

PRACTICE **MOCK**



**WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**MAY 2024-WEEK 2**

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## RRB PO 2024 Free Mock Test

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has conducted the first ignition trial for **SCE-200 (semi-cryogenic engine-200) at the semi-cryo integrated engine test facility (SIET)** located in the ISRO propulsion complex (IPRC) in **Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**.

The semi-cryogenic engine ignition is achieved using a start fuel ampule which uses a combination of Triethylaluminium and Triethyleboron developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and used for the first time in ISRO in the 2000 kN semi-cryogenic engine.

- The SCE-200 is a 2MN thrust class liquid rocket engine developed by ISRO's **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)**.
- This engine is designed to enhance the payload capability of ISRO's **Launch Vehicle Mark-III** launcher and other future launch vehicles.
- It operates on an oxidizer-rich staged combustion cycle using liquid oxygen (LOX) and RP-1 (rocket propellant-1) kerosene.

2. The **Indian Army** and the **Indian Air Force** have planned to jointly deploy **MQ-9B Predator drones** made by the United States of America (**USA**) at air bases in **Sarsawa and Gorakhpur** in **Uttar Pradesh**.

This will upgrade surveillance capabilities all along the Line of Actual Control with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

The drone deal, valued at around **USD 4 billion**, is negotiated at the tri-services level, with the Indian Navy leading the discussions with the American side.

As per the deal, **31 MQ-9B drones** are being acquired of which 15 would be for coverage of the maritime zone and would be deployed by the Indian Navy.

The IAF and the Army will have **eight** of these highly capable long-endurance drones and will be able to cover almost all the areas of interest along the LAC with support from other existing assets.

### **MQ-9B Predator drone:**

MQ-9B, manufactured by the USA-based General Atomics Aeronautical, has 2 variants: Sky Guardian and Sea Guardian. It is a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) used for offensive missions, reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence operations.

- 3. Dr Arunish Chawla**, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, has launched the **MEDITECH STACKATHON 2024** in collaboration with the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** in New Delhi.

The MEDITECH STACKATHON is a groundbreaking initiative designed to catalyse transformative change within India's burgeoning MedTech sector by undertaking a comprehensive value chain analysis of select medical devices.

The STACKATHON aims to address critical challenges, foster domestic manufacturing, and reduce import dependence, thereby positioning India as a global leader in medical technology.

**Note:** India is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest market for medical devices in Asia and among the top 20 globally. Net imports for 2022-23 stands at USD 4101 Million with an import coverage ratio of 0.45.

- 4. Kharga Corps**, a unit of the Indian Army's Western Command, has conducted a three-day joint exercise **Gagan Strike-II** with the Indian Air Force (IAF) in **Punjab**.

The primary goal of Gagan Strike-II is to refine the processes involving the Indian Army's mechanized units and to validate the employment of attack helicopters in developed terrain. The exercise focused on integrating Apache and ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter)-WSI (Weapon System Integrated) helicopters, Unarmed Aerial Vehicles, and the Army's special forces.

- 5. The Ambassador of Japan to India, Hiroshi Suzuki**, and **Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio** have jointly inaugurated the **Kohima Peace Memorial** and also laid the foundation stone of the **Eco-Park** in Kohima, opposite the State Cultural Hall.

The Kohima Peace Memorial and Eco Park holds particular significance as it celebrates the collaborative effort between the Government of Japan and the Japanese International Corporation Agency with the Government of Nagaland.

It represents not only a historical significance but also serves as a symbol of peace, and reconciliation and holds profound educational value.

Notably, the **80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima** is being commemorated in 2024. In December 2023, a Japanese sending organization called ARMS signed an MoU with Nagaland University to establish a Japanese language course in Kohima.

### **Battle of Kohima:**

The Battle of Kohima is considered as the turning point of the Japanese U Go offensive, or Operation C mission launched in India in 1944 during the Second World War. The Battle of Kohima was fought in three stages from 3 April to 22 June 1944.

- From 3 to 16 April, the Japanese attempted to capture Kohima Ridge, a feature which dominated the road by which the besieged British and Indian troops of IV Corps at Imphal were supplied. By mid-April, the small British and Indian force at Kohima was relieved.
- From 18 April to 13 May, British and Indian reinforcements counter-attacked to drive the Japanese from the positions they had captured. The Japanese abandoned the ridge at this point but continued to block the Kohima–Imphal road.
- From 16 May to 22 June, the British and Indian troops pursued the retreating Japanese and reopened the road. The battle ended on 22 June when British and Indian troops from Kohima and Imphal met at Milestone 109, ending the Siege of Imphal.

6. The **7<sup>th</sup> edition** of the joint military exercise "**Shakti**" between **the Indian and the French forces** has been held at the Joint Training Node of the Indian Army in **Umroi, Meghalaya**, from **13 -26 May 2024**.

Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate, this joint military exercise aims to enhance the capabilities of both nations to conduct multi-domain operations in a sub-conventional scenario.

The opening ceremony of Exercise Shakti has been attended by the French Ambassador to India, **Thierry Mathou**.

The exercise involves 90 personnel from the **Indian Army's Rajput Regiment**, alongside representatives from other arms and services. Similarly, an equivalent number of troops from France, hailing from the 13th Foreign Legion Half-Brigade (13th DBLE), have also participated.

Exercise Shakti, a biennial training program that began in 2011, alternates between India and France. The previous session took place in France in November 2021.

7. The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has organized the first-of-its-kind **Telecom Design Collaboration Sprint** to foster deep-tech innovation among startups and academic institutions.

The Sprint has been organized by DoT at the **International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore (IIIT-B)**.

**Objectives of sprint:**

- **Leveraging Collective Strengths:** The Sprint enabled startups to combine expertise in critical 5G infrastructure areas, fostering innovation and speeding up a common telecom stack development.
- **Fostering Holistic Solutions:** Through collaboration, startups aim to create comprehensive 5G solutions, addressing industry needs and preparing for future advancements.
- **Creating Market Opportunities:** By aligning efforts, it seeks to unlock market potential, empowering startups to compete and grow in the telecom landscape.

Fifteen leading startups/MSMEs in the Radio Access Network (RAN), Core ecosystems, esteemed institutions such as IIT Madras, C-DOT, IIT Delhi, and other network entities participated in the sprint.

8. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully tested a liquid rocket engine, **PS4**, made with the help of additive manufacturing technology, commonly known as 3D printing.

The engine has been tested at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.

The engine, PS4, which is used as the engine for the fourth stage of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), was redesigned by ISRO for production using 3D printing.

The new engine, now a single piece, saves 97 percent of raw materials and reduces production time by 60 percent.

9. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, Government of India, **S Somanath**, has launched the **Zero Emission initiative** of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group.

He has also unveiled a replica of Chandrayaan at the campus highlighting the cooperation of SFO Technologies and ISRO.

This initiative of SFO Technologies and the NeST Group follows the United Nations' objective of achieving a 50 percent reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040.

## STATES AFFAIRS

10. The Government of **Manipur** has introduced the **"School on Wheels"** program to impart education to students sheltered in relief camps. The program has been launched by **Anusuiya Uikey, Governor of Manipur**.

Under this, the school bus, equipped with a library, computers, and sports items, would visit different camps accompanied by a teacher.

The program would reach out to students staying in the relief camps and impart to them with required teaching.

The Manipur government currently runs around 320 relief camps, housing more than 59,000 men, women, and children. Around 18,000 students are currently staying in relief camps.

11. The **Uttarakhand** government has launched the '**Pirul Lao-Paise Pao**' campaign to combat the raging forest fire in the state. Under this campaign, the local youth and villagers will collect dry Pirul (Pine tree leaves) in the forest and take them to the designated Pirul collection center.

The Tehsildar in their respective areas will manage the pirul collection center under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

The Pirul will be weighed and stored at the collection center, and the villagers or youth will be paid **Rs 50 per kg**, which will be directly transferred to the bank accounts.

The collected Pirul will be packed and processed and sold to the industries for further use.

The government has designated the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board to oversee the Pirul Lao-Paise Pao Campaign.

12. **Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP)**, the Chhattisgarh-based arm of the state-run Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), will install the state's first **15-megawatt (MW)** floating solar project in its **Maroda-1** reservoir to improve its carbon footprint.

- The project is being implemented through **NTPC-SAIL Power Supply Company Limited (NSPCL)**, a 50:50 joint venture company of National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and SAIL.
- The solar plant will be set up in **Durg** district.
- The Maroda reservoir is spread across 2.1 square kilometres with a water storage capacity of 19 cubic millimeters (MM3).
- Total green power generation estimated from this plant is likely to be about 34.26 million units annually.
- The project is expected to reduce the CO2 emission of BSP by 28,330 tonnes annually.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**13. Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs** has introduced an **AI-generated avatar** as its **digital spokesperson**. This is a first in the world of diplomacy.

- The AI spokeswoman named **'Victoria Shi'** has been created to deliver pre-prepared official statements on behalf of the Ministry, and this is done using a visual avatar generated by AI.
- The name is a combination of the word "victory" and the Ukrainian phrase for artificial intelligence, "shtuchniy intelekt."
- The AI diplomat's tone and voice are modelled on **Rosalie Nombre**, a Ukrainian singer and TV celebrity.
- Each of Victoria's statements will include a unique **QR code** linking to the official text version on the Ministry's website.
- The AI-generated spokeswoman will be reading out official statements written by humans.

**14. Nepal** has planned to introduce a new **Rs 100 currency note** featuring a map that includes the Indian territories of **Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani**.

- This was decided during a meeting chaired by Nepali Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda to incorporate the controversial territories into the new map of Nepal.
- The decision was made following a proposal from the Nepal Rastra Bank to update the map on the Rs 100 banknotes.
- The government has authorized the Nepal Rastra Bank to replace the current map with the updated version of the currency note.

#### **Background on dispute:**

- Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura had been included in India's November 2019 map.
- Tensions between New Delhi and Kathmandu emerged after Nepal issued a political map in May 2020, which included the same territories.
- Diplomatic relations came under further strain when Nepal handed over a diplomatic note to India objecting to the inauguration of a road linking Kailash Mansarovar via Lipulekh on May 8, 2020.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs had responded to Nepal's objection, stating that the road, passing through Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district, fell entirely within the Indian territory.

#### **Sugauli Treaty:**

Nepal has asserted its claim based on the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. According to the treaty all territories east of the Kali (Mahakali) river, including Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh, belong to Nepal.

The Sugauli Treaty, signed on March 4, 1816, between the East India Company and Guru Gajraj Mishra, delineated the boundary line of Nepal following the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16.

India, however, has stated that the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal annulled the Sugauli Treaty.

**Note:** Nepal shares a border of over 1850 km with 5 Indian states: Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

- 15. Researchers** have discovered the **world's deepest blue hole** named **Taam Ja' Blue Hole (TJBH)** in **Chetumal Bay off the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico**. The blue hole goes down a whopping 1,380 feet (420 meters below sea level (mbsl)), nearly the height of the Trump Tower in Chicago.

TJBH's depth surpasses other well-known blue holes such as the Sansha Yongle Blue Hole in the South China Sea (301 mbsl) and the Dean's Blue Hole in the Bahamas (202 mbsl).

#### **Blue hole:**

Blue holes are vertical marine caves that were carved over thousands of years by glacial runoff during the Ice Age. Blue holes are water-filled vertical caverns, found in coastal regions where the bedrock is made of soluble material, such as limestone, marble, or gypsum. Blue holes typically contain tidally influenced water of fresh, marine, or mixed chemistry. They extend below sea level for most of their depth and may provide access to submerged cave passages.

- 16. Climeworks AG**, a Swiss start-up, has opened the **world's largest Direct Air Capture and Storage (DAC+S) facility** named **'Mammoth'** in **Iceland**. It will extract Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air and store it underground in the form of rock.

Mammoth is powered by the Hellisheidi geothermal power plant of ON Power.

The plant has a capture capacity of 36,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

Mammoth is the second commercial facility of Climerworks and is about ten times bigger than its predecessor plant, Orca.

It is built in modular design and will be completed by the end of 2024.

- 17. The Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has announced the creation of a **Global Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center of Excellence** in **Paris**, during the Choose France Summit, hosted by President Emmanuel Macron.

The new AI center will be based in the TCS PacePort in the La Dense area of Paris, which will be inaugurated in June 2024.

This will become the 7<sup>th</sup> such facility in TCS' global Pace network, following Amsterdam, London, New York, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and Tokyo.

The center will leverage TCS' global ecosystem of startups, academia, and research organizations to bring the best of global capabilities to French companies.

The center will, initially, focus on areas such as brain-computer interface, building empathy in machines, and unleashing the power of AI in arts and culture.



**18. Pakistan** has launched its first-ever lunar mission '**iCube-Qamar**' in collaboration with **China**. The 7kg satellite, developed by Pakistan's Institute of Space Technology (IST), SUPARCO, and China's SJTU, is part of China's Chang'e-6 mission.

It is equipped with two optical cameras.

This enables Pakistan to conduct satellite-based research on lunar surface imagery independently.

**19. The World Health Organization (WHO)** has published the **first global guidelines to prevent the occurrence of the bloodstream and other infections caused by the use of catheters** placed in minor blood vessels during medical procedures.

The new guidelines include **14 good practice statements** and **23 recommendations** on key areas for health workers, including:

- education and training of health workers
- techniques of asepsis and hand hygiene practices
- insertion, maintenance, access, removal of catheters, and
- catheter selection

Poor practices in the insertion, maintenance, and removal of these catheters carry a high risk of introducing germs directly to the bloodstream, which can lead to serious conditions such as sepsis, and difficult-to-treat complications in major organs like the brain and kidneys. WHO estimated that between 2000–2018, average mortality among patients affected by healthcare-associated sepsis was 24.4%, increasing to 52.3% among patients treated in intensive care units.

**20. Netherlands** hosted the **2024 World Hydrogen Summit** in Rotterdam from May 13 – 15, 2024. For the first time, India has set up its own pavilion, at the summit.

The **Indian Pavilion**, set up by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, is one of the largest pavilions at the Summit and has been inaugurated by **Bhupinder S. Bhalla**, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

The India Pavilion at the conference provides India an opportunity to showcase to the world the progress made by the country in the field of Green Hydrogen.

**Note:** India launched its National Green Hydrogen Mission in January 2023 with an overall outlay of Rs. 19,744 crores. India has set an ambitious target to achieve a green hydrogen production capacity of 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) by the end of the year 2030.

## REPORTS & INDICES

**21. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** has raised **India's GDP growth** estimate for **FY25** to **7.1 percent** from 6.5 percent earlier. The new projection slightly exceeds the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 7.0 percent.

The agency estimated the growth in private final consumption expenditure to jump to 7 percent in FY25, up from 3 percent in FY24, and added that this will be a three-year high.

**22. Henley & Partners**, an international wealth migration specialist, in collaboration with New World Wealth, a global data intelligence firm, has published the **World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2024**, which highlights the richest cities globally for the year 2024.

- **New York City**, the USA, has retained its title as the wealthiest city in the world. It houses 349,500 millionaires, 744 centi-millionaires, and 60 billionaires, and the total wealth of the residents exceeds USD 3 trillion.
- With 11 cities in the Top 50, the **USA** has emerged as the world's richest country.
- California's Bay Area (USA) is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by Tokyo (Japan); Singapore, and London (UK) at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> position respectively.
- **Mumbai (24<sup>th</sup>) & Delhi (37<sup>th</sup>)** are the only Indian cities featured among the top 50. In 2023, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Hyderabad also made to the list along with Delhi and Mumbai.
- In the Middle East, **Dubai** has emerged as the wealthiest city, ranking 21st in the top 50 list.
- The report also highlights the most expensive cities in the world. **Monaco** has topped the list for its high wealth per capita and extravagant real estate prices.
- The report highlighted that 5 out of the top 10 wealthiest cities now are in the Asia-Pacific region.

**23. The International Organization for Migration (IOM)** has published a report titled "**World Migration Report 2024.**" As per the report, **India hosts the world's largest number of international migrants** (18 million), residing notably in UAE, USA, and Saudi Arabia.

In 2022, India remains the top remittance recipient country, receiving more than **USD 111 billion**, the first country to reach and even surpass the USD 100 billion mark.

**Mexico is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest recipient of remittances** in the world and received USD 61.10 billion as remittance in 2022.

China is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest recipient of remittances in the world and received USD 51 billion in remittances in 2022, followed by the Philippines (USD 38.05 billion), and France (USD 30.4 billion).

International remittances surged by **650%**, from USD 128 billion to USD 831 billion between 2000 and 2022.

As per the report, only 3 Southern Asian countries i.e. India, Pakistan (6<sup>th</sup>), and Bangladesh (8<sup>th</sup>) are among the top 10 recipients of international remittances in the world.

24. The **World Bank** has released a report titled **"Recipe for a Livable Planet: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in the Agrifood System."** The report outlines actions for countries to enhance food security, and climate resilience, and protect vulnerable populations during the transition to net-zero emissions.

**Key highlights:**

- **Agrifood** generates almost a **1/3<sup>rd</sup>** of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- **3/4<sup>th</sup> of agrifood emissions** come from developing countries and **China, Brazil, and India** are the top 3 emitters.
- In India, 60% of such emissions come from the farm gate, mainly due to enteric fermentation in the livestock sector.
- Despite an overall doubling of climate financing (at \$660 billion) over the last decade, project-level financing for agrifood systems stands at only 4.3% (at \$28 bn).
- India has already deployed over 272,000 solar-powered irrigation systems by December 2020, indicating the potential for significant emissions reduction in the agri-food sector.
- The top ten agrifood emitters include China, Brazil, India, the United States, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Russian Federation, Canada, Pakistan, and Argentina.

The agri-food system encompasses the entire journey of food from farm to table (i.e., from cultivation, harvesting, processing, packaging, etc. to preparation, consumption, and disposal). It also encompasses non-food products (for example forestry, animal rearing, use of feedstock, etc.).

25. As per the report **"Global Electricity Review 2024"** by the global energy think tank, Ember, in 2023, **India surpassed Japan** to become the **world's third-largest producer of solar power**, generating 113 Terawatt-hour (TWh) compared to Japan's 110 Terawatt-hour (TWh).

From ranking ninth in 2015, India has substantially expanded its solar generation capacity. The report indicates that its share of solar power surged from 0.5 percent in 2015 to **5.8 percent** in 2023.

India witnessed the world's **fourth-largest increase** in solar generation in 2023 (+18 Terawatt hours or TWh), following China (+156 TWh), the United States (+33 TWh), and Brazil (+22 TWh).

Together, these top four solar growth countries accounted for 75 percent of the overall growth in 2023.

Globally, solar power generation accelerated sixfold between 2015 and 2023, with India witnessing a seventeen-fold increase in solar generation capacity during the same period.

- 26.** The **2023-24 Indian Export** data has been released by the **Union Ministry of Commerce**. As per the data, India's exports have recorded positive growth in **115 countries** out of the total 238 countries/territories it exported in 2023-24.
- Out of the 229 countries/territories from which India imports goods and services, imports have declined from 124 countries during 2023-24.
  - The total merchandise export from India in 2023-24 was USD 437.06 billion, a decline of around 3 percent compared to 2022-23.
  - The **services exports** rose to **USD 341.1 billion** in 2023-24, from USD 325.33 billion in 2022-23.
  - The total export (Merchandise plus Services) was **USD 778.2 billion** in 2023-24 as compared to USD 776.4 billion in 2022-23, registering a marginal growth of 0.23 percent.
  - In 2023-24, Indian exports to 10 major export destinations increased by **13 percent** compared to 2022-23.
  - The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** was **India's largest export market in 2023-24**, registering a growth rate of 12.71 percent.
  - India's merchandise export to UAE was USD 35.6 billion.
  - The exports to Singapore increased by 20.19 percent to USD 14.4 billion and to China to \$16.7 billion, a growth of 8.70%.
  - A sharp increase in export growth was registered in Albania (234.97 percent), Romania (138.84 percent), and Russia (35.41 percent).

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

- 27.** Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) have completed **9 years** on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024. These schemes were launched under the Ministry of Finance on **9<sup>th</sup> May 2015** in **Kolkata**, West Bengal. The aim is to provide affordable insurance and security to people from the unorganized section of the country.

### **PMJJY:**

It is a **one-year life insurance plan** renewable from **year to year** offering coverage for death due to any reason. It is available to citizens (including NRIs) in the age group of **18 to 50**

**years** having a savings bank or post office account. It provides life insurance cover of **Rs.2 lakh** in case of death due to any reason against a premium of **Rs.436 per annum**.

#### **PMSBY:**

It is a one-year accidental insurance plan renewable from year to year offering coverage for death or disability due to an accident. It is available to citizens (including NRIs) in the age group of **18 to 70 years** having a savings bank or post office account. It provides accidental insurance cover of **Rs.2 lakh** (Rs.1 lakh in case of partial disability) in case of death or disability due to an accident against a premium of **Rs.20** per annum per member.

#### **Atal Pension Yojana:**

It is a flagship scheme of the Government of India. It is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). It is available to all bank account holders in the age group of **18 to 40 years**. It provides a minimum guaranteed pension ranging from Rs 1000 to **Rs 5000** on attaining 60 years of age.

## **RRB PO 2024 Free Mock Test**

### **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

**28. India and Iran** have signed a long-term contract for the operation of the **Shahid Beheshti Port terminal** at Chabahar in Iran. As part of the contract, **India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL)** will invest around USD120 million in developing the Shahid Beheshti terminal.

The Chabahar Port of Iran has two terminals, Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari. India has got the contract to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal only.

This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had allocated Rs 100 crore for Chabahar Port for 2024-25, underlining India's focus on connectivity projects with Iran.

**29. The Tata Steel Special Economic Zone Limited (TSSEZL)** and **HHP Five Private Limited** (subsidiary of Hygenco Green Energies Pvt Ltd) have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a green hydrogen and green ammonia project at TSSEZL's Gopalpur Industrial Park (GIP) in **Ganjam district of Odisha**.

Under the MoU, Hygenco will acquire land in Ganjam district to establish its green hydrogen, green ammonia, and derivatives unit.

Hygenco aims to produce 1 million tonnes per annum from this plant in phases, with the initial phase scheduled for commissioning by December 2026.

- 30. Mindgrove Technologies**, which is backed by Peak XV Partners-backed and incubated by IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation and IIT Madras Incubation Cell, has launched **India's first indigenous high-performance microcontroller chip** named '**Secure IoT.**'

A microcontroller chip is a microcomputer embedded inside a system to control a particular function, such as receiving remote signals or displaying information, inside a device. It has one or more processing cores, memory, and peripherals.

The chip is a high-performance microchip controller clocking at 700 MHz and is the only commercially available Indian-made chip in the segment.

The chip can be used in various devices such as smartwatches, smart city devices like connected electricity, water, gas meters, fans, speakers, and even in the battery management and control systems of electric vehicles.

The chip is 30 percent cheaper than the ones available in the market.

Mindgrove Technologies has received a shipment of its first system-on-chip, 'Secure IoT', from Taiwan.

- 31. Sri Lanka** has inked a **20-year power deal** with **Adani Green Energy Ltd** of India to develop wind power stations in the country. Under this deal, Adani Green Energy will receive **8.26 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh)** which is approximately **7 rupees.**

Adani Green Energy will be developing wind power stations in **Mannar and Pooner** in Sri Lanka.

The renewable energy company got the approval in February 2023 to invest **\$442 million** towards the development of the 484 megawatts wind power plants in the two areas located in Northern Sri Lanka.

- 32. Infosys**, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, has received the **ISO 42001:2023** certification, the world's first international standard for **Artificial Intelligence Management Systems (AIMS)**, from TUV India, part of the TÜV Nord Group.

Infosys implemented the AIMS framework as part of its Topaz Responsible AI Suite, ensuring responsible AI practices and regulatory compliance.

The ISO 42001:2023 certification provides a clear roadmap and systematic approach to AI management, through effective risk mitigation and streamlined processes.

- 33. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Jindal Steel & Power** for the supply of indigenous marine-grade steel.

The MoU highlights the critical role of public-private partnerships in tackling intricate security challenges, emphasizing the necessity of cooperation between governmental bodies and the private sector.

Within the MoU, various significant advantages such as quality, grades, and dimensions, alongside the identification of specific steel plants tasked with manufacturing the product are outlined.

- 34.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of additional shares in **Sikkim Urja Limited**, formerly Teesta Urja Limited, by **Greenko Energies Private Limited**.

Greenko Energies is a limited liability company incorporated in India. It is an (indirectly) wholly-owned subsidiary of **Greenko Mauritius**. Greenko Mauritius is wholly owned by Greenko Energy Holdings (GEH), a company incorporated in Mauritius, which is the holding company of the Greenko group of companies.

Sikkim Urja is a special purpose vehicle incorporated for the purpose of the implementation of the 1200 Mega Watt (MW) (6 Units of 200 MW each) hydropower project in North Sikkim.

- 35.** India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj has presented a voluntary financial contribution of **USD 500,000** to the **U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund** and handed over to Vladimir Voronkov, Under Secretary General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

India's contribution would support UNOCT's global programs, mainly Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP).

They are aimed at building capacities of the member states of eastern and southern Africa to combat the critical issues of financing of terrorism and prevent the movement and travel of terrorists.

With its current contribution, India's cumulative financial support to the trust fund now stands at **USD 2.55 million**.

- 36. Springer Nature**, a German-British academic publishing company, has inked a Transformative Agreement (TA) with the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), India** to drive open access.

The agreement marks the first TA by any publicly funded department in India, which is a significant leap forward for India's research and academic community.

The deal will allow all 50+ centers affiliated with the DAE to read and publish Gold Open Access (OA).

An article published immediately as OA will be available for all to use and reuse from the moment it is published in Springer Nature's 2,000+ hybrid journals across all disciplines. Both Springer Nature and DAE will work together to promote open-access principles and remove barriers to the dissemination of scholarly research.

- 37. INOX Air Products**, a manufacturer of industrial and medical gases, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Asahi India Glass Limited (AIS)** to supply green hydrogen to AIS's greenfield float glass facility in **Soniyana, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan**.

This will be India's first-ever green hydrogen plant for the float glass industry.

- It is a **20-year** off-take agreement.

- It will have a capacity to generate up to **190 tonnes of green hydrogen** per annum through the electrolysis process.
- It is slated for commissioning by **July 2024** and will be powered by solar energy.
- In the first phase, 95 tonnes per annum (TPA) of green hydrogen will be supplied to AIS.

**38. Zomato**, the food delivery giant, has introduced the '**Weather Union**', a weather monitoring system in India. It has over 650 on-ground weather stations that provide real-time data on temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind speed, and direction.

This is India's first crowd-supported weather network.

The company's website displays live weather conditions in 45 cities.

The system is open to institutions and companies, and the Application Programming Interface (API) is free of charge.

**39. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** has sanctioned nine projects from the Electronics and Communication Systems (ECS) Cluster to the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar**.

The seven more projects are in the process of being sanctioned from ECS with a funding of Rs 18 crore.

The IIT-Bhubaneswar will work on these sanctioned projects, which would be beneficial in electronics warfare, AI-driven surveillance, power systems, and radar systems.

**40. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Hindalco Industries** for the manufacturing and supply of indigenous marine-grade aluminium to Indian public and private shipyards for the construction of ships.

The ICG fleet is presently operating 67 ships with aluminium hulls with the capability of operating in shallow waters.

**41. India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Oman** to undertake research on sharks and rays in the Arabian Sea. This will be launched at an upcoming workshop at ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

The experts from both countries will take part in the workshop.

The workshop will lay the foundation for a collaborative future in marine research between the two countries and open avenues for regional management and conservation of iconic resources such as sharks and rays in the Arabian Sea.

**42. India** has inked a pact with **Moldova** to allow holders of diplomatic and official passports from either country to travel to the other without requiring a visa.

This agreement will add further momentum to the friendly and cordial relations between the two countries.

The diplomatic relations between India and Moldova were established on March 20, 1992.



**43. Thomas Cook (India) Limited**, India's leading omnichannel forex services company, has launched **TCPay**, a new digital service that brings ease and efficiency to international money transfers.

TCPay offers multiple benefits that will transform the way individuals transfer funds.

The platform coupled with the Video KYC process, empowers customers with paperless transfers from the comfort and convenience of their home.

The new digital service offers several advantages such as the convenience of 24x7 access, paperless transfers, a simple and seamless digital interface, and others.

**44. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)** has approved **Hinduja Group's IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL)** for the acquisition of **Reliance Capital**.

The acquisition will include the takeover of Reliance Capital's insurance arms, wholly-owned subsidiary Reliance General Insurance, and 51:49 JV with Nippon Life, Reliance Nippon Life Insurance.

The insurance regulator has cleared the transfer of Reliance Capital's 26 percent stake in Reliance Nippon Life to Aasia Enterprises.

Post the transaction, Reliance Capital, Nippon Life Insurance and Aasia Enterprises LLP will be the promoters of the company.

**45. According to the data of the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), China** has emerged as the **largest trading partner of India** with **USD 118.4 billion** in two-way commerce in **2023-24**.

India's exports to China rose by 8.7 percent to USD 16.67 billion in FY24. The main sectors that recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/made-ups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic, and linoleum. Imports from China increased by 3.24 percent to USD 101.7 billion in FY24.

The **United States of America (USA)** with USD 118.3 billion is the **2<sup>nd</sup> largest trading partner of India** in FY24.

India's exports to the US dipped by 1.32 percent to USD 77.5 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 78.54 billion in 2022-23, while imports dipped by about 20 percent to USD 40.8 billion.

In 2023-24, the **UAE** with USD 83.6 billion, was the **third largest trading partner of India**. It was followed by Russia (USD 65.7 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD 43.4 billion), and Singapore (USD 35.6 billion).

**46. The Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** to conduct two pilot projects under the **Drone Didi Yojana**.

The pilot projects to train women to operate drones for agricultural purposes will be held at the National Skill Training Institute in **Noida and Hyderabad**.

The company will train 500 rural women farmers to operate drones for agricultural purposes, such as fertilising crops, monitoring crop growth, and planting seeds. Mahindra and Mahindra will offer training in skills such as drone flying, data analysis, and drone maintenance.

### **Drone Didi Yojana:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Namo Drone Didi scheme under the Sashakt Nari-Viksit Bharat programme on 11 March 2024 at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi.

Under this scheme, the government aims to train and equip 15000 women-led Self-Help Groups with agricultural drones to assist in tasks such as crop monitoring, spraying fertilizers, and sowing seeds.

- 47. AIIMS New Delhi** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **University of Bolton Institute of Medicine, England** to collaborate in the field of medical research, innovation, and education.

This MoU will encompass various initiatives such as staff and student exchange, educational conferences, and collaborative degree programs.

This will help the institutes to address global challenges and share expertise with the world.

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

- 48. Thomas Cook (India) Limited** has introduced **Video KYC** for paperless Forex services, offering convenience and doorstep delivery in 2 hours.

The new initiative, '**Ab Forex Ghar Baithe**', offers customers a paperless means to buy forex without stepping out of home.

The Video KYC is a simple 2-step process:

- Visit [www.thomascook.in](http://www.thomascook.in): Choose your currency and select Video KYC with Home Delivery option.
- Upload your documents and verify your identity on a video call

- 49. ICICI Bank** has rolled out a new facility allowing its **non-resident Indian (NRI)** customers to make **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** transactions in India using their international mobile numbers.

- Previously, NRIs had to register an Indian mobile number with their Non-Resident External (NRE) or Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) bank accounts to use UPI, limiting their ability to make payments conveniently.
- The new facility allows ICICI Bank's NRI customers to use their international mobile numbers registered with their NRE/NRO accounts for UPI payments.

- This change applies to customers residing in ten countries, including the USA, UK, UAE, Canada, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.
- This service is available through its mobile banking app, **iMobile Pay**.

**50. CCAvenue**, the payments platform of fintech firm Infibeam Avenues, has tied up with **Shivalik Small Finance Bank** to empower merchants by granting them access to Shivalik SFB's extensive customer base.

This association will integrate Shivalik SFB's internet banking service with its payment platform.

The account holders with the bank will be able to make payments on websites "powered" by CCAvenue.

**51. Mirae Asset Mutual Fund** has introduced a **Nifty Mid-Small Cap 400 Momentum Quality 100 exchange-traded fund (ETF)**. This is India's first mutual fund scheme on the Mid and Small-cap segment where the underlying portfolio will consist of 50 Mid-cap and 50 Small-cap stocks.

The minimum initial investment during NFO will be Rs 5,000 with subsequent investments being multiples of Re 1.

**Ekta Gala and Vishal Singh** will manage the scheme and invest 95-100% in securities included in the Nifty MidSmallcap400 Momentum Quality 100 Index and 0-5% in money market instruments/debt securities, instruments, and/or units of debt/liquid schemes of domestic mutual funds.

The scheme does not offer any plan/option for investment. The creation unit size for the scheme shall be 2,00,000 units.

**52. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Citi** have collaborated to sign a Master Risk Participation Agreement (**MRPA**) to enhance access to supply chain financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (**SMEs**) and support more than USD 100 million in additional annual trade across Asia and the Pacific.

The agreement was signed between the ADB's **Trade and Supply Chain Finance Programme (TSCFP)** and **Citibank North America**.

This collaboration harnesses Citi's expansive network and origination capabilities alongside ADB's extensive presence in the Asia Pacific region's developing countries, amplifying the developmental impact of trade and supply chain finance.

ADB and Citi have been collaborating on trade finance since 2009, facilitating USD 6.2 billion worth of trade, expanding access to finance for SMEs, and contributing to the region's resilience.

**53. Visa**, a digital payments platform, has appointed **Sujai Raina** as the new **Country Manager for India**. He will be responsible for the India business, leading and executing Visa's strategic initiatives for the market, and partnering with clients and the payments ecosystem.

He will also continue to lead business development for Visa in India.

He joined Visa in 2020 and served as Vice President and Head of Business Development in India.

- 54.** The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has imposed a penalty of **Rs.1 crore** on **Go Digit General Insurance** for non-disclosure of a change in the conversion ratio of compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS).

The company had not furnished the full particulars of the revision to the regulator, violating Section 26 of the Insurance Act.

- 55.** **DBS Bank India** has been recognized as a '**Best Employer**' 2023 by Kincentric for the fourth consecutive year. The award acknowledges organizations with exceptional employee experiences and a strong culture of engagement.

The Kincentric Best Employers study is one of the most respected annual studies with a robust evaluation methodology designed to understand alignment across business objectives, people processes, and employee experience.

The jury evaluates shortlisted organisations and selects the Best Employers, who are recognised by Kincentric.

- 56.** The **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** has introduced '**ICICI Pru Platinum**', a Unit Linked Investment Plan (ULIP) that ties the distributor's commission to their customers' Assets Under Management (AUM).

The customers have unlimited free switches between asset classes without any cost or tax implications.

The customers can choose from an array of 21 funds under this product, which includes 13 equity funds, four debt funds, and four balanced funds. Additionally, they can choose from four portfolio strategies.

This product, which provides a cost- and tax-efficient way to build long-term wealth, will also incentivize distribution partners to encourage their customers to stay invested throughout the policy term.

- 57.** **Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company** has introduced the '**Promise4Growth**' plan, a new Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) designed for customers embarking on a journey towards financial prosperity and security.

The product offers 3 plan options: Promise4Wealth, Promise4Care, and Promise4Life, each aligned with different savings goals and life stages.

- 58.** The Indian government has extended its support to the **Maldives** by providing a budgetary aid package worth **USD 50 million**. This support comes in the form of a rollover of a Treasury Bill for an additional year, facilitated by the **State Bank of India (SBI)**.

The decision to extend this financial assistance was made in response to a request from Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer during his recent official visit to India from May 8-10, 2024.

These Government Treasury Bills are subscribed by SBI under a unique Government-to-Government arrangement at zero cost (interest-free) to the Government of Maldives.

- 59. Setu**, a leading Indian fintech company and part of the Pine Labs Group, in collaboration with indigenous AI research firm **Sarvam AI**, has launched '**Sesame**', India's first Large Language Model (LLM) specifically designed for the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector.

The launch took place at Adbhut India, an event organized by the non-profit People+ai. Sesame is a domain- and region-specific LLM trained on custom BFSI data, aiming to enhance credit decision-making and provide personalized financial services.

- 60. The Financial Planning Standards Board India (FPSB)** has inked a pact with the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**, GIFT City, Gandhinagar, to promote GIFT IFSC as a '**Global Finance Hub**'.

Both organizations aim to enhance the financial market ecosystem and nurture skilled professionals for GIFT City's expanding financial workforce.

Both organizations will jointly organize international and domestic events to raise awareness and establish GIFT IFSC as a 'Global Finance Hub'.

The important features of this pact are talent pipeline support, ecosystem development, promotional activities, and research collaboration.

- 61. South Indian Bank** has joined hands with **Northern Arc Capital** to explore and maximize commercial prospects by combining efforts in loan origination, underwriting, disbursement, collection, and reconciliation procedures.

The cooperation will allow South Indian Bank to use **nPOS**, Northern Arc's unique technology platform for co-origination, co-lending, and pool buyouts, as well as interact with numerous originators for loan origination, underwriting, disbursement, and reconciliation.

- 62. HDFC Bank**, in collaboration with **Atal Innovation Mission (NITI Aayog)**, has allocated **Rs 19.6 crore** in grants to support social startups in **FY24**.

In FY 2023-24, **170 social start-ups** received funding via 41 incubators, with a total of Rs 19.6 crore in the 'Parivartan Start-up Grants program.'

The focus areas for the 2024 grants included climate innovation, financial inclusion, agriculture, and sustainable rural economy, accessible and affordable healthcare, education and livelihood enhancement, gender diversity, and inclusion.

Over half of the 170 startups hail from over 60 tier 2 and 3 cities.

- 63. SBI General Insurance**, one of India's leading general insurers, has appointed **Jaya Tripathi** as **Head of the Key Relations Group**. In her new role, she will lead the expansion of new

business opportunities and partnerships, drive sales team growth, and deepen partner relationships to enhance profitability.

- 64. L&T Finance Limited (LTF)** has launched '**The Complete Home Loan**', offered through a digitized process, along with a dedicated relationship manager and optional home décor finance.

Home décor finance aims to provide flexibility and convenience in acquiring essential furnishings for a comfortable living space.

The loan will be given against an architect's certificate or contract certification when the house is ready for interior decoration. It will be about 15 percent of the entire home loan, not exceeding Rs.75 lakh, and can go up to 10 years.

- 65. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has extended the **settlement scheme period** till **10<sup>th</sup> June 2024** for entities involved in reversal trades in the stock options segment on BSE in 2014 and 2015.

The settlement scheme commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and was scheduled to conclude on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

SEBI introduced the ISO Settlement Scheme 2024 which provides a settlement opportunity to those entities that have executed trade reversals in the stock options segment of BSE during the period April 1, 2014, to September 30, 2015, and against whom adjudication proceedings have been initiated and are pending before any forum or authority.

After the expiry of the scheme period, actions as per the relevant provisions of securities laws will be continued against the entities that do not avail of this opportunity for settlement.

In a recent circular (May 2024), SEBI mandated a standardized format for periodic reporting by **Investment Advisers (IAs)**, aiming to enhance transparency and accountability within the industry.

- 66. Yes Bank** has tied up with **EBANX** to empower cross-border commerce in India. This collaboration aims to streamline cross-border payment processing and enhance global commerce opportunities for global merchants and Indian customers in India.

This collaboration will leverage EBANX's extensive global experience and proficiency in cross-border payments alongside YES BANK's digital prowess.

- 67. Zeta**, a provider of banking technology to financial institutions globally, has launched a **digital credit-as-a-service** product for its enterprise customers, primarily banks.

The product is based on the credit lines on the UPI scheme to reduce the cost of financial services and allow users to access pre-approved credit through their UPI-linked accounts. Zeta estimates that the transaction volume on this scheme will exceed USD 1 trillion by 2030 and aims to capture 50% of this market opportunity with its end-to-end solution that can help banks conceive and rapidly launch multi-form credit products.

**68. Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has announced that it will close all its customers' **inactive bank accounts** on **1 June 2024**. Customers whose accounts have become inactive can activate their accounts by completing their KYC (Know Your Customer) by 31 May 2024.

The bank has taken this step to reduce expenses and prevent fraud in such accounts. Those customers' accounts will be closed where there has been no transaction (deposit or withdrawal) by the customer for the past **three years**, and the account balance has been zero.

If these account holders do not complete their KYC by 31 May 2024, then they will not be given further notice, and their account will be closed permanently on 1 June 2024.

The bank will not close certain inactive accounts. These are:

- Accounts linked to DEMAT accounts, lockers, or active standing instructions
- Student accounts for customers under the age of 25
- Minor accounts
- Accounts opened for specific schemes like PMJJBY, PMSBY, SSY, APY, DBT
- Accounts frozen by court orders, income tax department orders, or other statutory authorities

**69. Bank of India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Coast Guard** to offer a Defence service Salary Package with best-in-class features under its **"BOI Rakshak Salary/ Pension Savings Scheme."**

The package will provide numerous benefits to all ranks of the Indian Coast Guard, Veterans, Recruits, and Agniveers, including Personal Accidental Insurance coverage up to Rs 150 lakhs, Permanent Total Disability cover up to Rs 50 lakhs, Air Accidental Cover up to Rs 100 lakhs, and Permanent Partial Disability Cover of Rs 25 lakhs.

BOI's digital initiative and **BOI Mobile Omni Neo app** will also allow Defence personnel stationed at borders and other remote locations to stay connected and have simple access to a variety of financial solutions.

**70. The State Bank of India (SBI)** has become the first trading-cum-clearing member of the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX). With this, SBI's IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) will be able to trade on the IIBX platform.

#### **India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX):**

- It is India's first International Bullion Exchange. It is based at GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tech City) IFSC (International Finance Services Center), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- IIBX has been conceptualized to provide a gateway to import bullion into India and provide a world-class bullion exchange ecosystem to promote bullion trading, investment in bullion financial products, and vaulting facilities in IFSCs.

- It will facilitate Transparent Price Discovery, Responsible sourcing and supply chain integrity, Quality Assurance and Standardization.
- The IIBX is regulated by the International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA).
- The products and technology offered at IIBX are diversified and available at a cost that is far more competitive than those at Indian exchanges, as well as global exchanges in Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, London, and New York.

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### RBI IN NEWS

71. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted the restriction on **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** that barred the public sector lender from onboarding customers through its mobile banking application '**BoB World.**'

In October 2023, the RBI directed the government-owned Bank of Baroda to suspend any further onboarding of their customers onto the 'BoB World' mobile application.

The RBI acted on the bank under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act of 1949, which gives it the power to give directions to banks "to prevent the affairs of any banking company being conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of the depositors or in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the banking company."

'BoB World' was launched in **September 2021.**

72. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed **R Lakshmi Kanth Rao** as **Executive Director (ED)** with effect from 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024. As executive director, he will handle the **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), the Right to Information Act (FAA), and the Department of Communication.**

Earlier, he was serving as chief general manager in charge in the Department of Regulation. He also served as a banking ombudsman at RBI Chennai and as regional director of Uttar Pradesh in Lucknow.

### AWARDS & RECOGNITION

73. The **Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana** have been included in '**UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.**'

The Memory of the World Asia Pacific Committee recognizes and honors the Asia-Pacific achievements in genealogy, literature, and science, among other categories.

The decision to include Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana has been taken at the 10th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP), held from 7 and 8 May 2024, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.



- **Ramcharitmanas:** It was written by **Goswami Tulsidas** in the 16th century A.D. in the Awadhi dialect. It is different from Ramanaya which was written by Sage Valmiki in Sanskrit language. The Ramcharitmanas is written in Chaupai form.
- **Panchatantra:** It is one of the oldest collections of fables in the world, composed in Sanskrit. **Vishnu Sharma**, the court scholar of King Amar Shakti of Mahilaropya, is credited with compiling it. It was probably composed around 300 BCE. It was translated into Pahlavi (Iranian language) in 550 BCE.
- **Sahrdyaloka-Locana:** It was composed by **Acharya Anandvardhan** in Sanskrit. He lived in Kashmir during the second half of the 10th century and the first half of the 11th century AD.

In 2024, 20 inscribed items are included in 'UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.' These are as follows:

| Inscribed Item   | Country              |
|--|----------------------|
| Funafuti: The Edgeworth David 1897 Expedition Documents  | Australia and Tuvalu |
| Sultana's Dream- by Rokeya S. Hossain  | Bangladesh           |
| Archives Relating to the Chengdu Traditional Teahouses   | China                |
| Huizhou Genealogy Archives   | China                |
| Printing Blocks Housed at the Derge Printing House   | China                |
| The Illustrated Manuscripts of Rāmacaritamānasa of Tulasīdāsa  | India                |
| The Manuscript of the Sahrdyāloka-Locana: Seminal Text of Indian Poetics   | India                |
| The 15th Century Manuscript of the Pañcatantra Fables  | India                |
| Indarung I, The First Cement Plant in Southeast Asia (1910-1972)   | Indonesia            |
| Indonesian Sugar Research Institute's Archives 1887-1986: The Role of ISRI's Research Activities to the World Sugar Industry | Indonesia            |
| The Tambo Tuanku Imam Bonjol Manuscript  | Indonesia            |
| Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah: Genealogical History of Kedah State  | Malaysia             |
| The Royal Correspondence of Baginda Omar (Surat Persendirian Baginda Omar)   | Malaysia             |

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Family Chart of Hereditary Lords of the Khalkha Mongols, the House of Genghis Khan                        | Mongolia    |
| Mongolia's First Postage Stamps 'Eldev Ochir'   | Mongolia    |
| Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Tagala (Christian Doctrine in Spanish and Tagalog), Manila, 1593 | Philippines |
| Hinilawod Epic Chant Recordings   | Philippines |
| Images of Khorezm Oasis by Khudaibergan Devanov (1879-1937)   | Uzbekistan  |
| Turkestan Album" 1871-1872  | Uzbekistan  |
| Bas-reliefs on the Nine Bronze Urns in Huế Imperial Palace  | Vietnam     |

**74. QuantPower**, the most innovative AI-enabled trading platform, has secured the prestigious title of **Best Trading Platform** in India for the **second consecutive year**.

QuantPower.tech has revolutionized the trading landscape by providing a unified platform that caters to diverse trading styles.

QuantPower empowers investors to make informed decisions with confidence by seamlessly integrating advanced features such as Strategy Builder, Algo Bots, and Backtesting for algorithmic traders, alongside Advanced Charting, Trading from Charts, and Chart Alerts for manual traders.

**75. Pawan Sindhi**, a prominent figure, has been bestowed with the prestigious **Global Pride of Sindhi Award 2024** for his remarkable contributions to society and dedication to serving humanity.

The award ceremony emphasized the values of humanity, peace, and prosperity, promoting noble messages within society.

During the ceremony, Pawan Sindhi highlighted the importance of serving society, respecting gurus and saints, and emphasized the role of social service in building a stronger nation and a better future.

**76. Genius Box**, a leading brand specializing in innovative DIY educational kits for children, has been recognized and honoured by the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** for its outstanding commitment to quality and branding excellence.

Genius Box stands as a pioneer in revolutionizing children's education through its "Play-full-learning" approach.

The brand offers thoughtfully curated kits and games designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

77. The **2024 Pulitzer Prize** winners have been announced by **Columbia University** in New York (USA). The Pulitzer board conferred the awards celebrating excellence in journalism and literary works.

There are **23 Pulitzer categories** (15 journalism categories and 8 arts categories). In 22 of those categories the winners receive a USD 15,000 cash award and a certificate. Only the winner in the Public Service category of the Journalism competition is awarded a gold medal.

**2024 Pulitzer Prize winners:**

| Journalism Category          | Winners   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Public Service               | Pro Publica (Joshua Kaplan, Justin Elliott, Brett Murphy, Alex Mierjeski, and Kirsten Berg) |
| Investigative Reporting      | Hannah Dreier (The New York Times)  |
| International Reporting      | Staff of The New York Times   |
| Editorial Writing            | David E. Hoffman (The Washington Post)  |
| Breaking News<br>Photography | Photography Staff of Reuters  |
| Feature Photography          | Photography Staff of Associated Press   |
| Audio Reporting              | Staff of the Invisible Institute and USG Audio  |

| Book, Drama, & Music Category | Winners   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Fiction                       | Night Watch by Jayne Anne Phillips  |
| Drama                         | Primary Trust by Eboni Booth  |
| History                       | No Right to an Honest Living: The Struggles of Boston's Black Workers in the Civil War Era by Jacqueline Jones  |
| Biography                     | King: A Life by Jonathan Eig<br>Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom by Ilyon Woo |
| Memoir and Autobiography      | Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice by Cristina Rivera Garza                             |
| Poetry                        | Tripas: Poems by Brandon Som  |
| Music                         | Adagio (For Wadada Leo Smith) by Tyshawn Sorey  |
| General Nonfiction            | A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy by Nathan Thrall                               |

**Special Awards and Citations:**

- A special citation has been issued to the late writer and critic **Gregory Stephen Tate** (Greg Tate), an American writer, musician, and producer.
- A special citation has also been given to **journalists and media workers covering the war in Gaza**.

**Pulitzer Prize:**

The Pulitzer Prize was established by Joseph Pulitzer, a newspaper publisher. He provided funds for the foundation of the Pulitzer Prize as an incentive for excellence in journalism, arts, and culture. He donated money to the Faculty of Journalism at Columbia University to administer the prizes. The first Pulitzer Prizes were awarded in 1917.

Gobind Behari Lal was the first Indian to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1937 in the field of journalism.

**RRB PO 2024 Free Mock Test****PERSON IN NEWS**

- 78. Subodh Kumar**, a 2010-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, has been appointed as **Director** in the **Ministry of Ayush**.

He has been selected for the appointment to the post with effect from the date of taking over charge of the post for a period up to October 8 or until further orders, whichever is earlier. Presently, he is on 'Compulsory wait' in the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

- 79.** Scotland's Parliament has approved political veteran **John Swinney** of the Scottish National Party (SNP) to lead the country as first minister. He has been elected as the **7<sup>th</sup> First Minister of Scotland**.

He has succeeded Humza Yousaf, who formally resigned from the role.

**Note:** Scotland is one of the four constituent nations of the United Kingdom. The UK is made up of four constituent nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

- 80. Vladimir Putin** has been sworn in as **President of the Russian Federation** for the **fifth time** for a **six-year term**. He took the oath of office at a ceremony held at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

He has been in power as President or Prime Minister since 1999. In 1999, after President Boris Yeltsin's resignation, he was appointed interim president of Russia.

- 81. Larsen and Toubro (L&T)** has elevated **R Shankar Raman** to the position of President in the company. Post the promotion, he will continue to hold the position of the whole-time Director and CFO of the company as well.

R Shankar Raman, who joined L&T Group in 1994 to establish L&T Finance Ltd, brings extensive experience to his role, having served as CFO since October 2011.

- 82. Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno**, a military dictator and interim president of the Central African Country of **Chad**, has won the presidential election. He secured 61.03 percent of the votes while his nearest rival, Prime Minister Succes Masra, got only 18.53 percent votes.

The election will legitimize the rule of Mahamat Idris Deby Itno for another six years. He seized power with the support of fellow army generals in 2021 and became the interim president of the country after the death of his father, President Idriss Deby.

- 83. Rizwan Koita**, Director of the Koita Foundation and co-founder of CitiusTech, has been appointed as the chairperson of the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH).

He has replaced Mahesh Verma.

- 84. Dr Soumya Swaminathan** has been named among the 10 exceptional individuals to receive an **honorary degree** from Canada's prestigious **McGill University** during the Spring 2024 Convocation ceremonies.

The university grants honorary degrees to individuals who have lifetime records of outstanding scholarly, scientific, or artistic achievement, or of exceptional contributions to the public good through professional or philanthropic activity.

In 2017, Soumya Swaminathan joined the World Health Organisation (WHO) as Deputy Director General (Programmes), and, in March 2019, was named its first Chief Scientist, a role she filled through the Covid-19 pandemic until late 2022.

- 85. Vivek Bipindada Kolhe**, the Chairman of Sahkar Maharshi Shankarao Kolhe Co-operative Sugar Factory, has been elected as a **Director of IFFCO** (Indian Farmers Fertilizers Co-op Ltd.) New Delhi.

His selection marks a significant milestone as the youngest director from the state (Maharashtra).

- 86. Senior IPS officer Idashisha Nongrang** has been appointed as the **first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Meghalaya**. She will replace Lajja Ram Bishnoi who will retire on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

She is a 1992-batch Indian Police Service officer.

She will serve as the State's police chief till 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

She is also the **first tribal woman** to ascend to this prestigious rank.

**87. Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)** Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) **Cmde Hemant Khatri** has been honoured with the esteemed '**PSU Samarpan Award**' by Gov Connect at the award ceremony held in New Delhi.

The award recognized the exemplary leadership of HSL's CMD for driving the transformation of the shipyard and inspiring countless individuals within the industry.

**88. Wipro**, a leading IT major, has appointed **Vinay Firake** as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of its Asia Pacific, India, Middle East, and Africa (APMEA) strategic market unit (SMU)**.

He will report directly to Srinii Pallia, Wipro's CEO and Managing Director, and will also join the company's executive board.

He has succeeded **Anis Chenchah**, the previous CEO of the APMEA SMU, steps down from the role to explore opportunities outside the organization.

He will be based in **Dubai** for his new role.

**89. Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla** has assumed the role of **Chief of Personnel in the Indian Navy**. Earlier, he served as the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF).

He has also represented the Indian Navy in diplomatic capacities abroad and served as Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command, showcasing his versatility and leadership acumen.

**90. Tata Sons** chairman **N Chandrasekaran** has been appointed as **Chairman of Tata Electronics**. He will succeed Banmali Agrawala, who has held the position for several years and has recently taken on an advisory role within the group.

His appointment reflects the Tata Group's commitment to the semiconductor business.

**91. Conservative party leader Andrej Plenkovic** has been appointed as the **Prime Minister-designate of Croatia** for a third consecutive term after he forged an alliance with an extreme right party following an inconclusive election.

The party agreed to form a coalition with the far-right Homeland Movement for a parliamentary majority.

## OBITUARIES

**92. American corporate executive Frank Shrontz** has passed away at the age of 92. He was born in Boise, Idaho, USA.

He was the former **Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Boeing Company**. He served the company from 1986 to 1996.

**93. Noted Indian Urdu and Hindi short story writer and translator Salam Bin Razzaq** has passed away at his residence in Navi Mumbai after a prolonged illness.

His short story collection "*Shikasta Buton Ke Darmiyan*" won the **2004 Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu**.

- 94. Athanasius Yohan**, formerly known as K.P. Yohannan, Metropolitan Bishop of Believers Eastern Church, has passed away at a U.S. hospital in Dallas, Texas (USA). He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1950 in **Kerala**.

He was the founder and president of **GFA World**, formerly known as Gospel for Asia, a large non-profit missions' organization with a focus on India and Asia.

He established the **Believers' Church** in 2000 at Thiruvalla in central Kerala, appointing himself the bishop of the newly formed Church. He later became Metropolitan Archbishop, with a bunch of junior bishops under him.

- 95.** Kerala's first chess International Master **Varugeese Koshy** has passed away at his Valasaravakkam residence in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the age of 66.

He has mentored a host of Indian chess players including Grand Masters P. Harikrishna, S. L. Narayanan, and N.R. Visakh among others.

He represented India in several International tournaments.

He was also the **President of Chess Players Forum India** which was formed in 2020-21.

- 96. Moosa Raza**, the former chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir and prominent educationist, has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was born on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1937 in Meenambur, South Arcot District, Madras Province, British India.

He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1960.

He served the Gujarat and Central governments in various capacities, including the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Gujarat and **Chief Secretary** to the government of **Jammu and Kashmir from 1988 to 1990**.

He also served as a member of the National Integration Council of India, after he retired from Government service.

#### Key works:

- His book titled "*Of Nawabs and Nightingales*" is a collection of his early experiences in the Indian Administrative Service.
- His book "*Kashmir: Land of Regrets*", published in 2019, is a recollection of his tenure as the J&K Chief Secretary in the tumultuous years leading up to the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed.
- He published his memoirs titled "*Of Giants and Windmills*" in 2022 which traces his journey from a remote village in South India to his last role as Chairman of the South Indian Educational Trust.

He was honoured with **Padma Bhushan** for civil service in 2010.

**97.** Noted Indian Punjabi writer and poet **Surjit Patar** has passed away in Ludhiana, Punjab at the age of 79. He was born on 14 January 1945 in Pattar Kalan in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

He served as the President of Punjabi Sahit Akademi and President of the Punjab Arts Council.

**Major works:** "Candles", "Hanere Vich Sulagdi Varanmala", "Aiya Nand Kishore", "Hanera Jarega Kiven", "Fasla", and "Koi Daalia Cho Langeya Hawa Bann Ke."

**Awards:**

- **Sahitya Akademi Award** for Hanere Vich Sulghdi Varnmala in **1993**.
- **Saraswati Samman** by K.K.Birla foundation in **2009**.
- **Padma Shri** Award in the field of Literature and Education in **2012**.

**98.** Indian politician **Sushil Kumar Modi** has passed away in Patna, Bihar at the age of 72. He was born on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1952 in Patna, Bihar. He was affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He was a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from Bihar. He was the **Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar** as well as the **Finance Minister of Bihar** from 2005 to 2013 and from 2017 to 2020.

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## SPORTS

**99.** Anandana, the **Coca-Cola India Foundation**, has joined hands with **Hockey India** for the **National Women's Hockey League 2024**. This is the first-ever association with Hockey India.

The three-year collaboration underscores its role in positively shaping the sports and gender equality landscape.

The collaboration also aligns with the company's *#SheTheDifference* campaign, an initiative to celebrate, uplift, and support women.

**National Women's Hockey League 2024:**

The first phase of the tournament commenced on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and has been concluded on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024, in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Athletes participated in the tournament represented various states, including Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, Mizoram, Manipur, and Odisha.



**100.** The Indian boxing team has bagged **43 medals** at the **Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) Asian U-22 and Youth Boxing Championships 2024**, held in Astana, Kazakhstan.

This includes **12 gold, 14 silver, and 17 bronze medals** from both categories and ranked second in terms of the medal count, only behind the host Kazakhstan, which won 48 medals in total.

The Indian U-22 team finished with 21 medals, including seven gold, five silver, and nine bronze medals.

The youth section bagged 22 medals, including five gold, nine silver, and eight bronze medals.

**101.** The **Asia Open Pickleball Championships 2024** has been organized in **Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**. In the championship, Indian team bagged **three gold and two bronze medals**.

- Sachin Pahwa and Priyanka Chhabra led India to its first gold medal, defeating Ruben Hellberg and Chitlada Hemasee 11-9, 5-11, 11-9, in the mixed doubles intermediate 35+ category final.
- In the women's doubles open category, the pair of Isha Lakhani and Pei Chuan Kao bagged the gold medal with a dominating 15-7, 15-3 win against Dang Kim Ngan and Tyak K.
- In the men's doubles, India's Aniket Patel and Rohit Patil claimed the gold medal after defeating Nik Alessandro Isagan and Lester Ga 5-11, 11-6, and 11-8 in the final.
- In the men's singles advance 35+ category, Vijay Menon defeated Yu Hsuan Cher to secure the bronze.
- In the women's singles intermediate 35+ event, Priyanka Chhabra defeated Marissa Phongsirikul, to secure the bronze medal.

**102. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC)** has announced the appointment of **Amul**, a leading Indian milk producer with an international presence, as the 'Official Sponsor' of the Sri Lanka Men's Team for the duration of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be held from 2<sup>nd</sup> June to 29<sup>th</sup> June in the USA & West Indies.

Sri Lanka has become the third team after **South Africa and the USA** to be sponsored by Amul at the T20 tournament.

The partnerships mark a significant milestone for Amul, as it continues to expand its global footprint in the sporting arena.

Notably, Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF), known for its **Nandini** brand of dairy products, will sponsor **Ireland and Scotland** cricket teams in the tournament.

**103.** The **Japanese men's hockey team** won the **30<sup>th</sup> Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Trophy** by defeating **Pakistan** 4-1 in the penalty shoot-out in the final. The final match was played at the Azlan Shah Stadium in Ipoh, Malaysia, on 11 May 2024.

This is the Japanese team's maiden Sultan Azlan Shah Trophy.

Japan won the trophy, with Pakistan in second place. Malaysia was in third place, followed by New Zealand, South Korea, and Canada in last place.

This time, the Indian team skipped the tournament as they were more focused on preparing for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

### **Sultan Azlan Shah Cup:**

The Sultan Azlan Shah Cup is an annual invitational international men's field hockey tournament held in Malaysia. The tournament is named after the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia, Sultan Azlan Shah, a supporter of field hockey. It started as a biennial tournament in 1983 and, after its popularity, was converted into an annual event in 1999.

**Note:** India has won the Sultan Azlan Shah Trophy 5 times in 1985, 1991, 1995, 2009, and 2010.

**104.** Indian javelin thrower **Neeraj Chopra**, the reigning Olympic and world champion, has finished second with a best throw of **88.36m** at the Doha Diamond League 2024.

Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic finished first with a best effort of 88.38m.

Former world champion Anderson Peters (Grenada) came in third with an 86.62m attempt.

**105.** At the **Paris Olympics 2024**, India will have **six wrestlers** in its contingent with five quotas coming through women.

**Aman Sehrawat**, the Asian champion, and the U23 world champion, secured a Paris 2024 quota for India in the men's **57kg** at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers 2024 in Istanbul, Turkiye. It is India's first Paris 2024 quota in men's freestyle wrestling.

**Nisha Dahiya** obtained a quota for India in the women's **68kg** category at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers 2024 in Istanbul, Turkiye.

**Antim Panghal (53kg)** obtained India's first quota from the 2023 World Wrestling Championships while **Vinesh Phogat (50kg), Anshu Malik (57kg), and Reetika Hooda (76kg)** added to the tally at the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek in April 2024.

Notably, Indian wrestlers have failed to secure a quota in Greco-Roman wrestling.

**106.** New Zealand cricketer **Colin Munro** has announced his retirement from international **cricket** after a career spanning 123 matches for the Blackcaps across all formats.

He has featured in 65 T20Is, 57 ODIs, and a single Test for New Zealand, with his last appearance coming in their T20I home series against India back in 2020.

**107. P Shyaamnikhil** has become **India's 85th chess Grandmaster (GM)**. The 31-year-old chess prodigy, who started his career at the age of eight, has finally secured his third and final GM norms at the 2024 Dubai Police Masters Chess Tournament.

P Shyaamnikhil hails from **Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu**.

He became the International Masters (IM) in 2011 and earned his first GM norm in the Mumbai Mayors Cup 2011. He earned his second GM norm in the Indian Championship. He completed the mandatory 2500 ELO rating in 2012 itself.

**108.** Uttar Pradesh ADG Traffic B.D Paulson has inaugurated the **International Tennis Federation (ITF) Tournament Junior 30** in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh** on 13 May 2024.

About 125 international players of the junior boys and girls category including players from Ukraine and America are participating in this competition. Many players from UP are also in the fray for the coveted title.

**109.** The **22<sup>nd</sup> Asian Team Squash Championships** will be held in **Dalian, China**, from 12 to 16 June 2024.

**Velavan Senthilkumar** will lead the Indian men's team and other team members are 2023 National Games champion Abhay Singh, Rahul Baitha, and Suraj Chand.

**Rathika Seelan** will lead the women's team and other team members are 2023 National Games silver medallist Pooja Arthi R, Sunita Patel, and Janet Vidhi.

The Asian Team Squash Championship is organised by the Asian Squash Federation in association with the Squash Federation of the host country. It is organized every two years.

**110.** Indian Gymnast **Srishti Khandagale** has scripted history by becoming the **first-ever Indian** to win a medal at the **Asian Trampoline Gymnastics Championships 2024**.

She secured the **silver medal** in the Women's Individual Age group category at the 6th Asian Trampoline Gymnastics Championship held in Hong Kong, China.

Dolgoplova from Kazakhstan has secured the gold medal, while Hong Kong's S Hung won the bronze medal.

**111.** England fast bowler **James Anderson** has officially announced his decision to retire from **test cricket**. He will play his final red-ball game against West Indies for **England** in July 2024.

In 2024, he reached the landmark of 700 Test wickets in the Dharamsala Test against India. He made his Test debut at Lord's in 2003 and has taken 700 wickets in 187 Tests.

**112.** The **United Nations (UN)** has proclaimed **25<sup>th</sup> May** as **World Football Day**, by adopting a resolution during the 80th plenary meeting of the General Assembly in New York.

The year 2024 marks the **100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first international football tournament** in history with the representation of all regions as part of the 1924 Summer Olympic Games, held in Paris.

The resolution has been passed unanimously by the 193-member General Assembly.

**Taher M. El-Sonni**, Permanent Representative of the State of **Libya** to the United Nations, introduced the draft resolution under Sport for Development and Peace: Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic ideal during the meeting.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

**113. World Thalassaemia Day** is observed annually on **8<sup>th</sup> May** to spread awareness to honour the struggle of patients suffering from this disease. The day was created in 1994 by Panos Englezos, president and the founder of the Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF), in the loving memory of his son George who died of Thalassaemia and the other thalassaemia patients who fought this disease.

**Theme 2024:** "Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All."

Thalassaemia is an inherited blood disorder that doesn't let the body create enough haemoglobin. The disease weakens and destroys the blood cells. There are two types of thalassaemia, alpha, and beta, along with Thalassaemia minor, intermedia, and major as its subcategories.

**114. United Nations International Day of Argania** is observed annually on **10<sup>th</sup> May** to recognize the significance of the Argan tree in achieving the 3 dimensions, Economic, Social, and Environmental, of sustainable development at the local level. The day was first observed in 2021.

**Theme 2024:** "Argan tree facing the challenge of climate change"

### **Argan trees:**

The Argan tree (*Argania spinosa*) is a native species of the sub-Saharan region of **Morocco**. It grows in arid and semiarid areas. It's the defining species of a woodland ecosystem, also known as Arganeraie, which is rich in endemic flora. Argan oil is one of the rarest oils in the world and is hailed as the "liquid gold" of Morocco.

**115. World Lupus Day** is a global health event commemorated on **10<sup>th</sup> May** annually to raise awareness about the seriousness of this lupus disease. The day was created by Lupus Canada in 2004.

### **Lupus:**

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can cause inflammation in any part of the body including the heart, kidneys, lungs, blood, joints, and skin. In the skin, lupus presents as a **butterfly rash** on the cheeks. Lupus is caused when the immune system attacks its own tissue, resulting in destroying healthy tissue and causing pain and inflammation in all parts of the body.

**116. National Technology Day** is observed annually across India on **11<sup>th</sup> May** to honour the contributions of India's scientific community including scientists, researchers, and engineers. The day was first observed in **1999**.

The day commemorates the anniversary of the **Pokhran II Tests (1998) code-named Operation Shakti** which were a series of five explosions conducted under the guidance of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at the Indian Army's Pokhran Range, Rajasthan. After the tests, the then Prime Minister of India Atal Bihar Vajpayee declared India a nuclear state, making it the 6<sup>th</sup> country to join the elite nuclear club.

**117. World Migratory Bird Day** is observed twice a year since its inauguration in 2006. The day is celebrated bi-annually on the **second Saturday** in May and in October. This year (2024), the day falls on **11 May** and **12 October**, aligning with the cyclic nature of bird migration in different hemispheres. It is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

**Theme 2024:** "Protect Insects, Protect Birds"

**118. International Nurses Day** is observed annually on **12<sup>th</sup> May** to recognize the strong commitment, compassion, and dedication that nurses display in the practice of their profession. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the English social reformer, statistician, and founder of modern nursing. She was also known as Lady with the Lamp.

- **Theme 2024:** 'Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care'
- The day was first observed by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in 1965.

**Note:** International Nurses Week has been observed from 6 to 12 May 2024.

**119. International Day of Families** is observed annually on **15<sup>th</sup> May** to raise awareness about the importance of families and the role of the international community in the development of families. The day was first observed in 1994.

**Theme 2024:** "Families and Climate Change"

| Important Day                        | Date/Month           | Theme for 2024  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day | 8 <sup>th</sup> May  | Keeping Humanity Alive  |
| World Thalassaemia Day               | 8 <sup>th</sup> May  | Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All |
| International Day of Argania         | 10 <sup>th</sup> May |   |
| World Lupus Day                      | 10 <sup>th</sup> May |   |

|                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| National Technology Day           | 11 <sup>th</sup> May                    |  |
| International Day of Plant Health | 12 <sup>th</sup> May                    |  |
| International Nurses Day          | 12 <sup>th</sup> May                    | Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care |
| International Nurses Week         | 6 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> May |  |
| World Migratory Bird Day          | 11 <sup>th</sup> May                    | Insects  |
| International Day of Families     | 15 <sup>th</sup> May                    | Families and Climate Change                        |

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