climate change that science believes is necessary.

COP28 : UN Climate Summit Ends with Divisive Deal

The governments of the world have agreed on a declaration at the COP28 Climate Summit that has been both hailed as historic and dismissed as weak. Here are the big takeaways from COP 28 :

- Countries agreed on a text that encourages countries to move away from fossil fuels and quickly ramp up renewable energy.
- Island states whose homes are being washed away by rising sea levels said the text was an improvement but contains a 'litany of loopholes'.
- Scientists said the document did not go far enough for world leaders to honour the promise they made to keep the planet from heating 1·5°C above pre-industrial temperatures by the end of the century.
- Poorer countries said they were frustrated by the lack of a concrete plan to adapt to climate change and money to do so.

The Way Forward

The negotiations on the Enhanced Transparency Framework at COP28 laid the foundations for a new era in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. UN Climate Action has developed transparency reporting and verification tools for Parties, which were presented and tested at COP28.

The final version of the reporting tool must be made available to Parties by June 2024. At COP28, Parties also agreed that Azerbaijan will host COP29 from 11 to 22 November, 2024, and Brazil will host COP30 from 10 to 21 November, 2025.

The next two years will be critical. At COP29, governments will need to set new climate finance targets that reflect the scale and urgency of the climate change problem. And at COP30, we must provide new nationally determined contributions that apply to the whole economy, cover all greenhouse gases, and are fully compatible with the 1·5°C temperature limit.

At the beginning of 2025, each state will have to pay a new nationally determined contribution. All efforts in the areas of financing, adaptation and mitigation must keep us in step with her 1·5 degree world.

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This will also be demonstrated by the Gaganyaan mission that will send astronauts to low Earth orbit and bring them back to Earth.

The first module of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station—India's planned space station that will be capable of conducting experiments with the help of robots will be launched by 2028.

World's First 3D Printed Temple Comes up in Telangana's Siddipet

The world's first 3D printed temple is being built in Telangana in an area covering 3,800 square feet. The temple has been built by Hyderabad Apsuja Infratech in collaboration with addictive manufacturing solutions provider Simpliforge Creations.

- The temple will have three sanctums. Each dedicated to a different deity : Modak for Lord Ganesha, Square Shivalay for Lord Shankar and Lotus-Shaped Sanctuary for Goddess Parvati.
- The three gopurams (spires) and three sanctums were printed on-site by using robotics construction 3D printing facility.
- The remaining structures like the pillars, slabs and flooring were built using conventional construction techniques.

Kala Azar

India's first target year for Kala Azar elimination was 2010. This was later pushed to 2015, 2017 and 2020. However, after missing the deadline thrice, India is poised to achieve the elimination target for visceral leishmaniasis or Kala Azar this year with no block in the country reporting more than one case per 10,000 people.

About Kala Azar :

- Kala Azar is a parasitic infection transmitted by sandflies.
- It causes fever, weight loss, and spleen and liver enlargement.
- Liposomal amphotericin B alone, given as a single dose is currently recommended as the drug of choice by the Kala Azar elimination program in India.
- Left untreated, it can be fatal in 95% of cases.

Pompe Disease

Recently, India's first Pompe disease patient passes away. Pompe Disease known as Glycogen Storage Disease Type II, Pompe disease is a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme acid alphaglucosidase (GAA). This enzyme is crucial for breaking down glycogen into glucose within the lysosomes of cells. Its prevalence estimates range from 1 in 40,000 to 1 in 300,000 births.

Key Symptoms :

- Progressive muscle weakness, Difficulties in mobility, Respiratory complications and Cardiac complications.
- It is diagnosed by genetic and enzyme tests.
- There is no cure for disease, there are treatments to manage symptoms and improve the quality of life.

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Focus 3

WTO's Trade Policy Toolkit for Climate Action

—Dr. Vikram Singh

The WTO Secretariat on 2nd December, 2023 launched a 10-point set of 'Trade Policy Tools for Climate Action' at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai to present governments with a toolkit to draw from in their efforts to meet global climate targets. The new publication explores how integrating the trade policy options, such as reviewing import tariffs on low-carbon solutions, into national strategies can help economies mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to its consequences.

The toolkit, prepared by the WTO Secretariat as a source of information and possible inspiration to policymakers, spotlights 10 trade policy actions based on the Secretariat's research and on what many WTO members are already doing.

On government procurement, the WTO report further states that governments spend around US $ 13 trillion in public procurement per year, and this is directly and indirectly responsible for 15% of green house gas emissions. Introducing climate-sensitive criteria, while keeping public markets open for efficient and sustainable suppliers, could significantly reduce emissions according to the publication. The WTO's Environmental Database reveals that members have notified to the WTO over 70 environment-related government procurement measures since 2009.

WTO's Trade Policy Toolkits for Climate Action

1. Trade facilitation
2. Government procurement
3. Regulations and certification
3. Services
4. Import tariffs
5. Subsidies
6. Trade finance
7. Food and agriculture trade
8. Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
9. Internal taxation and carbon pricing.

In the light of the above observations the WTO has suggested certain measures to correct imbalances in the management of trade across the world. Key points of proposed Climatic action toolkit are given below :

Key Trade Policy Toolkits :

(1) Speed up customs clearance, reducing GHG emissions associated with inefficient customs procedures and road freight by adopting trade facilitation measures :

- Reducing waiting times at the border and streamlining inefficient customs procedures can help reduce emissions associated with trade, especially as trade volumes continue to increase.
- Implementing trade facilitation measures, such as the use of electronic documentation, can help to reduce border control delays and related energy consumption, leading to reductions of up to 85 per cent of emissions at certain land border crossings. The digitalization of paper-based trade processes could also reduce waste and lower associated emissions by as much as 63 per cent per invoice.
- The WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which entered into force in 2017, aims to simplify, harmonize and expedite customs procedures and border controls between trading partners. It is expected to reduce trade costs by an average of 14·3 per cent with the biggest gains in the poorest economies. Currently, the rate of implementation of TFA commitments by WTO members stands at around 77 per cent, but the figure is much lower in poor economies, which would benefit the most by speeding up implementation.

(2) Drive lower carbon emissions by using government procurement as a tool :

- Government procurement of goods and services accounts for approximately 13 per cent of world GDP (around USD 13 trillion per year). However, it is estimated to be directly or indirectly responsible for 15 per cent of GHG emissions. Government procurement systems usually mandate cost-effectiveness but only in some cases do they mandate climate change considerations.
- Greater emphasis on so-called green government procurement (GGP) policies can significantly reduce GHG emissions while producing major economic benefits, such as new green jobs and enhanced energy efficiency. For example, governments could revise their domestic procurement policies to include climate-sensitive criteria, such as science-based, low-carbon requirements in tenders. They could also make such criteria not just optional but mandatory.
- Various WTO members are already introducing low-carbon considerations into government procurement. The WTO's Environmental Database reveals that members have notified to the WTO over 70 environment-related government procurement measures since 2009, with the aim of promoting environmental goods and services, energy conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and renewable energy.

(3) Use international standards to avoid regulatory fragmentation when upgrading energy efficiency regulations :

- The growing number of energy efficiency requirements for consumer goods, such as electric vehicles or household appliances, can help to reduce domestic energy consumption and related GHG emissions by excluding the

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most polluting goods from the market.

- WTO rules and committees, such as the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade, help to promote coherent regulations and alignment with international standards, including for the measurement of carbon emissions embodied in traded goods or energy efficiency. Adherence to these principles can minimize regulatory costs and duplication while helping achieve climate action goals.
- Since 2009, over 1,180 energy efficiency and conservation regulations have been notified to the WTO by over 70 WTO members. Most of the regulations target commercial appliances, industrial equipment, household appliances and other materials.

(4) Accelerate mitigation efforts, support adaptation and assist disaster recovery by reviewing domestic regulations and restrictions for providers of climate-related services :

- Services related to low-carbon technologies for instance, installing, monitoring, and maintaining these technologies – are often as important as the goods themselves. Similarly, cross-border provision of insurance, telecommunications, logistics, health and weather forecasting services can help economies prepare for climate-related crises.
- Taking prompt action to review and reduce restrictions – including in the form of streamlined domestic regulations to trade in key services related to climate mitigation and adaptation can support governments' climate action strategies. To better respond to extreme weather events, economies could, for example, facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications of foreign service providers of relief services and reconstruction, in a manner compatible with WTO rules.

(5) Help accelerate the transition to a green economy by rebalancing tariff policies that may inadvertently benefit carbon-intensive sectors :

- Current import tariffs tend to be lower in carbon-intensive industries than in clean industries. Key fossil fuels, such as crude oil and coal, face average applied tariffs of 0·8 and 1·6 per cent respectively in the top ten importing markets while renewable energy equipment faces average tariffs of 3·2 per cent, with some members applying tariffs as high as 12 per cent. In the automotive sector, low-carbon vehicles exported to major markets face applied tariffs that are 1·6 to 3·9 percentage points higher than for conventional combustion vehicles.
- Import tariffs could be reviewed with a view to promoting the affordability and uptake of products such as renewable energy equipment and electric vehicles needed for the transition to a low-carbon economy. Rebalancing tariffs by even a relatively small number of percentage points could make an important contribution to reducing renewable energy costs and increasing the uptake of low-carbon technologies.

(6) Unlock additional resources to assist climate action by reforming environmentally harmful support measures :

- Governments' support measures, such as subsidies, can help correct market inefficiencies and enhance social welfare. At the same time, if not well calibrated, they can distort production and trade, reduce economic efficiency, exacerbate negative spillovers and damage the environment. This is relevant for sectors including in fossil fuels, agriculture, fisheries, transport and water supply. It is estimated that governments spend USD 1·2 trillion a year on potentially environmentally harmful subsidies.
- Reforming and repurposing subsidies could offer substantial environmental benefits. It is estimated that reforming fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 would reduce CO_2 emissions by an average of 6 per cent by 2030. Reinvesting just a third of these savings into energy efficiency and renewable energy could lead to an additional 3 per cent reduction in CO_2 emissions .

(7) Support the diffusion of climate-related technologies and equipment by facilitating and increasing trade finance, such as loans and guarantees :

- Some 60 to 80 per cent of world trade relies on trade finance, such as trade credit and insurance/guarantees, to help goods flow smoothly around the world. However, the supply of trade finance meets demand in only a few regions, with many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and women-led businesses unable to gain access to finance. In some regions, such as West Africa and the Mekong region, no more than 25 per cent of trade is supported by trade finance. Recent studies show that raising this trade coverage to 40 per cent would increase annual trade flows by 8 per cent on average.
- It is important that private banks, regional development banks and other institutions enhance their existing efforts to mobilize resources to increase trade finance programmes. One way they can do so is to join forces to develop risk-sharing frameworks that support trade in the products underpinning the energy transition.

(8) Improving how food and agricultural markets function to support climate adaptation and mitigation by easing trade in food :

- The weighted tariff average that governments applied to imports of agricultural goods was 6·2 per cent in 2021, but tariffs on some products can be prohibitive, at times even exceeding 1,000 per cent. In addition, farm subsidies can distort markets, contribute to increased carbon emissions, and encourage inefficient or unsustainable use of resources. OECD data indicates that USD 630 billion per year on average was provided in support to individual producers in 2020-22. A significant amount of this spending could be repurposed to

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support climate adaptation and mitigation.

- More open, fair and well-functioning global markets for food and agricultural products can play a critical role in shaping and assisting climate action, strengthening global food security, and reducing price volatility for food and fertilizer. WTO agreements by providing a stable and transparent framework for agriculture trade help in this regard. Prompt information-sharing about policies affecting trade would support the resilience of global markets for food and agricultural products.
- Agriculture and forestry account for over a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions. There is scope to lower emissions related to farm production and trade by changing agricultural practices and land use patterns. Paired with coordinated climate action, trade could also contribute to reducing the sector's carbon footprint by allowing economies to specialize more in foods they can produce with a relatively low carbon footprint.

(9) Protect economies from the spread of disease and pests exacerbated by climate change by strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary systems (SPS) :

- Extreme weather events, droughts and rising temperatures are altering the global prevalence of pests and diseases, affecting agricultural output and contributing to greater food safety risks. Plant pests alone are estimated to cause losses of up to 40 per cent of crop production, costing the global economy more than USD 220 billion annually. The impact of climate change on animal health is likely to be considerable, including through the spread of vector-borne diseases, such as bovine fever.
- To protect people from new pest and disease risks linked to climate change, it will be important for governments to adopt strategies and policies that strengthen SPS systems to safeguard plant and animal health. At the same time, it is critical to ensure that producers in vulnerable economies suffering from the impacts of climate change are equipped to meet these new SPS standards, so that they do not end up shut out of key export markets.
- Since 1995, WTO members have notified more than 33,000 measures to the SPS Committee. Most of these were adopted to protect food safety, ensure animal health and plant protection, and protect humans from animal or plant pests and diseases.

(10) Reduce policy fragmentation and compliance costs by improving coordination of climate-related, non-discriminatory internal taxes, including carbon pricing and equivalent policies :

- Carbon pricing, such as taxes on carbon-intensive goods, can be an effective tool in reducing global GHG emissions. Two thirds of all nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by governments to achieve emission reduction targets under the Paris Agreement consider the use of domestic carbon pricing schemes. However, the proliferation of such schemes according to the World Bank, over 70 carbon pricing systems already exist globally, with varying coverage and prices ranging from less than USD 1 to more than USD 130 per tonne of CO_2 equivalent can raise administrative and compliance costs for exporters, particularly for SMEs.
- Coordination of internal taxes, including carbon pricing, can be achieved through various international platforms. The 'Global Stocktake' at COP28 is a key opportunity for governments to review their internal taxation policies and seek better alignment.

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Be ready to face counter idea, a googly : If you come across any counter idea put forth by a member, before commenting evaluate it. If found appealing, accept it and agree with it politely. If not worthy, defend your answer firmly as this may be a ploy to check consistency in your views and opinion.

Never evade or dodge the issue : Perjure yourself and chances are you would be caught and that doesn't augur well for you. Do it at your own risk; give them an opening and the Interview Board may grill you, may trap you in arguments, build up pressure as discussion prolongs on given topic.

Though, sometimes Interview board members may fire a bolt from the blue just to check your mental alertness or there could be a situational question which reflects your decision-making capabilities.

Don't be skeptical : The time you start doubting yourself, the picture that looked clear at some point of time becomes blurry then. All you need to do is to adjust your focus. Avoid all distractions and negativity and keep your focus sharp like a laser beam, things will then gradually fall in place.

Being yourself echoes your originality : but exaggerating or spinning the precision or incapable to associate the key facts may weaken your integrity and you will have to face the consequences.

In Real Sense it is Conversation; an Exchange of Information

Most of the successful candidates who scored good marks see it as conversation; an exchange of information and while being calm is sign of your confidence; relaxed discussion mirroring your originality impress the interview board.

You need to be attentive as you face array of questions from diverse fields; being an active listener is going to help you a lot.

It is not just preparing academics or learning some new skills; it is about mental preparation and remaining calm and confident.

It is not just knowledge, the experienced board members are keen to know what is going on there in your mind and in such a scenario, your ability to articulate the answers matters and can create a big difference.

Be clear—Interview board's endeavour is to analyze real you.

Wishing you all a grand success !

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World Panorama

India and Maldives : New Challenges

—Arunoday Bajpai

India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy may have benign intentions, but it has been facing many odds in South Asia in recent years. Sri Lanka and Nepal are well known examples where, due to Chinese strategic influence India is faced with many problems in strengthening bilateral relations with these countries. Now Maldives has become another country, where India is facing the same problem. The vulnerability of India's foreign policy is so much so that the outcome of domestic elections has affected the future of India's regional policy. The Presidential elections in Maldives were held in September, 2023. In the first round of elections held on 9 September, 2023, no candidate could secured 50 per cent of the votes, hence a second round of votes were taken on 30 September, in which People's National Congress (PNC) candidate Mohamed Muizzu emerged victorious as new President of Maldives. Muizzu defeated pro-India Ibrahim Solih of Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP). Ibrahim Solih became President of Maldives in 2018 and followed *'India First'* foreign policy. On the other hand, the opposition parties and groups launched *'India Out'* campaign. This became an issue during the Presidential elections in September, 2023. The background of this issue relates to the close ties between India and Maldives cultivated during pro-India Ibrahim Solih regime 2018-23. India as a part of her regional strategy donated two helicopters and a Donier plane for its coastal security. India's 77 security personnel were deployed to operate three aerial platforms that were gifted for emergency evacuations and aerial surveillance of the nation's ocean territory for drug-smuggling and other criminal activities. In addition, India developed coast guard facilities at Addu atoll, which is southernmost atoll of Maldives. These developments became bone of contention between the ruling Solih regime and opposition groups and parties.

Thus when Muizzu was elected as President, he made public statement asking 77 Indian security personnel to leave Maldives. He also called for review agreements India and Maldives had signed over the years. This caused concerns in India. This was more so because Muizzu was close ally of former President of Maldives, Abdulla Yameen during 2013-18. Yameen is considered pro-China and it was during Yameen regime that China made strategic and economic inroads in to China. Now India fears the possible China tilt of the new President, Muizzu. During Muizzu's swearing in ceremony, Indian Minister Kiran Rijiju visited Male and conveyed India's concerns. During official discussion between Rijiju and the President Muizzu on 18 November, 2023, the new President Muizzu formally requested that the Government of India withdraw its military personnel from the Maldives. Muizzu noted that at the Presidential Election held in September, the Maldivian people had given him a strong mandate to make the request to India and expressed the hope that India would honour the democratic will of the people of the Maldives. Finally, The Indian Prime Minister Modi met Muizzue in Dubai in the first week of December during COP 28 meet and both agreed to strengthen economic relations, development partnership and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. They also agreed to form a Core Group to suggest measures for improving relations in these areas. However, there was no concession on the withdrawal of Indian security forces from the Maldives. After meeting Modi, Muizzu, while addressing newsmen on his return from a two-nation visit to Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), said that Modi reacted favourably to his suggestion for New Delhi to take back 77 military personnel. He added that Modi noted it is in the best interest of the people as well. He also remarked that technical details are being worked out to send back 77 security personnel to India. Thus, it appears that India will have to withdraw her security personnel from Maldives. It would be further added that though Abdulla Yameen was a pro-China President and while in power, Yameen had begun by asking India to call back the pilots and technicians along with the platforms, but he has not formally demanded the withdrawal of the flying-machines. Thus, Muizzu is even step ahead of his mentor Yameen in formally demanding withdrawal of Indian security personnel. This development has caused new tensions between India and Maldives.

Background of Indo-Maldives Relations

Maldives, with a population of 4·36 lakhs (2017), is located in the southwest of Sri Lanka and India in the Arabian Sea. It consists of 26 ring-shaped atolls, which are made up of more than 1,000 coral islands. Maldives became independent from the British colonial rule in 1965. India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in history. India and Maldives have cultivated close diplomatic, political, economic and cultural relations since 1965. Maldives transited to democratic system in 2008 creating the scope for domestic politics to affect bilateral relations as it is happening now.

Maldives holds strategic importance for India. It is located just 750 kms from the mainland India Coast

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and still nearer to from the Indian Union Territory of Lakshadweep and Minicoy. Maldives lies at the heart of the vital international sea lanes linking Europe and Middle East on the one end and India and East Asia on the other end. Around two-thirds of the world's oil and half its container shipments pass through these sea lanes. Also, Maldives hold crucial significance in India's regional strategy in the Indian Ocean Region. India, Sri Lanka and Maldives have formed a trilateral cooperation mechanism to address the security challenges in the region. But if Maldives again facilitates China strategic reach in the region, it would be a major security concern for India. This is a critical factor as China has already made strategic inroads in Sri Lanka through its port facilities and other infrastructure projects.

Revival of Indo-Maldives Ties: Solih Regime

Thus, during Yameen regime, China and Maldives developed close strategic and economic ties. However, Yameen government was replaced in November, 2018 election by a new regime headed by Ibrahim Solih, who adopted a pro-India stand with India. During Solih regime, India revived its tradition of ties with Maldives with a focus on development partnerships and security cooperation. PM Modi visited Male on 17 November, 2018 during the swearing in ceremony of Ibrahim Solih. It was under the background of China's overwhelming economic and strategic presence in Maldives that Modi's visit to Maldives assumes special significance. The importance of Modi's visit lies in the fact that it has initiated the process of reconciliation to rectify the further deterioration in the mutually beneficial bilateral relations between the two nations. President Solih made his first maiden external visit to India on 16-18 December, 2018, which paved the way for consolidating ties between the two countries. Solih publicly followed 'India First' Foreign policy, which perfectly matched with India's Neighbourhood First Policy initiated in 2014. Solih made his second visit to India on 1-4 August, 2022 which led to the expansion of his development partnership with India. These visits and high level exchanges led to downsizing Chinese presence in Maldives.

During this Solih regime, besides close ties between the people of the two countries, the development partnership and strategic ties received a new boost.

Development Partnership : Development partnership is the key feature of ndia's neighbourhood policy. India-Maldives development partnership has also witnessed rapid growth in recent years. The development partnership covers large infrastructure projects, community-level grant projects and capacity building programmes which are based purely on the requirements of the Maldives and implemented through transparent processes. During this period, the $ 500 India funded greater Male connectivity project, which links Male with adjacent Islands, was implemented. India also funded the development of the 4,000 social housing units being built in Greater Male under Buyer's Credit financing of Exim Bank of India.

During Solih's 2022 visit, the Indian Prime Minister Modi announced a new Government of India Line of Credit of $ 100 M to finance infrastructure projects in Maldives. The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in other Indian funded projects including the Addu Roads project, provision of water and sewerage facilities at 34 islands, restoration of Hukuru Miskiy (Friday Mosque), signing of the Hanimaadhoo Airport Development project and Cancer Hospital building project in Laamu. In addition, India is implementing 45 Community Development Projects (small projects) and many capacity building programs in Maldives. Alongside ITEC training scheme, hundreds of Maldivians undergo special customized training in India.

Strategic Ties

The India-Maldives defence and Security partnership aims at peace and stability in the Indian Ocean Region. It is based on the recognition that the security of India and the Maldives is inter-linked. The two leaders reiterated their assurance to be mindful of each other's concerns on the security and stability of the region and to not allow their respective territories to be used for any activity inimical to the other.

During Solih's second visit, they agreed on energizing cooperation in maritime safety and security, maritime domain awareness, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief through the implementation of ongoing projects and capacity building initiatives. Both leaders expressed satisfaction on the speedy progress made in the pre-construction phase of the Coast Guard Harbour at

China's Economic and Strategic Influence in Maldives

It was during the Abdulla Yameen regime (2013-18) that China seized the opportunity to develop close strategic ties with Maldives. China-Maldives strategic engagement received fresh impetus after the historic visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in September, 2014. Beijing has invested huge funds in the form of loans for big projects in Maldives like $830 million project to upgrade the airport, including a 1-3 mile bridge (Called Friendship Bridge) to link the Hulhule Island with the capital Male. China has also funded a hospital and a 1,000-apartment housing project on Hulhumale, a suburb built on reclaimed land. China had emerged as a ubiquitous presence in the Maldivian infrastructure, trade, and energy sectors. Yameen amended the Constitution in 2015 to allow foreign ownership of land in projects with investments of more than $1 billion, which facilitated land grab by China in Maldives. The Maldives has leased an uninhabited Island called Feydhoo Finolhu to a Chinese company in $ 4 million rent for 50 years to develop infrastructure for tourism.

Yameen made a successful four-day visit to China in December, 2017 and declared China amongst the Maldives's closest friends and most trusted and dependable development partners. During this visit, both signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on December 8, 2017. This is the first FTA signed by the Maldives with any country. The Maldives has become the second South Asian country after Pakistan to sign an FTA with China. In August 2017, three Chinese warships docked in the Maldives for joint training sessions. In February, 2018, 11 Chinese warships reportedly sailed into the eastern Indian Ocean to deter an Indian intervention in the Maldives during national emergency. China's presence on Maldives' northernmost atoll, which lies in the middle of international sea lanes, caused concerns in India.

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Maldives Seeks to Scrap Hydrographic Survey Agreement with India

The tensions continue between India and Maldives's new government led by Mohamed Muizzu. In spite of the formal meeting between the Indian PM Modi and Muizzu on 1 December, 2023 in Dubai at the Sidelines of COP28 meet, Maldives has now officially announced the scrapping of Hydrographic Survey Agreement with India on 14 December, 2023.

The Hydrographic Survey Agreement was singed between the two countries during Indian PM Modi's visit to Male in 2019. According to the terms of this agreement, if one party wishes to drop the agreement, the other party must be informed of the decision six months before the agreement is set to expire. According to the terms, the agreement automatically renews for an additional five, years, otherwise. The agreement expires on 7 June, 2024. However, if not objected by any party, it would continue for another five years. Hence, the demand of Maldives should be taken as a six month notice to scrap this agreement.

The Hydrographic Agreement provides for the joint survey by the Maldivian Defence forces and Indian Navy of the territorial sea, Exclusive Economic Zone, reefs and atolls of Maldives. The declared purpose of this survey is to help improve nagivation safety, economic development, security and defence cooperation, environmental protection, coastal zone management and scientific research in Maldives waters. The navy had so far carried out 3 such surveys under the agreement.

Later Muizzu remarked that in future, this survey would be carried out with 100 per cent management and control of Maldives as he would not like that his countries hydrographic data is transferred to other country (India). This is another sign of drift in the bilateral ties between the two nations after Maldives earlier demand for the withdrawal of 77 Indian security persons.

SIFAVARU. This project would assist the Government of Maldives in enhancing the capability of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) in exercising jurisdiction and undertaking maritime surveillance of its EEZ and atolls. India announced the supply of the second Landing Assault Craft (LCA), the gifting of 24 utility vehicles and $ 50 M Line of Credit facility to the Maldives National Defence Force. Prime Minister Modi congratulated President Solih for the successful hosting of the 5th Meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave in Male' in March 2022 on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. In brief, the ties between India and Maldives were reinvigorated during Solih regime (2018-23). However, the new regime led by Muizzu has created new concerns for India.

Future of Indo-Maldives Relations : Need for a Cautious Approach

In view of the above facts, the future of India-Maldives relations faces uncertain trajectory. The new President is not only adamant on the return of 77 Indian security personnel, but has also shown signs of tilt towards China, in spite of public rhetoric of maintaining balanced ties between India and China. Muizzu has said that he would not like to make Maldives as a centre of major power competition. However, things may move in the opposite direction. The Vice-President of Maldives visited China in the first week of December, 2023, his first overseas trip, to participate in the 'China-Indian Ocean Regional Forum on Development Cooperation'. Incidentally, the predecessor Solih government had denied Beijing's claims of official Maldivian representation at an earlier meeting of the China-Indian Ocean Forum meeting. It should be noted that China has formed this forum to challenge India's regional strategy in the Indian Ocean region. Now she is looking for new opportunities in view of new regime in Maldives. Muizzu's choice of Türkiyé for his maiden overseas visit in December, 2023 also goes against the past tradition of his predecessors to make India his first overseas destination. Thus, in spite of the Muizzu government's positive view on the US $ 500-million, India-funded Thilamale Sea Bridge, it is an open question whether Muizzu government will lean towards China, like its predecessor, Yameen, for the bigger infrastructure investment or it will maintain in future a balanced approach between India and China. There are signs that Maldives is not keen on strengthening strategic ties with India as Muizzu government skipped the high-level meeting of National Security Advisors (NSA) of member-nations of India led Colombo Security Initiative (CSI) in Port Louis, Mauritius on 8 December, 2023. The Colombo Security Initiative is a major plank of India regional naval strategy in this part of the Indian Ocean. Also, in mid December, 2023, Maldives has decided not to renew the Hydrographic Survey Agreement signed between the two countries in 2019 during Modi's visit to Male. Under this agreement, India was allowed to conduct a comprehensive study of territorial waters of Maldives including its atolls and coastlines. So far India has conducted only three rounds of joint survey under this agreement, which was intended to last until 2024.

Though these are the early signs of Muizzu regime's foreign policy, India needs to adopt a cautious approach towards Maldives in near future. In the long term, it also calls for India to review its neibhourhood policy and try to delink it from the domestic politics of the neighbouring countries. India needs to follow an approach of a confident regional power irrespective of the fact that which political party assumes a power in neighbouring countries. India has to take into account the fact that China will remain a major player in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region in near future.

Gaza Conflict and India's Policy Dilemma

The ongoing military conflict in Gaza has a placed Indian policy makers in a dilemma. The conflict started with Gaza based extremist group Hamas launching attack against Israel on 7 October, 2023 killing nearly 1400 civilians and capturing nearly 250 Israelis as hostage. In retaliation. Israel launched a massive attack in Gaza with objective of eliminating Hamas' war machine and military capabilities. Initially, Israel asked the

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people of North Gaza to evacuate the territory so that it could fish out Hamas militants holed in the underground tunnels across Gaza. Later it is reported to have been planned to fill these tunnels with sea water to destroy militants and arms hidden there. There was a brief ceasefire agreement in December 2023 between Hamas and Israel's mediated by Qatar. During this few days ceasefire, Hamas freed nearly 150 Israeli citizens who were taken hostage during Hamas raid on 7 October, 2023. Still nearly 100 Israeli hostages are under Hamas custody. The massive and disproportionate attack by Israel has led to the killing of nearly 18000 Palestinians in Gaza and making 80 per cent of Gaza's 20 lakh people homeless. This has caused a grave humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, in spite of terrorist attack by Hamas. In spite of call for ceasefire by many countries and the UN General Assembly on Humanitarian ground, Israel is not likely to halt the attack on Gaza civilians in the near future. The prolonged war has not only raised humanitarian concerns but also has polarized nations on this issue.

Global Reactions : The Gaza war is the reflection of long pending Palestine issue since 1948, when the state of Israel was created on the very land which is also claimed by Palestinians. Hamas is an extremist organization in Palestine that has been controlling Gaza since 2007. Its attack on Israel on 7 October has invited condemnation from the US and European countries and other countries including India. However, the massive attack by Israel, disproportionate to initial attack by Hamas, has also invited criticism from many countries. As civilian casualties mounted, the Arab countries under the banner of Arab League and other Islamic countries under the banner of Organization of Islamic Conference came together and called for immediate ceasefire by Israel, an making provision for humanitarian assistance to civilians displaced in Gaza. Among Islamic countries, Iran has been more vocal against Israel, but it could not do much in view of the heavy presence of US naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea in support of Israel. The US has mobilized extra naval forces, including aircraft carrier, in the region to help Israel against any military action by Iran or other Arab countries. China, Russia and other members of BRICS, excluding India. have been critical of Israel's disproportionate military actions in Gaza.

India's Policy Dilemma

The Gaza war has posed a new dilemma before India in view of its long held policy of supporting Palestine cause. The Indian PM Modi termed 7 October attack by Hamas against Israel a terrorist attack and extended political support to Israel on the day of attack. The Indian foreign ministry tried to balance this one sided support for Israel after a week by claiming that India stands for the two state solution in the region. A two-state solution means the existence of two independent states, Israel and Palestine. But this clarification could not cut much ice because Arab countries consider India to be siding with Israel, which became more evident with subsequent events. Though India has not declared Hamas as a terrorist organization but as a principle of foreign policy she is opposed to all form of terrorism. It was on this ground that India did not support the first UN General Assembly Resolution dated 26 October, 2023 because it did not criticize the terrorist attack by Hamas. The Resolution called for an immediate ceasefire by Israel and made provision for humanitarian assistance in Gaza. India abstained from voting on this resolution, in spite of the fact that the majority of Global South countries and South Asian countries voted in favour of this resolution. In November, 2023, the BRICS nations called an emergent summit to consider the Gaza situation, but the Indian PM did not take part in this online summit. India was represented by the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishanakar. During the BRICS Summit, India was isolated as majority of the leaders including those from China, Russia and South Africa criticized Israel's disproportionate aggression in Gaza and called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The Indian foreign minister talked about Hamas attack against Israel and called for humanitarian assistance. Thus, the initial Indian position was to tilt towards Israel, with focus on opposition to terrorist attack by Hamas.

However, Indian policy tried to balance this situation on 12 December, 2023, when it supported another UN General Assembly Resolution, which called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, an observance of international humanitarian law by Israel, the unconditional release of Israeli hostages by Hamas, as well as ensuring humanitarian access in Gaza. The US and her Western allies opposed this resolution but it was supported by overwhelming majority of 153 countries. This time, India supported this resolution, even if the resolution does not have any mention of the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October. This underlines a gradual shift in the Indian position on Gaza within a period of three months. The possible factors for this change may be overwhelming support of countries in favour of UN resolution in view of the large number of casualties in Gaza due to massive Israeli military action. Because of these casualties, Israel is fast eroding its moral ground. In fact, Israel's close ally, the US, has also warned it for these casualties and its moral repercussions. But Israel has ignored these warnings. The other factor for this dilemma is India's transitional nature of policy in this region for some decades. This dilemma and shift needs to be elaborated further in view of India's changing nature of policy in the Middle East in last few decades.

Background of India's Policy Towards Arab-Israel Conflict

After independence, India articulated her Arab-Israel policy in view of her own background of colonialism as well as her vital interests in the region. India had three core interests in the region.

First, India has been dependent on import of oil and gas and majority of this is imported from Arab countries. The Arab countries of Middle East are the largest producers of oil and natural gas in the world. Even in the face of climate change crisis and demand for renewable energy sources, this dependency on oil is likely to persist in near future.

Second, large number of India's skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled persons is working in Arab countries. These workers are source of nearly $ 75 billion foreign exchange for India.

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The welfare and safety of India's citizens working in the region is the priority of India's foreign policy.

Third, India has substantial portion of Muslim community. The Majority of the countries of the Middle East area are also Islamic nations. Thus, any difference between these countries has impact on India as well.

In view of the above facts and other economic interests, India has been staunch supporters of Palestine state in tune with Arab countries since the beginning of Arab-Israel conflict in 1948. The conflict originated when Israel was established in 1948 on the same land, which is also claimed by Palestinians as their home-land. The Palestinian claim for home-land has been actively and vehemently supported by Arab countries of the region. This has led to four major wars between Arabs and Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. In addition, Palestinians and Israel have also been engaged in several military conflicts from time to time. The present conflict between Hamas (an extremist faction of Palestinians) and Israel is just new examples of such conflicts, which became more prominent after Hamas captured Gaza in 2006.

India has been an open and ardent supporter of the Palestine cause since 1948. When the western powers supported the UN Plan for bifurcating mandate territory of Palestine into two parts–Israel and Palestine—finalized, India, along with other Arab countries opposed this plan as it wanted to support the Palestine claim over this land. Though India recognized the state of Israel when it was created in 1948, India did not establish full diplomatic relations with Israel in support of the Palestine cause. During all the four Arab-Israel wars mentioned above, India extended political support to Arab countries. PLO or Palestine Liberation Organization was fighting for the establishment of Palestine state. India was the first non-Arab country to recognition to PLO in 1974. Also, much before the 1993 Oslo Accord between Israel and PLO, India recognized the state of Palestine in 1988.

Post-Cold War Shift in Palestine Policy : The peace process between Israel and PLO began in the early 1990s and culminated in the signing of Oslo Accord, which facilitated the establishment of Palestine state in West bank and Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the PLO also recognized Israel as an independent state. However, the extremist factions of Palestinians organized under the banner of Hamas in 1988 did not recognize Israel, creating ground for the present day conflict between Israel and Hamas based in Gaza. However, this peace process gave India an opportunity to develop full diplomatic relations in 1992. Since then India and Israel have developed close ties in the field of defence and security and agriculture, water management and irrigation. Israel has emerged as an important source for India for the supply of advanced defence equipment and intelligence cooperation. In 2017, Modi became the first Prime Minister of India to visit Israel. Israeli PM Netanyahu has also made two visits to India during this period. Thus, both India and Israel have cultivated close ties in last two decades.

Meanwhile India has also developed close and strategic ties with major Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Iran in last two decades. India and Iran signed a Chabahar port agreement in 2016. Trade and investment ties were developed with UAE and Saudi Arabia. This was facilitated as these countries did not raise any issue of India's close ties with Israel. Also, there were moves to reconcile between Arab countries and Israel, while the issue of Palestine was still pending. These efforts bore fruit in 2020-21 when with the mediation of the US, four Arab countries, namely UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan signed peace accord with Israel. These peace accords are known as the Abraham Accord, after the name of Abraham, who is recognized as common ancestor of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Abraham Accord helped India to balance ties between Israel and Arab countries. India, Israel, UAE and the US also founded another regional body named as I2U2 to promote investment and development in the Middle East. In order to rope in Saudi Arabia in this reconciliation process, US and India announced during the G-20 Summit in September, 2023 the launch of India Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), linking India and Europe and passing through UAE, Saudi Arabia and Israel. These measures facilitated India's balancing game between Israel on the one hand and Arab countries on the other.

But the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October, 2023 and retaliatory attack by Israel on Gaza killing more than 18000 Palestinians and creating monumental humanitarian crisis not only shattered the ongoing peace process between Israel and Arab states, but also created new strategic fault lines between the two sides. It is this crisis which has made India's balancing game between the two sides a difficult task. On the one hand, India has close strategic ties with Israel, but India too has vital national interests in the Middle East, which calls for close cooperation with Arab countries. India's principled stand opposing all forms of terrorism further complicates the balancing game as India has treated the attack by Hamas against Israel as a terrorist attack. But at the same time, India cannot close its eyes to the disproportionate and massive assault by Israel killing 18000 civilians and rendering lakhs of people as homeless and blocking the humanitarian assistance in Gaza. During the G-20 meet, India projected herself as the champion of voice of Global South, but in this case majority of the Global South countries are critical of Israel's disproportionate military action against Palestinians and hence have called for immediate ceasefire by Israel. This was the message of two Un General Assembly Resolution on 26 October, 2023 and 12 December, 2023. While in the first resolution, India abstained but it supported the second resolution passed on 12 December.

Conclusion

The Hamas-Israel conflict has not only derailed ongoing process of reconciliation between Arab states and Israel, it has also created new fault lines between the two sides. The future of IMEC projects hangs in balance as they cannot be completed without the cooperation of both Israel and Arab States, which seems to be a difficult scenario in view of the present conflict. Some observers believe

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A 'New' Year Revolution !

—I.M. Soni

New year's eve is not merely an occasion for celebration but one also for cerebration.

The scene is familiar; glasses are raised "A happy new year, wish you happiness, health and prosperity". This is what we see and say on new year's eve.

A few months later, new year resolutions are jinved. We return to the humdrum life and stew in daily grinds and frustrations. We struggle in the consuming conflicts and are pushed to the wall by deep depression.

Why this 'collective' happy new year chorus when it is not going to last beyond a few weeks ? One reason is that we are giving expression to a mass category of unhappiness and bitterness. The new year eve is exercise is symbolic !

The event passes off like a passing show and back we sink in our dead routines. Can new year festivities a difference in life ? Do we change ?

The problem lies in the psyche. We desire a change, improvement but our emotions keep us tied to old norms and modes of past life-style.

I share feelings. The event has no meaning because we feel empty inside. I wish happiness to others as a formality. Inside me, my weaknesses and failings are gnawins at my heart.

Can a man sink in the wish well happiness to others ? Happy new year is a façade ! The chorus is a Clossal chorns of casualness.

I have seen a large number of persons, old and young, families who celebrate the occasion with gusto but in reality live in distress. They go through motions of transformation for a few days or hours but they go back to their mouldy shell. Family feuds and trifling tyrannies.

The garrulousness raises its head a small misunderstanding blares up into a consuming conflict, and the resolution turns to ashes.

There is a queer feeling of belonging to the dead past. Feeling amicability is good for a day but it is too good to last long.

Pleasantness and gentility are too wishy-washy for a long time. Duplicity and hypocrisy show. The fact is that posed pleasantness and artificial joviality are a strain.

We are grounded in tension, distress, conflict and by a shameful pettiness of behaviour. We have nothing to cheer. Yet we raise glanes and say : three cheers ! Husband clicking glasses has a blur-mind about wife, sulking at home because she dislikes drinking.

There are ways of meeting the situation. We have to fire by the purpose. This does not mean digging into the works of classical writers, thinkers and philosophers. Adopt a working philosophy of life, the world thrives on love, not hate. Look upon the wisdom of live and you hard yourself over to superior wisdom. This life in a significant way; you will be facing touching a sum that can work miracles.

Those who retreat from resolutions have build a strong ego force. Early life deprivations on parental neglect may turn one a cynic and make him give up hope for a fulfilling life; Life is not easy to live but why not make it easy for a day at least ? Each small step towards integration of the self gives you confidence for the next. Join the swaying swines !

Results follow : people cannot think you as they did in past. Now you have a glow of warmth of self-confidence.

New you appreciate yourself and be pleased over the smallest achievement. Ego inflation works. The state of your mind affects the body.

Now, the toxic eve is gone, breathe in realities of life and oxygennate your emotional and mental life. Be fired by a sense of purpose. You can legislate your life afresh. The misty evening is not going to last. It clears away.

New year provides an opportunity ! It knocks at your door. Do not complain of the noise ! Grasp it. Opportunity looks bigger going then coming. Click the glasses but do not let them come erasing to the floor.

PDarpan

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that Hamas attack was planned to hamper this reconciliation process as it ignored the interests of Palestinians. Whatever may be the cause of this conflict, the new and wide fault lines between Israel and Arab countries have created a difficult choice for India. India's balancing game between the two sides faces uphill task now. India's policy dilemma is nothing but the outcome of difficulty in balancing the game. India has close ties with the major players on both side of the divide. If the Gaza conflict continues for longer period as Israel has indicated, India's policy choices will face new difficulties. Yet by endorsing the second UN Resolution against Israel, India has indicated the subtle shift in her earlier pro-Israel. The fault lines between Israel and Arab states are not temporary in nature, but they are likely to persist in near future. India still supports the peaceful resolution of the conflict and stands committed for a two state solution—a Palestine State and Israel both co-existing together in peace. But this conflict does not care for princip-led stand. It needs talking sides, which India can ill effort. Thus, India needs to balance carefully and realistically her core interests and policy choices in the Middle East.

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Disaster Management Article

Silkyara-Barkot Tunnel Collapse : Manmade or Natural

—Dr. Deepankar Singh

Under construction, 4·53 km long Silkyara–Barkot tunnel collapsed on November 12, 2023. 41 workers were trapped inside the tunnel. All 41 workers were rescued on November 28, 2023, after several attempts by regional, national, and international agencies, and individuals, especially 'rat-hole' miners. Development projects in hilly states are often questioned by experts because of highly fragile nature of hills in the middle Himalayan region. Experts had flagged several issues related to the construction of the tunnels and highways in the Himalayas and cited fragile terrain, water seepage, the landslip-prone Himalayan rock system, lack of geological studies and the failure to design an escape tunnel. It is unfortunate that most of the governments in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand unheeded these expert advises.

Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, had given its approval to the construction of 4·531 km long 2-Lane Bi-Directional Silkyara Bend - Barkot Tunnel with escape passage including approaches on Dharasu -Yamunotri section between Chainage 25·400 km and Chainage 51·000 km in Uttarakhand.

The project falls along NH-134 (old NH-94) in the State of Uttarakhand. The project is being built under Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode. This is funded under NH (O) Scheme of Ministry of RT&H and forms part of ambitious Chardham Plan.

The construction period of the project was 4 years. The civil construction cost of the project is estimated at ₹ 1119·69 crore, while the total project cost is ₹ 1383·78 crore, which is inclusive of the cost towards Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation and other pre-construction activities as well as Maintenance and Operation cost of tunnel for 4 years.

The construction of this tunnel will provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri, one of the dham on Chardham Yatra, encouraging regional socio-economic development, trade and tourism within the country. It will reduce the travel distance from Dharasu to Yamunotri by about 20 km and travel time by about an hour. Under construction tunnel will save number of trees that would have been required to be removed in the road improvement of 25·600 km, had the original alignment been followed.

The project is being implemented by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), through National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL), a wholly state owned company, formed in 2014 for development of highways in states on the international borders.

The project aims at construction of 4·531 km long two lane Bi-Directional tunnel (along with 328m approach road) with escape passage on Dharasu–Yamunotri in the State of Uttarakhand. The ₹ 12,000 crore project would provide wide roads leading to the four shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri and Gangotri. The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route's Tanakpur-Pithoragarh stretch would also be widened.

Opposition to Chaardhaam Yatra Project Along with Silkyara-Barkot Tunnel

Ever since the Chaardham Yatra project was conceived and announced by the Central government, it was opposed by the environmentalists, geologists and NGOs working in the Uttarakhand to save the nature. Opponents of the project-particularly Citizens for Green Doon a Dehradun-based civil society group—first approached the National Green Tribunal in February 2018, and then the Supreme Court in October 2018. On August 8, 2019, the court gave directions for the formation of a High Powered Committee (HPC) to review the project and give recommendations to minimise its impacts.

Ravi Chopra, an environmental scientist and a development activist who was appointed the HPC chairman, mentioned in the committee's report submitted to the court in July 2020 : "We encountered several landslides…. Slope failures and muck dumped directly downhill into forests, river beds, and waterways were documented. Thousands of trees had been felled already and many more rolled down after unanticipated slope failures. Weak protective walls had left high, vertical slopes to their own fate." Neither the Uttarakhand Government nor the Union Ministry of Roads and National Highways heeded the fear of experts.

None of the committee members objected to the project, but there was a divide between them over road width. While the HPC chairman Ravi Chopra and four other members argued for roads with 5·5 metre-wide carriageway and 1·5 metre-raised footpath to minimise the project's adverse impacts, 13 members argued for a double-lane carriageway of 7 metres and additional 1·5 metre paved shoulders on both sides (that is, total 10 metres of tarred surface), also called a double lane with paved shoulder (DL-PS) configuration.

Minority members' argument for a 5·5-metre carriageway was backed by MoRTH's March 23, 2018 circular that narrowed down the national high-ways' width in the hills to minimise adverse impacts from cutting hills for roads. Majority members, on the other hand, argued for wide, DL-PS roads, based on MoRTH's old circular of October 5, 2012.

Accepting the view of the minority HPC members, on September 8, 2020, the Supreme Court gave directions to construct roads with a 5·5-

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metre carriageway. However, the Ministry of Defence intervened in the matter and filed an application in the Supreme Court on November 27, 2020, and sought permission for double-lane roads with a 7-metre tarred surface for 674 km. The argument was that since these roads would lead to the Indo-China border so a wide road was in the interest of country in terms of "interest of the security of the nation and for the defence of its borders".

The Supreme Court gave precedence to the 'national security' over environmental and geological context and allowed the 674-kilometre roads that lead to the Indo-China border to be widened based on DL-PS configuration. The court also paved the way for the Union government to widen the remaining 151-kilometre non-strategic roads by pursuing 'appropriate legal proceedings'.

Severe Lapses in the Construction of Silkyara–Barkot Tunnel

As happens in all cases of such disasters, experts, facts finding committee, enquiry reports found several lapses in the construction of Silkyara Barkot tunnel.

The Himalayas are one of the most unstable regions in the world. Underground excavations are very challenging in this region due to the fragile geology, tectonic activities and complex geological structures. Most of the rock failures occurred in sheared zones, thrusts and heavily weathered rock mass. The geological conditions around these projects are often characterized by significant presence of folds, faults, joints and inter-bedding of different types of rock strata; they are so complex and diverse that it is often difficult to accurately predict the field condition from conventional geotechnical site investigation. In many cases, the presence of shear zones, thrusts and tectonic activities has a strong influence on the in situ stress. Review of these prominent projects suggests that the complicated dynamics between a wide range of geological and geotechnical factors play a critical role in the tunneling in the Himalayas. Unfortunately the construction of Silkyara-Barkot tunnel witnessed ahead lapses :

- The tunnel collapse incident is especially disconcerting since the region is unstable, and essential tunnelling norms were not followed during construction.
- Several construction norms were overlooked to expedite project work and achieve faster completion.
- An escape passage that could be used to exit the tunnel in times of emergency was part of the project. However, it was never built.
- The area in the Silkyara–Barkot tunnel is part of a shear zone that comprises rock mass of poor quality. It was not considered appropriately while designing the tunnel in question.
- The Silkyara-Barkot area comprises low-grade metamorphic rocks, which are highly foliated. The area has shear zones, where rocks are crushed and weakened by natural forces, and are in a state of instability.
- Appropriate support had not been provided for Silkyara-Barkot tunnel which is passing through zones of poor rock mass.
- Tunneling in such highly fragile zone must be carried out under the supervision of an engineering geologist, perhaps it was not done.
- Major projects in India are mandated to undergo Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) by law, the Silkyara-Barkot Tunnel received an exemption due to its location in division into segments smaller than 100 km each.
- During the construction of the tunnel's roof, it is crucial to incorporate metallic support. It is widely accepted norm about implementing parallel tunnels as a precaution against potential collapses, neither metallic support nor parallel tunnels were actualized in Silkyara-Barkot tunnel.

Silkyara Rescue Operation : From use of technology to "Rat Hole Miners"

On 12th November, 2023, a collapse occurred in the under-construction tunnel from Silkyara to Barkot due to debris falling in a 60-meter stretch on the Silkyara side. Immediate mobilization of resources by the State and Central Governments ensued to rescue the 41 trapped labours.

Initially opting for a 900 mm pipe through the debris, safety concerns led to the exploration of multiple rescue options simultaneously. The area of entrapment, measuring 8·5 meters in height and 2 kilometres in length, is the built-up portion of the tunnel, offering safety to the labours with available electricity and water supply.

Multiple Ministries, public-sector undertakings, and defence agencies pooled in expertise, personnel and equipment under the oversight of the Prime Minister's Office for the Silkyara rescue operations.

The Indian Air Force, the National Disaster Response Force and the Border Road Organisation, along with State agencies such as the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and local administration also came together. Five agencies—ONGC, SJVNL, RVNL, NHIDCL, and THDCL—have been assigned specific responsibilities, working collaboratively with occasional task adjustments for operational efficiency.

Key features on Rescue Operations :

1. The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) Lifeline Efforts :

- Freshly cooked food and fresh fruits were inserted inside the tunnel at regular intervals using the 2nd life line (150 mm dia.) service.
- Video communication was established by SDRF with standard workforce and direct line communication has been established by NDRF

2. Horizontal Boring by The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) : Auger drilling started at 0045 hrs. on 22.11.2023 was halted due to metallic object (Lattice girder rib) being encountered in front of the pipe and the pipe could not be inserted further. Cutting of Metallic object (Lattice Girder rib) using Gas cutters was resorted to and com-

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pleted at 0230 hrs. on 23.11.2023. Pushing of 9th pipe was restarted and reached an additional 1·8 meter distance. Minor vibration was noted, so Auger was pushed slightly back to re-assess the force to be applied. Obstructions were observed.

- A bend part of forepole (pipe) from tunnel lining was struck in the auger assembly which led to vibrations.
- Strengthening of platform for auger machine was carried out using accelerating agent for rapid hardening of concrete completed followed by anchoring and bolting of the platform.
- Pushing of 10th Pipe (4·7 m length) started at 1625 hrs. on 24.11.2023 and a length of 2·2 m was inserted upto 1750 hrs. on 24.11.2023 resulting in total inserted length of 46·9 m.
- During pushing of 10th pipe, further obstruction was observed and pushing of pipe had to stop.
- After visual inspection by welders it was found that the cutter of augur has been entangled with lattice girder bars which damaged the 1·5 m of length of 800 mm passage pipe.
- After clearance of 800 mm rescue pipe from all the obstruction including stuck-up augurs, manual drift procedure was applied to clear the last few meters to access the other side.
- Erection of False Ribs from face of tunnel towards tunnel exit on Silkyara side to protect the Operational area (Ch. 194·50 to Ch. 184·50) Erection of Ribs started at 1950 hrs. on 25.11.023.

3. Vertical Drilling (1·0 m dia) for Rescue by SJVNL :

- Another option of vertical drilling was applied to reach at trapped workers.
- Platform for launching of drilling machine was completed.
- Marking of drilling point over the tunnel has been finalized at Ch. 300 L/S after discussion with GSI, RVNL & ONGC.
- Main machine reached at Drilling site. Drilling rig of machine transported from tunnel portal to drilling site. Drilling started at 1205 hrs on 26.11.2023.

4. Horizontal Drilling from Barkot Side by THDCL :

- THDC has initiated the construction of a rescue tunnel from the Barkot end.
- Total executed length of drift was 12 m.

5. Perpendicular - Horizontal Drilling by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) : Equipments for micro tunneling required for horizontal drilling to rescue labourers were brought from Nashik and Delhi.

6. Vertical Drilling (8 inches dia) by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) at Silkyara end :

- Access road of 1150 meter was constructed by BRO and handed over to RVNL. Machine for drilling towed to location by BRO.
- Drilling started at 0400 hours on 26.11.2023 and 72 meter completed.

7. Vertical Drilling (24 inches dia) Toward Barkot End by Oil and Natural Gas Company (ONGC)

- Air Drilling Rig was brought from Indore.
- All the associated material of Air Hammer Drilling Rig mobilized by ONGC were kept in standby at Rishikesh as the road and location for placement of Rig for drilling was being prepared by BRO.

8. Drift Tunnel by Manual-Semi Mechanized Method by Joint Team of THDCL / Army / Coal India and NHIDCL.

9. Road Cutting and Supportive Work by Border Road Organisation) BRO :

Services of Australian Tunnelling Expert

Notably, international tunnelling expert Professor Arnold Dix provided important technical support on the ground in the Uttarakhand tunnel rescue operation. Australian tunnelling expert Arnold Dix who played a crucial role in the safe rescue of miners trapped inside an Uttarakhand tunnel has affectionately referred to 41 evacuated workers as his 'adopted Indian sons'. The emotional proclamation came after Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese publicly commended Dix for his pivotal role in the miraculous rescue mission. Albanese expressed deep admiration for Professor Dix, who serves as the president of the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association, emphasising his expertise in handling such critical situations.

Rat-hole Miners : Last Hope Turned into Final Conquer

On November 22, 2023 post-midnight, the Auger drilling started but hit a setback due to a metallic object (Lattice girder rib) which the machine encountered due to which the pipe could not be inserted further. Cutting of a metallic object (Lattice Girder rib) using gas cutters was resorted to and completed on November 23, 2023. During the process, minor vibration was noted by the experts, so the drilling was stopped. When all the efforts since November 12 including the use of a highly sophisticated American augur machine, to rescue 41 workers trapped inside Silkyara-Barkot tunnel failed in drilling 60 meters of mountains, a team of rat-hole miners working for Delhi-based Rockwell Enterprises, a trenchless engineering services company that primarily cleans sewerage lines, was roped in to rescue 41 trapped workers in Silkyara-Barkot tunnel. Rat-hole miners are experts in extracting coal from narrow and horizontal mines. A team of rat-hole miners (Feroz and Munna Quraishi, Rashid, Irshad, Naseem, Monu, Naseer, Ankur, jatin, Devender, Saurabh, Waqeel & Hasan), dig a narrow pit, of three to four feet, just large enough for one person to descend and extract debrices. They use tools such as pickaxes, shovels, and hammers to make the pit. Finally, members of rescue team reachd to trapped workers. Later on all the workers, including the rate-hole miners were brought out safely from the tunnel through the 800 mm pipe.

Rat-hole mining was banned in 2014 by the Meghalaya government. The temporary ban by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) was imposed after a tragic incident in 2012 when 30 coal labourers were trapped inside a mine, leading to the loss of 15 lives.

Silkyara-Barkot tunnel rescue operation is the rarest of rare example of cooperation and collaboration of so

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Business and Economics Article

Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023

—Dr. B.K. Agarwal

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Piyush Goyal released the **"Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023"** report 2023 in New Delhi on 16th December, 2023, The report serves as a guide for stakeholders in the logistics sector by providing strategic insights. It will play a pivotal role in instilling healthy competition among States/UTs to enhance logistics performance. It also underscores notable initiatives like planning infrastructure on PM GatiShakti, 'industry' status for logistics, multimodal connectivity, digital initiatives in logistics, City Logistics Plans, Multimodal Logistics Parks, etc. States/UTs need to emphasise skill development, capacity building, the formalization of logistics policies, implementation of monitoring frameworks, and the promotion of green logistics. According to NCAER study, India's logistics cost has been worked out to be in the range 7·8-8·9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021-22, lower than the past private survey estimates of more than 10 per cent. At present, the government is going by certain estimates, suggesting India's logistics cost stands at 13-14 per cent of GDP. Logistics sector will be a cornerstone in India's endeavour to take it to a 10 fold growth from USD 3·5 trillion to USD 35 trillion by 2047.

Background

LEADS was conceived on the lines of the **Logistics Performance Index** (LPI) of the World Bank in 2018 and has evolved over time. While the LPI relies entirely on perception-based surveys, LEADS incorporates both perception and **objectivity** thereby enhancing the robustness and comprehensiveness of this exercise.

Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) is a unique initiative of the Government of India focused on assessing performance of logistics ecosystem across States and Union Territories (UTs). It provides valuable insights to States and UTs about key drivers of logistics performance, which States/UTs can leverage for effective policy and decision making. LEADS has also become a platform of its kind thereby showcasing initiatives taken by individual States and UTs to improve logistics performance. LEADS is thereby promoting a competitive federalism model for the development of the logistics sector across the country.

LEADS 5·0

Having an efficient domestic logistics eco-system is a pre-requisite for both national and international trade competitiveness and developing resilient supply chains. The LEADS initiative focuses on enhancing domestic logistics performance. Combined with various trade facilitation and EXIM logistics related initiatives being implemented, it helps to enhance overall competitiveness of Indian logistics ecosystem and global positioning. Improvement in India's LPI rank by six places to 38th position in 2023 is a reflection of the same.

LEADS 5·0 (2023) builds on the framework adopted in LEADS 4·0 (2022) coupled with valuable insights from previous versions. LEADS integrates perception-based data with objective data, creating a holistic and comprehensive framework for measuring logistics performance across States and UTs. The objectivity of LEADS 2023 has been significantly enhanced, as it now comprehensively considers the wide array of initiatives undertaken by States and Union Territories to improve the logistics sector. The LEADS 2023 perception survey instrument has been enhanced with a more effective methodology to accurately gauge improvements in logistics.

Performance of the States and to gather specific insights on First/Last Mile Connectivity quality, Packaging Facilities availability, and Skilled Manpower availability. Similarly, the objective survey instrument has been revised to capture details about various initiatives undertaken by States and UTs to improve the logistics ecosystem, including the adoption of PM GatiShakti (PMGS) for project planning.

The 5th edition of the LEADS annual exercise - LEADS 2023 report, provides insights into the improvement of logistics performance at the State/UT level. It highlights an enhanced overall stakeholder perception and impact of various reforms across States and UTs. This report, signalling a **positive shift** in States' performance across the **key pillars** – Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services and Operating and Regulatory Environment, **empowers** the State and UT Governments by providing **region specific insights** for informed decision making and comprehensive growth.

This report is based on a **pan-India primary survey** conducted between May and July 2023, covering over **7,300 responses** across 36 States and UTs. Additionally, over 750 stakeholder consultations, facilitated by National, Regional, and State Associations, significantly contributed to this comprehensive evaluation.

Continuing with the approach adopted in the fourth edition of the LEADS report (2022), States and UTs based on their Geography were placed into four Groups namely **Coastal Group, Landlocked Group, North-East Group** and **Union Territories Group** to analyse their logistics performance.

The Performance of States and UTs, in each of these Groups, was measured using combination of objective data and user perception

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scores (respondents' ratings) for individual indicators under the three pillars of logistics performance *i.e.*,

I. Quality of Logistics Infrastructure,
II. Quality of Logistics Services, and
III. Operating & Regulatory Environment.

States / UTs were classified into three performance levels : **achievers, fast movers** and **aspirers**, based on their logistics performance as measured through the LEADS framework.

Performance Highlights from LEADS 2023

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, the Coastal states—alongwith Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim, Tripura, Chandigarh and Delhi have emerged as the Acheivers in LEAD 5·0. Credit goes to political leadership and state administrative machinery. States like Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and some NE States have to go a long way to improve its logistics.

Road Ahead

States and UTs have made commendable progress towards building a vibrant logistics ecosystem across the country through **proactive infrastructure, policy, and regulatory reforms.** Improvement in user perception regarding the performance of the logistics ecosystem is a real positive for the sector and probably reflects the impact of various initiatives taken by States and UTs to enhance logistics efficiency.

Paving the Way for India's Global Logistics Transformation : Success in this endeavour requires aligning with global progress, addressing pandemic lessons, conflict resolution, and climate change. A robust logistics ecosystem is essential for India's growth and global alignment, necessitating collaboration between the Government of India, States / UTs, and the private sector. The foundation for advancing the logistics sector has been established

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Performance of States in LEADS 5·0 (2023)

Groups / Categories	Achievers	Fast Movers	Aspirers
Coastal	Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Kerala, Maharashtra	Goa, Odisha, West Bengal
Landlocked	Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand	Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand
North-East	Assam, Sikkim, Tripura	Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland	Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram
Union Territories	Chandigarh, Delhi	Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry	Daman & Diu/Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

LEADS 2023: Performance Snapshot

* States/ Union Territories within the performance categories are listed in alphabetical order



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Legal Article

An Analysis of the Criminal Reform Bills

—Neelam Kejriwal

Introduction

In an attempt to make the 'soul, body and thought' of criminal law purely 'Bhartiya', the 3 Criminal Law Bills, that is, Bhartiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023; Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023 and Bhartiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023 finally got assent of the President of India to replace the existing Indian Penal Code, 1860, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and Indian Evidence Act, 1872. The Bill aims at reforming the British era Criminal Justice and transforms the criminal laws to suit the need of the present era with a motive to deliver justice instead of punishment. The Bill is introduced by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah on 11th August, 2023 in the Lok Sabha. The three Bills were thereafter examined by the Standing Committee on Home Affairs which presented its 248th Report on 10th November, 2023 in Parliament. The Committee was headed by BJP MP Brij Lal and it proposed several changes in the Bill-few of them were addressed and few were left unaddressed. The Government withdrew the Bill and reintroduced it in winter session of the Parliament where it was passed by both the Houses.

The 3 Act introduced certain major changes in the criminal justice system the same is discussed below :

Analysis of the Major Changes Brought by the Act

Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita Act, 2023

1. Terrorist Act : The Act included Terrorism within its domain. The definition of terrorism was vague in nature and includes acts which disturb public order or social and political structure with the domain of terrorist activity thereby making even a non-violent statement a terrorist activity. The Act had modified the definition and defines terrorism on similar grounds as stated in Unlawful Assemblies Prevention Act, 1967. The scope of the definition in the Act is wide as compared to the definition in UAPA in one aspect that unlike UAPA it includes the act of counterfeiting any currency within its domain. The Act also made certain conducts punishable offence like recruiting or training the person for terrorist acts, voluntarily and knowingly harboring a terrorist. The power to decide the applicability of the Act or UAPA lies with the Superintendent of Police under the Act.

2. Mental Illness : The Act replaced the words like lunacy, unsoundness of mind or mental retardation with the broad definition like mental illness which was objected by the panel as being too broad to incorporate within its domain even the voluntary intoxication and certain mood swings which are not severe. The changes were incorporated in the Act and the term mental illness was replaced with unsoundness of mind to limit the scope of it and a new term was also coined, that is, intellectual disability.

3. Cruelty : Clause 84 of the Bill is similar to Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which defined cruelty against women. The Act further inserted the Clause 86 to specifically define what cruelty is and it is similarly worded to Section 498A of the Act. There is no addition or alteration to this provision.

4. Unauthorized Publication of Court Proceedings : Clause 73 of the Act incorporates a new offence that unauthorized publication of court proceedings except for High Court and Supreme Court in matters like rape or sexual harassment. The act is made punishable with imprisonment of 2 years and fine.

5. Petty Organized Crime : The Act originally defined Petty Organized Crimes as the act stirring a feeling of insecurity among citizens or committed by an organized criminal group or gang which was vague in nature. After the panel recommendation, the term was properly defined in the Act to include within its domain acts like-theft, snatching, cheating, selling of public examination question paper or similar kinds of act.

6. Adultery : The Act did not include within its scope adultery as a penal offence since it was decriminalized in the case of Joseph Shine *Vs.* Union of India. The panel made recommendation to make it a criminal offence as it was required to safeguard the institution of marriage but the Act left adultery out of its domain.

7. Unnatural Sex : In Navtej Singh Johar *Vs.* Union of India, SC has decriminalized consensual same sex relationship between two adults. The Act has also left out the provisions which criminalize any form of non-consensual sex between men, women, transpersons, and bestiality from its domain. Although, the panel made recommendation for inclusion of such provision but the Act also left these provisions outside its domain, that is, it is not made a criminal offence.

8. Mob Lynching : The Act introduced the provisions which made Mob Lynching as a penal offence punishable with imprisonment of 7 years which was not at par with the offence of murder or intentional culpable homicide. The panel report was accepted and the Act made the minimum punishment for mob lynching as life imprisonment making it similar to the offence of murder or intentional culpable homicide.

9. Other Important Amendments :

(a) The Act defines and includes certain offences within its domain like-fake news terrorism, organized crimes, corruption. The act however failed to make necessary changes in the Bhartiya Sakshya (Second) Sanhita, 2023 to incorporate these offences.

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(b) The offence of Sedition is repealed and a new offence of Deshdroh is introduced on similar lines again making it prone to be misused while in conflict with Fundamental Right of Freedom of Speech and Expression.

Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

1. Community Service : Community Service is the work which an individual is required to do as a form of punishment. Such work benefits the community at large and the person doing the service is not entitled to receive any remuneration for such services. The Act provided for awarding community services in petty offences matters by Judicial Magistrate First Class or Second Class. However, the Act failed to define Community Service. After the recommendation of panel on this ambiguity, it was addressed and the same was defined under Clause 23 of the Act.

2. Mercy Petition : Clause 473 of the Act provides for presenting of mercy petition before centre or state government's Home Department then file before the Governor and then appeal goes to President. The report suggests that instead of leaving such pardoning power at the discretion of the Executive bodies, such power should be exercised by quasi-judicial board within a specified time frame.

3. Handcuffing : Although, the use of Handcuff was held to be in violation of Fundamental Right to Life and Liberty (Article 21 of the Constitution) in the case of Prem Shanker Shukla *Vs.* Delhi Administration, the same was brought back by Clause 43(3) of the Act allowed the use of handcuffs during arrest or court procedures to ensure safety and security and prevent the escape of the accused. The hand-cuffing was also allowed for economic offence, on which the recommendation was given by the panel to restrict the use of handcuff only in serious offences like murder, rape, etc. It was also permitted to use the handcuffs on habitual offenders or an escapist. The current provision provides a discretionary power to use handcuffs on the offences against state as well as while the accused is produced before the court.

6. Court Proceeding in Audio and Video Format : The Act allowed the court proceeding on audio and video format. But after the panel recommendation that such proceeding might result in violation fundamental legal principles like accessibility to the trial proceedings for someone who is not a party to the proceeding, the Act removed the trials before Session Court, High Court and Summary Trial from the domain of Audio Video format. The Act included various trial procedure within the domain of audio-video format like witness examination, recording of evidence, reading out charges to accused, etc.

7. Extension of Police Custody Beyond 15 days : In order to prevent the cases of custodial violence, the SC in CBI *Vs.* Anupam J. Kulkarni stated that extension of period of arrest beyond 15 days is not permissible. The Act allows the extension of period of police custody beyond 15 days to 40-60 days.

8. Preventive Detention : Preventive Detention clause was broadened and incorporated in the Clause 172 of the Act providing the detention of the person in cognizable matter until the person is produced before the Judicial Magistrate or the occasion for which arrest happened, is passed. Such provision was very wide and ambiguous in nature as it didn't define the days till which person is arrested. The same was recommended by panel and in the revised Act, the period of arrest was defined as 24 hours and the person is to be presented before Magistrate instead of Judicial Magistrate.

9. Other Related Amendments :

(a) Clause 250 of the Act granted the right to accused to file an application for discharge within 60 days of committal of matter to Session Court. This over looked the fact of systematic delay within the criminal justice system of receiving the record by the accused.

(b) Clause 329 and 330 of the Act is also in question which states that the expert is not required to be summoned before the court unless and until the forensic report or genuineness of the reports is disputed by the opposing party within 30 days of their supply. This leads to admission of the report without the expert witness which might hinder the justice delivery procedure.

(c) The Act has eliminated all the reference to Additional Sessions Judges or Metropolitan Magistrates.

(d) The Act also allowed the in absentia trial and sentencing of the absconder to ensure the delivery of justice.

Bhartiya Sakshya Bill, 2023

1. Electronic Evidence : Clause 61 of the Act allowed the admissibility of the electronic record as it is similar to paper record, but this was without meeting the requirements of the Certification that was provides under Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. But after the panel recommendation, this anomaly is rectified by making admissibility of such electronic record subject to supporting certification requirement as stated by the Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

2. Other Important Amendments : The Act allowed the inclusion of Biological evidences like DNA evidences and makes special provisions for the same.

Conclusion

The main aim of the 3 Criminal Law acts is to reform the criminal justice system and bring it in consonance with the spirit of the India. The Act aimed at redefining certain crimes which are redundant with the time, defining certain new offence and increasing the ambit of the present offence to make it suitable for the Indian mass and ensure the timely delivery of justice, which incorporates within its domain even the use of modern technology to curb the delay in delivery of justice. However, a look at the present Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 shows a violation of civil liberties of the individual by granting the uncontrolled power of arrest to the police without any order from the judiciary which will ultimately lead to custodial violence. This loophole is again

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Law Article

Representation of People Act 1951

(Part One)

—A. Bajpai

Free and fair elections are the first condition for the success of representative democracy. In the Constitution, the Election Commission of India has been given responsibility for 'superintendence, direction and control' of elections in India. The independence of the Commission has been ensured by various provisions, such as difficult procedure for removal of the Chief Election Commissioner, non-interference in the internal functioning of the commission and so on. Other matters related to the election are regulated by the provision of two statutory mechanisms, namely the **Representation of people Act, 1950 and the Representation of People Act, 1951**, both passed by the Parliament of India. These two acts deal with the matters related to the elections of the two Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), State Legislative Assemblies and State Legislative Councils. The allotment of symbols to different political parties and the procedure for recognizing political parties as 'National Party or 'State Party,' are regulated by the **Election Symbol Order, 1968,** issued by the Election Commission of India.

The Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951 : The Act contains XI Parts and 171 Sections. This act provides for the conduct of elections to the two houses of Parliament as well as Houses or House of State Legislature of each state, the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those Houses, corrupt practices and other offences at or in connection with such elections. Part-I of the act deals with the definitions of the terms used in this act, and the last Part (XI) deals with some general provisions like power to make rules to implement this act as well as the bar on the jurisdiction of courts with respect to the provisions of this act. The major provisions of this act are given below :

Qualifications and Disqualifications of Members (Part II)

The Constitution of India prescribes certain qualifications and disqualifications for the members of Parliament as well as State Legislatures. The distinction between qualifications and disqualification is that qualifications are those conditions, which are required to be fulfilled before being chosen as a member of any House of Parliament/State legislature, whereas disqualifications are those demerits which are applicable not only for being chosen but also for being a member of any House of Parliament/State Legislature. In other words, if a member becomes subject to any disqualifications, he/she will lose membership of concerned House. The Constitution also provides that some further qualifications or disqualifications may be prescribed by law made by Legislature. Thus, the qualifications and disqualifications prescribed under the RPA are in addition to the qualifications and disqualifications prescribed by the Constitution.

Qualifications for Membership of Parliament

1. A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a member of the **Council of State** unless he is not a voter in any parliamentary constituency in India. This amendment was made in 2003. Earlier, such a person was required to be a voter in a parliamentary constituency of the state from where he was to be elected for the Rajya Sabha.
2. A person, contesting election from a **Lok Sabha** constituency, reserved for the Scheduled Caste, must be a member of any Scheduled Caste in India.
3. A person, contesting election from a **Lok Sabha constituency**, reserved for the Scheduled Tribe, must be a member of any Scheduled Tribe in India. However, to contest an election from the Scheduled Caste constituency in the Autonomous District of Assam, Lakshdweep, and Sikkim, a person of Scheduled Tribe should be registered as voter in that constituency.

Representation of People Act, 1950

This Act, passed in 1950, is divided into five parts and 32 sections. The Act mainly provides for the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies, preparation of electoral rolls for elections and the delimitation of election constituencies.

Part-I deals with purpose of the act as well as the definition of the terms used in this act.

Part-II is concerned with the allocation of seats to various states in Lok Sabha and total number of Legislative Assembly/Council in different states. The allocation of seats for different states in Rajya Sabha is mentioned in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution itself. It also lays down the procedure for the delimitation of constituencies of Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies/Councils.

Part-II A prescribes the official machinery for the registration of voters at district level.

Part-II B prescribes the procedure for preparation of electoral rolls for the elections of the two Houses of Parliament.

Part-III provides for the preparation of electoral rolls for the elections of Legislative Assemblies in different states.

Part-IV deals with the procedure for the preparation of electoral rolls for the election of Legislative Councils.

Part-V deals with certain general provisions including the bar on the jurisdiction of civil courts in the implementation of this act.

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4. A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a member of a Constituency of the **Legislative Assembly** of a State, reserved for SC or ST, unless he is a member of that community of the concerned State. However, for being chosen from Assembly seats in Tuensang district of Nagaland, or seats reserved for Sanghas and Sikkamese of Nepal origin, and Sanghas in Sikkim, the candidate should be a member of the respective community in the concerned constituency.

Disqualifications of Members of Parliament and State Legislatures : The following disqualifications for being chosen or for being a member of Parliament/State Legislative Assembly are mentioned in the Act, which are in addition to the disqualifications mentioned in the Constitution:

(A) Disqualification under certain specified Crimes : Under the provision of Section 8 of this Act, a person convicted under any of the following categories (1-2) of criminal offences for any length of imprisonment or fine shall be disqualified for being chosen or for being a member of any House of Parliament/ State Legislature for 6 years from the date of release from jail after such conviction :

1. Crimes Under IPC (Indian Penal Code) : promoting enmity among different social groups and acts promoting disharmony in society, offence of bribery, offence of impersonation in election's, offences relating to rape and cruelty to women, offence of making statements creating enmity and hatred among classes, or making such statement in places of worship.

2. Crimes under certain other Acts : Crimes under some other acts are also covered under the above provision. These Acts are : Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955; Custom Act, 1962; Foreign Exchange (Regulation) Act, 1973; The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985; TADA, 1987; Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988; crimes of booth capturing or fraudulently destroying nomination papers under RPA, 1951; Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act, 1991; Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971; Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988; POTA, 2002; and any crime related to hoarding of goods, Profiteering, adulteration of food and drugs, and Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

(B) Disqualification on the ground of Conviction for any Crime : Under the provision of Section 8(3), any person convicted of any crime and sentenced to not less than two years imprisonment shall be disqualified for being chosen and for being a member of any House after such conviction and for further period of 6 years after the date of release.

Provided, if the convicted person appeals against his conviction to a higher court within a period of three months, he will not be subject to this disqualification.

However, the underlined relaxation was declared null and void by the Supreme Court in July 2013 in a landmark judgment. After this judgement, the final position is that a convicted person will face disqualification immediately after his first conviction by any court of law, irrespective of the fact that his appeal is pending in a higher court against his first conviction.

(C) Disqualification on the ground of 'Corrupt Practices' : If a person is found guilty of any of the 'Corrupt Practices' under section 123 of this Act, the President of India may declare him disqualified for being chosen or for being member of any House for a period not exceeding 6 years. Such person shall also be disqualified for voting in any election for the same period. The President shall determine the question of disqualification under this section on the basis of opinion of the Election Commission.

(D) Disqualification on the ground of Dismissal from Government Service : Under Section 9, if a person is dismissed from the service of the Union or State government on

What Are Corrupt Practice in Elections (Part VII Chapter 1) ?

The Corrupt Practices in elections are mentioned in section 123 of the Representation of People Act, 1951. These practices include the following :

1. Bribery : Any gift or promise given to a candidate to contest or not to contest in the election or to a voter to influence his voting behaiour is included in the corrupt practice of 'bribery'.

2. Undue Influence : It means any direct or indirect interference or the attempt to interfere on the part of candidate or his agent in the free exercise of any electoral right.

3. Communal Appeal to Voters : Any appeal by a candidate or his agent to voters to seek their support on the ground of religion, race, caste, community or language or appeal to national symbols for the furtherance of the prospects of elections is a corrupt practice under the Act.

4. Promoting Enmity and Hatred between different Classes : The promotion of enmity and hatred among different classes by a candidate or his agent on the grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language for furtherance of prospects for elections is also a corrupt practice in elections.

5. The Propagation of Practice of Sati : The propagation of practice of Sati or its glorification by a candidate or his agent for influencing the elections prospect is a corrupt practice in elections.

6. Publishing a False Statement : The publication of a false statement by a candidate or his agent in relation to the personal character of a candidate, which he believes to be false, is taken as corrupt practice in the elections under this act.

7. Providing Conveyance to the Voters : If a candidate or his agent provides a vehicle for the voters to reach the polling booth, it is termed as corrupt practice.

8. Incurring Expenditure beyond the permissible Limit : If a candidate incurs expenditure beyond the permissible limit for that election, it is included under the definition of corrupt practice.

9. Seeking Support of Government Officials : If a candidate or his agent obtains or attempts to obtain any assistance (Other than a vote) from any government official for furtherance of his election prospects, it is deemed to be a corrupt practice in election.

10. Booth Capturing : The act of booth capturing as defined in the section 135 of this act is also counted as a corrupt practice.

It should be noted that the **'corrupt practices'** under section 123 are distinct from the **'Electoral Offences'** as mentioned in section 125 of this Act.

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the ground of corruption or disloyalty, he shall be disqualified for a period of five years from the date of such dismissal and a certificate of that effect will be issued by the Election Commission of India.

(E) Disqualification on the ground of government contract or share in a Government Company : If a person enters into a business or trade contract with government (Section 9) or holds a post of manager/secretary in a company with not less than 25 per cent share of the Union /state government (Section 10), he shall be disqualified for a period of **three years** from the date of such order issued by the Election Commission. However, the Election Commission may remove the disqualification under sections 9 and 10.

Disqualification for Voting : If a person is convicted of any of the following offences, he shall be disqualified from voting in any election for a period of six years from the date of such conviction (section 11A) :

- Offences under sections 171E and 171 F of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
- Offences under section 125 (**Promoting enmity** among classes in connection with elections); or section 135 (Removal of ballot papers from polling station's or **booth capturing**); or clause (a) of subsection 2 of section 136 (Any **electoral offence committed by an official** deployed in election duty) of this Act.

However, the Election Commission may, for the reason recorded, remove the above disqualifications.

Right to Vote (Section 62)

1. 'Only those persons, and no other person, are entitled to vote in the election' whose name appears in the electoral roll, prepared for the time being for an election.
2. Voters should not be subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in section 16 of RPA, 1950.
3. No person shall cast his vote in more than one constituency in the election of the same class, irrespective of the fact that the name of such person appears in two constituencies of the same election. Also no person shall cast his vote more than once in the same constituency in the same election.
4. Persons in lawful custody of police or confined in prison are not allowed to vote. However, persons arrested under preventive detention are exempted.

Section 16 A of Representation of People Act, 1950

Section **16 of PRA 1950** provides for the disqualifications of persons as the voters in the elections.

A person shall be disqualified for registration in an electoral roll (Voting Right) if he—

(a) is not a citizen of India; or
(b) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or
(c) is, for the time being, disqualified from voting under the provisions of any law relating to corrupt practices and other offences in connection with elections.

The name of any person who becomes disqualified after registration shall forthwith be struck off the electoral roll in which it is included.

It should be mentioned that the grounds for depriving a person from the voting right are mentioned in Article 326 of the Constitution, which provides that a person may be disqualified as a voter by a law made by legislature on the ground of **non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt or illegal practice.** The Section 16 A of the PRA 1950 is enacted to give effect to the above provisions of the Constitution.

Notification of General Elections (Part III)

The President of India shall issue notification for biennial elections to the Council of States not earlier than **three months** from the date of expiry of the term of its members and general elections to the House of People not earlier than **six months** from the date of the expiry of the its tenure.

Similarly, the Governor of the concerned state shall issue notification for biennial elections to the Legislative Council not earlier than **three months** from the date of expiry of the term of its members and general elections to the Legislative Assembly not earlier than **six months** from the date of the expiry of the its tenure.

Administrative Machinery for Elections (Part IV)

The Election Commission does not have its independent staff for the conduct of various elections. Thus, it is dependent on the government staff for the conduct of elections. Article 324(6) of the Constitution makes it mandatory on the part of the President and Governor to provide necessary government staff for the conduct of elections as and when requested by the Election Commission. Any government staff, such as those deployed in the election duty, works under the supervision and direction of the Election Commission during the course of election duty. The RPA 1951 make the following additional provisions with respect to elections machinery :

Delegation of Powers of Election Commission : Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and RPA, 1950 and 1951, the functions of the Election Commission may also be performed by the Deputy Election Commissioner and the Secretary to the Election Commission. Besides, during the elections, the following officials are appointed by the Election Commission for the conduct of elections:

1. Chief Electoral Officer : During the elections, the Election Commission appoints a Chief Election Officer in each State from among the officers of the State government. The Chief Electoral Officer shall supervise all elections in the state under this Act.

2. District Election Officer : In each district, there shall be appointed a District Election Officer, who shall coordinate and supervise all work in the district in connection with the conduct of elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures.

3. Observer : The provision for the appointment of observers by the Election Commission was made for the first time in 1996. An Observer may be appointed for a constituency or a group of constituencies to watch the conduct of the election. The observer has the power to issue direction to the Returning Officer, to stop the counting of votes or to withhold the declaration of results in the case of booth capturing or any other malpractice to such an extent that the

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result of the election cannot be ascertained.

4. The Returning Officer : The Returning officers are appointed by the Election Commission for each constituency after consultation with government of the concerned state. The general duty of a Returning Officer is to do all such acts which are essential for the effective conduct of elections. The counting of votes and the declaration of election result are also important duties of Returning Officer. The Election Commission may appoint Assistant Returning officers to assist the Returning Officer or to perform his duties in his absence.

5. The Presiding Officer : The District Election Officer appoints a government official as the Presiding Officer for each polling station, who is responsible for conducting voting in the concerned polling station. It shall be the general duty of the presiding officer to keep order thereat and to see that the poll is fairly taken.

6. Polling Officers : One or more Polling Officers are appointed for each polling station by the District Election Officer. The duty of polling officer is to assist the Presiding Officer in the voting at the polling station.

It should be noted that the District Election Officer, with the previous approval of the Election Commission, determines the number and place of polling stations for conduct of voting.

Conduct of Elections (Part V)

Introduction of EVMs Section 61 A : The Section 61 A was inserted in 1989 to provide for the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for recording the choice of voters for electing members of either the House of Parliament or State Legislature.

Counting of Votes (Section 64-65) : The counting of votes is done under the supervision and direction of the Returning Officer and each contesting candidate, his counting agent and his election agent have right to be present during counting of votes.

If ballot papers are destroyed or taken out of counting place before the counting is completed, the matter shall be reported to the Election Commission by Returning Officer and the commission shall take the final decision on counting.

In case of equality of votes between the two candidates, the Returning Officer will decide the winning candidate by a lot.

Declaration of Results (Section 66-67) : After the counting is completed, the Returning officer shall declare the result and report the result to the Election Commission and to the Secretary of the concerned House of Parliament/State legislature. The appropriate authority shall publish the result in Official Gazette. The date of declaration of result shall also be the date of election of the candidate.

Forfeiture of Deposit

The provisions regarding forfeiture of deposits of candidates after elections are mentioned in section 158 of the Act. The deposits are ***not returned*** to the defeated candidates under following conditions :

(1) If the candidate's name is not included in the list of contesting candidate or if he dies before the time of commencement of poll.

(2) If the candidate is not elected and the number of valid votes polled by him does not exceed one-sixth of the total number of valid votes polled by all the candidates or in the case of election of more than one seat, one-sixth of the total number of valid votes so polled is divided by the number of members to be elected. However, the deposit of the winning candidate is not forfeited in any case.

Provided that if elections are held under the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote, the deposit of defeated candidate shall be forfeited if he does not get more than one-sixth of the number of votes prescribed in this behalf as sufficient to secure the return of a candidate (Quota).

(3) If at a general election, the candidate is contesting from more than one Parliamentary constituency, only one deposit shall be returned (if he fulfils the other conditions), and the other shall be forfeited.

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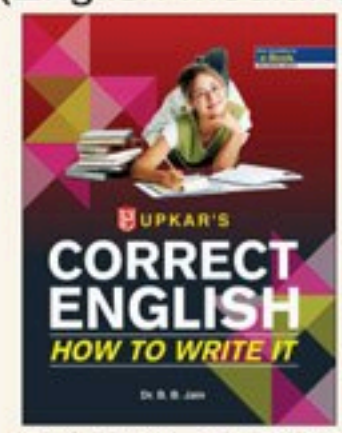
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Legal Article

An Introduction of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

—Dr. Richa Thapliyal

Introduction

Human Rights are those rights that are related to an individual or group of individuals. They are based on an old doctrine of natural rights that are inalienable in nature. Human rights gained prevalence only after the 2nd world war. The term human rights came into being in the 20th century. In ancient times, these rights were known as Natural Rights or the Rights of Man. The theory of natural rights could be seen in the writings of Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau, Grotius, etc. These philosophers believed that these natural rights are natural laws and "no one ought to harm, another in his life, health, and liberty or possessions". These natural laws provide natural rights to life, right to personal liberty and right to property to all individuals, irrespective of their colour, caste and creed.

Human rights were introduced immediately after the second world war by the newly formed organization *i.e.*, United Nation, which was founded on 24th October, 1945. A committee of the United Nations drafted a Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which was followed by two covenants-one on economic and social rights and another on political and civil rights.

Indian Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

India is a member of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the international covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. India has ratified ratified several international treaties in relation to protection of human rights. For example, The International Convention on the elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, The Convention on Child rights and so on. India, through its parliament, passed the landmark legislation, namely, The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The National Human Rights Commission was established in conformity with the Paris Principles (1991). The Paris Principles are a international standards which frame a guide work for the National Human Rights Commission.

The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, came into force with retrospective effect on September 28,1993. Originally, it was provided in section 1(2) of the Act. This Act applies to the whole of India and in the case of Jammu & Kashmir, it applies to the Union List and Concurrent List only. However, this provision has been omitted by Act 34 of 2019, and now this Act has been extended to whole country.

In India, the landmark legislation, namely the Protection of Human Rights Act was passed by parliament on December 18, 1993. The protection of human rights Act passed by both the houses *i.e.*, Rjaya Sabah and Lok Shaba, but it got the consent of the President on 8th January, 1994. It was enacted by Parliament in the Forty-fourth year of the Republic of India. India signed and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 1948. In India, a significant development of Human Rights was noticed between 1968 to 1993. At the end of 1981, like many other states, India too rectified the two covenants on human rights *i.e.*, the covenant on civil and political rights and the covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. As a result, the countries that rectified the convenants became legally bound by them. In the early 1910s, India was criticized for the violation of human rights in Jammu & Kashmir State by its armed forces. The Western world and the USA created pressure on India related to human rights violations. Facing the international pressure as well as considering the domestic demand, it was realized by the national leaders that such a law is required, which could deal with human rights violations. And in reply to criticism done by western countries, the Human Rights Commission Bill was first introduced in Lok Sabha, and after a thoughtful discussion, the Bill was introduced before the Parliament's standing committee. To understand the need of National and International demand for human rights, the President of India promulgated an ordinance, This later helped in the establishment of the National Commission on Human Rights in India. Justice Ranganathan Mishra, the former chief justice of India, was appointed as the first Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission.

Definition of Human Rights : According to the Human Rights Act, rights are the rights of an individual rights that are related to their life, liberty and equality. These rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, recognized by the international covenants and enforceable by Indian Courts. This definition limits the scope of the National Human Right Commission because India ratified only two covenants : the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. These covenants are not directly enforceable by Indian courts, but under The Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, the definetion of human rights is limited to the Fundamental Rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution. These Fundamental Rights are enforceable by the courts.

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The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

(Act No. 10 of 1994)

[8th January, 1994]

An Act to provide for the constitute of a National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission in States and Human Rights Courts for better protection of human rights and for matters connected there with or incidental thereto.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-Fourth year of the Republic of India.

Preliminary (Chapter–I)

(1) This Act may be called the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

(2) It extends to whole of India 1 [* * *]

(3) It shall be deemed to have come into force on 28th day of September, 1993.

Objectives and Significant Provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

The main objectives of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 was :

- To protect the human rights of the all Indian citizen throughout the country.
- To established the National Human Right Commission.
- To set up State Human Rights Commission in all the states.

The significant and major provisions of the Act are as follow :

The National Human Rights Commission (CHAPTER–II)

Chapter II, of the Act deals with the composition of the NHRC. It is said that it is responsibility of the central government to constitute a body to be known as The National Human Rights Commission. It will exercises the power and perform the functions assigned to it under this Act.

Composition of the Commission : The commission shall consist of a Chairperson who has been retired Chief Justice of India, or a judge of the Supreme Court.

- One member who is, or has been a judge of the Supreme Court.
- One member who is, or has been the Chief Justice of a High Court.
- There should be three more members out of which one shall be a women. These person should have knowledge or practical experience of human rights related matters.
- In Section 12 clause (b) to (j) deals with the deemed members of the commission, who are chairpersons of various commissions. And discharged specified functions.
- The National Commission for Backward Classes
- The National Commission for Minorities
- The National Commission for Child Rights
- The National Commission for Schedule Castes
- The National Commission for Schedule Tribes
- The National Commission for Women and
- The Chief Commissioner for Person with Disability.

Section 3(5) of the Act talked about headquarter of the commission shall be at Delhi but with prior approval of central government Commission can established offices at other places in India.

Process of Appointment of Chairperson and Other Members : Section (4) deals with the appointment of chairperson and other members of the commission. The chairperson and the other members are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal. These appointments shall be made after the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as chairperson :

- Speaker of the Lok Sabha
- Union Home Minister
- Leader of the Opposition in the Both Houses
- Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha

This section further provides that a sitting Supreme Court Judge or Chief Justice of a High Court cannot be appointed without consultation with the chief Justice of India.

Resignation and Removal of Chairperson and Members : Section (5) of the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, lays out some procedure for the removal of the chairperson or member of the commission.

The Chairperson or any member may, by notice in writing under his hand addressed to the President of India, resign his office.

The Chairperson or any Member shall only be removed from his office by the order of the President of India on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapability. The President is required to refer the matter to the Supreme Court for further investigation and if The Supreme Court finds fault, it will advice the President on his removal.

Further, The President can remove the Chairperson or any member if he :

(a) is adjudged an insolvent; or
(b) engaged in any paid employment; or
(c) is unfit to continue his duty due to infirmity of mind and body; or
(d) If unsound mind and declare by competent court; or
(e) Is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which in the opinion of the President involves moral turpitude.

Former and Current Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission

S.No.	Name	Date of Assumption	Date of Demitting Office
1.	Justice Shri Ranganath Misra	12.10.1993	24.11.1996
2.	Justice Shri M.N. Venkatachalliah	26.11.1996	24.10.1999
3.	Justice Shri J.S. Verma	04.11.1999	17.1.2003
4.	Dr. Justice A.S. Anand	17.2.2003	31.10.2006
5.	Shri Justice S. Rajendra Babu	02.04.2007	31.05.2009
6.	Justice Shri K.G. Balakrishnan	07.06.2010 (FN)	11.05.2015
7.	Shri Justice H. L. Dattu	29.02.2016	02.12.2020
8.	Shri Justice Arun Kumar Mishra	02.06.2021 **Presently working**	

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Term of Office of Chairperson and Members : Section (6) provides that the Chairperson or any member can hold their office for three years or until they attain the age of 70 years.

Functions and Powers of the Commission : Section 12 deals with this provision. The functions and powers of the commission are :

(a) That commission can inquire about any human rights violation or if negligence can be done by any public servant related to human rights violation.
(b) The NHRC can intervened in any proceeding of court if involving any allegation of human rights violation.
(c) The commission can visit to any jail and observe the condition of inmates. It can also make recommendation to the authority on its observance.
(d) It can encourages NGOs that are working in the field of human rights.
(e) It promotes research in the field of human rights.
(f) It can perform any function which is necessary for the promotion of human rights.

Under Section 13 of human rights act has power to investigate the complaint as a civil court.

Section 14, give power of utilizing the service of any officer or investigation agency of the central government or the state government for investigation of inquiry.

The annual and special report of the commission is to be submitted to the central government and the State government under Section 20 of this act.

State Human Rights Commission (CHAPTER V)

Chapter V, Section 21-29 deals with the composition, Constitution and functions of the State Human Rights Commission.

According to Section 21(1) A State Government may constitute a body to be known as the ..... (Name of the State) Human Rights Commission to exercise the powers conferred upon, and to perform the functions assigned to, a State Commission.

Composition of SHRC :

(a) The commission shall consist of a Chairperson who has been either former Chief Justice or a Judge of a High Court.
(b) One Member who is, or has been, a Judge of a High Court or District Judge in the State with a minimum of seven years' experience as District Judge.
(c) One Member to be appointed from among persons having knowledge of or practical experience in matters relating to human rights.

The Commission Further Provides—There shall be a Secretary who shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the State Commission. The State Government notifies the place for The headquarters of the State Commission. the State Commission will inquire only those cases of human rights violations which are enshrined in List II and List III in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution :

Appointment Procedure in SHRC : Section 22 is related to appointment of Chairman and other members of State Commission who shall be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of a committee that shall be consist of the Chief Minister, as a Chairperson and other members *i.e.*, the Speaker of the legislative assembly, Minister incharge of the Department of Home in that State Member; and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly

Tenure of the Office of Members : Section 24 deals with the tenure of the Chairperson and members of the council. It is same as it is in National Commission. It is three years or seventy years of age, whichever is earlier. These members can be eligible for reappointment.

Annual and Special Reports of State Commission : Section 28 talks about the State Commission shall submit an annual report to the State Government. The State Government shall cause the annual and special reports of the State Commission to be laid before each House of State Legislature where it consists of two Houses, or where such Legislature consists of one House, before that House along with a memorandum of action taken.

Human Rights Courts : (Chapter VI)

Part VI of the Act having two sections of Section 30 and Section 31. Both that comprises Sections deal with the creation of Human Rights Courts in each district.

Section 30 : Human Rights Courts : Each district establish a Human Rights Court for the purpose of providing speedy trial of offences arising out of violation of human rights the Act authorizes the state governments to establish a Human Rights Court with the consent of the Chief Justice of the High Court. There are conditions in this Section that shall not apply if :

(a) a court of session is already specified as a special court; or
(b) a special court is already constituted, for such offences under any other law for time being in force.

Section 31, Special Public Prosecutor : In this Section of the Act, the state government shall, by notification appoint a public prosecutor or appoint an advocate who has been in practice as an advocate for not less than seven years, as a special public prosecutor for the purpose of conducting cases in the court.

Finance, Accounts and Audit : (Chapter VII)

Section 32-35 provide details of finance, Account and Audit.

Section 32, Grants by the Central Government : The Central Government, shall after recommendation by Parliament pay some grants to the commission and the commission may spend such sums as it thinks fit for performing the functions under this Act.

Section 33, Grants by the State Government : The same condition is applicable for the State Government. It should take prior permission from State Legislature for paying grants to the State Commission and the State Government may utilized the sum for the purpose of the Act.

Section 34, Account and Audit : The Commission shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed by the Central Government in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

Miscellaneous : (Chapter VIII)

Section 36 to 43 provides miscellaneous instructions in the Act. They are as ahead :

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- Matters not subject to jurisdiction of the Commission.
- Constitution of special investigation teams.
- Protection of action taken in good faith.
- Members and officers to be public servants.
- Power of Central Government to make rules.
- Power of State Government to make rules.
- Power to remove difficulties.
- Repeal and Savings.

The Protection of Human Rights, (Amendment) Act 2019

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill was introduced by Mr. Amit Shah. The Bill amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. This amended act provides that if a person has served as a Chief Justice of India, is qualified to be appointed as The Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. In the same way, Judge of a High Court is eligible to be appointed as Chairperson of the State Human Rights Commission. Increasing the number of members, including women as one of the members, Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes, are some of the amendments under the Act.

Conclusion

The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 defines Human Rights as the rights related to life, liberty, and equality guaranteed to all individuals. The National Human Rights Commission is a statutory body mentioned in the Constitution of India. The State Human Rights Commissions are also working along the same line as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Apart from that the National Human Rights Commission has some limitations. Like recommendations made by NHRC are not binding. It does not have the power of penalize the authorities who do not implement their orders. India needs to revamped if they are to really protect human rights violations. The recommendations of the commission should be made enforceable. The NHRC should be provided with more powers for the disposal of cases related to human rights violation.

Some Interesting Facts

- The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 was implemented on 28 September, 1993.
- The Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993 amended in 2006.
- The protection of Human Rights Act instructs the NHRC to perform proactively or reactively investigate into infringement of human rights by the government of India or negligence of such violation by a public servant.
- President is not included in the Committee constituted for the appointment of the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission.
- To provide Economic compensation to any human rights violation victim is not the function of the National Human Rights Commission.
- New Delhi is the headquarter of the National Human Rights Commission.
- The recommendations made by NHRC are not binding.
- Violation of Human Rights by private parties cannot be considered under NHRC Jurisdiction.

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many agencies, it took seven government agencies including and especially the Prime Minister's Office, ONGC and National Disaster Management Authority assistance from the armed forces, and the efforts of many others to successfully rescue all the 41 workers from four states after digging through 57 metres of debris. In the end, it was rat-hole miners with experience of working in the tiniest crevasses, closer to the men inside the tunnel than the mighty machines that preceded them, who finally made the mission a success.

The Char Dham Project in Uttarakhand is an ambitious project of the Central and State government. It involves large-scale construction in one of the most ecologically fragile zones in the world the Himalayas. While connectivity and development are essential to the region-in terms of easy and quick access to China boarder, how these projects are being undertaken may require a closer look, especially in terms of increasing the focus on sustainability and environmental clearances. This may require a different, more creative design of development for the region and beyond. The rescue operation can also serve as a blueprint for future natural disasters and accidents. Finally, the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel collapse has once again turned the spotlight on the invisible migrant workers – the last time they drew the nation's attention was because of their travails during the lockdown in the pandemic. From those trapped to those who rescued them, are arduous stories of being away from home, amid unsafe working conditions and a precocity of existence that mostly goes unrecognised. This larger predicament, too, deserves to be addressed by an all-of-government approach.

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through a series of reform measures, as evidenced by the LEADS 2023 report, which consolidates data from States and UTs. States and UTs can further enhance logistics efficiency by focusing on areas such as **data-driven planning, city logistics plans, bridging infrastructure gaps, optimizing truck parking, RTO efficiency, technology utilization, private sector participation, and green logistics.** The transformation in the logistics sector signifies the positive impact of government infrastructure investments and the sector's growing emphasis on efficiency. With alignment between the Central Government, States, UTs, and private sector, this is a crucial time to improve logistics efficiency, supported by reforms like PMGS and NLP that enhance infrastructure and competitiveness, benefiting Indian goods' quality and cost-effectiveness. India's transition into a global manufacturing powerhouse is underway, driven by key trends like Investments, sustainability, and digitalization, with the commitment of States/UTs playing a pivotal role in this transformation.

The future of logistics in India is full of possibilities and the journey of discovery, innovation and progress is best travelled by promoting cooperative federalism, where all stakeholders cooperate and give Gati and Shakti to the new INDIA.

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Socio-Economic Article

Development Programmes Inevitably Silence Violence in Sensitive Areas

—Satyawan Saurabh

There are many examples where development programmes and approaches have yielded positive results in combating violence. The 'Rajasthan Madarsa Board' initiative focused on the modernization of traditional Islamic schools (madrassas) in the state. By including subjects such as Science, Mathematics, and English in the curriculum along with religious studies, it provided a more all-round education to the students. As a result, students became less vulnerable to extremist ideologies. The 'Sadbhavna' project in Andhra Pradesh aims to promote social integration among diverse communities. It brought people from different religious backgrounds together for community events, sports, and cultural activities. This increased understanding, reduced mistrust, and helped build stronger ties between communities. The 'Udaan' programme focuses on providing skill development and job training to the youth in the Kashmir Valley. By increasing their employability and providing economic opportunities, it aims to combat feelings of alienation and hopelessness among youth, thereby making them less vulnerable to radicalization.

Combating violence in sensitive areas of India requires a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach. By addressing root causes, engaging local communities, and investing in education and economic development, these programmes aim to foster social solidarity and counter extremist narratives. This introduction sets the stage for effective development initiatives that empower individuals, promote tolerance and build a resilient society against the spread of violence.

It is important to understand the underlying factors that contribute to violence in each region. Factors such as economic inequalities, social exclusion, lack of education, and political marginalization often play a role. Involve local communities in the design and implementation of programmes. Their insight and active participation are essential to ensure relevance and sustainability. Focus on improving access to quality education and skill development opportunities. Education can empower individuals to make informed choices and oppose extremist ideologies. Promoting inclusive economic growth by investing in infrastructure, industries, and job creation, economic opportunity can help reduce feelings of hopelessness and desperation that extremists can exploit. Encourage dialogue and interaction between different religious, ethnic, and social groups to promote understanding and tolerance.

Building social solidarity can help bridge divisions and reduce the appeal of extremist narratives. Strengthen law enforcement and justice systems to ensure fair and speedy resolution of conflicts and complaints. A sense of justice is necessary to build trust in institutions. Develop and disseminate counter-narratives that challenge extremist ideologies and propaganda. Media, local influencers, and religious leaders can play an important role in this endeavour. Engage youth through positive activities, sports, arts, and culture to divert attention from extremist influences and provide them with a sense of belonging. Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of development programmes to make necessary adjustments and improvements Ensure coordination between various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners to effectively pool resources and expertise.

By increasing their employability and providing economic opportunities, it aims to combat feelings of alienation and hopelessness among youth, thereby making them less vulnerable to radicalization. Development schemes such as the 'Road Connectivity Project' aim to build roads and improve connectivity in Naxal-affected areas. Such projects not only increased access but also brought economic benefits to isolated areas, reducing the influence of extremist groups. The 'Gunotsav' programme in Assam focuses on improving the quality of education in government schools. By enhancing the learning environment and teacher training, it improved educational opportunities for children, making them less vulnerable to extremist influences. Some states, such as Kerala, have implemented deradicalization programmes that focus on the rehabilitation of individuals affected by extremist ideologies. These initiatives provide counseling, vocational training, and reintegration support, helping individuals to reintegrate into society.

The success of development programmes in combating violence lies in their adaptability, community participation, and continuous evaluation. By addressing underlying factors, fostering social cohesion, and providing opportunities for education and economic development, these initiatives can make a significant impact in vulnerable areas of India. Together, these efforts contribute to building more inclusive, tolerant, and resilient societies, ultimately reducing the effects of violence and promoting lasting positive change.

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World Economy Article

Role of IMF in Emerging Global Economy

—Shrawan Kumar Singh

The world is changing. From COVID-19 and climate change to digitalization and diverging demographics, the IMF's member countries are confronting new challenges. The impacts of these challenges are being felt unevenly across countries. Deep-seated structural issues are becoming much more prevalent in today's world.

Changes in Global Economy

Martin Wolf has described eight changes in world economy :

1. A shift in global economic, and therefore political, power.
2. Increase in great-power rivalry as relations deteriorate between Western powers and a rising China.
3. A turn toward populist politics, not least within advanced economies. One feature of this populism is suspicion toward technocratic expertise.
4. The slowdown, or even reversal, of globalization.
5. Change in technology. Technological progress has been the driving force of economic growth.
6. An increase in financial fragility.
7. Change is the phenomenon dubbed 'secular stagnation'.
8. The rising salience of climate change as a policy issue. This is likely to have important effects on development strategies and macroeconomic policies in all countries.

In 2000, advanced economies generated 57 per cent of global output, measured by purchasing power parity. By 2024, according to IMF forecasts, that share will fall to 37 per cent. Meanwhile, China's share will jump to 21 per cent from 7 per cent, and the rest of emerging Asia will account for 39 per cent of global output, compared with 14 per cent for the United States and 15 per cent for the European Union. Prior to the transatlantic financial crisis, the volume of world trade grew almost twice as fast as world output. Now trade and output are growing at about the same rate.

Similarly, not all countries will be equally able to seize the opportunities presented by digital change, such as central bank digital currencies. There are quite different demographic pressures in various parts of the world. Income and gender inequalities are widening. All this creates a highly challenging environment for the IMF, which has also been changing.

Reform Agenda

Many scholars, notably among them are, Stiglitz, Dieter, Mervyn King, Jean Pisani-Ferry, Griffith-Jones and Ocampo have opined that the IMF has lost its relevance in the contemporary global economy. The experts have suggested many measures for bringing reforms in the functioning of IMF. Some of them are :

1. Enhancing the flexibility of the Fund's traditional stand-by arrangement (SBA).
2. Modernizing IMF conditionality for all borrowers.
3. Introducing a new flexible credit line (FCL).
4. Doubling access limits for non-concessional resources.
5. Adapting and simplifying cost and maturity structures for its lending, and
6. Eliminating facilities that were seldom used.

A revamped IMF would have higher quotas to back its activities, together with modernized distribution among member countries and greater access to borrowed financial resources. There is an urgent need to do more at three levels—institutional, national and global. The world should also be more sensitive to certain aspects of the IMF's structure and operations that limit its effectiveness, hamper its credibility, and unduly challenge its reputation. Successfully addressing these challenges requires cooperation between the Fund and other institutions that have expertise in these areas, such as the World Bank.

The challenges facing IMF are constantly evolving. *Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, has remarked "For everything to stay the same, everything must change"*. In fact, directional changes are necessary to ensure that the IMF continues to fulfil its mandate laid out more than 75 years ago.

A great deal must change. Some of these changes are within the Fund's control. Others call for a new global consensus. It requires new and imaginative approaches to securing necessary political and institutional transformation. These challenges are outside the Fund's historical areas of competence. But, they are vital in themselves and to important constituencies in member countries, and they have important macroeconomic implications.

The IMF is built on a commitment to cooperation among member countries. That commitment is on the wane. But, the countries of the world might rediscover its importance. If so, they will find the Fund an invaluable instrument. The IMF cannot ensure that outcome. But, it can, and must, prepare for it. To its credit, it is doing so. In the end, as has been succinctly remarked by Martin Wolf, "the Fund is the world's servant. It can guide, but it cannot shape the world. As the world goes, so will the IMF."

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Legal Article

Recording Phone Conversation without Permission Violates Right to Privacy Under Article 21 : Chhattisgarh High Court

—Sanjeev Sirohi, Advocate

While setting aside a 'Family Court' order of Mahasamund that allowed the use of recordings of telephone conversations as evidence to a husband, the Chhattisgarh High Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark and latest judgement titled Aasha Lata Soni *Vs* Durgesh Soni in CRMP No. 2112 of 2022 that was pronounced as recently as on October 5, 2023 has minced just no words to hold in no uncertain terms that recording a phone call without the knowledge of the person concerned violates their 'right to privacy' under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. It merits mentioning that this noteworthy ruling came in response to a petition that had been filed by a woman challenging a 'Family Court's' order. It must be noted here that the Single Judge Bench of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rakesh Mohan Pandey was dealing with the petition challenging the order that had been passed by the 'Family Court' whereby the application filed by the respondent under Section 311 of the CrPC to summon the witness for further cross-examination has been allowed.

We ought to note that in this leading case, the application under Section 125 of the CrPC was moved by the petitioner for the grant of maintenance and the same had been pending before the concerned 'Family Court' since 2019. The ruling by the High Court came in response to a petition that had been filed by a woman challenging a Family Court's order. The woman vehemently contended that the recordings had been made without her knowledge or consent, infringing on her right to privacy. We thus see that the Chhattisgarh High Court while agreeing entirely with her argument thus rightly set aside the Family Court's verdict.

At the very outset, this brief, brilliant, bold and balanced judgment authored by the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon'ble Shri Justice Rakesh Mohan Pandey sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "The petitioner has challenged the order dated 21.10.2021 passed by the learned Family Court, Mahasamund, District Mahasamund, Chhattisgarh in Miscellaneous Criminal Case No.F-118/2019, whereby the application filed by respondent under Section 311 of the CrPC to summon the witness for further cross-examination has been allowed."

To put things in perspective, the Bench envisages in para 2 that, "The application under Section 125 of the CrPC was moved by the petitioner for the grant of maintenance and the same is pending before the concerned Family Court since 2019. The petitioner led her evidence, thereafter, the case was fixed for examination of the witnesses and production of documents. Respondent/husband moved an application under Section 311 of the CrPC along with certificate under Section 65-B of the Indian Evidence Act for re-examination of the petitioner on the ground that certain conversation was recorded on the mobile phone and he wants to cross-examine the petitioner confronting with the conversation recorded on the mobile, and the learned trial Court vide order dated 21.10.2021 allowed the said application."

As we see, the Bench then discloses in para 6 stating that, "In the proceeding under Section 125 of the CrPC after examination of the petitioner, an application moved by the respondent under Section 311 of the CrPC for reexamination of the petitioner/wife was allowed by the learned Family Court on the ground that certain conversation was recorded by the respondent on his mobile and he wants to prove the same against the petitioner, therefore, the piece of the evidence is necessary for just decision of the case."

While citing the relevant and remarkable case law, the Bench then mentions in para 7 that, "The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of R.M. Malkani (supra) in para-30 held as : "There is no scope for holding that the appellant was made to incriminate himself. At the time of the conversation there was no case against the appellant. He was not compelled to speak or confess. Article 21 was invoked by submitting that the privacy of the appellants conversation was invaded. Article 21 contemplates procedure established by law with regard to deprivation of life or personal liberty. The telephonic conversation of an innocent citizen will be protected by Courts against wrongful or high handed interference by tapping the conversation. The protection is not for the guilty citizen against the efforts of the police to vindicate the law and prevent corruption of public servants. It must not be understood that the Courts will tolerate safeguards for the protection of the citizen to be imperiled by permitting the police to proceed by unlawful or irregular methods. In the present case there is no unlawful or irregular method in obtaining the tape recording of the conversation."

Further, the Bench then while citing yet another relevant case law states in para 8 that, "While dealing with a similar issue it was held in the matter of People's Union for Civil Liberties *Vs* Union of India (1997) 1 SCC 301 in para 18 as : "The right to privacy-by itself-has not been identified under the Constitution. As a concept it may be too broad and moralistic to define it judicially. Whether right to privacy can be claimed or has been infringed in a given case would depend on the facts of the said case. But the right to hold a telephone conversation in the privacy of one's home or office without interference can certainly be claimed as 'right to privacy'. Con-

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versations on the telephone are often of an intimate and confidential character. Telephone conversation is a part of modern man's life. It is considered so important that more and more people are carrying mobile telephone instruments in their pockets. Telephone conversation is an important facet of a man's private life. Right to privacy would certainly include telephone-conversation in the privacy of ones home or office. Telephone-tapping would, thus, infract Article 21 of the Constitution of India unless it is permitted under the procedure established by law."

Be it noted, the Bench notes in para 9 that, "Thereafter, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Mr. 'X' (supra), held in para 27 and 28 as : "Right of Privacy may, apart from contract, also arise out of a particular specific relationship which may be commercial, matrimonial, or even political. As already discussed above, doctor-patient relationship, though basically commercial, is, professionally, a matter of confidence and, therefore, doctors are morally and ethically bound to maintain confidentiality. In such a situation, public disclosure of even true private facts may amount to an invasion of the right of privacy which may sometimes lead to the clash of one persons 'right to be let alone' with another persons right to be informed. (27)

"Disclosure of even true private facts has the tendency to disturb a persons tranquility. It may generate many complexes in him and may even lead to psychological problems. He may, thereafter, have a disturbed life all through. In the face of these potentialities, and as already held by this Court in its various decisions referred to above, the Right of Privacy is an essential component of right to life envisaged by Article 21. The right, however, is not absolute and may be lawfully restricted for the prevention of crime, disorder of protection of health or morals or protection of rights and freedom of others." (28)

It is worth noting that the Bench notes in para 10 that, "The High Court of Madhya Pradesh (Indore Bench) in the matter of Arunima @ Abha Mehta (supra), reported in AIR 2016 MP 112 has observed in para-6 and 7 as : "On considering the above submissions and the impugned order, I find that the sole question that arises in consideration is whether the tapes produced by the husband are admissible evidence ? Admittedly, the conversation was recorded without the knowledge of the wife, behind her back, and is definitely an infringement of her right to privacy. Besides, it is violative of article 11 & 21 of the Constitution of India and has rightly pointed out by the Counsel for the petitioner/wife, that interception in the recording conversation is permitted only under the circumstances. Besides, there is also penalty under section 72 of the Information Technology Act and it could not be used as instrument to create evidence of such nature. The cases cited by the Counsel for the respondent are not applicable in the present context and are of no use to the respondent. (6)

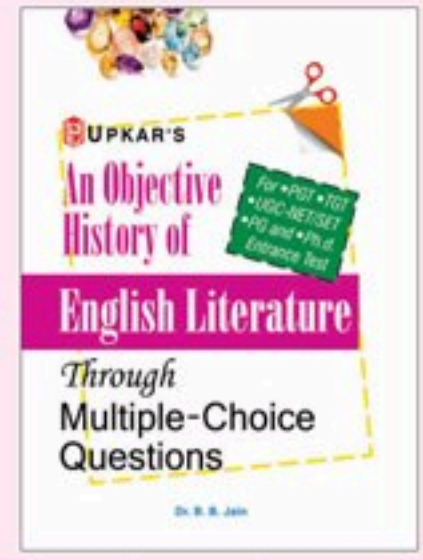
"I find that to say anything beyond the aforesaid would affect the merits of the case and hence it is held that impugned orders dated 10.7.2014 are contrary to the provisions of law and are hereby set aside. The trial Court, however, may continue in accordance with the provisions of law. The tapes, however, cannot be admitted in evidence but it may be kept on record." (7)

Most significantly and so also most forthrightly, the Bench then mandates in para 11 propounding that, "Now coming to the facts of the present case in the light of aforesaid discussed judgments, it appears that the respondent has recorded the conversation of the petitioner without her knowledge behind her back which amounts to violation of her right to privacy and also the right of the petitioner guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Further, the Right of Privacy is an essential component of right to life envisaged by Article 21 of the Constitution, therefore, in the opinion of this Court, the learned Family Court has committed an error of law in allowing the application under Section 311 of the CrPC along with the certificate issued under Section 65 of the Indian Evidence Act. Accordingly, the order passed by the learned Family Court on 21.10.2021 in Case No. F118/2019 is hereby set-aside."

As a corollary, the Bench directs in para 12 that, "Accordingly, the instant petition is allowed."

Finally, the Bench then concludes by holding in para 13 that, "Interim order granted earlier stands vacated."

In conclusion, we thus see that the Chhattisgarh High Court has made it indubitably clear that secretly recording of the telephonic conver-sations without their consent violates the right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. So it thus merits no reiteration that all the courts must always pay heed to what the Chhattisgarh High Court has held in this leading case so elegantly, eloquently and effectively in this leading case ! No denying it ! PDarpan

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Important Concepts in News

Indian History, Art & Culture

Srinivas Ramanujan

Reason for Discussion

In India 'National Mathematics Day' is celebrated every year on 22 December, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the great mathematician Srinivas Ramanujan (It is noteworthy that this day is being organized since 2012). The main objective of the concept of National Mathematics Day is to awaken interest in mathematics among the students, increase their natural curiosity towards mathematics and also to remove the fear of mathematics from the minds of students and develop the habit and skill of using mathematics including mathematics teacher to improve the teaching method.

Key Facts :

- Ramanujan was born on 22 December, 1887 in an ordinary family in Erode village of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu. His mother's name was Komaltammal and father's name was Srinivas Iyengar.
- Ramanujan, who had a sharp intellect since childhood, had discovered the formula to solve cube and biquadratic equations during his studies in high school. But he was highly inclined towards mathematics and spent a lot of his time on complex questions of mathematics. Due to spending time, he failed in all other subjects except Mathmatics in the 12th examination. Despite several attempts, he could not pass the 12th examination, after which he left formal education.
- With the help of one of his former teachers, Professor Iyer, he met the then collector of Nellore district, R. Met Ramachandra Rao who was also the President of the Indian Mathematical Society at that time. R. Ramachandra Rao was greatly impressed by Ramanujan's mathematical scholarship and he gave Ramanujan a job on the editorial board of the journal of the 'Indian Mathematical Society'.
- In the year 1911, Ramanujan presented his research paper on Bernoulli numbers, after which he got a lot of fame. After that he started working in the accounting department of Madras Port Trust.
- The turning point in Ramanujan's life came when he wrote a letter to GH Hardy, one of the most famous mathematicians of his time. and presented some of his research work to him. After a investigation, Prof. GH Hardy was greatly impressed by Ramanujan's scholarship and he invited Ramanujan to come to Cambridge University.

'Hardy-Ramanujan Number'

'1729' is said to be a magic number. According to Ramanujan's biography 'The Man Who Knew Infinity' by Robert Knaigel, GH Hardy once went to meet Ramanujan at a hospital. He told him that the taxi number was '1729' from which he came but it seemed to be an ordinary number. Ramanujan said that it was not an ordinary number. The genius mathematician said that it is the smallest number that can be expressed as the sum of two different cubes in 2 different ways. Later, the number was termed as the **'Hardy-Ramanujan Number'.**

- Ramanujan's talent can be gauged from the fact that Prof. GH Hardy compared him to such erudite scholars as Jacobi and Euler. Apart from this, Prof. GH Hardy developed a scale for all geniuses in which only Ramanujan was given 100 points. It is noteworthy that on this scale most of the mathematicians got only 30 marks out of 100 and Prof. GH Hardy gave himself 30 points.
- Ramanujan was awarded BA degree by Cambridge University for his remarkable research work in mathematics. Along with this, he was elected a Fellow of the world's most prestigious "Royal Society of London"
- Due to adverse weather and other problems in London, Ramanujan's health started deteriorating continuously. Due to continued ill health, he left his job and returned to India in 1919, but he later developed tuberculosis.
- Despite continued ill health, he continued working as Prof. In his last letter to GH Hardy, he described the mock theta function that is currently used to understand cancer.
- At the age of 32 he died on 26 April, 1920 due to poor health .
- While working on the research work done by Ramanujan, Jean-Pierre Serre and Pierre Deligne received the Fields Medal Award, called the Nobel of Mathematics.
- Currently, the mathematical formulas propounded by Ramanujan are being used in a wide area of science which includes theories ranging from signal processing to black holes. It is noteworthy that the theory given by him in the twentieth century was the mock theta function, the mystery of which could be solved in the 21st century. After this, people came to know that mock theta function is necessary to understand black holes.
- The theories of this great Indian mathematician came to public attention in 1991 when MIT Professor Robert Kanigel wrote the much-discussed biography 'The Man Who Knew Infinity: The Genius of Ramanujan'.
- In the film 'The Man Who Knew Infinity', based on Manujan's life, which was released in 2016, the role of Srinivas Ramanujan

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was played by British-Indian actor Dev Patil and its director was Matthew Brown.

- Keeping in mind the work done by Ramanujan in the field of mathematics, the Government of India declared the year 2012 as 'National Mathematics Year' on his 125th birth anniversary and decided to celebrate National Mathematics Day on 22 December every year on his birthday.

Ramanujan's Contribution to Mathematics

Formulas and Equations :

- Ramanujan compiled approximately 3,900 results (equations and identities) in his short life of 32 years. His most important works involved the infinite series of Pi.
- He provided several formulas to calculate the digits of Pi which were different from the traditional methods.ways.

Game Theory :

- He discovered a long list of new ideas to solve many challenging mathematical problems, which gave a significant impetus to the development of game theory.
- His contribution to game theory is purely based on intuition and natural talent and remains unrivalled to this day.

Other Contributions

Ramanujan's other notable contributions include hypergeometric series, the Riemann series, the elliptic integrals, mock theta function, the theory of divergent series, and the functional equations of the zeta function.

Polity, Governance and Social Justice

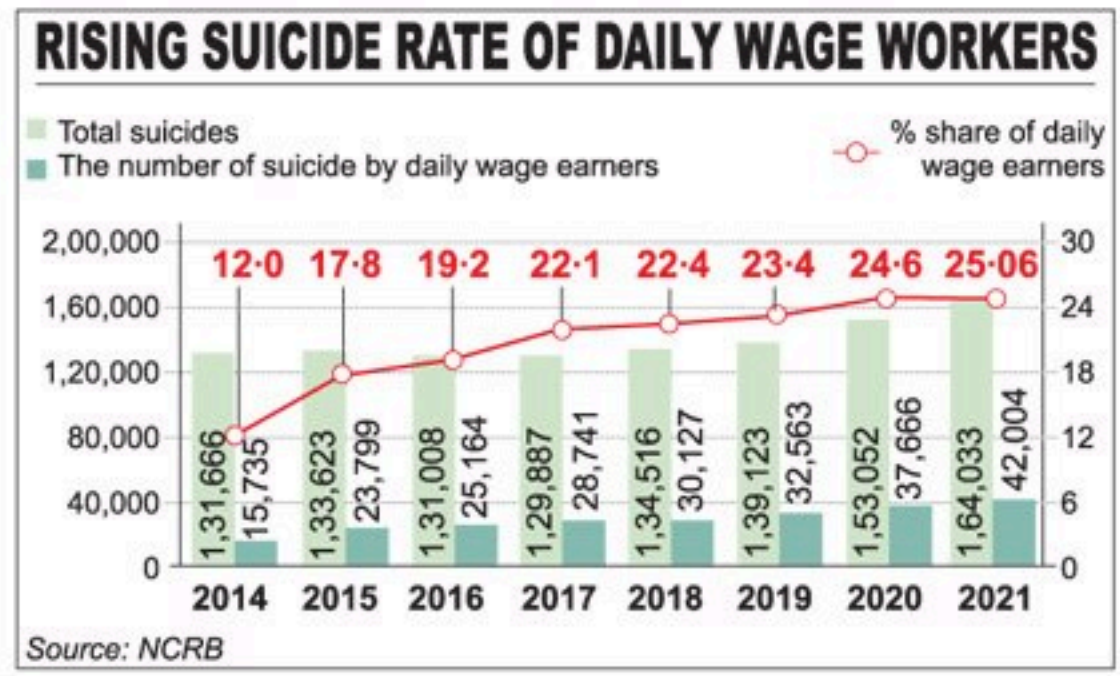
NCRB Report 2022

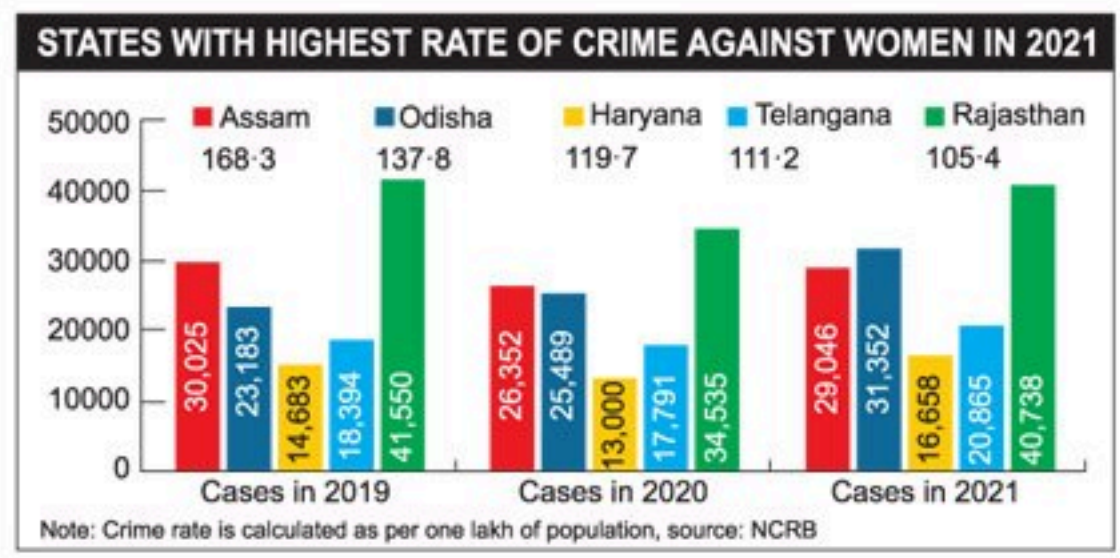
Reason for Discussion

Recently the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released its annual report titled "Crime in India for 2022". The report provides a comprehensive overview of crimes across the country.

Key Facts :

- According to the report, more than 58,00,000 cognizable crimes were registered in the year 2021, which included both crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Law (SLL). The number of cases compared to the year 2021 A decline of 4·5% was seen in registrations.
- The crime rate per lakh population in the country declined from 445·9 in 2021 to 422·2 in 2022. This decline can be considered a more reliable indicator considering the impact of population growth on the total crime number.
- Kolkata has emerged as India's safest city for the third consecutive year, recording the lowest number of cognizable crimes per lakh population among metropolitan cities. Pune (Maharashtra) and Hyderabad (Telangana) secured the second and third positions respectively.
- In terms of cyber crime, a total of 65,893 cases have been registered, an increase of 24·4% from 52,974 cases in 2021. Majority of the registered cases include cyber fraud cases (64·8%), followed by extortion (5·5%) and sexual There are cases of exploitation (5·2%). The crime rate under this category increased from 3·9 in the year 2021 to 4·8 in the year 2022.
- The year 2022 saw an alarming increase of 4·2% in suicides in India as compared to 2021. A total of more than 1·7 lakh cases of suicide were recorded in 2022. The suicide rate also increased by 3·3%, calculated per lakh population. But it is measured as the number of suicides.
- The highest number of suicide cases were reported in Maharashtra, followed by Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Telangana.
- Daily wage earners accounted for 26·4% of the total suicide cases. Agricultural workers and farmers were also disproportionately affected, accounting for a large portion of the suicide statistics.
- This is followed by unemployed persons, who accounted for 9·2% of all suicide cases reported in India in 2022. The total suicide cases recorded in the year





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involved more than 12,000 students.

- Major causes of suicide include 'family problems', 'marriage problems', bankruptcy and indebtedness, 'unemployment and professional issues' and illness.
- A total of 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were registered in the year 2022, which is 4% more than the year 2021. The major categories include 'cruelty by husband or his relatives', 'kidnapping of women' and 'abduction of women' cases like 'assault with intent to outrage her modesty' are included.
- Major causes of suicide include 'family problems', 'marriage problems', bankruptcy and indebtedness, 'unemployment and professional issues' and illness.
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- NCRB report showed an increase in crimes against Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) persons in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana in the year 2022.Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan continue to be major contributors, continuing to feature in the top five states with the highest incidence of crimes and atrocities against SC and ST communities. Other states with high levels of such crimes include Bihar, North Pradesh, Odisha and Punjab are included.
- Cases of crimes against children saw an increase of 8·7% compared to 2021. Most of these cases were related to kidnapping (45·7%) and 39·7% cases were registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act.
- There were 26,110 cases of crime against senior citizens in the year 2021, which increased by 9·3% to 28,545.
- The NCRB report reveals a worrying trend in the number of people dying or getting injured due to animal attacks. A significant increase of 19% was recorded in such incidents in the year 2022 compared to the year 2021. Maharashtra has the highest cases were registered, followed by various numbers of related cases in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Apart from this, cases of bites by animals/reptiles and insects also increased by 16·7%. The highest number of cases of bites were recorded in Rajasthan, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh respectively.
- The total number of environmental crimes in India has decreased by about 18% in the year 2022 compared to the year 2021.
- The total number of environmental crimes in India has decreased by about 18% in the year 2022 compared to the year 2021.
- Economic crimes have been classified into criminal breach of trust (FCF) and counterfeiting. Majority of the cases (1,70,901 cases) were seen in FCF, followed by criminal breach of trust (FCF) 21,814 cases and counterfeiting (670 cases).
- 192 cases were registered against foreigners, which is 28% more than 150 cases in 2021.
- The states with the highest charge sheet rate under IPC crimes are Kerala, Puducherry and West Bengal.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

NCRB was established in the year 1986 under the Union Home Ministry with the objective of empowering the Indian Police by providing information technology solutions and criminal intelligence to effectively enforce law and order. The NCRB was established on the basis of the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977–1981) and the Home Ministry's Task Force (1985).

NCRB is headquartered in New Delhi and is a division of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It also acts as a 'National Warehouse' to record the fingerprints of Indian and foreign criminals, and trace inter-state criminals through fingerprint searches. NCRB has four divisions – Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), Crime Statistics, Fingerprints and Training.

Publications of NCRB :

- Crime in India Report
- Sudden death and suicide
- Prison Statistics
- Report on missing women and children in India.

Environment and Biodiversity

Rat Hole

Reason for Discussion

Recently, rat-hole mining rescue operation with scientific methods of mining was carried out to save 41 workers trapped in the under construction tunnel of Silkyara located in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand.

Key Facts :

Rat-Hole Mining

- Rat-hole mining is a method of manual coal extraction by digging narrow, vertical holes in the ground, usually just wide enough for one person.
- These pits are known as 'rat-holes'. These pits can be up to 100 meters deep and extend horizontally for long distances.
- Miners descend into these pits using ropes and bamboo ladders and extract coal using hand tools.
- In this type of mining, primitive tools like picks, shovels and baskets are used.

This mining is broadly of two types :

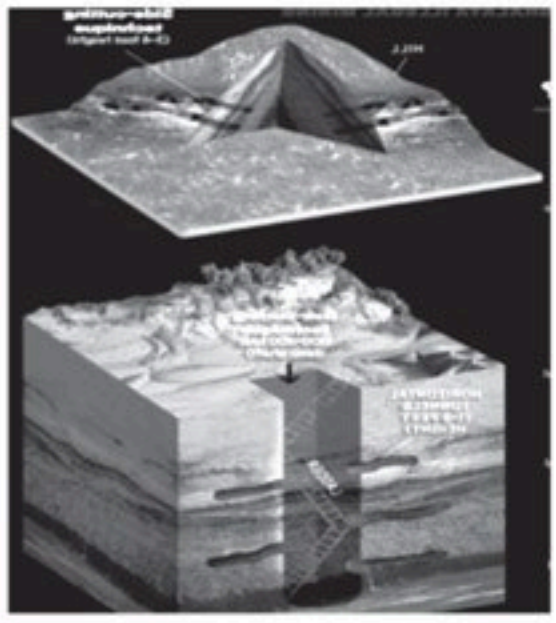
1. Side-Cutting Procedure : In the side-cutting procedure, narrow tunnels are dug on the hill slopes and workers go inside until they find the coal seam.

The coal seam in the hills of Meghalaya is very thin, less than 2 m in most cases.

2. Box-Cutting : In Box-cutting, a rectangular opening is made, varying from 10 to 100 sqm, and through that a vertical pit is dug, 100 to 400 feet deep. Once the coal seam is found, rat hole shaped tunnels are dug horizontally. Once the coal seam is found,

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rat hole shaped tunnels are dug horizontally through which workers can extract coal from.



Demerits of Rat-Hole Mining

Lack of safety measures : Rat-hole mines are generally unsafe and unregulated and lack basic safety measures such as proper ventilation, structural design and safety gear for workers. This creates a dangerous tunnel environment that can lead to suffocation, injury, and death.

Structural instability : There is always a risk of collapse in such narrow, unsupported tunnels, which could trap miners inside the tunnel.

Exposure to harmful substances : Miners are exposed to harmful substances such as coal dust and methane gas, which can cause respiratory problems and other health hazards.

Environmental impacts : Acidic runoff from these mines, known as acid mine drainage (AMD), is particularly harmful, deteriorating water quality and harming biodiversity in affected water bodies.

Ban on Rat Hole Mining

The National Green Tribunal banned rat hole mining in 2014 for being unscientific and unsafe. This ban is especially applicable in Meghalaya since 2015, because rat hole mining process is widely practiced here for coal mining. According to the NGT, excessive rat hole mining in Meghalaya has led to several cases where during the rainy season, mining areas were flooded resulting in the death of several people including employees/ labourers. A similar accident occurred in 2021 when five mineral workers were trapped in a flooded mine. Three bodies were found before rescue teams called off the operation after a month. The environmental pollution caused by this method was also included in this. However, mining is a major source of revenue for the state government. The Manipur government has challenged the NGT ban, arguing that there is no other viable alternative to mining for the region. In 2022, a panel appointed by the Meghalaya High Court found that rat-hole mining is continue unabated in Meghalaya.

Economy/Finance

National Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022

Reason for Discussion

According to the "National Multidimensional Poverty Index : A Progress Review 2023" report recently released by NITI Aayog, a record 13·5 crore people were freed from multi-dimensional poverty during the period 2015-16 to 2019-21.

Key Facts :

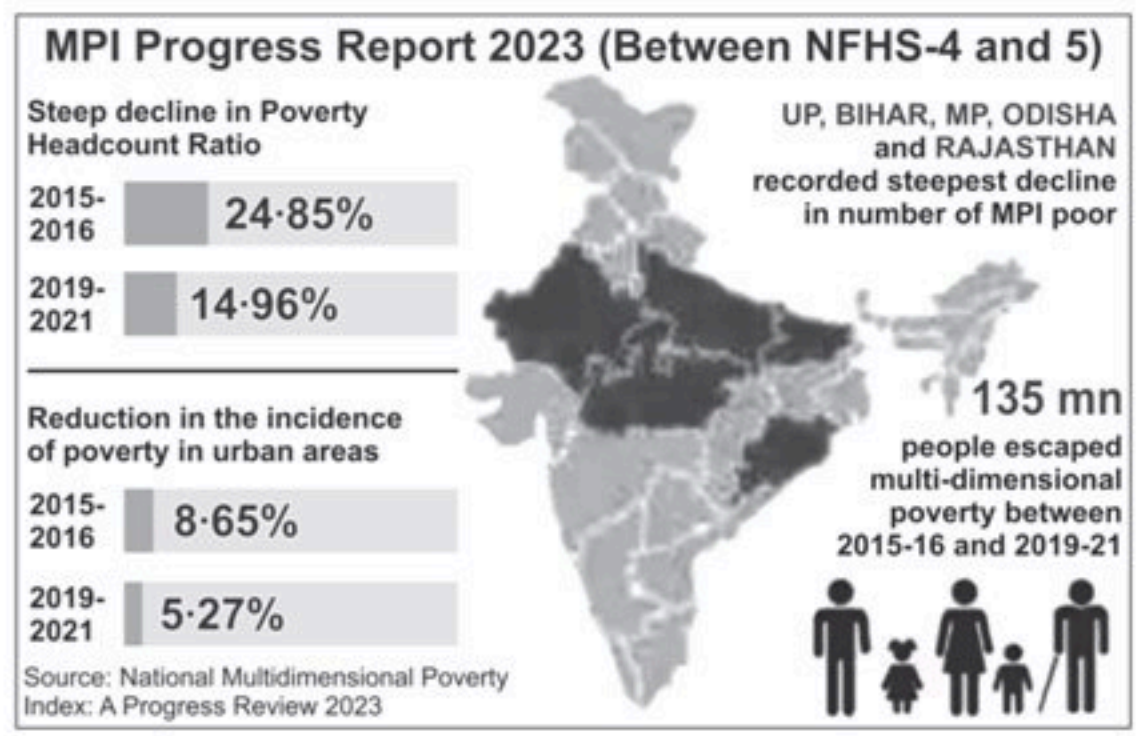
- According to the report, the number of multidimensional poor in India fell from 24·85% in the year 2015-16 to 14·96% in the year 2019-21, which is a significant decline of 9·89% points. During this period, poverty in urban areas declined from 8·65 per cent to 5·27 per cent, while poverty in rural areas declined fastest from 32·59 per cent to 19·28 per cent
- In Uttar Pradesh, 3·43 crore people were freed from multi-dimensional poverty, which is the biggest decline in the number of poor. The report, which provides multidimensional poverty estimates for 36 states and union territories and 707 administrative districts, shows that the sharpest decline in the proportion of multidimensional poor has occurred in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan.

Various Committees on Poverty in India

Since India's independence, six official committees have been formed to estimate the number of people living in poverty in the country.

- Planning Commission Working Group (year 1962)
- VM Dandekar and N Rath (year 1971)
- Separate Committee (year 1979)
- Lakdawala Committee (year 1993)
- Tendulkar Committee (year 2009)
- Rangarajan Committee (year 2014)

- The MPI value has almost halved from 0·117 to 0·066 and poverty intensity has declined from 47% to 44% between 2015-16 and 2019-21, resulting in India achieving SDG target 1·2 well ahead of the 2030 deadline. (the goal of reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half). This reflects the Government's strategic focus on ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth and eradicating poverty by 2030 and adhering to its commitment to the SDGs.



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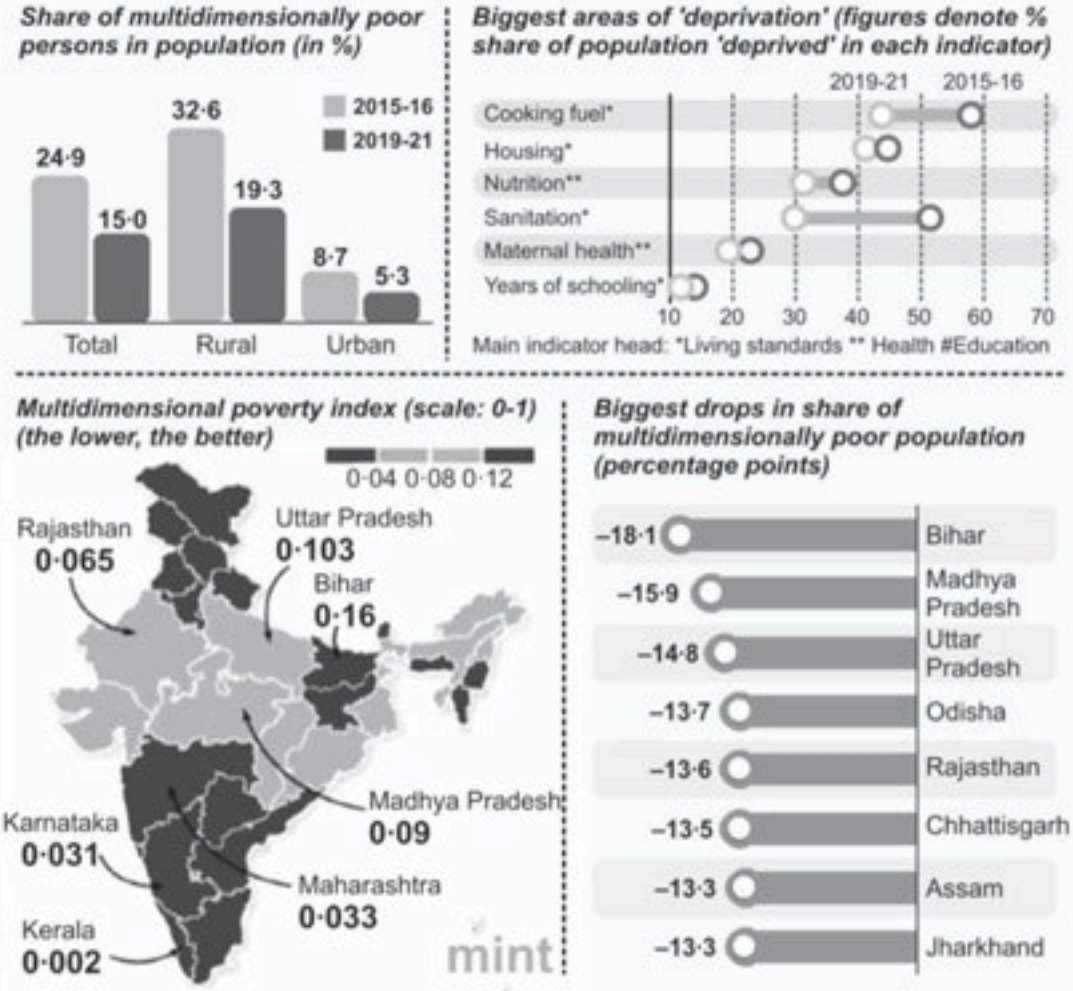
MPI *Vs* HDI

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Human Development Index (HDI)
MPI measures the deprivations of individuals in three dimensions – health, education and standard of living.	Measures a country's achievements in three dimensions – life expectancy, education and per capita income.
Multidimensional Poverty Index, Multidimensional Poverty Index uses 10 indicators to measure the intensity and incidence of poverty.	Uses 3 indicators to measure the average level of human development.
MPI scales from 0 to 1, where 0 means no poverty and 1 means extreme poverty.	HDI scales from 0 to 1, where 0 means low human development and 1 means extremely high human development.
Multidimensional Poverty Index is published annually by UNDP and OPHI.	Human Development Index is published annually by UNDP.

- The government's dedicated focus on improving access to sanitation, nutrition, cooking gas, financial inclusion, drinking water and electricity has led to significant progress in these areas.
- There has been significant improvement in all 12 parameters of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Major programs such as Poshan Abhiyaan and Anemia Mukt Bharat have contributed to reducing health deficiencies, while initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) have improved sanitation across the country.

CHANGING FORTUNES

Around 24·9% of Indians were assessed as multidimensionally poor in 2015-16, but that share came down to 15% in 2019-21.



A multidimensionally poor person is one who is at least 33·3% deprived overall (this is based on 12 indicators, all of which has a different weightage). Headcount ratio is the share of multi-dimensionally poor persons in population. Intensity refers to the average extent of deprivation among such persons (hence always >33·3%). The MPI value is headcount multiplied by intensity.

Source: Niti Aayog

- The impact of these efforts has resulted in a sharp and marked improvement in sanitation deprivation by 21·8% points. The provision of subsidized LPG through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has positively transformed lives, and the shortage of LPG has improved by 14·6% points.
- Initiatives like Saubhagya, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and Samagra Shiksha have also played a major role in reducing multidimensional poverty. Achieving remarkable progress, particularly through extremely low deprivation rates for electricity, access to bank accounts and drinking water facilities, reflects the government's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of citizens and creating a bright future for all.
- The consistent implementation of a variety of highly interlinked programs and initiatives has led to a significant reduction in deficiencies in many indicators.

National Multidimensional Poverty Index

The national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) simultaneously measures deprivation across three equally weighted dimensions of health, education and living standards, represented by 12 SDG-aligned indicators. These include nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal health, Years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, property and bank accounts are included.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index measures and analyzes deprivations in health, education and living standards. It "measures the interrelated deprivations of health, education and living standards that directly affect a person's life and well-being." Global MPI report Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) It is jointly published by.

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Science and Technology

Global Positioning System (GPS)

Reason for Discussion

Recently, the Delhi High Court has asked the Central Government to present its views in the context of a petition challenging the Civil Aviation Ministry's order banning the installation of 'receive-only Global Positioning System (GPS) devices' on aircraft. There was a ban on transportation.

Key Facts :

Global Positioning System (GPS)

- GPS is a satellite-based radio-navigation system used for monitoring and control.
- The US Department of Defense started the GPS program in 1973 and launched the first satellite in 1978.
- It is an American proprietary technology that provides positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services to users.

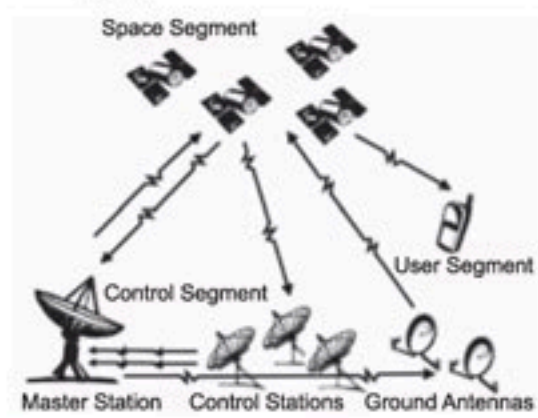
Main Components of GPS

The GPS program has three components – space segment, control segment and user segment.

- **Space segment :** Space segment includes 24 satellites. The six orbits they go through are all 20,200 km above Earth, and each orbit has four satellites at all times. With this combination, anyone on Earth will be able to 'see' at least four satellites at a time, which is an important requirement.
- **Control segment :** The control segment, managed by ground-based stations, ensures satellite performance and signal accuracy following Standard Positioning Service (SPS) standards published in 2020. Major stations around the world manage and monitor the reliability of the system. The SPS standard enables application developers and users anywhere in the world to understand the benefits of GPS systems.
- **Users :** The user segment includes diverse sectors ranging from agriculture to military operations, with the estimated number of GNNS (Global Navigation Satellite System) devices worldwide in 2021 being 6·5 billion, which is expected to grow by 2021. This number could rise to 10 billion by 2031, a figure that underlines its widespread impact.
- **GPS functionality :** The GPS receiver receives and measures radio signals provided by satellites at certain frequencies (L1 and L2 frequencies at 50 bits/second), providing accurate locations in three dimensions of space and one dimension of time. Helps in determining location.

Working of GPS

- **GPS satellite broadcasts :** Each GPS satellite continuously broadcasts a radio signal providing information about its location in orbit, operational status, and the time the signal was emitted.
- **Encoding technique :** The signal received from the satellite is encoded with code-division multiple access. This allows multiple signals to be transmitted in the same channel and a receiver being able to separate them.



- **Types of encoding :** raw/acquisition mode, which civilians can use to access raw GPS data, and another real-time based mode, which is encrypted and for military use.
- On a smartphone, a GPS receiver receives a signal and uses it to calculate its exact distance to the satellite.

Applications of GPS

- GPS receivers onboard aircraft provide pilots (and sometimes passengers) with a real-time map of the aircraft's position and the progress of each flight.
- GPS technology is used for mapping and positioning of dredging operations in rivers, ghats and sandy plains.
- In agriculture, high-accuracy GPS maps soil sampling locations, helping farmers see where soil is most fertile on their individual farms or across entire farms.
- Surveyors use GPS to make precise mapping and accurate measurements of the Earth's surface and underwater.
- GPS-enabled smartwatches and fitness trackers provide real-time data on distance, speed, altitude and heart rate, allowing users to set goals, track their workouts and analyze their performance over time.
- Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, rely on GPS technology for navigation, stabilization and geofencing.

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Continued from Page 87

visible when the Bhartiya Sakshya Sanhita, 2023 included within its domain the confession made in police custody as an admissible confession. The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 has also reincorporated the offence of sedition in the name of deshdroh in the similar spirit which was previously there. This will again result in violation of Fundamental Right of Freedom of Speech and Expression. The Act although provided for community services, does not include the concept of open prison within its domain. The new laws emphasized increased criminalization, harsher sentences and expanded police power which do not align with the ethos of Constitution. However, the positive side of the Act is that it had incorporated within its domain offences like mob lynching, terrorism, etc and had also given validity to electronic evidences and audio visual format of criminal proceeding which will help in timely delivery of justice.

To conclude, it can be validly stated that the Act is more in the nature of a rewrite of the previous enactments with a touch of modern viewpoints. There is still a long road ahead for the Acts to reach the final stage, where they are molded to suit the current environment and needs of the hour.

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Compendium

Indian Polity and Constitution

* The Central Vigilance Commission was established in 1964 on the recommendations of **—K. Santhanam**
* The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has been constituted under **—Article 338**
* The Comptroller and Auditor General of India is a **—Two-member body**
* Which Article of the Indian Constitution states that 'all authorities, civil and judicial in the territory of India shall act in aid of the Supreme Court ? **—Article 144**
* The Advisory Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court comes under **—Article 143**
* The only ground for impeachment of President of India is the 'violation of the Constitution' specified in **—Article 61 (1)**
* The feature of the nomination of members to the Rajya Sabha by the President has been taken from the Constitution of **—Ireland**
* Which Article of the Indian Constitution promotes 'International Peace and Security' ? **—Article 51**
* In India, the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 years by **—61st Constitutional Amendment Act**
* Which writ is issued by a higher court to a lower court or tribunal to prevent the latter from exceeding its jurisdiction ? **—Prohibition**

Indian National Movement

* Which Act established the Dyarchy system in the British India provinces ? **—The Government of India Act, 1919**
* Who made the comment, "It was a new charter of slavery" about the Government of India Act, 1935 ? **—Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru**
* The decision of the partition of Bengal was implemented on **—October 16, 1905**
* Who called Subhash Chandra Bose as 'Desh Nayak' ? **—Rabindra Nath Tagore**
* Who resigned as the President of the Indian National Congress when the motion of 'Council Entry Programme' failed in the INC session ? **—Chittaranjan Das**
* Which Indian leader was addressed as 'one man boundary force' by Lord Mountbatten ? **—Mahatma Gandhi**
* Who compared Gandhiji's Dandi march with the historic march of Lord Rama to Lanka ? **—Pandit Motilal Nehru**
* Which great Indian leaders formed 'the Congress Independent Party' in August 1926 AD ? **—Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai**
* Madam Bhikaji Cama unfurled the flag of Indian independence in August 1907 at **—Stuttgart**
* Acharya Narendra Deva, Jay Prakash Narayan and Minoo Masani were the prominent leaders of **—Congress Socialist Party**

History and Culture of India

* Who is the author of the book 'Tahqiq-i-Hind' ? **—Al-Biruni**
* How many Alvar saints are there in Indian bhakti traditions ? **—12**
* How many Nayanar saints are there in Indian bhakti traditions ? **—63**
* Abdur Razzaq, an envoy from Persia, visited Vijayanagar empire during the reign of **—King Deva Raya Second**
* St. Thomas came to ancient India for the propagation of Christianity during the reign of **—Gondophernes**
* Emperor Asoka sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to preach Buddhism in **—Ceylon (Modern day Sri Lanka)**
* Where did Mahatma Buddha deliver the maximum number of his sermons ? **—Shravasti**
* Which dynasty of South India claimed that its ancestors had ruled at Ayodhya ? **—Chalukyas of Kalyani**
* Who erected astronomical observatories at Delhi, Jaipur, Banaras, Ujjain and Mathura in 18th Centuries ? **—Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber**
* Mir Qasim transferred his capital from Murshidabad to **—Munger**

Economic Affairs of India

* Who has been appointed as the 'UPI Safety Ambassador' by NPCI ? **—Pankaj Tripathi**
* Which state won the first prize for best state in Inland Fisheries (plain areas) ? **—Uttar Pradesh**

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* How many cities from India have been included in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network this year ? **—Two Cities-Gwalior and Kozhikode**
* A Non-banking Financial Company (NBFC) in India is a company registered under the **—NBFC Act 1956**
* In India, RERA has been launched to regulate the **—Real Estate sector**
* In banking sector, RTGS stands for **—Real Time Gross Settlement**
* Loans provided by banks to farmers, small traders come under the category of **—Priority Sector Lending**
* The difference between 'Gross Value Added' and "Net Value Added' is **—Consumption of fixed capital**
* In India, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy was announced in **—April, 2000**

Geography (India and the World)

* The Atlas mountains are located in the continent **—Africa**
* Sundarbans are the fine examples of **—Littoral or Tidal forests**
* The Ninety East Ridge is located in **—The Indian Ocean**
* As the river enters the plain, it twists and turns forming large bends known as **—Meanders**
* Lombok strait is located between **—Bali and Lombok islands**
* Which current mainly helps in the formation of the Sargasso sea ? **—Antilles current**
* The mountain range lying between Pamir plateau and the Indus river is **—Karakoram**
* Falkland Current is also known as **—Malvinas Current**
* Haflong lake is located in **—Assam**
* The largest Bauxite producing state in India is **—Odisha**

Science & Technology

* The electron's distribution into the atomic orbitals is called as **—Electronic configuration**
* Glycolysis process occurs in which part of the cell ? **—Cytoplasm**
* Heavy water and graphite in a nuclear reactor are used as **—Moderator**
* Cobalt is a constituent of vitamin **—B_{12}**
* 'Altitude sickness' is caused at high altitude due to **—Low partial pressure of Oxygen**
* The process used for transforming salty water into pure water is called **—Reverse osmosis**
* Rusting of iron and green coating on the surface of copper are the examples of **—Corrosion**
* A liquid disturbed by stirring comes to rest due to **—Viscosity**
* Chemical decomposition of an organic compound by water is called as **—Hydrolysis**
* Cryolite and Corundum are the ores of **—Aluminium**

Agriculture

* Genetically modified Bt. Brinjal is developed for **—Insect resistance**
* The headquarter of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is located in **—Rome**
* Cobalt nutrient is considered as essential for growing **—Pulse crop**
* pH value of moderately alkaline soils varies between **—7·8 to 8·4**
* What kind of agriculture is practiced in below 50 cm annual rainfall ? **—Dry agriculture**
* Greenish colour in potato tuber is caused due to the presence of **—Solanine**
* 'Barani deep' is a variety of **—Paddy**
* Indian Institute for Horticultural Research in Bengaluru was established in **—1967**
* Vijay is the high yielding variety of **—Maize**
* Bitterness in bittergourd is caused due to the presence of **—Memordicocide**

Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change etc.

* Which country became the 95th member of the International Solar Alliance ? **—Chile**
* Which country inaugurated the world's largest single-site solar power plant ? **—The UAE**
* The Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) is located in **—Bhopal**
* Which pollution causes Itai-Itai disease in human beings ? **—Cadmium pollution**
* Energy cycle of the whole organic world is represented in a **—Biosphere**
* The measurement unit of the ecological footprints is called **—Global hectares**
* Kobushi Biosphere Reserve is located in **—Japan**
* The concept of 'Green House Gases' was postulated by **—Joseph Fourier**
* The Pug-mark technique is employed to estimate the population of **—Wild animals**
* 'The Uninhabitable Earth' is a famous book on environment written by **—David Wallace-Wells**

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Communication

* Communication issues at the international level are addressed by **—UNESCO**
* Referential framing used by TV audience connects media with **—Reality**
* The initial efforts for internet based communication was for **—Military purposes**
* Internal communication within institutions is done through **—LAN**
* 'Metacommunication' relates to **—Non-verbal cues**
* Which is the essential part to make a communication process complete ? **—Receiver**
* Downward and upward flows of information are both instances of **—Vertical communication**
* Expressive communication is driven by **—Encoder's personality characteristics**
* The credibility of mediated message is attributed to **—Expertness of the source**
* Which model of communication highlights the role of private and public cues that impact messages ? **—Barnlund's Transactional Model**

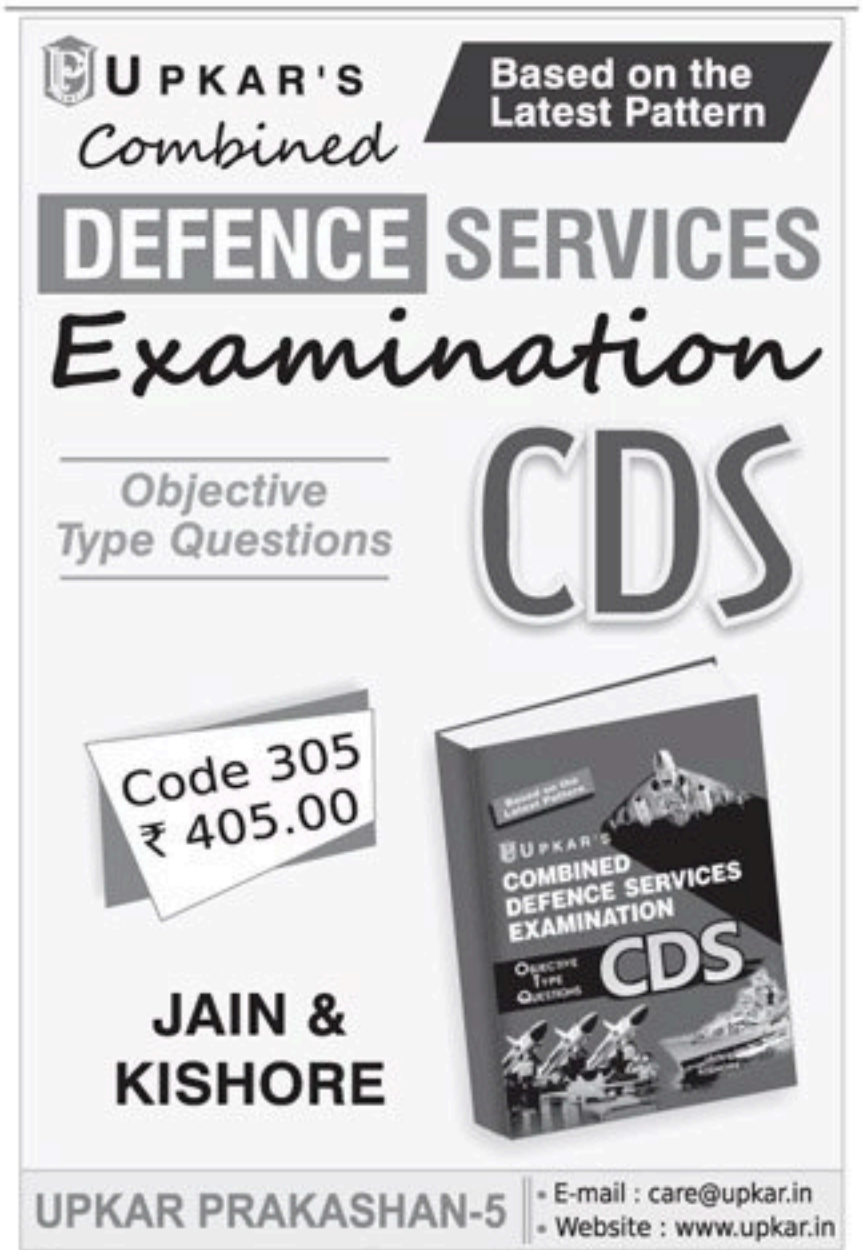
Sports and Games

* Which team clinched Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2023-24 recently ? **—Punjab**
* Which team emerged champion of the Sultan of Johor Cup 2023 ? **—Germany**
* Who emerged winner of the Ballon d'Or 2023 ? **—Lionel Messi from Argentina**
* Two Indian cricketers who have recently been inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame during ICC Men's World Cup 2023 in India, are **—Virender Sehwag and Diana Edulji**
* Which country emerged the overall champion of the 4th Asian Para Games organized in Hangzhou in China ? **—China**
* Who clinched the WTA Finals 2023 Singles title ? **—Iga Swiatek from Poland**
* Who clinched the ATP Finals 2023 Singles title ? **—Novak Djokovic from Serbia**
* 'A Century is Not Enough' is an autobiography of a great India cricketer named **—Sourav Ganguly**
* Which tennis Grand slam event is played on the Red soil ? **—French Open**
* How many players are there in a netball team ? **—Seven**

Miscellany

* Who has been sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner of India ? **—Heeralal Samariya**
* Perumal Murugan won the 2023 JCB Prize for Literature for his book **—Fire Bird**
* India successfully test-fired its surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile named **—Pralay**
* Which countries were removed from FATF's Grey List recently ? **—Panama, Jordan, Albania and Cayman Islands**
* Who has been crowned Miss Universe 2023 ? **—Sheynnis Palacios from Nicaragua**
* Who is known as 'the father of Artificial Intelligence' ? **—John McCarthy**
* Which mineral is known as 'fool's gold' ? **—Pyrite**
* 'All-Aye-Ligang' , a spring festival, is chiefly celebrated in **—Assam**
* National Education Day is observed on **—November 11**
* Chrome web browser was developed by **—Google**

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Prominent Historical Personalities of India



Kharavela

Kharavela, the third monarch of the Chedi dynasty of Kalinga in ancient India, is widely believed as the descendent of Chedi ruler Vasu. The Hathigumpha inscription on the Udaigiri Hills near Bhubaneswar in present day Odisha gives a detailed and reliable description about Kharavela's rule and age. It gives the account of Kharavela's time till 13th year of his rule but successfully establishes him as a historical figure in ancient India.

At the age of 24, Kharavela became the king of Kalinga in about 24 BC with the titles of *'Kalingadhipati'* and *'Kalinga Chakravartin'*. The Hathigumpha inscription describes him as a master of various subjects like law, mathematics and finance related matters besides his outstanding military skills. The inscription presents his account on year to year basis. Kharavela rebuilt and reshaped the capital Kalinga in the first year of his rule. In the second year, he sternly dealt with the Saatkarni threat to his rule and launched an attack to subdue the city of Mushika. He also got success against the Rathiras and Bhojakas of Berar in the third year of his rule. In short, he successfully established Kalinga as a powerful kingdom of that age. His power and prowess can be measured with the fact that he launched attacks on Magadha, a powerful state of that age in 8th and 12th years of his rule. During his second campaign to Magadha, Kharavela brought back an image of the Jain Tirthankara to Kalinga. He also got great success against a Pandya ruler in distant south region. Kharavela also established his authority in various parts and states of north India including Anga Kingdom. The Hathigumpha inscription gets silent on his historical achievements and accounts after the 13 year of his rule. Even nothing can be claimed with a certainty about his successor based on historical facts. But it is unquestionable that Kharavela was a powerful king and an able administrator of his age.

- Kharavela was a devout Jain and was popularly known as 'Bhikshuraja' (The Monk king).
- He excavated several caves as the dwellings for Jaina monks and ascetics in Khandagiri hills.

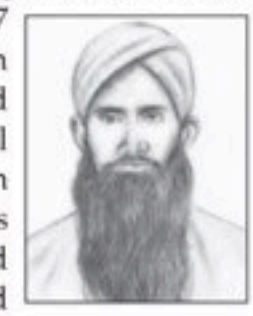
Dharmapala

Dharmapala, the most prominent king of the Pala dynasty of Bengal, was the son of Gopala who was the founder of the Pala dynasty. After Gopala, Dharmapala became the king in 770 AD. Despite fierce challenges from the Pratihara and the Rashtrakuta rulers, Dharmapala succeeded in establishing a powerful kingdom. However, he faced drubbing many times at the hands of the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas, he exploited the rivalry between the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas to his own favour like an astute statesman and diplomat. His kingdom extended in Bengal and Bihar and also held political control and influence over Kannauj. Many minor rulers of Punjab, Malwa and Rajputana accepted his authority. It was really a big achievement to rule over such a vast area in presence of formidable forces of the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas for a long time. He left a vast empire to his successor Devapala, who was the son of Queen Rannadevi, a Rashtrakuta princess and Dharmapala. The rule of Dharmapala came to an end in 810 AD.

- Dharmapala assumed the titles of 'Parmeswara', 'Paramabhattarak', 'Paramasaughat' and 'Maharajadhiraja'.
- Being a great patron of Buddhist learning, art and culture, he founded the Vikramsila monastery which later became a great centre of the Buddhist art and learning. He also founded a Vihara at Somapuri.
- Great Buddhist scholar Haribhadra graced the royal court of Dharmapala.

Maulavi Liyaquat Ali

Maulavi Liyaquat Ali was one of those early Indian leaders who bravely raised their voice against the British rule and led fellow Indians in the 1857 Revolt. Maulavi Liaquat Ali was born on October 5, 1817 in the house of Syed Mehr Ali in Mahgaon village of Chayil Tahsil of Allahabad district (Now in Kaushambi district), Uttar Pradesh. His mother's name was Amna B. He received religious education. The cruelty and oppressive policies of the British rule developed him into an opponent of the British rule. He joined British army and started indoctrinating anti-British ideas into the minds of Indian soldiers. East India company officers sensed this and expelled him from the army.



Maulavi Liyaquat Ali

But he continued spreading awareness against the cruelties of the British rule among Indians. In his village, he opened a madrasa where he taught children. He also delivered sermons at various places. Meanwhile, he began organising local peasants in their struggle against the persecution of the Company Bahadur and his loyal native rulers, especially in rural areas. Popular with small zamindars, talukdars and common people in Allahabad, Mirzapur and Pratapgarh, he soon emerged as a local hero in Rohilkhand, Awadh and Kanpur. When the 1857 Revolt broke out, Maulavi Liyaquat Ali along with his followers joined the revolt and created serious troubles for the British rule. As his efforts yielded some result, he entered with his force Allahabad (Now Prayagraj) town,

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drove away East India Company force and officers and took control of the town. On June 7, 1857, Maulavi Liyaquat Ali declared Allahabad independent and made the historic Khusro Bagh his headquarters. Maulavi declared himself as the representative of Delhi Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and ran the administration of the town from Khusro Bagh as his headquarters. During the Revolt, Maulavi Liyaquat Ali led the movement in Allahabad and managed to keep the British forces at bay from June 6, 1857 to June 16, 1857.

But the British succeeded in regaining the control of the region. General Neill of East India Company mobilised necessary forces and attacked Liyaquat Ali's headquarters on 11 June, 1857. Maulavi Liaquat Ali fought the battle valiantly till the end but left the battlefield on 17 June under adverse circumstances. Despite all efforts, he remained at large for 14 years and was finally arrested in 1871. After the trial, Maulavi Liyaquat Ali was sentenced to life imprisonment and was extradited to Andaman, where he breathed his last on 17 May, 1892.

- Maulavi Liyaquat Ali wrote a song 'Peyam-e-Amal' exposing the misdeeds of the British rule and seeking Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity.

Rajendra Nath Lahiri

Rajendra Nath Lahiri was an eminent Indian revolutionary and freedom fighter who is best remembered for his notable contribution in the revolutionary activities in the Kakori case and Dakshineshwar bombing events. Born on 29 June, 1901 in the Pabna area of present-day Bangladesh, in a landowner's family, Rajendranath Lahiri was sent to Varanasi to study. While he was pursuing his Masters (History) from Benaras Hindu University, he got acquainted with the famous revolutionary, Sachindranath Sanyal. Seeing the fire, spirit, and passion for freedom in Lahiri, Sanyal made him the editor of the magazine *Banga Vaani* and the coordinator and arms-in-charge for the Varanasi branch of the *Anushilan Samiti*, another revolutionary organization of that time.



Rajendra Nath Lahiri

Lahiri soon joined the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) and started taking part in revolutionary activities against the British rule in India. The HSRA, with its aim to oust the British from India through an armed and organized revolution, initially looted wealthy landlords to fund their firearms and the printing of their literature and posters. However, they soon realized that this was antithetical to their notion of freedom, and it was collectively decided to rob British government coffers instead. One of their most notable robberies took place on 9 August, 1925. Famously known as the Kakori Conspiracy Case, Rajendranath Lahiri, along with Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, and Thakur Roshan Singh, looted a train carrying government money near Lucknow. According to reports, it was Lahiri who stopped the train by pulling the chain in a second-class compartment. After Kakori case, Lahiri remained at large from the British police grip. Lahiri, an absconder in the Kakori conspiracy case, was arrested on November 10, 1925 from Calcutta, where he was expanding the HSRA network. In what came to be known as the 'Dakshineswar bomb case', Lahiri along with eight other revolutionaries were arrested from a bomb factory in Dakshineswar. Lahiri was awarded a 10 years' sentence in the Andamans but was later transferred to Lucknow Central Jail as British authorities came to identify him as an absconder in the Kakori conspiracy.

Among the Kakori martyrs, the names of three—Ashfaqullah Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil and Roshan Singh are well remembered by every Indian, mainly because they were hanged on the same date: December 19, 1927. However, the name of the fourth martyr of Kakori case, Rajendra Nath Lahiri, hanged two days before on December 17, 1927, largely remains forgotten. Lahiri can be seen as an embodiment of the transition that the Indian revolutionary movement was going through in the late 1920s. In terms of ideology, the revolutionary movement witnessed a refinement from anti-British nationalism towards socialism; in matters of religious beliefs, there was a shift towards atheism.

Rani Gaidinliu

Rani Gaidinliu was an eminent freedom fighter who made great efforts to oust the British rule from India in the North-East region. Gaidinliu was born on January 26, 1915, in present-day Tamenglong district of Manipur. Gaidinliu plunged into the fight against the British rule at an early age of 13 in 1927 when she joined forces with her cousin Haipou Jadonang, leading the Heraka Movement, which sought to restore the Naga Tribal religion to its former glory. The Heraka movement was basically an anti-British religious progressive movement. It was also a revolutionary project against the British Empire. Gaidinliu became the leader of this anti-British campaign when she was 17 years old, ending her arrest and subsequent 14-year incarceration.



Rani Gaidinliu

Between 1932 and 1947, Gaidinliu was kept at several prisons across the Northeast. In 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru visited her in Shillong Jail and swore to work for her freedom. After being released in 1947 she continued to work for the betterment of the community. Nehru described Gaidinliu as the 'daughter of the hills' and he gave her the title of 'Rani' for her courage. She was also awarded a Padma Bhushan. She also worked to propagate Gandhi Ji's message across the Manipur area. Her spiritual leadership position as a pioneer of the socio-religious movement was intertwined with her identity as a patriot. She drew on Mahatma Gandhi's endeavours at the national level to motivate her people to revolt against the British.

The Government of India issued a postal stamp in her honour in 1996, and commemorative coin in 2015. She passed away in February 1993.

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Current Objective Questions

Trade And Industry

1. The Indian economy has witnessed a surge in consumer-credit growth over the past couple of years. Which of the following statements is/are correct in this regard ?
   I. Retail loans grew at a compound annual rate of 24·8 per cent between March 2021 and March 2023, which was around double the rate of overall loan growth.
   II. Unsecured retail loans increased from 22·9 per cent to 25·2 per cent between March 2021 and March 2023.
   Correct code is—
   (A) Only I
   (B) Only II
   (C) Both I and II
   (D) Neither I nor II

2. The rise in unsecured loans has been attributed to—
   I. Improved underwriting capabilities.
   II. Digitisation of the economy.
   III. Use of fintech.
   How many options given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) All 3
   (D) None of the above

3. Consider the following facts about 'Rat-hole Mining' :
   I. Rat-hole mining is a method of manual drilling, which is carried out by skilled workers, most common in Meghalaya.
   II. Narrow pits are dug into the ground, usually just wide enough for one person to fit into.
   III. After digging the pits, the miner drops down into the holes using a rope and bamboo ladders.
   IV. This method is usually used to extract coals, and is considered extremely hazardous.
   V. It is illegal in many countries due to increasing cases of miners dying from asphyxiation, lack of oxygen and hunger.
   How many statements given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
   (C) Only 4 (D) All 5

4. To catalyse the shift towards digitalisation, the RBI has implemented various initiatives—
   I. Enabling the continuous operation of centralised payment systems.
   II. Establishing a Payment Infrastructure Development Fund to facilitate the cost-effective deployment of payment acceptance infrastructure.
   III. Introducing UPI123 Pay to extend digital payment capabilities to feature phone users,
   IV. Promoting interoperability for prepaid payment instruments (PPI).
   V. Initiating pilot projects for retail and wholesale central bank digital currencies (CBDC).
   How many initiatives given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
   (C) Only 4 (D) All 5

5. Consider the following minerals—
   I. Platinum group metals
   II. Molybdenum
   III. Glauconite and potash
   IV. Lithium
   V. Rare earth elements (REE)
   How many of the above minerals have been included in the first ever auction of blocks for the mining ?
   (A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
   (C) Only 4 (D) All 5

6. Consider the following pairs in relation to the rate of royalty fixed on the mining of important minerals by the government of India :
   I. Molybdenum : 7·5 per cent
   II. Platinum group metals : 4 per cent
   III. Lithium : 3 per cent
   IV. Glauconite and potash : 2·5 per cent
   V. Rare earth elements (REE) : 1 per cent
   How many pairs given above are correct ?
   (A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
   (C) Only 4 (D) All 5

7. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Scheme for providing Drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) ?
   (A) Outlay for the scheme is ₹ 1261 crore for the period from 2024-25 to 2025-26
   (B) It is a Central Sector Scheme
   (C) The scheme aims to provide drones to 15,000 selected Women SHGs
   (D) Drones will be used to supply drugs in remote areas

8. What was the GDP growth rate in the second quarter (Q2) of FY 2023-24 at constant prices ?
   (A) 5·3% (B) 6·6%
   (C) 7·2% (D) 7·6%

9. Which sector registered highest growth rate in Gross Value Added at constant prices (2011-12 = 100) in Q2 of FY 2023-24 ?
   (A) Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, fishing
   (B) Manufacturing
   (C) Construction
   (D) Service Sector

10. Production of milk has been estimated at ..... during the year 2022-23.
    (A) 230·58 million tonnes
    (B) 221·92 million tonnes
    (C) 219·35 million tonnes
    (D) 187·25 million tonnes

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11. Which of the following state ranks first in milk production during the year 2022-23 ?
(A) Uttar Pradesh
(B) Rajasthan
(C) Gujarat
(D) Madhya Pradesh

12. Total egg production in the country has estimated as..... during 2022-23.
(A) 138·38 billion eggs
(B) 146·23 billion eggs
(C) 149·27 billion eggs
(D) 157·36 billion eggs

13. Major contribution in the total egg production comes from—
(A) Kerala
(B) Maharashtra
(C) Gujarat
(D) Andhra Pradesh

14. Wool production in the country is estimated as ..... during 2022-23.
(A) 39·2 million kg
(B) 33·61 million kg
(C) 31·23 million kg
(D) 28·5 million kg

15. Major contribution in the total Wool production comes from—
(A) Gujarat
(B) Jammu & Kashmir
(C) Rajasthan
(D) Himachal Pradesh

16. Free distribution of foodgrains to all beneficiaries of National Food Security Act 2013 under PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana has been extended from January 1, 2024 to—
(A) 31 December, 2025
(B) 31 December, 2026
(C) 31 December, 2027
(D) 31 December, 2028

17. Consider the following statements in relation to Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)—
I. The Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) is a US-led collaboration of 14 countries.
II. It aims to enhance public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally.
III. A key goal of this partnership is to reduce the dependence on China to secure critical minerals.
IV. Indonesia, Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which have abundant reserves of critical minerals are not part of this partnership.
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

18. Which of the following factors affect the bond prices ?
I. Inflation
II. Interest rates
III. Credit ratings
IV. Market activity
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II,III and IV

19. How many statements given below are correct about the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23 ?
I. In rural areas, Unemployment Rate decreased from 5·3% in 2017-18 to 2·4% in 2022-23.
II. In urban areas Unemployment Rate decreased from 7·7% to 5·4% during 2017-23.
III. Unemployment Rate for male in India decreased from 6·1% in 2017-18 to 3·3% in 2022-23.
IV. Unemployment Rate for female decreased from 5·6% in 2017-18 to 2·9% in 2022-23.
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

20. Consider the following statements in relation to Negotiations at COP 28—
I. At COP28 negotiations 22 countries sign a declaration to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050.
II. At the COP28 climate negotiations, 118 countries signed a pledge to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030.
Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

21. Consider the following Life insurance companies of the world in terms of 'Life, Accident and Health Reserves—
I. LIC of India
II. Germany's Allianz SE
III. China Life Insurance Company
IV. Japan's Nippon Life Insurance Company
What is the correct order in terms of decreasing size of reserves in the world ?
(A) II-III-IV-I
(B) III-II-I-IV
(C) IV-III-II-I
(D) III-IV-I-II

22. 'LeadIT 2·0', launched at Dubai in COP 28, will focus on the following :
I. Inclusive & Just Industry Transition
II. Co-development & transfer of low-carbon technology
III. Financial support to emerging economies for Industry Transition
How many options given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

23. Consider the following pairs in relation to UPI transaction Limits :
I. Medical or health and educational services; ₹ 5 lakh
II. Capital markets (AMC, Broking, MFs etc.), Credit cards and Loan repayments : ₹ 2 lakh
III. Retail Direct scheme and IPO subscriptions : ₹ 5 lakh
IV. Other than above purposes: ₹ 1 lakh
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 3
(D) All 4

24. A tight liquidity condition in banking system could lead to—
I. A rise in the government securities yields.
II. A rise in interest rates for consumers.

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Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

25. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Web Portal UDGAM ?

(A) It has been launched by the Reserve bank of India

(B) It stands for Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access Information

(C) It helps depositors to identify their unclaimed deposits/ accounts and enable them to either claim the deposit amount or make their deposit accounts operative at their respective banks.

(D) Information regarding all the banks operating in India is available on this portal

26. Consider the following statements in relation to Indian capital market—

I. India now hosts 504 companies with billion dollar market capitalization.
II. India's capital market is the fourth largest capital market in the world.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

27. Which of the following statements is not related to 'Debt Brake Rule' ?

(A) It is the balanced budget rule

(B) It sets a cap on how much governments can borrow to finance various public projects

(C) It restricts the federal government of Germany from running a fiscal deficit in excess of 0·35% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

(D) It allows a government to stop repayment of public debt during severe resource crunch

28. Consider the following statements in relation to fiscal deficit—

I. Higher fiscal deficit necessitates rising interest rates.
II. Increase in interest rates results in increase in cost of production.
III. Increase in cost of production spiral into cost push inflation.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

29. "Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023" report analyses States' performance across the key pillars—

I. Logistics Infrastructure
II. Logistics Services and Operating
III. Regulatory Environment
IV. Barriers to the movement of logistic vehicles

How many pillars given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All four

30. Consider the following pairs in relation to states and their performance in LEADS Report 2023—

I. Uttar Pradesh—Achievers
II. Maharashtra—Achievers
III. Kerala—Fast movers
IV. West Bengal—Aspirers

How many pairs given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All four

31. World's largest office space is—

(A) Surat Diamond Bourse (India)

(B) The Pentagon (New York-The US)

(C) Chrysler World Headquarters and Technology Center (CTC) (Auburn Hills, Michigan, The US)

(D) SAS I Tower (Hyderabad, India)

32. Consider the following statements—

I. Governments across the world still plan to produce more than double the quantity of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1·5°C.
II. Government plans and projections would lead to an increase in global coal production until 2030, and global oil and gas production until at least 2050.

The above observations are the part of—

(A) Production Gap Report 2023
(B) COP 28 declaration
(C) Report of the Inter-government Panel on Climate Change
(D) World Development Report 2023

33. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the 'Amplifi' ?

I. AMPLIFI stands for Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive, and Future-ready Urban India (AMPLIFI)
II. AMPLIFI 2·0 contains data across 14 sectors for 440+ parameters for 250+ cities.
III. AMPLIFI 2·0 was launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Correct code is—

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

34. Consider the following statements about the 'AHEAD'—

I. AHEAD stands for "Alleviating Heat stress by Enhancing production of Affordable cooling Devices."
II. Consultation workshop was organized on 18th December, 2023 on "Alleviating Heat stress by Enhancing production of Affordable cooling Devices."

Correct code is—

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

35. Consider the following schemes—

I. Atal Pension Yojana
II. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana
III. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
IV. National Pension System

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How many schemes given above was/were launched on the same day ?
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 3
(C) All 4
(D) None of the above

36. Consider the following statements in relation to IMF's recent report about debt burden on India—
I. General debt GDP ratio of Central and all state government came down from 88·5% in FY 2020-21 to 81·0% in FY 2022-23.
II. External debt GDP ratio came down from 21·5% in FY 2020-21 to 18·4% in FY 2022-23.
Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

37. Who among the following became the most expensive buy in 2023 in IPL history ?
(A) Harshal Patel
(B) Mitchell Starc
(C) Pat Commins
(D) Alzarri Joseph

38. According to a report of World Bank which of the following is the correct order of the countries in terms of decreasing amount of remittances received in the Year 2023 ?
(A) China-India-Mexico
(B) India-China-Mexico
(C) Mexico- India-China
(D) India-Mexico-China

39. Unclaimed deposits with the commercial banks in India stood at .....on March 31, 2023.
(A) ₹ 42,270 crore
(B) ₹ 32,934 crore
(C) ₹ 36,185 crore
(D) ₹ 26,213 crore

40. The share of agriculture in total Gross Value Added (GVA) of economy has declined from 35% in 1990-91 to 15% in 2022-23. The decline is brought out by—
I. Slow to moderate growth in Agriculture
II. Rapid growth in industrial and service sector.
Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

Answers with Hints

1. (C)
2. (C) The latest Financial Stability Report of the RBI also highlighted the risk in rising unsecured retail loans and noted that 10 per cent of retail borrowers were missing their monthly payments. The rise in unsecured loans has been attributed to improved underwriting capabilities, digitisation, and the use of fintech, all of which have made lending easier, but may also have increased risks. NBFCs in particular have been using digital channels aggressively.
3. (D) Experts in Uttarakhand resorted to 'rat-hole' mining to help rescue 41 workers trapped inside the collapsed Silkyara tunnel. All the workers were rescued on November 28, 2023 and rat-hole mining was used to clear the last few metres in the rescue operations. The term 'rat-hole' refers to a narrow pit dug into the ground. Generally, this technique is used in North-eastern states of India to extract coal from narrow, horizontal seams.
4. (D) 5. (D) 6. (D)
7. (D) The scheme will help infusing advance technology in agriculture for improved efficiency, enhance crop yield and reduced cost of operation for the benefit of farmers.
8. (D)
9. (B) GVA of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, fishing grew @ 1·2% (lowest), manufacturing by 13·9%, Construction by 13·3% and Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, fishing by 4·3%.
10. (A)
11. (A) Highest milk producing State during 2022-23 was Uttar Pradesh with a share of 15·72% of total milk production followed by Rajasthan (14·44%), Madhya Pradesh (8·73%), Gujarat (7·49%), and Andhra Pradesh (6·70%). In terms of annual growth rate (AGR), the highest AGR recorded by Karnataka (8·76%) followed by West Bengal (8·65%) and Uttar Pradesh (6·99%) over the previous year.
12. (A) Total Egg production in the country has estimated as 138·38 billion nos. during 2022-23 registered a growth of 33·31% growth over the past 5 years as compared to the estimates of 103·80 billion numbers during 2018-19. Further, the production has increased annually by 6·77% during 2022-23 over 2021-22. In past the annual growth rate was 9·02% in 2018-19; 10·19% in 2019-20; 6·70% in 2020-21 and 6·19% in 2021-22.
13. (D) Major contribution in the total egg production comes from Andhra Pradesh with a share of 20.13 % of total egg production followed by Tamil Nadu (15·58%), Telangana (12·77%), West Bengal (9·94%) and Karnataka (6·51%). In terms of AGR, the highest growth rate was recorded by West Bengal (20·10%) and followed by Sikkim (18·93%) and Uttar Pradesh (12·80%).
14. (B) Wool production in the country is estimated as 33·61 million kg during 2022-23 registered a negative growth of 16·84% over the past 5 years as compared to the estimates of 40.42 million kg during 2018-19. However, the production has increased by 2.12% in 2022-23 over 2021-22. In past the growth rates were – 2·51% in 2018-19; – 9·05% in 2019-20, – 0·46% in 2020-21 and –10·87% in 2021-22.
15. (C) Rajasthan with a share of 47·98% followed by Jammu & major contribution in the total Wool production comes from Kashmir (22·55%), Gujarat (6·01%), Maharashtra (4·73%) and Himachal Pradesh (4·27%). In terms of annual growth rate, the highest AGR has recorded by Arunachal Pradesh (35·75%) followed by Rajasthan (6·06%) and Jharkhand (2·36%).
16. (D)

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17. (D) The Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) is a US-led collaboration of 14 countries (Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, UK, the European Commission, Italy, and now India). It aims to enhance public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally. A key goal of this partnership is to reduce the dependence on China to secure critical minerals.
18. (D) Bonds are a kind of fixed-income security that provide the investor with interest on his investment in exchange for lending his money to a corporation or government. Several factors affect bond prices : Inflation, interest rates, credit ratings, and market activity. These factors can also create risks associated with investing in bonds. There are ways to monitors things that can impact your bond investments, such as the credit rating of the issuer.
19. (D) 20. (C)
21. (A) According to a S&P Global Market Intelligence report, LIC's reserves stood at $ 503·7 billion. Germany's Allianz SE ($ 750·20 billion), China Life Insurance Company ($ 616·90 billion) and Nippon Life Insurance Company ($ 536·80 billion) are the top three insurance companies in the world.
22. (C) Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi together with H.E. Mr. Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister of Sweden, co-launched the Phase-II of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2·0) for the period 2024-26, at COP-28 in Dubai. India and Sweden had co-launched LeadIT at UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019.
23. (D) 24. (C)
25. (B) The users would be able to access the details of their unclaimed deposits in respect of seven banks presently available on the portal. These banks are State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Central Bank of India, Dhanlaxmi Bank Ltd., South Indian Bank Ltd., DBS Bank India Ltd. and Citibank N.A.
26. (C)
27. (D) The debt brake rule, or the balanced budget rule, sets a cap on how much governments can borrow to finance various public projects. It restricts the federal government in Berlin from running a fiscal deficit in excess of 0·35% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and in effect prohibits the country's 16 regions from any deficit spending whatsoever. The measure was enshrined into law in 2009 by the grand coalition government of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its sister party in the state of Bavaria the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the SPD, through an amendment to the German Constitution.
28. (C)
29. (C) LEADS report 2023, released on December 16, 2023 analyses States' performance across the key pillars—Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services and Operating Regulatory Environment.
30. (C)
31. (A) For 80 years, Pentagon claimed the title for the world's largest office building. At 67,28,604 sqft carpet area, the Surat Diamond Bourse exceeds the Pentagon's area of 66,73,624 sqft by almost 55,000 sqft.
32. (A) The production Gap Report 2023 has been published jointly by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Climate Analytics, E3G, International Institute for Sustainable Development, and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The PGR addressed the issues related to the misalignment between government's planned fossil fuel production and global production levels consistent with limiting global warming to 1·5°C.
33. (C)
34. (C) The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry in alliance with the World Bank, with support of the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEFCC), and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) suc-cessfully hosted the "Alleviating Heat stress by Enhancing production of Affordable cooling Devices (AHEAD)" consultation workshop on 18th December, 2023 at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi.
35. (B) Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana were launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9th May, 2015 from Kolkata.
36. (C)
37. (B) Australian fast bowler Mitchell Starc was bought by the Kolkata Knight Riders with a highest ever bid of ₹ 24·75 crore for the upcoming Indian Premier League session 2024. Second best bid was for Australian bowler Pat Commins who was picked up by Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹ 20·5 crore. Harshal Patel was bought by Punjab Kings for ₹ 11·75 crore and Alzarri Joseph was bought by RCB for ₹ 11·50 crore.
38. (D) India is expected to be the top recipient of remittances in 2023 as inflows increase 12.4 per cent to $ 125 billion, said a World Bank report on December 19, 2023. Mexico will come next by receiving $ 67 billion and China will follow it at $ 50 billion. The key drivers for remittance growth in 2023 are a tight labour market in the United States, high employment growth in Europe reflecting extensive leveraging of worker retention programs, and a dampening of inflation in high-income countries.
39. (A) There has been a 28 per cent annual increase in unclaimed deposits with the banks to ₹ 42,270 crore as on March 2023. As compared to ₹ 32,934 crore unclaimed deposits with public and private sector banks in FY22, the amount increased to ₹ 42,272 crore at the end of March 2023, an increase of 28 per cent. As much as ₹ 36,185 crore unclaimed deposits were with public sector banks while ₹ 6,087 crore were with private sector banks at the end of March 2023.
40. (C)

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Multiple Choice Questions

Current Questionnaire

1. Who among the following has been selected as the 'Miss Universe 2023' ?
   (A) Sheynnis Palacios (Nicaragua)
   (B) Anntonia Porsild (Thailand)
   (C) Moraya Wilson (Australia)
   (D) Shweta Sharda (India)
2. ICC World Cup 2023 has been won by—
   (A) India
   (B) Australia
   (C) South Africa
   (D) New Zealand
3. India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in semiconductor ecosystem with which country or a regional block ?
   (A) Taiwan
   (B) Japan
   (C) European Union
   (D) The US
4. Recently, the black-spotted croaker, or the ghol fish has been declared state fish of which state ?
   (A) Gujarat
   (B) Tamil Nadu
   (C) Andhra Pradesh
   (D) West Bengal
5. How many statements given below about Tantalum is/are correct ?
   I. Tantalum is a rare metal and is grey, heavy, very hard, and is known for being one of the most corrosion-resistant metals.
   II. Tantalum is widely used in the electronics and semiconductor industry because of its unique characteristics.
   III, Traces of Tantalum has been found in River Satlaj in Punjab
   IV. Tantalum is also prominently used in the defence sector in chemical plants, nuclear power plants, missiles and fighter jets.
   Correct code is—
   (A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
   (C) Only 3 (D) All 4
6. Consider the following statements in relation to Sickle Cell Disease—
   I. The UK drug regulator approved a gene therapy for the cure of sickle cell disease and thalassaemia.
   II. Government of India launched the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission.
   III. Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is an inherited group of blood disorder which is genetic in nature.
   How many statements given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) All 3
   (D) None of the above
7. Consider the following pairs—
   I. Silkyara-Barkot —Uttarakhand
   II. Chungthang —Arunachal Pradesh
   III. Assar—Jammu & Kashmir
   How many pairs given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) All 3
   (D) None of the above
8. Which of the following film won the Golden Peacock Award for best feature film in 54th International Film Festival of India held in Goa during 20-28 November, 2023 ?
   (A) The Persian film Endless Borders
   (B) The Bulgarian film Blaga's Lessons
   (C) The French film Party of Fools
   (D) The Syrian Film When the Seedlings Grow
9. Which of the following won the Silver Peacock Award for best Actor (Male) in 54th International Film Festival of India held in Goa during 20-28 November, 2023 ?
   (A) Iranian Actor Vahid Mobasheri
   (B) Marathi Actor Jitendra Joshi
   (C) Portuguese Actor Seu Jorge
   (D) Iranian Actor Pouria Rahimi Sam
10. Which of the following won the Silver Peacock Award for best Actor (Female) in 54th International Film Festival of India held in Goa during 20-28 November, 2023 ?
    (A) Venezuelan actress Daniela Marin Navarro
    (B) Bulgarian actress Eli Skorcheva
    (C) French actress, Melanie Thierry
    (D) Bulgarian actress Rozalya Abgaryan
11. Which of the following won the Silver Peacock Award for best Director in 54th International Film Festival of India held in Goa during November 20-28, 2023 ?
    (A) Iranian Writer and Director Nader Saeivar
    (B) Bulgarian Director Stephan Komandarev
    (C) British Director Amma Asante
    (D) Sri Lankan Director Asoka Handagama
12. Which of the following was honoured with the prestigious Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award in 54th International Film Festival of India held in Goa during 20-28 November, 2023 ?
    (A) Legendary Hollywood actor and producer Michael Douglas
    (B) French film maker Matthieu Kassovitz
    (C) Japanese film maker Akira Kurosawa
    (D) Indonesian film director Rachmat Kartolo

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13. Which of the following was honoured with the prestigious ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal in 54th International Film Festival held of India in Goa during 20-28, November 2023 ?
(A) 'Drift' by Anthony Chen (UK, France, Greece, 2023)
(B) 'Citizen Saint' by Tinatin Kajrishvili (Georgia, 2023)
(C) 'It's Sira' by Apolline Traoré (France, Germany, Senegal, 2023)
(D) 'A House in Jerusalem' by Muayad Alayan (Palestine, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Qatar, 2022)

14. Which of the following won the Best Web series (OTT) award at 54th International Film Festival of India held during 20-28 November, 2023 in Goa ?
(A) Panchayat Season 2
(B) Kaala Paani
(C) Jubilee
(D) Aspirants

15. Renowned Indian filmmaker, Director, and writer ..... received the special jury award for his groundbreaking work on ..... at the prestigious 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
(A) Rishab Shetty, '*Kantara*'
(B) Koduri Srisaila Sri Rajamouli, 'RRR'
(C) Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Gangubai Kathiawadi
(D) Vivek Agnihotri, Kashmir Files

16. Which of the following statements is/are correct in relation to COP 28 meeting at Dubai (UAE) ?
I. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 1, 2023 proposed to host the UN climate conference (COP) in 2028 in India.
II. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a 'Green Credit Initiative' focused on creating carbon sinks through people's participation.
Correct code is—
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

17. In an extraordinary celestial display, the skies over which country turned deep, blood-red on morning of 1/2 December, 2023 ?
(A) Mongolia
(B) Greenland
(C) Norway
(D) Finland

18. UNESCO on December 6, 2023 has declared the .....as "an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" (ICHH).
(A) Nauchandi Fair (Uttar Pradesh)
(B) Ajmer Urs (Rajasthan)
(C) Garba Dance (Gujarat)
(D) Baisakhi Festival (Punjab)

19. Mahua Moitra was expelled from the Lok Sabha on December 8, 2023 over cash-for-query allegations. She belongs to which political party ?
(A) Congress
(B) Trinamool Congress
(C) Rashtriya Janta Dal
(D) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

20. Consider the following statements in relation to recent judgement of Five member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court regarding abrogation of Article 370 about the Jammu & Kashmir special status—
I. Article 370 is a 'temporary provision'.
II. J&K did not retain any internal sovereignty after its integration with the India.
III. The court directed the Election Commission of India to take steps to conduct elections to the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024.
IV. Statehood of the Jammu & Kashmir should be restored as soon as possible.
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

21. Recently the 'Truth-and-Reconciliation Commission' was in the news. Consider the following statements in this regard—
I. Justice S.K. Kaul in his concurring verdict on the abrogation of Article 370 directed the setting up of the commission to probe human rights violations both by the State and non-State actors.
II. The Commission must not 'turn into a criminal court' and must offer a platform for dialogue instead.
III. The Commission could facilitate a reparative approach, that enables forgiveness for the wounds of the past and forms the basis of achieving a shared national identity.
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

22. With reference to the newly appointed Chief Ministers in five states where elections were held in November 2023, consider the following pairs—
I. Chhattisgarh —Vishnu dev Sao
II. Madhya Pradesh —Mohan Yadav
III. Mizoram —Lalduhoma
IV. Rajasthan —Bhajan Lal Sharma
V. Telangana —Anumula Revanth Reddy
How many pairs given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
(C) Only 4 (D) All the 5

23. Which of the following statement is incorrect about 'INS Tarmugli' ?
(A) It has been turned into a museum and stationed at Vishakhapatnam
(B) The ship is a Trinkat Class FAC which was gifted to the Maldivian Naval Defence Forces (MNDF) in 2006 by the Govt. of India
(C) The ship was returned to Indian Navy in May 2023
(D) This is the only war ship which has served two naval forces under three different names—INS Tillanchang, MCGS Huravee and INS Tarmugli

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24. As per the provisions of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of service and term of office) Bill, 2023, as passed by the Parliament which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners ?

I. The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a selection committee headed by the Prime Minister.

II. The selection committee, consisting of the Prime Minister (Chairperson), Leader of Opposition(or the leader of largest single party) in the Lok Sabha and a Cabinet Minister (Nominated by the Prime Minister) will consider a name from the five names suggested by the search committee.

III. The search committee, headed by the Union Law Minister, will have two more members not below the rank of Secretary.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All the 3
(D) None of the above

25. Which of the following facts is/are correct about the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners ?

(A) The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall hold office for a term of six years from the date on which he assumes his office or till he attains the age of sixty-five years, whichever is earlier

(B) The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall not be eligible for re-appointment

(C) Where an Election Commissioner is appointed as Chief Election Commissioner, his term of office shall not be more than six years in aggregate as the Election Commissioner and the Chief Election Commissioner

(D) All of the above

26. Pay of the Chief Election Commissioner and other election commissioners is—

(A) Fixed at ₹ 3 lakh per month
(B) Equal to the pay of the Judge of the Supreme Court
(C) Equal to the pay of the Chief Justice of the High Court
(D) Equal to the Cabinet Secretary

27. Which of the following country is India's oldest and most important 2+2 dialogue partner ?

(A) Australia (B) Japan
(C) UK (D) The US

28. Torkham and Chaman borders were in the news. They are between—

(A) Israel—Egypt
(B) Israel—Jordan
(C) Afghanistan—Pakistan
(D) India-Myanmar

29. Consider the following statements in relation to Indo-Taiwan bilateral relations—

I. India and Taiwan have formal diplomatic relations.

II. India and Taiwan established representative offices in their respective capitals way back in 1995.

III. India and Taiwan were in talks about sending tens of thousands of workers to the island.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

30. Consider the following facts about the Cell Broadcast Alert System—

I. It represents a cutting-edge technology that empowers citizens to disseminate critical and time-sensitive disaster management messages to all mobile devices within specified geographical areas.

II. It is useful in case of natural calamities and disaster management.

III. This ensures that crucial emergency information reaches as many individuals as possible promptly.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

31. Which of the following statement is incorrect about the 'Canopy Walk' ?

(A) It is a 240 meter wooden bridge at the height of 30 feet above the ground level that offers a mesmerizing view of the dense forest

(B) It has been developed in Kali Tiger Reserve located in Uttara Kannada district, in Karnataka

(C) It is India's first-ever Canopy Walk.

(D) None of the above

32. Which of the following statement is incorrect about Sea buckthorn ?

I. It's a shrub which produces an orange-yellow coloured edible berry.

II. In India, it is found above the tree line in the Himalayan region, generally in dry areas such as the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti.

III. In Himachal Pradesh, it is locally called Chharma and grows in the wild in Lahaul and Spiti and parts of Kinnaur.

IV. As a folk medicine, seabuckthorn has been widely used for treating stomach, heart and skin problems.

Correct code is—

(A) Only I (B) Only II
(C) Only III (D) All IV

33. Which of the following statement is incorrect about 'microalgae' ?

(A) Microalgae are organisms that can grow in aquatic environments and use light and carbon dioxide (CO_2) to create biomass

(B) Microalgae contain lipids and fatty acids as membrane components, storage products, metabolites, and sources of energy

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(C) The potentials of algae as the alternative biofuel sources have been widely reviewed
(D) They are phytoplankton typically found in dirty water and marine systems

34. Consider the five components of 5D (Demand, Demography, Democracy, Desire, and Dream). Who among the following underlined the importance of these ?
(A) Droupdi Murmu, President of India
(B) Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India
(C) Jagadeep Dhankhar, Vice-President of India
(D) Suman Beri, Vice-Chairmen of NITI Aayog

35. World's first statute 'Artificial Intelligence Act' has been passed by the—
(A) The US
(B) European Union
(C) India
(D) Australia

36. At the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) summit in Dubai, more than 100 countries signed the Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge, aiming—
I. To triple the global installed capacity for renewables to 11,000 Gigawatts.
II. Double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030.
Which of the above statements is/are correct in this regard ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

37. Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2022 has been awarded to—
(A) Indian Medical Association (IMA)
(B) Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI)
(C) Serum Institute of India (SII)
(D) Jointly to (A) and (B)

38. Second Voice of the Global South Summit 2023 was organized by India in.....on 17th November, 2023.
(A) New Delhi
(B) Mumbai
(C) Virtual Mode
(E) Bengaluru

39. ENCORE has been launched by—
(A) Election Commission of India
(B) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
(C) C-DOT
(D) NITI Aayog

40. AAINA Dashboard for Urban Local Bodies collects information on certain thematic areas.
I. Political and Administrative Structures
II. Finance
III. Planning
IV. Citizen Centric Governance
V. Delivery of basic Services
How many areas given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 2 (B) Only 3
(C) Only 4 (D) All 5

Answers with Hints

1. (A) Miss Nicaragua Sheynnis Palacios, Miss Thailand Anntonia Porsild and Miss Australia Moraya Wilson were named the top three Miss Universe 2023 finalists on November 18, 2023 in San Salvador (El Salvador).
2. (B) Australia defeated India in the Final match of ICC (Men's) world Cup 2023 by six wicket , which was played on November 19, 2023 in Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmadabad. Australia lifted the Cup for the sixth time.
3. (C) India and the European Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation on the semiconductor ecosystem which will facilitate investments, joint ventures and technology partnership including manufacturing facilities.
4. (A) Ghol fish, biologically known as 'Protonibea Diacanthus' and commonly called the black-spotted croaker fish, is an exotic specimen. It is prized in east Asia for its medicinal properties. From iodine, omega-3, DHA, EPA, iron, taurine, magnesium, fluoride, to selenium, it is loaded with rich nutrients. What makes this fish to be called as 'Sea Gold' is a pouch in its stomach, which has potent medicinal properties and has a high valuation in the overseas market.
5. (D)
6. (C) Sickle cell disease and thalassaemia are caused by mutations in the haemoglobin gene, which codes for a protein found in red blood cells that transports oxygen to organs and tissues. Sickle Cell Disease has following symptoms : Anaemia, Feet and hands swelling, Frequent infections, Delayed growth or puberty, Vision problems.
7. (C)
8. (A) The Persian film Endless Borders directed by Abbas Amini received the Golden Peacock award for the Best Film at the 54th IFFI. The film depicts that the emotional and moral borders that you impose upon yourself can be more complicated than the physical borders, observed the jury.
9. (D) Iranian Actor Pouria Rahimi Sam has been chosen as the Best Actor for his role in the Persian film *Endless Borders*, directed by Abbas Amini. The Jury has chosen the actor "for the richness of acting and interacting with his partners, children and adults in challenging shooting conditions."
10. (C) French actress, Melanie Thierry is honoured with Silver Peacock for Best Actor (Female) for her exemplary role in the film *Party of Fools*. The jury remarked that the range of expressions by the actress gives audience with subtlety all the emotions from hope to despair, encountered in her character's crazy journey.
11. (B) Bulgarian Director Stephan Komandarev is honoured with Silver Peacock for Best Director for his film *Blaga's Lessons*. Stephan Komandarev tells a powerful and shocking lesson through the character of a woman who has to decide to achieve her goals and in doing so compromise her values, reads the Jury's citation.
12. (A)

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13. (A) French, British and Greek co-production *Drift* directed by Anthony Chen received the prestigious ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal. The film which portrays how drifting through life's uncertainties can lead to unexpected bonds draws the lines of hope and resilience observed the selection Jury.
14. (A) *Panchayat Season 2*, directed by Deepak Kumar Mishra received the newly introduced award for the Best Web series (OTT). The series chronicles the life of an engineering graduate who joins as a Panchayat secretary in a remote fictional village of Phulera of Uttar Pradesh due to lack of better job options.
15. (A) 16. (C)
17. (A) In an extraordinary celestial display, the skies over Mongolia turned deep, blood-red as the country experienced one of the rarest auroral events on December 1 and early December 2, 2023. The phenomenon, known as an aurora, typically occurs closer to the poles and is often green in colour. However, the auroras seen in Mongolia were of a striking crimson hue, a rarity caused by the interaction of solar particles with oxygen at high altitudes over 241 kms above the Earth's surface, where the atmosphere is much thinner.
18. (C) UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took the decision at its meeting in Kasane, Botswana to inscribe Garba on its ICHH list. Garba is performed during nine days of the Navaratri festival that is dedicated to the worship of the feminine energy or Shakti. "Over the decades Garba has been an integral, multivalent component of Gujarati culture in India and among the Indian diaspora across the globe", it said.
19. (B) The Trinamool MP was accused of taking bribes, including expensive gifts, from Dubai-based businessman Darshan Hiranandani in return for asking in questions in Parliament. The report of an Ethics Committee, headed by BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar, had held Ms. Moitra guilty of 'unethical conduct' and contempt of the House by sharing her Lok Sabha credentials - user ID and password of the Lok Sabha Member's portal with unauthorised persons.
20. (D)
21. (C) Justice S.K. Kaul in his concurring verdict pronounced on December 11, 2023 in a case regarding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution about the special status to Jammu & Kashmir directed the setting up of the commission to probe human rights violations both by the State and non-State actors.
22. (D)
23. (A) Indian Navy commissioned INS Tarmugli, a Fast Attack Craft, at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam under the aegis of the Eastern Naval Command on 14 December, 2023.
24. (C) 25. (D) 26. (B)
27. (D) The US is India's oldest and most important 2+2 talks partner. The first 2+2 dialogue between the two countries was held during the President ship of Donald Trump.
28. (C) More than 6,500 Afghan nationals left Pakistan through the Torkham border, taking the total number of repatriated Afghans to over 1,70,000, border. 194 prisoners were transported from various districts in Punjab to the Torkham border crossing for repatriation. According to caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai, 700 Afghan nationals also returned through the Chaman border.
29. (C)
30. (C) The DOT in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) will be conducting comprehensive testing of the Cell Broadcast Alert System. This initiative aims to bolster emergency communication during disasters and prioritize the safety and well-being of our esteemed citizens.
31. (D)
32. (D) As a folk medicine, seabuckthorn has been widely used for treating stomach, heart and skin problems. In the last few decades, scientific research worldwide has backed many of its traditional uses.
33. (D) Microalgae or microphytes are microscopic algae invisible to the naked eye. They are phytoplankton typically found in freshwater and marine systems, living in both the water column and sediment. They are unicellular species which exist individually, or in chains or groups.
34. (A) President of India, Droupdi Murmu on December 12, 2023 underlined the importance of 5D (Demand, Demography, Democracy, Desire, and Dreams while delivering convocation address of IIIT, Lucknow.
35. (B) The passage of the European Union's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act—the first such law regulating AI worldwide—provides a model for oversight and regulation. It may become a benchmark for a global consensus on AI regulation, which is something India is trying to orchestrate with a declaration document at the ongoing Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit.
36. (C) India, which has set one of the most ambitious targets in renewable energy capacity increases globally, refrained from signing the pledge. China also balked at signing, with reports indicating the sticking point was the reference to phasing out coal and ending any fresh investments in that sector.
37. (D) IMA and TNAI, representatives of Covid-19 pandemic warriors has been awarded jointly ₹ 25 lakh prize money award Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2023.
38. (C)
39. (A) Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment (ENCORE), launched by the Election Commission of India, is a software that streamlines various election–related processes, provide a comprehensive solution for returning Officers.
40. (D)

PDarpan

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Solved Paper

UGC-NET/JRF EXAMINATION, 2023

(Held on 20-6-2023)

Economics

1. Find the extremum of $u = x^2 + y^2 + z^2$ subject to $x + y + z = 1$:

   (A) $(\bar{x}, \bar{y}, \bar{z}) = \left(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\right)$

   (B) $(\bar{x}, \bar{y}, \bar{z}) = \left(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{3}\right)$

   (C) $(\bar{x}, \bar{y}, \bar{z}) = \left(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\right)$

   (D) $(\bar{x}, \bar{y}, \bar{z}) = \left(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3}\right)$

2. Which of the following are not symptoms of multicollinearity in a regression model :

   (a) High R^2 with few significant t ratio for coefficients.

   (b) High pair-wise correlations among regressors.

   (c) The closer the Tolerance (TOLj) is to zero.

   (d) Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of a variable is below 10.

   (e) The closer the Tolerance (TOLj) is to 1.

   Choose the correct answer from the option given below—

   (A) (c) and (d) only

   (B) (d) and (e) only

   (C) (a) and (c) only

   (D) (b) and (d) only

3. Which of the following is/are correct about Walrasian demand function ?

   (a) The Walrasian demand function X (P, W) is homogenous of degree zero if X (aP, aW) = X (P, W) for any P, W and $a > 0$.

   (b) The Walrasian demand function X (P, W) is homogenous of degree one if X (aP, aW) = aX (P, W) for any P, W and $a > 0$.

   (c) The Walrasian demand function X (P, W) satisfies Walras' law if for every P >> 0 and W > 0, we have P. X = W for all X $\in$ X (P, W).

   (d) Walras' law says consumer fully expends his wealth.

   (e) If price and wealth both change in same proportion, then individual consumption choice does not change.

   Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

   (A) Only (a), (b), (c), (d)

   (B) Only (b), (c), (d), (e)

   (C) Only (a), (b), (c), (e)

   (D) Only (a), (c), (d), (e)

4. Arrange states in asscending order based on loans from the central government for the year 2020-21—

   (a) Karnataka

   (b) Madhya Pradesh

   (c) Tamil Nadu

   (d) Gujarat

   (e) Maharashtra

   Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

   (A) (c), (b), (d), (a), (e)

   (B) (b), (c), (d), (a), (e)

   (C) (c), (b), (a), (d), (e)

   (D) (b), (c), (a), (d), (e)

5. Which of the following is not true in the case of second theorem of welfare economics ?

   (A) If consumers exhibit convex preferences, every pareto efficient allocation is a possible competitive equilibrium in a pure exchange economy

   (B) In an economy involving production, the convexity of production sets ensures that a pareto efficient allocation can be achieved as a market equilibrium

   (C) It holds when there are increasing returns to scale

   (D) It implies that in the market system, the allocative role and the distributive role can be separated from each other

6. Give below are two statements :

   Statement I : Under first degree price discrimination, monopolist sells different units of output for different prices and these prices may differ from person to person.

   Statement II : Under third degree price discrimination, monopolist sells different units of output for different prices, but every individual who buys the same amount of the good pays the same price.

   In the light of the above statement choose the correct answer from the option given below :

   (A) Both Statement I and Statement II are true

   (B) Both Statement I and Statement II are false

   (C) Statement I is true but Statement II is false

   (D) Statement I is false but Statement II is true

7. Give below are two statements :

   Statement I : Friedman's theory of the demand for money is partly Keynesian and partly non-Keynesian.

   Statement II : It is non-Keynesian in that Friedman neglects completely Keynes' clarification of the motives for holding money and the corresponding components of demand for money.

   In the light of the above statements, choose the correct answer from the options given below :

   (A) Both Statement I and Statement II are true

   (B) Both Statement I and Statement II are false

   (C) Statement I is true but Statement II is false

   (D) Statement I is false but Statement II is true

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8. Which one of the following is not correct about LM schedule ?
(A) The LM schedule slopes upward to the right
(B) The LM schedule will be relatively flat (steep) if the interest elasticity of money demand is relatively high (low)
(C) The LM schedule will shift downward (upward) to the right (left) with an increase (decrease) in the quantity of money
(D) The LM schedule is the schedule giving the combinations of values of investment and interest rate that produce equilibrium in the money market

9. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I

(a) Tax Evasion
(b) Effective incidence of tax
(c) Legal incidence of tax
(d) Fiscal Illusion

List-II

1. Bond Financing
2. Illegal free riding
3. Obliged to deliver tax revenue to Government
4. Not necessarily correspond to on whom tax is imposed

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	3	1	2	4
(C)	2	4	3	1
(D)	4	3	2	1

10. According to Robinson the term 'Golden Age' in the context of Harrod-Domar model is used to emphasize :
(A) its mythical nature
(B) Its superiority
(C) Natural growth rate
(D) Warranted growth rate

11. As per the total revenue received by the government under the head of GST on the domestic supply of goods and services for 2021-22, arrange the following states in ascending order :
(a) Odisha
(b) Rajasthan
(c) Delhi
(d) West Bengal
(e) Madhya Pradesh
Choose the correct answer the option given below :
(A) (d), (c), (e), (b), (a)
(B) (e), (b), (a), (c), (d)
(C) (b), (e), (c), (a), (d)
(D) (c), (e), (a), (d), (b)

12. The components of services sector in Gross Value Added (GVA) are :
(a) Construction
(b) Trade, Hotels, Transport and Communication related to Broadcasting
(c) Electricity, Gas, Water supply and other utility services
(d) Public Administration, Defense and other services
(e) Financial Real Estate and Professional services
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (b), (c) and (e)
(B) Only (a), (b) and (c)
(C) Only (a), (b), (d) and (e)
(D) Only (a), (b), (c) and (e)

13. Here is given international organisations and their headquarters. Which of the following are correct combinations of the institutions and their headquarters.
(a) GATT : Geneva
(b) IMF : Washington DC
(c) World Bank : Washington DC
(d) International Development Association (IDA) : New York
(e) Asian Development Bank : Mandaluyong
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (a), (b) and (c)
(B) Only (a) and (b)
(C) Only (c) and (d)
(D) Only (a), (b), (c) and (e)

14. The BOP crisis of early 1990s made India borrow from the IMF which came on following conditions :
(a) Devaluation of rupee by 22%.
(b) Drastic custom cut to a peak duty of 30% from the erstwhile level of 130% for all goods.
(c) Consolidation of all indirect taxes into one tax
(d) Excise duty to be increased by 20% to neutralize the loss of revenue due to custom cut.
(e) Government expenditure to be cut by 10% per annum.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (a), (b), (c), (e)
(B) Only (b), (c), (d), (e)
(C) Only (c), (d), (e), (a)
(D) Only (a), (b), (d), (e)

15. In random walk without drift—
(A) The effect of shock persists throughout the time period
(B) The effect of shock in the past dies out over time
(C) The effect of shock drifts away quickly
(D) There is no effect of past shock

16. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Policy)

(a) National Forest Policy
(b) Marine Fishing Policy
(c) New Mineral Policy
(d) National Population Policy

List-II

(Year)

1. 2000
2. 1994
3. 2004
4. 1988

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	3	2	1
(B)	4	2	3	1
(C)	2	4	3	1
(D)	2	3	4	1

17. When MPS is 0·25 and initial increase in autonomous spending is 100, then the expenditure multiplier and resultant increase in GDP respectively are :
(A) 1, ₹ 100 (B) 0·75, ₹ 75
(C) 4, ₹ 400 (D) 1·33, ₹ 133

18. Given below are the alternative formulae for F-test statistics. We are interested in testing the statistical significance of the incremental contribution of X_3 at 5% level of significance to $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + U$. Which of these is not appropriate ? Where RSS is residual sum of square and ESS is explained sum of square.

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(A) $F = \frac{R^2UR - R^2R/d.f.}{(1 - R^2UR)/d.f.}$

(B) $F = \frac{ESS/d.f.}{RSS/d.f.}$

(C) $F = \frac{ESS_{new} - ESS_{old}/d.f.}{ESS_{new}/d.f.}$

(D) $F = \frac{R^2/d.f.}{(1 - R^2)/d.f.}$

19. The idea of creative destruction is associated with :
(A) Marx (B) Adam Smith
(C) Ricardo (D) Schumpeter

20. Arrange the following in ascending order on the basis of degree of economic integration.
(a) Custom Union
(b) Free Trade Area
(c) Economic Union
(d) Common Market
(e) Preferential Trade Arrangements
Choose the correct answer form the option given below :
(A) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e)
(B) (b), (c), (d), (a), (e)
(C) (e), (a), (b), (c), (d)
(D) (e), (b), (a), (d), (c)

21. Arrange the following in order to their year of establishment starting from oldest :
(a) The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI)
(b) National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD)
(c) The Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI)
(d) The Industrial Reconstruction Bank of India (IRBI)
(e) Export-Import Bank of India
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (c), (e), (b), (d)
(B) (c), (a), (d), (e), (b)
(C) (e), (c), (a), (b), (d)
(D) (a), (d), (c), (b), (e)

22. A tariff ridden offer curve will bend towards :
(A) Import good axis
(B) Export good axis
(C) Origin
(D) Any of the above is possible

23. Arrange the relative weights in percentage assigned to following criteria by the XIV finance commission in ascending order :
(a) Income distance
(b) Area
(c) Population (1971)
(d) Demographic Change (2011 population)
(e) Forest Cover
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (b), (e), (d), (c), (a)
(B) (e), (d), (b), (c), (a)
(C) (a), (c), (d), (b), (e)
(D) (e), (b), (d), (c), (a)

24. According to Sample Registration System, which of the following Indian States has the highest level of life time risk during 2018-2020 :
(A) Bihar
(B) Uttar Pradesh
(C) Madhya Pradesh
(D) Chhattisgarh

25. Which of the following is true for the Clark-Wicksteed-Walras product exhaustion theorem :
(a) The assumption of a homogeneous production function is necessary.
(b) It is an identity that holds for all values of the variables.
(c) The assumption of a homogeneous production function is not necessary.
(d) It is not an identity since it holds only for the values of the variables in the long-run equilibrium.
(e) It holds for all types of production functions.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (a) and (b)
(B) Only (a) and (d)
(C) Only (b), (c) and (e)
(D) Only (c), (d) and (e)

26. Which of the following statements are correct about trilemma in monetary policy ?
(a) It is related to closed economy model.
(b) It involves exchange rate, capital mobility and monetary policy.
(c) It arises because perfect capital mobility aligns the domestic interest rate to the world interest rate.
(d) Flexible exchange rate is not compatible with independent monetary policy.
(e) It is related to capital immobility and flexible exchange rate.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (b) and (c)
(B) Only (c) and (d)
(C) Only (a) and (d)
(D) Only (b) and (e)

27. Match List-I with List-II. Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

List-I

(States)

(a) Telangana
(b) Jharkhand
(c) Chhattisgarh
(d) Andhra Pradesh

List-II

(Foodgrain production (2021-22) Thousand Tonnes)

1. 11266·0 2. 4984·2
3. 8897·0 4. 15095·4

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	4	3	2	1
(C)	1	3	4	2
(D)	4	2	3	1

28. Adam Smith contribution are :
(a) Division of labour
(b) Notion of increasing returns
(c) Notion of diminishing returns
(d) Dialectical Materialism
(e) Socially necessary abstract labour time
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) Only (a) and (b)
(B) Only (a) and (c)
(C) Only (a) and (d)
(D) Only (a) and (e)

29. Which of the following is/are true about paradox of thrift ?
(a) Paradox of thrift was popularized by J.M. Keynes.
(b) It states that personal savings can be detrimental to overall economic growth.
(c) It shows the relationship between output growth and rate of unemployment.
(d) It shows the relationship between inflations and rate of interest.
(e) It states that individuals saving during an economic recession leads to fall in aggregate demand.

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Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) Only (a), (b), (c)
(B) Only (b), (c), (d)
(C) Only (c), (d), (e)
(D) Only (a), (b), (e)

30. Which of the following are correct in case of theory of Sets ?

(a) $(A \cup B') \cap (A' \cup C) \cap (B \cup C') = (A \cap B \cap C) \cup (A \cup B \cup C)$

(b) $(A \cup B') \cap (A' \cup C) \cap (B \cup C') = (A \cap B \cap C) \cup (A \cup B \cup C)'$

(c) $A \cup (B \cap C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$

(d) $A \cap (B \cup C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$

(e) $(A \cup B') \cap (A' \cup C) \cap (B \cup C') = (A \cap B \cap C) \cup (A' \cup B' \cup C')$

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a), (c), (e) only
(B) (b), (d), (e) only
(C) (b), (c), (e) only
(D) (a), (b), (d) only

31. Pillar I of Basel III norms focus on :

(a) Quality and level of capital
(b) Risk Coverage
(c) Containing leverage
(d) Risk management and supervision
(e) Market discipline

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a) and (b) only
(B) (b) and (c) only
(C) (c) and (d) only
(D) (d) and (e) only

32. The Uruguay Round of trade negotiations called for :

(a) the reduction of average tariffs on industrial goods
(b) quotas to be replaced by tariffs
(c) the reduction in agriculture export subsidies
(d) the reduction in industrial subsidies
(e) antidumping and safeguards to be relaxed

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a), (b), (c), (d) only
(B) (b), (c), (d), (e) only
(C) (c), (d), (e), (a) only
(D) (d), (e), (a), (b) only

33. A company has 140 employees, of which 30 are supervisors, 80 of the employees are married and 20% of the married employee are supervisors. If a company employee is randomly selected, what is the probability that the employee is married and is a supervisor ?

(A) 0·1531 (B) 0·1253
(C) 0·0923 (D) 0·1143

34. According to Tobin's Q theory of investment, when should a firm invest ?

(a) there is increase in the price of output
(b) there is an increase in marginal product of capital
(c) there is an increase in rate of interest
(d) there is a decrease in rate of depreciation
(e) marginal benefit of investment exceeds marginal cost

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (b), (c), (d), (e) only
(B) (a), (c), (d), (e) only
(C) (a), (b), (d), (e) only
(D) (a), (b), (c), (d) only

35. The concept of 'excess sensitivity' and 'excess smoothness' are explained by following statement(s).

(a) 'Excess sensitivity' refers to a situation where consumption over responds to temporary income shocks.
(b) 'Excess smoothness' refers to a situation where consumption under responds to temporary income changes.
(c) With excess sensitivity, anticipated rise in income is associated with relatively small change in consumption.
(d) With excess smoothness, changes in aggregate income are associated with relatively large changes in aggregate consumption.
(e) 'Excess sensitivity' and 'Excess smoothness' are related to the empirical evidences of permanent income hypothesis.

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a), (b), (c), (d) only
(B) (a), (b), (c), (e) only
(C) (a), (b), (d) only
(D) (a), (b), (e) only

36. Which of the following constitutes India's strategy to combat climate change in the backdrop of its stand at the 26th session of the conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC held in Glasgow, UK ?

(a) phasing out of coal-based thermal power generation by 2030.
(b) reduction of the carbon intensity of Indian economy by 45 per cent by 2030, over 2005 levels.
(c) capping Indian economy total final energy consumption in absolute levels.
(d) achieving the target of net zero emissions for India by 2070.
(e) promoting lifestyle for environment to combat climate change.

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a), (b), (d) only
(B) (b), (c), (d) only
(C) (b), (d), (e) only
(D) (c), (d), (e) only

37. Taylor's Rule tells :

(A) how monetary authority sets interest rate in response to economic activity
(B) how monetary authority maintains bank rate
(C) how monetary authority maintains exchange rate
(D) how government decides the tax rate to increase the tax base

38. Which of the following can be an equation representing the money market ?

(A) $300 = 2Y - 1{\cdot}5i$
(B) $i = 150 - Y$
(C) $Y = 100 - i$
(D) $i = (150 - 2Y)/2$

39. Sequence of steps followed in the estimation of Indirect Least Square (ILS) starting from the beginning :

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(a) Identification of the structural equations
(b) Application of OLS
(c) Obtaining structural coefficients
(d) Obtaining reduced form equation
(e) Use the model for policy

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (d), (b), (c) and (e)
(B) (a), (b), (d), (c) and (e)
(C) (b), (d), (a), (e) and (c)
(D) (b), (a), (c), (d) and (e)

40. Which of the following are true in case of social goods ?
(a) Public goods are non-rivalry in nature.
(b) Efficient provision of social goods needs a political process of budget determination.
(c) Efficient provision of social goods involve horizontal rather than vertical addition of individual pseudo-demand-lines.
(d) Among purely private and purely social goods, there are mixed cases which generate benefit or cost externalities
(e) Individual consumers will not bid for social good, but will act as free-riders.

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (c), (d) and (e) only
(B) (a), (b), (c) and (e) only
(C) (a) and (b) only
(D) (a), (b), (d) and (e) only

41. In the extreme case of liquidity trap :
(A) There will be tendency to buy bonds
(B) Most of the investors will show bearish behaviour
(C) Cash will be less preferred
(D) Price of the bond will be low

42. The merchant's file of 20 accounts contains 6 delinquent and 14 non-delinquent accounts. An auditor randomly selects 5 of these accounts for examination. What is the probability that the auditor finds exactly 2 delinquent cases ?
(A) 0·2562 (B) 0·3
(C) 0·3087 (D) 0·4526

43. Properties of sufficient estimators are :
(a) It may not be unbiased
(b) It may be unbiased
(c) It is always consistent
(d) It is not always consistent
(e) Minimum variance unbiased estimator

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (b) and (c) only
(B) (a), (c) and (e) only
(C) (a), (b), (c) and (d) only
(D) (a), (b), (c) and (e) only

44. Gunnar Myrdal is author of :
(a) Asian Drama
(b) An American Dilemma
(c) Theory of Economic Development
(d) Principles of Political Economy
(e) Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (b) and (c) only
(B) (a), (c) and (d) only
(C) (a), (b) and (d) only
(D) (a), (b) and (e) only

45. Which of the following are recommendations of the Narasimham Committee, 1991 ?
(a) Deregulation of the interest rate structure.
(b) Need for greater use of information technology.
(c) Permitting only private sector banks to access the capital market.
(d) Freedom to appoint chief executive and officers of the banks.
(e) Capital adequacy norms were implemented in stages.

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (b) and (e) only
(B) (a), (c) and (d) only
(C) (a), (d) and (e) only
(D) (c), (d) and (e) only

46. Based on the NITI, Aayog estimate of poverty for the year 2011-12, the states with above 30 per cent rural poverty are :
(a) Manipur
(b) Bihar
(c) Sikkim
(d) Uttar Pradesh
(e) Nagaland

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a) and (b) only
(B) (b) and (d) only
(C) (b), (c) and (d) only
(D) (a), (b) and (d) only

47. Arrange the following chronologically in order of their publication starting from the oldest :
(a) General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money
(b) A Treatise on Probability
(c) Essays in Persuasion
(d) The End of Laissez Faire
(e) A Tract on Monetary Reform

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (b), (c), (d), (a), (e)
(B) (b), (e), (d), (c), (a)
(C) (e), (b), (d), (c), (a)
(D) (d), (e), (b), (a), (c)

48. Which of the following are true in case of Ramsey Rule for efficient taxation ?
(a) Tax rate should be higher on the good that has lower price elasticity of demand.
(b) If the demand elasticity in a market is zero, taxes should be imposed only in that markets.
(c) Ramsey rule applies to taxation of goods, but not to taxation of income.
(d) Ramsey rule minimises the excess burden of taxation across markets.
(e) Ramsey rule does not necessarily result in social justice.

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (c), (d) and (e) only
(B) (a), (b), (d) and (e) only
(C) (a), (b), (c) and (d) only
(D) (a), (c) and (d) only

49. Integrate : $\int x\sqrt{x^2+1}\,dx\; x>0$
(A) $\frac{1}{2}(x^2+1)^{3/2}+C$
(B) $\frac{1}{3}(x^2+1)^{3/2}+C$
(C) $\frac{1}{3}(x^3+1)^{2/3}+C$
(D) $\frac{1}{2}(x^3+1)^{2/3}+C$

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50. Monetary base of an economy is :

(A) Amount of currency held by public and by the banks as reserves

(B) Amount of currency held by public and demand deposits.

(C) Amount of currency held by public and time deposits.

(D) Currency deposit ratio

51. According to the Census, 2011 arrange the states in the descending order based on the literacy rate (aged group 7 year and above) :

(a) Nagaland (b) Tripura

(c) Sikkim (d) Manipur

(e) Meghalaya

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (d), (c), (b), (e), (a)

(B) (c), (b), (d), (a), (e)

(C) (b), (c), (a), (d), (e)

(D) (a), (c), (b), (e), (d)

52. A foreign exchange swap is :

(A) a spot purchase of a currency combined with a forward repurchase of that currency.

(B) a spot sale of a currency combined with a forward repurchase of that currency.

(C) sale and purchase of a currency in forward market.

(D) Purchase of a currency in spot market.

53. Normalized Poverty Gap (NPG) is measured as a ratio of :

(A) Average Poverty Gap to poverty line

(B) Total Poverty Gap to poverty line

(C) Total Poverty Gap to total population

(D) Average Poverty Gap to total population

54. The Hausman's specification error test is used to test whether :

(A) An exogenous variable is correlated with the error term.

(B) An endogenous variable is correlated with the error term.

(C) Both an exogenous variable is correlated with the error term and an endogenous variable is correlated with the error term.

(D) OLS method is appropriate to estimate the SEM.

55. Properties of expenditure function are (in the context of utility theory) :

(a) Homogenous of degree one in price, P

(b) Strictly increasing in utility. u and non-decreasing in price, P for any good 1.

(c) Concave in P

(d) Continuous in P and u

(e) Strictly convex in P

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a), (c), (d), (e) only

(B) (a), (b), (d), (e) only

(C) (a), (b), (c), (d) only

(D) (b), (c), (d), (e) only

56. If S is a sample space and E is an event then the probability axioms can be written as :

(a) $P(A) \geq 0$

(b) $P(S) = 1$

(c) $P\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} A_i\right) \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} P(A_i)$

(d) $P(A) \leq 0$

(e) $P\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} S_i\right) \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} P(S_i)$

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

(A) (a) and (b) only

(B) (a), (b) and (d) only

(C) (a), (b) and (e) only

(D) (a), (b) and (c) only

57. In the national income identity $Y = C + I + G$, investment (I) is a function of :

(A) Real Income

(B) Nominal Income

(C) Real Interest Rate

(D) Nominal Interest Rate

58. Which of the following is not true in case of incidence of tax ?

(A) Imposition of tax raises price and lowers quantity.

(B) The resulting price increase of tax rise will be dampened if the tax is imposed in monopolistic market.

(C) One would be in a better position to avoid the tax and leave the seller with a larger part if demand is inelastic while supply is elastic.

(D) A unit tax enters through a parallel upward shift in the supply schedule.

59. Why subsidies are not an effective policy instrument in the long-run for internalizing externalities under competitive output markets ?

(A) a subsidy that is equal to marginal damages translates to a de facto decrease in firm's fixed costs.

(B) subsidy payments are available to all firms and induce excessive market entry.

(C) the level of industrial production in the sector would exceed the socially desired level.

(D) All of the above

60. Which of following is a correct measure of gross fiscal deficit of the state government ?

(A) Revenue Expenditure (RE) + Capital disbursement – Revenue Receipts (RR)

(B) RE + Repayment of loans to the Centre – RR

(C) Revenue Deficit + Capital Outlays + Net Lending

(D) RE + Discharge of internal Debt – RR

61. Suppose that a scarce resource, facing a constant demand, will be exhausted in 10 years. If an alternative resource will be available at a price of $ 40 and if the interest rate is 10%, what must be the price of the scarce resource today :

(A) $ 55·50 (B) $ 35·60

(C) $ 24·40 (D) $ 15·42

62. Which of the following holds for Bertrand's Duopoly model ?

(a) The reaction curves are derived from isoprofit maps which are convex to the axes.

(b) The point of intersection of the two reaction curves reflects a stable equilibrium.

(c) The reaction curves are derived from isoprofit maps which are concave to the axes.

(d) The point of intersection of the two reaction curves reflects an unstable equilibrium.

(e) Firm's behavioural pattern is such that they learn from past experience.

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Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a) and (b) only
(B) (c) and (d) only
(C) (a), (d) and (e) only
(D) (b), (c) and (e) only

63. Prevention of Money Laundering Act was enacted in the year :
(A) 2001 (B) 2002
(C) 2003 (D) 2004

64. Factor price equalization theorem is given by :
(A) David Ricardo
(B) J. S. Mill
(C) Paul Samuelson
(D) Adam Smith

65. Defensive expenditure method is based on the understanding that :
(a) the consumer spends money to ameliorate the damaging effects of the bad.
(b) the defensive expenditure undertaken reflects the consumer's willingness to pay to reduce the level of the bad.
(c) the observed defensive expenditure is an upper bound on the willingness to pay to avoid the bad.
(d) the defensive expenditure provide no additional services other than provisioning the desired environmental quality.
(e) the observed defensive expenditure is a lower bound on the willingness to pay to avoid the bad.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (b) and (c) only
(B) (c), (d) and (e) only
(C) (a), (b), (c) and (d) only
(D) (a), (b), (d) and (e) only

66. Which one of the following is not a characteristic of market structure ?
(A) Degree of buyers' concentration
(B) Degree of Sellers' concentration
(C) Conditions of entry
(D) Vertical integration

67. Given below are two statements :
Statement I : Division of labour is the starting point of Smith's theory of economic growth.
Statement II : It is division of labour that results in the greatest improvement in the productive power of labour.
In the light of the above statements, choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) Both Statement I and Statement II are true.
(B) Both Statement I and Statement II are false.
(C) Statement I is true but Statement II is false.
(D) Statement I is false but Statement II is true.

68. With the same monetary base, which of the following will lead to an increase in broad money ?
(A) High transaction cost of converting deposit into cash
(B) Higher investment under SLR
(C) Higher use of cash
(D) Increase in financial literacy and banking habit

69. In which of the following year IMF has set up the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to support member's structural reforms to address balance of payment difficulties of a long term character.
(A) 1974 (B) 1997
(C) 1963 (D) 2009

70. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I
(a) Cost-effectiveness
(b) Pollution permit trading system
(c) Market approach
(d) Command and Control approach

List-II
1. a policy that directly regulates polluters through the use of standards.
2. an incentive based policy that encourages conservation practices or pollution reduction technologies.
3. Requires that the least amount of resources be used to achieve an objective.
4. A market instrument that establishes a market for rights to pollute.

Choose the correct answer from the option given ahead :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	4	1	2
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	3	4	2	1

71. Given the income multiplier formula $m = \frac{I}{I - MPC}$, lower the marginal propensity to save,
(A) Higher will be the multiplier effect
(B) Lower will be the multiplier effect
(C) Multiplier will become infinite
(D) Multiplier will become zero

72. Arrange the following events of equity trading in India starting from the oldest :
(a) The BSE introduced screen-based trading.
(b) Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) are permitted to invest in the Indian Securities Market.
(c) NSE commenced operations in wholesale debt market segment.
(d) The SEBI banned badla trading on the BSE.
(e) The NSE overtook the BSE as the largest stock exchange in terms of volume trading.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (a), (b), (d), (e), (c)
(B) (b), (d), (c), (e), (a)
(C) (d), (b), (e), (c), (a)
(D) (c), (b), (d), (e), (a)

73. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I
(a) Kleins rule of thumb
(b) Ljung Box (LB) statistic
(c) KPSS
(d) Bai-Perron

List-II
1. Structural break
2. Unit Root
3. Significance of auto correlation coefficients
4. Multicollinearity

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	3	2	1
(B)	4	3	1	2
(C)	2	4	1	3
(D)	2	3	4	1

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74. Give below the two statements :
Statement I : The terms of trade of a nation are defined as the ratio of the cost of its export commodity to the price of its import commodity.
Statement II : The terms of trade of the trade partner are equal to the inverse of the terms of trade of the other nation.
In the light of the above statements, choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) Both Statement I and Statement II are true
(B) Both Statement I and Statement II are false
(C) Statement I is true but Statement II is false
(D) Statement I is false but Statement II is true

75. The book entitled, "Why Nations Fail; The Origin of Power, Prosperity and Poverty" has been written by :
(A) Abhijit Banerjee
(B) Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson
(C) Amartya Sen
(D) Joseph Stiglitz

76. Match List-I with List-II :
List-I
(Type of India's population growth rate)
(a) Rapid High Growth
(b) Stagmant Population
(c) High growth with definite signs of slowing down
(d) Steady Growth
List-II
(Period)
1. 1981-2011 2. 1921-1951
3. 1951-1981 4. 1891-1921
Choose the correct answer from the option given below—

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	2	3	1
(B)	3	4	1	2
(C)	3	4	2	1
(D)	4	3	2	1

77. What is the motto of G-20 18th meeting ?
(A) One Earth, One Family, One Future
(B) One Earth, One Nature, One Life
(C) One World, One Family, One Life
(D) One Earth, One Nature, One Future

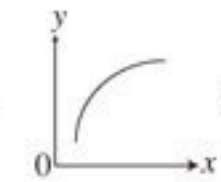
78. Suppose good 1 is taken on horizontal axis and good 2 on vertical axis, then what happens to the budget line if the price of good 1 doubles and price of good 2 triples ?
(A) The budget line becomes steeper
(B) The budget line becomes flatter
(C) The budget lien become vertical
(D) The budget lien remains unchanged

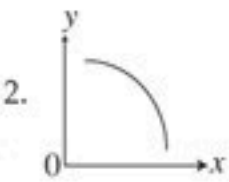
79. Match List-I with List-II :
List-I
(a) J. M. Keynes
(b) Kydland Prescott
(c) Baumol Tobin
(d) Friedman Schwartz
List-II
1. Inventory theoretic approach to transaction demand for money.
2. Liquidity Preference.
3. Time in consistency problem.
4. Monetary History of United States.
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

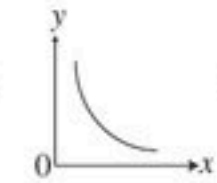
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	3	2	1	4
(C)	3	1	2	4
(D)	2	3	1	4

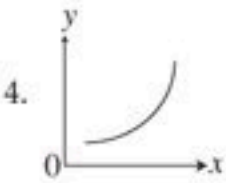
80. Arrange the following Acts in chronological order of their year of enactment starting form the oldest :
(a) Foreign Exchange Regulation Act
(b) Competition Act
(c) MRTP Act
(d) Foreign Regulation Act
(e) Foreign Exchange Management Act
Choose the correct answer from the option given below :
(A) (c), (b), (a), (d), (e)
(B) (c), (a), (b), (e), (d)
(C) (b), (a), (d), (e), (c)
(D) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e)

81. Which of the following defines ambient standards in an environment policy ?
(A) a standard that specifies a pollution limit to be achieved but does not stipulate the technology
(B) a standard that designates the equipment or method to be used to achieve some abatement level
(C) a standard that designates the quality level of some element of the environment to be achieved
(D) None of the above

82. Match List-I with List-II :
List-I
(a) $f'(x) > 0$ and $f''(x) > 0$
(b) $f'(x) > 0$ and $f''(x) < 0$
(c) $f'(x) < 0$ and $f''(x) < 0$
(d) $f'(x) < 0$ and $f''(x) > 0$
List-II
1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	4	3	2
(B)	1	3	2	4
(C)	4	1	2	3
(D)	4	2	3	1

83. Allocation of budget for Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in the Union Budget 2023-24 is :
(A) ₹ 2·25 lakh crore
(B) ₹ 1·25 lakh crore
(C) ₹ 1·78 lakh crore
(D) ₹ 1·68 lakh crore

84. Which is not a dimension of Human Development Index (HDI) ?
(A) Ability to lead a long and healthy life
(B) Ability to acquire knowledge
(C) Ability to achieve decent standard of living
(D) Ability to access clean environment

85. Match List-I with List-II :
List-I
(a) Central Bank Loss Function
(b) Monetary Rule (MR)
(c) Phillips Curve (PC)
(d) Dynamic IS Curve

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List-II

1. $y_1 = A - ar_{t-1}$
2. $\pi_t = \pi_{t-1} + \alpha(y_t - y_e)$
3. $(y_t - y_e) = -\alpha\beta(\pi_t - \pi^T)$
4. $L = (y_t - y_e)^2 + \beta(\pi_t - \pi^T)^2$

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	3	2	4	1
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	4	3	1	2

86. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I

(a) Kuznet
(b) Nurkse
(c) Leibenstein
(d) Schumpeter

List-II

1. Innovation and Entrepreneurship
2. Balanced growth theory
3. Inverted U-curve hypothesis
4. Critical minimum effort thesis

Choose the correct answer from the option given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	4	3	2
(B)	3	2	4	1
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	2	1	4	3

87. The Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP) was launched in the year :

(A) 1960-61 (B) 1961-62
(C) 1962-63 (D) 1963-64

88. The utility function of a consumer is given by $U = f(q_1, q_2) = q_1 \cdot q_2$, suppose the price of q_1 is $P_{q_1} = 1$ and price of q_2 is $P_{q^2} = 2$. The consumer wants to spend amount of k units only what will be his demand for q_1 and q_2 ?

(A) $(q_1 \cdot q_2) = \left(k, \frac{k}{2}\right)$

(B) $(q_1, q_2)\left(\frac{k}{4}, \frac{k}{6}\right)$

(C) $(q_1, q_2)\left(\frac{k}{2}, \frac{k}{4}\right)$

(D) $(q_1, q_2)\left(\frac{k}{2}, \frac{k}{3}\right)$

89. Which of the following applies to the physical linkage approach for the valuation of environmental benefits ?

(A) methods that assess responses immediately related to environmental changes.
(B) methods that examine responses not about the environmental good itself but some set of market conditions related to it.
(C) methods that estimate benefits using observations of behaviour in actual markets.
(D) methods that estimate benefits based on a technical relationship between an environment resource and the user of that resource.

90. Give below are two statements : One is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R) :

Assertion (A) : If governments do not care about protectionists' rents, they would replace all import duties with sales taxes.

Reason (R) : Sales tax is more efficient means of raising revenue than import tariff.

In the light of the above statements, choose the correct answer form the options given below :

(A) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of A
(B) Both (A) and (R) are true but (R) is not the correct explanation of A
(C) (A) is true but (R) is false
(D) (A) is false but (R) is true

Directions—(Q. 91-95) Read the passage below and answer the questions :

The Government of India's fiscal policy response to the covid crises comprised of a judicious mix of increasing food and fertilizer subsidies on the one hand and a reduction in taxes on fuel and certain imported products on the other. Despite these additional fiscal pressures the union govt. is back on track. The resilience in the fiscal performance of the union government has been facilitated by the recovery in economic activity buoyancy in revenues from direct taxes and goods and services tax (GST) and realistic assumptions in the budget. The gross tax revenue registered a YoY growth of 15·5% from April to November 2022, driven by robust growth in the direct taxes and GST. The gross GST-collection has increased at 24·8% on YoY during the same period. The Union Government's emphasis on capital expenditure (capex) has continued despite higher revenue expenditure requirements during the year. The center's capex has steadily increased from a long term average of 1·7 per cent of GDP (FY09 to FY20) to 2·5% of GDP in FY22 PA. The center has also incentivized the state governments through interest free loans and enhanced borrowing ceilings to prioritize their spending on capex. Government has boosted allocations on infrastructure intensive sectors such as roads and highways, railways and housing and urban affairs, which has boosted allocations on infrastructure intensive sectors such as roads and highways, railways and housing and urban affairs, which has bearing on capex. This increase in capex will have implication for medium term growth and sustainable government debt to GDP ratio.

91. Which of the following strategy is adopted by Union Government to priorities States' spending on capex ?

(A) Incentivizing for higher revenue expenditure
(B) Incentivizing for interest free loans and enhance borrowing ceilings
(C) Incentivizing for higher interest payment
(D) Incentivizing for large spending on tax

92. The Capex of the union government for the period FY 09 to FY 20 on an average was ..... :

(A) 2·5 per cent of GDP
(B) 15·5 per cent of revenue receipts
(C) 24·8 per cent of GST revenue
(D) 1·7 per cent of GDP

93. Which of the following strategies was not comprised India's Fiscal Policy response to Covid crises ?

(A) Increasing of food subsidy
(B) Increasing of fertilizer subsidy
(C) Reduction in taxes on certain imported products.
(D) Increase in taxes on fuel

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94. Which of the following is not correct with respect to facilitation of resilience of fiscal performance of the union government ?
(A) Recovery in Economic activity
(B) Buoyant GST revenues
(C) Expenditure austerity measures pertaining to food and fertilizer subsidy
(D) Realistic assumptions in budget

95. In order to further enhance capex, allocation for which of the following infrastructure sector is not increased ?
(A) Ports and Waterways
(B) Roads and Highways
(C) Railways
(D) Housing and Urban affairs

Directions—(Q. 96-100) Read the passage below and answer the questions :

GDP growth is the most widely used macroeconomic indicator for adjudicating broad economic progress. The outcomes from decisions made on the basis of such an indicator have been repeatedly disappointing because of failures to detect resource uses that turn out to be unsustainable. Adjusted Net Savings (ANS) provides a complementary indicator to help in understanding the changes in wealth and not per capita wealth, by capturing some of the important policy-induced dynamics. Based on the conventions of the System of National Accounts (SNA), ANS is measured as Gross National Saving minus depreciation of produced capital, depletion of subsoil assets and timber resources, and air pollution damages to human health, plus a credit for expenditures on education. If ANS is negative, the country is running down its capital stocks and possibly reducing future material well-being. If ANS is positive the country is adding to wealth and future material well-being. When natural resource depletion is not used to invest in other assets in the wealth portfolio, countries gross saving might not be enough to compensate this depletion resulting in negative net savings. However, nations with higher GDP are far less likely to obtain negative ANS. It is argued that, if not a superior indicator of sustainability, ANS is useful to the extent that it can serve as an indicator of unsustainability. Hence, the estimates and concepualization of ANS are not free from limitations.

96. Which of the following is not the constituent of ANS ?
(A) Public expenditures on education
(B) Air pollution damage
(C) Depletion of metals and minerals
(D) Loss of biodiversity

97. Which of the following reflects the shortcomings of ANS ?
(A) It allows substitution between different forms of capital
(B) It is not a comprehensive indicator of per capita wealth
(C) It is influenced by the level of GDP of an economy
(D) All of the above

98. Which of the following explains the decline in ANS in countries with increasing GDP per capita ?
(A) Increasing proportion of private investment in an economy
(B) Depleted assets not offset by sufficient investment in human and physical capital
(C) Increasing gross saving rates
(D) Increasing production of renewable natural capital

99. The concept of ANS should at best be used to :
(A) guide ecologically optimal sustainable scale
(B) serve as an indicator of unsustainability
(C) replace GDP as a measure of economic progress
(D) None of the above

100. Adjusted Net Saving (ANS) is :
(A) a proxy for change in per capita wealth
(B) a stock variable
(C) a flow variable
(D) unable to capture policy-induced dynamics

Answers with Hints

1. (D)
2. (B) Multicollinearity is a sample phenomenon. Thus finding any one particular method of detecting multicollinearity is difficult. Here we have listed several formal and informal methods to detect multicollinearity, although all of them are rule of thumb.
   - High R_2 but few significant t ratios.
   - High pair-wise correlations among regressors
   - Auxilliary regression
   - Studying the eigen values and condition index
   - Tolerance and variance inflation factor

   Thus Statement (d) and (e) are incorrect
3. (D) Statement (b) is incorrect
4. (A)
5. (C) Second theorem of welfare economics hold true when firms produce the goods with constant returns to scale.
6. (C) First-degree discrimination, or perfect price discrimination, occurs when a business charges the maximum possible price for each unit consumed. Many industries involving client services practice first-degree price discrimination, where a company charges a different price for every good or service sold. Statement I is correct. Third-degree price discrimination occurs when a company charges a different price to different consumer groups. Statement II is incorrect.
7. (A)
8. (D) The LM schedule (curve), or the money market equilibrium schedule, shows all combinations of interest rates and levels of income such that the demand for money is equal to its supply. Statement D is incorrect.
9. (C)
10. (A) Joan Robinson referred to the situation where $g = g_w = n$ and the unemployment gap is zero as the 'Golden Age' growth path, "thus indicating that it represents a mythical state of affairs not likely to obtain in any actual economy.
11. (B) Total revenue received by the states under the head SGST on the supply of goods and services for FY 2021-22 were ₹ 9,433 crore for Madhya Pradesh ₹ 11,329 crore for Rajasthan, 12,743 crore for Odisha, ₹ 13,443 for Delhi and ₹ 18,164 for West Bengal.

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12. (*) Components of services in Gross Value Added (GVA) are (b) Trade, Hotels, Transport, and Communication related to Broadcasting; (d) Public Administration Defence and other receipts; (e) Financial, Real Estates and Professional Services. Thus no answer is correct
13. (D)
14. (D) Consolidation of all indirect tax into one tax was not the condition of the IMF while granting the loan to India in the Financial year 1991-92.
15. (A) 16. (A)
17. (C) We know multiplier

$$K = 1/MPS.$$

Thus in present case

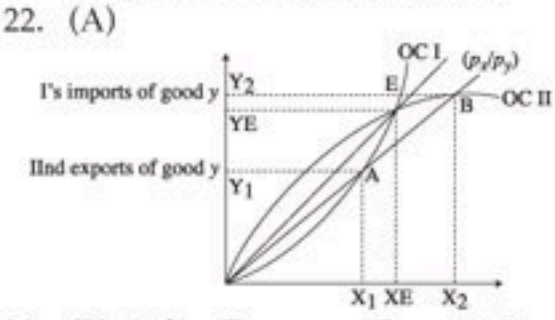
$$K = 1/0.25 = 4;$$

$$K = \frac{\Delta y}{\Delta 1} = \frac{\Delta y}{100} = 4$$

$\therefore \Delta y$ (Increase in GDP)

$$= 4 \times 100 = 400$$

18. (C)
19. (D) Creative destruction is a concept introduced by economist Joseph Schumpeter that refers to the process of innovation and technological change that leads to the destruction of existing economic structures, such as industries, firms, and jobs.
20. (D)
21. (B) Industrial Finance Corporation of India (1 July, 1948); The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (5 January, 1955); The Industrial Reconstruction Bank of India (1971); Export-Import Bank of India (1 January, 1982) NABARD (12 July, 1982)
22. (A)



23. (B) 14th Finance Commission accorded weight to various criteria in the following manners : Forest cover (7·5%), Demographic change (2011) population (10%). Area (15%), Population (1971) (17·5%), income distance (50%)
24. (C) As per SRS bulletin on Maternal Mortality 2018-20 the lifetime risk in various state is : Madhya Pradesh (0·53%), Uttar Pradesh (0·50%), Bihar (0·39%), Chhattisgarh (0·35%)
25. (D)
26. (A) The trilemma is an economic theory, which posits that countries may choose from three options when making fundamental decisions about their international monetary policy agreements. However, only one option of the trilemma is achievable at a given time, as the three options of the trilemma are mutually exclusive.
27. (D)
28. (D) Some of his most influential contributions include division of labor, gross domestic product (GDP), and the theory of the invisible hand. The division of labor as an important source of increasing returns.
29. (D) Paradox of thrift, a concept given by J.M. Keynse, states that individuals try to save more during an economic recession, which essentially leads to a fall in aggregate demand and hence in economic growth.
30. (C) 31. (*)
32. (A) Uruguay round of trade negotiations were silent on 'antidumping and safeguards to be relaxed'
33. (D) Number of married employees = 80

Number of married, who are supervisors

= 20% of 80 = 20% of 80 = 16

Therefore, required probability

= 16/140 = 0·11428 or 0·1143

34. (C) 35. (D) 36. (D)
37. (A) The Taylor Rule is an interest rate forecasting model invented by John Taylor in 1992 and outlined in his 1993 study, "Discretion Versus Policy Rules in Practice'. It suggests how central banks (Monetary Authority) should change interest rates to account for inflation and other economic conditions.
38. The LM relation is found by first equating Money Supply with Money Demand :

$$(M / P)^s = (M / P)^d$$

$$300 = 2Y - 1{\cdot}5\, i$$

39. (A) The correct sequence of steps followed in the estimation of Indirect Least Square (ILS) is : Identification of the structural equations-Obtaining reduced form equation-Application of OLS-Obtaining structural Coefficients-Use the model for policy
40. (D) Efficient provision of social goods involve vertical rather than horizontal addition of individual pseudo-demand, hence stamen (c) is incorrect
41. (D) In the extreme case of liquidity trap (a situation where interest rate are low to that extent that investors prefer to keep the cash with them instead of investing it) most of the investors will show bearish behaviour
42. (C)
43. (D) Sufficient estimator is not always consistent.
44. (D)
45. (C) In order to give a market-orientation to banking, the Narasimham Committee-I recommended that there shall be no more nationalisation of any commercial bank and even allowed public sector banks to raise 49% of their equity in the capital market along with advocating the setting up of private sector banks. Side-by-side, it was suggested that there shall be no more expansion of any bank branch in hitherto backward areas if it was found to be commercially non-viable. Likewise, the Narasimham Committee-I professed that in order to enhance profitability of commercial banks in India, the statutory pre-emption of public funds through Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) and Statutory Cash Reserve Requirement (CRR) shall be cut down and interest rates shall be deregulated.
46. (D) As per NITI Aayog's estimates incidence of poverty in rural areas in 2011-12 was 38·80% in Manipur, 34·06% in Bihar, 9·85% in Sikkim, 30·40% in Uttar Pradesh, 19·93% in Nagaland.
47. (B) Correct chronology of publication is A Treatise on Probability (1921) A tract on Mone-

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tary Reform (1923), - The End of Laissez Fair" (1926) - Essays in Persuasion (1931), - A General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936)

48. (B) Ramsey Rule applies to taxation only on goods.
49. (B)
50. (A) The monetary base of an economy includes all of the physical paper and coin currency in circulation, plus bank reserves held by the central bank. The monetary base is sometimes referred to as high-powered money as it can be expanded through the money multiplier effect of the fractional reserve banking system.
51. (C) Literacy rate in 2011 was 87·2% in Tripura, 81·4% in Sikkim, 79·6% in Nagaland, 79·2% in Manipur, and 74·4% in Meghalay.
52. (B) 53. (A) 54. (B)
55. (C) Properties of the Expenditure Function). If u(x) is continuous and locally non-satiated on RL + and p » 0, then e(p, u) is Homogeneous of degree 1 in p. (Statement a) Strictly increasing in u and non-decreasing in p for any good (Statement b). (C) Continuous in p and u (Statement c) Concave in p expenditure are functions.
56. (D) 57. (C)
58. (C) The tax incidence depends on the relative price elasticity of supply and demand. When supply is more elastic than demand, buyers bear most of the tax burden. When demand is more elastic than supply, producers bear most of the cost of the tax.
59. (D) 60. (C)
61. (D) Plugging in the values, we get:

PV (Present Value)

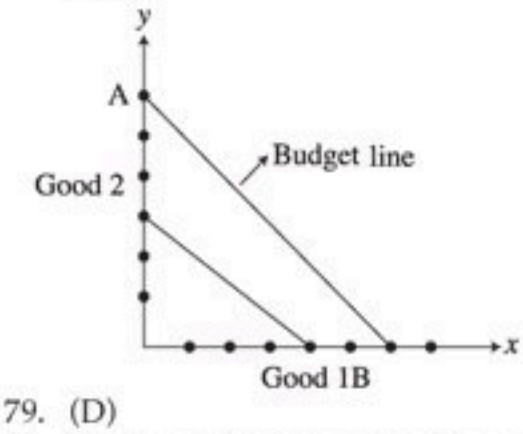
$$= \frac{40}{(1+10\%)^{10}}$$

$$= \frac{40}{(1{\cdot}1)^{10}} = \frac{40}{2{\cdot}59374}$$

$$= 15{\cdot}421$$

Since the scarce resource will be exhausted in 10 years, its price today must be equal to the present value of the alternative resource, which is $ 15·42.

62. (A) 63. (B) 64. (C)
65. (D) A defensive expenditure occurs when we spend money on something that does not increase our welfare, or is necessary to avoid a decrease in well-being. For example, spending money on health insurance does not necessarily make us better off, but it does help protect us from future costs that would negatively affect our well-being.
66. (D) Vertical integration is not a characteristic of market structure. Vertical integration is the business arrangement in which a company controls different stages along the supply chain. Instead of relying on external suppliers, the company strives to bring processes in-house to have better control over the production process.
67. (A)
68. (D) Increase in financial literacy and better banking habits will encourage more and more people to transact through banking modes. It will result in increase of broad money.
69. (A) 70. (D)
71. (A) m=1/1-MPC or m=1/MPS; If MPS is lower, higher will be the multiplier effect.
72. (B) Correct chronological order of the events of equity trading in India is : FIIs were permitted to invest in Indian securities market. The SEBI banned Badla trading on the BSE-NSE commenced operations in wholesale debt market segment. The NSE overtook the BSE as the largest stock exchange in terms of volume trading.
73. (A)
74. (D) The terms of trade of a nation are defined as the ratio of the price of its exports to the price of its imports. Since in a two-nation world, the exports of a nation are the imports of its trade partner, the terms of trade of the latter are equal to the inverse, or reciprocal, of the terms of trade of the former.
75. (B) 76. (A)
77. (A) Motto of G-20; 18th meeting is " One earth, One Family, One Future" वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्
78. (B) The vertical intercept (x_2 axis) decreases and the horizontal intercept (x_1 axis) stays the same. Thus, the budget line becomes flatter.



79. (D)
80. (*) No such Act as the 'Foreign Regulation Act' was ever enacted so none of the answer is correct.
81. (C) Ambient standards, which set limits on allowable pollution concentrations in receiving environments.
82. (C) 83. (B)
84. (D) Human Development Index is a composite measure of Long and healthy life as measured but expectancy of life; Knowledge as measured by expected years of schooling and mean year of study; Standard of living as measured by GNI per capita.
85. (C) 86. (B)
87. (A) IADP was launched from Kharif 1960. The programme was popularly known as 'PACKAGE PROGRAMME' because of the collective and simultaneous application of all improved practices : namely improved seeds. irrigation, fertilizer. plant protection, implements, storage facilities, marketing facilities and credit etc. Initially 7 districts were covered under this programme namely : (I) Thanjavur (TN). (2) West Godavari (AP). (3) Sahabad (Bihar), (4) Raipur (MP), (5) Aligarh (UP), (6) Ludhiana (Punjab). (7) Pali (Rajasthan). During Kharif of 19W, additional 9 districts covered were (I) Alleppy (Kerala), (2) Palghat (Kerala), (3) Mandya (Karnataka), (4) Surat (Gujarat), (5) Sambalpur (Odisha), (6) Burdavan (W.B.), (7) Cachar (Assam), (8) Bhandara (Maharashtra), (9) Six blocks in (J&K).
88. (C) 89. (D) 90. (A) 91. (B) 92. (D)
93. (D) 94. (C) 95. (A) 96. (D) 97. (D)
98. (B) 99. (B) 100. (C)

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Solved Model Paper

FORTHCOMING CHHATTISGARH P.C.S. (Pre.) EXAMINAITON

General Studies-I

1. Which of the following countries does not shares border with Israel ?
   1. Egypt 2. Jordan
   3. Syria 4. Iran
   5. Yaman 6. Lebanon

   Choose correct answer following codes given :
   (A) Only 1 and 6
   (B) Only 2 and 4
   (C) Only 3 and 4
   (D) Only 4 and 5

2. Consider the following statement about Project Udbhav :
   1. Project Udbhav was officially launched by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh.
   2. This project is a joint initiative between the Indian Army and the United Services Institution of India.
   3. It aims to integrate the Indian Army with historical military knowledge while embracing contemporary warfare and diplomacy.

   Which of the above sentence(s) is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1 and 2
   (B) Only 2 and 3
   (C) All 1, 2 and 3
   (D) None of the above

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Lok Sabha :
   1. The Deputy Speaker is appointed by the elected members of the Lok Sabha.
   2. All the union territories have one seat reserved in the Lok Sabha.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Match the following passes to their states :

   Pass

   (a) Zoji La (b) Lipulekh
   (c) Shipk Ila (d) Nathu La

   States

   1. Jammu & Kashmir
   2. Uttarakhand
   3. Himachal Pradesh
   4. Sikkim

   Select the correct answer using the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	1	3	2	4
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	4	2	3	1

5. Consider the following statements regarding Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) :
   1. It is a statutory body established under the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
   2. It promotes fair business practices and works towards restricting fraudulent activities related to securities trading.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

6. Which of the following pair is not matched correctly ?
   (A) Meerut—Kadam Singh
   (B) Delhi—Bahadur Shah II
   (C) Allahabad—Rao Tularam
   (D) Bareilly—Khan Bahadur Khan

7. Consider the following statements about 19th Asian Games :
   1. The 19th Asian Games were held in Hangzhou, China in 2023.
   2. In this games, China has won 201 Gold medal and secure first position.
   3. India won 107 medals and creates a history in Asian games.

   Which of the above statements are correct ?
   (A) Only 1 and 2
   (B) Only 2 and 3
   (C) Only 1 and 3
   (D) All 1, 2 and 3

8. Match the following :

   Institution

   (a) Depressed Classes Mission Society
   (b) Bahujan Samaj, 1910
   (c) Bahishkrit Hitkari Sabha
   (d) Harijan Sevak Samaj

   Founders

   1. Vitthal Ramji Shinde
   2. Mukund Rao Patil
   3. B. R. Ambedkar
   4. Mahatma Gandhi

   Choose correct answer following codes given :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	2	3	1	4
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	1	4	2	3

9. Consider the following statements :
   1. Vembanad Lake in Kerala, the largest salt water lake in India.
   2. Lonar Lake in Maharashtra notified National Geo-Heritage Monument.
   3. Wular Lake in Kashmir formed as a result of tectonic activity.

   Select the correct answer using the code given below :
   (A) Only 1 and 2
   (B) Only 2 and 3
   (C) Only 2
   (D) All 1, 2 and 3

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10. Which one of the following countries is not a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, also known as 'QUAD ?
(A) India (B) China
(C) Australia (D) Japan

11. Which of the following is the correct chronology of Revolt in India ?
(A) Ho Vidroh-Santhal Vidroh-Mopla Vidroh
(B) Ho Vidroh-Mopla Vidroh-Santhal Vidroh
(C) Santhal Vidroh-Ho Vidroh-Mopla Vidroh
(D) Mopla Vidroh-Ho Vidroh-Santhal Vidroh

12. 'Liquid funds' are a safe option for investors from the point of view of volatility and the risk of losing capital. Which of the following statements is/is correct regarding liquid funds ?
1. Liquid funds are money market instruments.
2. Liquid funds are equity funds.
3. Liquid funds are regulated by SEBI.
Select the correct code from the options given below :
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2, and 3

13. With reference to the 'Snow Leopard', consider the following statements :
1. It is listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
2. It is found in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand only.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

14. Which of the following statements is/are correct about absolute poverty ?
1. It is a situation where household income is below the level required to maintain basic living standards.
2. This situation makes it possible to make comparisons between different countries and over time.
Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

15. Choose the incorrect option from the statements given below :
(A) Prayagraj situated at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and invisible Saraswati
(B) Panji is situated on the banks of Mandavi river
(C) Ujjain is situated on the banks of Kshipra river
(D) Jamshedpur is situated on the banks of Ganga river

16. Consider the distribution of water on earth :
1. Ice caps hold more water than salt lakes and atmosphere combined.
2. Groundwater is a richer source of water than both fresh water lakes and inland seas.
3. Rivers hold more water than lakes.
Select the correct answer using the codes below :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1
(D) Only 1 and 3

17. With reference to the 'Curative Petition', consider the following statements :
1. A curative petition may be filed after a review plea against the final conviction is dismissed.
2. It is usually decided by judges in chambers, unless a specific request for an open-court hearing is allowed.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

18. Consider the following statements about United Nations Environment Assembly :
1. The United Nations Environment Assembly was created in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
2. The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
3. The Assembly meets annually to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) Only 2 and 3

19. Which of the following are included in the Directive Principles of State Policy ?
1. Prohibition of human trafficking and forced labour.
2. Provision of just and human conditions of work and maternity relief.
3. Equal justice and free legal aid.
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

20. In which of the following countries the system of judicial review is present ?
(A) Only India
(B) Only USA
(C) Only UK
(D) Both in India and USA

21. Consider the following statements regarding Cess :
1. It is a permanent source of revenue collected by the government for the development or welfare of a particular service or area.
2. It is collected in addition to both direct and indirect taxes.
3. Cess collected for a particular purpose cannot be diverted or used for other purposes.

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Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

22. Ecological succession is generally demonstrated by ?
1. Increase productivity
2. Lack of niche development
3. Increasing complexity of food web

Select the correct answer code :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

23. The Indian Constitution mandates that the Indian State be secular. The objective behind such a mandate is :
1. To ensure one religious community does not dominate another.
2. To ensure that State does not enforce any particular religion.
3. To ensure that State does not take away the religious freedom of individuals.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

24. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect about Quit India Movement ?
1. On 8 August, 1942, exactly seventeen years after the Kakori incident, on the call of Gandhi Ji, it started simultaneously in the country.
2. During this movement, Gandhi Ji called for 'do or die' in his speech at Gwalia Tank Ground.
3. During this movement, Gandhi Ji and Jawaharlal Nehru was imprisoned in the Aaga Khan Palace in Pune.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 3

25. Consider the following statements with reference to the Mughal Mansabdari system :
1. He was paid by the Diwan office.
2. 'Jaat' and 'Sawaar' positions were given.
3. Mansabdars were hereditary officers.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

26. In which of the following countries is the highest percentage of its geographical area covered with forests ?
(A) Japan (B) Indonesia
(C) China (D) India

27. Match the following given below :

Mahajanapada

(a) Gandhara (b) Shurasena
(c) Vatsa (d) Kosal

Capital

1. Mathura
2. Kosambi
3. Shravasti
4. Takshashila

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	4	3
(B)	4	3	2	1
(C)	4	1	2	3
(D)	1	4	2	3

28. Among the following states, Bhakra-Nangal is a joint project-
1. Rajasthan
2. Haryana
3. Jammu Kashmir
4. Punjab
5. Himachal Pradesh
6. Madhya Pradesh

Choose correct answer following codes given :
(A) Only 1, 4 and 6
(B) Only 2, 5 and 6
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) Only 1, 2 and 4

29. Which of the following is not correctly matched ?
1. The functions of Public Service Commissions—Article 317
2. Dismissal of members of Public Service Commissions—Article 320
3. Provision of Public Service Commission for Union and States—Article 315
4. Appointment and tenure of members of UPPSC—Article 312

Choose correct answer following codes given :
(A) Only 1 and 3
(B) Only 2 and 4
(C) Only 1, 3 and 4
(D) Only 1, 2 and 4

30. Which of the following port is not correctly matched with their country ?
(A) Rotterdam—Netherlands
(B) Igarka—China
(C) Montecidio—Uruguay
(D) Jakarta—Indonesia

31. Which of the following is/are correctly matched ?
1. 2 December - World Computer Literacy Day
2. 4 December - Indian Airforce Day
3. 5 December - World Soil Day
4. 9 December - International Human Rights Day

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2 and 3
(B) Only 1 and 4
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) Only 2 and 4

32. With reference to 'Biomes', consider the following statements :
1. Biomes are defined by genetic, taxonomic, or historical similarities.
2. Biomes are contiguous areas on Earth with similar climatic conditions.

Which of the statements given above is correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

33. Which of the following is not correctly matched ?

Sufi Silsila	**Founder- in India**
(A) Suhrawardi	—Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria

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(B) Firdausi
—Badruddin Samarkandi
(C) Qadiri
—Sheikh Abdul Qadir and his sons
(D) Naqshbandi
—Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2 and 3
(B) Only 1 and 4
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 4

34. Which of the following phenomena is reportedly linked to global warming ?
(A) Southern Oscillation
(B) La Nina
(C) El Nino
(D) None of the above

35. Match the following given below :

List-I
(a) Araneology
(b) Dermatology
(c) Lapideteriology
(d) Gerontology

List-II
1. Deals with spiders
2. Dealing with the skin
3. Study of butterflies
4. Study of old age

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	4	2	3
(B)	4	3	1	2
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	3	4	1	2

36. Which of the following is/are a constitutional institution in India ?
1. NITI Ayog
2. National Commission for Backward Classes
3. National Human Rights Commission

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

37. The Red Sea is one of the saltiest water bodies in the world. This is due to :
1. High evaporation and low rainfall.
2. Less discharge from fresh water bodies.
3. Limited connections with other open oceans with low salinity, such as the Indian Ocean.

How many of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

38. Which of the following statements is not correct ?
(A) Best Actor Award won by Allu Arjun for the Pushpa movie in 69th National Film Awards
(B) The first President's Gold Medal for Best Film at the National Film Festival was given to the Marathi film Shyamchi Aayi in 1954
(C) Pankaj Kapoor has won the Best Supporting Actor award for the film 'Mimi' in 69th National Film Awards
(D) The National Film Awards is organized by the Directorate of Film Festivals under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

39. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Gaganyaan Mission' :
1. It is India's first human space mission.
2. If it succeeds, India will become only the 4th country to send a human into space after the Soviet Union, the US, and China.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

40. Which of the following is/are correct statements regarding the French East India Company ?
1. It was a private company.
2. It was chartered by King Louis XIV.
3. It was abolished soon after the French Revolution.

Choose the correct option from the codes given ahead :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 2
(D) Only 1 and 3

41. Which of the following statements is incorrect ?
(A) Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana started in 1 May, 2017
(B) Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana was started in April 2015
(C) Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana launched in 9 May, 2015
(D) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana launched 28 August, 2014

42. Which of the following is not correct about the cell ?
1. The shape and size of cells are related to specific functions.
2. Some cells have changing shapes.
3. Each cell has its own ability to perform.
4. Same type of cells is present in all body tissues.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 4
(D) Only 1 and 4

43. Consider the following statements :
1. Phytoremediation is use of plants to remove contaminants from soil and water.
2. All contaminants are easily treated by bioremediation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

44. Which was not included in the three iron-steel plants established in the Second Five Year Plan ?
1. Durgapur 2. Bokaro
3. Bhilai 4. Rourkela

Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 2, 4

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45. By which of the following names is the coastal plain between Chilka and Kolleru Lake known ?
(A) Utkal plain
(B) Konkan plains
(C) Andhra Plain
(D) None of the above

46. Consider the following statements regarding distribution of minerals in India :
1. Most of the metallic minerals in India occur in the peninsular plateau region in the old crystalline rocks.
2. Over 95 per cent of coal reserves occur in the valleys of Damodar, Sone, Mahanadi and Godavari.
3. Most of the major mineral resources occur to the west of a line linking Mangaluru and Kanpur.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

47. Consider the following statements regarding algae :
1. It is a complete protein with essential amino acids.
2. Used as fertilizers and soil conditioners.
3. Used in Wastewater Treatment.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

48. What is the land form formed by the deposition of large amounts of sand blown by the wind from desert areas, named after a village located in the Alsace province of France ?
(A) Loes (B) Salinas
(C) Bajada (D) Playa

49. Consider the following statements :
1. After the death of Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore worked to revive and reorganize the Brahmo Samaj.
2. Devendra Nath Tagore established the Adi Brahmo Samaj for this purpose.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

50. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect about G20 Group ?
1. The G20 group of 19 countries and the EU was established in 26 September, 1999.
2. The G20 does not have a permanent headquarters. G20 operates through a rotating presidency system.
3. UK will hold the Presidency of the G20 from 1 December, 2023 to 30 November, 2024.
4. Under the Indian Presidency, the G20 in 2023 will focus on the theme, 'One Earth, One Family and One Future'.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 3
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) All 1, 2, 3 and 4

51. Recently Vishnu Dev Sai has become the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh state, from which assembly seat is he an MLA ?
(A) Prem Nagar
(B) Baikunthpur
(C) Kunkuri
(D) Raipur Rural

52. Which district of Chhattisgarh state has got the third position in the country in the Delta ranking released by NITI Aayog in July 2023 for the field of agriculture and water resources under aspirational districts ?
(A) Narayanpur
(B) Surajpur
(C) Sukma
(D) Rajnandgaon

53. Which of the following districts do not come in Bastar division of Chhattisgarh state?
1. Kanker 2. Dantewada
3. Korba 4. Narayanpur
5. Bijapur 6. Balod

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2 and 6
(B) Only 1 and 4
(C) Only 3 and 6
(D) Only 3 and 5

54. Which is not correctly matched in the context of Chhattisgarh state ?
1. First Election Commissioner —Shri Ajay Kumar Singh
2. First State Human Rights Commission Chairman —Shri Banwarilal Aggarwal
(a) First Assembly Speaker —Shri Rajendra Prasad
(b) First Deputy Speaker of the Assembly —Shri K. M. Aggarwal

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2 and 3
(B) Only 1 and 4
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) Only 2 and 4

55. Who is known as the founder of Satnam sect in Chhattisgarh ?
(A) Ramgopal Tiwari
(B) Guru Ghasidas
(C) Madhavrao Sapre
(D) Chudamani Saheb

56. Which of the following is/are not correctly matched regarding the state of Chhattisgarh ?
1. State Bird—Stork
2. State Animal—Forest Buffalo
3. State Tree—Banyan
4. State flower—Marigold

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 4
(B) Only 2 and 4
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 3

57. Which of the following is/are not included in the folk dance of Chhattisgarh state ?
1. Panthi Dance
2. Pandawani Dance
3. Kathak Dance
4. Kaksar Dance
5. Satriya Dance
6. Shaila Dance
(A) Only 1 and 3
(B) Only 2 and 6
(C) Only 2 and 4
(D) Only 3 and 5

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58. On June 2023, a team of scientists from Chhattisgarh has identified 10 new rare plant species in the state. Which of the following plant species/species is/are included in it ?
1. Cosmostigma racemosum
2. Solanum erinthium
3. Gamphostemma parviflorum
4. Dinebra polystachyos

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1, 3 and 4
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All of the above

59. What is the meaning of this Chhattisgarhi proverb 'Mahi mange jaaye au thekwa la lukay' ?
(A) Thinking bad about someone
(B) Not worrying about the result
(C) Something is better than nothing
(D) To hesitate

60. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the recently held Chhattisgarh state assembly elections ?
1. Bharatiya Janata Party has emerged as the largest party in this assembly elections.
2. Bharatiya Janata Party has got 30 more seats this time as compared to the last assembly elections 2018.
3. Indian National Congress has lost 33 seats this time compared to the last assembly elections 2018.

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1 and 2
(D) Only 1 and 3

61. Match the following assembly constituencies of Chhattisgarh state with their districts :

Constituency	District
(a) Baikunthpur	1. Korea
(b) Ambikapur	2. Surguja
(c) Kunkuri	3. Jashpur
(d) Kurud	4. Dhamtari

Select the correct answer from the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	1	2	3	4
(C)	1	2	4	3
(D)	4	2	3	1

62. Which of the following national parks is/are not situated in Chhattisgarh ?
1. Indravati National Park
2. Guru Ghasidas National Park
3. Betla National Park
4. Kanger Valley National Park

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 3 and 4
(B) Only 3
(C) Only 4
(D) Only 1 and 4

63. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect ?
1. Babu Brij Bihari Prasad started Individual Satyagraha on 27 November, 1940 in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
2. On 8 August, 1941, volunteers from Chhattisgarh who participated in the Individual Satyagraha were arrested near Lalitpur.
3. Jwala Prasad Mishra and Yadunandan Prasad Srivastava were among these volunteers.

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

64. Which of the following is not matched regarding the state of Chhattisgarh ?
1. Capital of Knowledge – Bhilai (Durg)
2. City of Ponds-Ratanpur (Bilaspur)
3. City of Temples - Ludeng (Jashpur)
4. City of Crossroads – Jagdalpur (Dantewada)

Select the correct answer from the code given ahead :
(A) Only 4
(B) Only 2 and 4
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 4

65. What is the meaning of this Chhattisgarhi proverb 'Dusar ke aankhi me neend nai avay' ?
(A) Not being satisfied with the work of others
(B) Not worrying about the result
(C) Something is better than nothing
(D) Ignoring rumors

66. On October 3, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of several development projects worth about ₹ 27,000 crore in Jagdalpur in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh. Which of the following project/projects was inaugurated under this ?
1. Inauguration of over ₹ 23,800 crore steel plant of NMDC Steel Limited at Nagarnar in Bastar district.
2. The Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation a road upgradation project from 'Kunkuri to Chhattisgarh-Jharkhand border section' of National Highway-43.
3. Prime Minister dedicated to the nation a new rail line between Antagarh and Taroki and a rail line doubling project between Jagdalpur and Dantewada.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) All 1, 2 and 3
(C) Only 3 and 1
(D) Only 2 and 3

67. Which is the first division formed after the formation of Chhattisgarh state ?
(A) Bastar (B) Durg
(C) Bilaspur (D) Surguja

68. Which honour is given in the field of social consciousness and Dalit upliftment in Chhattisgarh ?
(A) Yeti Yatanlal Samman
(B) Minimata Samman
(C) Guru Ghasidas Samman
(D) Maharaja Agrasen Samman

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69. Match the following regarding Chhattisgarh state :

Hills/Peak

(a) Palmagarh (b) Lafagarh
(c) Devgarh (d) Gourlata

Area

1. Bilaspur 2. Korba
3. Korea 4. Balrampur

Select the correct answer from the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	4	2	3	1
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	1	3	2	4

70. Which is the district with minimum male population according to Census 2011 ?
(A) Raipur
(B) Narayanpur
(C) Kondagaon
(D) Kabirdham

71. When was Chhattisgarh State Mineral Development Corporation established ?
(A) 2001 (B) 2003
(C) 2004 (D) 2008

72. Which of the following is not correctly matched with reference to the state of Chhattisgarh ?
1. Greater Wildlife Sanctuary - Tamorpingala
2. Smallest Wildlife Sanctuary - Bhoramdev
3. The oldest wildlife sanctuary - Sitanadi
4. Newest Wildlife Sanctuary - Badalkhol

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 4
(B) Only 2 and 4
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 4

73. Which of the names of various buildings of Chhattisgarh Government is/are not correctly matched ?
1. Mahanadi Bhawan - Ministry and Secretariat Building
2. Indravati Bhawan – Directorate Building
3. Minimata Bhawan – Assembly House
4. Karuna–Rest house of MLAs

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 4
(D) Only 1 and 4

74. Match the following :

Books

(a) Ram's exile
(b) Chhattisgarh Introduction
(c) Iron City
(d) Khairagarh : Current of Memories

Author

1. Shyam Lal Chaturvedi
2. Hari Thakur
3. Baldev Prasad Mishra
4. Balkrishna Gupta

Select the correct answer from the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	4	2	3	1
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	1	3	2	4

75. In which district of Chhattisgarh state is the Chilfighati iron ore field located ?
(A) Mahasamund
(B) Gariaband
(C) Kawardha
(D) Balodabazar

76. How many districts and divisions are there in the present Chhattisgarh state ?
(A) 32 districts, 5 divisions
(B) 33 districts, 5 divisions
(C) 34 districts, 5 divisions
(D) 33 districts, 6 divisions

77. How much revenue expenditure is proposed in Chhattisgarh State Budget 2023-24 ?
(A) ₹ 1,02,501 crore
(B) ₹ 92,426 crore
(C) ₹ 1,32,742 crore
(D) None of the above

78. Match the following with reference to Chhattisgarh state :

Area

(a) Ekalama (b) Kukardih
(c) Kansabel (d) Dhangol

Minerals

1. Iron Ore 2. Limestone
3. Gold 4. Corundum

Select the correct answer from the code given ahead :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	4	2	3	1
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	1	3	2	4

79. Which of the following is not matched ?
1. Cherrapunji of Chhattisgarh —Abujhmad (Narayanpur)
2. Kashmir of Chhattisgarh —Chaiturgarh (Korba)
3. Chittor of Chhattisgarh —Lafagarh (Korba)
4. Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh —Tapkara (Jashpur)
5. Prayag of Chhattisgarh —Bhoramdev (Kabirdham)

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 4 and 5
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 4

80. Which of the following is/are correctly matched with reference to the state of Chhattisgarh?
1. The oldest division—Raipur
2. Largest division in terms of population—Surguja
3. Smallest division in terms of population—Bastar
4. Newest Division—Durg

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 2
(B) Only 3 and 4
(C) Only 3
(D) Only 1 and 4

81. Which of the following districts of Chhattisgarh share border with Maharashtra state ?
1. Rajnandgaon
2. Mahasamund
3. Kanker
4. Kondagaon
5. Bijapur
6. Narayanpur

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) 1, 2, 3, 4 (B) 2, 4, 5, 6
(C) 1, 3, 5, 6 (D) 3, 4, 5, 6

82. Match the following words related to agriculture in Chhattisgarhi language :

Chhattisgarhi Word

(a) Bhataana (b) Kharahi
(c) Pallo/Apasi (d) Garapasi

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Meaning in Common Language

1. Harvesting and gathering crop
2. Irrigated land
3. Drying of seeds lying in the field
4. Unirrigated land

Select the correct answer from the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	2	1	4
(C)	3	1	2	4
(D)	4	3	2	1

83. Arrow is the symbol of which tribe in Chhattisgarh state ?
(A) Baiga (B) Pardhi
(C) Bhunjia (D) Binjhwar

84. Consider the following statements regarding the state of Chhattisgarh as per 2011 census :
1. The density of population in Chhattisgarh is 289 persons per square kilometer.
2. The rural population of the state is approximately 19603568.
3. Sex ratio of Chhattisgarh state is 991.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 3 and 1
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

85. On which occasion is Sua song sung ?
(A) On the occasion of Diwali
(B) At the time of birth
(C) At the time of Navratri
(D) At the time of marriage

86. In the context of Chhattisgarh state, match the following tribes with their main districts of residence :

Tribal

(a) Rajgond (b) Kondh
(c) Khadiya (d) Munda

District

1. Kondagaon
2. Mahasamund
3. Jashpur
4. Surguja

Select the correct answer from the code given ahead :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	2	1	4
(C)	3	1	2	4
(D)	4	3	2	1

87. Match the following districts with their divisions :

District

(a) Sukma
(b) Surajpur
(c) Kabirdham
(d) Mungeli

Division

1. Durg 2. Surguja
3. Bastar 4. Bilaspur

Select the correct answer from the code given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	2	1	4
(C)	3	1	2	4
(D)	3	2	4	1

88. To promote forest cover in the coal belt region of Chhattisgarh, which method will South Eastern Coal Fields Limited use for plantation in its operational areas ?
(A) Miyawaki method
(B) Hanseom method
(C) Garrison method
(D) None of the above

89. Which village has been awarded the Best Tourism Village award in the Silver category at the national level by the Union Ministry of Tourism on the occasion of World Tourism Day?
(A) Gahmar
(B) Sarodha-Dadar
(C) Kodiya
(D) None of the above

90. Consider the following statements about Chhattisgarh Governor Vishwabhushan Harichandan :
1. He took oath as the ninth Governor of Chhattisgarh on 23 February, 2023 at Raj Bhavan in the capital Raipur.
2. Before being appointed as the Governor of Chhattisgarh, Harichandan has served as the Governor of the neighbouring state of Jharkhand.
3. At that time, Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Arup Kumar Goswami had administered the oath of office and secrecy to Harichandan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) All 1, 2 and 3
(C) Only 3 and 1
(D) Only 2 and 3

91. Consider the following statements in the context of Chhattisgarh state budget 2023-24 :
1. Chhattisgarh has allocated 6·5% of its total expenditure for health.
2. Chhattisgarh has allocated 19·4% of its expenditure on education in 2023-24.
3. Chhattisgarh has allocated 3·6% of its expenditure for urban development.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 3 and 1
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

92. Recently who become the speaker of Chhattisgarh Assembly ?
(A) Raman Singh
(B) Ramvichar Netam
(C) Sundar Lal
(D) None of the above

93. In which year was Bastar Area Tribal Development Authority formed by the state government ?
(A) 2018 (B) 2013
(C) 2019 (D) 2021

94. Where was the first sugarcane based ethanol plant of Chhattisgarh state inaugurated recently ?
(A) Raipur (B) Kabirdham
(C) Bijapur (D) Jashpur

95. Who discovered the Kutumsar caves ?
(A) Ramshankar Tiwari
(B) Shankaranand Tiwari
(C) Shankar Tiwari
(D) Seva Shankar Tiwari

96. The following were the capitals of the ancient Sharabhpuriy dynasty of Chhattisgarh :
1. Pravarpur
2. Sharabhpur
3. Sirpur
4. Prasannapur

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Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 1, 3 and 4
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 2, 3 and 4
(D) Only 1 and 2

97. Who is the current Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court ?
(A) Justice A.K. Patnaik
(B) Justice W.A. Shishak
(C) Justice Deepak Gupta
(D) Justice Ramesh Sinha

98. In which district of Chhattisgarh is 'Kelo Irrigation Project' located ?
(A) Sukma (B) Balod
(C) Raigarh (D) Kanker

99. Which pair is not correct matched ?
1. Amritdhara Waterfall —Korea
2. Satdhara Waterfall —Mungeli
3. Ranidarah Waterfall —Sukma
4. Chitrakoot Waterfall —Bastar

Select the correct answer from the code given below :
(A) Only 4
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 2 and 4
(D) Only 1 and 3

100. Himangi Haldhar, a student of which district of Chhattisgarh, has received the National Inspire Award in the 10th National Inspire Standards comeptition on October, 2023 ?
(A) Raipur
(B) Bilaspur
(C) Balrampur
(D) None of the above

Answers with Hints

1. (D) Israel shares borders with four neighbouring countries, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Jerusalem is capital of Israel.
2. (C)
3. (A) The maximum strength of the Lok Sabha is 550. Of these, 530 are reserved for the states, and a maximum of 20 seats are reserved for the union territories. In both cases, seats are reserved according to population. Article 93 of the Constitution provides for the election of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. They are the Presiding Officers of the Lower House.
4. (C)
5. (C) SEBI was established as a statutory body in the year 1992 under the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
6. (C) Maulvi Liaquat Ali led the revolt in Allahabad in 1857. Rao Tula Ram in Ahirwal, Gaffur Ali and Harsukh Rai in Palwal, Dhanu Singh in Faridabad, Nahar Singh in Ballabhgarh led the revolt of 1857 in Haryana.
7. (D) The 19th Asian Games-2022 was held at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center Stadium, known as Big Lotus, in China. Indian players won the maximum in athletics, a total of 29 medals including 6 Gold, 14 Silver and 9 Bronze.
8. (A)
9. (B) Vembanad Lake is the longest lake of India. Lonar Lake is a notified National Geo-Heritage monument. Wular Lake was formed as a result of tectonic activity.
10. (B) The idea of the QUAD group was first presented by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. It is an informal strategic forum that includes India, Japan, Australia, and the United States. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) is an informal strategic forum between the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. The grouping is maintained by semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military exercises between member states.
11. (A) In 1820, Ho Vidroh was against King Jagannath Singh of Singhbhum who was a supporter of the British rule. Santhal Vidroh was against the East India Company (EIC) and zamindari system by the Santhal in 1855. Mopla Vidroh started as a resistance against the British colonial rule in certains places of old Malabar district in 1921.
12. (A) Liquid funds are debt funds. And it is regulated by the RBI and not by SEBI. Liquid funds are open-ended schemes that invest only in debt and money market instruments with a maximum maturity of up to 91 days. Therefore, the average maturity of liquid funds is equal to or less than 91 days. This strategy helps in mitigating the risk arising from interest rate volatility, providing high liquidity to the portfolio, and generating stable income.
13. (A) Habitat destruction, invasive species, climate change and pollution are having an unprecedented impact on the snow leopard worldwide. A recent estimation was conducted in Himachal Pradesh, as part of the Snow Leopard Population Assessment. It is listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. It is found in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, besides Himachal Pradesh.
14. (C) Absolute poverty includes low income and inability to obtain basic goods and services needed to survive with dignity *i.e.*, absolute poverty is a situation where household income is not enough to maintain basic living standards (food, shelter, housing) is below the required level. This situation makes it possible to make comparisons between different countries and over time. Relative poverty is a situation where household income is a certain percentage below the average income. Relative poverty is useful to show the percentage of the population that is relatively deprived.
15. (D) Jamshedpur is situated on the banks of Subarnarekha river. Subarnarekha is one of the longest east flowing inter-state rivers. It originates near Nagri village in Ranchi district of Jharkhand.
16. (A)

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17. (C)
18. (C) The United Nations Environment Assembly was created in June 2012, when world leaders called for UN Environment to be strengthened and upgraded during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20.
19. (C) Under Article 23(1) of the Indian Constitution, Prohibition of human trafficking and forced labour is a fundamental right.
20. (D) Judicial review in India is a process by which the Supreme Court and the High Courts of India examine, determine and invalidate the Executive or Legislative actions inconsistent with the Constitution of India. In Indian Constitution, concept of judicial review has been borrowed from the Constitution of the USA.
21. (C)
22. (B) Ecological succession is a process by which the structure of a biological community evolves over time. The community begins with a relatively few pioneer plants and animals and evolves through increasing complexity until it becomes stable or self-perpetuating as a peak community. The sequences are classified as two - primary and secondary.
23. (D) According to the Indian Constitution, only a secular state can realize its objectives of ensuring :
    - One religious community does not dominate another.
    - Some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community.
    - The state does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the religious freedom of individuals.

    For this, first of all, India uses the strategy of distancing itself from religion. The Indian state is not ruled by any religious group nor does it support any one religion.
24. (C)
25. (A) Mansabdari system was an administrative system prevalent in the Mughal period. 'Mansab' is basically an Arabic word meaning 'post' or 'rank'. Mansab-dari was an administrative system implemented by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1571. In Mansabdari the posts 'Jat' and 'Sawar' were given. The power of recruitment and promotion of Mansabdars was in the hands of the Mughal Emperor. Mansabdars were not recruited on genetic basis. Generally, recruitment of Mansabdars was also done on the basis of suggestions of 'Mir Bakshi'.
26. (A) In Japan, about 65% of its geographical area is covered by forests. Japanese vegetation is very abundant and diverse – more than 6,000 species of higher plants were identified due to the diversity of climatic conditions and geographical features. Whereas 24·56% of India's land area is covered with forests and trees.
27. (C)
28. (D) Bhakra Nangal project named after the two dams built at Bhakra and Nangal on the Sutlej River. It is a joint venture of the Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
29. (D) Appointment and tenure of members of UPPSC - Article 316. Dismissal of members of Public Service Commissions - Article 317. The functions of Public Service Commissions - Article 320.
30. (B) The seaport of Igarka is located on the shore of the Igarskaya creek of the Yenisey River in Russia. The port was established to export timber and timber products through the Northern Sea Route.
31. (C)
32. (B) Unlike ecozones, biomes are not defined by genetic, taxonomic, or historical similarities. Biomes are often identified by particular patterns of ecological succession and climax vegetation (a quasi-equilibrium state of the local ecosystem).
33. (D) Naqshbandi Silsila was founded in India by Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi. Later propagated by his successors Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Sheikh Baqi Billah.
34. (C) El Nino is an irregular, periodic variation in winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists have found a link between El Nino and global warming because El Nino events cause short-term increases in global average surface temperatures.
35. (C)
36. (B) NITI Ayog and National human rights commission is a non-constitutional body. It established in 1993. NITI Ayog formed in 2015. National Commission for Backward Classes is an Indian constitutional body under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It established in 1993.
37. (D) The Red Sea is one of the saltiest water bodies in the world due to high evaporation and low rainfall. No significant rivers or streams drain into the sea, and its southern connection to the Gulf of Aden, an arm of the Indian Ocean, is narrow. Its salinity ranges between ~36‰ in the southern part and 41‰ in the northern part around the Gulf of Suez, with an average of 40‰.
38. (C) Pankaj Tripathi has won the Best Supporting Actor award for the film 'Mimi' in 69th National Film Awards. Pankaj Tripathi played the role of Bhanu Pratap Pandey in 'Mimi'.
39. (C) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully demon-strated the TV D1 mission, the first uncrewed developmental flight of 'Gaganyaan' human spaceflight mission. Gaganyaan mission is India's first human space mission by ISRO. Its Objective to send humans into space on a Low Earth Orbit of 400 km for 3 days and bring them safely back to the Earth. If it succeeds, India will become only the 4th country to send a human into space after the Soviet Union, USA, and China.
40. (C) French East India Company was a government-backed company, whereas the English East India Company was a private company. This company was planned by Jean-Baptiste Colbert

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and chartered by King Louis XIV for the purpose of trade in the Eastern Hemisphere. This was abolished in 1769, two decades before the French Revolution.

41. (A) Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana launched by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on 1 May, 2016. It is related to distribute LPG connections to women of BPL families.
42. (D) The cell is the basic structural and functional unit of all forms of life. Every cell consists of cytoplasm enclosed within a membrane, and contains many macromolecules such as proteins, DNA and RNA, as well as many small molecules of nutrients and metabolites. There are over 200 different cell types in the human body. Each type of cell is specialized to carry out a particular function.
43. (A) Not all contaminants are easily treated by bioremediation using microorganisms. For example, heavy metals such as cadmium and lead are not easily absorbed or captured by microorganisms. Bioremediation is a treatment that uses naturally occurring organisms to break down hazardous substances into less toxic or non-toxic substances.
44. (B) Bokaro Steel Plant - the fourth integrated plant in the Public Sector - started taking shape in 1965 in collaboration with the Soviet Union during fourth five-year plan.
45. (A)
46. (A) Most of the metallic minerals in India occur in the peninsular plateau region in the old crystalline rocks. Over 97 per cent of coal reserves occur in the valleys of Damodar, Sone, Mahanadi and Godavari. Petroleum reserves are located in the sedimentary basins of Assam, Gujarat and Mumbai High *i.e.*, offshore region in the Arabian Sea. New reserves have been located in the Krishna-Godavari and Kaveri basins.
47. (D) Algae is a complete protein with essential amino acids. This is used as fertilizers and soil conditioners and to make Biodiesel and Bioethanol.
48. (A) The deposits formed from the deposits of dust blown by the wind are called loess. Loes is named after the village named Loes in Alsace province of France, because deposits of soil similar to Loes are found here. Loes is deposited in places remote from deserts. In this, the soil particles are so fine that layers are not found in them. But loess is highly permeable. The soil is soft.
49. (A) After the death of Raja Rammohan Roy, Debendra Nath Tagore joined the Brahmo Samaj on December 21, 1841, and worked to revive and reorganize the Brahmo Samaj. Adi Brahmo Samaj was founded originally by Raja Rammohan Roy and practically by Debendranath Tagore. Nav Vidhan Brahmo Samaj was founded by Keshub Chandra Sen.
50. (B) Brazil will hold the Presidency of the G20 from 1 December, 2023 to 30 November, 2024. The African Union became a full member of the G-20 on 9 September, 2023.
51. (C) Vishnudev Sai comes from Kunkuri assembly of Chhattisgarh. In the 2023 assembly elections, he defeated Congress's candidate U.D. Minz by 25,541 votes. Vishnudev Sai has also been the state President of BJP from 2020 to 2022.
52. (D)
53. (C) Bastar division of Chhattisgarh state includes the following districts – Bastar, Kanker, Dantewada, Sukma, Narayanpur, Bijapur, Kondagaon.
54. (D) First State Human Rights Commission Chairman—Shri K. M. Aggarwal.

    First Deputy Speaker of the Assembly—Shri Banwarilal Agarwal.
55. (B) Guru Ghasidas is the founder of the Satnam sect in Chhattisgarh. Madhavrao Sapre is known as the father of journalism in Chhattisgarh. Chudamani Saheb is the founder of Kabirpanth in Chhattisgarh. Ramgopal Tiwari identifies himself as a Co-operative man of Chhattisgarh.
56. (D) The state tree of Chhattisgarh state is Sal and the state bird is the Hill Myna.
57. (D) Satriya dance belongs to the state of Assam and Kathak dance belongs to Uttar Pradesh. Other folk dances of Chhattisgarh are Sua, Raut Nacha, Karma, Kaksar, Gaur, Navrani, Vedmati.
58. (D) 59. (D)
60. (D) By getting 54 seats in this assembly election, Bharatiya Janata Party has got 39 more seats this time as compared to the previous assembly election 2018. Indian National Congress has lost 33 seats this time compared to the last assembly elections 2018. And the Indian National Congress is reduced to only 35 seats.
61. (B)
62. (B) Betla National Park is a national park located in the Chota Nagpur Plateau in Latehar district of Jharkhand state, India. This park contains a variety of wildlife. 'Betla' is short for the following words : bison, elephant, tiger, leopard, chital.
63. (C) On 27 November, 1940, Pandit Ravi Shankar started an individual Satyagraha in Raipur district. On 2 April, 1941, a group of Satyagrahis left for Delhi on foot. Major volunteers in this included Rajaram Sahu and Rameshwar Sahu. The volunteers were arrested near Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh on 8 August, 1941 and sent to Jhansi jail. Ramgopal Tiwari, Jwala Prasad Mishra, Yadunandan Prasad Srivastava, Thakur Chhedilal, Shri Chintamani Oswal etc. of Bilaspur participated in the individual Satyagraha and also gave their arrests.
64. (C) Aarang (Raipur) is famous as a city of temples in the state of Chhattisgarh. Ludeng (Jashpur) is famous as the tomato capital of Chhattisgarh.
65. (A) 66. (B)
67. (D) Surguja is the first division formed after the formation of Chhattisgarh state. This division was established in 2008. Its headquarters is Ambikapur. Surguja division consists of 5

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districts, which are as follows – Surguja, Korea, Balrampur, Surajpur, Jashpur.

68. (C) Guru Ghasidas Samman is given by the Chhattisgarh Tribal Welfare Department in the field of social consciousness and Dalit upliftment in the memory of the founder of Satnam Panth and social reformer Guru Ghasidas. Under this, ₹ 2 lakh is given as prize money. The first 'Guru Ghasidas Samman' was awarded to Ramratan Jangade in the year 2001.
69. (C)
70. (B) According to Census 2011, the district with minimum male population in Chhattisgarh state is Narayanpur and the district with highest male population is Raipur.
71. (A) Chhattisgarh State Mineral Development Corporation was established on 7 June, 2001.
72. (B) The smallest wildlife sanctuary of Chhattisgarh state is Badalkhol (105 sq. km.) and the newest wildlife sanctuary is Bhoramdev.
73. (C) 'Karuna' is the name of the Chief Minister's residence and the name of the MLAs' rest house is 'Sangwari'.
74. (D)
75. (C) Eklama, Cheliknama, Chilfighati areas of Kawardha (Kabirdham) district of Chhattisgarh state are known for iron ore.
76. (B) At the time of formation of Chhattisgarh state, there were only 16 districts, but currently Chhattisgarh has 33 districts and 5 divisions.
77. (A) Chhattisgarh State Budget 2023-24 proposes revenue expenditure of ₹ 1,02,501 crore for 2023-24, which is 8% more than the revised estimate for 2022-23. This includes expenditure on salaries, pensions, interest, grants and subsidies.
78. (D)
79. (B) Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh is called Bhoramdev (Kabirdham) and Prayag of Chhattisgarh is called Rajim (Gariaband). Tapkara (Jashpur) is called Naglok of Chhattisgarh.
80. (C) Largest division in terms of population is Bilaspur and Surguja is the first division formed after the formation of Chhattisgarh state.
81. (C) The state of Maharashtra is located to the west of Chhattisgarh. A total of 4 districts of Chhattisgarh state share border with Maharashtra. Those 4 districts are as follows : Rajnandgaon, Kanker, Narayanpur, Bijapur.
82. (C)
83. (D) In Binjhwar tribes, arrow is considered a caste symbol. They used to shoot their animals with arrows and put arrow marks in place of signatures. In Binjhwar marriage, the arrow buried under the Mahua tree was taken as the marriage pillar.
84. (B)
85. (A) Sua song is sung on the occasion of Diwali. Bhadauni song is a folk song sung for entertainment at the time of marriage. Janvra Geet is a mother's song which is sung during Navratri.
86. (A) 87. (B)
88. (A) To boost forest cover in the coal belt region of Chhattisgarh, South Eastern Coal Fields Limited will plant trees using Japan's popular 'Miyawaki' method for the first time in its operational areas.
89. (B) Sarodha-Dadar village in Kabirdham district of Chhattisgarh state is situated between mountains and valleys at an altitude of about 3000 feet above sea level. Mangal Singh Dhurve of Sarodha-Dadar village received this award in a function organized at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on the occasion of Tourism Day. Sarodha-Dadar has been selected for the award out of 795 villages in 31 states and union territories across the country.
90. (C) Vishwabhushan Harichandan took oath as the ninth Governor of Chhattisgarh on 23 February, 2023 at Raj Bhavan in the capital Raipur. Before being appointed as the Governor of Chhattisgarh, Harichandan has served as the Governor of the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. He has replaced Anusuiya Uike.
91. (D)
92. (A) Former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Dr. Raman Singh has been elected Speaker of the Chhattisgarh Assembly.
93. (C) Bastar Area Tribal Development Authority was formed by the state government on 27 February, 2019. The main objective of the authority is to preserve, promote and protect the culture of the tribals in Bastar region.
94. (B) On September 26, 2023, the then Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had inaugurated the state's first sugarcane-based ethanol plant built at a cost of ₹ 141 crore in Kabirdham district through video conferencing.
95. (C) Kutumsar Cave was discovered by Dr. Shankar Tiwari, Professor of Geography, with the help of some local tribals. It is considered to be the deepest cave in India which is 60-120 feet deep and its length is 4500 feet. This cave is compared with the world's longest cave 'Carlswar of Cave' (America).
96. (C) Sharbharaj was the founder of this dynasty who made Sharabhpur (Sambalpur) the capital. The Sharabhapuriya dynasty ruled from the 5th to the 6th century. The Sharabhapuria dynasty was related to Vaishnavism.
97. (D) Justice Ramesh Sinha is current Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court. Justice W.A. Shishak was the first Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court.
98. (C) Kelo Irrigation Project is implemented in Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh. It is situated on the Kelo River, a tributary of the Mahanadi River. The project will benefit a land area of 34815 hectares covering 192 villages. Kharsia, Pusaur, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa districts are included in this project.
99. (B)
100. (B) Himangi Haldhar, a student of Bharatmata English Medium School, Bilaspur, has received the National Inspire Award.

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Solved Model Paper

FORTHCOMING HARYANA P.S.C. (Pre.) EXAMINATION

General Studies-I

1. Consider the following statements regarding Pandit Bhimsen Joshi :
   1. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was instrumental in organising the Sawai Gandharva Music Festival as homage to his guru, Sawai Gandharva.
   2. He was a contemporary of Gangubai Hangal, singer of the Khayal genre of Hindustani classical music.

   Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Which of the following sites of Indus Valley Civilization are located in India ?
   1. Mohenjo-Daro
   2. Rakhigarhi
   3. Ganweriwala
   4. Dholavira

   (A) Only 2 (B) 1 and 2
   (C) Only 4 (D) 2 and 4

3. Consider the following statements with respect to Uttaradhyayana Sutra :
   1. It is one of the most important sacred books of the Svetambara Jains.
   2. It is believed by some to contain the actual words of Bhagwan Mahavira.

   Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements regarding Mauryan art and architecture :
   1. Stone was the principal building material.
   2. Lauria Nandangarh pillar in Champaran was built during the time of Ashoka.

   Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Ambubachi Mela ?
   1. It is a usual Tantric fertility festival of Assam which marks the menstruation period of the Goddess Kamakhya.
   2. Traditional Bihu is danced for four continuous days in the Kamakhya temple complex during this mela.

   Select the correct answers using the codes given below :
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

6. Consider the following pairs :

   Folk Painting State/Region
   1. Madhubani—Bihar
   2. Pattachitra —Andhra Pradesh
   3. Patua —West Bengal

   Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?
   (A) 1, 3 (B) 1, 2
   (C) Only 1 (D) Only 3

7. Consider the following statements with respect to Jatra :
   1. The earlier form of Jatra has been musical, dialogues were added at later stage.
   2. Krishna Jatra became popular due to the influence of Mirabhai in the parts of Uttar Pradesh.

   Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
   (A) Only 1
   (B) Only 2
   (C) Both 1 and 2
   (D) Neither 1 nor 2

8. Consider the following statements regarding Sufism :
   1. Sufis consider that the knowledge of the Truth can be based only on self-experience.
   2. They believe that Almighty can be persuaded by cleverness.
   3. Sufis consider the shelter of a competent master as the most important step for the spiritual training of the seeker.

   Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
   (A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
   (C) 2 and 3 (D) 1,2, and 3

9. Consider the following statements regarding Kabir :
   1. He was born in the city of Varanasi.
   2. In Bijak, Kabir mocks the practice of praying to avatars such as Buddha of Buddhism.
   3. He questioned meaningless and unethical practices of all religions.
   4. He was patronized by the rulers.

   Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
   (A) 1 and 2 (B) 2, 3 and 4
   (C) 1, 2, and 3 (D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

10. Which among following empires in medieval India employed women in the state service?
    (A) Chola empire
    (B) Vijayanagara Empire
    (C) Mysore Wodeyars
    (D) Maratha Empire

11. Consider the following statements regarding Babur :
    1. Babur, the first Mughal emperor succeeded to the throne of Ferghana when he was 80 years old.

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2. He was forced to leave his ancestral throne due to the invasion of another Mongol group, the Uzbegs.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

12. Consider the following pairs regarding new dynasties and their founders :

1. Saadat Khan : Awadh
2. Murshid Quli Khan : Bengal
3. Asaf Jah : Hyderabad

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?

(A) 1 and 2
(B) 2 and 3
(C) 1, 2 and 3
(D) None of the above

13. Which of the following three kingdoms (tripartite) were involved in struggle for Kannauj ?

(A) Cholas, Palas and Rashtrakutas
(B) Palas, Pratiharas and Cholas
(C) Cheras, Rashtrakutas and Pandyas
(D) Palas, Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas

14. Consider the following statements regarding Chola administration :

1. They levied duties on ceremonial occasions like marriages.
2. Trade was exempted from tolls and customs to promote efficiency trade unlike other South Indian Kingdoms.
3. Forests, mines and ports were taxed during the Chola administration to generate revenue.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
(C) 2 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

15. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Partition of India ?

1. Lord Mountbatten was Viceroy during the partition of India.
2. Partition line was determined by the Border Commission headed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe.

Select the correct answers using the codes given below :

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

16. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946 ?

1. According to this plan, there was to be a Union of India, comprising both British India and the States.
2. The Union was to have an Executive and a Legislature consisting of representatives of the Provinces and the States.

Select the correct answers using the codes given below :

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

17. Consider the following statements :

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, one of the oldest newspapers in India, was launched in Bengali.
2. Mahratta was launched by B.G. Tilak in Marathi.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

18. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Government of India Act, 1919 ?

1. It was popularly known as Montagu - Chelmsford Report.
2. It was passed to expand the participation of Indians in the government of India.

Select the correct answers using the codes given below :

(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

19. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Champaran Satyagraha ?

1. European planter's plan to grow indigo on 3/20 part of the total land was the primary reason behind Champaran satyagraha.
2. Mahatma Gandhi was invited by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to visit Champaran district.

Select the correct answers using the codes given below :

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

20. The Congress split in 1907 was due to the issue of :

(A) Increasingly religious tones in the Indian National Movement
(B) Economic ideology of state-led development of India
(C) Methodology of struggle against the British
(D) Grant of concessions to the All-India Muslim League

21. Right to Equality in the Indian constitution does not include :

(A) Equality of opportunity in employment
(B) Prohibition on discrimination on ground of religion
(C) Abolition of titles
(D) Rights of the accused and convicts

22. With reference to the 'Gram Nyayalaya Act', which of the following statements is/are correct ?

1. As per the Act, Gram Nyayalayas can hear only civil cases and not criminal cases.
2. The Act allows local social activists as mediators/ reconciliators.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

23. The protection of language, script and culture of minorities is provided under which of the following rights ?

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(A) Right to freedom
(B) Right to freedom of religion
(C) Right against exploitation
(D) Cultural and educational rights

24. Which of the following are not necessarily the consequences of the proclamation of President's rule in a State ?
1. Dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly.
2. Removal of the Council of Ministers in the State.
3. Dissolution of the local bodies.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) 1 and 2 only
(B) 1 and 3 only
(C) 2 and 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

25. The functions of which of the following body in India are limited to advisory nature only ?
(A) Legislative Council
(B) Rajya Sabha
(C) Lok Sabha
(D) Legislative Assembly

26. Which of the following Commissions accepted language as the basis of reorganization of States ?
(A) Punchhi Commission
(B) JVP Committee
(C) Fazl Ali Commission
(D) SK Dhar Commission

27. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Anti-defection law ?
1. Under the law which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the presiding officer of a legislature.
2. The law applies only to Parliament and not to State Legislature.

Select the correct answers using the codes given below :
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

28. Who called the Preamble as Political Horoscope of Indian Constitution ?
(A) Thakurdas Bhargava
(B) N.A. Palkhiwala
(C) K.M. Munshi
(D) Jawaharlal Nehru

29. The word 'Cabinet' is mentioned in which Article of the Constitution of India ?
(A) Article 350 (B) Article 352
(C) Article 74 (D) Article 76

30. Consider the following statements :
1. The idea of a constituent assembly for India was first put forward by Jawaharlal Nehru.
2. British principally accepted the idea of constituent assembly for the first time through Cripps Proposal.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

31. Consider the following statements :
1. WTO uses the factors of trade and the level of economic development of a country as the criteria for making a distinction between a developed and a developing country member.
2. World Bank uses per capita income as the criteria to classify countries as developed and developing countries.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

32. Consider the following statements about the Aadhar Pay Service :
1. It will enable people to make and receive payments using their Aadhaar number and biometrics.
2. People can use the service even if they do not have debit cards, mobile wallets and mobile phones.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

33. Consider the following statements :
1. Reserve Bank of India keeps the cash reserve of all the scheduled banks.
2. Issue of new currency note is the right of Reserve Bank of India and Government of India.
3. Reserve Bank of India acts as a banker to the government.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
(C) 2 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

34. Which of the following is/are the effects of Inflation ?
1. Usually lenders suffer and borrowers benefit out of inflation.
2. Holding money remains an intelligent economic decision during inflation.
3. With every inflation the currency of the country appreciates in a flexible currency regime.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
(C) Only 1 (D) 2 and 3

35. Which of the following is not a function to be performed by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) under NRHM ?
(A) To provide primary medical care for minor ailments such as diarrhoea, fever and first aid for minor injuries
(B) To escort/accompany pregnant women and children requiring treatment/admission to the nearest pre-identified health facility and to carry on child deliveries in case of emergency situation
(C) To assist the village health and sanitation committee of the Gram Panchayat to develop a comprehensive village health plan
(D) To act as a depot older for essential provisions being made available to all habitations like Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT), Iron Folic Acid Tablet (IFA), chloroquine, Disposable Delivery kits, oral pills and condoms etc.

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36. Consider the following statements with respect to Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana :
    1. The scheme covers post-harvest losses up to a period of 14 days
    2. The scheme provides compensation for crops destroyed by wild animals.

    Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
    (A) Only 1
    (B) Only 2
    (C) Both 1 and 2
    (D) Neither 1 nor 2

37. The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana aims to :
    (A) built climate resilient cities
    (B) control air pollution in metro cities.
    (C) provide financial support to integrated bio-ethanol projects.
    (D) promote conversion of organic waste into biogas

38. Recently, 'PM-USHA' scheme was in the news. It is related to which one of the fields ?
    (A) Education
    (B) Renewable energy source
    (C) Women empowerment
    (D) Financial inclusion

39. Consider the following statements with respect to Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) :
    1. The Jan Aushadhi Scheme is revamped as Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY).
    2. It has been launched by the Depart ment of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
    3. The Scheme is implemented by a society registered under the Pharma and Medical Bureau of India (PMBI).

    Which of the statements given above are correct ?
    (A) 1 and 2
    (B) 2 and 3
    (C) 1 and 3
    (D) 1, 2 and 3

40. Consider the following statements about Atal Bhujal Yojana :
    1. It is a Central Sector Scheme.
    2. It is being implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
    3. It is being funded by the Government of India and the World Bank on a 30:70 basis.

    Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?
    (A) Only 1 (B) 1 and 2
    (C) Only 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

41. Which among the following sites in Haryana, is the place as per legends where Lord Krishna delivered the sermon of Bhagavad Gita ?
    (A) Jyotisar (B) Pehowa
    (C) Shahabad (D) Ladwa

42. Which committee will be constituted by the Haryana government to find solution to polluted water flowing in Yamuna river ?
    (A) Ram Bilas Sharma committee
    (B) Om Parkash Dhankhar committee
    (C) Krishan Lal Panwar committee
    (D) Narbir Singh committee

43. In which district of the state Shivalik Hills do not extend ?
    (A) Rohtak
    (B) Ambala
    (C) Yamunanagar
    (D) Panchkula

44. Which of the following is the latitudinal extension of Haryana ?
    (A) 27°39' North latitude to 30°55' North latitude
    (B) 27°39' South latitude to 30°55' South latitude
    (C) 20°2°39' East latitude to 30°55' East latitude
    (D) None of the above

45. Haryana was established as a separate state by which of the following acts ?
    (A) The Acquired Territories Merger Act 1960
    (B) Himachal Pradesh & Bilaspur (new State) Act 1954
    (C) States Reorganization Act of 1956
    (D) Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966

46. Which district of Haryana is known as 'City of Cotton' ?
    (A) Palwal (B) Panchkula
    (C) Hisar (D) Ambala

47. Consider the following pairs :
    1. Surajkund—Haryana
    2. Hemis Gompa—Karnataka
    3. Ambubasi—West Bengal

    Which of the above is/are correctly matched ?
    (A) Only 1
    (B) Only 1 and 2
    (C) Only 2 and 3
    (D) All 1, 2 and 3

48. Who was the first woman Speaker of Haryana Legislative Assembly ?
    (A) Anu Devi
    (B) Shanno Devi
    (C) Santosh Yadav
    (D) Sushma Swaraj

49. Which of the following is the principal cause of soil damage in Punjab and Haryana ?
    (A) Salinity and water-logging
    (B) Deforestation
    (C) Ravine erosion
    (D) Overgrazing

50. In which district is Rosli soil found ?
    (A) Jhajjar (B) Gurgaon
    (C) Rewari (D) All of these

51. The campus of Haryana Vishwakarma Skill University has been started in Dudhaula village of which district ?
    (A) Panipat (B) Palwal
    (C) Panchkula (D) Ambala

52. When will International Geeta Mahotsav 2023 be held ?
    (A) 1 to 17 December
    (B) 4 to 21 December
    (C) 7 to 24 December
    (D) 10 to 27 December

53. What is the 'State of Food and Agriculture report' ?
    (A) It is an annual report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) summarizing global trends in food consumption.
    (B) It is a biennial report released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) providing an overview of the world's food and agricultural situation.
    (C) It is a monthly report produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focusing on sustainable

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development in the agriculture sector.
(D) It is a quarterly report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) assessing the impact of climate change on global food production

54. What is one of the primary advantages of using drones in agriculture ?
(A) They are less expensive than traditional farming equipment
(B) They can cover large areas quickly and efficiently
(C) They have the ability to plant seeds directly into the soil
(D) They require constant manual operation by a farmer

55. Often seen in news, the Corruption perception index is released by :
(A) Transparency international
(B) United Nations General Assembly
(C) World Bank
(D) OECD

56. Recently, 'FjordPhantom' was in the news. It is the name of :
(A) A new glacial geography in Antarctica
(B) A new malware
(C) A newly discovered star
(D) A newly assembled supercomputer in India

57. Concerning biofortified seeds, which statement is accurate ?
(A) Biofortified seeds are genetically modified organisms (GMOs) with enhanced resistance to pests
(B) The primary goal of biofortified seeds is to increase crop yield through genetic modification
(C) Biofortified seeds are developed to enhance the nutritional content of crops, addressing specific nutrient deficiencies
(D) Organic farming practices exclude the use of biofortified seeds

58. Which one of the following is the context in which the term 'qubit' is mentioned ?
(A) Cloud Services
(B) Quantum Computing
(C) Visible Light Communication Technologies
(D) Wireless Communication Technologies

59. Regarding the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, consider the following statements :
1. Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged.
2. The Act empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

60. Consider the following statements regarding 'ENACT Partnership' :
1. It was launched at the Conference of Parties (COP28), which took place at Dubai, UAE in 2023.
2. It aims to enhance the protection from and resilience to climate impacts of at least 1 billion vulnerable people.
3. United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) will provide the secretariate to the partnership.

Which of the above-given statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) 1 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

61. Consider the following statements about the Competition Commission of India :
1. It is the chief national competition regulator in India.
2. It is a statutory body within the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
3. It looks into cases and investigates them if the same has a negative impact on competition.

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?
(A) Only 1 (B) 1 and 2
(C) 2 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

62. Consider the following statements about the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) :
1. It was established in 2000 by the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. It has universal membership and is composed of all Member States of the United Nations.
3. It promotes the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Which of the above statements is/are correctly matched ?
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
(C) 2 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

63. 'Prachand', mentioned in the news sometimes, is a :
(A) Light Combat Aircraft
(B) Light Combat Helicopter
(C) Crossover Utility Vehicle
(D) Light-weight autonomous UAV

64. 'ENCORE' software application associated with the :
(A) FIR Search
(B) Assets Mapping and Geo Tagging
(C) Human Resources Management System
(D) None of the above

65. What is the Lucy mission ?
(A) A JAXA mission to study the geological composition of the Moon
(B) A European Space Agency (ESA) mission to explore Mars' polar ice caps
(C) A NASA mission to study the Trojan asteroids, which share an orbit with Jupiter
(D) A SpaceX mission to investigate the geysers on Saturn's moon, Enceladus

66. With reference to the National investigation Agency (NIA), consider the following statements :
1. The NIA is the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India.
2. It is a body created by an executive resolution.
3. The agency is empowered to deal with the investigation of terror related crimes across states with special permission from the states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) 2 and 3
(B) 1, 2 and 3

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(C) Only 1
(D) None of the above

67. Recently, the UK gave India 'Safe State Status'. This will be helping India in which one of the following respects ?
(A) It will increase the Indian IT industry's presence in the UK
(B) It will give India a safe destination to invest in, hence raising FDI from the UK to India
(C) This would speed up the process of returning Indians who travel from the country illegally and rule out their chance of seeking asylum in Britain
(D) This will increase tourism in India due to the status of a safe destination to travel

68. Annapurna Certificate Programme is an initiative of the :
(A) NITI Aayog
(B) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
(C) Food Corporation of India
(D) Indian Council for Cultural Relations

69. 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education' (SATH-E) report published by the :
(A) NGO Pratham
(B) NITI Aayog
(C) National Council of Educational Research and Training
(D) National Council for Teacher Education

70. Houthi rebels/ tribals hail from :
(A) Syria (B) Lebanon
(C) Yemen (D) Palestine

71. Consider the following statements about the 'Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation' (APEC) :
1. It is an international non-governmental organization for public – private sector collaboration.
2. It is headquartered in Singapore.
3. The heads of government of all APEC members except China attend an annual APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) 1 and 3
(C) 1, 2 and 3 (D) Only 2

72. Which of the following statements about 'Kolkali' is correct ?
(A) Kolkali is a traditional dance form originating from the Indian state of Rajasthan
(B) Kolkali is primarily a solo dance performed during religious ceremonies
(C) Kolkali involves a group of performers who dance in a circle, tapping small sticks in a rhythmic manner
(D) Kolkali is known for its intricate hand gestures and facial expressions, similar to classical Indian dance forms

73. Consider the following:
1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.
2. Missile Technology Control Regime.
3. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

India is a member of which of the above ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) All three (D) None

74. Which of the following is not yet a member of the Group of Twenty or G20 ?
(A) Argentina
(B) Mexico
(C) Turkey
(D) Malaysia

75. The term 'Two state Solution' is sometimes mentioned in the new in the context of the affairs of :
(A) China (B) Israel
(C) Iraq (D) Yemen

76. Consider the following statements regarding 5G Technology :
1. 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks.
2. 5G works only in high frequency spectrum.
3. 5G is set to be as much as 100 times faster than 4G.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 1 and 3
(C) 2 and 3 (D) 1, 2 and 3

77. Consider the following statements with respect to Tetanus :
1. Tetanus is an infection caused by bacteria called Clostridium tetani.
2. It often causes a person's neck and jaw muscles to lock.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

78. Aedes aegypti mosquito mainly spreads which of the following disease(s) ?
1. Chikungunya
2. Yellow fever
3. Malaria
4. Japanese Encephalitis

Which of the above options is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) 1 and 2
(C) 3 and 4 (D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

79. Consider the following statements regarding Carbon nanotubes (CNT) :
1. Carbon nanotubes (CNT) are cylindrical molecules consisting of rolled-up sheets of single-layer carbon atoms, namely, graphene.
2. Carbon nanotubes are used in applications that require high strength, electrical conductivity and thermal conductivity as compared to the other conventional materials.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

80. Which of the following is the reason behind the faster travel of information in a fibre optic cable than copper wire ?
(A) Fiber optic cable is thinner than copper wire
(B) Fiber optic cable experiences no electromagnetic interference
(C) Fiber optic cable is made up of silica
(D) In the fiber optic cable pulses of light is used

81. Which one of the following is a reason why astronomical distances are measured in light-years ?

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(A) Distance among stellar bodies do not change
(B) Gravity of stellar bodies does not change
(C) Light always travels in straight line
(D) Speed of light is always same

82. Which of the following is not an artificial sweetener ?
(A) ASPARTAME
(B) Sucralose
(C) Sucrose
(D) Alitame

83. With reference to the sound waves, consider the following statements :
1. Sound waves do not need any medium and can travel in vacuum also.
2. Sound waves are longitudinal waves.
3. In sound wave propagation, the particles do not move from one place to another, but they simply oscillate back and forth about their position of rest.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) 2 and 3 only
(B) 1 and 2 only
(C) 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

84. Consider the following statements about Dry Ice :
1. It is the solid form of Carbon Monoxide.
2. It has a lower temperature than that of water ice.
3. It is useful for preserving food items where mechanical cooling is unavailable.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) 1 and 2 only
(B) 2 and 3 only
(C) 1 and 3 only
(D) 2 only

85. Nerve agents are a class of :
(A) phosphorus-containing organic chemicals
(B) sulphur-containing organic chemicals
(C) osmium-containing organic compounds
(D) radon-containing organic compounds

86. The term 'demographic trap' is used by demographers to describe the combination of :
1. Increasing Mortality
2. High Fertility rate
3. Declining mortality
4. Sub-replacement level fertility rates

Select the correct answer code :
(A) 1, 3 (B) 1, 4
(C) 2, 3 (D) 1, 2

87. Consider the following statements regarding 'Mount Marapi' :
1. It is located on the Island of Hawaii in the US state of Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean.
2. Its name means Mountain of peace.
3. With no eruption since the 19th century, this volcano is one of the extinct volcanoes of Hawaiian island.

Which statements mentioned above is/are correct ?
(A) 1 and 2
(B) 2 and 3
(C) 1, 2 and 3
(D) None of the above

88. Consider the following statements :
1. It lies in the Alipurduar subdivision of the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.
2. Its northern boundary runs along the international border with Bhutan.
3. The fragile 'Terai Ecosystem' constitutes a part of this reserve.
4. Two rivers, namely the River Raidak and the River Jayanti, flow near this tiger reserve.

The above-mentioned statements refer to which one of the following Tiger Reserve ?
(A) Sundarbans National Park and Tiger Reserve
(B) Buxa Tiger Reserve
(C) Nameri Tiger Reserve
(D) Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve

89. What do you know about the Moon ?
(A) The Moon is a star that emits its own light, primarily at night
(B) The Moon is Earth's only natural satellite, orbiting our planet
(C) The Moon is composed mainly of liquid water
(D) The Moon has a breathable atmosphere that can support human life without the need for spacesuits

90. With reference to the Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal (SYL), consider the following statements :
1. It is an under-construction canal to connect the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers.
2. It is supposed to carry water from Punjab to Haryana.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct ?
(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

91. Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under 'Critical Tiger Habitat' ?
(A) Corbett
(B) Ranthambore
(C) Nagarjunasagar- Srisailam
(D) Sunderbans

92. Consider the following statements about Mount Etna :
1. It is an active stratovolcano.
2. It is located on the east coast of Sicily, Italy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

93. In which of the following states is Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary located ?
(A) Karnataka
(B) Tamil Nadu
(C) Odisha
(D) Andhra Pradesh

94. Which of the following rivers is not a tributary of the River Indus ?
(A) Beas (B) Zanskar
(C) Kameng (D) Shyok

95. Which of the following glaciers are located in Uttarakhand ?
1. Bandarpunch Glacier
2. Nubra Glacier
3. Zemu Glacier
4. Nanda Devi Glacier

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Select the correct answer code :
(A) 1, 3, 4 (B) Only 1
(C) 1, 4 (D) 1, 2, 3

96. Consider the following statements :
1. Tigris River flows through Turkey and Iraq.
2. Mekong River is a transboundary River that flows through parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect ?
(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

97. The most common chemicals used for cloud seeding are :
1. Silver iodide
2. Potassium iodide
3. Dry ice
4. Sodium Chloride

Which of the above options is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) 1 and 4
(C) 1, 2, 3 and 4
(D) 2 and 3

98. Which of the following regions of India is the natural habitat of the 'Great Indian Hornbill' ?
(A) Sand deserts of northwest India
(B) Great Himalayan Range
(C) Salt marshes of western Gujarat
(D) Western Ghats

99. Consider the following statements about the 'Powering Past Coal Alliance' (PPCA) :
1. It focuses on transitioning from unabated coal power to clean energy.
2. India is a part of PPCA as it has committed to phasing out coal by 2070.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

100. Consider the following statements :
1. About 75 per cent of the country's annual rainfall is received from the Southwest monsoon between June and September.
2. Northeast Monsoon is also called the winter monsoon.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) 1 only
(B) 2 only
(C) Both 1 and 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

Answers with Hints

1. (D) Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was one of the greatest Indian vocalists from Karnataka, in the Hindustani classical tradition. He is known for the Khayal form of singing, as well as for his popular renditions of devotional music. Joshi belongs to the Kirana gharana tradition of Hindustani Classical Music.
Joshi was instrumental in organising the Sawai Gandharva Music Festival annually, as homage to his guru, Sawai Gandharva. He along with Smt Gangubai Hangal and others took Kirana gharana to heights.
2. (D) The Indus sites named Mohenjo-Daro and Ganveriwala are located in present-day Pakistan. The same Indus sites named Rakhigarhi (Haryana) and Dholavira (Gujarat) are located in India.
3. (C) Uttaradhyayana Sutra is one of the most important sacred books of the Svetambara Jains. It consists of 36 chapters, each of which deals with aspects of Jain doctrine and discipline. It is believed by some to contain the actual words of Bhagwan Mahavira (599/540 - 527/468 BCE).
4. (B) The palace of Chandragupta Maurya was inspired by the Achaemenid palaces at Persepolis in Iran. Wood was the principal building material.
During the time of Ashoka, the inscription of pillars as a symbol of the state or to commemorate battle victories – assumed a great significance. He also used pillars to propagate imperial sermons as well. Example : Lauria Nandangarh pillar in Champaran, Sarnath pillar near Varanasi, etc.
5. (A) Ambubachi Mela is a usual Tantric fertility festival of Assam which marks the menstruation period of the Goddess Kamakhya. The temple is closed for three days while she menstruates and reopens on the fourth day. It's considered to be extremely auspicious and powerful. The festival attracts numerous Tantric sadhus (holy men) from India and abroad.
6. (A) Madhubani art is practiced in the Mithila region, Bihar. Painting is done with fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens, and matchsticks, etc. using natural dyes and pigments and is characterised by eye-catching geometrical patterns.
Pattachitra or Patachitra is a general term for traditional, cloth-based scroll painting, based in the eastern Indian states of Odisha and West Bengal. Pattachitra art form is known for its intricate details as well as mythological narratives and folktales inscribed in it.
The Patuas are an artisan community found in the state of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha in India and parts of Bangladesh.
7. (B) Fairs in honour of gods, or religious rituals and ceremonies have within their framework musical plays are known as Jatra. This form was born and nurtured in Bengal.
Krishna Jatra became popular due to Chaitanya's influence, Later, however, worldly love stories too, found a place in Jatra. The earlier form of Jatra has been musical. Dialogues were added at later stage. The actors themselves describe the change of scene, the place of action, etc.
8. (B) Sufis consider that the knowledge of the Truth can be based only on self-experience. The Almighty cannot be persuaded by cleverness. One, who considers oneself to be frail and prays the Almighty in distress, receives His grace immediately. Sufis consider the shelter of a competent master as the most important step for the spiritual training of the seeker.

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9. (C) Kabir was born in the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, he is known for being critical of both organized religions. He questioned meaningless and unethical practices of all religions primarily the wrong practices in Hindu and Muslim religion.
In Bijak, Kabir mocks the practice of praying to avatars such as Buddha of Buddhism, by asserting, "Don't call the master Buddha, he didn't put down devils". Kabir urged people to look within and consider all human beings as manifestation of God's living forms.
10. (B) Society was well-organized in the Vijayanagara Empire. Women were respected in the society. They were educated and were absorbed in government services. They were trained not only in fine arts like music, dance, painting, etc., but also in fighting, wrestling and weapons of war. Women, therefore, were employed as bodyguards as well. Many scholarly women were patronized by the court. It was the only empire in medieval India which employed women in the state service.
11. (B) Babur, the first Mughal emperor (1526-1530), succeeded to the throne of Ferghana in 1494 when he was only 12 years old. He was forced to leave his ancestral throne due to the invasion of another Mongol group, the Uzbegs. After years of wandering he seized Kabul in 1504. In 1526, he defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at Panipat and captured Delhi and Agra.
12. (C) Amongst the states that were carved out of the old Mughal provinces in the eighteenth century, three stand out very prominently. These were Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad. All these three states were founded by members of the high Mughal nobility who had been governors of large provinces–Sa'adat Khan (Awadh), Murshid Quli Khan (Bengal) and Asaf Jah (Hyderabad).
13. (D) The Tripartite Struggle for control of northern India took place in the ninth century. The struggle was between the Pratihara Empire, the Pala Empire and the Rashtrakuta Empire. Towards the end of the ninth century, the successor of Nagabhata II of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, successfully attacked Kannauj and established control there.
14. (B) Besides land revenue, there were tolls and customs on goods taken from one place to another, various kinds of professional taxes, dues levied on ceremonial occasions like marriages and judicial fines. Taxes on mines, ports, forests and salt pans were collected. Professional tax and house tax were also collected.
15. (C) Lord Mountbatten was the last Viceroy of India and the first Governor of independent India. After the partition of India on 17 August 1947, the 'Radcliffe Line' became the border between India and Pakistan. The line was determined by the Border Commission headed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe.
16. (C) According to the Cabinet Mission Plan, there was to be a Union of India, comprising both British India and the States, and having jurisdiction over the subjects of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Communication. All residuary powers were to be vested in Provinces and the States.
The Union was to have an Executive and a Legislature consisting of representatives of the Provinces and the States. The Provinces could form groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could be responsible to determine the provincial subjects.
17. (A) Amrita Bazar Patrika was one of the oldest newspapers in India; it was launched in Bengali. It debuted on 20 February 1868. It was started by Sisir Ghosh and Moti Lal Ghosh. Bal Gangadhar Tilak used to run his two newspapers, 'Kesari', in Marathi and 'Mahratta' in English from Pune.
18. (C) Government of India Act, 1919 is popularly known as Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The Act embodied the reforms recommended in the report of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. It was passed to expand the participation of Indians in the government of India.
19. (A) In 1917, Gandhiji was requested to look into the problems of the farmers in the context of indigo planters of Champaran in Bihar. The European planters had been forcing the peasants to grow indigo on 3/20 part of the total land (called the tinkathia system). Raj Kumar Shukla was a famous Indigo cultivator of Champaran and he was a money lender as well.
20. (C) The Congress split in 1907. The Moderates were opposed to the use of boycott. They felt that it involved the use of force. However, the extremists insisted on the use of mass boycott movements, protests and strikes to make a point against the British. After the split, the Congress came to be dominated by the Moderates, with Tilak's followers functioning from outside.
21. (D) Right to Equality includes the following laws—Equality before law, Equal protection of laws, Prohibition on discrimination on ground of religion, Equal access to shops, bathing ghats, hotels etc., Equality of opportunity in employment, Abolition of titles, Abolition of untouchability.
22. (B) Gram Nyayalaya exercises the powers of both Criminal and Civil Courts. The Gram Nyayalaya are supposed to try to settle the disputes as far as possible by bringing about conciliation between the parties.
23. (D) Cultural and Educational rights (Articles 29–30). Protection of language, script and culture of minorities (Article 29).
24. (B) The state governor, on behalf of the President, carries on the state administration with the help of the chief secretary of the state or the advisors appointed by the President. This is the reason why a proclamation under Article 356 is popularly known as the imposition of 'President's Rule' in a state.

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President either suspends or dissolves the state legislative assembly. The Parliament passes the state legislative bills and the state budget. President's Rule does not lead to dissolution of local bodies.

25. (A) Barring the case of money bills, Rajya Sabha has equal powers in legislative matters in relation to Lok Sabha. This is not the case with Legislative council.
26. (C) The Fazl Ali Commission accepted language as the basis of reorganization of States. But it rejected the theory of one language one State. It suggested for the creation of 16 States and 3 UTs.
27. (A) The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in 1985 by the 52nd Amendment Act. The decision on the question as to disqualification on the ground of defection is referred to the Chairman or the Speaker of such House, and his decision is final. The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies.
28. (C) K.M. Munshi, who was also a member of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, defined Preamble as the "Horoscope of our sovereign democratic republic". He was a lawyer by profession and later became an author and a politician.
29. (B) The word 'Cabinet' is mentioned only once in the Indian Constitution in the Article 352(3) which states that, "the President shall not issue a proclamation unless the Union Cabinet communicates him in writing that such a proclamation may be issued".
30. (D) The idea of a Constituent Assembly for India was first given by Manvendranath Roy. The demand for constituent assembly was finally accepted in principle by the British Government in what is known as the 'August Offer' of 1940.
31. (A) Under the WTO rules, any country can 'self-designate' itself as a developing country. In fact, the WTO does not lay down any specific criteria for making a distinction between a developed and a developing country member, unlike in the World Bank where per capita income is used to classify countries.
32. (C) Aadhaar Pay app is yet another app to be launched by the government to promote digital economy and to encourage cashless transaction in an economy. The App lets consumers to pay without any physical payment instruments like debit cards, mobile wallets or mobile phones. It runs on the Android platform and the merchants need to install at PoS and the merchant's mobile phone needs to be linked to an Aadhaar biometric reader. Once the merchant has this infrastructure in place, the consumers can start transacting.
33. (B) RBI is the apex regulatory body of Indian Bank System. It keeps the cash reserves of all scheduled banks and hence it is known as Reserve Bank. It is the nation's sole note issuing authority. The Government of India is the issuing authority of coins and supplies coins to the Reserve Bank on demand. The Reserve Bank puts the coins into circulation on behalf of the Central Government. RBI acts as a banker to governments, both at the centre and in the states. It keeps deposits of governments and lends to governments.
34. (C) Inflation redistributes wealth from creditors to debtors, *i.e.*, lenders suffer and borrowers benefit out of inflation. The opposite effect takes place when inflation falls (*i.e.*, deflation). With every inflation the currency of the economy depreciates (loses its exchange value in front of a foreign currency), provided it follows the flexible currency regime. Holding money does not remain an intelligent economic decision (because money loses value with every increase in inflation).
35. (B) Empowered with knowledge and a drug kit to deliver first contact healthcare, every ASHA is expected to be a foundational head of community participation in public health programmes in her village. ASHA will be the first port of call for any health related demands of deprived difficult to access health services.
36. (B) Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana shall be implemented on an 'Area Approach basis', *i.e.*, Defined Areas for each notified crop for widespread calamities.
    Risks and Losses arising out of following perils shall be excluded : War & kindred perils, Nuclear risks, riots, malicious damage, theft, act of enmity, grazed and/or destroyed by domestic and/or wild animals. In case of Post–Harvest losses, the harvested crop bundled and heaped at a place before threshing, other preventable risks.
37. (C) The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana provides financial support to integrated bio-ethanol projects to set up second generation (2G) ethanol projects.
38. (A) 39. (C)
40. (B) Atal Bhujal Yojana is being implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. The scheme is being funded by the Government of India and the World Bank on 50 : 50 basis.
41. (A) Jyotisar is situated at 5 kms from the town of Kurukshetra in Haryana. It was in this very spot that Krishna preached the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, and it is aptly called 'Gitopadesha'.
42. (B) 43. (A) 44. (A)
45. (D) The Punjab Reorganization Act 1966 was passed by the Indian Parliament to create a new state of Haryana from the former state of East Punjab. Also, some territory was transferred to Himachal Pradesh.
46. (A) Palwal is a centre of the cotton trade in the area.
47. (A) Hemis Gompa is a religious fair of Buddhist community held in the month of January/ February at the world's famous Hemis Gompa "the biggest Buddhist monastery" located in Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. Ambubasi is a three-day traditional fair, which is organized every year during monsoon in the Kamakhya temple at Guwahati, Assam.

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48. (B) Shanno Devi was an Indian politician was the first woman speaker of a State Assembly in India. She was member of the Indian National Congress from the state of Punjab. She was the speaker of the Haryana Legislative Assembly from 6 December 1966 to 17 March 1967and the deputy speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly from 19 March 1962 to 31 October, 1966.
49. (A) The principal cause of soil damage in Punjab and Haryana is salinity and water logging. The area is totally damaged due to salinization of sub-soil water and does not allow any plant to grow.
50. (D) Sandy loam soil is also called Rosli soil. In this soil, sand predominates rather than silt and clay. This soil is mostly found in Hisar, Bhiwani, Rewari, Gurugram and Jhajjar districts.
51. (B) 52. (C)
53. (B) A recent FAO report (The State of Food and Agriculture 2023) exposes the hidden costs of unsustainable global agrifood systems, exceeding $ 10 trillion and constituting 11% of GDP in middle-income countries like India.
54. (B) The Union Cabinet has approved a Central Sector Scheme for providing drones to Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from 2024-25 to 2025-26. The scheme aims to empower 15,000 selected Women SHGs by offering drone rental services to farmers for agricultural purposes. Drones equipped with various sensors and cameras can survey large agricultural fields rapidly, providing valuable data on crop health, pest infestations, and other factors, aiding in precision farming.
55. (A) Transparency International releases the Corruption Perceptions Index once a year. The 180 nations and territories that make up the index are ranked according to how corrupt the public sector is thought to be. It uses a scale from 0 to 100. 100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt.
56. (B) Cybersecurity firm Promon has identified a novel Android malware named FjordPhantom that employs virtualization to target applications. It propagates through messaging services and combines app-based malware with social engineering to deceive banking customers.
57. (C) Biofortified seeds are developed through conventional breeding or genetic modification to increase the levels of specific nutrients in crops. This helps combat malnutrition and nutrient deficiencies, especially in regions where certain essential nutrients are lacking in the diet.
58. (B) In quantum computing, a qubit or quantum bit is a basic unit of quantum information—the quantum version of the classic binary bit physically realized with a two-state device. A qubit is a two-state quantum-mechanical system, one of the simplest quantum systems displaying the peculiarity of quantum mechanics.
59. (C)
60. (B) The ENACT Partnership was launched by Germany and Egypt with the International Union for Conservation of Nature to promote nature-based solutions to accelerated climate change. It was launched at the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022. It aims to promote the protection and resilience of at least 1 billion vulnerable people to climate impacts. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) hosts the partnership's secretariat.
61. (C) The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a statutory body that enforces the Competition Act, 2002. The CCI was established in 2009 by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
62. (C)
63. (B) The Prachand is India's first indigenous multi-role combat helicopter. It was developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
64. (D) The Election Commission of India (ECI) has developed an in-house software system through 'ENCORE' (Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment) to manage candidates and elections more efficiently.
65. (C) Lucy mission is NASA's first mission to explore the Jupiter Trojan asteroids. It is a solar-powered mission. It is estimated to be over 12 years long, during which the spacecraft will visit eight asteroids covering a distance of about 6-3 billion km to deepen the understanding of the 'young solar system'.
66. (C) The NIA is the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India mandated to investigate all the offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India. It was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008. The agency is empowered to deal with the investigation of terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states under written proclamation from the Ministry of Home Affairs.
67. (C) The UK government has tabled plans to add India to an expanded list of safe states. This would speed up the process of returning Indians who travel from the country illegally and rule out their chance of seeking asylum in Britain.
68. (D) The Annapurna Certificate Programme, an initiative by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), has recognized six Indian restaurants worldwide for promoting Indian culinary traditions. This annual program acknowledges restaurants contributing to India's cultural cause through cuisine on a global scale.
69. (B) NITI Aayog has released a report on the Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E).
70. (C) Houthi movement, officially called Ansar Allah ('Supporters of God'), is an Islamist political and armed organization that emerged from the Yemeni governorate of Saada in the 1990s. The Houthi movement is a predominately Zaidi Shia force, whose leadership is drawn largely from the Houthi tribe from North Yemen.
71. (D)

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72. (C) Kolkali is a traditional folk art form performed in the Malabar region of Kerala. It is also, known as Thattinmelkali, when performed on wooden stages. The dance involves moving in a circle, striking small sticks, and maintaining rhythm with special steps. The circle expands and contracts as the dance progresses.
73. (C) India is the member of all the Organizations.
74. (D) The Group of Twenty (G20) comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkiye, United Kingdom and United States) and two regional bodies, namely : the European Union and the African Union.
75. (B) Two-state solution, proposed framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states for two peoples: Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people.
76. (B)
77. (C) Tetanus is an infection caused by bacteria called Clos-tridium tetani. It often causes a person's neck and jaw muscles to lock, making it hard to open the mouth or swallow. CDC recommends vaccines for infants, Children, teens and adults to prevent tetanus.
78. (B) Aedes aegypti, the yellow fever mosquito, is a mosquito that can spread dengue fever, chikungunya, Zika fever, Mayaro and yellow fever viruses, and other disease agents.
    Malaria is transmitted by Anopheles mosquito. Japanese Encephalitis is generally spread by mosquitoes, specifically those of the Culex type.
79. (D) 80. (B)
81. (D) A light-year is a measurement of distance in space. The astronomical distances are measured in light-years, because the speed of light is constant throughout the universe and is known to high precision. One light-year equals 5,878,625,370,000 miles (9·5 trillion km).
82. (C) Sucrose, commonly known as 'table sugar' or 'cane sugar', is a carbohydrate formed from the combination of glucose and fructose. It is a natural sugar.
83. (A) Sound waves cannot travel through a vacuum. It is longitudinal waves due to which the propagation of vibration of particles is parallel to the direction of the energy wave propagation. When the atoms are set in vibration, they move back and forth. This continuous back and forth motion results in a high pressure and low pressure region in the medium.
84. (B)
85. (A) Nerve agents are a class of phosphorus containing organic compounds.
86. (C) The term 'demographic trap' is used by demographers to describe the combination of high fertility (birth rates) and declining mortality (death rates) in developing countries, resulting in a period of high population growth rate (PGR).
87. (D) Mount Marapi is located in West Sumatra. Its name implies the Mountain of Fire. With over 60 eruptions to its credit since the late 18th century, Marapi claims the title of the most active volcano in Sumatra.
88. (B)
89. (B) The Moon is Earth's only natural satellite, and it orbits our planet. It plays a significant role in causing tides on Earth and has been the subject of human exploration and study for centuries.
90. (D) The Sutlej and Yamuna rivers will be connected by the Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal (SYL), which is currently under construction. The disagreement over the sharing of Ravi-Beas water is the root cause of the long-standing dispute over the canal, which is intended to transport water from Punjab to Haryana. The river Beas joins river Sutlej in Punjab.
91. (C) It is the largest tiger reserve forest in India and a critical tiger habitat.
92. (C)
93. (D) Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary is located near Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
94. (C) River Kameng is a major tributary of Brahmaputra River.
95. (C) Zemu Glacier is located in Sikkim and Nubra Glacier is located in Ladakh.
96. (B) The Tigris is the eastern of the two great rivers that define Mesopotamia, the other being the Euphrates. The river flows south from the mountains of south-eastern Turkey through Iraq and empties into the Persian Gulf.
    The Mekong is a trans-boundary river in Southeast Asia. From the Tibetan Plateau, the river runs through China's Yunnan Province, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.
97. (C) The most common chemicals used for cloud seeding include silver iodide, potassium iodide and dry ice. After promising research, the use of hygroscopic materials, such as table salt (Sodium Chloride), is becoming more popular.
98. (D) The great Indian hornbill is one of the larger members of the hornbill family. It is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. It is naturally found in Western Ghats.
99. (A) PPCA, a coalition involving governments, businesses and organizations, focuses on transitioning from unabated coal power to clean energy. At COP28, PPCA welcomed new national and subnational governments, advocating for cleaner energy alternatives. India is not a part of PPCA as it has not committed to phasing out of coal.
100. (C) The climate of India is described as the 'monsoon' type. In Asia, this type of climate is found mainly in the south and the southeast. India receives rainfall during two seasons. About 75 per cent of the country's annual rainfall is received from the southwest monsoon, between June and September. The Northeast monsoon is also called the winter monsoon, the rainfall associated with the northeast monsoon is important for Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, north interior Karnataka, Mahe and Lakshadweep.

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Essay Contest

Question Mark on the Relevance and Effectiveness of Security Council

—Digvijay Kumar

Today, many things are happening around the world, and the world power is shifting very rapidly. The geopolitics is changing, many conflicts are taking place around the world, and every country is busy taking advantage of everything possible from all this happening around the world. The world peace and order seems to be disturbed, and to control it and save the world peace and order is the duty of UN Security Council. But today there are question marks itself on the effectiveness and relevance of Security Council. Is it even effective today or is it just nominal ? the thing is, Security Council is losing its shine, power, effectiveness and its main purpose today. And it is clearly reflected in the crisis and wars happening right now in the world. In fact, the United Nations (UN) Security Council's failure to act on Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has reignited long-smoldering global demands to overhaul the world's premier body for international peace and security.



Digvijay Kumar

Few topics generate so much talk and so little action as Security Council reform. In December 1992, the General Assembly created an open-ended working group to review equitable representation on the council. More than three decades later, that body continues to meet — with no tangible results. In October 2008, the UN formally authorized intergovernmental negotiations on the "question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council." After fifteen years of fruitless discussion, the diplomatic impasse persists in part because member states have never agreed to negotiate on the basis of a single rolling text. The impulse for reform is understandable. Nearly, eight decades after its creation, the Security Council retains the same five permanent members (P5)—China, France, Russia (following the dissolution of the Soviet Union), the United Kingdom and the United States. Since 1945, however, major players like India and Brazil have emerged, to say nothing of Japan and Germany, the long rehabilitated aggressors of World War II. Even as the UN's overall membership has nearly quadrupled (from fifty one to 193 member states), the council's composition has expanded only once, in 1965, when the addition of four elected seats grew the council from eleven to fifteen members.

Each of the P5 countries retains a veto permitting it to unilaterally block Security Council resolutions inimical to its natural interests (as Russia has done with respect to Ukraine). The result is frequent council paralysis, exacerbated by deepening geopolitical rivalry between western democracies and authoritarian China and Russia. To a growing proportion of the world's governments and citizens, the council today is both feckless and unjust, dominated by irresponsible and unrepresentative powers inclined to abuse their position rather than safeguard the peace. Restoring the council's effectiveness and legitimacy, critics contend, requires updating its anachronistic composition and unfair decision making rules to better reflect ongoing shifts in global power and emerging centers of moral authority. Unfortunately, UN Security Council members are divided over the shape of any reform, not least whether it should focus on enhancing the councils capability or its representativeness. Thanks to this diplomatic deadlock, the Security Council is trapped in amber. So questions are surely going to be raised on the effectiveness of Security Council.

Although the council has suffered previous blows-among them the ill fated US decision to invade Iraq in 2003 without its authorization, Russia's brozen aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 and ability to veto any council response have radicalized reform demands. With collective security paralyzed, another question hangs in the air— is the UN Security Council destined, like the league of Nations, for the ash heap of history ? The obstacles to council reform are daunting. They include the high procedural hurdles to amending the UN charter; divergent member state positions on the acceptable size and terms of any enlargement; disagreement over the acceptable size and terms of any enlargement; disagreement over current veto provisions and their potential extension to any new permanent members, and growing uncertainties over whether any plausible enlargement even if it made the council more representative would improve its functioning. Any change to the council's composition or voting rules would require the approval of two-thirds of UN members – including each of the P5– accompanied by relevant domestic legislation. Given intensifying geopolitical rivalry and deepening political polarization in many countries, prospects for updating the council appear slim. Yet, pressure for Security Council expansion and veto reform will surely grow as the distribution of power and the nature of security threats shift ever further from what they were in 1945. Absent structural changes, the council's performance and legitimacy will inevitably suffer. Given these stakes, the Security Council is losing. its effectiveness and it is no longer getting relevant in performing out its duties.

The structure of the Security Council with five permanent members (P5) who wield veto power and ten non-permanent elected members serving two-year terms is anachronistic, reflecting the configuration of global power at the end of World War II. Rather than act as guardians of peace, the P5 have often contributed to violence. Russia, most egregiously, is embroiled in a war with Ukraine that many fear could trigger

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Debate Contest

Biofuel Revolution will Result in Global Food Crisis

In Favour

—Digvijay Kumar

Biofuel is a liquid fuel produced from renewable sources, such as new and used vegetable oils and animal fats and is a cleaner-burning replacement for petroleum based diesel fuel.



Digvijay Kumar

To control increasing emissions of greenhouse gases from using fossil fuels in vehicles and to combat climate change, biofuels are seen as an alternative to reduce emissions from using fossil fuels in vehicles. It is now becoming a revolution to make biofuel and to use it in vehicles. But the fact that is being ignored is that biofuel revolution is resulting in global food crisis. Directly and indirectly, biofuels are also fuelling the global food crisis and are coming at the cost of denying food/food-grains to those who are not even aware of this and live in poor countries. If we see, biofuels have forced global food prices up by 75% for more than previously estimated-according to a confidential World Bank report obtained by 'The Guardian'.

Political leaders seem intent on suppressing and ignoring the strong evidence that biofuels are a major factor in recent food price rises. It is imperative that we have the full picture. While politicians concentrate on keeping industry lobbies happy, people in poor countries cannot afford enough to eat. Rising food prices have pushed 100 million people worldwide below the poverty line, estimates the World Bank, and have sparked riots from Bangladesh to Egypt. Government ministers here have described higher food and fuel prices as "the first real economic crisis of globalization". Without the increase in biofuels, global wheat and maize stocks would not have declined appreciably and price increases due to other factors would have been moderate. Production of biofuels has distorted food markets in three main ways. First, it has diverted grain away from food or fuel, with over a third of US corn now used to produce ethanol and about half of vegetable oils in the EU going towards the production of biodiesel. Second, farmers have been encouraged to set land aside for biofuel production. Third, it has sparked financial speculation in grains, driving prices up higher. Thus, this biofuel revolution is adding up to the global food crisis.

Now, Ukraine has stopped exporting its grain because it's at war. Russia's customers have stopped buying its grain because it started that war. Famine is stalking East Africa, where a brutal drought has ravaged harvests and now the region can no longer supplement its production with Ukrainian and Russian imports. Drought is also parading farms in the United States, especially in the West and the Southern Plains-another contributor to higher food prices and growing food shortages. The United Nations was warning even before the war in Europe's breadbasket that the world faced "unprecedented catastrophic levels" of food insecurity, and now that global food prices have reached an all-time high, we are facing the worst food crisis since 2008. It's a weird time to divert more grain from the food supply to fuel tanks. The amount of corn it takes to fill an SUV with ethanol could feed a person for a year, and the US and Europe could immediately replace the lost grain exports from Ukraine's breadbasket by cutting their biofuel production in half. So it's pretty obvious why this food crisis is a dumb time to accelerate biofuel production. In fact, a bunch of studies have confirmed that biofuel mandates were a leading driver of the 2008 food crisis, driving up prices by driving up demand for grain and vegetable oil. Land is much more efficient at growing food than growing energy. Using land to grow fuel induces the clearing of additional land to grow food, wiping out forests and other carbon sinks we need to save the climate. And, for the foreseeable future, the world should always be freaking out about its food supply. Thus global food crisis is getting increased by the biofuel revolution, which indeed is a matter of worry.

No matter what ends up happening in Ukraine, the world will still face a long-term food crisis after the guns go silent. Farmers will need to grow 7 quadrillion additional calories every year by 2050 to feed the growing global population, and they'll need to do it on a smaller agricultural foot-print to avoid accelerating our long-term climate crisis. In other words, our food and climate crises are largely land crises. We need the limited land on Earth to produce massive amounts of food and store massive amounts of carbon. Meanwhile, the European Union is pushing new climate policies that would devote as much as 20 per cent of the continent's farmland to growing crops for fuel and electricity, an area larger than Poland. It would take about 30 per cent of the world's crops to provide just 2 per cent of the world's energy, which would drive up food prices, speed up deforestation and ratchet up carbon emissions. The only thing most biofuels do well is funnel extra cash to farmers. Ethanol is the most common form of alcohol, the fermented magic in beer, wine and liquor. It's also a functional automotive fuel that powered the first prototype of the internal combustion engine and was once touted by Henry Ford as the future of Transportation. He was wrong- gasoline turned out to be much more efficient. But over the last few decades, corn ethanol has carved out a modest role in fuel markets because powerful politicians have seen it as a miracle elixir for

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agricultural prosperity, but in reality, it is causing global food crisis.

The question is, whether biofuels are any greener than fossil fuels. They're certainly not more efficient. Fossilized plants from millions of years ago have much higher energy density than fresh plants, and the corn ethanol (a biofuel) production process uses almost a gallon of fossil fuel for every gallon of gasoline it displaces. Still, even though planting, plowing, fertilizing, harvesting, fermenting and distilling corn produces far more emissions than extracting and refining oil. The problem is that when cornfields are used to grow fuel, farmers need to clear more carbon-absorbing natural land to replace the lost food production capacity. A 2008 paper in Science revealed that when this "indirect land—use change" was taken into account, corn-ethanol and other farm-grown fuels were much worse for the climate than gasoline. That year's food crisis basically confirmed the findings, as the ethanol boom depressed US corn exports, which encouraged Brazilian farmers to plant more soyabeans on farmer pastures to replace the missing grain, which encouraged Brazilian cattle randers to deforest the Amazon at record rates to create new pastures. More recent studies have confirmed that while biofuels made from crop residues or other waste products can help the climate, using productive land to grow fuel is a climate disaster. Biofuel revolution will surely result in global food crisis.

The biofuels industry can still point to studies that find climate benefits, but what those studies all have in common is that they downplay the danger of land-use change by assuming that biofuels will be grown on unspecified 'marginal lands' that wouldn't be able to grow food, or that biofuels will somehow inspire farmers to grow so much more food on their existing farms that they won't need to clear more land, or ironically, that biofuels will increase food prices so much that the global poor will eat less, a rather ugly source of climate benefits. Therefore, biofuel production will not be a revolution of much benefit but rather it will fuel the global food crisis. It is no prideful thing that in one country rich vehicles run so good with the help of biofuel and in another country people die of hunger and starvation or find it difficult to buy food because of very high prices. The food meant to go in their stomach is being mixed in the fuels to run vehicles on road. Morally, economically, such revolution is of no use but avoiding the problems of the poor country and food crisis. Every person in this world deserves to feed his stomach first, and then if left, the resource or the food-grains/crops could be used for something else. Thus, biofuel revolution is only resulting and will result in global food crisis. The earlier we understand this, the better it would be.

PDarpan

Test Your Knowledge

Answers with Hints

1. (C) Rukmini Devi Arundale was a famous dancer of Bharatnatyam.
2. (C) Archaeological site Lothal was discovered by Archaeologist S.R. Rao. Lothal had the world's earliest known dock, connecting the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati River.
3. (A)
4. (B) Buland Darwaza is in Fatehpur Sikari and Arhai Din Ka Jhopra is in Ajmer (Rajasthan).
5. (C) 6. (D) 7. (D)
8. (B) The vegetated coastal ecosystem of tidal marshes, mangroves and seagrasses are grouped as 'blue carbon'. These plants have high carbon burial rates.
9. (B) 10. (D)
11. (A) Kashdakari craft is a fine handicraft work of local women artisans of Meghwal community of Bikaner Region (Rajasthan).
12. (C)
13. (B) A critically endangered white-bellied heron was spotted in the Kamlang Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
14. (C)
15. (B) Kambala is a buffalo race even popular in Coastal Karnataka.
16. (C) In the history of Parliament, so far 14 members have been expelled from the house. They are H. G. Mudgal Congress MP in 1951), Narendra Kumar Kushwaha (BSP), Anna sahib M.K. Patil (BJP), Manoj Kumar (RJD), Y.G. Mahajan (BJP), Pradeep Gandhi (BJP), Suresh Chandel (BJP), Ramsevak Singh (Cong.), Lal Chandra Kol (BSP), Raja Ram Pal (BSP) all in 2005, Chhatrapal Singh Lodha (BJP – Rajaya Sabha in 2005), Indira Gandhi (Congress in 1978), Subramanian Swami (Jan Sangh – MP – Rajya Sabha in 1976), Tainted industrialist Vijay Malya, (Rajya Sabha Member) in 2016 was forced to resign just at the verge of his expulsion) Mahua Moitra (TMC-2023).
17. (B) 18. (A) 19. (C)
20. (C) People who consume fish and shellfish, which have high levels of methyl mercury, a highly toxic form of mercury, are exposed to mercury led hazards.
21. (A) 22. (D)
23. (A) Miricchakatika, a play unfolding in the era of King Plaka of the Pradyota dynasty of Ujjayani, was written by Sudraka during 5th century CE.
24. (B) Panchalas had two lineages–Northern Panchala and Southern Panchala. Northern Panchalas had Ahichchatra as their capital seat while Southern Panchalas had their capital at Kampilya. Kaushambi was the seat of Valsad.
25. (D) 26. (A)
27. (B) Jallianwala Bagh massacre was occurred during the rule of Lord Chelmsford, while Gandhi - Irwin Pact was signed during the rule of Lord Irwin.
28. (B) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose reached Singapore on 2nd July, 1943 and gave the rousing war cry of 'Dilli Chalo'.
29. (B) Prarathana Sabha was founded by Atmaram Pandukar, while Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was launched by M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi, and S.H. Chiplankar.
30. (C) 31. (D)
32. (B) Plants produce their food by the process of photosynthesis which requires two materials—carbon dioxide and water. Chlorophyll is the inner element of the leaves.
33. (D) 34. (A) 35. (C) 36. (C) 37. (A)
38. (A)

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CONCENTRIC Quiz

Special on Global Military Exercise

1. Which of the following countries participates in exercise 'VINBAX' – first conducted in 2018 ?
(A) Armed forces of India and Vietnam
(B) Armed forces of India and Israel
(C) Armed forces of China and Israel
(D) Armed forces of Israel and Vietnam

2. Which of the following joint military exercises is conducted between the Indian army and the Nepali army ?
(A) Exercise HADR
(B) Exercise SURYA KIRAN
(C) Exercise Malabar
(D) Exercise Talisman Sabre

3. Choose the correct match among the countries included in the Malabar Exercise 2023 :
(A) India, Australia and Japan Navies
(B) India, Australia and the US Navies
(C) India and the US Navies
(D) India, Australia, Japan and the US Navies

4. Indian Air Force participated in air combat Exercise Pitch Black for the first time in the year :
(A) 2018 (B) 2001
(C) 2020 (D) 2022

5. Which is not the correct statements about Exercise SIMBEX ?
(A) The 30th edition of the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) held in Singapore between the Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Indian Navy (IN)
(B) For the first time, both navies also deployed a submarine each for the exercise in 2022
(C) The submarine rescue joint standard operating procedures (JSOP) document signed between both navies
(D) The 29th edition of SIMBEX was hosted by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam (India)

6. Which of the following exercise aims at enhancing maritime domain awareness optimising maritime co-ordination amongst the participating navies in the Indo-Pacific Region ?
(A) Exercise 'La Perouse' 2023
(B) Exercise Cobra Warrior 2023
(C) Exercise Sea Dragon 2023
(D) Exercise SIMBEX 2023

7. The largest air exercise run by the Royal Air Force (United Kingdom) is :
(A) Exercise SIMBEX 2023
(B) Exercise Cobra Warrior 2023
(C) Air Exercise 'Cope India' 2023
(D) Exercise 'La Perouse' 2023

8. Choose the correct match for the military exercise :
(A) Exercise SIMBEX—Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Indian Navy (IN)
(B) Exercise Frinjax—Indian Army and French Army
(C) Exercise 'La Perouse'—India Air Force and United States Air Force
(D) Exercise "VINBAX'—Armed forces of India and Vietnam

9. Which of the following air exercises is/are conducted by the NATO Nations ?
(A) Air Defender 2023
(B) Exercise 'Cope India' 2023
(C) Exercise Frinjax
(D) Both (A) and (B)

10. Which of the following Multinational Joint Exercise inaugurated by Mongolian President ?
(A) Exercise Khaan Quest 2023
(B) Exercise - Air Defender 2023
(C) Exercise 'Cope India' 2023
(D) Exercise Frinjax

11. Which of the following exercises is/are hosted by India - the Northern Bay of Bengal - in 2023 ?
(A) Exercise 'Bongosagar'
(B) Exercise - Air Defender
(C) Exercise CORPAT
(D) Both (A) and (B)

12. Indian Navy participates in KAKADU Exercise 2022 which is hosted by :
(A) People's Liberation Army
(B) Royal Australian Navy
(C) The Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF)
(D) Both (A) and (B)

13. Which of the following exercises is hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) ?
(A) AUSINDEX exercise
(B) Pitch Black exercise
(C) RIMPAC exercise
(D) AUSINDEX maritime exercise

14. Which is not biennial exercise ?
(A) Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise
(B) Pitch Black–Air Combat Exercise
(C) Exercise Cobra Warrior
(D) Exercise Bongosagar

15. In which of the following exercises India participated first time in 2022 ?
(A) Exercise Vostok
(B) Exercise Mitra Shakti
(C) Exercise 'Tiger Triumph'
(D) Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise

16. Tri-Services Amphibious HADR Exercise, 'Tiger Triumph' is joint exercise between :
(A) The US and Australian Militaries
(B) The Indian and US Militaries
(C) The Australian and UK Militaries
(D) The Indian and US Militaries

17. When the first edition of Exercise RIMPAC conducted ?
(A) 2001 as an biennial exercise
(B) 1974 as an biennial exercise
(C) 1971 as an annual exercise
(D) 1988 as an biennial exercise

18. The exercise - Jimex conducted annually between India and :
(A) United States of America
(B) China
(C) Japan
(D) Australia

19. Which of the following ships participated in the Exercise IN-USN SALVEX 2023 ?
(A) The INS Nireekshak from the Indian Navy and the USNS Salvor from the US Navy
(B) The INS Satpura from the Indian Navy and the USNS Salvor from the US Navy
(C) Indigenously built guided missile frigate INS Sahyadri and fleet tanker INS Jyoti and the USNS Salvor from the US Navy
(D) All of the above

20. Which of the following countries attended the 10th edition Exercise Talisman Sabre (TS23) as observer ?
(A) Military personnel from India and Thailand
(B) Military personnel from the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand
(C) Military personnel from India, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand
(D) Military personnel from Singapore, and Thailand

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Concentric Quiz

ENTRY FORM

Special on Global Military Exercise

PRATIYOGITA DARPAN

Last Date for Sending February 15, 2024

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- No. of Questions Solved .....

ANSWERS FORM

Q. No.	A	B	C	D	Q. No.	A	B	C	D	Q. No.	A	B	C	D	Q. No.	A	B	C	D
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	11.	☐	☐	☐	☐	16.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	12.	☐	☐	☐	☐	17.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	8.	☐	☐	☐	☐	13.	☐	☐	☐	☐	18.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	9.	☐	☐	☐	☐	14.	☐	☐	☐	☐	19.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	☐	☐	10.	☐	☐	☐	☐	15.	☐	☐	☐	☐	20.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Rules and Regulations

- All students or those appearing in competitive examinations can take part in this contest.
- Candidates taking part in quiz contest will necessarily have to send their entries by the fixed date. Entries are to be sent by ordinary post. Please mark your envelope **'Quiz–Pratiyogita Darpan'** on the top left hand side.
- Answers given only on the Entry Form of the magazine will be admissible.
- In the form there are four squares against each question number. Contestants should put a Tick (✓) in the square for the answer they think is correct. Giving more than one answer to a question will disqualify it.
- Contestants should essentially write the number of questions they have solved.
- Marks will be deducted for wrong answers.
- The candidate sending the maximum number of correct answers will be given ₹ 1000 as first prize. Next two candidates after that will get ₹ 800 and ₹ 600 as second and third prize respectively. If there are more than one candidate eligible for a prize, the amount will be equally distributed among them.
- Write your name in English in Capital Letters. The name must be the one which appears in your bank account. Also, write the bank account number, IFSC code of the bank and your mobile phone number.
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Mental Exercise — Test Your Knowledge

1. Which of the following statemenst is incorrect about the Theosophical Society ?
(A) Theosophical Society was formed in New York City in 1875
(B) International Headquarter of the Theosophical Society is in Adyar (near Chennai)
(C) Rukmini Devi Arundate, famous Kathakalli dancer, was a member of the Theosophical Society
(D) Theosophical Society was founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge

2. Consider the following facts about India's ancient site 'Lothal''—
I. It is located in Bhal Region of State of Gujarat
II. Lothal was a port city and is believed to have been built in 2200 BC.
III. Lothal was a major hub of trade of goods like jewellery, gems and beeds.
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

3. Which classical dance of India is considered to be a fire dance ?
(A) Bharatanatyam
(B) Mohiniyattam
(C) Kathak
(D) Odishi

4. Consider the following pairs—
I. Buland Darwaza—Delhi
II. Atala Mosque —Jounpur (U.P.)
III. Qadam Rasul Mosque —Gaur (W. Bengal)
IV. Arhai Din Ka Jhopra —Lahore (Pakistan)
How many pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?
(A) Only I (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

5. Consider the following pairs—
I. Jamia Millia Islamia – Dr. Zakir Hussain
II. Aligarh Muslim University – Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan
III. Gujarat Vidyapeeth – Mahatma Gandhi
How many pairs given above is/are matched correctly ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

6. Consider the following statements—
I. The faith of 'Birsait' was started by tribal leader Birsa Munda.
II. Members of the Munda and oraon community joined the 'Birsat' in large number.
III. State of Jharkhand was created on the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda on November 15, 2000.
IV. A scheme of holistic development of Particularly vulnerable tribal Groups (PVTG) was launched on November 15, 2023.
How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

7. India was pushed in to its worst ever balance of payment (BoP) crisis in 1990-91 because of the which reason—
I. Breakdown of the USSR
II. The first Gulf War
III. Slowdown in Europe
How many of the options given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only III
(D) All I, II, III

8. Which of the following is tagged as Blue Carbon Stock ?
I. Tidal Marshes
II. Mangroves
III. Seagrasses
How many options given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

9. Which of the following statements is incorrect about Sangai deer ?
(A) It is found in Keibul Lamjao National Park in Manipur
(B) Chothe tribe protects Sangai deer
(C) It is state animal of Manipur
(D) It is a dancing deer

10. Consider the following—
I. Garba dance (Gujarat)
II. Kalbelia dance (Rajasthan)
III. Chhau dance (Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha)
IV. Mudiyettu (Kerala)
How many of the above is/are included in UNESCO's Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage List ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

11. Kashidakari work (Craft) is associated with which of the following states ?
(A) Rajasthan
(B) Jammu and Kashmir
(C) Telangana
(D) Bihar

12. What is 'Muziris' ?
(A) Coin
(B) Terracota Pottery
(C) Port City
(D) An Officer in Akbar's court

13. The Kamlong Tiger Reserve is located in—
(A) Assam
(B) Arunachal Pradesh
(C) Sikkim
(D) Manipur

14. Consider the following facts about the 'Nilgiri Tahr'—
I. Nilgiri Tahr is called as the pride of Western Ghats.

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II. It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.
III. It is an endemic species.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

15. Kambala festival is associated with which animal ?
(A) Bulls (B) Buffaloes
(C) Horses (D) Cocks

16. Consideration the following statement in relation to expulsion of Trimul Congress MP Mahua Moitra from Lok Sabha—
I. Mahua Moitra expelled from the Lok Sabha on the charge of cash-for query case.
II. She is the 14th MP to be expelled from the Parliament since the 1st Parliament.
III. H.G. Mudgal, a Congress MP, became the first ever member of Parliament to be expelled from the House.

How many statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

17. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the 'Geoglyphs' ?
(A) Geoglyphs are rock art produced on the surface earth either by positioning rocks, rock fragments or by reduction techniques
(B) Geoglyphs are cave paintings
(C) Geoglyphs are critical typology of material heritage being the only evidence pointing to the presence of human settlement in Konkan region
(D) They belong to mesolithic era till early historic era

18. Which geographical region of modern day India was known as 'Aparanta' ?
(A) Konkan
(B) Chhota Nagpur Plateau
(C) Vidarbha
(D) Tripura

19. Which of the following statements is/are correct about 'Kolkali' ?
I. It is a folk dance.
II. It is performed in the North Malabar region of Kerala.
III. Kolkali is widespread among the Dravidians.

How many of the above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

20. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the 'Mercury' ?
(A) It is a naturally occurring chemical element found in rock in the earth's crust.
(B) It is used in thermometers, flourescent light bulbs and some electrical switches.
(C) The people are exposed to mercury by eating pork which has high levels of methylemercury, a highly toxic form of mercury
(D) Coal based thermal power plants are the largest source of mercury emissions

21. Geminids and ursids are—
(A) Meteoroids
(B) Stars
(C) Dwarf Planets
(D) Pulsars

22. Consider the following political entities of ancient India—
I. Sakyas of Kapilavastu
II. Lichchavis of Vaishali
III. Mallas of Pava
IV. Koliya of Ramagrama

How many of the above were republics ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

23. Which of the following pairs of authors and their literary works is not matched correctly ?
(A) Visakhadatta —Mircchakatika
(B) Kalidas —Malavikagnimitram
(C) Vatsyayana—Kamsutra
(D) Magh—Sisupalvadha

24. Which of the following pairs is not matched correctly in relation to Mahajanapadas ?
(A) Kosal—Sravasti
(B) Panchala—Kaushambi
(C) Matsya—Viratnagar
(D) Asmaka—Paithan

25. Mandalams, Nadus, Sthala and Grama were the part of administrative structure of—
(A) Chola Empire
(B) Pandyan Empire
(C) Pallava Empire
(D) Vijayanagara Empire

26. Which of the following has been recognised as one of the world's most beautiful airport and awarded world special prize for interiors at the UNESCO's 2023 Prix versailles ?
(A) Terminal 2 (T2) of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru
(B) Terminal 3 (T3) of Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi
(C) Terminal 1 (T1) of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad
(D) Terminal 1 (T1) of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata

27. Consider the following pairs—
I. Abolition of Sati Pratha —Lord William Bentinck
II. Abolitions of Female Infanticide —Lord Hardinge I
III. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre —Lord Reading
IV. Gandhi — Irwin Pact —Lord Willingdon

How many pairs given above is/are matched correctly ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

28. Where from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose gave the rousing war cry of 'Dilli Chalo' ?
(A) Imphal (B) Singapore
(C) Berlin (D) Kabul

29. Which of the following pairs is not matched correctly ?
(A) Aatmiya Sabha —Raja Ram Mohan Roy
(B) Prarthana Sabha —M.G. Ranade
(C) Tatva Bodhini Sabha —Devendera Nath Thakur
(D) Theosophical Society —Helna Blavatsky

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30. Consider the following pairs—
I. Matangini Hazra —Gandhi Buri
II. Sarojini Naidu —Nightingale of India
III. Aruna Asaf Ali —Grand Old Lady
How many pairs given above is/are matched correctly ?
(A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) All 3
(D) None of the above

31. Consider the following—
I. They can move by themselves.
II. They need food, air and water for their survival and growth.
III. They are sensitive.
IV. They respire and excrete.
How many of the above is/are correct about the living things ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

32. Raw materials for Photosynthesis is/are—
I. Carbon dioxide
II. Water
III. Chlorophyll
IV. Fertilizer
Correct code is—
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

33. Consider the following pairs in relation to specific organs for respiration among different animals.
I. Amoeba—Cell membrane
II. Earthworms—Skin
III. Fish/Prawns—Gills
IV. Grasshoppers—Spiracles
How may pairs given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

34. Which of the following is a strong acid ?
(A) Hydrochloric Acid
(B) Ethanoic Acid
(C) Formic Acid
(D) Carbonic Acid

35. Which of the following is the least reactive metal ?
(A) Sodium (B) Calcium
(C) Gold (D) Mercury

36. Normally, Covalent compounds are insoluble in water. Consider the following covalent compounds—
I. Glucose II. Naphthalene
III. Sugar IV. Urea
How many of the above is/are soluble in water ?
(A) Only 1 (B) Only 2
(C) Only 3 (D) All 4

37. Here are given Assertion (A) and Reason (R) .
Assertion (A) : Diamond is made up of carbon only.
Reason (R) : If diamond is burnt in oxygen, then only carbon diaoxide gas is formed.
Correct code is—
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are corrct but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) Only (A) is correct
(D) Only (R) is correct

38. Which of the following is not a contagious disease ?
(A) Malaria (B) Covid-19
(C) Measles (D) Syphilis

[For Answer See Page 159]

Continued from Page 157

a third world war. Other permanent members have also been implicated in major conflicts on the Security Council's agenda, including the United Kingdom's support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, France's interventions in the Sohel, China's support for Myanmar's military Junta, and the United States' (as well as Russia's) ongoing involvement in Syria. The council is also not representative of the world's people. Nations from the global South make up more than two-thirds of the UN's membership, while the Security Council represents only 8 per cent of member states. When the UN was established in 1945, most of Africa was still under colonial rule. The only Security Council expansion to date took place in 1965, in the early stages of the continent's decolonization. Although, African conflicts take up over 50 per cent of council meetings and 70 per cent of its resolutions, no African country has a permanent seat only three non-permanent seats that rotate among the continent's sub-regional blocs. Many African leaders see this as a 'istorical injustice' and have argued that the council must be reformed to better represent the world's population and reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.

The current situation in Gaza which is witnessing heavy Israeli bombing in retaliation for the terrible attack carried out by Hamas in Israel on October 7 is once again profiling the ineffectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in maintaining international peace and security. Israel's action has already led to the death of over 6000 persons including children and women. Ironically, all this is happening as October 24 marked, in the words of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, "78 years since the UN Charter entered into Force". UNSC's specific mandate is to maintain international peace and security. The UN Charter has empowered it to do so. It can take action under Chapter 7 of the Charter's provisions to compel all member—States to adhere to its decisions. Yet, it has consistently failed to uphold and implement its mandate. The reason for its failure lies in the essential compromise which sits at its core : that any action which it takes should be in harmony with the interests of its 5 permanent members (P5). The P5, China, France, Britain, Russia and the United States who were the victors of the Second World War empowered themselves with the right to veto any decision of the Security Council. Thus, if anyone of them felt that a UNSC resolution was harmful to its interests, it could simply veto it. That has been done since UN's establishment. Recently, in the current Israel-Hamas conflict, a resolution moved by Brazil on October 18 which is currently a non-permanent member of the council calling for "humanitarian pauses for full, safe and unhindered for UN agencies and their partners" to access Gaza was vetoed by the United States.

Thus, there are several questions on the effectiveness of the Security Council and its relevance in today's world. The questions raised are very genuine which will help introspect the weak areas in Security Council and help strengthen it to maintain security and peace in the world and together we live happily with the motto "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family." PDarpan

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75/4A, Kalibari Marg
New Delhi–110 001

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Remalia Syiem
Shillong
Meghalaya–793 002

Third Prize Winner



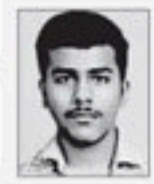
Gayatri Vitthalrao Patil
Ranpise Nagar
Akola
Maharashtra–444 001

Debate Competition

Topic : Biofuel Revolution will Result in Global Food Crisis

Winners

In Favour



Digvijay Kumar
75/4A, Kalibari Marg
New Delhi–110 001

Against the Topic

N.A.

Quiz Contest

(Special on Geomorphology)

First Prize Winner

Prathamesh S. Sinha
Darjeeling
West Bengal–734 426

Second Prize Winner

Malik Sarfaraz
Air Force Station Nal Bikaner
Rajasthan–334 001

Third Prize Winner

Ekram Ali
C-210/1, Manara Apartment,
Thokar No. 8
Saheen Bagh
Delhi–110 025

Answers

1. (A)	2. (C)	3. (A)	4. (D)	5. (A)
6. (A)	7. (B)	8. (B)	9. (D)	10. (A)
11. (B)	12. (D)	13. (C)	14. (B)	15. (C)
16. (D)	17. (B)	18. (A)	19. (C)	20. (A)

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AROUND THE NATION

Round The Half Year

41 Workers Trapped in Silkyara Tunnel Uttarakhand Rescued

On 28th November, 2023, After enduring a 17-day ordeal, the 41 workers who were trapped inside a tunnel in Uttarakhand were finally pulled out in a mammoth cross-team operation that took hundreds of man hours was handled by personnel of the National Disaster Relief Force, with their state counterparts providing support. The collapse may have been caused by a geological fault, known as a 'shear zone'. In geology, a shear zone is a thin zone within the Earth's crust or upper mantle that has been strongly deformed, due to the walls of rock on either side of the zone slipping past each other. With the help of Rat-hole mining, a banned practice saved 41 lives.

'Operation Zindagi' was launched by the State Government to save the trapped workers. Uttarakhand CM has announced that ₹ 1 lakh will be given to each of the 41 construction workers.

One Nation, One Registration Platform

Recently, the National Medical Commission (NMC) made an announcement about the reforms it will make into "Medical Practitioners and Licence to Practice Medicine".

Key Points :

- The aim is to eliminate duplication, red tape and allow the public to access information on any physician working in India.
- Undergraduate students on NMR will receive a masked ID, which will be unmasked upon course completion, allowing them to update qualifications and access state licenses for work across the country.
- The database will be available to the general public. This will contain relevant information about a medical practitioner's qualifications, date of registration, place of working [name of hospital/institute], speciality, year of passing, university, name of the institute/university where qualification was obtained etc.
- Commission has also signed a MoU with the Quality Council of India (QCI) for rating medical institutions in India. Both government and private medical colleges will be rated based on the quality of medical education they provide, from the 2024-25 academic session.

Inauguration of LCH Prachand

Recently, the Army's Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) successfully carried out inaugural firing of 70 mm rockets and 20 mm turret guns.

About LCH Prachand

- It was designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL).
- It was designed for the Indian armed forces operating in deserts and mountainous areas.
- The LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 metres (16,400 ft), which makes it ideal to operate in the high altitude areas of the Siachen glacier.
- It is also capable of firing a range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles and can destroy air defence operations of the enemy.

Centre to Depute National Level Monitors to Oversee Livestock Schemes

Recently, The Centre has decided to deploy National Level Monitors (NLM) to oversee the implementation of its livestock schemes including National Livestock Mission and Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

About National Level Monitors (NLM)

- The Department of Animal Husbandry implements the National Programme for Dairy Development and Livestock Health and Disease Control, which are also monitored by NLMs.
- This monitoring aims to ensure Ministry programmes are implemented according to guidelines, follow processes, and consider villagers' views, suggestions for improvement, and transparent, unbiased, and fair beneficiary selection.
- Monitoring will assess distribution of incentives to paravets, technicians, and farmers, and uploading real-time data on vaccination, disease monitoring, and artificial insemination on the National Digital Livestock Mission.
- NLMs are also proposed to be deputed to verify facts or conduct preliminary inquiries in cases of serious complaints from people's representatives and farmers regarding misuse of funds.

The NLMs will be third-party independent monitors —individuals and institutions deployed by the government. Individual NLMs will be selected from among retired Civil/Defence Services Officers, and academia.

India Flags off First International Cruise Liner

On 3rd November, 2023, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways flagged off the maiden voyage of the vessel Costa Serena, and the first International Cruise Liner in India from Mumbai.

Key Points :

- The initiative aligns with the 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign, reflecting the government's emphasis on promoting tourism.
- The development of cruise and lighthouse tourism is part of the Sagarmala Programme, which aims to establish India as the premier cruise hub in the Asia Pacific region by 2030.

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- The goal is to increase the **annual number of cruise passengers in India to 18 lakhs by 2030**, up from the current figure of 4-72 lakhs.
- India plans to have **25 operational cruise terminals by 2047,** with an estimated annual passenger count of 5 million.

Joint Exercise of Navies of India and Bangladesh at Northern Bay of Bengal

The 4th edition of Bilateral Exercise BONGOSAGAR-23 and the 5th edition of Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) by the two navies were conducted in the Northern Bay of Bengal from 7-9 November, 2023. Ships and aircraft from both navies undertook joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), and subsequently conducted maritime exercises to enhance interoperability.

Centre Extends UAPA Ban on Eight Meitei Extremist Organisations

On 13 November, 2023, The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reportedly issued a notification, declaring eight 'Meitei' extremism organisations as 'unlawful associations' under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for advocating secession of Manipur from India through armed struggle.

The eight organisations are the Peoples' Liberation Army generally known as PLA, and its political wing, the Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF), the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and its armed wing, the Manipur Peoples' Army (MPA), the Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and its armed wing, the 'Red Army', the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) and its armed wing, also called the 'Red Army', the Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL), the Coordination Committee (CorCom) and the Alliance for Socialist Unity Kangleipak (ASUK).

The notification collectively referred the outfits as 'Meitei Extremist Organisations'.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

It was enacted in 1967 and was amended to be modelled as an anti-terror law in 2004 and 2008. In 2019, Act was amended to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.

Provisions of the UAPA :

- **Section 3 :** The government has powers to declare an association 'unlawful'. Declaring an organisation an unlawful organisation includes the criminalisation of its membership and the forfeiture of the properties of the organisation.
- **Section 4 :** The government is mandated to send the notification to the Unlawful Activities Prevention Tribunal within 30 days of issuing the gazette notification to have the ban ratified.

  Constitution of the tribunal : The tribunal consists of only one person, who has to be a High Court judge.
- **Section 7 :** The government has power to prohibit the use of funds of an unlawful association.
- **Section 8 :** All places that are used by the unlawful association can be notified and seized.

Bihar Governor's Nod for Bill Raising Quota from 50% to 65%

On 21st November, 2023, the Bihar government issued the gazette notification for the two quota bills after governor assent the Bihar Reservation of vacancies in posts and services (For SC, ST, EBC and OBC) Amendment Bill and the Bihar (In Admission In Educational, Institutions) Reservation Amendment Bill, 2023 paving the way for increase in quota from the existing 50% to 65%.

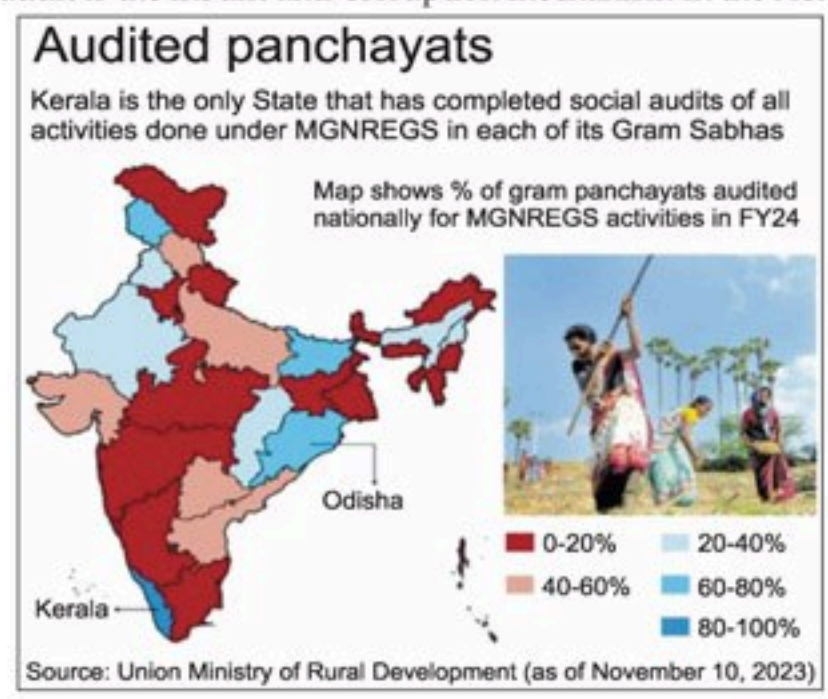
After the release of Caste Based Survey 2022, the state government has decided to increase the reservation quota for SCs, STs, EBCs and Backward Castes in educational institutions and public jobs in proportion to the increase of their population.

Key Provisions of Bihar Reservation Amendment Bill :

- According to the legislation, named the Bihar Reservation Amendment Bill, quota for Extremely Backward Class (EBC) will be raised from the existing 18% to 25%; for Backward Class (BC) from 12% to 18%; for Scheduled Caste (SC) from 16% to 20%; and for Scheduled Tribe (ST), the quota will be doubled, from 1% to 2%.
- The existing 3% reservation for BC women has been scrapped.
- The 10 per cent EWS quota has been earmarked for the poor among the general category and it has not changed. The total quota limit will be effectively up to 75 per cent now and 25 per cent will remain unreserved.
- The pattern for reservation quota has been fixed as per reservation in government jobs for these castes.

MGNREGS Audit Crosses 50% Local Bodies in Just Six States

On 10th November, 2023, According to the social audits revealed that out of the 34 States and union territories only six have completed social audit of works done under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in more than 50% of gram panchayat. And Kerala is the only State to cover 100% gram panchayats. High rate of corruption is one of the primary complaints against the scheme and social audit is the inbuilt anti-corruption mechanism in the Act.



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These statistics are sourced from the Management Information System (MIS) on Social Audit maintained by the Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

Ministry Asks States to Encourage Use of SATHEE Portal

Recently, the Ministry of Education (MoE) announced that it would write to every state to urge aspirant to use the recently built SATHEE (Self-Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams) online portal for JEE and NEET exam preparation.

About the SATHEE (Self-Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams) Portal :

- SATHEE is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.
- SATHEE is an open learning platform available to students at no cost. It aims to bridge the gap for students in society who are not able to afford the costly Private coaching guidance.
- SATHEE's AI Chabot helps students align their learning needs, aligning with the National Education Policy's goal of providing inclusive and high-quality education to remote areas.
- It will have preparation materials for students in English, Hindi, and other regional languages of India so that students can prepare for exams like JEE and NEET.
- It will be useful for candidates who will be preparing for CAT, GATE, UPSC, etc. It will also allow candidates to gain experience in coaching centres.
- Pan India mock tests are held every weekend, with the same look and feel adopted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for conducting the JEE. "This will entail subject-wise tests, questions not attempted marked in a certain colour, detailed performance analysis.
- The platform will have videos made by the faculty members of IITs and IISC to help students prepare for the competitive examinations. The videos would also help students learn concepts and revise topics they are weak at.

Centre Exempts CERT–In from Purview of RTI Act

Recently, The Union government has added the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) among a list of organisations that are exempted from the ambit of the Right to Information Act (RTI).

Key Highlights :

- The Centre has used its powers given under subsection (2) of Section 24 of the RTI Act to exempt CERT-In from the purview of the transparency law.
- Using those powers, the Centre has included CERT-In at serial number 27 in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act.
- There are 26 other intelligence and security organisations established by the Union government such as the Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Directorate of Enforcement, National Technical Research Organisation that are exempt under RTI.

About CERT-In

The CERT-In is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur. One of its primary objectives is enhancing "security awareness among common citizens". It functions under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Rice Research Station Named after M.S. Swaminathan

Recently, the Rice Research Station at Mankombu in Kuttanad, Alappuzha, under the Kerala Agricultural University has been renamed M.S. Swaminathan Rice Research Centre.

Key Facts :

- The research centre has played a key role in Kuttanad's agricultural advancements and it was renamed in memory of the contributions made by agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan who had his roots in Kuttanad. Swaminathan died in September this year.
- The Rice Research Centre was established in 1940 with the financial support of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. It was brought under the Kerala Agricultural University in 1972.

President of India Inaugurates First Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights

On 12th September, 2023, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the First Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights in New Delhi. It organised by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome and hosted from 12th to 15th September by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in collaboration with Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Authority, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), and ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR).

Lahari Bai—the Brand Ambassador of Millets (Shree Ann)

Lahari Bai (27-year-old) was awarded by the President Draupadi Murmu with a cash amount of ₹ 1,50,000, a citation and a memento at the investiture ceremony of the Farmers' Rights Global symposium. Lahari Bai belongs to the Baiga community and resides in Bajag tehsil of Dindori district (Madhya Pradesh). She has developed a seed bank of rare cereal species like Kodo, Kutki, Sanwa, Kaag, Sikia, Madua. She started giving the seeds away for free to 64 other towns. The Budget of 2023 also focused on Millets. The Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level.

PM Launches India's First Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) on 20th October

On 20th October, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor at Sahibabad RapidX Station, Uttar

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Pradesh. He will also flag off the RapidX train connecting Sahibabad to Duhai Depot, marking the launch of Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in India. The foundation stone for Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor was laid by the Prime Minister on 8th March, 2019.

About The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

- RRTS is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high-frequency commuter transit system with speed of 180 Kmph. RRTS is a transformational, regional development initiative, which is designed to provide high-speed trains for intercity commuting every 15 minutes.
- A total of eight RRTS corridors have been identified to be developed in NCR, out of which three corridors have been prioritised to be implemented in Phase-I including Delhi–Ghaziabad–Meerut Corridor; Delhi–Gurugram–SNB–Alwar Corridor; and Delhi–Panipat Corridor.
- RRTS being developed in the country, is a state-of-the-art regional mobility solution. PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the RRTS network will have extensive multi-modal-integration with Railway stations, Metro stations, Bus services etc.

PM Launches Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch 511 Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras in Maharashtra on 19th October, 2023, These Kendras are being established across 34 rural districts of Maharashtra.

The Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras will conduct skill development training programs across various sectors to provide employment opportunities to rural youth. Each Kendra will train about 100 youngsters in at least two vocational courses. The training is being provided by empanelled industry partners and agencies under National Skill Development Council. Establishment of these Kendras will help the region attain significant strides towards developing a more competent and skilled manpower.

The 2nd Edition of the National Cyber Security Exercise 'Bharat NCX 2023'

The 2nd Edition of the National Cyber Security Exercise 2023 'Bharat NCX 2023' was conducted as a hybrid exercise from 9th to 20th Oct., 2023 with the aim to train senior management and technical personnel of Government/ Critical Sector organizations and Public and Private agencies on contemporary cyber threats and handling cyber incidents and response. The participants were trained on various key cyber security areas such as Intrusion Detection Techniques, Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP), Vulnerability Handling and Penetration Testing, Network Protocols and Data Flows, Digital Forensics, etc.

PM Inaugurates Global Maritime India Summit 2023

On 17th October, 2023, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated 3rd edition of Global Maritime India Summit 2023 in Mumbai to aim to prepare blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy. The first Maritime India summit was held in 2016 in Mumbai while the Second Maritime Summit was held virtually in 2021. The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for projects worth more than ₹ 23,000 crore that are aligned with the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047' for the Indian maritime blue economy. The Summit provides an excellent platform for attracting investment in the country's maritime sector.

Mera Yuva Bharat Platform Launched

The Indian government gave approval to establish an autonomous body Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) to serve youth development and youth led development and provide equitable access to youth to actualize their aspirations and build Viksit Bharat.

My Bharat will provide benefit to youth in the age group of 15-29 years. This is in the line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National youth policy. However, the beneficiaries of programme aimed specifically at youths between the age group of 10 and 19.

The Mera Yuva Bharat (My Bharat) will be launched on 31st October, 2023 on National Unity Day.

New Indian Air Force Ensign

- On 8th October, 2023, the Chief of Air Staff unveiled the new IAF Ensign. The RIAF Ensign comprised of the Union Jack in the upper left canton and the RIAF roundel (Red, White & Blue) on the fly side.
- Post-Independence, the Indian Air Force Ensign was created by replacing the Union Jack with the Indian tri colour and the RAF roundels with the IAF tri colour roundel in the lower right canton.
- A new Indian air force Ensign has now been created to better reflect the values of the Indian Air Force by the inclusion of the Air Force Crest in the top right corner of the Ensign, towards the fly side.
- The IAF Crest has the national symbol, the Ashoka lion on the top with the words 'सत्यमेव जयते' in Devanagari script. Below the Ashoka lion is a Himalayan eagle with its wings spread, denoting the fighting qualities of the IAF. A ring in light blue colour encircles the Himalayan eagle with the words 'भारतीय वायु सेना' The motto of the IAF 'नभः स्पृशं दनभतम्' is inscribed below Himalayan eagle in golden Devanagari.

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) is a merged scheme including 3 Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely : Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) and has been implemented since 2021-22 with an aim to reduce poverty of the SC communities by generation of additional employment opportunities through Skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives. The Scheme has three components :

1. Development of SC dominated villages into an 'Adarsh Gram'.
2. 'Grants-in-aid' for District/State-level Projects for socio-economic betterment of SCs that may include creation of infrastructure in SC dominated villages,

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construction of Hostels/Residential schools, Comprehensive Livelihood Projects and financial assistance towards loans taken by beneficiaries.

3. Construction of Hostels in higher educational institutions which are top-ranked as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of Government of India and are funded by the Centre / State / UT Governments either fully or partially.

EU and India Holds Maiden Joint Naval Exercise

On 24th October, 2023, the European Union (EU) and India conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea to reinforce naval maritime security cooperation in support of the region, followed by the third meeting of the EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue on 5th October, 2023 in Brussels. The session also helped deepen ties between Ghanaian officials and representatives of the Indian, EU and EU Member States missions to Ghana and signalled the common determination to uphold the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

President of India Inaugurates Gandhi Vatika at Gandhi Darshan

On 4th September, 2023, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu unveiled the 12 feet high statue of Mahatma Gandhi and inaugurated 'Gandhi Vatika' at Gandhi Darshan, New Delhi. This initiative was organized by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti with India's celebration of 75 years of independence and its tenure as the G20 presidency. The statue of Mahatma Gandhi measured 12 feet, unveiled at the entrance of the Gandhi Darshan. Gandhi Darshan is located near the Rajghat, where the Father of the Nation was cremated.

Women's Reservation in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies : Constitution (106th Amendment) Act 2023 Notified

The President of India, on September 29, 2023, has given assent to the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act 2023, which provides 1/3rd reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. Accordingly, the Ministry of Law and Justice notified the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 on the same day to further amend the Constitution of India.

Though, it was introduced as the Constitution (128th) Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha, now it will be known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act as some proposed constitutional **amendments are yet to be passed by Parliament.**

During the special session of Parliament (19-22 September, 2023), Prime Minister Narendra Modi had described the law as 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam'. Lok Sabha passed the Constitution Amendment Bill with 454 votes in favour and two against it on 20th September, 2023. The Rajya Sabha passed the bill unanimously with 214 votes in favour and none against it, on 21st September, 2023.

Constitutionally the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 should be ratified by 50 per cent of the state assemblies since it mandates mandatory change in the composition of each Assembly constituency. According to a government source, the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 does not require ratification by the states since it doesn't change the actual number of seats that the states have in Parliament. "So state representation in Parliament remains unaffected."

Key features of the Act are following :

- **New clauses have been inserted in Article 239-AA that focuses on :**
  - 1/3rd of the seats that have to be filled by direct election will be reserved for women (including women belonging to Scheduled Castes).
  - Reservation of seats for women in Legislative Assembly of Delhi. 1/3rd of the seats for Scheduled Castes will be reserved for women.
- **Article 330-A has been inserted relating to : Reservation of seats for women in Lok Sabha or House of the People :**
  - 1/3rd of the seats that have to be filled by direct election will be reserved for women (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).
  - 1/3rd of the total number of seats reserved under Article 330(2) will be reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes.
- **Article 332-A has been inserted relating to : Reservation of seats for women in the Legislative Assembly of every State :**
  - 1/3rd of the seats that have to be filled by direct election will be reserved for women (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).
  - 1/3rd of the total number of seats reserved under Article 332(3) will be reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes.
- Thus, the Act provides vertical reservation to women (1/3rd of total seats in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly of each State have been reserved for women) as well as horizontal reservation (1/3 of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies will be reserved for the women of the corresponding categories).
- Rotation of seats will be exercised after delimitation exercise.
- The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period.

The law, however, will be implemented after the next census and the subsequent delimitation exercise—redrawing of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies—will determine the particular seats that are to be reserved for women.

Government Announces NCERT as Deemed-to-be-University

Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship announced that NCERT got the status of a Deemed-to-be-University during 63rd Foundation Day of NCERT in New Delhi. The Minister also

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inaugurated a new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laboratory of the CIET. The Jadui Pitara —a play-based learning-teaching material tailored for children between the age group of 3-8 years developed by NCERT will come up as a instrument of change that will benefit 10 crore children of the country. NCERT has established a formidable presence in research, actively shaped school education, teacher training, and adult literacy. NCERT on becoming a research university will offer opportunities for global collaborations and contributions to the global educational landscape, he added.

Curtain Raiser : Launch of Y-12654 (Mahendragiri)

On 1st September, 2023, Mahendragiri, the last Project 17A Frigate launched at M/s Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai. Mahendragiri (a mountain peak in Eastern Ghats) is the seventh ship of the Project 17A Frigates. These warships are follow-ons of the Project 17 Class Frigates (Shivalik Class), with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems. The Mahendragiri is a technologically advanced warship and stands as a symbol of India's determination to embrace its rich naval heritage, while propelling itself towards a future of indigenous defence capabilities.

BIS Releases Indian Standards on Biofuel to Aid GBA's Clean Energy Goals

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India officially released standards to enhance the objectives of Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA). USA, Brazil, and India are the major producers and consumers of biofuels; contribute to 85% production and 81% consumption of ethanol globally. The global ethanol market was valued at 99 billion USD in 2022 and is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 5% by 2032, creating a huge opportunity for Indian industries and contributing to farmers' income, job creation and overall development of the Indian ecosystem.

The BIS has developed the following nine Indian standards on biofuels :

1. IS 15464 : 2022 Anhydrous Ethanol for Use as Blending Component in Motor Gasoline – Specification
2. IS 15607 : 2022 Biodiesel B-100 - Fatty Acid Methyl Esters FAME – Specification
3. IS 16087 : 2016 Biogas (Biomethane) - Specification (First Revision)
4. IS 16531 : 2022 Biodiesel Diesel Fuel Blend B8 to B20 Specification
5. IS 16629 : 2017 Hydrous ethanol for use in ED95 automotive fuel – Specification
6. IS 16634 : 2017 E85 fuel (Blend of Anhydrous Ethanol And Gasoline) – Specification
7. IS 17021 : 2018 E 20 fuel - Admixture of anhydrous ethanol and gasoline - As fuel for spark ignited engine powered vehicles – Specification
8. IS 17081 : 2019 Aviation turbine fuel (Kerosene Type, Jet A-1) containing synthesized hydrocarbons – Specification
9. IS 17821 : 2022 Ethanol as a Fuel for Use in Positive Ignition Engine Powered Vehicles – Specification

The Prime Minister of India Inaugurates 'Yashobhoomi' and Launches 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme'

On 17th September, 2023, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated International Convention and Expo Centre-'Yashobhoomi' at Dwarka, New Delhi. On the same day, 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme' was also launched by the Prime Minister of India for traditional artisans and craftspeople on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti. The ecosystem of Yashobhoomi will take care of the travel, connectivity, and accommodation and tourism needs of the users. Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi Center are now going to make Delhi the biggest hub of conference tourism. The first phase of this project is complete and the second phase will enlarge it into double its size.

Significance of Yashobhoomi

Yashobhoomi will provide significant platform for the Exhibition and Event industry from countries around the world, the Film Industry and TV Industry of every region of India, award ceremonies and film festivals, first film shows, International Event Companies, Exhibition Sector and other international and national events. The Yashobhoomi convention centres will become world class exhibition centres; promote trade, industry, export and employment. Yashobhoomi will promote MSME sector, farmers and artisans and provide new opportunities and markets for them.

'PM Vishwakarma Scheme'

The Prime Minister of India launched 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme' for traditional artisans and craftspeople on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti, also launched the PM Vishwakarma logo, tagline and portal.

The primary focus will be on 18 areas of artisans and craftsmen, carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, sculptors, potters, cobblers, tailors, masons, hairdressers, washermen etc. The expenditure of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme will be ₹ 13,000 crore. The Indian government provide training and During training period, ₹ 500 per day allowance will be provided to the Viswakarmas.

President of India Inaugurates 1st Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show

On 21st September, 2023, President of India inaugurated 1st Uttar Pradesh international trade show in Greater Noida for taking the products of Uttar Pradesh to the markets of India and abroad. The Government of Uttar Pradesh took several steps to boost economic growth and investment. Uttar Pradesh is one of the fastest growing state-level economies in the country due to simplification of the investment process, ease of doing business and acceleration in infrastructure development.

India's First Lighthouse Festival Inaugurated in Goa

India's First Lighthouse Festival held in Goa from 23rd September to 25th September, 2023. On 23rd September, 2023, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and

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Waterways and Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the maiden edition of 'Bharatiya Prakash Sthamb Utsav' or Indian Lighthouse Festival at the historic Fort Aguada in Panjim (Goa).

The festival is aimed at rejuvenating the rich maritime history of India's 75 iconic lighthouses and unravels the illustrious stories to the world at the Fort Aguada.

Kolkata Metro Railway Joins Elite Club of Leading Metros; Replaces Main Line Steel Third Rail to Aluminium Third Rail

On 24th October, 1984, Kolkata Metro Railway regarded as India's first Metro was built by Indian Railways. In Kolkata Metro Railway, the power to Metro Rake is supplied to rolling stock at 750V DC through steel Third Rail. The Third Rail Current Collector (TRCC) made of steel fitted on metro rake collects the current from Third Rail. Kolkata Metro Railway has been using steel Third Rail for the last 40 years. With this Metro Railway, Kolkata would become the member of elite club of London, Moscow, Berlin, Munich, and Istanbul Metro who have also shifted from steel Third Rail to Aluminium Third Rail.

Kolkata Metro Railway has now decided to use composite Aluminium Third Rail in all the upcoming corridors being undertaken for construction along with retro fitment in existing corridor with steel Third Rail. Kolkata Metro Railway has floated a tender for replacement of existing Third Rail.

'Gujarat Declaration' Released at the First WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023

World Health Organization (WHO) released 'Gujarat Declaration' as the outcome document of first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023. WHO underlined that the application of rigorous scientific methods is needed to better understand, assess and, where appropriate, apply more holistic, context-specific, and complex and personalized approaches for health and well-being for all. The First global summit on Traditional Medicine was organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) andcohosted by the Ministry of Ayush, from 17th August to 18th August, 2023 at Gandhinagar (Gujarat).



Bharat Drone Shakti 2023 Inaugurated at Hindon Air Force Station

On 25th September, 2023, Bharat Drone Shakti 2023, a first drone exhibition cum display was jointly organised by Indian Air Force (IAF) and Drone Federation of India (DFI) at Air Force Station, Hindon (Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh). The two-day event held on September 25th & 26th, 2023, featured over 75 drone start-ups from across the country. The IAF and DFI seek to bolster the Government's initiative to make India a major drone hub by 2030.



The First C-295 Transport Aircraft Inducted into the Indian Air Force.

IAF Inducts First C-295 Transport Aircraft

Basically, the inauguration of Bharat Drone Shakti 2023 was followed by the formal induction of the first C-295 MW transport aircraft into the IAF. The first IAF squadron to be equipped with the aircraft is No. 11 Squadron (named The Rhinos). In September 2021, India formalised the acquisition of 56 Airbus C295 aircraft to replace the legacy Avro fleet of the IAF at a cost of ₹ 21,935 crore. On 25th September, 2023, the 'Sarv Dharm Puja' induction ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh along with Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari.

Out of the acquisition of 56 Airbus C295 aircraft, the first 16 aircraft will be delivered to the IAF in a 'fly-away' condition while the remaining 40 would be manufactured in India by Tata Advanced Systems Limited at their facility in Vadodara.

President of India Launches Y-3024 (Vindhyagiri) Under Project 17A

On 17th August, 2023, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu launched Vindhyagiri (named after the Vindhya mountain range in Karnataka)—the sixth Stealth Frigate of Project 17A being built at GRSE. Vindhyagiri descended into the waters of river Hooghly (West Bengal). The launch, 'Vindhyagiri' joined its two sister ships at the Outfitting Jetty at GRSE, to progress remaining activities and equipment trials, in the run up to their delivery and commissioning.

Introduction to the Project 17A

- **Project 17, Alpha Frigates (P-17A) :** P-17A was initiated by the Indian Navy in the year 2019 to build a series of stealth guided-missile frigates.
- **Companies associated with Indian Navy :** Built by two companies :
  1. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (MDL) and
  2. Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE).
- **Special design :** Frigates are built with a distinctive stealth design including radar avoidance technology. It also reduces the ship's infrared signals.
- **The ships launched under Project 17A :**
  1. The first stealth ship is Nilgiri which was commissioned in the year 2019.
  2. The second stealth ship was Udayagiri commissioned in May 2022 and will be operational in the year 2024.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023

A Bill replacing the Ordinance, namely, The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 which was promulgated by the President before Monsoon Session, was considered and passed by the Houses with a view to give effect to the intent and

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purpose behind the provisions of article 239AA of the Constitution, by a permanent authority, headed by the Chief Minister of Delhi along with the Chief Secretary, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Principal Secretary, Home Affairs. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, is being constituted to make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor regarding matters concerning transfer postings, vigilance and other matters.

The 6th Census Report on Minor Irrigation (MI) Schemes

The report on the 6th census on minor irrigation schemes released by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation released under the centrally sponsored scheme 'Irrigation Census'. Uttar Pradesh possesses the largest number of minor irrigation schemes in the country followed by Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. For the first time, the information about gender of the owner of MI scheme was also collected in case of individual ownership. Out of all the individually owned schemes, 18·1% are owned by women. Around 60·2% schemes have single source of finance whereas 39·8% schemes have more than one source of finance.

In single source of finance, majority of schemes (79·5%) are being financed by own savings of individual farmer. The 6th minor irrigation census with reference year 2017-18 was completed in 32 States/ UTs. The 6th MI census work was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The census work has been successfully completed now and the All India and State-wise report on 6th MI census has been published.

The 6th census report stated that :

- Total Minor irrigation (MI) schemes in the country : 23·14 million.
- Total Ground Water (GW) schemes : 21·93 million (94·8%) and which includes dugwells, shallow tube wells, medium tubewells and deep tubewells.
- Total Surface Water (SW) schemes : 1·21 million (5·2%) which includes surface flow and surface lift schemes.

	Top Ranked Ground Water Schemes States	Top Ranked Surface Water Schemes
1.	Uttar Pradesh	Maharashtra
2.	Maharashtra	Karnataka
3.	Madhya Pradesh	Telangana
4.	Tamil Nadu	Odisha
5.	Telangana	Jharkhand

Key Facts of the 6th Census Report

- There has been increase of about 1·42 million in MI schemes during 6th MI census as compared to 5th census. At the national level, both GW and SW schemes have increased by 6·9% and 1·2%, respectively.
- Dugwells have highest share in MI schemes followed by shallow tube-wells, medium tubewells and deep tubewells.
- Maharashtra is the leading State in dugwells, surface flow and surface lift schemes. Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Punjab are the leading States in shallow tubewells, medium tubewells and deep tubewells, respectively. Out of all MI schemes, 97·0% are 'in use', 2·1% are 'temporarily not in use' whereas 0·9% are 'permanently not in use'. Shallow tubewells and medium tubewells lead in the category of 'in use' schemes.
- A majority of MI schemes (96·6%) are under private ownership. In GW schemes, the share of private entities in the ownership is 98·3% whereas in SW schemes the respective share is 64·2%.

India's First 3D–Printed Post Office Inaugurated in Bengaluru

On 18th August, 2023, India's first 3D - Printed post office (the Cambridge Layout post office) was inaugurated in Bengaluru (Karnataka) making it is the first such public building in India. The 1021 sq. feet structure was fully constructed in just 43 days and at a significantly lower cost than possible with conventional methods with the cost of single-story building at INR 2,300,000 (~US $ 27,500), the construction cost was also 30-40% lower than it would be with standard techniques.



India's FIRST 3D : Printed Post Office Inaugurated in Bengaluru

LCA Tejas Successfully Test-fires Indigenous ASTRA Missile

On August 2023, Tejas, Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) LSP-7 successfully test-fired the ASTRA indigenous Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile at Goa. The missile was released successfully from the aircraft at an altitude of about 20,000 feet. This launch would significantly enhance the combat prowess of Tejas and reduce the dependency on imported weapons. The test launch was monitored by the different departments and agencies which are as under :

- Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA),
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) and
- Directorate General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DG-AQA).
- The aircraft was also monitored by a Chase Tejas twin seater aircraft.

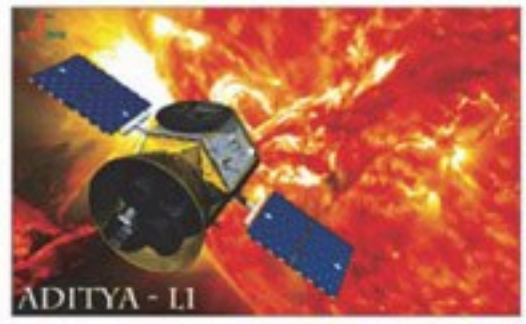
About ASTRA

ASTRA, a state-of-the-art BVR air-to-air missile to engage and destroy highly maneuvering supersonic aerial targets, is designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Research Centre Imarat (RCI) and other laboratories of DRDO. The indigenous Astra BVR firing from home grown Tejas fighter is a major step towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

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First Solar Mission 'Aditya-L1' Launched by ISRO

On 2nd September, 2023, the first Solar Mission, named as Aditya-L1 was launched by ISRO after success of Chandrayaan mission. India has earned more than 260 Million Euros from the launching of European Satellites. India has earned more than 150 million US Dollars from the launching of American Satellites. Aditya L-1 is the third such mission. It will study the energy sources from the Sun.



Outline of the First Solar Mission 'Aditya-L1'

The Sun Space Mission Aditya-L1 shall use the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) with seven payloads (Instruments on Board). The spacecraft shall be based in a halo orbit around Lagrange point-1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1·5 million kilometres from the Earth, while a satellite placed in the halo orbit will have the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any eclipses.

ISRO Launches Chandrayaan-3

On 14th July, 2023, the Chandrayaan-3 was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) which landed successfully on the moon. The journey of Chandrayaan-3 estimated to take approximately 42 days, with a landing scheduled for 23rd August, 2023 at the lunar dawn. With this step toward the space, India becomes the fourth country in the world to achieve this feat and the others are : United States, Russia, and China. Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission. The mission took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center (SDSC) in Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh). It consists of :



Chandrayaan-3 ready to launch by ISRO.

- An indigenous Lander module (LM),
- Propulsion module (PM) and
- A Rover with an objective of developing and demonstrating new technologies required for inter planetary missions.

The LVM3 M4 launcher was successfully lifted off and launched Chandrayaan-3 and after 16 minutes, the spacecraft separated from the rocket. It entered into an elliptic parking orbit (EPO). The lander and the rover will have a mission life of one lunar day (about 14 Earth days) as they work on solar energy. The landing site for Chandrayaan-3 is near the lunar South Pole. Several advanced technologies used in Lander to achieve mission objectives are :

- Laser & RF based Altimeters.
- Laser Doppler Velocimeter & Lander Horizontal Velocity Camera.
- Laser Gyro based Inertial referencing and Accelerometer package.
- 800 N Throttleable Liquid Engines, 58N attitude thrusters & Throttleable Engine Control Electronics.
- Navigation, Guidance & Control (NGC) : Powered Descent Trajectory design and associate software elements.
- Hazard Detection and Avoidance : Lander Hazard Detection & Avoidance Camera and Processing Algorithm
- Landing Leg Mechanism.

Chandrayaan 1

- Mission launched on 22nd October, 2008.
- On 8th November, 2008 Chandrayaan-1 entered in orbit of moon.
- It aimed to create a three-dimensional atlas of the moon and conduct mineralogical mapping.
- The Launch Vehicle was PSLV – C11
- Chandrayaan-1 made significant discoveries, including the detection of water and hydroxyl on the lunar surface.

Chandrayaan-2

- Mission launched on 22nd July, 2019.
- Lander of Chandrayaan-2 was Vikram.
- The Launch Vehicle was GSLV MkIII-M1.

Although the lander and rover crashed on the moon's surface; the Orbiter successfully collected data and found signatures of water at all latitudes.

The objectives of scientific payloads planned on Chandrayaan-3 Lander Module are provided below :

Sr. No	Lander Payloads	Objectives
1.	Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive ionosphere and Atmosphere (RAMBHA)	To measure the near surface plasma (ions and electrons) density and its changes with time.
2.	Chandra's Surface Thermo physical Experiment (ChaSTE)	The measurements of thermal properties of lunar surface near polar region.
3.	Instrument for Lunar Seismic Activity (ILSA)	To measure seismicity around the landing site and delineating the structure of the lunar crust and mantle.
4.	LASER Retroreflector Array (LRA)	It is a passive experiment to understand the dynamics of Moon system.

Salient Features of Chandrayaan-3

The lander, named **Vikram** and rover payloads, named **Pragyan** of Chandrayaan-3 remain the same as the Chandrayaan-2 mission. The aim of lander is to study various aspects of the lunar environment include studying lunar quakes, thermal properties of the lunar surface, changes in plasma near the surface, and accurately measuring the distance between Earth and the moon. The propulsion module of Chandrayaan-3 features a new experiment called Spectro-polarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth (SHAPE) which aims to search for smaller planets with potential habitability by analysing reflected light.

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Bharat 6G Alliance Launched by the Ministry of Communications

The Telecommunications Department (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications launched the Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA) to enhance innovation and leadership in 6G technology (the next frontier of wireless communication). The Communication Ministry issued grant of ₹ 240·51 crore under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) and also signed two agreements for projects. The Department of Telecommunications constituted a Technology Innovation Group on 6G (TIG-6G) on 1st November, 2021 with members from various Ministries and Departments.

The chief objectives of Bharat 6G Alliance are enable India to become a leading global supplier of IP, products and solutions of affordable 6G telecom solutions, deploy 6G technologies to act as a powerful force multiplier for India@2030.

Performance Grading Index (PGI)

The first Performance Grading Index (PGI) was released in 2017 which helped States/UTs to identify specific interventions required to make transformational changes in school education. In the last 4 years, States /UTs reached saturation level in many indicators of PGI, and few indicators became redundant due to rapid changes adopted during COVID-19 period. The Ministry of Education (MoE) released the Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) combined report for 2020-21 and 2021-22, assessing the performance of the school education system at the District level. Certain policy initiatives and interventions introduced post implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also required for aligning indicators of PGI for proper tracking the progress.

The MoE has also released a report on Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2·0 for States/UTs for the year 2021-22. The global agenda for education development reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) adopted by India in 2015 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. The report has 10 grades in which districts are categorized :

Term used for the Districts	Grades (%)
Daksh (Highest grade)	Above 90
Utkarsh	81–90
Ati-Uttam	71–80
Uttam	61–70
Prachesta - 1	51–60
Prachesta - 2	41–50
Prachesta - 3	31–40
Akanshi - 1	121 to 30
Akanshi - 2	11 to 20
Akanshi - 3	Lowest (less than 10)

Objectives of the PGI 2·0

The aim of PGI 2·0 is to achieve optimal education outcomes in terms of improving quality and also to adopt best practices followed by the top performing States/UTs which can be replicated wherever possible in shortest possible time. To give emphasis to teacher education in school education, a separate category and domain on Teacher Education & Training (TET) is now added in PGI 2·0.



The Key Findings of the Report

- None of the districts achieved the top two grades (Daksh and Utkarsh).
- The number of districts categorized as Ati-Uttam decreased significantly from 121 in 2020-21 to 51 in 2021-22, indicating the impact of the pandemic on educational performance.
- Several districts (including Krishna and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra Nagar Haveli, districts in Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha etc.) across different states were categorized as Ati-Uttam in both 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- The number of districts categorized as Prachesta-2 (sixth-highest grade) increased from 86 in 2020-21 to 117 in 2021-22 which suggested that more districts faced challenges in maintaining their performance due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd. Set Europe's Largest Battery Cell Giga Factory in UK

On 19th July, 2023, Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd. announced to set a global battery cell giga factory in the UK with a capacity to produce 40GW of cells annually. This will be one of the largest ever investments in the UK automotive sector which is estimated over £ 4 billion The key objectives are electric mobility and renewable energy storage solutions and establish a competitive green tech ecosystem in the UK for the future climate change prospective.

The Campus of IIT Madras Sets up in Zanzibar (Tanzania) First ever IIT Campus to be Outside India

The Ministry of Education (MoE), Govt. of India and Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) Zanzibar-Tanzania signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up of campus of IIT Madras in Zanzibar (Tanzania). This is the first ever IIT campus to be set up outside India. It is aimed to enhance the friendship between India and Tanzania and on building people to people ties across Africa and the Global South.

Opposition Political Parties Unite in Alliance as I.N.D.I.A.

Leaders of 26 opposition political parties in India have united to form an alliance in an attempt to win general election of May 2024 with the tagline **'Jeetega**

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Bharat', meaning 'India will win'. The opposition political parties made coalition in two days meet in Bengaluru (Karnataka) from 17 to 18 July, 2023 and the coalition will be called **the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance** (INDIA). The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance, made up of 26 parties, has a collective strength of 142 members in the Lok Sabha.



	Political Parties		Political Parties
1	INC	14	PDP
2	Apna Dal (Kamerawadi)	15	Kerala Congress (Joseph)
3	Rashtriya Lok Dal	16	CPI (M)
4	Samajwadi Party	17	CPI
5	Shiv Sena (UBT)	18	CPI (M-L)L
6	NCP (Sharad Pawar)	19	Revolutionary Socialist Party
7	JMM	20	All India Forward Bloc
8	Rashtriya Janata Dal	21	MDMK
9	Janata Dal (United)	22	VCK
10	Aam Aadmi Party	23	KDMK
11	DMK	24	MMK
12	AITC	25	IUML
13	J&K National conference	26	Kerala Congress (M)

No-Confidence Motion Moves in Lok Sabha Against Modi Government

On 26th July, 2023, the Lok Sabha member (from the Northeast) Gaurav Gogoi had moved a no-confidence motion against the ruling government in the Lok Sabha. Date and duration of discussion on 'No-confidence motion' will be decided by the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The Congress had issued a three-line whip, asking all its Lok Sabha members to be present for a parliamentary party meeting. 'No-confidence motion' can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha.

On 17th April, 1952, the Indian Parliament witnessed the first ever 'No Confidence Motion' against the first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru's government in August 1963 which was brought by Acharya J.B. Kripalani who gathered only 62 votes in favour and 347 votes were cast against the motion. **Apart from to prove the majority by the government in the house, the opposition brings the "No Confidence Motion" to also force the Government to discuss important issues.** A motion of 'No Confidence' against the Government can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha under Rule 198 which is granted by the speaker of Lok Sabha.

'No Confidence Motion' Historical Perspective

- The No Confidence Motion was first introduced in the United Kingdom. In 1742, the Motion of no confidence was passed against Sir Robert Walpole's government and it was the first time that a Prime Minister of Great Britain resigned after a vote of No Confidence by the House of Commons.
- On the 10th March, 1782, a vote of No Confidence was passed against Frederick North's government. Frederick North was forced to resign from his post.
- In 2011, under the **'Fixed-term Parliaments Act'** in UK, it was observed that Parliamentary General elections must be held every 5 years beginning in 2015. However, in this as well, a vote of No Confidence against the Government or a 2/3rds majority vote in the House of Commons can still trigger a general election at any time, and if the Government does not get the confidence vote again within 14 days of passing the motion in the House of Commons, the house is dissolved.

Vietnam Takes Corvette INS Kirpan as Gift from India

Minister of National Defence of Vietnam, General Phan Van Gang began his two-day visit to India from 18th June. On 19 June, 2023, Vietnam took indigenously-built in-service missile Corvette INS Kirpan as a gift from India to enhance the naval capabilities of Vietnam during the occasion of bilateral talks with Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh and Minister of National Defence of Vietnam General Gang. On the same day, General Gang also visited the National War Memorial and received a Tri-Service Guard of Honour.

First International Cruise Vessel of India Flags Off

On 5 June, 2023, The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal flagged off the first International Cruise Vessel of India, which will travel around 1400 km distance from Chennai to Sri Lanka. This is the beginning of the international cruise tourism terminal at Chennai which was built at a cost of ₹ 17·21 crore. With the launching of India's First International Cruise Vessel, India has entered in the new age of cruise tourism and maritime trade in the country. The cruise service will sail to three Sri Lankan ports; *viz.*, Hanbantota, Trincomalee, and Kankesanturei. The tour packages available are for two nights, three nights, four nights, and five nights, with varieties of fare starting from INR 86,383 (for two persons for three nights). The cruise will cover three ports during the 5-day cruise.

Indian Navy Launches 'Anjadip'

On 13th June, 2023, Indian Navy launched 'Anjadip' at M/s L&T, Kattupalli which is the 3rd ship of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft (SWC) Project, built by M/s GRSE for Indian Navy. The ship name Anjadip is associated with the island of Anjadip, located off Karwar to signify the strategic maritime importance. The island is connected to the mainland by a breakwater which is the part of INS Kadamba. On 29th April, 2019, the contract was signed between Ministry of

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Defence (MoD) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) for building eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft ships at Kolkata (West Bengal).

Introduction to Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft (SWC) Ships Project

Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) belongs to the branch of Naval Warfare that includes surface warships, aircraft, or other submarines to find, track and deter, damage or destroy enemy submarines. The Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASWSWC's) are designed for a speed of 25 knots (more than 46 kms per hour). It aims primarily to full scale sub surface surveillance of coastal waters accurately and coordinated ASW operations with aircraft. It is also capable to interdict or destroy sub surface targets in coastal waters during both day and night. The Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) proposed to construct 16 anti-submarine warfare (ASW) shallow water craft for Indian Navy. These are being built according to International Classification Society rules with specific requirements by the owner.

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society Gets Renamed as Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society

The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society was renamed as Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society in a special meeting, presided by Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh who is the Vice-President of the Society. This idea was mooted by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Executive Council, NMML had, in its 162nd meeting held on 25-11-2016, approved the construction of the Museum of all Prime Ministers from Shri Jawaharlal Nehru to Shri Narendra Modi in the Teen Murti Estate. After the completion of the project, the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya was opened to the public on 21st April, 2022.

National Working Plan Code-2023 Releases for Forests Management

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate change released the **'National Working Plan Code-2023'** during the occasion of the 'World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought' organized by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) in Dehradun on 17th June, 2023 for scientific management of forests and evolving new approaches. National Working Plan Code which was first adopted in 2004 with a subsequent amendment in 2014 brought uniformity and acted as the guiding principle for the preparation of the working plan for scientific management of different forest divisions of our country.

Dr. Kalaignar Pen Monument Gets Approved by Indian Government

The Tamil Nadu government proposed to construct the Muthamizh Arignar Dr. Kalaignar Pen Monument in the Bay of Bengal in Chennai after the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance with 15 conditions granted by the Union Ministry of Environment. After the Union Ministry approval, the State government can start implementing its proposal. On 19th June, 2023, the CRZ clearance was provided based on the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee (CRZ) and the Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management Authority. It also needs to be noted that the Ministry may revoke or suspend the clearance if the implementation of the conditions are not satisfactory. The environmental statement would have to be submitted to the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board every year and the status of compliance of conditions needs to be uploaded on the website of PWD.

Indian Navy Outreach Programme 'Julley Ladakh' (Hello Ladakh)

Indian Navy conducted 'Julley Ladakh' (Hello Ladakh), an outreach programme to Ladakh to increase awareness about the service in the pristine state and to engage with youth and civil society there. On 15th June, 2023, a 5000 km Motorcycle Expedition was flagged off by Vice Chief of Naval Staff from the National War Memorial. The Navy made similar efforts in the North East. The main objectives of the current initiative in the Northern Territory include :

- Celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (75 years of Indian Independence).
- Conduct Awareness drives at Schools/ Colleges in Ladakh region about the career opportunities Indian Navy offers including the Agnipath Scheme.
- Motivate Youth to join the Indian Navy.
- Showcase Nari Shakti, an initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, by including Women Officers and spouses.
- Interact with naval veterans and Veer Naris in the region.

'Nutri Garden Project' in Lakshadweep

'Nutri Garden Project' was launched by PM Narendra Modi in Lakshadweep. This initiative has shown how enthusiastic the people of Lakshadweep are about learning and adopting new things.

The project was launched as a result of the development objective of self-reliant India in which vegetable seeds have been provided to 1000 farmers. Moreover, 7000 chickens of indigenous breeds were distributed to the women of Lakshadweep families with income less than ₹ 600 under the Backyard Poultry Scheme.

G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

The G20 Development Ministers' Meeting was held from 11 to 13 June, 2023 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh under the G20 Indian Presidency. The Varanasi Development Ministers' Meeting took place amidst mounting developmental challenges that have been further aggravated by economic slowdown, debt distress, impacts of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, growing poverty and inequality, food and energy insecurity, cost-of-living crisis, global supply-chain disruptions, and geopolitical conflicts and tensions.

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ECONOMIC VISION

Round The Half Year

National Income

State-wise Data on Per Capita Income : 2022-23

As per the latest information received from State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administration, State/UT-wise Per Capita Income, measured in terms of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (NSDP), at current and constant (2011-12) prices for the last three year 2020-21 to 2022-23 are given in Table 1. The per capita income, at current prices, for the above mentioned last three years indicate increasing trend for all States/UTs.

Gross Value Added (GVA) is compiled Economic Activity/Sector-wise, therefore, their contributions to overall GVA of the entire economy for the last 5 years are given in Table 2.

The Union Territories namely, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh and Lakshadweep do not prepare the estimates of State Domestic Product (SDP).

India's GDP Growth Accelerates to Four-Quarter High of 7·8% in Q1 FY 24

India's economy grew at the fastest pace in four quarters—at 7·8 per cent in the April-June period of FY2023-24, which is a little below the central bank's estimate, aided by a supportive base along with a robust increase in investment.

Table 1 : Per Capita Net State Domestic Product

(Figure in ₹)

S. No.	States/UTs	At Current Prices (Base year : 2011-12)			At Constant prices (2011-12 = 100)		
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1,63,746	1,92,587	2,19,518	1,05,880	1,17,464	1,23,526
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1,90,212	2,15,897	NA	1,06,903	1,15,311	NA
3.	Assam	90,482	1,02,965	1,18,504	61,304	65,726	69,826
4.	Bihar	43,605	49,470	NA	28,127	30,779	NA
5.	Chhattisgarh	1,04,788	1,20,704	1,33,898	73,259	78,377	83,511
6.	Goa	4,31,351	4,72,070	NA	2,98,527	3,10,201	NA
7.	Gujarat	2,12,821	2,50,100	NA	1,60,321	1,74,539	NA
8.	Haryana	2,29,065	2,64,835	2,96,685	1,55,756	1,72,657	1,81,961
9.	Himachal Pradesh	1,83,333	2,01,854	NA	1,33,079	1,41,830	NA
10.	Jharkhand	71,071	78,660	NA	51,365	55,126	NA
11.	Karnataka	2,21,310	2,65,623	3,01,673	1,49,030	1,64,471	1,76,383
12.	Kerala	1,94,322	2,28,767	NA	1,32,700	1,48,790	NA
13.	Madhya Pradesh	1,03,654	1,21,594	1,40,583	56,320	61,534	65,023
14.	Maharashtra	1,83,704	2,15,233	2,42,247	1,27,970	1,38,490	1,46,774
15.	Manipur	79,797	84,345	NA	46,968	46,341	NA
16.	Meghalaya	84,638	90,638	98,572	56,679	60,606	65,336
17.	Mizoram	1,87,838	1,88,839	NA	1,18,555	1,11,180	NA
18.	Nagaland	1,26,452	1,42,363	NA	72,215	79,188	NA
19.	Odisha	1,02,166	1,28,873	1,50,676	70,877	79,899	86,512
20.	Punjab	1,49,193	1,61,888	1,73,873	1,11,662	1,16,850	1,21,671
21.	Rajasthan	1,15,122	1,35,962	1,56,149	73,140	80,545	86,134
22.	Sikkim	4,12,754	4,72,543	NA	2,39,928	2,56,507	NA
23.	Tamil Nadu	2,12,174	2,41,131	2,73,288	1,43,528	1,54,427	1,66,463
24.	Telangana	2,25,687	2,65,942	3,08,732	1,39,640	1,54,122	1,64,657
25.	Tripura	1,19,789	1,40,803	NA	80,512	86,539	NA
26.	Uttar Pradesh	61,374	70,792	NA	39,298	42,525	NA
27.	Uttarakhand	1,84,002	2,11,657	2,33,565	1,37,987	1,49,015	1,58,245
28.	West Bengal	1,06,510	1,24,798	1,41,373	63,562	69,890	75,561
29.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1,97,275	NA	NA	1,52,859	NA	NA
30.	Chandigarh	2,91,194	3,49,373	NA	1,99,845	2,15,825	NA
31.	Delhi	3,31,112	3,89,529	NA	2,34,569	2,52,024	NA
32.	Jammu & Kashmir	1,02,803	1,16,619	1,32,806	65,172	69,665	74,602
33.	Puducherry	2,03,178	2,09,890	NA	1,44,866	1,49,513	NA
	All India	**127065**	**148524**	**172276**	**86054**	**92583**	**98374**

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Table 2 : Economic Activity/Sector-wise Contribution to Overall GVA at Current Prices from 2018-19 to 2022-23

S.No.	Economic Activity/Sector	2018-19 (%)	2019-20* (%)	2020-21# (%)	2021-22@ (%)	2022-23$ (%)
1.	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	17·64	18·33	20·32	18·97	18·42
2.	Mining and quarrying	2·2	1·94	1·74	2	2·36
3.	Manufacturing	16·38	14·72	15·4	15·84	14·7
4.	Electricity, Gas, Water supply & Other utility services	2·62	2·74	2·75	2·59	3
5.	Construction	7·87	7·5	7·39	8·1	8·19
6.	Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication & Services related to Broadcasting	18·65	18·93	15·78	16·85	17·98
7.	Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services	20·55	21·11	22·19	21·51	21·42
8.	Public Administration, Defence & Other Services	14·1	14·74	14·43	14·13	13·94
9.	TOTAL GVA at basic prices	100	100	100	100	100

* : Third Revised/Final Estimates; # : Second Revised Estimates; @ : First Revised Estimates; $ Provisional Estimates

The data, released by the National Statistical Office, showed the services sector lifted growth during the quarter, with the economy now 13·8 per cent larger than the pre-pandemic first quarter of FY20 in real terms.

During the June quarter 2023-24, gross value added (GVA) at basic prices grew 7·8 per cent while nominal GDP was up 8 per cent due to low wholesale price inflation.

On the supply side, growth in manufacturing was a disappointing 4·7 per cent while the labour-intensive construction (7·9 per cent) and agriculture (3·5 per cent) sectors expanded at a robust pace.

Though, the services sector growing at double digits (10·3 per cent) remained the key support pillar for growth, the trade, hotels, transport, communication services segment remained 1·9 per cent below the pre-pandemic level of FY20, signaling persisting weakness in the largest contributor to the economy.

News in Brief

World Bank Country Classification

For the current 2024 fiscal year, low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of $ 1,135 or less in 2022; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between $ 1,136 and $ 4,465; upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between $4,466 and $ 13,845; high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of $ 13,845 or more.

(US $)

	Low Income	Lower-middle Income	Upper-middle Income	High Income
July 1, 2023-for FY24 (New)	<= 1,135	1,136 – 4,465	4,466 – 13,845	> 13,845
July 1, 2022-for FY23 (Previous)	<= 1,085	1,086 – 4,255	4,256 – 13,205	> 13,205

Justice AP Sahi appointed Chairperson of NCDRC

Former Chief Justice of the Madras and Patna High Courts, Justice AP Sahi, has been appointed the new Chairperson of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC). Justice Sahi will be serving a four-year term as the chief of the NCDRC. The NCDRC is a quasi-judicial commission set up in 1988 under the Consumer Protection Act. It is situated in New Delhi.

India Becomes Creditor to IMF

Traditionally India has remained a borrower in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Now it has become a creditor to the IMF. India has contributed US$ 291·7 million to the IMF in two tranches in May 2023 and June 2023.

Criterion for a Country to be Declared 'Develop'

- **The Economic Indicators :** Per capita income, level of industrialisation, the general standard of living and technological infrastructure.
- **The Non-economic Indicators**: Human development index, which measures parameters like levels of education, health and literacy. The UNDP's HDI ranks countries on three parameters : Standard of living education access and health and survival. The countries are scored between 0 and 1 based on these three parameters.
- A country with an HDI index over 0·8 is generally considered developed. According to the latest data, India's score is 0·633, and it stands at 132nd place out of 192 countries ranked.
- **The main benchmark that is used to determine the level of development of an economy is per capita income**. Some economists consider $ 12,000 to $ 15,000 per capita income to be sufficient for developed status. Others, however, consider a country to be developed if its per capita income is above $ 25,000 or $ 30,000.
- According to the World Bank, India's per capita income is around $ 2,400. At the same time, USA's and China's per capita incomes are $ 76,400 and $ 12,700, respectively.
- According to the International Monetary Fund, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, and Taiwan can be categorised as developed countries.
- The list of 'emerging' or developing economies includes names like China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam.

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Growth in private final consumption expenditure, or private spending, picked up at a robust 6 per cent, a three-quarter high.

Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), which represents investment demand in the economy, grew at a robust 8 per cent, signaling revival in private capital expenditure. Compared to the pre-pandemic period of FY20, GFCF grew 17 per cent.

Agriculture and Allied Sector

Union Cabinet Approves Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Kharif Crops for Marketing Season 2023-24

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on June 7, 2023 has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated Kharif Crops for Marketing Season 2023-24.

Government has increased the MSP of Kharif Crops for Marketing Season 2023-24, to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce and to encourage crop diversification, as provided in the table.

Government Fixes Fair and Remunerative Price of Sugarcane at ₹ 315/qtl for Sugar Season 2023-24

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for sugar season 2023-24 (October-September) at ₹ 315/qtl for a basic recovery rate of 10·25%. It has also been approved to provide a premium of ₹ 3·07/qtl for each 0·1% increase in recovery over and above 10·25%, and reduction in FRP by ₹ 3·07/qtl for every 0·1% decrease in recovery.

The cost of production of sugarcane for the sugar season 2023-24 is estimated at ₹ 157/qtl. This FRP of ₹ 315/qtl at a recovery rate of 10·25% is higher by 100·6% over production cost. The FRP for sugar season 2023-24 is 3·28% higher than current sugar season 2022-23.

The FRP has been determined on the basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State Governments and other stakeholders.

India is the second largest exporter of sugar in the world. In sugar season 2021-22, India has also become largest producer of sugar. It is expected that India would become third largest ethanol producing country in the world by 2025-26.

Final Estimates of Production of Major Crops for the Year 2022-23

The Final Estimates of production of major crops for the year 2022-23 have been released on October 18, 2023 by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. As per Final Estimates for 2022-23, total Foodgrain production in the country is estimated at record 3296·87 lakh tonnes which is higher by 140·71 lakh tonnes than the production of foodgrains of 3156·16 lakh tonnes achieved during 2021-22. Further, the production during 2022-23 is higher by 308·69 lakh tonnes than the previous five years' (2017-18 to 2021-22) average production of foodgrains.

As per Final Estimates, the estimated production of major crops during 2022-23 is as under :

- **Foodgrains :** 3296·87 lakh tonnes.
  - Rice : 1357·55 lakh tonnes.
  - Wheat : 1105·54 lakh tonnes.
  - Nutri / Coarse Cereals : 573·19 lakh tonnes.
  - Maize : 380·85 lakh tonnes.
  - Pulses : 260·58 lakh tonnes.
  - Tur : 33·12 lakh tonnes.
  - Gram : 122.67 lakh tonnes.
- **Oilseeds :** 413·55 lakh tonnes.
  - Groundnut : 102·97 lakh tonnes.
  - Soyabean : 149·85 lakh tonnes.
  - Rapeseed and Mustard : 126·43 lakh tonnes.
- **Sugarcane :** 4905·33 lakh tonnes.
- **Cotton :** 336·60 lakh bales (of 170 kg each)
- **Jute & Mesta :** 93·92 lakh bales (of 180 kg each)

Minimum Support Prices for Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2023-24

(₹ per quintal)

Crops	MSP 2014-15	MSP 2022-23	MSP 2023-24	Cost* KMS 2023-24	Increase in MSP over 2022-23	Margin over cost in per cent
Paddy -Common	1360	2040	2183	1455	143	50
Paddy-Grade A^	1400	2060	2203	-	143	-
Jowar-Hybrid	1530	2970	3180	2120	210	50
Jowar- Maldandi^	1550	2990	3225	-	235	-
Bajra	1250	2350	2500	1371	150	82
Ragi	1550	3578	3846	2564	268	50
Maize	1310	1962	2090	1394	128	50
Tur / Arhar	4350	6600	7000	4444	400	58
Moong	4600	7755	8558	5705	803	50
Urad	4350	6600	6950	4592	350	51
Groundnut	4000	5850	6377	4251	527	50
Sunflower Seed	3750	6400	6760	4505	360	50
Soybean (Yellow)	2560	4300	4600	3029	300	52
Sesamum	4600	7830	8635	5755	805	50
Nigerseed	3600	7287	7734	5156	447	50
Cotton (Medium Staple)	3750	6080	6620	4411	540	50
Cotton (Long Staple) ^	4050	6380	7020	-	640	

* *Refers to cost which includes all paid out costs such as those incurred on account of hired human labour, bullock labour/machine labour, rent paid for leased in land, expenses incurred on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilizers, manures, irrigation charges, depreciation on implements and farm buildings, interest on working capital, diesel/electricity for operation of pump sets etc., miscellaneous expenses and imputed value of family labour.*

^ *Cost data are not separately compiled for Paddy (Grade A), Jowar (Maldandi) and Cotton (Long staple).*

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Second Advance Estimate for the Year 2022-23 for Area and Production of Horticultural Crops

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on October 18, 2023 has released the 2nd Advance Estimates of the area and production of various horticultural crops for the year 2022-23. According to this estimate, total horticulture production in the country is expected to be a record 351·92 million tonnes in the year 2022-23.

Highlights of the Year 2022-23 (Second Advance Estimates) :

- Total horticulture production in the year 2022-23 is estimated to be 351·92 million tonnes, an increase of about 4·74 million tonnes (1·37%) as compared to the year 2021-22 (final).
- Production of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, flowers and honey is expected to increase.
- Fruit production is estimated to be 108·34 million tonnes in the year 2022-23 as compared to 107·51 million tonnes in the year 2021-22.
- The production of vegetables is estimated to be 212·91 million tonnes in the year 2022-23 compared to 209·14 million tonnes in the year 2021-22.
- Production of plantation crops is estimated to increase from 15·76 million tonnes in 2021-22 to 16·05 million tonnes in 2022-23, which is an increase of about 1·78%.
- Potato production is expected to be 60·54 million tonnes, compared to 56·18 million tonnes in the year 2021-22.

Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2024-25

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on October 18, 2023 has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2024-25.

Government has increased the MSP of Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2024-25, to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce. The absolute highest increase in MSP has been approved for lentil (masur) at ₹ 425 per quintal followed by rapeseed & mustard at ₹ 200 per quintal. For wheat and safflower, an increase of ₹ 150 per quintal each has been approved. For barley and gram an increase of ₹115 per quintal and ₹ 105 per quintal respectively, has been approved.

Minimum Support Prices for Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2024-25 (₹ per quintal)

S.No	Crops	MSP RMS 2014-15	MSP RMS 2023-24	MSP RMS 2024-25	Cost* of production RMS 2024-25	Increase in MSP (Absolute)	Margin over cost (in per cent)
1.	Wheat	1400	2125	2275	1128	150	102
2.	Barley	1100	1735	1850	1158	115	60
3.	Gram	3100	5335	5440	3400	105	60
4.	Lentil (Masur)	2950	6000	6425	3405	425	89
5.	Rapeseed & Mustard	3050	5450	5650	2855	200	98
6.	Safflower	3000	5650	5800	3807	150	52

**Refers to cost which includes all paid out costs such as those incurred on account of hired human labour, bullock labour/machine labour, rent paid for leased in land, expenses incurred on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilizers, manures, irrigation charges, depreciation on implements and farm buildings, interest on working capital, diesel/electricity for operation of pump sets etc., miscellaneous expenses and imputed value of family labour.*

2022-23 (Second Advance Estimates) Area and Production of Horticulture Crops

Area in '000 Ha : Production in '000 MT

Crops	2021-22 (Final)		2022-23 (Second Advance Estimate)	
	Area	Production	Area	Production
Total Fruits	7064	107507	7009	108342
Total Vegetables	11374	209143	11358	212908
Aromatics and Medicinal	668	664	739	644
Total Flowers	282	2813	272	2854
Honey	—	133	—	142
Total Plantation	4293	15764	4441	16045
Total Spices	4360	11155	4300	10986
Total	28041	347179	28119	351921

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Industry

Status of Oil India Ltd. and ONGC Videsh Upgraded

Ratna status of two oil sector companies was upgraded by the Ministry of Finance on August 3, 2023. Oil India Ltd's status has been upgraded from Navratna company to Maharatna company, while ONGC Videsh's status has upgraded from miniratna to Navratna category of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). The new status will help the companies take decisions on large investments on their own, both within India and abroad.

- OIL is an Oil Ministry CPSE with annual turnover of ₹ 41,039 crore and net profit of ₹ 9,854 crore for the fiscal year 2022-23.
- The Maharatna scheme was introduced for CPSEs, with effect from May 19, 2010, in order to empower them to expand operations and emerge as global giants. Maharatna CPSEs are BHEL, BPCL, CIL, GAIL, HPCL, Indian Oil, NTPC, OIL, ONGC, PFC, PGCIL,RECL, and SAIL (Total 13 CPSUs).
- ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), 13th Navratna CPSE, is an Oil Ministry CPSE with annual turnover of ₹ 11,676 crore_ and net profit of ₹ 1,700 crore for FY 2022-23.

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Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Gets Navratna Status

Department of Public Enterprise, on August 29, 2023 has granted the Navratna Status to Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited. RCF is a central public sector enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers. Currently number of Navatna status CPUS has become 16 :

1. Bharat Electronics Ltd. 2. Container Corporation of India Ltd. 3. Engineers India Ltd. 4. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. 5. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. 6. National Aluminium Company Ltd. 7. National Buildings Construction Corporation Limited 8. Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd., 9. Neyveli Lignite Corporation Ltd, 10. NMDC Ltd., 11. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd., 12. Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., 13. Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd., 14. ONGC Videsh Ltd., 15. IRCoN Interntional Ltd., 16. RITES Ltd.

Infrastructure Development

Bharat NCAP Launched

Union Minister of Road Transport and highways Nitin Gadkari launched the much-awaited Bharat New Car Assessment Programme or NCAP on August 22, 2023. The programme is aimed at improving road safety by raising the safety standards of motor vehicles up to 3·5 tonnes. The programme aims to provide a tool to the car customers to make a comparative assessment of crash safety of motor vehicles available in the market. Under this programme, car manufacturers can voluntarily offer their cars tested as per Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) 197.

Services

One Nation, One Student ID : APAAR

APAAR, an acronym for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry, is a specialized identification system designed for all students in India, beginning from an early age.

- Under this program, every student will receive a lifelong APAAR ID, streamlining the process of tracking academic progress from pre-primary education to higher education for students, schools, and government authorities.
- The introduction of APAAR aims to simplify the educational process and reduce the burden of carrying physical documents for students.
- This initiative has been launched as a component of the National Education Policy 2020 by the Ministry of Education .
- Each individual will possess a unique APAAR ID, linked to the Academic Bank Credit (ABC), a digital repository housing information about the credits earned by students throughout their educational journey.
- With the APAAR ID, students can digitally store all their certificates and credits, whether obtained through formal education or informal learning.
- To enroll in the APAAR system, students must provide basic information including their name, age, date of birth, gender, and a photograph. This data will be cross-verified using their Aadhar number.
- The Aadhar number is used exclusively for verification to match the name and date of birth. APAAR will not utilize or share these details with any other entity during registration.
- Registration for the creation of the APAAR ID is voluntary and not mandatory.

Money and Banking

Bank Frauds Dip Further in FY 23, Private Banks Report Maximum Cases

The value of frauds continued to decline in FY23, with banks reporting an overall defrauded figure of ₹ 30,252 crore in FY23, compared with ₹59,819 crore in FY22. Private sector banks reported the maximum number of frauds in 2022-23, while the share of public sector banks in terms of the overall amount defrauded continued to top the table in 2022-23.

- Frauds by volume have occurred predominantly in the digital payments space. However, in value terms, they have been reported primarily in loan portfolios (advances category).
- The total amount scammed continued to dip during 2022-23, down 49 per cent over 2021-22. While small-value card/internet frauds accounted for most of the frauds reported by private sector banks, those in public sector banks were mainly in loan portfolios.

HDFC Ltd. Merged with the HDFC Bank

The boards of directors of HDFC Ltd. and HDFC Bank have approved the merger of the two with effect from July 1, 2023. Following the mega merger, HDFC Bank has become the fourth-largest bank in the world with a market capitalisation of ₹ 14·73 trillion, or nearly $ 180 billion.

Ahead of the July 1, 2023 the effective date of the merger, HDFC Holdings and HDFC Investments were amalgamated into HDFC. After the merger, key HDFC Bank subsidiaries will include HDFC Securities, HDB Financial Services, HDFC Asset Management, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, HDFC Capital Advisors, and HDFC Life Insurance.

HDFC Bank will be 100 per cent owned by public shareholders and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41 per cent of HDFC Bank.

India and UAE Agreed to Promote Use of Local Currencies for Cross-border Payments

The Central Bank of UAE (CBUAE) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) signed two MoUs on July 15, 2023 in Abu Dhabi, during the official visit of PM Modi, for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions; and cooperation for interlinking their payment and messaging systems. The MoUs were signed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and the CBUAE Governor Khaled Mohamed Balama. The MoUs were

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exchanged between the two Governors in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

RBI Monetary Policy October 2023 : RBI Keeps Repo Rate Unchanged at 6·5%

RBI Monetary Policy Committee has kept the key policy repo rate unchanged at 6·5%. This is the fourth meeting on the trot that the MPC decided to maintain the status quo on the repo rate. The MPC last raised repo rate by 25 bps to 6·50% at its meeting in February 2023. Announcing the bimonthly monetary policy on October 6, 2023, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the transmission of 250 bps repo rate cut is still incomplete. The Real GDP growth projection for FY24 remains unchanged at 6·5%. Similarly, inflation for FY24 is projected at 5·4%, unchanged from earlier. Preventing food and fuel price shocks are non-negotiable necessities. RBI may have to consider open market operations (OMOs) with regard to G-secs to manage liquidity. OMO will be via auction.

Key Monetary Rates/Ratio
(As on October 6, 2023)

Monetary Rate/Ratio	Value
Repo Rate	6·50%
Fixed Reverse Repo Rate	3·35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	6·75%
Bank Rate	6·75%
Standing Deposit Facility Rate	6·25%
Cash Reserve Ratio	4·5%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio	18·0%

Fincare SFB to Merge with AU Small Finance Bank

AU Small Finance Bank announced the merger of Fincare Small Finance Bank with itself on October 29, 2023. The AU Small Finance Bank will acquire Fincare Small Finance Bank in an all-stock transaction valued at ₹ 4,411 crore. The move is aimed at extending the bank's footprint in southern India and entering the microfinance sector.

External Sector

FDI Equity Inflow Contracts 22% to $ 46 Billion in FY 23

Foreign direct equity investments declined by 22 per cent to $ 46·03 billion in 2022–23 amid challenges in the global economy, includeing factors like high inflation, expansionary monetary policy, and recessionary trends in developed economies.

- Total foreign direct investment (FDI), which includes equity capital of unincorporated bodies, reinvested earnings, and other capital, contracted 16 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to $ 70·97 billion during FY23.
- In 2021-22, total FDI inflows were 84·83 billion.
- Among the top 10 investing countries' FDI equity inflows, Singapore emerged as a big investor with $ 17·2 billion in FDI in FY23. It was followed by investment from Mauritius ($ 6·13 billion), the US ($ 6 billion), the United Arab Emirates ($ 3·35 billion), the Netherlands ($ 2·5 billion), Japan ($ 1·8 billion), the UK ($ 1·73 billion), Cyprus ($ 1·27 billion), the Cayman Islands ($ 772 million), and Germany ($ 547 million).
- As regards sectors, computer software and hardware manufacturing was the highest recipient of FDI at $ 9·39 billion, down 35 per cent YoY. The services sector—including financial, banking, insurance, research and development, and courier services—mopped up $ 8·71 billion worth of FDI but contracted 41 per cent on-year. The trading sector amassed $ 4·79 billion in FDI but contracted YoY. FDI in the automotive industry contracted 72 per cent to $ 1·9 billion in FY23. However, drugs and pharmaceutical, chemical, telecommunications, and construction sectors witnessed a jump in FDI inflows, compared to last year, to $ 2·06 billion, $ 1·85 billion, $ 713 million, and $ 146 million, respectively.
- Maharashtra continued to be the most favoured destination for investors, receiving $ 14·8 billion worth of investments, although inflows declined 4 per cent. Karnataka came a close second with $ 10·43 billion in FY23, up from $ 22·01 billion a year ago. Delhi was a distant third. Its FDI inflows declined to $ 7·53 billion, from $ 8·18 billion a year ago.



India's Current Account Deficit Widened to US $ 67 Billion in FY 2022-23

According to a release of RBI on June 27, 2023, India's current account deficit increased to US $ 67 billion in the FY 2022-23 from US $ 38·7 billion in the FY 2021-22. The current account balance recorded a deficit of 2·0 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 as compared with a deficit of 1·2 per cent in 2021-22 as the trade deficit widened to US $ 265·3 billion in FY 2022-23 from US 189·5 billion in FY 2021-22. Key observations in balance of payment are following :

- Net invisible receipts were higher in 2022-23 due to increase in net exports of services and net private transfer receipts, even though net income outgo was higher than in FY 2021-22.
- Net FDI inflows at US $ 28·0 billion in 2022-23 were lower than US $ 38·6 billion in 2021-22.
- Net FPI recorded an outflow of US $ 5·2 billion in 2022-23 as compared with an outflow of US $ 16·8 billion in FY 2022-23.
- Net ECBs to India recorded an outflow of US $ 4·1 billion in 2022-23 as against an inflow of US $ 7·4 billion in 2021-22.
- In 2022-23, there was a depletion of US $ 9·1 billion of the foreign exchange reserves (on a BoP basis).

So far as the current account deficit in fourth quarter of FY 2022-23

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is concerned, the RBI announced, "India's current account deficit (CAD) decreased to US $ 1·3 billion (0·2 per cent of GDP) in Q4 : 2022-23 from US $ 16·8 billion (2·0 per cent of GDP) in Q3 : 2022-23, and US $ 13·4 billion (1·6 per cent of GDP) a year ago (*i.e.*, Q4 : 2021-22]" The sequential decline in CAD in Q4 : 2022-23 was mainly on account of a moderation in the trade deficit to US $ 52·6 billion in Q4 : 2022-23 from US $ 71·3 billion in Q3 : 2022-23, coupled with robust services exports.

Ranking in Terms of FDI Inflow in the Year 2022 (US $ billion)

Country	2022		2021	
	Rank	FDI Inflow	Rank	FDI Inflow
The US	1	285	1	388
China	2	189	2	181
Singapore	3	141	4	131
Hong Kong, China	4	118	3	140
Brazil	5	86	6	51
Australia	6	62	21	21
Canada	7	53	5	66
India	8	49	8	45
Sweden	9	46	19	21
France	10	36	12	31

India Climbed to the 7th Position in the Global Ranking of Service Traders in 2022

India climbed to the 7th position in the global ranking of service traders in 2022, largely driven by the robust export of computer services, as per World Trade Organization (WTO) data.

India's services exports range from information technology to services provided by doctors and nurses abroad.

While the RBI doesn't release monthly disaggregated services exports data, its classification of services exports released quarterly with the balance of payment data includes transport, travel, construction, insurance and pensions, financial services, telecommunications, computer and information services, and personal, cultural, and recreational services, and other business services.

While software exports dominate India's services exports, 'other business services' exports have seen a strong ramp-up recently due to the mushrooming of global capability centres. This category includes legal services; accounting, auditing, bookkeeping and tax consultancy services; management consulting, managerial, and public relations services; and advertising, market research, and public opinion polling services.

India's External Debt End-June 2023 at US $ 629·1 Billion

- At end-June 2023, India's external debt was placed at US $ 629·1 billion, recording an increase of US $ 4·7 billion over its level at end-March 2023.
- The external debt to GDP ratio declined to 18.6 per cent at end-June 2023 from 18·8 per cent at end-March 2023.
- At end-June 2023, long-term debt (with original maturity of above one year) was placed at US $ 505·5 billion, recording an increase of US $ 9·6 billion over its level at end-March 2023.
- The share of short-term debt (with original maturity of up to one year) in total external debt declined to 19·6 per cent at end-June 2023 from 20·6 per cent at end-March 2023. Similarly, the ratio of short-term debt (original maturity) to foreign exchange reserves declined to 20·8 per cent at end-June 2023 (22·2 per cent at end-March 2023).
- US dollar-denominated debt remained the largest component of India's external debt, with a share of 54·4 per cent at end-June 2023, followed by debt denominated in the Indian rupee (30·4 per cent), SDR (5·9 per cent), yen (5·7 per cent), and the euro (3·0 per cent).
- Outstanding debt of the general government decreased, while non-government debt increased at end-June 2023.
- Loans remained the largest component of external debt, with a share of 32·9 per cent, followed by currency and deposits (22·9 per cent), trade credit and advances (19·0 per cent) and debt securities (16·8 per cent).
- Debt service (*i.e.*, principal repayments and interest payments) increased to 6·8 per cent of current receipts at end-June 2023 as compared with 5·3 per cent at end-March 2023, reflecting higher debt service.

States in Index

15 States Among Achievers in Logistics Performance Index 2022 : LEADS Report

The report ranks the States on the basis of their logistics ecosystem, highlights the key logistics-related challenges faced by the stakeholders and includes suggestive recommendations, according to the fourth LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2022. LEADS Index aims at enhancing the focus on improving logistics performance across states which is essential for improving the country's trade and reducing transaction cost. The first logistics report was released in 2018. No ranking was released in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key findings of the report are following :

- Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Gujarat are among the 15 States and UTs categorised as achievers in the logistics index chart 2022. The other States and UTs which are in the achievers category include Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Sikkim and Tripura are the other States categorised as fast movers in the ranking.
- The 15 States and UTs ranked in the aspirers category include Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, and Arunachal Pradesh.

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WTO Ranks India 18th in Merchandise Exports and 9th in Merchandise Imports in 2022

World Trade Statistical Review (WTSR), flagship publication of the WTO, was released on July 31, 2023. It provides key data on global trade in merchandise and commercial services. Trade in goods and services amounted to $ 31 trillion in 2022, a 13 per cent rise year-on-year (Y-o-Y). While trade in goods exceeded pre-pandemic levels in 2021, trade in services caught up in 2022. China remained the top merchandise exporter in 2022 but its share in world exports declined to 14 per cent (from 15 per cent in 2021). The United States (8 per cent of world trade) and Germany (7 per cent) were ranked in second and third positions.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), foodborne diseases affect 1 in 10 people worldwide each year. On average, every day, 1·6 million people fall sick due to unsafe food and 340 children under 5 years of age die due to these preventable foodborne diseases. Of the estimated 4·2 lakh people who lose their lives every year by consuming contaminated food, children under 5 years of age constitute about 40%, with 1,25,000 deaths every year.

According to WHO, there are also about 200 diseases, ranging from diarrhea to cancers, that are caused by consuming unsafe food, and some of these can be fatal. Foodborne illnesses usually are infectious or toxic in nature and often not visible to the plain eye. These are caused by organisms like bacteria, viruses, or parasites or by toxic chemical substances that enter the body through food and water.

India's Merchandise Trade and Commercial Services in 2022

	Value (US$ Billion)	Share in the World trade (%)	Annual Percentage Change	Rank in World Trade
Merchandise Exports	453	1·8	15·0	18
Merchandise Import	723	2·8	26·0	10
Export of Commercial Services	309	4·4	29	7
Import of Commercial Services	249	3·8	27	9
World Trade Organisation : World Trade Statistical Review 2023.				

India in Global Indexes

Global Gender Gap Report 2023 : India at 127th Place in 146 Countries

Global Gender Gap Report 2023 was released by the World Economic Forum. India has climbed eight places in the annual Gender Gap Report, 2023, and is ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity, from 135 last year. On the four key indicators of the index—economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment India has a lot of opportunity to improve in each so that about 70 crore women of the country may contribute to the economy, growth and overall wellbeing of society.

Key findings of the GGGR 2023 are following :

- The global gender gap score in 2023 for all 146 countries included in 2023 edition stands at 68·4% closed.
- At the current rate of progress, it will take 131 years to reach full parity.
- At the current rate of progress over the 2006-2023 span, it will take 162 years to close the Political Empowerment gender gap, 169 years for the Economic

Leading Exporters and Importers of Merchandise Goods in the World in the Year 2022 (Value in US $ Billion)

Top Ten Exporters of Merchandise Goods					Top Ten Importers of Merchandise goods				
Country	Value of Exports	Percentage Share	% Change Over 2021	Rank	Country	Value of Exports	Percentage Share	% Change Over 2021	Rank
China	3592	14·4	7	1	The USA	3376	13·2	15	1
The USA	2065	8·3	18	2	China	2716	10·6	1	2
Germany	1655	6·6	1	3	Germany	1571	6·1	11	3
Netherlands	966	3·9	15	4	Netherlands	899	3·5	19	4
Japan	747	3·0	– 1	5	Japan	897	3·5	17	5
South Korea	684	2·7	6	6	United Kingdom	824	3·2	19	6
Italy	657	2·6	7	7	France	818	3·2	18	7
Belgium	633	2·5	15	8	South Korea	731	2·9	19	8
France	618	2·5	6	9	India	726	2·8	26	9
Hong Kong	610	2·4	– 9	10	Italy	689	2·8	22	10
India	453	1·8	15	18	Hong Kong	668	2·8	– 6	11
World Trade Organisation : World Trade Statistical Review 2023.									

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Participation and Opportunity gender gap, and 16 years for the Educational Attainment gender gap. The time to close the Health and Survival gender gap remains undefined.

- No country has yet achieved full gender parity, although the top nine countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia and Lithuania) have closed at least 80% of their gap.
- For the 14th year running, Iceland (91·2%) takes the top position. It also continues to be the only country to have closed more than 90% of its gender gap.
- The global top five is completed by three other Nordic countries–Norway (87·9%, 2nd), Finland (86·3%, 3rd) and Sweden (81·5%, 5th) with one country from East Asia and the Pacific New Zealand (85·6%, 4th) ranked 4th.
- Additionally, from Europe, Germany (81·5%) moves up to 6th place (from 10th), Lithuania (80·0%) returns to the top 10 economies, taking 9th place, and Belgium (79·6%) joins the top 10 for the first time in 10th place.
- One country from Latin America (Nicaragua, 81·1%) and one from Sub-Saharan Africa (Namibia, 80·2%) – complete this year's top 10, taking the 7th and 8th positions, respectively.
- The two countries that drop out of the top 10 in 2023 are Ireland (79·5%, 11th, down from 9th in 2022) and Rwanda (79·4%, 12th, down from 6th).
- For the 146 countries covered in the 2023 index, the Health and Survival gender gap has closed by 96%, the Educational Attainment gap by 95·2%, Economic Participation and Opportunity gap by 60·1%, and Political Empowerment gap by 22·1%.
- India, Pakistan Bangladesh, and Bhutan have seen an improvement of 0·5 percentage points or more in their scores since the last edition. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are the best-performing countries in the region, while Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan are at the bottom of both the regional and global ranking tables. At the current rate of progress, full parity in the region will be achieved in 149 years.

India's Performance in Sub Indices of GGG Index 2023

Sub-Index	Score	Rank
Educational Attainment	1·000	26
Political Empowerment	0·253	59
Economic Participation	0·367	142
Health and Survival	0·950	142

Global Gender Gap Index 2023 Rankings

Rank	Country	Score
1	Iceland	0·912
2	Norway	0·879
3	Finland	0·863
4	New Zealand	0·856
5	Sweden	0·815
20	South Africa	0·787
57	Brazil	0·724
59	Bangladesh	0·722
103	Bhutan	0·680
107	China	0.678
115	Sri Lanka	0·659
116	Nepal	0·659
127	India	0·642
142	Pakistan	0·575
146	Afghanistan	0·405

Economic Freedom of the World Index : 2035

Economic Freedom of the World Report, 2023 was released by the Canadian think-tank–Fraser Institute. The EFW index rates 165 jurisdictions (Countries). The data are available annually from 2000 to 2021 and for years ending in zero or five back to 1970.

The index measures the degree of economic freedom present in five major areas : (1) Size of Government, (2) Legal System and Property Rights, (3) Sound Money (4) Freedom to Trade Internationally, and (5) Regulation.

Within the five major areas, there are a total of 25 components in the index. Many of the components are themselves made up of several subcomponents (which in turn may be based on several more underlying sources of data). In total, the index incorporates 45 distinct components and or subcomponents of data. Each component and subcomponent is placed on a scale from 0 to 10 that reflects the distribution of the underlying data. When subcomponents are present, they are averaged to derive the component rating. The component ratings within each area are then averaged to derive ratings for each of the five areas. In turn, the five area ratings are averaged to derive the summary rating for each country.

These ratings are for 2021, the most recent year for which comprehensive data are available. Hong Kong and Singapore, as usual, occupy the top two positions—but for the first time in the history of the EFW index, Singapore edges out Hong Kong for the #1 ranking. The next highest scoring nations are Switzerland, New Zealand, United States, Ireland, Denmark, Australia, United Kingdom, and Canada.

The rankings of some other major countries are Taiwan (11th), Japan (20th), Germany (23rd), Korea (42nd), France (47th), Italy (53rd), Mexico (68th), India (87th), Brazil (90th), Russia (104th), and China (111th). The 10 lowest-rated countries are : Republic of Congo, Algeria, Argentina, Libya, Iran, Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Zimbabwe, and Venezuela.

India Slipped to 56th Position in IMD World Talent Ranking 2023

Out of 64 economies, India has slipped four spots to 56th position, compared to its 52nd position in 2022, in the 2023 World Talent Ranking, according to the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) release :

- Though the report, released on 27 September, 2023 acknowledges India's infrastructure improvements, it underscores the need for further enhancement in talent competitiveness.
- The IMD World Talent Ranking considers various factors, including quality of life, statutory minimum wage, and primary and secondary education. India

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fared reasonably well in future readiness, ranking 29th. However, the report highlights India's weak educational system, ranking it second to last (63rd) in quality. This is attributed to unequal access to education, particularly in rural areas, and insufficient investment.

- In the IMD World Talent Ranking 2023, Switzerland ranked on top, while Luxembourg was in second place, followed by Iceland, Belgium, and the Netherlands.
- The United States is ranked 15th, while China is at 41st place, and the UK ranks 35th. Brazil (63rd) and Mongolia (64th) occupy the bottom two spots.

India Ranks 42 in 55 Countries on International IP Index 2023

The International IP Index, developed by the US Chamber of Commerce, is a powerful instrument for evaluating the robustness and efficiency of intellectual property (IP) frameworks established by policymakers worldwide. Furthermore, the Index provides a roadmap for economies aiming to improve the ecosystem for innovation and creativity through more efficient IP standards.

- The eleventh edition of the International IP Index benchmarking the IP framework in 55 global economies across 50 unique indicators, has been published by the US Chamber of Commerce.
- The International IP Index evaluates the countries based on nine major groups : Patents, trademarks, designs, trade secrets, commercialization of IP asset, enforcement, systematic efficiency and membership and ratification of international treaties.
- According to the report, which covers everything from patent and copyright laws to the ability to monetize IP assets and the ratification of international agreements, India has maintained continued strong efforts in copyright piracy through the issuing of 'dynamic' injunction orders.

Country Ranking in International Intellectual Property Index 2023

Rank 2023	Country	Score
1	The US	95·48%
2	UK	94·14%
3	France	93·12%
4	Germany	92·46%
5	Sweden	92·14%
6	Japan	91·26%
7	Netherlands	90·70%
8	Ireland	89·36%
9	Spain	86·44%
10	Switzerland	86·0%
42	India	39·74%

World Bank's Women, Business and The Law 2023

Women, Business and the Law 2023 assesses laws and regulations on women's economic participation in 190 economies, from 1970 to 2022. The report covers eight related areas: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.

- Women, Business and the Law's analysis starts from the premise that gender equality is essential for ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.
- Women, Business and the Law 2023 identifies barriers to women's economic participation and encourages the reform of discriminatory laws.
- Globally, on average, women enjoy only 77 per cent of the legal rights that men do; and nearly 2·4 billion women of working age around the world live in economies that do not grant them the same rights as men.
- At the current pace of reform, it would take at least 50 years to approach legal gender equality everywhere.
- Since 1970, the global average Women, Business and the Law score has improved by about two-thirds, rising from 45·8 to 77·1 points.
- Today, 14 economies (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden) score 100 on the index, meaning that women are on an equal legal standing with men in all of the areas measured.
- India's journey of social and legal reforms to address domestic violence followed a unique path spanning nearly five decades of debates, starting from addressing dowry-related violence, then recognizing additional offenses in the criminal law, and finally enacting the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005, which for the first time accorded protective rights and welfare measures to survivors. Likewise, the Kenya Protection against Domestic Violence Bill of 2015 was the culmination of more than 20 years of research, advocacy, and lobbying by Kenyan civil society organizations as well as a significant achievement for Kenyan parliamentarians.
- India's score on women equality is 74·4 in Women Business and the Law Report 2023.
- In Mumbai, India's top most business city, score in Women Business and the Law is 100 in three areas-Mobility, Work Place and Marriage; the level of equality of women is 80 in Assets, 75 in pension & entrepreneurship, 40 in parenthood and just 25 in pay.

Economic Freedom of the World : 2023 Report

The index published in Economic Freedom of the World measures the degree to which the policies and institutions of countries are supportive of economic freedom. The cornerstones of economic freedom are personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to enter markets and compete, and security of the person and privately-owned property. Forty-five data points are used to construct a summary index, along with a Gender Legal Rights Adjustment to measure the extent to which women have the same level of economic freedom as men. The degree of economic freedom is measured in five broad areas.

1. Size of Government—As government spending, taxation, and

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the size of government-controlled enterprises increase, government decision-making takes the place of individual choice and economic freedom is reduced.

2. Legal System and Property Rights—Protection of persons and their rightfully acquired property is a central element of both economic freedom and civil society. Indeed, it is the most important function of government. If property is not secure, if individuals are not safe, if the judiciary is not impartial, or if the rule of law is undermined, then, again, economic freedom is reduced.

3. Sound Money—Inflation erodes the value of rightfully earned wages and savings. Sound money is thus essential to protect property rights. When inflation is not only high but also volatile, it becomes difficult for individuals to plan for the future and thus use economic freedom effectively.

4. Freedom to Trade Internationally—Freedom to exchange—in its broadest sense, buying, selling, making contracts, and so on—is the essence of economic freedom. And this freedom is reduced when government impediments to trade make it costly or even impossible to exchange with businesses and individuals in other nations.

5. Regulation—Governments not only use a number of tools to limit the right to exchange internationally, they may also impose onerous regulations, domestically as well as on international trade, that limit the right to exchange, gain credit, hire or work for whomever one wishes, or freely operate one's business. As these limits multiply, economic freedom decreases.

Global Hunger Index 2023 : India's Rank Deteriorated to 111th Place

In the 2023 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 111th out of the 125 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2023 GHI scores. With a score of 28·7 in the 2023 Global Hunger Index, India has a level of hunger that is *serious*. Concern Worldwide and Welt Hungerhilfe, non-governmental organisations based in Germany and Ireland, respectively, have released the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023 report.

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators :

1. Undernourishment : The share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.

- Measures inadequate food access, an important indicator of hunger.
- Refers to the entire population, both children and adults.
- Is used as a lead indicator for international hunger reduction targets, including Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger).

2. Child Stunting : The share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.

3. Child Wasting : The share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting *acute* undernutrition.

- Go beyond calorie availability, consider aspects of diet quality and utilization.
- Reflect children's particular vulnerability to nutritional deficiencies.
- Are sensitive to uneven distribution of food within the household.
- Are used as nutrition indicators for SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

Level of Seriousness in India Under Various Components of Global Hunger Index 2023

Components of Global Hunger Index	Reference Year	Value
Undernourishment (% of population)	2020-22	16·6
Child wasting (% of children under five years old)	2018-22	18·7
Child stunting (% of children under five years old)	2018-22	35·5
Child mortality (% of children under five years old)	2021	3·1

4. Child Mortality : The share of children who die before their fifth birthday, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

- Reflects that death is the most serious consequence of hunger, and children are the most vulnerable.
- Improves the GHI's ability to reflect deficiencies of essential vitamins and minerals.
- Complements stunting and wasting, which only partially capture the mortality risk of undernutrition.

Based on the values of the four indicators, a GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from *low* to *extremely alarming*.

GHI Severity of Hunger Scale

GHI Severity	Level
Low	≤ 9·9
Moderate	10·0–19·9
Serious	20·0–34·9
Alarming	35·0–49·9
Extremely Alarming	≥ 50·0

Country Ranking in Global Hunger Index 2023

Rank 2023	Country	Score of GHI
4	China	< 5
19	United Arab Emirates	< 5
26	Russian Federation	5·8
32	Brazil	6·7
37	Saudi Arabia	7·3
58	South Africa	13·0
60	Sri Lanka	13·3
69	Nepal	15·0
81	Bangladesh	19·0
101	Ethiopia	26·2
102	Pakistan	26·6
111	India	28·7
123	Yemen	39·9
124	Madagascar	41·0
125	Central African Republic	42·3

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Schemes/Programmes/ Missions

Cabinet Approves 'PM-eBus Sewa' for Augmenting City Bus Operations

The Union Cabinet has approved a bus scheme **'PM-eBus Sewa'** for augmenting city bus operation by 10,000 e-buses on PPP model. The Scheme would have an estimated cost of ₹ 57,613 crore, out of which support of ₹ 20,000 crore will be provided by the Central government. The Scheme will support bus operations for 10 years. The move aims to help the Centre's plan to deploy 50,000 e-buses under the National Electric Bus Program and achieve 40 per cent e-bus penetration by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2070.

PM Vishwakarma Scheme

PM Vishwakarma, a Central Sector Scheme, was launched on 17th September, 2023 by the Prime Minister to provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools. The Scheme covers artisans and crafts people engaged in 18 trades, *viz.*, (i) Carpenter (Suthar/Badhai); (ii) Boat Maker; (iii) Armourer; (iv) Black-smith (Lohar); (v) Hammer and Tool Kit Maker; (vi) Locksmith; (vii) Goldsmith (Sonar); (viii) Potter (Kumhaar); (ix) Sculptor (Moortikar, stone carver), Stone breaker; (x) Cobbler (Charmkar)/Shoesmith/ Footwear artisan; (xi) Mason (Rajmistri); (xii) Basket/Mat/Broom Maker/Coir Weaver; (xiii) Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional); (xiv) Barber (Naai); (xv) Garland maker (Malakaar); (xvi) Washerman (Dhobi); (xvii) Tailor (Darzi); and (xviii) Fishing Net Maker.

The Scheme envisages provisioning of the following benefits to the artisans and craftspersons :

1. Recognition : Recognition of artisans and craftspeople through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.

2. Skill Upgradation : Basic Training of 5-7 days and Advanced Training of 15 days or more, with a stipend of ₹ 500 per day;

3. Toolkit Incentive : A toolkit incentive of upto ₹ 15,000 in the form of e-vouchers at the beginning of Basic Skill Training.

4. Credit Support : Collateral free 'Enterprise Development Loans' of upto ₹ 3 lakh in two tranches of ₹ 1 lakh and ₹ 2 lakh with tenures of 18 months and 30 months, respectively, at a concessional rate of interest fixed at 5%, with Government of India subvention to the extent of 8%. Beneficiaries who have completed Basic Training will be eligible to avail the first tranche of credit support of upto ₹ 1 lakh. The second loan tranche will be available to beneficiaries who have availed the 1st tranche and maintained a standard loan account and have adopted digital transactions in their business or have undergone Advanced Training.

5. Incentive for Digital Transaction : An amount of Re. 1 per digital transaction, upto maximum 100 transactions monthly will be credited to the beneficiary's account for each digital payout or receipt.

6. Marketing Support : Marketing support will be provided to the artisans and craftspeople in the form of quality certification, branding, onboarding on e-commerce platforms such as GeM, advertising, publicity and other marketing activities to improve linkage to value chain.

In addition to the above mentioned benefits, the Scheme will onboard the beneficiaries on Udyam Assist Platform as 'entrepreneurs' in the formal MSME ecosystem.

Enrolment of beneficiaries shall be done through Common Service Centres with Aadhaar-based biometric authentication on PM Vishwakarma portal. The enrolment of beneficiaries will be followed by a three-step verification which will include (i) Verification at Gram Panchayat/ ULB level, (ii) Vetting and Recommendation by the District Implementation Committee (iii) Approval by the Screening Committee.

BHARAT Campaign

BHARAT (Banks Heralding Accelerated Rural & Agriculture Transformation) campaign was launched on July 12, 2023 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare as a part of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF). This was a month-long campaign from 15th July, 2023 to 15th August, 2023. Top performing Banks under different categories *i.e.*, Commercial Banks in public and private Sector, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Cooperative Banks were selected at the end of the campaign and their special contribution was recognized. As on 31.7.2023, overall ₹ 1239 crore have been sanctioned by numerous banks for 1375 projects under BHARAT campaign.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launched the ₹ 24,000 Crore PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan PM-JANMAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 15, 2023 launched at Khunti (Jharkhand) PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan PM-JANMAN with a budget allocation of the ₹ 24,000 crore. This initiative is the new name of **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) Mission,** which was announced in Union Budget 203-24.

PVTGs were earlier known as primitive tribal groups. PVTGs are a sub-classification of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) or a section of STs who are considered more vulnerable than regular STs. The PVTG list has been created by the Central government with the aim to improve on priority the living standards of endangered tribal groups. According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 75 PVTGs are spread across 15 states and Union Territories.

Under PM JANMAN, the government will reach out to tribal groups and primitive tribes most of whom still dwell in the forests. The 75 PVTGs, with a population of about 28 lakh, live in 22,544 villages across 18 states and Union Territories in India. "Earlier governments did the work of connecting the figures, but now the government wants to connect the lives, not the figures. The central government is going to spend ₹ 24,000 crores on this mega campaign.

Miscellaneous

CAG Girish Murmu Re-elected as External Auditor of WHO for 4 Year Term

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu

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has been reelected as the external auditor of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a four-year term from 2024 to 2027. CAG is already holding this position in WHO for a four-year term from 2019 to 2023.The present election was held on May 29, 2023 in the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, where the CAG of India was reelected with an overwhelming majority (114 out of 156 votes) in the first round of voting itself, CAG's appointment is a recognition of its standing among the international community as well as its professionalism, high standards, global audit experience and strong national credentials.

Parliament Passes Jan Vishwas Bill, 2023

The Lok Sabha on July 27, 2023 and Rajya Sabha on August 2, 2023 passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023, to enhance ease of doing business, decrease compliance burden for individuals and industry, and alleviate judicial load by decriminalising minor economic offences. The Bill was mooted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The Bill proposes to revise 183 provisions across 42 laws under 19 government ministries.

At present, existing laws contain clauses for imprisonment for minor and procedural defaults, as well as lesser fines and penalties. This resulted in fear and mistrust towards the government. The intended changes of this proposed law aim to avoid unnecessary imprisonments and impose higher penalties and fines where necessary.

According to the Bill, offences have been decriminalized by either eliminating both imprisonment and/or fine; removing imprisonment while retaining or increasing fines; or changing imprisonment and/or fine to penalties. Conversion of fines into penalties implies that court prosecution can be bypassed for punishment.

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022, was first introduced to the Lok Sabha on December 22, 2022. On the same day, the Bill was referred to a joint committee of both Houses, which submitted its report in the Lok Sabha on March 20, 2023.

Some of the acts that have been amended, include : The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Public Debt Act, 1944; Pharmacy Act, 1948; Cinematograph Act, 1952; Copyright Act, 1957; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; and Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

India's Decade of Disparity : A Deep Dive into NASA's Latest Poverty Index

India's overall socio-economic growth over the past decade hides sharp contrasts among different states. NASA's Global Gridded Relative Deprivation Index (GRDI), a measure capturing poverty, health, education, satellite imagery, and more, exposes these stark regional differences.

- NASA's Socio-economic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC) launched the GRDI in August 2023. This tool gauges global poverty levels at a detailed 1 km resolution. A score of 100 indicates extreme deprivation, while zero denotes minimal. The data blends human development metrics with satellite imagery, including night-time lights, offering a more precise view than traditional census data.
- Six components are used to determine the degree of relative poverty in the final index :
  - **Child Dependency Ratio :** Quantifies the ratio of children (0-14 years) to the working-age populace (15-64 years). It measures the balance between young and working-age populations. A higher ratio indicates a younger, burgeoning population.
  - **Infant Mortality Rates :** Represents fatalities in infants under a year per 1,000 live births within that year. Acts as a health barometer, where higher rates hint at pronounced deprivation and health challenges.
  - **Subnational Human Development Index :** Assesses overall human well-being through education, health, and living standards. A lower index points towards areas with increased challenges in human development.
  - **Built Area :** Examines the ratio of developed to undeveloped areas, indicating urbanisation rates and infrastructure development. A lower ratio suggests a region may face challenges often associated with rural areas.
  - **VIIRS Night-time Lights Intensity :** Uses night luminosity as a proxy for economic activity and development. Dimmer regions typically align with areas facing economic hardships.
  - **VIIRS Night-time Lights Slope :** Observes changes in night-time luminosity over nearly a decade. A declining brightness can signify waning economic activity and increasing deprivation.
- Four states that are scheduled to go to the polls later this year have GRDI much higher than the national average. Chhattisgarh has a GRDI of 72·8, Madhya Pradesh 74, Rajasthan 75·7, and Mizoram 75·1. GRDI values surpassing 70 suggest pressing developmental challenges in these areas.
- Meghalaya, known for its lush rainforests and picturesque landscapes, tops the list with the highest GRDI value of 79·8. Despite its natural wealth, the state faces significant challenges in access to essential services, income levels, and other well-being metrics.
- Chandigarh is at the other end of the spectrum, with a GRDI of 19·1 only. A hub of modernity and progress, Chandigarh's low GRDI underscores its residents' relatively high living standards. Delhi, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Punjab and Goa, with GRDI values below 60, also reflect better living standards and access to essential services.

Unemployment Rate During July 2022-June 2023 in India Stands at 3·2%

According to the annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey

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Sector-wise Break-up

(% of all 15+ population)
Sector of Employment by Location and Gender

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	Rural Male		
Agriculture	40·4	38·4	38·3
Mining & quarrying	0·3	0·3	0·3
Manufacturing	5·8	5·9	6·4
Electricity, water, etc.	0·4	0·4	0·4
Construction	14·3	12·5	14·8
Trade, hotel & restaurant	7·3	8·0	8·2
Transport, storage & communications	4·0	4·2	4·1
Other services	5·3	5·6	5·5
	Rural Female		
Agriculture	27·0	27·2	31·0
Mining & quarrying	0·0	0·0	0·0
Manufacturing	2·6	2·8	3·4
Electricity, water, etc.	0·0	0·0	0·0
Construction	0·0	1·9	1·7
Trade, hotel & restaurant	1·3	1·3	1·7
Transport, storage & communications	0·1	0·1	0·1
Other services	2·7	2·4	2·8
	Urban Male		
Agriculture	3·7	3·8	3·3
Mining & quarrying	0·4	0·3	0·4
Manufacturing	13·7	15·1	14·6
Electricity, water, etc.	1·0	1·0	0·9
Construction	9·3	9·1	8·9
Trade, hotel & restaurant	19·2	17·7	18·8
Transport, storage & communications	8·5	8·8	9·4
Other services	14·5	14·5	14·6
	Urban Female		
Agriculture	2·2	2·4	2·7
Mining & quarrying	0·0	0·0	0·0
Manufacturing	4·9	5·3	5·6
Electricity, water, etc.	0·1	0·1	0·1
Construction	0·1	0·9	0·7
Trade, hotel & restaurant	3·4	3·2	3·6
Transport, storage & communications	0·8	1·0	1·3
Other services	8·8	8·9	9·4

Note : Perctnages are for 15+ working age population and not for total working population. Since the PLFS report data on the same refers to the latter, there are varitions.

Source for all data : NSSO, Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2022-23.

(July 2022-June 2023), the labour force participation rate (LFPR) was estimated at 42·4 per cent. For those aged 15 years and above, it was calculated at 60·8 per cent in rural and 50·4 per cent in urban areas. Digging deeper into the workforce, the worker population ratio or WPR (defined as the number of employed per thousand people) gives us an indication of the country's employment situation. The WPR in India, for the given period, was 56 per cent for persons aged 15 years and above. In rural areas, it was recorded at 59·4 per cent, and in urban areas at 47·7 per cent. The unemployment rate (UR) for the given period was 3·2 per cent for the whole country and 5·4 per cent for urban areas.

Poverty in India Eased in '21, But was Above' 18 Level : World Bank Data

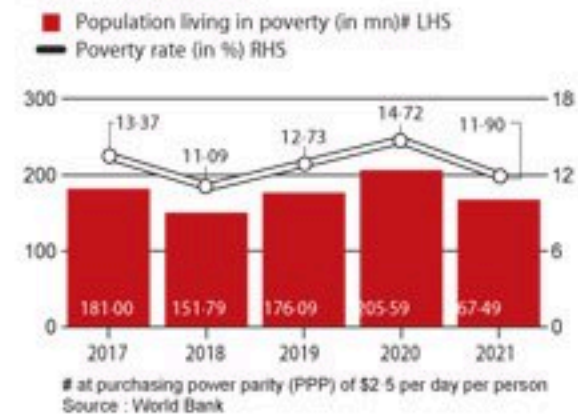
Extreme poverty in India declined by 38 million in 2021 to 167·49 million after a surge in the two preceding years, but remained above the 2018 level, the latest World Bank data shows.

While for most countries poverty rose in 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the global economy, the data shows poverty shot up in India a year earlier in 2019 to 176·09 million from 151·79 million in 2018, the lowest pre-pandemic count. India's poverty rate at 11·9 per cent in 2021 also remained higher than the 2018 level of 11·09 per cent, though easing from 14·72 per cent in 2020.

The World Bank measures extreme poverty rate at $ 2·15 a day in purchasing power parity terms.

The World Bank substantially revised upwards its extreme poverty number for 2019 to 176.09 million from 136·81 million estimated earlier. This substantially narrowed the gap with the 2020 figures to 29.5 million, implying the pandemic had a lesser debilitating impact on poverty than earlier anticipated.

IN NUMBERS



at purchasing power parity (PPP) of $2·5 per day per person
Source : World Bank

World Bank Updated International Poverty Line

The World Bank updated the global poverty lines in September 2022. The decision, was announced in May 2023 follows the release in 2020 of new purchasing power parities (PPPs)—the main data used to convert different currencies into a common, comparable unit and account for price differences across countries. The new extreme poverty line of $ 2·15 per person per day, which replaces the $ 1·90 poverty line, is based on 2017 PPPs.

The rise in the international poverty line reflects an increase in the costs of basic food, clothing, and shelter needs in low-income countries between 2011 and 2017, relative to the rest of the world. In other words, the real value of $ 2·15 in 2017 prices is the same as $ 1·90 was in 2011 prices.

The International Poverty Line (IPL) of $1·90, which was used until fall 2022, was derived as the mean of the national poverty lines of 15 poor countries in the 1990s, expressed in 2011 PPPs. The selection of these 15 poor countries was based on limited data at the time. With the gathering and analysis of new data from other low-income countries, the World Bank has expanded the reference group. The IPL is now derived as the median of the national poverty lines of 28 of the world's poorest countries, expressed in 2017 PPPs.

The new global poverty lines of $ 2·15, $ 3·65, and $ 6·85 reflect the typical national poverty lines of low-income, lower-middle-income, and upper-middle-income countries in 2017 prices. New nowcast estimates at the US $ 2·15 poverty line is available since October 2022.

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Semi-Annual National And International Updates

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AFSPA	—	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
ATSUM	—	All Tribal Student Union of Manipur
BSGI	—	Black Sea Grain Initiative
CCPA	—	Central Consumer Protection Authority
DAC	—	Defence Acquisition Council
EPFO	—	Employees Provident Fund Organisation
GJEPC	—	Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council
ILO	—	International Labour Organization
IMEC	—	India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor
INDIA	—	Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance
IPEF	—	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity
IRDAI	—	Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India
LGBTQIA	—	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
NCB	—	Narcotics Control Bureau
NCLAT	—	National Company Law Appellate Tribunal
NCS	—	National Center for Seismology
NCUI	—	National Cooperative Union of India
NDMA	—	National Disaster Management Authority
NIA	—	National Investigation Agency
NMDC	—	National Mineral Development Corporation
ONDC	—	Open Network for Digital Commerce
POCSO Act	—	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act
RPF	—	Railway Protection Force
RRTS	—	Regional Rapid Transit System
UAV	—	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UNIDO	—	United Nations Industrial Development Organization.
UNODC	—	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USCIRF	—	United States Commission for International Religious Freedom
UWW	—	United World Wrestling
WFI	—	Wrestling Federation of India
WIPO	—	World Intellectual Property Organisation

APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS

A.K. Mohanty

Senior physicist Ajit Kumar Mohanty assumed charge as the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy on May 3, 2023.

Mohanty, who is also Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, succeeded Kamlesh Nilkanth Vyas, who superannuated from the twin posts.

Mohanty will have a tenure up to the age of 66 years *i.e.*, till 10.10.2025 or until further orders, whichever is earlier, said a government order.

Ajay Banga

The Executive Directors of the World Bank on May 3, 2023 selected Ajay Banga as President of the World Bank for a five-year term beginning June 2, 2023.

Ajay Banga most recently served as Vice Chairman at General Atlantic. Previously, he was President and CEO of Mastercard, a global organisation with nearly 30,000 employees.

He was Honorary Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce, serving as Chairman from 2020-22. He became an advisor to General Atlantic's climate-focused fund, Beyond Net Zero, at its inception in 2021. Banga served as Co-Chair of the Partnership for Central America, a coalition of private organisations that works to advance economic opportunity across underserved populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. He was previously on the Boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods, and Dow Inc. Ajay Banga is a co-founder of The Cyber Readiness Institute and was Vice Chair of the Economic Club of New York.

He was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal in 2012, the Padma Shri Award by the President of India in 2016, the Ellis Island Medal of Honour and the Business Council for International Understanding's Global Leadership Award in 2019, and the Distinguished Friends of Singapore Public Service Star in 2021.

Praveen Sood

The high-powered selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Karnataka Director-General of Police (DGP) Praveen Sood as Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a period of two years. He took charge from Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, who completed his tenure on May 25, 2023.

A 1986-batch IPS officer of the Karnataka cadre, Sood was appointed Karnataka DGP in January 2020, superseding Ashit Mohan Prasad, who was from the previous batch.

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Dr. Manoj Soni

Dr. Manoj Soni took the Oath of Office and Secrecy as Chairman, Union Public Service Commission on May 16, 2023.

Dr. Manoj Soni joined the Commission as Member on 28.6.2017 and was later on appointed to perform the duties of the post of Chairman.

He served a total of three terms as Vice-Chancellor of the M.S. University of Baroda (one term) and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Gujarat for two terms. He has been the youngest-ever Vice-Chancellor in independent India.

Dr. Soni has earned a number of recognitions and awards and has significant publications to his credit.

Swaminathan Janakiraman

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has on June 20 approved appointment of State Bank of India(SBI) managing director Swaminathan Janakiraman to the post of deputy governor of Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years.

According to the RBI Act, 1934, the Central Bank should have four Deputy Governors—two from within the ranks, one commercial banker and an economist to head the monetary policy department. The other three deputy governors are Michael Debabrata Patra, M. Rajeshwar Rao and T. Rabi Sankar.

Amit Agrawal

Senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Shri Amit Agrawal assumed charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on June 20, 2023. He is an officer of the 1993 batch IAS from the Chhattisgarh cadre.

Janardan Prasad

Janardan Prasad has been appointed as the new Director General of the Geological Survey of India (GSI). Prasad, who took charge of the 174-year-old institution on June 1, 2023, succeeded Dr. S. Raju.

Geological survey of India, an attached office to the Ministry of Mines, is headquartered in Kolkata and has six regional offices in Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata. It was founded in 1851, by the East India Company.

Ravi Sinha

Ravi Sinha, IPS Officer from the 1988 batch of the Chhattisgarh cadre has been appointed new Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) Chief. Ravi Sinha will succeed incumbent Samant Kurnar Goel on June 30, 2023.

The Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) is the foreign intelligence agency of India. The agency's primary function is gathering foreign intelligence, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, advising Indian policymakers, and advancing India's foreign strategic interests.

Dennis Francis

United Nations General Assembly Elected Dennis Francis of Trinidad and Tobago President of Seventy-Eighth Session on June 1, 2023.

The Assembly then elected the following Vice-Presidents of its plenary : Bolivia, Congo, Estonia, Gambia, Iceland, Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Zambia. Those elected join the five permanent members of the Security Council—China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States which serve annually as Assembly Vice-Presidents.

Four Chief Justices Appointed in High Courts

The four Judges were elevated as Chief Justices of Gujarat, Kerala, Odisha and Telangana in July 2023. The President of India Draupadi Murmu appointed Justice Sunita Agrawal as Gujarat High Court Chief Justice, Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai as Kerala High Court Chief Justice, Justice Subhasis Talapatra as Odisha High Court Chief Justice and Justice Alok Aradhe as Telangana High Court Chief Justice.

Tushar Mehta

Tushar Mehta has been reappointed as Solicitor General for India for a period of three years. In a notification issued by the Ministry of Personnel Mehta's reappointment date is July 1, 2023. Mehta was appointed as the Solicitor General in 2018. He got an extension in 2020. Solicitor General is the second most senior law officer after Attorney General.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet also approved the re-appointment of other six law officers Vikramjit Banerjee, K.M. Nataraj, Balbir Singh, S.V. Raju, N. Venkataraman and Aishwarya Bhati as Additional Solicitor General for the Supreme Court for a period of three years.

Manoj Yadav

Haryana cadre Indian Police Service officer Manoj Yadav was appointed as Director General, Railways Protection Force (RPF) on July 17, 2023. Yadav, who was the Haryana DGP from 2019-21, is the senior most IPS officer in the cadre and is on central deputation at present as DG (investigations), National Human Rights Commission.

Anwar ul Haq Kakar

Anwar ul Haq Kakar is appointed caretaker Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He took office on August 14, 2023 after the National Assembly was dissolved August 9, 2023 three days before the legislative Assembly would have completed its five year tenure. Then Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and opposition leader Raja Riaz agreed to name Senator Anwar as the caretaker Premier.

Under Pakistan's Constitution, a neutral caretaker government oversees the national elections, which must be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the Assembly.

Pramila Mallik became First Woman Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly

Biju Janata Leader Pramila Mallik was elected the new speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly unopposed on September 22, 2023. She is the first woman speaker of the state.

The post of speaker has been lying vacant after former speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha was appointed Finance Minister during the last reshuffle of the cabinet by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

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Pramilla Mallik is a six time MLA from Binjharpur Assembly Constituency, first elected in the year 1990 on the Janata Dal ticket and in the year 2000 from Janata Dal .

General Abdourahamane Tchiani

Gen. Abdourahamane Tchiani, the commander of Niger's presidential guards unit, was appointed head of state on July 28, 2023 by a governing council set up by military forces that ousted President Mohamed Bazoum.

Actor R. Madhawan Appointed President of The Film And Television Institute

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) on Friday appointed actor R. Madhavan as the president of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and Chairperson of the Governing Council. Madhavan was named the president a few weeks after he won a National Award for his film Rocketry : The Nambi Effect.

Jaya Varma Sinha Became First Woman Chairman of The Railway Board

Senior Railway Traffic Service Officer Jaya Varma Sinha became the first woman Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson of the Railway Board. She assumed the charge on September 1, 2023 and will serve in this position up to August 31, 2024. She succeeded Anil Kumar Lahoti.

Jaya before joining this post was a member of Operations and Business Development and earlier she was the Additional Member, Traffic Transportation in the Railway Board.

The Chairperson of the Indian Railway Board is the administrative head of the Indian Railways and also works as ex-officio Principal Secretary to the Government of India for the Ministry of Railways. The Indian Railway Board comprises one Chairman and seven members.

Justice Sidharth Mridul Sworn in as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court

Justice Siddharth Mridul took oath as the 7th Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court on October 20, 2023 in Raj Bhavan in Imphal. Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey administered the oath of office to Justice Mridul. Justice Mridul was appointed as the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court on October 16, 2023.

Arindam Bagchi Appointed as the Permanent Representative in United Nations

Arindam Bagchi, presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva on October 16, 2023. He would be succeeding Indra Mani Pandey.

Arindam Bagchi, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) 1995 batch official, took over as spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs in March 2021.

Bagchi earlier served as ambassador to Croatia and deputy high commissioner to Sri Lanka.

Daniel Noboa President in Ecuador

Businessman Daniel Noboa, 35, was sworn in as the President of Ecuador on November 23, 2023. He is the Youngest President in Ecuador's history.

Noboa term as President will run only through May 2025, which is what remains of former President Guillermo Lasso's tenure. While presidential terms in Ecuador are normally 4 years long, this was an early election triggered by the dissolution of Parliament by outgoing President Guillermo Lasso.

Noboa,who has very little political experience, will face an uphill struggle to tackle security problems and the poorly performing economy of Ecuador.

Javier Milei New President in Argentina

Argentina elected Javier Milei as their new President on November 19, 2023. Milei is known as an economist. He is the author of many books on economics and politics.

For over 21 years, Milei has been a professor of macroeconomics, economics of growth, microeconomics, and mathematics for economists.

Javier Milei advocates for minimal government, focusing on justice and security, with a philosophy rooted in life, liberty, property, and free-market principles. Milei criticises socialism and communism advocating for economic liberalisation.

Heeralal Samariya Sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner

Information Commissioner Heeralal Samariya was sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) on November 6, 2023.

The post was vacant after the term of Y.K. Sinha ended on October 3, 2023.

The Chief Information Commissioner is appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of the committee headed by the Prime Minister. The Commission has 1 Chief Information Commissioner and 10 Information Commissioners.

Saima Wazed Elected to WHO Post

Saina Wzed, daughter of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has emerged victorious in the race for the World Health Organisation's South-East Asia (WHO-SEARO) regional director.

Saima has been nominated as the next World Health Organisation Regional Director for South-East Asia by the member states voted during a closed meeting at the seventy-sixth session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia Region from 30 October to 2 November, 2023 was held in New Delhi, India.

Nomination of Saima Wazed will be submitted to the WHO Executive Board during its 154th session on January 22-27, 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The term of new Regional Director will begin from February 1, 2024. Saima Wazed is an Autism activist.

Dr. Sanchit Tyagi Appointed Director of Sports Authority of India

Dr. Sanchit Tyagi, a 2013 batch Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer, was appointed the director of Sports Authority of India (SAI) on November 1, 2023.

Tyagi has been serving as joint director of National Book Trust of India since 2021.

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DEATHS/OBITUARY

Poojapura Ravi

Noted movie actor and theatre personality Poojapura Ravi died on June 18, 2023.

Raveendran Nair, known by his stage name Poojapura Ravi was an Indian actor, primarily performing comedy roles in Malayalam films.

He has acted in around 4,000 plays and nearly 800 movies. Ravi is known for his characters in 'Kallan Kappalil Thanne', 'Rowdi Ramu', 'Ormakal Marikkumo', 'Ammini Mammavan', 'Mutharamkunnu PO', and 'Mazha Peyyunnu Maddalam Kottunnu' among others.

Silvio Berlusconi

Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's ex-Prime Minister and media mogul, died at 86 on June 12, 2023. Silvio Berlusconi served as the Italian Prime Minister in 1994-95, 2001-06 and 2008-11.

Silvio Berlusconi, the boastful billionaire media mogul, was Italy's longest-serving premier despite scandals over his sex-fueled parties and allegations of corruption.

Oomen Chandy

Chandy was an Indian lawyer, stateman and politician who served as the 10th Chief Minister of Kerala, serving from 2004 to 2006 and 2011 to 2016. He served as the Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Legislative Assembly from 2006 to 2011. He died on July 18, 2023.

Bindeshwar Pathak

Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International Social Service Organisation died on August 15, 2023 at the age of 80, in New Delhi.

Pathak is known as toilet man and credited for establishment of sulabh shauchalaya throughout the country. His mission was to eradicate manual scavenging because he thinks that manual scavenging is a dehumanising practice that would ultimately have a destructive impact on modern Indian society.

The Sulabh International was established in 1970. It works to promote environmental sanitation,waste management, human rights and non conventional sources of energy. He was awarded Padma Bhushan, Stockholm Water Prize and other various awards for his work.

C.R. Rao

C. Radhakrishna Rao, one of India's greatest mathematicians and statisticians, died in the United States (US) on August 23, 2023 about two weeks before his 103rd birthday.

Dr. Rao the former director of Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) had hit the headlines earlier this year (2023) after he was awarded the International Prize in Statistics, which many consider equivalent to the Nobel Prize. C.R. Rao was born on September 10, 1920 in a Telugu family in Hadagali, Bellary district.

Cartoonist Ajit Ninan

Cartoonist Ajit Ninan died on September 8, 2023, at the age of 68 in New Delhi.

Ajit Ninan was an Indian cartoonist, best known for drawing the Centrestage series of cartoons in India Today magazine and Ninan's World in the Times of India. He was honoured with BARTONS Lifetime Achievement Award by Indian Institute of Cartoonists in 2022.

Gummadi Vittal Rao 'Gaddar'

Gummadi Vittal Rao known as balladeer Gaddar was a poet, singer and communist revolutionary died on August 6, 2023 at the age of 74 in Hyderabad.

He was popularly known as 'praja gayakudu' or people's singer.

Gaddar supported Telangana State-hood Movement and was a lifelong advocate for Dalits and marginalised people. He penned a song podusthunna poddumeeda nadusthinna kalaama which roughly symbolised Telangana as a rising sun. It became the anthem song of the mass movement for separate Telangana.

Rudra Veena Exponent Ustad Ali Zaki Hader

Rudra Veena exponent Ustad Ali Zaki Hader died on September 8, 2023 in New Delhi at the age of 50.

Ali Zaki Hader, the disciple of Ustad Asad Ali Khan was the last exponent of the Khandarbani (Khandaharbani) style of Jaipur-Bikaner Gharana of Dhrupad .

The Rudra Veena is a large plucked string instrument used in Hindustani Music, especially Dhrupad. It has a deep bass resonance. Rudra Veena was developed in the late 15th century.

Bharatanatyam Artist Saroja Vaidyanathan

Bharatanatyam dancer guru Saroja Vaidyanathan died on September 21, 2023 in Delhi at the age of 86.

Saroja is credited with starting the Bharatanatyam academy, Ganesa Natyalya, in Delhi. She devoted her life to Bharatanatyam. Saroja choreographed more than 10 full-length ballets and nearly 2000 individual Bharatanatyam shows. She was conferred the Padma Shri in 2000 and the Padma Bhushan in 2013 by the Government of India.

Malayalam Film Producer K.G. George

Veteran Malayalam Film producer and director K.G. George passed away on September 24, 2023 at an old age home near Kakkanad at the age of 78.

He received the national award for best feature film Swapnaadanam (1976) and has also bagged nine state film awards since he started his film career in 1970.

Agriculture Scientist M.S. Swaminathan

Renowned agricultural scientist and the architect of India's 'Green Revolution' Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan passed away in Chennai on September 28. He was 98.

Swaminathan was instrumental in developing high-yielding varieties of paddy that helped ensure India's low-income farmers produce more yield.

In 2004, Swaminathan was appointed as chair of the National Commission on Farmers. The commission submitted its report in 2006 and suggested, among its recommendations, that the Minimum Selling Price (MSP) should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.

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Swaminathan was awarded the first World Food Prize in 1987 following which he set up the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in Taramani, Chennai. He was also conferred Padam Shri, Padam Vibhushan, Padam Bhushan and Ramon Magsaysay Award.

ISRO Scientist N. Valarmathi

N. Valarmathi, the Indian Space and Research Organisation (ISRO) scientist and iconic voice behind the rocket countdown launches, died on September 2, 2023 at the age of 64 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

She voiced the launch of Chandrayaan-3 which ultimately became her final one. Valarmathi was heard giving the countdown for the rocket launch for ISRO launches for almost 6 years.

Former Chief Election Commissioner M.S. Gill

Former Chief Election Commissioner Manohar Singh Gill (M.S.Gill) died at South Delhi hospital on October 15, 2023 at the age of 86. He served as Chief Election Commissioner between 1996 and June 2001.

During his tenure as CEC, the ECI successfully conducted the general elections to the 12th Lok Sabha in 1998 and 13th Lok Sabha in 1999; 11th Presidential elections and Vice-Presidential Elections in 1997, and general elections to Legislative Assemblies in more than 20 states."

Former Indian Cricketer Bishan Singh Bedi

Former cricketer and captain of India team Bishan Singh Bedi died on October 23, 2023 at the age of 77 in New Delhi.

Bedi represented the Indian national cricket team from 1966 to 1979, during which he emerged as one of the finest spin bowlers in the sport's history. He was awarded the Padma Shri award in 1970 and the C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

Journalists Sachidananda Murthy

Senior Journalist K.S. Sachidananda Murthy Passed Away in Bengaluru on October 13, 2023 at the age of 68.

'Sachi', as he was widely known in journalist circles, had a four-decade-long career in journalism and most of which was spent in Malayala Manorama Group and in The Week Magazine. Before that, he had a stint with The Indian Express.

First Woman Judge of Supreme Court Fathima Beevi

Justice Fathima Beevi, India's first woman judge of the Supreme Court, died in Kollam in Kerala on November 23, 2023 at the age of 96.

Fathima Beevi was appointed as a judge of the Kerala High Court in 1983 and was elevated to a judge of the Supreme Court in 1989. She served as the judge of the Supreme Court from 1989 to 1992.

She also served as a member of the National Human Rights Commission of India from 1993 to 1997 and governor of Tamil Nadu from 1997 to 2001.

Justice Fatima Beevi, whose appointment as the first Muslim woman judge of the Supreme Court had inspired women to pursue the legal profession.

Justice Fathima Beevi was honoured with Kerala Prabha Award in 2023, the second highest honour given by the Government of Kerala.

Dr. S.S. Badrinath Founder of Sankara Nethralaya

Dr. S.S. Badrinath died at the age of 83, on November 21, 2023 in Chennai.

Dr. Badrinath founded Sankara Nethralaya, a non-profit eye hospital, in Chennai with the objective of offering free eye care to the economically disadvantaged. The hospital is one of India's largest charitable eye hospitals.

Dr. Badrinath was recipient of many awards like Padma Shri (1996), Padma Bhushan (1996), Dr. B.C. Roy National Award (1991) and Lifetime Achievement Award, Vitreo Retinal Society, India.

Former US First Lady Rosalynn Carter

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter died at the age of 96 on November 19, 2023 in her home in plains, Georgia, US.

Eleanor Rosalynn Carter served as the First Lady of the United States of America from 1977 to 1981 as the wife of President Jimmy Carter. She got married to Jimmy Carter in 1946.

Booker Prize-Winning British Author A.S. Byatt

Britain's most renowned novelist and Booker Prize - winning author A.S. Byatt died on November 16, 2023. She was 87.

A.S. Byatt won the Booker Prize for her 1990 novel "Possession : A Romance. Her short story collection The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye received the 1995 Aga Khan Prize for Fiction. The Children's Book was shortlisted for the 2009 Booker Prize and won the 2010 James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

A.S. Byatt was a critic, novelist, short story writer and poet. Her books have been translated into more than 38 languages.

She was awarded the Shakespeare Prize in 2000 and Erasmus Prize in 2016, the Park Kyong-in Prize in 2017 and the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award in 2018.

Communist Leader N. Sankaraiah

Freedom fighter and one of the founding members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) passed away on November 15, 2023 in Chennai. He was 102.

He was the Tamil Nadu CPI(M) state secretary from 1995 to 2002. He was also the Central Committee member of Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Journalist K.A. Francis

Former Editor-in-charge of the Malayala Manorama Weekly and painter K.A. Francis passed away on November 9, 2023 in Thrissur, Kerala. He was 76.

He was Chairman of Kerala Lalit Academy and founder of the Universal Arts of Kozhikode. He also served as President of the Kerala Chitrakala Parishad.

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AWARDS/PRIZES/HONOURS

Laureus World Sports Awards 2023—Major Winners

- **World Sportsman of the Year Award :** Lionel Messi (Argentina)
- **World Sportswoman of the Year Award :** Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce (Jamaica)
- **World Team of the Year Award :** Argentina Men's Football Team
- **World Breakthrough of the Year Award :** Carlos Alcaraz (Spain) for Tennis
- **World Comeback of the Year Award :** Christian Eriksen (Denmark) for football
- **World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award :** Catherine Debrunner (Switzerland) for Athletics
- **World Action Sportsperson of the Year Award :** Eileen Gu (Chinese American) for Freestyle Skiing
- **Laureus Sport for Good Award :** TeamUp (a psycho-social support intervention)

Pulitzer Prizes 2023; Associated Press Gets Award in Public Service

The Pulitzer Prizes 2023 recognizing the best of journalism and the arts work in 2022 were announced on May 8, 2023. For more than 100 years, the Pulitzer Prizes have been awarded by Columbia University to honour American achievements in journalism, letters, drama, and music. Pulitzers are widely recognized as the most prestigious awards in their field within the United States. It was the 107th edition of the awards. The Associated Press won two awards for its coverage of the war in Ukraine, including the most prestigious of all Pulitzers, the Public Service award. The New York Times won two Pulitzers as well, for International Reporting and for Illustrated Reporting and Commentary.

Journalism :

Public Service : Awarded to *Associated Press* for the work of Mystyslav Chernov, Evgeniy Maloletka, Vasilisa Stepanenko and Lori Hinnant, for courageous reporting from the besieged city of Mariupol that bore witness to the slaughter of civilians in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Breaking News Reporting : Awarded to the Staff of the *Los Angeles Times* for revealing a secretly recorded conversation among city officials that included racist comments, followed by coverage of the rapidly resulting turmoil and deeply reported pieces that delved further into the racial issues affecting local politics.

Investigative Reporting : Awarded to the Staff of *The Wall Street Journal* for sharp accountability reporting on financial conflicts of interest among officials at 50 federal agencies, revealing those who bought and sold stocks they regulated and other ethical violations by individuals charged with safeguarding the public's interest.

Explanatory Reporting : Awarded to Caitlin Dickerson of *The Atlantic* for deeply reported and compelling accounting of the Trump administration policy that forcefully separated migrant children from their parents, resulting in abuses that have persisted under the current administration.

Local Reporting : Awarded to John Archibald, Ashley Remkus, Ramsey Archibald and Challen Stephens of *AL.com*, Birmingham, for a series exposing how the police force in the town of Brookside preyed on residents to inflate revenue, coverage that prompted the resignation of the police chief, four new laws and a state audit.

Also awarded to Anna Wolfe of *Mississippi Today*, Ridge-land, Miss., for reporting that revealed how a former Mississippi governor used his office to steer millions of state welfare dollars to benefit his family and friends, including NFL quarterback Brett Favre.

National Reporting : Awarded to Caroline Kitchener of *The Washington Post*, for unflinching reporting that captured the complex consequences of life after Roe v. Wade, including the story of a Texas teenager who gave birth to twins after new restrictions denied her an abortion.

International Reporting : Awarded to the Staff of *The New York Times*, for their unflinching coverage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including an eight-month investigation into Ukrainian deaths in the town of Bucha and the Russian unit responsible for the killings.

Editorial Writing : Awarded to Nancy Ancrum, Amy Driscoll, Luisa Yanez, Isadora Rangel and Lauren Costantino of the *Miami Herald* for a series of editorials on the failure of Florida public officials to deliver on many taxpayer-funded amenities and services promised to residents over decades.

Books, Drama & Music :

- **Fiction** [*Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver (Harper)*]
- *Trust, by Hernan Diaz*
- **Drama** *(English, by Sanaz Toossi)*
- **History** *(Freedom's Dominion : A Saga of White Resistance to Federal Power, by Jefferson Cowie)*
- **Biography** (*G-Man : J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century, by Beverly Gage)*
- **Memoir or Autobiography** (*Stay True, by Hua Hsu)*
- **Poetry** *(Then the War : And Selected Poems, 2007-20, by Carl Phillips)*
- **General Nonfiction** *(His Name Is George Floyd : One Man's Life and the Struggle for Racial Justice, by Robert Samuels and Toluse Olorunnipa)*
- **Music** (*Omar, by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels*)

Three Imprisoned Iranian Female Journalists Get UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2023

Niloofar Hamedi, Elaheh Mohammadi and Narges Mohammadi, the three jailed Iranian female journalists, were on May 2, 2023 conferred the 2023 UNESCO/ Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize "for their commitment to truth and accountability."

Niloofar Hamedi writes for the leading reformist daily newspaper Shargh. She broke the news of the death of Masha Amini following her detention in police custody on 16 September, 2022. She has been detained in solitary confinement in Iran's Evin Prison since September 2022.

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Elaheh Mohammadi writes for the reformist newspaper, Ham-Mihan, covering social issues and gender equality. She reported on Masha Amini's funeral, and has also been detained in Evin Prison since September 2022. She had previously been barred from reporting for a year in 2020 due to her work.

Narges Mohammadi has worked for many years as a journalist for a range of newspapers and is also an author and Vice-Director of the Tehran-based civil society organization Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC). She is currently serving a 16-year prison sentence in Evin Prison. She has continued to report in print from prison, and has also interviewed other women prisoners. These interviews were included in her book 'White Torture'. In 2022, she won the Reporters Without Borders' (RSF) Courage Prize.

The UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization World Press Freedom Prize is named after Guillermo Cano, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper El Espectador in Bogota on Dec. 17, 1986. UNESCO has awarded the prize to coincide with World Press Freedom Day on May 3 since 1997.

Heidi Kühn Chosen for World Food Prize 2023

Heidi Kühn, founder of California-based non-profit organization Roots of Peace, was named the 2023 World Food Prize Laureate for her work to replace mines with vines in post-conflict regions over more than 25 years as Terry Branstad, President of the World Food Prize Foundation, announced her the winner of the World Food Prize 2023 winner at a ceremony held at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., the United States on May 11, 2023.

Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran Gets France's Highest Civilian Award

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of the Board of Tata Sons was honoured with France's highest civilian award Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur by French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna on behalf of the French President on May 16, 2023 for his contributions to strengthen the trade relationship between India and France. The National Order of the Legion of Honour is France's highest civilian honor. Napoleon Bonaparte created it in 1802 to honour French and foreigners for their military, civic, and artistic contributions. The Legion of Honour represents France's pride and dedication to excellence.

Georgi Gospodinov and Angela Rodel Win International Booker Prize 2023

Time Shelter, written by Georgi Gospodinov and translated into English by Angela Rodel, won the International Booker Prize 2023 on May 23, 2023 in London. The novel tells the story of the mysterious Gaustine and his "clinic for the past", whose premise of treating Alzheimer's—a disease that robs one of memory, the foundational aspect of life—sounds deceptively simple.

76th Cannes Film Festival 2023; Major Award Winners

- **Palme d'Or :** *Anatomy of a Fall*, directed by Justine Triet
- **Grand Prix :** *The Zone of Interest* directed by Jonathan Glazer
- **Jury Prize :** *Fallen Leaves*, directed by Aki Kaurismaki
- **Best Director :** Tran Anh Hung for *The Pot-Au-Feu*
- **Best Screenplay :** *Monster*, written by Yuji Sakamoto
- **Best Actress :** Merve Dizdar for *About Dry Grasses*
- **Best Actor :** Kōji Yakusho for *Perfect Days*
- **Camera d'Or :** *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell*, directed by Thien An Pham
- **Short Film Palme d'Or :** *27*, directed by Flóra Anna Buda
- **Queer Palm :** *Monster*

IIFA Awards 2023; Major Award Winners

- **Best Film :** Drishyam 2
- **Best Director**: R Madhavan for Rocketry : The Nambi Effect
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) :** Alia Bhatt for Gangubai Kathiawadi
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) :** Hrithik Roshan for Vikram Vedha
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female) :** Mouni Roy for Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male) :** Anil Kapoor for Jugg Jugg Jeeyo
- **Outstanding Achievement in Regional Cinema :** Marathi film Ved directed by Riteish Deshmukh
- **Best Debut (Male) :** Shantanu Maheshwari for Gangubai Kathiawadi and Babil Khan for Qala
- **Best Debut (Female) :** Khushali Kumar for Dhoka Around the Corner
- **Best Playback Singer (Female) :** Shreya Ghoshal for the song Rasiya from Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva
- **Best Playback Singer (Male) :** Arijit Singh for the song Kesariya from Brahmastra : Part One – Shiva
- **Best Music Direction**: Pritam for Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva
- **Best Lyricist** : Amitabh Bhattacharya for the song Kesariya from Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva

President Droupadi Murmu Honoured with Suriname's Highest Civilian Award

President Droupadi Murmu was on June 5, 2023 honoured with the Grand Order of the Chain of Yellow Star, the highest civilian award of Suriname, becoming the first Indian to get the honour. Murmu received the award from the President of the Republic of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

President Murmu dedicated the award to the 'successive generations' of the Indian-Surinamese community.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Honoured With 'Governor of the Year' for 2023 Award

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das was on June 14, 2023 honoured with the title of 'Governor of the Year' for 2023 by Central Banking, an international economic research journal in London. Mr. Das got the award for his role as the RBI chief in managing inflation and skilfully handling India's banking system during crises like COVID pandemic and global turmoils.

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Ramachandra Guha's Book Wins Elizabeth Longford Award for Historical Biography 2023

Eminent historian and journalist Ramachandra Guha's *Rebels Against the Raj : Western Fighters for India's Freedom* was announced the winner of the 2023 Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography on June 12, 2023. This year's jury was chaired by Roy Foster and comprised Antonia Fraser, Flora Fraser, Richard Davenport-Hines and Rana Mitter.

Ramachandra Guha received £ 5,000 as prize money and a bound copy of Elizabeth Longford's memoir, 'The Pebbled Shore'. The annual prize "was established in 2003 in affectionate memory of Elizabeth Longford (1906-2002), an acclaimed historical biographer and family matriarch best known for Victoria R.I. (1964), her scholarly and readable life of Queen Victoria, for her magisterial Wellington : Years of the Sword (1969), and Wellington: Pillar of State (1972)".

Gita Press, Gorakhpur Gets Gandhi Peace Prize 2021

The Union Ministry of Culture on June 18, 2023 awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize 2021 to Gita Press, Gorakhpur—the world's largest publisher of Hindu religious texts. The award jury headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi selected the press for the coveted honour in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.

Instituted by the central government in 1995, the Gandhi Peace Prize pays tribute to the ideals espoused by Mahatma Gandhi. The award includes a cash prize of ₹ 1 crore, a citation, a plaque, and a traditional handicraft or handloom item. The past awardees include organisations and individuals such as ISRO, Ramakrishna Mission, and Nelson Mandela.

Michael Rosen Gets PEN Pinter Prize 2023

Eminent British children's writer and performance poet Michael Rosen was awarded the coveted PEN Pinter Prize 2023 on June 29, 2023. PEN Pinter Prize 2023 is given to a writer from the UK, Ireland and the Commonwealth whose work is committed to a fearless exposition of truth about contemporary life. Rosen was the sixth British Children's Laureate between 2007 and 2009.

The PEN Pinter Prize was established in 2009 by English PEN, the founding centre of a global literary network that promotes literature and human rights.

The prize was named after **Harold Pinter**, who was the Vice President of English PEN and an active member of the International PEN Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC).

PM Narendra Modi Conferred With Highest French Honour 'the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was, on July 13, 2023, conferred with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris on PM Modi's official visit to France. It is the highest French honour in military or civilian orders. With this, PM Modi becomes the first Indian PM to receive this honour. In the past, the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor has been received by select prominent leaders and eminent personalities from across the world. These include former South African President Nelson Mandela, King Charles, the then Prince of Wales, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, among others.

Awards Conferred by Countries on PM Modi (Excluding French Honour) :

- **Companion of the Order of Logohu :** Papua New Guinea conferred the highest civilian award for championing the cause of unity of Pacific Island countries and spearheading the cause of Global South. —May 2023
- **'Order of the Nile' the highest state honour of Egypt :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the highest state honour of Egypt—'Order of the Nile' from President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on June 25, 2023 in Cairo on his state visit to Egypt.
- **Companion of the Order of Fiji :** Highest honour of Fiji in recognition of PM Modi's global leadership—May 2023.
- **Ebakl Award by the Republic of Palau :** During his visit to Papua New Guinea, PM Modi was conferred with Ebakl Award by the President Surangel S. Whipps, Jr. of the Republic of Palau—May 2023.
- **Order of the Druk Gyalpo :** Bhutan has honoured PM Modi with the highest civilian decoration, Order of the Druk Gyalpo in December 2021.
- **Legion of Merit by the US Government** (award of the United States Armed Forces that is given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements)–2020.
- **King Hamad Order of the Renaissance** (this Bahrain Order–First Class is a top honour by the gulf country) —2019
- **Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin** (highest honour of the Maldives awarded to foreign dignitaries)—2019.
- **Order of St. Andrew award** (highest civilian honour of Russia)—2019.
- **Order of Zayed Award** (highest civilian honour of the United Arab Emirates)—2019.
- **Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award** (highest honour of Palestine awarded to foreign dignitaries)—2018.
- **State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan** (highest civilian honour of Afghanistan)—2016.
- **Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud** (highest honour of Saudi Arabia awarded to non-muslim dignitaries)—2016.

ENI Awards 2023; Indian Scientist Thalappil Pradeep Among The Awardees

The 15th ENI Awards for 2023, the top global honour for scientific research in energy and environment, were announced on July 13, 2023 in three categories; Energy Transition, Energy Frontiers and Advanced Environmental Solutions. Professor **Thalappil Pradeep** from

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Department of Chemistry, IIT Madras was selected for the prestigious ENI Awards 2023 in the Advanced Environmental Solutions for his work on affordable clean water using advanced materials. Prof. Pradeep discovered advanced sustainable and affordable nanoscale materials for the removal of toxic contaminants (arsenic, fluoride, uranium, heavy metals, dissolved solids and microorganisms) from water. The discovered technologies are both sustainable and cost-effective and have been implemented as drinking water solutions benefitting 1·3 million of people in India every day.

The ENI Award 2023 in Energy Frontiers category for research on renewable energy sources and energy storage was awarded to **Matthew Rosseinsky,** University of Liverpool (UK), for his innovative machine learning approaches in the automated discovery of materials for next-generation energy. He demonstrated for the first time that novel structures of inorganic materials can be realized by predicting their energies using knowledge-based tools. His discoveries include : low thermal conductivity oxides for thermoelectrics, thermal barrier coatings for turbines, lead-free perovskites for photovoltaics and materials with high lithium transport properties for all-solid state lithium batteries.

Yu Huang, University of California (Los Angeles, USA) and **Jeffrey R. Long**, University of California (Berkeley, USA) shared the award for Energy Transition category.

This is the 15th edition of the ENI Award, a prize established in 2007. The aim of the award is to promote radical breakthroughs in energy efficiency, renewables, decarbonization and safeguarding of the environment, stimulating the work of new generations of researchers. It is sponsored by ENI, a global multibillion-dollar energy company headquartered in Rome.

PM Narendra Modi Gets Lokmanya Tilak National Award

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the Lokmanya Tilak National Award at an event in Maharashtra's Pune on August 1, 2023. The award was constituted by Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust in 1983 to honour the legacy of great freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. It is presented every year on August 1, the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak. PM Modi is the 41st recipient of the honour. It has previously been presented to luminaries such as Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, Pranab Mukherjee, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Indira Gandhi, Manmohan Singh, N.R. Narayana Murthy, E. Sreedharan, among others.

President Droupadi Murmu Approves 76 Gallantry Awards Including 4 Kirti Chakra Honours

President Droupadi Murmu approved 76 Gallantry awards to Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel on August 14, 2023, the eve of Independence Day 2023. These honours include four Kirti Chakra (posthumous), 11 Shaurya Chakras, including five posthumous, 2 Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 52 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 3 Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) and 4 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry). Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra are India's second-highest and third-highest peacetime gallantry awards after the Ashok Chakra.

List of Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra Recipients :

Kirti Chakra :

1. Late Shri Dilip Kumar Das, INSP/GD, CRPF (Posthumous)
2. Late Shri Raj Kumar Yadav, HC/GD, CRPF (Posthumous)
3. Late Shri Bablu Rabha, Constable/GD, CRPF (Posthumous)
4. Late Shri Sambhu Roy, Constable C/GD, CRPF (Posthumous)

Shaurya Chakra :

1. Major Vijay Verma
2. Major Vikas Bhambhu (Posthumous)
3. Major Mustafa Bohara (Posthumous)
4. Major Sachin Negi
5. Major Rajendra Prasad Jat
6. Major Ravinder Singh Rawat
7. Hav Vivek Singh Tomar (Posthumous)
8. Naik Bhim Singh
9. Rifleman Kulbushan Manta (Posthumous)
10. Shri Saifullah Qadri (Posthumous)
11. Shri Gamit Mukesh Kumar

PM Narendra Modi Conferred With Greece's Grand Cross of the Order of Honour

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on August 25, 2023 conferred with the Grand Cross of the Order of Honour, the second most prestigious civilian award of Greece by Greek President Katerina N. Sakellaropoulou in Athens. The Grand Cross of the Order of Honour is conferred by the President of Greece to Prime Ministers and "eminent personalities who by reason of their distinguished position, have contributed to enhancing the stature of Greece". The Order of Honour was established in 1975.

69th National Film Awards; Major Winners

Feature Films Category :

- **Best Feature Film** : Rocketry—The Nambi Effect directed by R. Madhavan
- **Best Actress** : Alia Bhatt for Gangubai Kathiawadi and Kriti Sanon for Mimi
- **Best Actor** : Allu Arjun for Pushpa
- **Best Female Singer** : Shreya Ghoshal (Maayava Chaayavaa from Iravin Nizhal)
- **Best Male Singer** : Kaala Bhairava (Komuram Bheemudo form RRR)
- **Best Supporting Actress** : Pallavi Joshi (The Kashmir Files)
- **Best Supporting Actor** : Pankaj Tripathi (Mimi)
- **Best Direction** : Nikhil Mahajan for Godavari (Marathi)
- **Nargis Dutt Award for Best Film on National Integration** : The Kashmir Files
- **Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment** : RRR
- **Critic (Special Mention)** : Subramanya Badoor (Kannada)

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- **Best Film (Critic) :** Purushothama Charyulu (Telugu)
- **Best Feature Film :** Hindi—Sardar Udham
- **Best Mishing Film :** Boomba Ride
- **Best Feature Film :** Assamese—Anur (Eyes on the Sunshine)
- **Best Feature Film :** Bengali—Kalkokkho - House of Time
- **Best Feature Film :** Gujarati—The Chhello Show (Last Film Show)
- **Best Feature Film :** Maithili—Samanantar
- **Best Feature Film :** Marathi—Ekda Kay Zala
- **Best Featrue Film :** Malayalam—Home
- **Best Feature Film :** Kannada—777 Charlie
- **Best Feature Film :** Meiteilon—Eikhoigi Yum
- **Best Feature Film :** Odiya—Pratikshya (The Wait)
- **Best Feature Film :** Telugu—Uppena (Wave)
- **Best Feature Film :** Tamil—Kadaisi Vivasayi (The Last Farmer)
- **Best Music Direction :** Devi Sri Prasad (Pushpa) and—MM Keeravani (RRR)
- **Best Lyrics :** Chandrabose (Dham Dham Dham—Konda Polam)
- **Special Jury Award :** Shershaah
- **Best Film on Environment :** Aavasavyuham (Malayalam)
- **Best Film on Social Issues :** Anunaad–The Resonance (Assamese)
- **Best Children's Film :** Gandhi & Co. (Gujarati)
- **Indira Gandhi Award for Best debut Film of a Director :** Vishnu Mohan's Meppadiyan (Malayalam)
- **Special Mention (Feature) :** Kadaisi Vivasayi (The Last Farmer), Jhilli, Home and Anur—Eyes on the Sunshine

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards 2022 Announced

Bhatnagar Prizes, named after Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, the first director general of CSIR, are given every year in seven scientific disciplines—biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, medicine, engineering and earth, atmosphere, ocean and planetary sciences to outstanding researchers under the age of 45. The award carries a cash component of ₹ 5 lakh.

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (SSB) for Science and Technology 2022 : List of Awardees

Biological Sciences :

- Dr. Ashwani Kumar (Molecular Mycobacteriology Laboratory CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology Chandigarh).
- Dr. Maddika Subba Reddy (Laboratory of Cell Death and Cell Survival Centre for DNA Fingerprinting Diagnostics Hyderabad).

Chemical Sciences :

- Dr. Akkattu T. Biju (Department of Organic Chemistry, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru)
- Dr. Debabrata Maiti (Department of Chemistry, Indian, Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai)

Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences :

- Dr. Vimal Mishra (Water and Climate Laboratory, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar)

Engineering Sciences :

- Dr. Dipti Ranjan Sahoo (Department of Civil Engineering Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi).
- Dr. Rajnish Kumar (Department of Chemical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai).

Mathematical Sciences :

- Dr. Apoorva Khare (Department of Mathematics, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru).
- Dr. Neeraj Kayal (Department of Mathematics and Computing, Microsoft Research Lab India, Bengaluru).

Medical Sciences :

- Dr. Dipyaman Ganguli (Translational Research Unit CSIR- Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Kolkata).

Physical Sciences :

- Dr. Anindya Das (Department of Physics, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru).
- Dr. Basudeb Dasgupta (Department of Theoretical Physics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai).

Ramon Magsaysay Awards 2023 Announced; India's Dr. Ravi Kannan Among the Award Winners

Philippines based Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation on August 31, 2023 announced the 65th edition of Ramon Magsaysay Awards, generally referred to as the Nobel Prize of Asia. Assam-based Oncologist **Dr. Ravi Kannan** was one of the four award winners this year. Ravi Kannan, a recipient of India's fourth-highest civilian award Padma Shri and the director of Assam's Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (CCHRC), won the award for revolutionising the treatment of cancer in Assam through his people-centered and propoor programmes. Dr. Kannan worked at the Cancer Institute in Chennai before he moved to Silchar in 2007 to join the Cachar Cancer Hospital.

Korvi Rakshand from Bangladesh, Eugenio Lemos from Timor-Leste, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer from the Philippines were the other three Ramon Magsaysay award winners this year.

Korvi Rakshand who is the founder of the non-profit organisation **JAAGO Foundation,** is the 13th Bangladeshi to have received the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award. Since its inception in 2007, JAAGO has grown exponentially; providing free, government-recognised English language education to over 30,000 students throughout Bangladesh.

Eugenio Lemos of **Timor-Leste,** is an agriculture expert who has helped the Timorese community embrace new ways to appreciate agriculture and nature preservation.

Miriam Coronel-Ferrer has made notable contributions in settling war disputes and resisting her country's martial rule.

The Magsaysay Award, established in 1957, seeks to reward individuals for integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism in democratic societies. It is often referred to as the Nobel Prize of Asia.

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Praveena Anjana Wins Miss International India 2023 Title

Rajasthan based Chartered Accountant Praveena Anjana was crowned the winner of the Miss India International 2023 title in September 2023. With this title win, Praveena won the right to represent India at the Miss International pageant to be held in Japan this October 2023. The Miss International pageant, a prestigious global beauty pageant, is held every year in Japan with the mission of promoting world peace and understanding through beauty.

Anjana began modelling at an early age and has competed in various beauty pageants, most recently winning the Miss Divine Beauty 2023 pageant in August this year.

Waheeda Rehman Chosen for 53rd Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award

Veteran actress Waheeda Rehman was on September 26, 2023 chosen for the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2023 for her outstanding contribution to the Indian cinema. Union Minister Shri Anurag Thakur officially made the announcement of the 53rd Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the most prestigious honour of the Indian cinema, to be conferred on legendary actress Waheeda Rehman.

Tamil writer Sivasankari Receives 'Saraswati Samman' 2022 for Her Book *Surya Vamsam*

Renowned Tamil writer Sivasankari was on October 12, 2023 felicitated with the coveted 'Saraswati Samman' 2022 for her book of memoirs **Surya Vamsam** by former Union Minister M. Veerappa Moily in New Delhi. Surya Vamsam is a book of memoirs in two volumes published in 2019.

Saraswati Samman instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991 is recognized as one of the most prestigious literary awards in the country. It carries an award money of ₹ 15 lakh, a Citation and a Plaque.

Satyajit Ray Excellence in Film Lifetime Award

Veteran Hollywood actor Michael Douglas was honoured with the prestigious Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement award for Excellence in Cinema at the 54th International Film Restival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

In his career of over five decades, Douglas, 79, has starred in several critically-acclaimed and blockbuster movies such as *'Wall Street'*, *'Fatal Attraction'*, *'The War of the Roses'*, *'Basic Instinct'*, *'Falling Down'*, *'The American President'*, *'Traffic'* and *'Behind the Candelabra'*.

The Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award, instituted in the IFFI in 1999, is presented to individuals whose exceptional contributions have significantly enriched and elevated the world of cinema. Past recipients include Bernardo Bertolucci, Carlos Saura, Martin Scorsese, Dilip Kumar, Krzysztof Zanussi and Wong Karwai.

Prof. Nandini Das Gets British Academy Book Prize 2023

Professor Nandini Das was on November 1, 2023 awarded the 11th British Academy Book Prize for global cultural understanding for her book Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire . The announcement was made by Chair of the Book Prize judging panel, Professor Charles Tripp FBA, at a celebration at the British Academy.

Sheynnis Palacios from Nicaragua Crowned Miss Universe 2023

Sheynnis Palacios from Nicaragua was crowned Miss Universe 2023 on November 18, 2023 at the Jose Adolfo Pineda Arena in San Salvador, El Salvador. She is the first winner from Nicaragua to win the international beauty pageant. Miss Universe 2022 USA's R'Bonney Gabriel decorated Pala-cios with the Miss Universe crown as per the tradition of the event. Palacios pipped contestants from 83 countries including Miss India Shweta Sharda, who was called into the list of top 20 contestants

- It was the 72nd edition of the Miss Universe beauty pageant.
- Miss Thailand Anntonia Porsild emerged as the first runner-up and Miss Australia Moraya Wilson was named the second runner-up at the event.
- Born as Sheynnis Alondra Palacios Cornejo, the queen of the jewelled crown of Miss Universe 2023 hails from Managua in Nicaragua. She pursued her degree in Mass Communication from Universidad Centroamericana.

Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2022

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2022 was, on November 19, 2023 jointly awarded to the Indian Medical Association and the Trained Nurses Association of India as representatives of the COVID-19 warriors in the country. Former Vice-President Hamid Ansari presented the award to Dr. Sharad Kumar Agarwal, president, Indian Medical Association, and Professor (Dr.) Roy K. George, President, Trained Nurses Association of India. The award symbolizes a tribute to the relentless efforts of the COVID-19 warriors in India.

51st International Emmy Awards 2023

The 51st International Emmy Awards 2023, one of the most prestigious awards for television were conferred in different categories on November 21, 2023 in New York. India managed to bring home two Emmy awards. Vir Das, who won an Emmy for his Netflix comedy special 'Vir Das : Landing', shared the award with 'Derry Girls Season 3'. Ektaa Kapoor was honoured with the International Emmy Directorate Award.

54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2023; Endless Borders Wins Best Film Honour

The 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2023 was successfully organized in November, 2023 in Goa. Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting (I&B), Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the nine-day grand cinematic festival on November 20, 2023 at the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Panaji, Goa.

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54th IFFI 2023 : Major Award Winners

- **Best Film : Endless Borders directed by Abbas Amini**
- **Best Web Series : Panchayat Season 2**
- **Best Actor (Male) : Pouria Rahimi Sam for the film Endless Borders**
- **Best Actor (Female) : Melanie Thierry for the film Party of Fools**
- **Special Jury Award : Rishab Shetty for the film Kantara**
- **Best Director : Stephan Komandarev for the film Blaga's Lessons**
- **Best Debutant Director : Reger Azad Kaya for the film When The Seedlings Grow**
- **Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award : Michael Douglas**

MEETING/CONFERENCE/CONGRESS

International Museum Expo 2023

This three-day event took place from 18th to 20th May at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The expo aims to facilitate a holistic conversation and showcase the diverse cultural heritage exhibited by various museums across the country.

76th World Health Assembly

The 76th World Health Assembly was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 21–30 May, 2023. The theme of this year's Health Assembly is : "WHO at 75 : Saving lives, driving health for all."

'Intersolar Europe 2023' Exhibition in Munich

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) participated in the three-day 'Intersolar Europe 2023' exhibition held in Munich, Germany from 14th to 16th June, 2023.

IREDA, a Mini Ratna (Category–I) Government of India enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, had set up a pavilion at the exhibition. IREDA's participation in 'Intersolar Europe 2023' highlights its commitment to contributing to the global Renewable Energy landscape and fostering sustainable development practices.

17th Indian Cooperatives Conference

National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) organised 17th Indian Cooperative Congress (ICC) on July 1-2, 2023 in New Delhi. Prime Minister inaugurated the conference.

The theme of the conference was Amrit Kaal : Prosperity through Cooperation for a Vibrant India. The objective of this conference was to discuss various trends in the Cooperative Movement and to deliberate on challenges being faced by the Cooperative world. The event witnessed participation of more than three thousand stakeholders.

A separate Ministry of Cooperation was formed in July 2021. Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said, that many changes have become possible in the field of cooperatives with the formation of this ministry.

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched E-Portals of e-Commerce website for Cooperative Marketing, Cooperative Extension and Advisory Services Portal.

Traditional Medicine Global Summit

The First World Health Organisation Traditional Medicine Global Summit was held on August 17-18, 2023 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.

The Summit was held alongside the G-20 health ministerial meeting. The Global Summit was co-hosted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, Jamnagar and the Government of India which holds the presidency of the G-20 in 2023.

WHO acknowledges the contribution of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM) to health, well-being, people-centred health care and universal health coverage and seeks to bring traditional medicine into the mainstream of health care, appropriately, effectively, and above all, safely.

At present, the WHO considers traditional and complementary medicines to include disciplines as wide-ranging as Ayurveda, yoga, homoeopathy and complementary therapies.

It reassessed the vast potential and applications of traditional medicine, taking into account significant challenges and opportunities in achieving universal health coverage and well-being for both people and the planet.

The Summit aimed to catalyse political commitment and collaborative efforts towards the evidence-based integration of traditional medicine, enhancing the health and well-being of individuals and the planet.

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation Summit

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation Summit took place from August 8-9, 2023 in the Brazilian city Belem.

Member countries of the organisation attended the summit and discussed regional cooperation in the Amazon Basin regarding environment, security, economy and development.

The declaration includes topics as : Monitoring and cooperation in water resources management; Climate change; Protection of forests, Amazon coastal zones, vulnerable ecosystems and biodiversity; Police, judicial and intelligence cooperation in combating illicit activities, including environmental crimes; Sustainable infrastructure; Economy for sustainable development; Health; Food and nutritional security and sovereignty, as well as Social protection.

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) is formed by the 8 Amazonian countries : Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty signed on July 3, 1978. In 1995, the 8 countries decided to create the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation. The permanent secretariat of the organisation was established in Brasilia, Brazil in 2002.

Global Maritime India Summit

Global Maritime India Summit was held in Mumbai on October 17-19, 2023.

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the third edition of Global Maritime India Summit 2023 in Mumbai via video conferencing on October 17, 2023. The Prime Minister also unveiled 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047', a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy. In line with this futuristic plan, the Prime Minister inaugurated, dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone for projects worth more than ₹ 23,000 crore that are aligned with the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047' for the Indian maritime blue economy. The summit provides an excellent platform for attracting investment in the country's maritime sector.

Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS) 2023 is a flagship event aimed at propelling the Indian maritime economy by promoting global and regional partnerships and facilitating investments. It is an annual meet of the Indian and international maritime community to address key industry issues and exchange ideas to bring the sector forward.

The event was conducted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. The theme of the conference was Connect, Collaborate, Create.

GMIS 2023 included an investor summit and an international exhibition to facilitate interaction and collaboration among the Indian and international maritime companies, policy makers, investors, and other stakeholders.The event featured a Global CEOs' Forum and Maritime Excellence Achievers' ceremony.

Parliament-20 (P20)

The Ninth G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) and Parliamentary Forum Summit was hosted by the Parliament of India in cooperation with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) on 13-14 October, 2023 in New Delhi. The Summit was preceded by a Parliamentary Forum on 12 October, 2023.

The theme of the Summit was Parliaments for One Earth, One Family, One Future, which draws inspiration from the ancient Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is one Family).

The Summit hosted four high-level sessions on Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Sustainable Energy Transition; Women led Development; and Transformation in Peoples' Lives through Public Digital Platforms.

A Parliamentary Forum was also organized on 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) as a pre-Summit event to promote adoption of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

The ninth edition of the P20 Summit, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on October 13, 2023, came to a close with Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla delivering the valedictory address at the concluding session on October 14. Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha, Shri Harivansh; President of Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Duarte Pacheco; Presiding Officers of Parliaments of G20 nations and other dignitaries graced the concluding session.

On the conclusion of India's P20 presidency, the Lok Sabha Speaker handed over the presidency to Parliament of Brazil.

International Conference-cum Exhibition on 'Aerospace and Aviation in 2047'

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated a two day international conference and exhibition on 'Aerospace and Aviation in 2047' in New Delhi on November 18, 2023.

The Aeronautical Society of India organised an International Conference-cum-Exhibition on November 18 and 19.

The event showcased the Technical Growth in the last 75 years and futuristic Road map for 2047.

The conference focused on Flying machines in Military and Aero Engine technologies, Hypersonic Technologies, Space Exploration Technologies and Launch of Advanced Rockets in India, Automation with Multi-Sensor Data Fusion. Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, Civil Aviation development, Green Initiatives by Aero Industry and Startup's.

World Hindu Congress

World Hindu Congress 2023 was held on November 24 and 25, 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of the congress was 'Jayasya Aayatnam Dharmah', meaning 'Dharma, Abode of Victory'.

The conference focused on areas of strategic importance to Hindus and provided avenues for collaboration among Hindu leaders, activists and thinkers for the Hindu resurgence.

The world Hindu Congress is a global platform for Hindus to connect for common good, prosperity and progress. The inaugural World Hindu Congress was held in Delhi in 2014, followed by in Chicago in 2018.

DEFENCE

India-Indonesia Bilateral Exercise Samudra Shakti

4th edition of India-Indonesia Bilateral exercise Samudra Shakti-2023 was held in Indonesia from 14-19 May, 2023.

Exercise Samudra Shakti is aimed at enhancing interoperability, jointness and mutual cooperation between both the navies.

The 35th Edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)

The 35th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted from 3-10 May, 2023.

CORPAT builds up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitates instituting measures to prevent and suppress unlawful activities like Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, piracy and armed robbery, prevention of smuggling, and illegal immigration.

International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX) Asia

The IMDEX Asia in Singapore was held from 3 May to 5 May, 2023. It is a trade fair and conference for military leaders in the field of maritime defence in Asia.

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The event takes place at the Changi Exhibition Centre. IMDEX Asia is held every two years, with the first edition taking place in 1997. The organiser of the fair is Experia Events company.

Exercise Orion 2023

The French armed forces' major triennial exercise Orion 2023 was launched in February 2023.

Orion embodies the desire to harden the French armed forces' joint operational readiness and ability to respond now to high-intensity conflicts.

Besides the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the France Air Force (FASF), Air Forces from Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and the United States of America also participated in this multilateral exercise.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent comprised four Rafale, two C-17, two Il-78 aircraft and 165 air warriors. This was the first overseas exercise for the IAF's Rafale aircraft.

INDO-UK Joint Military Exercise 'AJEYA WARRIOR–2023'

The 7th edition of joint military exercise 'AJEYA WARRIOR-23' between India and the United Kingdom was conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom from 27 April to 11 May, 2023.

Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR is a biennial training event with the United Kingdom which is conducted alternatively in the United Kingdom and India, the last edition was held at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand in October 2021.

Air Force Heritage Centre in Chandigarh

The Indian Air Force Heritage Centre at Sector 18, Chandigarh was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on May 8, 2023.

The centre, spread over 17,000 square feet in the heart of Chandigarh; depicts IAF's role in various wars, including in 1965, 1971 and the Kargil War, besides the Balakot air strike through murals and memorabilia.

Sea Harrier Museum

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated the Sea Harrier museum developed by the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) on RK Beach Road on May 11, 2023.

Designed and Manufactured by British Aerospace, Sea Harrier is a naval Short/Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VSTOL) Jet Fighter, Reconnaissance and Strike aircraft. It first entered service with the Royal Navy in April 1980. The fighters were de-inducted from the Royal Navy in the year 2006.

India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X)

India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) was launched at an event in Washington DC, USA on 21 June, 2023. The INDUS X event was co-organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Ministry of Defence, and US Department of Defence (DoD) and hosted by US-India Business Council (USIBC).

INDUS X factsheet released for operationalising the 'Defence Innovation Bridge' under Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).

Indian Navy Program 'Julley Ladakh' (Hello Ladakh)

The Indian Navy conducted 'Julley Ladakh' (Hello Ladakh), an outreach programme to Ladakh to increase awareness about the service in the pristine state and to engage with youth and civil society there.

Northern Interaction-2023

The People's Liberation Army Navy (China) and Russian Navy held their joint exercise 'Northern Interaction 2023' in the Sea of Japan in July 2023.

Exercise Nomadic Elephant

The 15th edition of the Joint Military Exercise Nomadic Elephant between India and Mongolia held at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from July 17-31, 2023.

The exercise aimed to enhance interoperability between both the Armies in conducting counter-terrorist operations in mountainous terrain under United Nations mandate.

ASTRA Missile Test-fired from Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas

Light Combat Aircraft Tejas successfully test-fired ASTRA beyond visual range air-to-air missile off the coast of Goa on August 23, 2023. The missile was carried out from the aircraft at an altitude of about 20000 feet and all the objectives were achieved.

ASTRA is a state-of-the-art Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile to engage and destroy highly manoeuvring supersonic targets.

ASTRA missile is indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

ASTRA MK-1 has been integrated with Sukhoi Su-30 MKI and will be integrated with Tejas etc. in future.

Malabar Exercise

The Malabar Maritime exercise was held from August 11-21, 2023 in Sydney, Australia. Indian Navy, US Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and the Royal Australian Navy participated in the exercise.

INS Vindhyagiri Launched

INS Vindhyagiri launched by the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu on August 17, 2023 in Kolkata. INS Vindhyagiri is the sixth ship of the P-17A Frigates and third and last was built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata.

This indigenously evolved stealth guided missile frigate equipped with state-of-the-art technology with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors as well as platform management systems.

Yudh Abhyas 2023

Indian army contingents participated in Indian and American joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 2023' at Alaska, US. Indian battalion of 350 personnel is affiliated to MARATHA Light Infantry Regiment.

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The joint exercise took place from September 25 to October 8, 2023 at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, US.

The theme of the Exercise was 'Employment of an Integrated Battle Group in Mountain/Extreme Climate conditions' under Chapter 7th of the United Nations Mandate.

The previous edition of the Exercise was conducted in Auli, Uttarakhand, India in November 2022.

India Participated in Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise 2023

Indian Army Contingent consisting of 32 personnel from a battalion affiliated to the RAJPUTANA RIFLES participated in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus Expert Working Group (EWG) on Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise 2023 which was conducted from September 25 to 30, 2023 in Vladivostok, Russia.

It is a multinational joint military exercise hosted by Russia as a co-chair of the EWG along with Myanmar. The main objective of the exercise which was strengthening and promoting regional cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.

INS Mahendragiri Launched

Indian Navy's warship Mahendragiri launched in Mumbai on September 1, 2023. It is the seventh ship of the Project 17A frigates series.

According to the government, "Under the Project 17A program, a total of four ships by M/s MDL and three ships by M/s GRSE are under construction. The first six ships of the project have been launched so far by MDL & GRSE, between 2019-23."

Mahendragiri is a technologically advanced warship designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau. Mahendragiri is named after a mountain peak in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.

Indo-Nepal Military Joint Exercise Surya Kiran

The 17th edition of Indo-Nepal joint Military Exercise Surya Kiran was conducted from November 24 to 07 December, 2023 in Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand, India. It is an annual event and conducted alternatively in the two countries.

The exercise will focus on employment of drones and counter drone measures, medical training, aviation aspects and also environment conservation.

Successful Flight Trials of First Indigenous Naval Anti-Ship Missile

The Indian Navy and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted Guided Flight Trials of the first indigenously developed Naval Anti-Ship Missile on November 21, 2023. The missile was launched from a Seaking 42B helicopter.

This success of the missile marks a crucial step towards attaining self-reliance in niche missile technology, showcasing advancement in seeker and guided technologies. This second successful trial came after its initial trials in May 2022.

India-US Joint Exercise Vajra Prahar

The 14th edition of the Indo-US Joint Special Forces exercise, VAJRA PRAHAR 2023 was held at the Joint Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya in India on November 21 to December 11, 2023.

The key highlights of the Vajra Prahar included Airborne insertion and sustenance of troops, water-borne insertion of troops, combat air controlling of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft and combat free fall insertion of troops.

India and European Union First Naval Exercise

The first ever India-EU joint naval exercise was conducted in two phases; which included a sea phase on October 24, followed by a harbour phase from October 25 to 26, 2023 at Tema, Ghana.

The joint exercise at sea and professional exchange in the harbour enhanced interoperability to undertake maritime operations in the Gulf of Guinea. The exercise also reaffirmed India-EU navy's ability to operate together and highlighted their shared and firm commitment to maritime security.

INS Sumedha, an indigenously built Naval Offshore Vessel, participated in the joint naval exercise.

India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise

The 9th edition of India-Sri Lanka Joint Military exercise 'Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023' was conducted from November 16 to 29, 2023 in Aundh, Pune.

The primary objective of the exercise is to collectively practice and focus on coordinated responses during counter-terrorist operations, Tactical activities, including raids, search and destroy missions.

The drill incorporated the utilisation of drones, counter unmanned aerial systems and helicopter manoeuvres. The objective is to enhance troop interoperability while minimising risks to life and property, aligning with the UN's peacekeeping agenda .

Fourth Anti-Submarine Warfare Craft 'Amini' Launched

Amini, the fourth in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) projects built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata for the Indian Navy, was launched on November 16, 2023 at Kattupalli in Tamil Nadu.

The ship was named to signify the strategic maritime importance of the island of Amini at Lakshadweep, located about 400 km west of Kochi.

Indian Armed Forces Exercise Trishakti Prahar

Joint Military exercise of all three forces of India Tri Shakti took place near western border with Pakistan in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan from November 13 to 25 , 2023.

In this exercise the Indian Air Force participated with the Indian Navy and Army in mutual understanding and coordination. The joint exercise involved over 25000 troops.

The joint military exercise showcased various activities like integrated air, land and combined arms operations, fast mobility and deep strike offensive capabilities.

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Apart from this specific technologies like automatic spectrum monitoring system, communication systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, precision guided missile systems and counter attack drone-systems were tested in this exercise.

Indian Airforce Exercise Poorvi Akash

Eastern Air Command (EAC) of Indian Air Force conducted its annual Command level exercise-Poorvi Akash from October 30 to November 4 along the China border

The aim of the exercise Poorvi Akash was to showcase operational readiness and capabilities of Eastern Air Command with high-tech weapons. The exercise encompassed both defensive and offensive operations conducted day and night. It also focused on enhancing the synergy between Indian Army and the Indian Air Force in joint operations.

Pralay Missile Test-fired

India successfully test-fired surface to surface short range ballistic missile (SRBM) 'Pralay' on November 7, 2023 from Abul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast.

Missile Pralay developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has a short range 350 km to 500 km and is capable of carrying a payload capacity of 500-1000 kg.

Pralay will be for deployment along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with Pakistan and China.

SPACE/SATELLITE

Asteroid 2023 HG1 Towards Earth

According to NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration),Asteroid 2023 HG1 was hurtling towards Earth at a speed of 7200 KMPH (2 KMPH), and it is thought to be the size of a house.

This asteroid was classified under the Apollo group of near-Earth objects and orbits the sun once every 402 days reaching a maximum distance of 173 million kilometres and a minimum of 145 million kilometres.

Aditya L-1 Mission

The Aditya L-1 mission is India's maiden mission to observe the Sun and is expected to launch in the coming months this year.

Pune's Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) has delivered the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (Suit) to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Suit will be launched on board India's maiden mission to explore the Sun—Aditya L-1. The Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) will study the Sun's ultraviolet (UV) emissions and capture high-resolution images of the Sun's atmosphere, known as the corona, in various UV wavelengths.

Euclid (Spacecraft) Mission

Euclid is a space telescope developed by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Euclid Consortium. The objective of the Euclid mission is to better understand dark energy and dark matter by accurately measuring the acceleration of the universe.

Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the launch was scheduled on a Soyuz ST-B in 2023; following the invasion, Euclid was launched on a Falcon 9 Block 5 on 1 July, 2023.

Euclid emerged from two mission concepts : DUNE, the Dark Universe Explorer, and SPACE, the Spectroscopic All-Sky Cosmic Explorer.

Chandrayaan 3

Chandrayaan 3 is the 3rd lunar mission under Chandrayaan program. Chandrayaan 3 was launched on July 14, 2023 as scheduled, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

It is anticipated that the Chandrayaan 3 mission will achieve a soft landing on the lunar South Pole on 23 August, 2023.

It consists of a rover named Pragyan and a lander named Vikram but does not have an orbiter. Chandrayaan 3 was launched by LVM3 M4. The Chandrayaan 3 has successfully completed its orbitraising manoeuvres in July.

Oldest Black Hole Discovered

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has detected the most distant, actively-feeding supermassive black hole ever observed in the universe.

The researchers team led by University of Texas at Austin observed a galaxy hosting this active supermassive black hole as part of the Cosmic Evolution Early Release Science (CEERS) Survey, designated CEERS 1019. This 13·2 billion year old black hole could change our understanding of the early universe.

Japan Moon Mission

Japan Space Agency (JAXA) successfully launched the Japan Moon Lander Mission called SLIM on September 7, 2023. SLIM, or Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, is taking a uniquely long route to the Moon and is scheduled to make a landing in four to six months. If successful, SLIM would be the smallest and lightest spacecraft to land on the Moon. A successful landing on the Moon would make Japan only the fifth country in the world to do so.

Vikram-1 Rocket Unveiled

Indian firm Skyroot Aerospace unveiled what is the country's first privately designed and developed orbital-class rocket. Named 'Vikram-1' on October 24, 2023 at Skyroot's new facility The Max-Q Campus in Hyderabad, Telangana, this rocket is expected to perform its maiden flight to space in the first quarter of 2024.

Vikram-1 has been named after the father of India's space programme Vikram Sarabhai. Vikram-1 will be the second rocket of Skyroot, after the successful launch of Vikram-S rocket on November 18, 2022 when the space stat-up company Skyroot became the first company to have launched a private rocket from the ISRO's launch centre in Sriharikota.

E-Commerce Company Amazon Launched First Test Satellites

Amazon's first pair of prototype satellites for its planned Kuiper internet network were launched.

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A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket lifts off carrying Amazon's two prototype relay stations for a space-based internet service it calls Project Kuiper, from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Cape Canaveral, Florida, US on October 6, 2023.

This is the company's first step before it deploys some 3200 more satellites into orbit to beam internet service globally and compete with SpaceX's Starlink

Amazon has vowed to invest $10 billion into its Kuiper project, which was announced in 2019, the year SpaceX began deploying its first operational Starlink spacecraft. The Federal Communications Commission of US is requiring Amazon to deploy half its planned satellite constellation by 2026.

NASA Psyche Mission

Psyche is NASA's first scientific mission launched on a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket on October 12, 2023 from Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

NASA's Psyche spacecraft will travel to a metal-rich asteroid by the same name orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter to study its composition. The spacecraft also carries the agency's Deep Space Optical Communications technology demonstration, which will test laser communications beyond the Moon.

SpaceX Launched Starlink Satellites

SpaceX launched 22 more of its Starlink internet satellites to orbit on October 5, 2023 on the company's 70th orbital mission of the year. SpaceX launched 21 of its Starlink broadband satellites on October 9, 2023.

Starlink is SpaceX's internet mega constellation, which currently consists of more than 4,800 operational spacecraft. But that number continues to rise, as these two Starlink launches show.

Earth Received First Laser Message From 16 Million Km

Earth received laser-beamed communication from a distance of 16 million km on November 14, 2023 making it the longest demonstration of optical communications. This link is known as the first light.

The experiment was made possible by the Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC) tool which was travelling on board NASA's Psyche Spacecraft. The Psyche spacecraft established a communication link with the Hale Telescope at the Palomar Observatory in California on November 14.

China Launched New Cartographic Satellite

China launched a cartographic satellite Tianhui-5 from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in northern China's Shanxi Province on November 1, 2023. The Satellite was a modified version of the Long March-6 carrier rocket.

The satellite will undertake tasks including land resource survey, geographic information mapping and scientific experiments.

NASA's Juno Mission Detects Salts on Jupiter's Moon Ganymede

US Space Agency NASA said on October 31, 2023 that Juno mission has for the first time detected mineral salt and organic compounds on the surface of Jupiter's moon Ganymede.

Data for this discovery was collected by the Jovian InfraRed Auroral Mapper (JIRAM) spectrometer aboard the spacecraft during a flyby of the icy moon on June 7, 2021.

DISASTERS/ACCIDENTS

Cyclone Mocha

Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm Mocha was a powerful and deadly tropical cyclone in the North Indian Ocean which affected Myanmar and parts of Bangladesh in May 2023.

Super Typhoon Mawar

Typhoon Mawar was barreling toward Guam early on May 24, 2023, threatening to slam into the US territory as the strongest storm there in decades. The super typhoon was tagged as 'Betty' after entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Tropical Cyclone Biporjoy

Cyclonic Storm Biparjoy was a powerful tropical cyclone that formed over the east-central Arabian Sea. Gujarat's coastal areas experienced heavy rains and strong winds.

The name of the cyclonic storm, Biparjoy, is recommended by Bangladesh, which is pronounced as 'Biporjoy'. In Bangla, the word Biparjoy means 'disaster'.

Typhoon Talim

The typhoon, named Talim, which means 'Sharp' in Tagalog hit China on July 17, 2023. Talim, the name was contributed by the Philippines. Tropical storm Talim is a category 2-equivalent typhoon that affected the Philippines and southern China in July 2023.

Typhoon Doksuri

Typhoon Doksuri lashed the coastline of the northern Philippines with strong winds and heavy rains on July 26, 2023. The storm, labelled as a super typhoon by China's Meteorological Administration, is nearly 900 km (560 miles) across and it sustained strength as it continues towards Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

Iceland's capital Reykjavik.

Peru Volcano Ubinas Erupted

Ubinas Volcano in the Moquegua Region is located approximately 70 km east of Arequipa.

Eruptive activity has been ongoing at the volcano in recent months and new explosive eruptions were reported at the volcano on August 21. Ubinas is the most active volcano in Peru. It has a history of small to moderate explosive erruptions, along with persistent degassing and ash emissions.

Typhoon Khanun

Typhoon Khanun, known in the Philippines as Typhoon Falcon, was a powerful, erratic tropical cyclone. The sixth named storm, and fourth typhoon of the 2023 Pacific typhoon season.

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Khanun formed on July 26, 2023 and dissipated on August 11, 2023. The highest winds were 175 km/h. Khanun started as a low-pressure area in the Pacific Ocean. It rapidly intensified into a Category 4-equivalent typhoon on the Saffir-Simpson scale over the Philippine Sea on August 1. Khanun affected areas in Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Korean peninsula, China and Russian Far East.

Hurricane Hilary

Hurricane Hilary is a Pacific Hurricane originated from a disturbance south of Mexico associated with a tropical wave that entered the Pacific Ocean from Central America on August 12, 2023. The Hilary quickly weakened into a tropical storm and made landfall in San Quintin, Baja California.

Earthquake in Morocco

On 8th September, 2023 an earthquake of magnitude 6·8 struck Morocco's Marrakesh-Safi region at 18·5 km depth. The epicentre was in the High Atlas Mountains, 71 km south-west of Marrakesh.

At least 2946 people were killed and 5674 were injured. The historic landmarks in Marrakesh were also damaged. A UNESCO World Heritage Site dating from the 12th century, also collapsed. The earthquake was also felt in Algeria, Portugal and Spain.

Hurricane Lee

Hurricane Lee formed on September 5 from a tropical wave that had moved offshore from West Africa into the tropical Atlantic.

On September 13, the hurricane slowly weakened as it was approaching Bermuda and New England, and to undergo the transition into an extratropical cyclone. The cyclone then made landfalls in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and in Newfoundland and Labrador, before moving out into the far northern Atlantic. As an extratropical low, Lee brought rain and gale-force winds to parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Tropical Cyclone Tej

A cyclonic circulation formed over the Arabian Sea on October 16, 2023.

It made landfall in Al Murah Governorate of Yemen, bring significant rainfall and flood across the eastern half of the country and western parts of Oman. Tej coexisted with cyclone Hamoon in the Bay of Bengal.

Cyclone Hamoon

The Indian Meteorological Department said on October 22, 2023 that cyclone Hamoon Cyclone Hamoon formed from a low-pressure area over the West-Central Bay of Bengal.

Hamoon has been named by Iran. It is a Persian word that refers to inland desert lakes or Marshland, formed as natural seasonal reservoirs in areas adjoining the Helmand basin.

Flood in Sikkim

A cloud burst over Lhonak Lake in North Sikkim resulted in a flash flood in the Teesta River in Lachen Valley October 4, 2023. At least 14 people died and 102 went missing after the cloudburst in the tiny hilly state.

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

ICMR Set to Conduct Dengue Vaccine Trial

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the country's apex agency for formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, has tied up with two biotech companies—Panacea and Serum Institute of India (SII) to conduct phase-III trials of their dengue vaccines.

Both vaccine candidates are based on a DNA-edited dengue virus developed by the US National Institute of Health.

Dengue viruses are spread to people through the bite of an infected Aedes species (Ae. aegypti or Ae. Albopictus) mosquito. Almost half of the world's population, about 4 billion people, live in areas with a risk of dengue disease.

Plastic-eating Microbes Discovered in Swiss Alps

Microbes found in the Graubünden Alps and the Arctic were able to digest the plastic types PUR (polyurethane) and PBAT/PLA, according to a study External link published on May 10, 2023 in the journal Frontiers in Microbiology.

Bacteria and fungi recently discovered in the Swiss Alps can digest biodegradable plastics at low temperatures. This ability, if upscaled to an industrial scale, will save money and energy during recycling, say scientists.

Several microorganisms that can do this have already been found, but when their enzymes that make this possible are applied at an industrial scale, they typically only work at temperatures above 30°C. The required heating means that industrial applications remain costly and aren't carbon neutral.

There is a need to find cold-adapted microbes whose enzymes work at lower temperatures. Scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL) are working on it.

Omicron-specific mRNA-based Booster Vaccine Developed

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has announced on June 20, 2023 that the Omicron-specific mRNA-based Booster vaccine GEMCOVAC®-OM developed using the indigenous platform technology by Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd. and supported under the Mission COVID Suraksha, implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), has got a nod from the office of the Drug Control General of India (DCGI) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

Like the prototype vaccine, GEMCOVAC®-OM is a thermostable vaccine, which does not require ultra-cold chain infrastructure used for other approved mRNA-based vaccines, making it easy for deployment pan India. It is delivered intradermally using a needle-free injection device system. When administered intradermally in participants as a booster, it generated significantly higher immune responses.The clinical outcome demonstrates the need for variant-specific vaccines for desired immune response.

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GBS Disease

Mumbai is experiencing a significant increase in cases of GBS disease with incidences ranging from 30 to 50 and per cent higher than usual during the monsoon season. The rise is believed to be due to viral or gastrointestinal infections.

Guillain-Barre Syndrome also called GBS is a condition in which the immune system of the body attacks on the peripheral nerves the condition may be triggered by an active bacterial or viral infection.

Weakness and tingling in hands and feet are usually the first symptoms. These sensations can quickly spread, eventually paralysing the whole body and problems breathing. Severe cases of the disease are rare. People of all ages can be affected, but it is more common in adults and in males.

The cause of it is not fully understood, but most cases follow an infection with virus and bacteria. This leads the immune system to attack the body itself.

There is no known cure for GBS, but treatment can help improve symptoms and shorten its duration. Presidency of the Republic of Peru released a Supreme Decree that declares a Health Emergency at the national level due to the unusual increase in cases of Guillain Barre Syndrome in Peru on July 8, 2023, in Peru.

WHO Recommended R21/Matrix-M Vaccine for Malaria

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended a new vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, for the prevention of malaria in children.

Malaria, a mosquito-borne disease, places a particularly high burden on children in the African Region, where nearly half a million children die from the disease each year.

ARCHAEOLOGY/HERITAGE

2000 Year-Old Relics of 'Modern Society' Found in MP's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered relics of a modern society that likely inhabited Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh National Park. The tiger reserve in MP, which sits on an erstwhile trade route, is a treasure trove of historical evidence, including rock-cut caves and a 2,000-year-old man-made waterbody, that points to the sophistication of the era.

1st Century Buddha Statue Found from Ancient Egypt

A 1,900-year-old statue of the Buddha—discovered at the ancient Egyptian port city of Berenike, on the coast of the Red Sea—likely belonged to a transplant from South Asia, according to archaeologists.

The newfound statue dates to between A.D. 90 and 140. The 28-inch-tall statue shows the Buddha standing and holding parts of his robes in his left hand.

The statue dates to a time when the Roman Empire controlled Egypt. There was considerable trade between Egypt and India during that time, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities noted, adding that ships from India would bring ivory, pepper and textiles, among other products, to Egypt.

Mesolithic-era Rock Paintings in Guntur

Archaeologist reported Mesolithic-era rock paintings in Guntur in Andhra Pradesh. A Mesolithic period rock painting depicting a person tilling a piece of land has been found by D. Kanna Babu, former Superintending Archaeologist of the Temple Survey Project (Southern Region) of the Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai, in Orvakallu village in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. He identified a new prehistoric rock painting on the walls and ceiling of natural rock shelters on a hillock at Orvakallu.

It was noticed that these were shelters for prehistoric humans who lived at this place. Among these five naturally formed caves, two are embellished with distinguished depictions of rock paintings on the back walls and ceilings executed by people of Mesolithic Age, roughly [from] 5000 BC.

DISEASES

Nipah Virus in Kerala

There has been an outbreak of the deadly Nipah virus in Kerala, India. Authorities were alerted to the outbreak after two deaths attributed to the virus.

The virus can cause fever, vomiting, respiratory issues and inflammation in the brain. It is carried mainly by fruit bats, but can also infect domestic animals such as pigs, along with humans. It spreads through contact with bodily fluids from infected animals or people. There are no approved vaccines or treatments. Nipah virus has a fatality rate between 40% and 75% depending on the strain.

It's unclear exactly when and how the virus jumped from bats to people in the current Kerala outbreak, but scientists are investigating.

The version that's behind the latest outbreak in Kerala can be passed from person to person, and is much deadlier.

African Swine Fever

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a viral disease affecting pigs and wild boar with up to 100% case fatality rate. African swine fever, classified by the World Organisation for Animal Health as a highly contagious viral disease affecting domestic and wild pigs.

The outbreak of ASF is causing a big financial loss and a threat to pig farmers, with several pigs infected with the virus. The notification confirming the outbreak of ASF was issued in pursuance of the directive of Manipur government's Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department on October 13, 2023. African swine fever was found in wild boar in October 2023 in Maruthonkara of Kozhikode district which also saw Nipah outbreak recently. The disease was confirmed at a virology lab in Bhopal. African swine fever is reported for the first time in the Kozhikode district.

X Virus Disease

UK healthcare professionals are preparing for a potential new pandemic known as 'Disease X,' which

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could be more deadly than COVID-19, with the capacity to result in 20 times more fatalities. Disease X could potentially cause up to 50 million deaths.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Disease X represents the knowledge that a serious international epidemic could be caused by a pathogen currently unknown to cause human disease."

In a list of diseases that the WHO considers high priority in terms of research and development, Disease X occupies a spot among diseases such as Ebola, Zika, and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

PLACES IN THE NEWS

Cochin Port

Cochin Port was awarded the prestigious Sagar Shreshta award for the year 2023 by the Ministry of Shipping in May 2023. The award is in recognition of the 'excellent performance of the Cochin Port in handling dry bulk and liquid bulk cargo vessels'. The Sagar Shreshta award is given to Indian ports for achieving excellence in various categories, including efficiency, productivity, and environmental sustainability.

Sittwe Port (Myanmar)

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal from India and Myanmar's Deputy Prime Minister Admiral Tin Aung San on May 9, 2023 jointly inaugurated the Sittwe Port in Myanmar and received the first Indian cargo ship flagged off from Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata. The Sittwe Port has been developed as part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) funded by the Government of India.

Ghaziabad

National Training Centre for Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was inaugurated in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya on May 31, 2023. The training centre is aimed at providing structured instruction, practice, and learning experiences to bridge the gap between existing knowledge and skills and desired knowledge or skills in the field of food safety and standards.

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society Renamed as Prime Minister's Museum and Library Society

The Nehru Museum Memorial and Library Society, named after India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, was renamed as the Prime Minister's Museum and Library Society on June 16, 2023. In a special meeting of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society presided over by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is the Vice-President of the Society, it was resolved to change its name to Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society.

Bangladesh

The World Bank (WB) launched its first dedicated road safety project in South Asia with a USD 358 million financing agreement signed in Dhaka with the government of Bangladesh on June 14, 2023. The project seeks to improve road safety and reduce fatalities and injuries from road crashes in selected cities, high-risk highways, and district roads.

Vienna (Austria)

The Global Liveability Index 2023 by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) declared Vienna as the most livable city in the world this year in June 2023. Despite slipping in the rankings during the pandemic in 2021, Vienna bounced back and reclaimed the top spot in 2022, maintaining its position in 2023. Denmark's Copenhagen, secured the second spot, while Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, ranked third and fourth, respectively. The Global Liveability Index 2023 attributed Vienna's success to its 'winning combination' of stability, good culture and entertainment, reliable infrastructure, exemplary education and health services.

Victoria State (Australia)

The Victoria state in Australia has withdrawn from hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games, citing significant cost overruns. The initial estimated budget of Aus $ 2 billion escalated to approximately Aus $ 7 billion. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews announced that the Games would not proceed in Victoria in 2026 and informed the Commonwealth Games authorities of their decision to terminate the contract on July 18, 2023.

Bengaluru

Union Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw on August 18, 2023 dedicated to the nation India's first 3D-printed post office located in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout. The construction of the post office was carried out by Larsen & Toubro Limited with technological support from IIT Madras under the guidance of Professor Manu Santhanam, Building Technology and Construction Management Division, Department of Civil Engineering.

Indore

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on August 25, 2023 announced the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) 2022 under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM). Indore, generally referred to as commercial capital of Madhya Pradesh won the national smart city award while Madhya Pradesh received the state award and Chandigarh received the UT award. Indore also won the honour for sanitation, water and urban environment category. Surat in Gujarat and Agra in Uttar Pradesh are the second and third-place winners among smart cities, while Tamil Nadu is the second in the State category followed by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC), 2022.

This is the fourth edition of the ISAC awards. In the past, the ISAC witnessed three editions in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Vijayawada Railway Station

Vijayawada Railway Station in Andhra Pradesh was on September 5, 2023 accorded **the highest Platinum Rating Certification as a Green Railway Station by the Indian Green Building Council** for its efforts in improving environmental standards and providing ecofriendly services to passengers.

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Santiniketan in West Bengal and Hoysala Temples in Karnataka Included in UNESCO World Heritage Sites List

Santiniketan in West Bengal, a landmark site known for being the place where Rabindranath Tagore built Visva-Bharati over a century ago, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list on September 17, 2023, making it the 41st World Heritage Site of UNESCO in India. Santiniketan is situated in a rural location in West Bengal, and is associated with the work and philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore, a world-famous poet, artist, musician and philosopher, and a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913). The site was established as an ashram and given its name in 1863 by Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore.

Nawanpind Sardaran (Punjab)

Nawanpind Sardaran village in Gurdaspur, Punjab was in October 2023 chosen for the "Best Tourism Village of India 2023" award for preserving and promoting Punjab's cultural heritage and sustainable development by the Union Tourism Ministry.

Udaipur (Rajasthan)

Udaipur, the 'City of Lakes' in Rajasthan, has become India's first wetland city. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, announced the designation on October 13, 2023. Udaipur is surrounded by five major lakes : Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, Rang Sagar, and Doodh Talai. These lakes provide a variety of ecological benefits, including flood control, water filtration and habitat for a variety of plants and animals.

Srinagar

The 4th Annual Conference of the Indian Economics & Allied Sciences Association was organized at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar from October 27 to 29, 2023. Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the conference on October 27. In his address, the Lt. Governor appreciated the endeavour of the Indian Economics & Allied Sciences Association for deliberation on India's development strategy of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat, Development issues of J&K, Ladakh and Tribal population in India and comprehensive analysis of policy measures towards the achievement of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Comprehensive discussion and analysis was done on policy measures aimed at realizing the vision of a developed India by the year 2047.

Shillong (Meghalaya)

A green tourism conclave was held in Shillong on October 19, 2023, a groundbreaking initiative of Indian Express Online Media, focused on the promotion of green and responsible tourism in India, with a particular emphasis on the Northeastern region and Odisha.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

- **My Life in Design** —Gauri Khan
- **Justice for the Judge : An Autobiography** —Ranjan Gogoi
- **Guts Amidst Bloodbath** —Anshuman Gaikwad, Aditya Bhushan
- **Mystics and Sceptics : In Search of Himalayan Masters** —Namita Gokhale
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Edited, Printed and Published by Rahul Jain for M/s Pratiyogita Darpan, 2/11A, Swadeshi Bima Nagar, Agra-2 and Printed by Thomson Press (India) Limited 18/35, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121 007 (Haryana)