

Monthly Current Affairs February 2023 English



iCET: India-US initiative to break down barriers to closer technology and defence cooperation

Why in news: The United States and India concluded the US-India iCET meeting and also decided to launch a new Innovation Bridge.



1. With the launch of the India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his American counterpart Jake Sullivan, experts believe the step will certainly break down barriers and foster ties in technology and bolster defence cooperation.
2. It reflects India US convention of strategic, commercial & scientific approaches in field of technology.
3. The initiative will work to connect the defense startups in India and USA.
4. The initiative will pave way for the emerging technologies, co-production and will further strengthen India-US relations.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Global Report On Neglected Tropical Diseases 2023: WHO

Why in news: Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of diseases that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas.

They are caused by various pathogens, including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins.



1. The WHO's Report provides a consolidated, up-to-date assessment of progress towards control, elimination and eradication of 20 diseases and disease groups (NTDs) globally, regionally and nationally.
2. Key highlights:
 - Burden of NTDs continues to be unequally borne by a small number of countries: 16 countries bear 80% of this burden.
 - Over the past decade, the number of people requiring interventions against NTDs decreased by 25%.
 - As of December 2022, 47 countries had eliminated at least one NTD.
3. Threats
 - Slower than expected progress in high burden countries,
 - Uneven progress across certain diseases,
 - Persistent underlying risk factors (poverty, climate change) and
 - Rapid population growth.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Tourism minister launches Visit India Year 2023 initiative.

Why in news: Each foreign delegate of G20 will be a brand ambassador of India's culture, heritage and tourist destinations.



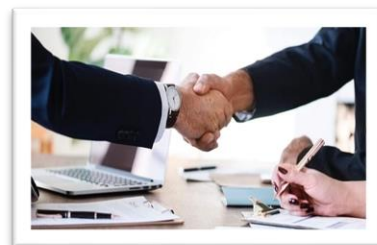
1. The campaign will showcase the Indian Tourism potential to the foreign delegates who will attend the G-20 meeting. In 2023, India is hosting the G-20 summit. The G-20 countries contribute to 85% of the world's GDP. Therefore, targeting them will help India boost its revenue from tourism.
2. During the campaign, the tourism ministry will showcase the major travel destinations in the country.
3. It is expected that Indian tourism will grow to 512 billion USD by 2028. To revive the tourism industry and increase inbound travel, the tourism ministry launched the Visit India Year 2023 campaign.
4. As a part of the initiative, the Ministry will also work at improving both the infrastructure and other framework conditions impacting the growth of tourism within the year.
5. Further, the 'Incredible India' brand will continue to be leveraged, embellished and polished to match the renewed expectation of travellers around the world.
6. The 'Visit India Year 2023' logo is a signature style to send open invitation to the world to come and experience the Incredible India. The logo represents a "microcosm of the countless stories India holds" — from heritage to gastronomy to our art and our rich wildlife. The Visit India Year 2023 Logo design is inspired by our belief system of Atithi Devo Bhava.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

UK to be country partner at BioAsia 2023

Why in news: Over the course of three days, prominent industry leaders, distinguished scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs will come together to discuss 'humanized' healthcare.

1. For the 20th edition of the largest event in the biotechnological industry of Asia, global business firm BioAsia picked the United Kingdom (UK) as its country partner.
2. With the theme of - 'Advancing for ONE: Shaping the next generation of humanized healthcare', BioAsia 2023 is all set to be held from February 24 to 26 in Hyderabad.



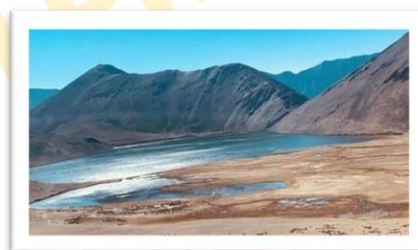
- a. 'O' in ONE stands for One Health. It aims to integrate different ecosystems with the aim of safeguarding the future
 - b. 'N' in ONE stands for Next Generation Health. Under this, the forum will aim to use disruptive technologies in the biotech field. The disruptive technologies are Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, and data science
 - c. 'E' in ONE stands for Equity: Here, the aim is to provide quality health care for all
3. It is a forum that connects biotech industry stakeholders.
 4. The forum is an opportunistic platform for biotech leaders to learn about the latest technological advancements in the field. Different biotech companies participate in the forum and exhibit their research and innovations in the field. Experts and researchers attend the forum and present their research findings.
 5. Hyderabad is the Cybercity of India. The Genome Valley, the first world-class Biotech cluster in India was established in the cyber city.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Yaya Tso to become Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site

Why in news: Lake Yaya Tso is known as a bird's paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh.

1. Yaya Tso, known as birds' paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres, has been proposed as Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site (BHS) under the Biological Diversity Act.
2. Yaya Tso is a nesting habitat for a large number of birds and animals, such as the bar-headed goose, black-necked crane and brahmny duck, adding it also has the distinction of being one of the highest breeding sites of the black-necked crane in India.
3. The Biodiversity Management Committee, the panchayat of Chumathang village, along with the SECURE Himalaya Project resolved the issue and declared Yaya Tso Lake a biodiversity heritage site.



Secure Himalaya project (2017)?

4. It is funded by the Global Environment Facility. It supports the government's efforts for the conservation of snow leopard and its habitat by developing and implementing a landscape-based approach for Himalayan ecosystems.



Biodiversity Heritage Sites

5. These are well defined, unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems with high diversity of wild and domesticated species, presence of rare and threatened species and keystone species and have significant culture, ethical or aesthetic values.
6. Under section 37(1) of Biological Diversity Act 2002, the state government in consultation with local bodies notifies areas of biodiversity importance as BHS.
7. First site was Nallur Tamarind Grove in Bengaluru (2007). There are total 35 BHS in India.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Indian Army organises integrated exercise 'Trishakri Prahar' in North Bengal

Why in news: The exercise, which included all of the Army's services, the Indian Air Force, and CAPFs, was designed to test the Security Forces' ability to fight using the most modern tools and weapons in a networked, integrated environment



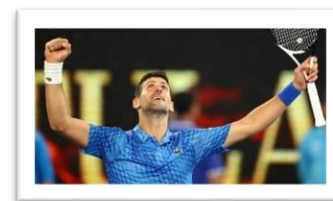
1. In order to coordinate an integrated battle, the Indian Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) conducted a joint training exercise called "Exercise Trishakri Prahar" in North Bengal from 21 to 31 January, 2023.
2. Swift mobilisation and deployment drills were practised throughout North Bengal as part of the exercise. All organisations, including the Civil Administration, Civil Defense Organizations, Police, and CAPFs, coordinated their efforts to ensure effective movement and rapid mobilisation.
3. The Integrated Fire Power Exercise demonstrated the ability of the Indian Armed Forces to apply resources from the Indian Air Force, Airborne Special Forces, and Security Forces in a coordinated manner in a networked environment.
4. As part of the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan," newly introduced weapons and equipment made in India participated in the exercise as well.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Djokovic wins Australian Open title to reach 22nd career Grand Slam

Why in news: Novak Djokovic decimated higher-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets to win his 10th Australian Open crown at the Rod Laver Arena.

1. Serbia's Novak Djokovic, who defeated Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3 7-6(4) 7-6(5) in the Australian Open final to tie the men's record of 22 Grand Slam titles.



2. Australian Open, one of the world's major tennis championships (the first of the four annual Grand Slam events), held at the National Tennis Centre at Melbourne Park in Melbourne, Australia.
3. The 2023 Australian Open was a Grand Slam level tennis tournament held at Melbourne Park, from 16–29 January 2023. It was the 111th edition of the Australian Open, the 55th in the Open Era, and the first major of the year. There is a total prize pot of AUD \$76.5 million (around £43.3m) for the Australian Open 2023.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

Former PM Manmohan Singh conferred Lifetime Achievement Honour in UK

Why in news: The India-UK Achievers Honours by NISAU UK, in partnership with the British Council in India and the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT), celebrate the achievements of Indian students who studied at British universities.



1. The Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life.
2. To mark 75 years of India's independence, the first-ever India UK Achievers Honours covered 75 high achievers and some key Outstanding Achievers who bolster the India-UK diaspora living bridge.
3. British Indian peer Lord Karan Bilimoria received the Living Legend Honour at the awards ceremony on January 25.
4. Among the Outstanding Achievers honoured included Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) spokesperson Raghav Chadha, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla and Indian women's football team goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

IIRF releases MBA Ranking 2023, IIM Ahmedabad, Bengaluru in top 3,

Why in news: Indian Institutional Ranking Framework has released the MBA Ranking for the year 2023. IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru and IIM Kolkata have attained the top three position respectively while IIM Lucknow has jumped one place and secured 4th rank.

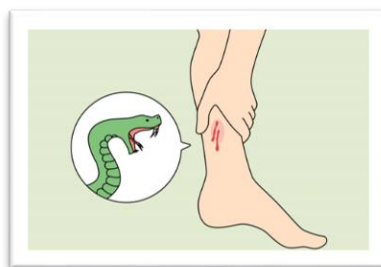


7. The ranking was based on seven criteria:
 - Research,
 - Teaching-Learning Resource Pedagogy,
 - Industry Income and Integration,
 - Placement Performance, Future Orientation,
 - External Perception and International Outlook, &
 - Placement Strategies and Support.
8. According to the latest Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) ranking (2023), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), is the top government college in India for pursuing the Master of Business Administration (MBA) course. IIM Bengaluru (Karnataka) and IIM Kolkata (West Bengal) are ranked second and third, respectively, after IIM Ahmedabad.
9. IIRF is prepared and published by Education Post, a monthly magazine on higher education since 2012, and is India's most authentic non-government ranking framework.
10. Top 3 private B-schools are -
 - Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur, Jharkhand
 - Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurugram, Haryana
 - Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune, Maharashtra

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

Current insight on the mechanisms of Cobra venom cytotoxins can help anti-venom therapy

Why in news: Scientists have traced the mechanisms of the toxic action of cobra venom, paving a path towards developing strategies for application of antivenom or small molecule inhibitors, which can help mitigate the local toxic effects of cobra venom retained at the bite site.



1. Cobras (genus Naja) are widely distributed over Asia and Africa, and cobra bites are responsible for large mortality and morbidity on these continents, including the Indian sub-continent.
2. Proteomic studies from several other laboratories have demonstrated that cobra venoms are predominated by the non-enzymatic three-finger toxin family, constituting about 60-75% of the total venom.
3. Usually, venoms from African spitting cobras have a higher proportion of CTXs than the Asiatic cobra ones, indicating geographical variation in snake venom composition.



4. A recent study published in the journal Toxins led by Prof. Mukherjee, Director of the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), Guwahati, has comprehensively discussed the mechanisms of action of cobra venom CTXs and highlighted their significance in cobra venom-induced pathophysiology and toxicity.
5. The research mentions that commercial antivenoms lack sufficient antibodies to neutralize these cobra venom toxins.
6. They suggested that developing strategies for topical application of antivenom (small antibodies, e.g., VHH or nanobodies) or small molecule inhibitors may be a more effective alternative to mitigate the local toxic effects of cobra venom CTXs retained at the bite site.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Campaign to empower underprivileged girls launched by UP govt

Why in news: Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government has launched a campaign titled Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to make daughters of the underprivileged classes capable and self-reliant.



1. The campaign, 'Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan' will work in association with an NGO, under the Aarohini Initiative Training Program for the safety and security of girls in all 746 Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls Schools in the state. The Campaign will be implemented in three phases.
2. The campaign aims at enabling daughters of the underprivileged sections to raise their voice for their rights along with creating an understanding of the happenings in their lives among them
3. Gender sensitisation is the primary goal of the Aarohini programme, which will be executed in three phases
4. In the first phase, teachers will be trained, which will start on 1st February 2023.
5. Along with the teachers, the institution will also groom the girls through debates and other activities.
6. With the help of this, girls will be able to face challenges like child marriage, domestic violence, not being able to complete education or any kind of problem in a planned manner and raise their voices for their rights. Apart from this, the annual 'Daughters Campaign' will also be run in these schools where a specific issue is raised by involving children, the community and the teachers

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



First-of-its-kind KG to PG campus in Telangana inaugurated

Why in news: In Telangana, the first KG to PG campus has been inaugurated under Mana Ooru-Mana Badi initiative at Gambhiraopet Mandal of Rajanna Sircilla district.



1. Under the KG to PG free education initiative, apart from government schools, KGBVs, Model School, government Junior College, government Degree College and Post Graduate College are being set up in one campus.
2. The State government was also taking up the Mana Ooru- Mana Badi programme to improve infrastructure in government schools with an expenditure of Rs 7, 300 crore.
3. Mana Ooru-Mana Badi means, Our Village-Our School initiative will be implemented in three years to benefit 19.84 lakh children of over 26 lakh schools.
4. The Minister announced on the occasion that the KG to PG campus at Gambhiraopet will be named after Telangana ideologue, academician and social activist Prof Jayashankar.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

Madhya Pradesh CM launches Ladli Behen Yojana

Why in news: All women of the state who are not an income tax assessee will receive the benefits arising from the newly launched scheme.

1. The CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has launched Ladli Behen Yojana to help poor and vulnerable women of the state become empowered.
2. The budget for the scheme is fixed at Rs. 60000 crores and the scheme will be valid for next 5 years.
3. Under the scheme, women of middle income class will receive Rs 1000 per month. Therefore, in 5 years a single beneficiary woman would receive a sum of Rs. 60000.
4. The government aims to give benefits to 1crore women who will receive the monthly payments direct in their account. Approximately 65% women of the state will be covered under the scheme.
5. The scheme will give preference to rural household women.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



World Wetland Day 2023

Why in news: The proposal for the convention on wetlands was first made on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

1. World Wetland Day is celebrated annually on February 2 with the aim to create awareness of the vital role wetlands play for people and the planet.
2. The theme for this year's World Wetlands Day is 'It's Time for Wetlands Restoration,' which focuses on the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration.
3. Wetlands are the parts of the earth where the soil is covered with water. They support both terrestrial and aquatic species.
4. There are five major types of wetlands. They are marine, estuarine, lacustrine, riverine, and palustrine. It is essential to conserve wetlands as they are among the most productive environments.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



United Nations recognized World Interfaith Harmony Week

Why in news: Recognized by the United Nations (UN), the series of activities under the “World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023” were kicked off at Ramgarhia Girls College, Ludhiana.

1. “The World Interfaith Harmony Week” was first proposed at the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 by H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan.
2. World Interfaith Harmony Week is an annual event observed during the first week of February, after the UN General Assembly designation in 2010.
3. The General Assembly pointed out that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and established World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.
4. During the launch of series of activities that will be held in city in coming days, scholars from different faiths including Mohammad Usmaan Ludhianvi (Shahi Imaam Punjab), Sikh scholar Sarabjit Singh Renuka, Christian scholar Fr. Varghese Kachappilly, Hindu scholar Prof. Vinay Sophat and Bhikku Pragya Bodhi Thero (Monk Incharge Takhatshila Mahabudh of Bihar) explained the meaning and significance of religious inclusion and pluralism for nurturing a healthy society.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



Equatorial Guinea appoints Manuela Roka Botey as first female PM

Why in news: The country of around 1.5 million people has had only two presidents since independence from Spain in 1968.

1. Equatorial Guinea has appointed Manuela Roka Botey as prime minister.
2. She became the first woman in the country to hold the position.
3. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has ruled the country since 1979.
4. The Capital of Equatorial Guinea is Malabo.
5. Equatorial Guinea is a Central African country comprising the Rio Muni mainland and 5 volcanic offshore islands.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



India to be theme country at 2025 Madrid International Book Fair

Why in news: India will be invited as the focal country at the Madrid International Book Fair in 2025, as reported by the Ambassador of Spain to the country Jose Maria Ridao.

1. Spain is the theme country at the 46th International Kolkata Book Fair being held currently in Kolkata.
2. The Madrid International Book Fair is an annual event held in the Buen Retiro Park in Madrid.
3. As part of the cultural exchange between the two countries, Spain has donated books to five universities in Bengal, where the Spanish language is taught.
4. The Madrid International Book Fair began in 1933. It ceased for a few years because of the Spanish Civil War.
5. Although it features mainly books from Spanish-speaking countries, the event promotes the literature of a guest country, which may speak another language.
6. In 2018 the guest country was Romania; in 2019 it was the Dominican Republic. The event scheduled for 2020 and 2021 were suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Finance Minister pitches for 100% switch to mechanised sewer cleaning in all cities and towns

Why in news: According to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, 1,054 people have died till December 31, 2022 due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.



1. The Budget for the newly named NAMASTE (National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem) scheme.
2. All cities and towns will be enabled for 100 per cent mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers to transition from manhole to machine-hole mode. The enhanced focus will be provided for scientific management of dry and wet waste.
3. To prevent deaths due to manual scavenging, the government is moving entirely to the mechanical desludging of sewers.
4. The highest number of such deaths have been reported from Tamil Nadu, where 231 persons have died during sewer cleaning.
5. Manual scavenging is completely prohibited under the 'Prohibition of employment as manual scavengers and their rehabilitation Act 2013'.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

RBI's Digital Payment Index

Why in news: The 2023 DPI in India is 377.46. In 2022, it was 349.30 and in 2021 it was 304.06. With this, RBI concluded that Digital Payments in the country increased by 24.13%.



1. The RBI-DPI comprises 5 broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.
2. 5 Parameters:
 - a. Payment Enablers (weight 25%),
 - b. Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%),
 - c. Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%),
 - d. Payment Performance (45%) and
 - e. Consumer Centricity (5%).
3. It has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period, i.e. DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100.
4. It will be published on RBI's website on a semi-annual basis from March 2021 onwards with a lag of 4 months.
5. The reason for increased digital payments activities has been – rise in UPI payments by 1.3%, the Fintech Adoption Rate in India has increased to 87% and the



transactions made through the National Payments Corporation of India increased by 2.6%.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

About 20,000 tonnes of Red Sanders were smuggled from India between 2016 and 2020: Report

Why in news: Heartwood of Red Sanders is in demand in the domestic and international markets for making furniture, handicrafts and musical instruments.

1. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recorded 28 incidents of confiscation and seizure of more than 19,049 tonnes of Red Sanders logs.
2. Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), also called Red Sandalwood, is a species found in the southern tropical dry deciduous forest of Andhra Pradesh (AP). The tree reaches an average height of 10 to 15 metres.
3. The species is listed as 'Endangered' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and falls in Appendix II of CITES. In India, it has been enlisted under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
4. The red dye obtained from the wood is used as a colouring agent in the textiles, medicine and food industries.
5. China remains the largest importer with more than 13,618 tonnes of the products, followed by Hong Kong at 5,215 tonnes and Singapore at 216 tonnes.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



OPERATION SADBHAVANA IN LADAKH

Why in news: A total of Rs 8.82 crore of 'Operation SADBHAVANA' funds have been allotted for the Union Territory of Ladakh during the current financial year 2022-23. The funds are being utilised for various activities like Human Resource/Skill Development, Sports, Healthcare, National Integration, Infrastructure Development, Ecology, Environment and Education.



1. As part of 'Operation SADBHAVANA', Indian Army is undertaking multiple welfare activities such as running of Army Goodwill Schools, Infrastructure Development Projects and Education Tours etc. for the children living in remote areas of Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh.
2. To improve the standard of education and to provide them with quality education, Indian Army is presently running seven (07) Army Goodwill Schools (AGS) under 'Operation SADBHAVANA' in Ladakh Region.
3. More than 2,200 Students are currently studying in these schools.
4. Women in remote areas of Ladakh are being empowered through various training programmes organised and funded through 'Operation SADBHAVANA' in Vocational Training Centres, Women Empowerment Centres and Computer Centres at various locations in Ladakh.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Government of Goa Launches Vision for All School Eye Health

Why in news: The programme is an extension of the current Vision for All Goa eye health program. The Vision for All Goa eye health program commenced in February 2021 and its monthly camps have screened 50,000 citizens as well as provided free spectacles to 16,000 people in need.

1. The government of Goa has launched the Vision for All School Eye Health program in partnership with OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation and Prasad Netralaya.
2. The Vision for All School Eye Health will focus on training 2000 teachers on basic visual acuity tests for the children in their respective schools, followed by detailed refraction by qualified professionals from Prasad Netralaya.
3. OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation has committed to providing 25,000 free spectacles to children identified with refractive error.
4. The Government of Goa is also organizing a training program for schoolteachers to identify eye health problems among children and refer them for further treatment.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



Maharashtra government declares 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha' as State song

Why in news: Composed by Marathi poet Raja Badhe, the song will be adopted on February 19, i.e. on the birth anniversary of Maratha warrior-king Chhatrapati Shivaji.

1. The Maharashtra government announced the Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha as the state song, which is usually performed at school cultural events on May 1, second only to the national anthem.
2. On February 19, the anniversary of the birth of Maratha monarch Chhatrapati Shivaji, the song will assume its official role.
3. At the moment, 12 other states—Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand—have an official state song.
4. Raja Badhe, a poet who worked for All India Radio from 1956 to 1962, composed the song, which Shrinivas Khale set to music. It was performed by well-known folk singer Shahir Sable in front of Yashwantrao Chavan during a ceremony for the creation of the state on May 1, 1960, at Shivaji Park in Dadar.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Saudi Arabia to host football's 2027 Asian Cup

Why in news: The Kingdom was the only bid presented at the Congress in Manama after India's withdrawal in December 2022.

1. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC), announced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) won the hosting of the 2027 Asian Nations Cup, for the first time in its history, since its inception in 1956.
2. Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa is officially President of the Asian Football Confederation's since last four years.
3. Qatar will host the next edition of the Asian Football Cup, from June 26 to July 16, 2023.
4. The AFC Asian Cup is the primary association football competition contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), determining the continental champion of Asia.
5. It is the second oldest continental football championship in the world after Copa América. The winning team becomes the champion of Asia and until 2015 qualified for the FIFA Confederations Cup.



(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



World food prices decline for 10th month running in January : FAO

Why in news: The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index, which tracks the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 131.2 points last month against 132.2 for December.

1. World food prices fell in January for a 10th consecutive month, and are now down some 18% from a record high hit last March following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
2. The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index, which tracks the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 131.2 points last month against 132.2 for December. It was the lowest reading since September 2021.
3. The index was introduced in 1996 as a public good to help in monitoring developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.
4. The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities.
5. It measures changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Department of Fisheries launches 'Sagar Parikrama' program on occasion of 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Why in news: 'Sagar Parikrama' aims to resolve the issues of the fishers and other stakeholders and to facilitate their economic upliftment.

1. The main objectives of 'Sagar Parikrama' are
 - (i) to facilitate interaction with fishermen, coastal communities and stakeholders so as to disseminate information of various fisheries related schemes and programs being implemented by the Government;
 - (ii) demonstrating solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholder as a spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat;
 - (iii) to promote responsible fisheries with focus on sustainable balance between the utilization of marine fisheries resources for food security of nation and livelihoods of coastal fisher communities and
 - (iv) protection of marine ecosystems. The mission augmented the manufacturing of Covaxin, and created necessary infrastructure for smooth development of future vaccines, so that our country is pandemic ready



2. The interaction programs being organized during the 'Sagar Parikrama' aims to resolve the issues of the fishers and other stakeholders and to facilitate their economic upliftment through various fisheries schemes and programs being implemented by the Government of India
3. Sagar Parikrama program is being organized through a pre-decided sea route covering coastal states/UTs.
4. Under Sagar Parikrama, an evolutionary journey is envisaged in the sea across the coastal belt demonstrating solidarity with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholder's as a spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

Digital India Mobile Van

Why in news: The van will provide insight into Digital India initiatives such as Aarogya Setu, India Stack Global, e-Rupi, PMJDY, Aadhar, Digi locker, e-way bill, UMANG, e-aushadhi, Co-WIN, etc.

1. The Digital India Mobile Van was launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
2. The main objective of the mobile van is to spread awareness of Digital India initiatives and also to spread the word about the G20 Digital Economy Working Group.
3. Lucknow was the first destination of the mobile van where the G20 DEWG's first meet is held.
4. To give impetus to the uptake of digital services in the country and raise awareness about various initiatives under the Digital India Programme, the mobile van will offer citizens a unique opportunity to experience the power of technology first-hand.
5. During its journey, the mobile van initiative will also teach people about using technologies and digital products.



(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

New India Assurance launches 'pay as you drive' policy



Why in news: The comprehensive motor insurance policy that charges premium is based on the usage of vehicle. The policy has two components - third-party cover and own-damage cover.

1. India's largest non-life insurance firm informed that the clients could avail of a discount on the renewal albeit at a lower applicable range.
2. The policy comes with various benefits. For instance, the customer can save money through discounts on renewal premiums, provided the vehicle runs within the specified kilometers.



FACTS

3. The New India Assurance Co. Ltd is a central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It is based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
4. It is the largest nationalized general insurance company in India based on gross premium collection inclusive of foreign operations. It was founded by Sir Dorabji Tata in 1919 and was nationalized in 1973.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

PM Modi becomes most popular world leader, leaves Biden, Sunak behind: Survey

Why in news: PM Modi's ratings were the highest in 2020 also. He received 84%. In 2021, his ratings declined to 63% while India was fighting against COVID.

1. The political intelligence company Morning Consult released a list of world leaders trending on the basis of their approval ratings among 22 nations that it surveyed.
2. According to the data shared on the organisation's website, 78% of people approve of PM Modi while 18% disapprove of him. PM Modi's approval rating has increased in recent days, standing at 79% in the third week of January.
3. US President Joe B In the second position was the Mexican President with 69% of approval and the Swiss president was in the third position. iden received 40% in the rating and was in the seventh position.
4. Canadian PM Justin Trudeau received 40%. Though his rating was the same as that of the American president, he was in the ninth position.
5. Morning Consult is a US-based tracker.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



World Cancer Day 2023

Why in news: World Cancer Day aims to save millions of lives each year through education, raising awareness and pressing governments and individuals worldwide to take action.

1. World Cancer Day is observed worldwide on February 4. The aim is to inform and encourage people on its prevention, early detection, and treatment.
2. "Close The Care Gap" has been the theme for World Cancer Day for the past three years (2022, 2023, and 2024).
3. Cancer is a disease that occurs when a group of normal cells are seen changing in the body, which leads to uncontrolled, abnormal growth forming a lump called a tumour.
4. The first Cancer Day was celebrated in Geneva, Switzerland in the year 1933, an initiative taken by the World Health Organisation.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



International Day of Human Fraternity 2023

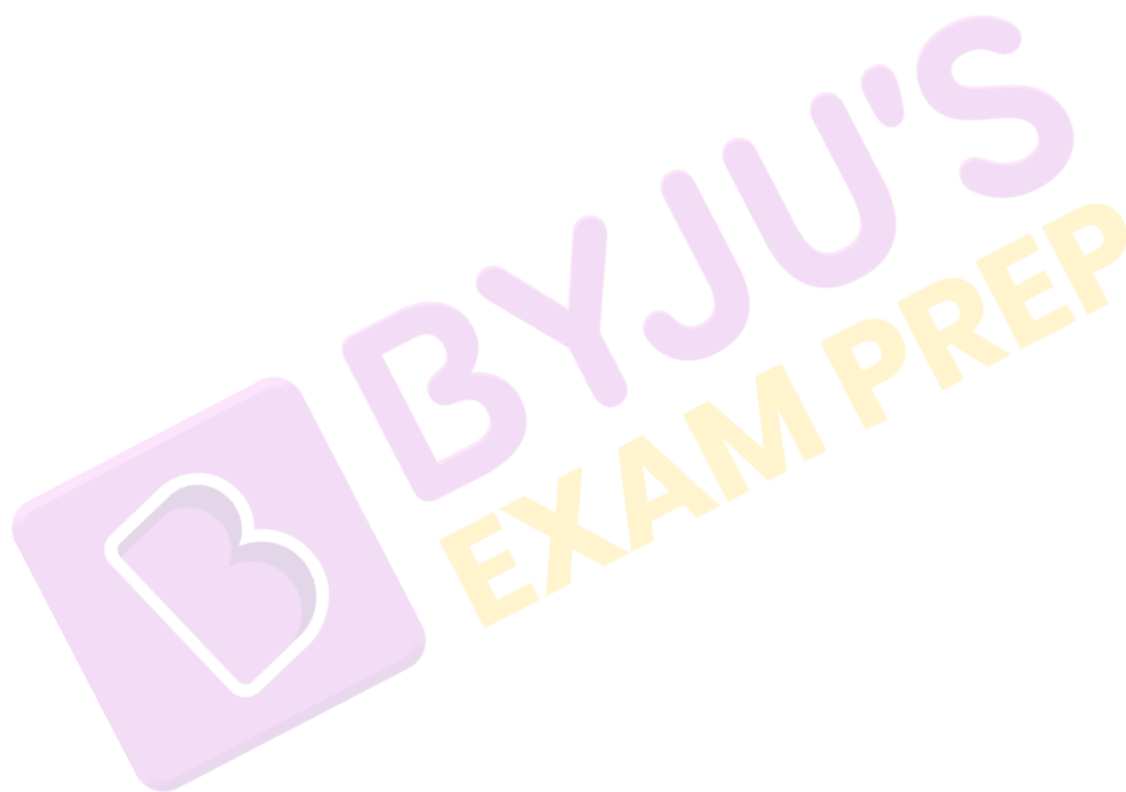
Why in news: The International Day of Human Fraternity was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21, 2020, with resolution 75/200 as a way to promote greater cultural and religious tolerance.

1. It underscores the importance of humanity coming together as a united community in times that are increasingly characterised by ethno-nationalistic, political, and economic polarisation.
2. The International Day of Human Fraternity was instituted to celebrate the historic document titled "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together", being signed by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and Pope Francis on February 4, 2019.
3. The document promotes the values of love, mutual respect, and cooperation between people of different religions and cultures and aims to create a world where everyone can live in peace and dignity.
4. The day is significant as it highlights the importance of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation as a way to build a more peaceful and harmonious world.



Daily Current Affairs

(SOURCE – NEWS18)



Trilateral framework: India, France, UAE unveil cooperation plan

Why in news: The plan was finalised during a phone conversation among External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and his France and UAE counterparts, Catherine Colonna and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, respectively.



1. India, France and the UAE on Saturday announced an ambitious road map for cooperation in defence, energy and technology under a trilateral framework.
2. The three foreign ministers met on September 19 last year for the first time in a trilateral format on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York.
3. The three sides agreed that the trilateral initiative will serve as a forum to promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy, with a focus on solar and nuclear energy, as well as in the fight against climate change and the protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean region.
4. The three countries also agreed to expand their cooperation through initiatives such as the Mangrove Alliance for Climate led by the UAE and the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership led by India and France.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Grammy Awards 2023

Why in news: The 65th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held on February 5, 2023 in Los Angeles.



1. The 65th Grammy Awards was presented in Los Angeles on 5th February 2023. With nine total nominations, Beyoncé is in first place, followed by Kendrick Lamar with eight, Adele with seven, and Brandi Carlile with six awards.
2. Bengaluru-based composer Ricky Kej won a Grammy for Best Immersive Audio Album for his most recent album Divine Tides with rock-legend Stewart Copeland (The Police), making him the only Indian to win three Grammy awards.
3. The Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles played host to the 65th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony.
4. Song Of The Year winner (A Songwriter(s) Award) goes to Bonnie Raitt for Just Like That. She beat Taylor Swift in the category.
5. Trevor Noah hosts the ceremony. Harry Styles, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar, ABBA and Lizzo are all among the nominees in for album of the year.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

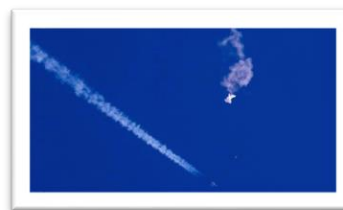
China threatens repercussions after US downs suspected spy balloon



Why in news: Unlike satellites that watch from higher altitudes, spy balloons can watch from lower altitudes.

1. The US military spotted a Chinese spy balloon near Alaska by the end of January 2023.
2. The balloon was flying at an altitude of 60,000 feet and posed no threat to the US public. The balloon stopped in Montana.
3. The stop is significant as the Malmstrom Air Force of the US military is here. It holds one of the three nuclear silos.
4. Following this, the US military shot the balloon with its F-22 fighter jets.
5. Spy balloons were used during world war II. They gave a bird's eye view of the battlefield. It was first used during the French wars in 18th century. Also, the views of spy balloons are more clear and longer. Satellites, on the other hand, pass on quickly and cannot provide the visual for a longer time.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill

Why in news: International participants from over 12 countries and domestic participants from Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy, IT/ITeS sectors participate in the Drill.

1. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) conducted this Cyber Security Exercise and drill in hybrid mode (Physical and Virtual) where international participants from more than 12 countries joined through online mode while domestic participants from diverse sectors such as Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy, IT/ITeS and others attended in-person as well as in virtual mode.
2. The event further progressed with conducting of Strategic Table Top Exercise (TTX) and Operational Drill using CERT-In Exercise Platform.
3. The first Table Top Exercise catered to Board & Top Management on the theme "Synergy to counter Global Cyber Crisis" focused on Crisis Management & Crisis Communication.
4. The second Table Top Exercise, an Operational Drill was designed for CISO and Mid-management on the theme "Building Collective Cyber Resilience". The scenario for the exercise, which included cyber extortion, data breach, supply chain attacks and disruptions was derived from real life cyber incidents, in which domestic level (limited impact) incidents escalated to global cyber security crisis.



- Exercise was successful in meeting its objectives and provided insights on enhancing and improving Crisis Management, Crisis Communication, Incident Response and global coordination & cooperation.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

PM inaugurates India Energy Week 2023 in Bengaluru

Why in news: The event will bring together leaders from the traditional and non-traditional energy industry, governments, and academia to discuss the challenges and opportunities that a responsible energy transition presents.



- India Energy Week is being organised from the 6th to the 8th of February and aims to showcase India's rising prowess as an energy transition powerhouse.
- It will see the presence of more than 30 Ministers from across the world. Over 30,000 delegates, 1,000 exhibitors and 500 speakers will gather to discuss the challenges and opportunities of India's energy future.
- The Prime Minister launched the uniforms under the 'Unbottled' initiative of Indian Oil. These uniforms are made of recycled PET bottles.
- He also dedicated the twin-cooktop model of the IndianOil's Indoor Solar Cooking System and flagged off its commercial roll-out.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Green hydrogen hubs to be set up in Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram

Why in news: A scheme of ₹200 crore has been announced for viability gap funding/grant/equity support to set up the green hydrogen hubs. An amount of ₹20 crore is earmarked additionally for the purpose in the Kerala Budget.



- Kerala Finance Minister announced that his government is to establish "Green Hydrogen Hubs". The project is to be implemented along with the private partner India Hydrogen Alliance.
- This is the first time such a project is initiated in India. It has already begun in other countries. International hydrogen hubs set up in different parts of the world are referred to as "Hydrogen Valley Projects".
- The plan is to build green hydrogen plants that can produce 60 tonnes of hydrogen per day.
- The plant will be established with a 150 MW Electrolyser and storage infrastructure.



5. Hydrogen Valley is a basically geographical area where the companies working on hydrogen production come together to build hydrogen plants. It has all the facilities for hydrogen production, storage, distribution, etc

(SOURCE – PIB)

Bihar: MV Ganga Vihar Floating Restaurant

Why in news: The Tourists can now cruise down the Ganga in this floating restaurant operated by the Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC).

1. The Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation recently built MV Ganga Vihar, a floating restaurant at the NI Ghat. The restaurant is on the Ganges.
2. The State Government of Bihar has been taking initiatives to increase tourism in the state. There are beautiful and historic heritage sites in the state with huge tourism potential. This includes the Rajgir, Sasaram, and Bodh Gaya.
3. Iconic Jumbo of Hong Kong is the biggest floating restaurant in the world. It is the south China sea.
4. The first floating restaurant of India was built in Sirhind of Punjab. It was built in a small canal near a village.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2023

Why in news: International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is celebrated on 6 February to spread awareness and educate people about the problems females faced due to genital mutilation.

1. This day spread awareness about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
2. Female genital mutilation is also sometimes known as circumcision in which the external female genitalia are removed partially or completely or another injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Mainly, it is done between infancy and the age of 15. Adult women may also undergo the procedure.
3. FGM is performed mainly in Africa, particularly in North-Eastern, Eastern and Western Africa. It also takes place in the Middle East, in South-East Asia and among immigrants in Europe.

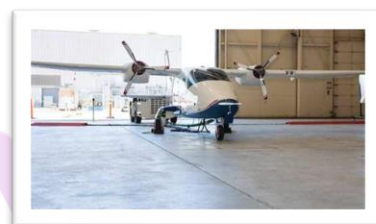


4. According to WHO, more than 200 million girls and women faced genital mutilation in 30 countries including Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.
5. The UN General Assembly in 2012 adopted a resolution A/RES/67/14 on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

X-57: Nasa's new electric plane can propel a zero-emission future

Why in news: The X-57 electric plane by NASA is a modified, four-seater, Italian-built Tecnam P2006T aircraft. It relies on a combination of lots of propellers, small motors, and many batteries.

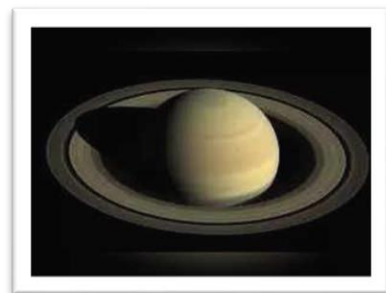


1. NASA's "all-electric" plane X-57 is soon set to take off. The plane has 14 propellers along its wings and is powered entirely by electricity.
2. Recently, NASA's X-57 Maxwell performed successful thermal testing of its cruise motor controllers.
3. Thermal testing is important because it validates the design, operability, and workmanship quality of aircraft controllers. The controllers have temperature-sensitive parts and must be able to withstand extreme conditions during flight.
4. The X-57 uses lithium batteries to run electric motors for its propellers. However, the energy of lithium-ion batteries is 50 times less than aviation fuel.
5. With a range of about 160 km and a flight time of about one hour, the X-57 is not expected to lead to a replacement technology for long-haul flying. Instead, short-hop flights with ten or so passengers are a good and potentially possible target for early, battery-powered flights.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Jupiter becomes planet with most moons

Why in news: Astronomers have discovered 12 new moons around Jupiter, putting the total count at a record-breaking 92. The 12 new moons around Jupiter were discovered by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.



1. Of the 12 moons discovered, nine are distant. These nine moons have retrograde orbits meaning their orbiting direction is opposite to that of Jupiter's rotation.
2. The inner moons of Jupiter have prograde orbits. Meaning, they rotate in the same direction as that of Jupiter.
3. Saturn, the one-time leader, comes in a close second with 83 confirmed moons.



4. For the record, Uranus has 27 confirmed moons, Neptune 14, Mars two and Earth one. Venus and Mercury come up empty.
5. In April, the European Space Agency is sending a spacecraft to Jupiter to study the planet and some of its biggest, icy moons. And next year, NASA will launch the Europa Clipper to explore Jupiter's moon of the same name, which could harbor an ocean beneath its frozen crust.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

Record-breaking 2022 for North Korea crypto theft - UN report

Why in news: A UN Security Council report claimed that North Korea has used sophisticated cyber techniques to steal potentially valuable information.

1. According to a current United Nations report, North Korea stole more bitcoin assets in 2022 than any other year and targeted the networks of multinational aerospace and defence industries.
2. Additionally, it stated that HOlyGhOst, a North Korean-affiliated gang, had “extorted ransoms from small- and medium-sized firms in various countries by disseminating ransomware in a widespread, financially motivated campaign,” according to a cybersecurity firm.
3. The United Nations released a confidential report on North Korea stating that the country is hacking digital networks that are in the cyber finance industry.
4. The reason mentioned by the report for such theft is the strict UN sanctions of UN, the EU, China, Japan, Russia, USA, Australia, and several other countries that are forcing the country to steal crypto and fund its nuclear program.
5. North Korea cannot acquire nuclear fuel from foreign countries. Following banned several imports and exports from North Korea. Therefore, the country is lacking funds for its nuclear program and is implementing sanctions.



(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

RIL and Ashok Leyland unveil India's first hydrogen-powered truck

Why in news: The Hydrogen-powered trucks will emit near zero emissions, deliver performance on par with conventional diesel trucks and reduce noise.

1. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its vehicle partner Ashok Leyland on February 6 unveiled India's first Hydrogen Internal Combustion Engine (H2-ICE) technology solution for heavy duty trucks at the India Energy Week in Bengaluru, the three-day event that is themed around 'Growth, Collaboration, Transition'.



2. Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship company of the Hinduja Group and India's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, along with RIL, has been developing this unique technology over the past year and has been under test since August 2022.
3. The Ashok Leyland H2-ICE heavy-duty truck range (19-35 Tonne) is powered by hydrogen, a renewable and clean energy source.
4. The vehicle's overall architecture is similar to a conventional diesel-based combustion engine, and helps quicker migration to cleaner energy sources at a relatively lower cost delta.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Yuva Sangam portal launched to connect youth from Northeast to other states

Why in news: The Yuva Sangam aims to focus on conducting exposure tours of the youth comprising of students and off-campus youngsters from North Eastern States to other states and vice versa.



1. Union Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan has launched Yuva Sangam portal with the aim to build empathy between youth of the North Eastern States and other States.
2. The Yuva Sangam will focus on conducting exposure tours of the youth comprising of students & off-campus youngsters from North Eastern States to other states & vice versa. It will provide an immersive, multidimensional experience of various facets-under four broad areas of Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati (Development) and Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect).
3. The initiative has been conceptualised under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' in collaboration with various other ministries and departments such as Culture, Tourism, Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, among others.
4. Around 1,000 youth will participate in the pilot of Yuva Sangam,
5. Through the course of the program, students will interact with each other in the areas of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events and tourism. They will get a first hand experience of living in a completely different geographical and cultural scenario.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Madhya Pradesh: Mukhyamantri Tirth-Darshan Yojana



Why in news: The State Government will extend one-time assistance in a lifetime to senior citizens above 60 years of age to visit a prescribed pilgrimage outside the state.



1. The scheme is to be implemented with the help of IRCTC. During the travel, the tourists will be provided with food, accommodation, bus travel cost, drinking water, etc. Hence, all the expenses will be borne by the State Government.
2. Pilgrim should be physically and mentally sound to undertake the journey and should not be suffering from any communicable disease like TB, difficulty in breathing, heart disease, leprosy etc.
3. At present, the State Government has selected Shri Badrinath, Shri Kedarnath, Shri Jagannath Puri, Shri Dwarka Ji, Haridwar, Amarnath, Vaishno Devi, Shirdi, Tirupati, Ajmer Sharif, Kashi, Amritsar, Rameshwaram, Sammed Shikhar, Shravan Belgola and Belangi Church, Nagapattinam as pilgrimages under the scheme.
4. Selection of pilgrims will be made by the collector. First, applications will be sorted place-wise. Selection will be made through a lottery if applications outnumber quota. A waiting list of 10 percent quota will also be chalked out.
5. For women, two years of age concession is provided.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Indore becomes first civic body to launch green bonds

Why in news: The public issues of the green bonds will be open for subscription from February 10-14. The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange.



1. Indore Municipal Corporation was ranked top in cleanliness survey for six consecutive years and now has become the country's first civic body to launch green bonds. It is seeking to raise Rs 244 crore for a 60-mw solar plant at its water pumping station.
2. The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange.
3. A green bond is a debt security issued by an organization for the purpose of financing or refinancing projects that contribute positively to the environment and/or climate. A green bond is alternatively known as a climate bond.
4. Apart from Indore, people from other parts of the country can invest in the eight-year duration bonds and earn attractive returns.
5. The IMC has to foot a heavy bill of Rs 25 crore every month to bring water to Indore from Jalud village, which is 80 km away, and the solar power plant will help cut the expenditure.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Foundation stone of South India's 1st Industrial Corridor Project laid at Tumakuru

Why in news: Based on the principles of last mile multimodal connectivity of PM-GatiShakti, the upcoming industrial township will have world class infrastructure.

1. The project will be a mixed-use development comprising of land uses like industrial, institutional, residential, commercial, green spaces etc. making it a completely self-sustainable and resilient smart industrial city.
2. This project will facilitate investments, foster innovation, enhance skills development and build finest manufacturing ecosystem for pitching India as a global investment destination.
3. With the objective to increase the share of manufacturing in the GDP of India, the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme is being implemented whereby 32 greenfield industrial smart cities under 11 industrial corridors are being developed with world class Plug-n-Play infrastructure.
4. The Phase-A of the project is expected to generate employment opportunities for approximately 88,000 people and attract investment of around Rs. 7,000 crore over a period of 5-6 years, triggering growth and prosperity in the region.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



International Energy Agency (IEA) Releases The Report Titled "Life Lessons From India"

Why in news: The Report examines how India has integrated several policies in its energy transition strategy that are aligned with LiFE initiative.

1. The report highlights that Annual global CO2 emissions will fall by 2 billion tonnes in 2030 on adoption of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) measures.
 - LiFE measures would save consumers globally around \$440 billion in 2030.
 - India's economy is already 10 percent more energy efficient than both global and G20 average.



- India took less time to go from half to full electricity access than other major economies.
 - Around 60% of emissions saving by LiFE measures could be directly influenced or mandated by governments.
2. LiFE mission was launched by Prime Minister of India at COP 26 in 2021 to bring individual behaviours at forefront of global climate action narrative.

ABOUT IEA -

3. It was created in 1974 to help co-ordinate a collective response to major disruptions in supply of oil.
4. Headquarters in Paris, France.
5. India is an associate member.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Israeli scientists develop sniffing robot with locust antennae

Why in news: Locusts have an acute sense of smell, which the researchers in Tel Aviv University have managed to harness to their bio-hybrid robot.

1. A new sniffing robot equipped with a biological sensor that uses the antennae of locusts could help advance disease diagnosis and improve security checks.
2. On the four-wheeled robot, the researchers placed the insect's antenna between two electrodes that send electrical signals as a response to a nearby odour. Each scent has a unique signature which, with machine learning, the robot's electronic system can identify.



ABOUT BIO HYBRID ROBOTS -

3. Bio-hybrid robots refer to robots that integrate biological components with artificial components, such as electronics and mechanics.
4. The use of biological components can provide advantages such as greater dexterity, adaptability, and energy efficiency compared to traditional robotic systems.
5. These robots may use biological materials such as cells, tissues, or muscles as actuators, sensors, or energy sources.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

LaMDA powered Bard, Google's answer to ChatGPT: Sundar Pichai



Why in news: Bard seeks to combine the breadth of the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of our large language models. It draws on information from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses.



1. Google has finally decided to start public testing for a new AI chatbot of its own called Bard.
2. Bard is based on Language Model for Dialogue Application or LaMDA and Google's own conversational AI chatbot. It is termed an "experimental conversational AI service."
3. The model is currently a "lightweight" version of LaMDA, and the one being "requires significantly less computing power, enabling us to scale to more users, allowing for more feedback."
4. This comes the challenge and threat posed by Microsoft-backed OpenAI and its AI chatbot, ChatGPT.
5. ChatGPT is powered by Microsoft's Azure Cloud services.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

Rise of AMR could result in up to 10 million annual deaths by 2050: UN report

Why in news: Some 24 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty due to rising AMR.



1. The UNEP report highlights that dangerous rise of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) could result in up to 10 million deaths annually by 2050. This will be equivalent to global deaths from cancer in 2020.
2. If unaddressed, the AMR threat could have an extreme economic toll, pushing 24 million more people into extreme poverty with a Gross Domestic Product drop of at least \$3.4 trillion annually by 2030.
3. The spread of AMR means "antimicrobials used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals and plants might turn ineffective, with modern medicine no longer able to treat even mild infections."
4. The report — 'Bracing for Superbugs: strengthening environmental action in the One Health response to antimicrobial resistance' — was launched at the Sixth Meeting of the Global Leaders Group on AMR, held in Barbados.
5. The report suggested that using the 'One Health' approach, which recognises that the health of people, animals, plants and the environment are closely linked and interdependent, can successfully address AMR

(SOURCE – DOWN TO EARTH)



India signs MoU with Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Joint Business Council to promote adoption of energy efficiency

Why in news: As part of this partnership, EESL will provide technical advisory, project management support, contracting and implementation support to execute select energy efficiency programmes from its portfolio with proven track records of successful implementation



1. Energy Efficiency Services (EESL), a joint venture of public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Power, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Joint Business Council (IMT-GT JBC) Malaysia at India Energy Week (IEW).
2. The MoU aims to promote the adoption of energy efficiency and sustainable practices in the region.
3. Under this partnership, EESL will implement Rooftop Solar, LED Street Light Project, Electric Mobility, UJALA, and Building Energy Efficiency Programme in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.
4. EESL will also collaborate with IMT-GT JBC Malaysia to identify opportunities for saving energy and lowering carbon emissions.
5. The Growth Triangle Joint Business Council was created by Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia in 1993. The main objective of the council is to boost private investments in MSMEs.

(SOURCE –BUSINESS STANDARD)

Inaugural session of the 1st G-20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

Why in news: After two years of negative growth, there was a four-fold rise in the arrival of foreign tourists in India in 2022 with around 6.9 million tourists visiting the country.



1. Ministry of Tourism is celebrating this year as “Visit India Year 2023” focusing on in-bound travel to India.
2. Rural and Archaeological tourism will be the focus area of Tourism. Also, Dholavira, which is a UNESCO World heritage site, will be the second spot for foreign delegates.
3. In the G20 Presidency of India, there are 5 interrelated priority areas for tourism. Accordingly, thrust will be on these five priority areas:
 - Greening of the Tourism sector
 - Harnessing the power of digitisation



- Empowering youth with skills
 - Nurturing tourism MSMEs/ startups
 - Rethinking the strategic management of destinations.
4. The different places chosen for the G20 events will encompass different flavors like rural tourism (Ladpura Khas village, MP), archaeological tourism (Dholavira), and ecotourism (Khonoma Village, Nagaland) etc.
 5. Along with this, 3 mega tourism related events are being organized to take advantage of the G20 Presidency. These include Global Investors' Summit in April 2023, MICE Convention and Meeting of World Tourism CEOs Forum.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Government to open Integrative Medicine Centres in all government hospitals across the country

Why in news: The Centers will treat patients using both ayurveda and modern medicine.

1. The first Integrative Medicine Centre was inaugurated at the Safdarjang Hospital in Delhi. The main objective of the initiative is to use the traditional knowledge of Indians in the medicinal field.
2. The centres will mainly focus on Ayurvedic medicines and will use modern technologies
3. The government aims to reach the grass root levels. GoI has been launching several schemes to provide inclusive health care. More than 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres have been opened under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.
4. These centres will operate at Government hospitals.
5. Integrative medicine is aimed at harnessing the potential of India's rich heritage and medical knowledge along with using modern advancements in allopathy.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



Amrit Bharat Station Scheme envisages to take up 1275 railway stations across country for upgradation, modernisation

Why in news: A budget of Rs. 2700 crore rupees have been allocated for the purpose of upgradation of various railway zones during the current fiscal.



1. The objectives of the scheme include -
 - Preparing and implementing master plans for railway stations in order to enhance the facilities already provided by the railway stations and creating roof plazas in long term.
 - Upgrading and replacing existing amenities as well as introducing new ones.
 - It covers all stations that have undergone technological-economic feasibility test.
2. The Union Ministry of Railways launched Amrit Bharat Station Scheme in December 2022 to modernize over 1,000 small stations over the coming years.
3. The scheme will subsume all previous redevelopment projects where work is yet to begin.
4. Key features for these proposed stations:
 - provisions for roof top plazas,
 - longer platforms,
 - ballastless tracks; and
 - 5G connectivity.

(SOURCE – TIMES NOW)

'Operation Dost': India's humanitarian aid reaches quake-hit Turkey

Why in news: In an effort to help those hit by the earthquake, the Indian government extended a hand of friendship to crisis-hit Turkey and Syria in the form of massive humanitarian aid, with multiple jets flying off to the countries carrying relief material.



1. Turkey and Syria witnessed the deadliest earthquakes on 6th February in over a decade.
2. India launched 'Operation Dost' to extend assistance to Turkey as well as Syria following Monday's devastating quake that killed nearly 12,000 people in the two countries.
3. On 7 February, India sent to Turkey relief materials, a mobile hospital, and specialised search and rescue teams in four C-17 Globemaster military transport aircraft.

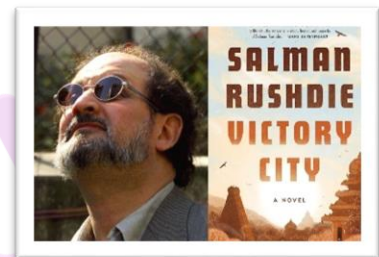


4. The NDRF teams are rendering assistance in rescue operations at Gaziantep while the medical team is setting up the field hospital in Iskenderun.
5. India also sent relief materials onboard a C-130J aircraft of the Indian Air Force to Syria. India has sent emergency medicines and equipment including portable ECG machines, patient monitors, and other essential medical items to Syria.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Salman Rushdie's new novel 'Victory City' released

Why in news: Penguin Random House is publishing Rushdie's 15th book, which takes the form of a translation of a fabled epic that was originally written in Sanskrit.



1. The tale is about the Vijaynagar Empire, which dominated much of the southern end of the Indian continent in the 14th century.
2. A young girl Pampa Kampana is endowed by a goddess with magical powers is founder of the city, in modern day India, of Bisnaga which literally means Victory city.
3. The novel is a saga of love, adventure and myth that is in itself a testament to the power of storytelling.
4. The book will be released in USA and later across India, UK and other countries.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

Quad nations launch 'Quad Cyber Challenge' to improve cyber security

Why in news: The main objective of the challenge is to create a resilient cyberspace. Cyberspace is the internet platform where people share information, and engage in conversations, and other social media activities. Ransomware attacks, malware, software vulnerabilities, AI attacks, etc are the major challenges faced by cyberspace today.



1. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad comprising India, United States, Japan and Australia launched a public campaign 'Quad Cyber Challenge' to improve cyber security across their nations.
2. The Quad has invited Internet users across the Indo-Pacific and beyond to become part of the challenge and practice "safe and responsible cyber habits,"
3. The 'Quad Cyber Challenge' shows the continuous efforts of Quad nations to bolster cyber security awareness and action and to foster a more secure and resilient cyber ecosystem to benefit economies and users.



4. National Security Council will be the Indian representative at the QUAD in implementing the challenge.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

16-member panel set up to draft Digital Competition Act within 3 months

Why in news: The Panel comprising civil servants, experts will study if Competition Act, 2002 enough to deal with new digital economy.



1. The panel will be headed by Manoj Govil, secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and it will study if existing provisions in Competition Act, 2002 and related regulations were sufficient to deal with the challenges in the digital economy.
2. It will also examine the need for an ex-ante regulatory mechanism for digital markets through a separate legislation.
3. It will study best international practices on regulation in digital markets, other regulatory regimes, institutional mechanisms or government policies regarding competition in digital markets.
4. The committee will also review the practices of major players (Systemically Important Digital Intermediaries) in the digital domain, which 'limit or have the potential to cause harm in digital markets.'
5. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) will provide secretarial and research assistance and logistic support to the panel.
6. The Committee will also comprise of CCI chairperson, Chairman of Indian Angel Network and NASSCOM cofounder Saurabh Srivastava, retired Professor Aditya Bhattacharjea, Khaitan & Co's Haigreve Khaitan, Pallavi Shardul Shroff of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, among others.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

RBI to launch QR code-based coin vending machines

Why in news: With an aim to promote distribution of coins, and enhance the accessibility to coins, RBI will launch vending machines that will dispense coins against debit to customer's account using UPI instead of physical tendering of banknotes.



1. The Reserve Bank of India will launch a pilot project on QR Code based Coin Vending Machine (QCVM) in 12 cities.



2. These vending machines will dispense coins against debit to the customer's account using UPI instead of physical tendering of banknotes.
3. This will enhance the ease of accessibility to coins.
4. The RBI will now look at permitting all inbound travellers to India to use UPI for their merchant payments while they are in the country.
5. This facility will begin with travellers from the G-20 countries arriving at selected international airports.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

National Council Of Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) Releases Report "Making India A Global Power House On Farm Machinery Industry"

Why in news: India's farm equipment market is 7 percent of global market, with more than 80 percent of value contribution coming from tractors.

1. NCAER has analyzed the non-tractor farm machinery industry from both demand and supply side perspectives, bringing out the challenges in the sector, and recommending measures & reforms by benchmarking global practices in their report.
2. The report, amongst other things, stresses that India needs a vision for the next 15 years to convert itself into a production and export hub for non-tractor farm machinery.
3. Availability of adequate farm power is very crucial for timely farm operations for increasing production and productivity and reducing losses. Our farm power availability is at 2.49 Kw/ha in year 2018-19 which is much lower as compared to Korea (+7 kw/ha), Japan (+14kw/ha), USA(+7kw/ha).
4. Recommendations -
 - Centre and State government may subsidise farmers on consistent basis for next 15 years for farmer mechanisation to reach desired levels.
 - Subsidy should be given for procurement and for renting heavy farm machinery like harvesters.
 - Agricultural universities/institutes should be identified and assigned responsibility for R&D in different Testing, specification standardisation & performance requirements, and regulations should be developed in line with global benchmarks.t agro-economic zones.



(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

India's First Glass Igloo Restaurant in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir



Why in news: These glass igloos have a proper heating arrangement and tourists can sit there to spend and enjoy the moment while having food at the same time.

1. India's first glass igloo restaurant in Gulmarg has become a popular destination for tourists who visit the area to experience scenic beauty.
2. It is Built in the middle of snow by the Kolahoi Green Heights hotel of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.
3. In 2021, the same hotel built a snow igloo in Gulmarg which was the biggest snow igloo in Asia that also attracted tourists.



(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

Safer Internet Day 2023

Why in news: Safer Internet Day is marked to help the younger generation understand safe practices on the Internet. This is not only to protect themselves but to understand that they do not cause harm to others, whether it is intentional or unintentional.

1. Safer Internet Day is celebrated on February 07 every year.
2. This year, the theme for the event is 'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online'.
3. The event was started as an initiative by the EU SafeBorders project in 2004 and later taken up by the Insafe network in 2005.
4. Today, the Internet Safer Day is celebrated in more than 170 countries across the globe.
5. The day plays a significant role as it saves users from online harm and risks. There are a lot of websites used by millions of users daily. A safe internet connection will avoid website vandalism. It is required to stay updated with the latest version of the internet.



(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

Asia set to use half of world's electricity by 2025: International Energy Agency

Why in news: Much of Asia's electricity use will be in China, a nation of 1.4 billion people whose share of global consumption will rise from a quarter in 2015 to a third by the middle of this decade.



1. Asia will for the first time use half of the world's electricity by 2025, even as Africa continues to consume far less than its share of the global population, according to a new forecast released by the International Energy Agency.
2. China will be consuming more electricity than the European Union, United States and India combined.
3. By contrast, Africa - home to almost a fifth of world's nearly 8 billion inhabitants - will account for just 3% of global electricity consumption in 2025.
4. The IEA's annual report predicts that nuclear power and renewables such as wind and solar will account for much of the growth in global electricity supply over the coming three years. This will prevent a significant rise in greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

MMTC-PAMP launches Digital Silver

Why in news: Physical silver is equivalent to the amount of silver purchased digitally will be stored in a certified bank-grade vault, which is audited by a third party trustee every day.

1. MMTC-PAMP, a joint venture between state-owned MMTC Ltd and Switzerland-based bullion brand PAMP SA, announced the launch of digital silver.
2. This digital asset provides all the benefits of silver, with added benefits of transparency, 24/7 accessibility, assured purity and low entry point to silver investments with no making charges involved.
3. The digital silver can be purchased for as low as Re 1. Investors have the choice of retaining the purchase within MMTC-PAMP's secure digital vault or redeem it later.
4. Digital silver is like shares. You put in your money on the company launching the product. He or she uses the money to expand his business. Therefore, there are employment opportunities and economic growth. Digital gold or digital silver is one of the safest ways to buy expensive metals. Storage is easy and safe.
5. The buyer does not possess the metal in his locker and therefore he need not worry about its safety. He need not pay locker charges.



(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



Rural Development Ministry launches Mission Antyodaya Survey to shed light on India's rural economy

Why in news: The survey will be conducted among 2,69,253 gram panchayats across the country, all of which have their profiles on E-Gram Swaraj portal. Since Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya are in the process of conducting assembly elections, the survey will start in these states after the polls. The last survey was done in 2020 where Kerala and Gujarat were at the top of the chart.



1. Union rural development and Panchayati raj minister Giriraj Singh launched Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23, which will shed light on how government schemes have benefited rural India and what is the current economic situation of the country's villages.
2. The Survey-2022 Questionnaire has 183 indicators and 216 data points covering 21 areas and has been translated in 13 regional languages
3. Mission will ensure effective utilization of resources through convergence of various government schemes with a focused micro plan for sustainable livelihood for each marginalized household.
4. The Department of Rural Development has been conducting Mission Antyodaya Survey across all Gram Panchayats in the country since 2017-18 with the purpose of transforming lives and livelihoods of people on measurable outcomes through convergence of various schemes.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

India's accreditation system ranked 5th globally; overall quality infrastructure system in Top 10

Why in news: The GQII rankings is an initiative on metrology, standardisation, accreditation and related services, supported by Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany.



1. Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) is an initiative that measures the relative development of countries' Quality Infrastructure (QI) on three parameters- Metrology Sector, Standardization System, Accreditation System.



2. India's national accreditation system under the Quality Council of India (QCI) has been ranked 5th in the world in the recent Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021.
3. India's overall QI system ranking continues to be in the Top 10 at the 10th position in the Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021.
4. The GQII ranks the 184 economies in the world on the basis of the quality infrastructure (QI). Nodal Bodies ensuring QI in India: In India, following bodies are entrusted for ensuring QI
 - a. Metrology Sector: The National Physical Laboratory under the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (NPL-CSIR) is the national metrology institute,
 - b. Standardization System: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national standards body and
 - c. Accreditation System: The constituent national accreditation boards under Quality Council of India support are the custodians of the national accreditation system.

FACTS

5. The National Accreditation System as per international standards in India is established by the Quality Council of India (QCI), a body established in 1997 jointly by the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and the Indian industry.
6. The chairman of QCI is appointed by Prime Minister.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

Skye Air launches India's first traffic management system for drones

Why in news: India's Drone Rules 2021 set restrictions on where private entities can fly drones by designating red, green and yellow zones.

1. Skye Air, a Gurugram-based drone solutions provider, launched traffic management system for drones in India.
2. The software will allow drone operators to plan routes, make flight plans and assess risks before running drone-based operations in the country. The solution, called Skye UTM, is a first-of-its-kind for India.
3. Just like flight traffic management, the need for drone traffic management is increasing. With e-commerce businesses looking for options for drone deliveries, drone usage is to increase in the future exponentially.
4. This is the first of its kind in India. UTM stands for Unmanned Traffic Management.
5. It will provide BVLOS drone operations. BVLOS is Beyond Visual Line of Sight, meaning you can operate your drones safely to far away places without even seeing them physically.



6. The SKY UTM is run by GoI and has information about all drone operators and drone flights in the country. The platform is run by DGCA, Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

UP Global Investors Summit 2023

Why in news: The PM inaugurated the Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit 2023 in Lucknow. He also inaugurated the Global Trade Show and launched Invest UP 2.0 during the programme. .



1. Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit 2023 is the flagship investment summit of the Government of Uttar Pradesh which will bring together policymakers, industry leaders, academia, think tanks and leaders from across the world to collectively explore business opportunities and forge partnerships.
2. The three-day summit in Lucknow aims to seek investment from both domestic and foreign investors.
3. Till now, according to the Uttar Pradesh government, it has received domestic investment proposals and intents amounting to Rs 21 lakh crore, in addition to the Rs 7.12 lakh crore worth proposals from foreign investors.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

WCD Ministry to hold two-day inception meeting of G20 Empower group at Agra in Uttar Pradesh

Why in news: The G20 EMPOWER 2023 under India's presidency is prioritizing the shift from women's development to women-led development. It aims to transform challenges into opportunities accelerating the shift towards women-led entrepreneurship and greater inclusion of women in the workforce.



1. The G20 Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER) is an alliance of G20 business leaders and governments that aims to accelerate women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector.
2. The Theme is Empowering Women to Lead across Sectors: Role of Digital Skilling and Future Skills.



3. The inception meeting scheduled on 11th-12th February at Agra, Uttar Pradesh will welcome women leaders from G20 nations, guest countries, international organisations and the private sector.
4. An exhibition will run concurrently during the event to showcase work of women-led micro-enterprises, women artisans and crafts persons from various States.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

World Pulses Day 2023: History, significance and theme

Why in news: World Pulses Day is celebrated on February 10 with an aim to spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses.



1. World Pulses Day is celebrated with an aim to spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.
2. Pulses also known as legumes, are considered global foods, and are produced in almost every country. In 2019, the UN General Assembly dedicated a day to pulses to increase awareness and access to pulses globally.
3. This year's celebration will highlight the contribution of pulses towards improving soil productivity, increasing the resilience of farming systems, providing a better life for farmers in water-scarce environments, and more. Since pulses have a low water footprint and can better tolerate drought and climate-related disasters, they are imperative to sustainable food production.
4. 'Pulses for a Sustainable Future' as the theme for the 2023 celebration.
5. The UN General Assembly recognised the value of pulses in 2013 and adopted the year 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP).

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

World Government Summit 2023 to begin on February 13 in Dubai

Why in news: The World Government Summit is a global forum held annually in Dubai, that brings together leaders in government, business, technology, and civil society to discuss pressing issues facing humanity and to shape the future of governments worldwide.



1. The World Government Summit 2023 is set to begin on February 13th in Dubai. The Summit will be held under the theme of "Shaping Future Governments".



2. It will bring together global thought leaders, global experts, and decision makers to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies, and models that will be critical in shaping future governments.
3. The summit aims to drive positive change and to promote innovation in the public sector by exploring new ideas, technologies, and best practices in governance.
4. The Summit will feature 20 presidents, including Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi; President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan; President of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, Macky Sall, among others.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 approved at 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting

Why in news: The 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting with India was held today on a virtual platform. It is an annual meeting of telecom ministers of 10 ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries and dialogue partner countries.



1. India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 includes the capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of Information and Communication Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security, Application of IoT & AI in Next Generation Smart City & Society 5.0, Sustainable Data and Transport Network for Future: Standards and Applications, 5G technologies for IoT and future trends, Role of ICT in implementation of Digital Health and Security protection and assessment for future network, etc.
2. Under the theme: “Synergy Towards a Sustainable Digital Future”, the meeting had fruitful and productive discussions on strengthening India ASEAN relations in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
3. The ongoing and proposed projects in ICTs, will strengthen collaboration between India and ASEAN by leveraging complementary strengths of each other.
4. To further support the growth of the telecom industry, promote fair competition, and increase the availability of broadband and telecom connectivity, the Indian government has ushered a new era of reforms in the telecom sector to encourage investment.



About ASEAN -

5. It is a group of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which was established in 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok declaration.
6. Founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
7. Presently ASEAN comprises 10 member states namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (Impac5) Concludes In Vancouver, Canada

Why in news: Recently, the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) was held in Canada in order to discuss the solutions to address the Funding Gap of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

1. IMPAC5 is a global forum that brings together ocean conservation professionals and high-level officials to inform, inspire and act on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
2. It aims to protect 30 percent of global ocean by 2030 (i.e. 30*30 campaign).
3. It supported Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, "Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility" Call for Action and Ocean Conservation Pledge. It was jointly hosted by Host First Nations (Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh) together with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPWS),
4. MPAs are designated areas of the ocean that are set aside for the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems and their biodiversity. Currently, an estimated 7.65% of ocean is covered by MPAs.



(SOURCE – NEWS18)

'Digital Payments Utsav': to Promote Digital Transformation

Why in news: 'It is a campaign that will showcase India's journey of Digital Transformation. The comprehensive campaign is expected to bring together various stakeholders, including the government, industry, and citizens, to drive the growth of the digital economy and promote financial inclusion.



1. The Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, launched the 'Digital Payments Utsav', a comprehensive campaign aimed at promoting digital payments across India.
2. The "Digital Payments Utsav" is an extraordinary campaign that will showcase India's journey of digital transformation, with a series of events and initiatives to be held from 9th February to 9th October 2023.
3. The focus of the campaign will be on promoting digital payments in the country, especially in the cities of Lucknow, Pune, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, as part of the G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) event.
4. In order to enable a common person to make payments in her local language, Mission Bhashini – National Language Translation Mission and Digital Payments was launched to make UPI 123 Pay available in local language.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

National Philatelic Exhibition- AMRITPEX 2023

Why in news: Union Communications Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw will inaugurate the National Philatelic Exhibition – AMRITPEX 2023 – at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

1. This five-day event, organised by the Department of Posts under the Ministry of Communications, will showcase India's rich culture, heritage and history through stamps.
2. For the first time in the country, new technology like virtual reality, augmented reality has been used to showcase the cultural heritage, history, nature, wildlife by narrating the stories of stamps.
3. An Exhibition on the Transformative Journey of India Post will also be inaugurated on this occasion. The Exhibition on the Transformative Journey of India Post will showcase the emerging role of post offices in enriching citizens' lives at the last mile and digitization of the postal system.
4. During this five-day exhibition, AMRITPEX 2023 will also host several Workshops, Panel Discussions, Interactive Installations, and cultural programs have been planned to connect the younger generation with India's ancient history, legacy and culture through stamps.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (GSI) FINDS LITHIUM DEPOSITS IN JAMMU & KASHMIR (J&K)

Why in news: For the first time, GSI has established Lithium inferred resources (which are in preliminary exploration stage i.e., G3) of 5.9 million tonnes in Salal-Haimana area of Reasi District of J&K (UT).



1. Lithium, referred as white gold, is first of alkalis in periodic table. It's a non-ferrous metal.
2. It is lightest solid metal. It is extracted from either brines or mined rocks. It has lowest density of all metals.
3. Significance of Lithium
 - Key component of rechargeable batteries (used in EVs) and energy storage solutions.
 - Lithium oxide is used in special glasses and glass ceramics.
 - Critical mineral for energy transition, and net-zero emissions will require higher reliance lithium.

FACTS

4. GSI is attached office to Ministry of Mines, was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for Railways.
5. It is Headquartered in Kolkata and has six regional offices.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

UP launches portal for 'One Family, One ID'

Why in news: The Uttar Pradesh government has finally launched the portal for creation of 'Family ID - One Family One Identity', to identify families as a unit for implementing the 'one job per family' proposal.



1. Under the scheme a unique identity will be issued to each family under the One Family One Identity scheme, thereby establishing a live comprehensive database of family units of the state.
2. This database will be helpful in better management of beneficiary schemes, timely targeting, transparent operation, giving 100 per cent benefit of the scheme to eligible people and simplification of government facilities for the general public
3. A 12-digit unique family ID will be provided to those families which were not ration card holders.



4. At present, about 3.59 crore families and 14.92 crore people living in Uttar Pradesh are getting the benefit of the National Food Security Scheme. The ration card number of these families will serve as 'family ID'.
5. Families not covered by the National Food Security Scheme, who are not eligible for ration cards, will be provided with the Family ID through the Family ID portal.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

World Unani Day 2023

Why in news: The day commemorates Hakim Ajmal Khan's contribution to the growth of Unani medicine in India and throughout the world. .

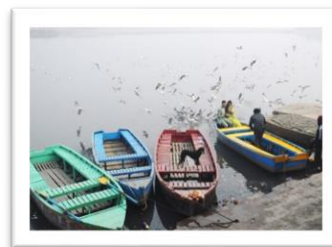
1. World Unani Day is observed on February 11 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of social reformer and renowned Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan, widely regarded as the pioneer of Unani medicine in India.
2. Hakim Ajmal Khan, who was born on February 11, 1868, was an educator, a Unani physician, and the founder of scientific study in the Unani system of medicine.
3. World Unani Day honours the illustrious scholar while raising public awareness of the use of Unani remedies in healthcare.
4. The Ministry of AYUSH, in 2017 announced that his birthday to be World Unani Day in honour of his efforts.
5. On February 10 and 11, the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine, Ministry of AYUSH, will host an international conference on Unani medicine in a hybrid virtual mode with the theme "Unani Medicine for Public Health."



(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

DHARA - Annual Meeting Of Members Of The River Cities Alliance

Why in news: DHARA which stands for Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers, the annual meeting of the members of the River Cities Alliance (RCA), is being organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) from 13th to 14th February in Pune.



1. DHARA 2023 will provide a platform for senior officials including Commissioners, Addl. Commissioners, Chief Engineers and Senior Planners of the 95-member river cities in India to co-learn and discuss solutions for managing local water bodies.



2. The expected outcome of DHARA 2023 is to inspire members of the RCA to engage in progressive actions for urban river management in their cities.
3. The event has strong synergies with the Urban20 (U20) initiative under the ambit of India's G20 Presidency.
4. DHARA 2023 will witness multiple sessions over the two-day event that include sessions on 'National Case Studies on Innovative River-related Practices' to introduce the participants to several unique and innovative solutions for different aspects of urban river management involving lake and pond rejuvenation, decentralized used-water management, etc and 'International Case Studies' to focus on Innovative River-related practices in countries like Denmark, reuse of used water in Israel, etc
5. River Cities Alliance (RCA) started with 30 cities in 2021 and currently has 95 cities as members across India. RCA was launched by the Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on November 2021 as a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
6. River Cities Alliance, first-of-its-kind Alliance in the world, symbolizes the successful partnership of the two Ministries i.e., Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The Alliance focuses on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

12th World Hindi Conference to be held in Fiji

Why in news: The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in partnership with the Government of Fiji, is organising the 12th World Hindi Conference from the 15th to 17th of February, 2023 in Fiji.

1. The 12th World Hindi Conference, scheduled to be held at Nadi from 15th February to 17th February 2023, will be on the theme "Hindi – Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence".
2. The conference will be spread over one plenary session and ten parallel sessions on topics such as Hindi in Girmitya countries, Hindi in Fiji and the Pacific, Information Technology, and Hindi in the 21st century.
3. Hindi scholars from India and other countries will be awarded the "Vishwa Hindi Samman" for their exceptional contributions to the Hindi language during the conference.



4. In Fiji, Hindi holds a very important significance. Fiji-Hindi is one of the three official languages, and because the Girmit brothers and sisters immigrated here 130 years ago, it has a very distinct history.
5. The 11th World Hindi Conference was held in Mauritius in 2018.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

The President inaugurates the 2nd Indian Rice Congress in Cuttack

Why in news: The second edition of the Indian Rice Congress was recently inaugurated by President Murmu at National Rice Research Institute at Cuttack, Odisha.



1. The congress will serve as a common platform for international scientists to learn about the new advancements in the field of agriculture.
2. The 2023 congress was held on the theme “Transforming Rice Research”. The congress focused on the global food crisis and the recent scientific developments that will help in increasing the production and yield of paddy crops.
3. 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.
4. The rice production in the country was only 89 million tonnes in 2010, which has increased by 46 percent to 130MT in 2022, with the efforts of farmers and scientists.
5. India is the second largest producer of rice and number One in exports.

FACTS -

6. The Congress is held every two years to provide a robust global platform for all the stakeholder i.e., researchers, industries, policy makers, extension workers, students and farmers.
7. It is organised by the Association of Rice Research Workers (ARRW) at ICAR-NRRI, Cuttack, to discuss the national and international developments in rice science.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

MIIRA: India readies plan to popularise millets on world stage

Why in news: “MIIRA” or Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness will be aimed at coordinating millet research programmes at the international level.



1. India is planning to propose the launch of a global initiative - MIIRA, to encourage the consumption and production of millets.
2. India would provide the "seed money" for MIIRA to take off, and each G20 member will subsequently be required to pay to its budget in the form of a membership fee.
3. MIIRA secretariat will be in Delhi, and India being a major producer of millets, will ensure a flow of investment from the country's industry and research bodies.
4. Millets are small-grained cereals such as sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), foxtail millet (kangni/ Italian millet), little millet (kutki), kodo millet, finger millet (ragi/ mandua), proso millet (cheena/ common millet), etc.
5. These crops require less water than rice and wheat, and are mainly grown in rainfed areas.
6. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM), a proposal sponsored by the Government of India to promote these "nutri-cereals."

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

India jumps to 55th place in ICAO's aviation safety oversight ranking: DGCA

Why in news: After the final report India's safety oversight capability ranking has climbed from 112 to 55. It may be noted that this ranking is dynamic and is contingent upon the outcomes of various Audits undertaken by ICAO.

1. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) undertakes audit of all the 187 contracting states under this programme.
2. Under its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach, an ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) was undertaken in India from November 9 to 16, 2022.
3. India's aviation safety oversight ranking has jumped to the 55th position from 112th place earlier, with a significant improvement in the country's score under the ICAO's coordinated validation mission, according to regulator DGCA.
4. As the international civil aviation watchdog, the ICAO ensures that member states fulfil their obligation to improve the safety of civil aviation within their own jurisdictions.
5. The eight audit areas of a Member State's aviation system that the programme monitors are:
 - Primary Aviation Legislation and Civil Aviation Regulations (LEG)



- Civil Aviation Organization (ORG)
- Personnel Licensing and Training (PEL)
- Aircraft Operations (OPS)
- Airworthiness of Aircraft (AIR)
- Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation (AIG)
- Air Navigation Services (ANS)
- Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA)

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

National Women's Day 2023

Why in news: National Women's Day celebrated on Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary is a day to remember the life and achievements of one of India's greatest women. It is a day to celebrate the contributions of women in India, to empower and inspire young women, and to pay tribute to the legacy of Sarojini Naidu.

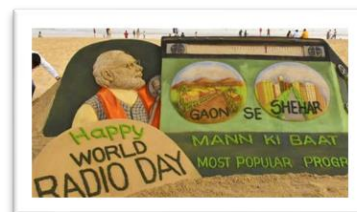


1. India is celebrating the National Women's Day 2023 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu popularly known as the nightingale of India.
2. Every year, on February 13, the country acknowledges her achievements as an extraordinary leader whose potential goes beyond the realm of the Indian political cluster.
3. The British government lauded Sarojini Naidu with the 'Kaisar-i-Hind' Medal for her service during the plague epidemic in India.
4. Sarojini Naidu was the first woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and was also appointed as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, making her the first woman to hold a high office in India.
5. She was a prominent spokesperson for the Indian independence movement and traveled extensively to raise awareness about the cause.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

World Radio Day 2023 today: Theme, history, significance

Why in news: The Spanish Radio Academy in September 2010 requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to mark a day to honour radio's significance across the world. Since then it is celebrated on February 13th every year.



1. World Radio Day, celebrated on February 13 every year, is dedicated to spread awareness about the power of the audio medium.
2. The radio was invented by Italian electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi in the 1890s, is an important means of communication to educate, entertain and inform.
3. It is a fast, easily accessible and affordable way to reach a huge number of people, including in remote areas. World Radio Day is honoured with special activities like broadcasts, community events, awards, debates conducted by radio stations and other organisations.
4. The theme for World Radio Day 2023 this year is 'Radio and Peace', which highlights the role of radio in encouraging peace and avoiding conflict.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

International Epilepsy Day 2023

Why in news: Around 50 million people in the world suffer from epilepsy. 80% of them are living in low and middle-income countries. It is celebrated on the second Monday of February every year.

1. The day is celebrated by the WHO of the UN and several other countries. The members of UN spread the awareness of the disease on this day.
2. The celebrations are to focus on the theme "STIGMA". Stigma means fear or feeling negative reactions.
3. Epilepsy is a nervous disorder. It affects brain activity. The disease is identified late among children. Early symptoms of the disease are left unnoticed. If identified at early stages, it can be cured easily.
4. Four to Ten of thousand people suffer from epilepsy. In high-income countries, 49 of 100,000 people suffer from epilepsy.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu elected Bangladesh's 22nd President

Why in news: A gazette was issued on the appointment of the new Bangladesh President. The tenure of incumbent Hamid, the longest-serving president of Bangladesh, will end on April 23, 2023.

1. Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu, a former judge and freedom fighter, was elected unopposed as Bangladesh's 22nd President.
2. Chuppu will replace President Mohammad Abdul Hamid.



3. He will have to relinquish the party post to become the titular head of the State.
4. Born in the northwestern Pabna district, Chuppu was a leader of Awami League's student and youth wings in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
5. He also took part in the 1971 Liberation War and was imprisoned for waging a protest after the August 15, 1975 assassination of Bangladesh's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- the father of Prime Minister Hasina -- in a military coup along with most of his family members.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

India hosts the special negotiation round for Pillars II-IV of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

Why in news: India hosted the special negotiating round for the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) in New Delhi, India, from February 8-11, 2023. The round covered IPEF Pillars II (Supply Chains), III (Clean Economy), and IV (Fair Economy).



1. Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) is an economic initiative launched by United States President Joe Biden on May 23, 2022.
2. IPEF has fourteen member states: Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.
3. The four themes of the proposed IPEF are:
 - Fair and resilient trade
 - Supply chain resilience
 - Infrastructure, clean energy, and decarbonization
 - Tax and anti-corruption
4. India stayed out of the joint declaration on the trade pillar of the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework ministerial meet in Los Angeles, with Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal citing concerns over possible discrimination against developing economies.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Saudi Arabia to send its first woman into space

Why in news: The astronauts "will join the crew of the AX-2 space mission" and the space flight will "launch from the USA".

1. Rayyana Barnawi Neyadi will join fellow Saudi male astronaut Ali Al-Qarni on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) "during the second quarter of 2023".
2. The oil-rich country will be following in the footsteps of the neighbouring United Arab Emirates which in 2019 became the first Arab country to send one of its citizens into space.
3. Nicknamed the "Sultan of Space", 41-year-old Neyadi will become the first Arab astronaut to spend six months in space when he blasts off for the ISS aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



All India Domestic Workers Survey undertaken by Labour Bureau

Why in news: The identity of the respondent households is never revealed and the results are released based on aggregation of numbers only.

1. This is the first-ever such survey in independent India which was initiated in 2021.
2. The survey would cover all States and Union Territories, covering 1.5 lakh households in 742 districts.
3. The main objectives of the survey are:
 - a. Estimate the number/proportion of domestic workers at the National and State level.
 - b. Household Estimates of Live-in/Live-out DWs.
 - c. The average number of DWs engaged by different types of households.
4. Labour Bureau is an attached office under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, which was set up on 1st October 1946.
5. It is entrusted with the work of compilation, collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics on different aspects of labour

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



India's first electric AC double-decker bus to run on city streets

Why in news: The first batch is expected to be of 10 of these buses and gradually its numbers will increase. The cost of each bus is ₹2 crore and each bus can carry around 90 passengers.



1. The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST)'s latest fleet of India's first AC double-decker electric buses are all set to run on the streets of Mumbai this week.
2. The induction of these 200 buses will not only reduce BEST's carbon footprint by 41% but will also save them 26 million litres of diesel per year.
3. The Switch EiV22, the model's name, has a 231-kWh battery with a range of up to 250 km. An operational run of 160-180 km can be expected owing to factors like vehicular traffic, weather conditions etc.
4. The bus can gain a 100 km of range with just a 45-minute charge, while a full charge takes 80 minutes. Its body is of composite aluminium and is more stable as 300-400 kilograms of batteries are part of the chassis and close to the tyres.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Aadi Mahotsav by TRIFED

Why in news: TRIFED, an organisation of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India has been organising "Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival" to provide direct market access to the tribal master-craftsmen and women in large metros and State capitals.



1. The national Aadi Mahotsav will be inaugurated on 16th February, 2023 at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi.
2. The present edition of the flagship event of TRIFED has the theme of "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.
3. More than 1000 tribal artisans and artists from 28 States/UTs will be participating in the festival.
4. The event will be marked by tribal cultural performances by approx. 500 tribal artists based on the tribal rituals, harvest, festivals, martial art forms etc.
5. The festival, will feature exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, handloom, paintings, jewellery, cane & bamboo, pottery, food & natural products, gifts & assortment, tribal cuisine and much more through 200 stalls to showcase this.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



Blackbuck haven in Odisha: Protection by locals triple numbers

Why in news: The blackbuck population has increased threefold in Odisha's Ganjam district, the only habitat of the most elegant member of the antelope family in the state, over 12 years.



1. The blackbuck is a Schedule 1 animal per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The species is listed as 'near threatened' in the global organisation International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List.
2. Improvement of habitats and protection by the local people and forest staff are some of the reasons behind the increase of the blackbuck population in the district.
3. People believe the creatures break long drought spells and bless the area with plenty of food and wealth. The government does not protect the region — the animal freely roams due to the shelter by the villagers.
4. A total of 7,743 blackbucks were counted in the district in the latest biannual census conducted by the state's forest department on January 29, 2023. The population was 2,194 in 2011.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

RBI's financial literacy week

Why in news: As part of the drive, RBI will conduct a mass media campaign to disseminate financial awareness messages. It has also roped in banks to educate their customers about financial literacy..



1. 'Financial Literacy Week' started on Monday and will last till February 17, 2023. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been conducting this every year since 2016 to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme among members of public across the country.
2. The theme selected for current year Financial Literacy Week (FLW) is "Good Financial Behaviour - Your Saviour".
3. The theme aligns with the overall strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education: 2020-2025 which aims at building financial resilience and well-being while creating awareness among members of public.
4. Focus will be on creating awareness about savings, planning and budgeting, and prudent use of digital financial services, RBI said in a statement.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



Global sea level rose by 4.5 mm per year during 2013-22 period: WMO

Why in news: Global mean sea level rose by 4.5 mm per year during the period 2013-22 and human influence was very likely the main driver of these increases since at least 1971.



1. According to a new report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) - "Global Sea-level Rise and Implications" - India, China, Bangladesh and the Netherlands face the highest threat of sea-level rise globally.
2. Almost 11% of the global population (896 million) in the Low Elevation Coastal Zone, increasing to beyond 1 billion by 2050 and associated development, coastal ecosystems face climate risks, including sea level rise.
3. Sea-level has risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in at least the last 3,000 years. The global ocean has warmed faster over the past century than since the end of the last deglacial transition (around 11,000 years ago)

WMO-

4. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organisation with a membership of 193 Member States and Territories.
5. It originated from the International Meteorological Organisation (IMO - a NGO), the roots of which were planted at the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.
6. The Secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, is headed by the Secretary-General and its supreme body is the World Meteorological Congress.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

WHO confirms outbreak of highly infectious Marburg virus after 9 deaths

Why in news: Nine deaths because of the Marburg virus have been reported in the Kie Ntem Province of Equatorial Guinea. In addition to the nine reported cases, 16 other suspected cases have been reported so far and nearly 200 people have been subjected to quarantine measures to prevent any further cases.



1. Marburg virus disease (MVD) is a severe illness that causes viral haemorrhagic fever in humans (it was formerly known as Marburg haemorrhagic fever). The virus was first identified after simultaneous outbreaks in Frankfurt and Marburg, Germany — from where it derives its name — and Belgrade, Serbia in 1967.



2. Marburg virus disease is a highly virulent disease and falls under the same family as the virus that causes the Ebola virus disease. Illness caused by the Marburg virus begins abruptly, with high fever, severe headache, and severe malaise.
3. Many patients also developed severe hemorrhagic symptoms within seven days of first falling sick. The virus usually takes between two and 21 days to incubate, leading to abrupt symptoms, some of which can make Marburg difficult to diagnose initially.
4. The virus is transmitted to people from fruit bats and spreads among humans through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, surfaces, and materials.
5. While there is currently no vaccine or treatment plans to treat the virus, there is a supportive care system, with treatments like rehydration with oral or intravenous fluids, has proven to improve an individuals chances of survival.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

Bima Sugam portal to address existing protection gap across general insurance business

Why in news: Indian insurance sector accounts for less than 1.5% of world insurance. Gol has been taking several measures to increase investment in the sector.

1. It is an electronic platform to sell insurance. Policyholders can view their insurance plans here. They can manage their plans.
2. The portal is accessible to insurance buyers, and sellers. Agents and intermediaries can also have access to the portal.
3. The portal will mainly help startups entering the insurance sector. Also, it is an attractive option for the insure tech and wealth tech companies as the portal holds centralized data of the products.
4. There are hidden details in some insurance policies. Such issues can be avoided. Buyers get to learn about different plans and choose the right one.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



Indigenously developed TAPAS UAV captures Aero India 2023 rehearsal from 12,000 feet

Why in news: The DRDO shared a stunning footage of Tapas UAV drone in action ahead of its debut. The 'Made In India' UAV will have its official debut during the air show in Bengaluru.



1. Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance-Beyond Horizon-201 (TAPAS BH-201) is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). It is being developed in the country by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE).
2. In November 2016, the first flight of the UAV took place.
3. Drones or Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are aircraft with no on-board crew.
4. The 'drones' can range from remotely piloted to fully automated, which means that it relies on a system of sensors and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) detectors to calculate its movement. It can fly at a controlled level of height and speed for a long period of time.
5. UAVs have a role in many aspects of aviation ranging from monitoring climate change to carrying out post disaster search operations, filming, communication in remote areas to military operations.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

Reserve Bank of India Announces 2nd Global Hackathon “HARBINGER 2023”

Why in news: The Reserve Bank on Tuesday announced its second global hackathon -- 'HARBINGER 2023 - Innovation for Transformation' with the theme 'Inclusive Digital Services'.



1. The RBI has invited innovative ideas in four segments.
 - 'Innovative, easy-to-use, digital banking services for differently-abled (Divyaang);
 - RegTech solutions to facilitate more efficient compliance by Regulated Entities (REs);
 - Exploring use cases/solutions for CBDC-Retail transactions, including transactions in offline mode'; and
 - 'increasing Transactions Per Second (TPS)/ throughput and scalability of blockchains'.
2. Winner of the hackathon will be given a prize of Rs 40 lakh and runner-up Rs 20 lakh.



3. "Being part of HARBINGER 2023 gives an opportunity to the participants to get mentored by industry experts and exhibit their innovative solutions before an eminent jury and win exciting prizes in each category,"
4. The first hackathon was announced in November 2021 and results were declared in June 2022.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Marine Spatial Planning framework, country's first, launched in Puducherry

Why in news: The framework, part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative, aims at balancing development alongside sustainable and equitable ocean resource management.



1. Puducherry has launched the country's first Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework as part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative, to balance growth alongside sustainable management of ocean resources and coastal environment preservation.
2. The plan is to be implemented by India and Norway together. It is being implemented under the Indo-Norway Ocean Initiative. The initiative was created under an MoU signed between the countries in 2019.
3. The process of allocating spaces in marine zones for human activities is called the Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF). The space is allocated for economic purposes, ecological purposes, or social purposes.
4. Objectives of Marine Spatial Planning Framework
 - To bring the diverse ocean users under the same platform
 - To create a broad and inclusive picture of the ocean
 - To provide a common platform for the policy builders and decision makers to discuss with each other

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

InfoCrop Simulation Model



Why in news: InfoCrop, available for free on IARI's website, can forecast climate impact on farm yield in real time.

1. Recently, scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Delhi conducted a first-of-its-kind experiment to quantify the impact of the hot weather on crop yield in Punjab and Haryana by using InfoCrop version 2.1.
2. In 2004, InfoCrop version 1 was launched by the IARI which is being updated regularly.
3. It has the life cycle data for almost all the local varieties of 11 crops: paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, pigeon pea, chickpea, soybean, groundnut, potato and cotton.
4. It provides daily and summary outputs on various growth and yield parameters, nitrogen uptake, greenhouse gas emissions, soil water and nitrogen balance.
5. InfoCrop version 2.1, India's only dynamic crop simulation model developed and released by the IARI in 2015 to study the long-term impact of climate change and crop management practices on yield.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

President's Colour Award

Wh in news: The Haryana Police will be given the President's Colour award in recognition of its outstanding service to the nation on February 14 in Karnal.

1. The President's Colour is a rare and prestigious honour, awarded by the President to armed forces that have rendered exceptional service to the nation.
2. The award serves as recognition of the sacrifices made by police personnel in the line of duty, and as a tribute to their commitment to protecting its people.
3. "The glorious track record of professionalism and high regard for diversity and human dignity has earned the Haryana Police the award of 'President Colour'.
4. As a part of this award, 'Standards' are presented to Heavy Cavalry and 'Guidons' are presented to Light Cavalry.



(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

The First G20 Culture Group (CWG) meet to be organised in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh



Why in news: The objective is to achieve a significant reduction in illicit trafficking of cultural property by 2030, strengthen regulation of online trading platforms and social media, and raise awareness among the general public through educational and social media campaigns.



1. The Culture Working group will have four meetings and they will be held in Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar & Hampi. For the Khajuraho meeting, the theme is "Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property".
2. India's CWG will reflect the emergence of Culture as a prominent theme on the global stage, it will adopt 'Culture' to renew multilateral and multicultural cooperation at all levels and will aim to forward this ideal and inform future global cultural policies and initiatives.
3. Four priority areas of India's CWG include Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property; Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future; Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries, and Creative Economy; Leveraging Digital Technologies for Protection and Promotion of Culture.
4. To engage with these priorities further, the CWG has also developed a robust year-long program of cultural projects such as exhibitions, immersive experiences, symposiums, seminars, art residencies, workshops, publications, etc.
5. An ancient city, Khajuraho is known for its majestic temples and elaborate sculptures. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Khajuraho Group of Monuments, was constructed by the Chandela Dynasty between 950-1050 AD.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

PM addresses launch of 'Jal-Jan Abhiyan'

Why in news: The Brahma Kumaris organization is deploying its Raja Yogis to conduct the campaign. Raja Yogis are well-versed yoga practitioners. They will inspire people to prevent water wastage and pull them into the concept of a sustainable world.



1. The Jal Jan Abhiyan will be implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Brahma Kumaris organization.
2. The main objective of the campaign is water conservation. During the campaign, the volunteers from the organization will conduct public awareness campaign on preserving water.
3. The campaign is to run for eight months. They will focus on building new water bodies and also on preserving more than 5,000 water bodies.



4. The target of the campaign is to reach at least ten crore people and organize 10,000 programs.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

CBDT notifies Income Tax Return Forms for Assessment Year 2023-24 well in advance

Why in news: The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified ITR forms 1-6, ITR-V (verification form) and ITR acknowledgement form.



1. In order to facilitate the taxpayers and to improve ease of filing, no significant changes have been made to the ITR Forms in comparison to last year's ITR Forms. Only the bare minimum changes necessitated due to amendments in the Income-tax Act, 1961 (the 'Act') have been made.
2. ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) and ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are simpler Forms that cater to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.
3. Sahaj can be filed by a resident individual having income upto Rs. 50 lakh and who receives income from salary, one house property, other sources (interest etc.) and agricultural income upto Rs. 5 thousand.
4. Sugam can be filed by individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs)) being a resident having total income upto Rs. 50 lakh and income from business and profession computed under sections 44AD, 44ADA or 44AE.
5. Individuals and HUFs not having income from business or profession (and not eligible for filing Sahaj) can file ITR Form 2 while those having income from business or profession can file ITR Form 3.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

21 more airports to be linked to Krishi Udan scheme

Why in news: While highlighting the importance of usage of drones in the agriculture sector, the applicability of drones will continue to increase beyond spraying pesticides to seeding, carrying out surveys and other areas.

1. The government will soon add 21 more airports under the Krishi Udan scheme, aimed at facilitating faster

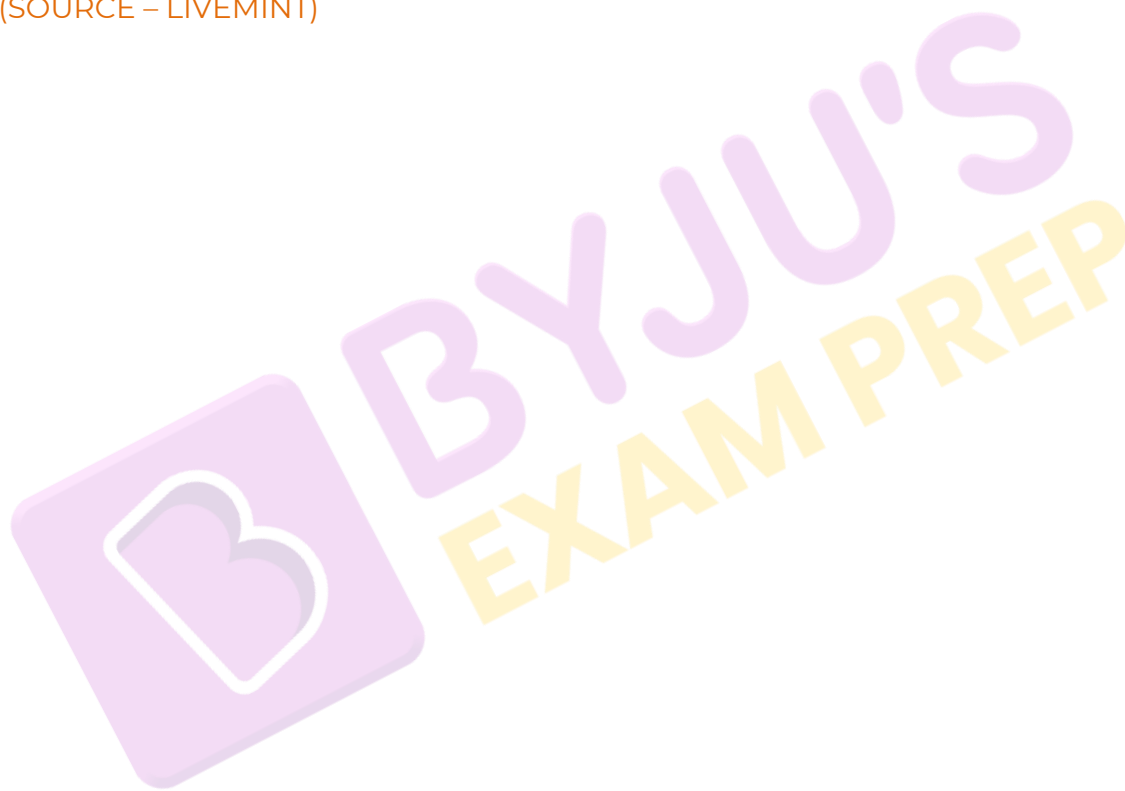


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movement of agricultural produce in north eastern, hilly and tribal regions of the country.

2. Ministry of Civil Aviation launched Krishi UDAN scheme in 2020 on international and national routes.
3. It aims to ensure seamless, cost-effective, time bound, air transportation and associated logistics for all Agri-produce originating especially from North-East, hilly and tribal regions of country.
4. Krishi UDAN 2.0 launched in 2021 to increase share of air carriage in modal mix for transportation of Agri-produce which includes horticulture, fishery, livestock and processed products.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Health Ministry launches nationwide campaign to combat filariasis

Why in news: The Union Health Ministry has launched a nationwide mass drug administration (MDA) campaign aimed at ending filariasis disease transmission through door-to-door administration of anti-filarial drugs, especially in 10 affected States.

1. India aims to eliminate filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target.
2. High-burdened areas are Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.



FACTS

3. Filariasis is a parasitic infection caused by microscopic, thread-like worms known as filariae. It is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes, and it affects millions of people in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.
4. Lymphatic filariasis is caused by infection with parasites classified as nematodes (roundworms) of the family Filarioididea.
5. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends three drug treatments to accelerate the global elimination of lymphatic filariasis. The treatment, known as IDA, involves a combination of ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine citrate and albendazole.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

Union Cabinet nod to 'Vibrant Villages Programme' for northern borders

Why in news: Under the 'Vibrant Villages Programme', holistic developmental works are to be undertaken in northern bordering villages.

1. The Union Cabinet approved the centrally-sponsored 'Vibrant Village Programme' for financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26), under which holistic developmental works are to be undertaken in northern bordering villages, and with an outlay of ₹4,800 crore.
2. This will help in encouraging people to stay in their native locations in border areas and reversing the outmigration from these villages adding to improved security of the border.
3. Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats. 100 % saturation of Central and state schemes will be ensured.



4. The scheme aids to identify and develop the economic drivers based on local natural human and other resources of the border villages on northern border and development of growth centres on "Hub and Spoke Model" through promotion of social entrepreneurship, empowerment of youth and women through skill development and entrepreneurship, leveraging the tourism potential through promotion of local cultural, etc.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Solar-powered drone SURAJ designed for surveillance operations unveiled

Why in news: The drone will carry a versatile payload of high-resolution zoom cameras with thermal imagery and foliage-penetrating lidar sensors with a maximum capacity of 10 kg. The drone is all set to support various Indian and global giants namely the Indian Army, Navy, Airforce, BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, DRDO, MOD, and MHA. .



1. SURAJ is an ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) high-altitude drone designed specifically for surveillance operations, providing "real-time information to the high command and protecting jawans on the ground."
2. This cutting-edge technology will capture, process, and transmit photos and videos in real-time, ensuring that the headquarters and base have access to vital information before planning strategic operations and terms.
3. It is designed and launched by Garuda Aerospace – a drone startup.
4. The drone's unique J-shaped wings are equipped with solar-powered cells that serve as its primary fuel source, while an auxiliary battery provides additional propulsion or decreased speed as required.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

Electronic Maintenance Management System (e-MMS) and SAMAR portal

Why in news: Ministry of Defense has launched the Indian Air Force e-MMS and SAMAR (System for Advance Manufacturing Assessment & Rating) portal.



1. E-MMS is a software that helps an organization track the status of maintenance tasks and schedule equipment repairs.
2. It is one of the largest and most technologically complex digital Enterprise Asset Management solutions implemented in the world.



3. SAMAR on the other hand is a portal of DRDO's Aeronautical Research and Development Board (AR&DB) and is an outcome of DRDO and Quality Council of India.
4. It is the benchmark to measure the competency of defence manufacturing enterprises.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

India-Japan joint military exercise Dharma Guardian

Why in news: Exercise Dharma Guardian will further enhance the level of defence cooperation between the Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self-Defence Forces, furthering the bilateral ties between the two nations.



1. The fourth edition of the India-Japan joint training exercise Dharma Guardian will be held at Camp Imazu in the Shiga province of Japan from February 17-March 2.
2. The scope of the India-Japan joint training exercise covers platoon-level joint training on operations in jungle and semi-urban or urban terrain.
3. The troops of the Garhwal Rifles Regiment of the Indian Army and an infantry regiment from the Middle Army of the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force (JGSDF) will participate in the joint training exercise.
4. During the joint exercise, the armies of the two nations will share their experiences gained during operations to bolster interoperability in planning and execution.

(SOURCE – CNN)

India's G20 presidency | Innovations double engine: Start up, scale up

Why in news: Startup20 Engagement Group, the only new group at the G20, is the first step in 'ambidexterity' – using the innovating capacity of startups along with stability and scale of corporations.



1. The G20 Startup20 Engagement Group held its inception meeting in Hyderabad, featuring delegates from G20 nations and nine special invitees from observer countries, representatives from multilateral organizations as well as the Indian startup ecosystem.
2. The Startup20 has three main taskforces; the Foundation and Alliances Taskforce, Finance, and Inclusion and Sustainability.



3. The Foundation and Alliances Taskforce will work to harmonize the global Startup ecosystem through consensus-based definitions and promote a global community of knowledge sharing among the Startup ecosystems to explore opportunities.
4. The Finance Taskforce will aim to increase access to capital for Startups by providing financing and investment platforms specifically for early-stage Startups to broaden the array of financial instruments available to Startups.
5. For Inclusion and Sustainability, the roadmap involves increasing support for women led Startups and organizations; promotion of Startups working on making communities more inclusive and to promote Startups working on SDGs in areas of global interest.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

India ranks 47th in OECD's services trade restrictiveness index

Why in news: In the latest data of the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI), released by OECD, India stood at 47th position. Despite improving by a single position, India continues to be among the bottom five countries in the index

1. Reflecting presence of huge market barriers in the country, India stood at 47th position in Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the year 2022.
2. However, there was an improvement from last year's ranking by one position.
3. Recent reforms include the privatisation of Air India in January 2022 and the elimination of pricing guidelines for transfers of shares between residents and non-residents has contributed to India's higher ranking.
4. Japan is at number one followed by UK & Netherlands.



FACTS-

5. Launched in 2014, the OECD's Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) provides information on regulations affecting trade in services in 22 sectors across all OECD member countries and Brazil, the People's Republic of China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, and South Africa.
6. The countries and sectors represent over 80% of global trade in services.
7. The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive.
8. The STRI can support policymakers to scope out reform options, benchmark them relative to global best practice, and assess their likely effects.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)



Union Cabinet approves establishment of new Primary Agricultural Credit Society in 2 lakh panchayats

Why in news: PACS account for 41% (3.01 crore farmers) of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans given by all entities in the country.

1. The Centre approved a plan for setting up 2 lakh Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives in the country in the next five years to strengthen the cooperative movement.
2. The Plan is to establish viable PACS, dairy and fishery cooperatives in villages, and strengthen the existing ones through convergence of various schemes of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying by leveraging the 'whole-of-government' approach.
3. Action plan for implementation of the project shall be prepared by NABARD, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and National Fishery Development Board (NFDB).
4. The following schemes have been identified for convergence under the current plan:
 - a. Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying:
 - i. National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD), and
 - ii. Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF)
 - b. Department of Fisheries:
 - i. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), and
 - ii. Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development (FIDF)
5. PACS are the ground-level cooperative credit institutions that provide short-term, and medium-term agricultural loans to the farmers for the various agricultural and farming activities.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



India's First Waste-to-Hydrogen Plant to be Set Up in Pune

Why in news: The first 10-ton reactor will be installed in November 2023, and the entire plant is targeted for completion in November 2024.

1. The country's first solid waste-to-hydrogen plant will be set up in Pune at more than Rs 430 crore.
2. For the Pune plant, PSU company Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd (BECIL) will provide project management consultancy and TGBL's wholly-owned subsidiary Variate Pune Waste to Energy Pvt Ltd will implement the project.



3. The refuse-derived fuel from waste will be used to generate hydrogen using plasma gasification technology.e-derived fuel from waste will be used to generate hydrogen using plasma gasification technology.
4. It will treat 350 tonnes of solid garbage every day by next year. The project aims to demonstrate the technological and financial feasibility of waste to hydrogen generation.

(SOURCE –THE HINDU)

Ladakh to host India's first frozen-lake marathon 'Last Run' at Pangong Tso

Why in news: Ladakh's 21km marathon, with Lukung as its starting point, will end at Maan village. 75 selected athletes from India and abroad are participating in the run, giving them an opportunity to make a bid for a Guinness world record for the world's highest frozen-lake marathon



1. India's first "frozen-lake marathon" at Ladakh's Pangong Tso at a height of 13,862 feet will be held on February 20 and the army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) have been roped in to implement a "proper action plan" for the event.
2. The marathon is being called the "Last Run" to highlight the issue of climate change.
3. It is being organised by the Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh (ASFL) in collaboration with the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh, the Tourism Department and the Leh district administration.
4. Spread along the border of India and China, the 700 square metre Pangong Lake records a temperature of minus 30 degrees Celsius during the winters, freezing the salt water lake.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar

Why in news: Sangeet Natak Akademi selects 102 artists of India for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for the years 2019, 2020 & 2021.



1. The award is presented by Sangeet Natak Akademi to artists in the field of dance, music, and drama. It is presented annually to artists below the age of 40.
2. The winners receive 25,000 rupees of the cash price. The Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar is being presented since 2006. The awards were presented by the Union Minister of Culture and Tourism.



3. Bismillah Khan has been credited with taking the shehnai from the marriage mandap to the concert hall. He brought Shehnai to the center stage of Indian classical music with his concert in the Calcutta All India Music Conference in 1937.
4. He was a recipient of many honors and awards. These include: Padma Vibhushan (1980), Padma Bhushan (1968), Padma Shri (1961), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1956) etc.
5. In 2001, Ustad Bismillah Khan became the third classical musician to be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Global Tourism Resilience Day 2023

Why in news: The importance of Global Tourism Resilience Day is rooted in its capacity to raise awareness of the crucial role that sustainable tourism practices play in establishing a world that is both resilient and sustainable.

1. The day is being observed for the first time today, February 17, and is aimed at highlighting the importance of sustainable tourism and its role in creating a more resilient and sustainable world.
2. The tourism industry has been hit hard by a series of crises and challenges over the past few years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and political unrest.
3. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution from Jamaica to declare the first-ever Global Tourism Resilience Day on 17th February 2023, in an effort to future-proof the sustainability of tourism.

(SOURCE – PIB)



REAIM 2023 | World's first global summit on Responsible AI in the Military kicks off in The Netherlands

Why in news: It's the first global attempt to prevent proliferation of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWS) and insert ethics, moral factor into rapidly developing weaponisation technology that has potential for cataclysmic damage.

1. The world's first international summit on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the military commenced on February 15 in The Netherlands.



2. The REAIM 2023 brings together governments, corporations, academia, startups, and civil societies to raise awareness, discuss issues, and possibly, agree on common principles in deploying and using AI in armed conflicts.
3. It aims to mobilise and activate wide group of stakeholders to contribute to concrete next steps & Foster and increase knowledge by sharing experiences, best practices and solutions
4. Role of AI in military domain
 - Training and simulation to provide battlefield experience to soldiers.
 - Surveillance, specifically in difficult to reach border regions, to provide situational awareness.
 - Offensive capabilities, such as autonomous armed drones, which can execute targets.
 - Reconnaissance and tactical support in combat situations such as targeted

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

ISRO Announces 'unique' Discovery About Origins Of Volcanic Rocks On The Moon

Why in news: ISRO, announced a new discovery regarding the origin of volcanic rocks on the Moon which melted and crystallised billions of years ago.



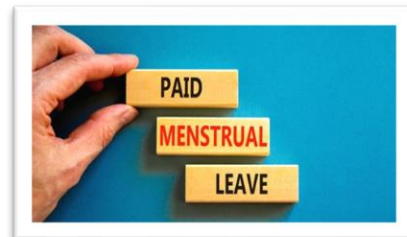
1. ISRO announced a new discovery regarding the origin of volcanic rocks on the Moon. This discovery was made by a group of scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad along with experts from the US and Japan who examined lunar meteorite samples here on Earth.
2. Two of the samples were those that were found on Earth– first in 1988 in Antarctica, and another in 1999 in South Africa's Kalahari Desert– while the third was collected by the Soviet Union's Luna-24 mission in 1976.
3. This suggests that meteorites studied have come from a region different from PKT (Procellarum KREEP Terrane).
4. KREEP is acronym for a place that has deposits of potassium (K), rare earth elements (REE) and phosphorus (P).
5. Study shows that these basalts are result of low-pressure melting in the Moon whereas basalts in PKT regions are a result of localized radioactive melting.
6. Mare regions of Moon which is on near side of Moon consists mainly of basalt Rocks

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



Spain passes law for 'menstrual leave', becomes Europe's first country to give special leave

Why in news: The Spanish parliament approved sick leave for women suffering from incapacitating periods on February 16, making Spain the first country in Europe to do so.



1. In Spain, women now have the option to take their monthly menstrual leave for three to five days if they feel uncomfortable during their periods.
2. Spain passed a number of sexual and reproductive rights laws, including ones over abortion and transgender rights, making it the first nation in Europe to grant workers the right to paid menstruation leave.
3. The menstrual leave provision will be funded by the government.
4. Other nations which has given menstrual leaves are Japan, Indonesia and Zambia.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Government launches pan-India best tourism village competition, new web portal

Why in news: The Centre launched a competition to select the best tourism village from across the country, and also a new website to promote rural tourism.



1. The 'Best Tourism Village Competition' helmed by the tourism ministry will be held in three stages, and will seek entries at district level, state level and finally at the national level.
2. The 9 point evaluation criteria have been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. On the occasion, a new web portal called Rural Tourism Portal to promote rural tourism in India was also launched.
4. The government also launched the website of the first Global Tourism Investors Summit which will take place at Pragati Maidan here later this year.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)



UIDAI Launched New AI Chatbot Aadhaar Mitra in India

Why in news: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has recently launched a chatbot to help people get an answer to their queries related to the Aadhaar card.



1. Aadhaar Chatbot is well-trained to answer queries on Aadhaar-related topics, provide information about Locate Aadhaar Center, Check Aadhaar Enrolment/ Update status, Check PVC Card Order status, file a Complaint, Check Complaint status, Locate Enrolment Center, and Book An Appointment.
2. The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has recently launched a chatbot to help people get an answer to their queries related to the Aadhaar card. It is called "Aadhaar Mitra".
3. The Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML)-based chatbot can answer queries related to Aadhaar enrolment number, PVC Card order status, and complaint status, among other things. It is available in both English and Hindi languages.
4. The user does not need to go to an Aadhaar enrolment center to update the card anymore. It can be done through the chatbot. They can also apply for a duplicate Aadhaar if the original is lost.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

Kavach 2023: Centre invites entries for national-level hackathon on cybersecurity

Why in news: KAVACH-2023 will be conducted in two phases and total prize money worth Rs 20 lakh will be awarded to the winning teams.



1. The Centre launched a national-level 'hackathon' with the aim to address cyber security challenges and cybercrimes in the country.
2. This will be done by identifying innovative ideas and technological solutions given by the participating students and start-ups.
3. The youngsters from educational institutions across the country and registered start-ups will participate in the "KAVACH 2023" hackathon to find robust, secure and effective technological solutions for cyber security using their technical expertise and innovative skills.



4. KAVACH 2023 is a unique national hackathon jointly conducted by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, AICTE, Bureau of Police Research and Development, and the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (Ministry of Home Affairs) to identify innovative ideas and technological solutions for challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and common citizens.

(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Health Ministry working on 'One Nation, One Organ Allocation' policy

Why in news: The Indian government is mulling to develop a 'one nation, one policy' for organ donation and transportation in the country.

1. The Union Health Ministry is working on a 'One Nation, One Organ Allocation' policy in consultation with states to come up with uniform guidelines for registration, allocation and other aspects of the process
2. India conducts third highest number of transplantation in the world.



FACTS

3. Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 provides a system to regulate, removal, storage and transplantation of human organs.
4. National Organ and Tissue Transplant Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) under MoH&FW function as apex centre that maintains registry of organs and tissues donation and transplantation.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

World Pangolin Day 2023

Why in news: India is home to two pangolin species, the Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin, both of which continue to be found in illicit trade despite having legal protection. .

1. World Pangolin Day is observed annually on the third Saturday in February and takes place on February 18 this year.
2. The day aims to celebrate pangolins, raise awareness and recommit international N.G.O.s to the fight against the global capturing of pangolins in Africa and Asia.
3. India reports a significant number of pangolin trafficking incidents reflected by seizures across the country.



4. They are poached mainly for international markets in China and Southeast Asia for their scales, which are used as an ingredient in traditional medicines and are believed to cure various ailments. Pangolin meat is also considered a delicacy and consumed for its alleged medicinal properties.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

India-Uzbekistan biennial military training Exercise DUSTLIK 2023 to begin in Uttarakhand

Why in news: As part of a military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and Uzbekistan Army, the fourth edition of biennial training Exercise DUSTLIK (2023) will be conducted from tomorrow till 5th March, 2023 in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.



1. It is a military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and Uzbekistan
2. The Indian contingent will be represented by the 14th Battalion, The GARHWAL RIFLES, part of Western Command in this bilateral exercise. The Uzbekistan Army will be represented by troops of the North Western Military District of Uzbekistan Army.
3. This joint exercise is aimed at enhancing military capability to undertake multi-domain operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under United Nations Mandate.
4. Uzbekistan is important to India for connectivity to Iran and the Central Asian region. India is trying to expand its trade in the Central Asian region. But the conflicts in Afghanistan are a big hindrance. To counter such security issues, India needs the support of other central Asian countries like Uzbekistan.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

EU formally bans gas, diesel car sales from 2035 to boost EV transition

Why in news: In a move to boost the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), the European Parliament has approved the law to ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars in the EU, starting in 2035.

1. In a move to boost the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), the European Parliament has approved the law to ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars in the EU, starting in 2035.
2. The Commission will present by 2025 a methodology to assess and report data on CO2 emissions throughout the full life-cycle of cars and vans sold on the EU market.



3. The new legislation sets the path towards zero CO2 emissions for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles in 2035 (an EU fleet-wide target to reduce CO2 emissions produced by new cars and vans by 100 per cent compared to 2021).
4. Every two years, starting from the end of 2025, the Commission will publish a report to evaluate the progress towards zero-emission road mobility.
5. The law was first accepted by negotiators from EU countries, the European Parliament and the European Commission in October last year.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

India's UPI, Singapore's PayNow to be linked for cross-border remittances

Why in news: The linkage of these two payment systems would enable faster and cost-efficient transfer of cross-border remittances.

1. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India and PayNow of Singapore will be linked to enable faster and cost-efficient transfer of cross-border remittances.
2. It will also help the Indian diaspora in Singapore, especially migrant workers and students through instantaneous and low-cost transfer of money from Singapore to India and vice-versa.
3. UPI payments system has become hugely popular for retail digital payments in India, and its adoption is increasing at a rapid pace.
4. The linkage will be a significant milestone for the development of infrastructure for cross-border payments between both the countries. It will also align with the G20's financial inclusion priorities to provide for faster, cheaper and more transparent cross-border payments.
5. PayNow is the fast payment system of Singapore, enabling peer-to-peer funds transfer service. It is available for retail customers with the help of participating banks & Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NFI) in Singapore.

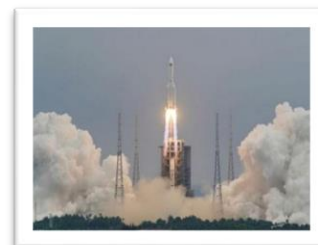


(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

India's first hybrid rocket launched from Tamil Nadu's Pattipulam

Why in news: Martin Foundation in association with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and Space Zone India successfully completed the project known as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission 2.

5. India's first hybrid sounding rocket by private players was successfully launched from Pattipulam village in the Chengalpattu district of Tamil Nadu on Sunday.



6. Around 3,500 students from government schools across the country became part of a team that designed and constructed a student satellite launch vehicle (rocket) and 150 PICO satellite research experiment cubes that contained different payloads.
7. The satellites were launched using a Sounding Rocket, also called as hybrid rocket, at Space Zone's facility at Pattipulam village near suburban Kelambakkam.
8. The rocket flew to an altitude of about 5-6 km and splashed down into the sea.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

India setting up \$4-billion fund to backstop corporate debt market

Why in news: India is setting up a fund worth ₹330 billion (\$4 billion) to provide liquidity to its corporate debt market during bouts of stress, to help stem panic selling and ease redemption pressures.

1. The facility, will be an entity that can trade in relatively illiquid investment-grade corporate bonds and be readily available in times of stress to buy such bonds from participants in the secondary market.
2. The government will provide 90% of the money for the fund, and other asset managers would contribute the rest



FACTS

3. SBI Mutual Fund, a unit of India's largest state-owned lender, State Bank of India, has been tasked with administering the backstop fund, which was first proposed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in 2020 after high-profile defaults rocked the domestic debt market.
4. This fund is being created to avoid such a situation in the future and meet the redemption pressure in any such event.
5. During times of stress, the backstop fund could step into the market to buy relatively illiquid investment grade bonds.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

Punjab government has organised a 'shrimp mela

Why in news: This mela is being organised to make farmers aware of the various schemes available for fish farming, and also to encourage more people to join it. It will be held at the farmers' training centre at Enakhera village, where successful farmers will share their stories.



1. Punjab is set to see its first state-level 'shrimp mela' (shrimp fair), beginning in Enakhera village of Muktsar district. While shrimp farming began in the state in 2016-17, the mela is a state government push to create more awareness about it.
2. Shrimp farming is an aquaculture-based activity in marine or freshwater environments to produce shrimp for human consumption. In Punjab, it is done in five south-western districts of Muktsar, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Bathinda and Faridkot.
3. South-west Punjab has saline underground water not fit for agriculture. Also, waterlogging is a perennial issue in this belt. Therefore, shrimp farming was proposed as a solution for farmers whose land was lying unutilised.
4. At present, various schemes are being run under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), which started in 2021 and will run till 2025 to promote 'blue revolution'.

(SOURCE – NEWS18)

Northern India's first nuclear plant to come up in Haryana's Gorakhpur

Why in news: The Department of Atomic Energy has also been given permission to set up joint ventures with PSUs for resources to open atomic energy plants, having the potential to fulfill India's energy needs in times to come.



1. North India's first nuclear power plant is coming up in Gorakhpur, Haryana.
2. Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Pariyojana (GHAVP), having two units of 700 MW capacity each of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) of indigenous design, is under implementation near Gorakhpur village in Fatehabad district in Haryana.

Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR)

3. It is a nuclear power reactor, commonly using unenriched natural uranium as its fuel, that uses heavy water (deuterium oxide D₂O) as its coolant and moderator.
4. The heavy water coolant is kept under pressure, allowing it to be heated to higher temperatures without boiling, much as in a typical pressurized water reactor.
5. While heavy water is significantly more expensive than ordinary light water, it yields greatly enhanced neutron economy, allowing the reactor to operate without fuel enrichment facilities (mitigating the additional capital cost of the heavy water) and generally enhancing the ability of the reactor to efficiently make use of alternate fuel cycles.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



World Day of Social Justice

Why in news: The political configurations across the world should be structured in a way that is suited to ending the social inequalities. The stakeholders need to strengthen the system that is tailored to protect the fundamental rights and build a society bereft of social injustices. .



1. This year's theme focuses on the recommendations of Our Common Agenda to strengthen global solidarity and to re-build trust in government by "Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice".
2. On February 20, every year we celebrate the World Day of Social Justice-- an occasion to renounce injustice across the globe. The day was first observed in 2009 to strengthen global solidarity and earmark a time to address the issues of social injustice and social inequalities like poverty and racial discrimination.
3. Social justice means fair and equal treatment for everyone. This includes equal access to opportunities, human rights and the benefits of growth regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or socio-economic position.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

India elected chair of 62nd session of UN Commission for Social Development

Why in news: Ruchira Kamboj, India's permanent representative to the UN, has been chosen to serve as the commission's chair during the 62nd.



1. The Commission for Social Development is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the 6 main organs of UN.
2. The Commission serves as the primary inter-governmental body to deliberate upon and strengthen international cooperation on social development issues
3. 54-member UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) advances 3 dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental
4. ECOSOC's 54 members are elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly.
5. Seats on the Council are allotted based on geographical representation with 14 allocated to African states, 11 to Asian states, six to eastern European states, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean states and 13 to western European and other states.

(SOURCE – THE PRINT)



RBI ban on FLDG arrangement: Fintechs explore alternative models to meet RBI norms

Why in news: Fintech lenders are exploring alternative business models after the first loss default guarantee (FLDG) arrangement was barred by RBI under the digital lending norms



1. FLDG or 'first loan default guarantee' is an arrangement between a fintech company and regulated entity (RE - banks and NBFCs), wherein the fintech compensates the RE to a certain extent if the borrower defaults.
2. RBI is not comfortable with fintechs taking default risk as they are not regulated entities under its purview - creating a systemic risk of NPAs
3. As per RBI digital loan norms, FLDG comes under synthetic securitisation - which Banks and NBFCs are not allowed to undertake.
4. Synthetic securitisation means a structure where credit risk is transferred, in whole or in part, through use of credit derivatives or credit guarantees.

(SOURCE – THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

GST Council reaches consensus to create tribunal

Why in news GST Council accepted recommendations of report of 'Groups of Ministers (GoMs) on GST Appellate Tribunal'

1. GSTAT (GST Appellate tribunal) constituted for disputes redressal under GST laws.
2. Central Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 (CGST Act) mandates for constitution of GSTAT and its Benches.
3. It will be presided a President and consists two technical members and two judicial members (one each from centre and state)



FACTS

4. GST council was formed under Article 279 A through 101st constitutional amendment act as a joint forum of center and states.
5. It comprises - Union Finance Minister - Chairperson ; Union Minister of State, in-charge of Revenue of finance - Member and Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government - Members
6. government will provide 90% of the money for the fund, and other asset managers would contribute the rest

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

India lists 13 activities for trading of carbon credits on global platform



Why in news: India has finalised its list of activities to be considered for trading of carbon credits in international carbon market under mechanism of the Paris Agreement

1. These broad mitigation activities in the list of 13 include renewable energy with storage, solar thermal power, off- shore wind, green hydrogen, compressed biogas, emerging mobility solutions like fuel cells and high end technology for energy efficiency.
2. Any entity can earn credits through these selected cleaner activities and those credits can be traded on a global platform. High emitting industries can buy credit to meet their emission rules.
3. Activities covered will be updated/revised by the National Designated Authority for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (NDAIAPA)
4. NDAIAPA was notified last year to take decisions in regard to the type of projects that may take part in the international carbon market under Article 6 (Paris Agreement)



(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

UP, Bihar among World's top 50 regions facing climate risk: Report

Why in news: The First ever physical climate risk analysis focused exclusively on the built environment points out that 80% of the top 50 most at-risk states and provinces in 2050 are in China, US and India.

1. Cross Dependency Initiative (XDI), part of a group of companies committed to quantifying and communicating the costs of climate change, calculated the physical climate risk to the built environment in over 2,600 states and provinces around the world in 2050.
2. Built environment refers to aspects of our surroundings that are built by man to support human
3. The XDI Gross Domestic Climate Risk data set compared these territories according to modelled projections of damage to buildings and properties from extreme weather and climate change such as flooding, forest fires, heatwave and sea level rise.
4. After China, India has the highest number of states (9) in the top 50, including Bihar, [Uttar Pradesh](#), Maharashtra and Punjab, which are at risk of damage to the built [environment](#) due to climate change hazards
5. Asia dominates the list of provinces at risk with more than 50% of the top 200 in 2050, with special focus on China and India.

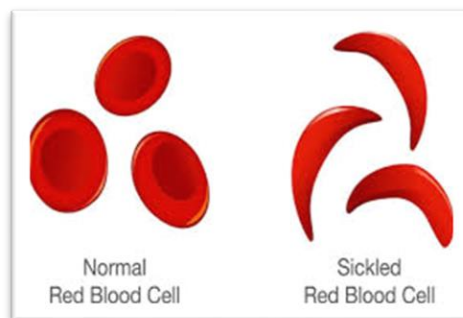


(SOURCE – HINDUSTAN TIMES)

Union Budget 2023-24: Eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047 'welcome step'

Why in news: The union budget 2023-24 aims to eliminate sickle cell anaemia – a genetic blood disorder by 2047

1. Sickle cell anaemia (SCA) elimination programme will entail awareness creation, universal screening of seven crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas, and counselling through collaborative efforts of central ministries and state governments.
2. Sickle cell disease is a genetic condition- that affects haemoglobin (responsible for carrying oxygen in the body) in red blood cells.
3. Complications of the disease can include anaemia, debilitating acute and chronic pain, infection, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and progressive organ damage, including decreased cognitive function and renal failure.
4. The disease is widespread among the tribal population in India. Nearly 20% of tribal children affected die before reaching the age of two, and 30% children die before reaching adulthood.
5. Women and children are more vulnerable to the disease.



(SOURCE – ECONOMICS TIMES)

International Mother Language Day

Why in news: February 21 is celebrated as the International Mother Language Day, as declared by the United Nations in 2000.

1. As per the UNESCO, this day aims to celebrate the ways of expressing the world in its multiplicity, committing to the preservation of the diversity of languages as a common heritage, and working for quality education in mother tongues for all.
2. The theme of the 24th edition of International Mother Language Day is 'multilingual education - a necessity to transform education'.
3. As per the 2018 Census report, India recorded 19,500 distinct entries for "mother tongue", of which only 121 were categorised and even fewer constitutionally recognized.
4. Under National Education Policy (NEP, 2020), wherever possible mother tongue should be the medium of instruction till Class 5 or preferably till Class 8.



(SOURCE – LIVE MINT)

UAE to host first I2U2 vice-ministerial meeting

Why in news: UAE recently hosted the vice-ministerial meeting of I2U2 at Abu Dabi

1. During the meeting, the leaders discussed regional cooperation and investment opportunities. They also discussed food insecurity and energy crisis issues.
2. Within the first two meetings, India gained 2 billion USD of investments in the states of Gujarat and MP in the field of hybrid energy projects.
3. I2U2 is a joint initiative of India, Israel, the USA, and the UAE.
4. The main objective of the initiative is security cooperation, technological hubs, food security, and other different energy fields.
5. The leaders of the initiative aim to increase private sector investments in the field of clean energy, emerging technologies, and waste treatment.



(SOURCE –THE HINDU)

Russia suspends START, the last Nuclear Treaty

Why in news: Russia has withdrawn from the treaty in the backdrop of US supporting Ukraine by funding war ammunition.

1. The START is a bilateral treaty signed between the US and the Soviet Union in 1991. It came into force in 1994.
2. Under the treaty, the countries agreed to bar 6,000 nuclear warheads and 1600 ICBMs (Intercontinental ballistic missiles).
3. More than 80% of the nuclear warheads were removed in 2001 with this treaty.
4. The original treaty expired in 2009 and NEW START Treaty was signed in 2010 - which applies till 2026.



(SOURCE –THE INDIAN EXPRESS)



Climate Performance Index (CPI)

Why in news: Observer research foundation has released CPI to evaluate performance of G20 countries in climate change mitigation

1. India ranks 1st among all G20 members in terms of overall climate performance
2. India's rank is attributed to factors like significantly low per capita contributions to emissions, Very limited share in legacy emissions relative to its population needs etc
3. Note - It is different from Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) published by Germanwatch

(SOURCE - PIB)



India to setup Digital University

Why in news: Minister of Skill Development Shri Dharmendra Pradhan recently announced that India will soon set up Digital University.

1. The Budget 2022-23 announced the establishment of a digital university.
2. The main objective of establishing a Digital University is to reduce the cost of higher education and increase access to skill programmes via promoting online learning in different Indian languages.
3. Other digital initiatives in education include - SWAYAM, SWAYAM-Prabha, ePG-Pathshala, eGyanKosh, National Digital Library.
 - a. SWAYAM : integrated platform and portal for online courses.
 - b. SWAYAM-Prabha : 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH
 - c. National Digital Library : project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.

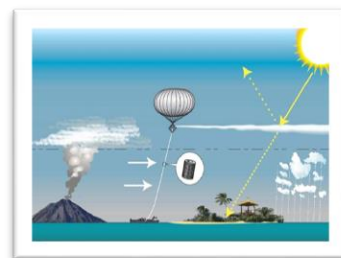


(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



Solar Radiation Management (SRM) technologies

Why in news : A paper recently published in the journal PLoS Climate proposed use of moon dust as a cooling solution to fight climate change.



1. SRM Technologies try to cool earth by artificially reflecting more sunrays back to space
2. Solar Radiation management can be done - in space, at atmosphere level or even on ground
3. Currently established SRM technologies include - Marine Cloud brightening, Cirrus cloud thinning, Stratospheric aerosol injection

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Nod To Commercial Release Of Nano-Diammonium Phosphate (Nano-Dap)

Why in news: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare gave its nod to commercial use of NANO-DAP.

1. Nano-DAP is a next-generation fertilizer produced by IFFCO and Coromandel International with nanoparticles of Nitrogen and Phosphorus, the primary macronutrients for plants.
2. A nanoparticle is a small particle that ranges between 1 to 100 nanometres in size.
3. Use of Nano -DAP has several advantages like - Reduced input cost, higher efficiency via higher nutrient uptake and environmental benefits of lower water consumption and nutrient run off
4. Nano-DAP is also expected to reduce subsidy burden and import dependence of DAP.
5. Currently, More than half of India's DAP requirements are imported, mainly from West Asia and Jordan.
6. However, there are concerns too regarding health effects of increased concentration of nano particles in food as well as on soil and crops.



(SOURCE – FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage



Why in news: 'Jadui Pitara' - a play-based LTM for age group of 3-8 years- has been developed under National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS).

1. National Education Policy 2020 proposed a 5+3+3+4 (Foundational + Preparatory + Middle + Secondary) curriculum pedagogical structure
2. A National Steering Committee will develop NCF for each of the stages.
3. NCF-FS emphasises play based learning for foundational stages. Accordingly, LTM for foundational stage was launched using the concept of Jaadui Pitara.
4. Jadui Pitara is available in 13 Indian languages and Comprises of playbooks, toys, puzzles, posters, story books etc. as well as reflecting local culture, social context and languages.
5. It involves learning and development in several domains including Physical Development, Socio-emotional and Ethical Development, Cognitive Development etc.

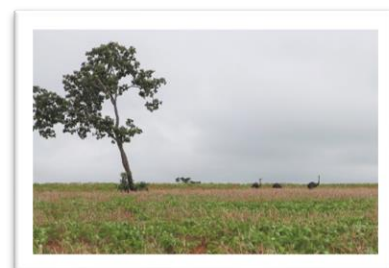


(SOURCE – DAILY PIONEER)

Fao Publishes Its First Global Assessment Of Soil Carbon In Grasslands

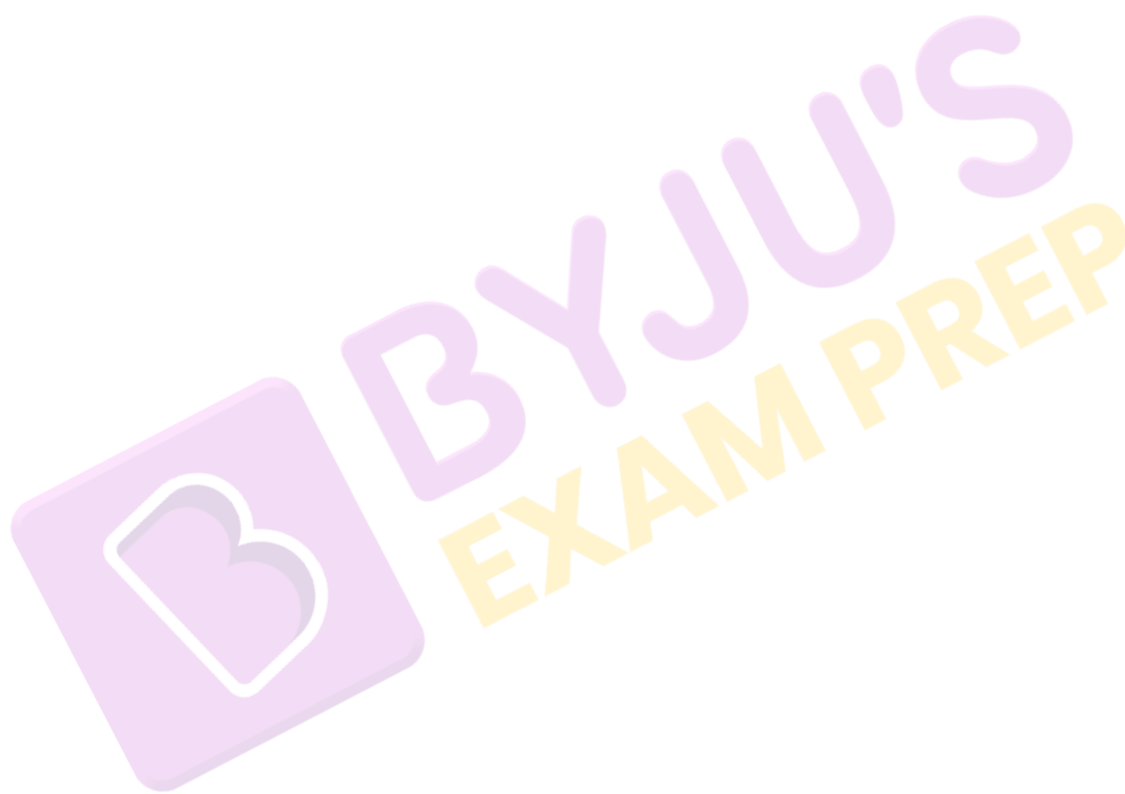
Why in news: The report measured Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) in both semi-natural and managed grasslands.

1. SOC helps in improving soil biological, chemical, and physical properties, water-holding capacity, and structural stability.
2. Moreover it is a cost-effective solution to mitigate climate change by reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide.
3. Key highlights of Assessment:
 - Grasslands, contain approximately 20% of world's SOC,
 - Loss of grasslands due to human activities such as intensive livestock grazing, agricultural activities etc.
 - Most of world's grasslands have a positive carbon balance, meaning land is stable. However, negative carbon balance was found in East Asia, Central and South America, and Africa south of Equator.
 - Recommendations:
 - i. Improve geostatistical methods and data accuracy related to SOC
 - ii. reversing grasslands loss by stimulating plant growth,
 - iii. capturing carbon in the soil
 - iv. protecting carbon in highly organic soils



Daily Current Affairs

(SOURCE – BUSINESS MIRROR)



Asia Economic Dialogue

Why in news: Ministry of External Affairs' flagship event on geo-economics - Asia Economic Dialogue - will be held from February 23-25 in Pune.

1. The principal theme for the Dialogue's seventh edition is 'Asia and the Emerging World Order'.
2. The dialogue will also discuss themes such as global growth prospects; How the Global South will shape the G20 agenda; the Metaverse: Understanding the Future; and Meeting climate targets: The Road Ahead.
3. More than 44 countries are going to participate in the dialogue, including Mexico, Singapore, Maldives, South Africa, the USA, Brazil, Switzerland, etc.
4. Significance - According to the IMF, Asia is one of the fast-growing markets in recent days. : With 4.7 billion people Asia accounts for 60% of world's population.

(SOURCE –ECONOMIC TIMES)

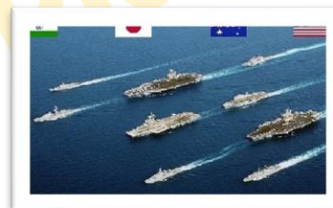


Malabar Naval exercise

Why in news: Australia to host Malabar naval exercise for first time this August

1. Australia will host the Malabar multilateral naval exercise, consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., for the first time this year.
2. Australia was included as a permanent member of Ex Malabar in 2020 amid the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh. Japan hosted the last edition of Malabar which was held in November 2022
3. Malbar ex began as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S. in 1992.
4. The exercise has grown in size, scope and complexity with Anti-Submarine Warfare training emerging as a major focus area in the last few years, especially against the backdrop of rapid expansion of Chinese Navy and its increased forays into the Indian Ocean.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



Auckland and Mumbai to collaborate on cancer care

Why in news: Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland and Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, sign a MOU to engage in long-term cooperation in cancer care and explore ways to enhance cancer care using digital health



1. Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland and Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH), Mumbai, the largest and the most renowned cancer care hospital and research centre in India, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to engage in long-term cooperation in cancer care.
2. Initial projects envisaged for the partnership include:
 - a. a digital platform for clinical trials to track study-related activities for patients, investigators and regulators;
 - b. a digital platform to make outpatient clinics more efficient; and a digital method to enhance prescription medicine safety, such as including connecting systems to ensure potential serious drug interactions are identified and flagged for the treating physician.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Anubhuti Inclusive Park

Why in news : The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways has laid the Foundation Stone of the world's largest Divyang Park - Anubhuti Inclusive Park in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

1. It is the world's first inclusive disabled park.
2. The park will be developed by Nagpur Improvement Trust
3. The park will have adapted facilities for all 21 types of disabilities, including a touch and smell garden, hydrotherapy unit, water therapy, and independent room for differently abled children, mothers, etc.
4. Facts :
 - Union government passed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 for protecting the promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and to give the disabled the right to live with dignity.
 - India is also signatory of the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



(SOURCE – FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

Report on “Assessment of Avoided CO2 Emissions during Construction and Operation of National Highways” released

Why in news : Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav today released the report on “Assessment of Avoided CO2 Emissions during Construction and Operation of National Highways” at the World Sustainable Development Summit.



1. The study assesses the extent of CO₂ which can be avoided per km in construction of the National Highways.
2. India has the 2nd longest road network in the world. Construction and maintenance of roads is known to be a source of CO₂, which is over and above the CO₂ emitted from fuel operated vehicles on roads.
3. Report findings -
 - In 2016, about 243 million tonnes of CO₂ was emitted from the operation of fossil fuel run vehicles in India, which is 10.8% of the total national CO₂ emissions.
 - The new and improved state of the art NH replacing congested and often circuitous routes, however, can help avoid CO₂ emissions by reducing fuel combustion
 - Avenue plantations and compensatory afforestation can additionally sequester CO₂, offsetting CO₂ emitted from highway operations as a whole.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

Why in news: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed a TKDL Access Agreement with Eurasian Patent Organisation.

1. The agreement will allow EPO to access TKDL database for purposes of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) grant.
2. TKDL, was established in 2001, by CSIR and Ministry of AYUSH.
3. It is first of its kind database of Indian traditional knowledge containing information related to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Yoga in five international languages
4. It acts as a bridge between traditional knowledge existing in local languages and patent examiners at IPOs.
5. It prevents misappropriation of country's traditional medicinal knowledge through patenting – acting as an efficient deterrent against bio-piracy.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

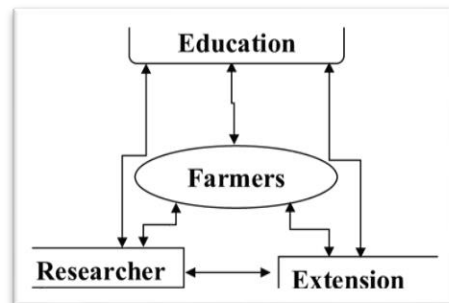


Govt approves five-year project on "Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture in J&K"

Why in news: In Jammu and Kashmir, in order to give a huge push to sustainable agriculture in the Union Territory, the Government has approved a five-year project on "Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture in J&K".

1. The project, worth 463 crore rupees, is aimed at empowering farmers and educated youth through technology driven and inclusive agri-extension services.
2. The project aims at creating 2000 Kissan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), at Panchayat level; as a hub of convergence of services at the district level they will also serve as a One Stop Centre for extension services.
3. The project will also establish business orientation centres at Sher-E- Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) and facilitate real-time problem redressal through cyber extension including RS-GIS-driven agro-advisories and ICT-based virtual contacts and communication systems.
4. The project will also create a strong MIS system to maintain transparency and accountability in service delivery and information sharing with parent departments and administration.

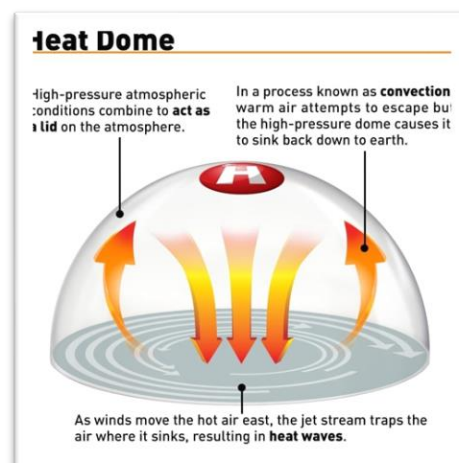
(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



Heat Dome Over North-West India May Start Retracting: India Meteorological Department (IMD)

Why in news: IMD predicts that it is likely to recede from land and back off into Central Arabian Sea soon, making way for moisture-laden western disturbances

1. Anticyclonic conditions over North-West India had caused unusual heat in February.
2. Heat dome is a high-pressure circulation in atmosphere which traps heat at surface - favoring heatwave formation
3. Often times, heat domes are associated with jet stream patterns (high atmospheric fast winds that generally run west to east).
4. Jet stream have a meandering wavelike pattern
5. When these meanders in jet stream become bigger, they move slower and can become stationary and resulting into heat domes.
6. Hot air typically rises into atmosphere, but dome's lid causes air to sink.



7. As air sinks, it compresses and becomes warmer that causes temperature in dome to rise continually.
8. Effects of heat dome:
 - a. harmful for standing agricultural crops
 - b. wildfire risks
 - c. health hazards like - exhaustion , heat rash, heat stroke etc.

(SOURCE – HINDU BUSINESSLINE)

India urges UNCLOS for early conclusion of – Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Why in news: India supported early conclusion of the International Legally Binding Instrument of BBNJ under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) during the ongoing inter-governmental conference.



1. “BBNJ Treaty”, also known as the “Treaty of the High Seas”, is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction within the framework of the UNCLOS.
2. BBNJ encompasses the high seas, beyond the exclusive economic zones or national waters of countries.
3. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), these areas account for “almost half of the Earth’s surface”.
4. These areas are hardly regulated and also least understood or explored for its biodiversity - only 1% of these areas are under protection .
5. Facts-
 - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 is an international agreement that establishes the legal framework for marine and maritime activities.
 - It is also known as Law of the Sea.
 - It divides marine areas into five main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

Ajay Banga US nominee for world bank



Why in news: US President Joe Biden has nominated former Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga for the position of World Bank president.

1. Notably, he is the first Indian-born nominee for the role of World Bank President.
2. Biden also stated that Ajay has a critical experience mobilising public-private resources to tackle the most urgent challenges. He has critical experience mobilizing public-private resources to tackle the most urgent challenges of our time, including climate change," Biden said.
3. Facts-
 - a. World Bank Group consists of 5 development institutions.
 - b. **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** provides loans, credits, and grants.
 - c. **International Development Association (IDA)** provides low- or no-interest loans to low-income countries.
 - d. **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** provides investment, advice, and asset management to companies and governments.
 - e. **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)** insures lenders and investors against political risk such as war.
 - f. **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)** settles investment-disputes between investors and countries.



(SOURCE – LIVE MINT)

MOU between IFC-IOR and Seychelles RCOC to strengthen maritime cooperation

Why in news: Navy's IFC-IOR ties up with Seychelles centre for enhancing maritime domain awareness.

1. The MoU aims to promote collaboration towards enhancing maritime domain awareness, information sharing and expertise development
2. Information Fusion Center - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), was established in 2018 in Gurugram by Indian Navy to strengthen Maritime Safety and Security in Indian Ocean Region.
3. It acts as a maritime information hub for the region.
4. It is the single point center linking all the coastal radar chains to generate a seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500-km coastline.
5. To enable better correlation and timely inputs, IFC-IOR hosts International Liaison Officers (ILOs) from partner nations like US, Japan Australia, France, Italy, UK.



(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



Singareni Thermal Power Plant, Telangana set to become first public sector thermal plant in South to have FGD facility

Why in news : Singareni Thermal Power Plant (STPP) is set to become the first public sector coal-based power generating station in the South and first among the State PSUs in the country to have flu gas desulphurization (FGD) plant to meet the green norms by cutting sulphur dioxide emission to a safe level.



1. Flue-gas desulfurization (FGD) allows to remove sulfur dioxide (SO₂) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants and from the emissions of other sulfur oxide emitting processes such as waste incineration, petroleum refineries, cement and lime kilns.
2. Some common FGD methods :
 - **Wet scrubbing** - using a slurry of alkaline sorbent, usually limestone or lime, or seawater to scrub gases;
 - **Spray-dry scrubbing** - using similar sorbent slurries;
 - **Wet sulfuric acid process** - recovering sulfur in the form of commercial quality sulfuric acid;
 - **Dry sorbent injection systems** - introduce powdered hydrated lime (or other sorbent material) into exhaust ducts to eliminate SO₂ and SO₃ from process emissions;
 - **SNOX Flue gas desulfurization** - removes sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates from flue gases.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

NHAI to explore use of phosphor-gypsum in highway construction

Why in news : National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers said that field trials on NHAI projects for use of Phosphor-Gypsum in National Highway construction to achieve a circular economy in the use of Gypsum will be taken up.



1. Phosphor-Gypsum is a by-product of phosphate fertilizer production
2. NHAI is also encouraging use of waste plastic in road construction, which tested very successfully.



- a. Studies established that roads built using plastic waste are durable, sustainable and increases life of the bitumen.
3. NHAI has also used 'Fly Ash' - fine residue of coal combustion in the Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) for construction of Highways and flyover embankments.

Gypsum vs Phosphogypsum		
More Information Online WWW.DIFFERENCEBETWEEN.COM		
	Gypsum	Phosphogypsum
DEFINITION	Gypsum is a mineral containing calcium sulfate, and it has the molecular formula $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$.	Phosphogypsum refers to the hydrated calcium sulfate that forms as a byproduct of fertilizer production from phosphate rock
OCCURRENCE	Natural	Synthetic
PRODUCTION	Via mining or quarrying	As a byproduct of phosphate fertilizer production

(SOURCE – LIVE MINT)

Excavations in Keeladi region since 2015 prove that an urban civilisation existed in Tamil Nadu in the Sangam age

Why in news: ASI and Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department excavated Keeladi site, a Sangam period settlement.



1. Keeladi is a tiny hamlet in the Sivaganga district in south Tamil Nadu located along the Vaigai river.
2. The excavations here from 2015 prove that an urban civilisation existed in Tamil Nadu
3. It belongs to period between 5th century BCE to 3rd century CE.
4. Key facts about Sangam period
 - This sangam was an academy of poets who flourished in three different periods under the patronage of Pandyan kings.
 - The Sangam literature, which was largely consolidated from the third Sangam, sheds light on people's living conditions and gives information about public and social activities like government, war, charity, trade, worship, agriculture, etc.
 - Sangam literature contains earliest Tamil works (Tolkappiyam), the ten poems (Pattupattu), the eight anthologies (Ettutogai) and the eighteen minor works (Padinenkilkanakku), and the three epics.



(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

SEBI plans to allow perpetual funds in India

Why in news: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is deliberating on allowing permanent capital vehicles (PCVs), evergreen or perpetual funds, where the capital available is managed for an unlimited period of time, into India.

1. Traditional funds have a finite tenure, on the other hand perpetual funds have an open term with respect to tenure and don't have a sunset period.
2. These funds can potentially exist for perpetuity and are aimed at long-term investors such as pension funds and insurance firms which do not want return of capital but regular income.
3. The funds could be structured in a way to give investors an option to redeem a certain portion of their investment after a 5, 10 or 15-year lock-in.
4. PCVs can thus be considered as an alternative to PE funds with limited life cycles.
5. They can be of various types, including limited partnerships traded publicly on an exchange, real estate investment trusts, closed-ended funds, interval funds and variable funds such as annuities and life insurance.



(SOURCE – FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

Mumbai's Churchgate railway station to be renamed after India's first RBI Governor

Why in news: The Churchgate railway station in Mumbai will soon be renamed after the first governor of RBI - CD Deshmukh (Chintaman Dwarakanath Deshmukh). The station will be called 'Chintamanrao Deshmukh station'.

1. Chintaman Dwarkanath Deshmukh, popularly called CD Deshmukh, was the first Indian to be appointed as the Governor of RBI. He served as the Governor from 1943 to 1949.
2. As the Governor, he oversaw the management of the Indian currency and banking system during the challenging times of World War II and the early years of India's independence.
3. One of Deshmukh's notable achievements as the Governor was the establishment of the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) in 1948 - to provide long-term



finance to industrial projects, which was crucial for development of India's industrial sector.

4. Deshmukh also played a key role in the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) after World War II. He represented India at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, where the IMF and the IBRD were established.

(SOURCE – TIMES NOW)

Chicago Convention On International Civil Aviation

Why in news: Cabinet clears ratifying protocols related to Chicago Convention on international civil aviation.

1. The concerned protocols include –
 - a. insert Article 3 b : refrain member States from use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight.
 - b. amend Article 50 (a) for raising strength of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council from 36 to 40.
 - c. amend Article 56 : raising strength of Air Navigation Commission from 18 to 21.
2. Articles of Convention establish privileges and obligations of all contracting States and promote international ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices adoption that regulate international air transport.
3. About International Civil Aviation Organization :
 - a. Chicago Convention led to creation of ICAO in 1944
 - b. It is a specialized agency of United Nations linked to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
 - c. India is a founding member .
 - d. It has 193 state parties including all UN members except Liechtenstein.

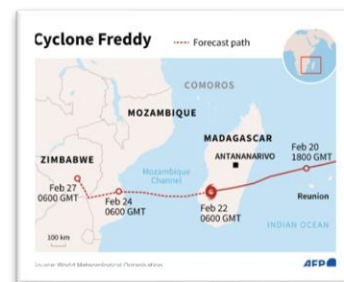


(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

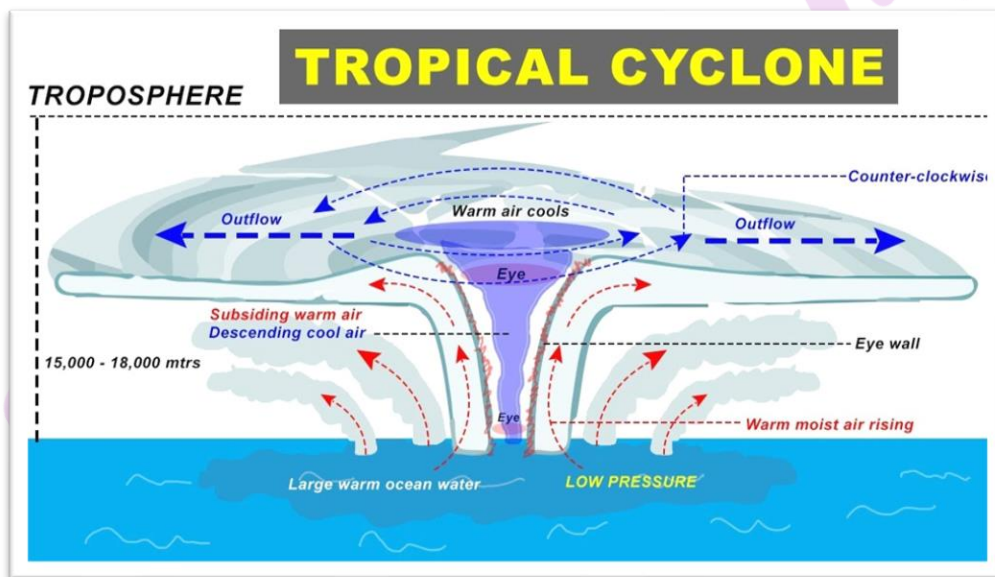
Cyclone Freddy Hits Madagascar And Mozambique.

Why in news: A total of 78,078 people in Madagascar have been affected by the flooding caused by the torrential rain and strong winds.

1. Cyclones are rapid inward air circulation around a low-pressure area.



2. The air circulates in an anticlockwise direction in the Northern hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern hemisphere.
3. Cyclones are usually accompanied by violent storms and bad weather
4. Tropical originate over oceans in tropical areas and move over to the coastal areas bringing about large scale destruction caused by violent winds, very heavy rainfall and storm surges
5. The conditions favourable for the formation and intensification of tropical storms are:
 - a. A pre-existing weak low- pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation.
 - b. Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27°C .
 - c. Presence of Coriolis force.
 - d. Small variations in vertical wind speed.
 - e. Upper divergence above sea level system.

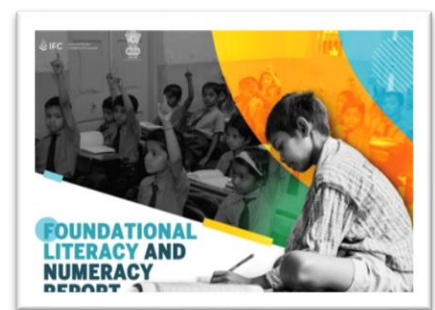


(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

The Foundational Literacy And Numeracy Report

Why in news: West Bengal on top, Uttar Pradesh at bottom of index for literacy among children below 10 years

1. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy refers to the ability of a child (between ages of 3 and 8) to read basic texts and do basic mathematical problems such as addition and subtraction.



2. The second edition of the report highlights focus on language as a critical foundational skill and its importance in acquiring early literacy.
3. The report is a benchmark for states and UTs to track their performance relative to their peers in achieving universal foundational learning by 2026-27.
4. The report's findings cover the role of nutrition, access to digital technology and language-focused instructional approach.
5. Recommendations:
 - Need to integrate mother tongue as medium of instruction
 - Need for data monitoring along with clearly defined outcome-based indicators on pedagogical framework and education in India.

(SOURCE – PIB)

Government Approved Integration Of 101 APMC Mandis Into E-NAM

Why in news : 101 more APMC mandis to be connected with e-NAM by March-end.

1. E-NAM (National Agriculture Market) is an online trading platform for agriculture produce aiming to help farmers, traders, and buyers with online trading and getting a better price by smooth marketing.
2. e-NAM provides single window services for all Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) related services and information. This includes commodity arrivals, quality & prices, buy & sell offers & e-payment settlement directly into farmers account, among other services.
3. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
4. Benefits of Trading on eNAM
 - Transparency via Online Trading
 - Better Price Realization For Producers
 - Reduced Transaction Cost For Buyers
 - Stable Price and Availability to Consumers
 - Efficient Supply Chain
 - Quality Certification, Warehousing, and Logistics
 - Enhanced Accessibility to the Market

(SOURCE – THE HINDU BUISNESSLINE)



Social Stock Exchange

Why in news : The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has received the capital market regulator's nod to launch social stock exchanges (SSEs) as a new segment.

Social Stock Exchange -
An innovative network
for raising money for
social ventures

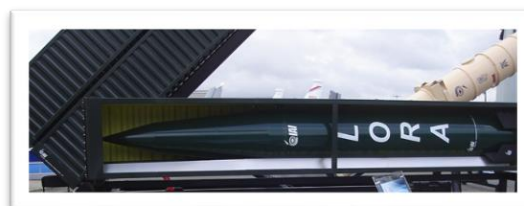


1. SSE function as a platform to allow For-Profit Social Enterprises (FPEs) and not-for-profit organisations (NPO) with a social purpose to raise funds.
2. The Social Stock Exchange segment will provide new avenue for social enterprises to finance social initiatives, provide them visibility and bring in increased transparency in fund mobilisation and utilisation by social enterprises
3. SSEs are a fundraising platform specifically created for social enterprises so that they can tap into broader sources of donations.
4. The process of listing for SSEs works akin to normal initial public offerings (IPOs). However, instead of shares, the participants are allotted Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments. Also, in normal IPOs investors can sell their shares post listing and make profits but ZCZPs don't yield any returns. In that sense, they are more like donations.
5. Benefits of SSE:
 - a. Leverage private sector participation in social development
 - b. Enables public participation in social causes through equity route.
 - c. Provides additional capital to improve lives of underserved.

(SOURCE – ECONOMICS TIMES)

LORA Weapon System (LORA) For Indian Tri-Services.

Why in news: Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) has signed an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for domestic manufacture and supply of its LORA Weapon System for the Indian Tri-services.



1. LORA ("Long Range Attack") is a theater quasi-ballistic missile produced in Israel.
2. It is a sea-to-ground and ground-to-ground system comprising a long-range ballistic missile, a unique launcher, a command and control system, and a ground/marine support system.
3. The LORA system provides ballistic assault capabilities for multiple ranges with a precision level of 10 meters CEP.



4. It has a range of 400 kilometres (250 mi) and a CEP of 10 metres when using a combination of GPS and TV for terminal guidance.
5. It can be ship-launched from inside of a standard Intermodal container as well as land-launched.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Dekho Apna Desh Initiative

Why in news: IRCTC to operate Baba Saheb Ambedkar Yatra tour package under “Dekho Apna Desh” initiative, covering some of the prominent sites associated with the life of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar.



1. Under “Dekho Apna Desh” initiative, Ministry of Railways along with Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), is operating Bharat Gaurav Tourist Trains on various theme based circuits across India.
2. About Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
 - a. Popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, he was one of the main architects of the Indian constitution.
 - b. He dedicated his life to eradicating untouchability and other social inequality in India.
 - c. He was a very well known political leader, philosopher, writer, economist, scholar and a social reformer.
 - d. In 1923, he set up the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association)', which was devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden.
 - e. He led Mahad satyagraha in 1927 to allow untouchables to use water in a public tank in Mahad (currently in Raigad district), Maharashtra.
 - f. He attended all the three Round Table Conferences (1930-32)
 - g. In 1936, he founded the Independent Labour Party.
 - h. He was the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly

(SOURCE – PIB)

Meta Launched New Llama

Why in news: Meta launches LLaMA model, a research tool more potent than OpenAI's GPT-3.

1. After OpenAI's ChatGPT brought about a revolution, Google unveiled its BARD and now Meta has released Large Language Model Meta AI (LLaMA).



2. LLaMA is a state-of-the-art foundational language model developed to assist researchers in their work in the subfield of AI.
3. LLaMA is not essentially a chatbot; it is a research tool that, according to Meta, will likely solve issues concerning AI language models
4. Large language models or LLMs are AI systems that consume massive volumes of digital text from internet sources such as articles, news reports, and social media posts.
5. These digital texts are used to train software that predicts and produces content from scratch based on prompts and queries. These models can help in tasks such as writing essays, composing social media posts, suggesting programming code, and generating chatbot conversations.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

World Bank's IFC to provide Sri Lanka with \$400 million financing

Why in news: The island nation's economy is estimated to have contracted by 9.2% in 2022 and is expected to shrink a further 4.2% in 2023, according to World Bank data



1. Three private banks will receive the facility to fund about 30% of imports, including medicine, food and fertiliser, the IFC said in a statement on February 27.
2. The funds will provide a much-needed foreign exchange cushion for Sri Lanka, which is grappling with its worst financial crisis in over seven decades partly triggered by a severe shortage of dollars.
3. IFC is also working on further plans to support client banks with other long-term funding and advisory services in the future, the statement added.
4. Sri Lanka signed a preliminary agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$2.9 billion bailout last September but has to put its debt on a sustainable repayment track before the funds can be disbursed.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

India ranks 42 among 55 countries on International IP Index



Why in news: India ranks 42nd among 55 leading global economies on the International IP Index released by the U.S. Chambers of Commerce, according to which India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation.



1. "As India's size and economic influence grows on the world stage, India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation," Patrick Kilbride, senior vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Center, who publishes the annual report, said on Friday.
2. According to the report, which covers everything from patent and copyright laws to the ability to monetise IP assets and the ratification of international agreements, India has maintained continued strong efforts in copyright piracy through the issuing of "dynamic" injunction orders.
3. India not only has generous R&D and IP-based tax incentives, but also has a strong awareness-raising efforts regarding the negative impact of piracy and counterfeiting. It is a global leader on targeted administrative incentives for the creation and use of IP assets for SMEs, it said
4. "India has taken steps to improve enforcement against copyright-infringing content and provides a best-in-class framework to promote better understanding and utilisation of IP assets. However, addressing long-standing gaps in its IP framework will be critical to India's ability to create a new model for the region and India's continued economic growth," Mr. Kilbride said.
5. By analysing the IP landscape in global markets, the Index aims to help nations navigate toward a brighter economic future marked by greater innovation, creativity, and competitiveness.
6. Following a decade of steady, incremental, improvement in IP systems worldwide, a deluge of proposals under consideration by US and international policy leaders, including at multilateral organisations, threatens to compromise hard-won economic gains, a media release said.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Pink Bollworm-resistant GM cotton gets green light for field trials in Haryana's Hisar

Why in news: India's biotech regulator GEAC gave Bioseed Research India approval to conduct BRL-1 trial for resistance against Pink Bollworm during the Kharif season.



1. Within months of approving new field trials for an array of genetically engineered crops including mustard,



potatoes and rubber in the country for the first time in 16 years, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has approved confined field trials for Pink Bollworm-resistant GM cotton in Hisar, Haryana. The second edition of the report highlights focus on language as a critical foundational skill and its importance in acquiring early literacy.

2. Despite applying to conduct the BRL-I trials in five locations- Janwada (Telangana), Jalna (Maharashtra), Akola (Maharashtra), Junagadh (Gujarat), and Hisar (Haryana)- Bioseed Research India has only thus far gotten a no objection certificate from the Haryana government.
3. The BRL-I trials are constrained experiments in which a single acre of land may be sown at each trial site. At this time, researchers are only able to plant the seeds on a total of 20 acres at once.

(SOURCE – KRISHI JAGRAN)

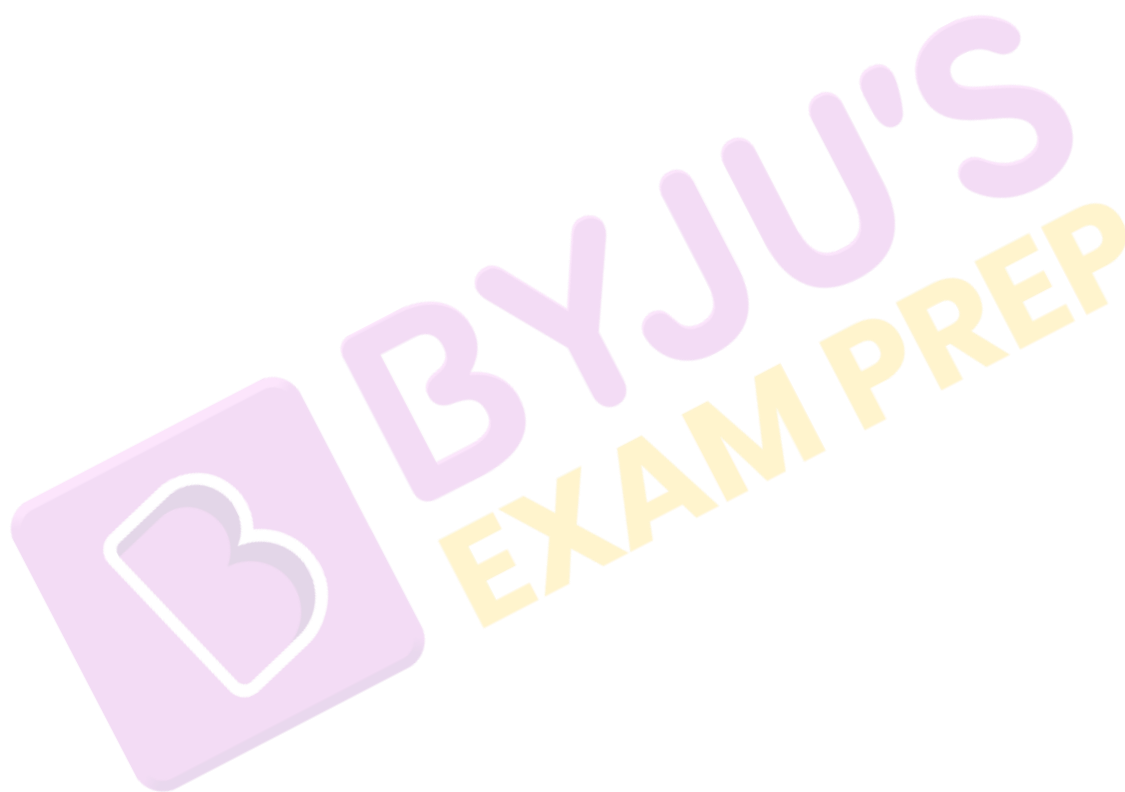
IAF to participate in multi-national exercise 'Cobra Warrior' in UK

Why in news : This exercise will enable IAF to participate in diverse fighter aircraft engagements and learn from the best practices of various Air Forces

1. Indian Air Force (IAF) will participate in multilateral air exercise 'Exercise Cobra Warrior' at the RAF's Waddington Air Force Base in the UK from March 6 to 24, an official statement said.
2. This year, the IAF is participating in the exercise with five Mirage 2000 fighters, two C-17 Globemaster III and an IL-78 mid air refueller aircraft. An Indian Air Force contingent comprising 145 Air Warriors departed from the Air Force Station in Jamnagar on Sunday for the UK to participate in the exercise, where the RAF and the IAF will be joined by contingents from Finland, Sweden, South Africa, the US, and Singapore.
3. On February 21, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a telephonic conversation with his UK counterpart Ben Wallace, where he called on UK companies to become part of India's growth story and participate in co-development and co-production in the country.
4. Both Ministers discussed a wide range of defence and security issues, including regional developments and the Indo-Pacific, as well as reviewing their ongoing defence cooperation and expressing satisfaction at their bilateral military-to-military engagements.

(SOURCE – BUSINESS STANDARD)





Exercise Desert Flag VIII: For first time, LCA Tejas to take part in a global air exercise

Why in news : An IAF contingent comprising of 110 Air Warriors arrived at the Al Dahfra air base in the UAE to participate in the exercise, in which five LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft would take part, the IAF said Saturday



1. For the first time, India's indigenously-made light combat aircraft Tejas will be participating in an international multilateral air exercise — Exercise Desert Flag VIII — in the UAE, reflecting India's increasing efforts at showcasing the jet at the world stage.
2. An Indian Air Force contingent comprising of 110 Air Warriors arrived at the Al Dahfra airbase of the United Arab Emirates to participate in the exercise, in which five LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft would take part, the IAF said Saturday. The exercise is scheduled from 27 February to 17 March.
3. "This is the first occasion when the LCA Tejas shall participate in an international flying exercise outside India," the IAF said in a statement.
4. As per the IAF, Exercise Desert Flag is a multilateral air exercise which will see participation from the air forces of the UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, the UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea, and the US.
5. "The aim of the exercise is to participate in diverse fighter engagements and learn from the best practices of various air forces," the IAF said.
6. India has been in talks with several countries to export LCA Tejas, including Argentina and Egypt. India was also hopeful of selling the platform to Malaysia, but the country has signed a deal with Korean Aerospace Industries for supply of 18 FA-50 light combat aircraft.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

PM has advised all states to adopt Parivar Pehchan Patra scheme, says Khattar

Why in news: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has advised all the states to adopt the state's ambitious Parivar Pehchan Patra (family id card) scheme.

1. Khattar was addressing the public at Janta Darbar held in Karnal district in which he listened to the problems of the people and ordered on-the-spot redressal.
2. According to the government, the Haryana Parivar Pehchan Bill, 2021, was passed in the assembly earlier to provide the Parivar Pehchan number as a unique identifier number to each family "as is generally required for the determination of eligibility for any scheme, service, subsidy or benefit provided or implemented by or on behalf of the state government or by any government agency or local authority".

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



The Maharaja Sayajirao University will host a two-day Youth20 (Y20) India Summit Saturday with focus on the theme of climate change and environmental conservation.

Why in news: The conference, to be inaugurated by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, will see over 600 delegates from 62 countries participate to discuss 'Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction: Making sustainability a Way of Life'.



1. Organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to mark the celebration of India's G20 Presidency, 167 delegates from G20 nations, eight international scholars, 12 national scholars, 25 international delegates, 25 national delegates, 25 representatives of Youth Ministry, 50 start-ups working on environment, 15 Shodh scholars, 10 NSS members and 250 students of various universities from the field of urban planning, climate change and environment studies participate in the discussions.
2. On Friday, Union Ministry of Youth Affairs Secretary Meeta Lochan arrived at MSU to oversee the preparations. Four plenary sessions have been lined up during the international conference.
3. On Friday, the delegation of participants also went around Vadodara city for a heritage walk.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

Scientists discover new layer at Earth's inner core

Why in news: A team of researchers has found evidence of a new layer to the planet sitting within the inner core. Earlier, it was thought the Earth's structure comprised four distinct layers – the crust, the mantle, the outer core and the inner core, but the current findings confirm there is a fifth layer.



1. The researchers believe they have documented evidence of a distinct layer inside Earth known as the "innermost inner core", a solid "metallic ball" that sits within the centre of the inner core, by measuring the different speeds at which these waves penetrate and pass through the Earth's inner core
2. "The existence of an internal metallic ball within the inner core, the innermost inner core, was hypothesised about 20 years ago. We now provide another line of evidence to prove the hypothesis," said Thanh-Son Phaim, from the ANU Research School of Earth Sciences.



3. The scientists looked at seismic waves that travel directly through the Earth's core and 'spit out' on the opposite side of the globe from where the earthquake occurred, also known as the antipode. The waves then return to the epicentre of the quake. The researchers from the ANU compare the process to a ping pong ball bouncing back and forth
4. "The findings are exciting because they provide a new way to probe the Earth's inner core and its centre-most region," he added. (IANS)

(SOURCE – SENTINEL ASSAM)

WHO : Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020 report

Why in news: WHO released - Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020 report.

1. Maternal Mortality Ratio is maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.
2. The report showed –
 - a. Globally, Maternal mortality declined by 34 % between 2000 and 2020.
 - b. Every day in 2020, approximately 800 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth i.e., a woman dies around every two minutes.
 - c. In 2020, about 70% of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa.
 - d. India recorded 24,000 maternal deaths in 2020, second only to Nigeria
 - e. However, there has been an overall reduction of 73.5 per cent in maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in India — deaths per lakh live births — between 2000 and 2020
 - f. In 2020, India's MMR stood at 103, a vast improvement from 384 at the turn of the century.
3. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.1 aims to reduce maternal mortality to less than 70 maternal deaths per 100000 live births by 2030.

(SOURCE – DOWN TO EARTH)

Fab 4 (Chip 4) Alliance

Why in news : US-led 'Fab 4' chip alliance met to coordinate supply chain resilience

1. Fab 4 or Chip 4 is an alliance of world's top producers of semiconductors: Taiwan, United States, Japan and South Korea.
2. It was proposed by US in 2022 to enhance the "security" and "resilience" of semiconductor supply chains, including by reducing the world's reliance on chips made in China.



3. Facts :

- Semiconductors are materials which have a conductivity between conductors and insulators.
- They can be pure elements, silicon or germanium or compounds, gallium, arsenide or cadmium selenide.
- They are the basic building blocks of all modern electronics and information and communications technology (ICT) products.

4. Steps taken by Indian Government :

- India has launched Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) - for manufacturing of electronics components and semiconductors.
- In 2021, MeitY also launched Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme - to nurture at least 20 domestic companies involved in semiconductor design and facilitate them to achieve a turnover of more than Rs.1500 Crore in the next 5 years.

(SOURCE – BLOOMBERG)

Hayabusa 2 Mission

Why in news: Scientists at NASA recently discovered life-forming molecules from studying samples returned by Hayabusa 2 explorer



- Hayabusa 2 is a Japanese spacecraft that studied the asteroid Ryugu, collected samples, and brought them to Earth for analysis.
- It was the first to deploy rovers to operate on an asteroid.
- It was launched by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in December 2014 and arrived at asteroid Ryugu on June 2018, collected samples from the asteroid during two touchdowns in 2019, and delivered the sample capsule back to the Earth on December 2020.
- Mission Objectives:
 - To understand origin and evolution of Solar System, including beginning of life.
 - To establish deep space exploration technology by taking on new challenges.
- Hayabusa2 is a follow-up to Japan's original Hayabusa mission, which was the first spacecraft to take samples from an asteroid, and was also the first mission to successfully land and take off from an asteroid. It returned samples from asteroid 25143 Itokawa to Earth on June 13, 2010.

(SOURCE – WION)



8th Raisina Dialogue

Why in news : MEA announced Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni would be the chief guest and keynote speaker at the 8th Raisina Dialogue.



1. Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.
2. It is annually organized by Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India since 2016.
3. It is multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion involving heads of state, cabinet ministers, and local government officials, leaders from the private sector, media, and academia.
4. About Observer Research Foundation (ORF):
 - Established in 1990
 - It is an independent think tank that conducts policy research on good governance, foreign policy, and sustainable economic development for India.
 - Mandate: It seeks to lead and aid policy thinking towards building a strong and prosperous India in a fair and equitable world.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

Australia's Deakin University to become the first foreign varsity to set up campus in India

Why in news : Australia's Deakin University is set to become the first foreign university to enter India via an independent campus in Gujarat's GIFT City.



1. Australia's Deakin University is set to become the first foreign university to set up campus in India. The University will set up an independent campus in Gujarat's GIFT City.
2. The Deakin University is ranked 266th in the QS World University Rankings and features among the top 50 young universities in the world.
3. Budget 2022 speech mentioned permitting world class foreign universities and institutions to offer courses in the GIFT City and that such institutions would be exempted from domestic regulations in order to facilitate the availability of high-end human resources for financial services and technology.



4. About Gujarat International Finance Tech-City (GIFT City):
- It is a planned business district in Gujarat ; located on the banks of Sabarmati River, connecting business capital (Ahmedabad) and political capital (Gandhinagar) of Gujarat state.
 - It is India's first operational greenfield smart city and International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).
 - It has a dedicated multi-services Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for international operations for various services sector players.
 - It is a vertical city that will optimise the land area consumption .

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

AIIMS, New Delhi has developed 'AFTER', a new tool to detect human emotions

Why in news: AIIMS has developed a new tool to map emotions that can help treat autism, schizophrenia and depression



- In a way forward to treating people with autism, schizophrenia and depression, doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Delhi have come up with a new tool to detect human emotions known as Facial Toolbox for Emotion Recognition (AFTER) database.
- It will create an emotional facial expression database (collection of images with great social and biological relevance).
- It rates emotions on a 5-point Likert scale in three dimensions: intensity, clarity, and authenticity.
- Likert scale is a unidimensional scale that researchers use to collect respondents' attitudes and opinions.
- It will be useful in treating persons with autism, schizophrenia, and depression.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

One nation one ration card

Why in news: PMO recently applauded success of 'One Nation One Ration Card', due to which several poor are getting rations in a transparent way.



- Under the ONORC scheme all NFSA beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, can claim either full or part foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) in the country through existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar authentication in a seamless manner.



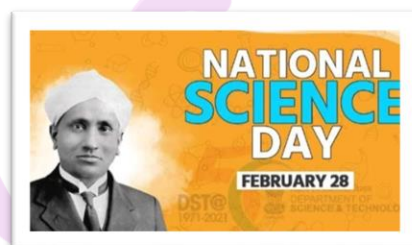
2. It is being implemented under National Food Security Act (NFSA).
3. The system also allows their family members back home, if any, to claim the balance foodgrains on same the ration card.
4. It empowers all NFSA beneficiaries to become AtmaNirbhar for their food security anywhere in the country, through portability of their existing ration cards enabling them.

(SOURCE – PIB)

National Science Day

Why in news: National Science Day is celebrated every year on February 28 to mark and recognise the contributions of scientists towards the development of the country.

1. It commemorates the discovery of the Raman Effect by Nobel laureate and Physicist CV Raman on this day in 1928.
2. For his work, CV Raman was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
3. Raman Effect or Raman Scattering refers to change in the wavelength of light that occurs when a light beam is deflected by molecules.
 - a. When a beam of light traverses a dust-free, transparent sample of a chemical compound, a small fraction of the light emerges in directions other than that of the incident (incoming) beam.
 - b. Most of this scattered light is of unchanged wavelength. A small part, however, has wavelengths different from that of the incident light and its presence is a result of the Raman Effect.
 - c. Use : The Raman effect forms the basis for Raman spectroscopy which is used by chemists and physicists to gain information about materials.
 - i. Spectroscopy is the study of the interaction between matter and electromagnetic radiation.



(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)



Daily Current Affairs

Monthly Practice Quiz

1. Which of the following countries emerged as India's largest export destination during the April-December period of FY2022-23?

- A. United States of America
- B. United Arab Emirates
- C. China
- D. United Kingdom
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* United States of America countries emerged as India's largest export destination during the April-December period of FY2022-23. It was followed by the United Arab Emirates and Netherlands.

* India's top 10 trade partners during the April-December 2022-23 period were the U.S., UAE, Netherlands, China, Bangladesh, Singapore, Brazil, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

* India's trade surplus with the Netherlands increased from \$1.5 billion in 2017 to \$12.3 billion in 2022-23 so far.

2. As per Bloomberg Billionaires Index in January 2023, Gautam Adani secured which rank among global billionaires?

- A. 5th
- B. 6th
- C. 10th
- D. 11th
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| D



Solution |||

* As per Bloomberg Billionaires Index in January 2023, Gautam Adani secured 11th rank among global billionaires.

* Having lost \$36 billion of his wealth so far in January following a rout in company share prices in the aftermath of the Hindenburg report, Gautam Adani has now lost his position in the elite club of the world's 10 richest billionaires.

* The index provides for the detailed calculations in the net worth analysis of each profile page of the billionaires. These figures are updated at the end of every trading day in New York.

3. As per the IMF's World Economic Outlook update in January 2023, what is the estimated economic growth rate in India in 2023?

- A. 7.2%
- B. 6.8%
- C. 6.1%
- D. 5.9%
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

* 'Growth in India is set to decline from 6.8 percent in 2022 to 6.1 percent in 2023,' as per the IMF's World Economic Outlook update in January 2023.

* The IMF released the January update of its World Economic Outlook, according to which the global growth is projected to fall from an estimated 3.4% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023, then rise to 3.1% in 2024.

* India and China will account for half of the global economic growth in 2023 versus just a tenth for the US and Euro area.



* According to the report, the Inflation in India is to reduce to 6.8% in March 2023. Further by the end of 2023, the inflation will reduce to 5%. In 2024, Indian Inflation will be 4%.

4. India ranks at which place globally with respect to the net gain in average annual forest area between 2010 and 2020?

- A. Second
- B. Third
- C. Fourth
- D. Fifth
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* India ranks third globally with respect to the net gain in average annual forest area between 2010 and 2020.

* Among the Indian States, Arunachal Pradesh has the maximum carbon stock in forests and Jammu & Kashmir contributes the maximum per-hectare carbon stock of 173.41 tonnes.

* According to the India State of Forest Report 2021 (ISFR), in 2021, the total forest and tree cover in India is 80.9 million hectares, which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country.

* Among the Indian States, Madhya Pradesh leads the green cover having the largest area under forests in 2021 with 11% of India's total forest cover. It is followed by Arunachal Pradesh (9%), Chhattisgarh (8%), Odisha (7%), and Maharashtra (7%).

5. Which of the following cities is the new capital of Andhra Pradesh?



- A. Amaravati
- B. Visakhapatnam
- C. Vijayawada
- D. Guntur
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- * Visakhapatnam is the new capital of Andhra Pradesh.
- * Amaravati is the present capital of Andhra Pradesh.
- * The city of Amaravati lies close to the Krishna river and has a huge green landscape. The foundation of the Amravati city was laid on October 22, 2015.
- * In 2020, the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020. It intended to give shape to the state government's plan of having three capital – the executive capital in Visakhapatnam, the legislative in Amravati and Judiciary in Kurnool for inclusive growth.

6. Which of the following states is the host of the fifth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games?

- A. West Bengal
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Karnataka
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



* The host of the fifth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games is Madhya Pradesh.

* Khelo India (Let's play India) initiative was launched by the Indian Government in 2017 to promote a sporting culture in the country by involving children at grassroot levels.

* Under this initiative, Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) and the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) are organized every year, where youngsters represent their states and universities respectively.

7. Consider the following statements on the India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET):

- 1) The initiative will work to connect the defense startups in India and USA
- 2) The initiative will pave way for the emerging technologies, co-production and will further strengthen India-US relations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

iCET: India-US initiative to break down barriers to closer technology and defence cooperation

The United States and India concluded the US-India iCET meeting and also decided to launch a new Innovation Bridge.



- a. With the launch of the India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his American counterpart Jake Sullivan, experts believe the step will certainly break down barriers and foster ties in technology and bolster defence cooperation.
- b. It reflects India US convention of strategic, commercial & scientific approaches in field of technology.
- c. The initiative will work to connect the defense startups in India and USA.
- d. The initiative will pave way for the emerging technologies, co-production and will further strengthen India-US relations. Hence, option C is correct.

8. Who among the following won the Australian Open Men's single title 2023?

- A. Carlos Alcaraz
- B. Rafael Nadal
- C. Luka Garcia
- D. Novak Djokovic

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Djokovic wins Australian Open title to reach 22nd career Grand Slam

Novak Djokovic decimated higher-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets to win his 10th Australian Open crown at the Rod Laver Arena.

- a. Serbia's Novak Djokovic, who defeated Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3 7-6(4) 7-6(5) in the Australian Open final to tie the men's record of 22 Grand Slam titles.



b. Australian Open, one of the world's major tennis championships (the first of the four annual Grand Slam events), held at the National Tennis Centre at Melbourne Park in Melbourne, Australia.

c. The 2023 Australian Open was a Grand Slam level tennis tournament held at Melbourne Park, from 16–29 January 2023. It was the 111th edition of the Australian Open, the 55th in the Open Era, and the first major of the year. There is a total prize pot of AUD \$76.5 million (around £43.3m) for the Australian Open 2023.

Hence, option D is correct.

9. Which of the following is funding the Secure Himalaya Project 2017?

- A. Global Environment Facility
- B. Green Climate Fund
- C. IPCC
- D. UNFCCC

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Secure Himalaya Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility. It supports the government's efforts for the conservation of snow leopard and its habitat by developing and implementing a landscape-based approach for Himalayan ecosystems.

Hence, option A is correct.

10. Which of the following will become Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site?

- A. Pangong
- B. Moriri
- C. Yaya Tso



D. Lanak la

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Yaya Tso to become Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site

Lake Yaya Tso is known as a bird's paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh.

a. Yaya Tso, known as birds' paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres, has been proposed as Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site (BHS) under the Biological Diversity Act.

b. Yaya Tso is a nesting habitat for a large number of birds and animals, such as the bar-headed goose, black-necked crane and brahminy duck, adding it also has the distinction of being one of the highest breeding sites of the black-necked crane in India.

c. The Biodiversity Management Committee, the panchayat of Chumathang village, along with the SECURE Himalaya Project resolved the issue and declared Yaya Tso Lake a biodiversity heritage site.

Hence, option C is correct.

11. Consider the following statements on the Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) 2023:

1) As of December 2022, 47 countries had eliminated at least one NTD

2) Over the past decade, the number of people requiring interventions against Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) decreased by 25%.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only



- C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases 2023: WHO

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of diseases that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas. They are caused by various pathogens, including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins.

a. The WHO's Report provides a consolidated, up-to-date assessment of progress towards control, elimination and eradication of 20 diseases and disease groups (NTDs) globally, regionally and nationally.

b. Key highlights:

- Burden of NTDs continues to be unequally borne by a small number of countries: 16 countries bear 80% of this burden.
- Over the past decade, the number of people requiring interventions against NTDs decreased by 25%.
- As of December 2022, 47 countries had eliminated at least one NTD.

c. Threats

- Slower than expected progress in high burden countries,
- Uneven progress across certain diseases,
- Persistent underlying risk factors (poverty, climate change) and
- Rapid population growth.

Hence, option C is correct.



12. Which of the following countries has been picked as partner for BioAsia 2023?

- A. USA
- B. India
- C. UK
- D. Russia

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

UK to be country partner at BioAsia 2023

Over the course of three days, prominent industry leaders, distinguished scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs will come together to discuss 'humanized' healthcare.

a. For the 20th edition of the largest event in the biotechnological industry of Asia, global business firm BioAsia picked the United Kingdom (UK) as its country partner.

b. With the theme of - 'Advancing for ONE: Shaping the next generation of humanized healthcare', BioAsia 2023 is all set to be held from February 24 to 26 in Hyderabad.

- 'O' in ONE stand for One Health. It aims to integrate different ecosystems with the aim of safeguarding the future.

- 'N' in ONE stand for Next Generation Health. Under this, the forum will aim to use disruptive technologies in the biotech field. The disruptive technologies are Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, and data science.

- 'E' in ONE stands for Equity: Here, the aim is to provide quality health care for all

c. It is a forum that connects biotech industry stakeholders.

d. The forum is an opportunistic platform for biotech leaders to learn about the latest technological advancements in the field. Different



biotech companies participate in the forum and exhibit their research and innovations in the field. Experts and researchers attend the forum and present their research findings.

e. Hyderabad is the Cybercity of India. The Genome Valley, the first world-class Biotech cluster in India was established in the cyber city.

Hence, option C is correct.

13. Consider the following statements on the MBA ranking 2023 released by Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF):

- 1) IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru and IIM Kolkata have attained the top three positions respectively.
- 2) Top 3 private B-schools are - Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur; Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurugram; and Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

IIRF releases MBA Ranking 2023, IIM Ahmedabad, Bengaluru in top 3

Indian Institutional Ranking Framework has released the MBA Ranking for the year 2023. IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru and IIM Kolkata have attained the top three position respectively while IIM Lucknow has jumped one place and secured 4th rank.

a. The ranking was based on seven criteria:



- Research,
- Teaching Learning Resource Pedagogy,
- Industry Income and Integration,
- Placement Performance, Future Orientation,
- External Perception and International Outlook, &
- Placement Strategies and Support.

b. According to the latest Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) ranking (2023), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), is the top government college in India for pursuing the Master of Business Administration (MBA) course. IIM Bengaluru (Karnataka) and IIM Kolkata (West Bengal) are ranked second and third, respectively, after IIM Ahmedabad.

c. IIRF is prepared and published by Education Post, a monthly magazine on higher education since 2012, and is India's most authentic nongovernment ranking framework.

d. Top 3 private B-schools are -

- Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur, Jharkhand
 - Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurugram, Haryana
 - Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune, Maharashtra.
- Hence, option C is correct.

14. Who among the following former Prime Minister of India was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours?

- A. Chandrashekhar
- B. Narendra Modi
- C. H.D. Dewe Gowda



D. Manmohan Singh

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Former PM Manmohan Singh conferred Lifetime Achievement Honour in UK

The India-UK Achievers Honours by NISAU UK, in partnership with the British Council in India and the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT), celebrate the achievements of Indian students who studied at British universities.

- a. The Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life.
- b. To mark 75 years of India's independence, the first-ever India UK Achievers Honours covered 75 high achievers and some key Outstanding Achievers who bolster the India-UK diaspora living bridge.
- c. British Indian peer Lord Karan Bilimoria received the Living Legend Honour at the awards ceremony on January 25.
- d. Among the Outstanding Achievers honoured included Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) spokesperson Raghav Chadha, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla and Indian women's football team goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan. Hence, option D is correct.

15. When is the "The World Interfaith Harmony Week" celebrated annually?

- A. First week of February
- B. Second week of February
- C. Last week of January



D. First week of January

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

United Nations recognized World Interfaith Harmony Week

Recognized by the United Nations (UN), the series of activities under the “World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023” were kicked off at Ramgarhia Girls College, Ludhiana.

- a. “The World Interfaith Harmony Week” was first proposed at the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 by H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan.
- b. World Interfaith Harmony Week is an annual event observed during the first week of February, after the UN General Assembly designation in 2010.
- c. The General Assembly pointed out that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and established World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.
- d. During the launch of series of activities that will be held in city in coming days, scholars from different faiths including Mohammad Usmaan Ludhianvi (Shahi Imaam Punjab), Sikh scholar Sarabjit Singh Renuka, Christian scholar Fr. Varghese Kachappilly, Hindu scholar Prof. Vinay Sophat and Bhikku Pragya Bodhi Thero (Monk Incharge Takhatshila Mahabudh of Bihar) explained the meaning and significance of religious inclusion and pluralism for nurturing a healthy society.

Hence, option A is correct.

16. When is World Wetlands Day celebrated annually?



- A. January 26
- B. January 30
- C. February 2
- D. February 12

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

World Wetland Day 2023

The proposal for the convention on wetlands was first made on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

- a. World Wetland Day is celebrated annually on February 2 with the aim to create awareness of the vital role wetlands play for people and the planet.
- b. The theme for this year's World Wetlands Day is 'It's Time for Wetlands Restoration,' which focuses on the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration.
- c. Wetlands are the parts of the earth where the soil is covered with water. They support both terrestrial and aquatic species.
- d. There are five major types of wetlands. They are marine, estuarine, lacustrine, riverine, and palustrine. It is essential to conserve wetlands as they are among the most productive environments.

Hence, option C is correct.

17. Consider the following statements on 'Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan' launched by the Uttar Pradesh government:

- 1) The campaign, 'Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan' will work in association with an NGO, under the Aarohini Initiative Training Program for the safety and security of girls in all 746 Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls Schools in the state.



2) The campaign aims at enabling daughters of the underprivileged sections to raise their voice for their rights along with creating an understanding of the happenings in their lives among them.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Campaign to empower underprivileged girls launched by UP govt:

Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government has launched a campaign titled Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to make daughters of the underprivileged classes capable and self-reliant.

- The campaign, 'Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan' will work in association with an NGO, under the Aarohini Initiative Training Program for the safety and security of girls in all 746 Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls Schools in the state. The Campaign will be implemented in three phases.
- The campaign aims at enabling daughters of the underprivileged sections to raise their voice for their rights along with creating an understanding of the happenings in their lives among them.
- Gender sensitisation is the primary goal of the Aarohini programme, which will be executed in three phases.
- In the first phase, teachers will be trained, which will start on 1st February 2023.
- Along with the teachers, the institution will also groom the girls through debates and other activities.



- With the help of this, girls will be able to face challenges like child marriage, domestic violence, not being able to complete education or any kind of problem in a planned manner and raise their voices for their rights. Apart from this, the annual 'Daughters Campaign' will also be run in these schools where a specific issue is raised by involving children, the community, and the teachers.

Hence, option C is correct.

18. Which of the following states has recently launched the 'Ladli Behen Yojana'?

- A. Rajasthan
- B. Uttarakhand
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Bihar

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Madhya Pradesh CM launches Ladli Behen Yojana

All women of the state who are not an income tax assessee will receive the benefits arising from the newly launched scheme.

- a. The CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has launched Ladli Behen Yojana to help poor and vulnerable women of the state become empowered.
- b. The budget for the scheme is fixed at Rs. 60000 crores and the scheme will be valid for next 5 years.
- c. Under the scheme, women of middle income class will receive Rs 1000 per month. Therefore, in 5 years a single beneficiary woman would receive a sum of Rs. 60000.



d. The government aims to give benefits to 1 crore women who will receive the monthly payments direct in their account. Approximately 65% women of the state will be covered under the scheme.

e. The scheme will give preference to rural household women. Hence, option C is correct.

19. Which of the is the host country of the Asian Football Cup 2027?

- A. Japan
- B. China
- C. United Arab Emirates
- D. Saudi Arab

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Saudi Arab is the host country of the Asian Football Cup 2027.

Saudi Arab will host the tournament for the first time.

The tournament was started in 1956.

It is the second oldest continental football championship in the world after Copa America.

20. As per the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index, world food prices fell in January 2023 for a 10th consecutive month. The index was introduced in which of the following years?

- A. 1945
- B. 1976
- C. 1996
- D. 2011



Answer ||| C

Solution |||

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index was introduced in 1996 as a public good to help in monitoring developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.

The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities.

It measures changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.

21. 'Sagar Parikrama' programme was launched by which of the following ministries of India?

- A. The Ministry of Defence
- B. The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
- C. The Ministry of Culture
- D. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

'Sagar Parikrama' programme was launched by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

The programme aims to resolve the issues of the fishers and other stakeholders and to facilitate their economic upliftment through various fisheries schemes and programs being implemented by the Government of India.

It is being organized through a pre-decided sea route covering coastal states/UTs.



22. According to the list of world leaders trending, released by the Morning Consult in February 2023, who among the following secured the highest approval rating?

- A. Narendra Modi
- B. Joe Biden
- C. Justin Trudeau
- D. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

According to the list of world leaders trending, released by the Morning Consult in February 2023, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi secured the highest approval rating 78%.

The second position was secured by Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador with 69% of approval and the Swiss president was in the third position.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau received 40% approval and he secured the ninth position.

23. World Cancer Day is observed worldwide on which of the following dates?

- A. 1 December
- B. 15 January
- C. 4 February
- D. 1 March

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



World Cancer Day is observed worldwide on February 4. The aim is to inform and encourage people on its prevention, early detection, and treatment.

“Close The Care Gap” has been the theme for World Cancer Day for the past three years (2022, 2023, and 2024).

The first Cancer Day was celebrated in Geneva, Switzerland in the year 1933, an initiative taken by the World Health Organisation.

24.The International Day of Human Fraternity 2023 was celebrated on which of the following dates?

- A. 1 January
- B. 26 January
- C. 31 January
- D. 4 February

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

The International Day of Human Fraternity 2023 was celebrated on 4 February.

The Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21, 2020.

It was instituted to celebrate the historic document titled “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”, being signed by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and Pope Francis on February 4, 2019.

25.Consider the following statements regarding India Energy Week 2023.



- 1) India Energy Week is being organised from the 6th to the 8th of February.
- 2) It aims to showcase India's rising prowess as an energy transition powerhouse.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- The event will bring together leaders from the traditional and non-traditional energy industry, governments, and academia to discuss the challenges and opportunities that a responsible energy transition presents.
- India Energy Week is being organised from the 6th to the 8th of February and aims to showcase India's rising prowess as an energy transition powerhouse.
- It will see the presence of more than 30 Ministers from across the world. Over 30,000 delegates, 1,000 exhibitors and 500 speakers will gather to discuss the challenges and opportunities of India's energy future.
- The Prime Minister launched the uniforms under the 'Unbottled' initiative of Indian Oil. These uniforms are made of recycled PET bottles.
- He also dedicated the twin-cooktop model of the IndianOil's Indoor Solar Cooking System and flagged off its commercial roll-out.



26. Which Indian state has launched Green Hydrogen Hub?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Gujarat
- C. Uttar Pradesh
- D. Kerala

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- A scheme of ₹200 crore has been announced for viability gap funding/grant/equity support to set up the green hydrogen hubs. An amount of ₹20 crore is earmarked additionally for the purpose in the Kerala Budget.
- Kerala Finance Minister announced that his government is to establish "Green Hydrogen Hubs". The project is to be implemented along with the private partner India Hydrogen Alliance.
- This is the first time such a project is initiated in India. It has already begun in other countries. International hydrogen hubs set up in different parts of the world are referred to as "Hydrogen Valley Projects".
- The plan is to build green hydrogen plants that can produce 60 tonnes of hydrogen per day.
- The plant will be established with a 150 MW Electrolyser and storage infrastructure.
- Hydrogen Valley is a basically geographical area where the companies working on hydrogen production come together to build hydrogen plants. It has all the facilities for hydrogen production, storage, distribution, etc.

27. Which of the following become the only Indian to win three Grammy awards?



- A. Ricky Kej
- B. A.R. Rehman
- C. Ilaiyaraaja
- D. M. M. Keeravani

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- The 65th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held on February 5, 2023 in Los Angeles.
- The 65th Grammy Awards was presented in Los Angeles on 5th February 2023. With nine total nominations, Beyoncé is in first place, followed by Kendrick Lamar with eight, Adele with seven, and Brandi Carlile with six awards.
- Bengaluru-based composer Ricky Kej won a Grammy for Best Immersive Audio Album for his most recent album Divine Tides with rock-legend Stewart Copeland (The Police), making him the only Indian to win three Grammy awards.
- The Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles played host to the 65th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony.
- Song of the Year winner (A Songwriter(s) Award) goes to Bonnie Raitt for Just Like That. She beat Taylor Swift in the category.
- Trevor Noah hosts the ceremony. Harry Styles, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar, ABBA and Lizzo are all among the nominees in for album of the year.

28. Who won the 'Song of The Year' Award at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards?

- A. John Raitt
- B. John Prine
- C. Jackson Browne



D. Bonnie Raitt

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Bonnie Raitt's "Just Like That" has won the 2023 Grammy Award for the Song of the Year.

29. Who conducted the recently held G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill?

- A. CERT-In
- B. CDAC
- C. NIELIT
- D. ISRO

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- International participants from over 12 countries and domestic participants from Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy, IT/ITeS sectors participate in the Drill.
- The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) conducted this Cyber Security Exercise and drill in hybrid mode (Physical and Virtual) where international participants from more than 12 countries joined through online mode while domestic participants from diverse sectors such as Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy, IT/ITeS and others attended in-person as well as in virtual mode.
- The event further progressed with conducting of Strategic Table Top Exercise (TTX) and Operational Drill using CERT-In Exercise Platform.



- The first Table Top Exercise catered to Board & Top Management on the theme “Synergy to counter Global Cyber Crisis” focused on Crisis Management & Crisis Communication.
- The second Table Top Exercise, an Operational Drill was designed for CISO and Mid-management on the theme “Building Collective Cyber Resilience”. The scenario for the exercise, which included cyber extortion, data breach, supply chain attacks and disruptions was derived from real life cyber incidents, in which domestic level (limited impact) incidents escalated to global cyber security crisis.
- Exercise was successful in meeting its objectives and provided insights on enhancing and improving Crisis Management, Crisis Communication, Incident Response and global coordination & cooperation.

30. On which day the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation was observed in 2023?

- A. 25 January
- B. 6 February
- C. 28 March
- D. 11 July

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is celebrated on 6 February to spread awareness and educate people about the problems females faced due to genital mutilation.
- This day spread awareness about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
- Female genital mutilation is also sometimes known as circumcision in which the external female genitalia are removed partially or completely or another injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.



Mainly, it is done between infancy and the age of 15. Adult women may also undergo the procedure.

- FGM is performed mainly in Africa, particularly in North-Eastern, Eastern and Western Africa. It also takes place in the Middle East, in South-East Asia and among immigrants in Europe.
- According to WHO, more than 200 million girls and women faced genital mutilation in 30 countries including Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.
- The UN General Assembly in 2012 adopted a resolution A/RES/67/14 on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

31. Consider the following statements on X-57 electric plane by NASA:

- 1) The X-57 electric plane by NASA is a modified, four-seater, Italian-built Tecnam P2006T aircraft.
- 2) The X-57 uses lithium batteries to run electric motors for its propellers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

X-57: Nasa's new electric plane can propel a zero-emission future

The X-57 electric plane by NASA is a modified, four-seater, Italian-built Tecnam P2006T aircraft. It relies on a combination of lots of propellers, small motors, and many batteries.



a. NASA's "all-electric" plane X-57 is soon set to take off. The plane has 14 propellers along its wings and is powered entirely by electricity.

b. Recently, NASA's X-57 Maxwell performed successful thermal testing of its cruise motor controllers.

c. Thermal testing is important because it validates the design, operability, and workmanship quality of aircraft controllers. The controllers have temperature-sensitive parts and must be able to withstand extreme conditions during flight.

d. The X-57 uses lithium batteries to run electric motors for its propellers. However, the energy of lithium-ion batteries is 50 times less than aviation fuel.

e. With a range of about 160 km and a flight time of about one hour, the X-57 is not expected to lead to a replacement technology for long-haul flying. Instead, short-hop flights with ten or so passengers are a good and potentially possible target for early, battery-powered flights. Hence, option C is correct.

32. Where will South India's first Industrial corridor project come up?

- A. Chennai
- B. Kochi
- C. Hyderabad
- D. Tumakuru

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Foundation stone of South India's 1st Industrial Corridor Project laid at Tumakuru

Based on the principles of last mile multimodal connectivity of PM-GatiShakti, the upcoming industrial township will have world class infrastructure.



- a. The project will be a mixed-use development comprising of land uses like industrial, institutional, residential, commercial, green spaces etc. making it a completely self-sustainable and resilient smart industrial city.
- b. This project will facilitate investments, foster innovation, enhance skills development and build finest manufacturing ecosystem for pitching India as a global investment destination.
- c. With the objective to increase the share of manufacturing in the GDP of India, the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme is being implemented whereby 32 greenfield industrial smart cities under 11 industrial corridors are being developed with world class Plug-n-Play infrastructure.
- d. The Phase-A of the project is expected to generate employment opportunities for approximately 88,000 people and attract investment of around Rs. 7,000 crore over a period of 5-6 years, triggering growth and prosperity in the region.

Hence, option D is correct.

33. Yuva Sangam portal has been recently launched by Union Education Minister for which group?

- A. youth from Northeast
- B. youth from Nouth
- C. youth from Union Territories
- D. youth from Africa

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Yuva Sangam portal launched to connect youth from Northeast to other states



The Yuva Sangam aims to focus on conducting exposure tours of the youth comprising of students and off-campus youngsters from North Eastern States to other states and vice versa.

a. Union Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan has launched Yuva Sangam portal with the aim to build empathy between youth of the North Eastern States and other States.

b. The Yuva Sangam will focus on conducting exposure tours of the youth comprising of students & off-campus youngsters from North Eastern States to other states & vice versa. It will provide an immersive, multidimensional experience of various facets-under four broad areas of Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati (Development) and Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect).

c. The initiative has been conceptualised under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' in collaboration with various other ministries and departments such as Culture, Tourism, Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, among others.

d. Around 1,000 youth will participate in the pilot of Yuva Sangam,

e. Through the course of the program, students will interact with each other in the areas of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events and tourism. They will get a first hand experience of living in a completely different geographical and cultural scenario. Hence, option A is correct.

34. Which of the following civic bodies is the first in India to launch a green bond?

- A. Bhopal Municipal Corporation
- B. Hyderabad Municipal Corporation
- C. Indore Municipal Corporation
- D. Lucknow Municipal Corporation

Answer ||| C



Solution |||

Indore becomes first civic body to launch green bonds

The public issues of the green bonds will be open for subscription from February 10-14. The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange.

a. Indore Municipal Corporation was ranked top in cleanliness survey for six consecutive years and now has become the country's first civic body to launch green bonds. It is seeking to raise Rs 244 crore for a 60-mw solar plant at its water pumping station.

b. The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange.

c. A green bond is a debt security issued by an organization for the purpose of financing or refinancing projects that contribute positively to the environment and/or climate. A green bond is alternatively known as a climate bond.

d. Apart from Indore, people from other parts of the country can invest in the eight-year duration bonds and earn attractive returns.

e. The IMC has to foot a heavy bill of Rs 25 crore every month to bring water to Indore from Jalud village, which is 80 km away, and the solar power plant will help cut the expenditure. Hence, option C is correct.

35. Consider the following statements on the moons of Jupiter:

1) The inner moons of Jupiter have prograde orbits. Meaning, they rotate in the same direction as that of Jupiter.

2) Astronomers have discovered 12 new moons around Jupiter, putting the total count at a record-breaking 92.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2



D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Jupiter becomes planet with most moons

Astronomers have discovered 12 new moons around Jupiter, putting the total count at a record-breaking 92. The 12 new moons around Jupiter were discovered by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.

- a. Of the 12 moons discovered, nine are distant. These nine moons have retrograde orbits meaning their orbiting direction is opposite to that of Jupiter's rotation.
- b. The inner moons of Jupiter have prograde orbits. Meaning, they rotate in the same direction as that of Jupiter.
- c. Saturn, the one-time leader, comes in a close second with 83 confirmed moons.
- d. For the record, Uranus has 27 confirmed moons, Neptune 14, Mars two and Earth one. Venus and Mercury come up empty.
- e. In April, the European Space Agency is sending a spacecraft to Jupiter to study the planet and some of its biggest, icy moons. And next year, NASA will launch the Europa Clipper to explore Jupiter's moon of the same name, which could harbor an ocean beneath its frozen crust. Hence, option C is correct.

36. Which of the following companies have recently launched India's first hydrogen powered truck?

- A. RIL and Ashok Leyland
- B. RIL and TATA Motors
- C. TATA Motors and Ashok Leyland



D. RIL and Mahindra

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

RIL and Ashok Leyland unveil India's first hydrogen-powered truck

The Hydrogen-powered trucks will emit near zero emissions, deliver performance on par with conventional diesel trucks and reduce noise.

a. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its vehicle partner Ashok Leyland on February 6 unveiled India's first Hydrogen Internal Combustion Engine (H2-ICE) technology solution for heavy duty trucks at the India Energy Week in Bengaluru, the three-day event that is themed around 'Growth, Collaboration, Transition'.

b. Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship company of the Hinduja Group and India's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, along with RIL, has been developing this unique technology over the past year and has been under test since August 2022.

c. The Ashok Leyland H2-ICE heavy-duty truck range (19-35 Tonne) is powered by hydrogen, a renewable and clean energy source.

d. The vehicle's overall architecture is similar to a conventional diesel-based combustion engine, and helps quicker migration to cleaner energy sources at a relatively lower cost delta. Hence, option A is correct.

37. In February 2023, International Energy Agency released the report titled "Life Lessons From India". Consider the following statements about the report:

1) India's economy is less energy efficient than G20 average.

2) India took less time to go from half to full electricity access than other major economies.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* As per the report "Life Lessons From India" released by, International Energy Agency in February 2023, India's economy is already 10 percent more energy efficient than both global and G20 average.

* India took less time to go from half to full electricity access than other major economies.

* The annual global CO₂ emissions will fall by 2 billion tonnes in 2030 on adoption of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) measures.

* LiFE mission was launched by Prime Minister of India at COP 26 in 2021 to bring individual behaviours at forefront of global climate action narrative.

38. In February 2023, Researchers of which country managed the sense smell of locusts to develop a bio-hybrid robot?

- A. Britain
- B. Germany
- C. Israel
- D. Japan

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



- * In February 2023, Researchers of Tel Aviv University in Israel managed the sense smell of locusts to develop a bio-hybrid robot.
- * Locusts have an acute sense of smell which will be used in the robot.
- * The robot equipped with a biological sensor that uses the antennae of locusts could help advance disease diagnosis and improve security checks.
- * Bio-hybrid robots refer to robots that integrate biological components with artificial components, such as electronics and mechanics.

39. BARD is a new AI chatbot of which of the following companies?

- A. Microsoft
- B. Oracle
- C. Adobe
- D. Google

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- * BARD is a new AI chatbot launched by Google.
- * Bard seeks to combine the breadth of the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of our large language models.
- * It is based on Language Model for Dialogue Application or LaMDA and Google's own conversational AI chatbot.

40. In February 2023, India signed a memorandum of understanding with three countries to promote the adoption of energy efficiency and sustainable practices in the region. Which of the following is not one of those countries?



- A. Singapore
- B. Indonesia
- C. Malaysia
- D. Thailand

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* In February 2023, India signed a memorandum of understanding with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to promote the adoption of energy efficiency and sustainable practices in the region.

* Energy Efficiency Services (EESL), a joint venture of public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Power of India, signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Growth Triangle Joint Business Council of the three countries.

* The Growth Triangle Joint Business Council was created by Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia in 1993.

41. The inaugural session of the 1st G-20 Tourism Working Group Meeting was held in February 2023 in which of the following states of India?

- A. Madhya Pradesh
- B. Odisha
- C. Kerala
- D. Gujarat

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* The inaugural session of the 1st G-20 Tourism Working Group Meeting was held in February 2023 at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.



* The Ministry of Tourism of India is celebrating this year as "Visit India Year 2023" focusing on in-bound travel to India.

* Rural and Archaeological tourism will be the focus area of Tourism. Also, Dholavira, which is a UNESCO World heritage site, will be the second spot for foreign delegates.

42. The Government of India is opening Integrative Medicine Centres in all government hospital across country. The first Integrative Medicine Centre was inaugurated in which of the following cities?

- A. Varanasi
- B. Delhi
- C. Gandhinagar
- D. Bengaluru

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* The first Integrative Medicine Centre was inaugurated at the Safdarjang Hospital in Delhi.

* The main objective of the initiative is to use the traditional knowledge of Indians in the medicinal field.

* The centres will mainly focus on Ayurvedic medicines and will use modern technologies.

* Integrative medicine is aimed at harnessing the potential of India's rich heritage and medical knowledge along with using modern advancements in allopathy.

43. Consider the following statements regarding Quad Cyber Challenge.



1) The main objective of the Quad Cyber challenge is to create a resilient cyberspace.

2) The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad comprising India, United States, Japan and Australia launched a public campaign 'Quad Cyber Challenge' to improve cyber security across their nations.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- The main objective of the challenge is to create a resilient cyberspace. Cyberspace is the internet platform where people share information, and engage in conversations, and other social media activities. Ransomware attacks, malware, software vulnerabilities, AI attacks, etc are the major challenges faced by cyberspace today.
- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad comprising India, United States, Japan and Australia launched a public campaign 'Quad Cyber Challenge' to improve cyber security across their nations.
- The Quad has invited Internet users across the Indo-Pacific and beyond to become part of the challenge and practice "safe and responsible cyber habits,"
- The 'Quad Cyber Challenge' shows the continuous efforts of Quad nations to bolster cyber security awareness and action and to foster a more secure and resilient cyber ecosystem to benefit economies and users.



- National Security Council will be the Indian representative at the QUAD in implementing the challenge.

44. Which organization has launched QR code-based coin vending machine?

- A. RBI
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. SEBI
- D. None of these

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- The Reserve Bank of India will launch a pilot project on QR Code based Coin Vending Machine (QCVM) in 12 cities.
- These vending machines will dispense coins against debit to the customer's account using UPI instead of physical tendering of banknotes.
- This will enhance the ease of accessibility to coins.
- The RBI will now look at permitting all inbound travellers to India to use UPI for their merchant payments while they are in the country.
- This facility will begin with travellers from the G-20 countries arriving at selected international airports.

45. Which operation has been launched by the Government of India to help earthquake-hit Turkey?

- A. Operation Trident
- B. Operation Dost
- C. Operation Python



D. Operation Woodrose

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- In an effort to help those hit by the earthquake, the Indian government extended a hand of friendship to crisis-hit Turkey and Syria in the form of massive humanitarian aid, with multiple jets flying off to the countries carrying relief material.
- Turkey and Syria witnessed the deadliest earthquakes on 6th February in over a decade.
- India launched 'Operation Dost' to extend assistance to Turkey as well as Syria following Monday's devastating quake that killed nearly 12,000 people in the two countries.
- On 7 February, India sent to Turkey relief materials, a mobile hospital, and specialised search and rescue teams in four C-17 Globemaster military transport aircraft.
- The NDRF teams are rendering assistance in rescue operations at Gaziantep while the medical team is setting up the field hospital in Iskenderun.
- India also sent relief materials onboard a C-130J aircraft of the Indian Air Force to Syria. India has sent emergency medicines and equipment including portable ECG machines, patient monitors, and other essential medical items to Syria.

46. The author of the novel 'Victory City' is-

- A. C. S. Lewis
- B. Virginia Woolf
- C. Chetan Bhagat
- D. Salman Rushdie



Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- Penguin Random House is publishing Rushdie's 15th book, which takes the form of a translation of a fabled epic that was originally written in Sanskrit.
- The tale is about the Vijaynagar Empire, which dominated much of the southern end of the Indian continent in the 14th century.
- A young girl Pampa Kampana is endowed by a goddess with magical powers is founder of the city, in modern day India, of Bishnaga which literally means Victory city.
- The novel is a saga of love, adventure and myth that is in itself a testament to the power of storytelling.
- The book will be released in USA and later across India, UK and other countries.

47. In which state/UT has India's first Glass Igloo restaurant opened?

- A. Himachal Pradesh
- B. Sikkim
- C. Ladakh
- D. Jammu & Kashmir

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- India's first glass igloo restaurant in Gulmarg has become a popular destination for tourists who visit the area to experience scenic beauty.
- It is Built in the middle of snow by the Kolahoi Green Heights hotel of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.



- In 2021, the same hotel built a snow igloo in Gulmarg which was the biggest snow igloo in Asia that also attracted tourists.

48. Consider the following statements regarding Safer Internet Day 2023

- 1) Safer Internet Day is celebrated on February 07 every year.
- 2) This year, the theme for the event is 'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online'.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- Safer Internet Day is marked to help the younger generation understand safe practices on the Internet. This is not only to protect themselves but to understand that they do not cause harm to others, whether it is intentional or unintentional.
- Safer Internet Day is celebrated on February 07 every year.
- This year, the theme for the event is 'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online'.
- The event was started as an initiative by the EU SafeBorders project in 2004 and later taken up by the Insafe network in 2005.



- Today, the Internet Safer Day is celebrated in more than 170 countries across the globe.
- The day plays a significant role as it saves users from online harm and risks. There are a lot of websites used by millions of users daily. A safe internet connection will avoid website vandalism. It is required to stay updated with the latest version of the internet.

49. Consider the following statements on **World Government Summit 2023**:

- 1) The World Government Summit 2023 is set to begin on February 13th in Dubai. The Summit will be held under the theme of "Shaping Future Governments".
- 2) It will bring together global thought leaders, global experts, and decision makers to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies, and models that will be critical in shaping future governments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

World Government Summit 2023 to begin on February 13 in Dubai

The World Government Summit is a global forum held annually in Dubai, that brings together leaders in government, business, technology, and civil society to discuss pressing issues facing humanity and to shape the future of governments worldwide.



a. The World Government Summit 2023 is set to begin on February 13th in Dubai. The Summit will be held under the theme of “Shaping Future Governments”.

b. It will bring together global thought leaders, global experts, and decision makers to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies, and models that will be critical in shaping future governments.

c. The summit aims to drive positive change and to promote innovation in the public sector by exploring new ideas, technologies, and best practices in governance.

d. The Summit will feature 20 presidents, including Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi; President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan; President of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, Macky Sall, among others.

Hence, option C is correct.

50. Which of the following countries is not a founding member of ASEAN?

- A. Indonesia
- B. Malaysia
- C. Philippines
- D. Vietnam

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

About ASEAN -

a. It is a group of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which was established in 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok declaration.

b. Founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.



c. Presently ASEAN comprises 10 member states namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Hence, option D is correct.

51. Which city hosted the **Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (Impac5)**?

- A. Vancouver
- B. Toronto
- C. Mexico City
- D. Boston

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (Impac5) concludes in Vancouver, Canada

Recently, the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) was held in Canada in order to discuss the solutions to address the Funding Gap of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

a. IMPAC5 is a global forum that brings together ocean conservation professionals and high-level officials to inform, inspire and act on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

b. It aims to protect 30 percent of global ocean by 2030 (i.e. 30*30 campaign).

c. It supported Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, "Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility" Call for Action and Ocean Conservation Pledge. It was jointly hosted by Host First Nations (Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh) together with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPWS),



d. MPAs are designated areas of the ocean that are set aside for the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems and their biodiversity. Currently, an estimated 7.65% of ocean is covered by MPAs.

Hence, option A is correct.

52. Which city is hosting AMRITPEX 2023?

- A. Hyderabad
- B. Mumbai
- C. New Delhi
- D. Srinagar

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

National Philatelic Exhibition- AMRITPEX 2023

Union Communications Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw will inaugurate the National Philatelic Exhibition – AMRITPEX 2023 – at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

a. This five-day event, organised by the Department of Posts under the Ministry of Communications, will showcase India's rich culture, heritage and history through stamps.

b. For the first time in the country, new technology like virtual reality, augmented reality has been used to showcase the cultural heritage, history, nature, wildlife by narrating the stories of stamps.

c. An Exhibition on the Transformative Journey of India Post will also be inaugurated on this occasion. The Exhibition on the Transformative Journey of India Post will showcase the emerging role of post offices in enriching citizens' lives at the last mile and digitization of the postal system.



d. During this five-day exhibition, AMRITPEX 2023 will also host several Workshops, Panel Discussions, Interactive Installations, and cultural programs have been planned to connect the younger generation with India's ancient history, legacy and culture through stamps.

Hence, option C is correct.

53. Consider the following statements on the **India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023**:

- 1) The work plan was approved at the 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting.
- 2) India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 includes the capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of Information and Communication Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security, Application of IoT & AI in Next Generation Smart City & Society 5.0.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 approved at 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting

The 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting with India was held today on a virtual platform. It is an annual meeting of telecom ministers of 10 ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries and dialogue partner countries.



a. India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 includes the capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of Information and Communication Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security, Application of IoT & AI in Next Generation Smart City & Society 5.0, Sustainable Data and Transport Network for Future: Standards and Applications, 5G technologies for IoT and future trends, Role of ICT in implementation of Digital Health and Security protection and assessment for future network, etc.

b. Under the theme: "Synergy Towards a Sustainable Digital Future", the meeting had fruitful and productive discussions on strengthening India ASEAN relations in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

c. The ongoing and proposed projects in ICTs, will strengthen collaboration between India and ASEAN by leveraging complementary strengths of each other.

d. To further support the growth of the telecom industry, promote fair competition, and increase the availability of broadband and telecom connectivity, the Indian government has ushered a new era of reforms in the telecom sector to encourage investment.

Hence, option C is correct.

54. Which state has recently launched the '**One Family, One ID**' portal?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Rajasthan
- C. Bihar
- D. Chhattisgarh

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

UP launches portal for 'One Family, One ID'



The Uttar Pradesh government has finally launched the portal for creation of 'Family ID - One Family One Identity', to identify families as a unit for implementing the 'one job per family' proposal.

a. Under the scheme a unique identity will be issued to each family under the One Family One Identity scheme, thereby establishing a live comprehensive database of family units of the state.

b. This database will be helpful in better management of beneficiary schemes, timely targeting, transparent operation, giving 100 per cent benefit of the scheme to eligible people and simplification of government facilities for the general public

c. A 12-digit unique family ID will be provided to those families which were not ration card holders.

d. At present, about 3.59 crore families and 14.92 crore people living in Uttar Pradesh are getting the benefit of the National Food Security Scheme. The ration card number of these families will serve as 'family ID'.

e. Families not covered by the National Food Security Scheme, who are not eligible for ration cards, will be provided with the Family ID through the Family ID portal.

Hence, option A is correct.

55. Which of the following cities is the venue of the annual meeting of the members of the River Cities Alliance in 2023?

- A. Varanasi
- B. Pune
- C. Kolkata
- D. Nasik

Answer ||| B

Solution |||



* The venue of the annual meeting of the members of the River Cities Alliance in 2023 is Pune.

* The annual meeting is known as the Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers (DHARA).

* DHARA 2023 is to provide a platform for senior officials including Commissioners, Addl. Commissioners, Chief Engineers and Senior Planners of the 95-member river cities in India to co-learn and discuss solutions for managing local water bodies.

56. Which of the following is the host country of the 12th World Hindi Conference?

- A. Mauritius
- B. British Guyana
- C. Fiji
- D. Maldives

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

* The host country of the 12th World Hindi Conference is Fiji. The venue of the event is Nadi.

* Fiji-Hindi is one of the three official languages in Fiji.

* The theme of the conference is "Hindi – Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence".

* The 11th World Hindi Conference was held in Mauritius in 2018.

57. The second edition of the Indian Rice Congress was held in which of the following cities?



- A. Raipur
- B. Patna
- C. Kolkata
- D. Cuttack

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* The second edition of the Indian Rice Congress was held at National Rice Research Institute at Cuttack in Odisha.

* The congress is to serve as a common platform for international scientists to learn about the new advancements in the field of agriculture.

* The theme of the Congress is "Transforming Rice Research".

* As of now India is the second largest producer of rice and number one in exports.

* 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.

58. The secretariat of the Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness (MIIRA) will be in which of the following cities?

- A. Delhi
- B. Kathmandu
- C. Tel Aviv
- D. Riyadh

Answer ||| A

Solution |||



- * The secretariat the Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness (MIIRA) will be in Delhi.
- * MIIRA will be aimed at coordinating millet research programmes at the international level.
- * India would provide the "seed money" for MIIRA to take off, and each G20 member will subsequently be required to pay to its budget in the form of a membership fee.
- * The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM).

59. What is India's safety oversight capability rank in the final report of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in February 2023?

- A. 55
- B. 65
- C. 75
- D. 85

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- * India's safety oversight capability rank in the final report of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in February 2023 has climbed from 112 to 55.
- * The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) undertakes audit of all the 187 contracting states under this programme.
- * As the international civil aviation watchdog, the ICAO ensures that member states fulfil their obligation to improve the safety of civil aviation within their own jurisdictions.



60. National Women's Day is celebrated on 13 February in India to remember the life and achievements of one of India's greatest women. It is celebrated on the birth anniversary of whom among the following?

- A. Indira Gandhi
- B. Sarojini Naidu
- C. Bhikaji Cama
- D. Rani Lakshmibai

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* National Women's Day is celebrated on 13 February in India on Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary is a day to remember the life and achievements of one of India's greatest women.

* Sarojini Naidu popularly known as the nightingale of India.

* The British government lauded Sarojini Naidu with the 'Kaisar-i-Hind' Medal for her service during the plague epidemic in India.

* She was the first woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and was also appointed as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, making her the first woman to hold a high office in India.

61. World Radio Day, celebrated on which of the following dates?

- A. 1st February
- B. 8th February
- C. 13th February
- D. 15th February

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



- * World Radio Day, celebrated on February 13 every year, is dedicated to spread awareness about the power of the audio medium.
- * The Spanish Radio Academy in September 2010 requested UNESCO to mark a day to honour radio's significance across the world. Since then it is celebrated on February 13th every year.
- * The theme for World Radio Day 2023 is 'Radio and Peace'.
- * The radio was invented by Italian electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi in the 1890s.

62. International Epilepsy Day is observed on which of the following days?

- A. First Tuesday of February
- B. Second Friday of February
- C. First Sunday of February
- D. Second Monday of February

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- * International Epilepsy Day is observed on second Monday of February every year.
- * The celebrations are to focus on the theme "STIGMA" which means fear or feeling negative reactions.
- * Around 50 million people in the world suffer from epilepsy and 80% of them are living in low and middle-income countries.
- * Epilepsy is a nervous disorder. It affects brain activity. The disease is identified late among children. Early symptoms of the disease are left unnoticed. If identified at early stages, it can be cured easily.



63. Who has been elected the President of Bangladesh in February 2023?

- A. Mohammad Abdul Hamid
- B. Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu
- C. Rejwan Ahammad Taufiq
- D. Dr. A . K. Abdul Momen

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu, a former judge and freedom fighter, was elected unopposed as Bangladesh's 22nd President.

* Chuppu will replace President Mohammad Abdul Hamid.

* He will have to relinquish the party post to become the titular head of the State.

* Born in the northwestern Pabna district, Chuppu was a leader of Awami League's student and youth wings in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

* He also took part in the 1971 Liberation War and was imprisoned for waging a protest after the August 15, 1975 assassination of Bangladesh's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- the father of Prime Minister Hasina -- in a military coup along with most of his family members.

64. Which of the following female astronaut will be sent by Saudi Arabia on a mission to the International Space Station during the second quarter of 2023?

- A. Rayyana Barnawi Neyadi
- B. Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor
- C. Hazza Al Mansouri



D. Sara Sabry

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* Rayyana Barnawi Neyadi will join fellow Saudi male astronaut Ali Al-Qarni on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) "during the second quarter of 2023".

* The oil-rich country will be following in the footsteps of the neighbouring United Arab Emirates which in 2019 became the first Arab country to send one of its citizens into space.

* Nicknamed the "Sultan of Space", 41-year-old Neyadi will become the first Arab astronaut to spend six months in space when he blasts off for the ISS aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

65. Which of the following is not a type of influenza?

- A. Influenza A and B
- B. Influenza C
- C. Influenza D
- D. Influenza E

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Avian influenza, also known as bird flu, is an infectious disease that primarily affects birds and can occasionally infect humans. There are four types of influenza virus: influenza A, B, C and D. Hence option D is correct answer.

66. Consider the following statements regarding Aadi Mahotsav.



1. The national Aadi Mahotsav will be inaugurated on 16th February, 2023 at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi.
2. The present edition of the flagship event of TRIFED has the theme of "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- * The national Aadi Mahotsav will be inaugurated on 16th February, 2023 at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi.
- * The present edition of the flagship event of TRIFED has the theme of "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.
- * More than 1000 tribal artisans and artists from 28 States/UTs will be participating in the festival.
- * The event will be marked by tribal cultural performances by approx. 500 tribal artists based on the tribal rituals, harvest, festivals, martial art forms etc.
- * The festival will feature exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, handloom, paintings, jewellery, cane & bamboo, pottery, food & natural products, gifts & assortment, tribal cuisine and much more through 200 stalls to showcase this.



67. Which of the following statements is correct about 'All India Domestic Workers Survey'?

- A. Estimate the number/proportion of domestic workers at the National and State level.
- B. Household Estimates of Live-in/Live-out DWs.
- C. The average number of DWs engaged by different types of households.
- D. All of the above

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* The identity of the respondent households is never revealed and the results are released based on aggregation of numbers only.

* This is the first-ever such survey in independent India which was initiated in 2021.

* The survey would cover all States and Union Territories, covering 1.5 lakh households in 742 districts.

* The main objectives of the survey are:

i. Estimate the number/proportion of domestic workers at the National and State level.

ii. Household Estimates of Live-in/Live-out DWs.

iii. The average number of DWs engaged by different types of households.

* Labour Bureau is an attached office under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, which was set up on 1st October 1946.

* It is entrusted with the work of compilation, collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics on different aspects of labour.



68.What is the name given to coarse grains/nutritious grains in the budget 2023-24?

- A. Shri Anna
- B. Godhum
- C. Breehi
- D. Yaw

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

The United Nations had declared the year 2023 to be celebrated as the International Year of Millets. In the budget 2023-24, coarse grains/nutritious grains have been named as 'Shri Anna'.

69.Consider the following statements on the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) report on - “Global Sea-level Rise and Implications”:

- 1) Global mean sea level rose by 4.5 mm per year during the period 2013-22 and human influence was very likely the main driver of these increases since at least 1971.
- 2) India, China, Bangladesh and the Netherlands face the highest threat of sea-level rise globally.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



Global sea level rose by 4.5 mm per year during 2013-22 period: WMO

Global mean sea level rose by 4.5 mm per year during the period 2013-22 and human influence was very likely the main driver of these increases since at least 1971.

a. According to a new report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) - "Global Sea-level Rise and Implications" - India, China, Bangladesh and the Netherlands face the highest threat of sea-level rise globally.

b. Almost 11% of the global population (896 million) in the Low Elevation Coastal Zone, increasing to beyond 1 billion by 2050 and associated development, coastal ecosystems face climate risks, including sea level rise.

c. Sea-level has risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in at least the last 3,000 years. The global ocean has warmed faster over the past century than since the end of the last deglacial transition (around 11,000 years ago).

Hence, option C is correct.

70. Where is the headquarter of WMO located?

- A. Brussels
- B. Manila
- C. Amsterdam
- D. Geneva

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-



- a. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organisation with a membership of 193 Member States and Territories.
- b. It originated from the International Meteorological Organisation (IMO - a NGO), the roots of which were planted at the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.
- c. The Secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, is headed by the Secretary-General and its supreme body is the World Meteorological Congress.
- Hence, option D is correct.

71. Which organisation/institution has developed the TAPAS UAV?

- A. Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE)
- B. IIT Bombay
- C. Defence Research Laboratory
- D. Indian Institute of Science
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

The TAPAS UAV was designed and developed by the Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE).
Indigenously developed TAPAS UAV captures Aero India 2023 rehearsal from 12,000 feet

The DRDO shared a stunning footage of Tapas UAV drone in action ahead of its debut. The 'Made In India' UAV will have its official debut during the air show in Bengaluru.

- a. Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance-Beyond Horizon-201 (TAPAS BH-201) is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). It is being developed in the country by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE).



- b. In November 2016, the first flight of the UAV took place.
- c. Drones or Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are aircraft with no on-board crew.
- d. The 'drones' can range from remotely piloted to fully automated, which means that it relies on a system of sensors and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) detectors to calculate its movement. It can fly at a controlled level of height and speed for a long period of time.
- e. UAVs have a role in many aspects of aviation ranging from monitoring climate change to carrying out post disaster search operations, filming, communication in remote areas to military operations.

Hence, option A is correct.

72. Which of the following organizations is hosting the 2nd Global Hackathon "HARBINGER 2023"?

- A. NITI Aayog
- B. IIT Delhi
- C. RBI
- D. National Informatics Centre
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Reserve Bank of India Announces 2nd Global Hackathon "HARBINGER 2023"

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday announced its second global hackathon - 'HARBINGER 2023 - Innovation for Transformation' with the theme 'Inclusive Digital Services'.

- a. The RBI has invited innovative ideas in four segments.



- 'Innovative, easy-to-use, digital banking services for differently-abled (Divyaang);
 - RegTech solutions to facilitate more efficient compliance by Regulated Entities (REs)';
 - Exploring use cases/solutions for CBDC-Retail transactions, including transactions in offline mode'; and
 - 'increasing Transactions Per Second (TPS)/ throughput and scalability of blockchains'.
- b. Winner of the hackathon will be given a prize of Rs 40 lakh and runner-up Rs 20 lakh.
- c. "Being part of HARBINGER 2023 gives an opportunity to the participants to get mentored by industry experts and exhibit their innovative solutions before an eminent jury and win exciting prizes in each category,"
- d. The first hackathon was announced in November 2021 and results were declared in June 2022.

Hence, option C is correct.

73. Consider the following statements on **Marburg virus disease (MVD)**:

- 1) Marburg virus disease (MVD) is a severe illness that causes viral hemorrhagic fever in humans.
- 2) The virus is transmitted to people from fruit bats and spreads among humans through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, surfaces, and materials.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2



D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

WHO confirms outbreak of highly infectious Marburg virus after 9 deaths

Nine deaths because of the Marburg virus have been reported in the Kie Ntem Province of Equatorial Guinea. In addition to the nine reported cases, 16 other suspected cases have been reported so far and nearly 200 people have been subjected to quarantine measures to prevent any further cases.

- a. Marburg virus disease (MVD) is a severe illness that causes viral hemorrhagic fever in humans (it was formerly known as Marburg hemorrhagic fever). The virus was first identified after simultaneous outbreaks in Frankfurt and Marburg, Germany — from where it derives its name — and Belgrade, Serbia in 1967.
- b. Marburg virus disease is a highly virulent disease and falls under the same family as the virus that causes the Ebola virus disease. Illness caused by the Marburg virus begins abruptly, with high fever, severe headache, and severe malaise.
- c. Many patients also developed severe hemorrhagic symptoms within seven days of first falling sick. The virus usually takes between two and 21 days to incubate, leading to abrupt symptoms, some of which can make Marburg difficult to diagnose initially.
- d. The virus is transmitted to people from fruit bats and spreads among humans through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, surfaces, and materials.
- e. While there is currently no vaccine or treatment plans to treat the virus, there is a supportive care system, with treatments like rehydration with oral or intravenous fluids, has proven to improve an individual's chances of survival.



Hence, option C is correct.

74. Which among the following has recently launched India's first **Marine Spatial Planning framework**?

- A. Puducherry
- B. Goa
- C. Lakshadweep
- D. Kerala

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Marine Spatial Planning framework, country's first, launched in Puducherry

The framework, part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative, aims at balancing development alongside sustainable and equitable ocean resource management.

- a. Puducherry has launched the country's first Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework as part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative, to balance growth alongside sustainable management of ocean resources and coastal environment preservation.
- b. The plan is to be implemented by India and Norway together. It is being implemented under the Indo-Norway Ocean Initiative. The initiative was created under an MoU signed between the countries in 2019.
- c. The process of allocating spaces in marine zones for human activities is called the Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF). The space is allocated for economic purposes, ecological purposes, or social purposes.
- d. Objectives of Marine Spatial Planning Framework



- To bring the diverse ocean users under the same platform
- To create a broad and inclusive picture of the ocean
- To provide a common platform for the policy builders and decision makers to discuss with each other

Hence, option A is correct.

75. The venue of the first meeting of the Culture Working Group of G20, in 2023, is which of the following places?

- A. Khajuraho
- B. Bhubaneswar
- C. Hampi
- D. Konark
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- The first meeting of the Culture Working group of G20, in 2023, will be held at Khajuraho.
- The Group will have four meetings in 2023 and they will be held in Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar & Hampi.
- For the Khajuraho meeting, the theme is "Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property".
- An ancient city, Khajuraho is known for its majestic temples and elaborate sculptures. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Khajuraho Group of Monuments, was constructed by the Chandela Dynasty between 950-1050 AD.



76.The Indian Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Jal Jan Abhiyan in February 2023 with which of the following organisations?

- A. Ram Krishna Mission
- B. The Brahma Kumaris
- C. The Art of Living Fondation
- D. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- The Indian Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Jal Jan Abhiyan in February 2023 with the Brahma Kumaris.
- The Brahma Kumaris organization is deploying its Raja Yogis to conduct the campaign. Raja Yogis are well-versed yoga practitioners.
- The main objective of the campaign is water conservation.

77.In February 2023, the Government of India announced to add 21 more airports under the Krishi Udan scheme. The Krishi Udan scheme was launched in which of the following years?

- A. 2018
- B. 2019
- C. 2020
- D. 2021

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- The Krishi Udan scheme was launched in 2020 on international and national routes.



- The Scheme aimed at facilitating faster movement of agricultural produce.
- Krishi UDAN 2.0 launched in 2021 to increase share of air carriage in modal mix for transportation of Agri-produce which includes horticulture, fishery, livestock and processed products.

78. The Union Health Ministry of India has launched a nationwide mass drug administration (MDA) campaign aimed at ending filariasis disease transmission. India aims to eliminate filariasis by which of the following years?

- A. 2024
- B. 2025
- C. 2026
- D. 2027
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- India aims to eliminate filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target.
- Filariasis is a parasitic infection caused by microscopic, thread-like worms known as filariae. It is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes.
- Lymphatic filariasis is caused by infection with parasites classified as nematodes (roundworms) of the family Filariodidea.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends three drug treatments which involve a combination of ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine citrate and albendazole.



79. In February 2023, the Garuda Aerospace has designed a drone equipped with solar-powered cells. What is the name of the drone?

- A. Suraj
- B. Prakash
- C. Akash
- D. Vyom

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- Suraj is a drone equipped with solar-powered cells.
- It is an ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) high-altitude drone designed specifically for surveillance operations, providing "real-time information to the high command and protecting jawans on the ground."
- It is designed and launched by Garuda Aerospace – a drone startup.

80. The Indian Ministry of Defense launched the 'SAMAR' in February 2023. What is the objective of the SAMAR?

- A. To develop combat skills for the infantry corps of the Indian Army
- B. To measure the competency of defence manufacturing enterprises
- C. To operate and manage the space command of the Indian armed forces
- D. To augment intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance capacity of Indian Navy
- E. None of the above/More than one of the above

Answer ||| B

Solution |||



- The Indian Ministry of Defense launched the SAMAR, in February 2023, to measure the competency of defence manufacturing enterprises.
- It is a portal of DRDO's Aeronautical Research and Development Board (AR&DB) and is an outcome of DRDO and Quality Council of India.

81. Consider the following statements regarding REAIM 2023.

- 1) Switzerland hosted the first global Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain, REAIM 2023.
- 2) The summit provided a platform for all stakeholders to discuss the key opportunities, challenges and risks associated with military applications of AI.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- On 15 and 16 February, the government of the Netherlands hosted the first global Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain, REAIM 2023.
- The summit provided a platform for all stakeholders to discuss the key opportunities, challenges and risks associated with military applications of AI.



- Participants included foreign ministers and other government delegates, as well as representatives from knowledge institutions, think tanks, industry and civil society organisations.
- The event was co-hosted by the Republic of Korea and took place at the World Forum in The Hague, the international city of peace and justice.

82. Which European country's parliament made a law regarding leave during periods?

- A. Spain
- B. Finland
- C. Denmark
- D. Norway

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- The Spanish parliament approved sick leave for women suffering from incapacitating periods on February 16, making Spain the first country in Europe to do so.
- In Spain, women now have the option to take their monthly menstrual leave for three to five days if they feel uncomfortable during their periods.
- Spain passed a number of sexual and reproductive rights laws, including ones over abortion and transgender rights, making it the first nation in Europe to grant workers the right to paid menstruation leave.
- The menstrual leave provision will be funded by the government.
- Other nations which have given menstrual leaves are Japan, Indonesia and Zambia.



83. In how many phases will the 'Best Tourism Village Competition' conducted by the Ministry of Tourism be organized?

- A. One
- B. Two
- C. Three
- D. Four

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- The Centre launched a competition to select the best tourism village from across the country, and also a new website to promote rural tourism.
- The 'Best Tourism Village Competition' helmed by the tourism ministry will be held in three stages, and will seek entries at district level, state level and finally at the national level.
- The 9 point evaluation criteria have been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- On the occasion, a new web portal called Rural Tourism Portal to promote rural tourism in India was also launched.
- The government also launched the website of the first Global Tourism Investors Summit which will take place at Pragati Maidan here later this year.

84. Recently, Section 133A of the IT Act, which was in the news, was used to survey which organization or person?

- A. Sonu Sood
- B. BBC
- C. Gautam Adani
- D. National Islamic University



Answer ||| B

Solution |||

The surveys at BBC offices are being conducted under various provisions of the IT (I-T) Act, 1961 such as Section 133A, which gives the IT (I-T) department the power to conduct surveys to collect hidden information. Through an amendment made in 1964, the provision for survey was included in the Act.

85. 'One Nation, One Organ Allocation' is an initiative of which ministry?

- A. Union Health Ministry
- B. Ministry of Women and Child Development
- C. Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)
- D. None of these

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

- The Indian government is mulling to develop a 'one nation, one policy' for organ donation and transportation in the country.
- The Union Health Ministry is working on a 'One Nation, One Organ Allocation' policy in consultation with states to come up with uniform guidelines for registration, allocation and other aspects of the process.
- India conducts third highest number of transplantations in the world.
- Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 provides a system to regulate, removal, storage and transplantation of human organs.
- National Organ and Tissue Transplant Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) under MoH&FW function as apex centre that maintains registry of organs and tissues donation and transplantation.



86. World Pangolin Day is celebrated every year in which month?

- A. January
- B. February
- C. March
- D. July

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- India is home to two pangolin species, the Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin, both of which continue to be found in illicit trade despite having legal protection.
- World Pangolin Day is observed annually on the third Saturday in February and takes place on February 18 this year.
- The day aims to celebrate pangolins, raise awareness and recommit international N.G.O.s to the fight against the global capturing of pangolins in Africa and Asia.
- India reports a significant number of pangolin trafficking incidents reflected by seizures across the country.
- They are poached mainly for international markets in China and Southeast Asia for their scales, which are used as an ingredient in traditional medicines and are believed to cure various ailments. Pangolin meat is also considered a delicacy and consumed for its alleged medicinal properties.

87. Consider the following statements regarding DUSTLIK 2023 .

- 1) It is a military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and Russian Army.



2) The fourth edition of DUSTLIK 2023 will be held in Ghaziabad.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* As part of a military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and Uzbekistan Army, the fourth edition of biennial training Exercise DUSTLIK (2023) will be conducted from tomorrow till 5th March, 2023 in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

* It is a military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and Uzbekistan

* The Indian contingent will be represented by the 14th Battalion, The GARHWAL RIFLES, part of Western Command in this bilateral exercise. The Uzbekistan Army will be represented by troops of the Northwestern Military District of Uzbekistan Army.

* This joint exercise is aimed at enhancing military capability to undertake multi-domain operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under United Nations Mandate.

* Uzbekistan is important to India for connectivity to Iran and the Central Asian region. India is trying to expand its trade in the Central Asian region. But the conflicts in Afghanistan are a big hindrance. To counter such security issues, India needs the support of other central Asian countries like Uzbekistan.



88.The European Union formally banned the sale of gas and diesel cars from which year?

- A. 2025
- B. 2030
- C. 2032
- D. 2035

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- * In a move to boost the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), the European Parliament has approved the law to ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars in the EU, starting in 2035.
- * In a move to boost the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), the European Parliament has approved the law to ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars in the EU, starting in 2035.
- * The Commission will present by 2025 a methodology to assess and report data on CO2 emissions throughout the full life cycle of cars and vans sold on the EU market.
- * The new legislation sets the path towards zero CO2 emissions for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles in 2035 (an EU fleet-wide target to reduce CO2 emissions produced by new cars and vans by 100 per cent compared to 2021).
- * Every two years, starting from the end of 2025, the Commission will publish a report to evaluate the progress towards zero-emission road mobility.
- * The law was first accepted by negotiators from EU countries, the European Parliament and the European Commission in October last year.



89. Where was India's first hybrid-sounding rocket successfully launched by private companies?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Odisha
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Kerala

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* Martin Foundation in association with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and Space Zone India successfully completed the project known as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission 2.

* India's first hybrid sounding rocket by private players was successfully launched from Pattipulam village in the Chengalpattu district of Tamil Nadu on Sunday.

* Around 3,500 students from government schools across the country became part of a team that designed and constructed a student satellite launch vehicle (rocket) and 150 PICO satellite research experiment cubes that contained different payloads.

* The satellites were launched using a Sounding Rocket, also called as hybrid rocket, at Space Zone's facility at Pattipulam village near suburban Kelambakkam.

* The rocket flew to an altitude of about 5-6 km and splashed down into the sea.

90. Which state government has organized the Shrimp Fair?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Bihar
- C. Punjab



D. West Bengal

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

* This mela is being organised to make farmers aware of the various schemes available for fish farming, and also to encourage more people to join it. It will be held at the farmers' training centre at Enakhera village, where successful farmers will share their stories.

* Punjab is set to see its first state-level 'shrimp mela' (shrimp fair), beginning in Enakhera village of Muktsar district. While shrimp farming began in the state in 2016-17, the mela is a state government push to create more awareness about it.

* Shrimp farming is an aquaculture-based activity in marine or freshwater environments to produce shrimp for human consumption. In Punjab, it is done in five south-western districts of Muktsar, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Bathinda and Faridkot.

* South-west Punjab has saline underground water not fit for agriculture. Also, waterlogging is a perennial issue in this belt. Therefore, shrimp farming was proposed as a solution for farmers whose land was lying unutilised.

* At present, various schemes are being run under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), which started in 2021 and will run till 2025 to promote 'blue revolution'.

91. North India's first nuclear power plant is being set up in which of the following states?

- A. Punjab
- B. Haryana
- C. Himachal Pradesh
- D. Uttarakhand



Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* North India's first nuclear power plant is being set up at Gorakhpur village in Fatehabad district in Haryana.

* The Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Pariyojana (GHAVP) will have two units of 700 MW capacity each of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) of indigenous design.

* A Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor commonly uses unenriched natural uranium as its fuel, that uses heavy water (deuterium oxide D₂O) as its coolant and moderator.

* The heavy water coolant is kept under pressure, allowing it to be heated to higher temperatures without boiling, much as in a typical pressurized water reactor.

92. Consider the following statements regarding the World Day of Social Justice:

1. It is celebrated every year on February 20.
2. The theme of the day in 2023 is "Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice".

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||



- * The World Day of Social Justice is celebrated every year on February 20.
- * 'The theme of the day in 2023 is "Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice".
- * The day was first observed in 2009 to strengthen global solidarity and earmark a time to address the issues of social injustice and social inequalities like poverty and racial discrimination.
- * Social Justice includes equal access to opportunities, human rights and the benefits of growth regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or socio-economic position.

93. Consider the following statements on the **UN Commission for Social Development**:

- 1) The Commission for Social Development is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- 2) Ruchira Kamboj, India's permanent representative to the UN, has been chosen to serve as the commission's chair during the 62nd session in Feb 2023

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

India elected chair of 62nd session of UN Commission for Social Development



Ruchira Kamboj, India's permanent representative to the UN, has been chosen to serve as the commission's chair during the 62nd session.

a. The Commission for Social Development is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the 6 main organs of UN.

b. The Commission serves as the primary inter-governmental body to deliberate upon and strengthen international cooperation on social development issues

c. 54-member UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) advances 3 dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental

d. ECOSOC's 54 members are elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly.

e. Seats on the Council are allotted based on geographical representation with 14 allocated to African states, 11 to Asian states, six to eastern European states, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean states and 13 to western European and other states.

Hence, option C is correct.

94. Which of the following statements about the GST Appellate Tribunal is correct?

A. GSTAT (GST Appellate tribunal) will be constituted for disputes redressal under GST laws.

B. The constitution of GST Appellate tribunal was recommended by a report of the 'Groups of Ministers (GoMs)'.

C. It will be presided a President and consists two technical members and two judicial members (one each from centre and state).

D. All of the above

Answer ||| D



Solution |||

GST Council reaches consensus to create tribunal

GST Council accepted recommendations of report of 'Groups of Ministers (GoMs) on GST Appellate Tribunal'

- a. GSTAT (GST Appellate tribunal) constituted for disputes redressal under GST laws.
- b. Central Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 (CGST Act) mandates for constitution of GSTAT and its Benches.
- c. It will be presided a President and consists two technical members and two judicial members (one each from the centre and state)

Hence, option D is correct.

95. When is the International Mother Language Day celebrated each year?

- A. Feb 21
- B. Feb 19
- C. Feb 25
- D. Feb 28

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

International Mother Language Day

February 21 is celebrated as the International Mother Language Day, as declared by the United Nations in 2000.

- a. As per the UNESCO, this day aims to celebrate the ways of expressing the world in its multiplicity, committing to the preservation of the



diversity of languages as a common heritage, and working for quality education in mother tongues for all.

b. The theme of the 24th edition of International Mother Language Day is 'multilingual education - a necessity to transform education'.

c. As per the 2018 Census report, India recorded 19,500 distinct entries for "mother tongue", of which only 121 were categorized and even fewer constitutionally recognized.

d. Under National Education Policy (NEP,2020), wherever possible mother tongue should be the medium of instruction till Class 5 or preferably till Class 8. Hence, option A is correct.

96.What is the full form of FLDC?

- A. finance loan drawback guarantee
- B. first loan drawback guarantee
- C. first loan default guarantee
- D. finance loan default guarantee

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

RBI ban on FLDC arrangement: Fintechs explore alternative models to meet RBI norms

Fintech lenders are exploring alternative business models after the first loss default guarantee (FLDC) arrangement was barred by RBI under the digital lending norms

a. FLDC or 'first loan default guarantee' is an arrangement between a fintech company and regulated entity (RE - banks and NBFCs), wherein the fintech compensates the RE to a certain extent if the borrower defaults.



- b. RBI is not comfortable with fintechs taking default risk as they are not regulated entities under its purview - creating a systemic risk of NPAs
- c. As per RBI digital loan norms, FLDG comes under synthetic securitisation - which Banks and NBFCs are not allowed to undertake.
- d. Synthetic securitisation means a structure where credit risk is transferred, in whole or in part, through use of credit derivatives or credit guarantees.

Hence, option C is correct.

97. Consider the following statements on **Sickle cell anemia**:

- 1) Sickle cell disease is a genetic condition- that affects haemoglobin (responsible for carrying oxygen in the body) in red blood cells.
- 2) Complications of the disease can include anaemia, debilitating acute and chronic pain, infection, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and progressive organ damage, including decreased cognitive function and renal failure.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Sickle Cell Anemia

- a. Sickle cell disease is a genetic condition- that affects hemoglobin (responsible for carrying oxygen in the body) in red blood cells.



b. Complications of the disease can include anemia, debilitating acute and chronic pain, infection, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and progressive organ damage, including decreased cognitive function and renal failure.

c. The disease is widespread among the tribal population in India. Nearly 20% of tribal children affected die before reaching the age of two, and 30% children die before reaching adulthood.

d. Women and children are more vulnerable to the disease.

Hence, option C is correct.

98. By what year does the Union Budget 2023-24 envisage to eliminate sickle cell anemia?

- A. 2047
- B. 2025
- C. 2070
- D. 2030

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Union Budget 2023-24: Eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047 'welcome step'

The union budget 2023-24 aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia – a genetic blood disorder by 2047.

The Sickle cell anemia (SCA) elimination programme will entail awareness creation, universal screening of seven crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas, and counselling through collaborative efforts of central ministries and state governments.

Hence, option A is correct.



99. Which of the following countries hosted the first vice-ministerial meeting of I2U2?

- A. India
- B. United States of America
- C. Israel
- D. United Arab Emirates

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* The United Arab Emirates hosted the first vice-ministerial meeting of I2U2 at Abu Dhabi.

* Within the first two meetings of I2U2, India gained 2 billion USD of investments in the states of Gujarat and MP in the field of hybrid energy projects.

* I2U2 is a joint initiative of India, Israel, the United States of America, and the United Arab Emirates.

100. Russia has withdrawn from the START in February 2023. In this regard consider the following statements:

1. The original START was signed in 1991.
2. The START is a bilateral treaty between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2



D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

* The START is a bilateral treaty signed between the United States of America and the Soviet Union in 1991 and it came into force in 1994.

* The original treaty expired in 2009 and NEW START Treaty was signed in 2010, which applies till 2026.

* Under the treaty, both the countries agreed to bar 6,000 nuclear warheads and 1600 ICBMs (Intercontinental ballistic missiles).

* More than 80% of the nuclear warheads were removed in 2001 with this treaty.

101. In the Climate Performance Index, released by the Observer Research Foundation, in February 2023, to evaluate the performance of G20 countries in climate change mitigation, which of the following secured 1st rank among all the G20 countries?

- A. Japan
- B. India
- C. Canada
- D. France

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* India secured 1st rank in the Climate Performance Index, released by the Observer Research Foundation, in February 2023, to evaluate the performance of G20 countries in climate change mitigation.



* India's rank is attributed to factors like significantly low per capita contributions to emissions, Very limited share in legacy emissions relative to its population needs etc.

* This index is different from the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) published by the Germanwatch.

102.The Union Budget 2022-23 of India announced the establishment of a digital university. What is the main objective of the University?

- A. To reduce the cost of higher education and increase access to skill programmes
- B. To make advanced research in the digital field for all purposes
- C. To enhance international cooperation of India for its Digital India programme
- D. To improve measures for cyber security at national as well as international level

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* The Union Budget 2022-23 of India announced the establishment of a digital university. The main objective of the University is to reduce the cost of higher education and increase access to skill programmes via promoting online learning in different Indian languages.

* Other digital initiatives in education include:

- SWAYAM : An integrated platform and portal for online courses.
- SWAYAM-Prabha : 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH
- National Digital Library : A project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.



103. A paper published in the journal PLoS (Public Library of Science) Climate, in February 2023, proposed the use of moon dust, for solar radiation management (SRM), as a cooling solution to fight climate change. In this regard considered the following statements:

1. SRM Technologies try to cool earth by naturally reflecting more sunrays back to space.
2. SRM can be done in space, at the atmosphere level or even on the ground.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

* Solar radiation management (SRM) Technologies try to cool earth by artificially reflecting more sunrays back to space.

* SRM can be done - in space, at the atmosphere level or even on the ground.

* Currently established SRM technologies include Marine Cloud brightening, Cirrus cloud thinning, Stratospheric aerosol injection etc.

104. The Indian Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare gave its nod to the commercial use of NANO-DAP. What is NANO-DAP?

- A. It is a next-generation fertilizer
- B. It is an advanced pesticide
- C. It is a type of micro-irrigation



D. It is a method for disposal of agricultural remains

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

* Nano-DAP is a next-generation fertilizer produced by IFFCO and Coromandel International with nanoparticles of Nitrogen and Phosphorus, the primary macronutrients for plants.

* Use of Nano -DAP has several advantages like - Reduced input cost , higher efficiency via higher nutrient uptake and environmental benefits of lower water consumption and nutrient run off.

105. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has published its first global assessment of Soil Carbon In Grasslands. Regarding the assessment consider the following statements:

1. Grasslands, contain approximately 20% of world's soil organic carbon.
2. Most of world's grasslands have a negative carbon balance.
3. There was found a negative carbon balance in East Asia.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

* Food and Agriculture Organisation has published its first global assessment of Soil Carbon In Grasslands.



* The assessment measured Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) in both semi-natural and managed grasslands.

* According to the assessment:

i. Grasslands, contain approximately 20% of world's SOC.

ii. Most of world's grasslands have a positive carbon balance, meaning land is stable.

iii. Negative carbon balance was found in East Asia, Central and South America, and Africa south of Equator.

106. 'Jadui Pitara', a learning-teaching material, has been developed under National Curriculum Framework. It belongs to which of the following?

- A. Research scholars involved in advanced research
- B. Skill-oriented technical education at the secondary level
- C. Teaching skill training programme at graduation level
- D. A play based method for children of age group of 3-8 years

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

* 'Jadui Pitara', is a play-based learning-teaching material for children of age group of 3-8 years, developed under National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage.

* It is available in 13 Indian languages and Comprises of playbooks, toys, puzzles, posters, story books etc. as well as reflecting local culture, social context and languages.

* It involves learning and development in several domains including Physical Development, Socio-emotional and Ethical Development, Cognitive Development etc.



107. Consider the following statements on the Asia Economic Dialogue:

- 1) Ministry of External Affairs' flagship event on geo-economics - Asia Economic Dialogue - will be held from February 23-25 in Pune.
- 2) The principal theme for the Dialogue's seventh edition is 'Asia and the Emerging World Order'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Asia Economic Dialogue

Ministry of External Affairs' flagship event on geo-economics - Asia Economic Dialogue - will be held from February 23-25 in Pune.

- a) The principal theme for the Dialogue's seventh edition is 'Asia and the Emerging World Order'.
- b) The dialogue will also discuss themes such as global growth prospects; How the Global South will shape the G20 agenda; the Metaverse: Understanding the Future; and Meeting climate targets: The Road Ahead.
- c) More than 44 countries are going to participate in the dialogue, including Mexico, Singapore, Maldives, South Africa, the USA, Brazil, Switzerland, etc.



d) Significance - According to the IMF, Asia is one of the fast-growing markets in recent days. With 4.7 billion people, Asia accounts for 60% of world's population.

Hence, option C is correct.

108. Which of the following countries will host the Malabar 2023 exercise?

- A. India
- B. USA
- C. Japan
- D. Australia

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Malabar Naval exercise

Australia to host Malabar naval exercise for first time this August

a. Australia will host the Malabar multilateral naval exercise, consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., for the first time this year.

b. Australia was included as a permanent member of Malabar exercise in 2020 amid the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh. Japan hosted the last edition of Malabar which was held in November 2022.

c. Malabar exercise began as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S. in 1992.

d. The exercise has grown in size, scope and complexity with Anti-Submarine Warfare training emerging as a major focus area in the last few years, especially against the backdrop of rapid expansion of Chinese Navy and its increased forays into the Indian Ocean.

Hence, option D is correct.



109. In which city of Maharashtra, the Anubhuti Inclusive Park has been established?

- A. Nagpur
- B. Pune
- C. Ahmednagar
- D. Nasik

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

Anubhuti Inclusive Park

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways has laid the Foundation Stone for the world's largest Divyang Park - Anubhuti Inclusive Park in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- a. It is the world's first disabled-inclusive park.
- b. The park will be developed by Nagpur Improvement Trust.
- c. The park will have adapted facilities for all 21 types of disabilities, including a touch and smell garden, hydrotherapy unit, water therapy, and independent room for differently abled children, mothers, etc.

d. Facts:

- Union government passed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 for protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and to give the disabled the right to live with dignity.
- India is also signatory of the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Hence, option A is correct.



110. When was the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)** established?

- A. 2014
- B. 2018
- C. 2001
- D. 2004

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed a TKDL Access Agreement with Eurasian Patent Organisation.

- a. The agreement will allow EPO to access TKDL database for purposes of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) grant.
- b. TKDL, was established in 2001, by CSIR and Ministry of AYUSH.
- c. It is first of its kind database of Indian traditional knowledge containing information related to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Yoga in five international languages.
- d. It acts as a bridge between traditional knowledge information existing in local languages and patent examiners at IPOs.
- e. It prevents misappropriation of country's traditional medicinal knowledge through patenting – acting as an efficient deterrent against bio-piracy.

Hence, option C is correct.

111. Consider the following statements on **"Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture in J&K"**:



1) The project, worth 463 crore rupees, is aimed at empowering farmers and educated youth through technology driven and inclusive agri-extension services.

2) The project will also establish business orientation centers at Sher-E-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Govt approves five-year project on "Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture in J&K"

In Jammu and Kashmir, in order to give a huge push to sustainable agriculture in the Union Territory, the Government has approved a five-year project on "Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalising Agriculture in J&K".

a. The project, worth 463 crore rupees, is aimed at empowering farmers and educated youth through technology driven and inclusive agri-extension services.

b. The project aims at creating 2000 Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) at Panchayat level; as a hub of convergence of services at the district level they will also serve as a One Stop Centre for extension services.

c. The project will also establish business orientation centres at Sher-E-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) and facilitate real-time problem redressal through cyber extension including RS-GIS-driven agro-advisories and ICT-based virtual contacts and communication systems.



d. The project will also create a strong MIS system to maintain transparency and accountability in service delivery and information sharing with parent departments and administration.

Hence, option C is correct.

112. Which of the following statements about the report on **“Assessment of avoided CO2 emissions during construction and operation of national highways”** is correct?

- A. In 2016, about 243 million tonnes of CO2 was emitted from the operation of fossil fuel run vehicles in India, which is 10.8% of the total national CO2 emissions.
- B. The new and improved state of the art National Highways replacing congested and often circuitous routes, however, can help avoid CO2 emissions by reducing fuel combustion.
- C. Avenue plantations and compensatory afforestation can additionally sequester CO2, offsetting CO2 emitted from highway operations as a whole.
- D. All of the above

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

Report on “Assessment of Avoided CO2 Emissions during Construction and Operation of National Highways” released

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav today released the report on “Assessment of Avoided CO2 Emissions during Construction and Operation of National Highways” at the World Sustainable Development Summit.

a. The study assesses the extent of CO2 which can be avoided per km in construction of the National Highways.



b. India has the 2nd longest road network in the world. Construction and maintenance of roads is known to be a source of CO₂, which is over and above the CO₂ emitted from fuel operated vehicles on roads.

c. Report findings -

- In 2016, about 243 million tonnes of CO₂ was emitted from the operation of fossil fuel run vehicles in India, which is 10.8% of the total national CO₂ emissions.

- The new and improved state of the art NH replacing congested and often circuitous routes, however, can help avoid CO₂ emissions by reducing fuel combustion

- Avenue plantations and compensatory afforestation can additionally sequester CO₂, offsetting CO₂ emitted from highway operations as a whole.

Hence, option D is correct.

113. The Cabinet of India has cleared ratifying protocols related to Chicago Convention on international civil aviation. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. The Chicago Convention led to the creation of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in 1944.

2. The ICAO is a specialized agency of the United States of America and European Countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| A



Solution |||

- The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), established in 1944, is a specialized agency of United Nations linked to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- The Chicago Convention led to creation of ICAO.
- India is a founding member of the ICAO.

114. Which of the following cyclones hit Madagascar And Mozambique in February 2023?

- A. Jawad
- B. Freddy
- C. Asani
- D. Mandoug

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- Cyclone Freddy hit Madagascar And Mozambique in February 2023.
- Cyclone Jawad hit eastern region in India in December 2021.
- Cyclone Asani hit southern region of India in May 2022.
- Cyclone Mandoug existed near India in December 2022.
- Cyclones are rapid inward air circulation around a low-pressure area.

115. Which of the following states secured the top rank in the index for literacy among children below 10 years released by the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in 2023?



- A. Kerala
- B. Gujarat
- C. West Bengal
- D. Uttar Pradesh

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- West Bengal on top, Uttar Pradesh at bottom of index for literacy among children below 10 years.
- The index was released by the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.
- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy refers to the ability of a child (between ages of 3 and 8) to read basic texts and do basic mathematical problems such as addition and subtraction.
- The report is a benchmark for states and UTs to track their performance relative to their peers in achieving universal foundational learning by 2026-27.

116.Which of the following is going to launch social stock exchanges in 2023?

- A. The Finance Ministry of India
- B. The Bombay Stock Exchange
- C. The Security Exchange Board of India
- D. The National Stock Exchange

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

- The National Stock Exchange is going to launch social stock exchanges (SSEs) in 2023.



- It will function as a platform to allow For-Profit Social Enterprises (FPEs) and not-for-profit organisations (NPO) with a social purpose to raise funds.
- The SSEs are a fundraising platform specifically created for social enterprises so that they can tap into broader sources of donations.

117. Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) has signed an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for the domestic manufacture and supply of its LORA Weapon System. What is the LORA?

- A. It is a cruise missile system.
- B. It is a quasi-ballistic missile system.
- C. It is a long-range artillery Gun.
- D. It is a laser ray-producing gun.

Answer ||| B

Solution |||

- Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) has signed an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for domestic manufacture and supply of its LORA Weapon System.
- LORA ("Long Range Attack") is a theater quasi-ballistic missile.
- It has a range of 400 kilometres (250 mi) and a CEP of 10 metres when using a combination of GPS and TV for terminal guidance.
- It can be ship-launched from inside of a standard Intermodal container as well as land-launched.

118. Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation, to operate Baba Saheb Ambedkar Yatra tour package under "Dekho Apna Desh" initiative, covering some of the prominent sites associated with the life



of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar. “Dekho Apna Desh” is an initiative of which of the following ministries of the Government of India?

- A. Ministry of Railway
- B. Ministry of Culture
- C. Ministry of Tourism
- D. Ministry of Home Affairs

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

- “Dekho Apna Desh” is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism of India.
- Under “Dekho Apna Desh” initiative, Ministry of Railways along with Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation is operating Bharat Gaurav Tourist Trains on various theme-based circuits across India.
- Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation, to operate Baba Saheb Ambedkar Yatra tour package under “Dekho Apna Desh” initiative, covering some of the prominent sites associated with the life of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

119. How many million dollars will IFC of the World Bank will provide Sri Lanka?

- A. 200 million
- B. 400 million
- C. 200 billion
- D. 450 million

Answer ||| B

Solution |||



- * The island nation's economy is estimated to have contracted by 9.2% in 2022 and is expected to shrink a further 4.2% in 2023, according to World Bank data.
- * Three private banks will receive the facility to fund about 30% of imports, including medicine, food and fertiliser, the IFC said in a statement on February 27.
- * The funds will provide a much-needed foreign exchange cushion for Sri Lanka, which is grappling with its worst financial crisis in over seven decades partly triggered by a severe shortage of dollars.
- * IFC is also working on further plans to support client banks with other long-term funding and advisory services in the future, the statement added.
- * Sri Lanka signed a preliminary agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$2.9 billion bailout last September but has to put its debt on a sustainable repayment track before the funds can be disbursed.

120. In the International IP Index Report 2023, which place has India been placed in 55 countries?

- A. 42nd
- B. 34th
- C. 86th
- D. 135th

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

India ranks 42nd among 55 leading global economies on the International IP Index released by the U.S. Chambers of Commerce, according to which India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation.



121. Which of the following universities will host the Youth 20 (Y20) India Summit with focus on climate change and environmental protection?

- A. The Maharaja Sayajirao University, Gujarat
- B. IIT Delhi, Delhi
- C. IISC Bangalore, Karnataka
- D. Harcourt Butler Technical University, Uttar Pradesh

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

The Maharaja Sayajirao University will host a two-day Youth20 (Y20) India Summit Saturday with focus on the theme of climate change and environmental conservation.

122. Recently in the discussion, Rideau Canal Skate is in which country?

- A. Canada
- B. Mexico
- C. Costa Rica
- D. Cuba

Answer ||| A

Solution |||

The Rideau Canal, also known unofficially as the Rideau Waterway, connects Canada's capital city of Ottawa, Ontario, to Lake Ontario and the Saint Lawrence River at Kingston.

123. Which of the following exercises are Air Force exercises organized between India and the United Kingdom (UK)?



- A. Ajeya warrior
- B. Konkan
- C. Indradhanush
- D. None of these

Answer ||| C

Solution |||

Exercise Indradhanush is a joint air force exercise conducted by the Royal Air Force (UK) and the Indian Air Force.

124. Consider the following statements regarding rural economy.

- 1) According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, 67% of the population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood.
- 2) According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, 75% of India's population lives in rural areas.

Select the correct statements using the code given below.

Code:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer ||| D

Solution |||

According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, 65% of India's population lives in rural areas and 47% of the population livelihood is agriculture. Hence option D is correct.

