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BREAKING
NEWS

JUNE 2023

BAZOOKA

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **3rd Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting** under the G20 Indian Presidency has successfully held at the International Labour Organization (ILO) headquarters in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

The meeting has been chaired by **Arti Ahuja**, the Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India and the Chair- EWG.

The discussions included progress updates on Antalya and Brisbane Targets by the ILO and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), highlighting the need for accelerated efforts to meet the goals.

Key outcomes under the Indian Presidency include the development of an international reference classification of occupations and extension of ILO and OECD's Skills for Jobs Database to G20 countries to address global skill gaps.

Note: The 4th Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting will be held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 19th July to 21st July 2023.

2. **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** has launched **Amrit Dharohar** and **Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)** initiatives on the occasion of the World Environment Day (5th June).

Amrit Dharohar:

- It aims to promote the unique conservation values of **Ramsar Sites**.
- It will be implemented over the next three years (**2023-26**) to encourage optimal use of wetlands for enhancing biodiversity, carbon stock, ecotourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.

India currently has 75 Ramsar sites that are wetlands of international importance.

MISHTI:

- It aims at **mangrove plantation** along the coastline and on salt pan lands.
- It will cover approximately 540 sq km area across **nine (9) coastal States** and **four (4) UTs** in five years (**2023-2028**).
- It will operate through convergence between MGNREGS, Campa Fund and other sources.
- The Centre will cover 80% of the project cost, while state governments will contribute the remaining 20%.

West Bengal has the highest mangrove cover, followed by Gujarat and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Note: Amrit Dharohar and MISHTI schemes were first announced in the 2023-24 Union budget.

3. India has conducted **Asia's first** demonstration of performance-based navigation for helicopters for a flight from Juhu to Pune using **GAGAN** satellite technology.
- GAGAN refers to *GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation*.
 - It is a space-based augmentation system for providing the best possible navigational services over the Indian FIR (Flight Information Region) with the capability of expanding to neighbouring FIRs.
 - It was jointly developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) and the Airports Authority of India (**AAI**).
4. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** has released the **OTT** (over-the-top) guidelines for the regulation of online depiction of **Tobacco Products** in online

curated content. These guidelines have been released on the occasion of World No-Tobacco Day (31st May).

With this release, **India** has become the **first country** to regulate anti-tobacco warnings on OTT platforms.

As per the guidelines, anti-tobacco health warning message displayed as a static message must be legible and readable, with black font on a white background, and must include the warnings "Tobacco causes cancer" or "Tobacco kills."

5. Cabinet has approved the constitution of an **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)** for the facilitation of the **"World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector"**.

IMC will be constituted under the chairmanship of the **Minister of Cooperation** with the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Minister of Food Processing Industries, and Secretaries concerned as members.

The Ministry of Cooperation will implement a pilot project in at least **10 selected Districts** of different States/ UTs in the country.

The plan entails setting up of various types of agri-infrastructure, including warehouse, custom hiring center, processing units, etc. at Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) level, thus transforming them into multipurpose societies.

The following schemes have been identified for convergence under the Plan:

Ministry	Schemes
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), • Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI), • Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), • Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME), • Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of food grains under the National Food Security Act, • Procurement operations at Minimum Support Price

6. India has conducted a successful launch of the medium-range **Agni-1 missile** from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. The training launch of the Agni-1, which has a strike range of **700 km**, has been conducted by the tri-service Strategic Forces Command (SFC).

Agni-1 is capable of carrying a payload of up to 1000 kg. It is designed & developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

This test launch has successfully validated all operational and technical parameters of the missile.

7. The Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has released the **UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023**, which will replace the 2019 guidelines.

The aim is to establish more quality-focused deemed universities.

The new rules are built on the principle of a **“light but tight”** regulatory framework envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Note: The UGC Act 1965 provides for the central government to declare any institution other than a university the status of institution deemed to be university. The first set of regulations in this regard was notified in 2010.

Salient features of the new regulations:

- Under the 2019 guidelines, higher education institutions having "existence for not less than 20 years" were eligible for applying for the status. However, the revised guidelines have now replaced it with multi-disciplinarity, NAAC grading, NIRF ranking and NBA grading.
 - The new regulations also introduces the “Distinct Institution” category.
 - The **faculty strength** has been increased from **100 to 150**.
 - The **corpus fund** for private institutions has been increased from Rs.10 crore to **Rs.25 crore**, and the creation of **executive councils** like central universities in these universities as well.
 - The revised guidelines have made it mandatory for deemed universities to register on **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**.
 - The institutions can offer twinning programmes, joint degree programmes, and dual degree programmes in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the regulations concerned.
8. The Government of India (GoI) has permitted **2000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** to open Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras (**PMBJAK**) across the country.
- Under this, 1000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras will be opened by August 2023 and 1000 by December 2023.
- More than 9400 PMBJAK have already been opened across the country till now.
- PMBJAK have 1800 types of medicines and 285 other medical devices.

- Medicines at PMBJAK are available at 50% to 90% lesser rate in comparison to the branded medicines.
- To open PMBJAK at least 120 square feet space either privately owned or rental should be available.
- The incentive amount for PMBJAK is Rs.5 lakh (15% of monthly purchase or maximum of Rs.15,000 per month).

Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS):

PACS are village level cooperative credit societies that serve as the last link in a three-tier cooperative credit structure headed by the State Cooperative Banks (SCB) at the state level. PACSs provide **short-term, and medium-term agricultural loans** to the farmers for the various agricultural and farming activities.

The first PACS was formed in 1904.

9. The **Indian Navy** and **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** has successfully engaged an underwater target with an indigenously developed heavyweight Torpedo, named '**Varunastra.**'

This is the second sea-level test in two weeks.

'Varunastra' was inducted by the Indian Navy in 2016 and is developed by the Indian Navy and the Naval Science and Technology Laboratory (NSTL) of DRDO.

10. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully flight-tested the '**Agni Prime**' ballistic missile from the **Abdul Kalam Island** off the coast of **Odisha**. This is the first pre-induction night launch conducted by the users after three successful developmental trials of the missile, validating the accuracy and reliability of the system.

'Agni Prime':

- The Agni Prime, also known as the Agni P, is a medium-range ballistic missile developed by DRDO as a successor for Agni-I and Agni-II missiles.
- It is a **two-stage** canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system.
- It is a canisterised surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km.
- It is the **sixth missile** in the Agni series of ballistic missile.

11. The **53rd Director General Level Border Co-ordination Conference** between India's Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB) has been organized in **New Delhi** from 11th June to 14th June 2023.
- During the conference, BSF delegation from India led by Director General BSF **Dr. Sujoy Lal Thousen** has meet the BGB delegation headed by **Major General AKM Najmul Hasan**.
 - The conference has been organized to discuss border related issues and for better coordination between the two border guarding forces.
 - During the conference, joint curbing of various cross-border crimes and timely exchange of information between the two border guarding forces has been discussed.

12. An IIT (Indian Institute of Technology)-Madras incubated space-tech startup, **GalaxEye Space**, will launch the world's first multi-sensor earth observation satellite named "**Drishti**" incorporating a visible spectrum camera that allows synchronized imaging, capable of capturing multiple images simultaneously.

This will be India's first and the world's highest-resolution multi-sensor imaging satellite. GalaxEye Space is going to launch its first satellite in 2024.

13. The 6th edition of the annual Naval Exercise '**Ekatha**' has been conducted between **India** and **Maldives**. The exercise is scheduled from 4th June to 3rd July 2023 in the Maldives to enhance interoperability in diving and special operations.

In this edition, Indian Navy divers and Marine Commandos (MARCOS) have participated in the exercise.

Ekatha is an exercise to ensure interoperability in diving and special operations between the navies of two countries. It is held annually.

14. The **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Trishul** has visited Durban port in South Africa to commemorate the **130th anniversary** of the 1893 incident at Pietermaritzburg involving **Mahatma Gandhi**.

- On June 7, 1893, Gandhi was evicted from a train at **Pietermaritzburg railway station**, an event that sparked his campaign against racial oppression.
- In the same year, Gandhi arrived in Durban to serve as a lawyer for merchant Dada Abdulla.

This occasion also marks **30 years** of the restoration of diplomatic relations between India and South Africa.

A 'Gandhi-Mandela-King Conference' has also been held in collaboration with the Pietermaritzburg Gandhi Foundation and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

- 15.** Indian and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have successfully held the **first meeting** of the Joint Committee (JC) of the **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** in **New Delhi**.

The meeting has been co-chaired by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Trade.

Key outcomes of the meeting:

- India-UAE have agreed to set a target of **USD 100 billion** of trade in non-petroleum products by **2030** from the USD 48 billion at present.
- Both nations have agreed to set-up a **UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC)** as a B2B collaboration mechanism, with a focus on MSMEs and start-ups, for building greater economic linkages and optimizing CEPA benefits.
- Both nations have agreed to operationalize the established committees/sub-committees/technical council under the CEPA.
- Both nations have also agreed on mutual exchange of preferential trade data on quarterly basis for effective monitoring of the CEPA.

Both the ministers have also participated in a **'B2B'** event which has been organized by the Department of Commerce in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

- 16.** Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has recently (June 2023) flagged off India's first international cruise vessel **'MV Empress'** from Chennai.
- This maiden vessel will run from **Chennai to Sri Lanka**.
 - It is built at a cost of 17.21 crore rupees.
 - The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art navigation systems and safety features, ensuring a secure and smooth journey for all on board.
 - The cruise service will go to three ports in Sri Lanka: **Hambantota, Trincomalee and Kankekanturi**.

Background:

This is the result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed during the Incredible India International Cruise Summit in 2022 between Chennai Port and M/s Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd to start domestic and international cruise services.

17. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has recently launched an online dredging monitoring system called “**Sagar Samriddhi**”.
- The system aims to tighten the monitoring regime for dredging contracts and also focus on monetising dredged material.
 - It is part of the government’s efforts to expedite the ‘**Waste to Wealth**’ initiative.
 - This system has been developed by National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC) the technological arm of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)**.
 - The new technology brings in marked improvement against the old system of Draft & Loading Monitor (DLM) system.
 - Presently, **Cochin Port** and **Mumbai Port** have adopted the system.

Note: Dredging is the act of removing silt and other material from the bottom of bodies of water.

18. The **12th edition** of joint military exercise “**Ex Ekuverin**” between the **Indian Army** & the **Maldives** National Defence Force has commenced at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand from 11 to 24 June 2023.

Ekuverin meaning ‘Friends’ is a bilateral annual exercise conducted alternatively in India and Maldives.

Objective: To enhance interoperability in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism Operations under the UN mandate and carry out joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.

Note: The 11th edition of the exercise was held in Maldives in December 2021.

19. **United States of America (USA)** Defence Secretary **Lloyd Austin** has recently (June 2023) visited India to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation between both nations, especially in areas of transfer of critical technologies for co-development of military hardware.

During his two-day visit, he held crucial meetings with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Both nations have concluded a new **Roadmap for U.S.-India Defense Industrial Cooperation** to expedite technology cooperation and co-production in areas such as air combat, land mobility systems, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, munitions, and the undersea domain.

Both nations have also discussed the establishment of the India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (**INDUS-X**), a new initiative to advance cutting-edge technology cooperation.

20. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a third revival package for **Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL)** with a total outlay of **Rs.89,047 crore** that includes the allotment of 4G and 5G spectrum through equity infusion.

With this, BSNL's authorised capital will increase to Rs.2.1 trillion from Rs.1.5 trillion.

Other Cabinet approvals (June 2023):

- Cabinet has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated **Kharif (summer) crops** for the 2023-24 crop year.
 - Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Central Sector Scheme of **"Exploration of Coal and Lignite scheme"** with an estimated expenditure of **Rs.2980 crore** from 2021-22 to **2025-26** co-terminus with the 15th Finance Commission cycle.
 - Cabinet has approved the extension of the Metro network from **HUDA City Centre till Cyber City** in Gurugram, a stretch of **28.5km** with 27 new stations to be built over the next four years. The main feature of this line is to connect New Gurugram with Old Gurugram.
21. The first edition of **India, France and UAE** Maritime Partnership Exercise has been held in the **Gulf of Oman** from 7th June to 8th June 2023.
- INS Tarkash** and French Ship Surcouf both with integral helicopters, French Rafale aircraft and UAE Navy Maritime Patrol Aircraft have participated in the exercise.
22. The **Ministry of Power** and the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** have jointly launched a national **Mission on Advanced and High-Impact Research (MAHIR)**.
- Objective:** To identify emerging technologies in the power sector and develop them indigenously, at scale, for deployment within and outside India.

The Mission will have a two-tier structure:

- **Technical Scoping Committee:** It will be chaired by the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority. It will identify ongoing and emerging research areas globally and recommend potential technologies for development under the Mission.

- **Apex Committee:** It will be chaired by the Union Minister for Power & New and Renewable Energy. It will deliberate on the technology and products to be developed and approve the research proposal.

The mission is planned for an initial period of five years from **2023-24 to 2027-28**.

Areas Identified for Research: Alternatives to Lithium-Ion storage batteries, modifying electric cookers/pans to suit Indian cooking methods, green hydrogen for mobility (High-Efficiency Fuel Cell), Carbon capture etc.

23. Union Minister of Steel and Civil Aviation **Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** has recently addressed a press conference on the theme 9-years of Government's "Seva, Sushasan and Gareeb kalyan" focusing on the Indian Steel sector at Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, New Delhi.

During the conference, he announced that India currently ranks as the **World's 2nd Largest Producer of Crude Steel** with the production of crude steel at 133.596 MT. It surpassed Japan in 2018.

China remains the global leader in crude steel production.

Note: National Steel Policy 2017 set the targets of achieving a total crude steel capacity of 300 MTPA and total crude steel demand/production of 255 MTPA by 2030-31.

24. Miss World Organization has announced that **India** will host the 71st edition of **Miss World 2023** pageant after a gap of 27 years. It will be organized in **New Delhi**.
- Miss India World 2022 Sini Shetty will represent India at the 71st Miss World 2023 contest.
 - India last hosted this competition in 1966.

India has won the Miss World contest six times, the first in 1966 (Rita Faria). Manushi Chhillar (2017) became the sixth Miss World.

25. The **Ministry of AYUSH** has introduced the **Yoga Break (Y-Break) protocol** in the office workplace. The aim is to get de-stressed, refreshed and re-focused at the workplace.

Through this initiative work balance will be created in the offices and the central government has urged to use these initiatives in the offices of all the departments of the country.

26. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced that the Central government will provide more than **Rs.8,000 crore** to the States to effectively deal with the situation of floods in urban areas, strengthening of fire brigade services and landslide mitigation.

The three schemes are:

- **Rs. 5,000 crore** will be provided to states to expand and modernize fire services.

- **Rs. 2,500 crore** to reduce the risk of urban flooding in the seven most populous metros including Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Pune.
- **Rs. 825 crore** will be provided to 17 states and union territories for landslide mitigation.

27. The Infrastructure Finance Secretariat (IFS) under the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance has launched its revamped website of **PPPININDIA** and online portals for India Infrastructure Project Development Funding Scheme (**IIPDF**) and the **Best Practices** in Infrastructure.

PPPININDIA is a website dedicated to promoting and facilitating Public Private Partnerships in India and helps in bridging the gap between the public and private sectors.

28. Indian Army, represented by a contingent from the **Garhwal Rifles**, has participated in the **19th** edition of Multinational Peacekeeping Joint Exercise "**Ex Khaan Quest 2023**" held in **Mongolia**.

The 14-day exercise aims to enhance interoperability of the participating nations, for sharing experience and to train uniformed personnel for the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO).

The exercise includes Command Post Exercise (CPX), Field Training Exercises (FTX), combat discussions, lectures and demonstration.

The exercise is co-sponsored by Mongolian Armed Forces (MAF) and United States Army Pacific Command (USARPAC).

Exercise Khaan Quest:

It is an annual military exercise held in Mongolia. It was established in 2003 as a joint exercise between MAF and the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). It became an international exercise in 2006.

29. Border Security Force (BSF) and its Bangladeshi counterpart **Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)** have agreed to undertake five developmental projects to improve the ground conditions along the India-Bangladesh border.

- The five projects include the construction of a bailey bridge, road repair, and the strengthening of retaining walls.
- The projects will be implemented in 5 states along the border: **Assam, West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Tripura**.

The decision has been announced during the 53rd Director General level border coordination conference held in Delhi from 11-14 June 2023 between BSF and BGB.

30. The **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Satpura** has participated in the 4th edition of **Multilateral Naval Exercise KOMODO (MNEK-23)** held at Makassar, Indonesia.

INS Satpura has participated in the exercise as part of the Indian Navy's deployment to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

INS Satpura has also represented the Indian Navy at the International Fleet Review (IFR) reviewed by HE Joko Widodo, President of Republic of Indonesia.

The theme of MNEK 2023 is ***"Partnership to recover and to rise stronger"***

MNEK:

MNEK is a biennial exercise, held every 2 years, since 2014 between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The 3rd edition of MNEK was held in 2018 in Lombok Island, Indonesia.

31. Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated the **'Project Gajapati to Gabon'** which is **Gabon's first Agri- SEZ Project & Power Transformers (T&D) project** from New Delhi.

The project will be implemented by AOM group with Centurion University as the technical and knowledge partner.

In the first phase of the program, 30 farmers and 20 B.Sc./M.Sc. Agri and B.Tech/M.Tech Engineering students from Gajapati district, which is an Aspirational district of **Odisha**, will visit Gabon as agri-technical and technical consultants under the above mentioned Agri-SEZ. This establishment will enhance food security and self-sufficiency in Gabon.

32. The **Border Security Force (BSF)** has launched a special mission '**Dana-Pani**' to provide food and water to birds and animals affected by the scorching sun in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan.

The purpose of this special initiative is *to protect the birds in the border area from the scorching heat.*

33. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched a **'Knowledge Sharing Platform'** to promote inclusive development of national highways. The portal is launched to encourage the exchange of knowledge and share innovative practices by experts and citizens.

34. Union Minister of Heavy Industries Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey has unveiled the "Dugdh Sankalan Sathi App" or "Milk Collection Partner Mobile App" from Mussorie, Uttarakhand for the Indian diary industry.

Dugdh Sankalan Sathi App:

- The App is designed and developed by **Rajasthan Electronics & Instruments Limited (REIL)**, a “Mini Ratna” Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- **Objective:** To improve the quality of milk, foster transparency among stakeholders, and streamline operations at the grassroots village level, including Milk Cooperative Societies.
- This will inform all services to milk producers in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu and other languages.

35. The Department of Legal Affairs in the Ministry of Law & Justice has formed a **16-member expert committee** to recommend reforms in the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996** with an aim to reduce the burden on courts.

The committee will be chaired by the Former Secretary of the Department of Legal Affairs and Padma Shri awardee (2017) **T K Vishwanathan**.

The panel has to submit its report within 30 days.

Members: Law ministry additional secretary Rajiv Mani, some senior advocates, representatives of private law firms, and officials of the Legislative Department, Niti Aayog, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), railways and Central Public Works Department (CPWD).

Under arbitration, the parties concerned, instead of approaching courts, opt for private dispute resolution through arbitrators. The decision of arbitrators is binding.

36. India, Nepal and Bangladesh have finalised the draft of a **tripartite power trade agreement**, which would help to forge greater energy connectivity across India's neighbourhood. The proposed pact, the first of its kind, is expected to be signed in the coming months.

37. India has gifted an indigenously-built in-service missile corvette **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kirpan to Vietnam** to enhance its navy capabilities. This has been done during a meeting held between the Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh and his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Gang in Delhi.

During the meeting, both the leaders have reviewed the full range of India-Vietnam Defence ties.

38. The **Northern Command** of the Indian Army has conducted **Exercise 'Agneyastra 1'** in **eastern Ladakh** to showcase India's fire power supremacy.

Artillery platforms of the Indian army such as the newly-inducted Korean K-9 Vajra-T 155mm/52 calibre self-propelled howitzer (SPH), FH-77 Bofors 155 mm/39 calibre towed howitzer and mortars are a part of the Exercise 'Agneyastra 1'.

Anti-tank missiles and Carl Gustav rocket launchers (RLs) have also participated in the exercise 'Agneyastra 1'.

39. North India's first Skin Bank has been opened at **Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi**. It is a bank where deceased donors can donate their skin which will be helpful in treating burns. The skin can be donated within six hours of death and utilized for burns and trauma patients after processing.

Skin Bank in India:

- There are a total of **16 skin banks** in the country where the skin of dead persons can be donated.
- Out of the 16 skin banks, seven are located in Maharashtra, four in Chennai, three in Karnataka, and one each in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

40. The Union Government has introduced a new curated collection of courses called "**Dakshta**" (***Development of Attitude, Knowledge, Skill for Holistic Transformation in Administration***) on the iGOT Karmayogi Platform to enhance skills of young professionals.

- This collection, comprising 18 courses, has been designed for young professionals and consultants working in government.
- The aim of collection is to build functional domain, and behavioural competencies by acquainting learners with subjects crucial for discharging their duties, and responsibilities effectively.

41. The **Department of Justice (DoJ)** under the Ministry of Law & Justice has collaborated with the National Legal Services Authority (**NALSA**) and Common Services Centre (**CSC**) e-Governance Service India Limited for mainstreaming legal aid to the marginalised communities through the system of **Tele Law**.

Tele Law:

- Tele Law was launched in **2017** as a pilot programme with 1800 CSCs in 11 states.
- Tele-Law means the use of communications and information technology for the delivery of legal information and advice.
- The concept of Tele-Law is to facilitate delivery of legal advice through a panel of lawyers stationed at the front office of Legal Services Authorities and CSC.

- The project initiates to connect citizens with panel lawyers through video conferencing/telephone facilities by the Village Level Entrepreneur identified in 1,00,000 gram panchayats.

42. Scientists at **Gujarat Energy Research and Management Institute (GERMI)** have developed the thinnest, lightweight and biodegradable paper-based supercapacitor.

- A supercapacitor is an electrochemical charge storage device with a fast charging/discharging cycle, high power density and a longer lifecycle.
- It has been developed from **seaweed** (marine macroalgae).
- This device is characterized by high tensile strength and performance as well as cost effective.

Seaweed is the common name for countless species of marine plants and algae that grow in the ocean as well as in rivers, lakes, and other water bodies.

43. Skyroot Aerospace has successfully conducted the flight qualification test of the engine named '**Raman-I**' at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

This is the first-ever test conducted at LPSC by a private company.

The Raman-I engine will be employed for roll attitude control, which helps in managing the rocket's rotation and orientation.

'Raman' is a series of engines or thrusters which uses the Earth storable hypergolic (MMH/N2O4) propellants for upper stage engine and attitude or reaction control in Skyroot's **Vikram-1 launch vehicle**.

44. Union Sports Minister **Anurag Singh Thakur** has flagged off "**Bharat in Paris**" campaign with a short marathon at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

The campaign has been launched by **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** to create awareness and promote sports across India ahead of the Paris Olympics games.

The 2024 Olympics will take place from 26 July to 11 August in France, at Paris.

45. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur** has successfully conducted a test of **artificial rain** through **cloud seeding**. The flight went up to an approximate height of 5,000 feet.

The experiment has been conducted with due approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Cloud seeding involves the utilisation of various chemical agents such as silver iodide, dry ice, common salt, and other elements with the aim of enhancing the probability of rains.

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- 46.** The **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)** has collaborated with **Pixxel Space India Pvt. Limited** to develop various geospatial solutions on pro bono basis for the Indian Agriculture Ecosystem using Pixxel's hyperspectral dataset. The project focuses on crop mapping, crop stage discrimination, crop health monitoring, and soil organic carbon assessments.
- 47.** **Indian Railways** will introduce its **first hydrogen train**, expected to start operating from **Jind, Haryana** by **March 2024**. The first prototype of the hydrogen train is scheduled to run between the Jind-Sonipat Section of Northern Railway in the fiscal year 2023-24. The hydrogen plant is in its final phase of development and is expected to be completed by December 2023. The hydrogen fuel based train of eight bogies will be environment friendly.

Hydrogen train:

The Hydrogen trains use hydrogen fuel cells instead of diesel engines. These cells produce electricity by combining hydrogen and oxygen, which generates the electricity used to power the train's motors. Among the by-products are water and a little heat.

- 48.** The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has conducted '**Exercise Ranvijay**' with a focus on integration, in which day and night operations have been carried out by combat aircraft including **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** aircraft as part of integrated wargames to enhance the skills of fighter pilots.
- The exercise provided an opportunity for pilots to sharpen their operational capabilities and strengthen their proficiency in executing complex maneuvers.
 - The exercise has been carried out in the UB Hills and Central Air Command (CAC) Area of Responsibility (AOR).

- The exercise has been carried out in different air bases of the CAC headquartered in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

49. Pune-based Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (**IUCAA**) has delivered the **Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)**, a unique space telescope, to the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for its **ADITYA-L1** solar mission.

Features of SUIT:

- The telescope is one of the seven payloads on Aditya-L1.
- It will provide full disk images of the sun in 2000 to 4000 Å wavelength range which has never been obtained.
- It will allow to record images in this wavelength crucial for maintaining the Ozone and Oxygen content in the atmosphere of the Earth.
- It will also measure the UV radiation hazardous for skin cancer.

Aditya-L1 Mission:

It is India's first dedicated scientific mission to study the Sun. The spacecraft will be placed in a halo orbit around the first Lagrange point, L1, which is 1.5 million km from the Earth towards the Sun.

50. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off **Vande Bharat Express trains** on five routes from **Rani Kamalapati Railway Station** in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.

5 Vande Bharat Trains:

- Rani Kamalapati (Bhopal)-Jabalpur;
- Rani Kamalapati-Indore;
- Goa (Madgaon)-Mumbai;
- Ranchi-Patna;
- Dharwad-Bengaluru

With this, the total number of Vande Bharat Trains have been increased to **23**.

The trains are designed to run at a speed of 110 kmph to 130 kmph, the average running speed on the ground ranges between 63 to 96 kmph.

The first Vande Bharat Trains was launched in February 2019 in New Delhi.

- 51.** The Directorate-General for Resettlement (**DGR**) under the Ex-Servicemen Welfare Department, Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Adecco India Private Limited** in New Delhi to generate employment for ex-servicemen.
- 52. Indian Railways**, Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States Agency for International Development/India (**USAID/India**) for collaboration on Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency. The aim is to reduce carbon footprint of Indian Railways in order to achieve Mission Net Zero Carbon Emission by 2030.
- 53.** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) has organized an **Anusandhaan Chintan Shivir** in New Delhi to promote Defence Research and Development in the industry and academia.

During the event, DRDO has released the **"DRDO Technology Foresight 2023"**, a list of 75 technology priority areas for Industry and Academia.

- 54.** India has been removed from an annual report on the impact of armed conflict on children, by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the impact of conflict in view of the measures taken by the government to better protect children.

India had been included in the report since 2010, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Lake Chad Basin, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

STATES AFFAIRS

- 55.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually flagged off the northeast region's **first Vande Bharat Express train** which will connect **Guwahati (Assam)** with **New Jalpaiguri (West Bengal)**.
- The train will stop at Kamakhya, New Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar, and New Coochbehar and culminate at New Jalpaiguri (NJP).
 - This will be the third Vande Bharat for West Bengal after the Howrah-NJP Vande Bharat Express and the Howrah-Puri Vande Bharat Express.
 - The train will cover the distance of 411 km in 5 hours and 30 minutes.
 - This is India's **18th** Vande Bharat Express Train.

PM Narendra Modi has also dedicated the New Bongaigaon--Dudhnoi--Mendipather and Guwahati--Chaparmukh electrified sections to the nation. He has also inaugurated the new DEMU/MEMU (workshop for trains) shed at Lumding.

- 56.** Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya has inaugurated the state-of-the-art **National Training Centre** for Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) at **Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The centre aims to provide structured instruction, practice, and learning experiences to bridge the gap between existing knowledge or skills and desired knowledge or skills in the field of food safety and standards.
 - FSSAI has established the National Training Centre to offer various training programs.
- 57.** An e-learning app '**Food Safety and Certification (FoSTaC)**' developed by FSSAI that contains learning and training modules about food safety guidelines, such as proper food handling, storage, hygiene practices, etc., for street vendors has also been launched.
- The Minister has also released two books developed by FSSAI – "**Millets (Shree Anna) Recipes- A Healthy Menu for Mess/Canteens and Healthy Gut**", and "**Healthy You - Traditional Recipes with potential probiotic benefits**".
- 58.** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved to establish a **Regional Office** of the **Universal Postal Union (UPU)** in **New Delhi**, India to undertake UPU's development cooperation and technical assistance activities in the region by entering into an agreement with UPU.
- This initiative will help expand India's diplomatic footprint and strengthen relations with other countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.
- 59.** Telangana Formation Day is observed annually on **2nd June** to celebrate the foundation of the youngest state of India which was formed on the same day in **2014**. The year 2023 marks the **9th Formation Day** of Telangana.
- Telangana became India's 29th state, however, at present, it is the 28th state as Jammu and Kashmir were made UT in 2019.
 - The day commemorates the official separation of Telangana from the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- 60.** The state Cabinet of **Maharashtra**, chaired by the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, has approved the following initiatives which are announced earlier in the state budget 2023-24 in March 2023.

- The cabinet has approved the decision to enable the farmers in Maharashtra to opt for the crop insurance scheme by paying Rs.1, with the state funding their share of a 2% premium.
- A new financial scheme named “**Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana**” has also been approved by the state government of Maharashtra. Under this scheme, farmers in Maharashtra will receive an annual payment of **Rs.6000**. The proposed budgetary outlay for the scheme is Rs.6,900 crore for 2023-24.
- The cabinet has also approved the decision to bring an area of 25 lakh hectares in the state under organic farming in the next 3 years.

61. The Cabinet of **Maharashtra** has launched an initiative '**Shasan Aplya Dari**' (government at your doorstep) to provide citizens the necessary information and full benefits of various schemes of government.

The state government will use the **Maha Labharthi** (mega beneficiary) portal for the effective implementation of this scheme.

62. The **Tata Group** will set up India's first lithium-ion cell manufacturing facility in **Gujarat** through its subsidiary, at a cost of **Rs.13,000 crore** which will contribute to the development of a thriving battery manufacturing ecosystem in Gujarat.

The plant will have an initial capacity of **20GWh**.

63. **South Western (Sapta Shakti) Command** of the Indian Army has recently conducted the exercise '**Sudarshan Shakti 2023**' along the western borders in Rajasthan and Punjab.

The exercise aims to start the transformation of the forces into a modern, lean, and agile fighting combination capable of leveraging new-age technologies.

The exercise is designed to validate operational plans in a network-centric environment with elements of combat power, combat support and logistic support.

64. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the 2 -day **Lavender festival** at **Bhaderwah** in Jammu region, as part of the One Week One Lab Campaign organized by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research- Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM).

- **Bhaderwah** has emerged as the **Lavender capital of India** and Agri StartUp destination.
- Bhaderwah is the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution (Lavender Revolution).

CSIR-Aroma Mission:

It is a flagship project of CSIR under which Lavender cultivation is being promoted in the temperate regions of J&K. The aim of the project is to increase the income of small and marginal farmers and develop agriculture-based Startups.

Lavender is a fragrant flowering plant known for its aromatic purple flowers and soothing scent. It is widely cultivated for its essential oil.

- 65. Rajasthan** Forest and Environment Minister Hemaram Chaudhary has flagged off a public awareness rally on World Environment Day (5th June) and inaugurated **33 new Air Quality Monitoring Stations (AQMS)** in the state.

He has also laid the foundation stone of the Integrated Resource Recovery Park at Tholai in the Jamwa Ramgarh area in the district.

- 66.** The Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan has launched the **Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON)** as a part of the state's mission of 'Internet for all'.

Objective: To provide free Internet connections to 20 lakh below-poverty-line (BPL) families and connect 30,000 government institutions in Kerala.

KFON network is being set up by the Kerala government in collaboration with the Kerala State Electricity Board and the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Ltd.

Under this, each household will receive **1.5 GB** of data per day at 15 Mbps speed.

The first phase of the project is completed.

- 67.** The Chief Minister of Maharashtra **Eknath Shinde** has launched **Asia's largest cluster development scheme** in Thane, Maharashtra for the collective redevelopment of unauthorized and official dangerous buildings after the collapse of the Sairaj Building in Thane which had claimed 18 lives.

- The CIDCO (City & Industrial Development Corporation) will execute the project.
- Under the project, the integrated redevelopment project will be done on the lines of townships.
- The occupants will get a **323 sq ft** ownership house.

- 68.** The Union Government has sanctioned **Rs.12,911 crore** to **Andhra Pradesh** for completing the first phase of the **Polavaram Project**, which also includes Rs.2,000 crore to cover the extra expenditure caused by the allegedly faulty construction of the diaphragm wall.

- Polavaram Project is situated on the **River Godavari** near Ramayyapeta village of Polavaram Mandal in Eluru district, where Godavari emerges out of the last range of the Eastern Ghats and enters the plains in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

- The major part of this project is the construction of an Earth cum Rockfill dam (2454 metre) with 3 gaps.
- It will supply drinking water to a population of 20.50 lakh in 611 villages.

69. The Government of **Uttar Pradesh** has launched the “**Nand Baba Milk Mission**” scheme to provide milk producers the facility of selling their milk at a reasonable price in villages through dairy co-operative societies.

The scheme has been allocated a budget of **Rs.1000 crore**.

The state government has also launched the **Family ID portal** for the creation of unique Family ID under ‘One Family One Identity’ scheme.

70. The Government of India (GoI) has constituted **Peace Committee in Manipur** under the Chairpersonship of **Anusuiya Uikey**, Governor of Manipur.

Objective: To facilitate peace making process among various ethnic groups of the State and strengthen social cohesiveness, mutual understanding and facilitate cordial communication between various ethnic groups.

Members: Chief Minister, a few Ministers in the State Government, MP, MLA, leaders from different political parties, and also includes former civil servants, educationists, litterateurs, artists, social workers and representatives of different ethnic groups.

71. The Chief Minister of **Haryana** Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the integrated **Water Resources Action Plan-2023-25** under Amrit Jal Kranti in Chandigarh. The objective is to meet the challenges of water depletion and water logging.

The plan will serve as a roadmap to meet the targets of water saving and water management in the state.

72. The Chief Minister of **Karnataka** Siddaramaiah has launched the ‘**Shakti**’ scheme, which offers free travel to women and transgender people in government-run buses in the state.

The scheme is available for women and transgender persons, who are domicile in Karnataka. They will be able to travel in general and express services operated by the RTCs (Road Transport Corporation).

The government has also reserved 50% of the seats for men in all RTCs, except BMTC (Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation) services.

73. The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has organized a **Buyer-Seller Workshops** in all 75 districts of **Uttar Pradesh**. These workshops aim to enhance the understanding of GeM's

functionalities among buyers and sellers in the state, as well as provide a platform to address any queries or concerns.

The workshop will continue till 31st August 2023.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM):

GeM is an online platform for the procurement of goods and services by government departments, public sector units, and other agencies.

- 74.** The **Ishad mango** from **Uttara Kannada (Karnataka)** has been awarded the Geological Indicator (GI) tag. This mango variety has been cultivated for the last 400 years.
- It is grown predominantly around **Ankola** region. It is tasty and contains a lot of pulp.
 - It has two variants: **Kari Ishad**, which has thin skin, more pulp and is sweeter, and **Bili Ishad**, which has thick skin and less pulp and sweetness.
- 75.** The state government of **Haryana** has announced that recipients of the Padma Shri, Padma Vibhushan and Padma Bhushan awards will be given a **“Monthly Pension”** of **Rs.10,000** to honour their thinking and improve their lives.
- The scheme will also provide free travel facilities to them in high-quality Volvo buses of the state government.
- 76.** The Chief Minister of **Madhya Pradesh** Shivraj Singh Chauhan has launched the **‘Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana’** by depositing an amount of Rs.1000 each in the accounts of 1.25 crore women of the state, during the event held in Garrison Ground, Jabalpur.
- The age limit should be above 21 years old and under 60 years old.
- 77.** The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department of the **Assam** Government has launched a web portal to prevent illegal transportation of cattle in the state.
- This system prepared under the Assam Cattle Preservation Act, 2021 will alleviate the problems encountered in transportation of improved breeds of high milk producing cattle to the state.
- 78.** The cabinet meeting chaired by **Madhya Pradesh** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan has approved the **Cooperative Policy 2023** to strengthen the cooperative movement and create jobs in the cooperative sector. This policy focuses on the preparation and the implementation of the public co-operative partnership (PCP) model.
- Madhya Pradesh has become the first state to have implemented cooperative policy.

79. Bhupinder Singh Bhalla, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MoNRE), has felicitated Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu for being the top achiever in Wind Energy Adoption during FY 2022-23.

- **Rajasthan** has been honoured for achieving the highest wind capacity addition.
- **Gujarat** has been honoured for achieving the highest wind capacity addition through open access.
- **Tamil Nadu** has been honoured for initiating the repowering of wind turbines.

Note: India ranks fourth in wind power capacity in the world.

80. The **Global DPI Summit 2023** has been held as the part of the side event of third meeting of G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) in **Pune, Maharashtra**.

The objective is to bring together brilliant minds, creative thinkers, and passionate advocates of DPI from around the globe and to embrace DPI as a catalyst for growth, inclusivity, and citizen's welfare.

During the summit, India and four countries of **Armenia, Sierra Leone, Suriname, and Antigua and Barbuda** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sharing **INDIA STACK** i.e. successful digital solutions implemented at population scale.

81. The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh **Pema Khandu** has launched an app called '**Arunpol App**' of Arunachal Pradesh Police. The app will facilitate common people to lodge complaints without coming to the police station.

He has also launched another app called E-Vigilance app for the state government employees.

82. The **five buildings and structures** from **Telangana** have been awarded with the '**International Green Apple Awards for Beautiful Buildings**' under the Urban and Real Estate Sector category, from a London-based independent non-profit organisation – 'The Green Organisation'.

The chosen buildings & structures include:

- Mozzam-Jahi Market in the Heritage category, for its excellent restoration and re-use
- Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge in the bridge category for its unique design
- B R Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat Building, in the aesthetically designed office and workspace building category
- Integrated Command Control Centre of Telangana Police in the unique office category
- Yadadri Temple, abode of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, in the excellent religious structures category.

It is for the first time that any building and structure from India has been awarded the prestigious Green Apple awards

83. Raja Parba Festival of Odisha, also known as **Swing Festival**, is an annual 3-day festival observed during the month of **Asadha** (usually starts on 14th June and ends on 16th June). This festival is dedicated to honour Earth and celebrate womanhood.

The festival also marks the beginning of monsoon.

The people of Odisha believe that Bhudevi (Earth), the wife of Lord Jagannath (Vishnu) undergoes her menstrual cycle in these days before the onset of rains.

During the festival, women and girls do not participate in cooking and spend their days on the improvised swings.

- **First Day of festival:** Raja Sankranti or Pahili Raja
- **Second Day of festival:** Mithun Sankranti
- **Third Day of festival:** Bhudaha or Basi Raja
- **Fourth Day of festival:** Vasumati Sanana

84. Farmers Fresh Zone (FarmersFZ), a Kerala-based startup, has been selected for the '**Accelerator Programme**' by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (**FAO**) of the United Nations (UN).

- FarmersFZ has figured in the list of 12 agri-food startups around the world for the UN body to develop business.
- FarmersFZ functions under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and aims to attain the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

85. Indian Navy has launched the "**Julley Ladakh**" (**Hello Ladakh**) outreach programme to increase awareness about the service in the pristine state and to engage with youth and civil society members.

For this, a **5000km Motorcycle Expedition** has been flagged off by VAdm Sanjay Jasjit Singh, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, from the National War Memorial on 15 June 2023 and will reach Leh on 28 June 2023 passing through the states of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

Objectives of Julley Ladakh:

- To celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (75 years of Indian Independence).
- To conduct awareness drives at Schools/ Colleges in Ladakh region about the career opportunities Indian Navy offers including the Agnipath Scheme.
- To motivate youth to join the Indian Navy.
- To showcase Nari Shakti, an initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, by including Women Officers and spouses.

- To interact with naval veterans and Veer Naris in the region.

86. Union Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has laid the foundation stone of **Bharat Mala Green Field Six-Lane Ring Road project** at village Kutail in **Karnal district of Haryana**. The total length of this project is 35 km starting from Shamgarh to Badhota village and it will cost about Rs.1,690 crore.

He has also laid the foundation stone for a project to build **11 flyovers** on the 8-lane National Highway 44 from **Delhi to Panipat** at a cost of Rs.890 crore. He has also approved 4 national highway projects worth Rs. 3,835 crore in various cities.

87. The Defence Research and Development Organization (**DRDO**) and the **Indian Navy** have recently collaborated and successfully demonstrated transferring of command & control capabilities of **TAPAS UAV** from a distant ground station to onboard INS Subhadra, 148km from **Karwar naval base, Karnataka**.

88. The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has inaugurated the online portal of the Himachal Pradesh Nurses Registration Council (HPNRC).

- The newly launched website aims to provide nurses with convenient access to various services, including primary registration, registration renewal, No Objection Certificates (NOC), additional qualification updates, foreign verification and more, all from their comfort zone.
- The portal will facilitate online migration and transfer of registration.\

89. Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** has inaugurated the **National Legislators' Conference Bharat (NLC Bharat)** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**. This conference gives a platform to engage in discussions and contemplate strengthening our legislative institutions.

It has been organized from 15th June to 18th June 2023.

NLC Bharat is an avenue for Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) and Members of Legislative Councils (MLCs) to gather for the first time in one place and exchange ideas in this historic conference.

The APJ Abdul Kalam expo pavilion has also been inaugurated reflecting the theme of Bharat's 75th year of independence and celebrating the spirit of democracy.

90. The **Nehru Museum Memorial and Library**, named after India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, has been renamed as the **Prime Minister's Museum and Library Society**. It is situated in New Delhi.

The decision of renaming has been taken at a special meeting of the Nehru Museum Memorial and Library (NMML) Society. It has been headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The idea for a dedicated museum for all Prime Ministers was given by PM Narendra Modi in 2016.

Nehru Museum Memorial and Library:

It is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture. It is housed in the Teen Murti House, the official residence of the first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. It aims to foster academic research on modern and contemporary history. It was designed by Robert Tor Russell who also designed Connaught Place and a few parts of Janpath.

91. The **Wihu Kuh** Festival, means “paddy transplantation festival,” is observed annually by **Tangsa**, a traditional tribal community, residing in the verdant hills of Changlang district of **Arunachal Pradesh**.

The festival marks the beginning of the agricultural season in the region.

As the seeds are sown, the air fills with the rhythmic beats of the “**rongker**”, traditional drums, and the sweet-toned tunes of the “**pangtoi**”, a bamboo flute.

Rice beer, locally known as “**apong**”, is a traditional beverage that flows freely during the festival

92. The Chief Minister of **Jharkhand** Hemant Soren has launched a ‘**Panchayat Level Medicine Shop**’ scheme in Chatra district, Jharkhand, by handing over the licenses to 21 educated youth of rural areas to operate medicine shops in panchayats.

The scheme aims to ensure the availability of essential medicines in remote villages and to promote employment.

93. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the **Integrated Simulator Complex (ISC) ‘Dhruv’** at Southern Naval Command, in Kochi, Kerala. The ISC ‘Dhruv’ hosts modern state-of-the-art indigenously-built simulators which will significantly enhance practical training in the Indian Navy. These simulators are envisaged to give real-time experience on navigation, fleet operations and Naval tactics

94. The state government of **Uttar Pradesh** has launched “**Polytechnic Chalo Abhiyan 2023**” to motivate youths to pursue technical education and take admission in polytechnic institutes. It aims to enrol lakhs of youth in Government, aided and private polytechnic institutes.

95. **Sao Joao festival** is observed annually on **24th June** in **Goa** to commemorate Saint John the Baptist, who baptised Lord Jesus on the river of Jordan and is celebrated at the onset of monsoon. Siolim, a village in North Goa, hosts a traditional canoe parade on the occasion of Sao Joao. The festival is celebrated by jumping into wells and lakes.

96. The state government of **Rajasthan** has recently (June 2023) launched the **Pregnancy, Child Tracking & Health Services Management System (PCTS) app** which enables online tracking, reporting, and monitoring of the health of pregnant women, obstetricians, and infants.

The app allows every ASHA Sahyogini in the state to reach women and infants in their respective areas and file reports on a daily basis regarding the health of mothers and children.

97. The **GeM** (Government e-Marketplace), India's leading online public procurement platform, has signed a strategic partnership with **TANSTIA** (Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny Industries Association) to jointly enhance the GeM seller base in Tamil Nadu.

98. The Government of **Uttar Pradesh** has implemented the '**Legal Aid Defense Counseling System (LADCS)**' for a period of **two years** under the Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority to provide free legal aid to the people of the state and settle small disputes on the basis of agreement.

- In the LADCS system, legal aid will be provided to the general public through the services of Chief, Deputy and Assistant Council.
- Legal aid can be provided to the general public on the lines of the public protection system in criminal cases.
- The objective of implementing LADCS is to strengthen court-based legal services to provide effective and efficient legal services to the backward and weaker sections of the society.
- It will benefit members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.

99. **Ambubachi Mela**, an annual Hindu festival, is observed at the **Kamakhya Temple** in **Guwahati, Assam**. The festival marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess in the Kamakhya Temple. The fair is an occasion to promote menstrual hygiene among the visitors through the use of sanitary pads.

In 2023, the fair has been organized for four days (23 to 26 June).

Kamakhya Temple:

- Kamakhya is one of 51 Shakti peethas or holy sites for the followers of the Shakti cult, each representing a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva's companion.
- The temple's sanctum sanctorum houses the yoni (female genital) symbolised by a rock.

- The temple is situated on the Nilachal Hills, whose northern face slopes down to the Brahmaputra River.
- According to the legends, it was built by the demon king Narakasura but records are available only from 1565 when Koch king Naranarayana rebuilt the temple.

Note: The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called *Tuloni Biya*, meaning small wedding.

100. The Government of **Maharashtra** has introduced the "**Vitthal Rukmini Warkari Bima Chhatra Yojana**" to provide an insurance cover to **Warkaris**, the devotees of Lord Vitthal, for the 'Ashadhi Ekadashi' celebrations at the Vitthal temple in Pandharpur.

This year (2023), the Ashadhi Ekadashi falls on 29th June.

- Under this scheme, in case of a death of a Warkari, his kin will be given an ex gratia grant of **Rs.5 lakh**.
- In case, a warkari suffers from permanent disability during the procession, he will get Rs.1 lakh, while in case of partial disability, the person will be given Rs.50,000.
- If a warkari falls sick, he will get Rs.35,000 for medication.
- The insurance cover will be valid for 30 days.

101. The **Himachal Pradesh** government has renamed its Department of Information Technology (IT) as the **Department of Digital Technologies and Governance** and the approval to this effect has been given by the state government of Himachal Pradesh.

With this, Himachal Pradesh has become the first state in India to have this nomenclature to transform the state into a digitally advanced state.

102. **Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) India** has tied up with the **West Bengal** government to issue D-U-N-S (Data Universal Numbering System) Numbers to exporters and MSMEs in the state.

Under this, D&B will assign a unique nine-digit (D-U-N-S) number to a specific MSME firm or an exporter which will encompass various financial health indicators of the business entity.

103. The **Naini Saini Airport in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand** has received the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) aerodrome licence to operate civil flights. The license is valid for 6 months. The license has been handed over to the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) by DGCA.

104. The Government of **Karnataka** has launched a portal for people to share suggestions regarding the development of the city, under the title '**Brand Bengaluru**'.

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105. The **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**, the government backed e-commerce marketplace, has signed an agreement with the **Kerala government** to improve access and business opportunities in various sectors in the State. By facilitating digital transformation.

106. **Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society**, an autonomous body under the Government of Assam, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Caspian Impact Investment Adviser Pvt. Ltd. (**Caspian Equity**), a venture capital institution that invests in social impact enterprises.

This MoU implements Assam Agribusiness Investment Fund (AAIF), a contributory and determinate investment trust, having a corpus of **Rs.250** corpus.

107. The Chief Minister of **Andhra Pradesh** Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the "**Jagananna Amma Vodi**" scheme for the 4th year, under which financial assistance of Rs.6,393 crore will be deposited into the bank accounts of 43 lakh beneficiaries, at Kurupam in Parvathipuram Manyam district, Andhra Pradesh.

108.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

109. **China** has successfully launched the '**Shenzhou-16**' manned spaceship, sending three astronauts, including the first civilian to its Tiangong space station for the 5-month mission.

The spacecraft has been lifted off atop a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert in northwest China.

This launch marks the 475th flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

110. The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** countries have launched the '**Arctic Challenge Exercise 2023**', with a pledge to defend their newest member, **Finland**, which is hosting its first joint training in Rovajarvi, one of Europe's largest artillery training grounds in Northern Finland.

The 'Arctic Challenge Exercise 2023' scheduled from 29th May 2023 to 9th June 2023, is the sixth of its kind which Finland, Norway, and Sweden have hosted together.

The exercise has been hosted bi-annually by Nordic nations since 2013 with an aim to train participating forces to conduct dissimilar aircraft combat in large composite air operations safely and effectively.

- 111.** The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has agreed to extend the **United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)** for **6 months** until the **3rd December 2023**, as conflicts worsen in Sudan.

United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS):

UNITAMS was created in June 2020 to support Sudan's democratic transition after the fall of Omar al-Bashir government. UNITAMS will support Sudan through a range of political, peacebuilding and development initiatives, including assisting the nation to achieve the goals of the Constitutional Declaration of August 2019, and carrying out its National Plan for Civilian Protection.

- **Headquarters:** Khartoum, Sudan
- **Head:** Volker Perthes of Germany

- 112.** The **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relations meeting** has been held in **Cape Town, South Africa**.

China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu, Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attended the meeting.

A joint statement titled '**The Cape of Good Hope**' has been issued at the end of the meeting. The statement comprises:

- Committing themselves to support rule-based open and transparent global trade.
- Pressed for a robust Global Financial Safety Net with a quota-based and adequately resourced International Monetary Fund (IMF) at its centre.
- Underlined the need for using local currencies in international trade and financial transactions.

BRICS:

It is an acronym that started as BRIC in 2001, coined by Jim O'Neill (a Goldman Sachs economist) for Brazil, China, India, and Russia. Later in 2010, South Africa was added to become BRICS. It brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 percent of the global population, 24 percent of the global GDP, and 16 percent of the global trade.

113. SpaceX has launched Falcon 9, a two staged rocket carrying 22 second generation starlink satellites, known as "**V2 Mini**" to Low-Earth Orbit from Space Launch Complex 40 (SLC-40) at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, the USA.

This is the 3rd launch and landing for this Falcon 9 first stage booster.

114. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will host the **2025 World Conservation Congress (WCC)** of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The 2025 WCC will be held in Abu Dhabi from October 10-21, 2025.

The WCC is the world's largest and most important gathering of conservationists, and it is expected to draw more than 10,000 delegates from over 160 countries.

The event will be an opportunity for conservationists to discuss the most pressing environmental challenges facing our planet.

115. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of Iran has introduced its first indigenously-made hypersonic ballistic missile dubbed as '**Fattah**' with a range of 1,400 kilometers (869 miles).

This missile has been named by the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

This missile is capable of moving at a speed of up to Mach 15 and it is capable of penetrating all defence shield.

116. SpaceX has successfully launched a two staged rocket Falcon 9 carrying **52 satellites** of **Starlink Mission** into circular low Earth Orbit about a distance of 540 km above Earth from the Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, United States of America (USA).

This marks SpaceX's 18th orbital mission of 2023 and this also the 35th re-flight of the SpaceX in 2023.

117. Chinese Astronauts, Fei Junlong, Deng Qingming and Zhang Lu, has returned to Earth on board the **Shenzhou-15** manned spaceship after completing their 6-month mission to build China's **Tiangong space station**.

Shenzhou-15 touched down at Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

118. Israel has carried out its initial tests flights of an **Autonomous aircraft** that can carry passengers and heavy cargo, an **Air Taxi**, in a bid to ease traffic congestion on the roads.

This is the first initiative of its kind in the world for an extensive and multidisciplinary examination of new technologies, including the transportation of cargo and later, people.

119. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched its **third cohort of four ocean innovators** to demonstrate the compelling roles of marine spatial planning

(MSP), marine protected areas (MPAs) and new environmentally and socially sustainable economic activities for a healthy and resilient ocean.

This will contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goal 14** (SDG14 targets 14.2, 14.5 and 14.7) i.e. Life Below Water.

UNDP's Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC) will provide financial, mentoring and incubator support to these four ocean innovators.

Note: UNDP has committed to deliver at least 100 Ocean Innovations by 2030.

120. China has completed the construction of the most powerful wind tunnel in the world, located in the mountainous Huairou district of northern Beijing.

The wind tunnel, called **JF-22**, has a diameter of 4 metres (13 feet) and can generate incredibly high airflow speeds of up to 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) per second.

121. USA President **Joe Biden** and **UK** Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** have announced a new economic partnership named "**Atlantic Declaration**" to boost industry ties in defence and renewable energy.

The deceleration aims to counter the threats posed by Russia, China, and economic instability.

The goal is to boost cooperation between the US and UK to tackle these challenges effectively.

122. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has elected **5 new countries** as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (**UNSC**) for 2-years period beginning from January 2024 to December 2025.

The new countries are **Algeria, Guyana, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, and Slovenia**. The five newly elected countries will join Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland as non-permanent members of the Council.

They will take up seats currently occupied by Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, and the United Arab Emirates when their two-year terms end on 31 December 2023.

123. An extremely severe cyclonic storm, named '**Biparjoy**', has developed in the **Arabian Sea**. It is the first cyclone in the Arabian Sea of this year.

The name 'Biparjoy' is suggested by **Bangladesh** and the word means 'disaster' or 'calamity' in Bengali.

The effect of this storm can be seen in the coastal areas of **Goa, Karnataka, Gujarat and North Kerala**.

As per a study, the intensity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea has increased by 20% in the post-monsoon period and 40% in the pre-monsoon period.

The number of cyclones in the Arabian Sea has increased by 52%.

124. The **Federal Minister of Defence of Germany Boris Pistorius** has recently visited India from June 5-8, 2023 to facilitate bilateral defence cooperation and explore avenues for strategic partnership.

This is the first visit of a German Defence Minister to India since 2015.

Key highlights of his visit:

- He has attended a meeting with India's Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh to enhance bilateral defence cooperation, particularly industrial partnership.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between German defence major Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (**TKMS**) and state-run Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (**MDL**) to cooperate in building six advanced submarines for the Indian Navy. They will be built under a **Rs.45,000-crore** programme called Project 75I.
- He has also been honoured with the Tri-Service Guard of Honour.

125. **Britain** will host the first global summit on '**Artificial Intelligence Safety**' later in 2023.

The summit will consider the risks of AI, including frontier systems, and discuss how they can be mitigated through internationally coordinated action.

126. The **United States of America (USA)** has announced its decision to rejoin the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and pay over USD 600 million in back dues.

- The reason is that USA is concerned about China's increasing influence in UNESCO, especially in areas related to technology and artificial intelligence.
- By rejoining UNESCO, the USA aims to assert its interests, ensure representation, and shape global standards.

The USA initially joined UNESCO in 1945 and it withdraw from UNESCO in 2017.

127. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**) has begun its **German** led air force deployment "**Air Defender 2023**" exercise in Europe. The exercise has been held from 12th-23rd June 2023 and includes 250 military aircraft from 25 NATO and partner countries including Japan and Sweden.

The exercise focuses on keeping up the USA presence in Europe and providing training on a larger scale.

128. SpaceX has successfully deployed **Indonesia's new communications satellite** named **SATRIA-1** (short for "Satellite of the Republic of Indonesia") to geosynchronous transfer orbit.

The satellite has been lifted off using a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, the USA.

SATRIA-1 is a 4.6 metric ton spacecraft, which provides about 150 billion bits (gigabits, GB) per second of communications, which is 3 times the capacity of the 9 telecommunication satellites that Indonesia currently use.

129. The United Nations has adopted the first-ever legally binding international treaty to protect marine life in the high seas.

The treaty known as the **Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty (BBNJ)**, or the High Seas Treaty, approved by 193 UN members, establishes standards and guidelines to determine the environmental impacts of high seas.

The treaty creates a Conference of Parties (CoP) to enforce the treaty's terms, which includes a scientific advisory board.

130. The UN General Assembly has adopted a draft resolution titled '**Memorial wall for fallen United Nations peacekeepers**' introduced by **India** to establish a memorial wall in the UN Headquarters to honour fallen peacekeepers. The wall will be included in the ceremonies on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

131. China has successfully launched the **Long March 2D** rocket with 41 satellites, setting a new national record for sending the most satellites in space in a single mission. The rocket has been launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in Shanxi province, China.

132. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) has participated in the three-day "**Intersolar Europe 2023**" exhibition held in **Munich, Germany**. The exhibition aims to educate visitors on IREDA's initiatives in financing renewable energy projects, promoting energy efficiency, and promoting the growth of renewable energy in India.

IREDA has set up a pavilion at the exhibition to educate visitors about the organization.

The pavilion has been inaugurated by CMD, IREDA, **Pradip Kumar Das**.

133. The Ministry of Defence, Government of India, and the Department of Defence (DoD), Government of the USA, has officially established the India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) at an event held in Washington DC, the USA to foster collaboration and innovation between Indian and US defence startups, promoting technological advancements in the sector.

The INDUS-X was formed based on the commitment made between the USA and Indian National Security Advisors in January 2023 to launch an “Innovation Bridge” to connect USA and Indian defence start-ups as part of the US-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).

INDUS-X will pave the way to:

- Enhance connectivity between American and Indian defence startups.
- Explore joint opportunities in high-tech defence innovation, research, and development
- Strengthen bilateral trade relationships and defence establishment linkages
- Creation of Indo-U.S. Joint Innovation Fund for the funding of the defence startups

134. The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** has approved the **6th Generation (6G) vision framework** during its meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The 6G has been named '**IMT 2030**' by ITU.

This new framework recommendation will now become a foundation document for 6G work across the different research groups and in external standards development organizations.

The newly approved 6G standard now includes six key usage scenarios, as compared to only three usage scenarios in 5G.

135. **India** and **Belgium** have signed a **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in criminal matters** which obligates both the countries to execute each other's search warrants and summons against fugitives wanted by individual investigating agencies.

In India, the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry for executing court orders under the MLATs.

In Belgium, the Federal Public Service Justice will serve such summons or execute warrant on the person.

136. The World Health Organization (WHO) has certified **Belize** as **malaria-free**, following the country's over 70 years of continued efforts to stamp out the disease. The nation has achieved a dramatic reduction in its malaria burden from a peak of about 10 000 cases in 1994 to zero indigenous cases in 2019.

With this, a total of **42 countries and 1 territory** have been certified as malaria-free by WHO, including 11 countries in the Region of the Americas.

Note: *Belize is the third country to be awarded a malaria-free status in 2023, following the certifications of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan in March 2023.*

137. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made his **first** state visit to the **United States of America (USA)** from 20th to 24th June 2023 at the invitation of President of USA Joseph Biden and First Lady Dr Jill Biden.

He has also become the **first Indian PM** to address the joint meeting of the US Congress for the 2nd time.

Key initiatives:

- **GE Aerospace** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** to produce fighter jet engines 'F414' in the country for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- India has approved U.S. chipmaker **Micron Technology's** USD 2.75 billion plan for a new semiconductor testing and packaging unit of which Micron will invest USD 825 million while the rest will be government incentives.
- **India-U.S New and Emerging Renewable Energy Technologies Action Platform** has been launched to accelerate cooperation in green hydrogen, offshore and onshore wind etc.
- An MoU has been signed under which U.S. Agency for International Development will support Indian Railways' ambitious target to become a "net-zero" carbon emitter by 2030.
- Creation of a payment security mechanism that will help India deploy 10,000 made-in-India electric buses.
- **Indo-U.S. Quantum Coordination Mechanism** has been introduced to facilitate better collaboration among academia and industries.
- Created new Joint Task Force of Association of American Universities and leading Indian educational institutions to expand research and university partnerships.
- India has joined the **Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)** to advance critical energy minerals supply chains globally, adhering to environmental and social standards.

- India has joined Artemis Accords and also, **NASA and ISRO** have agreed to launch a joint mission to International Space Station in 2024.
- US has approved to open two new consulates in **Bengaluru and Ahmedabad** and India will open its new consulate in **Seattle**.

138. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement with **India** for Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) during the World Customs Organization's (WCO) Customs Co-operation Council meeting held in Brussels, Belgium.

The Mutual Recognition Arrangement aims to promote trade facilitation and ease of doing business between the two countries.

139. **SpaceX** has successfully launched **47 Starlink satellites** by Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, USA. With this launch, SpaceX has now launched 4,642 Starlink satellites, and of those, 3,688 are in their operational orbits.

140. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH)** have collaborated to enhance the registry and sharing of regulatory information on medical products worldwide.

This collaboration aims to establish a unified language that simplifies global regulatory decision-making and enhances the analysis of adverse events and outcomes.

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141. The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), has released its **18th quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** bulletin for January-March 2023 (Q4FY23).

Key findings:

- India's urban **unemployment rate (UR)** in Current Weekly Status (CWS) terms for persons aged 15 years and above has declined to **6.8%** during Q4FY23 from 7.2% in Q3FY23.
- UR in CWS (male): 6% and UR in CWS (female): 9.2%

- The highest UR has been seen in **Himachal Pradesh (15.2%)**, followed by Chhattisgarh (12.5%) and Jammu & Kashmir (12.4%).
- The **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** in CWS is **48.5%** in Q4FY23.
- LFPR in CWS (male): 73.5% and LFPR in CWS (female): 22.7%.
- The **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** in CWS is **45.2%** in Q4FY23.
- WPR in CWS (male): 69.1% and WPR in CWS (female): 20.6%.

142. As per the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's payroll reporting data analysis, **1.39 crore people** found **new formal jobs** in India in **FY23**. This is a **13 percent** increase compared to FY22.

- **Maharashtra** has topped with a 15 percent increase in formal jobs in FY23.
- **Tamil Nadu** is in second place, with 14.05 net new payroll additions in FY23.
- **Karnataka, Haryana, and Gujarat** have bagged the third, fourth and fifth positions, respectively.
- Among the large states, **Assam** has the fewest formal job creations at 64,432. This is, however, a 177 percent increase compared to FY22.
- The 22-25 age group has bagged the most jobs at 36.24 lakh.

143. As per the latest data released by the Union Government, India's growth rate for **FY23** has been projected at **7.2%** as compared to 9.1% GDP growth in FY22.

Manufacturing sector has grown by 1.3 percent in FY23 after growing 11.1 percent in FY22 while agriculture, forestry and fishing has grown at 4 percent in FY23 against 3.5 percent growth seen in the fiscal before.

The Indian economy GDP growth in **Q4 FY23** (January to March 2023) is projected at **6.1%** year-on-year (YoY) when compared to the 4.5% growth in Q3 FY23 and 4% in FY22.

144. The **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**, in partnership with the Indian G20 Presidency, has launched a comprehensive report titled "**Low-cost finance for energy transition**". The report has praised India's achievement in rolling out renewable energy capacity.

The report is developed in collaboration with India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

The report provides a toolbox to increase the availability of low-cost capital in G20 countries and beyond.

Key highlights of the report:

- India ranked third on the Renewable Energy Attractive Index in 2021 and India's solar and wind power base is the fourth largest in the world.
- India's renewable energy sector growth is being driven by national targets of 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 and 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.
- The report mentioned sovereign green bonds as a next logical step to showcase India's commitment to building a low-carbon economy, mobilise private sector capital for sustainable development and lower the cost of capital for green projects by tapping into new investors.
- The report estimated that India would need USD 10 trillion between 2022 and 2070 to achieve them to meet its 2070 net-zero target.

145. The 8th edition of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) India Rankings 2023, prepared by the Ministry of Education (MoE), has been released by the Minister of State for Education, Rajkumar Ranjan Singh.

As per the list, **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras** has secured the top spot for the fifth consecutive year.

- **IIT Madras** is followed by the Indian Institute of Science (**IISc**) **Bengaluru** at 2nd, **IIT Delhi** at 3rd, **IIT Bombay** at 4th, and IIT Kanpur at 5th place.
- IIT-Madras has also bagged the first position in engineering for the eighth year in a row.
- IIT Madras has also ranked 2nd among research institutions and ranked 2nd best for innovation.

146. The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**, under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), has released its inaugural '**Sustainability Report for Financial Year 2021-22**' which covers NHAI's governance structure, stakeholders, environment and social responsibility initiatives.

Key findings of the report:

- The gradual decrease in Green House Gas emissions intensity of 9.7 percent in FY 2020-21 and 2 percent in FY 2021-22.
- NHAI has continuously been using recycled materials (Recycled Asphalt and Recycled Aggregates) for highways construction.

- NHAH has increased the utilization of certain materials (like, Copper slag, Fly Ash, Steel slag, Cold Asphalt Mix) in road construction for ensuring sustainability and reducing environmental footprints.
- More than 100 Wildlife crossings were created in 3 years across 20 states.
- More than 2.74 crore saplings were planted till 2021-22 to offset direct emissions from the vehicles.

147. Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) has emerged as India's highest-placed university in the '**Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2023**'. It has been ranked 52nd in the world for tackling some of the biggest global challenges.

Western Sydney University in Australia has topped the overall ranking for the second year in a row, followed by the **University of Manchester** in the UK and **Queen's University** in Canada

Other Indian universities in the top 300 include:

- Lovely Professional University in Punjab, ranked between 101 and 200;
- Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences in Himachal Pradesh ranked between 101 and 200; and
- KIIT University in Odisha ranked between 201 and 300.

148. The Impact Rankings is a global performance table that assesses universities against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Indian University among top 100 under each Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	Indian University under SDG
SDG 1 (No Poverty)	JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mysuru (65 th)
SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)	Lovely Professional University (41 st)
SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)	JSS Academy (16 th), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (23 rd) and Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (83 rd).
SDG 4 (Quality Education)	Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (9 th), Manipal Academy of Higher Education (25 th), and B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology (75 th)

SDG 5 (Gender Equality)	Manipal Academy of Higher Education (4 th), and Amrita University (46 th)
SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)	Amrita University (24 th), Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences (41 st) and B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology and SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai (77 th).
SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)	IIT Guwahati (6 th), Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (18 th), Chitkara University, Chandigarh (40 th), Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences (43 rd) and LPU at 77 th .
SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)	University of Calcutta (52 nd) and LPU (97 th)
SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)	KIIT University (17 th)
SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)	Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (44 th), and IIT Gandhinagar (54 th)

149. The **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** has projected that India's GDP growth for the fiscal year **2023-24** will be in the range of **6.5-6.7 percent** supported by strong domestic drivers and robust Capital expenditures (CapEx) momentum of the government.

CII has also projected India's GDP to grow in Q4 FY23 by 6.1%, with an annual growth rate of FY23 at 7.2 percent.

India's GDP growth is expected to increase to 7.8% in the next decade (FY22-31) as compared to 6.6% in the previous decade.

150. As per the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the **fiscal deficit** target in **FY23** has been reduced to **6.36%** of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) against **6.4%** in the revised estimates(RE) due to lower-than- estimated revenue expenditure.

Fiscal deficit for FY23 is at Rs.17.33 trillion, or 98.7% of the RE of Rs.17.55 trillion due to the reduction in higher tax, non-tax revenue collections and non-debt capital receipts.

The net tax revenue in FY23 reached marginally higher (by 0.5%) at Rs.20.97 trillion than the RE of Rs.20.86 trillion.

The non-tax revenues for FY23 are at Rs.2.86 trillion, or nearly 9.3% higher than the RE.

151. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, has released the **5th State Food Safety Index (SFSI)**, which evaluates the performance of states and union territories across six different aspects of food safety.

- Among the larger states, **Kerala** has topped the index, followed by Punjab and Tamil Nadu.

- Among the smaller states, **Goa** has emerged as the leader, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- **Jammu and Kashmir**, Delhi and Chandigarh secured the first, second, and third ranks respectively among the union territories.

The State Food Safety Index (SFSI) aims to foster healthy competition and catalyze positive change in the food safety ecosystem throughout the country, ultimately ensuring the provision of safe and wholesome food to all residents. It was launched in 2018-19.

152. The brand valuation firm Brand Finance has released its **INDIA 100 2023: The annual report on the most valuable and strongest Indian brands- June 2023** report in which the **Tata Group** has retained its 1st position as the most valued brand in India at USD 26,381 million in 2023.

- This is the first time that an Indian brand has breached the brand value mark of USD 25 billion.
- It has shown a growth at 10.23% as compared to 2022.

Infosys has retained the second spot in the rankings with a brand value of USD 13 billion. It is followed by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (**LIC**) with a value of USD 9.7 billion. Among the banks, the **State Bank of India (SBI)** has the highest brand value of USD 7.33 billion. It is followed by HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank.

Raymond has emerged as the most valuable clothing brand in India with an 83.2 percent rise in brand value to \$273 million.

153. A recent study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research–India Diabetes (**ICMR-INDIAB**) states that India now has over **101 million people** living with **diabetes** compared to 70 million people in 2019.

Around 136 million people (15.3% of the population) have pre-diabetes, and over 315 million people have high blood pressure.

The study has been published in the Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology journal.

- The study has shown that **Goa** has the highest population of diabetic patients is over 26.4 percent of the population, and the lowest prevalence in **Uttar Pradesh** with over 4.8 percent.
- Goa is followed by Puducherry with 26.3%, and Kerala with 25.5% of the cases.

154. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has emerged as **India's fourth largest investor** in the fiscal year 2022-23 following the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the two countries on 1st May 2022.

- In 2023, UAE's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to India has risen to USD 3.35 billion which is more than tripled from USD 1.03 billion in 2021-22.
- UAE's investment in India are mainly in sectors like services, sea transport, power and construction activities.

Singapore is the largest investor in India with USD 17.2 billion investment in FY23, followed by Mauritius and the USA.

155. Australia-based Rights group Walk Free Foundation has released the **Global Slavery Index 2023**, an assessment of modern slavery conditions in 160 countries. As per the index, around 50 million people globally were living in conditions of modern slavery in 2021, a 25% rise over the last 5 years.

- Among the G20 nations, **India** has topped the list with **11 million** people working as forced labourers, followed by **China**, Russia, Indonesia, Turkiye, and the United States of America (USA).

Global Analysis:

Top 5 countries (most prevalent): North Korea (1st), Eritrea (2nd), Mauritania (3rd), Saudi Arabia (4th), and Turkiye (5th).

Top 5 countries (least prevalent): Switzerland (160th), Norway (159th), Germany (158th), Netherlands (157th), and Sweden (156th).

156. According to the latest data from MyGovIndia, **India** has topped the global rankings in **digital payments** for the year 2022 with **89.5 million** digital transactions.

As per the data, India has accounted for **46 percent** of the global real-time payments in the year 2022.

India is followed by **Brazil** with 29.2 million transactions, China with 17.6 million transactions, Thailand with 16.5 million digital transactions, and South Korea with 8 million transactions.

157. As per the '**Oil 2023**' Analysis and forecast to 2028 report released by **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, **India** will surpass **China** as the main driver of global oil demand growth by **2027** as consumption expands in fast-growing developing economies and contracts in the developed world.

The global oil demand will rise by 6% between 2022 and 2028 to reach 105.7 million barrels per day (mb/d).

India has consumed 222.30 million tonnes of petroleum products in 2022-23, 10.2% more year-on-year.

China's demand will fall consistently from 2024 after a massive rise in 2023.

158. Vivek Johri, Chairman, **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** along with other Members of the Board has released the **National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2023** report.

- As per the study, the average import release time has improved in 2023 compared to 2022, achieving 20 percent reduction in release time for ICDs; 11 percent reduction for ACCs; and 9 percent reduction for seaports.
- In absolute terms, the import release time for seaports, ICDs, ACC and ICPs is 85:42 hrs, 71:46 hrs, 44:16 hrs and 31:47 hrs, respectively.

NTRS 2023 reaffirms the 3-fold 'Path to promptness' which comprises:

- Advance filing of import documents enabling pre-arrival processing
- Risk-based facilitation of cargo
- Benefits of trusted client programme - Authorised Economic Operators

Time Release Study (TRS) as a performance measurement tool aims to present quantitative measure of the cargo release time, defined as the time taken from arrival of the cargo at the Customs station to its out of charge for domestic clearance in case of imports and arrival of the cargo at the Customs station to the eventual departure of the carrier in case of exports.

159. US Green Building Council (USGBC) and Green Business Certification Inc (GBCI) have stated that **India** has emerged as a top country with **LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Zero green building projects.**

- India has **73** LEED Zero certified projects, comprising 45 percent of the more than 150 total LEED Zero certifications.
- Haryana and Tamil Nadu are leading the way in certifications.
- In India, realty firm DLF and FMCG player ITC are leading in the LEED Zero green certification initiative.
- The US and China have the second and third most LEED Zero certifications, with 47 (30 per cent) and 15 (10 per cent) certifications, respectively.

LEED Zero recognises projects that have reached net zero or net positive status in the categories of carbon, energy, water, or waste.

160. As per the latest data released by Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN), the **Gross loan portfolio** of the **microfinance industry** has increased by **22%** in **FY23** to Rs 3.48 lakh crore. Gross loan portfolio was at Rs.2.85 lakh crore as on March 31, 2022.

- The microfinance active loan accounts has increased by **14.6%** during the past 12 months to 13 crore as on March 31, 2023.

- In terms of regional distribution of gross loan portfolio, East & Northeast and South have accounted for 63% of the total portfolio.
- **Bihar** is the largest state in terms of portfolio outstanding, followed by Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- **NBFC-MFIs** are the largest provider of micro-credit with a loan amount outstanding of Rs 1,38,310 crore, accounting for 39.7 percent to total industry portfolio in FY23.

161. The **World Economic Forum** has released the annual **Global Gender Gap Index 2023** to benchmark progress towards gender parity and compare countries gender gaps across four key dimensions.

- Economic Participation and Opportunity
- Educational Attainment
- Health and Survival
- Political Empowerment

Key highlights of the Global Gender Gap Index 2023:

- The global gender gap score in 2023 has increased by 0.3% points from 68.1% in 2022 to **68.4%**,
- In the index, no country has yet achieved full gender parity.
- **Iceland** with 91.2% has topped the index followed by Norway (87.9%), and Finland (86.3%).

India's performance:

- India has closed **64.3%** of the overall gender gap and ranked **127th** out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity.
- India has improved by **1.4%** points and **8 positions** in 2023 compared with the 2022 edition.
- It was ranked 135th in the 2022 index.
- India has attained parity in enrolment across all levels of education. However, it has attained 36.7% parity on Economic Participation and Opportunity; 95% parity on Health and Survival index; and 25.3% parity on Political Empowerment.
- The index ranked India's neighbours Pakistan at 142, Bangladesh at 59, China at 107, Nepal at 116, Sri Lanka at 115 and Bhutan at 103.

162. Mukesh Ambani helmed **Reliance Industries Limited** has topped the **Hurun India's 2022 Burgundy Private 500 list** with a market value of Rs.16.4 lakh crore.

TCS with a market value of Rs.11.8 lakh crore took second place followed by HDFC Bank with a market value of Rs.9.4 lakh crore.

- The report has also mentioned that the total value of 500 most valuable companies in India reduced marginally by 6.4%.
- **Serum Institute of India** has topped the list of most valuable unlisted companies with a value of Rs.92 lakh crore followed by National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) with a value of Rs.1.65 lakh crore and BYJU's with a value of Rs.69,100 crore.
- As per the report, the biggest gainer are HDFC Bank, ITC and Housing Development Finance Corporation.

The list curated by Burgundy Private, Axis Bank's Private Banking Business and Hurun India tracks the changes in the value of the top 500 Indian companies during the six-month period (from 30 October 2022, to 30 April 2023).

163. As per the latest Randstad Employer Brand Research (REBR) 2023, **Tata Power** has emerged as India's most attractive employer brand. It has scored high on the top 3 EVP (Employee Value Proposition) drivers-financial health, good reputation, and career progression opportunities.

Tata Power was ranked 9th in the previous year's report.

- Tata Power is followed by **Amazon** at the 2nd spot and Tata Steel Limited at the 3rd place.
- The other organizations among the top 10 include Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) at the 4th place followed by Microsoft, Samsung India, Infosys, Tata Motors Limited, IBM, and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL).
- Among the startups, **Big Basket** has emerged as the most attractive startup employer brand in India.

**RBI GRADE B
2023**

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PRACTICE MOCK

- 164.** According to Henley Private Wealth Migration Report 2023, **India** will witness the exit of **6,500 high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs)** in 2023, the **second**-highest estimated outflow number globally, after China which has a net outflow of 13,500 HNWIs.
- India will be followed by the United Kingdom (3,200) and Russia (3000) in third and fourth places, respectively.
 - **Dubai, UAE and Singapore** have remained preferred destinations for wealthy Indian families amid Golden Visa program, favourable tax environment, robust business ecosystem and a safe, peaceful environment.
 - The top three destinations for HNWI migration in 2023 are expected to be the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
 - The report also found that the number of HNWIs in the world is expected to grow by 8.5% in 2023, reaching a total of 22.5 million.

High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs):

HNWIs refers to those with an investable wealth of USD 1 million or more (approx. Rs. 8.2 crore or more).

- 165.** The **Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU)** has released the **Global Liveability Index 2023**. The index ranks 173 cities across 5 categories: stability, healthcare, education, culture and the environment, & infrastructure.
- **Vienna**, the capital of Austria, has topped the Global Liveability Index 2023 as the world's most liveable city for the second consecutive year.
 - Vienna is followed by **Copenhagen (Denmark)**, Melbourne (Australia), and Sydney (Australia).
 - **Bottom 3 Liveable cities:** Damascus (Syria), Tripoli (Libya) and Algiers (Algeria).
 - The average index score is now 76.2 out of 100, up from 73.2 a year ago.

Ranking of Indian cities: New Delhi (141st); Mumbai (141st); Chennai (144th); Ahmedabad (147th); Bengaluru (148th).

- 166.** The TIME has released its list of 100 Most Influential Companies of 2023. The list is divided into five categories titled: Leaders, Disruptors, Innovators, Titans, and Pioneers.

Meesho, an e-commerce company, and the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, two Indian companies, have been featured on the **TIME's 100 Most Influential Companies of 2023** under the 'pioneer' category.

The list has described Meesho as *"Innovative Retailer"* and NPCI as *"Connecting Commerce"*.

The list is dominated by:

- Kim Kardashian's clothing brand SKIMS and Elon Musk's SpaceX (under Leader category)
- Sam Altman's OpenAI (under Disruptors)
- Kia America, Formula One (under Innovators)
- Major League Baseball, MLB, Disney, Samsung, Apple, and Microsoft (under Titans)

167. The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru**, Karnataka has topped among Indian institutes in the 11th Times Higher Education's (THE) Asia University Rankings 2023 with **48th position**.

- The 2nd highest ranked university in India is JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research with 68th rank in Asia, the 3rd highest is Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences, which comes 77th, Mahatma Gandhi University, which is 4th and last university under top 100 shared 95th rank with Xi'an Jiaotong University, China.
- India has been ranked third when it comes to having the highest number of rankings with 75 universities in the ranking list.
- India has one university in the top 50, four universities in the top 100 and 18 universities in the top 200 in 2023.

The list is topped by **China's Tsinghua University** and Peking University at 1st and 2nd positions for the 4th year in a row.

Singapore's National University of Singapore is ranked at 3rd place for the 3rd consecutive year.

168. The 11th edition of **"The Forbes list of most influential CMOs 2023"** has been released in which Tata Group's brand custodian **Harish Bhat** has been ranked **10th** as the most influential CMOs (chief marketing officers) for the 2nd consecutive year.

At 21st rank, the Indian origin Asmita Dubey, Chief Digital & Marketing Officer, L'Oreal has also named in the list.

Top-3 in the Forbes list of most influential CMOs 2023:

- William White, CMO, Walmart (who was second last year);
- Marcel Marcones, Global CMO, AB InBev;
- Conny Braams, Chief Digital & Commercial Officer, Unilever

169. The **Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2023 (GSER 2023)** has been released by policy advisory and research firm Startup Genome. As per it, Indian ecosystems continue to rise, with **Bengaluru, Karnataka** startup ecosystem has positioned to the **20th** spot, moving two places from 2022.

- Mumbai has moved up five places to 31st position and Delhi has moved up two places to 24th position respectively in the GSER 2023.
- Among the emerging ecosystems, Pune (Maharashtra) has moved into the 31-40 range in 2023, from 51-60 in 2022.

Silicon Valley has retained its top position, while New York City and London are tied at the second position. They are maintaining the top three position from 2020.

170. Union Minister of Mines, **Pralhad Joshi**, has unveiled India's first-ever report on '**Critical Minerals for India**'. The report identifies **30 critical minerals** essential for sectors including defence, agriculture, energy, pharmaceuticals, and telecom.

This comprehensive list marks a milestone in India's pursuit of self-reliance and security in mineral resources, aligning with the vision of achieving 'Net Zero' targets.

The list aims to guide policy formulation, strategic planning, and investment decisions in the mining sector.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

171. The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the **City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain 2.0 (CITIIS 2.0)**.

CITIIS 2.0 is a program conceived by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).

The program will run for a period of four years, i.e., from **2023 till 2027**.

The funding for CITIIS 2.0 would include a loan of **Rs.1760 crore** (EUR 200 million) from AFD and KfW (EUR 100 million each) and a technical assistance grant of Rs.106 cr. (EUR 12 million) from the EU.

CITIIS 2.0 has three major components:

- **Component 1:** To provide financial and technical support for climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation projects in up to **18 smart cities**.
- **Component 2: All States and UTs** will be eligible for support on-demand basis. The States will be provided support to (a) set-up/strengthen their existing State climate centres/ Climate cells/ equivalents (b) create State and city level Climate Data Observatories (c) facilitate climate-data driven planning, develop climate action plans and (d) build capacities of municipal functionaries.
- **Component 3:** Interventions at all three levels; Centre, State and City to further climate governance in urban India through institutional strengthening, knowledge dissemination, partnerships, building capacity, research and development to support scale up across all States and Cities.

Note: CITIIS 1.0 was launched jointly in 2018 by MoHUA, AFD, EU, and NIUA, with a total outlay of Rs.933 crore (EUR 106 million).

- 172.** Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, has launched the **Unified Registration Portal** for the **GOBARdhan** scheme. This portal will act as a one stop repository to assess investment and participation in Biogas/CBG sector at pan India level and also streamline the process of setting up CBG/Biogas plants in India.

GOBARdhan scheme:

GOBARdhan stands for **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan**. The scheme was launched in 2018 under the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)-Phase II program.

Objective: To generate wealth and energy by converting cattle dung, agri residue and other organic waste into Biogas, CBG and bio fertilizers.

Nodal agency: Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti
It encompasses schemes/programmes under various Ministries & Departments viz.

- Waste to Energy Scheme of M/o New and Renewable Energy
- SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) scheme of M/o Petroleum and Natural Gas
- SBM(G) Phase II of DDWS
- Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF) of Dept. of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare

- Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) of Dept. of Animal Husbandry & Dairy.

GOBARdhan is being implemented in partnership with State Governments and Private Sector.

Any project producing CBG/Biogas (more than 10 cuM/day) and bio slurry as principal outputs is eligible to be under the ambit of this scheme.

173. J.P. Morgan has increased its projection for India's annual growth rate to **5.5%** for **FY24**, following an increase in India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to 6.1% in the March quarter of FY23 (Q4FY23).

This growth has been boosted by government and private capital spending. The economy also grew at a better-than-expected 7.2% for fiscal 2023.

174. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has launched a **PM SVANidhi mobile app** for street vendors, to ease the loan application process and provide various information to them regarding the scheme.

The Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme has completed **3 years** on **1st June 2023**.

The scheme aims (i) To facilitate working capital loan up to Rs.10,000 with tenure of 1 year; (ii) To incentivize regular repayment; and (iii) To reward digital transactions.

The vendors, availing loan under the scheme, are eligible to get an interest subsidy @ 7%. The scheme facilitates working capital loans in three tranches to street vendors.

175. Nyaya Vikas Portal has been created by the Department of Justice to monitor the implementation of the centrally sponsored scheme 'Nyaya Vikas'. This portal helps in empowering stakeholders with seamless access to information about funding, documentation, project monitoring and approval.

Nyaya Vikas scheme:

- The Department of Justice has been implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Districts and Subordinate Judiciary since **1993-94**.
- Under the Scheme, central assistance is provided to the State Government / UT Administrations for the construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordinate Courts.

176. The Government of India (GoI) has launched a new fellowship programme to connect the Indian STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) diaspora with

Indian academic and R&D institutions for collaborative research work leading to sharing of knowledge, wisdom, and best practices in the frontier areas of science & technology.

- The programme named '**Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV)**' will be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology.
- It would be awarded to outstanding scientist/technologists of Indian origin (NRI/OCI/PIO) who are engaged in research activities in their respective countries.

177. The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has extended the timeline for the '**Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects**' program to **31st March 2026 (FY 2026)** from the earlier FY 2024.

This project was implemented with the aim to reduce project cost per MegaWatt (MW) and higher transmission losses.

The project was initiated to build solar parks with 500 MW and above capacity, smaller solar power parks are also allowed only in case of acute shortage of non-agricultural land and large portions of land difficult to acquire in view of difficult terrain.

Phase I:

The ultra-mega solar power projects were implemented in December 2014, with an aim to set up at least 25 solar parks and ultra-mega solar projects with a production capacity of 20,000 MW within 2020.

Phase II:

The solar power projects scheme was extended to 2023-24 with enhanced capacity of 40,000 MW on 21st March 2017.

178. Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has launched the **PM-Kisan Mobile App** with **Face Authentication Feature** during an event at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

It has been launched under the scheme for income support to farmers i.e. "Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi".

With this app, farmers can complete e-KYC (Know Your Customer) remotely, sitting at home easily by scanning face without OTP (One Time Password) or fingerprint.

PM-KISAN:

PM Kisan is one of the world's largest DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) schemes in which farmers get **Rs. 6,000** directly transferred through Aadhaar linked bank accounts in **three instalments** in a year. It was launched in February 2019 but is being implemented with effect from December 2018.

179. Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying **Parshottam Rupala** has launched the **NOC Approval for New Drug and Inoculation System (NANDI)** portal in New Delhi.

- The portal is developed by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (**DAHD**) in collaboration with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (**CDSCO**) through the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (**CDAC**).
- It will streamline the regulatory approval process for veterinary products.
- It will enhance transparency and efficiency in assessing and examining proposals for veterinary drugs and vaccines.
- It will be more streamlined through seamless integration with the SUGAM portal of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization.

180. The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)** has observed the '**Udyami Bharat-MSME Day**' on the occasion of World MSME Day (27th June).

During the occasion, Union Minister for MSME **Narayan Rane** has launched the '**CHAMPIONS 2.0 Portal**' and 'Mobile App for Geo-tagging of Cluster Projects and Technology Centers.'

- Champions portal is a single-window grievance redressal portal for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- The CHAMPIONS stands here for the Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing Output and National Strength.
- It was launched on **June 1, 2020**, by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.

- It is created in a Hub & Spoke Model. The Hub is situated in New Delhi in the Secretary MSME's office. The spokes will be in the States in various offices and institutions of the Ministry.

New Features of CHAMPIONS 2.0 Portal:

- The revamped portal will now incorporate AI-driven chatbots and will be available in 11 languages, including Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Kannada.
- The portal will also have a real-time feedback mechanism for its analysis.

181. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched the Field Assessment for the **8th edition Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2023 – Mera Shehar, Meri Pehchan**.

Under SS 2023, around 3,000 assessors will take the field for assessment from 1 July, 2023. The assessors will study performances of 4500+ cities across 46 indicators and it is expected to be completed within a month.

The focus of SS 2023 is on **Waste-to-Wealth** initiative and is curated towards processing and scientific management of waste.

Note: Swachh Survekshan was introduced under the aegis of MoHUA in 2016.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

182. **JSW Steel Limited**, a flagship company of the JSW Group, has become the first manufacturer to receive **GreenPro ecolabel** for its '**Automotive Steel**' products.

The GreenPro Ecolabel, developed by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)'s Green Business Centre, recognizes the highest standards of environmental sustainability and product performance in the Indian manufacturing sector.

183. The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, Karnataka has named the 0.5-metre diameter **Hypersonic Wind Tunnel** after **Late Prof Roddam Narasimha**, an aerospace scientist, to recognise his pioneering efforts in experimental hypersonics in India.

Prof Roddam Narasimha, who passed away in December 2020, was instrumental in the development of aerospace technology in India, both at the technical and policy levels. He was awarded **Padma Vibhushan**, the second-highest civilian award in India, in **2023**.

184. The Indian Council of Medical Research National Institute of Virology (**ICMR NIV**) has joined the **Centralized Laboratory Network (CLN)** that works to test vaccines that can be used during pandemic and epidemic disease outbreaks.

- CLN is a part of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (**CEPI**) and is the largest global group that has standardized methods and materials for testing vaccines.
- As CLN members, each institution will support the rapid development of novel vaccines against a future Disease X, a newly identified pathogen with epidemic or pandemic potential.

On 30th May 2023, 5 new members based in Africa and India joined the CLN network and currently it has 15 partner facilities in 13 countries.

185. The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has launched a pilot project on **Electronics Repair Services Outsourcing (ERSO)** in Bengaluru, Karnataka which will run for three months (from 31st May 2023) on a trial basis with five companies, namely Flex, Lenovo, CTDI, R-Logic, and Aforeserve.

- ERSO involves outsourcing defective/damaged electronic items to Indian repair service organizations for repair, refurbishment, and calibration to achieve optimal functionality.
- Over the next 5 years, the ERSO industry is likely to fetch India around USD 20 billion in revenue and also generate millions of jobs.
- Global electronic equipment repair service market is forecast to reach USD 188 billion by 2026.

186. The state government of **Maharashtra** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bajaj Finserv in Mumbai. Under this MoU, the non-banking finance company will invest **Rs.5,000 crore** in **Pune** which is expected to create 40,000 jobs.

187. The **Malviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT)** and the **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** of the Ministry of Jal Shakti have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish India's first-of-its-kind **National Centre for Earthquake Safety of Dams** to ensure the protection of dams from earthquakes and other natural disasters.

The central government would provide **Rs.30 crore** for setting up the proposed centre at MNIT in **Jaipur**.

India has the third largest number of dams (6,000) in the world.

Note: The Dam Safety Act, 2021 provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of the specified dams for the prevention of dam failure-related disasters.

188. Microsoft has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Directorate General of Training (DGT)** under the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to train 6,000 students and 200 educators in digital and cyber-security skills at government-led Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and National Skills Training Institutions (NSTIs).

The training is being conducted under the 'CyberShikshaa' programme.

189. The Prime Minister of Nepal **Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda** has recently visited India from 31st May to 3rd June 2023 at the invitation of the PM of India Narendra Modi.

He has accompanied by his daughter **Ganga Dahal**. This was his first official visit abroad since assuming office in December 2022 and his 4th visit to India as the PM of Nepal. During his visit, India and Nepal exchanged **seven** Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) including the inauguration of railway facilities, expansion of a petroleum pipeline, and digital payments.

7 MoUs:

- Project Development Agreement for the development of 669 MW Lower Arun Hydropower Project.
- MoU on the development of 480 MW Phukot Karnali hydropower project.
- MoU on the construction of Integrated Check Posts (ICP) in Dodhara Chandani in Nepal.
- MoU between NPCIL India and NCHL of Nepal for facilitating cross-border digital payments.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of petroleum infrastructure.
- MoU between the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of Nepal and Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) of India.
- India-Nepal Transit of Treaty, 1992 has also been renewed.

Both sides have also reached an agreement for **Long-Term Power Trade** wherein it has been decided to increase the quantum of export of power from Nepal to India to **10,000 MW** within a timeframe of ten years.

Nepal PM has also addressed the **Nepal-India Business Summit** held in New Delhi. The summit has been organized by Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

190. Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES Limited), a prime transport infrastructure consultancy and engineering firm, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Power Finance Corporation (PFC)** to explore avenues of mutual

collaboration for consultancy works in sectors such as Transport & Logistics, Energy, Water & Sanitation, Communication, Social and Commercial Infrastructure.

- 191. NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL)**, a subsidiary of NTPC Limited, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL)** in Lucknow with an aim to collaborate in the development of Renewable Energy Parks and Projects and to facilitate in Government of India's efforts towards energy transition.
- 192.** The Government of **Tamil Nadu** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth over **Rs.818.9 crore** with **Japanese Companies** during Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin nine-day visit to Japan and Singapore.
- 193.** The **Indian Navy (IN)** and Chennai-based **Indian Maritime University (IMU)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for technical collaboration. The MoU enable collaboration in various areas, including training, joint research and development, collaborative courses, and resolution of field level issues.
- 194.** The Government of **Bihar** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** to construct new Civil Enclaves at Darbhanga and Purnea Airport.
- Under this MoU, the Bihar Government will provide undisputed land free of cost to AAI for both airports.
- 195. NHPC Limited and Torrent Power Limited** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of **Maharashtra** to generate 13,050 MW through Hydro Pumped Storage Projects (HPSP).
- NHPC Limited will generate 7,350 MW power and Torrent Power will produce 5,700MW. These projects will attract an investment of about Rs.44,000 crore.
- 196. QNu Labs Private Limited (QNu Labs)**, a leading quantum technology startup company, has collaborated with the **Indian Navy** to procure and deploy Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) based systems.
- With this collaboration, Indian Navy has become India's first agency to procure large-scale Quantum-based encryption systems.
- 197. Microsoft India** has signed a 3-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **AirJaldi Networks** to provide internet access for underserved communities in 12 states of India.

The program titled '**Contentful Connectivity**' aims to expand access to high-speed internet and meaningful connectivity in rural regions of India by partnering with private, public, and non-profit sectors.

Under this program, AirJaldi Networks will expand into 3 new states namely, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha.

198. Tata Elxsi, a leading global design and technology company, has collaborated with the Indian Space Research Organization (**ISRO**) to design and develop the Crew Module Recovery Models (**CMRM**) for the recovery team training of the **Gaganyaan Mission**.

- The project has marked Tata Elxsi's entry into mechanical design for space.
- This is the **first time** ISRO has outsourced the mechanical design and development work to an external partner for a critical system.

199. The Ministry of Women & Child Development has launched the '**Amrit Generation**' campaign in collaboration with **Meta** to empower and engage the youth of India (age 16-18 years) by encouraging them to express their aspirations and dreams for the future.

- The campaign invites young people to showcase their creativity and share their aspirations by creating Reels on Instagram and Facebook using the #Amrit Generation.
- The Fifty entries from the campaign will be invited to New Delhi to interact with senior policymakers and industry leaders and will also get an opportunity to visit the Meta office in Gurugram.

200. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (**the Global Fund**) have signed a new and revised **Strategic Framework for Collaboration**, designed to build stronger and more resilient health systems and maximize collaboration and impact in support of country, regional and global responses to major communicable diseases.

The new five-year framework builds on the previous agreement signed in 2018.

It aligns with the 2023-2028 Global Fund Strategy and the WHO General Programme of Work.

201. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Amazon Kisan** to combine strengths and create synergy between the two organizations for guiding the farmers on scientific cultivation of different crops for optimum yield and income.

202. The West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC), Amazon Global Selling and the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** have jointly

organized an **e-Export Haat** at Silpa Sadan in Kolkata to enable small businesses and entrepreneurs from West Bengal and to expand their businesses globally through e-commerce exports.

203. The **Bar Council of India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Bar Council of England and Wales and the Law Society of England and Wales**. The aim of this MoU is to establish an exchange program for lawyers and law students, enabling them to receive training and learning opportunities in each other's jurisdictions.

204. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** and **Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU)** to synergise the professional capabilities of IICA and RRU towards capacity building, education, research and consulting in the domain of Internal Security, Financial Crimes, Law Enforcement, Corporate Frauds and other subject matters common to their mandate and objectives.

205. **Indian Army** has signed a contract with **Astrome Tech Pvt Ltd**, Bangalore to procure the indigenously developed '**Tactical LAN Radio**' for creating secure tactical LAN in remote and difficult terrain.

'Tactical LAN Radio' is a state-of-the-art high bandwidth backhaul wireless radio equipment for the provisioning of reliable and failsafe communication.

The contract has been signed through Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX).

206. The Government of Bihar, Los Angeles Zoo and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) have collaborated to conserve **Ghariyal** (gavial), a fish-eating crocodile, in the **Gandak River** in West Champaran district, Bihar.

This collaboration aims to strengthen the conservation efforts of the reptiles and release hatchlings back to the river safely.

Note: Gharials are critically endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Species.

207. Gujarat-based aerospace firm **Azista BST Aerospace** has successfully launched its maiden satellite, **AFR (Azista BST Aerospace First Runner)**, as part of SpaceX's Transporter-8 mission.

- The satellite has been launched atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California.
- AFR, an 80-kilogram satellite, features optical remote sensing capabilities and is the first of its kind.

- AFR will provide a panchromatic image with 5 metre resolution with a Swath of 70 km.

208. The Competition Commission of India (CCI), a fair-trade regulator, has cleared the proposed deal involving **Manipal Health Enterprises Pvt Ltd** and **Manipal Education and Medical Group India Pvt Ltd (MEMG India)**.

CCI has also approved the minority stake acquisition in **Lenskart Solutions** by Dove Investments, Defati Investments Holding BV and Infinity Partners.

CCI has also approved the acquisition of an additional **4.04%** shareholding of Acko Technology and Services Private Limited (**Acko Tech**) by General Atlantic Singapore ACK Pte. Ltd. (**GASACK**).

CCI has approved the acquisition of a certain shareholding in **Ambit Private Limited (APL)** by Daiwa International Holdings Inc through a combination of primary subscription of shares and secondary share purchases from existing shareholders.

209. **NITI Aayog** and the **United Nations in India** have signed the *“Government of India - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027”* in New Delhi.

The GoI-UNSDCF 2023-27 has been signed by CEO NITI Aayog **B V R Subrahmanyam** and UN Resident Coordinator India **Shombi Sharp**.

- The GoI-UNSDCF 2023-2027 is built on four strategic pillars derived from the 2030 Agenda: **People, Prosperity, Planet and Participation**.
- The four interlinked pillars have six outcome areas focusing on Health and Well Being; Nutrition and Food Security; Quality Education; Economic Growth and Decent Work; Environment, Climate, WASH and Resilience; and Empowering People, Communities, and Institutions.
- The GoI-UNSDCF will have specific focus on SDG localisation and South-South cooperation for the first time.

210. The **Indian Institute of Management, Jammu (IIM)** has recently (June 2023) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (**SIDBI**) to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in India.

The MoU has been signed on the sixth annual convocation of IIM at Jammu.

211. India and Australia have decided to expand the negotiations on **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** by including **15 more areas** which have never been part of any trade deal that India has been part of.

These areas include agri-tech, critical minerals, space, sports, MSMEs, gender innovation and competition policy, among others.

212. The Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) has launched 2 warships of different classes and laid the keel of a 3rd vessel.

The ships launched are '**Anjadip**', the 3rd **Anti-Submarine Shallow Water Craft (ASWSWC)**, and '**Sanshodhak**', the 4th **Survey Vessel Large (SVL)** while the keel has been laid for the 7th ASWSWC.

The ship is named 'Anjadip' to signify the strategic maritime importance accorded to the island of Anjadip, which is located off Karwar (Karnataka).

The ship is named 'Sanshodhak', meaning 'Researcher', signifies the primary role of the ship as a Survey Vessel.

213. The state government of Assam has inked two Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with Northeast Frontier Railways (**NFR**) and Numaligarh Refinery Limited (**NRL**) to ensure hassle-free rail and river travel, and to expedite development in the state.

214. Tata Steel has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Germany's SMS group** to collaborate on a technology that may cut carbon emission by more than 50 percent during steel making process.

Tata Steel aims to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2045.

215. Google has collaborated with the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (**MeitY**) to enhance **G20-Stay Safe online Campaign** of MeitY to create citizen awareness on online cyber safety in India.

Under the collaboration, Google will work with MeitY to amplify the campaign through literacy programmes around cyber safety, helping people identify common types of online scams through multilingual digital content on online safety, and educational content on how to navigate information online.

216. Kiya.ai, an India-based company specializing in Artificial Intelligence and emerging technology solutions, has showcased the India-based Metaverse platform named '**Bharatmeta**' at VivaTech event held in Paris 2023.

Bharatmeta offers practical use cases for banking, commerce, culture, and collaboration within the metaverse.

It aims to bridge the gap between physical and virtual realms.

217. The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance (MoF), Government of **India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Finance, Government of **Philippines**, on financial technology (FinTech) cooperation.

The MoU aims to promote financial inclusion to address the digital divide. Under this MoU, a Joint Working Group (JWG) would be constituted comprising senior representatives from Foreign and IT Ministers, Central Banks, financial sector regulatory institutions, and other related agencies as members.

218. The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, the highest decision-making body in the Ministry of Defence (MoD), has approved the deal to acquire the **MQ-9 Reaper (Predator B) drones** from the **United States of America (USA)**.

The deal involves the acquisition of 15 drones for the Indian Navy for surveillance operations in its area of responsibilities.

MQ 9 Reaper Drone is the primary offensive strike unmanned aerial vehicle for the U.S. Air Force. These drones have an endurance of more than 27 hours and can operate at up to 50,000 feet.

Other deals:

MoD has also signed a deal for procurement of **1,035 equipment** with Hyderabad-based **ICOMM Tele Limited** to upgrade the Information Technology of the Indian Army. According to the deal, 1,035 scale of 5/7.5 tonne radio relay communication equipment containers worth **Rs 500 crore** will be procured.

219. Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), India's largest renewable power producer and the renewable energy arm of the diversified Adani portfolio, has been ranked **First in Asia** and among the top 10 companies globally in the renewable energy sector by the Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Ratings.

AGEL has been placed in the 'Prime' (B+) band, recognizing its robust ESG disclosure practices and high level of transparency

220. A consortium of **Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd (TRSL)** and **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** have inked a contract with Indian Railways for manufacturing **80 Vande Bharat** sleeper train sets by 2029.

The estimated value of the contract is **Rs.24,000 crore**.

The train will be designed to achieve speeds of 160 kilometres per hour (kmph).

The first prototype will be delivered within 2 years.

Additional Information:

Mobility Solutions (MSL), a part of JCBL Group, has bagged a contract worth **Rs 100 crore** with the Indian railways for delivering and installing several essential components for the Vande Bharat Express.

221. Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company (Kotak Life) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Directorate General Resettlement (DGR)** under Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Ministry of Defence to generate employment opportunities for the esteemed Ex-Servicemen of the Defence Services.

Under this MoU, Ex-servicemen will be offered various roles in Kotak Life across multiple distribution channels.

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222. The **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has launched 'My Account My Name' for savings bank account customers to choose any easy to remember 7 Digit/Character Account Name as their account number with IOB.

Under this, the account name can be a combination of 7 letters only or seven numbers only or seven alphanumeric.

223. Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) has launched a new deposit scheme '**Vikas Ashadeep 400 days**'. The scheme is of a tenor of 400 days with an interest rate of 7.50 per cent for senior citizens and 7 percent for general public.

Under the scheme, a minimum of Rs. 10,000 and a maximum of Rs. 2 crore can be deposited.

224. The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has become the **first public sector bank** to launch an Interactive Voice Response (IVR)-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) solution - **UPI 123PAY**, aligning with the Digital Payment Vision 2025 towards a cashless and cardless society.

UPI is a 24-hour payment channel enabling customers to perform fast, encrypted and real-time payments.

UPI 123PAY was launched in 2022 by the Reserve Bank of India in collaboration with the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI).

225. Amp Energy India has secured up to **USD 250 million** (around Rs.2,061 crore) from **SMBC Bank of Japan** (Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation), ICG (Intermediate Capital Group), and AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) to expand its operations and strengthen its position as the leading energy transition platform in India.

226. The United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) and the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (**DAY-NULM**) have collaborated to empower women to make well-informed career choices in the field of entrepreneurship.

The partnership will provide support for women looking to start and expanding their own enterprises, particularly in sectors such as care economy, digital economy, electric mobility, waste management, food packaging and more.

The three-year project, extendable beyond **2025**, will cover eight cities in the initial phase.

227. **IndiGo**, India's largest airline, will buy **500 A320 planes** from **Airbus** in the largest order in the history of commercial aviation. The cost of the deal is **USD 500 billion**. The aircraft will be delivered between 2030 and 2035.

228. The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** has revised the upper ceiling amount of boarding and lodging for Indian Athletes and team officials by **66%**, from USD 150 to **USD 250** per day.

This is for the athletes and officials participating only in international competitions, under the Ministry's Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs).

229. Thrissur-based **South Indian Bank (SIB)** has been recognized with the **Outstanding Digital CX** award at the 6th Digital CX Awards 2023 under the SME (Small Medium Enterprises) loans category for its remarkable performance in providing GST-based loans through a Technology platform.

Digital CX Awards, instituted by Singapore-based 'The Digital Banker', recognize excellence in providing exceptional digital experiences to customers.

SIB has also partnered with **actyv.ai** to implement its Digital GST Business Loan Platform.

Additional Information:

In June 2023, South Indian Bank (SIB) has introduced '**SIB SWIFTe**', an innovative and customer-centric digital account opening platform that eliminates the hassle of paper-based documentation.

230. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed **Mutual Funds** to invest in **repo transactions** in securities such as commercial papers and certificates of deposits (CDs) to improve the growth of the corporate bond market.

In addition, the mutual funds can participate in repo transactions only in 'AA' and above-rated corporate debt securities.

The new provisions will come into force with immediate effect.

Repo transactions:

It is also known as repo or sale repurchase agreements. In this, securities are sold with the seller agreeing to buy them back at a later date. The instrument is used for raising short-term capital.

Other related news:

SEBI has introduced a regulatory framework for online investment platforms that facilitate investments in commission-free mutual fund (MF) schemes. The framework will come into force on 1st September 2023.

231. Fino Payments Bank has tied up with Bengaluru-based **Hubble Money**, a fintech company, to introduce India's and world's first **spending account**. The aim is to help customers manage their finances, track expenses, and earn rewards on purchases.

The users will earn an annual interest rate of 2.75% on the funds parked in the account.

232. NHPC Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Kerala State Electricity Board Limited (KSEB)** to provide consultancy services to KSEB as its Owner's Engineer for vetting of design of KSEB's ongoing projects as well as of projects in the pipeline.

233. Google has launched the "**Indian Languages Programme**" under the Google News Initiative (GNI), to support local news publishers in India, improve their digital operations, and reach more readers.

- The Indian Languages Programme aims to provide training, technical support, and funding to news publishers in English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Malayalam, Gujarati, and Marathi.
- Indian language news organisations registered in India with an operational website are eligible to apply to the program. They must have at least 12 months of continuous operation with a full-time employee count of 50 or more.

Note: GNI is Google's digital skills training program for journalists and newsrooms in tackling misinformation.

234. Mahindra Defence Systems (MDS), a wholly owned subsidiary of Mahindra & Mahindra, has started delivering the first units of the '**Armado**' to the Indian armed forces.

- The Armado is an **Armoured Light Specialist Vehicle (ALSV)**, designed and developed by Mahindra.
- It offers ballistic protection up to B7, Stanag Level II.
- It is powered with a 3.2-litre, turbocharged, direct-injection diesel engine that can also run on NATO-grade diesel.

- The engine produces 215hp and 500Nm of torque and power is delivered to all four wheels via a 4-speed automatic gearbox.
- It features Bilstein independent suspension for all four corners and gets 318/80 R17 tyres.

235. Airbnb, an online lodging hosting service, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Ministry of Tourism** to promote India's high potential as a tourism destination and to highlight the rich cultural heritage and homestays.

Airbnb will also launch a dedicated '**Soul of India**' microsite to promote heritage homes across India.

As part of the Visit India 2023 initiative, this MoU will include destination promotion, sharing travel and tourism insights, host recognition and capacity building.

236. Udupi Cochin Shipyard Limited (UCSL), the wholly owned subsidiary of Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), has bagged an international order from Norway-based **Wilson Ship** owning AS for the design and construction of **six** new generation diesel-electric **3800 DWT general cargo vessels**. The contract is signed with an option for additional eight vessels.

The total cost of the "Future proof Dry Cargo Vessel" project is **Rs.580 crores**.

The first vessel will be delivered by December 2024 and thereafter deliveries will be completed within March 2026.

237. The **Government of India (GoI)** and the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)** have signed an agreement to enhance cooperation and identify areas of mutual interest.

It has been signed during the 4th and final G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting and G20 Tourism Ministerial Meeting held in Goa.

The MoU will see both parties collaborate on key programmatic areas related to tourism market intelligence, tourism, and rural development, tourism investment, education, and innovation.

238. ITI Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** and **Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL)** to produce new products and services for **smart cities**.

239. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its **Argentine** counterpart **Fabrica Argentina de Aviones (FAdeA)** to explore

collaboration in the maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) of aircraft components, systems, and structures during the Paris Air Show 2023.

The partnership aims to strengthen ties between HAL and Argentina's aviation industry and it contributes to the growth and development of the aerospace sector in the Latin American (LATAM) region.

240. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **HFCL Limited** to indigenously develop and deploy emerging technologies and technical solutions to address the requirements of defence, telecom and railway sectors.

The MoU has been signed for 2 years.

241. The Government of India (GoI) has extended the timeline for disbursement of loan for the completion of **ethanol projects** up to **30 September 2023**. The extended timeline for ethanol projects tends to boost agricultural economy, reduces fossil fuel dependency, saves foreign exchange and cuts air pollution.

242. The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** has discontinued its two autonomous bodies, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (**RMK**) and Central Social Welfare Board (**CSWB**), as well as the internal division Food and Nutrition Board (**FNB**).

This decision is a part of the Ministry of Finance's rationalization exercise to shut down departments and sections that no longer have relevance in the current scenario.

243. The National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (**NHPC Limited**) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Grid Corporation of Odisha (**GRIDCO**) for the development of pumped storage and renewable energy (RE) projects in Odisha.

The aim is to set up a storage project of **2,000 MW** and RE projects (on-ground and floating solar projects) of **1,000 MW** in the state.

244. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of **TCNS Clothing Co Limited** by **Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited**. The proposed combination involves acquisition of **51%** of the expanded share capital of TCNS Clothing Co Limited by Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL).

- 245. Mahindra Last Mile Mobility (LMM)**, a division of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd (M&M), has become the first firm to receive the eligibility certificate under the Rs.25,938-crore production-linked incentive scheme for automobiles (auto PLI).
- 246.** On 28th June 2023, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for multiple initiatives and they are as follows:
- The Cabinet has increased the **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)**, the minimum price that mills have to pay to **sugarcane growers**, by Rs.10 to Rs.315 per quintal for the 2023-24 season starting October 2023.
 - The Cabinet has approved the introduction of the **National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill 2023**. The NRF will be “an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research” in India.
 - The Cabinet has approved the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement (HQA) between Government of India (GoI) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (**CDRI**), which was signed on August 22, 2022. This will facilitate grant of exemptions, immunities and privileges and will provide CDRI an independent and international legal persona so that it can carry out its functions internationally, more efficiently.
 - The Cabinet has approved assistance of **Rs.1451.84 crore** for Market Development Assistance (MDA) for promoting Organic Fertilizers from Gobardhan Plants.

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- 247.** Paytm owner One97 Communications Limited has launched '**Paytm UPI SDK**' to allow customers of online merchants to make UPI payments directly and in-line from the merchant's mobile app by entering their UPI PIN, and without getting redirected during checkout.
- 248.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has constituted a **21-member Intermediary Advisory Committee** to advise the SEBI on changes in legal framework and increasing transparency in the functioning of market intermediaries like stock exchanges, depository participants, clearing corporations, among others.

The committee will be chaired by former SEBI executive director **S Ravindran**.

249. According to published yearly bank figures, **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has emerged as the best bank in terms of bad loan management, with net non-performing assets (NPAs) reducing to 0.25 percent during FY23.

This is the lowest ratio among all banks with total business above Rs.3 lakh crore including both public sector banks and private sector banks.

- BoM is followed by **HDFC Bank** with net NPA drop to 0.27 percent, and **Kotak Mahindra Bank** at 3rd spot with 0.37 percent of net advances.
- On the public sector bank side, BoM is followed by the State Bank of India (SBI) with net NPAs reducing to 0.67 percent, and Bank of Baroda at 0.89 percent at the end of March 2023.

Other highlights:

In terms of Capital Adequacy Ratio, **BoM** has the highest CAR (18.14 percent) among PSBs, followed by Punjab & Sind Bank (17.10 percent) and Canara Bank (16.68 percent) as of March 31, 2023.

In terms of deposit growth rate, **HDFC Bank** ranked first with 20.80 percent, followed by Federal Bank with 17 percent growth and Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) with 16.49 percent growth.

In terms of low-cost Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits, **BoM** topped with 53.38 percent, followed by IDBI Bank (53.22 percent), and KMB (52.83 percent).

BoM has the highest Provision Coverage Ratio at 98.28 percent, followed by UCO Bank at 94.50 percent and Indian Bank at 93.82 percent.

250. Goldman Sachs has increased the **Indian economic growth** forecast by 30 basis points to **6.3%** from 5.9% year-on-year (y-o-y) for the calendar year **2023**, citing a boost in net exports.

It has estimated GDP growth for January-March 2023 at 4.9 percent, 6.5 percent for April-June 2023, 5.9 percent for July-September 2023 and 8.1 percent for October-December 2023.

251. The board of directors of **ICICI Bank** has approved the reappointment of **Sandeep Batra** as **Executive Director (ED)** for a further period of 2 years with effect from December 23, 2023, to December 22, 2025, subject to the RBI approval.

The current tenure of Sandeep Batra as ED is set to end on 22nd December 2023.

252. **Yes Bank** has unveiled its new logo and brand identity to resonate with the evolving needs and aspirations of customers and enable people to live each day to the fullest.

- The tick has been transformed into a **soaring bird**, which represents the **Bank's current position** of 'soaring'.
- The red and blue have been given an electric tone, representing the high energy and innovation of the bank.



The bank has launched an integrated campaign with the tagline '**Life Ko Banao Rich**' which represents the bank's core focus of being a complete solution provider.

- 253. Equitas Small Finance Bank** has collaborated with **IBM Consulting**, the professional services and consulting arm of IBM, to design and build a digital banking platform. The aim is to provide a secure experience to the bank's customers.
- 254. Razorpay** has launched India's fastest one-step UPI (Unified Payment Interface) payment solution named "**Turbo UPI**" allowing customers of online merchants to make UPI payments directly without getting redirected to a third-party UPI app during checkout.
- This solution has been developed in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Axis Bank.
 - With this, the payment steps are reduced from 5 to 1.
- 255. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has formed **three committees** to frame draft schemes for pension, provident fund and insurance under EPFO, in line with the provisions of the **Social Security Code, 2020**.

Chanramauli Chakraborty, Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner (ACC) (Headquarters) Legal, will be the overall co-ordinator for all three committees.

Three Committees:

- Committee for framing **Employee's Provident Fund Scheme (EPFS) 2023**: This 11-members committee will be co-chaired by **Sanjay Kumar & Pankaj Raman**.

- Committee for framing **Employee's Pension Scheme (EPS) 2023**: This 8-members committee will be chaired by **Rajiv Bhist**.
- Committee for framing **Employee's Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLIS) 2023**: This 5-members committee will be chaired by **Vaishali Dayal**.

The committees are expected to submit the first draft of the schemes to EPFO by June 23, 2023.

256. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has launched its **"India Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) 2023-2027: Catalyse Robust, Climate-resilient, and inclusive growth"** to assist India for its efforts to achieve sustainable, climate-resilient, and inclusive growth for the next 5 years.

Three pillars of CPS 2023-27:

- Deepen Social and Economic Inclusiveness
- Promote Climate Resilient Green Growth
- Accelerate Structure Transformation and Job creation

257. **Yubi**, formerly known as CredAvenue, has collaborated with **Indian Bank** to extend digital supply chain financing solutions to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in India.

This collaboration is expected to disburse Rs.1500 crore within the first year.

258. **Kiwi**, an Indian credit card platform, has launched its all-inclusive **"Credit on UPI"** customer solution, thereby, transforming how credit cards are issued and utilized. Kiwi will enable customers to experience "Credit on UPI" by issuing Rupay Cards in collaboration with banks.

Note: RBI has allowed the linking of RuPay credit cards to the UPI platform in June 2022.

259. **Manappuram Finance Ltd.** has launched **Ma-Money**, a new digital lending platform, to provide customers with all the financial products offered by Manappuram Finance under one umbrella.

The app is primarily targeted at customers in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

260. Dairy technology provider Stellapps' fintech arm **mooPay**, in partnership with IBISA Network, HDFC ERGO, and Gramcover, has launched a unique **heat Index-based insurance plan** for **farmers**.

Under this farmers receive insurance benefits if the temperature exceeds specified limits for a set number of days within a **60-day** period starting from 1st May 2023 based on region-specific parameters.

261. Myntra has tied up with **Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited** to launch its first co-branded digital fashion and lifestyle credit card namely '**Kotak Myntra credit card**' which will be available on MasterCard and RuPay networks and can be applied for completely online.

The card will be dedicated to fashion shoppers across metros, Tier 1, Tier 2, and 3 cities. The joining fee and annual fee for the credit card is Rs.500.

262. Karbon Card, a B2B payment solution provider, has launched **India's first mobile-based expense management card** named '**Card++**'.

The card will address the challenges faced by startups and Small and Midsize Businesses (SMBs) by providing reliable and accessible expense solutions, thus, reducing disruptions caused by the use of multiple payment instruments by SMBs.

263. RBL Bank has introduced a new fixed deposit scheme named "**ACE Fixed Deposit scheme**" with an interest of up to **8.50 percent**. The new saving scheme can be taken for a tenure of 12 months to 20 years.

The minimum deposit value of the FD scheme is Rs.50 lakh and the maximum deposit value is Rs.2 crore. The scheme is available for residents as well as non-residents of India.

264. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has identified **SBI Life Insurance Company Limited** (SBI Life), which is one of the largest life insurers in the country with satisfactory financials, as the **acquirer insurer** of the life insurance business of **Sahara India Life Insurance Co. Ltd (SILIC)** with immediate effect.

265. The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has approved the acceptance of **e-bank guarantee** and **insurance surety bonds** as 'bid security' and 'performance security' in standard documents of engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC), hybrid annuity model (HAM) and BOT (Toll) projects.

266. The **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** has increased its stake in **Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL)**, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) under the Ministry of Steel, by **2.001%** through an open market acquisition, at an average price of Rs.66.18 per unit.

With this acquisition, LIC has increased its stake from 6.68% to **8.68%**.

Other related news:

LIC has reduced its stake in National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (**NHPC**) to **3.19%** in the March quarter from 3.48% in the preceding quarter.

267. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued guidelines for transactions in **Corporate Bonds (CBs)** through the **Request for Quote (RFQ) platform** by stock brokers in order to increase liquidity on the platform.

- Stock brokers will have to undertake at least 10 percent of their total secondary market trades by value in CBs in that month by placing quotes through one-to-one (OTO) or one-to-many (OTM) mode on the RFQ platform of stock exchanges from 1st July 2023.
- The value would be increased by 25% of their total secondary market trades from 1st April 2024.

'Request for Quote' (RFQ):

RFQ is a trade execution platform, launched in 2020 as per the guidance from SEBI. This platform is a direct participation model where all participants trade in their own account. With recent SEBI's circular to permit participation through brokers from 01 Jan 2023, participants are now allowed to use the services of SEBI registered brokers of the NSE's debt segment for executing deals on their behalf on RFQ Platform.

- 268.** The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, India (**HSBC India**) has unveiled its latest advertising campaign **"My Account Starts Today"** featuring its new brand influencer Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli**.

The campaign highlights HSBC's purpose of "opening up a world of opportunity" as it works to support the goals of India going global.

- 269.** **YES Securities (India) Limited (YSL)**, a leading financial services company, has tied up with **WatchYourHealth (WYH)**, a tech driven healthcare platform, to provide investment solutions to healthcare professionals through the **'Wellth- Where Investments and Health Unite'** programme.

The partnership aims to help the healthcare community start their investment journey for successful wealth creation and achieve long-term financial goals.

- 270.** The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has launched **"Project Kuber"** to facilitate and cater to various banking requirements of customers in **Bengaluru Circle**.

The project includes the establishment of four Transaction Banking Hubs and one Corporate Salary Package Hub.

These hubs will focus on increasing SBI's market share in liability products.

The Transaction Banking Hubs will provide a range of services to both corporate and non-corporate clients.

- 271.** The **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has launched the **Interoperable Cardless Cash Withdrawal (ICCW) facility** wherein a customer can withdraw cash using UPI (Unified Payments Interface) from the bank's ATMs (Automated Teller Machine) without using the physical debit card.

With this, BoB has become the **first public sector bank** to launch this service.

The customers can avail two transactions a day per account with a withdrawal limit of **Rs 5,000** per transaction.

272. Kotak Private Banking, a division of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, has launched a savings programme named '**Reserve**' exclusively for its Ultra High Net Worth Individuals (UHNIs) and High Net Worth Individuals (HNIs) comprising entrepreneurs, business families, and professionals.

The programme is applicable for an individual who is having a 7.5 crore relationship value and a minimum savings bank account balance (Average Yearly Balance) of Rs.50 lakhs.

273. The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, a member of the World Bank Group, has collaborated with the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (**NaBFID**) to develop PPP (Public-Private Partnership) projects in India's infrastructure sector.

This will support India's target of achieving a USD 5 trillion economy while fostering low-carbon and climate-resilient growth.

274. K Prathapa Reddy, Deputy General Manager of SBI, has become the new chairman of the Warangal-headquartered **Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB)**. He will serve as the chairman of APGVB for 5 years.

He has succeeded K. Praveen Kumar.

275. World Bank in its latest Global Economic Prospects Report-June 2023 has lowered **India's FY24 growth forecast** to **6.3%** from 6.6% in January 2023.

For FY25, World Bank expects GDP growth rate at 6.4%. While for 2025 forecast, the growth rate is expected at 6.5%.

The global GDP growth is expected to lower from 3.1% in 2022 to 2.1% in 2023. It will be 2.4% in 2024 and 3% in 2025.

Other GDP projection:

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) has marginally raised its 2023-24 (FY24) growth forecast for India to **6 percent**, from 5.9 percent estimated earlier.

276. Bajaj Finserv Limited (BFL) has launched its mutual fund (MF) business under **Bajaj Finserv Mutual Fund**. This is India's **43rd** asset management company (AMC) and **6th** company to enter the MF industry post-2021.

- This MF will be headquartered in **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- Nimesh Chandan will be the chief investment officer (CIO) of the MF, while **Ganesh Mohan** will be the chief executive officer (CEO).
- Sorbh Gupta and Siddharth Chaudhary will be the fund managers.

- 277. SBM Bank (India) Limited** has launched **SBM World Elite Metal Debit Card**, powered by Mastercard, for exclusive, on-invitation access to the world of luxury for the Uber-affluent Indian. The card is valid for a period of 5 years.
- 278. Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)** has sold **1.7 percent stake** in private sector lender **Kotak Mahindra Bank** through open market transactions. The shares are sold at an average price of Rs.1,855.64 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs.6,123.61 crore.
- 279.** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has granted the Certificate of Registration (CoR) to **Go Digit Life Insurance Limited** to carry out life insurance business in India.
- 280. RING**, India's leading digital credit platform has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (**NPCI**) to integrate **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Plug-in** capabilities into RING's existing digital services. This partnership will help RING offer 'Scan & Pay' options to its existing and new customers.
- 281. HDFC Bank** has introduced a new credit card named '**Milennia Credit Card**' which offers cashback over e-commerce platforms and multiple benefits.
- This card is applicable to both self-employed and salaried Indian nationals. The minimum age limit is 21 and the maximum age is 40.
- 282. J.P. Morgan Chase Bank**, the largest bank by assets under management in the United States (US), has teamed up with **six Indian banks** to settle interbank dollar transactions on its blockchain-based trading platform, '**Onyx**'.
- Under the pilot, the six Indian banks will open on-chain Nostro accounts with JPMorgan's branch in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, or GIFT City.
 - The 6 Indian banks includes HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Yes Bank, and IndusInd Bank, and JPMorgan's own banking subsidiary at GIFT City.
- 283. SAMCO Asset Management Private Limited** has launched India's first actively-managed momentum fund '**SAMCO Active Momentum Fund**'. It is an open-ended equity scheme following momentum theme with Benchmark index of Nifty 500 Index TRI.
- The fund manager for SAMCO Active Momentum Fund is **Paras Matalia**

284. The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched the mission “**Electric Vehicle Operations and Lending for Vibrant Ecosystem**” (**EVOLVE**) in association with NITI Aayog, World Bank, Korean-World Bank and Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to provide finance for electric vehicles (EV) loans to Micro, Small, & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The aim is to provide affordable commercial financing for EV loans to MSMEs, including hosting telematics and reducing financing costs.

Other related news:

The **Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME)** and Small Industries Development Bank of India (**SIDBI**) have tied up to introduce the **NBFC Growth Accelerator Program (NGAP)**.

The aim is to address the funding challenges faced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by focusing on capacity building for smaller Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The program will primarily support NBFCs lending to MSMEs in Tier II and Tier III cities.

285. The campaign titled '*I am Adyar, Adyar is me*' has been launched by the **Federal Bank** in Chennai to honour and celebrate the local community of Adyar.

The Adyar branch of the Federal Bank has been converted into a living museum for the campaign.

The campaign features a special exhibition showcasing 40 compelling stories of the individuals who made Adyar special.

286. The Asian Development Bank (**ADB**) and the Government of India (**GoI**) have signed a **USD 130 million** loan agreement to increase agricultural productivity, improve access to irrigation and promote horticulture agribusinesses to raise farmers' income in **Himachal Pradesh**.

287. The **World Bank's** Board of Executive Directors has approved a **USD 148 million** loan to support the Indian state of **West Bengal** in harnessing surface and ground water through better irrigation practices that will benefit people in rural areas.

The USD 148 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a maturity of **11.5 years** with a grace period of **four years**.

288. The Government of India (GoI) has announced the four important initiatives to strengthen **1,514 Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** in the country.

- UCBs can now open new branches up to **10%** (maximum 5 branches) of the number of branches in the previous financial year without prior approval of RBI in their approved

area of operation. UCBs have to get the policy approved by their board and comply with the Financially Sound and Well Managed (FSWM) Norms.

- UCBs can also do **One-Time Settlement** at par with commercial banks.
- The timeline for UCBs to achieve **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** has been extended from 31st March 2024 to **31st March 2026**.
- In order to meet the long pending demand of the cooperative sector for closer coordination and focused interaction, RBI has recently notified a **nodal officer** as well.

The term Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs), though not formally defined, refers to primary cooperative banks located in urban and semi-urban areas. These banks, till 1996, were allowed to lend money only for non-agricultural purposes.

289. The **National Stock of India (NSE)** has signed a tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Higher and Technical Education department (HTED), Government of **Maharashtra**, and **Moneybee Institute** to create awareness amongst the public about the various aspects of investing in the capital markets, and provide relevant and practical knowledge to investors, enabling them to make informed investment decisions.

290. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed **SBI Mutual Fund (SBIMF)** to acquire up to **10%** of total paid-up equity share capital of **ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company** through market purchase.

This approval is valid for **one year** and is subject to compliance with applicable provisions of IRDAI (Registration of Indian Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2022, Indian Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) Rules, 2015, Insurance Act/Rules/ Regulations, Orders, Circulars, etc.

291. **World Bank** has launched its first dedicated road safety project in South Asia with a **USD 358 million** financing agreement signed in **Dhaka** with the Government of Bangladesh.

- The project seeks to improve road safety and reduce fatalities and injuries from road crashes in selected cities, high-risk highways, and district roads.
- The project will focus on two national highways in Bangladesh: Gazipur-Elenga (N4) and Natore-Nawabganj (N6).

292. The Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB) has selected new chiefs for the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) and National Insurance Company (NIC).

- **GIC Re's** new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) will be **Ramaswamy Narayanan**. He will succeed Devesh Srivastav, who is set to retire in September 2023.
- **NIC's** new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) will be **Rajeshwari Singh Muni**. She will succeed Suchita Gupta, who is set to retire in August 2023.

Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB):

FSIB was constituted on July 01, 2022 under Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance. It replaced Banks Board Bureau (BBB).

Composition:

- **Chairperson to be nominated by Central Government.**
- **Ex officio members:** Secretary in charge of DFS, Department of Public Enterprises, Chairperson of IRDAI, Deputy Governor of RBI.
- Several part-time members with subject matter knowledge

Functions:

- To recommend persons for appointment as whole-time directors (WTDs) and non-executive chairpersons (NECs) on the Boards of Directors in Public Sector Banks (PSBs), financial institutions (FIs) and Public Sector Insurers (PSIs).
- To advise on certain other matters relating to personnel management in these institutions.
- To build a databank containing data related to the performance of the PSBs, FIs and PSIs.
- To help PSBs, FIs and PSIs in terms of developing business strategies and capital raising plan etc.

293. The **Max Life Insurance** has launched a non-linked participating individual life insurance savings plan named the '**Smart Wealth Advantage Growth Par Plan**' with four income variants.

The savings plan would provide individuals with financial protection and savings accumulation.

The plan includes four variants: Insta Income, Balanced Income, Future Income, and Lifelong Income.

294. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of **P N Vasudevan** as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of **Equitas Small Finance Bank** for a period of three years with effect from July 23, 2023.

295. Motilal Oswal Asset Management Company (MOAMC) has launched an open-ended **Motilal Oswal Nifty Microcap 250 Index Fund** which is India's first-ever passively managed micro-cap fund to replicate/track the total returns of the Nifty Microcap 250 Index.

It will focus on the first 250 firms beyond the NSE 500 companies.

The scheme will be managed by Swapnil Mayekar and Rakesh Shetty.

296. Private equity firm **TPG Investments** has sold its entire stake in **Shriram Finance** through its India arm through open market transactions. The firm has divested its entire **2.65 percent** stake in NBFC Shriram Finance for **Rs.1,390 crore**.

**RBI GRADE B
2023**

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297. IndusInd Bank has joined hands with **Wise**, the global technology company specializing in moving and managing money around the world, to offer online inward remittance services to Non-Residents India (NRIs) residing in the **USA & Singapore**.

IndusInd Bank's multi-partner remittance service platform – Indus Fast Remit (IFR) and Wise Platform have been integrated to offer multi-currency inward remittance service to NRIs.

298. Kotak Mahindra Bank has launched a facility named '**ActivMoney**' for savings accounts that will provide depositors with a return of 7% per annum. This facility automatically transfers the amount, above the default minimum threshold of Rs.25,000, in multiples of Rs.10,000 to an FD of 180 days during which the amount earns 7 percent interest.

299. Axis Bank has appointed former Reserve Bank deputy governor **N S Vishwanathan** as the Non-Executive (Part-time) Chairman. He has been appointed for a period of three years, subject to approval of the shareholders of the Bank and Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

300. The World Bank's Board of Directors has approved a **USD 150-million loan** to support the **Resilient Kerala programme**. The programme is designed to strengthen Kerala's preparedness for natural disasters, climate change impact, and disease outbreaks.

The loan has a final maturity of 14 years, including a grace period of six years

301. Max Life Insurance Company Ltd, a subsidiary of Max Financial Services, has acquired a **2.99% stake** in **Capital Small Finance Bank (CSFB)** for a cash consideration of Rs.49.5 crore.

This investment will increase CSFB's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) by over 1% to 20.77%.

Additional Information:

Capital Small Finance Bank Limited started operations as India's 1st Small Finance Bank on April 24, 2016 after conversion from Capital Local Area Bank.

- **Headquarters:** Jalandhar, Punjab
- **MD & CEO:** Sarvjit Singh Samra

302. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has divested a **4.54% stake** in Central Depository Services (CDSL) for Rs.468 crore to comply with the regulatory requirement.

303. PhonePe, India's largest digital payments company, has launched the **PhonePe Payment Gateway** in an attempt to serve MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) merchants across India with no extra charges like setup fees or maintenance costs for small and medium business owners.

304. HDFC Ltd has signed a definitive agreement to sell **90% stake** in its education loan arm **HDFC Credila** to BPEA EQT and CrysCapital for a cash consideration of **Rs.9.060 crore**.

305. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has granted its approval to **Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited (HDFC)** to acquire a certain stake in **HDFC Life Insurance Company** and **HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited**.

These approvals will aid in the merger of HDFC into HDFC Bank, expected to be finalized by the Q3FY24.

306. The **National Bank of Ukraine** has been honoured with the Central Bank of the Year award and the Currency Manager award at the Central Banking Awards 2023.

307. The **Union Bank of India (UBI)** has launched four bank account schemes to benefit women, women entrepreneurs and professionals, pensioners and cooperative housing societies.

Four Account Schemes:

- **Union Unnati:**

It is a current account designed for **Women Individuals & Sole Proprietorship** with an average monthly balance of Rs.50000.

- **Union Samridhi:**

It is savings bank account targeted at **Women Individuals** (18 years and above). It is specifically tailored to empower women by providing them with a safe and convenient avenue to save and manage their finances.

- **Union Samman:**

It is savings bank account targeted at **Pensioners** thus individuals drawing regular pensions through Union Bank are eligible for this account.

- **Union SBCHS:**

It is savings bank account targeted at **cooperative housing societies** (such as Resident Welfare Association/apartment owners Association) by offering concessions in processing charges on loans for purchase of Solar Lights/Plants, Gensets, Elevators and other machinery for usage in society.

308. Fitch Ratings has increased its forecast for **India's GDP growth** by 0.3% points to **6.3%** for the current fiscal year 2023-24 from 6% estimated earlier due to near-term momentum and a stronger outturn in the first quarter of **FY24**.

- The GDP growth of the Indian economy was about 7.2% in FY23 and 9.1% in FY22.
- The growth projections for FY25 and FY26 are estimated at 6.5% each due to inflation having eased and the domestic economy has picked up.

309. Axis Bank has introduced its latest feature, '**One-View**', on Axis Mobile Application to enable the users to manage their accounts across the different bank, including non-axis accounts.

With this, Axis Bank has become the **first private sector bank** to introduce this new-age banking feature leveraging the Account Aggregator ecosystem to create a seamless banking experience for its customers.

310. The Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (**TNSRLM**) to foster the growth of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the state and provide them with vital financial support.

311. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a **USD 295 million loan** to widen and upgrade around 265 kilometers of state highways, improving transport connectivity and safety in the state of **Bihar**.

The central government is contributing USD 156.6 million to the project.

312. Paytm Payment Services Limited (PPSL) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Arunachal Pradesh Innovation and Investment Park (APIIP)** to create a startup ecosystem for the youths in the state.

According to this MoU, Paytm Incubation Centre will provide its product to early-stage startups at a discounted price and offer free credits through the Paytm Startup toolkit.

313. Manipal Technologies Limited has tied up with **Indian Bank** to promote financial inclusion through the provision of tailored banking solutions. The initial focus will be on covering over 600 places before progressively spreading into fresh regions in states like Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Punjab.

314. Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited (ABSLI), a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), has recently launched a new retirement solution called "**ABSLI Nishchit Pension Plan**".

- This plan is specifically designed to help individuals plan for their retirement by providing a **100% guaranteed corpus**, ensuring a secure and uninterrupted income during their golden years.
- The plan sets a maximum entry age of 65 years and a minimum entry age of 30 years.
- The minimum annualized premium required is Rs.20,000.
- Policyholders can avail the vesting benefit until the age of 75, with a minimum vesting age of 45 years.

315. The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched a new non-linked, non-participating, individual, savings, life insurance plan named '**Dhan Vridhhi**' to offer a combination of protection and savings.

- The plan is available for 10, 15, or 18 years of term.
- The plan offers a savings component that allows policyholders to accumulate a lump sum amount at maturity.
- The plan offers a premium waiver benefit that can be used to waive premiums in the event of the policyholder's death.
- The plan offers a guaranteed death benefit.
- The Minimum Basic Sum Assured is Rs.1,25,000 and one can opt for higher basic sum assured in multiples of Rs.5000.
- The Guaranteed Additions will accrue at the end of each policy year, throughout the policy term. The Guaranteed additions range from Rs.60 to Rs.75 and Rs.25 to Rs.40 per Rs.1000.

316. DBS Bank India, a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Limited, Singapore, has appointed **Rajat Verma** as Managing Director and Head of Institutional Banking in India. He will succeed Niraj Mittal, who will be taking up a new role as country head of DBS Bank in Australia.

317. The **World Bank** has approved **USD 391 million loan** to improve access to high-quality healthcare services and to economic opportunities for people in **Assam and Tripura**.

- USD 251 million loan has been approved for Assam State Secondary Healthcare Initiative for Service Delivery Transformation (ASSIST) Project.
- USD 140 million loan has been approved for Tripura Rural Economic Growth and Service Delivery Project.

The loans have a maturity period of 10.5 years, including a 5-year grace period.

318. Canara Bank has become the **first public sector bank (PSB)** in India to introduce the facility of UPI (Unified Payments Interface) payments to merchants through RuPay Credit Card, in association with NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India). This facility is made available at 'Canara ai1' Banking Super App of the Bank.

319. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has introduced an **Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)** like facility for trading in **secondary market** based on blocked funds in investor's bank account, instead of transferring them upfront to the trading member, thereby providing enhanced protection of cash collateral.

The new facility will become live by January 1, 2024.

Under the framework, funds will remain in the account of client but will be blocked in favour of the Clearing Corporation (CC) till the expiry date of the block mandate or till block is released by the CC, or debit of the block towards obligations arising out of the trading activity of the client, whichever is earlier.

The facility will be provided by integrating Reserve Bank of India (RBI)-approved Unified Payments Interface (UPI) mandate service of single-block-and-multiple-debits with the secondary market trading and settlement process called 'UPI block facility'.

320. World Bank has approved a **USD 300 million loan** to improve the quality of education in government-run schools in **Chhattisgarh**, India under the project Chhattisgarh Accelerated Learning for a Knowledge Economy Operation (CHALK).

The project aims to benefit about 4 million students, mostly from poor and vulnerable communities in the state.

The loan has a maturity of 18.5 years with a grace period of 5 years.

321. The 3 Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) have collaborated with the World Health Organization (**WHO**) to launch the new **Health Impact Investment Platform**.

The three MDBs are **African Development Bank (AfDB), European Investment Bank (EIB), and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)**.

- The platform aims to strengthen and invest in climate and crisis-resilient Primary Healthcare Services (PHC) in low-and low and middle-income countries (**LICs and LMICs**).
- The platform will provide **Euro 1.5 billion** to LICs and LMICs in the form of loans and grants for PHC services, for vulnerable populations and communities.

322. The **World Bank's** Board of Executive Directors has approved a **USD 255.5 million loan** to help India improve the quality of its technical education and expanding the number of jobs prospects available to students. This loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a final maturity of 14 years including a grace period of five years.

323. Infosys, India's second-largest IT services firm, has signed a **USD 454 million** deal with the Denmark-based **Danske Bank** to accelerate its digital transformation. The deal is signed for five years with an option to renew for one additional year for a maximum of three times.

324. FaMe TN (Facilitating MSMEs in Tamil Nadu) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to attract investments worth **Rs.1,510 crore** to provide jobs for 7,400 people.

This is a part of the investments worth Rs.1723.05 crore which are confirmed at the MSME Day function held under the chairmanship of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

325. Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Co. Ltd (Kotak General Insurance) has partnered with B2B SaaS platform **actyv.ai** to provide bite-sized insurance products to new-age Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) companies. This partnership empowers enterprises to extend group insurance coverage to their distributors, retailers, and suppliers.

326. The Executive Committee of the Central Board (ECCB) of the **State Bank of India (SBI)** has accorded approval for acquiring the entire **20% stake** held by SBI Capital Markets (**SBI CAPS**) in **SBI Pension Funds**.

RBI IN NEWS

327. Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has tied up with IIT Madras Research Park (**IITMRP**) and IIT Madras Incubation Cell (**IITMIC**) to introduce voice-banking solutions to eliminate language barriers across the country.

The initiative aims to conduct a basic banking transactions through voice-controls in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English, in the initial stage.

328. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released its **Annual Report 2022-23**, a static report of the Central Board of Directors on the working of the RBI for the year ended 31st March 2023 (FY23) submitted to the Central Government in terms of Section 53(2) of the RBI Act 1934.

- The size of the balance sheet has increased by Rs 1,54,453.97 crore, i.e., **2.50 percent** from Rs.61,90,302.27 crore as on March 31, 2022, to **Rs.63,44,756.24 crore** as on March 31, 2023.
- Income for the year has increased by **47.06 percent**, and expenditure increased by **14.05 percent**.
- The year ended with an overall surplus of **Rs.87,416.22 crore** as against Rs.30,307.45 crore in the previous year, resulting in an increase of 188.43 percent.
- As on March 31, 2023, the total gold held by the Reserve Bank was **794.63 metric tonnes** as compared to 760.42 metric tonnes as on March 31, 2022.
- The central bank spent Rs.4,682.80 crore on the printing of currency notes during FY23, marginally lower than Rs.4,984.80 crore in FY22.

Note: RBI transfers the surplus as a dividend to the central government.

329. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Shaktikanta Das** has launched a **financial inclusion dashboard** named '**Antardrishti**'. The dashboard will provide the necessary knowledge to evaluate and track the development of financial inclusion by recording relevant data.

It will also provide the required insight to monitor the progress of financial inclusion. The dashboard is presently intended for internal use in the RBI.

330. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has met on June 6th, 7th & 8th, 2023, and released the second bi-monthly monetary policy statement for FY24 which projected India's real **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth to **6.5%** for **FY24** (lower than 7% in FY23) with FY24's Q1 at 8%, Q2 at 6.5%, Q3 at 6%, and Q4 at 5.7%.

The policy rates remain unchanged.

The stance is to focus on **withdrawal of accommodation**.

Policy rates as of June 2023	
Repo rate	6.50%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate	6.75%
Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate	6.25%
Bank Rate	6.75%
Reserves Ratio as of June 2023	
Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	4.50%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18%

Note- The next meeting of the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to be held during August 8-10, 2023.

Other Decisions:

- CPI inflation for **FY24** is forecasted at **5.1%**, with FY24's Q1 at 4.6%, Q2 at 5.2%, Q3 at 5.4%, and Q4 at 5.2%.
- RBI has issued guidelines regarding **Default Loss Guarantee (DLG)** in digital lending. As per the guidelines, a Regulated Entity (RE) can only enter into DLG arrangements with a Lending Service Provider (LSP) or another RE with whom it has entered into an outsourcing LSP arrangement.
- RBI has issued a comprehensive framework **for compromise settlements and technical write-offs**, under which all Res including cooperative lenders could be able to resolve non-performing assets (NPA) and streamline instructions for regulated entities.
- RBI has extended the phase-in time for achievement of the **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** Targets for Primary (Urban) Cooperative Banks (UCBs) by 2 years i.e. from 31st March 2024 to **31st March 2026**.

- RBI has proposed to expand the scope of **e-RUPI vouchers** by granting permission to non-bank prepaid instrument issuers to issue them.

331. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Shaktikanta Das** has been conferred with the award of '**Governor of the Year**' at the Central Banking Awards 2023 in London, UK.

- He has been recognized for his role during COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the fight against inflation.
- He is the **second** RBI Governor to be honoured with the award after Raghuram Rajan, who received the award in 2015.

332. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **A.P. Hota**, independent director, as part-time Chairman of the **Federal Bank** for a period of 3 years with effect from 29th June 2023 till 14th January 2026.

333. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs.30 lakh** on **Standard Chartered Bank**-India for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Reserve Bank of India (Know Your Customer (KYC)) Directions, 2016'.

This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI conferred under the provisions of section 47 A (1) (c) read with section 46 (4) (i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

RBI has also imposed a fine of Rs.26 lakh on TransUnion CIBIL Limited, Rs.24.25 lakh on Equifax Credit Information Services Private Limited, Rs.24.25 lakh on Experian Credit Information Company of India Private Limited, and Rs.25.75 lakh on CRIF High Mark Credit Information Services Private Limited.

RBI releases the Financial Stability Report, June 2023

The Reserve Bank has released the **27th** issue of the **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**, which reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the Indian financial system.

The Reserve Bank of India published the first **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** in **March 2010**. To be published every six months, these reports are an attempt at institutionalizing the implicit focus and making financial stability an integral driver of the policy framework.

Highlights:

- The global economy is facing heightened uncertainty amidst banking system fragility in certain countries, persisting geopolitical tensions and moderating but elevated inflation.
- Despite global headwinds, the Indian economy and the domestic financial system remain resilient, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals.
- Continuing growth momentum, moderating inflation, narrowing current account deficit and rising foreign exchange reserves, ongoing fiscal consolidation and a robust financial system are setting the economy on a path of sustained growth.
- Healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates are engendering a new credit and investment cycle and brightening the prospects of the Indian economy.
- The capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) and the common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) rose to historical highs of 17.1 per cent and 13.9 per cent, respectively, in March 2023.
- SCBs' gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio continued its downtrend and fell to a 10-year low of 3.9 per cent in March 2023 and the net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio declined to 1.0 per cent.
- Macro stress tests for credit risk reveal that SCBs would be able to comply with the minimum capital requirements even under severe stress scenarios. The system-level capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) in March 2024, under baseline, medium and severe stress scenarios, is projected at 16.1 per cent, 14.7 per cent and 13.3 per cent, respectively.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

334. Konkani writer **Damodar Mauzo** has been conferred with the **57th Jnanpith Award**, India's highest literary honour.

- He is a native of **Goa** state.
- He is the second Goan to receive the award, after Ravindra Kelekar in 2008.
- He was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for his novel 'Karmelin'.
- He is notable for his novels, such as Karmelin, and Tsunami Simon, and short stories, such as Teresa's Man and Other Stories from Goa.

Jnanpith Award:

It is the oldest and the highest Indian literary award presented annually by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature". It was instituted in 1961. The award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English, with no posthumous conferral. The first recipient of the award was the Malayalam writer G. Sankara Kurup (1965). Bengali novelist Ashapurna Devi became the first woman to win the award in 1976.

335. The World Health Organization (WHO) has selected **Meghalaya** for the **World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2023** for recognising its efforts in controlling tobacco consumption. The State Tobacco Control Cell has received the award on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day (31 May).

The state has been awarded under the category of South-East Asia Region.

Other awardees (South-East Asia Region):

- Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research Dharwad, Karnataka
- Indonesian Multiculture Farmers Forum (FPMI), Indonesia
- National Statistical Office, Thailand

336. The **All-India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Nagpur** has become the first AIIMS in India to receive the prestigious National Accreditation Board of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) accreditation.

337. President of India **Droupadi Mormu** has been conferred with the highest civilian award of **Suriname, 'the Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star'**, during his 3-days visit to the country.

- She has received the honour from **Chandrikapersad Santokhi**, the President of Suriname.
- She is the first Indian to receive this award.

During the visit, both India and Suriname have signed 3 Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) in the field of health & agriculture.

India has also extended the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cards facility to the 6th generation of Surinamese people.

The Government of India has also announced the supply of essential medicines worth 5.1 Cr rupees to Suriname to aid the Caribbean country's flood relief efforts.

338. Jagdish S Bakan, Wildlife Warden and District Forest Officer (DFO) of Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu, has won the **2023 Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management** of UNESCO.

He is the first Indian to win Michel Batisse Award.

Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management:

The USD 12,000 award is given in memory of Dr Michel Batisse, a French scientist, for outstanding achievement in the management of biosphere reserves in line with the recommendations of the Seville Strategy. The award was established in 2005 and is given once every 2 years during the MAB Programme.

339. The **Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST)** undertaking has won the **UITP Awards 2023** under **Climate & Health** category for its green travel initiatives at the UITP Global Public Transport Summit held in Barcelona, Spain.

The award has recognized BEST efforts in sustainable urban transport for its "BEST Green Travels Initiative: Creating Sustainable Public Transport". Lokesh Chandra (IAS) who led these innovations during his tenure as the General Manager, BEST, has received the award.

340. Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani's **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** has climbed 8 spots to the **45th rank**, the highest for an Indian company in the 2023 edition of the **Global 2000** list of public companies published by **Forbes**.

- Reliance has been ranked ahead of well-known names like Germany's BMW Group, Switzerland's Nestle, China's Alibaba Group, US-based Procter & Gamble and Japan's Sony.
- State Bank of India has climbed to the 77th spot from 105th in the 2022 ranking. HDFC Bank is at 128th position (153 in 2022) and ICICI Bank is at 163 (204 in 2022).
- The 55 Indian firms figured on the list.

The Global 2000 ranks the largest companies in the world using four metrics: sales, profits, assets, and market value.

341. Indian-origin professor **Joyeeta Gupta**, a professor of Environment and Development in the Global South at the University of Amsterdam, has been awarded the **2023 Spinoza Prize**, also known as the **'Dutch Nobel Prize'**, for her remarkable contributions to science and her commitment to creating a just and sustainable world.

Toby Kiers, a professor of Mutualistic Interactions at the University of Amsterdam, has also been awarded the Spinoza Prize 2023.

Spinoza Prize:

It is one of the highest academic awards in the **Netherlands**. Each year, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) awards the NWO Spinoza Prizes to two researchers working in the Netherlands who according to international standards belong to the absolutely best researchers worldwide.

The prize was established in 1995. The prize is named after Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677).

The laureates each receive a bronze statue of Spinoza and 1.5 million euros.

342. The **Geological Survey of India Training Institute (GSITI)**, under the Ministry of Mines, has been awarded 'Ati Uttam' grade by the National Accreditation Board of Education and Training (**NABET**) for its outstanding Earth Science training.

The assessment are based on the inspection of all standard operating procedures and methodologies followed by GSITI at various levels.

343. England all-rounder **Moeen Ali** has been awarded **OBE (Order of the British Empire)** for his services to the game of cricket during the Queen's birthday honours. He represented England for 225 matches across all the three formats.

Order of the British Empire (OBE):

OBE was established by King George V in 1917 to honour those who had served in a non-combative role and expanded the Order to reward contributions to the Arts, Sciences, Charitable work and Public Service. The Order is comprised of five classes across both military and civilian divisions.

344. Indian writer **Arundhati Roy** has been awarded the **45th European Essay Prize** for lifetime achievement by the Charles Veillon Foundation. She has been awarded the prize for the French translation of her compilation of essays titled "Azadi" (2021).

She will receive the award, along with the prize money of CHF 20,000 (approx Rs 18 lakh), at a ceremony on 12th September 2023 in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

European Essay Prize:

It is awarded by the Charles Veillon Foundation since 1975. The award honour a book or the work of an author to nourish and spread the evolution of thought.

345. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has collaborated with Grammy Award-winning Indian-American singer **Falguni Shah (Falu)** for a special song '**Abundance in Millets**' to promote the benefits of millets and their potential to alleviate world hunger.

- The song, penned in English and Hindi, highlights the power of millets.
- The song performed by the Mumbai-born singer-songwriter Falguni and her husband and singer Gaurav Shah, has recently been released across streaming platforms.

Note: The year 2023 has been designated as the "International Year of Millets".

346. The Vice President of India, **Jagdeep Dhankhar**, has conferred the **4th National Water Awards, 2022** at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. A total of **41 winners**, including joint winners across 11 categories have been awarded for their exemplary work in the field of water conservation and management.

The first edition of the National Water Awards was introduced in 2018.

The cash prizes for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd rank winners are Rs.2 lakhs, Rs.1.5 lakhs, and Rs.1 lakh, respectively.

Winners of 4th National Water Awards:

- **Best State: Madhya Pradesh (1st),** Odisha (2nd), and Andhra Pradesh & Bihar (3rd).
- **Best District: Ganjam, Odisha (1st),** Namakkal, Tamil Nadu (2nd), and Adilabad, Telangana (3rd).
- **Best Village Panchayat:** Jagannadhapuram Village Panchayat, Bhadradri Kothagudem district, Telangana
- **Best Urban Local Body: Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh (1st),** Indore Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh (2nd), and Surat Municipal Corporation, Surat, Gujarat & Malkapur Municipal Council, Karad, Satara, Maharashtra (3rd).
- **Best Media:** Advance Water Digest Private Limited Gurugram, Haryana
- **Best School:** Jamiyatpura Primary School, Mehsana, Gujarat
- **Best Institution for Campus usage:** Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Reasi, Jammu and Kashmir
- **Best Industry:** Barauni Thermal Power Station, Begusarai, Bihar
- **Best NGO:** Arpan Seva Sansthan, Udaipur, Rajasthan
- **Best Water User Association:** The Sanjeevani Piyat Sahkari Mandli Ltd, Narmada, Gujarat
- **Best industry for CSR:** HCL Technologies Ltd., Noida, Uttar Pradesh

The VP of India has also inaugurated a short film featuring the animated character **Piku**, the mascot of the National Water Mission for telecast on Doordarshan to spread the message of water conservation.

347. The **Gita Press, Gorakhpur**, has been conferred with the **Gandhi Peace Prize** for the year **2021** in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.

Gita Press, established in 1923, is one of the world's largest publishers, having published 41.7 crore books in 14 languages, including 16.21 crore Shrimad Bhagvad Gita.

Gandhi Peace Prize:

It is an annual award instituted by the government in 1995, on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of MK Gandhi. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender. The award carries an amount of Rs.1 crore, a citation, and a plaque.

348. British-American author **Salman Rushdie** has been awarded the **2023 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade** for his indomitable spirit, for his affirmation of life and for enriching our world with his love of storytelling.

- The award carries a purse of €25,000 (US\$27,302).
- The award will be handed out in a ceremony in October 2023 during the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Peace Prize of the German Book Trade:

The prize was created in 1950. It recognizes a personality committed to serving international understanding between nations and cultures through their work.

349. The Recording Academy of the United States has recently announced the addition of three new categories to the **2024 Grammy Awards**. The new categories include:

- **Best African Music Performance**
- **Best Pop Dance Recording**
- **Best Alternative Jazz Album**

With these additions, total number of categories of Grammy Awards will reach 94.

The 2024 Grammy Awards will be held in February 2024.

Grammy Awards:

Grammy awards are presented by the Recording Academy of the United States to recognize "outstanding" achievements in the music industry. The first Grammy Awards ceremony was held on May 4, 1959.

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350. Star Alliance, the world's largest global airline alliance, has won the title of **World's Best Airline Alliance** at the 2023 Skytrax World Airline Awards, also known as the Oscars of the aviation industry.

Star Alliance Lounge at Los Angeles International Airport has also maintained its position of World's Best Airline Alliance Lounge for the seventh year.

Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, has won the '**Best Airline in India and South Asia**' award for the third time in a row, showcasing the excellence of India's aviation industry to the world stage.

351. Chennai-based lawyer-activist **Lalitha Natarajan** has been awarded the **2023 Iqbal Masih Award** for the Elimination of Child Labour for her extraordinary contributions to combat child labour. She has rescued children from forced labour in various industrial sectors across the state of Tamil Nadu, including food processing factories and handloom mills.

Iqbal Masih Award

The Iqbal Masih Award is a non-monetary award presented annually by the **U.S.** Secretary of Labor and administered by ILAB's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking. It was established by the U.S. Congress in 2008 to honor extraordinary contributions to combat child labor.

It was named after a Pakistani child who was sold into slavery as a carpet weaver at age 4, escaped at 10 and became an outspoken public advocate against child exploitation.

352. An Indian documentary titled '**When Climate Change Turns Violent**' has won a special prize in the 'Health for All' category at the 4th Annual Health for All Film Festival (**HAFF**) held at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

- The documentary has been directed by **Vandita Saharia** of Rajasthan. She was the only Indian among the winners.
- The 4.32-minute documentary focuses on the relationship between domestic violence, climate change and human trafficking.

353. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach has awarded **Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus**, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), with the **Olympic Order** in an award ceremony held at Olympic House in Lausanne, Switzerland. This recognition has been given to him for his inspiring efforts in making the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 happen, even amidst the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the event, IOC has also honoured the **World Health Organization (WHO)** with the **Olympic Cup for 2021** in recognition of its exceptional contribution to the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Jan Dijkema, the former President of the International Skating Union, has also been awarded the Olympic Order.

Olympic Order:

It was established in 1975. It is the highest award of the Olympic Movement. It is awarded for particularly distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement, i.e. recognition of efforts worthy of merit in the cause of sport.

354. Acharya N Gopi, a renowned poet, literary critic, and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award, has been honoured with the **first Prof. Kothapalli Jayashankar Award**. He hails from Telangana.

His notable works are '*Kalanni Nidra Ponivvanu*' (I Will Not let Time Sleep 1998); '*Naneelu*' (The Little Ones 1998) and '*Jala Geetham*' (Water Song - a long poem 2002).

The Prof. Kothapalli Jayashankar Award, instituted by Bharat Jagruthi, a cultural organization affiliated with Bharat Rashtra Samithi, aims to honour accomplished literary figures.

355. The 1st edition of the **UNESCO-AI Fozan International Prize 2023** has been conferred upon 5 exceptional young scientists during a ceremony at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris, France.

Winners:

- **Federico Ariel (Argentina)**
- **Abdon Atangana (Cameroon)**
- **Qiaomei Fu (China)**
- **Hesham Omran (Egypt)**
- **Jelena Vladic (Serbia)**

UNESCO-AI Fozan International Prize:

UNESCO-AI Fozan International Prize for the Promotion of Young Scientists in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) aims to strengthen STEM research, STEM

education and international cooperation to confront the global challenges addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is awarded every two years to five laureates from the five geographic regions of UNESCO (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America and Latin America and the Caribbean).

The Prize consists of an award of US \$ 50,000 for each of the five laureates as well as a medal and a diploma.

356. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited Egypt for 2 days from 24th June to 25th June 2023 at the invitation of Egyptian President El-Sisi and his visit marks the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Egypt in 26 years.

During his visit, he has been conferred with Egypt's highest honour "**Order of the Nile**".

India and Egypt have also signed agreements on a strategic partnership. The 3 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) have also been signed between both the nations in the fields of agriculture, archaeology, and antiquities, and competition law.

357. President Droupadi Murmu, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, has conferred **84 Distinguished Service Awards** to serving and retired Indian Armed Forces and Coast Guard personnel for distinguished service of exceptional order during the Defence Investiture Ceremony (Phase-II) in New Delhi.

The 84 Distinguished Service Awards includes 52 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSMs), one Bar to AVSM, three Uttam Yudh Seva Medals (UYSMs) and 28 Param Vishisht Seva Medals (PVSMs).

358. Actress **Angela Bassett**, writer-director-actor-songwriter **Mel Brooks** and film editor **Carol Littleton** have received honorary Oscars at the **2023 Governors Awards**, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences during the 14th annual Governors Awards taking place on 18th November 2023 at the Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles.

The honorary Oscar statuette, which is voted on by the Board of Governors, is given to honor lifetime achievements, contributions to the motion picture industry or service to the Academy.

359. Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) Rishi Sunak has honoured retired British Indian Sikh Soldier **Rajindar Singh Dhatt** (aged 101) with **UK Points of Light award** at India Global Forum's (IGF) annual UK-India Week 2023 reception at 10 Downing Street, London, United Kingdom.

He has been awarded for his service in the British Indian Army and coordinating "**Undivided Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association**" to help bring together British Indian war veterans.

UK Points of Light award honours exceptional individuals whose contribution is making a difference in their communities and whose stories might inspire others to find innovative solutions to social concerns in their own communities and beyond.

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BOOKS & AUTHORS

360. Veteran journalist **Ramachandra Murthy Kondubhatla** has authored a new book titled "**NTR: A Political Biography**". The book describes a realistic picture of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR), the star figure in the discourse on cinema and politics in the two Telugu states (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana).

The book is published by HarperCollins India.

361. BJP National President **Jagat Prakash Nadda** has released a book titled "**Amrutkaal Ki Ore**" in New Delhi based on nine Years' Achievements of Narendra Modi Government. The book is compiled by **Shivanand Dwivedi** and **K.K Upadhyay**. The book is published by Prabhat Prakashan.

362. Paterson Joseph, a beloved British actor and writer, has won the **2023 Royal Society of Literature (RSL) Christopher Bland Prize** for his debut novel titled "*The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho*".

The book is a historical fiction about Charles Ignatius Sancho, who was the first black man to vote in England.

RSL Christopher Bland Prize:

It is an annual award of £10,000 to a debut novelist or non-fiction writer first published aged 50 or over. The Prize was launched in 2018 in memory of British Politician Sir Christopher Bland who died in 2017.

363. A new book titled *“A Life Well Spent”* has been authored by **Satish Chandra**. The book depicts the four decades he served in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) from 1965 to 2005 as an IFS probationer to Deputy National Security Advisor. The book has 13 chapters. The book is published by Rupa Publications India.

364. Historian and writer **Ramchandra Guha’s** book *“Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India’s Freedom”* has won the **Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography 2023**.

He has been awarded £5,000 (₹5 lakhs approximately) and a bound copy of Elizabeth Longford’s memoir, *The Pebbled Shore*.

‘Rebels Against the Raj’ tells the story of seven foreigners who joined India’s freedom struggle.

Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography:

It was established in 2003 in affectionate memory of Elizabeth Longford, the acclaimed biographer, and is sponsored by Flora Fraser and Peter Soros. This £5,000 prize is awarded annually for a historical biography published in the preceding year.

365. The book titled as *“India’s Finance Ministers — From Independence to Emergency (1947-1977)”* depicts the story of India’s unforgettable finance ministers who shaped India’s economy in the first 30 years after Independence.

The book is authored by **A.K. Bhattacharya**.

The book is published by Penguin Business.

366. The new book titled *“Droupadi Murmu: From Tribal Hinterlands to Raisina Hills”* has been authored by journalist **Kasturi Ray**. The book illustrates the challenges Murmu encountered on her path to success as India’s first President from a tribal community.

The book is published by Rupa Publications with a Foreword by Kiren Bedi, former Lt. Governor of Puducherry.

PERSON IN NEWS

367. Nusrat Chowdhury, a civil rights lawyer, has been confirmed by the Senate as the **first Muslim female federal judge** in the **United States**. She will assume her lifetime appointment in Brooklyn federal court in New York. This court’s jurisdiction covers various aspects of federal law and plays a critical role in upholding justice within the region.

- 368. Daniel Zhang Yong**, the 51-year old Chinese business executive, has announced his resignation as **Alibaba** Group Holding Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and to focus on Alibaba Cloud Intelligence Group. He became CEO in 2015 and chairman in 2019.
- **Eddie Yongming Wu**, chairman of Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall Group, is set to assume the role of CEO at Alibaba Group.
 - **Joseph Tsai**, the Executive Vice Chairman, is set to assume the position of Chairman.
- 369.** Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has appointed incumbent Justice Minister **Catalin Predoiu** as the interim Prime Minister of **Romania** following the resignation of current PM Nicolae Ciuca on 12th June 2023.
- 370.** Former Union Finance Secretary and retired Gujarat cadre bureaucrat **Hasmukh Adhia**, who is principal advisor to Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel, has been appointed as **Chairman of GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec) City**. He has replaced Sudhir Mankad, former chief secretary of Gujarat.
- He has also been appointed as Chairman and Director of the Vadodara based Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Ltd (GACL) and the Chairman and Director of the Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC).
- 371. Petteri Orpo**, leader of the National Coalition Party (NCP), has been elected as the new **Prime Minister of Finland**. He has replaced Sana Marin of the Social Democrats.
- 372. Kamal Kishore Chatiwal** has become the Managing Director (MD) of Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL). He has succeeded Sanjay Kumar, who has taken over as Director (Marketing) in GAIL (India) Limited.

Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL):

It is a leading Indian natural gas distribution company that supplies natural gas for cooking and as a vehicle fuel. It is a joint venture between GAIL and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), in which the Delhi government holds a 5% stake. It was incorporated in 1998 and its headquarters is based in New Delhi.

- 373.** Indian-origin satellite industry expert **Aarti Holla-Maini** has been appointed as the Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (**UNOOSA**) in **Vienna** by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

She will succeed **Simonetta Di Pippo** of Italy.

The UNOOSA works to promote international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of space, and in the utilisation of space science and technology for sustainable economic and social development.

374. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, leader of Greece's centre-right new Democracy (ND-Nea Demokratia) party, has won the national election and secured a 2nd four year term as the **Prime Minister of Greece**. He served as the PM of Greece for the first term from July 2019 to May 2023.

PERSON IN NEWS

375. Gurdeep Singh, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of NTPC Limited, has been given additional charge as the **CMD of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO)**, following the retirement of the incumbent CMD P.C. Pankaj.

He has been given additional charge for a period of three months with effect from June 1 or till the appointment of a regular incumbent to this post or until further orders, whichever is earliest.

376. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been re-elected as the **President of Türkiye** for his **third** consecutive term. He has been serving as the 12th President of Türkiye since 2014. He has won 52.14% of the votes in the second round against the Opposition candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroglu, who had 47.86%.

377. Amarendu Prakash has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of **Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL)**, a Maharatna a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Steel.

He has succeeded Soma Mandal.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has extended the tenure of **Atul Verma** as the Director-General of the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** for three months beyond 31st May 2023.

The Director General (DG) office is the investigation arm of CCI.

378. K. Krithivasan has taken charge as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**, India's largest information technology services company and a part of the TATA Group.

He has become the 5th Chief Executive Officer of TCS.
He has succeeded **Rajesh Gopinathan**.

379. Ajay Yadav, a 2005 batch IAS officer of the **Bihar** cadre, has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (**SECI**).

He has succeeded **Suman Sharma**.

380. Celeste Saulo, a leading meteorologist from Argentina, has become the **first female Secretary-General (SG)** of the World Meteorological Organization (**WMO**). She is currently serving as the 1st Vice-President of WMO. She will take charge as SG of WMO on 1st January 2024.

She will succeed Petteri Taalas of Finland.

Other major appointments at WMO:

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General **Mrutyunjay Mohapatra** has been elected as one of the three vice presidents of WMO.
- **Abdulla Al Mandous**, Director of the United Arab Emirates National Center of Meteorology, has been elected as the next **President of WMO** for a four-year term (**2023-27**).
- **Daouda Konate**, Director of meteorology of Cote d'Ivoire, and **Eoin Moran**, Director Met Éireann, the Irish Meteorological Service are elected the first and second vice presidents.

381. Dennis Francis of **Trinidad and Tobago** has been elected as the **President** of the **78th** session of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters in New York, USA.

He will take charge as President of UNGA at the beginning of the 78th session in September 2023.

He will succeed Csaba Korosi of Hungary.

382. Ashwani Kumar, Executive Director, Indian Bank, has been appointed as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of UCO Bank for a period of 3 years. He has succeeded Soma Sankara Prasad.

383. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, the private life insurer, has launched first of its kind insurance plan in the Indian life insurance industry designed for Type-2 diabetic patients and pre-diabetics individuals named '**Bajaj Allianz Life Diabetic Term Plan Sub 8 HbA1c.**'

The term plan will enable financial security for pre-diabetic or Type-2 diabetic individuals whose HbA1c (Haemoglobin A1c) is up to **8 percent**.

As per the data, India is referred to as the 'diabetes capital of the world' with the diabetic population in the country expected to hit an alarming mark of 69.9 million by 2025 and 80 million by 2030.

384. Janardan Prasad has become the new Director-General of the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** with effect from 1st June 2023. He has replaced Dr. S.Raju, who was holding the post since April 2022.

385. Latvia has elected **Edgars Rinkevics**, the country's top diplomat since 2011, as President to serve for a four-year term with effect from 8th July 2023. He will become the first openly gay President in the Baltic nation.

He will succeed incumbent President **Egils Levits**.

Note: 'Saeima' is the parliament of the Republic of Latvia.

386. Colonel Shuchita Shekhar has become the first woman officer of the Army Service Corps to assume command of a Communication Zone Mechanical Transport Battalion.

The Communication Zone Mechanical Transport Battalion is responsible for the maintenance of the Supply Chain of the fully operational Northern Command.

387. The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) has recommended **Sanjay Swarup** for the post of Chairman & Managing Director (**CMD**) of **Container Corporation of India (CONCOR)**, a PSU (public-sector undertaking) under the **Ministry of Railways**.

He will succeed V Kalyana Rama, the current CMD of CONCOR, who is set to be step down from the role in September 2023.

388. Peter Albers, CEO of India's largest airline IndiGo, has been elected as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**. He will remain in this post till 2024.

He will replace the current chairman Yvonne Manzi Makolo, CEO of Rwandair.

389. Nitin Agarwal, 1989-batch IPS officer of Kerala cadre, has been appointed as the new Director General (DG) of the **Border Security Force (BSF)** from the date of joining the post and up to 31st July 2026, his date of superannuation, or till further orders whichever is earlier.

He will succeed Sujoy Lal Thaosan, who has been holding the additional charge of BSF since December 2022.

390. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed senior IAS officer **Amit Agarwal** as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**.

He will succeed Saurabh Garg, whose two-year term has ended.

He is a 1993 batch IAS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre.

He will also serve as the additional secretary of the Ministry of Information & Technology (MeitY).

391. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed **Subodh Kumar Singh** as the new Director-General of the **National Testing Agency (NTA)**. He will replace **Vineet Joshi**, who was appointed as the DG of NTA in 2018. He is a 1997 batch IAS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre.

392. Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) has appointed Indian cricketer **Hardik Pandya** as the brand ambassador for Exter, its sub 4 metre sports utility vehicle (SUV).

Exter is expected to come up with safety features including the six airbags and electronic stability control.

393. TransUnion CIBIL Limited, India's first credit information bureau, has appointed **V Anantharaman** as its non-executive chairman. He has replaced M.V. Nair, who stepped down from the post after 11 years of chairmanship.

394. The Ministry of Steel has given 3 months extension to **Amitava Mukherjee**, Director (Finance) of National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) Ltd, to hold the additional charge of Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of **NMDC & NMDC Steel Limited** from 1st June to 31st August 2023, or till a regular office-holder joins the post, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

He has been holding the additional charge as CMD of NMDC since March 31, 2023.

395. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed **Sudhansh Pant**, IAS officer of 1991 batch Rajasthan cadre, as the new **Secretary** (Officer on Special Duty (OSD)), **Department of Health and Family Welfare** under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW). He will succeed Rajesh Bhushan, who is set to retire on 31st July 2023.

Other appointments:

- **Power Secretary:** Pankaj Agarwal (He will succeed Alok Kumar on 30th June 2023)
- **Civil Aviation Secretary:** Chanchal Kumar (He will succeed Rajiv Bansal on 1st August 2023)

- **Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Secretary:** T.K. Ramachandran (He will succeed Sudhansh Pant).

396. Aalok Kumar, Corporate Officer & Senior VP - Head of the Global Smart City Business, NEC Corporation, and President & CEO, NEC Corporation India, has been appointed as a member of the **Asian Development Bank's (ADB)** High-level Advisory Group on Digital Technology for Development in Asian countries with effect from 1st May 2023.

ADB established a High-level Advisory Group on Digital Technology for Development in 2019. It consist of 8 member group.

397. Epson India, a world leader in digital and printing solutions, has appointed actress **Rashmika Mandanna** as its brand ambassador. The actress will collaborate with the company to promote its products in a multi-media campaign for its 'EcoTank' printers.

398. Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has been re-elected as the Prime Minister of **Kuwait**. He was first appointed as the Prime Minister on 24th July 2022.

399. Gopichand P Hinduja has become the new **Chairman** of the USD 34.5 billion-worth Hinduja Group after the death of Srichand Hinduja, who died on 17th May 2023 at his home in London due to a prolonged illness.

Hinduja Group:

Parmanand Deepchand Hinduja founded the company in 1914. Its headquarters is located in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

400. U Saravanan has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of state-owned **National Fertilizers Ltd (NFL)** with effect from 16th June 2023 till the date of his superannuation i.e. 31st January 2027.

He was serving as CMD of another fertilizer CPSE, Madras Fertilizers Ltd.

401. Ravi Sinha, a 1988-batch IPS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, has been appointed as the new **chief** of India's foreign intelligence **Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)** for a tenure of 2 years with effect from 1st July 2023. He will succeed incumbent Samant Goel on completion of his tenure on 30th June 2023.

The head of R&AW is designated as the **Secretary (Research)** in the **Cabinet Secretariat**, and is under the authority of the Prime Minister of India without parliamentary oversight.

Research and Analysis Wing (RAW):

RAW is India's main international intelligence agency. After the Indo-China War in 1962 and the Indo-Pak War in 1965, the RAW agency was created. RAW was formed in September 1968.

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- Rameshwar Nath Kao was the first Director of RAW.

402. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **Swaminathan Janakiraman**, Managing Director (MD) of State Bank of India, as the new **Deputy Governor** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for three years from the date of joining. He has succeeded **Mahesh Kumar Jain**, whose tenure ended on 22nd June 2023.

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OBITUARIES

403. **Suresh Narayan Dhanorkar**, also called **Balubhau Dhanorkar**, has recently passed away at the age of 48 in New Delhi. He was born in Yavatmal, Maharashtra.

- He was an elected member of the Lok Sabha from Chandrapur constituency, **Maharashtra**.
- He belonged to the Indian National Congress political party.
- He was the only candidate for INC to be elected as MP from Maharashtra.

404. Noted scholar, linguist, academician and writer **Vellayani Arjunan** has recently passed away in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He was born on 10 February 1933 in Vellayani, Travancore, British Raj.

- He holds 3 Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.) degrees from three universities (Aligarh, Agra, and Jabalpur).
- He had the credit of having Post-Graduations (PGs) in Malayalam, English, and Hindi and PG diplomas in Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil.
- He was honoured by the Government of India in **2008** with the fourth highest Indian civilian award of **Padma Shri**.

405. Noted **Sanskrit** scholar **Ved Kumari Ghai** has recently passed away in Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir. She was born on 16th December 1931 in Pratap Garh Mohallah, Jammu.

She was head of the Sanskrit department at Jammu University. She was also a scholar in the Dogri language and also knew Hindi.

She was honoured with the **Padma Shri**, the fourth-highest civilian award in India, in **2010**.

406. Manoj Mishra, a noted **Environmental Activist** and former Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, has passed away at the age of 68 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh due to COVID-19-related complications. He was born on 7th October 1954 in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

He fought tirelessly to preserve and protect the Yamuna River and its floodplains. He also started the '**Yamuna Jiye Abhiyan**'.

407. Renowned actress **Sulochana Latkar** has passed away due to prolonged respiratory illness in Mumbai, Maharashtra. She was born as Nagabai on 30th July 1928 in Khadaklat village in Belgaum, Karnataka. She made her debut in films in 1946.

She was awarded the **Padma Shri** in **1999**. She was awarded the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004. In 2009, she was awarded the Maharashtra Bhushan Award by the Government of Maharashtra.

408. USA sprinter **Jim Hines**, the first man to break the 10-second barrier for the 100 metres, has recently passed away at the age of 76. He was born in September 1946 at Dumas, Arkansas, USA.

In 1968, he became the **first man to officially break the 10-second barrier in the 100 meters**, and won individual and relay gold at the Mexico City Olympics.

He had a share of the 4*100 relay world record at the Mexico Olympics, securing the US team to Gold in 38.24 seconds.

He retired from athletics at the end of 1968, and moved into the National Football League (NFL), and played for 2 years for the Miami Dolphins and Kansas City Chiefs.

409. Ama Ata Aidoo, Ghanaian author, poet, and playwright famous for her feminist ideals, has passed away at the age of 81 in Ghana, a country of western Africa. She was born in 1942 in Aboadzi Kyiakor, Gold Coast (now Ghana).

She published her first play "**The Dilemma of a Ghost**" in 1965 and became the first African woman to publish a play.

She won the **Commonwealth Writers' Prize** in 1992 for her novel "Changes: A Love Story".

410. Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu of the **Kingdom of Tonga** has recently passed away in Ackland, New Zealand at the age of 75. She was born on 12th May 1948 in Tonga, a Polynesian country. She will be buried in Tonga at the Male's Kula Royal Tombs. She was the first elected female parliamentarian in 1975-1977 in Tonga after fifteen years of women's suffrage.

- 411. Gitanjali Aiyer**, one of India's first English news presenters on national broadcaster Doordarshan (DD), has passed away at the age of 71. She was born on 29th January 1947. She worked with DD for over 3 decades since 1971 and was awarded the **best anchor** 4 times. She has been honoured with Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award for Outstanding Women in 1989.
- 412. Silvio Berlusconi**, former **Italian Prime Minister** and the billionaire media magnet, has recently passed away at the age of 86 in Milan, Italy. He was born on 29th September 1936 in Milan, Italy.
- He was the **three-time** PM of Italy serving during the period of 1994-95, 2001-06, and 2008-11.
 - He was the longest serving post-war PM of Italy, and the third longest-serving since the Unification of Italy, after Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Giolitti.
- 413.** Two-time Oscar winning actress and **UK's** former politician **Glenda Jackson** has recently passed away in London, UK. She was born at 151 Market Street in Birkenhead, Cheshire, on 9 May 1936. She won two Academy Awards, three Emmy Awards and a Tony Award. She was appointed CBE by Queen Elizabeth II in 1978.
- 414. Imtiaz Ahmad**, an inspiring teacher and an exemplary sociologist, has recently passed away in New Delhi. He was born on 28th April 1940 in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- He was a former Professor of political sociology at the Centre for Political Studies at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.
 - He will be remembered for his pioneering work on caste among Indian Muslims.
 - His book titled '**Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India**', which was published in 1973, is a pioneering work.
- 415.** American writer **Cormac McCarthy** has passed away at the age of 89 at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the United States of America (USA). He was born on 20th July 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. He was known for his graphic depictions of violence and his unique writing style, recognizable by a sparse use of punctuation and attribution. He was awarded **Pulitzer Prize** for his novel "*The Road*" in **2007**.
- Notable works:** Child of God; Suttree; Blood Meridian; The Stonemason; No Country for Old Men; The Road; The Sunset Limited; and Stella Maris.

416. John Bannister Goodenough, co-winner of the **2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry** for his work on the development of the **Lithium-ion batteries**, has recently passed away in Austin, Texas, USA. He was born in Jena, Germany, on July 25, 1922.

He shared the Nobel Prize with British-born American chemist M. Stanley Whittingham and Japanese chemist Akira Yoshino.

Books: He wrote *Magnetism and the Chemical Bond* (1963), *Solid Oxide Fuel Cell Technology: Principles, Performance, and Operations* (2009, with Kevin Huang), and an autobiography, 'Witness to Grace'.

417. American economist **Harry Markowitz**, *father of modern portfolio theory (MPT)*, has recently passed away in San Deigo, California, the USA. He was born on 24th August 1927 in Chicago, the USA.

- He shared the **Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (1990)** with Merton H. Miller and William F. Sharpe for his ideas on finance.
- He focused on combinations of assets, rather than individual securities
- He also did ground-breaking work in mathematical programming and computer simulations.
- He developed **Simscrip**, a language used to write simulation software.

Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) is a practical method for selecting investments in order to maximize their overall returns within an acceptable level of risk.

SPORTS

418. Indian cricket legend **Sachin Tendulkar** has been named the '**Smile Ambassador**' for Maharashtra's Swachh Mukh Abhiyan, a campaign that promotes oral hygiene.

He will be the campaign's brand ambassador for the next 5 years.

The Swachh Mukh Abhiyaan is a national campaign undertaken by the Indian Dental Association to improve oral health and hygiene and educate people about its importance.

419. Indian hockey team, led by Uttam Singh, has won the **Dhofar Municipality Men's Junior Asia Cup 2023** by defeating **Pakistan** in the finals held in Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex Stadium in Salalah, Oman.

This marks India's **4th** Men's Junior Asia Cup title.

India has previously won the title in 2004, 2008 and 2015.

Pakistan is the second-most successful team in the tournament with three titles.

Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup:

It is a men's international under-21 field hockey tournament organized by the Asian Hockey Federation. The tournament has been held since 1988 and serves as a qualification tournament for the Men's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup.

420. Grandmaster (GM) **Aravindh Chithambaram** of India has won the **23rd Dubai Open 2023** for the second consecutive year. The 23rd edition of Dubai Chess Open has been organised by Dubai Chess & Culture Club in Dubai, UAE.

He is followed by Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan at 2nd, and Arjun Erigaisi (India) at 3rd. He hails from Thirunagar, Tamil Nadu.

421. Belgian-Dutch racing driver **Max Verstappen** of Red Bull Racing has won the **2023 Spanish Grand Prix**. This win marked Max Verstappen's 5th of the season, 3rd in a row, 3rd in Spain, and the double world champion's 40th in F1.

He is followed by Mercedes' **Lewis Hamilton** at 2nd place and Mercedes' George Russell at 3rd rank.

422. Panjab University (Chandigarh) has won the 3rd edition of the **Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2023** held in Uttar Pradesh from 25th May to 3rd June 2023. Panjab University has topped the KIUG 2023 medals tally with 26 gold, 17 silver and 26 bronze medals (total - 69 medals).

- Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar has finished second with 24 gold, 27 silver and 17 bronze (total 68 medals).
- Jain University, Karnataka has finished third with 16 gold, 10 silver and six bronze medals (total - 32 medals).

Swimmer **Siva Sridhar (Jain University)** has topped the men's section with a total of 11 medals, including eight golds, while fellow swimmer **Shrungi Bandekar (Jain University)** has won nine medals in the women's section, including five golds.

Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2023:

KIUG 2023 is the third edition of the inter-university meet. Rowing is the new category of sport added in this edition.

Four cities across Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, Varanasi, Greater Noida and Gorakhpur, hosted a majority of KIUG 2023 events. Only the shooting events are scheduled in New Delhi.

Mascot: Jeetu

Torch: Shakti

Games Anthem: Khelo India-Har Dil Mein Desh

423. Three Indian boxers, **Deepak Kumar, Mohammed Hussamuddin and Nishant Dev**, have won the bronze medal at the 22nd edition of the **International Boxing Association (IBA) World Men's Boxing Championships (2023)**, held at the Humo Arena in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

For the first time India has won **3 medals** at a single edition of the tournament.

Uzbekistan has topped the overall medal tally with 9 medals (5 Gold, 2 Silver, and 2 Bronze), followed by Kazakhstan with 5 medals (4 Gold and 1 Silver) and Russia at 3rd with 6 medals (2 Gold, and 4 Bronze).

India has secured 12th position along with Spain in the tournament.

424. The Norwegian Grandmaster, the World No.1, **Magnus Carlsen** has won the **2023 Superbet Rapid & Blitz Poland**, the second leg of the Grand Chess Tour (GCT), held at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland.

He received a cash prize of USD 40,000.

He topped the final standing with a score of 24/36.

425. Fan Zhendong, World No.1 Table Tennis player from China, has won the men's singles title at the **2023 World Table Tennis Championships** defeating China's Wang Chuqin in the finals held in Durban, South Africa. This marks his 2nd singles title.

Women's singles: Sun Yingsha (China)

426. India has topped the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2023** medal tally with a total of **15 medals** (six gold, six silver and three bronze). A total of 39 Indian shooters have competed in the tournament. The tournament has been held in Suhl, Germany.

With this, India has finished on top of all the ISSF Junior World Cups and World Championships held since 2019.

India's Gold winners:

- Sainyam (Women's 10m air pistol)
- Dhanush Srikanth (Men's 10m air rifle)
- Amanpreet Singh (Men's 25m pistol)
- Gautami Bhanot/Abhinav Shaw (10m air rifle mixed team)
- Gautami Bhanot/Swati Chowdhury/ Sonam Uttam Maskar (Women's 10m air rifle team)
- Megana Sadula/Payal Khatri/ Simranpreet Kaur Brar (Women's 25m pistol team)

India is followed by South Korea (12 medals), and the USA (9 medals).

427. The **2023 French Open**, a Grand Slam tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts, has been held at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France, from 28 May to 11 June 2023.

Men's singles:

Novak Djokovic (Serbia) has defeated Casper Ruud in the final to win the men's singles tennis title at the 2023 French Open. This is his third French Open title and his record-breaking 23rd men's singles major singles title overall.

Women's singles:

Iga Świątek (Poland) has defeated Karolína Muchová in the final to win the women's singles tennis title. This is her third French Open title.

428. The **Indian hockey team** has bagged the **Women's Junior Asia Cup 2023** title after defeating **South Korea** in the final match held in Kakamigahara, Japan. This is the first time India has won the Women's Junior Asia Cup.

With this, India has qualified for the 2023 Women's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup to be held in Santiago, Chile.

Japan has secured third place after defeating China.

The tournament has been organized by the Asian Hockey Federation.

429. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the first **National Training Conclave** at the International Exhibition and Convention Centre at Pragati Maidan in **Delhi**.

- **Aim:** To foster collaboration among civil services training institutes and strengthen the training infrastructure for civil servants across the country.
- The conclave is part of the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) - 'Mission Karmayogi'.
- The conclave has been hosted by the Capacity Building Commission (CBC).

430. Indian **long jumper** and Commonwealth Games silver medallist **Murali Sreeshankar** has secured third place at the **Paris Diamond League 2023** achieving a best jump of 8.09 m in his 3rd attempt.

With this, he has become the third Indian after Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, and discus thrower Vikas Gowda to finish on the podium in the Diamond League.

431. The **Australia** men's cricket team, captained by Pat Cummins, has defeated Indian men's cricket team, captained by Rohit Sharma, by **209 runs** in the finals to win the 2nd edition of International Cricket Council (ICC) World Test Championship (WTC) 2021-23 held at The Oval, London, the United Kingdom.

Player of the Match (finals): Travis Head (Australia)

Most runs: Joe Root (England) 1915 runs

Most wickets: Nathan Lyon (Australia) 83 wickets

Note: New Zealand won the 1st edition of ICC World Test Championship (WTC) by defeating India by 8 wickets.

432. Uruguay has won the **FIFA U20 World Cup 2023** by defeating Italy in the final match held at Estadio Único Diego Armando Maradona, La Plata in Argentina. This is Uruguay's first FIFA U20 World Cup title.

Israel has finished third in the tournament by defeating South Korea.

Awardees:

- **Golden Ball:** Cesare Casadei (Italy)
- **Golden Boot:** Cesare Casadei (Italy)
- **Golden Glove:** Sebastiano Desplanches (Italy)
- **FIFA Fair Play Trophy:** United States

433. The **Egypt** team has won the **Squash World Cup 2023** after defeating Malaysia 2-1 in the final held at Express Avenue Mall in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Previously, Egypt won the title in 2011.

India, along with Japan, has secured the 3rd position in the championship.

Eight teams: India, Australia, Colombia, Egypt, Hong Kong China, Japan, Malaysia and South Africa - competed for the title at Chennai.

Note: Squash is typically played by two players for singles matches or four players for doubles matches.

Squash World Cup:

It is an International Tournament in which national team squads represented by two men and two women play ties of four matches against each other. It was first took place in 1996 in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Australia won the 1st Squash World Cup in 1996.

434. Indian Men's Football Team has won the **2023 Intercontinental Cup** after defeating **Lebanon** in the finals held at the Kalinga Stadium in the Indian city of Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- This marks India's first victory against Lebanon.
- **Player of the Tournament:** Sandesh Jhingan (India)

This is the 3rd edition of the Intercontinental Cup, a four-nation football tournament, organized by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

435. Dutch-Belgium racing driver **Max Verstappen** of **Red Bull** has won the **Canadian Grand Prix 2023** title, 9th round of the Formula 1 2023 championships, at Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

This marks Red Bulls' **100th** win in F1 events since its inception in 2004. Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin has finished 2nd and Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes has finished 3rd in the race.

436. Indian badminton players **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty** have won the Men's doubles title at the Kapal Api Group **Indonesia Open 2023** by defeating 2022 world champions Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik from Malaysia.

This is Satwik-Chirag's first-ever men's doubles title at the BWF World Tour Super 1000 event and they also became the 1st doubles pair from India to win a little at Super 1000 event.

Men's Singles: Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)

Women's Singles: Chen Yufei (China)

437. Pakistan women's cricketer **Nahida Khan** has announced her retirement from international cricket. She made her international one day debut on 7 February 2009 against Sri Lanka. She represented Pakistan in three ODI World Cups (2013, 2017, and 2022) and four T20I World Cups (2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018). She played 66 ODIs and 54 T20Is matches.

438. The Chief Minister of Goa Pramod Sawant has launched the mascot and unveiled the official Jersey of the **37th National Games** to be held in **Goa in October 2023**.

The mascot named '**Moga**' represents an **Indian bison (Gaur)** and showcases the distinct identity of Goa, embodied the connection between the Games and the state's heritage. Gaur is the state animal of Goa.

The 36th edition of the National Games was held in Gujarat.

Note: The first National Games of India was held in **1924** in Lahore - now in Pakistan - in what was then undivided India. It was then called the 'All India Olympic Games'.

439. Indian fencer **Bhavani Devi** has won a **bronze medal** in the women's sabre event held at the **Asian Fencing Championships** in Wuxi, China by defeating reigning world champion Misaki Emura of Japan in the quarterfinals.

With this, she has become the **first Indian fencer** to win medal in Asian Championships.

Asian Fencing Championships:

It is the fencing zonal championship organized by the Asian Fencing Confederation for the Asia-Oceania zone. The first Asian Fencing Championships was held in 1973 in Tehran. The tournament resumed in 1989 and has been held annually since 2007.

440. Uttar Pradesh will host **India's first MotoGP racing event** at the Buddha international circuit in **Greater Noida** on 22nd and 23rd September 2023. The riders from as many as 19 countries will participate in the event.

In 2022, MotoGP commercial rights owner Dorna and Noida-based race promoters Fairstreet Sports signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to host the premier two-wheel racing event in India for the next seven years.

441. Teddy Bear has been chosen as the mascot of the **UEFA European Football Championship 2024**, which will be held in **Germany**. The mascot pays homage to the popular children's teddy bear toy, which is said to have originated in Germany in the early 20th century.

Euro 2024 will take place from 14th June to 14th July in ten German cities.

UEFA European Football Championship:

It is the primary association football tournament organised by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). It is the second-most watched football tournament in the world after the FIFA World Cup.

442. The Indian team has won **202 medals** (including 76 Gold, 75 Silver, 51 Bronze) in **Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023** held in Berlin, Germany from 17th June to 25th June 2023.

Special Olympics is a sports event conducted every two years, alternating with Summer and Winter Games for the people with intellectual disabilities.

- **2023 Mascot:** 'Unity'
- **2023 Motto:** 'Unbeatable Together'
- **Goodwill Ambassadors:** Ayushman Khurana and Yuvraj Singh

Note: Special Olympics Canada Winter Games Calgary 2024 will be held from 27th February to 2nd March 2024 in Calgary, Canada.

443. Former India women's pace bowler **Jhulan Goswami** has been inducted into the **MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) World Committee** alongside **Heather Knight**, captain of the England women's cricket team, and **Eoin Morgan**, former England Men's cricketer.

MCC's World Cricket Committee:

It is an independent body comprised of current and former international cricketers and umpires from across the globe. It was set up in 2006. It meets twice yearly to discuss the prevalent issues in the game. The committee acts as a complementary body to ICC (International Cricket Council) and its constituent nations.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

444. World Milk Day is observed annually on **1st June** to recognize milk as global food and to celebrate the dairy industry. The goal of World Milk Day is to reach 'Dairy Net Zero' by lowering greenhouse emissions and improving waste management over the next 30 years. The day was established by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in 2001.

Note: India is the largest producer of milk followed by the US, Pakistan, and China, and also accounts for 22 percent of the global milk production.

445. World Bicycle Day is observed annually on **3rd June** to recognize bicycling as a way to get a sustainable form of traveling that also ensures one's physical well-being.

The day was first observed in 2018.

446. International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression is observed annually on **4th June** to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are victims of physical, mental, and emotional abuse. The day was first observed on 19th August 1982. At that time, the day was focused on victims of the Lebanon War.

447. World Environment Day (WED) is observed annually on **5th June** to create awareness among people about the importance of nature. The day is organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and held annually since 1973. The day was established in 1972, which was the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the human environment.

Theme 2023: "Solutions to plastic pollution"

The year 2023 marks the **50th anniversary** of the World Environment Day. WED 2023 is hosted by **Côte d'Ivoire** and supported by the **Netherlands**.

448. The UN Russian Language Day is observed annually on **6th June** to spread awareness about the history, culture, and development of the Russian language. The day also marks the

birth anniversary of the Great Russian poet A.S. Pushkin, the father of modern Russian literature.

- It is one of the six official languages used by the United Nations throughout the Organization.
- The day was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010.

Note: Six official languages of the UN are English, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and French.

449. World Food Safety Day is observed annually on **7th June** to draw attention and mobilize action to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks and improve human health. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations. The day was first observed in 2019.

Theme 2023: 'Food Standards Save Lives'

The year 2023 marks the observance of the 5th World Food Safety Day.

450. World Oceans Day is observed annually on **8th June** to inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean, develop a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean, and mobilize and unite the world's population on a project for the sustainable management of the world's oceans.

The concept of World Oceans Day was first proposed by the United Nations in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The day was first observed in 2009.

Theme 2023: "Planet Ocean: tides are changing"

451. World Accreditation Day is observed annually on **9th June** to highlight the value of accreditation in the economy. It is a global initiative jointly launched by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). The day was first observed in 2008.

The year 2023 marks the 16th anniversary of World Accreditation Day.

Theme 2023: " Accreditation: Supporting the Future of Global Trade."

The theme focuses on how accreditation supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, and 17.

452. World Day Against Child Labour is observed annually on **12th June** to raise awareness and activism to prevent child labour. The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched this

day in 2002 to spread awareness about the harmful mental and physical problems faced by children forced into child labour, all over the world.

Theme 2023: "Social Justice for All. End Child Labour!"

453. International Albinism Awareness Day is observed annually on **13th June** to spread awareness about albinism and to highlight the human rights of people with albinism. The day was first observed in 2015.

Theme 2023: "Inclusion is Strength"

454. World Blood Donor Day is observed annually on **14th June** to spread awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Karl Landsteiner.

This day was first initiated and established on 14 June 2004 by the World Health Organization (WHO).

For 2023, the World Blood Donor Day slogan is "**Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often.**"

The host country for World Blood Donor Day 2023 is **Algeria**.

455. Mumbai Police has observed **14th June** as '**No Honking Day**' to curb noise pollution and to create awareness about the menace among the people. The police have appealed to the people to make 'no honking' a habit.

456. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is observed annually on **15th June** to spread awareness about abuse and neglect of older persons and raise awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) initiated and designated the 15th June as WEAAD in June 2006. The day was first observed in 2012.

Theme 2023: "Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Older Age Policy, Law and Evidence-based Responses"

457. International Day of Family Remittances is observed annually on **16th June** to recognise the importance of over 200 million migrant workers who send money home to over 800 million family members. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution on 12th June 2018 and proclaimed the 16th June of every year as the International Day of Family Remittances.

Theme 2023: "Digital remittances towards financial inclusion and cost reduction"

458. World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed annually on **17th June** to promote public awareness of international efforts to combat desertification. The day was first observed in 1995.

Theme 2023: "Her Land. Her Rights"

459. International Day for Countering Hate Speech is observed annually on **18th June** to promote inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech.

The year 2023 marks the celebration of the 2nd International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of **Morocco** to the United Nations have hosted a high-level event to mark the 2nd International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

460. National Reading Day is observed annually on **19th June** to encourage the habit and culture of reading and to promote literacy. The day also marks the death anniversary of **Puthuvayil Narayana Panicker**, who is considered as the Father of Kerala's Library and Literacy Movement.

- The year 2023 marks the observance of the **28th National Reading Day**.
- National Reading or Digital Reading Month has been observed across India from **19th June to 18th July 2023**.

PN Panicker:

He was born in a Nair family on 1st March 1909 at Neelampeeror, Kerala. He started the '**Granthashala Sangam**' in 1945 to promote literacy movement and libraries in the state. He was famous for the message of - "Vayichu Valaruka" which means "Read and Grow". He made the literacy movement into a popular socio-cultural movement. He founded the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) in 1977. Granthasala Sangam won the 'Krupsakaya Award' from UNESCO in 1975.

461. World Refugee Day is observed annually on **20th June** to commemorate the obstacles faced by refugees all over the world. The day was first observed in 2001 by the United Nations on the 50th anniversary of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention regarding the status of refugees.

The day was previously known as 'Africa Refugee Day', but in 2000, UN officially designated the day as 'World Refugee Day'.

Theme 2023: 'Hope Away From Home'

462. The International Yoga Day (IDY) is observed annually on **21st June** to spread awareness about the benefits of practicing Yoga, an ancient physical, mental, and spiritual practice that originated in India. The day was first observed in **2015**.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **9th International Yoga Day (IDY) 2023**.

Theme 2023: 'Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'

In India, IDY 2023 has been led by Vice President of India **Jagdeep Dhankar** in **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has attended the 9th IDY 2023 program at the UN Headquarters in **New York**, the USA.

As part of IDY 23, the Ministry of AYUSH has organized an event '**Ocean Ring of Yoga**' (symbolising unity and solidarity) in coordination with the Ministry of Defence and other ministries. Under this, the Indian Navy ships deployed in the Indian Ocean Region are visiting various ports of friendly foreign countries and spreading the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

463. International Olympic Day is observed annually on **23rd June** to promote sports and health. The day commemorates the foundation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 at the Sorbonne, Paris, where the Olympic Games were revived by Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

Theme 2023: 'Let's Move'

464. Day of the Seafarer (DotS) is observed annually on **25th June** to honour the vital contribution that seafarers make to global trade and the economy, frequently at considerable personal sacrifice to themselves and their families. The day was first observed in 2011. The year 2023 marks the observance of the 13th Day of the Seafarer. The day is organized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Theme 2023: "MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on"

465. International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day, is observed annually on **26th June** to highlight the physical and psychological impact of substance abuse, drug overdose deaths and drug-related humanitarian crises with an aim to eliminate the menace from society. The day was first set by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1987.

Theme 2023: "People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention"

466. World Micro- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day is observed annually on **27th June** to spread awareness of the tremendous contributions of micro-, small and

medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year, the International Trade Centre (ITC) marks the 6th anniversary of MSME Day. The day was first observed in 2017.

It is noteworthy that MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, 60 to 70% of employment and 50% of GDP worldwide.

467. National Insurance Awareness Day is observed annually on **28th June** to raise awareness about Insurance which offers security in several situations and to make people aware of the benefits of investing in insurance plans.

The day also serves as a reminder to people to check if all their insurance payments (or renewals) are up to date.

Note: As per the Economic Survey 2022-23 released on 31st January 2023, the Insurance penetration in India has risen from 2.7% (in 2000) to 4.2% (in 2020) and was 3.2% in 2021.

468. National Statistics Day is observed annually on **29th June** to raise awareness about the use of statistics in everyday life and policy-making. The day marks the celebration of the birth anniversary of Late Professor **Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis**, known as the “Father of Indian Statistics”. The day was first observed in 2007.

Theme 2023: “Alignment of State Indicator Framework with National Indicator Framework for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals.”

List of Important Days:

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2023
World Milk Day	1 st June	
Global Day of Parents	1 st June	
International Sex Workers Day	2 nd June	
World Bicycle Day	3 rd June	
International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression	4 th June	
World Environment Day	5 th June	Solutions to plastic pollution
International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	5 th June	
World Day Against Speciesism	5 th June	

UN Russian Language Day	6 th June	
World Pest Day	6 th June	
World Food Safety Day	7 th June	Food standards save lives
World Oceans Day	8 th June	Planet Ocean: tides are changing
World Brain Tumour Day	8 th June	
World Accreditation Day	9 th June	Accreditation: Supporting the Future of Global Trade
International Archives Day	9 th June	
World Day Against Child Labour	12 th June	Social Justice for All. End Child Labour!
International Albinism Awareness Day	13 th June	Inclusion is Strength
World Blood Donor Day	14 th June	
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	15 th June	Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Older Age Policy, Law and Evidence-based Responses
Global Wind Day	15 th June	
ASEAN Dengue Day	15 th June	ASEAN's Commitment to Fight Against Dengue
International Day of Family Remittances	16 th June	Digital remittances towards financial inclusion and cost reduction
World Sea Turtle Day	16 th June	
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	17 th June	Her Land. Her Rights
World Crocodile Day	17 th June	
Sustainable Gastronomy Day	18 th June	
International Picnic Day	18 th June	
Autistic Pride Day	18 th June	
International Day for Countering Hate Speech	18 th June	
National Reading Day	19 th June	
World Sickle Cell Day	19 th June	Building and strengthening global sickle cell communities, formalizing newborn screening and knowing your sickle cell disease status

International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict	19 th June	Bridging the gender digital divide to prevent, address and respond to conflict-related sexual violence
World Refugee Day	20 th June	Hope Away From Home
International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice	21 st June	
World Music Day	21 st June	
World Hydrography Day	21 st June	Hydrography - Underpinning the Digital Twin of the Ocean
International Yoga Day	21 st June	Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
World Refugee Day	20 th June	Hope Away From Home
International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice	21 st June	
World Music Day	21 st June	
World Hydrography Day	21 st June	Hydrography - Underpinning the Digital Twin of the Ocean
International Yoga Day	21 st June	Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
International Olympic Day	23 rd June	Let's Move
United Nations Public Service Day	23 rd June	Innovative Public Service Delivery: Ensuring No One Is Left Behind
International Widows' Day	23 rd June	
Day of the Seafarer (DotS)	25 th June	MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on
World Vitiligo Day	25 th June	Vitiligo: Looking into the Future
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture	26 th June	
World Drug Day	26 th June	People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention
World Refrigeration Day	26 th June	Next Generation Cooling: The Future is in our hands
World Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day	27 th June	
National Insurance Awareness Day	28 th June	
World Allergy Awareness Week	18 th to 24 th June 2023	Managing allergic diseases amidst climate change
National Statistics Day	29 th June	Alignment of State Indicator Framework with National Indicator Framework for

		Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals
International Day of the Tropics	29 th June	
International Asteroid Day	30 th June	
International Day of Parliamentarism	30 th June	Parliaments for the Planet

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