

PRACTICE **MOCK****JULY 2023**

BAZOOKA

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NATIONAL AFFAIR

- The Union Government has implemented a key provision of the Competition (amendment) Act 2023 that vests power of appointment of **Director General (Investigation)** in the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** from the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**. The Government has also now concurrently modified existing recruitment rules, Competition Commission of India (Director General) Recruitment Rules, 2009, to change the composition of the Search-cum-Selection Committee for appointment of DG.
 - Earlier, the Search-cum-Selection Committee was headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).
 - Now, the **Search-cum-Selection Committee** will be headed by Chairperson CCI and will have two Members, one each to be nominated by MCA and Central Government (expert-person of eminence).
 - The DG would be appointed by CCI out of the Panel (upto three names) recommended by the search-cum-selection committee after obtaining prior approval of the Central Government.

2. **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will receive the first **C-295 transport aircraft** in **September 2023** by Airbus in flyaway condition from **Spain**. C295 is replacing Avro transport aircraft that procured in 1960s.
- The C-295 has a capacity of 9 tonnes and can carry up to 71 troops or 50 paratroopers.
 - IAF will become the largest operator of the C-295.
- In September 2021, the Defence Ministry signed a Rs.22000 crore deal with Airbus and Space S.A. Spain for the procurement of 56 C-295MW transport aircraft. As per contract, 16 aircraft would come in flyway condition, manufactured at the Airbus facility in Seville, and rest 40 would be manufactured in India by Airbus jointly with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL).

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3. The **Indian Army** has launched a **Tri-Services All Women Motorcycle Rally – ‘Nari Sashaktikaran Motorcycle Rally’**, in collaboration with **TVS Motors** company to commemorate the **24th Kargil Vijay Diwas** and to highlight the brave spirit of women.
- The all-women Motorcycle Rally has been flagged off by the Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande from the National War Memorial, New Delhi.
- The rally will cover a total distance of approximately 1000 kilometres through Haryana, Punjab and high mountain passes of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to reach Kargil War Memorial in Dras on 25 July 2023.
- The riders took part in the rally with TVS Ronin motorcycles.
4. **India’s first Construction Innovation Hub (CIH)** has been established in **Kochi, Kerala** to promote affordable and sustainable building facilities to foster collaboration, innovation and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders.
- Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) will be responsible for the CIH’s overall programme management.
5. **NITI Aayog** has released a revamped **India Energy Security Scenarios (IESS) 2047 (IESS 2047 V3.0)** to assess the integrated impact of various green energy policies of the Government of India.
- IESS is an open source web based tool launched by Niti Aayog.
 - It has been designed with the help of **IIT Bombay**.

- The purpose of this tool is to analyse emissions, cost, land and water requirements of India till 2047 by assessing the demand and supply of energy in the country.
- The tool will be updated on a **yearly basis**.
- It is user-friendly interactive tool that can help ministries/ departments to develop a variety of energy transition scenarios to achieve net-zero.
- The tool is also flexible enough to provide many permutations and combinations of net-zero pathways.
- The baseline has been standardised at 2020 and calibrated up to 2022.

6. India has hosted the **Global Food Regulators Summit 2023**, held as part of the Group 20 (G20) event, in Manekshaw Centre, **New Delhi**, from 20th to 21st July 2023.

The summit has been inaugurated by Dr.Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare.

- The summit has been organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (**FSSAI**) under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- This is the first time the summit has been held outside Rome, Italy.
- **Special Guest:** Dr.Bedu Ram Bhusal, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal.
- **Guest of Honour:** Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Key launches during the summit:

- **'Food-o-copoeia'**, a collection of safety and quality regulations for each food category, has been launched.
- A common digital dashboard, which will act as a unified portal on food-related regulations and norms, has been launched.
- The common regulators platform **'SaNGRAH'**-Safe Food for Nations: Global Food Regulatory Authorities Handbook has been launched at the summit. It is a comprehensive database of food regulatory authorities from 76 countries worldwide.

7. **Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)** will host the **25th Congress of the International Commission on Irrigation & Drainage (ICID)** and the 75th International Executive Council (IEC) Meeting of ICID from 6-13 November 2023 under the aegis of Indian National Committee on Irrigation & Drainage (INCID).

The conference will be organised as a joint initiative of Union and State Governments.

The ICID will conduct the congress with the theme 'Tackling Water Scarcity in Agriculture.'

Note: The 1st and 6th ICID Congresses in 1951 and 1966 were held in India.

8. **Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** has launched an online portal to report the violation of the sale of **E-cigarettes** on online shopping sites and in retail shops under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act (PECA), despite a ban on it since 2019.

The portal, ***violation-reporting.in***, will allow faster action against any reported violations.

Electronic Cigarettes:

E-cigarette is a device that has the shape of a cigarette, cigar, or pen and does not contain tobacco. It uses a battery and contains a solution of nicotine, flavourings, and other chemicals, some of which may be harmful.

9. Hyderabad-based space startup, **Skyroot Aerospace**, has successfully tested its **Raman-II engine** at the Liquid Thruster Test Facility (LIFT) of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Propulsion Complex (IPRC) at Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu.
- Raman-II engine was designed by Skyroot to generate 820 Newton (Sea Level) and 1,460 Newton (Vacuum) thrust, with a nominal chamber pressure of 8.5 bar absolute.
 - It uses Mono Methyl Hydrazine and Nitrogen Tetroxide as propellants.
 - The engine will be installed into the fourth stage of its launch vehicle, Vikram I.
10. Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) has adopted the first-of-its-kind "**Clean Energy Marine Hubs Initiative (CEM-Hubs)**" for scaling up low carbon fuel production during the **14th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) and 8th Mission Innovation (MI)** meeting held in **Goa**.

Theme of CEM14/MI-8: "Advancing Clean Energy Together"

The aim of this meeting is to bring together the global clean energy community.

CEM-Hubs Initiative is a high-level global forum jointly led by private sector and governments across the energy-maritime areas to promote policies and programs to transform maritime transportation and production hubs for future low-carbon fuels.

- 11.** The Geographical Indications Registry has issued the Geographical Indication (GI) tag certificate of Tamil Nadu's **Authoor betel leaf** to Thoothukudi district administration.
- The betel leaves, locally known as *Vettrilai*, cultivated in the Authoor village of **Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu** attained the GI tag in April 2023.
 - This recognition will enable the reach of Authoor betel leaves in both domestic and international markets.

Authoor Vettrilai:

It is cultivated across an extensive area spinning approximately 500 acres of land, encompassing regions like Mukkani, Authoor, Korkai, Suganthalai, Vellakoil, and other Mukkani villages.

The leaves are nurtured by Thamirabrani river water.

It is available in 3 distinct varieties viz. **Nattukodi, Karpoori, and Pachaikodi.**

The leaves also find a mention in the 13th-Century book "The Travels of MARCO POLO (The Venetian)."

- 12. Cannabis Research Project** of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (**CSIR-IIIM Jammu**, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) is the first of its kind Cannabis Medicine Project in India under Private Public Partnership (PPP) with **IndusCann Limited**, headquartered in **Toronto, Canada.**

It is the first institute to obtain the first license for Cannabis cultivation in India.

Cannabis, a substance of abuse, will be used as a good for mankind especially for patients suffering from neuropathies, cancer, and epilepsy.

- 13. HCL Technology (HCL Tech)** in Noida, Uttar Pradesh has joined the **XR Startup Programme** to discover, nurture, and accelerate extended reality (XR) technology start-ups in India.

- XR Startup Programme, launched in **September 2022**, is a joint initiative of **Meta and MeitY Startup Hub (MSH).**
- Under this, selected startups working on XR technology might receive a grant of up to Rs.20 lakh from the HCL Tech.

Note: XR is a broad term to refer to Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality.

14. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah has laid the foundation stone of **108 feet** tall statue of **Lord Shri Ram** in **Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh** through video conferencing.
- The statue to be installed in Mantralayam village in Kurnool will give the message of Sanatan Dharma to the entire world.
 - The statue will be built at a cost of more than **Rs.500 crore**.
 - This project is spread over an area of 10 acres in Mantralayam village situated on the banks of Tungabhadra River and would be completed in two and a half years.

15. Rajya Sabha Chairman **Jagdeep Dhankar** has nominated **four women parliamentarians** to the **panel of vice-chairpersons**, giving women equal representation in the panel, for the first time in the history of the Rajya Sabha.

The Rajya Sabha Chair has also become fully digital.

S. Phangnon Konyak is the first ever woman from Nagaland to be elected as a member of the Rajya Sabha. She belongs to BJP.

PT Usha who was nominated to Rajya Sabha in 2022 and is a member of the Committee on Defence, Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Committee on Ethics.

Fauzia Khan, belongs to the Nationalist Congress Party, was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra.

Sulata Deo is a member of the Biju Janata Dal. She was elected to Rajya Sabha from Odisha.

Note: The panel of vice-chairpersons is a group of members nominated to assist the chairman or the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha in conducting its business efficiently.

16. India has contributed **USD 1 million** as part of a voluntary contribution to the United Nations (UN) to promote the use of the Hindi language in the UN and to foster inclusive dialogue and understanding.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj has handed over a cheque of USD 1 million to Melissa Fleming, Under Secretary General of the UN Department of Global Communications.

Note: Hindi@UN project, in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information of the UN, was launched in 2018, with the goal of increasing the public outreach of the UN in the Hindi language, and spreading greater awareness about global issues among millions of Hindi-speaking people around the world.

- 17.** The Government of India (GoI) has decided to make the **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT)**, premier R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, as the **nodal agency** to handle Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and **patents**.

C-DoT will now play the role of the facilitator only for standard essential patent (SEP) negotiations.

C-DoT will offer support and guidance to startups, Micro, Small, && Medium Enterprises (MSME), and research entities in converting their innovations into IPRs and transforming research into commercially viable products.

- 18.** **India's first Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) in fisheries** will be set up at the **Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS)** in Kochi, Kerala to foster a culture of innovation and technological advancement.

KUFOS has received a grant of **Rs.10 crore** from NITI Aayog to set up India's first AIC in fisheries at the university.

KUFOS, under the guidance of **Radhika Rajasree**, professor and head of the Department of Fish Processing Technology, will spearhead the transformative project as its principal investigator.

Atal Incubation Centre (AIC):

The AIC is a part of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM). It aims to foster and support world class innovation, dynamic entrepreneurs who want to build scalable and sustainable enterprises.

- 19.** The Ministry of Finance, Government of India (GoI), has approved the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO's) Central Board of Trustees' recommendation to set the annual interest rate of **8.15%** on **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** accounts for **FY23**.

The current rate is 0.5% higher than the FY22 when it was 8.10%.

With this rate, there will be distributing over Rs.90,000 crore to members' accounts on a total principal amount of approximately Rs.11 trillion during FY23, p from Rs.77,424.84 crore and Rs.9.5 trillion, respectively, during FY22.

After the distribution for FY23, EPFO will be left with a surplus of Rs.663.91 crore.

20. Twitter, a social media platform, has launched its new logo, dropping the blue bird on its website for an **"X"** as part of a wider rebranding.

The company's new logo shows a white X on a black background.

In April 2023, the name of the company was changed from Twitter Inc. to X Corp.

21. Private space data company **Pixxel** has won a multi-crore grant from iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence under the Ministry of Defence) for the Mission DefSpace Challenge under **iDEX Prime (Space)**, to manufacture miniaturized multi-payload satellites for the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**.

This grant will equip Pixxel to develop small satellites of up to 150 kgs for Electro-Optical, Infrared, Synthetic Aperture Radar and Hyper Spectral purposes.

This grant has been received as a part of the SPARK (Support for Prototype and Research Kickstart (in Defence)) grants by iDEX.

22. The President of India **Droupadi Murmu** has completed one year in office as the **15th President of India**. She is the first tribal woman to hold the top office.

On the occasion, she has laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various projects at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi.

- She has laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the **Shiva Temple** in the President's Estate, New Delhi.
- She has laid the foundation stone for the construction of a **Cricket Pavilion** at the Sports Ground of Dr Rajendra Prasad Kendriya Vidyalaya, President's Estate, New Delhi.
- She has inaugurated '**Navachara**' an AI-enabled gallery developed by Rashtrapati Bhawan in collaboration with Intel India.
- She has inaugurated '**Sutra-kala-Darpan**', a textile collection of Rashtrapati Bhawan, featuring antique textiles that narrated the rich legacy of Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- She has inaugurated '**Janjatiya Darpan Gallery**', offering a glimpse into the cultural richness and contributions of various tribal communities in building the nation.

23. Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia has inaugurated the 5th Helicopter & Small Aircraft Summit (Heli Summit 2023) in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

He has also launched RCS UDAN 5.2 and HeliSewa-App during the event.

- Heli Summit 2023 has been jointly organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with the Government of Madhya Pradesh, Pawan Hans Ltd., and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- The theme of the event is **"Reaching the Last Mile: Regional Connectivity through Helicopters & Small Aircraft"**.

UDAN 5.2 has been launched for further enhancing the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country and achieving last-mile connectivity through small aircraft such as 1A (<9 seats) and Category 1 (<20 seats).

HeliSewa-App:

The HeliSewa Portal is an initiative of the Ministry of Civil Aviation under Digital India to create a common platform to create an ecosystem between the helicopter operators and the district authorities.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Pawan Hans and Jetserve has been signed for advancing the Helicopter and Small Aircraft sector in India.

24. The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kozhikode has announced to set up an "India-Japan Study and Research Centre." The aim of this centre is to enhance the management education and research competencies in the specific areas of mutual interest between both the countries.

25. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched multiple initiatives and laid the foundation stone of various development projects in the public program in Sikar, Rajasthan.

- **1.25 lakh PM Kisan Samridhi Kendras (PMKSKs)** have been dedicated to the nation.
- These PMKSKs will provide farmers with agriculture-related inputs (fertilizers, seeds, and equipment), testing facilities for soil, seeds, and fertilizers, and provide information about various government schemes.

He has released an amount of about **Rs.17,000 crore** in the form of **14th instalment** of the **PM-KISAN scheme** to more than 8.5 crores beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer.

He has launched '**Urea Gold**', which is a new variety of sulphur-coated urea that will help to remove sulphur deficiency in the soil.

He has launched the inclusion of around 1500 Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the Open Network of Digital Commerce (ONDC).

He has laid the foundation stone of 7 medical colleges and inaugurated 5 new medical colleges in Rajasthan.

He has inaugurated 6 Eklavya Model Residential Schools and Kendriya Vidyalaya in the state.

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26. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the newly constructed International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC) complex '**Bharat Mandapam**' in **New Delhi**.

The new ITPO (India Trade Promotion Organisation) complex has been developed at a cost of about **Rs.2,700 crore**.

It has been developed as India's largest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination.

It is a grand architectural marvel, designed to host large-scale international exhibitions, trade fairs, conventions, conferences, and other prestigious events.

Its majestic multi-purpose hall and plenary hall have a combined capacity of 7000 people, which is larger than the seating capacity of the famous Sydney Opera House in Australia.

Its magnificent Amphitheater is equipped with a seating capacity of 3000 individuals.

Bharat Mandapam derives its root from Lord Basaveshwara's (12th century) idea of Anubhav Mantapa.

Anubhava Mantapa:

- It was one of the earliest Parliament in history of mankind, where Sharanas (poets and socio-spiritual reformers) deliberated for reforms in various spheres.
- Prabhudeva, a great Yogi, was the President and Lord Basaveshwara acted as PM.
- Members were not elected by people but were picked up or nominated by higher authorities of Mantapa.

27. Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav has launched the **Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC)** during the 4th

Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group and Environment and Climate Ministers meeting held in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.

- RECEIC is an industry-driven initiative under India's G20 Presidency.
- RECEIC aims to promote resource efficiency and circular economy practices globally.
- 39 companies headquartered in 11 different countries have joined the coalition as its founding members.
- RECEIC aims to facilitate knowledge-sharing, best practice sharing, and sustainable practices among the participating industries.
- The coalition has three guiding principles: Partnerships for impact, Technology Cooperation, and Finance for scale.

28. The Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has inaugurated a two-day **National Conference on Rural WASH Partners' Forum (RWPF)** at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi to celebrate the **1st anniversary** of formation of **RWPF**.

Theme of the conference: "Accelerating Progress towards a Swachh Sujal Bharat"

Key initiatives launched in National Conference on RWPF:

- **Manual for Disaster Management Plan (DMP)** has been released to ensure safety, uninterrupted supply and minimum loss of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) assets and services involving stakeholders at national, state, district, and village level.
- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) and Echo India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up the **JJM Digital Academy**.
- RWPF Annual Yearbook and Web page have been launched.
- **'Swachhata Chronicles'**, a transformative tales from India, has been released to achieve the goal of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen – Phase II).

Rural WASH Partners' Forum (RWPF):

It is a platform set up by the **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti** in collaboration with **KPMG India** for Development/ Sector Partners working in rural WASH space of India. It was launched in **July 2022**. It is a leading platform for development partners and sector partners working in the rural WASH sector in India.

The RWPF's mission is to accelerate progress towards a Swachh Sujal Bharat.

RWPF Secretariat has been set up at DDWS where KPMG is the platform coordinator to take tasks and activities forward.

29. Bengaluru, the capital of Karnataka, has become the **first Indian city** to join the **World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF)**, a global network of cities that share research and intelligence to explore the role of culture in future prosperity.

Bengaluru has become the **41st city** to join the forum.

World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF):

It was established in London in 2012 with eight cities. It has 43 participating member cities. It enables the policy makers of member cities to share research and intelligence, and explores the vital role of culture in their future prosperity.

30. ITC Limited, a leading Indian multi-business enterprise, has released a special postal stamp, a customised **"My Stamp"** on **Mission Millets** in partnership with the **Department of Post** under the Ministry of Communication.

The postal stamp has been released to celebrate Shree Anna and to create awareness about the importance of Millets.

The postal stamp is a part of ITC's Mission Millets initiative commemorating the International Year of Millets 2023.

Note: 'My Stamp' is the brand name for personalized sheets of Postage Stamps of India Post.

31. Jindal Aluminium Limited, India's largest Aluminium extrusion company and India's second largest producer of aluminium flat rolled products, has been awarded the **AS 9100D Aerospace certification** by M/s NVT Services, one of India's top aerospace certification agencies.

The certificate recognises Jindal Aluminium as a qualified manufacturer for the aviation, space, and defence industry.

32. President **Droupadi Murmu** has recently (July 2023) laid the foundation stone for '**Divine Light House**' of **Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya (PBKIVV)** at Dasabatia, near Tamando in Bhubaneswar, Odisha during her 3-day visit to Odisha from 25th July to 27th July 2023.

She has also launched the 2023 theme of PBKIVV '**The Year of Positive Change**' for conducting seminars and conferences.

33. Gurugram-based IoTechWorld Avigation Private Limited has received a **'Type Certificate (TC)'** from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for its new indigenous product **'AGRIBOT A6'**.

This is the 2nd drone from IoTechWorld that has received TC.

Type Certificate for drones is an official document issued by the DGCA certifying that a specific type of drone meets all the technical parameters and safety standards for operation in India.

34. Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed combination involving acquisition of shareholding up to **59.38%** of **Unichem Laboratories Limited (Target)** by **Ipca Laboratories Limited (Acquirer)**.

The proposed combination pertains to proposed acquisition of 33.38% of the issued and paid-up equity voting share capital (on a fully diluted basis) of the Target by the Acquirer pursuant to a share purchase agreement.

35. The **15th edition** of bilateral joint military exercise **"NOMADIC ELEPHANT-23"** has been conducted between **India and Mongolia** in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia** from 17 to 31 July 2023.

- **Objective:** To build positive military relations, exchange best practices, develop interoperability, bonhomie, camaraderie and friendship between the two armies.
- The primary theme of the exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain under United Nations.
- **Participants:** Soldiers of the Mongolian Armed Forces Unit 084 and Indian Army soldiers from the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment.

Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT is an annual training event with Mongolia which is conducted alternatively in Mongolia and India. It is a bilateral exercise.

The last edition was held at Special Forces Training School, Bakloh in October 2019.

36. The engineers at Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) facility in Bengaluru, Karnataka has joined the two main components of the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR), namely the spacecraft bus and the radar instrument payload, to create a single spacecraft.

NISAR:

- It is jointly developed by NASA & ISRO. It is set to launch in early 2024 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh by ISRO's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark-II rocket.
- NISAR will be able to track the movement of land and ice surface in extremely fine detail.
- The NISAR satellite is capable of tracking nearly every part of our planet at least once in every 12 days.

37. The Minister of State (MoS) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajeev Chandrashekar has inaugurated **India's first PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL)** under NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in **Kerala** in collaboration with **OPPO India**.

- The lab is situated at St Paul's CEHSS in Kuriachira, Thrissur, Kerala.
- The aim is to create an empowered future-ready workforce and nurture entrepreneurship and technological skills among the youth.
- **Learning Links Foundation**, New Delhi based 'not for profit' organization will act as the implementation partner.
- The ATL has been set up to empower school children in classes 6th to 12th to develop innovative solutions.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):

AIM is a flagship initiative of the Government of India, implemented by NITI Aayog. It was launched in 2016 with the aim of fostering innovation and entrepreneurship among Indian youth.

Note: Till 2022, 10,000 ATLs were established across 35 States and UTs in India through government grants.

38. The **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)**, with the technical assistance of **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**, has developed **five guidelines** to enhance mountainous road infrastructure in India.

These guidelines are designed to ensure high-quality and sustainable road projects in hilly regions which will improve road networks and promote economic growth.

The guidelines provide technical specifications and best practices for road construction in mountainous regions, covering the following topics:

- Planning of Hilly Roads
- Slope Protection and Embankment with Advanced Technology

- Tunnel on Arterial Roads in Hilly Area
- Mountain Bridge with Advance Technology
- Operation and Maintenance of Mountainous Highways

39. Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), also known as Delhi International Airport, has become the **first airport in India** to get **four runways**. This runway has been inaugurated by the Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya M. Scindia.

This runway increases the throughout capacity of the Delhi airport from roughly 1400 - 1500 air traffic movements per day to almost 2000 air traffic movements per day.

The Union Minister has also inaugurated **India's first eastern cross taxiway (ECT)** at IGIA that will connect the Northern part of the airfield to the southern side, thus reducing taxi time for aircraft and help passengers deplane within 12 minutes of landing.

The ECT and the fourth runway are projected to lead to a reduction of almost **55,000 tons of CO₂ emissions** annually, contributing to environmental sustainability.

40. The Ministry of Education, India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Education and Knowledge department of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to set up the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi** campus in **Abu Dhabi**.

- The campus will offer Master's courses from January 2024, and Bachelor's courses from September 2024.
- The campus will strengthen the partnership between India and UAE.
- This will be the IIT's second international campus. Earlier, IIT Madras has signed MoU to set up a campus in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

41. Adani Group has commissioned **India's first transnational project** at Godda in **Jharkhand** to supply power to the **Bangladesh** electricity grid. This is India's first commissioned transnational power project where 100% of the generated power is supplied to another nation.

Adani Power Jharkhand Limited (APJL) will supply 1,496 MW from the Godda USCTPP (Ultra Super Critical Thermnal Power Plant) under the PPA with the Bangladesh Power Development Board.

The plant is expected to generate 7,200 million units of electricity per year.

42. The Prime Minister of India **Narendra Modi** has recently (July 2023) visited **Paris, France** at the invitation of President of France, Emmanuel Macron. He is the Guest of Honour at the **Bastille Day Parade** on 14th July 2023, where a tri-services Indian armed forces contingent participated.

He has become the **first Indian PM** to have been conferred with the **Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour**, France's highest civilian and military honour.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Indo-French partnership, both countries have agreed to adopt a roadmap named "**Horizon 2047: Charting the future of India-France Strategic Partnership**" to set the course for the bilateral relationship up to 2047, which will celebrate the centenary of India's independence, the centenary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries and 50 years of the strategic partnership.

Key Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and Letter of Intents (Lols) signed during his visit:

- The two countries have established a partnership on Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR) as well as for continuing cooperation on nuclear energy projects such as the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) in Maharashtra and the Jules Horowitz Research Reactor (JHR) in Cadarache, France.
- French space agency Centre National D'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have signed several agreements on reusable launchers.
- Other key agreements include finalisation of the joint Earth observation satellite, TRISHNA (Thermal infraRed Imaging Satellite for High resolution Natural resource Assessment), and the first phase of a constellation of maritime surveillance satellites in the Indian Ocean.
- MoU between Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE), and Naval Group France, a leader in European Naval Defence Industry, has been signed to collaborate in the field of surface ship that caters to fulfil the requirement of India and International Naval forces.
- Lol between India and France for cooperation in the field of Health & Medicine.

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43. Union Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** has launched the '**Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS)-Sahara Refund Portal**' aimed at aiding over 10 crore

depositors of the Sahara Group in reclaiming their money within 45 days of registration in the portal.

- The portal has been developed by a subsidiary of Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) Ltd, a Systematically Important Non-Deposit taking NBFC.
- In Phase I, around 1.7 crore investors will be benefited, and claims up to Rs.10000 will be prioritised for settlement.
- The refunds will be credited to the Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of the investors within a 45-days of registration in the portal.

44. Tata AIG General Insurance has been selected as the lead non-life insurer for the State of **Maharashtra** by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

With this, the company will collaborate with all non-life and health insurance companies in the state to increase insurance penetration.

The concept of a lead insurer to increase insurance penetration in the states has been developed by IRDAI in line with its vision of "Insurance for all by 2047.

45. The International Energy Agency (IEA) in collaboration with **Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)** under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG) has launched the **Oil 2023 medium-term market report**, titled: *IEA Oil 2023 - Supply and demand dynamics to 2028*, in Delhi.

Key highlights:

- The global oil demand will rise by 6% between 2022 and 2028 to reach 105.7 million barrels per day (mb/d).
- India's demand for energy is growing faster than any other major economy, with growth in all sectors.
- The annual demand growth is expected to decline from 2.4 mb/d in 2023 to just 0.4 mb/d in 2028.
- Biofuels are expected to provide 10% of new liquid fuel supply growth to 2028, and as per the report, biofuels production expands nearly 600 kb/d from 2022 to 2028, with Brazil, Indonesia, and India combined accounting for 70% of this increase.

46. The **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** has launched a free online training programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI), **"AI for India 2.0"**.

- It is a joint initiative of Skill India and Grab Ur Vernacular Imprint (GUVI), an Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu and Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, Gujarat incubated company.
- This National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) under the MSDE and IIT Madras accredited online programme will enable the youth of India with frontier skills.
- It is available in 9 languages.

47. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh, has approved the proposal to procure **26 Rafale Marine aircraft** for the Indian Navy from the **French government**.

- The Rafale Marine Aircraft will come with associated ancillary equipment, weapons, simulator, spares, documentation, crew training and logistic support.
- Their procurement from the French Government is on an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) basis.

Other approvals:

The DAC has also granted the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of the three additional **Scorpene submarines** under Project 75. It will be built by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).

48. **NITI Aayog**, under the NITI Working Paper series, has introduced the **Techno-Commercial Readiness and Market Maturity Matrix (TCRM Matrix) Framework** to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in India.

This framework is a pioneering assessment tool designed to revolutionize technology evaluation, foster innovation, and fuel entrepreneurship in India.

The TCRM Matrix provides the historical evolution of technology assessment frameworks, including the Technology Readiness Level (TRL), Commercialization Readiness Level (CRL), and Market Readiness Level (MRL) scales.

The framework presents an integrated assessment model that offers in-depth insights and actionable intelligence to stakeholders at every stage of the technology development cycle.

49. The **3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting** under the Indian Presidency has been held during 17-18 July 2023 in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

The meeting has been jointly chaired by Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman, and Governor, Reserve Bank of India, Shaktikanta Das.

- The G20 FMCBGs endorsed G20 Report on Macroeconomic Risks Stemming from Climate Change and Transition Pathways.
- The member has also endorsed the new G20 2023 **Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP)** for 3 years 2024-26.
- During the meeting, the Indonesian Finance Minister Mulyani Indrawati and her Indian counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman jointly inaugurated the **India-Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)** in Gandhinagar, Gujarat to enhance collaboration on bilateral and international economic and financial matters.
- The meeting concluded with a G20 Outcome Document and Chair's Summary comprising 26 paragraphs and 2 Annexures.

Note: The G20 FMCBGs will meet next in October 2023 in Marrakesh (Morocco) on the sidelines of IMF/WBG Annual Meetings.

50. **India** and the **United States of America (USA)** have jointly launched a call for proposals on "*Critical and Emerging Technology: Quantum Technologies and Artificial Intelligence for Transforming Lives*".

- The program is designed by the Indo-US Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) and the Secretariat for USISTEF (US-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund).
- The aim is to promote technology innovation and entrepreneurship in commercially viable and socially relevant areas.
- It will provide a prominent boost to the domestic as well as the US priorities looking at various facets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

51. Union Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** has made a 3-day official visit to **Malaysia** from 9-11 July 2023, with a focus on further combining bilateral defence cooperation and enhanced strategic partnership between India and Malaysia.

During his visit, he held bilateral talks with the Defence Minister of Malaysia **Mr Dato' Seri Mohamad Hasan**, where both the ministers reviewed defence cooperation between the 2 nations.

Key highlights:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has discussed the **Roadmap for the 4th Decade of India-Malaysia Defence Cooperation** with Malaysian counterpart.
- The initiatives have been discussed by both the nations to further expand bilateral defence ties, particularly focused on identifying ways to strengthen industrial cooperation.
- The nations agreed to establish the **Sukhoi Su-30MKM Forum** and the Strategic Affairs Working Group to elevate the cooperation between the two ministries.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) regional office** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has unveiled the statue of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**, in the presence of distinguished Indian National Army (INA) veterans in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

52. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) **Rajiv Kumar** participated in the **11th meeting** of the Executive Board of the **Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)** held in **Cartagena, Colombia**.

He led a three-member Election Commission of India (ECI) delegation to Colombia which includes Manoj Sahoo, Deputy Election Commissioner, and Anuj Chandak, Joint Director.

During the meeting, he raised the ECI proposals namely:

- Setting up an **A-WEB portal** that would serve as a repository of electoral best practices and initiatives taken by member EMBs in various aspects of electoral management and
- Establishing **A-WEB Global Awards** for EMBs who make significant contributions and take important initiatives in the democratic processes.

Both proposals have been approved by the Executive Board.

On the sidelines of the 11th A-WEB Executive Board meeting, a bilateral meeting has also been held with the National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea on ECIs Electronic Postal Ballot System.

An international conference on the theme "A global view on the challenges of regional elections 2023" has also been organised by National Civil Registry, Colombia.

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB):

A-WEB is the largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide with 119 EMBs as Members & 20 Regional Associations/Organisations as Associate Members.

It was founded in October 2013 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Headquarters: Songdo, South Korea

Chairperson: Mosotho Moepya

- 53.** The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**, that will pave the way for commercial mining of **six critical minerals** (lithium, beryllium, niobium, tantalum, titanium and zirconium), and deep-seated minerals like gold, silver and copper.

This is the 5th amendment to the act since 2014.

The proposal will remove the 6 minerals from India's 'Atomic Minerals' list and empower the Centre to auction their reserves for mining by private players.

- 54.** The first **LSAM 7 (Yard 75)** barge has recently (July 2023) been delivered to the **Indian Navy**. The Navy has received this unique barge in the presence of Iftekhar Alam, Commanding Officer of INS Tunir.

The barge has been built in accordance with the classification requirements of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) and has a service life of 30 years.

- 55.** **GQG Partners LLC**, a Florida (the United States of America)-based asset management firm led by Rajiv Jain, acquired a **5.96% stake** in the **Patanjali Foods Limited** (formerly known as Ruchi Soya Industries Limited), a manufacturer of consumer packaged foods in India, for **Rs.2400 crore** through the Offer-for-sale (OFS) process initiated by Patanjali Foods.

- 56.** **V.Srinivas**, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, has launched the **3rd edition** of the **National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) portal**.

The framework aims to analyse the depth and effectiveness of existing e-Governance service delivery mechanisms from the citizen's perspective.

This framework, based on the Online Service Index (OSI) of UN eGovernment Survey, has been customized for the Indian federal structure and the e-Governance landscape of the States and UTs.

Framework for NeSDA 2023 is elaborated under 3 dimensions:

- Portals Coverage
- Mandatory Service Coverage
- Assessment Parameters

57. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur** has developed a tool that will check the alertness of locomotive pilots. A tamper-proof device for the online monitoring of drowsiness can be used for real-time assessment of a loco pilot's alertness based on the analysis of normal and near-infrared facial images.

The device has an embedded computing unit, a camera, a near infrared lighting facility, and a warning system.

IIT Kharagpur has also developed a tool that will help assess the fitness of loco pilots before they join duty for their shift.

58. The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under the Ministry of Commerce, has launched the **One District One Product (ODOP)** Awards.

The award aims to recognize and honour those who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments within their respective Districts, States/UTs, and International Missions abroad in achieving economic development through the ODOP approach.

The Awards focus on the following:

- Encouraging constructive competition, innovation, and efficient public service delivery in successful ODOP interventions;
- Promoting replication and institutionalization of best practices through experience sharing;
- Recognizing innovations done for successful identification and solving bottlenecks in the supply chain of ODOP products.

One District One Product (ODOP):

ODOP was first launched by Uttar Pradesh in 2018, later adopted by Union with the aim of fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country. ODOP selects, brand and promotes One Product from each District.

59. NLC India Limited (NLCIL), a Navratna company under the **Ministry of Coal**, has bagged the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) award in the category "**Timely Payments (CPSEs)**" for the year 2023 for its outstanding contribution in improving the reliability of e-market practices in line with the vision of GeM.

- NLCIL registered and on-boarded in GeM portal in the year 2017.
- NLCIL's growth in GeM procurement started from a small value of Rs.2.21 crore during the year 2018-19 and the company has registered an impressive growth of Rs.984.93 crore during the year FY 2022-23.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is a dedicated e-Market service platform, a National public procurement portal, governed by Government of India for marketing different goods and services.

60. The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in collaboration with **Bayer** has launched an industry visit initiative under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL), at Bayer's manufacturing facility in Vapi, Gujarat.

The collaboration aims to introduce students to the latest manufacturing techniques and technologies used in industry.

Bayer has opened its manufacturing and production plants and research centres across Vapi (Gujarat), Shamirpet (Hyderabad), Chandippa (Telangana), and Bangalore to the ATL students to provide first-hand exposure to experience how technology, automation, and innovation are leveraged by the industry.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog is Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016.

- **Mission Director:** Dr Chintan Vaishnav

61. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under the Ministry of Communication (MoC), in collaboration with MyGov, has launched the "**Bharat Internet Utsav**" to celebrate the power of the Internet.

It aims to highlight the transformative role of the internet by encouraging citizens to share their stories of how the internet has positively impacted their lives.

It recognizes the internet as an essential tool for connectivity, knowledge-sharing, and socio-economic development.

62. The **Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL)** has been upgraded from “Schedule B” to “**Schedule A**” category Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

With its new status as a “Schedule A” enterprise, NRL becomes eligible to achieve the coveted Navratna as a Navratna company, NRL will have the freedom to invest up to Rs.1000 crore without seeking approval from the central government.

Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL):

It was established as a company on 22nd April 1993. It works under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. It is based in **Guwahati, Assam**. The Assam government holds a 26% stake in the company.

NRL is the largest refinery in Northeast India.

63. Ahmedabad (Gujarat), the Chair City of Urban 20 (U20) 2023, has hosted the 2-day **U20 Mayoral Summit 2023** in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**. The summit has been hosted with the support of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), and the U20 Technical Secretariat.

The summit has been concluded with the handover of the **Communique** from the Mayors to G20 leaders.

The communique has been drafted as an action agenda of the **six priorities** identified collectively by U20 cities. These priorities include:

- Encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours
- Accelerating climate finance
- Championing local culture and economy
- Ensuring water security
- Catalysing digital urban futures
- Reinventing frameworks for urban planning and governance.

The Communiqué is aligned with the G20 theme of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, or One Earth, One Family, One Future.

Urban 20 (U20):

U20 is a city diplomacy initiative that brings together cities from G20 member states under a common framework to discuss global economic, climate, and development issues.

64. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched the **National Cadet Corps (NCC) Integrated Software (NIS)** in New Delhi. The NIS, developed in partnership with Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo Informatics (BISAG), is a single window interactive software for Cadets, designed on the 'Entry to Exit Model'.

This will enable seamless issue of certificates, creation of an all India database of NCC cadets at the time of their employment.

During this event, the NCC and **State Bank of India (SBI)** has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to open zero balance accounts of all NCC Cadets with debit card, chequebook & passbook facility under SBI's "Pahli Udaan" scheme.

- About 5 lakh cadets will be benefitted by this MoU every year.
- The account will remain functional till completion of training or attaining 18 years of age whichever is later.

65. The Central Government has brought the **Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)** under the ambit of the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**.

- The government has notified changes to **Section 66** of the PMLA Act to add GSTN as the entity to the list mandated to share information with the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** and the **Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)**.
- GSTN has been brought under PMLA Act after the rise in cases of GST fraud and fake registrations.
- The move follows an ED probe into a fake GST registration case involving stolen PAN and Aadhaar for money laundering.

Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN):

GSTN is a Special Purpose Vehicle which was established in 2013 for the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST). It provides shared IT infrastructure and services to taxpayers, the Central Government and the State/Union Territory Governments.

Government owns **100% shareholding** in GSTN that is 50% with Union Government, and 50% jointly with State Governments & Union Territories (UTs).

66. The **Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** has become the first Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) in India to receive certification for its **Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS)**.

The certification has been awarded by the internationally accredited certification body InterCert USA.

ABMS has been implemented in 10 departments of ONGC's corporate office in Delhi in the first phase as per **ISO 37001:2016** International Standard under the guidance of Digital Edge, an international consulting firm.

67. The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (**IN-SPACE**) has issued an **expression of interest (Eoi)** for the first-of-its kind Transfer of Technology (**ToT**) of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) to Indian private space firms.

The aim of this initiative is to boost the Indian private space industries.

Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):

- SSLV is a **3 stage Launch Vehicle** configured with three Solid Propulsion Stages and Liquid propulsion-based Velocity Trimming Module (VTM) as a terminal.
- It is **2 m** in diameter and **34m** in length with a lift off weight of 120 tonnes and is capable of launching 500 kg satellite in 500 km planar orbit.

68. K Rajaraman, the Secretary to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), has launched the **"Standards Coordination Portal"** during the "National Workshop on Enhancing Indian Participation in Telecom Global Standards Bodies" held at Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) campus in New Delhi.

- The portal aims to increase India's participation in global standardising initiatives by bringing together specialists from various sectors such as industry, academic institutions, research organizations, and government.
- The portal is developed by Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) under the DoT.
- This also serves as a central hub for sharing information and promoting collaboration in the Standardisation of telecom and related ICT domains.

He has also unveiled the TEC standard on **"Fairness Assessment and Rating of Artificial Intelligence Systems"**, which has been meticulously crafted through extensive consultations

with stakeholders by TEC. This standard outline comprehensive procedures for evaluating and rating the fairness of artificial intelligence systems, ensuring ethical and responsible AI deployment.

69. Bhuvnesh Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has recently (in July 2023) inaugurated **Product Design Centre (PDC)**, set up at Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

The PDC has prototyping and system designing facilities equipped with all the software and printing technologies for system designing, prototyping, ideation and fabrication.

He has also launched "**Grain-Ex**" through machine vision technology for pulses developed under 'National programme on Electronics and ICT applications in Agriculture and Environment (AgriEnIcs)' along with ICAR-The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi.

Grain-Ex is an appearance based e-Quality detection system for 14 types of pulses.

70. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has inaugurated the indigenous Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS) '**Sagar Sampark**' in New Delhi to boost the digitalisation in the maritime sector.

- Sagar Sampark is a terrestrial based enhancement system which corrects the errors and inaccuracies in the Global Navigation Satellite System (**GNSS**) allowing for more accurate positioning information.
- It is able to transmit corrections of Global Positioning System (**GPS**) and Global Navigation Satellite System (**GLONASS**).
- Sagar Sampark at six locations will assist the Director General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) to provide radio aids to ships for marine navigation.
- The system will provide accurate information to the ships for safe navigation and will reduce the risk of collisions, groundings, and accidents in the port and harbour areas.
- The error correction accuracy has been improved from **5 to 10 meters** to less than 5 meters for 100 Nautical Miles (NM) from Indian coastlines.

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71. The **120th** anniversary of **India Government Mint** has been observed in **Hyderabad** with commemorative souvenir coins. These souvenir coins are crafted of silver and copper serve as a tribute to the rich legacy and contributions of the India Government Mint in the field of coinage and minting.

India Government Mint:

India Government Mint, Hyderabad ('IGM Hyderabad), a unit of Security Printing And Minting Corporation of India Limited ('SPMCIL'), is one of the four Mints that is engaged in the manufacture and supply of coins to Reserve Bank of India for the purpose of circulation.

It was originally established in 1803 AD as the Royal Mint for the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Government of India took over the control of mint in 1950.

72. The **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna** has recently visited Seychelles to take part in the **2023 Operation Southern Readiness** conducted by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

This reinforces the Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region and marks the maiden participation of an Indian Navy ship in the CMF exercise.

The joint training exercise is being attended by representative delegations from USA, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and ship participation from UK, Spain & India.

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF):

- CMF is a multinational maritime partnership, which exists to uphold the Rules-Based International Order (RBIO) by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas.
- CMF has **38 member nations**: Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Türkiye, UAE, United Kingdom, United States, and Yemen.
- India is NOT a member of CMF.

INS Sunayna:

It is the second Saryu-class patrol vessel of the Indian Navy. It was launched on 14 November 2009 by Mrs. Usha Ranjan, wife of the then Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Suresh Mehta. The ship was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 27 January 2011. The ship has been deployed in the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf to protect Indian shipping interests.

- 73.** Minister for Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw has inaugurated the Curtain Raiser of **7th edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2023** in **New Delhi**.

The IMC 2023, co-hosted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), will be held from **27th – 29th October 2023** at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

Theme of IMC 2023: **'Global Digital Innovation'**.

IMC 2023 event will witness around 100,000 plus participants, 5,000 plus CXO-level delegates, 350 plus speakers, and 400 plus exhibitors.

India Mobile Congress (IMC):

IMC is a flagship event of telecom sector in the country. It was established in 2017. IMC has promoted India's positioning and serves as a key forum for global thought leaders to design the next wave of digital innovation, with India leading the charge.

- 74.** The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** has launched the **Action Taken Report (ATR) Module of AuditOnline** during a virtual event presided over by Kapil Moreshwar Patil, Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj. The module will enable Panchayats to become more efficient, empowered, and corruption-free in managing funds.

AuditOnline:

AuditOnline is open-source software developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as part of the Panchayat Enterprise Suite under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (as part of the Digital India Programme). It was launched in 2020.

The application aims to promote transparency and accountability in the financial management of Panchayats.

- 75.** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched India's third lunar mission **'Chandrayaan-3'** perched on **LVM3** heavy-lift launch vehicle, named **'Bahubali'** rocket, at 2.35 p.m. from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in **Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh** on 14th July 2023.

The mission has a budget of **Rs.615 crore**.

The mission aims to land a rover on the lunar **South Pole**.

The mission life of Chandrayaan-3 is **one lunar day**, which is equivalent to about 14 Earth days.

The spacecraft will complete the **3,84,000 kilometers**-long journey in nearly 42 days to reach moon.

With this, India has become the **4th country** to successfully launch a spacecraft on the moon after USA, Russia, and China.

The Mission Director is **Mohan Kumar**, the Vehicle/Rocket Director is **Biju C. Thomas** and the Spacecraft Director is **Dr P. Veeramuthuvel**.

Objectives of Chandrayaan-3 mission:

- To demonstrate a safe and controlled landing on the Moon's surface.
- To carry out rover operations on the lunar terrain.
- To conduct on-site experiments on the surface of the Moon.

Components of Chandrayaan-3 mission:

- **Propulsion module** (Carry the lander and rover configuration till 100 km lunar orbit)
- **Lander (Vikram) module** (Capability to soft land and deploy Rover)
- **Rover (Pragyaan)** (Carry out in-situ chemical analysis of the lunar surface). It will leave imprints of the ISRO and the national emblem, depicting the Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath, on the lunar surface.

LVM-3:

Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3) (previously known as GSLV-MK III) is a three-stage launch vehicle consisting of two solid propellants S200 strap-ons on its sides and a core stage comprising L110 liquid stage and C25 cryogenic stage. The vehicle is also dubbed as one of the heaviest for its ability to carry satellites up to 8,000 kg.

76. The **Ministry of Textile** has announced the **43 new implementing partners** under the **Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector (SAMARTH) scheme**. The objective is to enhance the reach and effectiveness of the scheme.

- The scheme has set a new target of training around **75,000 beneficiaries**, which will be allocated to training partners.

- The Funding pattern has also been revised with an increment of **5 percent** in cost norms, which will give much needed additional financial support to industries imparting skill under this Scheme.

SAMARTH scheme:

It is a demand driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling programme of the Ministry of Textiles formulated under the broad skilling policy framework adopted by Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

The scheme aims to incentivize and supplement the efforts of the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile and related sectors.

The scheme has penetrated across 28 States and 6 Union territories of the country and caters to all sections of the society including SC, ST, and other marginalized categories.

- 77.** Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), has launched a new campaign for banks under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) titled **"Banks Heralding Accelerated Rural & Agriculture Transformation (BHARAT)"** to mobilize funds from banks.

This one-month long campaign, which will run from 15th July to 15th August 2023, has been launched with a target of Rs.7200 crore.

MoA&FW has also asked banks to promote **Rs.1 lakh crore** AIF for creation of necessary infrastructure in the farm sector.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):

It is a financing facility launched on 8th July 2020, for creation of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farm assets. Under this scheme, Rs.1 lakh crore is to be disbursed by financial year 2025-26 and the interest subvention and credit guarantee assistance will be given till the year 2032-33.

- 78.** The **50th meeting** of the **Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council** has been held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministry of Finance.

Key recommendations:

- Uncooked/ unfried snack pellets, which are also known as papad khar, sago fritters, etc., will have a lower GST rate of 5% instead of 18%.
- **Dinutuximab (Quarziba)** medicine, which is used for treating a rare form of cancer in children, will be exempted from IGST when imported for personal use.

- **Raw cotton**, including kala cotton, supplied by agriculturists to cooperatives will be taxable under the reverse charge mechanism.
- Imitation zari thread or yarn, which is used for making embroidery and decorative items, will have a reduced GST rate of 5% instead of 12%.
- The **GST rate on LD slag**, a by-product of the steel industry, has been reduced from 18% to **5%**.
- The **GST rate on fish soluble paste**, a product used in the animal feed industry, has been reduced from 18% to **5%**.
- **Casino, Horse Racing and Online gaming will all be taxed at the rate of 28%**. Tax would be levied on full value of bets or full value of consideration paid without making any differentiation based on whether the games required skill or were based on chance.
- **GST Appellate Tribunal** to be setup from **1st August 2023**. The tribunal is to deal with tax disputes, and lessen the burden on the higher judiciary. The tribunal is to have a Principal Bench in **New Delhi**, with the President, a judicial member, a technical member (centre) and a technical member (state). It will also have state benches.

GST Council:

The Council was set up by the President as per Article 279A (1) introduced by the 101st Amendment Act. It consists of the Union Finance Minister and representatives from all States and Union Territories and was established to make decisions on various aspects of GST.

79. The Ministry of Power, Government of India has established a dedicated Centre of Excellence named 'UTPRERAK' to accelerate industry adoption of clean technologies and thus scale up India's contribution to the global energy transition.

- **The Unnat Takniki Pradarshan Kendra (UTPRERAK)** is the Centre of Excellence to Accelerate Adoption of Energy Efficient Technologies and seeks to play a catalytic role in improving the energy efficiency of the Indian industry.
- It is also named as Advanced Industrial Technology Demonstration Centre (AITDC).
- It has been set up by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.
- It is mandated to become the key reference and resource institution on industrial energy-efficient technologies.

- 80.** Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying **Parshottam Rupala** has launched the **Report Fish Disease (RFD) App** to improve the reporting of aquatic animal diseases in India.
- The app has been developed by **ICAR-NBFGR (National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources)** under National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD), funded under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India.
 - The RFD app will help the farmers in reporting incidence of diseases in finfish, shrimps, and molluscs on their farms with the field level-officers and fish health experts.
 - This app will help farmers in getting the scientific advice for efficient management of disease.
- 81.** Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Amit Shah has virtually launched the '**Akshar River Cruise**' on **Sabarmati Riverfront** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**. This is the first passenger catamaran built in India under the "Make in India" initiative.
- The 30-metre-long luxury cruise, with two engines and a two-hour drive, will help boost tourism with attractions such as live music, tasty vegetarian, and Jain food.
 - The river cruise is equipped with 180 life safety jackets, a fire sprinkler system against fire.
 - The cruise has a capacity of 165 passengers.
 - The cruise has been developed at a cost of Rs.15 crore.
- 82.** The **Indian Navy** and the **French Navy** have conducted a joint Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) in the Bay of Bengal along the coast of **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.
- The Indian Naval Ships (INS) **Rana** (a guided missile destroyer) and **Sumedha** (an indigenously built offshore patrol vessel) have participated in the exercise with the French Navy ship FS Surcouf.
- The exercise showcased the seamless coordination and interoperability between the Indian and French naval forces.
- 83.** The 3rd unit of the **Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3)**, India's first indigenously developed 700 MW nuclear power reactor, has commenced its commercial operations at the Kakrapar site in **Gujarat**.

- The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is building two 700 MW pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs) at Kakrapar, which is also home to two 220 MW power plants.
- The Kakrapar project encompasses the construction of two 700 MW PHWRs: KAPP-3 and KAPP-4.

The Government of India (GoI) has sanctioned the building of 10 indigenously developed PHWRs in fleet mode at four locations: Gorakhpur in Haryana, Chutka in Madhya Pradesh, Mahi Banswara in Rajasthan and Kaiga in Karnataka.

- 84.** The **Ministry of Power** has notified the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023** to develop India's first domestic regulated carbon credit trading market.
- The scheme was 1st announced under the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022.
 - The scheme has been drafted by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Ministry of Power.

The Centre has formed a **National Steering Committee (NSC)** to govern Carbon Market through Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023.

- The NSC, constituted of 20-22 members, will be headed by the **Secretary, Ministry of Power**, while the Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will be the co-chairperson.
- The committee will also have members from the Ministries of finance, new and renewable energy, steel, coal and petroleum, and Niti Aayog among others.
- The steering committee will recommend the BEE for the formulation and finalisation of procedures for institutionalizing the Indian carbon market and formulation of greenhouse gas emission targets for obligated entities.

The **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)** has been mandated to regulate the market.

Grid Controller of India will be the registry of Indian Carbon Market (ICM).

- 85.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **17th Indian Cooperative Congress (ICC)** in **New Delhi** on the occasion of the International Day of Cooperatives (first Saturday of July). It has been organized by the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI).

The conference has been chaired by the Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah.

The theme of the congress is **"Amrit Kaal: Prosperity through Cooperation for a Vibrant India."**

Key highlights of the event:

- He has also launched the e-commerce platform **NCUI Haat** for Cooperative Marketing.
- He has also unveiled a book on **"Cooperative Growth and Trends in India"**, a souvenir on cooperative movement, training modules on "Member's role in cooperative" and "Governance in Cooperatives".
- He has also launched an e-commerce app for **Cooperating Marketing**, created through a partnership between **Google Cloud** and the National Cooperative Union of India (**NCUI**).

86. The **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), has launched the **eSARAS mobile app** to support the marketing of products made by women in self-help groups (SHGs).

The app aims to provide a platform for the marketing of authentic handicrafts and handlooms.

The initiative aims to promote local products and enhance livelihood opportunities for SHG members.

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87. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways **Sarbananda Sonowal** has launched a campaign to transform **75 historic Lighthouses** into Tourism Spots from Dwarka, Gujarat.

He has also inaugurated the 1st three renovated lighthouses in Dwarka, Gopnath & Veraval in Gujarat.

The campaign aims to showcase the rich culture, significance, and allure of these magnificent structures whereby they can propel prospect of tourism and power local economy.

88. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **Sai Hira Global Conference Center in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh**. The convention centre will be the centre of spiritual conferences and academic programs.

89. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways **Sarbananda Sonowal** has recently laid the foundation stone of **Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) Terminal at Bogibeel in Dibrugarh (Assam)** along the banks of the River Brahmaputra.

The terminal will be developed at a cost of Rs.46.60 crores and is scheduled to be completed by February, 2024.

The terminal will help in rejuvenating inland waterways transportation in the region for both cargo and passenger movement, by helping the growth of trade and commerce.

90. Researchers at **IIT Kanpur** have successfully created **India's first 100% Dimethyl Ether (DME)-fueled tractor** for both on- and off-road operations. This shows a significant step toward a sustainable and renewable fuel-based transportation system.

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), an institution under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), funded the research, and is aligned with the '*Methanol Economy*' program of NITI Aayog.

91. Elena Geo Systems, a Bengaluru based Space Technology Company, and **Optimus Logistics** have successfully developed handheld devices called **PNT (Positioning, Navigation and Timing) devices** that are driven by satellite communications.

- This project has been funded by the Department of Telecommunications under the Digital Communication Innovation Square (DCIS) scheme.
- The PNT device will house a 5G mobile phone and NavIC chip along with its adapter and receiver to be able to communicate with NavIC satellite.
- These devices will be useful during disaster management, railway track surveillance and high altitude emergency situations.

92. Gas Authority of India (GAIL) Limited, a Maharatna-central public sector undertaking (CPSU), has been accredited with Authorized Economic Operator (**AEO T3 status**) which is the highest level of facilitation for Importers & Exporters by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, Ministry of Finance.

93. The **Startup20 Shikhar Summit**, organized by the Startup20 Engagement Group under the India G20 Presidency, has been organized in **Gurugram, Haryana**.

- During the closing ceremony, **Dr. Chintan Vaishnav**, Chair of Startup20, has officially handed over the torch to **Brazil**, as the country has G20 presidency for 2024.

- During the summit, the G20 countries have adopted the first '**Startup20 Communique 2023**' by agreeing on the creation and adoption of a definition framework for start-ups that will have 5 components including legal entity type, age, size, scalability, and innovation.
- **Saudi Arabia**, represented by HRH Prince Fahad Bin Mansoor, has emerged as the first country to endorse and support the Startup20's call to allocate an ambitious sum of \$1 trillion per annum into the startup ecosystem by 2030.

Startup20:

Startup20 is the first of its kind official engagement group initiated under the Indian presidency of the G20 2023.

- **Headquarters:** Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- **Startup20 India Chair:** Dr.Chintan Vaishnav

94. The **Indian Navy** has hosted the **7th edition** of the bilateral **Japan-India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23)** in **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**. This edition marks the 11th anniversary of JIMEX, since its inception in 2012.

Participants:

- Indian Navy has been represented by **INS Delhi**, India's first indigenously built Guided Missile Destroyer, **INS Kamorta**, an indigenously designed and built Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette, fleet tanker **INS Shakti**, a submarine, maritime patrol aircraft P8I and Dornier, ship-borne helicopters and fighter aircraft.
- Japanese Navy has been represented by the guided missile destroyer **JS Samidare** and its integral helicopters.

JIMEX 23 provides an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices and facilitates operational interactions between IN and JMSDF to foster mutual cooperation and reaffirm their shared commitment towards maritime security in the region.

95. Manoj Sinha, Lt Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, has launched **India's first Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS) chatbot** in **Jammu & Kashmir** to enhance mental health support for distressed people by initiating an instant conversation with those who are in need.

Tele-MANAS is a two-tier system.

- Tier 1 comprises State Tele MANAS cells, which include trained counsellors, and mental health specialists.
- Tier 2 comprises specialists at District Mental Health Programme (DMHP)/Medical College resources for physical consultation and/or eSanjeevani for audio visual consultation.

96. The **7th edition** of the Indian Navy – US Navy (**IN – USN**) Salvage and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) exercise, **SALVEX** has been conducted from 26 June to 06 July 2023 in **Kochi, Kerala** to strengthen US and Indian divers' capability in diving and salvage techniques.

The exercise has witnessed participation from both navies which included the vessels/ships – INS (Indian Naval Ship) Nireekshak and USNS (US Naval Ship) Salvor in addition to Specialist Diving and EOD teams.

The first-ever IN-USN SALVEX was conducted in 2005 and the SALVEX series of exercises have been conducted annually thereafter, alternately in Indian and US Pacific locations.

97. The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has launched a new web-portal **Integrated Election Expenditure Monitoring System** to facilitate the online filing of Contribution Report, Audited Annual Account, and Election Expenditure Statement by the Political Parties according to the provisions in the Representation of the People Act 1951. The online availability of the data is expected to enhance the level of compliance and transparency.

98. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications has launched **Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA)** to propel India's technological progress in the telecom sector.

A grant of **Rs.240.51 crores** under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) has been allocated to support the advancement of 6G technology.

B6GA will deploy 6G technologies to act as a powerful force multiplier for India by **2030**.

99. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the indirect acquisition of **Marnix Lux SA** by **Concentrix Corporation**, and acquisition of approximately **22%** shareholding in combined company by the shareholders of Marnix Lux.

100. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communication, has conducted '5G & Beyond Hackathon 2023' to shortlist India-focussed cutting edge ideas that can be converted into workable 5G and beyond products and solutions.

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STATES AFFAIRS

101. The Government of **Telangana** has introduced '**Saagu Baagu**' (which means agricultural advancement) Project Phase-I insight report in collaboration with **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.

The project aims to provide AI-based agritech services to farmers in Telangana.

The phase-1 report of the 'Saagu Baagu' states that WEF's AI for Agriculture Innovation (AI4AI) initiative has helped more than 7,000 chilli farmers get access to agritech services.

In phase II (from 2023 onwards), to expand additional agritech services to 20,000 chilli and ground nut farmers in three districts and to introduce digital public infrastructure.

In phase III (by 2025), the target is to reach 1,00,000 farmers in the state.

The 'Saagu Baagu' project was initiated in 2022.

102. The **Government of Gujarat** has joined hands with the **One District One Product (ODOP)** program, an initiative under the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, to promote the indigenous crafts and artisans of the state.

ODOP-Gujarat presents an extensive array of 68 distinctive products, encompassing a diverse range from traditional crafts to agricultural commodities.

103. The Chief Minister of **Himachal Pradesh** Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has launched a collateral-free loan scheme, namely '**Sashakt Mahila Rin Yojna**' to economically empower women.

Under the scheme, the bank offers credit of Rs.21,000, Rs.51,000 and Rs.1,01,000 at a relatively low-interest rate of 8.51 percent.

104. The Government of **Rajasthan** has introduced India's first ever Gig workers Bill the '**Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (registration and welfare) Bill 2023**' to guarantee social security to gig workers.

Aggregators, which include food delivery apps and e-marketing platforms, must provide the Rajasthan government with a database of all platform-based gig workers on-boarded or registered with them within 60 days of the Act's implementation.

Note: Gig worker refers to someone who earns from such activities outside of the traditional employer-employee relationship and who works on a contract.

105. The Government of **Punjab** has inked an agreement with **British Council Education India** to start an English language training course for government college students.

Under this association, the course named '**English for Work**' will be launched as a pilot project in government colleges for 5,000 students from the academic session 2023-24.

106. The Government of Assam has launched the "**Gajah Kotha**" campaign to reduce the growing problem of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC). The campaign involves over 1,200 participants and aims to promote coexistence between humans and elephants.

The focus of the campaign is on HEC affected villages in Eastern Assam.

The aim is to educate the residents about elephant behaviour, ecology and the cultural importance of elephants in the region.

Aranyak, a renowned wildlife NGO based in Guwahati, is leading the campaign.

107. 'Ker Puja' festival is observed annually in the state of **Tripura**. It is a Hindu festival that takes place two weeks after Kharchi Puja and honours Ker, a guardian god.

- In the Kokborok, a local tribal language, Ker means boundary or specific area.
- The puja is initiated by the Tripura raja at royal Ujjayanta palace of Tripura.
- During Ker, a particular area is demarcated and bounded by a large piece of green bamboo, which is a symbolic representation of Ker.
- The puja generally takes place in morning preferably from 8 A.M to 10 A.M. For 2.5 days during the puja, all entry points to the capital city are closed to disallow entry and exit.
- During Ker Puja offerings, sacrifices are made to please gods for the welfare of the villages so that they can save them from calamities, epidemics and external aggression.

108. Harela, a Hindu festival, is observed annually in the Indian state of **Uttarakhand** and in some regions of Himachal Pradesh. This festival is very popular in the Kumaun region of Uttarakhand.

- Harela means 'Green day'.

- It is celebrated on 16th and 17th July every year.
- It is celebrated to mark the beginning of the rainy season (monsoon) which is celebrated in the month of Shravan in the Hindu calendar.
- During this festival, farmers start the traditional sowing cycle in their fields.

109. The Chief Minister of **Himachal Pradesh** Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has launched the **Aapda Rahat Kosh-2023** website, a digital platform initiative aimed at helping the disaster-affected people in the state.

Individuals can donate money in Aapda Rahat Kosh-2023 from anywhere using various payment methods such as debit card, credit card, net banking, QR code and UPI (Unified Payment Interface).

110. The Chief Minister of **Karnataka** Siddaramaiah has launched the registration for **Gruha Lakshmi Yojana**, which provides **Rs.2000** monthly assistance to the female head of the household.

The amount will be transferred through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

The scheme will benefit around 1.28 crore families in Karnataka.

It will be implemented from 15th August 2023.

111. The Chief Minister of **Chhattisgarh** Bhupesh Baghel has introduced a housing scheme named "**Gramin Awas Nyay Yojana**" to provide homes to rural homeless individuals in Chhattisgarh.

The scheme will be fully sponsored by the State Government of Chhattisgarh by allocating Rs.100 crore in the budget.

112. The Department of Science & Technology, the Government of **Gujarat** has collaborated with London-Based Company, **OneWeb** to set up India's first private '**Satellite Network Portal Site**' in **Gujarat**.

The satellite network portal to be established in **Katosan and Tejura** in Jotana Taluka of **Mehsana district** is scheduled to be launched in 2023 with an estimated cost of over Rs.100 crore for its Phase-1.

It will provide high-speed, low-latency, and affordable connectivity to the government, businesses, consumers, schools, and more.

113. The Government of **Uttar Pradesh** has introduced an **Electric Vehicle (EV) subsidy portal** to enable citizens to apply online for subsidies available on the purchase of EVs in UP. As per the UP government policy, buyers can apply online for EV subsidies for vehicles bought after October 14, 2022.

The development and maintenance of the portal have been done by Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation Ltd (UPDESCO).

As per the policy, two-wheeler electric vehicles will get **Rs.5,000** per vehicle subsidy for the first two lakh purchases, not exceeding 15 percent of the ex-factory cost.

For four-wheeler electric vehicles, the subsidy will be **Rs.1 lakh** per vehicle for 25,000 earlier purchases, not exceeding 15 percent of the ex-factory cost, etc.

114. The Chief Secretary of J&K **Dr Arun Kumar Mehta** has launched the **'Mobile-Dost-App'** in **Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)** in sync with the vision of Apka-Mobile-Hamara-Daftar.

- The Mobile-Dost-App aims at empowering the people of Jammu & Kashmir by providing a comprehensive platform to access all the Government to Citizen Services (G2C) directly from their mobile devices.
- It offers over 450 government-to-citizen services, including certificates, licenses, grievance registration, and welfare scheme access.

115. **Odisha Television Limited (OTV)**, an Odia based broadcast and digital media company in Odisha, has introduced **India's** and **Odisha's first** regional multi-lingual Artificial Intelligence (AI) news anchor named **"Lisa"** in a ceremony held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Lisa is the very first AI anchor in the arena of free-to-air regional television broadcasting.

Lisa has the capability to speak a myriad of languages. These include Odia, English, and many more.

116. The **Odisha** cabinet, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has recommended a proposal for inclusion of **'Kui' language** in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Kui language:

- It belongs to the Dravidian Family of languages.
- It is spoken mainly by people of **Kondh/ Kandha** Tribe, the largest tribes of **Odisha**.
- It uses Odia Script and Khondi, Gumsai are its dialects.
- It was also referred to as the Kuinga language during the historical period.

Schedule 8 of the Indian Constitution:

It enlists the Official language of the Country and consists of 22 languages currently. The 22 languages are: Manipuri, Maithili, Kashmiri, Hindi, Kannada, Gujarati, Konkani, Malayalam, Assamese, Marathi, Nepali, Bengali, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Telugu, Tamil, Odia, Urdu, Bodo, Dogri, and Santhali.

14 languages were originally listed in the Constitution and the rest are added over time.

Sindhi was introduced in 1967, Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali in 1992, and Santali, Dogri, Maithili, and Bodo by the 92nd Amendment Act of 2003.

117. The **Uttar Pradesh** Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has approved two “**Obra D**” thermal power projects of **800MW** each to be built at a cost of **Rs.18,000 crore** in **Sonbhadra** district. The aim is to provide cheaper electricity to the people of the state.

The projects will be executed by the government in 50-50 partnership with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). 30% equity will be provided for project implementation, while the remaining 70% will be sourced from financial institutions.

The construction of the first unit is estimated to take 50 months, while the second unit is expected to be completed in 56 months.

118. **South India's first AI news presenter** has been introduced by the Kannada news channel **Power TV** as AI news presenters began to infiltrate the Indian TV news sector.

The AI presenter has been given the name **Soundarya** by the management.

The channel will also experiment with various news shows, featuring the new AI presenter.

Note: In March 2023, India Today group launched country's first AI news presenter **Sana** for their Hindi channel Aaj Tak.

119. The **Odisha** Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister(CM) Naveen Patnaik has approved '**Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha**' scheme to take measures to enhance rural infrastructure, leading to

accelerated growth and to promote, preserve and protect the Jagannath culture and tradition of Odisha.

120. J&K government has created "**Department of Public Grievances**" as a separate Administrative Department, which will also subsume Lieutenant Governor's Mulaqaat - Live Public Grievance Hearing.

121. The Geographical Indication Registry (Chennai, Tamil Nadu) under the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade (DIPIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI), has recognized **7 Handicrafts** products from **Uttar Pradesh** with Geographical Indication (**GI**) Tag.

Seven products: 'Amroha Dholak', 'Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastashlip', 'Mainpuri Tarkashi', 'Sambhal Horn Craft', 'Baghpat Home Furnishings', 'Barabanki Handloom Product' and 'Kalpi Handmade Paper'.

With this, the total number of GI-certified products of UP has increased to **52**.

122. The Greater Chennai Police (GCP), a division of the Tamil Nadu police, has launched India's first '**Police Drone Unit**' for aerial surveillance in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- The unit has a total of 9 drones under three categories: Quick Response Surveillance drones, Heavy-lift multi-rotor drones, and Long Range Survey wing plane.
- The unit has been established at a cost of Rs.3.6 crore.
- These drones are equipped with built-in artificial intelligence (AI) facilities and can be operated upto 5-10 km from the ground station.

123. The Hemis Tsechu Festival is observed annually in **Leh, Ladakh** by Hemis Gompa (monastery) on the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava to commemorate his life and works, who is referred to as Guru Rinpoche.

The main celebration of the festival is the chaam dance performed by monks to commemorate the victory of good over evil and to bless the land with renewed life and fertility.

Guru Padmasambhava:

He lived in the late 8th century, introducing tantric Buddhism to the Himalayan kingdom. He preached to people with his famous eight avatars.

124. The Union Minister for Tourism G Kishan Reddy has released a special postal cover to commemorate “**9 Years of Telangana Statehood**” and **Picture Post cards** (a set of 5 cards) on “**Buddhist Heritage in Telangana-Bavapur Kurru**” at an event in Dak Sadan, Hyderabad, Telangana.

The special postal cover features the Dhulikatta Buddhist stupa (Hinayana sect of Buddhism) priced at Rs.50 and the set of Bavapur Kurru post cards are priced at Rs.200.

Bavapur Kurru:

It is the Buddhist site. It is located on an island in the middle of the River Godavari, 14 kms from Khanapur town in Nirmal district, Telangana. This site was found by archaeologists in 2019.

125. Tamil Nadu Police has launched a new initiative '**Pengal Pathukappu Thittam**' to ensure the safety of women travelling alone at night. Under this scheme, the women travelling alone can avail of a free drop facility in a patrol vehicle in case they feel unsafe.

The scheme will be in operation on all day of the week.

126. The Government of **Odisha** has launched a scheme named “**Mo Jungle Jami Yojana**” (My Forestland Scheme) to effectively implement the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006.

This initiative will be implemented across 32000 villages of 32 districts and will benefit approximately 7.4 lakh tribal families in Odisha.

127. The Government of Odisha has launched the **Odisha Gunvatta Sankalp** in Bhubaneswar, Odisha with an aim to promote and prioritize quality across various sectors in the state of Odisha.

It has been launched with in collaboration with the Quality Council of India (QCI) and other industry associations.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

128. The President of Sri Lanka **Ranil Wickremesinghe** has made an official visit to India from 20th – 21st July 2023. This marks his first trip to India since he was elected President of Sri Lanka in July 2023.

Both nations celebrated **75th** anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2023.

Both nations have adopted a vision document titled as **“Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity”** to strengthen maritime, air, energy, and people-to-people connectivity to boost the economic partnership between **India and Sri Lanka**.

Key Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) exchanged between India and Sri Lanka:

- MoU on cooperation in the field of renewable energy.
- Energy Permit for Sampur Solar Power Project.
- Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) in the field of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- Memorandum of Cooperation for economic development projects in Trincomalee district of Sri Lanka.
- Network to Network Agreement between NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Lanka Pay for UPI application acceptance in Sri Lanka.

129. China-based **Galactic Energy** has successfully launched two satellites, **“Qiankun-1”** and **“Taian”**, into orbit. The satellites have been launched via a **Ceres-1** carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. This is the sixth launch for this rocket series.

- The Qiankun-1 remote earth probing satellite will be used to test key breakthrough technologies for extremely low orbit and for establishment of an advance aerospace platform.
- The Taian, also known as Xing Shidai-16, is designed for a high-technology computer project.

Ceres-1:

It is solid-propellant four-stage light rocket fuel. It is 19 meters long, 1.4 meters wide and can take up to 400 kg of cargo into orbit.

130. The Commune of Montone, Italy and the Italian Military historians has unveiled the **V.C. Yeshwant Ghadge Sundial Memorial** at Montone, Perugia, **Italy** to honour Indian Army

soldiers from the 4th, 8th, and 10th divisions who fought in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War (1939-1945).

- The memorial is named after **Naik Yeshwant Ghadge**, Victoria Cross, who was killed in action fighting on the heights of Upper Tiber Valley.
- The memorial is in the form of a live Sundial.
- The motto of the memorial is "*Omines Sub Eodem Sole*" which translates in English as "*We all live under the same sun*".

Note: Neena Malhotra is the Ambassador of India in Italy.

131. The General Council of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has elected **Dr Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi**, UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Trade at the Ministry of Economy, as the Chair of the **13th Ministerial Conference of WTO**.

The Ministerial Conference, attended by leading representatives from the 164 countries and customs blocs that make up the WTO, will take place in Abu Dhabi, UAE in February 2024.

132. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in its '**July 2023 World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update-Near Term Resilience, Persistent Challenges**' has projected a growth rate of **6.1%** for **India** in **2023**, which is a 0.2 percentage point upward revision compared with the April projection of 5.9%.

- For 2024, it remained at 6.3%, as projected in April 2023 WEO Update.
- India grew at 7.2% in 2022.
- As per Calendar Year, India's growth projections are 6.6% in 2023 and 5.8% in 2024.

The global growth is projected to fall at **3%** in both **2023 and 2024** from an estimated 3.5% in 2022.

Global headline inflation is projected to fall to 6.8% in 2023 and 5.2% in 2024 from 8.7% in 2022.

133. **World Bank** has approved the membership of the **Bank of Israel** to join the **International Committee on Credit Reporting (ICCR)**, a permanent structure of the World Bank, constituting a unique worldwide committee on credit reporting.

International Committee on Credit Reporting (ICCR):

ICCR was established in May 2009. It was created and coordinated by the World Bank (WB) with support from the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) forming an outstanding structure of governmental and private organizations.

Chair: Jean Pesme

134. The Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (**SpaceX**) has launched **22 Starlink v2 satellites** to Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) onboard the Falcon 9 rocket from the Space Launch Complex 40 (SLC-40) at Cape Canaveral Space Force Base in Florida, the United States of America (USA).

135. North Korea has successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) named '**Hwasong-18**' for the second time from Pyongyang, North Korea. It uses solid-fuel technology, giving it the capability to launch with minimal preparation and allows faster deployment of missiles during war which makes it harder for the opponent to detect signs of their launch in advance. Hwasong-18 is the North Korea's first solid-fuel ICBM.

136. Rajasthan cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has introduced the **Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill 2023** to provide social security to individuals and households of Rajasthan.

The bill focuses on 3 main areas such as Right to Minimum Guaranteed Income, Right to Guaranteed Employment, and Right to Guaranteed Social Security Pension.

Under the Bill, all families of the state get guaranteed employment of 125 days every year, while the aged, disabled, widows, and single women get a minimum pension of Rs.1,000 per month. The pension will be increased at the rate of 15 percent each year.

137. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India** and **Absolute Foods**, a leading bioscience company specializing in agri-tech, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the government of India's flagship Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and enhance the resilience of the farmers.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):

- It was launched in **2016** by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

- It is a large-scale crop subsidy insurance scheme that was aimed to safeguard farmers.
- It is available for all States and farmers on a voluntary basis.
- The farmers have to pay a maximum 2% premium for Kharif, 1.5% for Rabi food and oilseed crops, and 5% for commercial/horticultural.

138. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has become the **first Arab country** to be granted observer status in the **Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering**, a regional body similar to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

This decision has been made at the APG's 2023 Annual Meeting and Technical Assistance and Training Forum held in Vancouver, Canada.

During the meeting, **Tuvalu** has been admitted as the newest APG member. With this, APG now has **41 active members**.

Kazakhstan has also been admitted as the APG observer. With this, APG now has **9 observer jurisdictions**.

139. The **World Humanitarian Drive (WHD)**, which promotes international education and trade, has been granted special consultative status by the United **Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.

The consultative status with ECOSOC empowers WHD to actively interact with its subsidiary bodies, the Human Rights Council, certain General Assembly sessions, other intergovernmental bodies, and the UN Secretariat.

140. The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has chaired the **23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS) Summit 2023** held in a virtual format.

This is the first-time that SCO-CHS Summit has been held under **India's Chairmanship**.

The theme of the summit is **"Towards a SECURE SCO"**.

SECURE stands for Security; Economy (and Trade); Connectivity; Unity; Respect (for Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity); and Environment.

Key Highlights:

- During the summit, the member nations have signed the **New Delhi Declaration** coined by the Indian Government to fight against terrorism.
- The member nations have also adopted two thematic joint statements: '*Countering Radicalization leading to Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism*' and '*Cooperation in the field of Digital Transformation*'.
- PM Narendra Modi has presented the AI (artificial intelligence) and Natural Language Processing (NLP)-based language platform '**Bhashini**' at SCO summit.
- During the summit, **Iran** has become the **9th permanent member** of SCO.
- Belarus will become a full member of SCO charter by 2024 as the nation signed a Memorandum of Obligations which will lead to its membership.

Note: *Kazakhstan will host the 24th SCO-CHS Summit 2024.*

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):

It is a 9-member intergovernmental organization that was founded in Shanghai on 15th June 2001. India has joined the SCO as an observer country in 2005 and became a full member state in 2017 along with Pakistan.

Members: China, Russia, Pakistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

141. India has joined the **Champions Group** of the **Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG)**, accepting an invitation from United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) António Guterres to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been designated as Sherpa to the GCRG process.

Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG):

- The GCRG was set up by the UN Secretary-General in **March 2022**.
- The 32-member Group ensures the resolution of inter-connected challenges of food security, energy, and financing.
- It is overseen by the Champions Group comprising representatives of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, and Senegal.
- The UN Deputy-Secretary-General leads the Steering Committee of the GCRG.

142. The Government of **Mongolia** has recently (in July 2023) granted 2 licenses to the **SpaceX**, owned by Elon Musk, to function as an internet service provider using low-orbit satellites, expanding high-speed connectivity in Mongolia.

The introduction of starlink technology will enhance the connectivity to the underserved locations that are difficult to reach.

143. The **United States of America (USA) and India** have conducted '**Operation Broader Sword**', a bilateral multi-agency enforcement initiative, **to identify illicit and illegal medical products** shipped using the International Mail System.

The operation held from 12th to 23rd June 2023 targeted shipments coming to the USA from India through International Mail Facilities (IMFs) in John F Kennedy International Airport in New York, USA and O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, the USA.

During the operation, investigators examined over 1500 shipments originating in India and barred approximately 500 products, including illicit and illegal medications intended to treat or mitigate serious diseases.

144. **China** has released its first homegrown open-source desktop operating system named '**OpenKylin**' to help the country step up efforts to cut dependence on US technology.

The system is based on the existing open-source Linux operating system.

It will be used in space program and industries such as finance and energy.

145. **Shavkat Mirziyoyev** has been re-elected as the **President of Uzbekistan** with 87.1% of the vote for 7 years term according to preliminary results released by the Central Election Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. He is a member of the Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party.

146. The United Nations (UN) **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** has adopted the *2023 Strategy at the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) on Reduction of Greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions from Ships*, with enhanced targets to tackle harmful emissions.

The revised IMO GHG Strategy aims to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050.

IMO has also established a goal to adopt technologies, fuels, and energy sources with zero Greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions, aiming for a minimum adoption rate of 5% and striving for a higher adoption rate of 10% by the year 2030.

147. The **Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** for the procurement of **2 Dornier Aircrafts** for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

The overall cost is **Rs.458.87 crore** along with associated Engineering support package.

The aircraft will be procured under the Buy (Indian) category in New Delhi in line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat policy.

Note: The Dornier Aircrafts are being indigenously manufactured at HAL (Transport Aircraft Division), Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh under "Make in India" initiative.

148. LandSpace, a Chinese private aerospace company, has become the first aerospace company to launch a two stage rocket "**Zhuque-2 Y-2**" using liquid methane as fuel and liquid oxygen (LOx) as oxidizer.

- The rocket has been launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi desert, China.
- The launch has been the second attempt for the "Zhuque-2 Y-2" rocket, following a failed initial launch of Zhuque-2 Y-1 in December 2022.

With this, **China** has become the first country to launch 1st methane-powered rocket to space.

149. The **French General Armaments Directorate (DGA), France** has successfully conducted its first test firing of a **V-MaX (Vehicule Manoeuvrant Experimental)**, a Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV) to develop new missile technology capable of evading the most sophisticated air defences.

Hypersonic gliders, a type of warhead for ballistic missiles that can operate freely and glide at hypersonic speed, designed to carry a nuclear or conventional warhead.

150. SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket has launched a European Space Agency (ESA) telescope '**Euclid**' from Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA into orbit on a mission to study the nature and properties of **dark energy and dark matter**.

The telescope is designed to observe galaxies across a wide range of wavelengths.

The spacecraft will have a 1.2 metre wide telescope and two instruments.

Euclid will travel to the 2nd Lagrangian Point about 1.5 million kilometres from Earth.

151. The 2nd edition of the **Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC)** meeting has been held between **India and Tanzania** in Arusha, Tanzania, East Africa focussed on a wide range of opportunities for collaboration with a view to enhancing security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

India and Tanzania have finalized a 5-year roadmap to expand defence and maritime, infrastructure building and collaboration in military equipment and technology.

152. The Government of **Taiwan** has announced that it will establish its third **Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC)** in **Mumbai**. The main aim of opening the centre is to enhance cooperation between both countries.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) is already present in New Delhi and Chennai.

India and Taiwan opened representative offices in 1995: a Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) in New Delhi and an "India Taipei Association" in Taipei.

Note: The trade volume between India and Taiwan increased from USD 2 billion in 2006 to USD 8.9 billion in 2021.

153. Digital Transformation Solutions Provider UST joined **Project Rosalind**, an initiative led by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the Bank of England (BoE) to develop Application programming interface (API) prototypes for central bank digital currencies (CBDC).

UST has collaborated with BIS and BoE to develop an API layer comprising **33 API endpoints** grouped into six functional categories.

- 154.** Virgin Galactic Holding Inc, the Space Company founded by United Kingdom (UK) entrepreneur Richard Branson, has successfully completed its first commercial spaceflight called "**Galactic 01**".
The crew flew more than 50 miles (80 km), an altitude recognized as the edge of outer space by the Government of the United States of America (USA), above the New Mexico desert on a Virgin Galactic rocket plane.
- 155.** The 'Quadripartite', comprising the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), the UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**), the World Health Organization (**WHO**) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (**WOAH**), has released the "**One Health Priority Research Agenda on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**" through a webinar.
The research agenda aims to promote increased research and investment in AMR.
- 156.** The 117th and final launch of **Ariane 5**, a 53 metre tall, three-stage launcher has successfully blasted off from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana toward geostationary orbit to deliver two military communications satellites namely **Syracuse 4B** for the France and the **Heinrich Hertz (H2Sat)** for the German Governments.

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REPORTS & INDICES

- 157.** The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the state-wise data on per capita income. This data has been 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.

Per capita income at Current Prices:

- **Telangana** has topped the list of Indian states with the highest per capita income at current prices i.e. **Rs.3,08,732**.
- It is followed by Karnataka with a per capita income of Rs.3,01,673 and Haryana at Rs.296,685.

Per capita income at Constant Prices:

- Based on constant prices, **Haryana** has topped the list with a per capita income of **Rs.1,81,961** in 2022-23.
- It is followed by Karnataka at Rs.1,76,383 and Tamil Nadu at Rs.1,66,463.

Sector-wise contribution to Overall GVA (Gross Value Added) at Current Prices from 2018-19 to 2022-23:

- **Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services** continued to contribute the highest to the gross value added (GVA). In 2022-23, it contributed **21.42 percent** to the total GVA. In 2021-22, its contribution was 21.51 percent.
- It is followed by the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (18.42%), and trade, hotels, transport, communication & services sector (17.98%).

158. The Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog Suman Bery has released the **2nd edition** of the '**National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): A Progress Review 2023**'.

The report is based on the latest **National Family Health Survey (2019-21)** and represents progress made by India in reducing multidimensional poverty between the two surveys, NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21).

Key highlights:

- India has registered a significant decline of **9.89 percentage** points in number of India's multidimensionally poor from 24.85% in 2015-16 to **14.96%** in 2019-2021.
- About **135.5 million** (13.5 crore) persons have exited poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21.
- The **rural areas** has witnessed the fastest decline in poverty from 32.59% in 2015-16 to **19.28%** in 2019-21 as compared to a decline from 8.65% to 5.27% in urban areas.
- **Uttar Pradesh** has registered the largest decline in number of poor i.e.3.43 crore people.
- The fastest reduction in the proportion of multidimensional poor has been observed in the states of **UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan**.
- **Delhi, Kerala, Goa, and Tamil Nadu** have the least number of people facing multidimensional poverty along with the Union Territories.
- The MPI value has nearly halved from 0.117 in 2015-16 to 0.066 in 2019-21 and intensity of poverty has reduced from 47% to 44%.

National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

NITI Aayog had published the first edition of national Multidimensional Poverty Index for India in 2021. The report presents an in-depth analysis of the headcount ratio and intensity of multidimensional poverty at the national, State/UT, and district levels.

National MPI consists of three dimensions – **Health, Education, and Standard of Living**.

These dimensions are represented by 12 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligned indicators.

159. NITI Aayog has released the third edition of the report titled '**Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022**' for States/UTs of India. The report discusses India's export performance amid the prevailing global trade context in FY22, followed by an overview of the country's sector-specific export performance.

The EPI 2022 Report evaluates the performance of the states across four pillars: **Policy, Business Ecosystem, Export Ecosystem, and Export Performance**.

These pillars are further based on ten sub-pillars – Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

Performance of States:

Top performers:

- **Tamil Nadu** with a score of 80.89 has topped in EPI 2022, followed by Maharashtra (78.20), Karnataka (76.36), and Gujarat (73.22).
- Tamil Nadu's performance in terms of export performance indicators, including the value of exports, export concentration, and global market footprint, contributed to its top ranking.

Hilly/Himalayan states:

Uttarakhand has secured the top position among hilly/Himalayan states in the EPI 2022. It is followed by Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram.

Landlocked Regions:

Haryana has topped the chart among the landlocked regions, indicating its preparedness for exports. It is followed by Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

Union Territories/Small States:

Goa has ranked first among Small States/UTs in the EPI 2022. Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Ladakh have secured the second, third, fourth, and fifth positions, respectively.

160. Henley & Partners, a London-based global citizenship and residence advisory firm, has released the **Henley Passport Index (HPI) 2023 (3rd quarter)**.

- **Singapore** is the world's most powerful passport with visa-free access to 192 travel destinations out of 227 worldwide.
- The 2nd place is shared by 3 European countries Germany, Italy, and Spain with 190 visa-free destinations.
- Japan, which held the top position for five consecutive years, has dropped to 3rd place as the number of visa-free destinations for its passport holders decreased to 189.
- **Bottom countries:** Afghanistan (103rd), Iraq (102nd) and Syria (101st)
- **India** has been ranked **80th** (earlier 87th in 2022) along with Togo & Senegal. India secured a score of 57.

161. The **United Nations (UN) Women** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** have launched a report titled as **"The paths to equal: Twin Indices on women's empowerment and gender equality"** at the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (WD 2023) in Kigali, Rwanda, East Africa.

The report highlights the global challenges faced by women and provides a roadmap for targeted interventions and policy reforms.

The report sees UN Women and UNDP join forces to propose the **Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)** as the twin indices for measuring gender parity and women's empowerment.

Less than 1% of women and girls live in countries with both high levels of women's empowerment and high gender parity.

More than 90% of the world's female population i.e. 3.1 billion women and girls live in countries characterized by a large women's empowerment deficit and a large gender gap.

162. The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has launched the **Heat Index** on an experimental basis to provide general guidance for the regions within India where, the apparent temperature/feel like temperature (considering the impact of humidity along with the temperature) are on the higher side causing discomfort for the people.

The heat index is derived using the heat index equation similar to what is used by National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USA.

Colour codes used for Experimental Heat Index are as follows:

- **Green:** - Experimental heat Index less than 35 deg C
- **Yellow:** - Experimental heat Index in the range 36-45 deg C
- **Orange:** - Experimental heat Index in the range 46-55 deg C
- **Red:** - Experimental heat Index greater than 55 deg C

It is being implemented across the country including Andhra Pradesh.

163. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has published its '**Asian Development Outlook (ADO) July 2023: Robust Growth with Moderating Inflation**'. As per it, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast is at **6.4%** in **FY23** & **6.7%** in **FY24**, as projected in ADO April 2023.

- The inflation projection for India in FY2023 is reduced slightly from 5.0% in ADO April 2023 to 4.9% and maintained at 4.5% in FY24.
- This is driven by continued domestic demand that supports India's recovery.

The growth in South Asia is projected at 5.5% in 2023 and 6.1% in 2024.

164. The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** has released a report on **Performance Grading Index 2.0** for States and Union Territories (UTs) for the year 2021-22 to assess the performance of the school education system at the state/UT level.

- The PGI 2.0 structure comprises of 1000 points across 73 indicators grouped into 2 categories viz., Outcomes, Governance Management (GM).
- These categories are further divided into 6 domains,, Learning Outcomes (LO), Access (A), Infrastructure & Facilities (IF), Equity (E), Governance Process (GP) & Teachers Education and Training (TE&T).

- PGI 2.0 for 2021-22 classified the States/UTs into ten grades viz., highest achievable Grade is **Daksh**, which is for State/UT scoring more than 940 points out of total of 1000 points.
- The lowest grade is **Akanshi-3** which is for score up to 460.

Note: PGI was first released for the year 2017-18.

Key highlights of PGI 2.0:

- None of the states/UTs has attained the highest grade 'Daksh'.
- Only two states/UTs, namely **Punjab (647.4 score) and Chandigarh (659.0 score)** have attained Grade Pracheta -2 (score 641-700);
- Six states/UTs joined Grade Pracheta - 3 (score 581-640);
- 13 states/UTs joined Grade Akanshi -1 (score 521-580);
- 12 states/UTs attained Grade Akanshi - 2 (score 461-520);
- 3 states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Mizoram have attained Grade Akanshi - 3.
- **Kerala** attained a score of **609.7**, Gujarat (599.0 score), Puducherry (592.7 score), Tamil Nadu (590.4 score), and Maharashtra (583.2 score) under Grade: PRACHESTA-3.
- Haryana attained a score of 577.9, and Rajasthan attained a score of 577.5 under Grade: AKANSHI-1.

165. Four Indian-origin women, **Jayshree Ullal (ranked 15th)**, President and CEO of Arista Networks, a computer networking firm, **Neerja Sethi (ranked 25th)**, co-founder of IT consulting and outsourcing firm Synte, **Neha Narkhede (ranked 50th)**, co-founder and former chief technology officer (CTO) of cloud company Confluent, and **Indra Nooyi (ranked 77th)**, PepsiCo's former chair and CEO, have been featured on the **2023 America's Richest Self-Made Women**, 9th edition of Forbes' annual ranking of USA's most successful women entrepreneurs, executives and entertainers.

The combined net worth of these 4 women stands at **USD 4.06 billion**.

Daine Hendricks, the co-founder of ABC Supply, has topped the list for the 6th time in a row. He is followed by Judy Love & Family, Chairman & CEO, Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores, with USD 10.2 billion and Judy Faulkner, Founder & CEO of Epic Systems with USD 7.4 billion.

166. Sumit Virmani, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of **Infosys (India)**, has been ranked **41st** on the **Forbes World's Most Influential CMOs List 2023**, which recognizes the 50 Most Influential CMOs in the world.

The list is topped by William White, CMO of Walmart, and is followed by Marcel Marcondes, Global CMO of Anheuser-Busch InBev (Belgium) in the 2nd, and Conny Braams, Chief Digital and Commercial Officer of Unilever (England) in the 3rd.

167. As per the **5th edition** of **Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation** by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (**UNESCAP**), India has emerged as the best-performing nation in the South-Asian region in terms of trade facilitation.

- India has been positioned at the forefront of global trade facilitation efforts, with an impressive score of **93.55%** in 2023 vis a vis 90.32% in 2021.
- India has witnessed a substantial improvement in the score for **"Women in Trade Facilitation"** component from 66.7% in 2021 to **77.8%** in 2023.
- India has achieved a perfect score of 100% in four key areas: Transparency, Formalities, Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation, and Paperless Trade.
- The 2023 survey reveals that India has not made any notable implementation in terms of 'Wildlife Trade Facilitation'.
- India is the best performing country when compared with south and south-west Asia region (64.30%) and Asia and the pacific region (66.76%).

The 2023 survey covers more than 140 economies and evaluates 60 trade facilitation measures.

168. The **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023** has been released by the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford.

- As per the report, in India, **415 million poor people** moved out of poverty from **2005/2006** to **2019/2021**, with incidence falling from 55.1 percent in 2005/2006 to **16.4 percent** in 2019/2021.

- In 2005/2006, about 645 million people were in multidimensional poverty in India, with this number declining to about 370 million in 2015/2016 and 230 million in 2019/2021.
- The people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived under the nutrition indicator in India declined from 44.3 percent in 2005/2006 to 11.8 percent in 2019/2021, and child mortality fell from 4.5 percent to 1.5 percent.
- In the drinking water indicator, the percentage of people who were multidimensionally poor and deprived fell from 16.4 in 2005/2006 to 2.7 in 2019/2021.
- The percentage of people who were multidimensional poor and deprived fell from electricity from 29 percent to 2.1 percent and housing from 44.9 percent to 13.6 percent.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

MPI is an index designed to measure acute poverty, understood as a person's inability to meet minimum internationally agreed standards. It advances **Sustainable Development Goal 1**, i.e. ending poverty in all its form.

169. Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), has launched a new report titled as ***"A world of debt: A growing burden to global prosperity"***, a report from the **United Nations Global Crisis Response Group (UN-GCRG)**.

- As per the report, nearly 40% of the developing countries in the world is in serious debt, as public debt reached a record **USD 92 trillion** in **2022**, which is five-fold since 2000.
- On average, African countries pay four times more for borrowing than the United States and eight times more than the wealthiest European economies.
- A total of 52 countries, almost 40 percent of the developing world, are in serious debt trouble.
- The developing countries owe almost 30% of the total, of which roughly 70% is attributable to China, India, and Brazil.
- The net interest debt payments exceeding 10% of revenues for 50 emerging economies worldwide.

The report has been jointly prepared by the GCRG, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the five UN Regional Economic Commissions.

UN Global Crisis Response Group:

The UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy, and Finance (GCRG) was established in March 2022 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres to address the interconnected crises of food, energy, and finance. These crises, including inflation, food insecurity, rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions, and mounting debt, pose significant challenges to global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing threats of climate change and the conflict in Ukraine.

170. The **Times Higher Education (THE) Young University Rankings (YUR) 2023** has been released by the Times Higher Education (THE). The ranking is based on the 13 performance indicators as the flagship THE World University Rankings.

The ranking include 1799 universities across 104 countries and regions.

As per the rankings, **Nanyang Technological University of Singapore** has topped the list, followed by The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, and PSL Research University, Paris.

Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU), Kerala has emerged as top among Indian universities and secured 77 globally. It is followed by JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research (79th) and Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences (91st).

171. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) has released the **QS World University Rankings 2024**. The 20th edition of the QS World University Rankings features 1,500 institutions across 104 locations and is the only ranking of its kind to emphasise employability and sustainability.

- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA** has topped the rankings for the 12th year in a row.
- MIT is followed by the University of Cambridge (2nd) and the University of Oxford has replaced Stanford University on the third spot.

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay is the only Indian institute featured among the top 150 Universities in the QS World University Rankings 2024. It has been ranked **149th** globally.

IIT Bombay is followed by IIT Delhi (197th), IISc Bengaluru (225th), IIT Kharagpur (271st), and IIT Kanpur (278th).

172. M The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) has published the **35th** edition of the **World Competitiveness Index 2023**. The index is based on 33

competitiveness criteria and four factors, namely Economic performance, Government efficiency, Business efficiency, and Infrastructure.

Denmark has topped the index, followed by Ireland and Switzerland.

India has dropped 3 places to rank **40** which is an improvement from the 43rd position secured in 2019-2021.

The key factors that contributed to India's ranking are exchange rate stability, compensation levels, and advancements in pollution control.

Note: Kuwait is the latest economy to join the ranking, making its debut in 2023.

World Competitiveness Index:

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), first published in 1989, is a comprehensive annual report and worldwide reference point on the competitiveness of countries.

173. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released a report titled "**Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2023**" in collaboration with Accenture. The report has also released the **Energy Transition Index (ETI) 2023** which ranks 120 countries.

- **Sweden** with an ETI score of 78.5 has topped the index, followed by Denmark (76.1) and Norway (73.7) in 2nd and 3rd rank respectively.
- India has been ranked **67th** with an ETI score of 54.3.
- Among the world's 10th largest economies, France (7th) is the only G20 country to feature among the top 10 of the ETI 2023.
- India and China, the emerging and developing countries in Asia with high populations have improved their ETI score by 12% in the past 10 years.
- The global average ETI scores increased by 10% since 2014 but showed only marginal growth in the past 3 years. The 2023 global average is 56.3%.
- The report stated that India and Singapore are the only countries that are making advances on all aspects of energy system performance.

174. According to the Export data released by the government of India for FY23, **Tamil Nadu** has secured the top spot as India's leading **exporter of electronic goods in FY23**, with exports reaching USD 5.37 billion, nearly triple the export of FY22 (USD 1.86 billion).

- Tamil Nadu is followed by **Uttar Pradesh** in the 2nd place with an export of USD 4.90 billion and Karnataka in 3rd place with USD 4.52 billion.

- For the 1st time, Tamil Nadu has overtaken UP, Karnataka, and Maharashtra to top the list as India's leading exporter of electronic goods.

In FY22, Karnataka was the top exporter of electronic goods with USD 3.87 billion.

175. The 17th edition of the **Global Peace Index 2023** has been released by the international think-tank, the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). The index measures peace in 163 countries.

India has been ranked at **126th** position with a score of 2.314 by climbing nine positions from 2022.

Iceland has been ranked the world's most peaceful country for the **15th** consecutive year. It is followed by Denmark and Ireland.

Bottom 5 countries are: Afghanistan (163), Yemen (162), Syria (161), South Sudan (160), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (159).

176. The **World Bank** and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** have jointly published a report titled as '**Trade in services for development: Fostering sustainable growth and economic diversification.**'

- The report states that India has doubled its share of global commercial services exports to 4.4 percent in 2022 from 2 percent in 2005.
- The report has stated that China has also doubled its share of global commercial services exports from 2005 to 2022, from 3% to 5.4%.
- China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and India are top exporters and importers of services, driving the trade performance of developing economies.
- Services value-added accounted for 51% of India's total exports in 2018, reflecting reforms to attract foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Global commercial services exports almost tripled from 2005 to 2022, fueled by Information & Communications Technologies (ICT) advancements.
- Digitally delivered services exports has reached USD 3.82 trillion in 2022, representing 54% of total global services exports.

177. The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** has published its **World Investment Report 2023** which focuses on trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide, at the regional and country levels and emerging measures to improve its contribution to development.

Key findings:

- India and ASEAN are the most buoyant recipients of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with increases of 10 and 5%, respectively.

- FDI inflows are higher in developing countries compared with those in developed economies.
- China, the second largest FDI host country in the world, saw a 5% increase.
- FDI in the Gulf region declined, but the number of project announcements increased by two thirds.
- Inflows in many smaller developing countries were stagnant, and FDI to the least developed countries (LDCs) declined.
- Much of the growth in international investment in renewable energy has been concentrated in developed countries.
- The investment gap across all sectors of the Sustainable Development Goals has increased to more than \$4 trillion per year from \$2.5 trillion in 2015.
- The largest gaps are in energy, water and transport infrastructure.

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GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

178. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the amendments to 2 key bills: The **Mediation Bill 2021 and Press & Registration of Periodicals Bill 2023**, which are re-worked to incorporate suggestions from a Parliamentary panel.

These bills will be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament.

Amendments to Mediation Bill 2021:

- Pre-litigation mediation has been made voluntary.
- The maximum timeline for completing mediation proceedings has been reduced to 180 days from 360 days.

Mediation Bill 2021 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 20th December 2021. The bill aims to institutionalise and establish the Mediation Council of India.

The bill applies only for mediations conducted in India.

The council will not have representation of practising mediators with adequate experience.

The council requires prior approval from the Government of India before issuing regulations related to its essential functions.

Press & Registration of Periodicals Bill 2023:

The Press & Registration of Periodicals Bill 2023 will replace the Press & Registration of Books (PRB) Act 1867 which governs the registration of the print and publishing industry in India.

The bill aims to ensure transparency and ease of doing business.

- 179.** The Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, has extended the **Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY)**, an unemployment relief scheme, under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation for a period of two years up to **June 30, 2024**.

It has been decided to extend ABVKY for the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2024.

This is the **third** extension since its inception.

Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY):

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) launched Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) scheme (on pilot basis) on 1st July 2018. The scheme aims to provide relief to the Insured Persons (IPs) who have become unemployed.

- 180.** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) has launched several new technological initiatives under the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** to empower farmers and streamline the operations.

Key initiatives:

YES (Yield Estimation System) -TECH Manual:

- It is a comprehensive guide developed after extensive testing and piloting in 100 districts of India.
- It facilitates the implementation of YES-TECH, a technology-driven yield estimation system, offering methodologies, best practices, and integration insights for accurate yield assessments at the Gram Panchayat level.

WINDS Portal:

- WINDS stand for **Weather Information Network Data Systems**.
- It is a centralized platform that hosts, manages, and processes hyper-local weather data collected by Automatic Weather Stations and Rain Gauges at Taluk/Block and Gram Panchayat levels.

AIDE mobile app:

- The app aims to revolutionize the enrolment process, bringing it directly to the doorstep of farmers.
- This door-to-door enrolment ensures a seamless and transparent process, making crop insurance more accessible and convenient for farmers.

181. Home Minister Amit Shah has launched a unique initiative **“Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar” (MGMD)** as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. It is a pan-India initiative of **Ministry of Culture** under **National Mission on Cultural Mapping**.

He has also launched the virtual platform for MGMD initiative during a grand projection mapping show at the Qutub Minar.

Objective: To culturally map India's 6.5 lakh villages, spanning 29 States and seven Union Territories, on a comprehensive virtual platform.

The Ministry of Culture initiated MGMD project under National Mission on Cultural Mapping in coordination with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

182. The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to the **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023**. The amendments have been made to decriminalise minor offences by amending 183 provisions in **42 Acts** which is administered by 19 ministers with the aim **to promote ease of business and living**.

- It amends 42 laws, across multiple sectors, in agriculture, environment, and media & publication.
- Some of the Acts to be amended include the Boilers Act, Aadhaar Act, Legal Metrology Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, Public Debt Act, Pharmacy Act, Cinematograph Act, Copyright Act, Patents Act, Environment (Protection) Act, Motor Vehicles Act, Trade Marks Act, Railways Act, Information Technology Act, Prevention of Money-laundering Act, Food Safety and Standards Act, Legal Metrology Act, and Factoring Regulation Act.
- The bill aligns with the government's vision of achieving Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.
- The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill was initially introduced by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in the Lok Sabha on December 22, 2022.

183. The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has replaced the Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES), tasked with examining economic indicators only, with a Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS).

Objective is to review the framework and results of surveys conducted for the National Statistical Office (NSO).

Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS):

- **Pronab Sen**, India's first chief statistician and the former chairman of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), has been named the chair of the new committee.
- The SCoS will not only focus on economic indicators but will also review the framework and outcomes of all surveys conducted by NSO.
- SCoS has **10 official members, and 4 non-official members** who are eminent academics.
- The panel can have up to 16 members, as per the order issued by MoSPI.

Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES):

The SCES was set up in 2019 and primarily concerned with examining economic data related to specific sectors and surveys. It had 28 members, including 10 non-official members.

184. The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a bill to convert the **National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE) Mumbai** as the **21st Indian Institute of Management (IIM)**.

- The amendment will rename NITIE Mumbai as IIM Mumbai.
- With this, **Maharashtra** will become the **first state in India** to have two IIMs, which includes IIM Nagpur, established by the Government of India in 2015, and newly designated IIM Mumbai.

NITIE Mumbai:

It was established in 1963 with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It has been a prominent institution in the field of business education for the past 60 years and has earned a reputation as an exceptional B-School and has made significant contributions to management education.

It has been ranked 7th in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking 2023.

185. The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, has launched the first-ever "**Credit Guarantee Scheme**" for **Livestock Sector**.

- The scheme under the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) aims to strengthen the credit delivery system and facilitate smooth flow of credit to the Micro, Small & Medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in Livestock sector without hassles of collateral security.
- DAHD has established a **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust** of **Rs.750 crores**, which will provide credit guarantee coverage up to 25% of the credit facilities extended to the MSMEs by the eligible lending institutions.
- The scheme provides an interest subvention of **3 percent**.
- The scheme provides loan up to **90%** of the total project cost from any Scheduled Bank, & National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust:

In March 2021, DAHD has formed a trust with **NABSanrakshan Trustee Company Private Limited**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD for the establishment of a Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for extending the credit guarantee to Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises under **Rs.15000 crores** AHIDF scheme.

This is India's first ever fund trust under Credit guarantee scheme of AHIDF in the agriculture and Animal Husbandry sector.

186. The Government of **Odisha** has recently (in July 2023) launched the '**Aam Pokhari**' scheme to revive ponds lying unused in the urban areas of the state.

- Under the project, around 2000 water bodies in 115 urban local bodies of the state will be renovated.
- The scheme will be implemented at a cost of **Rs.120 crore**.

187. Voyager Space, a global leader in space exploration, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), to explore launch and deployment opportunities for small satellites orbited by Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) and Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

188. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialized agency of the United Nations, has organized 2 days Global Summit '**AI for Good**' in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

The summit has highlighted the deployment of specialized robots to aid in achieving the organization's 17 Social Development Goals (SDGs).

During the summit, the United Nations has introduced 51 robots to advance SDG goals.

Notable robots which attended the summit are: '**Grace**' (Nursing Assistant Robot), '**Sophia**' (first robot innovation ambassador for the UNDP), '**Nadine**' (realistic humanoid social robots), '**Geminoid**' (ultra-realistic humanoid robot), etc.

189. The Government of **Gujarat** has launched the revamped **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-Mukhyamantri Amrutam (PMJAY-MA)** scheme, under which people can avail free medical treatment up to **Rs.10 lakh**, a twofold rise from the previous limit of Rs.5 lakh.

The new revamped PMJAY-MA scheme benefits around 1.78 crore Ayushman Bharat cardholders in Gujarat to afford high-cost medical facilities.

As per the scheme, 2,027 state-run hospitals, 803 private and 18 hospitals of the Central government in the state are authorised to provide treatment or perform surgeries under the PMJAY-MA, and 2,471 types of treatments and surgeries are available to card holders in these hospitals.

Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):

PMJAY, the world's largest health assurance scheme, aims to provide poor and vulnerable families with a health cover of Rs.5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 23rd September 2018 in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

190. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has launched the new guidelines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) titled 'Sagar Samajik Sahayyog'.

Objectives:

- To empower ports to undertake CSR activities directly.
- To allow ports to initiate, undertake and expedite projects for community welfare through a framework where local communities can also become partners of development & change.

Expenditure:

- 20% of CSR expenses must be earmarked to Sainik Kalyan Board at the district level, National Maritime Heritage Complex and National Youth Development Fund.
- 78% of funds should be released for the social & environmental welfare of the community.
- A sum of 2% total CSR expense has been earmarked for monitoring of the projects under the CSR programmes by the Ports.

191. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Narendra Modi, has approved the '**PM-PRANAM**' scheme for farmers. A package of **Rs.3.68 lakh crore** has been committed for urea subsidy for the next three years (2022-23 to 2024-25). The outlay also provides for the setting up and revival of 6 urea production units to reduce the current import dependency for urea and make India self-sufficient in this aspect by 2025-26.

- PM-PRANAM stands for PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth.
- The scheme aims to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers by incentivising state.
- The scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24.
- Under the scheme, the states, which will adopt alternative fertilisers will be incentivised with the subsidy that is saved by reducing the use of chemical fertilisers.

192. The **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has issued scheme guidelines for the implementation of the **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT)** programme.

SIGHT programme:

It is a sub-component under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of **Rs.17,490 crore**. It has two components:

Component I: It aims at providing electrolyzer manufacturing incentives with a total outlay of **Rs.4440 crore**

Component II: It focuses on green hydrogen production with financial outlay of **Rs.13050 crore**.

The **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)** would be the implementing agency responsible for the scheme's execution.

193. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCEM)** as part of the National Health Mission (NHM) and released the guidelines for Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission from **Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh** on 1st July 2023.

Objective: To eliminate sickle cell anaemia by **2047** and save the lives of 2.5 lakh affected children and families.

The NSCEM will be implemented in 278 districts of 17 states in India namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.

194. Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs, has increased the **interest rates** on selected small saving schemes by up to 0.3% for the **2nd Quarter for the Financial Year 2023-24 (1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023).**

Instruments	Rates of interest (%) (Q1 of FY 2023-24)	Rates of interest (%) (Q2 of FY 2023-24)	Compounding
Savings Deposit (SD)	4.0	4.0	Annual
1 Year Time Deposit (TD)	6.8	6.9	Quarterly
2 Year Time Deposit (TD)	6.9	7.0	Quarterly
3 Year Time Deposit (TD)	7.0	7	Quarterly
5 Year Time Deposit (TD)	7.5	7.5	Quarterly
5 Year Recurring Deposit (RD)	6.2	6.5	Quarterly
5 Year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS)	8.2	8.2	Paid Quarterly
5 year Monthly Income Scheme (MIS)	7.4	7.4	Paid Monthly
5 Year National Savings Certificate (NSC)	7.7	7.7	Annual
Public Provident Fund (PPF) Scheme	7.1	7.1	Annual
Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)	7.5 (will mature in 115 months)	7.5 (will mature in 115 months)	Annual
Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS)	8.0	8.0	Annual

195. The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)** has launched a special scheme under the aegis of the Nirbhaya Fund to provide shelter, food, and legal aid for pregnant minor victims of sexual assault who have no family support.

- The scheme **“critical care and Support for accessing justice to rape/gang rape survivors and minor girls who get pregnant”** aims to provide essential assistance to these vulnerable individuals.
- Under the initiative, medical and financial support will be provided through the Nirbhaya Fund.
- The total outlay of the scheme is **Rs.74.10 crore**.
- The scheme aims to provide an integrated support system under one roof, leveraging the administrative structure of Mission Vatsalya in collaboration with state governments and Child Care Institutions (CCIs).

196. **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, Chief Minister of **Madhya Pradesh**, has implemented the **“Mukhyamantri Sikho-Kamao Yojana”** for the skill development of the youths of Madhya Pradesh.

The scheme aims to facilitate the ‘On the Job Training (OJT)’ opportunities in registered industrial and vocational establishments, enabling young individuals to get industry-suitable skills.

197. The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has launched the **“Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States”** as a part of the allocation of the Preparedness and Capacity Building Funding Window under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to strengthen the fire services across the States of India.

- The total outlay of the scheme is **Rs.5000 crore** and out of this, Rs.500 crore is kept to incentivize the States on the basis of their legal and infrastructure-based reforms.
- The state government concerned will have to contribute 25% of the total project cost.
- The North-Eastern and Himalayan states shall contribute only 10% - from their budgetary resources.

198. The board of directors of IDFC First Bank has approved the scheme of amalgamation of its parent **IDFC Ltd with IDFC First Bank** in a share exchange ratio of **155:100**.

The share exchange ratio for the amalgamation will be 155 equity shares of face value of Rs.10 of IDFC First Bank for every 100 equity shares of face value of Rs.10 of IDFC Ltd.

IDFC First Bank has proposed to complete the merger by the end of 2023.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

199. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)** to work together to expand awareness and knowledge on international affairs and Indian foreign policy.

The MoU will be valid for a period of 3 years.

The MoU aims to address the challenges and opportunities in the global arena and shared vision of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future.'

200. **India** has signed a contract with **Bangladesh** to modernize signalling system of **Dhaka-Tongi-Joydebpur rail line** at Rail Bhaban, Dhaka. The project is being implemented under the Line of Credit (LoC) extended by India to Bangladesh.

For this, **Bangladesh Railway (BR)** has appointed a Mumbai-based Indian company **KEC International Limited** to develop signalling systems for the under-construction 3rd and 4th dual-gauge rail tracks from Dhaka to Tongi and double-line dual gauge from Tongi to Joydebpur.

The overall cost of the contract is **3.49 billion** Bangladeshi Taka.

201. **Finance Corporation (PFC)** has announced joining "**Asia Transition Finance Study Group**" (**ATFSG**) during the bilateral ministerial meeting between Union Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy RK Singh and His Excellency Yasutoshi Nishimura, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Government of Japan on the side lines of G20 summit at Goa.

PFC is the first member from India to join ATFSG.

Asia Transition Finance Study Group (ATFSG):

The ATFSG was launched in October 2021 with the aim of presenting and disseminating the concept of Asian transition finance. This is an initiative by Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) for promoting sustainable transition finance for Asian Countries.

202. 'India AI', an IBD under Digital India Corporation of MeitY, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Meta** India to foster collaboration in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies.

The objective of the MoU is to establish a framework for collaboration and cooperation between 'India AI' and Meta in the field of AI & Emerging Technologies including to make Meta's open-source AI models available for use by Indian AI ecosystem.

203. India Chamber of Business and Commerce (India Chamber) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have recently (in July 2023) signed a Memorandum of Association (MoA) to promote India as global Hub in healthcare manufacturing and delivery and for creating a global stakeholders platform for the building robust healthcare ecosystem promoting future of health capabilities in India and promoting Investment creation in the field of Healthcare.

204. Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), a Navratna Defence PSU, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Gabriel Power and CoRoVer Pvt Ltd** to leverage opportunities across the power and energy sectors and AI-based conversational solutions.

205. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Canada-based **World Design Organisation (WDO)** to offer suggestions and guidance on the ways to improve the infrastructure of Bengaluru, Karnataka.

As part of the MoU, the state government will provide **Rs.200 crore** for the next five years.

206. The Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation (AP-Genco) and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) will form a Joint Venture (JV) for implementing Pumped Storage Hydropower Projects (PSHPs) with a total generation capacity of 6000 MW in Andhra Pradesh.

207. Walmart and Flipkart have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Government of Telangana** to support the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Telangana. Under this MoU, Walmart will offer support to MSMEs to digitise their businesses and fuel capacity building for the state of Telangana.

208. RITES, formerly known as Rail India Technical and Economic Service Limited, has recently (July 2023) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)** to identify mutual areas of interest in railway projects and foster collaboration between the two entities.

209. The BITS Goa Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship Society (**BGIIES**) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** to revolutionise the shipbuilding and defence industry through the development and implementation of cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

210. Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) and **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC Ltd)**, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with clean energy companies for providing a total of **Rs.5 lakh crore** funds to their projects during the "Green Finance Summit" held in Goa.

- PFC has signed pacts worth Rs.2.37 lakh crore funding with 20 companies in the clean energy space.
- REC has tied up for Rs.2.75 lakh crore.

211. Indian Army has signed a contract with **Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL)** for the procurement of **Tactical Access Switch** under the Make in India model to produce a compact, modular, and strengthen networking device capable of faster switching. Tactical Access Switch is used for the communication between two tactical army troops. It is equipped with a non-blocking mode of operation as well as switching capability for data and voice.

212. The **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** has signed Technical Assistance and License Agreement (TALA) with **General Electric Technology GmbH Switzerland** for Gas Turbines.

Under this extension agreement, BHEL will gain enhanced rights for existing /uprated and new gas turbine models.

213. Saudi Arabia has become the **51st country** to sign the **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC)** during the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC):

The TAC is a peace treaty signed in 1976 among ASEAN member states to establish a set of guidelines to govern inter-state relations in the region, promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation based on mutual respect, non-interference principle and peaceful settlement of disputes.

China is the first major country from outside of ASEAN to accede to the treaty in 2003.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM):

- The 56th AMM, chaired by Indonesia, has been held in Jakarta, Indonesia under the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth".
- The AMM was formed by the ASEAN Declaration in 1967. It is responsible for ASEAN's political-security cooperation as well as ASEAN's interactions with external parties.

The ASEAN group includes: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

214. India and UAE have signed a pact to establish **Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS)** framework to promote use of Indian Rupee (INR) and UAE Dirham (AED) for cross-border transactions.

This pact has been signed during the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to UAE in July 2023.

- Both sides have agreed to link India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** with UAE's **Instant Payment Platform (IPP)**.
- Both sides have agreed to link their respective Card Switches vis-à-vis **RuPay** switch and **UAESWITCH** to enable mutual acceptance of domestic cards and processing of these card transactions.
- India's Structured Financial Messaging System (SFMS) will be linked with messaging system in UAE to ease their financial messaging.

215. Ashok Leyland Limited, a part of Hinduja Group, has recently (in July 2023) won a contract worth **Rs.800 crore** to supply defence vehicles to the Indian army. The contract include the procurement of the field artillery tractor (FAT 4*4) and the gun towing vehicle (GTV 6*6).

216. The **United Kingdom (UK)** has signed a treaty to join the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**, a major Asia-Pacific trading bloc in New Zealand.

- UK has become the first new member and first European nation to join since the bloc was formed in 2018.
- With the inclusion of the UK, the collective Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the bloc, comprising Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam, will amount to 12 trillion pounds or 15% of the global GDP.

217. The **International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA)** has inked Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **BITS Pilani PIEDS Finxcelerator**, Pilani Campus in Rajasthan.

This MoU aims to put in place a framework for cooperation and understanding between IFSCA and BITS Pilani PIEDS Finxcelerator to collaborate by supporting and facilitating FinTech and TechFin entities.

218. Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Avaada Group** to fund its energy transition projects. Under this MoU, REC will invest **Rs.20000 crore** in Avaada Group over the next 5 years.

The MoU has been signed at the sidelines of the 4th G20 Clean Energy Ministerial meeting held in Goa.

219. The **Ministry of Culture (MoC)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Navy** to revive the ancient stitched shipbuilding method known as the **Tankai method**.

The project aims to leverage the expertise of the remaining traditional shipwrights in India and showcase their exceptional craftsmanship.

In the Tankai method, instead of using nails, the Ships are built by stitching wooden planks together. This offers flexibility and durability, making them less vulnerable to damage from shoals and sandbars rather than nails.

220. The **Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** and **AOAC INTERNATIONAL (AOAC)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate and enhance the food safety analytical ecosystem in India.

Key objectives of MoU:

- To establish a system for uniform testing methods across the country.

- To develop and validate analytical methodologies.
- FSSAI will be granted gratis access to AOAC Official Methods, providing the Indian food safety ecosystem access to globally recognized testing methods.

221. India and Japan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop the **semiconductor ecosystem**, which will include design, manufacturing, equipment research, and talent development.

This will help India to become a global hub for the semiconductor industry and provides access to Japanese technology, which helps India to develop its own semiconductor industry.

222. THDC India Limited, a Mini Ratna category-I company under National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) and a Schedule 'A' Public Sector Undertaking (PSU), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** in New Delhi to provide technical services as the technical consultant.

The MoU aims to enhance road safety in the National Highway, by addressing the risks associated with landslides.

223. The Government of **Gujarat** has signed a six Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with private industries for mangrove plantation under MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shorelines Habitats & Tangible Incomes) scheme.

Under this MoU, the mangroves will be planted over 3000 hectares area of land to conserve coastal ecosystems in Gujarat.

The objectives of these agreements are to increase the mangrove plantation cover along the coastline of Gujarat.

224. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest software exporter, has signed a contract with **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**, Government procurement portal, for developing, running and maintaining the GeM portal in GeM headquarters in New Delhi.

225. Ministry of Textile has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of **Gujarat** to set up **PM MITRA (Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel) Park** in Vansi village, Jalalpore Taluka in Navsari district, Gujarat.

- The PM MITRA Park in Vansi is inspired by the 5F vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi: *Farm to Fibre to Fabric to Fashion to Foreign*.
- The park will be built through a Special Purpose Vehicle with 51% equity from Gujarat and 49% from the centre.
- The park shall have excellent connectivity to Mumbai & Delhi via proposed route of Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC).

226. Facebook parent **Meta** has launched a new text-based microblogging platform '**Threads**' for sharing text updates, and joining public conversations. It is built by the Instagram team, photo, and video sharing social networking service owned by Meta Platforms.

The new app is rolled out in 100 countries including India and is available in iOS and Play Store.

Threads aims to provide a microblogging experience similar to Twitter, allowing users to share their thoughts, engage with others, and participate in public discussions.

227. The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** and **Electoral Tribunal (ET) of Panama** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the institutional framework for their ongoing cooperation in the field of election management and administration.

ECI has been expanding its links and cooperation with foreign Election Management Bodies (EMBs) through its 'International Cooperation Programme'.

228. The **Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE)**, National Water Mission (NWM), Ministry of Jal Shakti, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Plumbing Association (IPA)** for a Water Positive India by awareness creation & promotion of rain water harvesting structures, low flow fixtures & sanitary ware, treatment of grey & black water, water audit of built environment.

The focus will be on circular economy of water including grey water use (5Rs: Reduce – Recycle- Reuse-Replenish-Respect) in built environment.

The MoU aligns with the NWM's Goal-4 to increase water use efficiency by 20%.

National Water Mission (NWM):

The National Water Mission is one the eight missions of the Government of India which was launched under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) for combating the threats of global warming.

Goals of NWM:

Goal 1: Comprehensive water data base in public domain

Goal 2: Assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources

Goal 3: Promotion of citizen and state actions for water conservation, augmentation and preservation, and Focused attention to vulnerable areas including over-exploited areas.

Goal 4: Increasing water use efficiency by **20%**

Goal 5: Promotion of basin level integrated water resources management

229. The Government of **Meghalaya** has signed a series of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **NTPC Limited** to enhance power infrastructure and clean energy generation in Meghalaya in New Delhi.

The agreement includes the Power Portfolio Management Services (PMS) for Meghalaya, setting up of Pump Storage Power Plants (PSPs) and implementation of floating solar projects in the state.

230. **Gogoro**, a Taiwanese-based battery swapping firm, has inked an '**Ultra Mega Project**' agreement with the **Maharashtra government** to invest more than USD 1.5 billion to establish state-wide battery charging and swapping infrastructure in Maharashtra.

The proposed 'Ultra Mega Project' deal includes financial incentives and support from the Maharashtra government.

The project focussed on creating a domestic supplier ecosystem that allows for domestic growth and foreign market expansion and would generate approx. 10,000 direct and indirect jobs.

231. **India and Bangladesh** have launched **Trade Transactions** in **rupees** in order to strengthen and reduce dependency on the US dollar. This marks the first time Bangladesh has engaged in bilateral trade with a foreign country outside the realm of the US dollar. The exchange rate is based on Market demand.

- Trade settlement through Indian rupee will only apply to export amount from Bangladesh while the rest of imports from India will be settled in US dollars.

- From Bangladesh side trade and transactions with India will be done by its **Eastern Bank** and **Sonali Bank Ltd**, while from Indian side operations will be done by **State Bank of India** and **ICICI Bank**.

Bangladesh has become **19th country** to trade with India in rupees.

Note: Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second largest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia.

232. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Limited has signed a **Master Shipyard Repair Agreement (MSRA)** with the **Navy of USA** to strengthen the strategic partnership between India and the United States of America (USA) in the defence sector and to contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

- This historic agreement is a direct outcome of the 2022 U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue and demonstrates U.S. commitment to utilize repair facilities on a regular basis at the L&T shipyard in Kattupalli near Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- The agreement is valid for a period of 5 years.

233. India & Tanzania have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the **first Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** outside India named **IIT Madras** in **Zanzibar, Tanzania**.

- IIT will open its first-ever overseas campus in Zanzibar, Tanzania in October 2023.
- The initiative is in line with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aims to strengthen educational cooperation between India and Tanzania.

The MoU has been signed during a 4-day official visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to United Republic of Tanzania from 5th to 8th July 2023.

He has also co-chaired the **10th** session of **India-Tanzani Joint Commission on Economic, Technical, and Scientific Cooperation** in Dar-es-Salaam.

Other MoU signed:

The **Foreign Cooperation Department (FCD), Government of Haryana** and the **Tanzania Investment Center (TIC)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the bilateral economic collaboration and promote greater economic growth and increase investment opportunities between both the nations.

234. The **Ministry of Defence** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** to promote the use of millets and healthy eating practices among the armed forces and ensure availability of safe and nutritious food.

The MoU will encourage the families of the Armed Forces and the community at large to adopt nutritious diets, make healthy food choices, and maintain food safety.

235. The **International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA)** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI)-India and IIM Lucknow Enterprise Incubation Centre (IIML EIC) in July 2023.

- MoU with CPI-India aims to increase mobilization of global sustainable capital flows into India.
- MoU with IIML-EIC aims to establish a framework for cooperation and understanding between both organizations for supporting and facilitating FinTech and TechFin entities.

236. The Government of **Goa** has signed three memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to strengthen MSMEs in the state and enable digital payments in government departments.

The MoU has been signed with the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (**CGTMSE**), **Paytm**, and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (**ICAI**).

237. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Technology Services Limited (LTTS) has partnered with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to provide 5G network solutions for global enterprises providing faster connection speed and lower latency.

Under this partnership, the spectrum will be provided by BSNL using both PLMN (public land mobile network) and isolated allotment.

238. The National Association of Software and Service Companies (**NASSCOM**), the leading organization representing India's technology industry, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Manchester's Inward investment Agency (**MIDAS**) and Manchester Airports Group (**MAG**) to establish the first NASSCOM launch pad in the **United Kingdom**.

The objective is to promote innovation, investment and technological exchange between Greater Manchester (UK) and India.

239. The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG) & Indian Navy (IN)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Port Rail & Ropeway Corporation Ltd (IPRCL)** in Gandhinagar to establish a Naval gallery at the National Maritime Heritage Complex (**NMHC**) which is being constructed at the historic Indus Valley civilization region of **Lothal, Gujarat**.

This association aims to plan, develop, construct, and commission a Naval gallery on the theme "Evolution of Indian Navy & Indian Coast Guard".

The foundation stone for the NMHC project was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2019. It is being developed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) at an investment of Rs.4,500 crore.

240. The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has signed a contract for the Medium Refit with Life Certification (MRLC) of the "**Indian Naval Ship (INS) Shankush**", a Sub-Surface Killer (SSK) Class of Submarine, with the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (**MDL**).

- The cost of the overall contract is **Rs.2725 crore** and the delivery of the submarine post-MRLC will be in 2026.
- Under this contract, INS Shankush will undergo comprehensive renovation and life certification at MDL's facility in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- INS Shankush belongs to the Shishumar class of submarines and has a speed of 22 knots.

241. **India Post** has signed a bilateral Tracked Packet agreement with **Canada Post** to introduce **International Tracked Packet Service (ITPS)** to facilitate e-commerce exports.

India Post already provides ITPS Service with 38 partner countries and Canada will be the 39th and the service commenced from 1st July 2023.

The service will provide competitive shipping solution for packets upto 2.0 kg with tracking facility and fulfil a major demand of exporters.

242. **India** has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with **Japan** for the development of the **Integrated Mast United Combined Radio Antenna (NORA-50)**. This unique horn-shaped structure consolidates multiple antennas for tactical data link, TACAN (Tactical Air

Navigation), and communications, aiming to reduce radar cross-section (RCS) and enhance operational capabilities.

243. The **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)** for cooperation in Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Innovative Air Mobility.

This MoU will focus on collaboration on unmanned aircraft and innovative air mobility between the two civil aviation authorities.

The MoU will also ensure regular information sharing between the two authorities on the technological developments and research in this area and also their respective strategies for outreach to relevant stakeholders.

244. The **University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** to foster academic collaboration and promote research initiatives.

This initiative aims to enhance cross-cultural learning experiences and promote academic diversity.

Initially, the exchange program will facilitate the transfer of approximately 10 students and faculty members each year at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

245. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of **India**, and The Public Service Division of the Republic of **Singapore** have signed a **Protocol Document** to extend the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on enhancing cooperation in the field of Personnel Management and Public Administration till 2028.

- The MoU has been signed by **V. Srinivas**, Secretary on behalf of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, and **Simon Wong**, High Commissioner of Singapore to India.
- The MoU will provide cooperation in areas such as Administrative Reforms & Public Sector Transformation, Public Service Delivery, Leadership and Talent Development, E-Governance, Capacity Building and Training.

246. **Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ)** and the **Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote mutual growth and development in the food and agriculture sectors of the UAE and India.

The MoU aims to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity-building, allowing tech and agricultural companies in the RAKEZ business community to enhance their methods and share innovative, sustainable farming techniques with major Indian companies.

247. The **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **South-Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organisation (SARADO)**, comprising of Anti-Doping organizations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, to increase the Regional Cooperation in anti-doping in sports NADA India-SARADO Cooperation Meet in New Delhi.

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BANKING & FINANCE

248. **Indian Bank** has launched a new concept called '**Resources Acquisition Centre' (RAC)** to build-up deposit business portfolio, which encloses Current Deposit, Savings Bank, and Term Deposit accounts.

The first RAC has been inaugurated in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The lender has planned to establish 20 RACs at Ultra Potential Centres in Phase-I to strengthen its deposit portfolio.

249. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the regulator of the securities market, through a circular allowed **Asset Management Companies (AMC)** to introduce **six new strategies** under the **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** category.

Currently, mutual funds can launch only one ESG scheme under the thematic category of equity schemes.

Six new strategies: *Integration, Exclude, Best-in-class & Positive Screening, Impact investing, Sustainable, and Transition or Transition Related.*

ESG Scheme:

- It aims to promote sustainable and responsible business practices covering a range of issues like climate change, pollution, human rights, business ethics, corporate governance, etc.
- In 2012, SEBI issued guidance note on ESG disclosures for companies listed on Indian Stock Exchanges to disclose ESG performance in annual reports.

250. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** will set up a trustee company, which will be its wholly-owned subsidiary, for managing the **Corporate Debt Market Development Fund (CDMDF)**

- CDMDF will act as a backstop facility for purchase of investment grade corporate debt securities.
- **SBI Funds Management Ltd (SBIFML)**, the asset management company (AMC) of SBI Mutual Fund, has been identified as the investment manager-cum-sponsor of CDMDF.
- SBI has 62.53 percent stake in SBIFML.
- CDMDF will be launched as a close ended scheme with an initial tenure of 15 years from the date of its initial closing (date on which contribution from all AMCs and specified schemes is received by CDMDF).

251. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, leading private life insurer, has announced its collaboration with ace cricketer, **Shubman Gill**, to take forward its brand journey.

The company will be featuring him in its marketing campaigns to bring alive the product propositions and reach out to a wide customer base.

252. BNP Paribas Arbitrage has acquired **88.85 lakh equity shares** or 0.55% equity stakes of private lender **Bandhan Bank** for a cash consideration of **Rs.187 crore** through an open market transaction.

The shares have been purchased at an average price of Rs.211 apiece

253. Bank of Maharashtra, a premiere Public Sector Bank, strengthens its digital channels by launching several new products and utilities to enhance the banking experience for both its customers and staff members.

- The Bank has launched an upgraded **Mobile Banking app** for a better user experience with features like a reduced beneficiary addition period, a unified application for mobile

banking & UPI customers, and new features like Shortcut for WhatsApp banking, Account statements, etc.

- It has enhanced features on its **WhatsApp banking function (+91-7066036640)** with Downloadable forms, Instant access to Interest Rate Charts, a Grievance Redressal system, know your IFSC, Bank Holidays, etc.
- The Bank has also introduced **Credit Card payment** via Internet Banking & through other UPI platforms.
- The Bank has also launched several other digital initiatives, including RE-KYC through a web-based dashboard, empanelment Fintech firms & CRILC dashboard.

254. Bajaj Finserv Asset Management has launched its first equity fund '**Bajaj Finserv Flexi Cap Fund**' in the flexi-cap category, an open-ended and dynamic equity scheme.

The New Fund Offer opens for subscription on 24th July and closes on 7th August 2023.

The scheme aims to identify 'megatrends' and invest in opportunities across large-, mid-, and small-cap stocks.

255. HDFC Asset Management Company (HDFC AMC), investment manager to HDFC Mutual Fund (HDFC MF), has launched its fourth fund the **HDFC Charity Fund for Cancer Care** in collaboration with the Indian Cancer Society (ICS).

The aim is to treat underprivileged cancer patients.

The New Fund Offer opens for subscription on 28th July and closes on 8th August 2023.

It is a closed-ended income scheme and a Fixed Maturity Plan (FMP) with a tenure of 1,196 days.

256. Union Minister of State for Finance Ministry Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad has announced that over the past 5 years **Indian banks** have been allocated a sum of **Rs.5,729 crore** from the "**Depositor Education and Awareness**" (DEA) Fund to facilitate the refund of unclaimed deposits.

As of 31st March 2023, Rs.36,185 crore is transferred from Public Sector Banks to DEA Fund and Rs 6,087 crore is transferred from Private banks as well.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated the “**100 Days 100 Pays**” Campaign to locate and settle the top 100 unclaimed deposits in each bank and district within 100 days, commencing on June 1, 2023, and concluding on September 8, 2023.

The RBI has also planned to establish a centralized web facility.

Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme (DEA Fund):

It was initiated by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** in 2014. It serves as a crucial mechanism to tackle unclaimed deposits. Its main objective is to create awareness among depositors and protect their interests in the financial realm.

257. IDBI Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with commercial vehicle maker **Ashok Leyland** for a channel financing partnership of its dealers. The MoU aims to provide personalized financial solutions specifically designed for dealers by the partnering entities.

258. Union Bank of India has joined hands with **IBM** to create a state-of-the-art Digital Business Platform, focusing on omni-channel experiences and data-driven hyper-personalization.

Omni-channel experience ensures the flexibility of the customers to engage with the bank through various channels, including mobile, online, and in-branch.

259. Canara Bank has topped the list of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) with the **highest lending of Rs.1,87,813 crore** to state-backed corporations and public sector undertakings during 2022-23 for the **5th consecutive time**.

This is according to the Parliamentary Questions and Answers data (Lok Sabha) on Outstanding Debt of States and Union Territories (UTs).

Canara Bank is followed by **Punjab National Bank** (Rs.70,142.5 crore), **State Bank of India** (Rs.66,523.2 crore), **Bank of India** (Rs.25,147 crore), and **Bank of Baroda** (Rs.15,706.8 crore).

The total lending by 12 PSBs to government entities fell to **Rs.4.12 lakh crore** in FY23 from Rs.4.93 lakh crore in FY22.

In FY23, the PSBs achieved a record aggregate net profit of Rs.1.04 trillion.

PM SVANidhi scheme, which was started to support COVID-affected street vendors to restart their businesses, as of 20th July 2023, amounting to **Rs.6,482 crore**, have been disbursed to 38.5 lakh street vendors.

Tamil Nadu has the **highest amount of outstanding debt** among all States and Union Territories in India, at Rs.7.54 lakh crore (as per budget estimates for FY23).

Tamil Nadu is followed by Uttar Pradesh (UP) (Rs.7.10 lakh crore).

Odisha is the only state in India to reduce its debt consistently over the past years: 1.8% in 2019-20, 8.4% in 2020-21, and 12% in FY 2022-23.

The UT of **Puducherry** has the lowest outstanding debt of Rs.11,651 crore.

260. Mahindra & Mahindra Limited (M&M), an automotive manufacturing company of Mahindra group, has acquired a **3.53% stake** in **RBL Bank** as an investment at a cost of Rs.417 crore.

This is the first significant move by a manufacturing sector to venture into a private bank, after new norms of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2021.

There is also a scope for further investments of Mahindra & Mahindra subjected to the cap of 9.9%.

261. ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched a protection-oriented saving life insurance plan. The plan named "**ICICI Pru Protect N Gain**" is a unique product which offers a comprehensive life insurance cover, protection against accidental death and permanent disability due to an accident and market-linked returns to build long-term wealth and achieve financial goals.

262. Dvara KGFS, a Chennai-based NBFC, has entered into a co-lending partnership with **HDFC Bank** to provide business capital to unorganised micro business units that have limited access to formal sources of finance.

This partnership will increase Dvara KGFS's capabilities in empowering the operations of micro business in rural areas.

263. Federal Bank has launched a unique Non-Resident (NR) Saving Bank (SB) account scheme, named **SB NRE (Non-Resident External) Eve+** designed exclusively for the financial needs of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) women.

- NRI women customers are allowed to open zero balance savings accounts for two children below 12 years of age.

- The account offers complimentary insurance up to **Rs.78 Lakh**, including benefits for child education, accidental death, hospital cash, and card protection.
- Safe Deposit Locker and Portfolio Investment Services available at concessional rates.
- Customers get free access to domestic and international airport lounges.
- 50% concession on Processing Fee/Administration Fee for Home Loans & Car Loans.

264. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has launched a new life insurance plan called "**Bajaj Allianz Life Ace**", a plan that is non-linked, participating, and offers early-income benefits, empowering customers to customize their cash flows.

This is the first plan which allows such a customization.

Key features:

- The plan has a **Goal Protection Benefit**, ensuring that the policyholder's family receives income through the policy term even after the policyholder's death.
- Insured receive income in arrears after the premium-payment term, with the flexibility to delay its start for up to **5 years**.
- The insured can receive income in arrears from the first policy month or year after the deferment period, including cash bonuses (if declared) and guaranteed income.
- It provides higher income in arrears after the premium-payment term and deferment period.
- The sum assured on death is 11 times the annualised premium, and the death benefit will never be lower than the guaranteed death benefit of **105 percent** of total premiums paid.

265. The Bank of India (BoI) has inaugurated its **IFSC Banking Unit (IBU)** in the International Financial Services Centre at **GIFT SEZ** area in Gandhinagar.

BOI has targeted to achieve USD 1 billion in business by March 2024 and USD 4 billion in the subsequent 3 years.

The IBU will provide services, such as External Commercial Borrowing (ECBs), Trade Finance Facilities, Foreign Currency Loans, Syndication Loans (Origination, Underwriting and Distribution), Foreign Currency deposit account -Current and Term Deposits, besides offering digital banking facilities through transaction-based Internet Banking facility, to various clients allowed as per IFSCA guidelines.

266. The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has tied up with the **Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMFL)**, better known as **Amul**, to provide financial services to federation's supply network pan-India under the Micro-Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) scheme.

With this, both the partners are aiming to provide support to more than 11 lakh retailers, wholesale dealers and others.

267. The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** has announced its support for India's National Green Hydrogen Mission by offering a loan facility of up to **€1 billion**.

The loan aims to assist India in developing its nascent green hydrogen ecosystem and renewable energy projects.

268. The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has launched an environmental initiative "**PNB Palaash**", an eight-month period campaign to embrace sustainability.

- The campaign will lead to cost, savings and operational efficiencies for environmental protection through measures such as energy and waste management, resource conservation, paper reduction, streamlined digital processes.
- Under this initiative, one lakh plus employees of PNB will plant minimum two saplings each.
- The campaign is in line with the RBI's vision of sustainable finance and the sixth iteration of Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE 6.0), an initiative by the Department of Financial Services (DFS).

269. **Bajaj Markets**, a subsidiary of Bajaj Finserv, has collaborated with **SBI General Insurance Co. Ltd.** to provide consumers motor and health insurance plans.

Under this collaboration, one can purchase SBI General Insurance policies starting at a nominal price of Rs. 53 with coverage options ranging up to Rs. 2 crores.

270. **Google Pay** has introduced its '**UPI (Unified Payments Interface) Lite**' payment feature in India to allow users to make small payments without entering the UPI personal identification number (PIN).

- The UPI Lite wallet should have a minimum balance of **Rs. 2,000**.
- This feature allows users to make payment up to **Rs. 200** and doesn't require PIN to initiate the transaction.

UPI Lite:

It was launched by the Reserve Bank of India along with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in September 2022, and currently it is supported by 15 banks.

Paytm, PhonePe, and BHIM have the UPI Lite feature already.

271. IIFL Home Finance, a mortgage lender and subsidiary of IIFL Finance, has raised a term loan of **USD 50 million** from the **U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)**, an agency of the United States.

IIFL HFL focuses on catering the financial needs of the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Lower Income Groups (LIG) through its distribution network, including tier 3 and 4 cities in India.

272. PhonePe Insurance Broking Services Private Limited (PIBS), a wholly owned subsidiary of PhonePe Private Limited, has launched **health insurance plans** offering comprehensive insurance in partnership with leading insurers.

- With this, PhonePe Insurance has become the **first and only Platform in India** to enable customers to pay for insurance in easy installments through UPI on the PhonePe App.
- These health insurance plans come with coverage up to **Rs.1 crore**.

273. HDFC Bank has crossed **USD 100 billion** market capitalization (m-cap) and traded at a market value of around USD 152 billion. With this, HDFC Bank has become the world's **7th largest lender**, moving ahead of Bank of China, Morgan Stanley, and Goldman Sachs.

JP Morgan Chase (USD 438 billion) has topped the list of the world's top 10 banks by market capitalization. It is followed by Bank of America at 2nd and ICBC at 3rd.

274. The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has observed its **42nd Foundation Day** on 12th July 2023. The Chief Guest of the event was Amit Shah, the Union Home and Cooperation Minister.

The day has been marked by a series of events throughout the country, including a webinar on the theme of “NABARD: 42 Years of Rural Transformation.”

NABARD:

NABARD is a development bank focusing primarily on the rural sector of the country by providing finance for Agriculture and rural development. It came into existence on 12 July 1982 by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).

It is a statutory body established under Parliamentary Act-NABARD Act, 1981.

275. Cholamandalam MS General Insurance has been appointed as the lead insurer for **West Bengal** by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

Now, the company will focus on various aspects of health protection, coverage against natural calamities, increasing employment opportunities for locals, and protecting MSME businesses through comprehensive insurance offerings

276. Banque Saudi Fransi (BSF), one of Saudi Arabia’s largest banks, has implemented **TCS BaNCS** for payments, provided by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

- TCS BaNCS has centralised and standardised BSF’s domestic and international payments operations.
- The micro services architecture of TCS BaNCS enables BSF to offer real-time payment services and scale its systems to handle high-transaction volumes.

277. The Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched a virtual branch “**PNB Metaverse**” to deliver a unique experience of banking to existing and new customers who can now explore the bank’s products and services such as bank deposits, retail/MSME loans, digital products, women/senior citizens, 'Do It Yourself' and government flagship schemes.

278. PhonePe has launched its **Point-of-sale (POS) device** that enables merchants to accept payments through Debit Cards, Credit Cards, and Unified Payments Interface (UPI), with a simplified settlement experience.

The POS device, built on the Android platform, can be assessed in areas of cellular coverage.

It has PCI-PTS 6 (Payment Card Industry-PIN Transaction Security) certification safeguarding both merchant and consumer data.

279. Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has set up a **five-member** working group for implementing the recommendations of the Reserve Bank of India's committee on the working of the **Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)**.

The primary focus of the working group is to conduct a thorough review of assignment agreements and trust deed templates related to the acquisition of distressed assets by ARCs from lenders.

The Working Group comprises:

- Ajit Kumar, MD and CEO, Secondary Loan Market Association (SLMA);
- Hari Hara Mishra, CEO, Association of ARCs in India;
- Mythili Balasubramanian, Executive Director, Edelweiss ARC;
- Dharmendra Pali, senior official from State Bank of India
- Anupama Ranade, senior official from ICICI Bank.

280. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, one of the leading private general insurers of India, has hosted the **first-ever General Insurance Festival of India (GIFI)** on 3rd July 2023 in **Pune, Maharashtra** which officially set a new Guinness World Records achievement for the largest attendance for an insurance conference.

There was a record turnout of 5235 attendees who contributed to creating history worldwide in the insurance industry.

As a part of GIFI, Bajaj has established the GIFI Awards in India to recognize the top-ranked health and general insurance advisors across the insurance industry.

Winners of GIFI Awards:

Category	Winners
Best Health Insurance Advisor of India	Mayank Chander Kothari from Ahmedabad

Best Motor Insurance Advisor in India	Shiv Kumar Gupta from Varanasi
Best Property Insurance Advisor in India	Priyadarshini Sheshadri from Bengaluru
Best Multiline Insurance Advisor in India	Prashant Shah from Mumbai
Best Woman Insurance Advisor in India	Priti Sameer Shah from Mumbai

281. The Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel and Union Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan has launched the pilot project of “**Antyodaya Shram Suraksha Accident Insurance**” scheme for the welfare of the workers from Nadia of Kheda district in Gujarat.

- The scheme aims to provide financial stability to workers or labourers, in case of any accident or death.
- The scheme is being implemented through the Indian Postal Department, the Indian Post Payments Bank and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- Under this scheme, premium ranges between **Rs.289 and Rs.499** per year.
- In case of the labourer’s accidental death, **Rs.10 lakh** will be given to their family and the same amount will be given to the worker in case of permanent disability.
- In the event of the death, the deceased’s children will be eligible for education assistance of **Rs.1 lakh**.

With this, **Gujarat** has become the first state to introduce this scheme.

282. IDFC First Bank has introduced a **travel credit card** in association with Club Vistara, and Mastercard to enhance travel experiences for cardholders. The aim is to provide solutions tailored specifically for frequent flyers and travel enthusiasts, while also ensuring security.

The new card will provide banking services with travel incentives.

283. The 3 Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), **European Investment Bank (EIB)**, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, and **World Bank (WB)**, have recently (in July 2023) contributed **USD 27 billion** for India's green growth during the International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH-2023) held in New Delhi.

Funding allotment:

- **EIB:** It has pledged **Euro 1 billion** to develop a large-scale hydrogen industry hub.
- **ADB:** It intends to provide **USD 20-25 billion** over 5 years to support India's green growth.
- **World Bank:** It has approved **USD 1.5 billion** to aid India's low-carbon transition journey.

Note: India ranked 4th globally in terms of installed renewable energy capacity and achieving cost-effective solar and wind power generation.

284. Max Life Insurance Company Limited has recently (in July 2023) collaborated with **DCB Bank** to provide different types of life insurance products to the DCB Bank customers including Term, Savings, and Retirement Plans to secure their financial future and increase their investment portfolio.

285. Razorpay, a prominent Indian Full-Stack Payments and Business Banking Platform, has launched the **first International Payment Gateway in Malaysia** in partnership with Curlec, under the brand 'Curlec By Razorpay' with the aim to bridge the gap between local and international payment gateways.

The collaboration will help both companies to transform the digital payments system in Malaysia.

286. The **Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Bank** has launched **UPI QR code** (United Payment Interface Quick Response code) interoperable with India's sovereign digital currency, Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

With this, HDFC Bank has become the first commercial bank to provide interoperability between United Payment Interface (UPI) and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

287. PayU has launched a 45-day fintech accelerator program, **inFINity** for early-stage Indian startups in collaboration with **AWS India** (Amazon Web Services) and venture capital firm **Chiratae Ventures**. The program aims to support the growth of early-stage fintech startups by providing access to mentorship from industry experts, curated resources, and AWS Activate credits.

288. Fincare Small Finance Bank has launched its multilingual campaign '**The Great Indian FD Fest**' featuring brand ambassador Viswanathan Anand.

The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about the bank's interest rate offering for all categories of customers.

This campaign celebrates the spirit of financial empowerment and presents a golden opportunity for every Indian to secure their financial future through fixed deposits.

289. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has reduced its stake by **2 percent** in **India Cements Ltd** from 5.87 percent to **3.83 percent**. The reduction has taken place between November 2017 and July 2023 through open market transactions. LIC now holds 11.9m shares in the cement producer.

290. Bank of India has launched the '**Centralized Pool Buy-Out and Co-Lending Cell**' housed in its headquarters in Mumbai, Maharashtra. This cell is equipped with an end-to-end digital underwriting system onboard pool buy-outs and co-lending of loans in partnership with NBFCs to boost priority sector lending.

Pool Buy-Out: It is a practice in the banking sector to buy out the retail portfolios of NBFCs in return for immediate payment.

291. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has tied up with **Priority Pass Access India**, a domestic lounge experience programme to offer Airport Lounge access to RuPay card holders.

Through this partnership, eligible RuPay cardholders in India will now have the opportunity to access over 50 premium lounges and airport experiences in major cities across India.

292. ICICI Lombard General Insurance and **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** have jointly launched a combi insurance solution named '**iShield**' to provide customers with both health and life insurance.

The plan will enable customers to take care of expenses required for medical treatments.

The life insurance under 'iShield' will continue till the age of 85, ensuring sufficient financial resources for the family to continue with their lives.

293. The Ministry of Culture has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Canara Bank** to streamline the process and disbursement of financial assistance to veteran artists on a monthly basis under the "Scheme for Financial Assistance for Veteran Artists".

The Ministry of Culture administers a 'Financial Assistance for Veteran Artists' scheme under which financial assistance of **Rs.6,000 per month** is provided to artists and scholars above the age of 60, who have contributed significantly in their specialised fields of performing arts and culture in their active age or are still contributing, but due to old age, they are facing difficulty and are in penury condition.

294. Paytm has collaborated with **Shriram Finance**, a non-banking finance company (NBFC) of the Chennai-based Shriram group, to extend financial services to its users, including loan products.

Under this, Shriram Finance products will be made available on Paytm's platform digitally.

295. TATA AIA Life Insurance has introduced a first-of-its-kind feature in the insurance industry by enabling digital payments through WhatsApp and Unified Payment Interfaces (UPI). This has been done in collaboration with WhatsApp and PayU.

296. The World Bank has approved the **USD 1.5 billion** to accelerate India's development of low-carbon energy. This funding aims to assist India scaling up renewable energy, fostering the growth of green hydrogen, and stimulating climate finance for investments in low-carbon energy.

The USD 1.44 billion loan is from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and is facilitated by a United Kingdom USD 1 billion backstop aimed at boosting the World Bank's climate change financing to India.

Other related news:

World Bank has approved the **USD 200 million** loan to the Government of Himachal Pradesh with a maturity period of 14.5 years, including a grace period of 4.5 years.

297. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has revamped its digital banking app '**YONO for Every Indian**' and introduced the **Interoperable Cardless Cash Withdrawal (ICCW)** facility that allows customers to withdraw cash from any bank's ATM using a single-use dynamic QR code.

This has been launched on SBI's 68th Bank Day.

YONO (You Only Need One):

It was launched in 2017. It aims to meet customer expectations for a seamless and pleasant digital experience, turning the vision of 'YONO for Every Indian' into a reality.

298. Indian Bank, a leading public sector lender, has tied up with **National E-Governance Services Ltd (NeSL)** to roll out a range of digital services as part of its ambitious digital transformative initiative, Project World of Advance Virtual Experience (**WAVE**), which was initiated in 2022.

As part of their digital transformation efforts, Indian Bank and NeSL have introduced an electronic bank guarantees (e-BG) service to replace traditional paper-based processes.

299. Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture **Meenakshi Lekhi** has inaugurated a first-of-its-kind exhibition on '**Banking on World Heritage**' at Darshanam gallery of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.

- This exhibition has showcased Banknotes of G-20 Member Nations, depicting United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) listed World cultural Heritage sites.
- The exhibition has been curated by Rukmini Dahanukar, an independent scholar and founder of 'Money Talks'.

300. The **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has unveiled the all-new **RuPay Select Debit Card** to provide users with gym memberships, free health check-up, complimentary golf lessons, spa services, and lounge access in selected domestic and international airports.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The individuals must maintain a savings bank account or a certificate of deposit (CD) with IOB, with an average daily balance of Rs.1 lakh.
- The cash withdrawal limit is Rs.50,000, while the daily limit for usage in merchant establishments (PoS) is Rs.5 lakh.
- An amount of up to Rs.3,50,000 is set for daily usage in e-commerce platforms.
- The issuance fee for the card is Rs.800.

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- 301.** The State Bank of India (SBI) has appointed **Kameshwar Rao Kodavanti** as its **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** with effect from July 1, 2023. He has replaced Charanjit Surinder Singh Attra who has resigned from the post.
- 302.** The **Airtel Payments Bank** has joined hands with **Park+** to enable FASTag-based smart parking solution at the **Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport, Varanasi** in Uttar Pradesh.
- This smart parking solution allows automatic cashless payments at airport parking.
- The parking fee payment is deducted through the FASTag associated with the vehicle, which reduced the time required to make the payment.
- 303.** The **Bank of India (BoI)** has become the first bank to officially roll out the **Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) 2023** and operationalizing this scheme at all its branches.
- With this, BoI is authorized to open accounts under MSSC. So far, only post offices are authorized to open accounts under MSSC.
- Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC):**
- MSSC was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her Budget speech FY 2023-24.
- It is a **one-time savings scheme** to provide financial security to girls and women in India.
 - The minimum investment is **Rs.1,000**, any sum in multiples of Rs.100 can be deposited, up to a maximum limit of **Rs.2 lakh**.
 - The scheme offers an interest rate of **7.5 percent** per annum, compounded quarterly.
 - All earnings under MSSC will be taxable as per existing income tax provisions. However, TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) will not be deducted under the scheme.
- 304.** **Flipkart**, the leading e-commerce company, has introduced a personal loan service in collaboration with **Axis Bank**. The loan facility allows individuals to obtain up to **Rs.5 lakh**

with a remarkable approval time of just 30 seconds and eliminates the need for document submission.

305. Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to introduce the facility of linking its RuPay Credit Card to a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with UPI-enabled apps.

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RBI IN NEWS

306. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has included **NongHyup Bank** in the list of **Scheduled Banks** under Schedule II of the RBI Act, 1934. The inclusion in the Schedule II is set to enhance the bank's presence and further its financial endeavours in the Indian market.

- Nonghyup Bank is an agricultural bank headquartered in **Jung-gu, Seoul, South Korea**.
- The bank was established in 2012 as detached from, and is now owned by the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF).
- Nonghyup Bank entered India in 2016.

307. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed business restrictions on Bengaluru-based **The National Co-operative Bank Ltd** and capped deposit withdrawal at Rs.50000 per account.

The business restrictions have been imposed because of its poor declining financial condition for a period of 6 months from the close of business on July 24, 2023 and are subject to review.

308. The Economic Research Department of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has published a paper titled "**India@100**". As per it, India needs to achieve an average annual real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of **7.6 percent** over the next 25 years to become a developed nation by **2047-48**.

This would require raising the current per capita GDP from USD 2,500 to USD 22,000, an increase of 8.8 times.

Key highlights:

- As per World Bank standards, India's per capita income must be more than USD 21,664 by 2047. For this, the required real GDP compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) for India needs to be 7.6% during 2023-24 to 2047-48.
- As per IMF standards, India's per capita nominal GDP must be more than USD 30,351. For this, the real GDP CAGR required for India should be 9.1% during 2023-24 to 2047-48.
- So as per above, India's per capita nominal GDP would have to record a CAGR of 10.6 (9.1%) to become a high income country.

309. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of **B Ramesh Babu** as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the **Karur Vysya Bank** for the second term of three years with effect from 29th July 2023.

He was an Ex-Deputy Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer in the State Bank of India (SBI).

310. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the license of **United India Co-operative Bank Limited, Nagina (Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh)** as the bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects to pay its present depositors in full.

311. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently empowered the users of credit, debit, and prepaid cards in India with **card network portability** with effect from **1st October 2023**.

Card network portability:

It refers to the ability of consumers to transfer their card accounts from one network to another. It allows cardholders to maintain their existing card accounts, balances, and credit history while switching to a different payment network.

The authorized card networks in India are **MasterCard, Visa, American Express Banking Corp, Diners Club International**, and National Payments Corporation of India – **RuPay**.

312. The **Reserve Bank of India** has cancelled the banking license of two cooperative banks, **Sri Sharada Mahila Co-operative Bank**, Tumkur, Karnataka and **Harihareshwar Sahakari Bank**, Wai, Satara, as the lenders do not have adequate capital and earning prospects.

313. The Ministry of Finance has announced that there will be **no change** in the rate of **Tax Collected at Source (TCS)** for all purposes under **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** and for overseas travel tour packages, regardless of mode of payment, for amounts up to **Rs.7 lakh** per individual per annum.

It has also been decided to give more time for the implementation of the revised TCS rates and for inclusion of credit card payments in LRS.

The increase in TCS rates which were to come into effect from 1st July 2023 shall now come into effect from **1st October 2023** with the modification.

Nature of payment	Earlier rate before Finance Act, 2023	New rate w.e.f 1 st October 2023
LRS for education financed by loan	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh
	0.5% above Rs 7 Lakh	0.5% above Rs 7 Lakh
LRS for Medical treatment/ education (other than financed by loan)	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh
	5% above Rs 7 Lakh	5% above Rs 7 Lakh
LRS for other purposes	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh	Nil upto Rs 7 lakh
	5% above Rs 7 Lakh	20% above Rs 7 Lakh
Purchase of Overseas tour program package	5% (without threshold)	5% till Rs 7 Lakh, 20% thereafter

314. According to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), **India's current account deficit (CAD)** has declined to **0.2 percent** of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the January-March quarter (**Q4**) of fiscal 2022-2023 (**FY23**) from 2% of GDP in Q3 of FY23.

India's CAD has decreased to **USD 1.3 billion**, 0.2% of GDP in Q4: 2022-23 (Q4 FY23) from USD 16.8 billion (2% of GDP) in Q3 FY23, and USD 13.4 billion (1.6% of GDP) a year ago i.e. Q4 FY22.

This is mainly on account of moderation in the trade gap and the rise in services exports.

- The Balance of Payments (BoP) stood at a surplus of USD 5.6 billion in Q4 FY23 compared to a surplus of USD 11.06 billion in the preceding quarter.
- Net foreign portfolio investment (FPI) recorded an outflow of USD 1.7 billion in Q4 FY23 driven by the equity segment, compared to an outflow of \$15.2 billion in the year-ago quarter.
- Net External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) to India has recorded an inflow of USD 1.7 billion, as against an outflow of USD 2.5 billion during Q3FY23 and an inflow of USD 3.3 billion in Q4 FY22.
- Net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) at USD 6.4 billion is higher than USD 2.0 billion in Q3FY23, although lower than a year ago (USD 13.8 billion).

315. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has introduced the **Centralised Information Management System (CIMS)**, an advanced platform for efficient data management, to revolutionize its data handling, analysis, and governance.

The system leverages advanced technology to manage big data, enabling powerful data mining, text mining, visual analytics, and statistical analysis.

The system will improve monetary policymaking through refined economic analysis and the management of big data flow.

CIMS will lead to a paradigm shift in economic analysis and supervision, as well as reduce the regulatory compliance burden.

316. Propelld, an **Education financing startup**, has received a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to disburse loans worth Rs.2000 crore by Financial Year (FY) 24 and to bolster its direct lending proposition.

With this, Propelld will provide tailored loan products, flexible repayment options, and competitive interest rates to its customers.

317. According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI's) provisional data, **India's services exports** in May 2023 has been increased by **7.7%** compared to May 2022, reaching USD 27.06 billion while imports rose 2% to USD 15.5 billion.

The government's initial estimates, released in mid-June, had indicated that services exports amounted to USD 25.3 billion, with services imports at USD 13.53 billion.

318. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the license of the **Malkapur Urban Co-operative Bank Limited, Buldhana, Maharashtra** and **Shushruti Souharda Sahakara Bank Niyamita, Bengaluru in Karnataka.**

These banks did not have adequate capital and earning prospects which means they do not comply with the provisions of Section 11(1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act 1949.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

319. The President of India Droupadi Murmu has conferred the **National Geoscience Awards-2022 (NGA)** of the **Ministry of Mines** in a function organized at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre in New Delhi.

22 Geoscientists including working professionals and academicians from across the country received the awards grouped under three categories namely 1 National Geoscience Award for Life Time Achievement, 1 National Young Geoscientist Award and 8 (3 Team Award + 3 Joint Award + 2 individual Awards) National Geoscience Awards in various fields of geosciences.

Key Awardees:

- The **National Geoscience Award for Lifetime Achievement** has been conferred upon **Dr Om Narain Bhargava**, well known for his pioneering work in the Himalayas spanning over the last four decades.
- The **National Young Geoscientist Award** has been presented to **Dr Amiya Kumar Samal**, Assistant Professor of Banaras Hindu University who has made significant contribution in understanding the variation of sub-continental lithospheric mantle (SCLM) below different Archean cratons of the Indian shield.

National Geoscience Awards (NGA):

NGA is a symbol of recognition and appreciation for exceptional individuals and organizations that have demonstrated excellence, dedication and innovation in the realm of Geosciences. It was instituted in 1966 by the Ministry of Mines.

The awards are presented in the field of Mineral Discovery and Exploration, Basic Geosciences, Applied Geosciences and Mining, Mineral Beneficiation and Sustainable Mineral Development.

320. Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting **Anurag Thakur** has presented the **8th and 9th National Community Radio Awards**. The awards have been conferred during the Inaugural Session of the two-day Regional Community Radio Sammelan (North) held at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi.

For the 9th National Community Radio Awards, a total of 12 Awards in 4 Categories have been given.

Awards	Winners		Name of Programme
Thematic Awards	1st	Radio Mind Tree, Ambala, Haryana	Hope Jeene Ki Rah
	2nd	Radio Hirakhand, Sambalpur, Odisha	Adhar O PoshanBigyan
	3rd	Green Radio, Sabour, Bihar	PoshanShrinkhla
Most Innovative Community Engagement Awards	1st	Radio SD, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh	Hizra in Between
	2nd	Kabir Radio, Sant Kabir Nagar, Uttar Pradesh	Selfie Le Le Re
	3rd	Radio Mind Tree, Ambala, Haryana	Book Bugs
Promoting Local Culture Awards	1st	Voice of SOA, Cuttack, Odisha	Asmita
	2nd	Friends FM, Tripura, Agartala	Revived a dying art: MASK & POT
	3rd	PantnagarJanvani, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand	Dadi Ma Ka Batua

Sustainability Model Awards	1st	Radio Hirakhand, Sambhalpur, Odisha	
	2nd	Vayalaga Vanoli, Madurai, Tamil Nadu	
	3rd	VAGAD Radio "90.8", Banswara, Rajasthan	

Note: As of 23rd July 2023, there are a total of 449 Community Radio Stations in the country, out of which 70 % are in the rural areas.

The Government of India instituted the National Community Radio Awards to promote better programming in Community Radio and encourage Community Radio Stations to generate programmes in the interest of local community.

The awards are given to those Community Radio Stations who have done exemplary work in the field of Community Radio Broadcasting through Community Centric Programmes.

The National Community Radio Awards carry 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize for Rs.1 Lakh, Rs.75,000 and Rs.50,000 respectively.

321. Byculla railway station in central **Mumbai, Maharashtra** has won the **2022 UNESCO Asia Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation (Award of Merit)**. This is India's oldest railway station (169 years-old).

- The recognition comes after 5 years of restoration activities of the railway station started in 2018.
- Byculla railway station was built in 1852.
- It is one of the original stations on the Thane-Bombay rail network that was inaugurated in 1853.

322. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced the awards for the Best Referee and the Assistant Referee for the season 2022-2023.

Rahul Gupta has been named the Best Referee, and **Kishan Chand Joshi** has been named the Best Assistant Referee.

323. Flautist **Shashank Subramanyam** and Carnatic vocalist **Aruna Sairam** have been presented with the prestigious **Chevalier De L'orde Des Arts Et Des Lettres awards** by the French government at a ceremony held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The award has been given in recognition of their contribution to the music field and development of Indo-France relations.

Chevalier De L'orde Des Arts Et Des Lettres:

- The Ordre des Arts et des Lettres ('Order of Arts and Letters') is an order of **France** established on 2 May 1957 by the Minister of Culture.
- Its purpose is the recognition of significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of these fields.
- The award is given at 3 levels: Commandeur (Commander), Officier (Officer), and Chevalier (Knight).

324. Professor Thalappil Pradeep from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras' Department of Chemistry has been honoured with the 15th edition of the **International Eni Award 2023**, which is considered among the top global honours for scientific research in energy and environment.

- He has been recognized for his work on affordable clean water using advanced materials.
- He discovered advanced sustainable and affordable Nano scale materials for the removal of toxic contaminants from water.

International Eni Award:

It is a prize awarded by the Italian oil and gas company Eni since 2007, which aims to encourage better use of energy sources and increased environmental research. It is given in three categories; Energy Transition, Energy Frontiers and Advanced Environmental Solutions.

The prize is composed of a gold medal, a citation and a cash component.

325. The US India SME Council has presented the **"Global Incredible Inc Leadership Award"** to Union Minister of Tourism and Culture **G Kishan Reddy** for his efforts to promote tourism and India's rich culture.

US India SME Council:

It is a Non-profit, Membership, and a Premier Business Advocacy Organization, based in Washington, DC, USA. It is dedicated to serve the Small Business Community and to become a new voice for Small to Medium Business Enterprises (SMBEs) in the U.S. and India.

326. NTPC Limited has been honoured with the prestigious **Economic Times (ET) HR World Future Skills Awards 2023**. The company has received awards in two categories: "*Best Use of AI/AR/VR in Learning and Upskilling*" and "*Best Advances in Creating Extended Enterprise Learning Programs*."

327. The President of India Draupadi Murmu has presented the '**Bhoomi Samman- 2023**' awards to **9 State Secretaries and 68 District Collectors** along with their teams for achieving saturation of the core components of Digital India Land Records Modernization Program (DILRMP) - the core of Governance.

The awards have been given to Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tripura, and West Bengal at a function organized by the Union Ministry of Rural Development in Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

Out of 766 districts in the country, 68 districts have won "Platinum Prize" in six categories under the DILRMP.

Bhoomi Samman awards:

The award honour the contributions made by government employees and their teams in bringing the idea of an empowered India online to reality. It will be awarded for the first time in the previous 75 years.

Digital India Land Records Management Program (DILRMP):

DILRMP has been run by the Department of Land Resources from the year 2008-9 with 100 percent funding from the Central Government. The main objective of this program is to develop a modern, detailed and transparent land records management system for the convenience of the citizens.

328. Moksha Roy, a 7-year old Indian-origin girl from Hertfordshire, the United Kingdom, has been awarded the **UK Prime Minister's Points of Light Award** as Sustainability Champion for volunteering for several sustainability initiatives including raising funds for children in need for United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

She has been the world's youngest Sustainability Champion, who started advocating for the United Nations (UN)'s Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) initiative against micro-plastic pollution at the age of 3.

Points of Light Award:

It was first established by George H.W. Bush, former President of the USA, in 1990. In April 2014, **United Kingdom** Points of Light was launched, it was developed in partnership with the US programme. The award is presented to outstanding individual volunteers who are making a change in their community.

329. The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has awarded the **Ministry of Coal** under the “**Best Engagement**” category for its achievements in e-procurement through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

The Ministry has performed consistently well on the GeM platform for two financial years in a row.

As on 17th July 2023, the actual procurement facilitated through GeM this financial year stands at an impressive Rs.3,909 crore.

Other Awards:

Coal India Limited (CIL) has been awarded “Rising Star” by GeM.

NLC India Limited has been awarded in the “TimelyPayments” category.

330. Coal India Limited (CIL), a Maharatna Public Sector Unit (PSU) under the Ministry of Coal, has been honoured with the ‘**Rising Star Award**’ in appreciation of its outstanding efforts to enhance procurement through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal in the fiscal FY 2022–23.

CIL has produced **703.2 MT** of coal in FY'23, registering a growth of 13%.

331. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has been selected as the **41st recipient** of the **Lokmanya Tilak National Award** in recognition of his exceptional leadership and his efforts to promote the spirit of patriotism among the citizens.

The Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust will honour him on 1st August 2023 on the occasion of the 103rd death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak, a prominent figure in India's freedom struggle in the early 20th century.

Lokmanya Tilak National Award:

The award was started in 1983. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh as well as memento.

332. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, one of the leading private life insurer in India, has won the **Insurer Innovation Award 2023** for the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region at The World's Digital Insurance Awards.

The award, hosted by TDI (The Digital Insurer), acknowledges Bajaj Allianz Life's ground-breaking WhatsApp Conversational Platform which empowers customers to digitally service their policies seamlessly.

333. The **Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM)** has been awarded the **SKOCH Award** under the theme "State of Governance India 2047" in Gold category for its outstanding efforts in creating marketing avenues for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the Union Territory.

Mission Director JKRLM is Indu Kanwal Chib.

Other awardees:

The Government of **Gujarat's** handloom and handicraft training initiative **Hastkala Setu Yojana** has won a gold medal SKOCH award in the category 'Ease of Doing Business'. The project has been recognised for its upskilling of rural artisans across Gujarat.

SKOCH Award:

SKOCH Award is India's highest independent civilian honour. The awards have been non-controversial and non-partisan for 25 years. It was instituted in 2003.

334. The **Ministry of Culture's** Culture Working Group has achieved a **Guinness World Record** for organizing the **largest display of Lambani items** during the 3rd G20 culture working group (CWG) meeting held at Hampi, Karnataka.

The theme for the exhibit is 'Culture Unites All'. This display is titled 'Threads of Unity' and celebrates the aesthetic expressions and design vocabulary of Lambani embroidery.

Over 450 Lambani women artisans and cultural practitioners associated with Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra Kendra (SKKK) came together to create these items using GI-tagged **Sandur Lambani embroidery** having 1755 patchworks.

Lambani embroidery:

It is a vibrant and intricate form of textile embellishment characterized by colourful threads, mirror work, and a rich array of stitch patterns. It is practised in several villages of Karnataka such as Sandur, Keri Tanda, Mariyammanahalli, Kadirampur, Sitaram Tanda, Bijapur, and Kamalapur.

It is also known as Banjara embroidery. It is mainly practiced by the community of Lambanis. It is characterised by colourful threads, mirror work, and a rich array of stick patterns.

Note: Sandur Lambani embroidery received GI-tag in 2010.

335. Mary Kom, former Rajya Sabha member and India's first-ever Olympic medallist in women's boxing, has been honoured with the India Global Forum (IGF) United Kingdom (UK) Special Award: **Global Indian Icon of the Year award (2023)** at the 5th annual UK-India Awards (2023) held in Fairmont Windsor Park, UK.

She has been recognized for her remarkable 20-year journey filled with dedication and unwavering commitment to the sport of boxing.

336. Michael Rosen, a renowned British poet, and writer, has been recognized for his literary contributions and honored with the prestigious **PEN Pinter Prize 2023**. He is known for making poetry accessible to children through his work and performances. His themes are often social, political, and ethical.

PEN Pinter Prize:

The Prize was established in 2009 by English PEN, the founding centre of a global literary network that promotes literature and human rights. It is awarded annually to a writer resident in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Commonwealth or former Commonwealth.

337. The President of the World Bank **Ajay Banga** has been named among the 2023 annual list of "**Great Immigrants**" that honours individuals who have strengthened the United States of America (USA) through their contributions.

The list is created by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA, a philanthropic organization.

He has become the first-ever Indian American to lead the World Bank in June 2023 and he is the only honouree from India in 2023 list of "Great Immigrants".

He was awarded with the **Padma Shri** in **2016** for his contributions in the fields of trade & industry.

338. The **Department of Health and Family Welfare** of the Union Health & Family Welfare Ministry has been awarded the winner of **Kreta Vikreta Gaurav Samman Samaroh 2023** in Highest Single-Bid Procurements in the 2022-23 fiscal category.

The awards event has been organized by the Government e-Marketplace of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

These awards aim to celebrate those who share the vision of a transparent, inclusive, and efficient public procurement landscape in India.

339. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced the winners of the AIFF annual awards for the season 2022-23.

Indian football team midfielder **Lallianzuala Chhangte** ((Mizoram) has been named the **AIFF Men's Footballer of the Year for 2022-23** for the first time and **Manisha Kalyan**, Indian Women's Football Player from Punjab, has been named the **AIFF Women's Footballer of the Year for 2022-23** for the 2nd time.

Other winners of AIFF Awards 2022-23:

- AIFF Men's Emerging Player of the Year 2022-23: Akash Mishra
- AIFF Women's Emerging Player of the Year 2022-23: Shilji Shaji
- AIFF Men's Coach of the Year 2022-23: Clifford Miranda
- AIFF Women's Coach of the Year 2022-23: Priya Parathi Valappil

340. Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla have presented the coveted **Elephant Family environmental award** to Indian conservationists at the 2023 Animal Ball, Lancaster House, London, United Kingdom to recognise contributions to protecting Asian Life.

- **Kartiki Gonsalves**, Filmmaker documentary "The Elephant Whisperes', has received the Tara Award.
- **The Real Elephant Collective (TERC)**, a wildlife conservation group from India, consisting of 70 Adivasi artists, has been honoured with Mark Shand Award.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

341. M Venkaiah Naidu, India's former Vice President, has released a book titled **"As the Wheel Turns"** to mark the Rayala Corporation's Diamond Jubilee (75th year celebration) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The book is authored by **Ranjit Pratap**, Managing Director of Rayala Corporation.

The book explains a remarkable 50 years journey of Ranjit Pratap's personal experiences, hardships, and triumphs in the world of business.

342. Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change **Bhupender Yadav** has released the pictorial book titled as **"Biodiversity and Importance of Mangrove Ecosystem"** authored by scientists from the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

It provides a comprehensive overview of the mangrove ecosystem in India and is available in English, Tamil, and Telugu.

343. T.S. Seshan, the former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, has authored a book titled as **"Through the Broken Glass: An Autobiography"**. The book depicts his term as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) from 1990 to 1995 with a page count of 368. It has been published 4 years after he passed away in 2019.

The book has been published by Rupa Publications India.

Other books by him: "An Undocumented Wonder: The Making of the Great Indian Election."

344. Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala, has released the novel **"Krishnan Oru Ezhaam Indriyam"**, the Malayalam translation of **'Krishna-the 7th Sense'** authored by **Prof. Debashis Chatterjee**, Director of Institute of Management (IIM)-Kozhikode, Kerala during the event held at IIM, Kozhikode, Kerala.

The book has been translated from English to Malayalam by **V Madhusoodan**.

The Governor has also disclosed the latest edition of Debashis Chatterjee's work Karma Sutras-Leadership and Wisdom in Uncertain Times, the lead book of the IIMK (Kozhikode)-Penguin Series for New Managers.

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PERSON IN NEWS

345. The former Union Minister and senior Punjab BJP leader **Vijay Sampla** has resigned from the post of chairperson of National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC). He has been holding the charge of NCSC chairperson since 2021.

He served as chairman, for the Khadi and Village Industries Board, Punjab from 2009-12.

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):

NCSC is an Indian constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Anglo Indian communities to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. Article 338 of the Indian constitution deals with NCSC.

The 1st NCSC was formed on 24th February 2004 and was headed by Suraj Bhan as chairman.

NCSC works under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

346. Commodore **A Madhavarao** (Retd) has been appointed as the Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Defence, effective from 19th July 2023.

He has been appointed till the date of his superannuation on 30th April 2026 or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

347. The Ministry of Steel (MoS) has extended the tenure of **Amitava Mukherjee** as the Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) Additional charge of **NMDC Limited**, earlier known as National Mineral Development Corporation and NMDC Steel Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of NMDC Limited for 3 months.

The extended tenure comes into effect from 1st September 2023 to 19th November 2023 or till a regular CMD is appointed or until further orders, whichever is the earliest.

- 348. Ritesh Chauhan**, a 2005 batch IAS officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre, has been given additional charge of the post of **Managing Director (MD)**, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (**NAFED**) under Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- 349.** The Chief Minister of Odisha **Naveen Patnaik** has become the **2nd longest-serving Chief Minister in India** with a tenure of **23 years and 139 days**. He took charge on 5th March 2000.
- He has surpassed the record set by former West Bengal CM Jyoti Basu who holds office for 23 years 137 days from 21st June to 5th November 2000.
 - He is also the 3rd CM after Pawan Chamling and Jyoti Basu to win five consecutive terms as CM.
 - **Pawan Kumar Chamling**, the former CM of Sikkim, holds the 1st position as the longest-serving CM (24 years and 166 days) after independence in India.
- 350. James Ferguson 'Jim' Skea** of the **United Kingdom** has been elected as the new chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (**IPCC**). He has defeated his nearest rival Thelma Krug of Brazil by 90-69.
- IPCC Bureau will have 34 members including the chair.
- 351. Pedro Sánchez**, General Secretary of Spanish Socialist Worker's party, has been named the **interim Prime Minister of Spain**. The interim government will remain in power until a resolution is reached for the political uncertainty that emerged from the inconclusive elections held on 23rd July 2023.
- He has been the **7th PM** of Spain.
- Note: Cortes** is the official name of the Spanish Parliament. It comprise two Houses: the Congress of Deputies and the Senate.
- 352. Nivruti Rai**, the former country head of Intel India, has recently (in July 2023) appointed as the **MD & CEO** of **Invest India**. She has replaced Manmeet K Nanda, Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on 12th July 2023, who had assumed this additional charge of MD and CEO ad-interim in March 2023.

353. Retired IAS officer and former Chief Secretary of J&K **Braj Raj Sharma** has been appointed as the **State Election Commissioner of Jammu & Kashmir** with effect from the date he assumes charges till he attains the age of 65. He succeeded KK Sharma whose tenure completed on 1st February 2023.

The appointment has been made by Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha in exercise of the power conferred by proviso to sub-section (3) of Section 36 of the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989.

354. DG Rakesh Pal has been appointed as the **25th Director General** of the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**. He is an alumnus of the Indian Naval Academy and joined Indian Coast Guard in January 1989.

He hails from Uttar Pradesh.

He was conferred with Tatrakshak Medal in 2013 and President Tatrakshak Medal in 2018 for his illustrious service.

355. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **Manoj Yadava**, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Haryana cadre, as the **Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF)**.

He will succeed Sanjay Chander who will retire on 31st July 2023.

Other appointments:

- **Shafi Ahsan Rizvi** has been appointed as Advisor of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- **Rajesh Pradhan** has been appointed as Joint Director in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

356. President of India Draupadi Mormu, in exercise of the power conferred by the Constitution of India, has appointed the following High Court Judges as Chief Justices of High Courts.

- **Justice Sunita Agarwal**, judge of the Allahabad High Court, has been appointed as Chief Justice of the **Gujarat High Court**.
- **Justice Alok Aradhe**, judge of the Karnataka High Court, has been appointed as Chief Justice of **Telangana High Court**.
- **Justice Subhasis Talapatra**, judge of the Orissa High Court, has been appointed as Chief Justice of **Orissa High Court**. He will take charge on 7th August 2023.

- **Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai**, judge of Gujarat High Court, has been appointed as Chief Justice of the **Kerala High Court**.

High Court Judge:

- The Chief Justice and judges of the High Courts are appointed by President under Article 217.
- A High Court judge retires at the age of 62.
- A judge (including Chief Justice) of a High Court could be transferred under Article 222.
- A Judge of the High Court can be removed from office only for proven misbehaviour or incapacity in the manner in which a Supreme Court judge is removed.

357. Sat Pal Bhanoo, who currently serves as the Additional Zonal Manager at LIC of India's Zonal Office in Bhopal, has been appointed as the new **Managing Director** of the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**.

He has succeeded Siddhartha Mohanty.

He has been appointed with effect from the date of assumption of charge of office and up to the date of his superannuation on 31st December 2025 or until further orders, whichever comes earlier.

Now, LIC has 4 MDs: Sat Pal Bhanoo, Mini Ipe, M Jagannath, and Tablesh Pandey.

358. Rajay Kumar Sinha has taken charge as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAPS), a wholly-owned investment banking arm of SBI.

Prior to this, he was in charge of Treasury operations at the State Bank of India (SBI).

359. The Ministry of Finance has appointed **Pramod Rao**, Executive Director, SEBI, as a Member in the Board of the **International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA)**. He replaced Sujit Prasad, Executive Director SEBI, who was appointed as a Member (representing SEBI) in IFSCA in July 2020.

360. Justice Sheo Kumar Singh I has been appointed as the **Acting Chairperson** of **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with effect from 6th July 2023.

He has succeeded Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, chairperson of NGT (July 2018-July 2023), who retired on 6th July 2023.

National Green Tribunal (NGT):

The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18th October 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

The orders of Tribunals are binding, and it has the authority to offer affected persons relief in the form of compensation & damages.

New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other four place of sitting of the Tribunal.

361. The **International Astronomical Union (IAU)** has named a **minor planet** after **4 Indians** namely Aswin Sekhar, India's prominent meteor astronomer from Kerala, Ashok Kumar Verma, an Indian astrophysicist, Kumar Venkataramani, an Indian astronomer and Ritu Parekh, planetary geologist from Gujarat.

This honour has been conferred at the 2023 edition of Asteroids Comets Meteors Conference held in Arizona, the USA.

Aswin Sekhar is the **first professional meteor astronomer from India** in modern times.

Minor Planets:

Minor planets are small celestial bodies within the solar system that are orbiting the sun. These include the asteroids, Pluto, and other icy worlds beyond Neptune, and a diverse host of other bodies.

362. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved a two-year extension in the tenure of **Dr Rajkumar Upadhyay**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT).

His appointment is valid for 2 years till 9th July 2025 or attaining the age of 60 years.

363. Luis Suárez Miramontes, the so-called “Golden Galician” who is the only **Spanish man** to win football’s most prestigious individual award, the Ballon d’Or, has recently passed away in Milan, Italy. He was born in La Coruna, Spain in 1935.

- He won the Ballon d’Or in 1960 and was runner-up in 1961 and 1964.
- He represented Barcelona team for 253 games scoring 141 goals from 1954 to 1961.
- He was nicknamed as “The Architect”.

364. Microsoft India has appointed **Irina Ghose** as the new Managing Director (MD). He has replaced Anant Maheshwari who stepped down from his position.

Navtez Singh Bal has been appointed as the new Chief Operating Officer (COO). He was earlier heading the Government, Public Sector and Education Business for Microsoft in India which is now taken care of by Venkat Krishnan.

365. K Rajaraman, Secretary of the Department of Telecommunications and 1989-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, has been named the **next Chairman** of the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** with effect from August 2023.

He will succeed Injeti Srinivas, the first chairman of the IFSC who will complete his three-year tenure in July 2023.

His appointment is valid for 3 years starting from the date he assumes charge, or until he reaches the age of 65, or until further orders are issued, whichever occurs earlier.

366. SBI Cards and Payment Services (SBI Card), India’s largest credit card issuer, has appointed **Abhijit Chakravorty** as the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for two years.

He is currently a Deputy MD at SBI.

He will replace Rama Mohan Rao Amara on 12th August 2023.

367. Sheikh Talal Fahad Al Ahmad Al Sabah of Kuwait has been elected as the new President of the **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** from 2023-27 by the 42nd OCA General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand.

He has replaced his older brother **Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah**, who led the OCA for 30 years until 2021.

Olympic Council of Asia (OCA):

OCA is an independent non-governmental not-for-profit international Asian sport organization currently with 45 member National Olympic Committees.

Headquarters: Kuwait city, Kuwait

Established: 1982

368. Rohit Jawa has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL). He has succeeded Sanjiv Mehta. He is also the President of Unilever South Asia and a Member of the Unilever Leadership Executive (ULE).

369. The **Government of Kerala** has appointed IAS officer **V Venu**, who is currently the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), as Chief Secretary of the state. He has succeeded V.P. Joy.

Sheikh Darvesh Saheb, who is currently the head of the Fire and Rescue services in Kerala, has been appointed as the Director-General of Police (DGP) of Kerala. He has replaced Anil Kanth.

370. The Government of India (GoI) has extended the tenure of **Brajendra Navnit** as **Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India** to the World Trade Organization (WTO) by **9 months** beyond 28th June 2023 and upto 31st March 2024 or until further orders.

He is a 1999-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre.

He has been serving as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the WTO since 2020.

371. Anurag Verma, a 1993-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, has been appointed as the **42nd Chief Secretary of Punjab** in Chandigarh, Punjab. He has succeeded Vijay Kumar Janjua.

He will also hold the charge as principal secretary, personnel, and vigilance.

372. Veteran USA actor Alan Arkin, who received four Academy Award nominations and won an Oscar, has recently passed away in California, USA at the age of 89. He was born on 26th March 1934 in Brooklyn, New York, USA. He demonstrated his versatility from farcical comedy to chilling drama. He won his **Oscar** for his supporting performance in the indie comedy "Little Miss Sunshine" in 2007.

373. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the reappointment of **Tushar Mehta** as the **Solicitor General of India (SGI)** for a period of three years with effect from 1st July 2023.

He has been serving as the SGI since 10th October 2018. This is the 2nd extension granted to him by the government of India.

The ACC has also approved the re-appointment of 6 Additional Solicitor General (ASG) for the Supreme Court of India for a period of 3 years namely: *Vikramjeet Banerjee, KM Nataraj, Balbir Singh, Suryaprakash V Raju, N Venkatraman and Aishwarya Bhati*.

Solicitor General of India (SGI):

The Solicitor General of India is subordinate to the Attorney General for India. The SGI is the **second-highest law officer** of the country.

374. In **P.M. Prasad** has been appointed as the new **Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)** of **Coal India Limited (CIL)**. He has succeeded Pramod Agrawal, who superannuated on June 30, 2023.

He was previously holding the charge of CMD of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) since 1st October 2020.

375. Vice Admiral **Atul Anand** has been appointed as the Additional Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs in the Ministry of Defence. He was commissioned into the executive branch of the Indian Navy on 1 January 1988.

He has succeeded **Lt Gen Anil Puri**, who retired on 28th February 2023.

376. Lt Gen M.U. Nair has been appointed as the new National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) by the National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC), the cyber security and e-surveillance agency under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

- He is the third cyber security chief in India.
- He has succeeded Lt Gen (retd.) Dr Rajesh Pant.

377. Ajit Agarkar, the former Indian Cricketer, has been appointed as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) new **Chairman** of the **Senior Men's Selection Committee** by succeeding the previous Chairman **Chetan Sharma**, who resigned from the post in February 2023.

The Senior Men's Selection Committee chaired by Ajit Agarkar consists of Shiv Sundar Das, Subroto Banerjee, Salil Ankola, and Sridharan Sharath.

378. The 31 members of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, an intergovernmental military alliance, has decided to extend the tenure of **Jens Stoltenberg**, Secretary-General of NATO for another year until 1st October 2024.

This is the fourth time he got his term extended by NATO.

He served as the former Prime Minister of Norway.

379. Dr. B. Neeraja Prabhakar, Vice Chancellor of Telangana State Horticultural University, has been appointed as the Chairman of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) for the ICAR-Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research (IIOPR).

She has assumed office on 13th June 2023 and will head a 10-member committee for a period of 3 years.

380. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed **P. Vasudevan** as the new **Executive Director (ED)** with effect from July 03, 2023. He will look after Department of Currency Management, Corporate Strategy and Budget Department (Areas other than that of Budget & Funds) and Enforcement Department.

Prior to being promoted as ED, P. Vasudevan was the Chief General Manager-in-charge of the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems.

- 381.** Senior Congress leader and Chhattisgarh health minister **T.S. Singh Deo** has been appointed as the **deputy chief minister of Chhattisgarh**. The appointment has been approved by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge at the Congress headquarters in Delhi.
- 382. Ajit Pawar** has recently (July 2023) been appointed as the **Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra** in the presence of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and existing Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Raj Bhawan, Mumbai, Maharashtra, by joining the National Democratic Alliance.
Along with him 8 other Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leaders took oath as ministers.

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OBITUARIES

- 383. American** jazz and traditional pop singer **Anthony Dominick Benedetto**, known professionally as **Tony Bennett**, has recently passed away at the age of 96 in New York, USA. He was born on 3rd August 1926 in New York, USA. He was awarded 20 Grammy Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award, and two Primetime Emmy Awards. He made the album '**Cheek to Cheek**' in collaboration with Lady Gaga in 2014. He received first Grammy for the song '**I Left My Heart in San Francisco**' under two category for Record of the Year and Best Solo Vocal Performance, Male.
- 384. Milan Kundera**, Czech-Republic born French writer, has recently passed away in Paris, France at the age of 94. He was born on 1st April 1929 in Brno city, Czech Republic. His best-known work is "**The Unbearable Lightness of Being**". His notable works include: 'The Joke'; 'The Book of Laughter and Forgetting'; 'Life is Elsewhere'; 'Immortality'; 'Identity' etc.
- 385.** Veteran **Marathi** writer and columnist **Shirish Kanekar** has passed away in Mumbai, Maharashtra at the age of 80. He was born on 6th June 1943 in Pune, Maharashtra. He was popular for his newspaper columns on Cinema, Cricket, and Politics.

Notable works: Humorous articles like 'Kanehari', 'Fillambaji', and 'Shirishasan'; Bollywood movies such as 'Nut Bolt Bolpat', 'Kanehari', and 'Cricket Vedh', Books such as 'Irsalaki'; and 'Surparambya'.

386. Marathi actor and director **Ravindra Mahajani** has recently passed away in Pune, Maharashtra. He was born on 7th October 1949 in Belgaum, Bombay State.

He was known as "*the Vinod Khanna of the Marathi film industry*" due to his personality and looks.

Major films: Gondhalat Gondhal, Laxmichi Paule, Saat Hindustani, Kalat Nakalat, Panipat, etc.

387. Indian mathematician and educationalist **Mangala Narlikar** has passed away at the age of 80 in Pune, Maharashtra. She was born on 17th May 1943 in Bombay Province, British India.

Books written: "Ganitachyaa Sopya Vata", "An Easy Access to Basic Mathematics", and "A Cosmic Adventure", etc.

388. Indian politician Oommen Chandy has recently passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka. He was born on 31st October 1943 in Puthuppally, Kingdom of Travancore, British Raj (present day Kottayam district, Kerala).

- He served as the **10th Chief Minister of Kerala** from 2004 to 2006 and again from 2011 to 2016.
- He is the longest serving MLA in the Kerala Legislative Assembly and the only Indian Chief Minister to achieve award for public service from the United Nations.
- He was a senior leader of the Indian National Congress party.

During his tenure as Minister for Labour (Kerala Government), he introduced **unemployment wages** for the first time in the country.

389. Indian painter and sculptor Karuvattu Mana Vasudevan Namboothiri, also known as Namboothiri, has recently passed away in Kottakkal, Malappuram district of Kerala. He was born on 13th September 1925 Ponnani, Madras Presidency, British India.

- He was famous for his line art and copper relief works.

- He was awarded the Raja Ravi Varma Award in 2003.
- He was also a recipient of the Kerala State Film Award for Best Art Director.

390. Nirmala Buch has passed away recently at the age of 97 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. She was born on 11th October 1925 in Khurja district of Uttar Pradesh.

- She had served as the **first and only woman chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh** from 1991 to 1993.
- She was a 1960 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer who is well-known for her primary role in framing of 'gramin vikas' and 'panchayati raj' system in MP.
- She had also served as financial and education secretary from 1975-1977 to the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- She established "Mahila Chetna Manch" in 1984 to work for women empowerment.

391. Nikki McCray-Penson, a former **basketball** star and current Rutgers assistant coach, has recently passed away at age 51. She was born on 17th December 1971 in Collierville, Tennessee, USA.

She won two Olympic gold medals for the USA-first in Atlanta in 1996 and then in Sydney in 2000.

She was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012.

SPORTS

392. Indian Badminton players **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty** have won the Men's Doubles title by defeating **Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto of Indonesia** at the finals of the **Korea Open 2023** held at Jinnam Stadium in Yeosu, South Korea. Both the players have become the first Indian pair to win the Korea Open.

Other winners:

Category	Winners
Men's singles	Anders Antonsen (Denmark)

Women's singles	An Se-young (South Korea)
Women's doubles	Chen Qingchen & Jia Yifan (China)
Mixed doubles	Feng Yanzhe & Huang Dongping (China)

393. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen** has recently won **F1 Qatar Airways Hungarian Grand Prix 2023** held in Budapest, Hungary. This marks Red Bull's team **12th win** in 2023.

- Red Bull's achievement broke the record of McLaren's 11 wins in 1988.
- This also marks Verstappen's 7th consecutive win. He completed the race with 26 points.

Lando Norris from McLaren has finished second with 18 points and Sergio Perez from Red Bull has finished third with 15 points.

394. Bollywood actor **Shah Rukh Khan** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of **ICC World Cup 2023**. He has launched the World Cup 2023 campaign '**It takes one day**' in his iconic voiceover.

The video has been organized by Meta, the official digital content licensee of the ICC.

The 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup will be held in India from October 5 to November 19, 2023.

The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad will be the venue for the opening and closing games.

395. Sri Lankan cricketer **Lahiru Thirimanne** has announced his retirement from **international cricket** with immediate effect, after a 12-year cricket career. He represented Sri Lanka in 44 Test matches, 127 One Day Internationals (ODI) and 26 Twenty20 (T20) Internationals after his debut in 2010.

396. **Denmark's** professional cyclist **Jonas Vingegaard** of the Jumbo-Visma has won the 110th edition of the Tour de France for a second straight year on the Champs-Elysees in Paris, France.

He crossed the finish line after the 21-day race 7min 29sec ahead of Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar.

The Tour de France is an annual men's multiple-stage bicycle race primarily held in France.

397. Pakistan A cricket team has won the **Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2023** by defeating India A in the finals held at R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

This marks Pakistan's second consecutive win in the tournament, previously it won the cup in the 2019 finals against Bangladesh in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Player of the series: Nishant Sindhu (India)

Most runs in the tournament: Avishka Fernando (Sri Lanka)

Most wickets in the tournament: Nishant Sindhu (India)

Player of the match (final): Tayyab Tahir (Pakistan)

398. The 3rd edition of the **ISSF Junior World Championships 2023** has been held from 16 to 24 July 2023 at Changwon Shooting Range, Republic of Korea.

In the championship, **China** has topped the medal tally with 28 medals (12 Gold, 9 Silver, and 7 Bronze).

India has finished **2nd** with **17 medals (6 Gold, 6 Silver and 5 Bronze)**, followed by Ukraine with 10 medals (5 Gold, 3 Silver, and 2 Bronze).

India's Gold Medal winners:

Shubham Bisla (10m air pistol men), Sainyam (10m air pistol women), Abhinav Shaw and Gautami Bhanot (10m air rifle mixed team), Abhinav Shaw, Srikanth Dhanush and Parth Rakesh Mane (10m air rifle men's team), Kamaljeet (50m pistol men), Yashita Shokeen, Veerpal Kaur and Tiyana (50m pistol women's team), and Kamaljeet, Ankait Tomar and Sandeep Bishnoi (50m pistol men's team).

A total of 90 Indian shooters participated in pistol, rifle, and shotgun events in the under-21 age category.

399. India's tennis player **Sumit Nagal** has won the men's singles title by defeating **Dalibor Svrčina** of Czech Republic in the Tampere Open 2023 held in Tampere, Finland.

This marks his fourth Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Challenger title in 5 outings and his second title in 2023, when he won the Garden Open 2023 in Rome, Italy.

He has secured **178th place** in ATP World Singles ranking after the winning Tampere Open.

He has also become the first Indian tennis player to win two ATP Challenger titles on European soil.

400. Aditya Samant has become **India's 83rd Chess Grandmaster (GM)** by earning his 3rd GM norm against Aryan Chopra in the 9th round of Biel Chess Festival Master Tournament (MTO) 2023 held in Switzerland.

- He hails from Maharashtra.
- He is the 3rd Indian to achieve the final GM norm at the Biel Chess tournament.

Note: To become a Grandmaster, a player has to secure 3 GM norms and cross the live rating of 2,500 Elo points.

401. Indian cricketer **Yashasvi Jaiswal** has become the **first player** in the history of Indian cricket to hit **171 runs** in his debut Test match away from home. He has become the **17th Indian batter** to hit a century in his Test debut match.

- He has achieved this feat in the first Test match against **West Indies** in Dominica.
- He has broken the record of **Sourav Ganguly** who scored 131 against England at the pitch of Lord's in 1996.
- He is only **the fifth Indian** overall to score a hundred on Test debut overseas. The first to do so was Abbas Ali Baig against England in 1959.
- He has become the **third Indian batsman** to score a century on his Test debut against West Indies. Rohit Sharma and Prithvi Shaw are the other two batsmen to do that.

402. England Football team has won the **Men's 2023 UEFA European U21 Championship title** by defeating **Spain** in the finals held at Batumi Arena, Georgia. This marks England's 3rd UEFA European U21 Championship title after 1982 and 1984.

This also marks the 9th finals of Spain, more than any other country. Italy stands 2nd with 7.

England forward **Anthony Gordon** has been named as the Player of the Tournament.

403. India has finished at the **9th position** securing 2 Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in the competition out of 112 countries at the **64th International Math Olympiad (IMO) 2023** held at Chiba, Japan from 2-13 July 2023.

This is the fourth time India secured a position in the top 10 (India finished 7th in 1998 and in 2001, and 9th in 2002).

Gold medallists: Atul Shatavart Nadig (Bengaluru, Karnataka) and Arjun Gupta (New Delhi)

Silver medallists: Ananda Bhaduri (Guwahati, Assam), and Siddharth Choppara (Pune, Maharashtra)

Bronze medallists: Adhitya Mangudi Venkata Ganesh (Pune, Maharashtra), and Archit Manas (Hyderabad)

Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education – TIFR is the nodal Centre for training and selecting the students for the International Olympiads (in physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and mathematical).

404. The **25th** edition of the **Asian Athletic Championship (AAC) 2023**, the flagship event of the Asian Athletics Association (AAA), has been held in the Supachalasai National Stadium in Bangkok, Thailand from July 12th to July 16th 2023.

This is a biennial event happening once in every two years.

- **Japan** has topped the medal tally with **37 medals** (16 gold, 11 silver, 10 bronze), followed by China with 22 medals (8 Gold, 8 Silver, 6 Bronze).
- **India** has finished **3rd** with **27 medals** (6 gold, 12 silver, 9 bronze).

Thailand has chosen Hindu God "**Hanuman**" as the official mascot of 25th Asian Athletics Championships.

405. The 136th edition of the Wimbledon Championships 2023 has been held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, United Kingdom.

Category	Winners
Gentlemen's singles	Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)
Ladies singles	Markéta Vondroušová (Czech Republic)
Gentlemen's doubles	Wesley Koolhof (Dutch) and Neal Skupski (UK)

Ladies doubles	Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) and Barbora Strýcová (Czech Republic)
Mixed doubles	Mate Pavić (Croatia) and Lyudmyla Kichenok (Ukraine)

406. Team India has overall won **61 medals** (38 Gold, 21 Silver, and 2 Bronze) in the **Commonwealth Senior, Junior, and Youth Weightlifting Championships 2023** held at Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

The event has witnessed 250 weightlifters from 20 countries participating across junior, youth, and senior categories from 12th July to 16th July 2023.

Indian Senior weightlifting contingent have won **20 medals** (9 Gold, 9 Silver, and 2 Bronze) in the championship.

India's medal winners (senior category):

Gold medal: N Ajith (men's 73kg), Ajay Singh (men's 81kg), Shubham Todkar (men's 61kg), Popy Hazarika (women's 59kg), Komal Kohar (women's 45kg), Gyaneshwari Yadav (women's 49kg), Mukund Aher (men's 55kg), S Nirupama Devi (women's 64kg), and Vanshita Verma (women's 81kg).

Silver medal: Jhilli Dalabehera (women's 49kg), Shrabani Das (women's 55kg), T Madhavan (men's 67kg), Harjinder Kaur (women's 71kg), Pallavi S (women's 64kg), Amarjit Guru (men's 89kg), Harshad Wadekar (men's 96kg), Harcharan Singh (men's 102kg), and Lovepreet Singh (men's 109kg).

Bronze medal: Jagdish Vishwakarma (men's 96kg), and Purnima Pandey (women's +87kg).

407. South Zone, led by Hanuma Vihari, has won the **2023 Duleep Trophy** title by defeating West Zone, led by Priyank Panchal, by 75 runs in the finals held at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

South Zone has won the Duleep Trophy after 9 years.

This marks South Zone's 14th title.

Vidwath Kaverappa of South Zone has won both the "Player of the Match" for taking 8 wickets (7/53 and 1/51) in the final match as well as the 'Player of the Series' award for taking 15 wickets in 2 match.

Duleep Trophy:

The Duleep Trophy, also known by its sponsorship name, the MasterCard Duleep Trophy, is a First-Class Cricket tournament in India. It is named after Kumar Shri Duleepsinghji (also called as Duleep), and Indian cricketer from then-British India.

408. Yonex US Open 2023 has been held at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, the USA. It is the part of HSBC Badminton World Federation (BWF) Super 300 series held from 11th July to 16th July 2023.

Winners of Yonex US Open 2023	
Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Li Shi Feng (China)
Women's Singles	Supanida Katethong (Thailand)
Men's Doubles	Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin (Malaysia)
Women's Doubles	Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning (China)
Mixed Doubles	Ye Hong-wei and Lee Chia-hsin (Taiwan)

409. Anshuman Jhingran, an open sea swimmer, has become the youngest person globally to cross **North Channel**. He has crossed at the age of only 18 years and 125 days. He has qualified for a place in the Guinness World Records.

He has become the 114th person to cross the North Channel since 1947.

He hails from Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.

North Channel:

The North Channel is the strait between north-eastern Northern Ireland and south-western Scotland. It connects the Irish Sea with the Atlantic Ocean.

410. R Praggnanandhaa, Indian chess master, has become champion at the **V Geza Hetenyi Memorial Super Grandmaster Chess Tournament 2023** held in Budapest Hungary. He secured a draw against Polish GM Radoslaw Wojtaszek in the final round with the white pieces.

411. World No.1 & Former World Champion **Magnus Carlsen** of **Norway** has won the **SuperUnited Rapid and Biltz Croatia 2023** with a score of **26.0/36**. The event has been held in Westin Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia.

Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia (22.5) has finished 2nd, and Alireza Firouzja (21) of Iran has finished third in the event.

Indian Grand Master (GM) D Gukesh has finished 5th while former World Champion GM Vishwanathan Anand has finished 7th place.

412. Max Verstappen, the Red Bull driver, has won the title at **Formula 1 (F1) Aramco British Grand Prix (GP) 2023** held at Silverstone Circuit in Northamptonshire, England, the UK.

- This marks his **first British GP title** and 6th consecutive F1 win of the 2023 season.
- This also marks Max's 8th win of this season and Red Bull's 10th consecutive win of 2023 season.

Lando Norris, the McLaren driver has finished second, and Lewis Hamilton, the Mercedes driver has finished third.

413. Indian Badminton Player **Lakshya Sen** has recently (in July 2023) won the **men's singles title** at the **2023 Canada Open** by defeating **Li Shi Feng (China)** in the final match held at Markin-MacPhail Centre in Calgary, Canada.

This marks Lakshya Sen's second BWF Super 500 title.

Women's singles: Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)

Men's doubles: Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)

Women's doubles: Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida (Japan)

Mixed doubles: Hiroki Midorikawa and Natsu Saito (Japan)

414. **Parth Salunkhe** has become the **first Indian male archer** to win a **Gold medal** in Recurve men's individual by defeating Song Injun (South Korea) in the **Limerick 2023 World Archery Youth Championship** held in Limerick, Ireland.

- He has also won a Bronze medal in the Recurve mixed team along with Ridhi.
- He is also the sixth Indian archer to become Youth World Champion.

In the championship, **Indian Archery team** have won **11 medals** (6 Golds, 1 Silver, and 4 Bronze) and secured 2nd position in the medal tally.

South Korea has topped the medal tally with 10 medals (6 Gold and 4 Silver).

415. **India** has secured the **first position** in the medal tally at the **34th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2023** held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

India and **Singapore** have emerged as the leading nations, securing an impressive total of four gold medals each.

Name	Medal	State
Dhruv Advani	Gold	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Ishan Pednekar	Gold	Kota, Rajasthan
Megh Chhabda	Gold	Jalna, Maharashtra
Rohit Panda	Gold	Risali, Chhattisgarh

Total 29 gold medals have been awarded at the 34th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2023.

Previously, India has topped the medals tally in Astronomy and Astrophysics (in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2015, and 2021), Physics (in 2018), and Junior Science (in 2014, 2019, 2021, and 2022).

Note: Kazakhstan will host the International Biology Olympiad in 2024.

416. Sri Lanka has won the **International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Qualifier** tournament by defeating **Netherlands** by **128 runs** in the finals held on 9th July 2023 in Harare and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

The CWC 2023 Qualifier, the 12th edition of CWC, has been held from 18th June to 9th July 2023 in Harare and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Sri Lanka has won all the 8 matches they played in the tournament and became the first team from the ICC World Cup 2023 Qualifiers to qualify for the main draw of the World Cup 2023 to be held in India from 5th October to 19th November 2023.

Dilshan Madhushanka has won the player of the match award.

417. Tokyo 2020 Olympic Gold medallist **Neeraj Chopra** has won the gold medal in the Men's Javelin Throw at the **Lausanne Diamond League 2023** held in Lausanne, Switzerland. He has recorded a throw of **87.66 m**.

Julian Weber (Germany) has finished second with the throw of 87.03 m, and Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch (Czech Republic) has finished third with the throw of 86.13 m.

418. Dutch-Belgium racing driver **Max Verstappen** has won the **2023 Austrian Grand Prix** at the circuit Red Bull Ring, Spielberg, Austria. This marks his 7th win out of 9 Formula 1 (F1) events in 2023.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (Monacan Driver) has finished 2nd position and Red Bull's Sergio Perez (Mexican Driver) has finished 3rd position.

419. The **Indian Football Team** has won the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Bangabandhu Championship 2023 by defeating **Kuwait** national football team at the finals held in Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Bengaluru in Karnataka.

This marks India's 9th SAFF Championship title.

SAFF Championship 2023 Awards:

- **Best Goalkeeper:** Anisur Rahman Zico (Bangladesh)
- **Highest Goalscorer:** Sunil Chhetri (India)
- **Most valuable player:** Sunil Chhetri (India)
- **Fair play award of the team:** Nepal
- **Man of the Match (final):** Gurpreet Singh Sandhu (India)

420. Bangladesh One Day International (ODI) Captain **Tamim Iqbal** has announced his retirement from **international cricket** after 16 years of his journey in cricket. He last played against Afghanistan in Chattogram, Bangladesh on 5th July 2023.

He is the highest ODI run scorer for Bangladesh (8313 runs) and scored 14 centuries which is highest among Bangladesh players.

421. The **Netherlands Men's Hockey Team** has defeated **Belgium** to win the 4th edition of **FIH Hockey Pro League 2022-23** in the finals held in Antwerp, Belgium.

- The Netherlands Men's has become the first team in the men's competition to win the title twice.
- The Indian Men's Hockey Team has finished fourth position with 30 points from 16 matches.
- **Player of the match in the finals:** Jip Janssen (The Netherlands).

The **Netherlands Women's Hockey Team** has also won the FIH Hockey Pro League 2022-23 title for the 3rd time by defeating New Zealand in Wagner Hockey Stadium, Amstelveen, The Netherlands.

Player of the match in the finals: Xen de Waard

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IMPORTANT DAYS

422. National Broadcasting Day is observed annually on **23rd July** to commemorate the first radio broadcast made on this day, in 1927, from the Bombay Station of the Indian Broadcasting Company. On this day in 1927, Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC), a personal corporation, launched All India Radio's journey. On June 8, 1936, the British Raj eventually took control of the Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC) and transformed it into All India Radio (AIR).

The year 2023 marks the **96th anniversary** of the establishment of the All India Radio (AIR) which was formerly known as IBC.

423. Income Tax Day or 'Aaykar Diwas' is observed annually across India on **24th July** by the Income Tax Department to commemorate the introduction of provision of income tax in the country.

The year 2023 marks the **164th Income Tax Day**.

On 24th July 1860, Sir James Wilson introduced income tax for the first time in India. The day was celebrated for the first time in 2010, to mark 150 years of income tax in India.

424. World Drowning Prevention Day is observed annually on **25th July** to encourage individuals, governments, UN agencies and civil society organisations to collaborate and provide critical measures to prevent drowning deaths. The day was first observed in 2021.

Theme 2023: "Anyone can drown, no one should"

In May 2023, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted its first-ever resolution on drowning prevention.

Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths.

425. World Mangrove Day, also known as International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, is observed annually on **26th July** to spread awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems as a unique, special, and vulnerable ecosystem and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation, and uses.

- The day was first observed in 2016.
- The day also commemorate Greenpeace activist **Hayhow Daniel Nanoto**, who passed away in 1998 during a massive protest to re-establish the mangrove wetlands in Muisne, Ecuador.

426. Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on **26th July** to commemorate the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation. The Kargil War took place between 3rd May and 26th July 1999 in the Kargil district of Kashmir and along the Line of Control (LoC).

The Kargil War ended in 1999 when the Indian troops took back control over the mountain posts that were occupied by the Pakistani forces.

During the war, the Indian Army recaptured strategic peaks including Tololing, Tiger Hill, and Point 4875.

The day marks victory in **Operation Vijay** in 1999.

The year 2023 marks the **24th anniversary** of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

427. World Hepatitis Day is observed annually on **28th July** to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, which causes inflammation of the liver that leads to severe disease and liver cancer. It is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The day is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate scientist **Dr Baruch Blumberg**. He discovered the Hepatitis B virus (HBV).

The day was first observed in 2008 and by WHO in 2011.

Theme 2023: "One Life, One Liver"

428. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Raising Day, also known as CRPF Foundation Day, is annually observed on **27th July** to commemorate the establishment of CRPF, the largest of India's Central Armed Police Forces, functions under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs.

The year 2023 marks the **85th Raising Day** of CRPF.

- CRPF is the premier central police force of the Union of India for internal security, originally constituted as the crown Representative Police on 27th July 1939.
- It is one of the oldest Central para military forces (now termed as Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)).
- It became the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on the enactment of the CRPF Act of Parliament on 28th December 1949. This Act constituted CRPF as an armed force of the Union.

429. International Tiger Day is observed annually on **July 29th** to spread awareness about dangers and problems faced by tiger population across the world.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **13th** International Tiger Day.

- The World Tiger Day was founded in 2010, during Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit 2010.
- The day was first observed in 2011.
- Tiger is classified as endangered species by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- As per World Wildlife Fund, approximately 95% of the population of tigers has declined in the last 150 years.

Note: As of 2023, India's tiger population has reached **3925**, with an annual growth rate of 6.1%. Madhya Pradesh has the largest tiger population with 785 tigers, followed by Karnataka with 563, Uttarakhand with 560, and Maharashtra with 444.

430. The **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons** is observed annually on **30th July** to raise awareness about the condition of victims of human trafficking and to promote and protect their rights. The day was first observed in 2014.

Theme 2023: "Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind"

431. World Day for International Justice is observed annually on **17th July** to commemorate the momentous approval of the Rome Statute and the formation of the new International Criminal Justice System in 1998. The day also marks the strengthening system of international justice and to promote the rights of the victims.

On 17th July 1998, 120 countries came together to sign a treaty titled the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The establishment came to be known as the International Criminal Court (ICC), which came into force on 1st July 2002.

432. Nelson Mandela International Day is observed annually on **18th July** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid activist who served as the first President from 1994 to 1999. The year 2023 marks the 105th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.

- United Nations officially declared July 18 as Nelson Mandela International day in November 2009.

- The day was first celebrated in 2010.
- **Theme 2023:** "The Legacy Lives on Through You: Climate, Food and Solidarity."

Nelson Mandela:

He was born in Transkei, South Africa in 1918. He was also known as the 'Gandhi of South Africa'. He was a strong follower of Gandhi's teachings. He was felicitated with the **Nobel Peace Prize** in **1993**, **Bharat Ratna** in **1990** & International Gandhi Peace Price in 2001 for his peace-making efforts.

433. World Snake Day is observed annually on **16th July** to spread awareness about the snakes in the world and also to recognize the importance of snakes.

In India, the World Snake Day has been observed at the **National Zoological Park in New Delhi** for the conservation of snakes by creating awareness about different types of snakes in India.

As of now (July 2023), there are 31 number of snakes of 07 species present in the National Zoological Park in New Delhi.

434. International Moon Day is observed annually on **20th July** to commemorate the anniversary of the first landing on the lunar surface by humans. Neil Armstrong was the first human to set foot on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 Mission in 1969.

- The year 2023 marks the observance of the 2nd International Moon Day.
- The day has been organized in cooperation with United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).
- **Theme 2023:** "Lunar Exploration Coordination & Sustainability"

435. World Brain Day is observed annually on **22nd July** to increase public awareness and promote advocacy related to brain health. The day also commemorates the establishment of the World Federation of Neurology (22nd July 1957). The day was first observed in 2014.

Theme 2023: "Brain Health and Disability: Leave No One Behind"

The World Brain Day 2023 is framed by five key aims:

- **Prevention:** Brain disabilities can be prevented, treated, and rehabilitated.
- **Awareness:** Global brain health awareness can reduce the disability associated with brain disorders.
- **Access:** Universal access to care, treatment, rehabilitation, and assistive technology is essential.
- **Education:** Education increases equity for those living with brain disabilities.
- **Advocacy:** Brain health is a human right that applies to everyone, everywhere.

436. National Fish Farmer's Day is observed annually on **10th July** to recognize the contributions of the fish farmers, aquaculture industry professionals and other stakeholders towards sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

The year 2023 marks the observance of **23rd National Fish Farmers Day**.

The day also marks the observance of the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)** Foundation Day. NFDB was set up in 2006 as an autonomous organization under the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

The day was first observed in 2001.

437. World Population Day is observed annually on **11th July** to raise awareness about global population issues. The United Nations Development Programme's Governing Council had established the 'World Population Day' in 1989 after the global population crossed five billion in 1987. The day was first observed in 1990.

Theme 2023: *"Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities"*

438. International Malala Day is observed annually on **12th July** to honour the Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who works for women's right to education across the globe. Since July 12 was her birthday, therefore the United Nations promptly declared that the day will be celebrated as 'Malala Day' to honour the young activist.

Malala Yousafzai:

She was born in Mingora, Pakistan in 1997. She began advocating for women's education in 2008. In 2012, she was attacked by the Taliban. She was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2014** in recognition of her efforts for children's rights which had begun even before she was shot. In 2015, an asteroid '**316201 Malala**' was named in honour of Malala Yousufzai. She has also authored a book titled '**We Are Displaced**' which chronicles her experiences of travelling the world and visiting refugee camps.

439. World Youth Skills Day is observed annually on **15th July** to highlight the importance of equipping young people with skills for employment and entrepreneurship. The day was first observed in 2015.

Theme 2023: "Skilling teachers, trainers and youth for a transformative future"

440. National Doctor's Day is observed annually on **1st July** to recognize the contributions of physicians to individual lives and communities. The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, a renowned physician and the second Chief Minister of West Bengal. He was also an educationist, social worker and freedom fighter. He was awarded **Bharat Ratna** in **1961**.

The first Doctor's Day was observed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in 1991.

Theme 2023: "Celebrating Resilience and Healing Hands"

441. International Sports Journalists Day, also known as World Sports Journalists Day, is observed annually on **2nd July** to honour all sports journalists around the world and also brings awareness regarding sports journalism to the common public. The day was first observed in 1994, when the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) decided to commemorate it in honour of its 70th anniversary.

442. International Plastic Bag Free Day is observed annually on **3rd July** to spread awareness around the need to bring in eco-friendly alternatives and curb plastic pollution. The day was first observed in 2008, when Rezero, a member of Zero Waste Europe (ZWE), initiated it.

The year 2023 marks the 14th edition of the celebrations.

443. World Zoonoses Day is observed annually on **6th July** to raise awareness for the risk of zoonotic diseases. The day commemorates 6th July 1885, when French biologist Louis Pasteur successfully administered the first vaccine against Rabies virus, a zoonotic disease. Zoonoses are infectious diseases that can be spread from animals to humans, and vice versa. It can spread from direct contact with animals or indirectly, vector-borne or food-borne.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2023	Remark
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National Chartered Accountants Day	1 st July	Empowering Financial Excellence	The day commemorate the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on 1 st July 1949.
International Day of Cooperatives	First Saturday of July (2022: 1 st July)	Cooperatives partners for accelerated sustainable development	
Goods and Services Tax (GST) day	1 st July		Goods and Services Tax (GST) was launched on 1 st July 2017.
National Doctor's Day	1 st July	Celebrating Resilience and Healing Hands	The day commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy.
International Sports Journalists Day	2 nd July		The day was first observed in 1994.
World Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) Day	2 nd July		
International Plastic Bag Free Day	3 rd July		The day was first observed in 2008.
World Zoonoses Day	6 th July		
World Chocolate Day	7 th July		The day was first observed in 2009.
World Kiswahili Language Day	7 th July		Kiswahili language is widely spoken in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.
National Students Day	9 th July		The day commemorate the foundation of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a student organization.

National Fish Farmers Day	10 th July		The day was first observed in 2001.
World Population Day	11 th July	Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities	The day was first observed in 1990.
International Malala Day	12 th July		The day celebrates the birth anniversary of the Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who works for women's right to education across the globe.
World Paper Bag Day	12 th July		
World Youth Skills Day	15 th July	Skilling teachers, trainers and youth for a transformative future	The day was first observed in 2015.
World Snake Day	16 th July		
World Day for International Justice	17 th July		
Nelson Mandela International Day	18 th July		
World Chess Day	20 th July		The day was first observed in 2020.

International Moon Day	20 th July		The year 2023 marks the observance of the 2nd International Moon Day.
World Brain Day	22 nd July	Brain Health and Disability: Leave No One Behind	
Pi Approximation Day	22 nd July		
National Flag Adoption Day	22 nd July		The National Flag of India was adopted on 22 nd July 1947.
National Broadcasting Day	23 rd July		
Income Tax Day	24 th July		
World Drowning Prevention Day	25 th July	Anyone can drown, no one should	The day was first observed in 2021.
World In Vitro Fertilization Day	25 th July		The day is observed to commemorate the birth of Louise Joy Brown, the World's first IVF baby.
Kargil Vijay Diwas	26 th July		The day marks victory in Operation Vijay in 1999.
International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	26 th July		
World Hepatitis Day	28 th July	One Life, One Liver	

World Nature Conservation Day	28 th July		
International Tiger Day	29 th July		
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons	30 th July	Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind	
International Friendship Day	30 th July		
World Ranger Day	31 st July		

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