

# Monthly GK Digest

February 2023



## Monthly Digest February-2023

Dear Readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a **complete docket** of important news and events that occurred in the month of '**February-2023**'. This file is important for, **MBA** exams.

### **Banking & Financial Awareness**

- The New India Assurance** has launched "**Pay as You Drive**" policy for vehicles.  
**Note:** It is a comprehensive **motor insurance policy** that charges premiums based on the usage of the vehicle. The policy has two components - third-party cover and own-damage cover. This policy offered features like discounts on renewals, coverage beyond the distance limit, and enhanced protections. The discount will be applied to the basic own damage premium. **NIA Chairman: Neerja Kapur**
- According to data, released by the RBI, as of **December 2022**, the **total number of micro ATMs** across the country has reached **14.19 lakh**.  
**Note:** But, there has been no significant surge in the value of money withdrawn through these devices since June 2022. There were just about 3.56 lakh micro ATMs in India in 2020. The cash withdrawal in Dec 2021 was ₹25.2-lakh crore. It grew to only about ₹25.5-lakh crore by November 2022
- The **Reserve Bank of Australia** has announced that it will **remove the portrait of the British monarchy**, Queen Elizabeth II from its **A\$5 banknotes**.  
**Note:** The new currency notes of the \$5 would feature an Indigenous design rather than an image of King Charles III. The other side of the note will continue to **feature the Australian Parliament**. King Charles III, who became British monarch, is the head of state in Australia, NZ, and 12 other Commonwealth realms outside the UK.
- Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman presented **Union Budget for 2023-24** in Parliament on 1st Feb 2023.  
**Note: Seven priorities:** Inclusive development, Reaching the last mile, Infrastructure and investment, Unleashing the potential, Green growth, Youth power, and financial sector. **Funds allocated** (in lakh crore rupees):
  - Defence Ministry: 5.94
  - Road and highways Ministry: 2.7
  - Railways: 2.41
  - Home Affairs: 1.96
  - Agriculture and Farmer Welfare: 1.25
  - Communications: 1.23
- According to the **Reserve Bank of India – Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI)**, released by RBI, the digitization of payments across the country has **increased to 377.46 in September 2022** from 349.30 in March 2022.  
**Note:** RBI introduced the composite Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) on January 1, 2021. Base year: March 2018. As per the Economic Survey 2022-23, India has the highest fintech adoption rate of 87% among the public compared to the global average of 64%.
- The Indian government collected **Rs 1,55,922 crore GST in January 2023**.  
**Note:** The CGST is Rs 28,963 crore, SGST is Rs 36,730 crore, IGST is Rs 79,599 crore, and cess is Rs 10,630 crore. The GST collection in **January 2023 is the second highest**, after the Rs 1.68 lakh crore gross mop-up reported in April 2022. The revenues in the current financial year up to January 2023 are 24% higher than the GST revenues in January 2022.
- Mobicule** has launched the industry's first Asset Repossession Solution for banks and NBFCs named '**mCollect Repossession module**'.  
**Note: Asset Repossession Solution:** It is a comprehension solution that maps all the complex processes in the repossession of an asset, as a part of its debt collection and recovery product. The repossession module will encompass and cater to filling gaps in the end-to-end process, such as identification, digitization, and automation of the repo kit
- Reliance Retail** has become the **first Indian retailer** to introduce **Central Bank Digital Currency**, also known as the digital rupee.  
**Note:** The company has piloted the use of the Digital Rupee in one store in Mumbai. The launch of this facility was in **collaboration with Innoviti**

**Technologies, ICICI Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank.** The Digital Rupees was first introduced by the RBI on December 1, 2022. Initially, It is limited to Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar

9. **RailTel Corporation** has received Rs. 253.35 crore project from the **State Bank of India (SBI)** for providing **4G LTE connectivity** to 15,000 offsite ATMs across the country.

**Note:** It will also take care of the operation and maintenance of the entire network for a period of five years. The project includes the set-up of a Network Operations Centre (NOC), backhaul connectivity to the Data centre & Disaster Recovery centre of SBI, a live dashboard for SLA monitoring, etc.

10. **SEBI** strengthened the framework for **green bonds** by introducing the **concept of 'blue' and 'yellow' bonds** as new modes of sustainable finance.

**Note: Blue bonds:** related to water management, and marine sector. **Yellow bonds:** pertaining to solar energy. For this, SEBI amended norms governing the issue and listing of non-convertible securities. Green Debt Securities: Debt securities are issued for raising funds that are to be utilized for projects falling under certain categories.

11. The Reserve Bank of India increased its **repo rate by 25 basis points (bps)** to 6.5%.

**Note:** The repo rate has now been increased by 25 (225 + 25) bps since May 2022 by the panel. RBI predicted the real GDP growth for FY24 at 6.4%, while growth for FY23 has been pegged at 7%. RBI projected retail inflation at 6.5% (FY23) from 6.7% and 5.3% for the next fiscal year. Other rates:- **SDF: 6.25%; MSF: 6.75%; Bank Rate: 6.75%**

12. The **South Indian Bank** has launched a **wealth management platform** in partnership with **Geojit Financial Services Ltd.**

**Note:** SIB Wealth is an exclusive value-added service. It will help the bank's high net worth (HNI) customers to invest their money in the best financial instruments available in the market. Under this platform, SIB will be offering: Portfolio management services; Alternative investment fund; Systematic investment plan; Mutual funds, Bonds, and Real estate funds

13. **PhonePe** has launched a service that will **allow** the fintech firm's **Indian users traveling abroad** to pay foreign merchants using **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**.

**Note:** UPI international' support merchant outlets in **UAE, Singapore, Mauritius, Nepal, and Bhutan** that have a **local QR (quick response) code**. Users will be able to make direct payments in a foreign currency from their Indian bank. Walmart-backed PhonePe claimed it is the first Indian fintech app to launch the service.

14. **Airtel Payments Bank** launched its **current account "BizKhata"** which offers unlimited transactions and instant activation for account holders across the country.

**Note:** This account was designed specifically for **small merchants and business owners**. It brings all business transactions to one platform and allows them to maintain clear records while enjoying multiple banking benefits, like Zero Minimum Balance, Secure, hassle-free payments, Auto Sweep Out etc.

15. India's leading fintech, **MobiKwik** has become the **first fintech application to support RuPay Credit Cards on UPI**.

**Note:** The RuPay Credit Cards are now linked directly to UPI IDs. MobiKwik's customers can easily make payments to merchants by scanning the UPI QR code and using UPI PIN for payment authentication. Aim: To make financial services accessible and lead the way to financial inclusion. The integration of RuPay Credit Cards with UPI is in line with the NPCI.

16. **Ujjivan SFB** launched a mobile banking application named **'Hello Ujjivan' with three Vs (voice, visual, and vernacular)**.

**Note:** Aim: To provide banking access to individuals who have limited reading and writing skills. This application was **co-created with Navana.AI**. It is accessible by voice in **eight languages** (Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati, Kannada, Odia, and Assamese). Customers can perform banking transactions, and access services in their native language.

17. The Reserve Bank of India will launch **QR Code-based Coin Vending Machine (QCVM)** in collaboration with a few leading banks.

**Note:** Aim: To improve the distribution of coins. This pilot project will be launched in **19 locations in 12 cities** across the country. QCVM is a **cashless coin dispensation machine**. It will dispense coins against debit to the customer's bank account using UPI. It would eliminate the need for physical tendering of banknotes and their authentication.

18. Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology and Communications, Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the **'Digital Payments Utsav'** in New Delhi on February 9, 2023.

**Note:** Aim: To promote Digital Payments across the nation. This campaign particularly focuses on G-20 Digital Economy Working Group event cities - Lucknow, Hyderabad, Pune, and Bengaluru. It also witnesses the flagging off of the Digital Payment Sandesh Yatra.

19. **Edelweiss General Insurance** has **rebranded** itself as **Zuno General Insurance**.

**Note:** Aim: To make insurance easy, friendly, and transparent. Zuno GI also launched the findings of

its survey "Usage Based Insurance: Decoding Awareness, Perception, and Behaviour". It was conducted in collaboration with Crownit. The Zuno GI conducted the survey in eight cities – Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, and Ahmedabad. MD & CEO, Zuno GI: Shanai Ghosh

**20. Bajaj Finance** has launched an **'Insurance Mall'** portal for its customers to ensure an Easy-buy experience.

**Note:** This new portal offers a plethora of policies, plans in the core insurance segment, and Pocket Insurance and Subscription. Bajaj Finance also partnered with some of India's leading insurers to provide the best products to customers.

**21. The RBI** decided to expand the scope of the **Trade Receivable Discounting System (TReDS) platform** allowing the **use of insurance facilities**.

**Note:** The RBI has permitted the eligible entities to undertake factoring businesses to participate as financiers on TReDS and allow secondary market operations on the platform. Aim: To boost trade of receivables increasing cash flows to MSMEs. TReDS is an electronic platform to facilitate the financing of trade receivables of MSMEs.

**22. The provisional figures of Direct Tax collections** up to 10th February 2023 continue to register steady growth with gross collections are at **Rs. 15.67 lakh crore** which is 24.09% higher than the gross collections for the corresponding period of last year.

**Note:** Direct Tax collection, net of refunds, stands at Rs. 12.98 lakh crore which is 18.40% higher than the net collections for 2022. It is 91.39% of the total Budget Estimates of Direct Taxes for F.Y. 2022-23.

**23. Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has launched its own private **cloud platform, 'MAHABANK NAKSHATRA'**, to strengthen its digital infrastructure at the 88th Business Commencement Day.

**Note:** Aim: To facilitate the High-Performance Cloud Capabilities for Digital Infrastructure and hosting applications of the Bank. The bank has also launched a portal named Suvidha. **Suvidha** is an automated **Decease Claim Settlement System (DCSS)**.

**24. The Kotak Mahindra Bank** has announced that it will acquire **100% equity shares** of **Sonata Finance (SFPL)** for Rs 537 crore.

**Note:** Sonata Finance is a non-banking finance company, which is engaged in microfinance. Impact: This acquisition will provide Kotak Mahindra Bank access to 502 branches across the ten states. The SFPL will become a wholly owned subsidiary of the bank after receiving regulatory and other approvals. **MD & CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank: Uday Kotak**

**25. HDFC Bank** has launched a pilot project, **'OfflinePay'**, to test offline digital payments for merchants and customers enabling payment transactions even when there is **no mobile network**.

**Note:** HDFC bank claimed that it has launched the first-of-its-kind digital payment solution. This project was launched in partnership with Sweden-based Crunchfish Digital Cash AB. Vision: To boost the adoption of digital payments in smaller towns and rural areas with poor network connectivity.

**26. South Indian Bank** has signed an MoU with **Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL)** to help dealer partners streamline vehicle inventory funding.

**Note:** Under this partnership, they will also offer convenient and comprehensive retail financing solutions to their customers. It will cater to the business requirements of both companies and produce a significant synergistic effect. **South Indian Bank MD and CEO: Murali Ramakrishnan;** Headquarters: Thrissur

**27. HDFC Bank** has proposed to sell its entire stake of 9.95% (1,65,731 shares) in **Softcell Technologies Global Pvt Ltd** for ₹9.94 crore at ₹600.36 per share.

**Note:** In 2020, HDFC Bank sold a 2.05% stake (34,150 shares) in Softcell for Rs 1.47 crore. Softcell was founded on 6th September 2018 to sell Information Technology products and offers software and related services. **HDFC Bank CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan;** Headquarters: Mumbai

**28. ICICI Bank and European bank's BNP Paribas** signed a Memorandum of Understanding to fulfill the banking needs of European corporates operating in India and Indian companies in the European Union.

**Note:** This MoU will set up a framework between the two banks for **providing financial services** to corporate customers operating in the India-Europe corridor. BNP Paribas Group has been in India since 1860. BNP Paribas provides a wide range of financial services.

**29. The Reserve Bank** announced its **second global hackathon -- 'HARBINGER 2023 - Innovation for Transformation'**.

**Note:** Theme: Inclusive Digital Services Aim: To develop solutions that have the potential to make digital financial services accessible. The RBI has **invited innovative ideas in four segments**.

- Differently-abled
- Facilitate efficient compliance
- Extend the reach of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC)
- Enhance the scalability of blockchains

**30. The Income Tax Department** has notified the **New Income Tax Return (ITR)** filing forms for individuals and businesses for Assessment Year 2023-24 (FY 2022-23).

**Note:** The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has **notified six ITR forms** - ITR-1 SAHAJ, ITR-2, ITR-3, ITR-4 SUGAM, ITR-5, ITR-6. The CBDT has also notified ITR-V (verification form), and ITR acknowledgment form. The forms will come into effect from April 1, 2023. CBDT Chairman: Nitin Gupta

**31. Indian Overseas Bank** has launched the facility of issuance of the **e-BG (Electronic Bank Guarantee)** scheme in association with the National e-Governance Services Ltd.

**Note:** e-BG: An instrument issued by the bank in which the **bank agrees to guarantee a particular sum** in the event that the applicant fails to fulfill an action/performance. It is a **paperless mode** with digital stamping and digital signature. Real-time issuance would make it available for the beneficiary instantly.

**32. Muthoot FinCorp** has introduced '**Vyapar Mitra Business Loans**' to provide working capital and business loans to micro and small businesses like traders.

**Note:** This new feature can offer **business loans based on their daily cash flow** without additional collateral. Besides, one can receive a business loan without Income Tax Return (ITR) papers and no prior CIBIL score records. Benefits: No prepayment charges, loan renewals up to three times a year, and simple and fast documentation

**33. Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL)** has launched **the UPI LITE feature**, which is enabled by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for multiple small-value UPI transactions.

**Note:** The feature enables faster real-time transactions with a single click through Paytm. Aim: To drive the adoption of digital payments across the country. **UPI LITE was launched by the RBI in September 2022.** A UPI LITE wallet allows a user to do instant transactions of up to ₹200.

**34. EbixCash Limited** has become the **first company** in India to launch and **enable Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions for foreign nationals visiting India.**

**Note:** It will offer UPI services **to international delegates attending the G-20 summit**, being held in India. This facility will be enabled across all other entry points in the country. It can be extended to foreign travelers after physical verification of the Passport and Visa of the customers at the point of issuance.

**35. CAMSPay** has received in-principle approval from RBI to operate as a **payment aggregator.**

**Note:** It is a part of Chennai-based Computer Age Management Services (CAMS). CAMS is India's largest registrar and **transfer agent of mutual funds.** CAMSPay is a payment platform specializing in solving the banking and finance services sector's

payment challenges. Payment aggregators are entities that on-board digital merchants and accept payments on their behalf after getting a licence.

**36. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has made **necessary changes in NEFT and RTGS systems for Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) related transactions.**

**Note:** Under the FCRA, foreign contributions must be received only in the "FCRA account" of the **State Bank of India (SBI), New Delhi Main Branch (NDMB).** The contributions to the FCRA account are received directly from foreign banks through SWIFT and from Indian intermediary banks through NEFT and RTGS systems.

**37. The Reserve Bank of India** has appointed former Bank of Baroda ED, **Vikramaditya Singh Khichi as a member of the Advisory Committee on Reliance Capital.**

**Note:** The move follows **the resignation of former Axis Bank Deputy MD Srinivasan Varadarajan.** The Advisory Committee on Reliance Capital was set up to advise the administrator of crisis-ridden Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Capital. Other members: Sanjeev Nautiyal (former DMD, SBI) and Praveen P Kadle (former MD, Tata Capital).

**38. FM Nirmala Sitharaman** announced that the **GST Council adopted the Group of Ministers (GoM) report on the GST Appellate Tribunal** with certain modifications.

**Note:** The GoM on Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunals was set up under the **chairmanship of Haryana Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala** in July 2022. **Suggestions:** The tribunals should consist of two judicial members. One technical member each from the Centre and States, besides a retired Supreme Court Judge as president.

**39. GBBC Digital Finance** has joined **the International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)** as an affiliate member.

**Note:** GBBC Digital Finance has joined the Affiliate Members Consultative Committee, which is the **70th member of the committee.** This committee contributes to IOSCO policy and standards development. IOSCO is a global organization that creates and advocates for global securities standards. It consists of 35 national securities regulators.

**40. The first G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors** under the G20 Indian Presidency will be held on the 24th and 25th of February in **Bengaluru, Karnataka.**

**Note:** **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das** will chair the meeting. It will see the participation of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the G20 members, invitee members, and heads of International Organisations.

41. According to an analysis of the latest **financial results of public sector banks (PSBs)** showed that the **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has emerged as the **top performer** in terms of loan growth percentage during the third quarter of 2022-23.  
**Note:** The BoM recorded a 21.67% increase in gross advances on a year-on-year basis. BoM was **followed by the Union Bank of India (19.80%) growth**. While the State Bank of India (SBI) ranked fourth with 16.91% rise in advances growth.
42. The RBI issued the final guidelines on **Interest Rate Risk (IRR) in the Banking Book**.  
**Note:** Banks use this to measure, monitor, and disclose their exposure to IRRBB, which may impact the capital base and future earnings of lenders. IRRBB: The current or prospective risk to banks' capital and earnings arising from adverse movements in interest rates that affect their banking book positions. **Excessive IRRBB: Risk to banks' current capital base and/or future earnings**
43. Indian PM Narendra Modi and Singapore's PM Lee Hsien Loong witnessed the launch of the **cross-border linkage between UPI and PayNow**.  
**Note:** The launch was done by **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das** and **MD of the Monetary Authority of Singapore Ravi Menon**. It enables residents of both countries to transfer cross-border remittances faster and more cost-efficient. It will also help the Indian diaspora in Singapore to transfer money from Singapore to India and vice-versa.
44. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has  **canceled the license of Garha Co-operative Bank, Guna in Madhya Pradesh**.  
**Note:** Reason: The lender **does not have adequate capital and earning prospects**. About 98.4% of the depositors of the bank are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). The bank is prohibited from conducting various activities, such as acceptance, and repayment of deposits with immediate effect.
45. Aviva Life Insurance has launched **Aviva Signature Guaranteed Income Plan**.  
**Note:** It is a **non-linked, non-participating savings life insurance plan**, that helps build long-term wealth. It also helps customers save tax and guarantees a steady income stream in the long run. It aims to meet the diverse financial needs of policyholders at different phases of their lives. The options include Signature MoneyMaker, Signature Investor, Signature Builder, and Signature Saver.
46. The Reserve Bank of India has restricted the **withdrawal limit to ₹5,000** for savings and current account customers of **Uravakonda Co-operative Town Bank and Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank Ltd**.  
**Note:** Reason: Due to the **poor liquidity position** of these banks. This restriction shall remain in force for a period of six months from the close of business on February 24, 2023. Without prior approval of RBI, these banks shall not grant or renew any loans and advances, etc.
47. **Central Bank of India** and **Moneywise Financial Services Pvt Ltd (MFSPL)** signed a co-lending agreement for lending to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).  
**Note:** This partnership will help to **expand the portfolio** for both entities. The said loans would be subject to compliance with the applicable laws and guidelines issued by RBI. MFSPL is an RBI-regulated non-banking financial company (NBFC) focused on MSME Lending.
48. The **SEBI has proposed** that the listed entities should take **approval from shareholders at least once in 5 years** for the **appointment of directors** to serve on their boards.  
**Note:** Reason: To **curb the practice of occupying permanent directorship** in a company. SEBI also proposed norms, related to special rights granted to certain shareholders; sale, disposal, or lease of assets of a listed entity outside the 'scheme of arrangement' framework and on agreements binding listed entities
49. Credit rating and research agency, **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** projected the growth of the Indian economy to **5.9% year on year during 2023-24**.  
**Note:** The GDP growth estimate of the agency is **lower than the 6.4% real GDP growth** projected by the **RBI** for FY24. According to the agency, there are fault lines in the economic recovery that is happening in the Private final consumption expenditure, Government Final Consumption Expenditure, and net exports.
50. **HDFC Bank** has signed an MoU with the **UAE-based Lulu Exchange** to strengthen the cross-border payments between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.  
**Note:** In the beginning, the expertise and regulatory framework of Lulu Exchange would be utilized to launch a digital inward remittance service - '**RemitNow2India**'. It will allow UAE individuals resident to send money to any bank account in India via IMPS and NEFT through HDFC digital banking channels.
51. The **State Bank of India** has partnered with **PayNow (Singapore Payment System)** for cross-border payments.  
**Note:** The facility is offered **through SBI's Bhim SBIPay mobile application**. This partnership will allow fund transfers from India to Singapore

through registered mobile numbers, and from Singapore to India using the UPI ID. This initiative will boost the digitization initiatives, providing an easy, seamless cross-border payment facility to users.

52. **Niva Bupa Health** Insurance has launched a new health insurance policy named '**ReAssure 2.0**'.

**Note:** Aim: To encourage customers to start investing for their health and financial security at an early age. This new-age indemnity plan offers a 'live healthy' benefit. It gives a premium discount of up to 30% on policy renewal basis health points earned. It is available as an individual, multi-individual, and family floater **starting from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 1 crore. Age: 18 -65 yrs**

53. **Pine Labs and Thomas Cook (India)** partnered with **National Payments Corporation of India** to enable payments via UPI for foreign nationals from G20 countries.

**Note:** Pine Labs will issue the prepaid payment product under the PPI authorization from RBI. This facility can be accessed on arrival in India at Thomas Cook's airport counters. When **encashing foreign currency at Thomas Cook's counter**, the customer can open a Pine Labs Fave Money prepaid account loaded with the rupee value

54. The **NBFC Paisalo Digital** Ltd entered into a co-lending loan agreement with **Karnataka Bank** to

meet the funding requirements of priority segments such as agriculture and MSME.

**Note:** This agreement will enable Paisalo Digital to drive financial inclusion by **providing low-cost financial solutions to priority sectors**. As per the RBI circular, released on November 5, 2020, banks and NBFCs can enter into tie-ups for the joint contribution of funding for priority sectors.

55. **Dunzo delivery** joined hands with **Alliance Insurance Brokers** to provide insurance to its national network of delivery partners.

**Note:** With this initiative, **Alliance Insurance Brokers** is providing insurance protection to almost 20,000 delivery partners, **insured on a daily basis**, while they are active on the platform. In case of an accident, the policy offers a benefit of Rs 5 lakh to cover children's education and reimburse business losses and hospitalization expenses.

56. **Kotak Mahindra Bank** has launched a unified portal named '**Kotak fyn**' for corporate customers.

**Note:** Aim: To track their **payments, collections, trade, and other services** related to their bank accounts. The bank is also planning to introduce a new loan origination and management system that would digitize the process from the loan application, to sanction, to disbursal. This system would reduce the turnaround time for corporate borrowers and make the process more transparent.

## Obituaries

1. **Former Union Law Minister** and veteran lawyer, **Shanti Bhushan** passed away at the age of 97 in New Delhi.

**Note:** He served as the law minister of India under the **Morarji Desai government** from 1977 to 1979. He was best known for successfully arguing for setting aside the election of Indira Gandhi in 1975. In his political career, he was a member of Congress and later joined the Janata Party. He also served as a Rajya Sabha member from 14 July 1977 to 2 April 1980.

2. **Legendary filmmaker, K. Viswanath**, fondly known as Kalatapasvi, passed away at 92 in Hyderabad, Telangana.

**Note:** He was born in 1930 in Andhra Pradesh and gained popularity in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi films. He has made 50 movies since 1965 and was a celebrated filmmaker. He was awarded the highest recognition in Indian Cinema, the **Dadasaheb Phalke award in 2016** and Padma Shri in 1992.

3. Popular **South Indian playback singer, Vani Jayaram** passes away at 78 in Chennai.

**Note:** The Government announced the **Padma Bhushan** award for the late singer this year. She did playback for over one thousand Indian movies and

recorded over 10 thousand songs. She sang in Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Odia, Gujarati, Haryanvi, Assamese, Tulu, and Bengali languages. She had won National Film Awards three times and also was honoured with a lifetime achievement award by Filmfare (2013).

4. **Former President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf** passed away at the age of 79 in Dubai.

**Note:** He ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008. He has been declared a fugitive in the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing case. In March 2014, he was indicted for suspending the Constitution on November 3, 2007. In December 2019, a special court handed Musharraf a death sentence in the high treason case against him.

5. **Veteran Indian painter, BKS Varma** passed away at the age of 74 in Bangalore, Karnataka.

**Note:** The subject of his paintings was mainly environmental and social issues presented in a surreal form. He was trained in art by the legendary art teacher A.N. Subbarao at the art and culture institution. He was honoured with the Karnataka Rajya Puruskar (2001), Rajyothsava award (2001),

and Honorary Doctorate by Bangalore University (2011).

6. **Legendary American pop composer**, songwriter, and pianist, **Burt Bacharach** passed away at the age of 94 in Los Angeles, California, the United States.

**Note:** He has won various awards including eight Grammys and three Oscars, two Golden Globes, and a lifetime achievement prize. He wrote more than 500 songs from the late 1950s to the 1980s. His greatest creations include melodies like 'I'll Never Fall in Love Again,' 'I Say a Little Prayer' and 'Walk on By,' 'Alfie'.

7. Acclaimed **Indian painter** and printmaker, **Lalitha Lajmi** passed away at the age of 90 due to age-related ailments.

**Note:** She was born to a poet father and a poly-linguist writer-mother in Kolkata on October 17 in 1932. She was the sister of legendary filmmaker Guru Dutt and mother to director Kalpana Lajmi. Her works are held in the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art, the British Museum, and CSMVS Museum Bombay.

8. Noted actor, **Javed Khan Amrohi** passed away at the age of 73 due to lung failure.

**Note:** He was nominated for the Academy Award for **Best Actor** in 2001 for the film 'Lagaan'. He worked in about 150 movies including Andaz Apna Apna (1994), and Chak De! India (2007). He also worked in TV series such as Mirza Ghalib (directed by Gulzar) and Karim (the barber) in Nukkad (directed by Saeed Akhtar Mirza). He was also a member of the acting faculty at the Zee Institute of Media Arts.

9. **Noted Yakshagana Bhagavatha** (playback singer), **Balipa Narayana Bhagavatha** passed away at 85.

**Note:** He gained fame with his '**Balipa style**' of singing. His grandfather Balipa Narayana Bhagavatha was also a famous Bhagawatha who had first popularised the Balipa style of singing. He has written more than 30 Yakshagana 'Prasanga' (scripts). He was the chief Bhagwat of Kateel Durgaparameshwari Prasadita Yakshagana Mandali (Kateel Mela).

10. **Noted Actor and Politician, Nandamuri Taraka Ratna** passed away at the age of 39 due to cardiac arrest in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

**Note:** He was the **grandson of the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and founder of the TDP, N.T. Rama Rao**. He made his debut with

Okato Number Kurraadu (2002) followed by Yuva Rathna (2003), Taarak (2003), and Bhadradri Ramudu. He was also awarded the Nandi Award 2009 for Best Villain in Amaravathi.

11. **Legendary manga artist, Leiji Matsumoto** passed away at age 85 due to acute heart failure in Tokyo, Japan.

**Note:** His manga works Galaxy Express 999 and Space Pirate Captain Herlock were adapted into television anime series in the 1970s and became huge hits in and outside Japan. Many of his **manga was in the "battlefield comics"** genre with more than 150 stories depicting the tragedy of war. Mangas are comics or graphic novels originating from Japan.

12. **Former Gujarat Governor** and Rajya Sabha MP, **Om Prakash Kohli** passed away at 87 in Noida.

**Note:** He joined the political arena in January 1991. He was the **19th Governor of Gujarat** between 2014 and 2019 during the term of chief ministers Anandiben Patel and Vijay Rupani. He also held the additional charge as Governor of Madhya Pradesh from 2016 to 2018 and Goa governor for three weeks in 2014. He was a lecturer at Hansraj College and Deshbandhu College in Delhi.

13. Classical dance legend, **Kanak Rele** passed away at the age of 85.

**Note:** She was an exponent of **Mohiniyattam**. She was awarded the first Guru Gopinath National Puraskaram of the Government of Kerala. She played a major role in popularizing Mohiniyattam and making it globally prominent.

14. A retired chief commissioner of income taxes, lawyer, expert in Sanskrit, and BusinessLine columnist, **TCA Ramanujam** passed away at an age of 88.

**Note:** He serves as **Chief Commissioner of Income Tax** until his retirement in **1992**. He also spent a year as a member of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal. In 2002, he began his advocacy career again and served as a senior standing counsel for the Income Tax division.

15. **Subi Suresh, an actor and television host from Malayalam**, passed away at an age of 41.

**Note:** She also performed a variety of comedic roles on programs like Cinemala. She has appeared in a number of Malayalam television programmes as well as the films Grihanathan, Thaksara Lahala, and Elsamma Enna Aankut.

### Important Days

1. **World Wetlands Day** is observed every year on **February 2** to raise global awareness about the crucial role of wetlands for people and the planet.

**Note: Theme 2023: It's Time for Wetlands Restoration.** This theme highlighted the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration. The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 75/317 for World Wetlands Day on 30 August 2021.



2. **World Cancer Day** is observed on **February 4** each year to create awareness about cancer and to encourage its identification, prevention, and treatment.  
**Note:** It is being observed with the slogan "close the care gap" -- a call for equitable access to cancer care. Blue and Orange are the official colors for world cancer day 2023. This day originated on 4th February 2000 at the first World Summit Against Cancer, which was held in Paris.
3. **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is observed on **February 6** every year.  
**Note:** Aim: To amplify and direct efforts on the elimination of this cruel practice. It also aimed to promote the elimination of female genital mutilation. **Theme 2023: Partnership with Men and Boys to transform Social and gender Norms to End FGM**
4. The **International Day of Human Fraternity** is observed every year on **February 4**.  
**Note:** It was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21, 2020. **Motto: Harmony in difference**
5. **World Pulses Day** is observed every year on **February 10** to spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.  
**Note: Theme 2023: Pulses for a Sustainable Future.** The UN General Assembly recognized the value of pulses in 2013. The UN has also adopted the year 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP).
6. **World Radio Day** is observed annually on **13 February** to spread awareness of the importance of radio and how it has helped people to stay updated with the news.  
**Note:** The 12th edition of World Radio Day (2023) **theme is 'Radio and Peace'**. The focus of the theme: On the rapid changes and advancements in the technology of radio. February 13 was chosen as World Radio Day as it was the day of the establishment of the United Nations Radio in 1946.
7. **International Epilepsy Day** is celebrated on the **second Monday of February every year**, and this year (2023), this day falls on the **13th of February**.  
**Note:** Aim: to spread awareness of the Epilepsy disease. The celebrations are to **focus on "STIGMA"** which means fear or feeling adverse reactions. Epilepsy is a nervous disorder that affects brain activity. This day is observed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other countries.
8. The **'Financial Literacy Week'** of the Reserve Bank of India started on **13 February and continues till February 17, 2023**.  
**Note:** The **theme** for the Financial Literacy Week 2023 is **"Good Financial Behaviour – Your Saviour"**. The theme aligned with the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education: 2020-2025. The RBI has been conducting this week every year since 2016 to create financial education awareness.
9. **World Unani Day** is observed on **February 11** every year to celebrate the **birth anniversary** of social reformer and renowned Unani scholar **Hakim Ajmal Khan**.  
**Note:** Hakim Ajmal Khan was born on February 11, 1868. He was an educator, an Unani physician, and the founder of scientific study in the Unani system of medicine. The Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine, Ministry of AYUSH, hosted an international conference on Unani medicine with the theme "Unani Medicine for Public Health" in Delhi.
10. **National Productivity Day** is observed on **February 12** to promote awareness towards increasing the country's productivity.  
**Note:** It is coordinated by the National Productivity Council (NPC). **2023 theme: Productivity, Green Growth, and Sustainability: Celebrating India's G20 Presidency**
11. **National Deworming Day** is observed on **February 10** every year.  
**Note:** Aim: To deworm all the children across the country in the age group of 1 to 19. Worms are parasites, which live in human intestines for food and survival. The worms consume nutrients meant for the human body and cause blood loss, poor nutrition, and stunt growth.
12. The UNGA has designated **February 11** as the **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**.  
**Note:** Aim: To recognize the important contribution that women make to the fields of science and technology. The UN SDGs 2030 also lays out gender equality in science as an essential component of the agenda. The **theme** for the 8th International Day of Women and Girls in Science is **Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance (IDEA): Bringing communities Forward for sustainable and equitable development**.
13. **World Day of Social Justice** is observed annually on **February 20**.  
**Note:** Aim: To raise a voice against social injustice and to bring together diverse communities to eradicate poverty, physical discrimination, gender inequalities, religious discrimination, and illiteracy. **Theme 2023: Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice**
14. **World Pangolin Day** is observed annually on the **third Saturday in February**.  
**Note:** In 2023, this day falls on **February 18**. Aim: To remember and celebrate pangolins, raise awareness, and fight against global pangolin

capture in Africa and Asia. Pangolin Day marks the 12th edition of the event.

15. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution from Jamaica to declare the **first-ever Global Tourism Resilience Day on 17th February 2023**.

**Note:** Aim: To future-proof the sustainability of tourism. This day also aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism, in accordance with local, regional, and national priorities and through education, activities, and events

16. **International Childhood Cancer Day** is observed annually on **February 15** to raise awareness and show support for children who are suffering from cancer.

**Note:** In 2021, the three-year campaign for International Childhood Cancer Day was started. The **theme for the three-year campaign is 'Better Survival'**. The campaign is an attempt to meet the WHO Global Childhood Cancer Initiative's goal of at least 60% of children diagnosed with cancer worldwide surviving by 2030.

17. India observed the **8th edition of the Soil Health Card Day on 19 February 2023** to commemorate the launch of the Soil Health Card Scheme.

**Note:** It provides information to farmers on the nutrient status of their soil along with recommendations on appropriate dosages of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health. It also aims to provide financial assistance to farmers to apply corrective measures for deficiencies. **In 2015, PM Modi has launched this scheme in Rajasthan.**

18. **International Mother Language Day** is observed on every year **February 21** to highlight the cultural and linguistic diversity in the country.

**Note: Theme 2023: Multilingual education - a necessity to transform education.** This day was first initiated by Bangladesh and it was accepted at the UNESCO General Conference held in 1999. UNESCO decided to observe this day to understand the value of the mother tongue.

19. The **World Organization of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)** has observed **World Thinking Day every year on 22nd February**.

**Note: Theme 2023: Our Planet, Our Peaceful Future.** Aim: To create awareness about issues that

affect girls and young women. This day also aims to celebrate sisterhood, solidarity, and women's empowerment. In 1999, at the World Conference in Dublin, the name of the day was changed from Thinking Day to World Thinking Day.

20. India observed **National Science Day on February 28** to honor the Indian scientist and physician, Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman as C.V. Raman for discovering the Raman Effect.

**Note:** Sir C V Raman received the Nobel Prize in 1930 for his discovery. **Theme 2023: Global Science for Global Wellness.** Theme highlights: India's emerging role on the global stage and its increasing visibility in the international community

21. The **4th National Protein Day** is observed across the nation on **27th February** as an annual awareness day to highlight the importance of adequate protein consumption.

**Note: Theme 2023: Easy Access to Protein for All.** It was first observed on 27th February 2020. This day was initiated by the Right To Protein (RTP) with a focus on raising awareness of adequate protein consumption for better health and nutrition.

22. **World Scout Day** is observed annually on **February 22** by Boy Scouts worldwide to honor Lord Robert Baden-Powell.

**Note:** Robert Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scout Movement, on the day of his birthday. The day is observed by National Scout Organizations all over the world through events including fundraising campaigns, food drives, and other types of volunteer work.

23. **Central Excise Day** is observed every year on **February 24** to recognize and honor the contributions made by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).

**Note:** Every year, Central Excise Day is observed to raise public awareness of the dedication and labor-intensiveness of CBIC. **Primary responsibility: To prevent tampering with manufactured items.**

24. **World NGO Day** is an annual international observance on **February 27**.

**Note:** Aim: To recognize the contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This day was first celebrated in 2010 and has since become an annual event that highlights the work of NGOs around the world.

### New Appointments

1. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has recommended **Dr Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi** as the new **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)**.

**Note:** The recommendation will be approved by the Health Ministry, followed by approval of the

Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) led by PM Narendra Modi. He will **replace Dr. V G Somani**, whose extended tenure will be ended in February 2023. Dr. Somani was appointed DCGI for three years on August 14, 2019.

2. **Air Marshal A P Singh** has been appointed as the **new Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force**.

**Note:** He has **succeeded Air Marshal Sandeep Singh**, who retired from service on 1st February 2023. He served as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Air Command. He was commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF on December 21, 1984. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College and National Defence College.

3. President of **Equatorial Guinea**, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has appointed **Manuela Roka Botey** as the **first female prime minister** of the country.

**Note:** She **replaced former premier Francisco Pascual Obama Asue**, who has been in the position since 2016. Before this, she served as the education minister and joined the government in 2020. President Teodoro Obiang was re-elected for a sixth term in office in November 2022.

4. Gujarat Ports Infrastructure Company Limited has appointed **Madhvendra Singh** as the **first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Gujarat Maritime Cluster (GMC)**.

**Note:** GMC is the first of its kind Commercial Maritime Cluster in the country aimed at creating a hub for maritime services of international standards. Gujarat Maritime Board established GMC through its subsidiary, Gujarat Ports Infrastructure Company Limited.

5. Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd's Board of Directors appointed **Raul Rebello** as **managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO)** designate.

**Note:** He will **replace Ramesh Iyer**, who will be retiring on April 29, 2023. Currently, he is serving as the chief operating officer (COO) of the company. Before to joining Mahindra Financial, he worked as the executive vice president and head of rural lending and financial inclusion at Axis Bank Ltd.

6. After receiving the approval for the appointment of **five new Supreme Court judges** by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, the current strength of Supreme Court is 32.

**Note:** Sanctioned strength: 34. They will take oath on 6th February by CJI DY Chandrachud. Five appointed judges are:

- (1) Pankaj Mithal (CJ of Rajasthan)
- (2) Sanjay Karol, (CJ of Patna)
- (3) PV Sanjay Kumar, (CJ of Manipur)
- (4) Ahsanuddin Amanullah (judge, Patna HC)
- (5) Manoj Misra (judge, Allahabad HC)

7. The Union government appointed **K Satyanarayana Raju** as the new managing director and **CEO of Canara bank**, with effect from February 7, 2023.

**Note:** He has **replaced L V Prabhakar**, who resigned on 31 December 2022. He has 33 years of experience in all banking segments, like branch banking, corporate credit, etc. He also served as the executive director of Canara bank. He joined the Vijaya Bank in 1988 and has risen to the level of chief GM at the Bank of Baroda.

8. The Government has cleared the appointment of **two new judges** of the **Supreme Court - Justices Rajesh Bindal and Aravind Kumar**.

**Note:** With this, the Supreme Court has regained its full strength of 34 judges. Rajesh Bindal: He was the Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court. Aravind Kumar: He was Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court. Earlier, the government also appointed five judges - Justices Pankaj Mithal, Sanjay Karol, PV Sanjay Kumar, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, and Manoj Misra

9. The former Foreign Minister of **Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides** has been elected as the country's new **president**.

**Note:** He **defeated his rival Andreas Mavroyiannis**. He won nearly 52 percent of the votes, and his rival Mavroyiannis won only 48 percent. He was expelled from the ruling DISY party after announcing his candidacy and ran as an independent. He was appointed as the government's spokesman in 2014 and foreign minister in 2018.

10. The President of India, Droupadi Murmu has appointed **Ramesh Bais** as the **new governor of Maharashtra**.

**Note:** He has replaced Bhagat Singh Koshyari, who resigned from his post. Other appointments (Governor):

- *Arunachal Pradesh:* Lt. General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik (Retired)
- *Sikkim:* Lakshman Prasad Acharya
- *Jharkhand:* C.P. Radhakrishnan
- *HP:* Shiv Pratap Shukla
- *Assam:* Gulab Chand Kataria
- *Andhra Pradesh:* Justice (Retd.) S. Abdul Nazeer
- *Ladakh:* Brigadier (Dr.) B.D. Mishra
- *Manipur:* Sushri Anusuiya Uikye (Former Governor of Chhattisgarh)
- *Chhattisgarh:* Biswa Bhusan Harichandan (Former Governor of Andhra Pradesh)
- *Nagaland:* La Ganesan (Former Governor of Manipur)
- *Meghalaya:* Phagu Chauhan (Former Governor of Bihar)
- *Bihar:* Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar (Former Governor of HP)

11. **Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu** has been elected as the **22nd President of Bangladesh**.

**Note:** He was nominated for the post by the ruling Awami League. No other party or individual filed a nomination for the post. He will **replace President**

**Mohammad Abdul Hamid**, whose tenure will be ended on April 23, 2023. Abdul Hamid served as President for two consecutive terms of five years. The Bangladesh constitution does not allow any person to hold the President's post beyond two terms.

**12. Aniket Sunil Talati** has been elected as the **new President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** for the 2023-24 tenure, with effect from February 12, 2023.

**Note:** While **Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal** has been elected as **Vice President of the institute**. Prior to this role, Aniket Sunil Talati worked as the Director of ICAI ARF, Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of India (IIPI), and Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) India.

**13.** The Ministry of Law and Justice has cleared the appointment of **four chief justices of high courts** including - Justice Sonia G Gokani, Justice Sandeep Mehta, Justice Jaswant Singh, and Justice N Kotiswar Singh.

**Note:** **Justice Gokani** has been appointed as the acting chief justice of the Gujarat High Court. Chief justice of the Gauhati HC: **Justice Sandeep Mehta**. Chief justice of Tripura HC: **Justice Jaswant Singh**. Chief justice J&K and Ladakh HC: **Justice N Kotiswar Singh**.

**14.** Indian-American, **Neal Mohan** has been appointed as the new **Chief Executive Officer of YouTube**.

**Note:** He will **replace the current head, Susan Wojcicki**, who will step down after 25 years. He joined Google in 2008, and later he was appointed chief product officer at YouTube in 2015. Prior to Google, he worked as a Senior Analyst at Accenture and later joined Microsoft. He is an MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

**15. Rajan Amba** has been appointed as the **managing director of Jaguar Land Rover India**, effective from 1st March 2023.

**Note:** He will **replace Rohit Suri**, who announced his retirement from the position of MD and President in January 2023. Prior to this role, he worked as the Vice President - Sales, Marketing, and Customer Care of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles. He has also worked as a Chief Operating Officer with Carat Lane (a subsidiary company of Titan).

**16. Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar** has been appointed as the **new Vice Chief of Army Staff**.

**Note:** He is currently serving as the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) in the Army Headquarters. He will **succeed Lt Gen B S Raju**, who has been appointed as the Jaipur- headquartered South Western Army Commander. While Lt Gen NSR Subramani has been appointed as the next Central Army Commander in Lucknow. All the new appointments will come into effect on March 1.

**17.** The government has approved the appointment of an IAS officer of the 1987 batch of the Chhattisgarh cadre, **BVR Subrahmanyam as the CEO of NITI Aayog**.

**Note:** He would **succeed Parameswaran Iyer**, who has been appointed as executive director of the World Bank for a period of two years. Earlier, he served as the chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir and Additional Chief Secretary (Home) in Chhattisgarh. He also served as private secretary to then PM Manmohan Singh from 2004 to 2008.

**18. Professor Meghana Pandit** has been appointed the **chief executive officer (CEO) of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**.

**Note:** She becomes the **first female chief** of the trust. She is also the first person of Indian heritage to be appointed CEO of any National Health Service (NHS) trust in the Shelford Group.

**19. Actor Ayushmann Khurrana** has been appointed as the **National Ambassador of UNICEF India**.

**Note:** The actor signed the contract in presence of a UNICEF representative. He keeps up a strong voice for children's rights, especially for the most vulnerable supporting solutions for issues that impact them the most.

**20.** Aam Aadmi Party's **Shelly Oberoi** has defeated BJP candidate Rekha Gupta to become the **new Delhi Mayor**.

**Note:** She received 150 votes while Rekha Gupta got 116 seats. She also becomes **Delhi's first woman mayor in 10 years**. The election was held after the Supreme Court ruled out the possibility of nominated members participating in the voting process. In Delhi MCD polls, the AAP had bagged 134 seats, BJP got 104 seats, and Congress bagged nine seats.

**21.** Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) **Girish Chandra Murmu** has been selected as the **External Auditor of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** in Geneva.

**Note:** He has been selected for a **four-year term from 2024 to 2027**. CAG will take over from the incumbent External Auditor of ILO, the Supreme Audit Institution of the Philippines. CAG's appointment is a recognition of its standing among the international community and its professionalism, and its global audit experience.

**22.** US President, Joe Biden has nominated **former Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga** as the **president of the World Bank**.

**Note:** He would **replace David Malpass**, who will step down from his role this June before completing his tenure in April 2024. He was nominated for his expertise in handling global challenges including climate change. Presently, he is serving as the vice chairman at private equity firm General Atlantic.

23. **Lt Gen RS Reen** (1986-batch officer) took over as the **Director General Quality Assurance (DGQA)** on 24th February, 2023.

**Note:** DGQA is an Inter-Service Organization functioning under the Department of Defence Production in Ministry of Defence. He is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt from Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata and has headed a Senior Quality Assurance, Brig at Headquarters of DGQA and was Controller (Missile System) in Secunderabad.

24. The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet approved the **extension** of the **Secretary of the Department of Defence - Aramane Giridhar**.

**Note:** He will remain in his post **until October 31, 2024**, or till further order whichever is earlier. This extension is beyond his age of superannuation. He was due to retire in June 2023, after completing 60 years of superannuation. He is a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre.

25. The **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** has confirmed the

appointment of former bureaucrat **Shailesh Pathak as its secretary general**, with effect from 1 March 2023.

**Note:** FICCI also announced that director general, Arun Chawla will be superannuated on June 30, 2023, and transition to an advisory role. He has worked with the government as an IAS officer as well as helmed large companies in the private sector.

26. Beverage maker **PepsiCo** has appointed actor **Ranveer Singh** as its **brand ambassador** and also unveiled a new campaign targeting younger consumers.

**Note:** He joined Pepsi's growing league of celebrity endorsers. The brand roped in actor Salman Khan in 2019. More recently, it also announced KGF actor, Yash as the brand's new face. "Rise up Baby" is a youth movement that brings alive in different flavors.

### Important News – India

1. The **Adani Group** has **acquired** the strategic **Israeli port of Haifa for USD 1.2 billion**.

**Note:** The deal was signed by Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani in presence of Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. The Haifa Port is the **second largest port in Israel** in terms of shipping containers and the biggest in shipping tourist cruise ships. The Adani group will also develop real estate at the port to transform the Haifa skyline.

2. According to the latest data from the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, the **normalized Night Time Light (NTL) radiance** in India has **jumped to 43% in 2021** as compared to 2012.

**Note:** The night light is used by economists to track the economic growth of regions across the globe. **Bihar (474%), Manipur (441%), Ladakh (280%), and Kerala (119%)** have shown **significant growth**. While a good increase was observed in Arunachal Pradesh, MP, UP, and Gujarat.

3. According to **the research firm, Mercom Capital**, the **solar module manufacturing capacity of India** would reach approximately **95 GW by the end of 2025**.

**Note:** The solar module manufacturing capacity as of September last year was 39 gigawatts (GW). **Report title: State of Solar PV Manufacturing in India**. Indian PV manufacturers are strategically poised to expand their production capacities and adopt new technologies

4. Union Railway minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw has informed that India will receive its **first hydrogen train by December 2023**.

**Note:** It will run on **heritage circuits like Kalka-Shimla** and later it will be expanded to other places. The Vande Metro (mini version of Vande Bharat Express) is also being developed. Vande Metro Aim: To help people living around big cities to travel to and fro in comfort between their place of work and hometowns. **Railway Budget (2023-24):** Rs 2.4 lakh crore.

5. The **Ministry of Cooperation** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, NABARD, and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited**.

**Note:** Aim: **To enable Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** to provide services offered by Common Service Centers. Now, PACS will be able to work as Common Service Centres. This will help increase PACS's business activities and help them become self-sustaining economic entities.

6. The **unemployment rate of India declined to 7.14% in January 2023** (the lowest in four months) from 8.30% in December 2022.

**Note:** This data was released by the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)**. The urban unemployment rate declined to 8.55% in January from 10.09% (December 2022). While the rural unemployment rate slipped to 6.48% from 7.44%. Unemployment was the highest in J&K at 21.8% followed by Haryana (21.7%) and Rajasthan (21.1%).

7. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** signed an MoU with Engineers India Limited.

**Note:** Reason: **To develop Waste to Energy and bio-methanation projects** in cities with a population of millions plus. These two projects will integrate the concept of circularity in waste management by producing green energy from municipal solid waste (dry and wet waste). The by-products, such as electricity will also help in achieving the sustainability of waste management operations.

8. The **36th edition of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela** commenced in **Faridabad, Haryana** on February 3, 2023, and will continue till February 19, 2023.

**Note:** It was organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in association with the Ministry of Tourism, Textiles, Culture, and External Affairs. It was inaugurated by the Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar. **Theme state 2023:** North-East region. **Partner nation:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

9. Union Minister for Environment, Bhupender Yadav launched the **'Save Wetlands Campaign' in Goa**.

**Note:** It is structured on a "whole of society" approach to wetlands conservation. It enables affirmative actions for wetlands conservation at all levels of society and involves all strata of society. He also released two publications - 'India's 75 Amrit Dharohar- India's Ramsar Sites Factbook' and 'Managing Climate Risks in Wetlands - A Practitioner's Guide'.

10. NTPC hosted G20 international seminar on **Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS)** on 5 February 2023 in Bengaluru.

**Note:** This seminar will be attended by industries, policymakers, scientists, and academicians from different countries. Focus: Achieving clean energy transition and subsequently moving towards net zero. CCUS is a technology that can capture and make effective use of the high concentrations of carbon dioxide emitted by industrial activities.

11. Coal India arm, **MCL** has introduced drone technology through a **web-based portal 'VIHANGAM'** along with a drone and ground control system in coal mines.

**Note:** Aim: For environmental monitoring, volume measurement, and photogrammetric mapping of mines for digitalization of the mining process. It allows an authorized person to access real-time drone video from the mine. This pilot project is at present operational at Bhubaneswari and Lingraj opencast mines, Talcher Coalfields.

12. Union HM, Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of a **₹ 450-crore nano urea plant** and township of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) in **Deoghar, Jharkhand**.

**Note:** It will be the **fifth nano urea plant in India**. In 2022, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi

inaugurated the world's first nano urea plant in Gujarat. Nano urea improves crop productivity, soil health, and the nutritional quality of produce.

13. Indian Railways has introduced Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train under the **'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' Scheme**.

**Note:** This **"Garvi Gujarat" tour** will depart on 28th February from Delhi Safdarjung Station. Aim: To showcase the heritage of vibrant Gujarat. Major attractions: The Statue of Unity, Champaner, Somnath, Dwarka, Nageshwar, Beyt Dwarka, Ahmedabad, Modhera, and Patan

14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate a **helicopter manufacturing plant of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** in **Tumakuru (Karnataka)** to the nation.

**Note:** The 'Greenfield Helicopter factory' will manufacture the Light Utility Helicopters. It has Heli-runway, flight hangar, final assembly hangar, structure assembly hangar, air traffic control, and support services. It complies fully with Industry 4.0 standard tools and techniques for its operations. Area: 615 acres

15. Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) under the Ministry of Agriculture signed an MoU with the **Development Innovation Lab (DIL)** at the University of Chicago.

**Note:** To explore the opportunities to harness innovation to improve food security, address climate change, and allow farmers to increase their incomes. It will look into innovation opportunities related to agriculture and food security in the context of climate change.

16. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, the Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Bhagwant Khuba informed that the government has **set up a task force** under the aegis of the **Fertiliser Association of India** to improve the quality of Single Super Phosphate (SSP) fertilizer.

**Note:** Aim: To promote its use as an alternative to Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP). The government is promoting the combination of SSP and urea in a ratio of 3:1 in order to encourage its use among farmers.

17. The FMCG arm of Reliance Retail Ventures Limited, **Reliance Consumer Products Limited (RPCL)** has signed a strategic partnership with **Sri Lanka's Maliban Biscuit Manufactories**.

**Note:** Reason: To bring the unique and highly sought-after taste of Maliban to Indian consumers. With this partnership, both organizations will develop unique value propositions that RPCL will utilize to strengthen their portfolio in the biscuit segment.

18. **Nagaland** signed an MoU with **Patanjali Foods Ltd** for the development and area expansion of palm oil cultivation and processing for Zone-II of Nagaland

under the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP).

**Note:** Zone II includes the Mokokchung, Longleng, and Mon districts of Nagaland. Aim: To give a boost to the oil palm growers in the state of Nagaland and the region. Patanjali is already working in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Tripura.

19. The **Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)** has signed an MoU with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to collaborate on **Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** programmes.

**Note:** It will focus on Australian training standards. Focus area: Automotive, allied health, mining, IT, cyber security, renewable energy, logistics, supply chain, and water management. Austrade's Australia-India Future Skills Initiative team in India will execute with CII.

20. **India, France, and the UAE** announced a formal trilateral cooperation initiative in the areas of defense, nuclear energy, and technology.

**Note:** The Foreign Ministers of the three countries held a telephonic meeting to adopt a roadmap for the implementation of this initiative. Aim: To promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy. The countries will discuss further collaboration and training between their defense forces.

21. The **first G20 Education working group meeting** is being organized in Chennai on 1st Feb 2023 and will continue till 2nd Feb 2023.

**Note:** The Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. L. Murugan inaugurated the session. Discussion topic: K-12 education, tech-enabled learning, and skill development. A seminar on the 'Role of Digital Technology in Education' – a unique initiative under India's Presidency was organized at the IIT Madras Research Park.

22. The **6th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) Leaders' Meeting** is being hosted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in Lucknow on 6th February 2023.

**Note:** The meeting was inaugurated by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Anandiben Patel.

**Theme: 'Integrating Emerging Technologies in Audit'.** Discussions topics: Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security, and concerns of digital technology.

23. The **first meeting of the Youth -20 engagement group** under India's G20 presidency is being organized in the **IIT-Guwahati campus, Assam** on 6th February 2023.

**Note:** Aim: Provide an opportunity for the students to voice their opinions to the audience worldwide. More than 150 Youth delegates from G20 countries are set to participate in the meetings. Over 12000

college and university students also participated in these events.

24. The government has extended **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)** scheme till **March 2026**.

**Note:** Reason: It could not bear the desired result till now due to the COVID uncertainty. PM-KUSUM was launched in 2019. Aim: To add a solar capacity of 30,800 MW by 2022 with a total central financial support of Rs 34,422 crore. PM-KUSUM consists of three main components. **Minister of New and Renewable Energy: R K Singh**

25. Union Minister of Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan has launched the **Youva Sangam registration portal** in New Delhi.

**Note:** Aim: To build close ties between the youth of the North East Region (NER) and the rest of India under the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. It aims to provide an immersive, multidimensional experience of various facets-under four broad areas - Paryatan, Parampara, Pragati, and Paraspar Sampark.

26. **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** signed an MoU with **Digital Green** under public-private partnership framework.

**Note:** Reason: To build a national-level digital extension platform. It will host a digital library of curated multi-format multi-lingual content, deliver curated content to farmers, and help extension workers to access it. It also upskills the vast network of extension workers for agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and rural livelihood missions.

27. According to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the **'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative of India** for the adoption of energy-efficient behavior can **save the world \$440 billion in 2030**.

**Note:** About 1/5th of the emission cut is required by 2030 to put the world on a pathway to net zero emissions. PM Modi introduced the LiFE initiative at COP26 in Glasgow in Nov 2021. Aim: To tackle the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change.

28. Former US secretary of state, **Hillary Clinton** announced a **Global Climate Resilience Fund of 50 million dollars** for women to fight climate change.

**Note:** This fund will also help to provide new livelihood resources and education. She addressed the salt pan workers near Kuda village in Gujarat's Surendranagar district. She also attended a programme in Ahmedabad to mark 50 years of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) as a trade union. SEWA was founded in 1972.

29. The **Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI)** signed an MoU with the **National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)** to set up digital forensic laboratories, collaborate in research and training programs, and provide technical assistance. **Note:** DGGI is an apex intelligence organization under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). DGGI collects and disseminates information and takes necessary steps to check evasion of GST.
30. Secretary (Telecom) and Chairman of the Digital Communications Commission, K. Rajaraman launched the **'IEEE C-DOT Certified Telecom Expert Program (ICCTEP)'**. **Note:** Aim: To bring learning in the areas of Telecom, including 5G, Cyber Security, and Quantum Communication. It was collaborated by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT). C-DOT is the R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications.
31. The **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** signed a Statement of Intent with the **International Energy Agency (IEA)** to strengthen cooperation in data and research in the energy sector to enhance global energy security. **Note:** It will initiate cooperation in the energy sector between Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell PPAC and IEA. The govt is also planning to provide training and internships by IEA experts to develop the skills. Minister of Petroleum: Hardeep S Puri
32. **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Joint Business Council (IMT-GT JBC)**, Malaysia to promote the adoption of energy efficiency and sustainable practices in the region. **Note:** Under this partnership, EESL will implement Rooftop Solar, Electric Mobility, UJALA, and Building Energy Efficiency Programme in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. **CEO, EESL: Vishal Kapoor**
33. The government has formed a **16-member committee** to draft the **Digital Competition Act** within three months, after studying anti-competitive practices. **Note:** The panel is **chaired by Manoj Govil (secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs)**. The panel will study the existing provisions of the Competition Act 2002, and related regulations to deal with the challenges in the digital economy. CCI will provide secretarial and research assistance and logistic support to the panel.
34. **Reliance Jio and GSMA** launched a digital skills programme initiative to train **rural women** in India. **Note:** Aim: To provide need-based training to rural women and individuals from marginalized/low-income groups to help them make meaningful use of digital access. According to the GSMA's 'Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022', women in India are 41% less likely than men to use mobile internet While 330 million women in India still do not use mobile internet, compared to 248 million men
35. **Jio-bp** has launched **E20 petrol** and became one of the first fuel retailers in India to make E20 blended petrol available. **Note:** E20 petrol: 20% blend of ethanol and 80% of fossil-based fuel. E20 blending in petrol is being introduced in the country by the government of India. Aim: To reduce the country's oil import cost, energy security, lower carbon emission, and better air quality, among others. The government had advanced the target of E20 fuel from 2030 to 2025.
36. The **National Council of Applied Economic Research's (NCAER)** report on "Making India a Global Power House on Farm Machinery Industry" was released. **Note:** It was released by the Union MoS for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje. This study was sponsored by Mahendra & Mahendra. Purpose: To analyze the non-tractor farm machinery industry from both demand and supply side perspectives. India's farm power availability is at **2.49 Kw/ha in 2018-19**.
37. The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** has found **Lithium** inferred resources (G3) of **5.9 million tonnes** in the **Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi District of Jammu and Kashmir**. **Note:** The ministry has handed over the 51 mineral blocks, including Lithium and Gold to the state governments. Out of these 51 mineral blocks, 5 blocks pertain to gold, and other blocks pertain to commodities like potash, molybdenum, base metals, etc. Lithium is a Non-ferrous metal.
38. **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** will be taking up **111 public health** and public good geoscience activities during 2023-24. **Note:** A total of 966 standard programmes have been finalized by GSI across 5 Missions for 2023-24. This session's focus is on baseline data generation and mineral exploration programmes with special emphasis on strategic-critical and fertilizer minerals exploration. Besides this, GSI will be taking up 115 courses for training and capacity building.
39. The **Ministry of Shipping** has formed a committee to draft revised Guidelines for the operationalization of **Roll-on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) and Roll-on-Passenger (Ro-Pax) ferry service**. **Note: Headed by:** Chairman of the Deendayal Port Authority. Aim: To promote coastal shipping through the PPP route. It would also draft the Model Concession Agreement for Ro-Ro or Ro-Pax Terminal Operator. Model License Agreement for the Operation of the ferry services in the country.



40. The government has launched a '**Khanan Prahari' mobile application** and '**Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System (CMSMS)**' a web app.

**Note:** Aim: To report the unauthorized coal mining activities. CMSMS has been developed to curb illegal mining and take transparent action as an e-Governance initiative of the government on the use of Space Technology. Minister of Coal, Pralhad Joshi informed in Rajya Sabha, that 462 cases have been reported on the Apps till January 2023.

41. Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda informed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a 15-day '**Aadi Mahotsav**' at the **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi** on February 16, 2023.

**Note:** **TRIFED**, an organization of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, will **organize the "Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival"**. Aim: To provide direct market access to the tribal master craftsmen and women in large metros and State capitals.

42. **Air India** has signed agreements with **Airbus SE and Boeing Co.** for the largest purchase of jetliners in commercial aviation history.

**Note:** Aim: To reinvent itself with a fuel-efficient fleet that can take on local low-cost rivals and powerful Gulf airlines like Emirates. The airline and the two plane makers have agreed on the broad strokes of the agreement. Airbus is in line to receive 250 orders (approx) and is made up of 210 aircraft from the A320 single-aisle.

43. The **first G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting** under India's presidency is being started in Bengaluru from February 9 to 11, 2023.

**Note:** **Hosted by:** MoEFCC. **Chaired by:** Leena Nandan (Secretary). **Theme:** LiFE is an "important and cross-cutting". **Focus:** Arresting land degradation, Accelerating ecosystem restoration, and Enriching biodiversity; Promoting a sustainable and climate-resilient blue economy; encouraging resource efficiency and circular economy

44. The **Gender Balance Forum** and the **Women in Government Forum** will be organized at the World Government Summit in **Dubai** from 13-15 February 2023.

**Note:** **Theme for Women in Government Forum** is Ready for Leadership: Shaping the Agenda for the Future. **Theme for World Government Summit 2023** is Shaping Future Governments. Aim: To bring together thoughts of leaders from around the region and the world. The leaders will also discuss new ways to advance gender equality and women's participation.

45. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the three-day-long **Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit 2023** in Lucknow on 10th February 2023.

**Note:** He has also inaugurated Global Trade Show and launched Invest UP 2.0. It is the flagship investment summit of the Uttar Pradesh Government. Aim: To bring together policymakers, industry leaders, academia, think tanks, and leaders from across the world to collectively explore business opportunities and forge partnerships

46. Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw has inaugurated **AMRPTEX 2023** - National Philatelic Exhibition at Pragati Maidan, Delhi.

**Note:** It is a 5-day Mahakumbh of Stamps, which is to be held from 11th to 15th February, 2023. It displays more than 20,000 exhibits under 13 competitive categories and invitees and is the national platform to highlight and display the 5000 years old rich history and culture of this great nation.

47. Secretary of MeitY, Alkesh Kumar Sharma has inaugurated **1st International Conference on Communication, Electronics and Digital Technologies – NICE-DT 2023** and Digital Skilling, which is the lead event of G20.

**Note:** It was organized by National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT). NIELIT: It is an autonomous Scientific Society of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and is engaged in Capacity Building and Skill Development

48. The **12th World Hindi Conference** will be held in **Fiji** from the 15th of February 2023.

**Note:** It is a 3-day long event and is being organized by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with the Government of Fiji. **Main theme of the conference:** "Hindi - Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence". The conference will be attended by representatives from 50 countries. The 11th World Hindi Conference was held in Mauritius.

49. President of India, Droupadi Murmu has inaugurated the **2nd Indian Rice Congress** at ICAR-National Rice Research Institute, Cuttack on February 11, 2023.

**Note:** ICAR-NRRI has developed India's first high protein rice, called CR Dhan 310 and NRRI has also released a high-zinc rice variety, called CR Dhan 315. Rice is the basic food crop and is mainly grown in rain-fed areas that receive heavy annual rainfall and is a kharif crop in India.

50. The **third edition of the ASEAN Digital Ministers meeting** approved the India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 in New Delhi.

**Note:** The **theme of the meeting: Synergy Towards a Sustainable Digital Future**. Aim: To strengthen India-ASEAN relations in the field of Information and Communication Technologies. The work plan includes capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of

Information and Communication Technologies such as AI in Cyber Security.

51. The G20 EMPOWER meeting is being organized in Agra, Uttar Pradesh from 11th to 12th February 2023.

**Note: Theme: Empowering Women to Lead across Sectors: Role of Digital Skilling and Future Skills.** Focus: To shift from women's development to women-led development. It was attended by Smriti Zubin Irani (Minister for Women and Child Welfare). She also highlighted the government's steps on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and efforts for Women's empowerment.

52. The Annual Meeting of Members of the **River Cities Alliance (RCA) "DHARA"** is being organized in **Pune** from 13th - 14th February 2023.

**Note: DHARA: Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers.** The annual meeting of the members of RCA is being organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in association with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). The event has strong synergies with the Urban20 (U20) initiative under the ambit of India's G20 Presidency.

53. According to the government data, **Delhi, Assam, and Himachal Pradesh** - allocated a **higher portion of their budget expenditure on education.**

**Note: Delhi spent 22% of its budget,** while Assam spent 20% and HP spent 19%. Among the big States, such as Chhattisgarh and Bihar allocate 18.82% and 18.3% respectively, of the State's estimated net budget expenditure to education. Other allocations: Maharashtra: Rs 80,437; UP: Rs 75,165 crores; WB: Rs 43,466 crores

54. The government has approved **Namami Gange Mission-II** with a **budgetary outlay of Rs.22,500 crore till 2026.**

**Note:** It also includes the projects for existing liabilities of Rs.11,225 crore and new projects/interventions of ₹11,275 crore. The Government **has released a total of Rs.14,084.72 crore** to the NMCG, from 2014-15 till 31st January 2023. Out of which, NMCG has released Rs.13,607.18 crore to State Governments to implement Ganga-related projects.

55. The Union Cabinet has approved the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "**Vibrant Villages Programme**" for the **Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26** with a financial allocation of **Rs. 4800 Crore.**

**Note:** The scheme will provide funds for the development of essential infrastructure and the creation of livelihood opportunities. In the first phase, 663 Villages will be taken up in the program. Aim: To improve the quality of life of people living in identified border villages.

56. The Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Modi, has approved the signing MoU between **India and Chile** for cooperation in the field of **Agriculture and Allied sectors.**

**Note:** Main areas of cooperation: Agricultural policies for the development of **modern agriculture**; Organic agriculture to facilitate the bilateral trade of organic products; Promote innovation in the agricultural sector; Both countries will constitute a Chile-India Agricultural Working Group. **Chile Capital: Santiago**

57. The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India and South Africa** for cooperation in the **Disability Sector.**

**Note:** The decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Aim: To encourage cooperation between the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in India and South Africa. This MoU will strengthen the bilateral ties between India and South Africa. **South Africa President: Cyril Ramaphosa**

58. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and his **Spanish counterpart, Pedro Sánchez** had a telephone conversation to discuss ways to **further strengthen the growing relationship between both countries.**

**Note:** Both leaders discussed a number of **bilateral and international** issues of mutual interest. They also agreed to collaborate on issues such as digital infrastructure, climate action, clean energy transition, and sustainable development. **Spain Capital: Madrid**

59. The I&B Minister, Anurag Singh Thakur has informed that the Union Cabinet has approved the **construction of the Shinku La Tunnel in Ladakh.**

**Note:** Reason: To provide **all-weather connectivity in Ladakh region.** The construction work of this **4.1-kilometer tunnel** will be completed by December 2025. The total expenditure on this project will be 1,681 crore rupees. The tunnel will lead to the development of the region and boost the tourism, Health, and education sectors.

60. A national-level hackathon, **KAVACH-2023** was launched in New Delhi to identify innovative ideas and technological solutions for addressing **the cybersecurity and cybercrime challenges of the 21st century.**

**Note:** A **36-hour long** event participated by youth from educational institutions and registered start-ups. This Hackathon was jointly conducted by AICTE, the Bureau of Police Research and Development, and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre. **Chairman, AICTE: T G Sitharam**

61. The IIT Kanpur has developed an energy-efficient **compressed air-based pipeline system**.  
**Note: Reason:** For transporting coal and minerals, offering round-the-clock monitoring with considerable savings in time and costs. The cargo-based hyperloop system was developed by Professor, Bishakh Bhattacharya, and research scientists, Kanhaiya Lal Chaurasia and Yashasvi Sinha. It will address challenges such as material loss, uncertainty in delivery time, and air pollution.
62. The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has launched a chatbot named **Aadhaar Mitra** to help people get an answer to their queries related to the Aadhaar card.  
**Note:** The **Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML)**-based chatbot can answer queries related to enrolment number, PVC Card order status, and complaint status. It is available in both English and Hindi languages. It also shows videos to help the users understand its features and how to use them.
63. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-**Rishikesh** conducted a trial to test the feasibility of **drones supplying medicines** to primary health centers or smaller hospitals by **Vertiplane X3 drone**.  
**Note:** This drone was **used to deliver a 2kg package of anti-tubercular drugs** to a district hospital in Tehri Garhwal during the trial. The aerial distance of nearly 40 kilometers between the helipad at AIIMS and the hospital was covered in 30 minutes.
64. The **UAE and India** have launched the **UAE India Business Council - UAE Chapter (UIBCUC)**.  
**Note:** Aim: To **robust the economic ties** and support their joint mission to increase bilateral trade and investment. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi (UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade) has launched the UAE India Business Council - UAE Chapter (UIBC-UC) in Dubai. Shared Goals: To increase the bilateral trade to \$100 billion; To attract \$75 billion in investment from the UAE to India
65. Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying Parshottam Rupala launched the **Sagar Parikrama Phase-III from Hazira Port, Gujarat**.  
**Note:** It started towards **the coastal line of Maharashtra at Satpati**, Vasai, Versova, and Parikrama and **ended at Sasson Dock, Mumbai**. Aim: To disseminate information on various fisheries-related schemes and programs being implemented by the government. It also aimed to promote responsible fisheries and protect marine ecosystems.
66. Union MoS, Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh announced that **North India's first nuclear power plant** would be set up in **Gorakhpur in Fatehabad district, Haryana**.  
**Note:** The plant will be built **on 560 hectares of land**. Aim: To **generate 2800 MW**. The first phase will be completed by 2025 and the second by 2028. As the second phase completes, the plant will be fully operational to generate 2800 MW. The project will be built at an estimated cost of Rs 20,594 crores.
67. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has launched the '**mPassport Police App**' to streamline and **expedite the police verification process for passport issuance**.  
**Note:** The App was **launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah** during the 76th Raising Day Parade of Delhi Police. The mPassport Police App will **cut the verification time period to 5 days**. He also dedicated 350 mobile Tablets to personnel of the Delhi Police Special Branch, on the occasion of the force's Raising Day.
68. Union Education Minister, **Dharmendra Pradhan** launched a Learning-Teaching Material named **Jaadui Pitara**.  
**Note:** It was launched for the **Foundational Stages of children**. It is a unique initiative of the government that will help students of foundational stages to learn in a play-way method with ease. The Jaadui Pitara consists of playbooks, activity books, flashcards, posters depicting various stories, games, puzzles, puppets, and many more items.
69. Senior Janata Dal (United) leader, **Upendra Kushwaha** has resigned from all party positions and launched a new political party '**Rashtriya Lok Janata Dal (RLJD)**'.  
**Note:** He has also resigned from the post of MLC. He was a key political aide of Nitish Kumar. He quit the JD(U) in 2013 to float Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP). He allied with the NDA and won the Lok Sabha polls a year later.
70. **Ladakh has created history** by successfully conducting its **maiden 21-km trail running** event in sub-zero temperature at **13,862 feet high Pangong Tso**.  
**Note:** It was registered in the **Guinness world record as the world's highest frozen lake half marathon**. The four-hour-long marathon started from Lukung and ended at Maan village. Five energy stations, consisting of energy drinks, medical teams, oxygen support, and mobile ambulances were set up along the route.
71. The **Pratiksha Trust** has signed an MoU with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** and Centre for Brain Research (CBR) **for research, innovation, and translation in deep science**.  
**Note:** Aim: To support the fundamental and translational **research on neurodegenerative diseases** of the elderly population. For this

research, Pratiksha Trust commit over 450 crore rupees over the next 10 years. Pratiksha Trust: It was established by Kris Gopalakrishnan and Sudha Gopalakrishnan.

72. **The Central Water Commission (CWC)** signed a Memorandum of Agreement with **IIT Roorkee** for the development of the **International Centre of Excellence for Dams (ICED)**.

**Note:** The Centre will be developed **under the externally funded Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)** Phase II and Phase III. It will remain valid for ten years or till the duration of the DRIP Phase-II and Phase-II Scheme, whichever is earlier, from the date of signing.

73. The **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, FSSAI**, and the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research**, Hyderabad (NIPER Hyderabad) signed a tripartite MoU to create **nutritional supplement testing capacity** in India.

**Note:** This will provide information & build awareness about the risks associated with the use of nutritional supplements. It also increases the research opportunities in the **clean sport & anti-doping domain**.

74. **Jammu and Kashmir's** government has approved **Rs 30.40 crore for the Sensor-based Smart Agriculture project**.

**Note:** It aims to **integrate agriculture with technology driven by Artificial Insemination** and IoT to automate practices, enhance resource use efficiency, and improve profitability. The project would enable the use of Hi-tech poly houses to cultivate cash crops around the year. In J&K, over 70% of the economy is based on agriculture.

75. Minister of Tourism, G Kishan Reddy has announced that the **Tourism Ministry** will organize the **first Global Tourism Investors' Summit** from 17 to 19 May 2023 in **New Delhi**.

**Note:** Agenda: To showcase **opportunities in the Tourism and hospitality sector**. This Summit will deliberate on potential opportunities for investment across tourism segments including hotels and restaurants and other related sectors. He also informed that the govt is working to promote the Tourism sector.

76. **India** will host the **Permanent Mission Roundtables at United Nations Head Quarter** as Chair of G- 20 and ahead of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit 2023 to be held in New York.

**Note:** A roundtable **titled 'Gandhian Trusteeship: A panel discussion on Sustainable Lifestyles and Enduring Pace'** will be held on the 23rd of February 2023. Focus: India's growth story and achievements and how these might be scaled for the potential benefit of the global South

77. The Union Minister of Power, RK Singh has officially inaugurated **the Power Pavilion, ELECRAMA 2023** at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.

**Note:** The event was attended by Vivek Kumar Dewangan (Chairman & Managing Director, REC Limited) and other officials from REC. **Theme 2023: Re-imagining the Future: Metamorphosis of the Power Sector in India**. Vision: To showcase innovation in the power sector such as Smart Meters, Smart Feeder Management Systems, Methanol production etc.

78. **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has developed a new **wheat variety called HD-3385**.

**Note:** It can **overcome the challenges arising out due to changes in weather patterns and rising heat levels**. It is amenable to early sowing, escaping the impact of heat spikes, and can be harvested before March's end. Recently, the Centre announced to set up of a committee to monitor the situation arising from the increase in temperatures and its impact on the current wheat crop.

79. The **Kerala High Court** has become the **first high court** in the country to **publish judgments in the regional language**.

**Note:** On February 21 (International Mother Language Day), Kerala published two of its recent judgments in Malayalam. The judgments in **Malayalam** were uploaded on the court's website just below the English version. The Kerala High Court made use of SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuwad Software ) tool to translate the judgments.

80. The Namami Gange Executive Committee, headed by NMCG Director General G. Asok Kumar, has approved **nine Projects, worth over 1,200 crore rupees for Pollution abatement in Ganga Basin and Ghat Development**.

**Note:** Out of these projects, **seven pertain** to the abatement of pollution in the **Ganga Basin and two to ghat development**. The decision was taken during the 47th meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

81. The **New Delhi World Book Fair** will be started at **Pragati Maidan in New Delhi** from 25th Febraury to 5th March 2023.

**Note:** The 2023 theme of the fair is Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The Guest of Honour Country: France. The G20 theme has been integrated with the book fair, and exhibitions of books from G20 member countries will be organized during the fair.

82. The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi has approved the extension of the term of the **22nd Law Commission of India from 20th February 2023 to 31st August 2024**.

**Note:** The 22nd law panel was constituted **for three years on 21st February 2020**. Law

Commission of India: It is a non-statutory body and is constituted by the Government of India from time to time. It was originally constituted in 1955.

83. **NTPC Limited** has **topped the ranking of Independent Power Producers and Energy Traders Globally** in the S&P Global Commodity Insights **Top 250 Global Energy Company Rankings 2022**.

**Note:** These rankings are based on **four key metrics:** Asset worth, Revenues, Profits, and Return on Investment (ROI). Presently, **NTPC contributes 24% of the total electricity** produced in India. NTPC is targeting non-fossil fuel-based capacity to make up nearly 50% of the company's portfolio by 2032.

84. **India** has slipped to the **42nd position in the International Intellectual Property Rights Index 2023** out of 55 countries for 2022.

**Note:** **India was ranked 40th in the index in 2021**. It was launched by the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Centre and is monitored by the Indian government. It evaluates the protection of IP rights in 55 of the world's leading economies, together representing approximately 90% of global GDP.

85. World's longest river cruise '**MV Ganga Vilas**' will **culminate its journey on 28th February in Dibrugarh** which **started its journey on 13th January 2023**.

**Note:** It will **cover a distance of 3,200 km in over 50 days** before reaching Dibrugarh on the 28th of February via Patna Sahib, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Dhaka, the Sunderbans and the Kaziranga national park. It is built with a unique design and a futuristic vision, three decks and 18 suites on board with a capacity of 36 tourists.

86. **CJI D Y Chandrachud** has launched the '**neutral citations**' to ensure a uniform pattern of citing the decisions of the Supreme Court.

**Note:** Earlier, the apex court had taken various steps to implement a **uniform, reliable, and secure methodology for identifying and citing decisions** in the apex court. Other initiative: Electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project, which is aimed to provide free access to about 34,000 judgments to lawyers, law students, and the common public.

87. **Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman of EAC-PM**, released the **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy report**.

**Note: Prepared by:** Institute for Competitiveness. **Punjab has emerged as the top-performing state on education and health-related indicators.** Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, J&K, Kerala, Rajasthan, Sikkim, TN, and Puducherry were ranked as high-performing states and UTs. Meghalaya, D&N Haveli, Nagaland, Telangana, UP, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, and Ladakh were among underperformed.

88. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Shivamogga airport in Karnataka** on 27 February 2023.

**Note:** The airport has been built on 663 acres of land with an **investment of ₹449.22 crore**. Apart from this, the prime minister has also inaugurated several other development projects in the poll-bound state. The Passenger Terminal Building of the airport can handle 300 passengers per hour. The foundation was laid in June 2020 by former CM B S Yediyurappa.

89. PM Narendra Modi has released the **13th installment of financial benefits worth Rs 16,800 crore** to over eight crore eligible farmers under the flagship **PM-KISAN scheme**.

**Note: PM-KISAN refers to Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.** Under this scheme, eligible farmers are provided with a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year in three equal installments of Rs 2,000 each every four months. The fund is directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

90. The government is planning to set up **10 'Clean Plant Centres'** to boost the domestic production of the selected crops.

**Note:** These centres were already **established in developed countries such as the US, Netherlands, and Israel**. They will be set up under the 'Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program'. It was announced by FM Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2023-24. These centres will be established for fruit crops with a **budget of Rs 2,200 crore** in the next **seven years till 2030**.

91. **Indian Oil Corporation** Chairman, Shrikant Madhav Vaidya has revealed that the company is planning to **set up green hydrogen plants at all its refineries by 2047**.

**Note:** It is part of a Rs 2-lakh crore green transition plan to **achieve net-zero emissions**. It is also planning to set up a 7,000 tonnes p.a. green hydrogen-producing facility. IOC is restructuring its business with a greater emphasis on petrochemicals to hedge volatility in the fuel business.

92. Union Cabinet has approved the signing **Air Services Agreement between India and Guyana**.

**Note:** This agreement will come into force after the exchange of diplomatic notes between parties. Aim: To enable a **framework for the provision of air services between the two countries**. Indians have a sizeable presence in Guyana and are the largest ethnic group comprising about 40% of the population. It will provide an enabling environment for enhanced and seamless connectivity.

93. **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** has signed Letter of Intent (LoI) with **Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (Fraunhofer ISE)** for a long-term collaboration **focusing on hydrogen technologies**.

**Note:** It will trigger development of **higher Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** for hydrogen energy clusters being set up by DST and identify existing technologies and potential interventions from Fraunhofer in green hydrogen, integrate them with indigenous technologies.

94. The **18th UIC World Security Congress** has been started commenced in **Jaipur, India on 21st February 2023**.

**Note:** The 3-day Conference is being jointly organized by the International Union of Railways, Paris and Railway Protection Force. **Theme 2023: Railway Security Strategy: Responses and Vision for Future.** The World Security Congress is a globally recognized security platform. The Union International Des Chemins (UIC) or International Union of Railways was established in 1922.

95. An annual flagship event of the External Affairs Ministry on **Geo-economics, Asia Economic Dialogue** is being conducted in **Pune, Maharashtra** from 23 -25 February 2023.

**Note:** This event is being **co-hosted** in collaboration with **Pune International Centre.** **Theme 2023: Asia and the Emerging World Order.** The Dialogue also discusses themes such as

Global Growth Prospects, How the Global South Will Shape the G20 Agenda and the Metaverse.

96. Union Minister, Jitendra Singh has inaugurated **International Conference on Biotechnology** for the first time since Independence in **North East Region.**

**Note:** He has also inaugurated the 22nd Congress of the International Society for Ethno-pharmacology and the 10th Congress of Society for Ethno-pharmacology (ISE SFEC-2023). It will be held from February 24-26, 2023 at the City Convention Centre, Imphal, Manipur. **Theme: Reimagine Ethnopharmacology: Globalization of Traditional Medicine.**

97. Union Minister, **Rajkumar Ranjan Singh** has inaugurated **New Delhi World Book Fair 2023**, which is being held from 25 February to 5th March 2023 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

**Note:** It was **organized by National Book Trust, India**, in collaboration with ITPO (India Trade Promotion Organization). It will also have an NEP pavilion to mark the successful introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 and will have hundreds of authors, publishers from across the world.

### Important News – State

1. **Yaya Tso lake** has been proposed as **Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site (BHS)** under the Biological Diversity Act.

**Note:** The resolution was signed by the village stakeholders and the SECURE Himalaya project. It is known as a bird's paradise. Location: at an altitude of 4,820m in Ladakh. It is also one of India's highest breeding sites of the black-necked crane. The Secure Himalaya project is funded by the Global Environment Facility.

2. The **Delhi Commission** for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) launched its **WhatsApp chatbot named 'Bal Mitra'.**

**Note:** It is an initiative to enable two-way communication between people and the child rights panel. It will help citizens and the commission to interact more effectively. Features of the chatbot: Complaint registration, searching information and tracking complaint status, and seeking information on admissions

3. The government of **Goa** has launched the **'Vision for All School Eye Health' program** in partnership with OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation and Prasad Netralaya.

**Note:** The programme extends the current Vision for All Goa eye health program. It commenced in February 2021. Aim: To train 2000 teachers on basic visual acuity tests for the children in their

respective schools, followed by detailed refraction by qualified professionals from Prasad Netralaya.

4. J&K LG, Manoj Sinha inaugurated **the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2023** at Aquaplex Crown at Baghe-Bahu, Jammu.

**Note:** The fair was participated by the **women's Self Help Groups** from around 25 States and UTs across the country.

Aim: To provide a platform for the rural SHG women to sell and promote their self-made products. On this platform, the SHG will display handicrafts, handloom, and natural food items from different rural areas across the country.

5. The **Kerala government** presented announced a road map for **setting up green hydrogen hubs in Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram** in the coming two years.

**Note:** The **outlay for this scheme is Rs 200 crore.** Aim: To build green hydrogen plants that can produce 60 tonnes of hydrogen per day. It will be established with a 150 MW Electrolyser and storage infrastructure. The Hydrogen produced through the electrolysis of water is known as green hydrogen.

6. The **Punjab Cabinet** under the chairmanship of CM Bhagwant Mann **approved new industrial and electric vehicle policies.**

**Note:** Electric Vehicles: Incentives for those switching over to electric vehicles under the vehicle scrapping policy; Charging stations will also be

- installed. The new industrial policy pitches Punjab as a favorite investment destination. Introduction of public mining sites to ensure that sand and gravel are available at reasonable rates to common people.
7. Uttar Pradesh CM, Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the **VFS Global Visa Application Centre in Lucknow**.  
**Note:** Aim: To enable citizens of the state to complete the formalities related to the visa application process for 10 countries with ease. **10 Countries:** Austria, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Estonia, Hungary, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and Saudi Arabia. VFS Global (Visa Facilitation Services Global) was launched in Mumbai in 2001. **VFS Global HQ: Dubai, UAE**
  8. The **Telangana government** launched India's **first mobility-focused cluster, Telangana Mobility Valley (TMV)** during the first edition of Mobility Next Hyderabad Summit 2023, Telangana.  
**Note:** Aim: To attract investments of around Rs 50,000 crore and generate more than 4 lakh jobs in the next five years in the state. The TMV also aimed to facilitate the companies across all segments of sustainable mobility. It also promotes mobility startups in Telangana.
  9. The **Jammu and Kashmir** government initiated a program to support their **farmers and promote sustainable agriculture in the Union Territory**.  
**Note:** Reason: Growing concern for health and increasing demand for organic food. The 'alternate agriculture system for sustainability' project is a part of the government's efforts to create a sustainable environment for agriculture. Aim: To create six to seven organic clusters per district, covering a total of 2000 hectares of land.
  10. **India Health Link** has signed an MoU with the **Uttar Pradesh government** under their InvestUP program to **set up a health ATM**.  
**Note:** It provides screening of various health parameters at more than 4,600 community and primary health care centers. It is a self-service, walk-in Health ATM. Individuals can get their screening done for 20+ vital health parameters including BP, weight, pulse, temperature, and ECG within 10 minutes followed by an instant report.
  11. Maharashtra Governor, Bhagat Singh Koshyari has inaugurated the **Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav-2023 (RSM)** at Azad Maidan, Churchgate in Mumbai.  
**Note:** Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav conveys the enduring message of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, which signifies that despite numerous diversities in language and cultural expressions, India is united and one. This 9-day event is organized by the Ministry every year in different states of India and will go on till 19th February.
  12. **Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority** has organized **first National Lok Adalat of 2023** throughout the Union Territory.  
**Note:** During the day-long National Lok Adalat, out of a total 88,723 cases taken up by 142 Benches at various courts across the UT, 75,250 Cases were disposed off and an amount of Rs. 45,05,14,697/- was awarded as compensation/settlement amount in Motor Accident Claims, civil, criminal, labour disputes, Electricity and Water Bills cases, etc.
  13. **Strictest Anti-Copying Law of India** has come into force in **Uttarakhand** and has been approved by Governor Lieutenant General Gurmeet Singh.  
**Note:** It is termed as Uttarakhand Competitive Examination (Measures for Prevention and Prevention of Unfair Means in Recruitment) Ordinance 2023. Under this, a provision to impose a fine of 10 crores rupees along with life imprisonment or 10 years in jail for the copycat mafia is there.
  14. **Telangana** Finance Minister, Harish Rao has informed, that the state government is **planning to enact the Clinical Establishment Act**.  
**Note:** Reason: To regulate the private hospitals in state. Concern: Related to the private hospitals over irregularities and imposing hefty charges for treatment. Aim: To improve facilities and provide corporate healthcare for the poor through government hospitals. The State government was establishing a government medical college in each district.
  15. **The Uttar Pradesh** government has finally launched the portal for the **Family ID - 'One Family One Identity'**.  
**Note:** Aim: To identify families as a unit for implementing the 'one job per family' proposal. A unique identity will be issued to each family under the One Family One Identity scheme. It will establish a live comprehensive database of family units of the state. This database will be helpful in better management of beneficiary schemes and transparent operation.
  16. India's first **"frozen-lake marathon"** will be organized at the **Pangong Tso, Ladakh** on February 20, 2023.  
**Note:** The **Indian army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police** have been roped in to implement a "proper action plan" for the event. The 21-kilometer marathon will be started from Lukung and ended at Maan village. The event will be participated by 75 selected athletes from India and abroad. The marathon is being called the "Last Run" to highlight the issue of climate change.
  17. Kerala CM, Pinarayi Vijayan has launched the **monthly stipend scheme for junior lawyers in Kerala**.

**Note:** Under this scheme, a **monthly stipend of Rs. 3,000** will be provided to junior lawyers in the State. Eligibility for stipend: Lawyers below 30 years of age with less than three years of practice. Annual income less than Rs. 1 lakh. The scheme will be implemented by the Bar Council of the state. Junior lawyers are law graduates who work under attorneys or legal associates.

18. The **sixth phase of Sujalam-Sufalam Jal Abhiyan** has been **started in Gujarat** on 17th February 2023.

**Note:** The state-wide campaign was **launched by the Gujarat CM, Bhupendra Patel** at Khoraj in Gandhinagar. Aim: To raise the groundwater level and maximize the use of rainwater. This phase will be held for 104 days and continue till 31st May 2023. Developmental works like the deepening of lakes, delisting works of check dams and reservoirs, and cleaning of canals will be carried out

19. The **J&K govt** has approved a five-year project on **Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture** in J&K.

**Note:** Aim: To give a **push to sustainable agriculture**. The project, worth 463 crore rupees, is also aimed to **empower farmers** and educated youth through technology-driven and inclusive agri-extension services. One of the critical outcomes would be the creation of 2,000 Kissan Khidmat Ghars, which will serve as One Stop Centre for farmer-oriented services.

20. The **Kerala government** has become the **first state** in the country to use **robotic technology** to clean all its **commissioned manholes**.

**Note:** The robotic **scavenger named 'Bandicoot'**. It was **launched under the Guruvayur Sewerage Project in Thrissur district** by the Kerala Water Authority (KWA). It is a part of the 100-day action plan of the state government. It was developed by Kerala-based Genrobotics, which had recently bagged the 'Kerala Pride' award at the Huddle Global 2022.

21. The **Kerala government** signed an agreement with the **UN Women** to **boost women-friendly activities** in the State's tourism sector.

**Note:** The MoU was signed by Kerala Tourism Director P B Nooh and UN Women India representative Susan Ferguson. Both parties **agreed to work towards promoting gender-inclusive tourism** sites in the State. It would be implemented by the Responsible Tourism Mission. It will be done by creating modules and capacity-building of relevant stakeholders.

22. **Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai** has confirmed, that state will get **India's first Marina** which will be constructed at **Byndoor in the Udupi district**.

**Note:** Aim: To **promote coastal tourism in the state**. The state government has received permission from the Government of India for the relaxation of Coastal Regulation Zone rules. The government also proposed to build a corridor of ancient temples like Madhukeshwara (Banavasi) and Dattatreya (Ganagapura) and promote Yatra tourism.

23. **UP government** has signed a Memorandum of Association (MoA) of **over Rs 5,000 crore with Tata Technologies to upgrade 150 ITIs** in the state.

**Note:** Aim: To help the **youth upgrade their skills** and make them fit for the modern-day industry. This MoA will also help in the skill development of the youth of the state and will be helpful in taking forward the programs of Tata Technologies. The trained youth will be able to get jobs in prestigious institutions of Tata and abroad.

24. **Madhya Pradesh** cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has approved the **Mukhyamantri Ladli Behna Yojana** to empower **women at every level**.

**Note:** Under this scheme, **Rs 1000 (month)** will be deposited in the account of women, irrespective of their class or caste, whose **age is above 23 years**. The Yojana will be launched on March 5, 2023. The applications are very simple, the team will visit to fill out the application in their village itself.

### Important News – World

1. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his US counterpart Jake Sullivan launched the **US-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) and Innovation Bridge**.

**Note:** The iCET was announced by US President Joe Biden and PM Narendra Modi in May 2022. Aim: To elevate and expand strategic technology partnerships and defense industrial cooperation between governments and businesses. Innovation Bridge will connect both countries' defense startups.

2. The global business firm, **BioAsia** has selected the **United Kingdom (UK) as its country partner** for the 20th edition of the largest event in the biotechnological industry of Asia.

**Note: Theme 2023: Advancing for ONE: Shaping the next generation of humanized healthcare.** In ONE - 'O' in ONE stands for One Health; 'N' in ONE stands for Next Generation Health; 'E' in ONE stands for Equity

3. The Ambassador of Spain to India, Jose Maria Ridao has announced that **India** will be invited as the



**focal country at the Madrid International Book Fair in 2025.**

**Note:** Spain is the theme country at the 46th International Kolkata Book Fair, organized in Kolkata from 31st Jan 2023 to 12th Feb 2023. Aim: To have a direct relationship with Indian authors. They will expand the horizon to Indian publishers, cinema, and music.

4. Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina has inaugurated the biggest book fair of Bangladesh '**Ekushey Boi Mela' in Dhaka.**

**Note: Theme 2023:** Poro Boi, Goro Desh: Bangbandhur Bangladesh" (Read books, build the country, a country of Bangabandhu's dream). The month-long book fair is being organized on the grounds of the historic Suhrawardy Udyan and the Bangla Academy. She has also distributed the Bangla Academy Award 2022 in recognition of literary works in Bangla.

5. **Sri Lanka** celebrated its **75 years of Independence** from British rule on **4th February 2023.**

**Note: Theme: Namo Namo Matha - A step towards a century.** The main ceremony of the National Independence Day Celebrations was held at Galle Face Green in Colombo. A special cultural arts festival Lankaralanka was also organized at Independence Square in Colombo. The event was attended by Union Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan.

6. Bangladesh minister, Nasrul Hamid has informed that **Bangladesh would receive electricity from the Godda power plant in Jharkhand** from March 2023.

**Note:** 750MW of power will come from the first unit of the Adani power plant in Godda in March 2023. Another 750 MW of power will come from the second unit of the Godda power plant in April 2023. The Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) signed an agreement with the Adani group for importing electricity from its plant at Godda.

7. **India and the European Union (EU)** formed three working groups **under the Trade and Technology Council (TTC).**

**Note:** Reason: To deepen strategic ties with the trade bloc. The working group will cover critical issues, such as: Strategic technologies, digital governance, and connectivity; Green and clean energy technologies; Trade, investment, and resilient value chains

8. According to the recent **Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021**, the **national accreditation system of India** under the Quality Council of India (QCI) has been ranked **5th** in the world.

**Note:** The GQII ranks the 184 economies in the world on the basis of quality infrastructure (QI).

India's overall QI system ranking continues to be in the Top 10 at the 10th position (the standardization system (under BIS) at 9th and the metrology system (under NPL-CSIR) at 21st).

9. According to the DGCA, **India's aviation safety oversight ranking** has jumped to **55th position** from 112th place in the country's score under the ICAO's coordinated validation mission.

**Note:** Under the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach, an ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission was conducted in India in November 2022. USOAP is based on eight critical elements of a safety oversight system and is measured by a set of protocol questions.

10. According to the **Financial Times (FT) Global MBA Ranking 2023**, the **Post Graduate Programme (PGP)** of the Indian School of Business (ISB) ranked the best in India.

**Note:** It is the only Indian B-school in the top 50 worldwide and has been ranked 39th globally and sixth in Asia. ISB is also ranked best in India in the research category. While IIM Bangalore has been ranked at 52nd position in the rankings. Columbia Business School in the United States topped the global chart.

11. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Ocean Cleanup** to **eliminate plastic pollution** in oceans and rivers around the globe.

**Note:** Goal: To reduce leakages of plastics into marine ecosystems by boosting policies and behavior change, reducing overall plastic pollution. It also aims to accelerate the deployment of interception technologies in rivers to end marine plastic pollution.

12. According to the latest report, released by **TomTom, Bengaluru's traffic** has made it the **second slowest place to drive** through in the world in 2022 with about **half an hour of travel time by road to cover 10 km.**

**Note:** While **London ranks first** with an average of 36 minutes and 20 seconds to travel 10 km in 2022. Dublin (Ireland), Sapporo (Japan's town), and Milan (Italy) rank third, fourth, and fifth respectively.

13. **Bharat Electronics Limited** and **Israel Aerospace Industries** have concluded an MoA to form a JV aiming at a single point of contact for extending long-term product support **services for India's defense forces.**

**Note:** The new JV is being established to **provide life cycle support for MRSAM** (Medium Range Surface to Air Missile) air defense systems. MRSAM is an advanced air and missile defence system. The IAF, Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Israeli Defence Forces use it.

14. According to the **services trade restrictiveness index (STRI)**, conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), **India ranked 47 out of 50 countries.**

**Note:** As per the report, India had been progressively introducing reforms over the past years, contributing to a slight liberalization of services trade in some sectors. **Top 5: Japan (1), UK, Netherlands, Czech Republic, and Chile (5).** Bottom: Indonesia (50), Thailand(49), and Russia (48)

15. **Bangladesh's** government signed an agreement with the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** to **increase the use of solar energy in the country.**

**Note:** The agreement was signed between the ISA Director General Ajay Mathur and the Bangladesh Power Division Secretary Md. Habibur Rahman. The agreement is to be **implemented by December 2026.** The government aims to generate 40% of its total energy through renewable sources by 2041 and to produce 4000 MW of solar power by 2030.

16. **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** has **suspended its membership in Russia** as **Moscow's war in Ukraine** violated the organization's principles.

**Note: FATF Core Principle: To promote security, safety, and the integrity of the global financial system.** FATF is an inter-governmental organization set up to combat money laundering and terrorism financing by setting global standards and checking if countries respect them. The FATF also added South Africa and Nigeria to its grey list.

17. **Italy PM, Giorgia Meloni** will be on a **two-day visit to India** on 2nd March 2023 with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and a high-powered business delegation.

**Note:** The Italian Prime Minister will be the **Chief Guest** and Keynote Speaker at the **8th Raisina Dialogue, 2023.** Indian PM Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart will hold discussions on bilateral, regional, and global issues. Both countries are celebrating 75 years of diplomatic relations.

### Honor & Awards

1. Former **PM Dr Manmohan Singh** (India) was conferred a **Lifetime Achievement Honour** by the **India-UK Achievers Honours in London.**

**Note:** He was awarded for his contribution to economic and political life. It was handed over to him in New Delhi by the National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK. Living Legend Honour: Lord Karan Bilimoria and Opposition Labour Party MP Virendra Sharma. **Outstanding Achievers:** Parineeti Chopra, Raghav Chadha, Adar Poonawalla, and Aditi Chauhan

2. Secretary to the CM of Odisha, **VK Pandian** was honoured with the **FIH President's Award 2023** for his outstanding contribution to hockey.

**Note:** He was awarded by **FIH President Tayyab Ikram** at the Bhubaneswar-Rourkela final of the Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023. **FIH President's Award:** It is a recognition to individuals National Associations or other organizations for valuable services to hockey. **Hockey India President: Dilip Tirkey.**

3. Indian music composer, **Ricky Kej** won his **third Grammy Award** in the best new age album category for '**Divine Tides**' at the **65th Annual Grammy Awards** ceremony in Los Angeles.

**Note:** He has shared this award with Stewart Copeland, who collaborated with Kej on the album. Stewart Copeland is a Drummer of the iconic British rock band The Police. **Record of the Year:** About Damn Time by Lizzo; **Album of the Year:** Harry's House by Harry Styles; **Song of the Year:** Just Like That.

4. **VP Nandakumar (MD & CEO, Manappuram Finance Ltd)** has received the **Hurun India's award 2022** for his remarkable achievements in the world of business.

**Note:** He was honored with the Hurun Industry Achievement Award 2022 in Mumbai. Adi Godrej (Chairman, Godrej Group), Cyrus S. Poonawalla (MD, Serum Institute of India Ltd), Kris Gopalakrishnan (co-founder, Infosys), and Sanjiv Goenka (RPG Group) were the earlier recipients of this award.

5. **Visva-Bharati University** will soon receive the '**heritage**' tag from **UNESCO** to take the distinction of world's first living heritage university.

**Note:** This University was founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921. It is one of India's major Central Government funded autonomous universities. The institution was given the status of a Central University in 1951 through a central Act. The Vice-chancellor of the University is appointed by the President of India.

6. **Chairman and MD of MRF, K.M. Mammen** was honoured with the **ATMA Lifetime Achievement Award** at the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) Annual Conclave 2023 in New Delhi.

**Note:** Reason: For his leadership qualities, an invaluable contribution to the Indian tyre industry. Maruti Suzuki India MD & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi presented the award. He also leads the industry from the front for over 20 years. **ATMA Headquarters: New Delhi**

7. **Veteran journalist Dr. Anne Bhavani Koteswara Prasad** has been selected for the prestigious PCI's Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Award 2020.  
**Note:** Reason: For his outstanding contribution to the field of journalism. The Chairperson of the Press Council of India (PCI), Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai conferred the award. ABK Prasad worked as the editor of mainstream journals in the State. He was the Chairman of the Official Language Commission (2004 - 2009) in Andhra Pradesh.
8. Union HM Amit Shah will present the **President's Colour Award to Haryana Police** on February 14 for their outstanding service to the nation.  
**Note:** The state police will be bestowed with the prestigious President's Colour Award during a ceremonial function at the Haryana Police Academy, Madhuban in Karnal. The "President's Colour" is bestowed on any armed forces or a police unit, in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the Nation, both in peace and in war.
9. The **'Blockbill' app team, Niyati Totala and Neel Kalpeshkumar Parikh (IIT Indore's Students)** were awarded the prestigious **Global Best M-GOV Award 2023** at the World Government Summit in Dubai, UAE.  
**Note:** Egyptian President Abel Fattah Al-Sisi has presented the award. **Blockbill:** It is a blockchain-based receipt generation app. It generates digital receipts for all of its users' transactions. Silver Award: 'Don't Waste' team (Uzbekistan); Bronze Award: 'Farmit' team (Serbia).
10. An eminent linguist, **Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra** will be honored with **UNESCO's International Mother Language Award 2023**.  
**Note:** Reason: For the **promotion of the mother language in India**. Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina will present this award to Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra at the International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka. He is the first Indian to receive this prestigious award for the promotion of a language. He is also the recipient of Odisha Sahitya Akademi.
11. The **Karnataka Bank** was honored with the **'Prathista Puraskar'** under the 'Digidhan Awards 2021-22' by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity).  
**Note:** Reason: To achieve the target with the **highest percentage in BHIM-UPI transactions** in the private sector bank category. DigiDhan award is a recognition for the top-performing banks in the digital payments space. MD& CEO of Karnataka Bank: Mahabaleshwara MS
12. A campaign **'Don't Choose Extinction', launched by the UN Development Programme (UNDP)** has won **Gold and Silver in two different categories at the 2nd Annual Anthem Awards**.  
**Note:** The campaign aims to **raise awareness about the climate emergency**. This campaign won Gold in Sustainability, Environment & Climate – Non-Profit Campaign Category, while Silver in Sustainability, Environment & Climate – Global Awareness Campaign Category.
13. **Former Health Minister, K.K. Shailaja** has been selected for the **32nd Ramashramam Unneerikkutty Award**.  
**Note:** Reason: For her **services as a minister during the times of the Nipah outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic**, and her services to the State. This is an annual award, which is given to individuals who have made a mark in the fields of art, literature, culture, politics, or social service. She is the fourth woman to win the award ever since its inception in 1985.
14. Former India Davis Cup tennis player, **Ramesh Krishnan** was presented with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** at the annual awards, **organized by the Rotary Club of Madras, T. Nagar (RCMT), Chennai**.  
**Note:** Tamil Nadu Tennis Association president and ace tennis player Vijay Amritraj presented the award. **Vijay Amritraj was the recipient of the first award in 2010**. Golf player, Uttam Singh Mundy was awarded for vocational excellence.
15. **Austin Butler** won the **76th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) Awards 2023** in the **Best Leading Actor category for Elvis**.  
**Note:** **Cate Blanchett won the Best Leading Actress Award** for her performance in **TÁR**. A German anti-war drama, 'All Quiet on the Western Front' won a maximum of seven awards including Best Film and Director. This movie is a screen adaptation of the 1928 novel by Erich Maria Remarque. 'The Banshees of Inisherin' and 'Elvis' both movies won four BAFTA awards.
16. A noted writer, **V Madhusoodanan Nair** has been selected for **Jnanappana Puraskaram 2023** for his contribution to the **field of literature**.  
**Note:** The award consists of a Rs 50,001 cash prize, a 10-gram gold locket with an image of Sree Guruvayoorappan, a citation, and a memento. This award was **instituted by Guruvayur Devaswom** in memory of 'Poonthanam Namboothiri', the ardent devotee of Guruvayoorappan, who wrote Jnanappana. The award will be presented on February 24, 2023.
17. **Ranbir Kapoor** was awarded the **Best Actor award** at the **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival (DPIFF) Awards 2023** in Mumbai.  
**Note:** He was awarded for his role in Brahmastra Part One-Shiva. **Alia Bhatt won the Best Actress award** for Gangubai Kathiawadi.
- **Best Film: The Kashmir Files**
  - **Film Of The Year: RRR**
  - **Most Promising Actor: Rishab Shetty (Kantara)**
  - **Critics Best Actor: Varun Dhawan (Bhediya)**

- Critics Best Actress: Vidya Balan (Jalsa)
  - Best Director: R Balki (Chup)
- 18. Noted classical singer, Pt Prem Kumar Mallick** has been selected for the **prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards** for 2019.  
**Note:** Reason: Contributions in the **field of music (Hindustani Vocal)**. He is a professor in the department of music and performing arts at Allahabad University. He will receive this award along with other artists from across the country for the award for years 2019, 2020, and 2021. President Droupadi Murmu will present the award on February 23.
- 19. An Indian-origin, Karthik Subramaniam** has won the prestigious National Geographic **'Pictures of The Year'** award with his photograph titled **"Dance of the Eagles"**.  
**Note:** The award-winning photograph **captured a bald eagle intimidating its peers** to claim a prime log while salmon hunting in the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve in Alaska. He titled the picture 'Dance of the Eagles' as a homage to the fictional dragon war in George R.R. Martin's novel 'A Dance with Dragons'.
- 20. In a first for the Indian Navy, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Harikumar** awarded an **'on the spot' Unit Citation to INS Nireekshak in Kochi**.  
**Note:** Reason: For **deep sea diving and undertaking salvage operations** under the most challenging circumstances. He also awarded commendations to the crew involved in the salvage operation. **INS Nireekshak:** It is a Dive Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel of the Indian Navy. It was built in 1985 by Mazgaon Shipbuilders.
- 21. A veteran CPI-M leader, T K Rangarajan** has been honored with the **Sansad Ratna Lifetime Achievement Award 2023**.  
**Note:** Thirteen MPs were nominated for the Sansad Ratna Awards 2023. The **13th edition of the award** ceremony will be held on March 25 in New Delhi. **Sansad Ratna Awards:** It was **instituted in 2010** and inspired by the teachings of former President APJ Abdul Kalam. It recognizes and felicitates the top-performing MPs based on their work in the apex legislative body
- 22. Chairman of JSW Group Sajjan Jindal** was honored with the **EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2022**.  
**Note:** Reason: For his **exceptional entrepreneurial journey in scaling the global**

- conglomerate** with a presence in steel, cement, infrastructure, energy, and paints. He will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) at Monte Carlo in June 2023. While K P Singh, Chairman Emeritus, DLF Group, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award.
- 23. Jammu & Kashmir Tourism** has been chosen by **India Today Tourism Survey for best adventure tourism award** in recognition of its efforts in **promoting 'Gulmarg'** as an adventure destination of international order.  
**Note:** India Today award comes just within a month of South Asian Travel Trade Expo(SATTE) in which the J&K Tourism Department was awarded for its efforts in post COVID-19 recovery of the tourism sector.
- 24. The RRR (Directed by SS Rajamouli)** has won **four awards at Hollywood Critics Association Film Awards 2023**.  
**Note:** The movie has received awards in **Best Action Film, Best International Feature, Best Original Song (Naatu Naatu), and Best Stunts categories**. The RRR has also been nominated for the Oscars 2023 in Best Original Song (Naatu Naatu). The song 'Naatu Naatu' has already bagged the prestigious awards Best Original Song award at the 80th Golden Globe Awards.
- 25. Computer scientist, Hari Balakrishnan** has been awarded the **2023 Marconi Prize**.  
**Note:** He is a professor in the **Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology**. The Marconi Prize is a top honor for computer scientists and is awarded by the U.S.-based Marconi Foundation. It is given to those who have made a significant contribution to increasing digital inclusivity through advanced information and communications technology.
- 26. Lionel Messi (35)** won **FIFA's best men's player of the year for 2022** after winning his maiden World Cup title with Argentina in December 2022 in Qatar.  
**Note:** While Alexia Putellas (Spain) was awarded the best women's player for a second straight year.  
**Other awardees:**
- Best fans award: Argentina
  - Fairplay award: Luka Lochoshvili (Georgia)
  - Best men's coach: Lionel Scaloni (Argentina)
  - Best women's coach: Sarina Wiegman
  - Best goal (Puskas award): Marcin Oleksy

### Sports News

- 1. Indian golf player, Aditi Ashok** clinched **her fourth Ladies European Tour (LET) title** at the **Kenya**

**Ladies Open 2023** golf tournament held at Vipingo Ridge, Kenya.

**Note:** She last won a Ladies European Tour golf tournament in 2017. She carded a 12-under to win ahead of Alice Hewson (England) and April Angurasarane (Thailand), who finished with identical final scores of 3-under. Meanwhile, India's Avani Prashanth finished tied-ninth and Amandeep Drall came tied-52nd.

- The Sports Minister, Anurag Singh Thakur, and LG of J&K, Manoj Sinha launched the Mascot, Theme Song, and Jersey for the **3rd edition of Khelo India Winter Games in Jammu & Kashmir.**

**Note:** The Winter Games are scheduled to be held from 10-14 February 2023 at Gulmarg, J&K. It is **supported by the Ministry of Sports** and organized by the J&K Sports Council and Winter Games Association, J&K. **Mascot:** Snow Leopard (depicts the vibrant heritage of the Himalayas).

- Footballer, **Raphael Varane** has announced his **retirement** from international duty with France to focus on his career with Manchester United.

**Note:** He was a key starter for Les Bleus as they won the World Cup in 2018 and helped Didier Deschamps guide his team to the 2022 showpiece in Qatar. He began his international career almost ten years ago, on March 22, 2013. He became only the fourth player in history to win both the World Cup and the Champions League in the same year.

- The inaugural season of the **Women's Premier League (WPL) 2023** will be held in **Mumbai (Maharashtra)** from 4 - 26 March.

**Note:** All the tournament matches will be held in the **Brabourne Stadium and the DY Patil Stadium.** The auction of WPL players will take place on February 13 in Mumbai. IPL team owners: Mumbai Indians, RCB, Delhi Capitals, Capri Global Holdings (Lucknow), and Adani Sportsline **IPL chairman: Arun Dhumal; BCCI Secretary: Jay Shah.**

- Australia's** T20 captain, **Aaron Finch** has announced his **retirement** from international cricket.

**Note:** Earlier, the opening batsman had announced retirement from the 50-over format in September 2022. He made his international cricket debut in a T20I against England in 2011. He made his ODI debut against Sri Lanka in 2013 and his Test debut against Pakistan in 2018.

- LeBron James** becomes the all-time **leading scorer in the National Basketball Association (NBA).**

**Note:** He has **surpassed** a record held by the **great Kareem Abdul Jabbar** since 1984. He pushed his career total to 38,388 points. He has won four NBA titles and competed in 10 NBA finals. He has a

career average of 27.2 points, 7.5 rebounds, and 7.3 assists.

- Jean Eric Vergne of DS Penske** has won an action-packed **Formula E in Hyderabad**, that marked a successful return of a high-profile motorsport event in India, defeating Nick Cassidy.

**Note:** This is Eric Vergne's first win of the season. Antonio Felix Da Costa of Porsche secured the final third spot on the podium. Hyderabad ePrix is the single-seater, electrically powered Formula E race, and will be the first Formula E race to be held in the country.

- Third edition of the Khelo India National Winter Games** has begun at famous tourist destination Gulmarg in Kashmir.

**Note:** Gulmarg is a Centre of Excellence for Winter Sports and sports budget of Jammu and Kashmir is enormous as compared to other states and union territories of the country. This edition will continue for next four days wherein more than 1500 athletes from across the country are taking part in eleven different sports categories.

- The **fifth Khelo India Youth Games** was concluded at the **Upper Lake in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.**

**Note:** Maharashtra has topped the medals tally by winning 154 medals (53 gold, 54 silver, and 47 bronze). While Haryana placed second with a total of 116 medals, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The 5th KIYG -2023 was hosted in the eight towns of MP - Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Maheshwar, Balaghat, Mandla, Jabalpur, and Gwalior.

- Wu Yibing (23)** has become the **first Chinese man** to win an **ATP Tour title at the Dallas Open 2023.**

**Note:** He defeated John Isner (United States) by 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/3), and 7-6 (14/12). He also becomes the second man from China to break into the top 100 of the ATP rankings. While the duo of Jamie Murray (United Kingdom) and Michael Venus (New Zealand) won the doubles title at the same event

- Real Madrid** has won the for a **Club World Cup 2023** record-extending **fifth time** in the final held in the Abdellah stadium, Rabat, Morocco.

**Note:** Real Madrid has **defeated Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal** by 5-3. Vinícius Júnior (Brazilian) scored twice and assisted Karim Benzema to lead Real Madrid. Real Madrid last won the tournament in 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

- Indian Women's cricket player, **Smriti Mandhana** became **the most expensive women's pick in the Women's Premier League (WPL) auction.**

**Note:** She has been bought by the **Royal Challengers Bangalore for 3.40 Cr.** A total of 87 players were bought by the five franchises for a sum total of Rs. 59.50 Cr. The second costliest Indian player is all-rounder Deepti Sharma who was bought by UP Warriorz for Rs 2.6 crore. Indian skipper, Harmanpreet Kaur was bought by Mumbai Indians.

**13. Saurashtra has defeated Bengal** by nine wickets to lift their **second Ranji Trophy title 2023**, organized at Eden Gardens, Kolkata.

**Note:** Saurashtra captain Jaydev Unadkat was declared **Man of the Match** for his impressive performance. While Batter Arpit Vasavada was named the player of the series. Most runs: Mayank Agarwal (Karnataka) (990). Most wickets: Jalaj Saxena (Kerala) (50). Saurashtra won their first title in 2019-20 after beating Bengal.

**14. Team India won the bronze medal at the Asia Mixed Team Championships 2023**, held at the Dubai Exhibition Centre in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 14 to 19 February 2023.

**Note:** P.V. Sindhu-led side faced a 2-3 defeat against China in the semifinals and settled for the bronze medal. **Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand won the Women's Doubles.** While team China won the Gold medal, South Korea won the Silver medal.

**15. India has won two gold medals in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed team and 10m Air Pistol Mixed team** at the ongoing ISSF Shooting World Cup, Cairo in Egypt.

**Note:** Indian **10m Air Rifle Mixed team of Narmada Nithin Raju and Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil** defeated Hungary's Eszter Denes and Istvan Peni by 16-6 to bag the top spot on the podium. While the **10m Air Pistol Mixed team of Rhythm Sangwan and Varun Tomar won gold.**

**16. Indian shooter, Rudranksh Patil clinched his first World Cup individual gold in the men's 10m air rifle event** at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.

**Note:** He **defeated Maximilian Ulbrich of Germany**, who was settled for silver. While Miran Maricic of Croatia won the bronze medal. In women's 10m air rifle, Tilottama Sen (14) won the second bronze for India. Seonaid Mcintosh (Great Britain) won gold and Nina Christen (Switzerland) settled for silver.

**17. BCCI secretary, Jay Shah has informed that the TATA Group has bagged the title rights for the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2023.**

**Note: The first match of WPL 2023 will begin between Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians** on March 4 at the DY Patil Stadium. In its first season, the WPL will stage a total of 20 league matches and two Playoff games that will be played. Five teams: Delhi Capitals, Gujarat Giants, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore & UP Warriorz

**18. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar** has secured the gold medal in the **men's individual 50m rifle 3 positions competition** at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.

**Note:** In the event, he **defeated Alexander Schmir from Austria** by 16-6. With this gold, India topped the medal tally with four gold and Hungary at second. 10m air rifle mixed team: Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil and R Narmada Nithin; 10m air pistol mixed team: Varun Tomar and Rhythm Sangwan; Men's 10m air rifle: Rudranksh Patil

**19. Australian women's cricket team has defeated South Africa** by 9 runs to lift the **ICC T20 World Cup Trophy 2023** at Newlands, Cricket Ground in Cape Town, South Africa.

**Note:** Australian women's cricket team has won this **title for the sixth time.** They have completed a 'three-peat' under the captaincy of Meg Lanning, winning in 2018, 2020, and 2023. Player of the series: Australia Ashleigh Gardner; Most runs: South Africa Laura Wolvaardt (230)

**20. Manchester United** defeated Newcastle to win the **Carabao Cup title in 2023 after six years.**

**Note:** Newcastle is a Saudi Arabia-backed club. The Carabao cup is also known as the EFL cup, a major football trophy played in England. The competition was open to all clubs participating in the Premier League and the English Football League. Liverpool is the most successful club in the competition and has won more than nine championships.

**21. Indian Greco-Roman wrestler Ankit Gulia (19)** won a **bronze medal in the men's 72 kg division** of the **Ibrahim Moustafa ranking series in Alexandria, Egypt.**

**Note:** He **lost to Otar Abuladze (Georgia) and got the better of Nurzhigit Keneshbek Uulu (Kyrgyzstan)** in the repechage round. The Indian grappler won the medal after Iranian 67kg Olympic champion Mohammadreza Abdolhamid Geraei withdrew from the bronze medal match due to an injury.

**22. Madhya Pradesh women's hockey team won the 13th Hockey India Senior Women National**

**Championship 2023** held in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

**Note:** MP defeated Hockey Maharashtra by 5-1 in the final. MP's Pratibha Arya was adjudged the best defender of the championship. She was also

awarded the player of the match title. The team of Hockey Jharkhand secured third place after defeating Hockey Haryana in the third-place match.

## Books and Authors

1. The author of **Wanderers, Kings and Merchants** is **Dr Peggy Mohan**.

**Note:** She has bagged the 'Mathrubhumi Book of The Year' award at the fourth edition of the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL 2023). Her book 'Wanderers, Kings and Merchants,' portraying the evolution of language as the outcome of migrations. She won Rs two lakh as a cash prize and a sculpture. Nobel Laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah presented the award to Mohan at the valedictory ceremony of the four-day MBIFL 2023.

2. British author, **Salman Rushdie** has released his new novel "**Victory City**".

**Note:** This novel was published by Penguin Random House. It is an "epic tale" of a 14th-century woman who defies a patriarchal world to rule a city. This novel purports to be a translation of a historical epic originally written in Sanskrit. Rushdie won the Booker Prize in 1981 for his second novel, *Midnight's Children*. His notable works: *Grimus* (1975); *Shame* (1983); *The Satanic Verses* (1988).

3. **Letty McHugh** has been announced as the **winner of the Barbellion Prize**.

**Note:** She was awarded for her '**Book of Hours: An Almanac for The Seasons of The Soul**'. The

Barbellion Prize is dedicated to ill and disabled writers whose work represents the experience of chronic illness or disability. This prize was named after the English diarist W N P Barbellion, who wrote about his life with multiple sclerosis.

4. Tamil Nadu **Governor R.N. Ravi released two books — Pt. Deendayal Udadhya: Dispersions of Thought and Pt. Deendayal Udpadhyaya: Integral Humanism** in Chennai.

**Note:** The book was authored by **Professor B. Dharmalingam**. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya was an Indian politician and a proponent of integral humanism ideology. He also started the monthly publication *Rashtra Dharma* (National Duty). He also served as the 10th President of *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (1967 – 1968).

5. BJP national president, **JP Nadda has launched a book "Modi: Shaping a Global Order in Flux"** in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

**Note:** The book is forewarded by **S. Jaishankar** (Union External Affairs Minister) and edited by **Sujan Chinoy, Vijay Chauthaiwala, and Uttam Kumar Sinha**. Over 23 chapters, the book features write-ups by the likes of **Amitabh Kant** (former CEO of NITI Aayog), **Chauthaiwale, Chinoy, Anurag Saxena, Amish Tripathi, and D.B. Venkatesh Varma** (former diplomat).

## Science and Defence

1. **Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE)** has developed a major subsystem for a **space radar**, which holds significant potential for ISRO and the military.

**Note:** LRDE is a **Bengaluru lab of the Defence Research and Development Organisation**. LRDE has been involved in the development of space-borne imaging radar for installation on satellites and has completed the development of an UnFurlable Reflector Antenna (UFRA). UFRA is one of the major subsystems of a radar.

2. **Scott Sheppard, Astronomer of Washington's Carnegie Institution for Science has discovered 12 new moons around Jupiter planet.**

**Note:** Now, Jupiter has 92 moons. Jupiter planet has overtaken Saturn planet, which has 83 moons at

present. The orbits of the 12 hitherto undiscovered moons of Jupiter have been published by the Minor Planet Center (MPC). Of the 12 new moons, nine are particularly distant. The MPC estimates that these nine moons have orbits longer than 550 days.

3. **NISAR, a joint satellite of NASA and ISRO, is planned to be launched in 2024.**

**Note:** NISAR refers to NASA-ISRO SAR, is a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory. It will also provide spatially and temporally consistent data for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, landslides, etc. Radar systems in **NISAR: L – Band SAR and S-Band SAR**; L-Band SAR: Designed and Created by JPL of NASA; S-Band SAR: Designed and created by ISRO

4. The Indian military has concluded the **joint training exercise Trishakti Prahar**, which was started in **North Bengal** on January 21, 2023.  
**Note:** Aim: To practice battle preparedness of the security forces, using the latest weapons and equipment in a networked, integrated environment. This exercise was participated by the Army, the Indian Air Force, and CAPFs. The exercise concluded with an Integrated Fire Power Exercise at the Teesta Field Firing Ranges.
5. **Google** launched its conversational artificial intelligence (AI) **chatbot named 'Bard'**.  
**Note:** It will be directly **competing with Microsoft-backed firm OpenAI's ChatGPT**. It will combine the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence, and creativity of language models. Bard is based on LaMDA, the firm's Language Model for the Dialogue Applications system. It helps to draw information from the web to provide high-quality responses.  
**Google CEO: Sundar Pichai**
6. **Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras**.  
**Note:** Reason: To build training modules for Indian Spaceflight Program, using augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR) technologies. The modules will be built at IIT Madras' Experiential Technology Innovation Centre (XTIC). It will also be used to train engineers at Isro's Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC).
7. The **Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** for the procurement of **41 sets of Modular Bridges** at an **estimated cost of ₹2,585 crore** for the Corps of Engineers, Indian Army.  
**Note: Designed and developed: DRDO.** It shall be produced by L&T as a DRDO-nominated production agency. Each set of bridges shall consist of **seven carrier vehicles** based on **8x8 heavy mobility vehicles** and two launcher vehicles based on 10x10 heavy mobility vehicles.
8. The Indian Navy's Captain, Prashant Saxena AWPS (Mbi) has launched the **Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile (ACTCM) Barge, Yard 125 (LSAM 15)**.  
**Note:** It was launched at **M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd in Thane**. It is equipped with auxiliary systems developed by indigenous manufacturers. The Barge has been constructed with a service life of 30 years. This Barge will help Indian Navy to fulfill its operational commitments by easing transportation and embarkation.
9. The **14th edition of the Aero India** show was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in **Bengaluru (Karnataka)** on 13th February 2023.

- Note: 2023 Theme: The Runway to a Billion Opportunities.** Purpose: To showcase indigenous defense equipment, technologies, and fighter aircraft. It also aimed to promote indigenous production and export of air platforms to attract foreign investment.
10. **Skye Air** launched a **drone-based traffic management system** named '**Skye UTM**' in **India**.  
**Note:** It was **unveiled by the Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India, Nitin Gadkari**. Skye UTM is a Cloud-based aerial traffic management system. It integrated unmanned air traffic with manned aviation airspace. The software will allow drone operators to plan routes, make flight plans and assess risks before running drone-based operations in the country.
  11. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the second developmental flight of the **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV-D2) with three satellites** on February 10, 2023, from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.  
**Note:** Three satellites: EOS-07, Janus-1, and AzaadiSAT-2. The first developmental flight of the SSLV was launched from SDSC on August 7, 2022, but it failed. Reason: Due to vibration disturbance for a short duration on the equipment bay deck
  12. The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** and **Samsung Semiconductor India Research (SSIR)** have joined hands to promote research and development in the field of **on-chip electrostatic discharge (ESD) protection**.  
**Note:** This partnership seeks to build cutting-edge ESD device solutions to protect ultra-high-speed serial interfaces in advanced integrated circuits and system-on-chip products. Solutions arising from this research will be used in Samsung's advanced process nodes.
  13. Bengaluru-based start-up, **NewSpace Research** has **delivered SWARM drones to Indian Army**.  
**Note:** These drone systems will make the Army the first major armed force in the world to operationalize with these **high-density SWARM drones**. The swarm of 100 drones is capable of hitting targets at least 50 km away into enemy territory. It is a part of the Aatmanirbhar effort to indigenize critical and disruptive military technologies.
  14. The **4th edition** of a joint military exercise, "**EX DHARMA GUARDIAN**" between **India and Japan** is being started at Camp Imazu in **Shiga province of Japan** from 17th February - 2nd March 2023.  
**Note:** This exercise covers platoon-level joint training on operations in jungle and semi-urban or urban terrain. **Indian Army's Garhwal Rifles Regiment troops** and Japan's Infantry Regiment troops participated in the exercise.



15. The **Indian Air Force** has developed an **innovative solution named 'Vayulink'** to **send radio communication to the base station when the signals are low**.

**Note:** It would help pilots to **deal with bad weather** and also provide them with jammer-proof uninterrupted communication with the base station. It is an ad-hoc data link communication system. It will be installed in an aircraft and provide information about other aircraft close by, encrypted traffic data over a secured channel.

16. The **4th edition** of the biennial training **Ex DUSTLIK 2023**, between the **Indian Army and Uzbekistan Army** is being conducted in **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand** from 20th February to 5th March 2023.

**Note:** Aim: To enhance the **military capability to undertake multi-domain operations** in a Sub Conventional scenario. The 14th Battalion, the GARHWAL RIFLES, part of Western Command represented the Indian contingent. The troops of the North Western Military District represented the Uzbekistan Army.

17. **Indian Naval Ship Sumedha** has reached Abu Dhabi, **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** to participate in **Naval Defence Exhibition (NAVDEX) 2023 and International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) 2023**.

**Note:** Agenda: To showcase the strengths of India's indigenous shipbuilding and underscore the **vision of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat**. It is the third ship of the indigenously built Saryu class Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels. It was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 2014.

18. A Saudi Arabian woman, **Rayyana Barnawi** will become **the first woman astronaut from Saudi Arabia** to go on a **space mission**.

**Note:** She will **join fellow Saudi astronaut, Ali Al-Qarni** on a 10-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS). Barnawi and Al-Qarni will fly to the ISS aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft as part of a mission by Axiom Space. The Ax-2 mission will be launched by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A, NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

19. **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation** and Space Zone India in association with **Martin Foundation** launched the **APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite** launch vehicle mission 2023 in Chengalpattu, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

**Note:** It can be used for weather research and to assess atmospheric conditions and radiation. It was **designed and constructed by students from grades 6 to 12** from different parts of the nation including 200 students from the fishermen's community.

20. India's lunar mission, **Chandrayaan-3** has successfully underwent **Electro-Magnetic**

### **Interference/ Electro-Magnetic Compatibility (EMI-EMC).**

**Note: EMI-EMC test:** It is conducted for **satellite missions to ensure the functionality of the satellite subsystems in the space environment**. It also ensures compatibility with the expected electromagnetic levels. The test was conducted by the **ISRO at U R Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru**. The performance of the systems was satisfactory.

21. **Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT Roorkee)** has signed an MoU with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** to promote the development of indigenous technologies.

**Note:** They also aim to **develop equipment through Research and Development in areas of mutual interest**. The MoU was signed at Bengaluru during Aero India 2023. The IIT Roorkee will provide its expertise and cooperation in research for feasibility studies and prototype development.

22. Navratna PSU, **Bharat Electronics (BEL)** has signed an MoU with **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), DRDO and Cisco**.

**Note: BEL & ADA agreement:** For the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme. **BEL & Cisco:** For long-term strategic cooperation in the areas of networking, collaboration, and security among other associated services. Aim: To leverage the **complementary strengths and capabilities**. These MoUs were signed during the **Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru**.

23. **UAE's leading defense group, EDGE** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India's aerospace firm **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** at the **International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX)**.

**Note:** Aim: To **explore the areas of cooperation**, including joint design and development of missile systems and Unmanned aerial vehicles (drones). Besides, both companies will also explore the utilization of HAL's small gas turbine engines on EDGE's guided weapons.

24. **INS Sindhukesari** has become the **first Indian submarine** to dock in **Indonesia** and is a **3,000-tonne Kilo-class diesel-electric submarine**.

**Note:** The submarine made its way to the **Indonesian capital of Jakarta** to dock after traversing through the nearby Sunda Strait and was part of INS Sindhukesari's first operational turnaround. It was designed as part of Project 877 and built under a contract between Rosvooruzhenie, Russia, and Ministry of Defence, India.

25. A contingent of the **Indian Air Force** will **participate in Exercise Cobra Warrior** at the Waddington Air Force Base in the **UK**.

**Note:** The exercise is scheduled to be held from 6th -24th March 2023. It is a **multilateral Air exercise**

in which **Air Forces from Finland, Sweden, South Africa, the USA, and Singapore** would also participate. In 2023, IAF is participating in the exercise with five Mirage 2000 fighters, two C-17 Globemaster, and an IL-78 mid-air refueller aircraft.

26. The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will participate in **Ex-Desert Flag VIII**, organized at the **Al Dahfra airbase** of the **United Arab Emirates**.

**Note:** The exercise will be scheduled from 27th February to 17th March 2023. The IAF has participated with five Light Combat Aircraft, LCA Tejas, and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. The **Air Forces from UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, the UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, South Korea, and the USA** would join this multilateral air exercise.

27. **Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH)** and **Waipapa Taumata Rau** (Auckland University) signed an MoU to engage in long-term cooperation in cancer care.

**Note:** TMH is the most **renowned cancer care** hospital and research center in India. Initial projects envisaged for the partnership include a digital platform: For clinical trials to track study-related activities for patients, investigators, and regulators; To make outpatient clinics more efficient; To enhance prescription medicine safety

28. **Australian National University's** researchers are **trying to reveal the fifth layer of the Earth**.

**Note:** **Seismic waves generated by earthquakes** have **revealed new insights** about the deepest

parts of Earth's inner core. The team believes that presented evidence of a distinct layer inside Earth known as the innermost inner core. This layer is a solid 'metallic ball' that sits within the center of the inner core. So far, scientists believed that there are only four layers on the Earth

29. Radio telescope, **the Atacama Large Millimetre/submillimetre Array (ALMA)** is set to get software and hardware upgrades.

**Note: Reason:** To collect more data and produce sharper images than ever before. **ALMA is a radio telescope** comprising 66 antennas located in the Atacama Desert of northern Chile. The upgradation would take around five years to finish. It is operated under a partnership between the US, and 16 countries in Europe, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Chile.

30. **After OpenAI's ChatGPT**, Google BARD, now **Meta Platforms, Inc. has introduced** a new research tool that will soon aid in building **AI-based chatbots**.

**Note:** The company has publicly released its **Large Language Model Meta AI (LLaMA)**. LLaMA is a state-of-the-art foundational language model. It is **developed to assist researchers** in their work in the subfield of AI. This would be Meta's third LLM after GLaTICA and Blender Bot 3 that were shut down immediately after incorrect results.

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