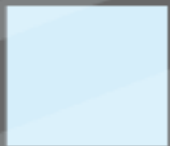


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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog** has launched a new accelerator called '**Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE)**' to support India and **Australia** circular economy startups and small-to-mid-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The RISE Accelerator will be delivered in collaboration between CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, and AIM-NITI Aayog.

The program will be delivered virtually with opportunities to travel between both countries. The participating startups may also be eligible for up to Rs.40,00,000 in non-equity grants.

Note: A circular economy means products are designed in such a way that they can be used again, or even multiple times, to maximise their value.

2. **India** has become the **Chair of International Sugar Organisation (ISO)** for **2024** to lead the global sugar sector. This has been announced during the 63rd council meeting of ISO in London, United Kingdom (UK).

Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary (Food) in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India, has attended the meeting.

- India has been the largest consumer and second largest producer of sugar in the world. With about 15% share in global sugar consumption and about 20% production of sugar, Indian sugar trends affects the global markets profusely.
- India is the market leader in the Eastern Hemisphere for the sugar market, while Brazil leads the Western Hemisphere.
- India is the 3rd largest country in the world in ethanol production after the United States of America (USA) and Brazil.

Notably, the **ethanol blending** percentage in India has increased from **5%** in 2019-20 to **12%** in 2022-23 while the production has increased from 173 crore litres to more than 500 crore litres during the same period.

3. The Indian Navy, in association with the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), has successfully conducted Guided Flight Trials of the first indigenously developed **Naval Anti-Ship Missile Short Range (NASM-SR)** from a Sea King 42B helicopter.

This marked the **2nd test** of the missile.

Naval Anti-Ship Missile Short Range (NASM-SR):

- NASM-SR is the first indigenous air-launched anti-ship cruise missile developed for the Indian Navy.
- It can be launched from attack helicopters.
- This missile will replace the **Sea Eagle missiles**, which are currently in use with the Navy.
- It can travel at a speed of **Mach 0.8** (slower than the speed of sound) with a strike range of around 60 km.
- It would have an imaging infrared seeker, which would home in on the heat emissions of its targets.
- It can have a warhead of 100kg and is capable of sinking patrol boats and damaging larger warships.
- The NASM-SR, on approach to its target, can cruise at just 5 metres above sea level, making it difficult for enemy radars to detect, track, and shoot down with surface-to-air missiles or guns. This low-level capability of anti-ship missiles is known as sea skimming.
- It will be integrated with **MH-60R helicopters** from the USA.

4. The Union Government has decided to rename the **existing Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)** as '**Ayushman Arogya Mandir**' with the tagline '**Arogyam Parmam Dhanam**'.

The new name will replace the existing title 'Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centre' across all operationalised AB-HWCs.

The government has earmarked **Rs 3,000** per facility for this rebranding exercise.

The use of scripts other than Devanagiri (Hindi) or English is permitted for branding, with the condition that the full and exact title can be translated into the state language(s). However, the tagline must be transliterated in the state language(s).

The rebranding process is expected to be completed nationwide by the end of 2023.

Ayushman Bharat Health & Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)

It was launched under the Ayushman Bharat Program in 2018. They provide care for non-communicable diseases, palliative and rehabilitative care, Oral, Eye, and ENT care, mental health, and first-level care for emergencies and trauma. They also provide free essential drugs and diagnostic services.

Currently, 1.6 lakhs AB- HWCs have been successfully established across states and UTs over the last five years.

5. The **14th Edition** of the Indo-US Joint Special Forces exercise "**VAJRA PRAHAR 2023**" has commenced at the Joint Training Node, **Umroi** in **Meghalaya**.

The exercise is being conducted from 21st November to 11th December 2023.

The US contingent is represented by personnel from the 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) of US Special Forces.

The Indian Army contingent is led by Special Forces personnel from the Eastern Command.

Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR:

It is a joint exercise conducted between **Indian Army and US Army Special Forces**. It aims at sharing best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics.

The first edition was conducted in the year **2010** in India.

Note: The 13th edition of Exercise Vajra Prahar was conducted at the Special Forces Training School (SFTS), Bakloh (Himachal Pradesh).

6. **OneWeb India**, which operates in low earth orbit, has become the **first organisation** to receive the authorisation from Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (**IN-SPACE**) to launch Eutelsat One Web's commercial satellite broadband services in India.

The authorisation valid for **5 years** is subject to the assignment of the spectrum by the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Ministry of Communication for both the gateways and user terminal operations.

OneWeb India has also obtained in principle approval to establish and operate two gateways in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

7. The Indian Armed Forces have participated in the second edition of Joint Military Exercise **"AUSTRAHIND-23"**. The exercise is being conducted at **Perth, Australia** from **22nd November to 6th December 2023**.

Participants:

- Indian Army contingent comprises 60 personnel from a Battalion of the **GORKHA Rifles**, One officer from Indian Navy and 20 personnel from Indian Air Force.
- The Australian Army contingent comprises 60 personnel from the **13th Brigade**, 20 personnel each from the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force.

Aim: To foster collaborative partnership and share best practices between the two sides. The exercise also promotes inter- operability while undertaking multi-domain operations in Urban and Semi- Urban terrain under Chapter VII of United Nations on peace keeping operations.

AUSTRAHIND:

Exercise AUSTRAHIND was instituted in 2022 and the first edition was conducted in Mahajan, Rajasthan. It is planned to be an annual training event to be conducted alternatively in India and Australia.

8. The **Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS)**, Ministry of Ayush, has launched the **"Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative" (AGNI)** for physicians practising in the field of Ayurveda.

Key objectives of Agni:

- To promote the culture of reporting evidence-based practices among the Ayurveda Practitioners.
- To provide a platform to the Ayurveda practitioners for reporting their innovative practices & experiences in various disease conditions.
- To document successful treatments for various diseases for the purpose of education and academics.
- To identify interested practitioners for collaboration and capacity building through training in research methods and clinical practices.
- To undertake research for mainstreaming pragmatic practices through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal.

CCRAS will document and publish reported medical practices and therapeutic regimens in consultation with NCISM (National Commission for Indian System of Medicine) for educational and academic purposes.

Note: AYUSH is an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

9. The **17th edition** of the Indo-Nepal joint military exercise, **SURYA KIRAN- XVII**, has been commenced in **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand** from 24th November to 7th December 2023. It is an annual event and conducted alternatively in the two countries.

Participants:

- The **Indian Army** contingent comprising of 354 personnel is represented by a Battalion from the KUMAON Regiment.
- The **Nepal Army** contingent comprising of 334 personnel is represented by Tara Dal Battalion.

Objective: To enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counter terrorism operations in mountainous terrain and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief under United Nations Charter on peace keeping operations.

Note: SURYA KIRAN- XVI was held at Saljhandi, Nepal in December 2022.

10. The Government of India (GoI) has introduced a roadmap for the mandatory blending of **compressed biogas (CBG)** in the **city gas distribution (CGD)** sector. This will target the compressed natural gas (**CNG**) and piped natural gas (**PNG**) segments.

This decision has been approved by the National Biofuels Coordination Committee (NBCC) during a meeting, aiming to boost the manufacturing and consumption of CBG in India. The mandatory blending will be introduced in a phased manner, commencing in the fiscal year 2025-26.

The blending obligation is set at **1%** of total CNG and domestic PNG consumption for **FY26**, escalating to **3%** for **FY27**, **4%** for **FY28**, and reaching **5%** from **FY29** onwards.

The **Central Repository Body (CRB)** will oversee and implement the blending mandate.

Key objectives of the Compulsory Blending Obligation (CBO) are:

- Stimulating demand for CBG in the CGD sector
- Reducing liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports
- Saving foreign exchange
- Promoting a circular economy
- Contributing to the net-zero emission target

It will anticipate investments worth approximately **Rs.37,500 crore** and facilitate the establishment of **750 CBG projects** by FY29.

11. The **Indian Mission** to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**), together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (**MoA&FW**), has organized the **ASEAN-India Millet Festival 2023** in **Indonesia**.

The festival has been inaugurated in the Kota Kasablanka Mall in South Jakarta, Indonesia. The festival aims to spread awareness and create a market for millets and millets-based products among the ASEAN Member states.

Millet Festival is a part of UN's International Year of Millets 2023 (**IYM 2023**) celebrations. The festival includes an exhibition, panel discussions, and cooking workshops.

ASEAN:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).

Members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

12. The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, has hosted the **Global Fisheries Conference India 2023** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat** on the occasion of the **World Fisheries Day (21st November)**.

- The aim is to celebrate the contribution and achievements of fishers and fish farmers and other stakeholders and reinforce commitment towards sustainable and equitable development of the Fisheries sector.
- The theme of the conference is '**Celebrate the Fisheries and Aquaculture Wealth**'
- During the conference, **Ghol fish** was declared as **State fish of Gujarat**.
- The World Fisheries Awards are also distributed on the occasion.
- During the programme, the Inland Reservoir Leasing portal was launched by the Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel.

Note: With 8% share in global fish production, India is the 3rd largest fish producer, 2nd largest aquaculture producer, largest shrimp producer and 4th largest seafood exporter in the world.

13. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has recently (in Nov'23) attended the **10th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting - Plus (ADMM-Plus)** held in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.

ADMM-Plus:

- ADMM-Plus is the sole recognised framework for Defence Minister meetings in the Asia-Pacific region. Its objective is to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace and stability.

- The ADMM-Plus serves as a venue for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners, which are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States are among the countries represented.
- It was established by a resolution agreed at the 2nd ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in Singapore in 2007.
- The inaugural ADMM-Plus meeting took place on October 12, 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Additional Information:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded on 8th August 1967 to promote economic growth, peace, security, social advancement, and cultural development across Southeast Asia.

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

ASEAN secretariat: Jakarta, Indonesia

14. Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**, Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has co-chaired the **first Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC) meeting** with Australian Education Minister Jason Clare and Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Skills and Training, Government of Australia.

The meeting has been held at the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar** in Gujarat.

During the 1st AIESC meeting, 5 Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) are exchanged between Indian and Australian Higher education institutions (HEIs) to facilitate greater research collaborations in areas like Agriculture, Water Management, Critical Minerals, Healthcare, AI, Renewable Energy and Climate Change.

Both nations have announced the opening of two Australian Universities campuses of Wollongong and Deakin University in GIFT City, Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

Note: AIESC, earlier the Australian India Education Council (AIEC), is a bi-national body established in 2011 to guide the strategic direction of the education, training, and research partnerships between the two countries.

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15. The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** has launched an open data platform namely '**IAEA Data Platform**' to streamline scientific data accessibility for decision-makers, member states, experts, and the public.

IAEA Data Platform organizes data into three main topics:

- Nuclear Safety and Security

- Nuclear Technology and Applications
- Safeguards and Verification

The platform consolidates, organizes and standardizes IAEA data into a single repository, enhancing transparency, and knowledge.

16. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, **Dr Jitendra Singh** has launched the software application "**Dashboard**" portal of the Ministry of Science & Technology for real-time, prompt and effective **Parliament business**.

This portal streamlines real-time Parliament business, including Parliament Questions, Acts of Parliament and Gazette Notifications of Govt. of India as well as Cabinet Notes. He has also laid the Foundation Stone of the new Auditorium-cum-Guest House Complex in the premises of the "Technology Bhavan" which is the headquarters of DST.

17. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off the **Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra** from Khunti, Jharkhand on the occasion of the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (15th November).

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra:

- Starts from **15th November 2023** and ends on **26th January 2024**.
- **Aim:** to promote and publicize government welfare schemes.
- The schemes that will be publicized through the yatra include Ayushman Bharat; PMJAY; PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana; Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana among others.
- The yatra specifically addresses concerns in tribal areas, focusing on issues like Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission, enrolment in Eklavya Model Residential Schools, scholarship schemes, forest right titles for both individuals and communities, and the establishment of Van Dhan Vikas Kendra through organizing Self Help Groups.
- The 5 specially designed **IEC** (Information, Education and Communication) Vans are deployed to carry the message of the Government's flagship welfare programmes.
- **Target:** To cover over **2.55 lakh Gram Panchayats** and over **3,600 urban local bodies** by 25th January 2024.

18. The Indian Navy has launched '**Amini**', the 4th in a series of eight **Anti-Submarine warfare shallow water crafts (ASW-SWC)**, at shipbuilding facility of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in Kattupalli, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- Amini, an Aruna class ship, is named after Amini Island in Lakshadweep due to its strategic significance.

- It is 77-meter ship with a 900-ton displacement, capable of reaching a maximum speed of 25 knots and covering 1,800 nautical miles.
- It is built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE)**.
- It is designed for anti-submarine operations in coastal waters and low intensity maritime operations (LIMO), and mine laying operations.

19. The **ninth edition** of Joint Military exercise **“Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023”** between the armed forces of **India and Sri Lanka** has been commenced in **Aundh (Pune), Maharashtra**. The exercise is being conducted from **16th to 29th November 2023**.

- The Indian contingent, of 120 personnel, has been represented mainly by troops from the MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY Regiment. The Sri Lankan side has been represented by personnel from 53 Infantry Division.
- 15 personnel from Indian Air Force and five personnel from Sri Lankan Air Force are also participating in the exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to jointly rehearse conduct of Sub Conventional operations under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.
- The scope of the exercise includes synergising joint responses during counter-terrorist operations.
- The Army Martial Arts Routine (AMAR), combat reflex shooting and Yoga will also form part of the exercise curriculum.
- The exercise will also involve employment of Drones and Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems besides helicopters.

Note: The eighth edition of Mitra Shakti was conducted at Combat Training School, Ampara in Sri Lanka in October 2021.

20. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has introduced the **ISRO Robotics Challenge-URSC (U R Rao Satellite Centre) 2024 (IRoC-U 2024)** to build robots to compete in an extra-terrestrial inspired arena.

- The tagline of the challenge is **“Let’s build a space robot.”**
- The aim of this challenge is to establish a standardised platform for everyone who wants to delve into the realm of space robotics.
- The first-place team (winning team) will be awarded a cash prize of **Rs 5 lakh**, the second-place team Rs 3 lakh, and the third-place team Rs 2 lakh.

Additionally, ISRO will award a consolation prize of Rs 1 lakh to two teams.

The ISRO Robotics Challenge Day will be held in August 2024 at the URSC Bengaluru Campus.

21. India has hosted the **2nd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)** in a virtual format. The summit focused on ways to sustain the momentum generated toward a more inclusive, representative, and progressive world order.
- The theme of the Inaugural Leaders' Session is "Together, for Everyone's Growth, with Everyone's Trust" and that of the Concluding Leaders' Session is "Global South: Together for One Future."
 - The 2nd summit has been structured into 10 sessions.
 - The key focus is to share the beneficial outcomes and progress achieved in the concerns/priorities of the Global South during India's G20 Presidency.
 - During the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled '**DAKSHIN**', a Global South Centre of Excellence, and called for **5 'Cs'** for the Global South.
 - 5 'Cs' stands for **Consultation, Cooperation, Communication, Creativity, and Capacity building**.

Note: India hosted the first VOGSS in January 2023, where 125 Global South countries came together with the theme "Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose."

Global South:

The term "Global South" refers to various countries often described as "developing," "less developed" or "underdeveloped." The concept of the Global South can be traced to the Brandt report of 1980.

22. The **Indian Navy (IN)** has launched the '**Missile Cum Ammunition (MCA) Barge, LSAM 10 (Yard 78)**', the **4th Barge** of 08 x MCA Barge project, at Guttenadeevi, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh.
- The barge has been built by the Micro, Small, & Medium Enterprise (MSME) Shipyard, M/s SECON Engineering Projects Pvt Ltd (SEPPL), Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
 - These Barges are indigenously designed and built under relevant Naval Rules and Regulation of Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).
 - The availability of these Barges would provide impetus to operational commitments of IN by facilitating Transportation, Embarkation and Disembarkation of articles/ ammunition to IN Ships both alongside jetties and at outer harbours.

Note: The contract for building 08 x Missile Cum Ammunition Barge was signed between Ministry of Defence and M/s SECON Engineering Projects Pvt Ltd, Visakhapatnam on 19 February 2021.

23. The **2023** edition of the **Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD)** has been held in **New Delhi**. This annual apex-level regional strategic dialogue of the Indian Navy, conducted from 15 to 17 November 2023, aims to review various maritime trends, regional opportunities and

challenges within Indo-Pacific region, and foster exchange of solution-oriented dialogue amongst key stakeholders.

The theme of IPRD 2023 is ***“Geopolitical Impacts upon Indo-Pacific Maritime Trade and Connectivity”***.

IPRD-2023 has been organised by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi, as the Indian Navy’s knowledge partner.

During IPRD-2023, the NMF has signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) of cooperation with four prominent think-tanks in the Indo-Pacific, namely:

- Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE), Nepal;
- Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS), Kenya;
- Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Vietnam;
- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi

24. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has visited Sri Lanka from 1st to 3rd November 2023. During her visit, she addressed the **‘NAAM 200’** event organized by the **Sri Lankan government** to commemorate the **200th anniversary of Indian-origin Tamils to Sri Lanka** in Colombo.

She has also addressed the India-Sri Lanka Business Summit on the theme: ***“Enhancing Connectivity: Partnering for Prosperity”***.

She has stated that India would continue to collaborate with the Sri Lankan Government on matters pertaining to debt restructuring.

She has also inaugurated the two branches of the **State Bank of India** i.e., one in **Jaffna** and another SBI branch in **Trincomalee**. With this, the total number of branches of SBI in Sri Lanka is **7**.

It is noteworthy that, SBI has become the first foreign Bank in Sri Lanka to successfully launch path breaking direct LKR-INR trade.

Both nations have also concluded the 12th round of talks on the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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25. The **Eastern Air Command (EAC)** of the Indian Air Force has conducted its annual Command-level exercise **“Poorvi Akash”** in the north-eastern region to check its combat preparedness.

Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare has launched **‘Krishi 24/7’**, India’s first AI-powered solution for agricultural news monitoring and analysis.

It is developed by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) in collaboration with Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence (Wadhvani AI) with support from **Google.org**.

Krishi 24/7 scans news articles in multiple languages and translates them into English.

It extracts essential information from news articles including headline, crop name, event type, date, location, severity, summary and source link to ensure the government receives timely updates.

26. The Chief Minister of Gujarat **Bhupendra Patel** has unveiled the **Crest** of the **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Surat**, indigenous under-construction, guided-missile destroyer of Project 15B, at the ceremony conducted under the aegis of Western Naval Command by Gujarat Naval Area, in Surat, Gujarat.

This is the first capital warship to be named after the city of Gujarat.

The crest of INS Surat depicts the renowned **Hazira lighthouse**. It was built in 1836, at the southern entrance of the Gulf of Khambhat. It was among India's earliest lighthouses. The crest also features an **Asiatic lion** (state animal of Gujarat) representing the majesty and strength of ships.

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Surat:

INS Surat is the fourth ship of the indigenously designed and constructed Project 15B (Vishakhapatnam Class) destroyers. It is being built by the Mazagaon Dock Limited (MDL) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The ship has been constructed using innovative block construction methodology, wherein the ship's hull has been assembled at distinct geographical locations before being integrated at MDL.

27. The **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** has become the **first Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** to set up an international campus, by launching a campus in **Tanzania**.

The Zanzibar Campus, IIT Madras, will be on Zanzibar Island, off the East African mainland and part of the Tanzanian republic.

The campus offers courses in artificial intelligence and data science, with 50% of students being African and 50% Indian.

In the first batch at **IITM Zanzibar**, students from Zanzibar, mainland Tanzania, Nepal, and India have been admitted, with 40 percent of the students being women.

The classes for the first Academic Year (2023-24) commenced in October 2023.

The campus will have the capacity to accommodate students in dormitories and provide various facilities.

28. The **first Global Conference on Cooperation in Enforcement Matters (GCCEM)** was held in **New Delhi**. The conference has been inaugurated by Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance.

Objective: To facilitate sharing of insights, best practices and to serve as a catalyst for enhancing collaboration with Indian Customs' partner Administrations.

Hosted by: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) under Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in consultation with World Customs Organisation (WCO).

Theme: 'It takes a Network to fight a Network'.

29. The **fourth** edition of bilateral exercise between **Indian Navy** and **Bangladesh Navy**, **BONGOSAGAR-23**, and the **fifth** edition of Coordinated Patrol (**CORPAT**) by the two navies have been conducted in the Northern Bay of Bengal.

Indian Navy Ships Kuthar, Kiltan and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) Dornier have participated in the exercise.

CORPAT-23 also included the maiden Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief drills held between the two navies.

The bilateral exercises and coordinated patrols have strengthened mutual understanding and cooperation between the two navies.

Note: Bongo Sagar exercise was first conducted in 2019 while 1st edition of IN-BN CORPAT was held in 2018.

30. The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched the **Fourth Phase of 'Operation Sesha'** to **curb the illegal trade of Timber**, including Red Sanders.

The Indian customs department will run the 4th phase of Operation Sesha in collaboration with World Customs Organisation (WCO)'s Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs) in Asia-Pacific and Middle East.

The use of artificial intelligence could play a huge role in the 4th phase of the operation.

Operation Sesha:

It was launched in **2015** to bust organised syndicates of smugglers of precious woods. The name Sesha has been derived from **Seshachalam forest** in **Andhra Pradesh**, bordering Karnataka.

Under this initiative, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence of Indian Customs works in collaboration with probe agencies of several other countries to curb illegal trade of timber.

31. The Indian Army is set to induct the **Hermes 900 Starliner drone** of **Israel**. The Hermes 900 Starliner drone is an advanced, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) developed by Elbit Systems, an Israeli defence technology company.

- This drone is known for its capabilities in surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence gathering, offering an extended flight duration and high-altitude performance.
- It is designed to operate in diverse terrains, providing robust aerial support and intelligence to military and security forces.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) inducted two Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) Heron Mark 2 drones from the Israel Aerospace Industries in August 2023.

32. Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence and **US Department of Defence**, have organised the first **INDUS-X Investors Meet** at **New Delhi** as a precursor to the 2+2 Indo-US Ministerial Dialogue.

Doug Beck, Director Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), US DoD led the US delegation and Vivek Virmani, PO (G) & COO/iDEX-DIO led the Indian delegation.

The **INDUS-X Educational Series (Gurukul)** has also been launched during the event. The initiative aims to help the innovators /startups to navigate in the defence eco-system of the US and India. The Gurukul (Education) series will have sessions for the startups/innovators by the experts from both sides including Govt Officials, Corporate Leaders, Industry Forums, Incubators/ Accelerators etc.

The event is co-ordinated by US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), IndusTech, and mach33.aero (Social Alpha).

The first-ever INDUS-X Investors Meet evinced the interest of the investors in the start-ups and MSMEs operating in the defence sector and the emerging opportunities under the INDUS-X initiative.

India - U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X):

Launched: June 2023.

Objective: To expand strategic technology partnership and defense industrial cooperation between governments, businesses, and academic institutions of India and the US.

33. India has successfully test-fired its **short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) 'Pralay'** from the Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. The missile met all its mission objectives.

Pralay missile:

- The missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) for deployment along Line of Actual Control and Line of Control.
- 'Pralay' is a **350-500 km** short-range, **surface-to-surface missile** with a payload capacity of **500-1,000 kg**.
- The solid-fuel, battlefield missile is based on the **Prithvi Defence Vehicle**.
- It has the ability to change its path after covering a certain range mid-air.
- It is as powerful as Russian "**Iskander**" and China's "**Dong Feng 12**".

34. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **2nd edition** of the **World Food India 2023**, the biennial Mega Food Event, at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, in **New Delhi**.

The event held from 3-5 November 2023 has been organized by the Ministry of Food Processing Industry (MoFPI).

He has also inaugurated the Food Street as part of World Food India 2023.

Mascot: Millind (a probot)

Note: The Ministry of Food Processing Industries launched the first edition of World Food India in 2017.

During the inaugural event, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi provided **Seed Capital Assistance** of **Rs.380 crore** to support over **1 lakh Self Help Group (SHG)** members. During WFI 2023, Global and domestic investors have committed an investment of **Rs.33,129 crore** in India's food processing sector. The MoFPI has signed **16 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)** worth Rs.17,990 crore with several organizations. During the event, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (**APEDA**) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Lulu Hypermarket LLC** to enhance the export of Indian agricultural products, including millets, to the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCCs).

35. The **Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched the '**AINA Dashboard for Cities**' portal to create a robust database of key performance metrics of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Primary objectives of the AAINA Dashboard are to help cities to:

- See how they are faring vis-à-vis other cities;
- Inspire them by pointing to possibilities and areas of improvement;
- Providing opportunity to learn and engage with frontrunners.

The AAINA dashboard would serve as a tool for comparing similarly placed cities and promoting peer learning among cities.

The Dashboard will present the data submitted by the ULBs on the basis of indicators across five broad pillars namely:

- Political & Administrative Structure
- Finance
- Planning
- Citizen Centric Governance
- Delivery of Basic Services

36. The **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)**, operating under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, has unveiled a dedicated **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) portal**.

The core objective of the newly launched CSR portal is to enhance transparency in managing CSR requests from various organizations and institutions.

It will be accessible 24*7 to all and will provide a CSR policy and proposal checklist for examination of CSR requests.

37. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), under the Ministry of Finance, has implemented an **18% Goods and Services Tax (GST)** on **corporate guarantees** involving related entities, such as parent companies and subsidiaries, effective from 26th October 2023.

The notification gives effect to the recommendation announced by the **52nd GST Council Meeting**, chaired by the Union Minister for Finance Nirmala Sitharaman, held in October 2023 in New Delhi.

The notification specifies that the 18% GST will apply to corporate guarantees between parent and subsidiaries and other related parties either on the financial consideration charged by the guarantor for that service or **1%** of the value of the guarantee, whichever is higher.

The order also provides that in the case of corporate guarantees issued to a bank by a director against loans sanctioned to a company, and where no fee is paid to the director for that service, no GST would apply.

Goods and Services Tax (GST):

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a value-added tax levied on most goods and services sold for domestic consumption. It was introduced in India on July 1, 2017.

38. Union Minister of Communication Ashwini Vaishnaw has announced that **India will host the World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA) in 2024.**

WTSA24 will mark a significant step towards the advancements of Fifth Generation (5G) and Sixth Generation (6G) networks.

- WTSA is the governing conference of the International Telecommunication Union Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T).
- It is a quadrennial event (happening once in 4 years).

WTSA20 was scheduled to be held in India. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was held in Geneva, Switzerland in March 2022.

39. The 7th edition of the Joint Military Exercise 'KAZIND-2023**' has been conducted between the armed forces of India and Kazakhstan. It has been scheduled from **30th October to 11th November 2023** in **Otar, Kazakhstan.****

This collaborative exercise aims to enhance cooperation and combat readiness between the two nations.

Participants:

- Indian Army contingent comprises 90 personnel led by a Battalion from the **DOGRA Regiment.**
- The Kazakhstan contingent is mainly represented by personnel from Regional Command South of Kazakh Ground Forces.
- 30 personnel of Air Force from both sides have also participated in the exercise.

Both sides have practiced Counter Terrorism operations in a sub-conventional environment under United Nations mandate.

The Joint Exercise between India and Kazakhstan was instituted as 'Exercise PRABAL DOSTYK' in the year 2016. After the second edition, the Exercise was upgraded to a company-level

exercise and renamed as 'Exercise KAZIND'. The Exercise has been further upgraded as a Bi-service Exercise in 2023 by including the Air Force component.

40. India has hosted the **6th Session** of the **International Solar Alliance Assembly** at Bharat Mandapam, in **New Delhi**. The session has been presided by the Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, **R. K. Singh** in his capacity as the President of the ISA Assembly.

Ministers from 20 countries and delegates from across 116 Member and Signatory countries have participated in the Assembly.

During the session, it has been decided to increase the **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** Cap for solar projects **from 10% up to 35%** of project cost. The ISA programme for VGF provides funding for projects in developing countries.

Four projects set up with ISA's assistance are inaugurated by the Union Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister at the 6th ISA Assembly. These projects are:

- Solarisation of the parliament building of the Republic of Malawi.
- Solarisation of two rural health care centres in the Republic of Fiji, with an 8-kW solar PV system and 20-kWh battery storage capacity for each health centre.
- Installation of 1 solar powered cold storage of capacity 5 MT for the benefit of agricultural stakeholders at La Digue Island, Republic of Seychelles.
- Solarisation of the Nawai Junior Secondary school (JSS) in the Republic of Kiribati, with a 7 kW Solar PV rooftop system paired with a 24-kWh BSS.

ISA has announced that the Global Solar Facility (GSF), set up in 2022, is set to receive a capital contribution of \$35 million dollars.

ISA Assembly:

The ISA Assembly is the apex decision-making body of ISA, in which each Member Country is represented. This body makes decisions concerning the implementation of the ISA's Framework Agreement and coordinated actions to be taken to achieve its objective. The Assembly meets annually at the ministerial level at the ISA's seat. It assesses the aggregate effect of the programmes and other activities in terms of deployment of solar energy, performance, reliability, cost, and scale of finance.

Note: Headquarters of the International Solar Alliance is in Gurugram, Haryana.

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41. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed three **S-400 air defence missile squadrons** along the borders with **China and Pakistan** in order to bolster its air defence capabilities.

In October 2018, India signed a USD 5 billion deal with **Russia** to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems.

S-400:

- S-400 is one of the world's most advanced air defence systems.
- It is a mobile long-range **surface-to-air missile system** developed by Russian state-owned enterprise.
- It has capability to protect against all sorts of aerial attacks, including drones, missiles, rockets and even fighter jets.
- It has command and control centre, automatic tracking and targeting systems, launchers, and support vehicles.
- It carries separate radar systems, which can detect aerial targets to a range of **400 km** (surveillance range up to 600km).
- It can simultaneously engage **80 aerial targets**.
- It can hit target up to altitude of up to 30 km.

42. The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), India has planned to operationally deploy by 2028-2029 its own **long-range surface-to-air missile (LR-SAM)** system, similar to that of **Israel's Iron Dome** defence system.

This system developed under "**Project Kusha**" will equip India with a robust air defence system which will detect and neutralise incoming threats.

This system can detect and destroy incoming stealth fighters, aircraft, drones, cruise missiles and precision-guided munitions at ranges up to 350 km.

The mobile LR-SAM, with long-range surveillance and fire control radars, will have different types of interceptor missiles designed to hit hostile targets at 150-km, 250-km, and 350-km ranges.

This system will be effective even against high-speed targets with low-radar cross-section.

43. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** along with his Bangladeshi counterpart **Sheikh Hasina** has virtually inaugurated three Indian-assisted development projects to strengthen connectivity and energy security in India and Bangladesh.

The three projects are:

- **12.24km Akhaura-Agartala cross-border rail link:**

A rail link starting from Nischintapur in Tripura to Gangasagar in Bangladesh has been inaugurated. This will connect **Agartala (Tripura)** and **Akhaura (Bangladesh)**.

Of the **12.24 km** Agartala-Akhaura railway line, Tripura has got 5.46 km on the Indian side and 6.78 km lies in Akhaura upazila of Bangladesh's Bahmanbaria district.

Note: Tripura shares an 856 km-long international border with Bangladesh, the second longest border between these two countries of any Indian state after West Bengal.

- **Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line:**

The project includes the construction of nearly 65 kms of broad gauge rail route between Mongla Port (Bangladesh's 2nd largest port) and the existing rail network in Khulna region of Bangladesh.

- **Unit - II of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant:**

The Maitree super thermal power project, being built under an Indian concessional financing scheme loan of USD 1.6 billion, is a 1,320 MW plant located at **Rampal in Khulna division of Bangladesh.**

The project has been implemented by the Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Private Limited, which is a 50-50 joint venture between India's NTPCL and the Bangladesh Power Development Board.

- 44.** The **Ilyushin-38 (IL) Sea Dragon (SD)** long-range maritime patrol aircraft of the Indian Navy (IN) has decommissioned after 46 years of service to the nation, at INS Hansa at Dabolim, Goa.

INAS (Indian Naval Air Squadrons) 315 was commissioned on 01 October 1977 with the induction of IL-38 aircraft.

The IL-38 aircraft was also featured in the **2023 Republic Day Flypast** at New Delhi.

Two IL-38 aircraft will remain stationed permanently at the National Maritime Heritage Museum, Lothal, Gujarat and at Nipani in Karnataka.

The long-range maritime patrol duties previously carried out by the IL-38 will now be taken over by Boeing-manufactured P-81 aircraft and MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones.

- 45.** The **Spear corps**, an aviation unit of the Indian Army, has successfully tested a rocket and turret ammunition system from the first indigenous attack helicopter named '**Rudra**'. It also enhances the Army's strike capability and lethality in the mountains.

Rudra:

- Rudra is a weaponised version of the Advanced Light Dhruv Helicopter of 5.8 ton class powered by two Shakti Engines.
- It is designed and developed by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to meet the requirements of Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF).
- It can be used for a variety of missions such as reconnaissance, troop transport, anti-tank warfare, and close air support.

46. The Government has appointed **12 nodal officers** in the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** and the **Central Bureau of Film Certification (CBFC)** with whom complaints related to **film piracy** can be lodged and action will be taken within **48 hours**.

Those indulging in piracy could now be fined from **Rs.3 lakh to five percent** of the gross audited value of production.

If a complaint is filed by someone who does not have the copyright or is not authorised by the copyright holder, the Nodal Officer may hold hearings to determine the complaint's validity before giving directives.

The action has been taken under the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023.

Presently, there is no institutional framework in place to directly take action on pirated film content other than legal action under the Copyright Act and the IPC.

47. The National Centre of Excellence in Carbon Capture and Utilisation (**NCoE-CCU**) at IIT Bombay has innovated a method to convert **carbon dioxide (CO₂)** to **carbon monoxide (CO)** using electro catalytic conditions at ambient temperatures.

- The newly developed process requires only minimal energy as it can proceed under ambient temperatures (**25-40 °C**) in the presence of water.
- The energy required for this electrocatalysis reaction can be harnessed directly from a renewable energy source (in the form of a solar panel or windmill), which ensures a carbon-neutral operating scenario for a facile CO₂ to CO conversion.

The process for CO₂ to CO conversion that is widely in use currently occurs at elevated temperatures (400-750 °C), and the presence of the equivalent amount of H₂ is necessary for driving this reaction forward making it an energy-intensive process.

Carbon monoxide (CO):

CO is a widely used chemical in the industry especially in the form of syn gas. In the steel industry, CO is an essential ingredient for converting iron ores to metallic iron in blast furnaces. Currently, CO is generated by partial oxidation of coke/coal, which leads to a significant production of CO₂ as an end product of this process.

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STATES AFFAIRS

48. Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission of **Kerala** has been selected for the **Global List of Case Studies** of the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**. This recognition will promote eco-friendly tourism in the state.

Kerala has been chosen for employing local resources and products while boosting RT destinations, thus finding resources to achieve its objectives towards realising the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Apart from Kerala's RT Mission, Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve project is the only other Indian case study to be featured in this UNWTO list.

- 49. New Delhi** hosted the **India Mushroom Summit 2023** at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute, from 20th November to 22nd November 2023. The summit has been inaugurated by Delhi University Vice Chancellor **Yogesh Singh**.

The theme of the summit is '*Ideas, Industry, Innovation*' in the area of Mushrooms.

The summit focuses on the various developments in mushroom sector related to cultivation, post-harvest technology, marketing, developing skilled manpower.

The summit is organized by Milkyway Spawn Co Ltd in collaboration with Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, University of Delhi and Campus of Open Learning, University of Delhi.

During the summit, the Indian Mushroom Journal titled 'Mushroom Chronicles' has been released.

- 50.** The Government of West Bengal has organized the **7th edition** of **Bengal Global Business Summit** in Kolkata, West Bengal. The summit aims to bring together corporate leaders, business delegations, entrepreneurs, academia, and think-tanks from around the globe with the purpose of making strategic and business alliances as well as to learn about the industrial ecosystem and business friendly initiatives of the state.

During the summit, West Bengal received investment proposals worth over **Rs.3.76 lakh**.

A total of **188 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and Letters of Intent (LoIs)** are signed.

During the summit, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee unveiled five new policies for the State on logistics, internet cable landing station, green hydrogen, new and renewable energy manufacturing promotion, and export promotion.

Reliance Industries has pledged to invest Rs.20000 crore in next three years in West Bengal in the areas of Digital Life Solutions, Retail, and Bio Energy.

ITC Limited has launched the ITCMAARS (Metamarket for Advanced Agriculture and Rural Services) app to provide crop advisory, market access and financial services to farmers of West Bengal.

Key MoUs signed:

- The West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (**WBIDC**), a nodal agency of state Industry, Commerce and Enterprises Department, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Amazon India** to boost e-commerce exports.

- **West Bengal Transport Department** and **Uber**, one of the leading ridesharing apps, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch 'Uber Shuttle', a bus service for daily commute, in Kolkata.
- The Kolkata-based **Merlin Group** has signed an MoU with WTC (**World Trade Centre**) Bangalore, WTC Mumbai, and WTC Noida for mutual support in various activities, promoting businesses and members in each other's states.
- The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has signed an MoU with the government of West Bengal to boost the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the state.

51. Mamta Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, has named former Indian cricketer and Padma Shri Awardee **Sourav Ganguly** as the "**Brand Ambassador of Bengal**" and handed over the Appointment letter.

The announcement has been made during the 7th edition of the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS 2023) held in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Earlier, renowned Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan has been serving as the brand ambassador of Bengal since 2012.

Sourav Ganguly:

Sourav Ganguly, popularly known as "Dada" or "Prince of Kolkata", represented India from 1992 to 2008. He became the 35th President of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in October 2019 and served until 2022.

Awards:

- **Arjuna Award:** 1998
- **Padma Shri:** 2004

Note: Sourav Ganguly was appointed as the brand ambassador of Tripura Tourism in May 2023.

52. The Government of **Himachal Pradesh** has launched the **first phase** of **Rs.680 crore 'Rajiv Gandhi Self-Employment Start-up Yojna'**.

In the first phase, the e-taxi scheme has been launched.

- The unemployed youth of the state above the age of 23 years will be given a **50% subsidy** on loans to purchase e-taxis and e-buses with no collateral guarantee under a state government scheme to generate employment and promote green initiatives.
- These e-taxis would be attached to various government departments.
- **500 permits** will be issued in the first phase, and the number of permits will be increased as per the demand soon.

Second Phase: The youth would be encouraged to set up solar energy projects.

Third Phase: The youth would be provided a subsidy for agriculture-related work

The government is committed to providing employment to the youth and making Himachal a green state by 2026.

- 53.** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, alongside FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development Arsene Wenger, has inaugurated the **AIFF-FIFA Talent Academy** at Kalinga Stadium in **Bhubaneswar**, Odisha.

This is according to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the All-India Football Federation (AIFF), International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and the Government of Odisha to elevate football development in India.

A total of 50 talented football players, including 15 from Odisha, in the Under-14 category will be selected for the academy from across the country.

The academy will be headed by a FIFA-appointed coach along with various coaches and staff from AIFF and the Odisha government.

- 54. Saffron grown in the Kishtwar area of Jammu and Kashmir** saffron has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in **November 2023**.

Kishtwar's saffron production area is locally called as **Mandal**.

This recognition emphasizes the distinctive identity and exceptional quality of saffron grown in the Kishtwar region.

Other noted products of Jammu & Kashmir got GI tags in 2023: Basohli Pashmina Woolen Products (Textiles); Bhaderwah Rajmash (Agriculture), and Ramban Sulai Honey (Food Stuff).

- 55.** Union Minister of State for Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, Shripad Yesso Naik, has inaugurated the **11th edition** of the **International Tourism Mart (ITM)** in **Shillong, Meghalaya**.

The three-day event has been held at the Lariti International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture.

ITM creates awareness about the tourism potential of North East Region (NER) and highlight its unique tourism products, rich bio diversity, unique intangible heritage.

International Tourism Mart (ITM):

ITM is an annual event held by the Ministry of Tourism in one of the North Eastern States on rotation basis, with an objective to provide a bigger platform to the North Eastern stakeholders to interact with their counterparts from both within the country and overseas markets.

- 56. India's first Telecom centre of excellence (CoE)** will come up at the **IIT Roorkee** campus in **Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh**. This initiative will promote innovation and growth in the telecommunication sector.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh will fund around **Rs.30 crore** for its establishment. The foundation stone for the same will be laid by the **Chief Minister of UP Yogi Adityanath** on **5th December 2023**.

The centre will focus on connecting 5G with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and 6G, which will enable India to reduce its dependence on foreign technology and increase competition in the global market.

Research will be done on these sectors:

- Fundamentals of Advanced Wireless Communication
- 5G and wireless standards
- Millimeter Wave Transceiver Module Design
- AI/ML for Wireless Communication

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57. Telangana has unveiled the **world's first 3D-printed temple**, a groundbreaking structure situated in **Burugupally, Siddipet district**.

The temple has been built in a tie-up between a Hyderabad-based construction company Apsuja Infratech and Simpliforge Creations, a 3D-printed construction company.

The 3D-printed temple structure is built in an area of 3800 square feet.

The temple encompasses three sanctums, each dedicated to a different deity. These sanctums include a modak dedicated to Lord Ganesha, a square Shivalay devoted to Lord Shankar, and a lotus-shaped sanctuary for Goddess Parvati.

58. Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan, has inaugurated the **Odisha Research Centre (ORC)** in Bhubaneswar.

The objective of the Centre is to develop innovative epistemological frameworks to explore varied and nuanced dimensions of Odisha's history, culture, economy, and society. ORC has been established in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR); Indian Knowledge Systems Division, Ministry of Education; IIM Sambalpur; IIT Kharagpur; and IIT Bhubaneswar.

59. Noida International Airport (NIA) has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **IndiGo** to become the launch carrier for the under-construction airport which is scheduled to open at the end of 2024.

With this MoU, IndiGo is set to become the **first airline** to operate flights from Noida International Airport.

Under this MoU, NIA and IndiGo will collaborate to develop and strengthen air connectivity within Uttar Pradesh and beyond.

Noida International Airport (NIA):

In 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Noida International Airport (NIA) at Jewar in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh. The NIA, a greenfield airport will be India's first net zero emissions airport.

Once operational, it will be the second international airport in the Delhi NCR (National Capital Region) after Indira Gandhi International Airport.

The code 'DXN' symbolises the airport's proximity to Noida, Delhi, and western UP.

60. The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, has made an official visit to **Odisha** in November 2023. During her visit, she attended the inaugural session of the 36th Annual Conference and Literary Festival of All India Santali Writers Association at Bripada, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha.

She has flagged off **3 new trains** from Badampahar railway station in Mayurbhanj, Odisha. She has also launched an education campaign titled "**New Education for New India**" of Brahma Kumaris in Sambalpur, Odisha.

She has also inaugurated an **Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS)** at Kuliana, Odisha, developed with a budget of **Rs.38 crore**. EMRS is being constructed by Hindustan Steel Construction Ltd (**HSCL**), a public sector enterprise under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Note: Indian government aims to set up 740 EMRS schools by March 2026.

61. The **9th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-IX)** has been conducted by the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** off **Vadinar coast, Gujarat**, in accordance with the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP).

Objective: To assess the coordination and readiness of various agencies in responding to a marine oil spill.

Participants:

- Representatives of various ministries and departments of central and coastal state governments, ports, oil handling agencies, and other stakeholders participated in the exercise.
- More than 31 foreign observers and 80 delegates participated in the exercise.

Notably, ICG functions as the Central Coordinating Authority for response to Oil spills in Indian waters.

Note: Indian Coast Guard (ICG) assumed responsibilities for protecting the marine environment in the maritime zones of India on 07 Mar 1986. Subsequently, the ICG prepared the NOSDCP for combating oil spill disasters at sea, which was approved by the Committee of Secretaries in 1993.

62. Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has launched the **Varanasi's second** Floating Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Mobile Re-Fuelling Unit (MRU) station at **Ravidas Ghat** on the banks of Ganga River.

The compression capacity of this station is around 15,000 kg/day of CNG which can fill approximately 1,000 – 1,500 boats per day.

CNG will be filled in cascades from Namoo Ghat and transported by water ways to Ravidas Ghat for fuelling boats.

It has a capacity of 4,000 kg/day, which can cater to 300 to 400 boats per day.

It has been developed by **GAIL (India) Limited**, a Maharatna PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Note: India's First CNG station is the Namoo Ghat CNG station located in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

63. The **9th edition** of the **India International Science Festival (IISF) 2023** will be held at **Faridabad in Haryana** from **January 17-20 2024**. It will be held at the Campus of Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) and Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB) of the Department of Biotechnology in Faridabad.

The theme of IISF 2023 is '**Science and Technology Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal**'.

IISF 2023 aims to provide a platform for inspiring the public at large and individuals with diverse levels of interests like students, educators, scientists, researchers, industry professionals, entrepreneurs and science communicators.

IISF 2023 will have a total of 17 themes to showcase scientific achievements offering diverse benefits to participants and the general public.

The event holds an interface among all stakeholders through various activities such as seminars by national and international experts, interactions with speakers, exhibitions, competitions, workshops, knowledge-sharing activities, and technology shows.

India International Science Festival (IISF):

The IISF is dedicated to fostering creativity in Science, Technology and Innovation for the advancement of prosperous India.

IISF was initiated under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi through collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati.

Since 2015, the IISF hosted eight editions in different geographical regions of India. In 2021, the Department of Space and the Department of Atomic Energy became an integral part of IISF.

64. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power has approved the detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of **SJVN Limited** for its two hydro projects worth around Rs 40,000 crore in **Arunachal Pradesh**.

The projects are **Etalin hydroelectric power (HEP)** which is of 3,097 MW, and the **Attunli HEP** which is of 680 MW.

The project cost of Etalin HEP at March 2022 price level is Rs 32,813 crore and for Attunli HEP it is Rs 6,866 crore.

The 3,097 MW Etalin HEP is the largest hydro project under development in the country.

65. The Governor of Bihar, **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**, has approved the **Bihar Reservation Amendment Bill 2023**, passed recently by the Bihar Legislative Assembly and Council during the winter session.

As a result, the reservation quota for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Economically Backward Classes (EBC), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) has been increased to **65%** from 50%.

Combined with the existing 10% for EWS (Economically Weaker Sections), the reservation quota will rise to 75%.

As per the bill, quota for EBC will be raised from 18% to 25%; for Backward Class (BC) from 12% to 18%; for Scheduled Caste (SC) from 16% to 20%; and for Scheduled Tribe (ST), the quota will be doubled, from 1% to 2%.

The 3% reservation for BC women has been scrapped.

66. The **Sea buckthorn (Hippophae rhamnoides L)**, a thorny shrub in the Union Territory of **Ladakh**, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag under "Agriculture" goods category.

This becomes the **4th GI product** of Ladakh. Earlier, Ladakh Pashmina, Apricot (Raktse Carpo species) and Ladakhi wood carvings have also got GI tags.

The Geographical Indication Registry under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has approved the Department of Industries and Commerce, Ladakh as the Registered Proprietor for 'Ladakh Sea Buckthorn' in Class 31.

Sea buckthorn:

- Sea Buckthorn is popularly known as 'Wonder Plant', 'Ladakh Gold', 'Golden Bush' or 'Gold Mine' of cold deserts.
- It produces small orange- or yellow-coloured berries which are sour in taste but rich in vitamins, especially **Vitamin C**.
- It is naturally distributed over 11,500 hectares in the Ladakh region.
- The shrub can withstand extreme temperatures from minus 43 degrees Celsius to 40 degrees Celsius and is considered drought-resistant.
- Sea Buckthorn berries have a unique characteristic of remaining intact on the shrub throughout the winter months despite of the subzero temperature.

67. Telangana government led incubator, **Technology Hub (T-Hub)** has introduced two flagship initiatives, **T-Bridge and T-Scale**, to boost the growth and success of Indian startups.

These initiatives are introduced during the **8th Foundation Day** of T-Hub.

- T-Bridge, the international wing, aims to facilitate global market access for start-ups.
- T-Scale, in collaboration with Factoryal, has introduced a growth maturity model, guiding 25 qualifying start-ups through a 12-month journey to achieve Series-A readiness.

68. **Bengaluru Climate Action Plan** has been unveiled in line with the city's commitment to C40 cities. The plan, comprising a total of 269 actions, has been finalised at a meeting chaired by Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

Of these 269 action plans, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will be responsible for executing 143.

The objective of the Bengaluru Climate Action Plan is to mitigate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from the city and build resilience against climate change-induced hazards.

In the plan, urban heat, urban flooding, droughts, thunderstorms, lightning and air pollution have been identified as climate and environmental hazards.

Bengaluru is a co-lead of the Global Air Quality Network for the C40 cities global network. The city hosted the first Air Quality Network seminar in 2017.

Earlier, Mumbai and Chennai prepared an action plan for climate change.

C40:

C40 is a global network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities that are united in action to confront the climate crisis. The six Indian Cities namely **Delhi NCT, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad** are parties to it.

As part of the signatory to the C40 cities, the commitment from the cities is to achieve **carbon emission** reduction by **2030** and **carbon neutrality** by **2050**.

69. The Chief Minister of Bihar, **Nitish Kumar**, has unveiled a statute of **Sachchidananda Sinha**, one of the makers of modern Bihar, who also served as the provisional president of the Constituent Assembly, in Patna on the occasion of his birth anniversary (10th November).

The statue is located on the premises of the famed 'Sinha Library', he founded in 1924.

A garden christened 'Dr Sachchidananda Sinha Shatabdi Vatika' has been developed in front of the old library building and the statue has been installed in its corner.

Sachchidananda Sinha:

- He was born on 10th November 1871 in Arrah, in erstwhile Bengal Presidency.
- He played crucial role in formation of Province of Bihar and Orissa.
- He was an active member of British Committee on Indian National Congress in London.
- He served as the member of Imperial Legislative Council from 1910-1930.

- As a constitutional nationalist, he believed that Indians should adopt constitutional means to attain freedom.
- He served as interim President of Constituent Assembly before Rajendra Prasad was formally appointed as President.
- **Key books:** *Iqbal: The Poet and His Message, Kashmir the Playground of Asia, etc.*

70. ReNeW Power has commissioned its first interstate transmission project, the **Koppal Transmission Scheme**, which will help in the transmission of **1,500 megawatts (MW)** of renewable energy in the Koppal Area of Karnataka.

The remaining transmission for **3,500 MW** is expected to be completed by June 2024. The Koppal Transmission Scheme, awarded in FY22, covers the construction of a new 400/220 kv sub-station at Koppal along with 276 circuit km of 400 kV D/C quad moose transmission line with the extension of the 400 kV GIS Bays at the PGCIL Narendra (New) substation.

71. The Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC) has launched its city cab service or **ASTC Cab Services** which will be operated through a dedicated mobile application coupled with an independent digital payment solution via Unified Payments Interface (**UPI**).

The new service has been inaugurated by Assam Transport Minister Parimal Suklabaidya. With 9000, city cab services taxis, ASTC aims to provide commuters a convenient, affordable, and safe mode of travel.

The ASTC has collaborated with **PhonePe Private Limited** to provide UPI-based digital payment solutions for its city cab services.

72. The official of the State Investigation Agency (SIA) of Jammu & Kashmir has introduced the **Global Positioning System (GPS)** tracker anklets to monitor the terror-accused people out on bail.

With this, J&K police has become the **first police department in India** to make use of GPS tracker anklets.

The tracker is wearable device affixed around the ankle to track the movement of accused persons.

The device is already in use in the countries like the USA, the UK, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

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73. The 47th edition of Wangala Festival has been observed at Jengjal in West Garo Hills district of **Meghalaya**. The three-day festival has been observed from 9th November 2023. It has been organised by the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee.

Wangala Festival:

- It is also known as the Festival of Hundred Drums.
- It is a most popular festival among the **Garo** tribal community in the state of Meghalaya.
- It is a harvest festival held in honour of **Saljong**, the Sun God of fertility.
- The celebration also signifies the end of a long toil period, which brings good output of fields.
- Wangala dance is also performed. Men play horn and lok drums, and women make formation around nokma in honour of Misi-Saljong.

74. The Chief Minister of Meghalaya **Conrad K Sangma** has recently (in Nov'23) launched the '**Water Smart Kid Meghalaya**' campaign under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to educate children about water conservation and protection and aims to instill a sense of responsibility as Water Conservation Ambassadors.

During the event, he was also recognized and awarded "**Water Guardians**" for inspiring efforts in the conservation of water bodies.

75. The **Airgun Surrender Abhiyan**, an initiative of Arunachal Pradesh Government has received international recognition at the **UNESCO's International Conference on Biosphere Reserves** held at Sabah, Malaysia.

Dr Damodhar A.T. represented India on the occasion and presented India's country report along with the success story.

Airgun Surrender Abhiyan:

The Airgun Surrender Abhiyan is an initiative of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of **Arunachal Pradesh** government.

Under the scheme people are invited to voluntarily surrender their Airguns and licensed guns to stop the use of these guns to kill birds and other wild animals.

The scheme was officially launched on March 17, 2021, at Lumdung in East Kameng District where 46 air guns were surrendered and Lumdung was declared first Airgun free village of Arunachal Pradesh.

76. Mera Hou Chongba, the annual cultural festival of solidarity in **Manipur**, has been observed at the **Kangla Palace compound** in Imphal, Manipur. The festival, organised by the Mera Hou Chongba Thoushil Lup, marks the oneness of the growth of nationalism in the state and celebrates the bond of brotherhood, love, & unity.

The celebration is intended to build and strengthen ties between Manipur's hill tribes and valley people.

The festival is being observed in the state since the period of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the Gog King of Manipur (1st century AD).

77. The Governor of **West Bengal** Dr C.V. Ananda Bose has launched the '**Mission Kala Kranti**' initiative. The aim of this initiative is to promote the **art and culture** of West Bengal and India.

This initiative has been launched during the Durga Pooja Carnival organized in the Red Road, Kolkata, West Bengal.

78. In India, seven states namely, **Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab & Madhya Pradesh** and two union territories **Lakshadweep & Puducherry** have observed their Foundation Day on 1st November 2023.

- Kerala was formed on 1st November 1956, by integrating Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar.
- Andhra Pradesh was formed on 1st November 1956, by bringing together all Telugu-speaking regions of Hyderabad.
- Karnataka was founded on Karnataka Rajyotsava Day on 1st November 1956, after the passing of the State Reorganisation Act.
- The State of Madhya Pradesh was formed on 1st November 1956 by merging the erstwhile Central Provinces CP & Berar, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal.
- Chhattisgarh was formed on 1st November 2000. Earlier, Chhattisgarh was a part of Madhya Pradesh.
- The state of Haryana was carved out of Punjab on 1st November 1966.
- Punjab Day is celebrated across the state on November 1 marking the formation of the state under the Punjab Reorganisation Act (1966).
- During the reorganization of Indian states in 1956, the Lakshadweep islands were separated from Malabar District and organised into a separate union territory for administrative purposes.
- The formation of Puducherry is celebrated as Liberation Day every year on November 1. The day commemorates the transfer of Puducherry from French colonial rule to India.

79. The Government of **Norway** will fund **USD 44.7** million to strengthen food security and environmental protection in **Uttarakhand** under India's '**The Hunger Project (THP)**'. This amount will be valid for **3 years** till September, 2026.

The funds will be used in ecologically sensitive areas, empowering women leaders, increasing food security and protecting the environment.

The project will be implemented in 3 districts, 9 blocks, 172 gram panchayats and 145 van panchayats of Uttarakhand.

The Hunger Project (THP):

THP is a non-profit organization that works to end hunger and extreme poverty across 12 countries in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. THP was established in India in 1984 and currently works across six states.

80. The **Central Railway** has introduced the **Block Proving by Axle Counter (BPAC) system** in the **Vasind-Asangaon section** (Thane district) of the **Mumbai Division** to enhance safety in train operations.

Previously, the BPAC system was in operation up to Vashind railway station within the Kalyan-Igatpuri section.

The Mumbai Division of the Central Railway already has BPAC systems in place on various sections, including:

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Kalyan section
- CSMT-PANVEL Harbour line
- CSMT-Goregaon line
- Kalyan-Karjat section
- Vasai-Panvel-Roha section

The BPAC system plays a crucial role in ensuring the safe clearance of sections before authorizing the entry of another train, contributing to the overall safety of rail travel.

Additional Information:

The Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railway came into existence on April 16, 1853, when the first train on the Indian Sub-continent steamed off from Mumbai to Thane, a modest stretch of only 33 kms. Central Railway was carved out of erstwhile GIP Railway on November 5, 1951.

It is a system with a network of 3905.47 route kilometres and 5975.33 track kilometres linking 477 stations in five divisions i.e Mumbai, Pune, Bhusawal, Nagpur, and Solapur.

81. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of multiple development projects worth around **Rs.7,500 crore** at Shirdi in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.

Key projects:

- He has launched the '**Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Nidhi Yojana**'. The Yojna will benefit more than 86 lakh beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana in Maharashtra, by providing an additional amount of Rs 6000 per year to them.
- He has dedicated to the nation the left bank (85km) canal network of the **Nilwande Dam**. It will benefit 182 villages from 7 Tehsils (6 in Ahmednagar district and 1 from Nashik district) by facilitating pipe distribution networks of water.
- He has inaugurated the new **Darshan Queue complex** at Shirdi. The foundation stone of this new complex was laid by the Prime Minister in October, 2018.
- He has laid the foundation stone of the Maternal & Child Health Wing at Ahmednagar Civil Hospital.
- He has also distributed Ayushman cards and Svamitva cards to beneficiaries.
- He has also inaugurated and dedicated to the nation multiple development projects including Ayush Hospital at Ahmednagar Civil Hospital; Electrification of Kurduwadi-Latur Road railway section (186 Km); 3rd & 4th railway line connecting Jalgaon to Bhusaval (24.46 km); four laning of Sangli to Borgaon section of NH-166 (Package-I); and additional facilities at Manmad Terminal of Indian Oil corporation Limited;

82. The Indian Army's **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)** known as '**Prachand**' has successfully carried out the firing of 70mm rockets in both day and night conditions.

The firing has been carried out at a firing range near Likabali in Assam.

'Prachand':

- LCH Prachand is a multi-role combat helicopter, designed and developed by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.
- It is the only attack helicopter in the world that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 metres.
- It is capable of firing air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles.
- It is fitted with **5.8-tonne twin-engine** named **Shakti engine**, primarily designed for deployment in high-altitude areas (like Siachen glacier).
- It has best stealth features, armoured-shield systems, and dark-mode attack capability.

83. Dinesh Gundu Rao, Health Minister in **Karnataka** Health Department, has launched the "**Dr Puneeth Rajkumar Hrudaya Jyoti Yojana**" to provide treatment to cardiac arrest patients.

The scheme has been named after famous Kannada actor Puneeth Rajkumar, who died of a heart attack on October 29, 2021, at the age of 46.

The scheme aims to treat patients within the 'golden hour', the period which is crucial to save people who suffer a cardiac arrest.

The scheme has been implemented in two ways. Hub and spoke model and installation of automated external defibrillator (AED) devices in public places.

- 84.** President of India, **Draupadi Murmu**, inaugurated '**Parvati Bhawan**' and '**Navdurga Path**' Skywalk at Vaishno Devi Bhawan in Katra, **Jammu & Kashmir**.

A 250-meter skywalk is a pedestrian flyover that is built at an elevation of 20 feet above the existing track and cost Rs.15.69 crore.

Parvati Bhawan is linked to skywalk to ensure that pilgrims proceed directly to the shrine after depositing their luggage. It has 1,500 lockers that cater to 10,000 to 15,000 pilgrims every day.

The state government of **Jharkhand** has approved a new electrification scheme named '**Mukhyamantri Ujjwal Jharkhand Yojna**.' The scheme aims to provide electricity facilities to un-electrified rural hamlets and households, as well as leftover urban areas.

The cabinet has allocated **Rs.1485.39 crore** for this scheme.

- 85.** The Jharkhand cabinet led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren has approved the '**Abua Awas Yojna**' to build **8 lakhs pucca houses** for the homeless in the state in 3 phases at a total budget of **Rs.16,320 crores**.

The objective is to provide three-room and 1 kitchen houses with a total area of 31 square meters to underprivileged individuals within the next two-year timeline.

Phases:

- **First Phase (FY 2023-24):** 2 lakh houses will be constructed.
- **Second Phase (FY 2024-25):** 3.5 lakh houses will be constructed.
- **Third Phase (FY 2025-26):** 2.5 lakh houses will be constructed.

- 86.** The **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** and **Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL)** have signed a **15-year contract**, estimated at a value of over **Rs.63,000 crore**, to supply propane to GAIL's propane dehydrogenation (**PDH**)-polypropylene (PP) project in **Usar in Maharashtra**.

GAIL's Usar PDH-PP project will be **India's first PDH plant**, which is set to commence operations in 2025.

Under this contract, BPCL will provide GAIL with 600 kilo tonnes per annum (KTPA) of propane from its LPG import facility at Uran in Maharashtra.

GAIL's Usar plant is expected to have a capacity of 500 KTPA.

87. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has flagged off the maiden voyage of the vessel **Costa Serena**, the *first International Cruise Liner in India* from Mumbai, Maharashtra.

This initiative aligns with the Government of India's "Dekho Apna Desh" initiative to the middle class to prefer domestic tourism over international tourism.

The 300-metre vessel, which has a capacity of 3,780 passengers, is primarily operational in Mumbai, Kochi, Goa, and the Island of Agatti in Lakshadweep.

Note: By 2047, India aims to have 25 operational cruise terminals, with an estimated 5 million passengers annually.

Costa Serena:

Costa Serena is a Concordia-class cruise ship for the Italian cruise line, Costa Crociere (Costa Cruises). The name Serena was intended to symbolize harmony and serenity. Costa Serena was constructed by Fincantieri (Shipbuilding Company) at its Sestri Ponente shipyard in Genoa in Italy.

88. The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship Samar**, the first of its class Offshore Patrol Vessel, has been decommissioned with full honours in a traditional armed forces ceremony held at Coast Guard Jetty in **Kochi, Kerala**.

ICGS Samar, commissioned in to the Coast Guard in **February 1996** by the then **Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao** at Goa, was initially based at Mumbai and later rebased in Kochi.

ICGS Samar was indigenously built by **Goa Shipyard Ltd**.

ICGS Samar was the first of its series, which was earlier known as Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV).

ICGS Samar is a 102 meters long ship and is propelled by 6,200 KW twin diesel engines to a maximum speed of 21 knots.

Samar meaning "Battle" is a projection of Indian Coast Guard's will and commitment "to strive and protect" the maritime interests of the nation.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

89. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has inaugurated the **world's largest single-site solar power plant**, the 2-gigawatt (GW) Al Dhafra Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Independent Power Project (IPP), in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

- With this, solar power production capacity will increase to 3.2 GW.
- This plant will power almost 200,000 homes and eliminate over 2.4 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year.

- The plant aligns with the UAE's ambitious goal to triple renewables capacity and double energy efficiency by 2030.

90. The **Association of Asia-Pacific Airlines (AAPA)** has set a target for its 14 members to adopt **5 percent** sustainable aviation fuel (**SAF**) usage by **2030**.

The resolution has been made in, its 67th Assembly of Presidents of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines held in Singapore.

This aims to reduce the aviation industry's carbon footprint, as SAF can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% compared to fossil-based jet fuels.

91. Russia has formally **withdrawn** from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (**CFE**), a landmark arms control agreement that sought to limit the deployment of conventional weapons in Europe.

The two other legally binding agreements, the Budapest agreement of 1990 and the CFE's Flank Document, which were linked to the treaty, are also withdrawn.

The exit of Russia is due to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) eastward expansion as a threat to its security.

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE):

The CFE was a landmark post-Cold War arms control agreement signed on **19th November 1990**, in Paris, France between two military blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

It imposed limits on five key categories of conventional military equipment in Europe (tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, helicopters, and combat aircraft) and mandated the destruction of excess weaponry.

92. The United States of America (USA) has hosted the 30th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco on November 2023.

The leaders' meeting is the highlight of the APEC Leaders' Week, held in San Francisco on 11-17 November 2023 with the theme of **"Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All."** The Leaders' Meeting was first held in 1993.

During the meeting, the **Golden Gate Declaration** is adopted to create a resilient and sustainable future for all.

In the declaration, the leaders reaffirm their determination to deliver a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive, and predictable trade and investment environment.

India has been invited to the 30th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting 2023 as a **Guest Economy**.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, **Piyush Goyal**, has represented India in the meeting. He has also participated in the Investor Forum of the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)**.

PGII is the infrastructure plan. It was first announced during the G7 summit in the UK and officially launched in 2022. It aims to mobilize up to **USD 600 billion** by **2027**. G7 countries are UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the European Union (EU).

Note: *Peru will host the annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) country leaders in 2024.*

93. The **United Kingdom (UK)** has hosted the **world's first Artificial Intelligence Safety Summit** at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire (UK).

This 2-day summit has brought together Ministers and representatives from various countries, including the UK, the United States of America (USA), India, among others. This summit aims to unite world leaders and prominent tech industry giants focussed on devising a comprehensive, collaborative strategy to mitigate risks and combat the misuse of AI technologies.

The summit has witnessed the signing of the **Bletchley Park Declaration** by 28 major countries, including the United States, China, India, and the European Union.

- The Bletchley Park Declaration is the first global pact on tackling frontier AI risks, and it reflects a high-level political consensus and commitment among the major AI players in the world.
- It acknowledges the potential of AI to enhance human well-being but also recognizes the risks posed by AI, especially **frontier AI**, which may cause serious harm, either deliberate or unintentional, particularly in domains like cybersecurity, biotechnology, and disinformation.
- Frontier AI is defined as highly capable foundation generative AI models that can produce realistic and convincing outputs, such as text, images, audio, or video, on demand.

During the summit, UK's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has launched the **world's first AI Safety Institute** in the UK to examine, evaluate, and test new types of AI.

Note: *France will host the 2nd AI Safety Summit in 2024, and South Korea will co-host a mini virtual AI summit in the next six months.*

94. The **United Nations** has collaborated with the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** to create a new stamp collection and first-day envelopes to honour **Marie Curie** on her **120th birth anniversary** which was observed on 7th November 2023.

The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA), the postal agency of the United Nations, has issued a definitive set of Marie Skłodowska-Curie stamps and first-day envelopes adorned with a new IAEA distinctive cachet.

The special envelope also pays tribute to the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP).

Marie Sklodowska-Curie:

Marie Curie was born on 7th November 1867. She is a polish-born physicist and chemist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. She is also the only person ever to receive two Nobel Prizes in different fields of science, one in physics in 1903 and one in chemistry in 1911.

- 95. Chile** has become the **95th member** of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. The nation has handed over the Instrument of ISA ratification during the meeting of Ambassador Juan Angulo of Chile with Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy) in Ministry of External Affairs Abhishek Singh in New Delhi.

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

The International Solar Alliance is an initiative jointly launched by India and France in 2015 on the side-lines of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris. The ISA is guided by its 'Towards 1000' strategy which aims to mobilise USD 1,000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030.

At present, 116 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement, of which 95 countries have submitted the necessary instruments of ratification to become full members of the ISA.

Headquarters: Gurugram, Haryana

Director-General: Ajay Mathur

- 96. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO)** have jointly published the research in the journal ***Environmental International***, estimating that nearly 1 in 3 deaths from non-melanoma skin cancer is caused by working under the sun.

The research finds that outdoor workers carry a large and increasing burden of non-melanoma skin cancer and calls for action to prevent this serious workplace hazard and the loss of workers' lives it causes.

As per the estimates, 1.6 billion people of working age (15 years or older) were exposed to solar ultraviolet radiation while working outdoors in 2019, equivalent to 28% of all working-age people.

In 2019 alone, almost 19,000 people in 183 countries died from non-melanoma skin cancer. Between 2000 and 2019, skin cancer deaths attributed to occupational exposure to sunlight almost doubled (increasing by 88% from 10 088 deaths in 2000 to 18 960 deaths in 2019).

Notably, WHO, ILO, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme recently launched the **SunSmart Global UV App** that outdoor workers can use to estimate their exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation.

Non-melanoma skin cancer refers to a group of cancers that develop in the upper layers of the skin. The two main subtypes of this cancer are basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.

Note: The term "working age" typically refers to the minimum age at which a person is legally permitted to work in a particular jurisdiction. In many countries, the minimum working age is 15 years.

97. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has launched the **framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems**. This framework is designed to enhance the resilience of health systems while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions to help safeguard the health of communities worldwide.

Key objectives of the WHO Framework are:

- To guide health sector professionals in addressing climate-related health risks through collaboration;
- To strengthen health system functions for climate resilience and low carbon health approaches;
- To support development of specific interventions for climate risk reduction and emissions reduction; and
- To define roles and responsibilities for health decision-makers in climate resilience.

98. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** and **SpaceX** have jointly launched SpaceX's **Cargo Dragon** spacecraft (**CRS-29 Dragon**) on its **29th** commercial mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

The primary mission objective is to transport vital research gear and equipment to the ISS. This is the 9th SpaceX launch under the Commercial Resupply Services-2 (CRS) contract. The spacecraft carried cargo weighing about 6,500 pounds of scientific research, crew supplies, and hardware to ISS.

99. The **6th High-Level Meeting of the India-OPEC Energy Dialogue** has been held at the OPEC Secretariat in **Vienna, Austria**. The meeting has been co-chaired by Haitham Al Ghais, Secretary General of OPEC and Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs of the Republic of India.

The meeting focused on key issues related to oil and energy markets with a specific emphasis on ensuring availability, affordability and sustainability, which are necessary in ensuring the stability of energy markets.

The meeting has been concluded with both parties underscoring the importance of fostering enhanced cooperation between India and OPEC moving forward.

It has been agreed to hold the next High-Level Meeting of the India-OPEC Energy Dialogue during the course of 2024 in India.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):

OPEC is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960.

- **Member countries:** Algeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.
- **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria

100. The **US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** has announced to offer **USD 553 million** (around Rs 4,600 crore) to support the development of the Adani Group's deepwater shipping container terminal in the Port of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The port's **West Container Terminal** is being developed by a consortium involving Adani Ports and SEZ, Sri Lankan group John Keells Holdings and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. Adani Ports holds a 51% stake in the container terminal of the port, which also has a terminal run by China Merchants Port Holdings Co Ltd.

Sri Lankan conglomerate John Keells Holdings owns 34% of the WCT and the remaining 15% is held by the state-run Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA).

101. Chinese drone startup Ehang has received the type certificate for "**Ehang's EH216-S**", an electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft from the **Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC)**, the Chinese civil aviation authority under the Ministry of Transport.

With this, EH 216-S becomes the 1st eVTOL vehicle in the world to be cleared for commercial use.

The EH 216-S air taxis are electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft capable of carrying two people or 600 pounds of cargo.

They are propelled by 16 electric rotors and can fly at speeds of up to 80 miles per hour (mph) and a distance of up to 18 miles.

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102. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has launched the **Integral Field Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Experiment, (INFUSE)**, sounding rocket mission, from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

The mission aims **to spectroscopically image a region of Cygnus Loop**, and study shock fronts as material from the supernova interacts with interstellar medium.

In Latin, Cygnus means Swan.

Cygnus Loop, also known as the Veil Nebula, is the remnant of a star that was once 20 times the size of our Sun.

- Some 20,000 years ago, star collapsed under its own gravity and erupted into a supernova.
- Supernova is the large explosion of a star.

It will be the first far ultraviolet integral field spectrograph (IFS) in space and will have access to the Lyman ultraviolet.

103. Bhutan has become the **first country** in the world to fully sterilise and vaccinate its entire stray dog population across Bhutan. This feat has been achieved after the completion of the National Dog Population Management and Rabies Control Project, which began in 2009.

The project has successfully sterilised and vaccinated over 150,000 strays since its inception. The project also included microchipping 32,000 pet dogs.

The project was implemented by a global animal charity, Humane Society International (HSI).

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REPORTS & INDICES

104. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released the 14th edition of a report titled- the **Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record – Temperatures hit new highs, yet world fails to cut emissions (again)**, stating that urgent Climate Action is crucial to avoid the alarming trajectory of Temperature Rise.

Key highlights:

- There is only a 14% chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°Celsius over pre-industrial levels.
- Even if the existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are delivered by 2030, the world will warm by 2.5°C, breaching the 2°C target set by the Paris Agreement.
- Only 9 countries have updated their NDC since the COP27 of UNFCCC in 2022.
- Approximately two-thirds come from fossil fuel-based CO2 emissions.
- G20 nations are responsible for three-quarters of the current warming.
- The three largest emitters are China, United States and India.
- The world needs to reduce emissions by 8.7% every year from 2024 to achieve the 1.5°Celsius target.

Note: Emission gap is the difference where greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be in 2030 and where they should be to limit global warming to well below 2°C or 1.5°C.

105. S&P Global Rating has increased **India's FY24 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth** rate forecast by 40 basis points to **6.4 percent**, up from 6 percent. This increase is driven by strong domestic momentum that may have offset the negative effects of high food inflation and weak exports.

For FY25, India's GDP growth projection has been reduced to 6.4% from 6.9% amid subdued global growth, a higher base, and the lagged impact of rate hikes.

106. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released the **2nd edition** of the **World Energy Employment (WEE 2023)** report stating clean energy jobs surpassed fossil fuel jobs for the first time in 2021 at the global level.

As per the report, clean energy sectors added 4.7 million jobs globally between 2019-2022 and stand at 35 million, while fossil fuels jobs recovered more slowly after layoffs in 2020 and remain around 1.3 million below pre pandemic employment levels, at 32 million.

Clean energy jobs now represent over half of all energy sector jobs.

Over half of the employment growth is concentrated in five sectors: solar PV (Photovoltaic), wind, Electric Vehicles (EVs) and batteries, heat pumps, and critical minerals mining.

EVs and batteries experienced the fastest growth, adding over 1 million jobs since 2019.

Notably, India also generated the fourth-highest number of new clean energy jobs during 2019-22.

India ranks third in the number of energy workers globally, following China and the Asia-Pacific regions.

107. The World Health Organization (WHO) has introduced a new '**Commission on Social Connection (2024-26)**', comprising 11 leading policymakers, thought leaders, and advocates, to address loneliness as a pressing health threat.

It aims to promote social connection as a priority and accelerate the scaling up of solutions in countries of all incomes.

The commission will be co-chaired by US Surgeon General **Dr Vivek Murthy**, and African Union Youth Envoy **Chido Mpemba**.

The commission will analyse the central role social connection plays in improving health for people of all ages and outline solutions to build social connections at scale.

The Commission on Social Connection, supported by a Secretariat based at WHO, will hold its first leadership-level meeting from 6 to 8 December 2023.

The first major output will be a flagship report released by the mid-point of the three-year initiative.

108. The report titled "**Progress Toward Measles Elimination-Worldwide, 2000-2022**" has been released by the World Health Organization (WHO) and US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Key highlights:

- As per the report, an estimated **11 lakh children in India** missed their Measles-containing-vaccine first-dose (MCV1) in 2022.
- 33 million children globally missed either both doses and second dose.
- Globally, immunisation against measles dropped to lowest levels since 2008 during the pandemic, leading to an 18% rise in cases and 43% increase in deaths in 2022.
- Measles deaths rose by 43% from 2021 to 2022.
- Immunisation against measles worldwide reached its lowest level since 2008 during the pandemic.
- The 10 countries with the highest number of infants who did not receive MCV1 were Nigeria (30 lakh), Democratic Republic of the Congo (18 lakh), Ethiopia (17 lakh), India (11 lakh), Pakistan (11 lakh), Angola (8 lakh), Philippines (8 lakh), Indonesia (7 lakh), Brazil (5 lakh), and Madagascar (5 lakh).

Measles:

It is a highly contagious and serious airborne disease. It is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and is normally passed through direct contact and the air. The virus infects the **respiratory tract**, then spreads throughout the body, causing severe disease, complications and even death.

109. The **Microfinance Industry Network (MFIN)** has released its India Microfinance Review for Fiscal Year 2023 titled "**Micro Matters: Macro View**", stating the condition of NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company)-MFIs (microfinance institutions) in India.

Key findings of the report:

- NBFC-MFIs followed by banks are the largest provider of micro-credit amongst other regulated entities.
- MFIs' gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) decreased from **5.6% (FY22)** to **2.7% (FY23)**.
- The share of East and Northeast states decreased to 34.9% from 37.7% from last year.
- Portfolio at Risk (PAR) for NBFC-MFIs has gradually improved post-pandemic.

PAR measures the percentage of outstanding microfinance loans in a lender's total loan portfolio that are at risk of default, meaning loans that are not paid for more than **30 days**.

Note: Microfinance refers to collateral-free loans given to individual/s belonging to low-income households, i.e., households having annual income up to **Rs.3,00,000**.

Microfinance Industry Network (MFIN):

MFIN is an association of Non-Bank Finance Company Micro Finance Institutions (NBFC-MFIs) established in 2009. It is an umbrella body of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) of the country.

- **Registered office:** Hyderabad, Telangana
- **CEO & Director:** Alok Mishra

110. India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is projected to decline marginally to **6.3%** in **2024** from the 6.4% estimated for 2023. This is according to **India 2024 outlook** from **Goldman Sachs Group**.

- As per the report, the government spending will drive growth in the 1st half, while private investment will accelerate after the general election to become the key driver of growth.
- During Q2 of 2024, Subsidies and transfer payments will be the growth driver as India heads into the General election in May 2024.
- Headline CPI inflation is expected to decline to 5.1 percent year-on-year (average) in 2024, above the RBI's and consensus forecast of 4.7 percent year-on-year, from an estimated 5.7 percent in 2023.
- The core inflation is expected to decline to 4.5 percent year-on-year (average) in 2024 from an estimated 5.1 percent in 2023.
- Higher oil prices, slower growth in trading partners, and steady domestic growth will increase the current account deficit by 60 bps to 1.9 percent of GDP in 2024 from 1.3% expected in 2023.

111. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released the '**2024 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report: Making Our Future: New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific**' stating India has emerged among top countries with high income and wealth inequality, despite rapid economic growth.

Key highlights:

- In India, between **2000 and 2022**, per capita income increased from USD 442 to **USD 2,389**.
- Between **2004 and 2019**, poverty rates (based on the international poverty measure of USD 2.15 per day) dropped from 40 to **10 percent**.

- Between **2015-16 and 2019-21**, the share of the population living in multidimensional poverty fell from **25 to 15 percent**.
- Despite these successes, poverty remains persistently concentrated in states that are home to 45 percent of the country's population but contain 62 percent of its poor.
- The groups at greater risk of falling back into poverty include women, informal workers, and inter-state migrants. Women are only 23 percent of the labour force.

112. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has released the '**Adaptation Gap Report**' **2023** which focuses on adaptation finance, or the availability of money to carry out the adaptation projects.

Key highlights:

- The **adaptation finance** gap, is the difference between estimated adaptation financing needs and costs and finance flows, has grown over the past.
- The report finds that the adaptation finance needs of developing countries are 10-18 times as big as international public finance flows. This is over 50 percent higher than the previous range estimate.
- The modelled costs of adaptation in developing countries are estimated at US\$215 billion per year this decade.
- The adaptation finance needed to implement domestic adaptation priorities is estimated at US\$387 billion per year.
- The current adaptation finance gap is now estimated at USD 194-366 billion per year.
- Despite these needs, public multilateral and bilateral adaptation finance flows to developing countries declined by 15 percent to US\$21 billion in 2021.

Adaptation Gap Report (AGR):

The Adaptation Gap Report (AGR) has been published each year since 2014 by the UNEP. The report's primary objective is to inform the negotiators of the UNFCCC Member States, and the broader UNFCCC constituency, about the status and trends within climate adaptation at global and regional levels.

113. The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has released the **State Food Security Index (SFSI) 2022-2023** to measure the performance of states and union territories on food safety.

SFSI was started in 2018-19 to create a competitive and positive change in the food safety ecosystem in the country.

Parameters & Weightage:

- Human Resources and Institutional Data: 18%
- Compliance: 28%
- Food Testing Infrastructure: 17%
- Training & Capacity Building: 8%
- Consumer Empowerment: 19%
- 'Improvement in SFSI Rank' (added in 2023): 10%

Key highlights of the State Food Security Index (SFSI) 2022-2023:

Over the past five years, 19 out of 20 large Indian states, including **Maharashtra** (from 74 to 45), **Bihar** (from 46 to 20.5), **Gujarat** (from 73 to 48.5), and **Andhra Pradesh** (from 47 to 24), have experienced a decline in their 2022 - 2023 SFSI scores compared to 2019.

The worst drop has been recorded in the '**Food Testing Infrastructure**' parameter. **Gujarat and Kerala** were the best performers in this parameter in 2022 - 2023 while **Andhra Pradesh** performed the worst.

The 2022 - 2023 average compliance score for all large states stood at 11 out of 28 compared to 16 out of 30 in 2019. **Punjab and Himachal Pradesh** received the highest scores in this parameter and **Jharkhand** received the lowest score.

In the 'Consumer Empowerment' parameter, **Tamil Nadu** emerged as the top performer followed by Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.

The average score of 'Human Resources and Institutional Data' parameter dropped to 7 points out of 18 in 2022- 2023 from 11 points out of 20 in 2019.

The only parameter that recorded significant improvement was '**Training and Capacity Building**'. The average score in this parameter increased from 3.5 out of 10 in 2019 to 5 out of 8 in 2022- 2023.

In the new parameter, 'Improvement in SFSI Rank,' only Punjab showed significant improvement.

Top 3 larger states: Kerala (1st), Punjab (2nd) and Tamil Nadu (3rd)

Top 3 smaller states: Goa (1st), Manipur (2nd), and Sikkim (3rd)

Top 3 union territories: Jammu & Kashmir (1st), Delhi (2nd), and Chandigarh (3rd)

- 114.** The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has released the **Global Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2023**. The report assessed data from 192 countries and areas (out of 215) with more than 99% of the world's population and TB burden.

Key findings:

- The global number of people newly diagnosed with TB was **7.5 million** in 2022.
- TB remained the world's **second leading cause of death** in 2022 after COVID-19.
- The net reduction of TB incidence from 2015- 2022 was **8.7%** far from WHO End TB Strategy milestone of 50% reduction by 2025.
- Only about 2 in 5 people with drug resistant TB accessed treatment in 2022.

- **India, Indonesia and Philippines** collectively account for nearly **60%** of reduction in number of people newly diagnosed with TB in 2020- 2021.
- India has **27%** of world's TB cases.

Tuberculosis (TB):

TB is caused by the bacterium **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**. The germs are spread through the air and usually infect the lungs but can also infect other parts of the body. TB can be spread when a person with active TB disease releases germs into the air through coughing, sneezing, talking, singing or even laughing.

Currently, **Bacille Calmette-Guerin** is only licensed vaccine available for TB prevention.

- 115.** The **QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Ranking: Asia 2024** has been released. The rankings show **148 Indian universities** which is more than the last edition.

With this, **India holds the highest representation in Asia's higher education system**, surpassing China (133) and Japan (96).

India has 118 universities in 2023 ranking.

This is the 16th edition of the QS World University Ranking in this category.

The institutes from **Myanmar, Cambodia, and Nepal** featured in the rankings for the first time.

Top 3 in QS World University Rankings: Asia 2024			
Rank	University	Country	Score
1	Peking University	China	100
2	The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	97.9
3	National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore	97.2

The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay** secured the highest spot with **40th position** in the rankings. IIT Bombay secured 67.2 score in the rankings.

IIT Bombay is followed by IIT Delhi (46), IIT Madras (53), IISc Bengaluru (58), IIT Kharagpur (59), IIT Kanpur (63), and the University of Delhi (94).

- 116.** The **Inclusiveness Index 2023** has been published by the Othering and Belonging Institute (OBI) at California University, the USA. The index examines inclusivity in terms of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and the general population using several measures.

- **India** has been ranked **117th** out of 129 countries in the index with an overall score of 49.24.

- **New Zealand** has topped the index for the second consecutive year with an overall score of 82.08. It is followed by Portugal at the 2nd place and the Netherlands at the 3rd place.
- Iran has placed at the bottom of the global list with a score of 36.59.
- India ranked lower than smaller countries such as Bangladesh (106) and Israel (115) in the inclusiveness index.
- India has been ranked 129th in religion inclusiveness, 121st in gender, 108th in disability, 87th in race, 40th in the general population, and 39th in LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or questioning, Intersex, Asexual).

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117. Global credit rating agency, Moody's Investor Services, has retained India's economic growth at **6.7%** for the financial year 2023-24 (**FY23-24**) in its "Global Macro Outlook 2024-25 (November 2023 Update)".

The report has also projected that India's GDP to grow at 6.1% in FY24-25 and 6.3% in FY25-26.

This is slightly higher than the Reserve Bank of India (RBI's) projection of 6.5% for 2023-24. India's GDP grew by 7.8% in the first quarter of the FY23-24, from 6.1% in the fourth quarter of FY22-23.

The report suggests that inflation to fall back to target in most G-20 economies by year-end 2025.

The rating agency also expects growth in advanced Group 20 (G20) economies to slow to 1% in 2024 from 1.7% in 2023, before rising to 1.8% in 2025.

The report suggests that inflation to fall back to target in most G-20 economies by year-end 2025.

118. The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** has published its annual report **World Energy Outlook 2023** to provide in-depth analysis and strategic insights into every aspect of the global energy system.

Key Highlights from the report:

Globally:

- The energy sector is the primary cause of the polluted air that more than 90% of the world's population is forced to breathe, linked to more than 6 million premature deaths a year.
- Fossil fuel share in the global energy supply is projected to reduce from around 80% to 73% by 2030.

- Investment in clean energy has risen by 40% since 2020.
- In 2020, one in 25 cars sold was electric. In 2023, this is now one in 5.

India:

India is expected to have the highest growth in energy demand over the next three decades. India's industrial sector will emit 30% less CO₂ by 2030 and passenger cars will emit 25% less CO₂ per kilometre driven. This is due to the government policies in addressing climate commitments through increased efficiency and new technologies. India's demand for electricity for running household air-conditioners is estimated to expand nine-fold by 2050.

119. The Annual Report on "**Road Accidents in India-2022**" has been published by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)**. The report has been prepared by the Transport Research Wing (TRW) under MoRTH.

Key Highlights of the report:

- As per the report, a total of **4,61,312 road accidents** have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2022, which claimed 1,68,491 lives and caused injuries to 4,43,366 persons.
- The number of road accidents in 2022 increased by **11.9 percent** compared to previous year 2021.
- The number of deaths and injuries on account of road accidents are also increased by 9.4 percent and 15.3 percent respectively.
- India has the highest number of accident-related deaths, followed by China.
- The age groups (18-45) accounted for 66.5% of total accident deaths.
- Rural areas reported greater number of road accidents.
- **Tamil Nadu** with 64,105 accidents (13.9 %) has recorded the **highest number of road accidents** in 2022, followed by Madhya Pradesh (54,432 i.e., 11.8%) and Kerala (43,910 i.e., 9.5%).
- **Uttar Pradesh** (22,595 i.e., 13.4 %) has topped the States in respect of the **number of fatalities** due to road accidents followed by Tamil Nadu (17,884 i.e., 10.6%).

120. Hurun Research Institute and EdelGive Foundation has released the **10th EdelGive Hurun India's Philanthropy List for 2023** in which **Shiv Nadar** of HCL Technologies retained the title of '**India's Most Generous**' for the **3rd consecutive year** as he donated **Rs.2,042 crore** during the FY2022-23.

The donations went to institutions related to arts and culture, including VidyaGyan, Shiv Nadar University, Shiv Nadar School, Shiksha Initiative, and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. The list has featured **Azim Premji** in the second position. He has donated Rs.1,774 crore towards education-related causes.

Mukesh Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries, and **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, the chairman of Aditya Birla Group, came third and fourth on the list. Their contributions are Rs.376 crore and Rs.287 crore respectively.

Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of Zerodha, became the **youngest philanthropist** on the list as he donated Rs.110 crore during FY22-23.

The total donation by the philanthropists is increased by 59% compared to 2022 and 200% compared to last 3 years.

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GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

121. The **State Educational Achievement Survey (SEAS) 2023** has been successfully conducted by the national assessment regulator '**Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)**.'

This is the first survey that aims to identify areas where learning needs improvement. It is conducted in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi to understand the baseline performance in the development of the competencies at the end of the foundational, preparatory, and middle stages. The survey assessed educational competencies among students at the block level in India in **classes three, six, and nine**.

It covered approximately **80 lakh students** from three lakh schools at 5,917 blocks across the nation. It also includes 6 lakh teachers and more than 3 lakh field investigators.

The six states **Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, and West Bengal** have not participated in this survey.

PARAKH:

It was set up in January 2023 by NEERT on the lines of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to improve the monitoring, measuring and assessing activities in the Indian school education system.

It is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education that fulfils basic objectives of setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards of India.

122. The **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)** under the **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)** to synergize efforts in curbing drug usage, especially among the youth.

NMBA is presently being implemented in 372 identified most vulnerable districts. More than 10 crore individuals have been reached under the Abhiyaan with a multifaceted approach including workshops, counselling, street plays, marathons, and engagement through youth organizations including National Service Scheme and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.

More than 500 Nasha Mukti Kendra have been geotagged for easy accessibility.

Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA):

NMBA was launched on **15th August 2020** by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in the 272 most vulnerable districts to substance use in the country. Through NMBA, Ministry intends to create awareness on mass level on substance use through the participation of its major stakeholders like youth & adolescents, women, educational institutions and the community at large.

123. Union Minister for Women and Child Development **Smriti Irani** has launched the **National Outreach Programme on Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children** in an event held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The aim of this protocol is to ensure overall improvement in children's wellbeing through early intervention, specialized support and services for infants and young children with disability and educating and supporting families and communities to improve divyang children's participation.

The Protocol embraces a Social Model for Divyangjan Inclusive Nutrition Care under the POSHAN Abhiyan, with a step-by-step approach:

- Screening for early disability signs
- Inclusion in community events and empowering families
- Referral support via Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)/ Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya
- Karyakram (RBSK) teams

The protocol is in line with the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022. The Protocol provides guideline for Anganwadi workers to track and help children with disabilities up to the age of 6.

The Protocol is an important commitment under the **Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi** program of Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.

For the first time, Anganwadi workers will help in screening children with any type of disability.

'Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi':

It is a flagship program of the **Ministry of Women & Child Development** which was launched in May 2023.

The program focusses on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at Anganwadis across the country.

The objective of the program is to transform anganwadi centers into not just nutrition hubs but also education-imparting centers.

Under this program, every child would be provided with at least **two hours** of high-quality pre-school instruction daily.

Note: Anganwadi is a type of rural childcare center in India. It was established as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. It provides basic health care, nutrition, and early childhood education to children below the age of six.

124. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a 2-day visit to Jharkhand from **15th to 16th November 2023**. During his visit, he launched the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) on the occasion of **Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas** (15th November) held in **Khunti, Jharkhand**.

Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN):

- The **24,000-crore rupee** scheme aims to benefit and saturate the families and habitations with basic facilities.
- Under PM JANMAN, the government will reach out to tribal groups and primitive tribes, most of whom still dwell in the forests.
- This will protect the tribes on the verge of extinction and nurture them.
- The government has identified 75 tribal communities and primitive tribes with a population of lakhs who reside in more than 22,000 villages in India.

During the occasion, he has also released **Rs.18,000 crore** as the 15th installment of **PM Kisan** scheme for over 8 crore farmers across the country.

125. The Indian Government has approved investments worth **USD 360 million** in the **Information Technology (IT) hardware sector** under its flagship Production Linked Incentive (PLI) 2.0 scheme to boost India's position in the global electronics supply chain.

Target segment: Laptops, Tablets, all in-One PCs, Servers and Ultra Small Form Factor (USFF) Laptops manufactured in India.

Incentives: Around 5% on net incremental sales over base year.

Tenure of incentive: 6 years during Scheme Tenure.

The approved investments are spread across 27 companies, including global giants like Dell, HP, and Foxconn, as well as domestic manufacturers like Dixon Technologies and VVDN. These companies are expected to create over 50,000 new jobs in the IT hardware sector.

Note: India has set a target of becoming a USD 300 billion IT hardware manufacturing hub by 2026.

126. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched the '**Jal Diwali-Women for Water, Water for Women Campaign**' under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (**AMRUT**) in partnership with National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM).

Campaign aims to provide a platform for inclusion of women in water governance by:

- Providing knowledge about water treatment processes through visits to Water Treatment Plants.
- Providing insight into water quality testing protocols and ensures quality water delivery to citizens.
- Instilling a sense of ownership and belonging among women towards water infrastructure.

127. Phase I of the campaign, held from 7th to 9th November 2023, witnessed participation from all States/ UTs, except the 5 states (Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana) under Model Code of Conduct.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):

AMRUT was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2015 in 500 cities and towns for developing basic infrastructure in water supply sectors; storm water drainage; green spaces and parks etc.

AMRUT 2.0 (2021-22 to 2025-26) provides universal coverage of water supply through functional taps in all households.

128. The **Ministry of Coal** has amended the **SHAKTI (Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala (Coal) Transparently in India) Policy**, which allows power plants, including private generators without Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), to be granted coal linkage for a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of one year.

- The amendment aims to enhance a more transparent coal allocation mechanism by providing the power generated through coal linkages must be sold through power exchanges or a transparent bidding process on the Discovery of Efficient Energy Price (DEEP) portal.
- The amendment is expected to improve the availability and affordability of coal for power generation and enhance the overall efficiency of the sector.

SHAKTI Policy:

The Ministry of Coal introduced the SHAKTI Policy in **2017** for the allocation of coal among thermal power plants transparently and objectively. The policy provides coal linkages to power plants which lack fuel supply agreements (FSAs) through coal auctions.

129. The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)** has approved the **Digital Advertisement Policy 2023** to enable and empower the **Central Bureau of Communication (CBC)** which is the advertising wing of the Government of India to undertake campaigns in the Digital Media Space.

The policy will enable CBC to empanel agencies and organizations in the OTT (Over the Top) and Video on Demand Space.

CBC will also recognize the popularity of podcasts and digital audio platforms through the empanelment of digital audio platforms.

The policy also empowers CBC to empanel Digital Media Agencies to enhance its outreach through the various platforms.

CBC now for the first time will be able to disseminate public service campaign messages through mobile applications.

The policy introduces competitive bidding for rate discovery, ensuring transparency and efficiency. Rates discovered through this process will remain valid for three years and will be applicable to all eligible agencies.

130. Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, R. K. Singh, has unveiled two new programs of the **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL): National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP) and Energy Efficient Fans Programme (EEFP)**, to promote energy-efficient and eco-friendly solutions in India.

NECP:

- It aims to transform cooking practices in India by introducing induction-based cook stoves
- **Target:** To deploy **20 Lakh Induction cook-stoves** across India.
- **Benefits:** The cookstoves offer a cost advantage of 25-30 percent over traditional cooking methods. It supports Ministry of Power's Go-electric campaign and contributes to carbon mitigation goals.
- It is a subset of the Clean Cooking Scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna.

EEFP:

- It aims to enhance the market for efficient fans by deploying one crore 5-star energy-efficient brushless direct current (BLDC) ceiling fans across India.
- **Benefits:** Low Energy Consumption: Conventional fans typically consume 75-80W whereas contemporary 5-star fans consume only 28-32W.

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL):

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), operating under the Ministry of Power, is a leading Energy Service Company. It was formed in 2009. It is a Joint Venture of four reputed public-sector undertakings: NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation Limited, REC Limited and POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited.

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **CEO:** Vishal Kapoor

131. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the extension of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** for another five years while addressing an election rally at Drug in Chhattisgarh. This scheme which was supposed to be ended by December 2023 will be ending in **2028**.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):

- PMGKAY was initially rolled out in **2020** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Under this scheme, the centre provides **5kg of free food grains** per month to the poor. This is in addition to the subsidized (Rs 2-3 per kg) ration provided under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 to families covered under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- The families belonging to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (**AAJ**) and Priority Households (**PHH**) categories are eligible for the scheme.
- This scheme is part of the existing Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).
- The scheme is being operated by the **Department of Food and Public Distribution** under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.

132. COLORS, the flagship Hindi channel of General Entertainment Channel & Viacom 18, has collaborated with the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)** to support the **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** initiative to bring societal change.

The collaboration will help to raise awareness around girl child abandonment through their latest show **'Doree'** (aired on 6th November 2023).

The channel will also raise awareness of Child Helpline Number 1098 amongst viewers and provide the much-needed popular support to this initiative.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP):

BBBP scheme was launched by the Government of India in **January 2015** in **Panipat, Haryana** to address the issue of decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in the country.

This scheme is jointly run by the *Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Education*.

The scheme is being operated/implemented as a component of the **Sambal sub-scheme of Mission Shakti**.

The scheme, which was earlier operational in 405 districts, is now being expanded to cover all the districts of the country through multi-sectoral interventions.

There is **no provision for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** or creation of capital assets under the scheme.

Key objectives of the scheme:

- To improve the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) by 2 points every year.

- To improve the percentage of institutional deliveries or sustained at the rate of 95 percent or above.
- One percent increase in first trimester Anti-Natal Care (ANC) registration per year.
- One per cent increase in enrolment at secondary education level and skilling of girls/women per year.
- To check dropout rate among girls at secondary and higher secondary levels.
- To raise awareness about safe Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM).

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BUSINESS & ECONOMY

133. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of **27.18%** share capital of **CaratLane** Trading Private Limited by **Titan** Company Limited on a fully diluted basis, from Mithun Padam Sacheti, Siddhartha Padam Sacheti, and Padamchand Sacheti.

Titan has acquired 91.90 lakh equity shares in CaratLane for a cash consideration of **Rs.4621 crore**.

This acquisition increased Titan's stake in CaratLane to **98.28%** from 71.09%.

CaratLane is a subsidiary of Titan and has been in a strategic vendor relationship with Tanishq since 2010. It was founded in 2008 by Mithun Sacheti.

134. Blue Dart Express Limited (Blue Dart) has collaborated with **India Post** to introduce an automated digital parcel lockers service at selected post offices across India.

With this, Blue Dart aims to offer an additional delivery method to its customers.

Blue Dart has also collaborated with Podrones, a last-mile technology and parcel locker company, to drive this initiative.

Fusing Forces, India Post's Smart Parcel delivery system (ANVIT) collaborates with Blue Dart's expertise to leverage smart parcel technology, redefining the landscape of efficient and reliable logistics solutions.

135. Amazon has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** to utilize the **Ganga River** for cargo movement, transporting customer shipments and products.

The first ship with e-commerce cargo will soon be flagged off from **Patna**, Bihar to **Kolkata**, West Bengal (WB).

This collaboration is a significant step towards realizing the Prime Minister (PM)'s Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

In January 2023, Amazon already has a dedicated air cargo network in India with the launch of Amazon Air.

136. The **Genesys International**, a mapping company, and **Survey of India (Sol)**, a national surveying and mapping authority, have inked a pact to create a three-dimensional (3D) digital twin-mapping programme in India.

Under the initiative, digital twin cities will be created to provide insight into urban planning and development, navigation, disaster resilience and other things.

It will be used by government departments for new initiatives.

With this, Genesys has become the 1st company to have a public-private agreement with Sol for digital twinning.

137. The **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** to forge a strategic partnership in disaster risk reduction.

This MoU will serve as a platform to formalise the strategic partnership and facilitate research, capacity building, and training.

According to NIDM, currently 260 universities and institutions are part of the disaster risk reduction programme.

138. **IndiGo** has partnered with **Microsoft** to develop and launch an AI chatbot named '**6Eskai**'. This chatbot will use (Generative Pretrained Transformers) GPT-4 technology.

It can address customer queries in 10 languages, reducing agent workload by 75%.

6ESkai is capable of performing a wide range of tasks, including booking tickets, applying promotional discounts, booking add-ons, performing web check-ins, helping in seat selection, planning trips, answering FAQs, and connecting customers with an agent.

This bot is not only capable of understanding written or typed language but also verbal instructions using speech-to-text models.

Note: Air India has launched an AI Chatbot named 'Maharaja'.

139. The **National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (Divyangjan) (NIEPVD)** has tied up with the **Daisy Forum of India (DFI)** to facilitate the provision of an online library containing accessible books and related resources tailored for persons with print disabilities.

The collaboration seeks to create and disseminate accessible books through **Sugamya Pustakalaya**, an online library designed for persons with print disabilities in India.

NIEPVD has also tied up with the **National Book Trust, New Delhi** to establish a Universal Design Centre for Reading in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

140. The **Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** to

provide an umbrella framework for initiating collaborative interaction between CSIR Labs, HQ IDS and armed forces, namely Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

The MoU focusses on enhancing scientific understanding of technologies related to defence and undertaking joint research and development in dual-use technologies.

- 141. Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL)**, the developer of India's first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **University of Sydney Infectious Diseases Institute**.

The MoU aims to advance vaccine research initiatives, strengthen academic-industry partnerships, and augment global efforts to combat infectious diseases.

- 142. The Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has inked a deal with **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** to procure **16 upgraded super rapid gun mount (SRGM)** and accessories for the Indian Navy (IN) under Buy (Indian) category at a total cost of **Rs.2956.89 crore**.

The upgraded SRGM will be manufactured by BHEL at its Haridwar Plant.

The SRGM is a medium caliber anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence weapon system that provides a sustained rate of fire and high accuracy.

The upgraded SRGMs will be installed onboard Indian Navy's in-service and newly built ships by Mazagon Dock & Shipbuilders Limited (**MDL**), Mumbai, Maharashtra and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (**GRSE**), Kolkata, West Bengal.

- 143. REC Limited**, a Maharatna CPSE under Ministry of Power, has been awarded the **"Best Employer for Policies in Diversity & Inclusion" Award** at the 4th Diversity & Inclusion Excellence Awards and Conclave organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (**ASSOCHAM**) in New Delhi.

The award highlights REC's commitment to create a workplace that celebrates differences, fosters innovation, and promotes equal opportunities for all employees.

Policies in the HR front of REC is conducive, employee-friendly and played pivotal role in achieving this milestone.

Additional Information:

REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE established in 1969, under Ministry of Power, provides long term loans and other finance products for Power-Infrastructure sector comprising of Generation, Transmission, Distribution, Renewable Energy and new technologies like Electric Vehicles, Battery Storage, Green Hydrogen etc.

Headquarters: New Delhi

- 144. India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **European Union (EU)** to strengthen semiconductor supply chains and jointly pursue innovation.

The MoU aims to increase resilience of semi-conductor's value chain in India and EU and covers cooperation in wide areas covering research and innovation, talent development, partnerships, and exchange of market information.

European Union (EU):

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states located primarily in Europe. The EU was established by the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on 1st November 1993. The main goal of the EU is to promote cooperation and integration among its member states in order to enhance economic and political stability in Europe. The EU has its own currency, the Euro, which is used by 19 of the member states.

- 145.** The **National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **NRW.Global Business** to establish launchpad in **Germany**.

The MoU aims to promote innovation, investment and technological exchange between North Rhine-Westfalia (NRW) in Germany and India.

With this MoU, Indian tech companies looking to establish a presence in NRW will have access to 180 days of rent-free office space within offices based at 5 cities in NRW namely: Cologne, Düsseldorf, Essen, Krefeld and Solingen.

- 146.** The **Government of Karnataka** has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with **Meta**, which owns Facebook, to launch two major initiatives that will raise awareness among students and educators on online safety and digital citizenship.

With this association, the Government of Karnataka has planned to train **1 lakh teachers** and **10 lakh students** in digital safety and AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) skills by **2025**.

- Under the online safety initiative, young people (18-24 years) from 100 colleges and universities across the State will receive digital awareness training.
- The digital citizenship initiative, a joint programme between the Ministry of Information Technology & Bio Technology (IT/BT) and Meta, will develop a WhatsApp chatbot for the delivery of information services across various Government departments.

- 147.** **Google** has launched the AI chatbot, '**Bard**' to create a protected but immersive learning experience for younger users. Teen users can use Bard to find inspiration, discover new hobbies and solve everyday problems.

Bard introduces a **math learning component**, allowing users to type or upload a picture of a math equation.

To enhance the accuracy of information provided by Bard, Google has implemented a '**double-check**' response feature, especially when handling fact-based queries, to avoid hallucination.

While the **minimum age for managing a Google Account is 13**, the accessibility of Bard will be subject to regional regulations, which may set slightly higher age benchmarks.

The AI chatbot has undergone training to identify and filter out unsafe content, prioritizing the well-being of its young users.

Teen users will receive an **AI literacy guide** as well as a quick on-boarding video to teach them about Bard's underlying technology and using generative AI tools critically.

148. The Department of Telecom (DoT) has granted Internet Service Provider (ISP) licenses to **Jio Satellite Communications** and **OneWeb**. The newly acquired ISP licenses empower Jio Satellite Communications and OneWeb to provide internet services by seamlessly integrating satellite capabilities with terrestrial networks.

Additionally, they can utilize Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) technology to establish direct connections with end consumers.

149. The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)- National Institute of Pathology (NIP)** has launched the **"DISHA"** (Diagnostic Services in Healthcare - Availability and Geo-mapping of Laboratory services in India) portal to assist the public to identify and locate nearest diagnostic health facilities.

The portal provides information on the type of facility, distance, test availability, test cost, and turn-around time.

150. UAE-based Facilities Management Firm, **EFS Facilities Services Group**, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** to facilitate skilled International Workforce Mobility (IWM) for Indian nationals, with a specific emphasis on Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The MoU has been signed by Satinder Pal Singh, COO of EFS, and Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC in the presence of Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan.

The MoU targets the creation of access to approximately 5000 overseas job opportunities for skilled Indian nationals over the next 3 years.

Other agreements:

- **NSDC International** has signed an agreement with **We One**, a subsidiary of UAE-based DP World, to support the skill development and employment opportunities for the front-line workforce.
- **India** has signed an MoU with **UAE** to enhance collaboration in education, including student and faculty mobility, exchanging educational information, and fostering academic partnerships between institutions in both countries.

151. University of Delhi has collaborated with **Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service, Uzbekistan** to spread numerous opportunities for students, faculty, and researchers from Samarkand and Delhi.

This collaboration aims to facilitate valuable experiences for both students and faculty, contributing significantly to global education and research.

Both institutions aspire to establish a student exchange programme. It also involves the joint organisation of workshops and seminars.

152. Dr S Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) has signed two agreements with the Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani to boost youth mobility & cultural exchange.

- The **Mobility and Migration Partnership Agreement** to enable seamless movement of workers, students and professionals.
- The **Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation (EPCC)** agreement for the period **2023-27**.

The last EPCC was signed between two countries for the period of three years 2017-2020.

153. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved **Mirae Group** entities' acquisition of a minority stake in **Shadowfax Technologies**. The Mirae Group entities undertake venture investments and are ultimately directly or indirectly controlled by the global investment manager Mirae Group.

154. Amazon India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** to extend its **Amazon WoW (Women of the World) programme** across the country.

- Amazon WoW programme aims to foster optimising resource utilisation, upskilling and promoting tech careers among women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
- It is open to any women student who is currently pursuing a four-year BTech/BE or two-year MCA, M.Tech/ME programme or five year dual degree.
- It offers workshops on coding, problem-solving, tech interviews, and data structures and algorithms etc.

155. The **Ministry of Ayush** and **World Health Organization (WHO)** have signed a **Traditional and Complementary Medicine 'Project Collaboration Agreement' (PCA)** during an event organized in Geneva, Switzerland.

Objectives:

- To standardize Traditional and Complementary Medical Systems, integrate their quality and safety aspects into the National Health System, and disseminate them at the international level.
- To strengthen the system of training and practice in the field of Complementary Medicine System 'Siddha', formulation of guidelines for the listing of Traditional and Complementary Medicines, safety and related efforts, etc.

As per the agreement, **Traditional Medicine Global Strategy 2025-34** will be prepared by WHO with the support of the Ministry of Ayush.

An International Herbal Pharmacopoeia of herbs found in South-East Asia will be developed by the Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with WHO.

The first phase of this agreement will run from 2023-28.

Note: During the G20 summit in India, WHO conducted the first Traditional Medicine Global Summit in 2023.

- 156.** The Government of India (GoI) has announced a **1 percent** interest rate rebate for **Divyang individuals** availing financial assistance through the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (**NDFDC**).

The objective behind this decision is to enhance financial inclusion and foster economic empowerment among the persons with disabilities.

This rebate under NDFDC loan is for timely repayment, and subject to specific terms and conditions.

- 157. India** has signed a deal with the **USA** to boost its startup ecosystem through increasing cooperation in critical technologies. This deal on enhancing innovation ecosystems through an **Innovation Handshake** under the framework of the **India-US Commercial Dialogue** has been signed on 14th November in San Francisco, the USA.

Objectives of the deal:

- To connect the two sides' dynamic startup ecosystems, address specific regulatory hurdles to cooperation, share information and best practices for startup fundraising, and promote innovation and job growth, particularly in critical and emerging technologies (CET) as identified under India -U.S. initiative for Critical and Emerging Technology (**iCET**).
- To strengthen the startup ecosystem in deep tech sectors and promote cooperation in CET.

Innovation Handshake: It aims to connect the startup ecosystems of the India-USA.

The deal has been signed between US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, who led an industry roundtable to officially launch the ambitious 'Innovation Handshake'.

158. The **Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA)**, a cooking oil industry body, and the **Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries (ABIOVE)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for close cooperation in soyabean oil supply to India.

The MoU aims at cooperating with the supply, use, and trade of soyabean, soyameal and soyabean oil as well as oilseeds, oilseed products, and edible oil markets.

The MoU targets technology exchange for improved oilseed cultivation, emphasizing amplified agricultural productivity.

159. **Infosys**, India's second-largest IT services firm, has entered a three-year partnership with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** to accelerate the cloud transformation of financial organizations in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

As part of this partnership, Infosys and AWS aim to support financial organisations, like retail banking at NatWest Group, in accelerating their cloud adoption journeys.

160. **India & Netherlands** have signed a Memorandum of Intent (MoI) to cooperate on **medical product regulation** and enhance the quality of medical products and healthcare services for both the nations

The MoI has been signed during a meeting of **Bhagwant Khubra**, Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers with Ernst Kuipers Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports of the Kingdom of Netherlands, at Hague, Netherlands.

During the meeting, the **second World Local Production Forum (WLPF)** meeting has also been held in The Hague from 6 to 8 November 2023. The World Local Production Platform is a platform created at the initiative of WHO (World Health Organization) with the aim of increasing access to medicines and other health technologies.

161. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah has launched organic food products under the brand name '**Bharat Organics**' of the **National Cooperative Organics Ltd (NCOL)**, a newly created cooperative body to promote organic produce.

The brand has been launched during the National Symposium on 'Promotion of Organic Products through Cooperatives' organized by NCOL in New Delhi.

He has also launched the NCOL's logo, website and brochure. He has distributed NCOL membership certificates to five cooperative societies.

During the event, **six products** under the 'Bharat Organics' brand have been launched. The six organic products (*tur dal, chana dal, sugar, rajma, basmati rice, and Sonamasoori rice*) will be sold through Mother Dairy's Safal outlets and online platforms.

A total of 20 organic products will be launched by December 2023.

About 50 percent of profits from sale of organic products through NCOL will be transferred directly to member farmers.

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162. Chandigarh Smart City Limited (CSCL) has launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven chatbot named '**BIRBAL**' to enhance the delivery of government services to citizens.

The platform is powered by leading-edge AI technology from CoRover.ai, ensuring that the citizen services experience is nothing short of revolutionary.

The chatbot is named after the legendary Mughal advisor and main commander of army in the court of the Mughal emperor, Akbar, mirroring the intelligent and helpful qualities of the revered figure.

163. Flying Wedge Defense and Aerospace has become India's **first**-ever private firm to secure a Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) type certification for indigenous Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology called '**FWDA10.**'

FWDA10 is certified for its proper design, material, specification, construction, and performance for safe operations.

The certification of this UAS is based on the recommendation of UL India Private Limited. Flying Wedge is situated in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Note: The DGCA Type Certification is issued under the provision of Rule 8 and Rule 9 (3) of the Drone Rules 2021.

164. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur and Indian Institute of Skills (IIS), Kanpur have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in which IIT Kanpur will mentor IIS for the next **five years**.

The MoU has been signed in the presence of Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

As per the MoU, IIT Kanpur will be involved in mentoring the development of laboratory infrastructure at IIS Kanpur, developing suitable course curriculum based on the laboratory system, offering joint certificate and diploma courses as approved by the two institutes (IITK and IIS), and the development of Center for Deep-Skill Training and Research (CDSTAR) at IIT Kanpur which will be complementary to the training at IIS Kanpur.

IIS has also exchanged MoUs with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Dassault Aircraft Services India (DASI).

165. Indian commercial vehicle manufacturer, Ashok Leyland, has delivered the first batch of 12 LNG (Liquified Natural Gas)-powered haulage truck, '**AVTR 1922**', to Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL) in Hosur, Tamil Nadu.

With this, Ashok Leyland has become the **first Indian Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM)** to unveil an in-house LNG engine compliant with Bharat Stage Six (BSVI) Stage II emission standards.

The AVTR 1922, powered by LNG, is built on the AVTR platform (India's first and only fully modular truck platform).

The AVTR 1922 LNG powered truck features a proven 6-cylinder H-series engine, and its performance has been optimized for Indian operating conditions.

- 166.** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** and the **FSR Global** at IICA Campus in Manesar, Gurugram. The MoU aims to foster collaborative efforts and explore pragmatic approaches for establishing mutually beneficial partnerships.

The primary focus of this partnership is to enhance operational capabilities within the regulatory landscape of the energy sector, both in India and worldwide.

- 167. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Airbus**, the largest European aircraft manufacturing company, have signed a contract for the establishment of Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facilities dedicated to the A-320 family of aircraft at Nashik, Maharashtra.

Airbus will provide tools and consulting services, with the facility set to be operational by November 2024.

This association aims to meet the rising demand for MRO services in India.

- 168.** The **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** has incorporated a joint venture (JV) with **France-based Safran Helicopter Engines** under the name "Safhal Helicopter Engines Pvt Ltd".

This new 50/50 JV Company in **Bengaluru, Karnataka** will design, develop, produce, sell, and support helicopter engines.

The JV is formed with an aim to develop the adequate propulsion system for the Indian Ministry of Defence's (MoD) future 13-ton Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and its naval version, the Deck Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH).

- 169. Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel (AM/NS) India** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Government of Odisha** to establish a **High-Performance Centre of Kho Kho** at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha to promote Kho Kho talents.

The aim is to transform Odisha into a premier Kho Kho excellence hub for India.

AM/NS India will operate and manage the HPC and train the Kho Kho players. It will also coach and develop judges for the sport along with their certifications.

- 170.** The **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Lean Campus Startups (LCS) (Trust) & WEICI India** to empower corporate and women entrepreneurs, augment their knowledge, skills, and competencies in the effective establishment and management of a diverse workforce.

In partnership with IICA, LCS will orchestrate programmes for women entrepreneurs and students.

Note: Lean Campus Startups, set up in 2014, is a brand of Mission Catalyst, a pioneering trust dedicated to shaping the future of India through transformative initiatives in education, skill development, and entrepreneurship.

171. The **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, under the Ministry of Rural Development, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** for **2 years** to promote **women enterprises**.

The primary objective is to demonstrate on-the-ground activities that establish a reliable and sensitive support structure for the capacity enhancement of women entrepreneurs (WEs). It also aims to institutionalize standard protocols, systems, and procedures for streamlined access to formal finance, as well as the development of a comprehensive framework for new financial products and schemes.

172. **Russia** has signed a contract with **India** to supply its **Igla-S man-portable air defence missile system (MANPADS)** to India. Igla-S is designed to counter low-flying aircraft and helicopters.

It has a range of 500 meters to 6000 meters and can go up to the altitude ranging from 10 meters to 3500 meters.

It works on "fire and forget" principle.

It is exported by Russian Defence Export agency Rosoboronexport.

173. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Madras)** faculty members, students and alumni have designed and developed a mobile application called '**OptRoute**' to enable easier and efficient transportation of goods within cities.

This mobile phone app connects a driver with the consumer and does not take any commission or on-boarding fee.

The first version of the App has been developed and commercialised through OptRoute Logistics, an IIT Madras-incubated start-up co-founded by Prof. N.S. Narayanaswamy, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Madras and Anuj Fulia, an IIT Madras alumnus.

The OptRoute application has two user modes: Driver and Customer. In the customer mode, users can place any goods transport request for which a vehicle is needed. In the driver mode, users can view the available requests and accept them.

174. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science & Technology (**CSIR-NIIST**) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to collaborate in India's aerospace and defence sectors.

This MoU aims to strengthen the indigenisation and import substitution program for India's aerospace and defence sectors.

175. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of **India** and Public Sector Transformation & the Civil Service of the **French Republic** have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for cooperation in the field of **Public Administration and Administrative Reforms** for **three years**.

The LoI seeks to strengthen the bilateral partnership between the two countries through exchange visits focused on administrative reforms, good governance webinars, research publications, institutional exchanges, capacity building programs and replication of good governance practices.

Under this LoI, a Joint Working Group (JWG) will be established to create a roadmap for bilateral collaboration.

176. RailTel Corporation of India Limited, a Miniratna (Category-I) Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Railways, has set up a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** to provide training in railway signalling and telecommunication systems, with courses also focusing on operations related to automatic train protection system 'Kavach', in **New Delhi**.

The CoE aims to ensure the availability of competent and skilled manpower in the field of Railway Signalling and Telecommunications Training.

177. Swedish defence company **Saab AB** has become the **first foreign company** to receive **100% FDI** (Foreign Direct Investment) in India's defence projects. The FDI proposal is valued at around Rs.500 crore.

- With this, Saab is set to establish a facility to manufacture Carl-Gustaf M4 rocket launchers in India.
- The facility will support the production of the Carl- Gustaf M4 for the Indian Armed forces as well as components for users of the system around the world.
- Saab has set up a new company, Saab FFV India, to make the latest generation of the Carl-Gustaf M4 system.

Note: At present, India allows only 74% FDI in the defence sector under the automatic route. Beyond that, clearance can be obtained through Government approval.

178. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** and the **Ministry of Education (MoE)** to incorporate electoral literacy formally into the school and college education system.

Key salient features of the MoU:

- To systematically integrate voter education and electoral literacy into the curriculum, starting from classes 6 to 12 in all schools. This integration will also extend to the curricular framework for all colleges and universities, tailored to suit different disciplines and credited accordingly.
- NCERT will introduce and update textbooks to include content on electoral literacy and will advise State Education Boards and other Boards to follow suit.
- To foster a sense of responsibility within State Education Departments for establishing Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in schools and colleges.
- To encourage various activities to promote voter awareness among students, ensuring they are well-versed with the country's electoral system and encouraging them to register as voters and participate enthusiastically, with a well-informed and ethical approach, in every election.
- It seeks to evolve a robust mechanism to fulfil the aspirational goal of ECI to handover the voter ID card to every student immediately after their attaining the age of 18 years: an institutional framework to be created for online registration of eligible and prospective students who have attained 17+ years of age (after every qualifying date (1st January, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October of every calendar year) and during the annual summary revision of electoral rolls.
- Designate one of the rooms in every **senior secondary school** as the '**Democracy Room**' for the regular display of voter education materials and the conduct of Continuous Electoral and Democracy Education (CEDE) activities throughout the year.
- To develop critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills amongst university students to actively participate in university-level politics, including engaging in informed debates and discussions.
- To devise a system of credits for students taking part in CEDE to pursue higher studies.

179. The Government of **Odisha** has inked three Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the India Electronic and Semiconductor Association (**IESA**), Synopsys and Electronics, and the Computer Software Export Promotion Council (**ESC**) to develop an ecosystem for the manufacturing of semiconductors.

The Odisha government has also successfully hosted **Odisha4Silicon-2023**, a pioneering initiative to set up a robust semiconductor ecosystem in the region.

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BANKING & FINANCE

180. Lakshmi Ramakrishna Srinivas has been appointed as the **Additional Director** of the **South Indian Bank**. She has been appointed as a non-executive independent director of the bank for a period of three years with effect from November 20, 2023

She also served as Director of State Bank Staff College (SBSC), Hyderabad, Telangana. She was earlier the Chief General Manager of State Bank of India (SBI).

181. According to the **ICRA Limited**, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the **second quarter of FY 2024 (Q2FY24)** is projected to grow at **7%**, surpassing the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) forecast of 6.5%.

India's GDP growth was 7.8% in (April to June 2023) Q1FY24.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) growth will ease to 6.8% in (July-September 2023) Q2, driven by the services sector at 8.2%, agriculture at 3.5%, and industry at 6.6%.

ICRA maintains a GDP growth estimate of 6% for FY24, projecting a slightly lower figure than the MPC's projection of 6.5%.

182. Madhabi Puri Buch, Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), has launched the **Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA)** platform at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

The IRRA platform is an initiative conceptualised and implemented by Market Infrastructure Institutions (**MIIs**) under the able guidance of SEBI to reduce risks faced by investors in the eventuality of technical glitch at trading member end at both Primary site and disaster recovery site.

This platform will provide investors an opportunity to close open positions and cancel pending orders in case of disruption at the stockbrokers' end.

IRRA is a cloud-based platform available to the trading members supporting internet-based trading and security trading through wireless technology for their investors.

The IRRA platform will **not be available for algo trading and institutional clients**.

183. Chennai-based **Unifi Capital** has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to establish a mutual fund house.

The company has been operating as a portfolio manager since 2001 and currently manages over Rs 20,000 crore on behalf of about 10,000 portfolio management services and alternative investment funds.

Sarath Reddy is the founder of Unifi Capital.

- 184.** The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has sanctioned a senior secured loan of **USD 6.5 million** to **Greenway Grameen Infra Private Limited** to produce 1 million improved cookstoves, Greenway Jumbo Stoves, for rural households in India's Madhya Pradesh and Odisha States.

The financing also includes a **USD 3.25 million** first-loss liquidity reserve from the Climate Innovation and Development Fund (CIDF), administered by ADB.

The project anticipates a total reduction of 22.9 million tons of carbon dioxide.

- 185.** The Board of Directors of **Bandhan Bank** has approved the re-appointment of **Chandra Shekhar Ghosh** as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD and CEO) of the bank for **three years**, with effect from **July 10, 2024**.

The board approval for re-appointment is subject to the approval of the Reserve Bank of India and the shareholders of the bank.

- 186.** **IndusInd Bank Limited** has joined hands with the **Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL)** to introduce payments through the Digital Rupee at select gas stations in Delhi NCR

This initiative utilizes the Reserve Bank of India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), launched in 2022, along with blockchain technology to improve financial services.

The Digital Rupee application is designed to be user-friendly, available on both iOS and Android platforms, and features UPI QR code interoperability for seamless transactions.

- 187.** **Mastercard Incorporated** has collaborated with **U Gro Capital Limited**, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), to provide holistic digital supply chain financing solution to small businesses in India.

The collaboration with U GRO Capital is in line with Mastercard's earlier announcement to get 1 billion people and 50 million micro and small businesses, including 25 million female entrepreneurs into the digital economy by 2025.

- 188.** The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has sanctioned a **USD 500 million loan** to enhance the quality and affordability of tertiary health care and medical education in **Maharashtra**.

The Maharashtra Tertiary Care and Medical Education Sector Development Programme, financed by the ADB loan, aims to construct four new medical colleges with tertiary care hospitals, which will include features that are resilient to climate and disasters, gender-sensitive, and socially inclusive.

189. Berkshire Hathaway Inc has sold its entire **2.46 percent** stake in **Paytm** for a cash consideration of **Rs.1,371 crore** through an open market transaction at a loss of about **31 percent** per share.

The company had acquired 2.6 percent stake in Paytm for Rs 1,279.7 per share at an aggregate value of Rs 2,179 crore.

190. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved **USD 170 million** loan to support the modernization of water supply services in the city of **Kochi** in **Kerala**, India, helping improve the quality of urban life and build climate resilience.

The project will upgrade five water treatment plants that have a cumulative production capacity of 325 million liters per day (MLD), as well as build a new plant with 190 MLD capacity.

191. HSBC India has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the **UK Export Finance (UKEF)** to establish a financing programme of up to **100 million pound** to support Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and corporates for financing their imports from Britain.

This LoI will enhance the availability of credit for Indian MSMEs and boost trade ties between the two countries.

Note: India was the UK's 12th largest trading partner in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2023, accounting for 2.1% of total UK trade.

192. The World Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (**the Global Fund**) to improve their collaboration on climate change's impact on health.

The aim is to support more efficient, effective, and sustainable financing to improve health outcomes in the face of climate change.

Both organizations will work together on climate and health priorities to reduce the burden of malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis (TB) through stronger health systems, including better access to primary healthcare services for the most vulnerable populations.

193. L&T Finance, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), has signed a financing pact with the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** for **USD 125 million** to support financing in rural and peri-urban areas in India particularly for women borrowers.

- The funding comprises a loan of up to USD 125 million from ADB, and an agreement to syndicate additional USD 125 million co-financing from other development partners.

- At least 40% of the proceeds will be allocated for women borrowers, while the rest will support farmers, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as well as loans to purchase new two-wheeled vehicles.

194. Jaiprakash Associates Limited (JAL) and trusts associated with the company will transfer **7.71% equity or over 18.93 crore shares** to **ICICI Bank** as part of a settlement agreement between the JAL and the bank, amid loan repayment default.

The 7.71% stake is worth Rs.366 crore at the current market price.

The trust associated with JAL includes: Gujarat Anjan Cement Limited (GACL) Trust, Jaiprakash Enterprises Limited (JEL) Trust, Jaypee Cement Limited (JCL) Trust, and Jaypee Hotels Limited (JHL) Trust.

The share transfer did not require government or regulatory approval since the shares being transferred were below the mandatory 10% threshold.

195. IDBI Bank has extended the validity of special fixed deposit (FD) scheme called '**Amrit Mahotsav FD**' to 31st December 2023 from the earlier 31st October 2023 deadline.

In July 2023, IDBI introduced a special FD scheme called Amrit Mahotsav FD for a tenure of 375 and 444 Days.

This FD scheme offers an interest rate of 7.10% for the public and 7.60% for senior citizens.

196. Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) has added **9 Indian stocks** to its MSCI Global Standard Index with effect from **30th November 2023**. These include: *IndusInd Bank, Suzlon Energy Limited, One 97 Communications (Paytm), Persistent Systems, APL Apollo Tubes, Polycab India, Macrotech Developers, Tata Motors A (Tata Motors DVR), and Tata Communications.*

Following the above addition, 46 stocks will be added to this index while 69 stocks will make an exit from this index.

No Indian stocks are excluded from the index.

The maximum share of inflows will be led by **IndusInd Bank** at **USD 290 million**, followed by Suzlon at USD 264 million and Persistent Systems at USD 254 million.

197. Mumbai-based InCred Holdings Ltd, the parent company of fintech startup InCred Financial Services Ltd, has become the **2nd Indian startup** to become a **unicorn** in **2023**.

InCred became unicorn after raising funding worth Rs.500 crore in its latest round (Series D) of equity funding.

The equity round has gathered interest from various investors, including a global private equity fund, corporate treasuries, family offices, and Ultra-High-Net-worth-Individuals (UHNIs).

Zepto, a quick commerce platform, became India's first unicorn of 2023 in August 2023.

Note: In the venture capital industry, the term 'unicorn' refers to any startup that reaches the valuation of **USD 1 billion**. The valuation of unicorns is not linked to their current financial performance, but largely based on their growth potential as perceived by investors and venture capitalists who have taken part in various funding rounds.

198. Federal Bank has introduced the **UPI (Unified Payment Interface) Lite** functionality for small-value digital payments. UPI Lite allows an individual to store money in their UPI Lite on-device wallet and make offline payments to merchants.

As per the Federal Bank, these are the transaction limits for UPI Lite:

- Per transaction limit: up to **Rs.500**
- Maximum Cumulative usage per day: **Rs.4,000**
- Maximum balance in UPI Lite account at any point of time: **Rs.2,000**

Note: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had launched the UPI Lite functionality in September 2022 during its Monetary Policy Meet (MPC).

199. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched two PNB Digital Gold Loan schemes namely **PNB Gold Loan** for the retail segment and **PNB Swarnim** for the agriculture segment.

The scheme aims to provide a hassle-free credit to customers to quickly meet their personal as well as agriculture credit requirements by using gold jewellery and/or ornaments as collaterals.

The PNB Digital Gold Loan scheme allows individuals to borrow amounts ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 25 lakh for personal needs.

200. One97 Communications, which owns **Paytm** brand, has tied up with global travel technology company, **Amadeus**, under which it will integrate Amadeus' travel platform and optimise travel experience from search to booking, and payment.

The aim is to redefine travel experience with Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Paytm will deliver hyper-personalised recommendations and dynamic pricing to its users, powered by Amadeus.

This association will also pave the way for Paytm to offer a unified PNR solution in partnership with Indian national carriers.

201. The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has recently (in Nov'23) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Technology Development Board (TDB)** to facilitate easier access to credit for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The MoU is signed with the aim of easing credit access to MSMEs that are attempting the development and commercial application of indigenous technology or adapting imported technology for wider domestic applications.

202. Kotak Mahindra Bank has appointed **Ashok Vaswani** as a Director, Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and Key Managerial Personnel of the Kotak Mahindra Bank for a period of **3 years**, with effect from **1st January 2024**.

He will succeed Dipak Gupta, whose term as the MD & CEO and Key Managerial Personnel of KMBL ends on 31st December 2023.

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203. The Department of Economic Affairs, under the Ministry of Finance, has notified **7 changes** in **Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS)**, a government-sponsored savings instrument for individuals aged 60 years or employees aged 55 years or more but less than 60 years.

The SCSS, launched in 2004, currently offers **8.2 percent** interest per annum.

Key changes:

First: The government has provided **3 months** to invest in SCSS for individuals aged above 55 but below 60. Currently, investment has to be made within 1 month of receipt of retirement benefits.

Second: The **spouse of the government employee is permitted to invest** the financial assistance amount in the scheme.

Third: The scope of retirement benefits has been clearly defined.

- Retirement benefit means any payment received by the individual due to retirement or superannuation.
- This includes provident fund dues, retirement or superannuation or death gratuity, commuted value of pension, leave encashment, savings element of group savings linked insurance scheme payable by the employer on retirement, retirement-cum-withdrawal benefit under Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) and ex gratia payments under a voluntary or special voluntary retirement scheme.

Fourth: A **1 percent deduction** of the deposit is applicable if the account is closed before completing one year of investment. Earlier, if account closed before one year, no interest will be payable and if any interest paid in account shall be recovered from principle.

Fifth: Account holders can now **extend the account for any number of blocks**, with each block lasting 3 years. Previously, the extension was allowed only once.

Sixth: In the case of extending the SCSS account on maturity, the deposit will earn the interest rate applicable to the scheme on the date of maturity or on the date of the extended maturity.

Seventh: The maximum deposit amount in the scheme shall not exceed the allowed deposit limit.

- The maximum deposit limit for SCSS increased to **Rs.30 lakh** from Rs.15 lakh with effect from 1st April 2023.

204. Karnataka Bank has tied up with **HDFC Life Insurance Company** to offer life insurance products to its customers. This association offers customers a range of innovative and customer-centric financial solutions.

The association with HDFC Life will add value to Karnataka Bank's customers by giving them access to industry leading products.

205. Insurance Ombudsman has disposed of **92.28 percent** of the complaints it received from the insured during 2022-23. It received 55,946 complaints during FY23 across its 17 offices in the country, of which 51,625 were disposed of.

The Delhi office of the Insurance Ombudsman disposed of all the 5,257 complaints it received in FY23.

Kolkata office resolved 100% of complaints in the FY23. All 3,027 complaints were resolved. This has been announced on the occasion of the **Bima Lokpal Day**. The day is observed annually on **11th November** to commemorate the foundation day of the Insurance Ombudsman.

Insurance Ombudsman:

Insurance Ombudsman is an alternate grievance redressal platform. It aims to resolve grievances of aggrieved policyholders against insurance companies and their intermediaries or insurance brokers speedily and cost-effectively.

It was established in **November 1998**.

The offices of the Insurance Ombudsman are under the administrative control of the Council for Insurance Ombudsman (CIO). They are covered under the **Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005**.

The Insurance Ombudsman can entertain complaints where the quantum of loss payable under the insurance policy does not exceed **Rs.50 lakhs**.

206. IndusInd Bank, in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has introduced the '**IndusInd Bank Platinum RuPay Credit Card**' with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Integration. This integration allows individuals to conduct transactions both online and offline, while also earning rewards on UPI transactions.

This will enable customers to make payments through the RuPay network using POS devices and e-commerce websites.

207. Canara HSBC Life Insurance, an insurance company sponsored by Canara Bank and HSBC, has launched the **Guaranteed Assured Income (GAIN)** for the customers of Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (**KVBG**) in Mangaluru, Karnataka.

It is a non-linked and non-participating life insurance cum savings plan designed to provide financial security with a tailor-made coverage period to customers.

The customers opting for GAIN have the flexibility to choose an income period from 5 to 39 years based on their requirements.

The life insurance plan is thoroughly designed to provide families with unmatched financial stability and security.

- 208.** The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced the appointment of actor **Pankaj Tripathi** as its '**United Payments Interface (UPI) Safety Ambassador**'. The aim is to strengthen safety awareness on digital payment platforms.

This initiative underscores the importance of the security and safety of digital payment platforms, especially in the context of the UPI.

- 209.** UBS Securities India Private Limited has increased India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) forecast to **6.3%** for fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24). UBS has also raised India's FY25 GDP growth forecast upwards by 20 basis points to 6.2%.

It also projected India's growth to settle towards the long-run average of 6.2% and 6.5% in FY26 and FY27.

It increased its forecast on the Indian economy's growth potential in the medium term to 6-6.5% from the earlier 5.75-6.25%.

- 210.** **Axis Bank** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA)** to establish the **Axis Bank Chair for Financial Inclusion** at IRMA, Gujarat.

The Chair, established for **five years**, aims to conduct research, foster closer collaboration between the industry and academia, promote thought leadership, and advocate policy development.

The Chair's goal is to promote the advancement of financial inclusion (FI) and financial literacy in India.

Under this MoU, IRMA and Axis Bank will establish a **Joint Advisory Committee** responsible for managing the Chair's selection process, defining the terms of its operation, and regularly evaluating its performance.

The MoU also includes provisions for sponsoring two research associates under the Chair's purview.

- 211.** As per the latest data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), **Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka** have the highest **mutual fund investment** in India during July-September Quarter-Fiscal Year 2024 (Q2 FY24).

Rank	State	Equity assets (out of Rs.25.85 lakh crore)

1	Maharashtra	Rs.7.47 lakh crore
2	Gujarat	Rs.2.21 lakh crore
3	Karnataka	Rs.1.99 lakh crore
4	Delhi	Rs.1.94 lakh crore.
5	Uttar Pradesh	Rs.1.66 lakh crore

Gujarat accounted for **7 percent** of **SIP** (Systematic Investment Plan) inflows around **Rs.1200 crore**.

Gujarat and Karnataka accounted for 8.5 percent and 7.7 percent of the overall equity asset of the industry while that of Delhi was down at 7.5 percent.

212. Mirae Asset Mutual Fund has introduced the feature of **UPI AutoPay Mandate** for **SIP (Systematic Investment Plan)** registrations. The initiative is jointly developed by Mirae Asset Mutual Fund, Kfintech and **BillDesk** to help investors of Mirae Asset Mutual Fund to register SIP mandate using UPI AutoPay feature.

UPI AutoPay allows an investor to automate their recurring SIP payments. The payments will be deducted from the bank account on a particular date.

Note: According to the present limit set by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which owns and operates UPI, mandates up to **Rs.15,000** can be created using UPI AutoPay.

213. The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) has announced the appointment of **Venkat Nageswar Chalasani** as the new **Chief Executive (CE)**. He has succeeded **N.S. Venkatesh**.

Prior to this role, he served as the Deputy Managing Director (DMD) at the State Bank of India (SBI), where he spent almost four decades.

214. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, in collaboration with the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, has introduced the **Natural Capital Fund (NCF)**, a concessional fund aimed at bolstering projects that bolster food security while simultaneously safeguarding and reviving natural capital in ADB's developing member countries (DMCs).

The GEF has committed a **USD 15 million** investment to support the NCF's initiative.

NCF is a funding vehicle that accepts and administers contributions from multiple funding sources, including bilateral and multilateral organizations.

NCF plans to co-finance projects alongside ADB and other partners.

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215. The **Government of India (GoI)** has signed a **USD 400 million** policy-based loan with **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** to support urban services by creating high quality urban infrastructure, improving service delivery, and promoting efficient governance systems.

The loan has been sanctioned for **Sub-programme 2 of the Sustainable Urban Development and Service Delivery Programme**.

Sub-programme 1, approved in 2021 with a financing of USD 350 million, established national-level policies and guidelines to improve urban services, while Sub-programme 2 is supporting investment planning and reform actions at the state and urban local body (ULB) levels.

Sub-programme 2 supports the reforms initiated by the states and the ULBs in operationalizing the national flagship programme of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 targeted for universal access of water supply and sanitation.

216. Federal Bank has signed a partnership with Indian shuttler **Prannoy Haseena Sunil Kumar (HS Prannoy)** to promote the lender's strategy to invest in various adjacent domains to enhance its brand's influence.

Under this partnership, the Federal Bank will be the exclusive banking partner. This is an annual partnership where the branding of the bank will be displayed by the player in several upcoming Badminton World Federation (BWF) events like BWF Super Series, BWF Gold Series, and BWF World Badminton.

217. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a **USD 100 million loan** to enhance urban services and tourism facilities in **Tripura**. The project will focus on improving water supply systems, stormwater drains, and urban roads.

The project will upgrade urban water supply systems by installing 42 km of new transmission and distribution pipes, establishing four new water treatment plants, and improving 55 km of stormwater drains.

It will also improve 21 km of urban roads.

218. The Global venture capital funds, Accel Partners and Quona Capital will increase their stake in **Shivalik Small Finance Bank** to **9.99% each**. Currently both VCs hold a 4.99 percent stake each in the bank.

In January 2020, the bank received in-principle approval from the RBI to convert from an urban cooperative bank into a small finance bank.

Shivalik Small Finance Bank (SFB):

The bank commenced its operations as SFB on 26th April 2021. It is based in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The present MD & CEO of the bank is Anshul Swami.

219. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, one of the leading private general insurers of India, has launched '**Sarvatra Bima**' initiative that aims to establish the company's tangible presence in Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions in India and provide a one-stop solution, where the people will be able to seamlessly fulfil all their insurance-related service requirements.

It aligns with the company's "HarGhar BAGIC" mission aimed at reaching insurance products and associated services to every household in the country.

Under this initiative, a fully functional and equipped van has been mobilized. The van will reach Kolhapur and will further traverse regions across the Western belt of Maharashtra, connecting with more than 3,500 villages across over 30 Tehsils in these regions.

220. The boards of **AU Small Finance Bank (SFB)** Limited and **Fincare Small Finance Bank (SFB)** approve the all-stock merger of AU SFB and Fincare SFB under **Section 44A** of the Banking Regulation Act of 1949.

AU-SFB will acquire Fincare SFB in an all-stock transaction valued at **Rs.4,411 crore**.

This merger aims to expand the AU SFB's reach in southern part of India and enter micro-finance sector.

The merger is subject to approval by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

The merger will come into effect from **1st February 2024**, or a date as may be fixed mutually by both companies and approved by the RBI.

As per the terms of the merger, shareholders of Fincare SFB will receive 579 shares in AU SFB for every 2000 shares they hold in Fincare SFB.

According to terms, Fincare Business Services Ltd (FBSL), promoter of Fincare SFB, shall infuse **Rs.700 crore** into Fincare SFB prior to the completion of the merger.

Post-merger, **Rajeev Yadav**, the MD&CEO of Fincare SFB, will be appointed as Deputy CEO of AU SFB. He will report to Sanjay Agarwal, MD&CEO of AU SFB.

221. **Kotak Mahindra Bank** and **Kotak Mahindra General Insurance** have inked a deal with Switzerland-based **Zurich Insurance Company Limited**, whereby Zurich will invest approximately **Rs.4,051 crore** to acquire a **51 percent stake** in the Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Ltd.

Further, within three years from the initial acquisition, Zurich will buy an additional 19 percent stake in the company.

This transaction is expected to be completed by 30th June 2024.

Out of the total infusion, Rs.1,609 crore will be in the form of fresh growth capital. The rest will be for share purchase.

222. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has introduced a new format of the **Scheme Information Document (SID) of mutual fund schemes** to facilitate better readability and transparency for investors.

- The new format will come into effect on **1st April 2024**.
- The new norms are suggested by the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI) and recommended by the Mutual Fund Advisory Committee (MFAC).

Under the modification, the scheme's portfolio holdings (top 10 holdings by the issuer and fund allocation toward various sectors) will be disclosed by way of a functional web link where such data will be hosted.

The certain disclosures about the aggregate investment in the scheme by AMC's board of directors and other key personnel, will be provided in the Statement of Additional Information (SAI) of the MF scheme.

The creation of segregated portfolio shall be optional and at the discretion of the AMC. It should be created only if the SID of the scheme has enabling provision for a segregated portfolio with detailed disclosures made in SAI.

The AMCs will have to disclose the risk-o-meter of the benchmark on the front page of the initial offering application form, SID and Key Information Memorandum (KIM), and common application form, along with the information about the scheme.

223. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has cleared **Motilal Oswal Alternates'** acquisition of stake in **SK Finance Ltd.** The deal relates to the minority investment by India Business Excellence Fund-IV in SK Finance Ltd.

SK Finance is a Reserve Bank of India-registered Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), engaged in the business of providing financing for vehicles (new and used) and loans to micro small and medium enterprises.

224. SBI Card has joined hands with **Reliance Retail** to launch the eco-friendly **Reliance SBI Card credit card**, granting shoppers at Reliance Retail access to rewards. The collaboration aims to enhance the shopping experience and provide exclusive discounts and rewards for customers.

The card has been launched in two variants, namely Reliance SBI Card and Reliance SBI Card PRIME.

225. AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) has partnered with **ixigo**, one of the leading travel platforms, to introduce a premium co-branded credit card tailored for contemporary travellers.

The **ixigo-AU co-branded credit card** is a first-of-its-kind value proposition across all travel verticals such as flights, trains, buses, and hotels.

With this co-branded card, travellers can take advantage of discounts, up to 10%, on flight, bus, and hotel bookings when using the ixigo platform.

The card carries an annual fee of Rs.999 + GST, which is exempted with Rs.1000 spending within the first 30 days.

The annual fee for the subsequent year is also waived upon reaching a minimum spend of Rs.1 lakh in the preceding year.

226. Aurionpro Solutions Ltd has collaborated with **Mastercard** to introduce a contactless payment solution for public transportation. The commuters will have the convenience of tap-and-go payments using any digital wallet linked with a MasterCard.

This system eliminates the need for multiple cards or regular top-ups, as MasterCard's open-loop solutions enable the same digital wallet to be used across various transit modes and in numerous cities.

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227. The **World Economic Outlook: Navigating Global Divergences** report has been released by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in October 2023. The report has projected that the **world economy** is expected to slow down from 3.5% in 2022 to **3.0% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024**.

This is one of the lowest growth rates in decades and below the historical average of 3.8% recorded between 2000 & 2019.

As per the report, the **global inflation** is expected to decrease from 8.7% in 2022 to **6.9% in 2023 and 5.8% in 2024**. The decline is due to the tighter monetary as well as the lower international commodity prices.

The report suggests the importance of focusing on monetary policy actions and frameworks to anchor inflation expectations.

228. Mahindra Finance, a part of the Mahindra Group, has entered into a Co-lending Model (CLM) partnership with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** to provide affordable financing solutions to empower Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSME) sectors across India.

Mahindra Finance will be responsible for customer origination and servicing; while SBI will provide the funding of loan.

Co-lending Model (CLM):

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) laid out the co-origination framework in 2018, allowing banks and NBFCs to co-originate loans.

Co-lending is an arrangement where the loan origination is by one entity but the risk is shared by two entities. A non-banking financial company (NBFC) is the originator while a bank is where the major portion of the loan rests.

229. ICICI Bank has enabled its customers to pay to any **merchant QR (Quick Response) code** using the **"Digital Rupee by ICICI Bank"**, the digital rupee app of ICICI Bank.

The bank's measure enables its millions of customers for a seamless digital payments experience as it has made Unified Payments Interface (UPI) interoperable.

The Digital Rupee (₹) or e-INR or E-Rupee is a tokenised digital version of the Indian Rupee, issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a central bank digital currency (CBDC).

RBI launched the pilot project of CBDC (Digital Rupee) on 1st December 2022.

Note: The term QR stands for Quick Response code. The QR was originally created by Japanese company Denso Wave for labelling automobile parts in 1994.

230. The **Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, India (HSBC India)**, in collaboration with the National E-Governance Services Limited (**NeSL**), has introduced the **Electronic Bank Guarantee (E-BG)** services to facilitate digitization of trade finance.

With this, HSBC India has become the **first foreign bank** in India to introduce E-BG in India. The E-BG platform simplifies and expedites the guarantee issuance process by introducing electronic stamping (E-stamping) and electronic signing (E-signing), effectively eliminating the need for paper documentation.

Note: HDFC Bank is India's 1st bank to issue an e-BG in September 2022.

231. The **ICICI Prudential Multi-Asset Fund** has completed **21 years**. The scheme was incepted on **31st October 2002**. The fund has a good track record, which generates a Compound Annual Growth Rate (**CAGR**) of **21%**.

As of 30th September 2023, the scheme manages an Assets Under Management (AUM) of Rs.24,060.99 crore or about 57% of the total AUM in the multi-asset allocation category. ICICI Prudential Multi-Asset Fund is an open-ended scheme investing in equity, debt and exchange traded commodity derivatives/units of gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETF)/ units of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) & InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trust)/ preference shares.

232. **Ageas Federal Life Insurance** has launched its new life insurance policy, '**Ageas Federal Life Insurance Super Cash Plan**'. It is a non-linked, participating savings plan that offers benefits of immediate liquidity through regular income.

The scheme offers immediate cash flow starting from the end of 1st policy year/month. There is also a provision for Guaranteed boosters starting from the end of every fifth policy year till the end of policy term.

233. **IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Limited (IndiaFirst Life)** has become the **1st life insurance company** in India to receive Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (**GIFT City**)'s International Financial Services Centre (**IFSC**) Registration.

The IFSC Unit of IndiaFirst will soon commence operations.

The registration will enable India First Life to expand its reach globally.

This will also enhance its market presence and capitalize on the customer outreach opportunities at a global level, particularly NRIs banking with its partner banks (Bank of Baroda and Union Bank of India).

Additional Information:

IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company is an insurance company established in November 2009 and is headquartered in Mumbai. It is a three-way venture firm with **Bank of Baroda (65%), Union Bank of India (9%)** and **Carmel Point Investments India Private Limited (26%)**.

- 234.** The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has formed a taskforce that will review the **existing bancassurance framework** and improve the efficiency of the same amid complaints of mis-selling/forced selling of policies.

The committee will be headed by **J Meena Kumari**, Executive Director (Life) IRDAI.

The committee has to suggest regulatory stipulations on the market conduct requirements of bancassurance partners amid rising complaints of mis-selling or forced selling of policies from customers.

The committee will study the effectiveness of existing bancassurance models and suggest ways to improve its efficiency.

The committee will submit its recommendations within a period of two months from the order i.e. within 31st December 2023.

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RBI IN NEWS

- 235.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 36 AAA read with section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (As Applicable to Co-operative Societies), has superseded the board of Mumbai-based **Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank Ltd** for a period of **12 months** over poor governance standards.

In this regard, RBI has appointed **Satya Prakash Pathak**, former Chief General Manager of State Bank of India as "Administrator" to manage the affairs of the bank during this period. RBI has also appointed a "Committee of Advisors" to assist the Administrator to discharge his duties.

The members of the "Committee of Advisors" are Venkatesh Hegde (former General Manager, SBI); Mahendra Chhajed (Chartered Accountant); and Suhas Gokhale (former MD, COSMOS Co-operative Bank Limited).

Note: As per the Banking Regulations Act 1949, RBI can supersede the board of directors of a bank for up to 12 months if it feels that the board is not working in the interest of shareholders and depositors.

- 236.** The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a monetary penalty on three banks viz. **Citibank NA (Rs.5 crore), Bank of Baroda (Rs.4.34 crore) and Indian Overseas Bank (Rs.1 crore)** for non-compliance with some of its Directions.

This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c) read with Section 46 (4) (i) and Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Reason for penalty on Citibank:

For non-compliance with its directions on 'Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services by banks read with Know Your Customer (KYC) Direction, 2016'.

Reason for penalty on Bank of Baroda:

For non-compliance with its Directions on 'Creation of a Central Repository of Large Common Exposures Across Banks', 'Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) – Revision in Reporting', 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions', and 'Reserve Bank of India (Interest Rate on Deposits) Directions'.

Reason for penalty on Indian Overseas Bank:

For non-compliance with its Directions on 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions'.

237. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has updated the '**Alert List**' of unauthorised forex trading platforms by adding **19 more entities**, taking the total to **75**.

The Alert List contains the names of entities, which are neither authorised to deal in forex under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) nor to operate electronic trading platform (ETP) for forex transactions under the Electronic Trading Platforms (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2018.

Alert List contains names of entities/platforms/websites which appear to be promoting unauthorised entities.

Newly added entities:

Admiral Market, BlackBull, Easy Markets, Enclave FX, Finowiz Fintech, FX SmartBull, Fx Tray Market, Forex4you, Growing Capital Services, HF Markets, FX SmartBull, Just Markets, GoDo FX, HYCM Capital Markets, JGCFX, PU Prime, Real Gold Capital, TNFX, Ya Markets, and Gate Trade.

238. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Rajat Kumar Jain** as the Part-time Chairman of **Fino Payment Bank** with effect from 24th November 2023, until 1st November 2025.

He is currently serving as an Independent Director in Fino bank.

239. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in exercise of its powers under section 45L (1) (b) of the RBI Act, 1934, has barred **Bajaj Finance** Limited from sanctioning and disbursing loans under its two lending products viz. "**eCOM**" and "**Insta EMI Card**", with immediate effect.

This happened due to the non-adherence of the company to the extant provisions of digital lending guidelines.

240. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the resolution plan for debt-ridden **Reliance Capital (RCap)**, and enabled Hinduja Group entity, **IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL)**, to acquire RCap.

IIHL had emerged as the highest bidder with an offer of Rs 9,650 crore to take over Reliance Capital in the second round of auction concluded in April 2023.

RBI has also approved the appointment of **five Hinduja Group** representatives as **directors** on the board of the debt-ridden Reliance Capital. The directors are: Amar Chintopanth, Shardchandra V Zaregaonkar, Moses Newling Harding John, Bhumika Batra and Arun Tiwari.

241. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Isha Ambani, Anshuman Thakur, and Hitesh Kumar Sethia** as **Directors** of **Jio Financial Services Limited**, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) backed by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL).

This approval is valid only for six months with effect from the 15th November 2023.

242. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the **risk weights on consumer credit exposure** of commercial banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) by 25 percent.

As per the revision, credit card loans by **banks** will now attract a risk weight of **150 percent**, as compared with 125 percent earlier, while those by **NBFCs** will attract a risk weight of **125 percent**, up from the previous 100 percent.

For the Banks, the increase in risk weights extended to personal loans, but excludes housing loans, education loans, vehicle loans and loans secured by gold and gold jewellery.

For the NBFCs, the increase in risk weights extended to retail loans, excluding housing loans, educational loans, vehicle loans, loans against gold jewellery and microfinance/SHG loans.

The increased risk weight is applicable to **outstanding as well as fresh loans**.

RBI has exempted microfinance loans by NBFCs from the risk-weight increase.

Note: Risk weight refers to the capital banks keep aside as provisioning to cover any loan defaults.

243. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Shaktikanta Das has released the **1st flagship publication** of the **Centre for Advanced Financial Research and Learning (CAFRAL)** titled **'India Finance Report 2023 (IFR 2023).'**

The report states that India's fintech sector could replace traditional banking in the near future.

The theme of the report is **'Connecting the Last Mile: Non-Banking Financial Companies in India.'**

Key highlights:

- The report noted that India is witnessing rapid digitalization with the implementation of the India Stack.
- The introduction of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) has provided FinTech with a seamless digital infrastructure, accelerating its expansion and creating new possibilities for financial inclusion across the country.
- There is a 10% increase in per capita UPI transactions usually leads to a 4.6% rise in fintech lending and 1.5% in lending by commercial banks.
- The transaction value grew at 163% CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) from FY18 to FY23.
- The UPI's contribution to digital transactions grew from 4% in FY18 to 52% in FY22 (by volume).
- In October 2023, UPI recorded 1,141 crore transactions, totaling Rs.17.16 lakh crore.

244. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified a new comprehensive **Master Direction to banks and NBFCs on Information Technology Governance, Risk, Controls and Assurance Practices 2023** under the Banking Regulation Act (1949), Reserve Bank of India Act (1934) and the Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act (2005) etc.

It aims to improve IT governance of Banking and financial Institutions.

It will come into effect from **April 1, 2024**.

Applicable To: Banks (including foreign banks), NBFCs, Credit Information Companies, All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) such as NABARD etc.

Not Applicable To: Local area banks and NBFC-core investment companies.

The new directions aim to establish a Robust IT Governance Framework to enhance operational resilience in their IT systems and infrastructure.

These directions suggest to establish both an Information Security Policy and a Cyber Security Policy.

The key focus areas of IT governance will include strategic alignment, risk management, resource management, performance management and business continuity/ disaster recovery management.

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245. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved **ICICI Bank's** request to make **ICICI Securities** a wholly owned subsidiary. Following this, ICICI Securities will be delisted and become a wholly owned subsidiary of its parent company, ICICI Bank.

ICICI Securities has four lines of business: Broking, Distribution of financial products, Wealth management, and Investment banking.

The acquisition is likely to be completed in the next 12-15 months, subject to regulatory approvals from ICICI Bank and the company's shareholders' and creditors, RBI, National Company Law Tribunal, stock exchanges and other regulatory and statutory authorities.

246. PayGlocal, a cross-border focused payments platform provider, has received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a **Payment Aggregator license**.

This will enable PayGlocal to onboard merchants onto its platform for online payment processing.

247. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed cooperative banks desirous of changing their name to approach the **Department of Supervision (DoS) of the concerned Regional Office** (DoS, Central Office in case of Co-operative Banks coming under the purview of Mumbai Office) of the Reserve Bank of India for grant of **no objection certificate (NOC)** under **Sections 49B and 49C of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949**, clearly stating the reason/s for such change.

The approval of the General Body of the bank will be mandatory at the time of submitting such requests to RBI.

NOC from RBI under section 49C read with section 56 of BR Act, 1949 will be necessary only in case there is a requirement for 'confirmation' from the Central/State Government, one or more authority/authorities for alteration of bye-laws under the applicable Co-operative Act /Rules.

It will be mandatory for a cooperative bank to give a declaration in writing regarding the above-mentioned requirement for 'confirmation' under the applicable Co-operative Act /Rules while submitting its request to RBI.

The cooperative banks shall submit their requests for change of name and bylaws, only when these are supported by valid and compelling reason/s for the proposed change. It may be noted that RBI shall have the discretion to assess whether the reason/s submitted by the bank are valid and compelling.

After getting NOC from the concerned office of the Reserve Bank, the Co-operative banks will approach the Central Registrar of Co-operative Societies (CRCS) or Registrar of Co-operative Societies (RCS) for amendment in their by-laws.

No co-operative bank shall display/operate with an amended name without affecting the corresponding change in its name in the banking licence issued by the Reserve Bank of India.

248. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that the **bulk deposit limit** for **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** has been increased from Rs.15 lakh to **Rs.1 crore** in order to raise funds.

Accordingly, "Bulk Deposit" for Regional Rural Banks will now mean Single Rupee term deposits of Rs.1 crore and above".

This means all domestic term deposits accepted from individuals for amount of Rs.1 crore and below will have premature-withdrawal-facility.

These instructions will also be applicable for Non-Resident (External) Rupee (NRE) Deposit or Ordinary Non-Resident (NRO) Deposits.

Note: The bulk deposit limit for scheduled commercial banks and Small Finance Banks is Rs.2 crore and above.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):

RRBs are government owned scheduled commercial banks of India that operate at regional level in different states of India. These banks are under the ownership of Ministry of Finance, Government of India, Sponsored Bank and concerned State Government in the ratio of 50:35:15 respectively.

Prathama Bank, with head office in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh was the first RRB established on 2 October 1975.

249. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the **Regulation of Payment Aggregator- Cross Border (PA-CB)**. RBI has decided that all entities facilitating cross border payment transactions for import and export of goods and services will be directly regulated by it and such entities will be treated as **Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB)**.

Currently, all Payment Aggregators (PAs), which facilitate processing of domestic transactions in online mode, are covered within the scope of RBI regulations.

The entities including Authorised Dealer (AD) banks, PAs and PAs-CB shall comply with these new instructions.

All non-banks which provide PA-CB services must apply for authorization from the RBI by **30th April 2024**.

Key norms:

- The non-banks providing PA-CB services must have a minimum net worth of **Rs.15 crore** at the time of applying to the RBI for authorisation and a minimum net worth of **Rs.25 crore** by **31st March 2026**.
- All non-bank PA-CB should register with Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) as a pre-requisite for seeking authorization from the RBI.
- In respect of import and export transactions processed by PA-CBs, the maximum value per unit of goods / services sold / purchased shall be **Rs.25,00,000**.
- Non-complaint non-bank PA must cease operations by **31st July 2024**, if unable to meet requirements or apply for authorization.

250. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed **Manoranjan Mishra** as the new **Executive Director (ED)** with effect from **1st November 2023**. Prior to being promoted to ED, he was serving as Chief General Manager in the Department of Regulation.

As the ED, he will be looking after the Enforcement Directorate, Risk Monitoring Department and Department of External Investments & Operations.

251. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a **Rs.72 lakh** penalty on state-owned **Punjab National Bank** for non-compliance with certain provisions related to 'interest rate on advances' and 'customer service in banks'.

RBI has imposed a penalty of **Rs.30 lakh** on **Federal Bank** for contravention of certain provisions of KYC norms.

It has also imposed a penalty of **Rs.10 lakh** on **Mercedes-Benz Financial Services India Private Ltd** (formerly known as Daimler Financial Services India Private Ltd) for non-compliance with certain provisions of the Know Your Customer (KYC) Direction, 2016.

A monetary penalty of **Rs.13.38 lakh** has been imposed on **Kosamattam Finance Ltd**, Kottayam, for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Systemically Important Non-Deposit taking Company and Deposit taking Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016'.

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

252. Tamil writer **Perumal Murugan** has won the **2023 JCB Prize for Literature** for his novel named '**Fire Bird**', originally written in Tamil as "Aalanda Patchi", which was first published in 2012.

The book is translated into English by **Janani Kannan**.

The book is published by Penguin Random House India.

The book is the 5th translated work to win JCB Prize for Literature.

The book explores themes of displacement and the human desire for stability in a changing world.

JCB Prize for Literature:

The Prize was established in 2018. It is an annual award presented to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian author. The author of the winning book receives a cash prize of Rs.25 lakh and a trophy, 'Mirror Melting' designed by artist duo Thukral and Tagra. The translator will be awarded a cash prize of Rs.10 lakhs.

253. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has released the **11th edition** of the list of **BBC 100 Women 2023** which includes four Indian women viz. Actress **Dia Mirza**, Cricketer **Harmanpreet Kaur**, Photographer **Arati Kumar-Rao**, and Tibetan Buddhist nun **Jetsunma Tenzim Palmo**.

It is a list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2023.

Harmanpreet Kaur and Dia Mirza are named under the Entertainment & Sport category while Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo is acknowledged under the category of Culture and education. In 2023, for the first time, this BBC 100 Women list specifically highlights '**Climate pioneers**' a group of women leading the battle against the climate crisis. The list features 28 Climate Pioneers from across the globe who are inspiring and leading their communities to tackle the devastating impact of climate change.

254. The **Ministry of Steel** has presented the **National Metallurgist Award (NMA) 2022** to recognize the excellence & contribution of Metallurgists in the Iron & Steel Sector.

The awardees are:

- Dr Kamachi Mudali Uthandi - Lifetime Achievement Award
- Dr Debashish Bhattacharjee - National Metallurgist Award
- Dr Rameshwar Sah - R&D in Iron & Steel Sector
- Dr Niloy Kundu - Young Metallurgist (Environment) Award
- Agilan Muthumanickam - Award Young Metallurgist (Metal Science) Award

National Metallurgist Award:

National Metallurgists Day Awards was instituted in 1962 by the then Ministry of Steel & Mines to recognise & honour the outstanding contributions of Metallurgists in the metallurgical field covering operation, research, design, education, waste management and energy conservation.

The first award was given in the year 1963.

255. **Angkor Wat**, located in **Cambodia**, has become the **eighth Wonder of the World** by beating Pompeii (Italy). The title of the eighth Wonder of the World is given to outstanding buildings or projects, and Angkor Wat has gained this recognition.

Angkor Wat:

- Ankor Wat is located in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- This temple was built by **King Suryavarman II** in the 12th century.
- The temple was first a Hindu temple dedicated to **Vishnu** but later transformed into a **Buddhist** temple.
- The temple was inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** in **1992**.
- The temple's central part has five lotus-shaped towers showing symmetry and representing a sacred mountain in Hindu and Buddhist beliefs.
- The detailed carvings on its walls depict stories from Hindu and Buddhist histories.

256. Abdullahi Mire, a journalist and former refugee from **Somalia**, has won the **2023 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Nansen Refugee Award**. He has been recognized for championing the right to education while putting 100,000 books in the hands of displaced children and youth in Kenya.

Regional Winners of the 2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award:

- Elizabeth Moreno Barco from Colombia (Americas)
- Abdullah Habib, Sahat Zia Hero, Salim Khan, and Shahida Win from Asia-Pacific
- Lena Grochowska and Władysław Grochowski from Poland (Europe)
- Asia Al-Mashreqi from Yemen (Middle East and North Africa)

UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award:

The award honours individuals, groups and organizations who go above and beyond the call of duty to protect refugees, displaced and stateless people. The award was established in **1954**.

The award celebrates the legacy of **Fridtjof Nansen**, a Norwegian scientist, polar explorer, diplomat and first High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations.

The first UNHR Nansen Refugee Award was presented in 1954 to Eleanor Roosevelt, the first Chair of the UN Human Rights Commission and First Lady of the United States alongside President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Since **2017**, Regional Winners have also been recognized for their humanitarian efforts. The award consists of a commemorative medal and a monetary prize of **USD 100,000** donated by the governments of Norway and Switzerland.

257. The USA dictionary publisher **Merriam-Webster** has chosen '**Authentic**' as the **Word of the Year for 2023**. The word is defined as "not false or imitation" and "true to one's own personality, spirit, or character."

Authentic is an adjective which modifies the noun.

The word is often connected to national as well as personal identity.

258. The **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)** will award a multi-year **Rs.1,000-crore** purchase order to **Nokia** for the supply of optical transport network (**OTN**) equipment and deployment through a local system integrator.

The BSNL contract includes the supply, installation, and commission of the optical transport network on the pan-India level.

The contract also has a provision for three-year operation and maintenance (O&M) services and a comprehensive annual maintenance contract (AMC) for eight years.

259. Indian-born British-American author **Slaman Rushdie** has been awarded the first-ever '**Lifetime Disturbing the Peace Award**'. The award has been presented by the Vaclav Havel Center in Manhattan, New York, USA.

He has authored many novels and book of stories including **Midnight's Children** which was awarded the Booker Prize in 1981.

In 2008, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to literature.

Vaclav Havel Center:

The Havel Center was founded in 2012 as the Vaclav Havel Library Foundation. It is named for the Czech playwright and dissident who became the last President of Czechoslovakia after the fall of the communist regime.

260. The **2023 Olympic Cup** has been awarded to the **Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation (THF)** in recognition of its long-term commitment to supporting refugee athletes and refugees worldwide through taekwondo.

The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, has presented the Cup in a ceremony held at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Olympic Cup:

It is a unique award and was created by the IOC's founder, Pierre de Coubertin. It was first awarded in 1906. The Olympic Cup is the highest distinction for an organisation with a proven record of promoting the ideals of the Olympic Movement.

Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation (THF):

THF was founded by World Taekwondo President Chungwon Choue at the United Nations headquarters in **New York** in 2015, the THF aims to empower refugees worldwide through taekwondo, helping them to improve their quality of life, develop their life skills, learn the Olympic values and pursue their dreams.

261. The **15th edition** of the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) Healthcare Excellence Awards 2023** has been presented in New Delhi. The award is given to recognize and felicitate organizations and individuals for their outstanding contributions to the Indian healthcare sector.

These awards were instituted since 2009.

Innovation, Impact, and Sustainability & Scalability forms the three criteria for evaluation.

FICCI Healthcare Excellence Award 2023	
Chairman's Award for Outstanding Leadership in Healthcare	Dr Bishnu Prasad Panigrahi, Group Head, Medical Strategy & Operations, Fortis Hospitals
	Gracy Mathai, CEO, Baby Memorial Hospital, Calicut, Kerala

Healthcare Humanitarian	Dr R Ravi Kannan , Director, Cacha Cancer Hospital and Research Center, Silchar, Assam
Healthcare Personality of the Year	Dr Vikram Shah, CMD, Shalby Ltd., Director, Joint Replacement Surgeries, Shalby Group of Hospitals
Lifetime Achievement in Healthcare Industry	Dr Yash Paul Bhatia, CMD, Astron Groups

- 262.** The Government of Maharashtra has honoured veteran playback singer and Padma Shri awardee **Suresh Ishwar Wadkar** with the '**Gaansamragini Lata Mangeshkar Award 2023**'.
- The award recognizes an artist who has made consistent and invaluable contributions and achievements in the field of music and singing.
 - The award includes a cash prize of **Rs.5 lakhs**, a certificate, and a memento.

Awards/ Honours (Suresh Wadkar):

- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award:** 2018
- **Padma Shri:** 2020

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- 263.** Asian Power Magazine has presented the 19th Asian Power Awards, **3rd Asian Oil and Gas Awards**, and inaugural Asian Water Awards in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on November 2023.

The "Innovation Award- India" has been given to **GAIL (India) Limited** for reduction in LNG Shipping cost & emissions through Ship-to-Ship (STS) transfer of LNG with backhauling. Another award "Midstream Project of the Year- India" has been given to GAIL (India) Limited for the installation of the first floating Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) station at Varanasi.

- 264.** Indian economist and Padma Shri awardee **Bina Agarwal**, a professor at the University of Manchester, has been honoured with the **2023 Kenneth Boulding Award in Ecological Economics** along with **David Barkin**, a professor at the Metropolitan University in Mexico City.

The International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) has presented the award for their significant contributions to ecological economics, focusing on environmental governance, agrarian change, and social equity in developing countries.

The award has been presented during the IESS's 2023 Biennial Conference in Santa Marta, Colombia.

This award is given in honour of people who exemplify aspects of the special character of Kenneth E. Boulding, American economist and educator, with the hope of perpetuating his many individual strengths that combined into wisdom among ISEE members and beyond.

Note: Bina Agarwal received the Padma Shri for her work in the field of Literature and Education in 2008.

265. Mohali (Punjab)-based **Deepti Bubuta** has bagged the **2023 Dhahan Prize for Punjabi literature** for her short stories collection titled '*Bhukh Eon Sah Laindi Hai*' (*Hunger Breathes Like This*).

With this, she has become the **first woman** to win the Dhahan Prize.

She has been presented with a cash award of 25,000 CAD and a trophy at a ceremony held at Northview Golf and Country Club in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.

Dhahan Prize:

The Dhahan Prize is the largest international literary award for fiction books in Punjabi language. It was established by the Canada India Education Society (CIES) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2013 to give a platform to both aspiring and established writers to take their work to a broader, multilingual audience.

266. The **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2022** has been jointly awarded to the New Delhi headquartered **Indian Medical Association (IMA)** and the New Delhi-based **Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI)** as representatives of the COVID-19 warriors in the country.

The award has been presented to Dr Sharad Kumar Agarwal, President, IMA, and Professor (Dr) Roy K. George, President, TNAI.

The award acknowledges every doctor, nurse, paramedic and karamchari for their selfless service, unflinching dedication, and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize:

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development is a prestigious award given annually by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust to individuals or organizations in recognition of creative efforts toward promoting international peace, development, and a new international economic order; ensuring that scientific discoveries are used for the larger good of humanity and enlarging the scope of freedom.

The prize carries a cash award of **2.5 million Indian rupees** and a citation.

The award was first presented to **Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)**, a New York (USA)-based non-profit, non-partisan international network of committed legislators, in **1986**.

267. **Sheynnis Palacios (Nicaragua)**, a mental health activist and audiovisual producer, has been crowned **Miss Universe** at the 72nd Miss Universe Beauty Pageant 2023 held in San Salvador, Republic of El Salvador.

She is the first women from Nicaragua to win Miss Universe crown.

She has been crowned by R'Bonney Gabriel (USA), who held the title of Miss Universe for 2022.

First runner up: Anntonia Porsild (Thailand)

Second runner up: Moraya Wilson (Australia)

Note: The first Miss Universe Pageant was held in Long Beach, California, USA in 1952 which was won by Armi Kuusela from Finland.

268. Dr Mathavaraj S of the UR Rao Satellite Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has become the **first recipient** of **Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award**.

He designed the powered descent trajectory of the **Chandrayana 3 Mission** that had successfully landed on the South Pole of the moon.

- The Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award is instituted by the Goa government.
- The award will be presented on 13th December 2023 on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr Manohar Parikar who served as the Chief Minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014 and from 2017 to 2019.
- The award comprises a cash prize of **Rs 5 lakh**, which is currently the highest cash prize in science and technology, and a citation.

269. The word "**Hallucinate**" is chosen as the **Word of the Year 2023** by the Cambridge Dictionary. The original definition of the chosen word is to "seem to see, hear, feel, or smell" something that does not exist, usually because of "a health condition or because you have taken a drug".

The word now has an additional meaning, relating to when artificial intelligence systems such as ChatGPT, which generates text that mimics human writing, "hallucinates" and produces false information.

The word has been chosen because the new meaning gets to the heart of why people are talking about AI (Artificial Intelligence).

The Cambridge Dictionary Word of the Year has been published every year since 2015. A team makes the decision based on data on words that saw popular usage in the year and their cultural salience.

270. Dr Sujit Roy, Co-Founder, BrainAlive AI (BAAI), has won the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (**NASA**) **IMPACT** (Interagency Implementation and Advanced Concepts Team) **Planet Award 2023** for his outstanding contribution to the Geospatial AI Foundation Model project.

He has over 10 years of experience of R&D (Research & Development) in Machine Learning and Computational Neuroscience in global research organizations like NASA Impact and University of Manchester.

NASA and IBM Research collaborated to create NASA's first open-source geospatial artificial intelligence (AI) foundation model for Earth observation data. Sujit Roy was part of the NASA's research team.

BrainAlive AI (BAAI) is an AI Engine that leverages data transformation approach to convert raw interaction data into real-time user engagement insights.

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271. Indian comedian and actor **Vir Das** has won the **International Emmy Award 2023** under the **comedy** category for his Netflix stand-up special show "*Vir Das: Landing*".

He shared the Emmy for Comedy with "Derry Girls-Season 3", a UK origin web series produced by Hat Trick Productions.

With this, he has become the **first Indian comedian** to win the Emmy Award.

This marks his maiden International Emmy Award and the 2nd Emmy nomination including his nomination in 2021 for the stand-up show "Vir Das: For India."

'Veer Das Landing' is a comedy special i.e., an unscripted standup comedy show, where comedians talk about their lives and experiences.

272. Indian producer **Ekta Kapoor** has been honoured with the prestigious **Directorate Award** at the **51st International Emmy Awards** ceremony held in New York, USA. She has been honoured for her contribution to the world of arts and entertainment.

The award has been presented by the renowned author and new age leader, Deepak Chopra. With this, she has become the **first Indian woman filmmaker** to receive the honour.

Previously, Subhash Chandra, the founder of Zee Group, received the Directorate Award in 2021 for his contribution to India's television industry.

Directorate Award:

It is one of the two special awards of the International Emmy Awards. It is presented to an organization or an individual for outstanding contributions over a period of time to the arts and sciences of international television.

International Emmy Award:

International Emmy Awards are being given since 2007. It is annually presented by the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (IATAS) to recognize excellence in television programming produced outside of the USA.

273. American tennis player **Serena Williams** has received the Council of Fashion Designers of America's (CFDA) Fashion Icon Award in 2023. With this, she has become the **first athlete** to receive this award.

The award has been presented at the ceremony held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, USA.

CFDA Fashion Award:

The Council of Fashion Designers of America celebrates the top talent in fashion design with the CFDA Awards since 1980. The event is considered as fashion industry's equivalent of the Oscars.

274. William, Prince of Wales, has announced the winners of the **2023 Earthshot Prize** at the awards ceremony which was held in Singapore.

Category	Winners	Country
Protect and Restore Nature	Accion Andina	The Andes Mountains, South America
Clean Our Air	GRST	Hong King, China
Revive our Oceans	WildAid Marine Program	Global
Build A Waste-Free World	S4S Technologies	India
Fix our Climate	Boomitra	Global

Earthshot Prize:

The Earthshot Prize, also known as 'Eco Oscar', was instituted in **2021**. It is given to five winners each year for their contributions to environmentalism. Each winners will receive **1 million pound sterling (USD 1.2 million)** to develop their innovation.

The prize is focussed on **5 earthshot goals**: Protect and Restore Nature; Clean Our Air; Revive our Oceans; Build A Waste-Free World; and Fix our Climate.

275. India's first ever dedicated award show for **Indian Forest Service officers**, the **Eco Warrior Awards 2023**, has been held in New Delhi to honour exceptional individuals and initiatives that have made significant contributions to environmental conservation and sustainable practices.

Eco Warrior Awards 2023 is organised jointly by Indian Masterminds and Indian Forest Service Association, and the awards are sponsored by **HPCL** (Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited), a Maharatna company in oil and gas sector; **GAIL** - India's leading Natural Gas Company; and **Okiwana** - Ye E Sahi Hai.

Awardees:

Category 'Forest Protection': Vasu Kanojia, DFO, North Seoni, Madhya Pradesh.

Category 'Wildlife Conservation': Dr. Mohan Ram for his exemplary work in wildlife conservation in Gir Forest, Gujarat.

Category 'Wildlife Protection': Ritesh Sarothiya, Regional Deputy Director, NR, WCCB, Headquarters, MoEF & CC, Delhi.

Category 'Best Use of Technology for Conservation': Biswajit Mishra, currently serving as CCF, (CTI), in Bengaluru.

Category 'Award for Community Connect': Millo Tassar, Conservator of Forests in Arunachal Pradesh.

276. The song '**Abundance in Millets**', featuring **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has been nominated in the **Best Global Music Performance** category at the 2024 Grammy Awards.
- The song is composed by Mumbai-based singer-songwriter **Falguni Shah** and her husband and singer **Gaurav Shah**.
 - The song features a speech written and delivered by PM Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the Global Millets (Shree Anna) Conference in March 2023 in New Delhi.
 - The song celebrates the International Year of the Millets (2023), which was declared by the United Nations.
 - The song is created to raise awareness of the super-grain (millet) as another potential key to minimizing world hunger.

277. Falguni Shah is a singer, songwriter, and also the 1st South Asian woman to win a Grammy. In 2022, she had won the Grammy Award for 'Best Children's Music Album 'A Colorful World.'

Note: The common types of millets grown in India include pearl millet (Bajra), sorghum (Jowar), finger millet (Ragi), and small millets such as foxtail millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet, proso millet, little millet, and two pseudo millets such as Buckwheat and Amaranthus. Grammy Award is any of a series of awards presented each year in the United States by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences. The Grammys, as they are commonly known, are meant to recognize spectacular work in the music industry.

278. The 19th edition of '**Kalakar Puraskar**,' organized by the Carvalho Household of Kundapura in collaboration with Mandd Sobhann, Mangaluru, has been presented to **Apolinaris D'Souza**, a distinguished Konkani singer, lyricist, and composer.

He has made immense contributions to **Konkani music** in **Oman** and in **Mangaluru**, Karnataka.

He is known for his popular hymns such as '*Mon'dirant Bhitor Sorun*,' '*Orgam Tuka Somiya*,' '*Ye Ye Jezu Mogalla*,' '*Unddya Vayna Sovem*,' '*Vetam Somiya*,' and '*Sasnnacho Vishev*.'

He was the first person to organize Konkani program in Muscat, Oman in 1976.

Kalakar Puraskar:

The award was institutionalized in 2004 by linguist Pratap Naik under the name of his Carvalho family. It is presented to individuals from the Karnataka region in recognition of their outstanding achievements in various fields related to Konkani culture, including music, dance, theatre, folklore, and cinema.

The award carries a cash prize of Rs.50,000, a citation of honour, and a memento.

279. The **West Bengal** has presented the inaugural **Durga Bharat Samman award (2023)** during the event organized at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata, West Bengal. The award recognizes the contribution of people in different fields from across India.

The awards have been classified into 3 categories: *Durga Bharat Param Samman; Durga Ratna Awards; and Durga Bharat Puraskar.*

Durga Bharat Param Samman is the highest award among the three.

- Hindustani classical vocalist and composer **Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty** has been conferred with the prestigious 'Durga Bharat Param Samman' by the Governor of West Bengal, C V Ananda Bose.
- **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)** for its achievements in shipbuilding.
- **Chandrayaan Team** of ISRO for the success of the Chandrayaan Mission.
- **Visva-Bharati University**, Santiniketan for its contribution to education.

The award carries a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh for each of the recipients.

280. The **2023 Ballon d'Or Awards**, the 67th annual ceremony of the Ballon d'Or, have been presented by France Football magazine. The award recognizes the best footballers in the world in the 2022–23 season.

Argentine professional footballer **Lionel Messi** has won the 2023 Ballon d'Or Award (Men) for the record **8th time**. He belongs to Inter Miami club.

Spain's **Aitana Bonmatí** has won the 2023 Ballon d'Or Award (Women) (Club: Barcelona).

Kopa Trophy: Jude Bellingham (England) (Club: Borussia Dortmund)

Yashin Trophy: Emiliano Martínez (Argentina) (Club: Aston Villa)

Gerd Müller Trophy: Erling Haaland (Norway) (Club: Manchester City)

Socrates Award: Vinícius Júnior (Brazil) (Club: Real Madrid)

Club of the Year: Manchester City

The Ballon d'Or is an annual football award presented by French news magazine France Football since 1956. It is awarded based on the achievements from the past season.

281. John Chambers, Chairman of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), has awarded **Nita Ambani**, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, with the **2023 Global Leadership Award for Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility** in an event held in New Delhi.

She has been recognized for her philanthropic work, particularly in the areas of education, arts, sports, and healthcare. She is a strong advocate for women's and children's causes, aiming to bridge the gender divide and maximize women's contributions to India's growing economy.

US-India Strategic Partnership Forum:

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), formed in 2017, is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the partnership between the US and India, serving as a trusted partner for businesses, non-profit organizations, the diaspora, and the governments of both countries.

- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., USA

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282. The **16th edition** of the **Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition 2023** has been organized by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** through the Institute of Urban Transport (India) and with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. at the Manekshaw Centre, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi.

The conference has been inaugurated by **Hardeep Singh Puri**, Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Theme: Integrated and Resilient Urban Transport

In the valedictory session, awards have been presented to the winning state / city authorities for "Excellence/ best practice projects in Urban Transport" in the following categories:

Categories	Awardees
City with the Best Public Transport System	Srinagar Smart City Limited for Srinagar's Multimodal Transport System project.
City with the Best Non-Motorized Transport System	Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation for NMT friendly Pimple Saudagar Neighbourhood project.
City with the Most Innovative Financing Mechanism	Jabalpur City Transport Services Limited for their Financial Mechanism for Sustainable City Bus Services project.
City with Best Record of Public Involvement in its Transport Planning	Sustainable Transport and Efficient Mobility Society (STEMS), East Khasi Hills (Shillong) for their Shared Commuter Service project.
City with the Best Green Transport Initiative	Kochi Metro Rail Limited for their Kochi Water Metro project.
Metro Rail with the Best Multimodal Integration	Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) for their Multi Modal

	Integration Project for 30 Stations of Mumbai metro Line 2A & 7.
Metro Rail with the Best Passenger Services and Satisfaction	Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. for Delhi Metro Rail project jointly with Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. for their Lucknow Metro Rail project.
Running trophy for the State / UT, which has Implemented Best Urban Transport	Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) for their Mo Bus & Mo E-Ride.

Urban Mobility India:

The Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference cum Exhibition was initiated by the erstwhile Ministry of Urban Development now Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India in 2008 to provide a platform for churning out thoughts / ideas, promoting best practices across India and in different parts of the world to carve out the way forward for improving urban mobility in the country.

Note: The 15th edition of the Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition (2022) was held in Kochi, Kerala.

283. Admiral R Hari Kumar, the Indian Navy Chief, has presented the inaugural **Navy's Intellectual Beacon (NIB) award** to **Commander M Arun Chakravarthy**, winner of Indian Navy's Sardar KM Panikkar NIB essay competition.

He also received the unique badge (NIB), introduced for the winner to wear on his/her uniform for 1 year duration.

'NIB' essay competition was introduced to promote reading, writing, critical thinking and systematic skills amongst the Naval community. All officers below the rank of Captain (Col equivalent) are eligible to participate in it.

Note: The NIB award has been constituted by the Indian Navy in the memory of **Sardar KM Panikkar**, a maritime strategic thinker who advocated maritime awakening in India, wrote strongly in favour of enhancing maritime consciousness in the nation, and relentlessly highlighted the significance of maritime power and naval policy to India's growth and prosperity.

284. 'AI', a term that describes 'the modelling of human mental functions by computer programs' has been named **Collins Dictionary Word of the Year 2023**. AI has seen rapid development and has been much talked about in 2023.

AI stands for **Artificial Intelligence**.

AI, the uncountable noun, is chosen from the spoken material from radio, TV, and everyday conversations.

The Collins English Dictionary is a printed and online dictionary of English. It is published by HarperCollins in Glasgow, Scotland.

285. The 55 cities have joined the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)**) on the occasion of World Cities Day 2023 (31st October).

The list has featured 2 Indian cities namely **Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh) and Kozhikode (Kerala)**.

Kozhikode has been designated as the '**City of Literature**' and **Gwalior** as the '**City of Music**' in the list.

The newly recognized cities highlight their dedication to integrating culture and creativity into their developmental frameworks.

Other Indian cities included in UCCN:

- Jaipur: Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)
- Varanasi: Music (2015)
- Chennai: Music (2017)
- Mumbai: Film (2019)
- Hyderabad: Gastronomy (2019)
- Srinagar: Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The cities work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.

286. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has announced the winners of the **2023 Champions of the Earth Award**. The 2023 Champions of the Earth award honour those working to **#BeatPlasticPollution**. This follows the historic UN Environment Assembly resolution to develop a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution by 2024.

The 2023 Champions of the Earth are celebrated in four categories:

Policy leadership category: Mayor Josefina Belmonte of Quezon City (**Philippines**) to ban single-use plastics, a trade-in programme for plastic pollution etc.

Inspiration and Action category: Ellen MacArthur Foundation (United Kingdom) in mainstreaming lifecycle approach, including for plastics.

Entrepreneurial Vision category:

- **Blue Circle (China)** uses blockchain technology and internet of things to track and monitor full lifecycle of plastic pollution.
- **José Manuel Moller (Chile)** is founder social enterprise (Algramo) dedicated to providing refill services that reduce plastic pollution and lower everyday essentials costs.

Science and Innovation category: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (South Africa) uses cutting-edge technology and multidisciplinary research to develop innovations to tackle plastic pollution.

Champions of the Earth award honour individuals, groups, and organizations whose actions have transformative impact on environment. It is awarded annually since its inception in 2005. It is UN's highest environmental honour which recognizes outstanding leaders from government, civil society and private sector.

287. Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, has inaugurated the **71st Foundation Day of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on 1st November 2023.

During the occasion, Rameshwar Teli, Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, has inaugurated an exhibition named **"Amrit Kaal - Behtar Kal"**, displaying the 71 years of EPFO history including chatbot and revamped MIS 3.0.

A documentary film on journey of 71 years of the organization titled Achievements of EPFO was also played on the occasion highlighting the organization's achievements over the seven decades.

He has also unveiled the second edition of State Profile Booklet 2023, Establishment e-Report and Compendium of 50 Landmark Judgments and manual on Communication Framework Document, Audit Manual, Recovery Manual and Exemption Manual.

Bhavishya Nidhi Awards 2023 have also been presented for best performances.

Bhavishya Nidhi Awards 2023	
Category	Awardees
Best Regional Office (Large)	RO COIMBATORE
Best Regional Office (Small)	RO Rajahmahendravaram
Best District Office	DO ALIGARH
Best Remote Office	RO GUWAHATI
Best Zonal Office	ZO HUBLI (KARNATAKA- GOA)

Best Office in Grievance Management	RO AHMEDABAD
Best Office in Pro-Active Settlement	RO KOLLAM
Best Performance in Jeevan Pramaan	RO VATWA
Best NAN 2.0 Campaign	RO JAMMU
Bhavishya Nidhi Swachhata Award 2023	RO BHOPAL
Best Innovation	RO NOIDA
Best Tech Intervention	Technical Team of NDC
Best Achievement in Capacity Building	PDNASS Induction Training Team
Best Exempted Trust	M/s ZENSAR TECH LTD (PUPUN000398)
Outstanding Sports Achievements	ZO Chennai & Puducherry
Sportsperson of the Year – Female	Radhika Gupta, SSSA, RO Kandivali East
Sportsperson of the Year – Male	Clement Augustine, SSSA, RO Kottayam
Sportsperson of the Year – Male	P. Shiva Kumar, SSSA, RO Chennai North

EPFO:

It is a statutory body that came into existence under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, of 1952. It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

It administers the mandatory provident fund, a basic pension scheme, and a disability/death insurance scheme.

288. Union Minister of Power **R.K. Singh** has honoured the winners of the 5th edition of the **Hindu Business Line Changemaker Awards (2023)** during the award ceremony held in New Delhi.

The award recognizes the people and organizations that have brought a positive change in society since 2018.

Changemaker Awards 2023 (Category)	Winners
Changemaker-Financial Transformation	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna
Changemaker-Digital Transformation	Stellapps and Technologies
Changemaker-Social Transformation	HerKey and Educate Girls

Iconic-Changemaker	Amul
Young Changemaker	Shrinidhi RS
Changemaker of the year 2023	Reserve Bank of India

289. An engineer-turned-social worker, **Deenanath Rajput**, from Bastar (Chhattisgarh) has been awarded the **2nd Rohini Nayar Prize (2023)** for his outstanding contribution to rural development.

The award has been presented by Nand Kishore Singh who is the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission.

He worked for the upliftment of over 6000 tribal women in Bastar, a region known for its challenges, including Naxalite activities.

He founded Bhumagadi Mahila Krushak Producer Company Limited in 2018.

The award was presented in memory of the late economist-administrator Dr. Rohini Nayar. The award comprises a trophy, a citation, and a cash prize of Rs.10 lakh.

Note: Sethrichem Sangtam, who helped triple the incomes of 1,200 marginalised farmers in Eastern Nagaland, was awarded the first Rohini Nayar prize (2022).

290. Responsible Tourism Partnership and International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) has announced the 8 winners of the **Global Responsible Tourism Award 2023**, which includes Kerala Responsible Tourism (RT) mission and Soar Excursions, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Winners of Global Responsible Tourism Award 2023	
Category	Winners
Best for Tackling Plastic Waste	Lemala Camps and Lodges in Tanzania
Best for Meaningful Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soar Excursions, Gujarat (India) • Uthando, South Africa
Best for Local Sourcing - Craft and Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala RT Mission, Kerala (India) • Ngwenya Glass, Eswatini
Best for Addressing Climate Change	Weeva, South Africa
Best for Diversity and Inclusion	The Batuc Network, Brazil
Best for Nature-Positive Tourism	Wildlife Act, South Africa

Global Responsible Tourism Awards:

Responsible Tourism established the Responsible Tourism Awards in 2004.

The Global Responsible Tourism Awards, which cater to Africa, India and Latin America regions, are given in six categories including Best for Tackling Plastic Waste; Best for Meaningful Connections; Best for Local Sourcing - Craft and Food; Addressing Climate Change; Best for Diversity and Inclusion and Best for Nature-Positive Tourism.

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BOOKS & AUTHORS

291. Famous poet, lyricist and CBFC (Central Board of Film Certification) Chief **Prasoon Joshi** has released a book titled '**Do Palkon Ki Chhavn Main**'.

The book is written by noted academician **Dr Hema Joshi**.

This book is about the author's love for two Indian cities, Almora where she born and Prayagraj where she spent her later years.

Dr Hema Joshi is from the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand.

292. Former Indian cricketer **Kapil Dev** has released the book titled "**Thread by Thread: The S. Kumar's Story**". The book is penned by **Sathya Saran**, a distinguished journalist.

The book is published by Penguin Random House.

The book details the life of Shambhu Kumar Kasliwal, co-founder of the S Kumars Group, the fabric of India and one of the most enduring brands in India since 1948.

Shambhu Kumar pioneered the introduction of Polyester Blends in India, which boosted the manufacturing and consumption of affordable, long-lasting fabrics for the middle class and the lower income groups.

293. Irish author **Paul Lynch** has won the **2023 Booker Prize** for his novel named '**Prophet Song**'. The book is published by Oneworld. He has been awarded by Shehan Karunatilaka, the 2022 winner, during a ceremony held at Old Billingsgate, London in the United Kingdom (UK).

He has received 50,000 Pound sterling and the Iris Trophy for his award-winning novel.

Booker Prize:

The Booker Prize is the world's leading literary award for a single work of fiction. It was founded in the UK in 1969. The Booker Prize initially rewarded Commonwealth writers and now spans the globe: it is open to anyone regardless of origin.

Each year, the Booker Prize is awarded to the best sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK and Ireland.

- 294.** A book titled '**Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers**' has been authored by **Sharmishtha Mukherjee**. The book is the biography of former President of India Pranab Mukherjee.
- The book is published by **Rupa Publications**.
- The book sums up the life of Pranab Mukherjee starting from a small village in West Bengal to his rise to the President office.
- The book is also a mirror to the father-daughter relationship between Pranab Mukherjee and Sharmishtha.
- 295.** Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Kalanidhi Division has launched the book titled '**Mapping of the Archives in India**'. The book is authored by **Prof. Ramesh Chandra Gaur and Vismay Basu** and is published by IGNCA and UNESCO.
- The book contains 424 directories of archives of India. The book informs of the conservation, digitisation, and archivisation perspectives as well.
- 296.** Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Vice President of India, has released a new book titled "**Building Partnerships- India and International Cooperation for Maritime Security**" authored by **Captain Himadri Das** during the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023 (IPRD-2023) at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.
- During IPRD-2023, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministry of Finance, has released an edited volume titled '**Maritime Perspectives: Maritime Security Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific: Strategies and Trends.**'
- Both the books have been published by the **National Maritime Foundation (NMF)**. IPDR 2023, the 3-day annual apex-level regional strategic dialogue of the Indian Navy, has been organized in collaboration with NMF as its knowledge partner.
- 297.** The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** has released a book titled "**Snakes of Himachal Pradesh**" which provides comprehensive information about the diverse snake species found in the state of Himachal Pradesh.
- Compiled and edited by:** Omesh Kumar Bharti and DD Bisht
- The book is published with funding from the National Health Mission (NHM) in Himachal Pradesh.
- Note:** Omesh Kumar Bharti received Padma Shri in 2019 in the field of Medicine.
- 298.** **Sreedhara Panicker Somnath (S. Somnath)**, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), has penned his autobiography titled "**Nilavu Kudicha Simhangaal**" in Malayalam language.
- The book is published by Kerala-based Lipi Publications.

The book was inspired by the success of Chandrayaan-3, ISRO's lunar-exploration mission headed by him in August 2023.

The book focuses on the power of hard work and perseverance in the face of difficulties.

299. India-born author **Nandini Das** has won the **2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding**, a leading international **non-fiction** prize, for her book '*Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire*'.

This book is her debut and has been described as the true origin story of Britain and India told through England's first diplomatic mission to the Mughal courts.

The author has presented a new perspective on the origins of empire through the story of the arrival of the first English ambassador in India, Sir Thomas Roe, in the early 17th century.

The award carries a cash prize of **£25000**.

The British Academy Book Prize, formerly known as the Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize, was established in 2013. This is the leading international non-fiction prize. The award rewards and celebrates the best works of non-fiction that demonstrate rigour and originality and have contributed to public understanding of other world cultures and their interaction.

PERSON IN NEWS

300. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) **Girish Chandra Murmu** has been elected as the **Vice-Chair** of the **UN (United Nations) Panel of Auditors for 2024**.

The panel has elected Pierre Moscovici, First President of Cour des comptes, French Republic, as its Chair for 2024.

The announcement has been made during the 63rd session of the Panel held at the UN headquarters in New York, USA.

The Panel of external auditors comprising heads of 12 Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) globally, oversees the external audit of the UN Secretariat, funds and programmes, and specialised agencies.

Note: Girish Chandra Murmu is the 14th Comptroller and Auditor General of India. He hails from Odisha.

301. The Government of **Karnataka** has appointed **Rajneesh Goel** as the **40th Chief Secretary** of the state. He will hold the position till his retirement in July 2024 or until further orders.

He is currently serving as the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) in the Home Department of the Government of Karnataka.

He will succeed Vandita Sharma.

302. **Dr Anish Shah**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mahindra Group, has been named as the **President-elect** of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (**FICCI**) for 2023-2024.

He will succeed Subhrakant Panda, the incumbent President of FICCI after the 96th Annual General Meeting, which is set to be held in December 8-9, 2023, in New Delhi. He is currently serving as the Senior Vice President of FICCI.

303. Incumbent President of Madagascar **Andry Rajoelina**, leader of Young Malagasies Determined (Tanora Malagasy Vonona, TGV party) has been re-elected as the **President of Madagascar** for the **3rd term**.

He won 59% of the vote in the elections defeating former President Marc Ravalomanana (14.4%) and former judo champion, Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko (12%). He previously served as the President of Madagascar from 2009 to 2014 and from 2019 to 2023.

304. AS-IT-IS Nutrition, a fitness and sports nutrition company, has appointed Indian cricketer **Ravindra Jadeja** as its brand ambassador. With this partnership, the brand aims to enhance its visibility and reach among cricket enthusiasts.

Other related news:

SportsBaazi, the sports gaming platform, has appointed Afghanistan cricket player **Rashid Khan** as its brand ambassador. The partnership aligns with SportsBaazi's fresh brand identity, which seeks to introduce exciting new formats and creative user experiences to revolutionise fan engagement with sports.

305. The **Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI)**, the premier body of rural marketers in India, has appointed **Puneet Vidyarthi** as its President for the **2023-2025** during its 18th Annual General Meeting (AGM).

He has replaced Biswabaran Chakrabarti.

306. Robert Shetkintong has been appointed as the High Commissioner of India to the **Republic of Mozambique**. He is currently serving as the Ambassador of India to Ethiopia since 2020.

Note: The capital of Mozambique is Maputo.

307. Pedro Sanchez of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party has been re-elected as the **Prime Minister of Spain**. He has been elected for the 2nd term with a majority in the Spanish parliament. He has won 179 votes in the 350-seat lower house of the Parliament.

He has been serving as the Acting PM of Spain since 25th July 2023.

308. Emmett Shear has been appointed as the interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Microsoft-owned OpenAI**. He will replace Mira Murati, the interim CEO of OpenAI.

Emmett Shear is the co-founder of the live video-streaming website Twitch in 2011. Twitch was acquired by Amazon in 2014.

309. Javier Milei of Libertarian Party has been elected as the new **President of Argentina**. He will succeed the current Argentina President Alberto Fernandez after assuming office on 10th December 2023.

He won the election with 56% votes against 44% for his rival, Peronist Economy Minister Sergio Massa.

310. Luc Frieden, ex-finance minister of the Christian Social People's Party, has been sworn in as the **23rd Prime Minister of Luxembourg**. He has succeeded Xavier Bettel of Liberal Democratic Party (DP), who served as PM of Luxembourg from 2013 to 2023.

The outgoing PM Xavier Bettel has been appointed as deputy PM and foreign minister. Gilles Roth has been appointed as the new Finance Minister of Luxembourg.

311. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the appointment of **Vinay M Tonse** as the **Managing Director (MD)** of the **State Bank of India (SBI)** for the period of two years till **November 2025**.

He was serving as the Deputy MD (Corporate Account Group) of SBI.

He had also served as the MD & CEO of SBI Funds Management Limited from 2020 to 2022.

He has succeeded Swaminathan Janakiraman.

312. Senior Indian diplomat **Surendra Kumar Adhana** has been re-elected as a **member** of the **United Nations (UN) Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)** for a three-year term, **2024–26**, beginning on 1st January 2024.

The Advisory Committee on ACABQ is an expert Committee of 21 Members elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years, based on a broad geographical representation. Members serve in a personal capacity and not as representatives of member states.

The major functions of the Advisory Committee are:

- To examine and report on the budget submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly;
- To advise the General Assembly concerning any administrative and budgetary matters referred to it;
- To examine on behalf of the General Assembly the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and proposals for financial arrangements with such agencies; and
- To consider and report to the General Assembly on the auditors' reports on the accounts of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies.

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313. Information Commissioner **Heeralal Samariya** has been sworn in as the new **Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)**. President of India Droupadi Murmu has administered the oath of office to him in New Delhi.

He was sworn in as the Information Commissioner (IC) in the CIC on November 7, 2020. The post has been lying vacant after Y K Sinha's term ended on 3rd October 2023.

314. The Central Government has appointed **Sanjay Kallapur** and **R. Narayanaswamy** as part-time members of the **National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)**, India's independent accounting regulator. The appointment is valid for a period of three years.

Sanjay Kallapur also served on the Board of IDBI Bank in risk management and audit committees.

R. Narayanaswamy worked in Steel Authority of India from 1980 to 1984. He joined the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in 1984.

315. Hitesh Kumar S. Makwana, Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official of Tamil Nadu cadre, has been appointed as the **Surveyor General of India**.

He was earlier an Additional Secretary in the Union Home Ministry.

He has been appointed as the Surveyor General of India, Survey of India, Department of Science and Technology in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary by keeping the recruitment rules for the post in abeyance.

316. The Government of India has appointed **Govardhan S. Rawat and Dr. Ajay Kumar Sood** as the **Deputy Managing Directors** of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (**NABARD**).

Govardhan S. Rawat has been appointed for a tenure of **5 years** with effect from taking over the charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Ajay Kumar Sood has been appointed till his superannuation on **31st August 2027**.

These appointments follow the approval of the proposal by Department of Financial Services, under the Ministry of Finance.

317. Nadir Larbaoui, a former diplomat, has been appointed as the **Prime Minister of Algeria**. He has replaced Aymen Benabderrahmane.

The appointment of Nadir Larbaoui to this position has been made by the President of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

318. Rear Admiral CR Praveen Nair has assumed the role of Flag Officer Commanding the **Western Fleet**, the sword arm of the Indian Navy. He succeeded Rear Admiral Vineet McCarty, who became the Fleet Commander of the Western Fleet in November 2022.

He was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 1st July 1991 and served as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy & Plans) at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi, Delhi.

- 319.** Dictador, a spirit brand based in Colombia's Cartagena, has appointed '**Mika**', the world's first AI human-like robot CEO (Chief Executive Officer), to lead the company.

Mika is a research project between **Hanson Robotics**, a Hong Kong-based robotics company, and **Dictador**. It has been customised to represent company value.

Hanson Robotics also created Sophia (2015), the popular humanoid robot.

Mika will be responsible for Arthouse Spirits DAO project and communication with the DAO community on the company's behalf.

- 320.** Noted Indian author and columnist **Chetan Bhagat** has been named the **Brand Ambassador** of **Henry Harvin Education (HHE)**, a Global edtech company based out of the United States of America and India.

HHE is an online platform providing 800+ programmes for upskilling and reskilling that serves as a career and competency development organization.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has extended the term of **Matam Venkata Rao**, MD and CEO of Central Bank of India (CBI), till **July 31, 2025**.

He has been serving as the MD & CEO of CBI since March 2021.

- 321. Professor Sarang Deo**, a distinguished figure in the field of Operations Management and healthcare at the Indian School of Business (ISB), has been appointed as a member of the **Strategic and Technical Advisory Group (STAG)** for **Tuberculosis** by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

He will be a part of a 15-member expert group responsible for independently evaluating the WHO's efforts in eradicating TB.

STAG-TB:

STAG-TB operates with the mission of contributing to the global effort to end the tuberculosis epidemic and eventually eliminate the disease. STAG-TB provides WHO with invaluable scientific and technical guidance. Its responsibilities include offering independent evaluations of WHO's strategic, scientific, and technical aspects related to tuberculosis work, reviewing the progress and challenges associated with TB-related core functions, and advising on priority activities for prevention and care.

- 322.** The **Central Railway** has introduced the **Block Proving by Axle Counter (BPAC) system** in the **Vasind-Asangaon section** (Thane district) of the **Mumbai Division** to enhance safety in train operations.

Previously, the BPAC system was in operation up to Vashind railway station within the Kalyan-Igatpuri section.

The Mumbai Division of the Central Railway already has BPAC systems in place on various sections, including:

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Kalyan section
- CSMT-PANVEL Harbour line
- CSMT-Goregaon line
- Kalyan-Karjat section
- Vasai-Panvel-Roha section

The BPAC system plays a crucial role in ensuring the safe clearance of sections before authorizing the entry of another train, contributing to the overall safety of rail travel.

Additional Information:

The Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railway came into existence on April 16, 1853, when the first train on the Indian Sub-continent steamed off from Mumbai to Thane, a modest stretch of only 33 kms. Central Railway was carved out of erstwhile GIP Railway on November 5, 1951.

It is a system with a network of 3905.47 route kilometres and 5975.33 track kilometres linking 477 stations in five divisions i.e Mumbai, Pune, Bhusawal, Nagpur, and Solapur.

- 323.** Tata Power has appointed **Deepesh Nanda** as the President-Renewables and the CEO & MD of its subsidiary, Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (**TPREL**). His appointment has been effective from 1st November 2023.

He has succeeded Ashish Khanna, who moved as President of Generation Business. He will also lead innovation and digital transformation initiatives in the renewable energy sector.

- 324.** The President of India Droupadi Murmu, in exercise of the power conferred by **Article 223** of the Constitution of India, has appointed **Justice H.S Thangkhiew**, senior-most Judge of the **Meghalaya High Court** as its **Acting Chief Justice** with effect from November 2, 2023.

He has succeeded Justice Sanjib Banerjee, 11th CJ of Meghalaya High Court who retired on 1st November 2023.

Other appointments:

Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Judge of Uttarakhand High Court, has been appointed as the Acting Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court with effect from 27th October 2023 upon the retirement of Justice Vipin Sanghi, CJ of Uttarakhand on 26th October 2023.

President can appoint an Acting Chief Justice of High Court when:

- The office of Chief Justice of a High Court becomes vacant
- CJ of HC is temporarily absent
- CJ of HC is unable to perform the duties of his office

325. Senior Indian diplomat **Surendra Kumar Adhana** has been re-elected as a member of the **United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative & Budgetary Questions (UN-ACABQ)** for a three year term, **2024-26**, beginning on **1st January 2024**.

He has been a member of ACABQ, a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), since November 2022.

UN-ACABQ:

The United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative & Budgetary Questions (UN-ACABQ) is an expert committee of 21 members elected by the UNGA for a term of three years.

The members of UN-ACABQ serve in a personal capacity and not as representatives of member states.

326. **Saima Wazed**, the candidate of **Bangladesh**, has been nominated as the next **World Health Organization Regional Director for South-East Asia Region** for five years with effect from **1st February 2024**.

She has secured 8 out of 10 votes against Shambhu Prasad Acharya, a senior WHO official proposed by Nepal.

She is the daughter of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

She will succeed **Poonam Khetrapal Singh**, an Indian national, who became the first woman to assume the office of WHO regional director for South-East Asia in 2014.

Former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court (2018-19), Justice Rajendra Menon, has been re-appointed as the **Chairman** of the **Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)** for a period of four years till **6th June 2027**.

He was initially appointed to the post in 2019 under the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007.

Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT):

AFT was formed with the passing of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act 2007 by the Parliament.

AFT has been provided with the power

for the adjudication or trial by Armed Forces Tribunal of disputes and complaints with respect to commission, appointments, enrolments and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to the Army Act, 1950, The Navy Act, 1957 and the Air Force Act, 1950.

Its Principal Bench is in New Delhi.

327. **Dabur India Limited** has appointed **Sushil Chandra**, former Chief Election Commissioner (24th) of India and former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), as an Additional Director in the category of **Non-Executive Independent Director** for a period of **5 years** with effect from 2nd November 2023 till **1st November 2028**.

With this, the company will now have ten independent directors on its board.

328. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the extension of term of office of **A S Rajeev**, MD and CEO of **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)**, for **six months** till his superannuation.

He was first appointed as the MD and CEO of BoM in 2018.

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OBITUARIES

329. Indian ophthalmologist **Sengamedu Srinivasa Badrinath** (S.S. Badrinath) has passed away at the age of 83 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was born on 24th February 1940 in Triplicane, Madras Presidency (now Chennai, Tamil Nadu).

He was the founder and chairman emeritus of Sankara Nethralaya, one of India's largest charitable eye hospitals.

He founded Sankara Nethralaya (headquartered Chennai) in 1978.

Awards:

- **Padma Shri:** 1983
- **Padma Bhushan:** 1996
- **Dr B.C. Roy National Award:** 1991

Note: An ophthalmologist is a medical or osteopathic doctor who specializes in eye and vision care.

330. Nongthombam Maipak, former Mister India title holder and well-known veteran body builder of **Manipur** popularly known as Mister Maipak, has passed away in Imphal, Manipur at the age of 88.

He was born on 12th June 1935 at Uripok Sorbon Thingel Sinam Leikai in Imphal West District, Manipur.

He won the **Mr. India title** in **1970** and then represented India in the Mr. Universe competition held from 25-26 September 1971 in Paris, France.

He was also a popular athlete in the hammer throw, shot put, and discus throw events.

He represented Manipur in the **1958 Delhi National Games** in the hammer throw event, where he broke the national record.

331. Fatima Beevi, the first woman judge of the Supreme Court, has passed away in Kerala at the age of 96. She was born on 30 April 1927 at Pathanamthitta in the Kingdom of Travancore (now Kerala).

She was appointed to the **Supreme Court** in **October 1989**, when the late Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, E S Venkataramiah was the Chief Justice of India and R Venkataraman, the President. She held this position till her retirement on April 29, 1992.

She was also the **first Muslim woman** judge to be appointed to any higher judiciary.

She topped the Bar Council exam in 1950, becoming the first woman to receive a Bar Council gold medal.

She also served as the first chairperson of the Commission for Backward Classes.

She served as a member of the National Human Rights Commission.

She also served as the **Governor of Tamil Nadu** from 1997 to 2001.

She was honoured with **Kerala Prabha Award**, the second-highest honour given by the Government of Kerala in 2023.

332. Noted Gujarati photo journalist **Zaverilal Mehta** has passed away in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He was born in 1928 in Gujarat. He was conferred with **Padma Shri** award in the field of literature and education-journalism in **2018**.

He also received several awards including "Best Photo Journalist" award (1996-97) from the state government of Gujarat.

He is known for capturing the Kutch cyclone of 1998, 2001 earthquake, and documenting the tenures of 13 chief ministers.

333. B. Sasikumar, a renowned Indian Violinist and Carnatic Musician from Kerala, has passed away at the age of 74 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He was born on 27th April 1949 in Thiruvalla, **Kerala**.

His notable works include: '*Navavarana Krithimahima*', a 10-episode series on Navavarana Krithis. He also directed Adhyathma Ramayanam's recital in 2001.

He has composed and presented an orchestral piece called "*String*", consisting of only string instruments, with young artists for the AIR program.

Awards:

- Violin Samrat Award from Kuwait: 2011
- Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi Award: 2008
- Kerala Sangeetha Natak Academy Fellowship: 2002

334. C.K. Gopinathan, a director on the board of Dhanlaxmi Bank based in Thrissur, Kerala and a notable shareholder, has passed away. He has more than 25 years of experience in the banking sector and has been on the Board of the Dhanlaxmi Bank since **August 2016**. He has a 7.5 percent stake in the bank as of September 2023.

He also served as a Director at the Catholic Syrian Bank for nearly eight years, from September 26, 2008, to July 20, 2016.

335. P.R.S. Oberoi, the Chairman Emeritus of The Oberoi Group, has passed away at the age of 94. He was born on 3rd February 1929 in New Delhi. He was fondly known as the '**doyen of Indian hospitality**'.

He was also popularly known as '**Biki**'.

He served as the Executive Chairman of EIH Limited, which is the flagship company of the Oberoi Group, one of India's largest luxury hotel chains.

The Oberoi Group was founded in 1934 by Rai Bahadur Mohan Singh Oberoi, father of PRS Oberoi.

Awards:

- **Padma Vibhushan: 2008**
- Lifetime Achievement Award by Forbes India: 2014
- Lifetime Achievement Award for management by the All India Management Association: 2013

336. Dame AS Byatt, a British author, critic, and poet, has passed away at the age of 87 in London, the United Kingdom. She was born on 24th August 1936 in Yorkshire, England, UK.

Her first novel, *Shadow of a Sun*, was published in 1964 and was followed by *The Game* in 1967.

Her book '*Still Life*' won the PEN/Macmillan Silver Pen Award in 1986.

She won the **Booker Prize for Fiction** in **1990** for her book titled '**Possession: A Romance**'.

Her book, *The Children's Book* (2009) was shortlisted for the 2009 Man Booker Prize for Fiction and won the 2010 James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction).

337. Brijinder Nath Goswamy, an Indian art critic and historian, has passed away in Chandigarh at the age of 90. He was born on 15th August 1933 in Sargodha in Punjab province of Pakistan.

He was best known for his scholarship on **Pahari painting** and Indian miniature paintings.

He was the author of over 20 books on arts and culture, including *Sakti Burman: A Private Universe*, a monograph on the life and works of Sakti Burman, renowned Bengali painter and *Masters of Indian Painting 1100-1900*, a treatise on Indian miniature art.

Padma Shri: 1998

Padma Bhushan: 2008

338. S Venkitaramanan, former Governor of RBI, has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the age of 92. He was born on 28 January 1931 in the town of Nagercoil in Padmanathapuram division of Travancore.

He served as **Finance Secretary** in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India for a period of four years from 1985 to 1989.

He served as the **18th Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, appointed by the Chandra Shekhar government, from 22 December 1990 to 21 December 1992.

During his tenure as RBI Governor,

- He navigated RBI through the crucial years of the 1990 balance of payment crisis.
- The **Indian stock market scam of 1992 (Harshad Mehta scam)** was exposed by Sucheta Dalal (journalist).
- India adopted the International Monetary Fund (IMF's) stabilisation program, which included Rupee devaluation and the initiation of economic reforms.

Harshad Mehta scam:

Harshad Mehta was an Indian stockbroker and a convicted fraudster who was involved in the 1992 Indian securities scam. The scam was a massive stock manipulation scheme financed by worthless bank receipts, which his firm brokered for "ready forward" transactions between banks.

The scam exposed the loopholes in the Indian banking system and the BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) transaction system, and consequently the SEBI introduced new rules to cover those loopholes.

- 339. Dhruba Narayan Ghosh**, who played a key role in formulating the government's strategy in nationalisation of banks in India, has passed away in Kolkata, West Bengal.

He served as the **12th Chairman of State Bank of India** from **13 May 1985 until 12 May 1989**.

He was also the founder and first chairman of the ICRA Limited.

He also authored an autobiography titled '**No Regrets**' published by Rupa Publications on 1 August 2015.

- 340.** Noted Indian politician **Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya** has passed away at the age of 92 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was born on 8th October 1931 in Udipi district of Karnataka.

He served as the **Governor of Manipur**, from 27 June 2019 to 23 July 2019 and **Governor of Nagaland**, from 19 July 2014 to 31 July 2019, also **Governor of Arunachal Pradesh**, from 28 January 2017 to 3 October 2017 and **Governor of Tripura**, from 21 July 2014 to 19 May 2015.

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- 341. Kedarnath Aggarwal**, the Founder and Chairman of one of the biggest and most famous sweets and snacks brand, **Bikanervala**, has passed away at the age of 86. He was the resident of Bikaner, Rajasthan.

He was fondly known as 'Kakaji'.

He along with his brother Satyanarayan Aggarwal, started Bikanervala in the 1950s as street vendors in Old Delhi and set up their first shop in Chandni Chowk.

The group now operates more than 60 outlets in India and has presence in countries such as the US (in New Jersey), New Zealand, Singapore, Nepal and the UAE.

342. Subrata Roy, the Founder and Chairman of Sahara India Pariwar, has passed away due to cardiorespiratory arrest in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was born on 10th June 1948 in Araria, Bihar.

He founded **Sahara India Pariwar** in **1978**.

Sahara India Pariwar operated a vast number of businesses such as Aamby Valley City, Sahara Movie Studios, Air Sahara, Uttar Pradesh Wizards, Filmy, among others.

Subrata Roy in 2012 was named one of India's most influential businessmen by India Today magazine.

In 2004, Time magazine named the Sahara Group as "the second-largest employer in India" for its 1.2 million workforces.

Under his leadership, Sahara also sponsored the Indian cricket and hockey teams and owned a Formula One racing team.

343. Former Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force (IAF) **Air Marshal Pranab Kumar Barbora** has passed away at the age of 72 in New Delhi. He was born on 10 December 1950 in Shillong, Meghalaya.

He was known to be an outstanding air warrior who was instrumental in reactivation of the **Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO)** air strip in eastern Ladakh in 2008. He was heading the Western Air Command (WAC) at the time.

He was the **first officer from the Northeast** to reach such a high post in the armed forces.

He commissioned into the IAF as a fighter pilot on 13 June 1970.

He had also taken part in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War too.

He was a member of the IAF team that inducted the first Jaguar squadron, and the IAF's maiden Air Combat Simulator, the first of its kind in Asia.

He was a recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal and Vayu Sena Medal.

344. Professor Saleemul Huq, a British-Bengali scientist whose contributions have had an impact on the Global South, has passed away in Gulshan, Bangladesh. He was born on 2nd October 1952 in East Bengal, Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

He was an expert in the field of **climate change, environment and development**.

He served as the Director of the International Centre for Climate Change & Development (ICCCAD) based in Bangladesh.

He created the theoretical framework known as "**Locally Led Adaptation**". This concept emphasises how communities affected by climate change have the autonomy and know-how to design their plans for resilience.

Awards/Honours:

- He was awarded **2020 National Environment Award** by the Government of Bangladesh for his contribution to the development of the environment.

- He was appointed **Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)** in the 2022 New Year Honours for services to combating international climate change.
- He **contributed** to the reports of the IPCC which was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2007**.

345. Leela Omchery, a noted musicologist and artist, has passed away at the age of 94 in New Delhi. She was born on 31 May 1929 in Mankoyikkal tharavdu in Thiruvattar in Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu.

She was awarded the **Padma Shri in 2009** for her contributions to Indian classical dance and music.

She was also awarded the Kendra Sangeet Natak Academy Award for the contribution to Traditional Music (Sopaana Sangeetham) and popular music of Kerala in 2003.

Her notable works include: Indian Music and Allied Arts (5 volumes); Gleanings in Indian Music; Abhinaya Sangeetham, etc.

SPORTS

346. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has introduced the **Stop Clock** rule to monitor time between overs in men's ODIs (One Day International) and T20Is (Twenty20 International) cricket matches.

As per the rules, if the bowling team is not ready to bowl the next over within 60 seconds of the previous over being completed, a **five-run penalty** will be imposed the third time it happens in an innings.

The Stop Clock will be introduced on a trial basis from December 2023 to April 2024.

ICC has also announced equal match-day pay for both female and male umpires from January 2024.

This initiative promotes gender equality in cricket.

347. Novak Djokovic (Serbia) has defeated Jannik Sinner (Italy) to win the men's singles title in **Nitto Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) finals 2023**, held from 12th to 19th November 2023 at the Pala Alpitour stadium in Turin, Italy.

This marks Novak Djokovic's 7th ATP finals title, which includes 2008, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2022, and 2023.

With this, he broke Roger Federer's record of six ATP Finals title.

Men's Doubles:

- **Rajeev Ram (USA)** and **Joe Salisbury (UK)** have won the ATP finals men's doubles 2023 title.
- **Rohan Bopanna (India)** and **Matthew Ebden (Australia)** pair lost to Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos in the semifinals of the ATP men's Doubles Finals.

2023 GNP Seguros Women's Tennis Association (WTA):

Iga Swiatek (Poland) has defeated **Jessica Pegula (USA)** to win the women's singles title at the 2023 GNP Seguros Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Finals.

In the women's doubles, **Laura Siegemund (Germany)** and **Vera Zvonareva (Russia)** has defeated Nicole Melichar-Martinez (USA) and Ellen Perez (Australia) at the WTA finals.

348. Pakistan all-rounder **Syed Imad Wasim Haider**, who announced his retirement from international cricket. He made his international debut in 2015 in a One Day International (ODI) match against Sri Lanka.

He has played 55 ODI matches and 66 T20Is matches for Pakistan.

He played his last game in April 2023 against New Zealand in T20I format.

349. Australia women's cricket captain, **Meghann Lanning** has announced her retirement from international cricket at the age of 31. She made her international debut against New Zealand in **2010** and played 241 matches for Australia.

She made her ODI debut in 2011 and Test debut in 2013.

She led Australia in 182 matches and won **five ICC titles** as a captain.

Under her captaincy, Australia won a gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

She scored **8,352 runs** in 241 matches over all three formats.

Her achievements:

- Two ICC Women's Cricket World Cup trophies (ODIs)
- Five ICC Women's T20 World Cup titles
- She was named ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year in 2014
- She won ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year in 2015

350. Indian Para Archery team has topped the medal tally with a total of **9 medals** (4 Gold, 4 Silver, and 1 Bronze) at the **Asian Para Archery Championship 2023** and CQT (Continental Qualifying Tournament) 2024 held in Bangkok, Thailand.

South Korea has finished in 2nd place with 5 medals (3 Gold, 1 Silver, & 1 Bronze), and China has finished 3rd with 4 medals (2 Gold, 1 Silver, & 1 Bronze).

Gold Medal:

- Compound Men's Open Team: Rakesh Kumar (Jammu & Kashmir) and Suraj Singh
- Compound Women's Open Team: Jyoti Baliyan and Sheetal Devi (Jammu & Kashmir)
- Compound Open Mixed Team: Rakesh Kumar and Sheetal Devi
- Compound Men's Open: Rakesh Kumar

Silver Medal:

- Recurve Women's Open Team: Pooja Jatyan and Pooja Khanna
- Recurve men's open team: Harvinder Singh and Vivek Chikara

- Men's W1 Team: Adil Mohammad Nazir Ansari and Naveen Dalal
- Compound Women Open: Sheetal Devi

Bronze Medal:

- Compound Women Open: Sarita

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351. Hockey Punjab, led by Harmanpreet Singh, has won the 13th edition of the **Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023** and clinched gold medal by defeating Hockey Haryana in the finals.

This marks Hockey Punjab's **fourth** title.

Hockey Tamil Nadu has won the bronze medal and stands at third place after defeating Hockey Karnataka.

The championship has been held from 17th to 28th November 2023 at Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Note: The 2022 Senior Men championship was won by Haryana who defeated Tamil Nadu.

352. Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, has launched the **Khelo India Para Games 2023** logo and mascot. The maiden Khelo India Para Games will be held in **New Delhi** from **10th to 17th December 2023**.

'**Ujjwala**', a sparrow, is the official mascot of Khelo India – Para Games 2023. The little sparrow is a symbol of the pride of Delhi and its uniqueness portrays determination and empathy.

The games will feature **7 disciplines** including para-athletics, para shooting, para-archery, para football, para badminton, para table tennis and para weight lifting.

The games will be held across 3 SAI (Sports Authority of India) stadiums:

- Indira Gandhi Sports Stadium
- Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range
- Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

353. India has won **three medals (one silver and two bronze)** in the 16th edition of the **World Wushu Championship 2023** held in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

India has finished 18th in the medal table in this competition.

In this competition, Roshibina Devi from India has won the silver medal, while Kushal Kumar and Chhavi have won bronze medals.

The Chinese team has topped the medal list by winning 15 gold medals.

The biennial World Wushu Championships is the highest-level world event organized by the International Wushu Federation.

Wushu:

Wushu, which is also referred to as kung-fu, is the collective term for the martial art practices which originated and developed in China. It is categorized into two main categories, namely Taolu (Routines Competition) and Sanda (Free-Fighting Competition).

354. Indian Badminton players **Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** have finished **2nd** in the men's doubles category of **Li Ning China Masters 2023** held in Shenzhen Bay Gymnasium, Shenzhen, China from 21st to 26th November 2023.

India duo lost the finals against the World No.1 pair of **Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang of China**.

China Masters 2023 is a Badminton World Federation (BWF) Super 750 tournament.

Men's Singles: Kodai Naraoka (Japan)

Women's Singles: Chen Yu Fei (China)

Women's Doubles: Nami Matsuyama & Chiharu Shida (Japan)

Mixed Doubles: Zheng Si Wei & Huang Ya Qiong (China)

Note: The China Masters, formerly known as Fuzhou China Open, is an annual badminton tournament held in China.

355. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen** (Belgian-Dutch driver) has won the 15th edition of the Formula 1 (F1) Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2023 held at Yas Marina Circuit on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

This also marks his **4th consecutive Abu Dhabi GP title** and **19th title** of the 2023 season.

With this win, he became the **first driver** in history to lead 1000 laps in a single season.

Red Bull won 21 of 22 races this season, with Sergio Perez claiming 2 wins.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc of Monaco finished 2nd and Mercedes' George Russel of UK finished 3rd in the race.

Abu Dhabi marks the last race (22nd) of 2023 season.

356. **Italian tennis team** captained by Flippo Volandri, has won the **2023 Davis Cup title** by defeating Australian team captained by Lleyton Hewitt in the finals held in Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena in Malaga, Spain.

This marks Italy's **2nd** Davis Cup title. Previously, Italy won the title in 1976.

The 2023 Davis Cup is the 111th edition of the tournament.

Davis Cup:

The Davis Cup is the premier international team event in men's tennis. It is run by the International Tennis Federation (ITF). The first edition of Davis Cup was held in **1900**. The event was named Davis Cup after **Dwight Davis's** trophy, which was designed by William Durgin and crafted by Rowland Rhodes. Davis Cup is played in Hard Surface (indoor).

357. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen**, the Dutch-Belgian driver, has won the **Formula 1 (F1) Las Vegas Grand Prix 2023** held at Las Vegas Strip Circuit in Nevada, the United States of America (USA).

This win marks Max Verstappen's 18th win out of 20 races of the 2023 season.

He has broken his own record for the most F1 race victories in a single season in 2023 by winning 18 races.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (Monaco) has finished 2nd and Red Bulls' Sergio Perez (Mexico) has finished 3rd in the race.

358. England bowler **David Jonathan Willey** has announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket. He made his international debut in 2015. He has played 73 ODI matches and taken 100 wickets, while he has played 43 T20Is matches and taken 51 wickets.

He was a part of England's ICC Men's T20I World Cup 2022 winning team, held in Australia.

Other related news:

Afghanistan fast bowler **Naveen-ul-Haq** has announced his retirement from ODI cricket at the end of Afghanistan's campaign in the 2023 ODI World Cup. He has played 15 ODI and 27 T20I matches.

359. The **Australian Men's cricket team**, led by Pat Cummins, has won the 13th edition of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's One Day International (ODI) Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2023 by defeating Rohit Sharma led India in the finals held in **Narendra Modi Stadium** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.

India hosted the **ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023** across 10 venues from 5th October to 19th November 2023.

This win for Australia marks their **sixth** ODI World Cup title including 1987, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2015, and 2023.

Awards:

- Player of the Tournament: Virat Kohli
- Player of the Match (finals): Travis Head (Australia)
- **Highest run-scorer: Virat Kohli (765 runs)**
- Highest wicket-taker: Mohammed Shami (24 wickets)

Key records:

- **Virat Kohli (India)** has broken Sachin Tendulkar's (49 centuries) record of the most number of centuries in ODI matches. He scored his **50th century** against New Zealand in the semi-final.
- **Rachin Ravindra** of New Zealand broke Sachin Tendulkar's record of scoring most runs in a single edition of the Cricket World Cup below the age of 25.

- **Mohammed Shami (India)** has become the first Indian bowler in an ODI match to take 7 wickets. He also made the record for the most number of wickets for India in a single edition of the ODI World Cup with 24 wickets in the 2023 edition by surpassing Zaheer Khan's record of 21 wickets in the 2011 ODI World Cup.
- **Glenn Maxwell (Australia)** has made the record by hitting the fastest century in ODI World Cup history where he scored 100 runs in 40 balls against the Netherlands.

Prize Money:

- **Winner:** USD 4 million
- **Runner up:** USD 2 million
-

360. Max Verstappen, the Red Bull driver (Dutch-Belgian), has won the **Formula (1) Sao Paulo Grand Prix 2023** title held at Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace circuit in Brazil. This win also marks his **17th win** out of 20 races of the 2023 season.

McLaren driver Lando Norris (United Kingdom) has secured second place while Aston Martin driver Fernando Alonso (Spain) has secured third place.

361. The Indian Women's Hockey Team has won the **Jharkhand Women's Asian Champions Trophy Ranchi 2023** by defeating **Japan** 4-0 in the final match held in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

The 7th edition of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy has been held in Marang Gomke Jaypal Singh Mundha AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

China has won the bronze medal by defeating South Korea in the Bronze medal match.

Awards:

- Salima Tete (India): Jharkhand Player of the Tournament
- Deepika (India): Fan Choice Award for Best Goal of the Tournament
- Akio Tanaka (Japan): Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament
- Savita Punia (India): JSW Women Leader of the Tournament
- Sangita Kumari (India): Rising Star of the Tournament
- Kim Eunji (South Korea): Best Rising Goalkeeper of the Tournament

362. The Indian Grandmaster (GM) Vidit Santosh Gujrathi has won the **3rd** edition of the **Federation Internationale des Echecs (FIDE) Grand Swiss 2023** title held from 23rd October 2023 to 6th November 2023 in the Villa Marina, Douglas, Isle of Man.

GM Hikaru Nakamaru (USA) has won the silver medal in the tournament and GM Andrey Esipenko (Played under FIDE flag) has won the bronze medal in the tournament.

International Master (IM) **Vaishali Rameshbabu** has won the 2nd edition of **FIDE Women's Grand Swiss 2023** title.

GM Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine) has won the silver medal in the tournament and GM Tan Zhongyi (China) has won the bronze medal in the tournament.

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363. The **Punjab cricket team** has won its maiden domestic Twenty20 (T20) IDFC First Bank **Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2023-24** title by defeating the Baroda team in the final held in Inderjit Singh Bindra Stadium in Mohali, Punjab.

Anmolpreet Singh (Punjab) has been awarded the **player of the match** in the finals for his century (113 runs) which is also the first-ever century in the finals of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

Abhishek Sharma (Punjab) has received the **player of the series** award for scoring 485 runs and taking 2 wickets.

This is the 16th edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. It witnessed the participation of 38 teams grouped into 5 groups.

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy:

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy is a domestic Twenty20 cricket championship in India. It is organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), among the teams from the Ranji Trophy. It is named after former Test cricketer Syed Mushtaq Ali. The first edition was held in the year 2006-07.

364. The Indian contingent has secured **2nd position** in the medal tally with **7 medals (3 Gold, 1 Silver, and 3 Bronze)** in the **Asian Archery Championships 2023** held in **Bangkok, Thailand**.

South Korea has secured first place in the medal tally with 11 medals (6 Gold, 2 Silver, and 3 Bronze) while Kazakhstan in the third place with 3 medals (1 Gold and 2 Silver) in the 23rd edition of the Asian Archery Championships.

Archer	Event	Medal
Parneet Kaur	Women's compound	Gold
Aditi Swami, Priyansh	Mixed compound	Gold
Parneet Kaur, Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Gopichand Swami	Women's compound team	Gold
Jyothi Surekha Vennam	Women's compound	Silver
Abhishek Verma	Men's compound	Bronze
Tisha Punia, Bhajan Kaur, Ankita Bhakat	Women's recurve team	Bronze
Abhishek Verma, Prathamesh Fuge, Priyansh	Men's compound team	Bronze

- 365.** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the cricketers inducted into the **ICC Hall of Fame** as the class of 2023. Former ICC ODI World Cup winners Aravinda de Silva (Sri Lanka) and Virender Sehwag (India) have been inducted as part of the Class of 2023 along with pioneering Indian women's cricketer, Diana Edulji.
- **Diana Edulji**, No. 111 in ICC's Hall of Fame, represented India for 17 years, and is the **first Indian woman** to be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame. She has played T20 Tests and 34 ODIs for India and has bagged 63 and 46 wickets, respectively.
 - **Virendra Sehwag** has played a pivotal role in India's two World Cup wins (2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup). He has played 104 Tests, 251 ODIs and 19 T20Is for India and has amassed over 17,000 runs in international cricket.
 - **Aravinda de Silva**, the 110th inductee on the list, had a 19-year career representing Sri Lanka, notably playing a big role in their 1996 World Cup triumph. He has played 93 Tests and 308 ODIs for Sri Lanka.

- 366.** Army Medical Corps officer **Lt Col Sanjeev Malik** has made history by winning **5 Gold Medals** in the **42nd World Medicine and Health Games** held in Colombia.

His victories in the 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 5000m, and cross-country events make him the only athlete to achieve this feat in 2023.

World Medicine and Health Games:

The World Medicine and Health Games, often regarded as the Olympic Games for Health Professionals, was first started in 1978. The Games annually attract over 2,500 participants from more than 50 different nations.

- 367. Maharashtra**, with **228 medals** including 80 gold, has topped the medal table and won the **Raja Bhalindra Singh Trophy** for the overall championship in the **37th National Games** held in Goa.

This is the **first time** Maharashtra has won the trophy.

Services has finished second with 126 medals including 66 gold, Haryana has finished third with 192 medals including 62 gold, Madhya Pradesh has finished fourth with 112 medals including 37 gold, and Kerala has finished fifth with 87 medals including 36 gold.

Host Goa has finished 9th with a total of 92 medals, including 27 gold.

Best male athlete of the games: Srihari Nataraj (Swimmer) from Karnataka

Best female athlete of the games: Sanyukta Prasen Kale and Pranati Nayak (Gymnast) from Odisha.

- 368. Diana Edulji**, No. 111 in ICC's Hall of Fame, represented India for 17 years, and is the **first Indian woman** to be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame. She has played T20 Tests and 34 ODIs for India and has bagged 63 and 46 wickets, respectively.
- 369. Max Verstappen**, the Belgian-Dutch driver of Red Bull, has won the **Formula 1 (F1) Mexico City Grand Prix** held at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez circuit in Mexico City, Mexico from 27th to 29th October 2023.

This marks Max Verstappen's third consecutive win at the Mexico City GP including his win in 2021, 2022, & 2023.

Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton (UK)** has finished second while Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc (Monaco) has finished third in the race.

- 370.** The Chief Minister of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde has unveiled the **22-foot statue** of **Sachin Tendulkar**, famously known as Master Blaster and God of Cricket, at the **Wankhede Stadium** in Mumbai, Maharashtra during the World Cup match between India and Sri Lanka.

The statue, capturing the iconic batsman in the act of playing a stroke, is positioned adjacent to the Sachin Tendulkar stand.

It serves as a tribute to his 50 years of life, commemorating his 50th birthday celebrated in April 2023.

The statue has been made by **Pramod Kamble**, a painter-sculptor from Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Sachin Tendulkar was awarded the **Bharat Ratna in 2014**, Padma Vibhushan in 2008, and Padma Shri in 1999.

- 371.** The Indian athletes has finished **5th position** in the medal tally with **111 medals** (29 gold, 31 silver and 51 bronze) in the Hangzhou Asian Para Games 2022 held in Hangzhou, China from 22nd to 28th October 2023.

This feat supersedes India's previous best of 72 medals, which was recorded in the 2018 edition of the Asian Para Games in Indonesia.

India had sent its 303 athletes (191 men and 112 women) to the fourth edition of the Asian Para Games 2022.

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	214	167	140	521
2	Iran	44	46	41	131
3	Japan	42	49	59	150

Athlete	Sport	Event	Medal
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Ankur Dhama	Athletics	Men's 5000m-T11	Gold
Nishad Kumar	Athletics	Men's High Jump-T47	Gold
Ram Pal	Athletics	Men's High Jump-T47	Silver
Shailesh Kumar	Athletics	Men's High Jump-T63	Gold
Mariyappan Thangavelu	Athletics	Men's High Jump-T63	Silver
Monu Ghangas	Athletics	Men's Shot Put-F11	Bronze
Pranav Soorma	Athletics	Men's Club Throw-F51	Gold
Dharambir	Athletics	Men's Club Throw-F51	Silver
Amit Kumar	Athletics	Men's Club Throw-F51	Bronze
Prachi Yadav	Canoe	Women's VL2	Silver
Kapil Parmar	Judo	Men -60kg J1	Silver
Kokila	Judo	Women -48kg J2	Bronze
Avani Lekhara	Shooting	Women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1	Gold
Rudransh Khandelwal	Shooting	Mixed 50m Pistol SH1	Silver
Aruna	Taekwondo	Women's K44 - 47kg	Bronze
Praveen Kumar	Athletics	Men's High Jump-T64	Gold

Unni Renu	Athletics	Men's High Jump- T64	Bronze
Ekta Bhan	Athletics	Women's Club Throw-F32/51	Bronze
Simran	Athletics	Women's 100m- T12	Silver
Deepthi Jeevanji	Athletics	Women's 400m- T20	Gold
Ajay Kumar	Athletics	Men's 400m-T64	Silver
Manish Kaurav	Canoe	Men's KL3	Bronze
Prachi Yadav	Canoe	Women's KL2	Gold
Gajendra Singh	Canoe	Men's VL2	Bronze
Neeraj Yadav	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw-F54/55/56	Gold
Yogesh Kathuniya	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw-F54/55/56	Silver
Muthuraja	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw-F54/55/56	Bronze
Ravi Rongali	Athletics	Men's Shot Put- F40	Silver
Pramod	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T46	Silver
Rakesh Bhaira	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T46	Bronze
Ashok	Powerlifting	Men's -65kg	Bronze
Rudransh Khandelwal	Shooting	Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1	Silver
Manish Narwal	Shooting	Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1	Bronze

Rubina Francis	Shooting	Women's 10m Air Pistol SH1	Bronze
Team India	Archery	Men's Doubles Recurve - Open	Bronze
Team India	Archery	Women's Doubles Compound - Open	Silver
Team India	Archery	Men's Doubles Compound - Open	Silver
Pooja	Athletics	Women's Discus Throw-F54/55	Silver
Sumit	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F64	Gold
Pushpendra Singh	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F64	Bronze
Haney	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw- F37/38	Gold
Narayan Thakur	Athletics	Men's 200m-T35	Bronze
Shreyansh Trivedi	Athletics	Men's 200m-T37	Bronze
Soman Rana	Athletics	Men's Shot Put- F57	Silver
Hokato Sema Hotozhe	Athletics	Men's Shot Put- F57	Bronze
Sundar Singh Gurjar	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F46	Gold
Rinku	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F46	Silver
Ajeet Singh	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F46	Bronze

Ankur Dhaka	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T11	Gold
Rakshitha Raju	Athletics	Women's 1500m-T11	Gold
Lalitha Killaka	Athletics	Women's 1500m-T11	Silver
Sharath Makanahalli	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T13	Silver
Balwant Singh Rawat	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T13	Bronze
Nimisha Suresh	Athletics	Women's Long Jump-T47	Gold
Pramod Bhagat / Manisha Ramadass	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5	Bronze
Manasi Joshi	Badminton	Women's Singles SL3	Bronze
Sivarajan Solaimalai / Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SH6	Bronze
Nitesh Kumar / Thulasimathi Murugesan	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5	Bronze
Mandeep Kaur	Badminton	Women's Singles SL3	Bronze
Vaishnavi Puneyani	Badminton	Women's Singles SL4	Bronze
Zainab Khatoon	Powerlifting	Women's -61kg	Silver
Kumari Raj	Powerlifting	Women's -61kg	Bronze
Bhavina Patel	Table Tennis	Women's Singles - Class 4	Bronze

Sandeep Dangi	Table Tennis	Men's Singles - Class 1	Bronze
Adil Mohamed Nazir Ansari / Naveen Dalal	Archery	Men's Doubles - W1 Open	Bronze
Sheetal Devi / Rakesh Kumar	Archery	Mixed Team Compound - Open	Gold
Narayan Thakur	Athletics	Men's 100m-T35	Bronze
Sachin Sarjerao Khilari	Athletics	Men's Shot Put-F46	Gold
Rohit Kumar	Athletics	Men's Shot Put-F46	Bronze
Shreyansh Trivedi	Athletics	Men's 100m-T37	Bronze
Bhagyashri Jadhav Madhavrao	Athletics	Women's Shot Put-F34	Silver
Monu Ghangas	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw-F11	Silver
Simran	Athletics	Women's 200m-T12	Silver
Manisha Ramadass	Badminton	Women's Singles SU5	Bronze
Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan	Badminton	Women's Singles SH6	Bronze
Pramod Bhagat / Sukant Indukant Kadam	Badminton	Men's Doubles SL3-SL4	Bronze
Sukant Indukant Kadam	Badminton	Men's Singles SL4	Bronze

Krishna Nagar / Sivarajan Solaimalai	Badminton	Men's Doubles SH6	Bronze
Himanshi Bhaveskumar Rathi	Chess	Women's Individual Standard VI-B1	Bronze
Mandeep Kaur / Manisha Ramadass	Badminton	Women's Doubles SL3-SU5	Bronze
Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan / Rachana Shaileshkumar Patel	Badminton	Women's Doubles SH6	Bronze
Sidhartha Babu	Shooting	R6 - Mixed 50m Rifle Prone SH1	Gold
Rakesh Kumar	Archery	Men's Individual Compound - Open	Silver
Sheetal Devi	Archery	Women's Individual Compound - Open	Gold
Raman Sharma	Athletics	Men's 1500m-T38	Gold
Solairaj Dharmaraj	Athletics	Men's Long Jump- T64	Gold
Manu	Athletics	Men's Shot Put- F37	Bronze
Pradeep Kumar	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw-F54	Silver
Laxit	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw-F54	Bronze
Lakshmi	Athletics	Women's Discus Throw-F37/38	Bronze
Pramod Bhagat	Badminton	Men's Singles SL3	Gold

Nitesh Kumar	Badminton	Men's Singles SL3	Silver
Yathiraj Suhas Lalinakere	Badminton	Men's Singles SL4	Gold
Krishna Nagar	Badminton	Men's Singles SH6	Silver
Nitesh Kumar/Tarun	Badminton	Men's Doubles SL3-SL4	Gold
Chirag Baretha/Raj Kumar	Badminton	Men's Doubles SU5	Silver
Thulasimathi Murugesan	Badminton	Women's Singles SU5	Gold
Thulasimathi Murugesan/Manasi Joshi	Badminton	Women's Doubles SL3-SU5	Silver
Suyash Narayan Jadhav	Swimming	Men's 50m Butterfly-S7	Bronze
Neeraj Yadav	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F55	Gold
Tek Chand	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F55	Bronze
Dilip Mahadu Gavit	Athletics	Men's 400m-T47	Gold
Pooja	Athletics	Women's 1500m- T20	Bronze
Satish Inani Darpan	Chess	Men's Individual Rapid VI-B1	Gold
Kumar Pradhan Soundarya	Chess	Men's Individual Rapid VI-B1	Silver
Ashwinbhai Kanchanbhai Makwana	Chess	Men's Individual Rapid VI-B1	Bronze

Kishan Gangolli	Chess	Men's Individual Rapid VI-B2/B3	Bronze
Satish Inani Darpan/Kumar Pradhan Soundarya/Ashwinb hai Kanchanbhai Makwana	Chess	Men's Team Rapid VI-B1	Gold
Aryan Joshi/Somendra/Kis han Gangolli	Chess	Men's Team Rapid VI-B2/B3	Bronze
Vruthi Saganlal Jain/ Himanshi Bhaveshkumar Rathi/ Sanskruti Vikas More	Chess	Women's Team Rapid VI-B1	Bronze
Anita/Konganapalle Narayana	Rowing	PR3 Mixed Double Sculls - PR3 Mix2x	Silver

Note: The newly introduced sports at the Asian Para Games 2022 are para taekwondo and para canoe.

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372. The **All-India Football Federation (AIFF)** has won the **AFC President's Recognition Awards for Grassroots Football 'Bronze'** during the 27th edition of the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Annual Awards (2022) held in Doha, Qatar.

AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey has received the award in the event.

AFC President's Recognition Awards for Grassroots Football 'Gold': Football Australia

AFC President's Recognition Awards for Grassroots Football 'Silver': Guam Football Association

Other awardees:

Samantha Kerr (Australia) has been named the **AFC Women's Player of the Year 2022** for the second time.

Salem Al Dawsari (Saudi Arabia) has been named the **AFC Men's Player of the Year 2022**.

373. India has finished **2nd** in the medal tally with **55 medals (21 Gold, 21 Silver, & 13 Bronze)** in the **Asian Shooting Championships 2023** held in **Changwon, South Korea** from 22nd October to 2nd November 2023.

China has topped the competition by winning 76 medals, including 33 gold.

The 15th edition of the Asian Shooting Championships comprised both Junior and senior-level events.

Indian rifle shooter **Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar** has won two medals including:

- Gold medal in the Individual men's 50m rifle 3 positions.
- Silver medal in the 50m Rifle 3 positions men's team event along with Akhil Sheoran and Swapnil Kusale.

Harmehar Singh Lally has won the gold medal in the Skeet Men Junior event (Shooting) and Bhavtegh Singh Gill won the silver medal in the same event.

The Asian Shooting Championships is organized by the **Asian Shooting Confederation**.

374. **West Indies** spinner **Sunil Narine** has announced his retirement from **international cricket**. He played 122 international matches for the West Indies in total, which included six Tests, 65 ODIs and 51 T20Is.

He made his One Day International (ODI) debut in December 2011 and Test match debut in June 2012.

He was a part of the West Indies team that won the 2012 T20 World Cup, where he took the winning wicket of Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka) in the final match.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

375. **World Vegan Day** is observed annually on **1st November** to spread the benefits of veganism for humans, non-human animals, and the natural environment. The day was started in 1994 by then Chair of The Vegan Society, Louise Wallis, in the United Kingdom, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the organisation and the coining of the term's "vegan" and "veganism".

Note: The term 'vegan' was coined by Donald Watson.

376. International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists is observed annually on **2nd November** to draw attention to the level of impunity for crimes against journalists, which remains extremely high globally.

The United Nations General Assembly had chosen this day to commemorate the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2nd November 2013. The day was first observed in **2014**.

377. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s **International Biosphere Reserve Day** or **World Biosphere Day** is annually observed on **3rd November** to spread awareness of the importance of biosphere reserves and to promote their conservation and sustainable use.

The year 2023 marks the **2nd observance** of International Biosphere Reserve Day. The day was first observed in 2022.

Biosphere Reserves (BR):

BR are 'learning places for sustainable development'. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity.

378. World Tsunami Awareness Day is observed annually on **5th November** to create awareness among people across the world in matters related to the dangers of tsunami. The day was first observed in 2016.

The United Nations has designated 5th November as World Tsunami Awareness Day on 22nd December 2015. The day aligns with the International Day for Disaster Reduction (October 13) and the seven targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Theme 2023: "Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future"

Tsunamis:

The word "tsunami" comprises the Japanese words "tsu" (meaning harbour) and "nami" (meaning wave). A tsunami is a series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance usually associated with earthquakes occurring below or near the ocean.

379. The **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict** is observed annually across the globe on **6th November** to spread awareness about the consequences that war and conflict have on the environment.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **22nd** International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

The day was first observed in 2002.

The birth anniversary of the Nobel Prize winner and Bharat Ratna Awardee Indian Physicist **Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (C. V. Raman)** is annually observed on **7th November**. The year 2023 marks the **135th** birth anniversary of him.

- He was born on 7th November 1888, in Trichinopoly, Tamil Nadu, and died on 21st November 1970, in Bangalore, Karnataka.
- He was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Physics** in **1930** for his work on light scattering, known as the **Raman Effect**. He became the first person of Asia descent to win this prestigious award.
- In **1954**, the Government of India honoured him with the first **Bharat Ratna**, its highest civilian award.

380. National Cancer Awareness Day is observed annually on **7th November** in India to spread awareness on cancer, its symptoms and treatment.

Former Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare **Dr Harsh Vardhan** declared 7th November to be observed as the National Cancer Awareness Day in 2014.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancers are most common types of cancers in men. Breast, colorectal, lung, cervical and thyroid on the other affect women more.

381. International Day of Radiology is observed annually on **8th November** to promote the role of medical imaging in modern healthcare. The day is a joint initiative of the European Society of Radiology (ESR), the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) and the American College of Radiology (ACR).

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **12th** International Day of Radiology.

The day also marks the anniversary of the discovery of x-rays by **Wilhelm Roentgen** in 1895. The day was first observed in **2012**.

Theme 2023: "Celebrating Patient Safety"

382. World Urbanism Day, also known as "World Town Planning Day", is observed annually on **8th November** to recognise and promote the role of planning in creating livable communities.

The day is organised by the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). The day was founded in **1949** by the late Professor Carlos Maria della Paolera of the University of Buenos Aires.

Theme 2023: Learn Globally, Apply Locally

383. National Legal Services Day is observed annually on **9th November** to create awareness for ensuring reasonable fair and justice procedure for all citizens. The day also marks the enactment of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.

The day was first started by the Supreme Court of India in 1995 to provide help and support to poor and weaker sections of the society.

Theme 2023: "Access to Justice for All: Empowering the Marginalised through Legal Awareness"

Note: The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 on 5 December 1995.

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384. The State of **Uttarakhand** celebrates its Foundation Day every year on **9th November**. The state was formed on 9th November 2000 as the 27th State of India when it was carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh. It was earlier known as Uttaranchal, however, in 2007, it was renamed Uttarakhand. It is located at the foothills of the Himalayan Mountain ranges. It is largely a hilly State, having international boundaries with China (Tibet) in the north and Nepal in the east.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **23rd Uttarakhand Foundation Day**.

385. World Quality Week (WQW) is annually observed across the globe on the **2nd week of November** to recognise the achievements of quality professionals, reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year, and share best practices for ensuring quality in all areas of lives.

In 2023, WQW has been observed from **6 to 10 November 2023**.

Theme 2023: "Quality: realising your competitive potential"

This week is being observed since 2021 by the UK-based Chartered Quality Institute (CQI).

386. World Science Day for Peace and Development is observed annually on **10th November** to focus on the important role of science and the need to engage the public widely in debates on emerging scientific issues. The day was declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2001 and observed for the first time in 2002.

The year 2023 marks the 22nd edition of World Science Day for Peace and Development.

Theme 2023: "Building Trust In Science"

387. India observes the **National Ayurveda Day** every year on the occasion of **Dhanwantari Jayanti** or Dhanteras to spread awareness to new generation and promote Ayurvedic principles of healing in society. In 2023, the day falls on **10th November**.

The theme for Ayurveda Day 2023 is '**Ayurveda for One Health**' with tag line 'Ayurveda for everyone on every day' i.e., 'Har din har kisi ke liye Ayurveda' focusing on human-animal-plant-environment interface.

National Ayurveda Day was first started in 2016 to further promote Ayurveda into mainstream.

The term 'Ayurveda' means 'the knowledge of life' comprises of two Sanskrit words viz 'Ayu' meaning 'Life' and 'Veda' meaning 'Knowledge' or 'Science'.

388. National Education Day is observed annually on **11th November** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, the first education minister of independent India. The year 2023 marks the **135th** birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

The day was declared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on 11 September 2008.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad:

He was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 1888. He served as India's education minister from 15 August 1947 to 2 February 1958. He was awarded **Bharat Ratna** posthumously, India's highest civilian honour in 1992.

389. Public Service Broadcasting Day is observed annually on **12th November**. This day is observed to commemorate the first and only visit of the Father of the Nation, **Mahatma Gandhi**, to the studio of All India Radio, Delhi in 1947.

The day was declared as Public Service Broadcasting Day or (Jan Prasaran Diwas) in 2000.

390. World Kindness Day is observed annually across the globe on **13th November** to promote and commend acts of kindness. This day fills in as a sign of the positive effect that generosity has on people, communities, and the world overall.

The history of World Kindness Day traces back to 1997 when the World Kindness Movement conducted its first session in Tokyo, Japan to unite similar associations from around the world. It was only after 1998 that the day was laid out as a yearly event.

Theme 2023: "Be Kind Wherever Possible"

391. World Diabetes Day is observed annually on **14th November** to mark the birth anniversary of Sir Frederick Banting, who discovered the insulin hormone along with Charles Herbert Best in 1922. The day was established by the International Diabetes Foundation (IDF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1991. The day was recognised by the United Nations in 2006 and first observed in 2007.

Theme 2023: "Access to Diabetes Care"

392. Tribal Pride Day or 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas' is observed annually on **15th November** to commemorate the contribution of tribal communities to the history and culture of the nation. The day also commemorates the birth anniversary of **Birsa Munda**, an iconic freedom fighter, social reformer, and renowned tribal leader. The year 2023 marks the **148th** birth anniversary of him.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved to declare 15 November as Tribal Pride Day in 2021.

Birsa Munda:

He was born on 15th November 1875 in Ulihatu village in Jharkhand. He was an Indian tribal freedom fighter, folk hero and a religious leader. He was also known as Dharti Aaba (Father of Earth). He started the faith of 'Birsait'. He led the famous Munda Rebellion in the south of Ranchi in 1899-1900.

393. World COPD Day is observed annually on the **third Wednesday of November** to spread awareness about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and improve COPD care throughout the world.

In 2023, the World COPD Day falls on **15th November**. The day was first observed in 2002.

Theme 2023: "Breathing is Life - Act Earlier"

COPD is a lung disease that blocks airflow and makes it difficult to breathe.

394. International Day for Tolerance is observed annually on **16th November** to raise awareness about the dangers of intolerance. The day also marks the anniversary of UNESCO's Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. The day was first observed in 1997.

UNESCO has also created '**Madanjeet Singh Prize**' to recognize that tolerance is a universal human right. The prize is awarded every two years on the International Day for Tolerance.

Note: UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize 2022 was awarded to Franca Ma-ih Sulem Yoong (Cameroon)

395. National Press Day is observed annually across India on **16th November** to recognize the importance of the free and responsible press in a democratic society. The day also marks the establishment of the **Press Council of India (PCI)**. The day also aims to highlight its importance as the 4th pillar of democracy (media).

396. India has observed its 3rd edition of '**Audit Diwas**' on **16th November** to mark the historic origin of the institution of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) and the contribution it has made to the governance, transparency, and accountability over the past several years.

Why 16th November?

On 16th November 1858, after the merger of the audit departments of the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Presidencies under the Government of India Act 1858, the first Auditor General took the charge.

Note: G. C. Murmu is currently serving as the 14th CAG of India.

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397. National Newborn Week is annually observed across India to spread awareness about the importance of newborn care for child survival and development. This week is observed in the month of November from **15th to 21st November**.

The week is observed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Theme 2023: "Safety, Quality and Nurturing care – Birth Right of Every Newborn".

The first week was launched by the then Prime Minister Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2000.

398. World Philosophy Day is observed annually on the **Third Thursday of November** to promote an academic exchange of philosophy for the development of human thought.

In 2023, the day falls on **16th November**.

The day was first introduced in 2002 by UNESCO. In 2005, the UNESCO General Conference proclaimed that World Philosophy Day would be celebrated every third Thursday of November.

399. National Epilepsy Day is observed annually across India on **17th November** to create awareness about epilepsy. The day is organized by the Epilepsy Foundation of India.

Epilepsy is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which brain activity becomes abnormal, causing seizures or periods of unusual behaviour, sensations and sometimes loss of awareness.

Note: The month of November is observed as 'National Epilepsy Awareness Month'.

400. International Students' Day is observed annually on **17th November** to ensure that every student has access to education around the globe. The day commemorates the anniversary of the 1939 Nazi attack on the University of Prague during World War II.

401. The **Battle of Rezang La** has commemorated its **61st anniversary** on **18th November** 2023. It was fought between Indian and Chinese troops on the icy mountain tops on the southeastern ridge of the Chushul Valley.

- In 1962, the Charlie Company (C Company) of the 13th battalion of the Kumaon Regiment fought against the Chinese attack at the Rezang La Pass in Ladakh.
- The C Company, led by **Major Shaitan Singh**, had 117 soldiers. Of these, 110 were martyred during this battle.
- The valour of the Company not only successfully stopped China's advance, but it also resulted in the Chushul airport being saved, thereby preventing a possible Chinese occupation of the entire Ladakh region in 1962.

Rezang La:

It is also known as Rechin La. It is a mountain pass on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between Indian-administered **Ladakh** and the Chinese administered Spanggur Lake basin, which is also claimed by India. It is situated on the eastern watershed ridge of the Chushul Valley that is being claimed by China.

402. World Antimicrobial Awareness Week is observed annually from **18th November to 24th November** to raise awareness of global antimicrobial resistance and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policymakers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) happens when microorganisms (such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites) develop the ability to continue to grow, even when they are exposed to antimicrobial medicines that are meant to kill them or limit their growth (such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials, and anthelmintics).

Theme 2023: "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together"

403. World Toilet Day is observed annually on **19th November** to celebrate toilets and raise awareness for the people living without access to sanitation. The day promotes action to address the global sanitation crisis and contribute to the achievement of *Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6): sanitation and water for all by 2030*.

The day was first observed in 2013.

Theme 2023: "Accelerating Change"

The **hummingbird** is the symbol of World Toilet Day and World Water Day (22 March) 2023. It will inspire people to take personal action to help improve toilets and sanitation systems.

404. Women's Entrepreneurship Day is observed annually on **19th November** to acknowledge, support and celebrate the invaluable contribution of women business leaders and entrepreneurs towards economic growth and development. The day is organized by the Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organisation (WEDO). The day was first observed in 2014.

405. National Integration Day (Quami Ekta Diwas) is observed annually on **19th November** to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's first woman Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi**.

The year 2023 marks the **106th** birth anniversary of her.

International Men's Day is observed annually on **19th November** to cherish the achievements and contribution of all men in society. The day was established in 1999 by Dr Jerome Teelucksingh in honour of his father's birthday.

In India, the day was first observed in 2007.

Theme 2023: "Zero Male Suicide"

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406. World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is observed annually on the **third Sunday of November** to remember the many millions killed and injured in road crashes, their families and communities, as well as to pay tribute to the dedicated emergency crews, police and medical professionals who daily deal with the traumatic aftermath of road death and injury.

In 2023, the day falls on **19th November**.

The day was started by the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR) in 1995 and adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/5 on 26th October 2005 as an "appropriate acknowledgement for victims of road traffic crashes and their families".

Theme 2023: "Justice"

407. World Children's Day is observed on **20 November** annually to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.

The day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day.

The day is annually organized by the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Theme 2023: "For every child, every right"

November 20th is chosen as it is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

408. All India Cooperative Week is organized annually across India from **14 to 20 November** to highlight the achievements of the cooperative sector in different regional areas and formulating future strategies of development based on the dynamics of cooperative development in each sector.

The week was first observed in 1953.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **70th edition** of the All-India Cooperative Week. This week is organized by the National Cooperative Union of India.

Theme 2023: "Role of Cooperatives in Making India \$5 Trillion Economy and Sustainable Development Goals"

409. World Television Day is observed annually on **21st November**, to recognize that television plays a major role in presenting different issues that affect people. In December 1996, the United Nations proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day commemorating the date on which the first World Television Forum was held in 1996.

410. World Heritage Week (WHW) is observed annually across India from **19th November to 25th November** to promote the conservation of the heritage and the culture of monuments.

WHW events are annually organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under the Ministry of Culture.

As of 2023, India has **42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites**. This includes:

- 34 cultural sites
- 7 natural sites
- 1 mixed heritage site

411. The Martyrdom Day of **Guru Tegh Bahadur**, ninth Guru of the Sikh religion, is observed as Shaheed Diwas on **24th November**. On this day, he was killed in 1675 by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi for refusing to convert to Islam.

He was born in Amritsar on April 21, 1621, to Mata Nanki and Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh guru,

He was a learned spiritual scholar and poet whose **115 hymns** are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the main text of Sikhism.

Sikh holy premises Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi mark the places of execution and cremation of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

He is called '**Hind ki Chadar**' as his martyrdom is seen as sacrifice for the Humanity.

412. The Government of **Uttar Pradesh** has declared **25th November** to be observed as '**No Non-Veg Day**' to mark the **144th** birth anniversary of **Sadhu Thanwardas Lilaram Vaswani**.

The day coincides with the observance of International Meatless Day on 25th November.

The announcement has been made after UP government imposed a ban on the production, storage, distribution, and sale of food products with halal certification.

Sadhu Thanwardas Lilaram Vaswani:

Sadhu Thanwardas Lilaram Vaswani, an educationist who started the Mira Movement, was born on November 25, 1879. Annually, the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, which exists to take forward the life and mission of Sadhu T. L. Vaswani, celebrates International Meatless Day on Vaswani's birthday, 25 November, because he had strongly advocated the universal practice of vegetarian living. He died on January 16, 1966, at the age of 86.

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413. **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** is observed annually on **25th November** to spread awareness of the fact that women around the world are subject to various forms of violence and the true nature of the issue is often hidden. The day was first observed in 2000.

Theme 2023: "UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls!"

414. Constitution Day, also known as '**Samvidhan Divas**', is observed annually across India on **26th November** to mark the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the country. On this day in 1949, the constitution was adopted which came into force on 26th January 1950.

Note: The year 2023 marks the 74th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India. The Government of India has designated 26th November as 'Constitution Day' on **19 November 2015**, during the year-long celebration of the 125th birth anniversary of the Father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. BR Ambedkar. Earlier, this day was celebrated as Law Day.

415. National Milk Day is observed annually across India on **26th November** to commemorate the birth anniversary of the Father of India's White Revolution, **Dr Verghese Kurien**. The year 2023 marks the **102nd birth anniversary** of him.

The day was first observed in 2014.

Dr Verghese Kurien is known as the 'Father of the White Revolution' in India. He led the 'Operation Flood', which is the largest agricultural dairy development programme worldwide.

Note: World Milk Day is observed annually on 1st June.

416. National Cadet Corps (NCC) Day is celebrated every year on the **fourth Sunday of November**. In 2023, the day falls on **26th November**.

This day is celebrated all over India, with cadets participating in blood donation camps and social development programs.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the **75th** raising day of NCC.

National Cadet Corps (NCC):

NCC, which is the largest uniformed youth organisation in the whole world, was established on 15th July 1948. It is headquartered in New Delhi. It includes the army, the naval and the air wing.

417. The maiden **United Nations World Sustainable Transport Day** has been observed on **26th November 2023** to recognize the pivotal role of safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all.

The observance is led by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in collaboration with the UN regional economic commissions.

On this day in 2016, the first UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 26th and 27th November 2016.

Background:

On 16th May 2023, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/77/286 and proclaimed the 26 November of every year as the World Sustainable

Transport Day. The proposal was initiated by **Turkmenistan**, and co-sponsored by 66 other countries.

418. National Organ Donation Day is observed annually across India on **27th November** to spread awareness among people and to recognize the selfless efforts made towards mankind and re-establish our belief in humanity.

The year 2023 marks the observance of the 14th National Organ Donation Day. The day is organised by the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

419. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is observed annually on **29th November** to mark the anniversary of resolution 181, wherein the Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine on 29th November 1947.

In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly designated 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

420. Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare is observed annually on **30th November** to pay tribute to the victims of chemical warfare, as well as to reaffirm the commitment of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to the elimination of the threat of chemical weapons, thereby promoting the goals of peace, security, and multilateralism. The day was first observed in 2005.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2023	Remark
World Vegan Day	1 st November		
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists	2 nd November		
International Biosphere Reserve Day	3 rd November		
India Water Week (IWW)	1 st to 5 th November 2023		
World Tsunami Awareness Day	5 th November	Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future	
International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict	6 th November		
Infant Protection Day	7 th November		

National Cancer Awareness Day	7 th November		
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Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2023	Remark
World Urbanism Day	8 th November	Learn Globally, Apply Locally	
International Day of Radiology	8 th November	Celebrating Patient Safety	The day was first observed in 2012.
National Legal Services Day	9 th November	Access to Justice for All: Empowering the Marginalised through Legal Awareness	
International Week of Science & Peace	9 th to 15 th November		The week was first observed in 1986.
World Science Day for Peace and Development	10 th November	Building Trust in Science	
World Usability Day	Second Thursday of November (9 th November 2023)	Collaboration and Cooperation	The day was first observed in 2005.
National Education Day	11 th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first education minister of independent India.
World Quality Week	6 th to 10 th November 2023	Quality: realising your competitive potential	
World Pneumonia Day	12 th November	Every Breath Counts: Stop Pneumonia in Its Track	
Public Service Broadcasting Day	12 th November		
World Kindness Day	13 th November	Be Kind Wherever Possible	The day was first observed in 1998.
World Diabetes Day	14 th November	Access to Diabetes Care	
National Children's Day	14 th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of India's 1 st Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (2023 marks the

			134th birth anniversary of him)
Tribal Pride Day	15 th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda (2023 marks the 148th birth anniversary of him)
World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day	Third Wednesday of November (15 th November 2023)	Breathing is Life - Act Earlier	The first World COPD Day was held in 2002.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2023	Remark
National New Born Week	15 th to 21 st November	Safety, Quality and Nurturing Care - Every Newborn's Birth Right	
International Day for Tolerance	16 th November		The day was first observed in 1997.
National Press Day	16 th November		
All India Cooperative Week	14 to 20 November	Role of Cooperatives in Making India \$ 5 Trillion Economy and Sustainable Development Goals	The week was first observed in 1953.
National Epilepsy Day	17 th November		
International Students' Day	17 th November		
World Prematurity Day	17 th November	Small Actions, BIG IMPACT: Immediate Skin-to-Skin Care for Every Baby, Everywhere	
World Philosophy Day	Third Thursday of November (16 th November 2023)		
National Naturopathy Day	18 th November		
World Day for Prevention of and	18 th November		

Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence			
World Antimicrobial Awareness Week	18 th to 24 th November	Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together	
World Heritage Week	19 th to 25 th November		
World Toilet Day	19 th November	Accelerating Change	The day was first observed in 2013.
International Men's Day	19 th November	Zero Male Suicide	
National Integration Day	19 th November		The day commemorates the birth anniversary of India's first woman Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
Women's Entrepreneurship Day	19 th November		
World Children's Day	20 th November	For every child, every right	
Africa Industrialization Day	20 th November		
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	Third Sunday of November (19 th November 2023)	Justice	
World Television Day	21 st November		
World Fisheries Day	21 st November		

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