

# Monthly Current Affairs April 2023 English



## Important News: International

### Nasa names first woman and black man on Moon mission.

**Why in news:** NASA named the four astronauts who will fly to the moon by the end of next year, including one woman and three men. The three Americans and one Canadian were introduced during a ceremony in Houston, home to the nation's astronauts as well as Mission Control.



1. The names of the astronauts are Reid Wiseman, the mission's commander; Victor Glover, the pilot; Christina Koch, mission specialist; and, Jeremy Hansen, also a mission specialist. The first three are NASA astronauts, while Mr. Hansen is a member of the Canadian Space Agency.
2. Carried to Earth orbit atop NASA's two-stage Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, the Artemis II crew will practice manual maneuvers with the Orion spacecraft before handing back to ground control for further tests and the lunar flyby portion of the mission.
3. At its farthest distance from Earth, Artemis II is expected to reach a point more than 370,000 km away. The typical low-Earth orbit altitude of the International Space Station is about 420 km above the plane.
4. They will now commence a rigorous period of training to prepare themselves for the mission. By selecting a woman and a person of color, NASA is fulfilling its commitment to promoting diversity in its exploration efforts. It is worth noting that all previous crewed Moon missions have been undertaken by white men.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

### The European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 mission

**Why in news:** The two spacecraft forming the European Space Agency's Proba-3 mission are ready with instruments and sensors allowing them to maneuver to a millimeter-scale precision relative to one another. The spacecraft will fly into space on India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in 2024.



1. Proba-3 is an ambitious mission that aims to form a 144-m long solar coronagraph, allowing scientists to study the Sun's faint corona closer to the solar rim than has ever before been achieved. Achieving precise formation flying opens up a whole new era for science and applications, including Earth observation and in-orbit satellite servicing.
2. PSLV ESA is responsible for designing and implementing Proba-3's mission, while PSLV will be used to deploy its spacecrafts into orbit. Proba-3 marks the next step



in formation flying, and the spacecrafts will be in a highly elliptical orbit of 600 x 60530 km.

3. Proba-3's spacecrafts will be deployed by India's PSLV in a high Earth orbit. Engineers will subject them to a simulated space environment during the testing phase. The spacecrafts will maintain formation to a few millimetres and arc second precision at distances of 144 m or more for six hours at a time, achieved autonomously without relying on guidance from the ground.
4. Proba-3's primary goal is to validate strategies, guidance, navigation and control, and other algorithms in space. Maintaining formation throughout the orbit is difficult due to high fuel costs. Therefore, each orbit will be divided between 6 hours of formation flying manoeuvres at apogee and the rest of the orbit in passive safe drifting.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Vaikom satyagraha

**Why in news:** March 30, 1924, in the temple town of Vaikom in the princely state of Travancore, a non-violent agitation started, marking the beginning of "temple entry movements" across the country.



1. Vaikom is a serene town in Kottayam, Kerala.
2. The issue of entry into the temple led by the Viacom Satyagraha was first raised by Ezhava leader TK Madhavan in an editorial in his newspaper Deshabhimani in 1917.
3. A march comprising of 'upper caste' Hindus who supported the reform commenced in Vaikom and ended at the capital of Trivandrum.
4. It was launched by leaders in Kerala such as T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon and George Joseph, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi.
5. Inspired by the success of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, by 1920, he began advocating more direct methods.
6. In November 1936, almost a decade after the conclusion of the Satyagraha, the historic Temple Entry Proclamation was signed by the Maharaja of Travancore, which lifted the centuries-old ban on the entry of marginalised castes into the temples of Travancore.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



## United Nations 2023 Water Conference

**Why in news:** UN conference was held to Support the achievement of internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



1. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference held in New York on March 22-24 was the first such meeting on water after 46 years. The conference coincided with the mid-term comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action.
2. In a report entitled 'Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028', the U.N. recognised the urgent need for action given that we are not on track to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 6 for water: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all".
3. The theme was "Our watershed moment: uniting the world for water". This is 2nd such water conference the first being held in 1977 in Mar de Plata, Argentina
4. It resulted in the first global 'Action Plan' recognizing that "all peoples have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs."
5. It led to global funding and a concerted effort to provide drinking water and sanitation for all. These actions substantially reduced the population without access to safe drinking water in much of the developing world.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## World Energy Transitions Outlook report

**Why in news:** International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) launched the World Energy Transitions Outlook 2022 at the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue.



1. It is an intergovernmental organisation, it was officially founded in Bonn, Germany, in January 2009. It has 167 members and India is the 77th Founding Member of IRENA. It has its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
2. India ranked 87 out of 110 countries in the Global Energy Transition Index (ETI) 2021, a benchmark by the World Economic Forum.
3. IRENA's 1.5°C pathway positions electrification and efficiency as key drivers of the energy transition, enabled by renewables, hydrogen, and sustainable biomass.



4. The pathway, which requires a massive change in how societies produce and consume energy, would result in a cut of nearly 37 gigatonnes of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050.
5. These reductions can be achieved through 1) significant increases in generation and direct uses of renewables-based electricity; 2) substantial improvements in energy efficiency; 3) the electrification of end-use sectors (e.g. electric vehicles and heat pumps); 4) clean hydrogen and its derivatives; 5) bioenergy coupled with carbon capture and storage; and 6) last-mile use of carbon capture and storage.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Kim Cotton, who made history by becoming first female on-field umpire in full-member men's international

**Why in news:** In February 2022, Kim Cotton was named as one of the on-field umpires for the 2022 Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.



1. Kim Cotton became the first-ever female umpire to stand in a men's international cricket match featuring two full member countries. Cotton accomplished the feat during the second T20I match between New Zealand (NZ) and Sri Lanka (SL) in Dunedin, New Zealand.
2. She is a New Zealand cricket umpire. Her full name is Kim Diane Cotton. She was born in New Zealand's Auckland.
3. The 45-year-old was named as one of the 12 on-field umpires for the 2018 ICC Women's World Twenty20. In February 2022, she was named as one of the on-field umpires for the 2022 Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## United Nations Statistical Commission

**Why in news:** India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2024.

1. UNSC was established in 1947(HQ: New York) and is the highest body of the global statistical system. The term of office of members is four years.
2. India was a member of the Statistical Commission last in 2004 and the country is returning to the UN agency after a gap of two decades.





3. UNSC brings together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world.
4. It is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international levels.
5. **Membership:** The Commission consists of 24 member countries of the United Nations elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council based on an equitable geographical distribution according to the following pattern:
  - Five members from African States
  - Four members from Asia-Pacific States
  - Four members from Eastern European States
  - Four members from Latin American and Caribbean States
  - Seven members from Western European and other States

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Hybrid solar eclipse

**Why in news:** A 'hybrid' solar eclipse called the Ningaloo Eclipse is set to happen on April 20, 2023.

1. A hybrid eclipse is a type of solar eclipse that looks like an annular solar eclipse or a total solar eclipse, depending on the observer's location along the central eclipse path.
2. During a hybrid solar eclipse, the Earth's curvature brings some sections of the eclipse path into the Moon's umbra, the darkest part of its shadow that creates total solar eclipses, while other areas remain outside the umbra's reach, causing an annular eclipse.
3. Solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Earth and Sun while completely blocking the face of the Sun. It will be visible to the people located in the centre of the Moon's shadow when it hits Earth.
4. Eclipse happens when the moon while orbiting the Earth, comes in between the sun and the Earth, due to which the moon blocks the sun's light from reaching the Earth, causing an eclipse of the sun or a solar eclipse.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



## Global Trade Outlook and Statistics

**Why in news:** Risks to the forecast are tilted to the downside, including geopolitical tensions, food insecurity, potential financial instability stemming from monetary policy tightening, and increasing levels of debt.



1. Released by WTO, it (est. 1995; HQ: Geneva, Switzerland) is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade. With effective cooperation in the United Nations System, governments use the organization to establish, revise, and enforce the rules that govern international trade.
2. Trade volume growth in 2022 was slower than expected at 2.7% following a fourth quarter slump, but still stronger than worst casescenarios considered at the start of the war in Ukraine.
3. Digitally delivered services exports were worth US\$ 3.82 trillion in the same year.
4. World merchandise trade will grow slower ( 1.7% in 2023) before picking up to 3.2% in 2024
5. Risks to global trade: Geopolitical tensions, food insecurity, potential financial instability stemming from monetary policy tightening, and increasing levels of debt

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Tick-borne encephalitis

**Why in news:** Recently, as per an official statement by the UK Health Security Agency, 3 cases of probable or confirmed tick-borne encephalitis acquired in England since 2019.



1. Tick-borne encephalitis infection is caused by a virus which is a member of the family Flaviviridae.
2. As per the World Health Organisation, approximately 10,000–12,000 clinical cases of tick-borne encephalitis are reported each year in eastern, central, northern and increasingly western European countries, and in northern China, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation.
3. This virus is carried by ticks and causes a range of diseases like mild flu-like illness, to severe infection in the central nervous system such as meningitis or encephalitis. One can also have asymptomatic infection due to the virus.



4. The symptoms of the viral infection are high fever with headache, neck stiffness, confusion or reduced consciousness. The symptoms are similar to meningitis, an illness that affects the brain and the bones of the spinal cord.
5. Treatment: There are 4 widely used vaccines of assured quality available namely
  - FSME-Immun and Encepur: Manufactured in Austria and Germany respectively, and based on European strains of the virus
  - TBE-Moscow and EnceVir: Manufactured in the Russian Federation and based on Far-Eastern strains.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## C.R. Rao wins International Prize in Statistics 2023

**Why in news:** The 2023 International Prize in Statistics, which is regarded as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in statistics, has been awarded to Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao, an Indian-American statistician.



1. Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao, a prominent Indian-American mathematician and statistician, will receive the 2023 International Prize in Statistics, the equivalent to the Nobel Prize in the field, for his monumental work 75 years ago that revolutionised statistical thinking.
2. Rao's groundbreaking paper, 'Information and accuracy attainable in the estimation of statistical parameters', was published in 1945 in the Bulletin of the Calcutta Mathematical Society, a journal that is otherwise not well known to the statistics community.
3. The paper was subsequently included in the book Breakthroughs in Statistics, 1890-1990. This was an impressive achievement given Rao was only 25 at the time and had just completed his master's degree in statistics two years prior.
4. Rao-Blackwell Theorem (because it was discovered independently by eminent statistician David Blackwell), provides a means for transforming an estimate into a better—in fact, an optimal—estimate. Together, these results form a foundation on which much of statistics is built
5. His research on Information geometry has recently been used to aid the understanding and optimization of Higgs boson measurements at the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)





## Hydrological Status and Outlook System (HydroSOS)

**Why in news:** In the recently held United Nations Water Conference 2023, the World Meteorological Organisation's Hydrological Status and Outlook System offered a data analysis tool for simulation.

1. HydroSOS is a global operational mechanism of World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) for hydrological data.
2. HydroSOS integrates hydrological status assessments and outlooks from, and for National Hydrological Services (NHS).
3. It aims to provide an operational system capable of assessing the current hydrological status and its likely near-future outlook for all areas of the globe.
4. The System will be delivered by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), offering simple, accessible hydrological information to users such as government bodies, basin managers, funding institutions etc.

## World Meteorological Organisation

5. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations(UN).
6. It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873.
7. Established in 1950, WMO became the specialized agency of the UN for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.
8. Headquarters: Geneva,  
(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## ARTEMIS II MISSION

**Why in news:** NASA in the past week announced the crew that will fly aboard its Artemis II mission — a lunar mission that will pave the way for further deep space explorations.

1. Artemis 2 is the second scheduled flight of the Artemis program and the first crewed Artemis mission. The astronauts and mission controllers will collect data on Orion and the crew's performance to assess how ready the Artemis program is to send people to the moon's surface.
2. During Artemis 2, four astronauts, will fly around the moon before returning to Earth. NASA has announced the four astronauts that will go to the lunar orbit and come back with the Artemis 2 mission—mission commander Reid Wiseman,



Victor Glover, Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen and NASA mission specialist Christina Koch.

3. The roughly 10-day-long mission is tentatively scheduled to launch in November 2024.
4. Artemis 2 will use the huge Space Launch System (SLS) megarocket and Orion spacecraft to launch the crew on the lunar flyby mission.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Taiwan Strait

**Why in news:** Seventy-one Chinese military aircraft crossed the sensitive median line of the Taiwan Strait recently as China began drills around Taiwan.



1. Taiwan Strait, also called Formosa Strait, is a 180-kilometre-wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and continental Asia.
2. The chief ports are Amoy in mainland China and Kao-hsiung in Taiwan.
3. The strait extends from southwest to northeast between the South and East China seas. The strait is currently part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north. The narrowest part is 130 km wide.
4. Historically both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan espoused a One-China Policy that considered the strait part of the exclusive economic zone of a single "China".

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF)

**Why in news:** India and the US were prime movers behind the UN Democracy Fund in 2005, when they were negotiating the civilian nuclear co-operation deal. As Joint Secretary (Americas) at the time, S Jaishankar was a lead negotiator.



1. India is the fourth highest donor to UN Democracy Fund, which funds at least 68 projects worldwide linked to the Open Society Foundation.
2. It is used to empower civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes.
3. Funding: It subsists entirely on voluntary contributions from Governments.



4. Advisory Board: It is constituted by the Secretary-General and includes
- UN Member States who have made the largest cumulative financial contributions to the Fund over the previous three years.
  - International civil society organizations
  - Individuals serving in a personal capacity

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## Uranium 241

**Why in news:** While studying the atoms of heavy elements, physicists in Japan discovered a previously unknown isotope of uranium, with atomic number 92 and mass number 241, i.e. uranium-241.



1. The researchers also calculated that uranium-241 likely has a half-life of just 40 minutes.

### How was uranium-241 found?

2. The researchers accelerated uranium-238 nuclei into plutonium-198 nuclei at the KEK Isotope Separation System (KISS).
3. In a process called multinucleon transfer, the two isotopes exchange protons and neutrons. The resulting nuclear fragments contained different isotopes.
4. Uranium is a silvery-white metallic chemical element in the periodic table, with atomic number 92. It occurs naturally in low concentrations in soil, rock and water, and is commercially extracted from uranium-bearing minerals such as uraninite.
5. It has the highest atomic weight of all naturally occurring elements.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Tulsi ghat restoration project in uganda

**Why in news:** Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to Uganda, appreciated the initiatives of Overseas Friends of BJP-Uganda's initiative to contribute to further beautifying the oldest living city in the world.



1. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched the 'Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project' of Varanasi, during his visit to Uganda's Kampala.
2. The Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project is an initiative aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of Varanasi, the oldest inhabited city in the world.



3. Uganda was endorsed to chair the Non-Aligned Movement on behalf of Africa for the period from 2022 to 2025. The NAM chair position rotates every three years during summit conferences. The chair of the movement is assisted by both the former and incoming chairs. According to the movement, this structure represents its past, present and future.
4. He also discussed cooperation in trade and investment, infrastructure, energy, defence, health, digital and agricultural domains.
5. The Non-Aligned Movement is a group of countries that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Freedom House Index

**Why in news:** Global watchdog Freedom House has released its Freedom in the World Index for 2023, rating Tibet as the least free country in the world.



1. Freedom House, the global watchdog of human freedom around the world, released its report titled "Freedom in the World 2023 Report". Freedom House has ranked Tibet as the "least free country in the world" along with South Sudan and Syria in the report.
2. This is the third consecutive year that Tibet has been ranked at the bottom of the list in Freedom House's surveys conducted in 2021 and 2022. The report stated that residents of Tibet were deprived of basic rights, both Chinese and Tibetan, and that the Chinese government is ruthless in suppressing any signs of dissent among Tibetans.
3. Serious attacks on Tibetan culture and religion", including the forced relocation of nomadic communities, poor treatment and exploitation of Tibetan culture, as well as the forced assimilation of Tibetan children through boarding schools run by the CPC.
4. The Tibetan Autonomous Region primarily aims to promote the rule of national consciousness, civic consciousness and law consciousness for Tibetan religious figures to exercise control over their thoughts and beliefs.
5. Freedom House is a non-profit organization group in Washington, D.C. It is best known for political advocacy surrounding issues of democracy, political freedom, and human rights.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



## India retains top status in International Flight Safety Standards.

**Why in news:** India's International Aviation Safety Assessment rating to continue to remain in Category One as country meets international standards for aviation safety oversight.



1. India received Category One status after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States of America conducted an audit of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in the areas of aircraft operations, airworthiness and personnel licensing.
2. FAA under its International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program determines whether a country complies with safety standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
3. The FAA appreciated the DGCA for demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the effective safety oversight of India's aviation system. Category One status countries are permitted to operate and expand their services to destinations in the USA and codeshare with US air carriers.
4. India's Category 1 determination has come at a time when the Indian aviation is on a high growth trajectory and air carriers in India have major capacity induction and expansion plans.
5. India had scored an Effective Implementation (EI) of 85.65% from the previous EI of 69.95% thereby enhancing its global ranking significantly.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## W20 International Meeting to commence at Jaipur in Rajasthan

**Why in news:** The two-day 2nd Women's 20 (W20) International meet begins in Jaipur, Rajasthan from today. The meeting will bring together 120 women leaders from 18 G20 countries.



1. The purpose of this meeting is to address the issues of gender inequality and to promote the economic empowerment of women globally. The W20 meeting will focus on the theme of "Women-led development to accelerate the untapped potential of women for an inclusive and sustainable future".
2. W20 India has adopted the 4C strategy of Collaboration, Cooperation, and Communication to build consensus and Call to Action to achieve its mission and goals. The agenda focuses on five key priorities based on Women's Entrepreneurship, Grassroots Women's Leadership, Bridging the Gender Digital Divide, Education and Skill Development and Climate Change.



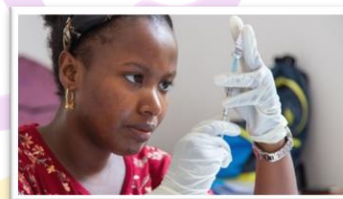


3. The two-day meeting will feature keynote speeches and panel discussions on topics such as women's economic empowerment, gender digital divide and transformation, grassroots leadership and entrepreneurship, and setting goals and targets for a sustainable future.
4. India has set new dimensions in digital inclusion. Bank accounts of women have been opened, those accounts have been linked with Aadhaar and money from various schemes is being sent directly to their accounts. A large number of women are also getting loans under Mudra Yojana. Women have been empowered by this. These experiences are being shared in the meeting so that other countries can also get the benefit of this experience.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Ghana becomes first country to approve Oxford malaria vaccine for children

**Why in news:** Ghana has made history by becoming the first country to approve a highly effective malaria vaccine developed by scientists at the University of Oxford in the UK. The vaccine, called R21/Matrix-M, has exceeded the World Health Organization's target of 75% efficacy, making it a significant milestone in the fight against malaria.



1. In Ghana, where malaria is endemic and perennial, an estimated 5.3 million cases and 12,500 deaths were recorded in 2021. The R21/Matrix-M vaccine, which has shown promising results in clinical trials, could be a game-changer in reducing the burden of malaria in Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries.
2. However, the WHO has yet to recommend the R21 vaccine for widespread use, and until it does, there is a question mark over the amount of international funding available for it. The vaccine's phase 3 trial is ongoing, but earlier trials have shown efficacy levels of 77%, a level that was maintained after a single booster dose given a year later.
3. Malaria is a life-threatening mosquito borne blood disease caused by plasmodium parasites. It is predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America as well as Asia.
4. The parasites spread through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



## Russia replaces Iraq as top oil supplier to India in Nov with 23% share

**Why in news** - India's oil imports from Russia rose for the fifth straight month, totaling 908,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November, up 4% from October, the data showed

### Key Points:

1. Russia has for the first time emerged as top oil supplier to India replacing Iraq as refiners last month snapped up oil from Moscow fearing a price cap from Dec. 5 could hit supplies and choke payment avenues, data obtained from trade sources showed.
2. India's oil imports from Russia rose for the fifth straight month, totaling 908,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November, up 4% from October.
3. The Group of Seven nations(G-7), Australia, and the 27 European Union countries have imposed a price cap of \$60 a barrel on Russian seaborne oil from Dec. 5 as the West tries to limit Moscow's ability to finance its war in Ukraine.

(Source – PIB)



## Singapore's cost of living is shooting up and here's how Indians there are coping with it

**Why in news** - The Group of Seven leading economies have created an open, international climate club for countries that want to cooperate in the fight against global warming

### Key Points:

1. The latest Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Worldwide Cost of Living (WCOL) Index released earlier this month declared Singapore and New York City (US) as joint "most expensive cities in the world".
2. Tel Aviv (Israel) which topped the ranking in 2021 fell to third place. Tel Aviv gained the "most expensive city" tag last year mainly because of the strength of the shekel which rose almost 20 per cent against the US dollar.
3. The main reason for the rise is the war between Russia and Ukraine which has driven up among other things energy, food and commodity costs. The price of a litre of petrol has shot up 22 per cent in the last one year on average in local-currency terms amid higher global oil prices.
4. The WCOL is a twice-yearly survey conducted by EIU that compares more than 400 individual prices across more than 200 products and services in 172 cities. In 2021, the number of cities covered increased to 173 when Kyiv was included.

(Source – CNN)



## Bosnia and Herzegovina set for EU candidate status

**Why in news** - EU leaders are expected to endorse the move on Thursday.

### Key Points:

1. EU countries agreed to grant Bosnia and Herzegovina candidate status — a major early milestone on the long road to joining the bloc. The decision is expected to be formalized on Thursday when EU leaders descend on Brussels for a summit.
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for EU membership in 2016, but its bid has languished amid enlargement fatigue that has stalled EU aspirations across the Western Balkans.
3. In June, EU leaders granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate status.
4. The Czech Republic currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.
5. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician who has been serving as the president of the European Commission since 2019

(SOURCE – POLITICO)



## UAE is India's second biggest export destination, third biggest source for imports

**Why in news:** According to the annual trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, the UAE remains the second most important export destination for India.

1. During the financial year 2022-23, the US and UAE have retained the first and second positions respectively in this category.
2. India's total exports crossed the target of \$750 billion (about \$770 billion) for 2022-23. India's merchandise exports and imports have now declined in three of the last four months.
3. Major commodities exported by India: Petroleum, electronics goods, rice etc. And the major items of import: petroleum and coal.
4. Major export destinations: United States, United Arab Emirates, Netherlands and China. and major import destinations: China, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Russia.
5. India's total exports of goods and services grew by 6 per cent during the last fiscal. The Netherlands moved up to the third position in this category, replacing



China during the same period. The importance of the Netherlands was to the high levels of refined petroleum products through the maritime nation last year.

6. Among India's export destinations, the UAE was ranked second after the US. On India's import graph, the UAE was ranked third after China and Russia last month. Among the GCC states, only Saudi Arabia is among India's top export destinations and sources of imports. The Kingdom was ranked eighth for Indian exports and fifth as an import source.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## World Food Programme

**Why in news:** India has signed an MoU with the World Food Programme (WFP) to send 10,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan.



1. As per WFP, nine out of 10 Afghan families could not afford enough food at present, and at least 20 million Afghans were facing the threat of starvation.
2. The World Food Programme is an international organization within the United Nations that provides food assistance worldwide. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and the leading provider of school meals.
3. Its headquarters is in Rome, Italy.
4. World food programme has been founded by FAO & UNGA. The objective is to end hunger by protecting access to food, improving nutrition and achieving food security, supporting SDG implementation and partnering for its results.
5. It is funded entirely by voluntary donations from governments, corporations, individuals, and not-for-profit entities. WFP has been working in India since 1963. Working to improve the efficiency, accountability, and transparency of India's subsidized food distribution system, fortification of government-distributed food, and mapping and monitoring of food insecurity.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Buzi Bridge in Mozambique

**Why in news:** The Buzi Bridge in Mozambique was virtually inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar. It has been built by India as part of the 132 km Tica-Buzi-Nova-Sofala Road project. This newly constructed bridge is a practical example of India-Mozambique solidarity and friendship.



1. During his visit, Dr Jaishankar took a ride in a Made in India train from Maputo to Machava with Mr Magala, and CMD of Rail India Technical and Economic Service RITES Rahul Mithal joined them on the journey. This journey highlights the significance of India's contribution to Mozambique's rail infrastructure development.
2. The Indian side reiterated its support for Mozambique's sustainable development. The focus of the meeting included counter-terrorism and disaster resilience.
3. The External Affairs Minister also had talks with Mozambican Minister of Transport and Communication and Chairman, Mozambican Port and Rail Authority Mateus Magala regarding expanding train networks, electric mobility, and waterways connectivity. He emphasized that India is a reliable partner in this regard.
4. Mozambique Capital: Maputo.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Olkiluoto 3 nuclear reactor (OL3)

**Why in news:** The Olkiluoto 3 is western Europe's first new reactor in more than 15 years. It is the first new-generation EPR, or European Pressurized Reactor, plant to have gone online in Europe. It was developed in a joint venture between France's Areva and Germany's Siemens.



1. It is the most powerful nuclear reactor in Europe, with a capacity of generating 1,600 megawatts.
2. The EPR was designed to relaunch the European nuclear industry after the Chernobyl catastrophe of 1986, and was touted as offering higher power and better safety.
3. It will help Finland to achieve its carbon neutrality targets and increase energy security at a time when European countries have cut oil, gas and other power supplies from Russia
4. The final price for Olkiluoto 3 is set at around 11 billion euros (\$12 billion) – nearly three times the initial estimate. Finland now has five nuclear reactors at two power plants located on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Combined, they cover more than 40% of the country's electricity demand.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)





## Syria becomes world's largest 'narco-state'

**Why in news:** Syria has become the world's largest narco-state, with most of its foreign exchange earnings coming from the production and export of captagon, a highly addictive amphetamine commonly referred to as "poor man's coke."



1. Syria can be classified as a narco-state because the illicit trade in narcotics, especially the Captagon, makes up a significant part of its economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings.
2. Syria is the major producer of captagon, a highly addictive amphetamine that is mainly exported to the Gulf region.
3. The rapid increase in the production and use of illicit drugs, especially captagon, has raised concerns globally. The US calls it an "international security threat".
4. What is Captagon?
5. Captagon is a popular recreational drug among youth in the Gulf states, as well as used by armed individuals who feel invincible under its influence.
6. It is sometimes referred to as "Captain Courage" or "Jihadi Magic Potion".
7. The cost of manufacturing a captagon is as low as 1 USD per pill.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## Global Buddhist Summit

**Why in news:** PM will inaugurate the first Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi on April 20th and 21st.



1. First Global Buddhist Summit to address universal human concerns with philosophy & praxis
2. The Global Buddhist Summit will be moderated by the Ministry of Culture + International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).
3. Theme: "Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy for Praxis."
4. **Objective:**
  - The summit aims to enhance cultural and diplomatic relations with other countries and mark the importance and importance of India in Buddhism, as Buddhism originated in India.
  - The summit is an effort towards engaging the global "Buddhist Dhamma" leadership and scholars on the matters of Buddhist and universal concerns, and to come up with policy inputs to address them collectively.
5. The summit will witness the participation of eminent scholars, Sangha leaders and Dharma practitioners from all over the world, who will discuss pressing global issues and look for answers in the Buddha Dhamma that is based on universal values.



6. The discussions will be held under four themes: Buddha Dhamma and Peace; Buddha Dhamma: Environmental Crisis, Health and Sustainability; Preservation of Nalanda Buddhist Tradition; Buddha Dhamma Pilgrimage, Living Heritage and Buddha Relics: a resilient foundation to India's centuries-old cultural links to countries in South, South-East and East Asia.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## IBSA Forum

**Why in news:** The trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa forum is likely to receive increased diplomatic focus, according to persons aware of the matter.



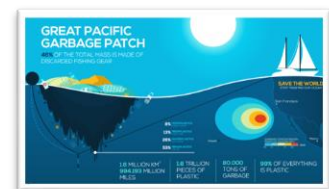
INDIA  
BRAZIL  
SOUTH AFRICA  
FORUM

1. It is a trilateral dialogue forum of India, Brazil and South Africa which was created in the year 2003. The group was formalised as the IBSA Dialogue Forum under the Brasilia Declaration.
2. It aims to promote close coordination on global issues among the three large multicultural and multiethnic democracies of Asia, South America and Africa and contribute to enhancing trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa cooperation in regional areas.
3. It was established in 2004,
4. It facilitates the execution of human development projects to advance the fight against poverty and hunger in developing countries.
5. It is managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
6. IBSAMAR is a joint multinational maritime exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African navies which is an important part of defence cooperation between these countries.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

**Why in news:** The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is also described as the Pacific Garbage Vortex, a group of marine debris particles in the central North Pacific Ocean discovered between 1985 and 1988.



1. It is located between about 135°W to 155°W and 35°N to 42°N. The patch is spread over an indefinite area of widely varying range depending on the degree of plastic concentration used to define the affected area.
2. Researchers based in the Netherlands used a fleet of boats and aircraft to scan bottles, containers, fishing nets and huge accumulation of fine particles with the



Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP) and found a stunning build-up of plastic waste.

3. The vast dump of plastic waste circulating in the Pacific Ocean is now larger than in France, Germany and Spain and is growing faster than previously feared.
4. The GPGP currently has about 80,000 tonnes of buoyancy plastic. That's around the weight of 500 jumbo jets, and sixteen times more than the plastic mass exposed in previous studies.
5. Heavy concentration of plastic fragments on marine gyre between Hawaii and California. The dump now contains about 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic, posing a double threat to marine life.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Global Food Policy Report 2023

**Why in news:** The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) released the Global Food Policy Report, 2023, on April 13, urging stakeholders to invest in long-term solutions to build resilient and equitable food systems.



1. Several crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, natural disasters, civil unrest and political instability have led to an increase in food insecurity across the world during 2020-2022.
2. The IFPRI report suggests focusing on three key areas:  
crisis prediction and preparedness;  
Building resilience before and during a crisis;  
and making crisis response supportive and inclusive for vulnerable groups.
3. The IFPRI report reveals that 205 million people across 45 countries experienced crisis-level acute food insecurity or worse in 2022. The report advocates for strengthening agrifood value chains to support livelihoods and food security during crises.
4. Established in 1975, IFPRI provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. IFPRI's vision is a world free of hunger and malnutrition. It focuses on five strategic research areas:
  - Fostering Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Food Supply.
  - Promoting Healthy Diets and Nutrition for All.
  - Building Inclusive and Efficient Markets, Trade Systems, and Food Industry.
  - Transforming Agricultural and Rural Economies.
  - Strengthening Institutions and Governance.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)



## Exobiology Expansive Life Surveyor (EELS)

**Why in news:** The US space agency NASA is developing a snake-like robot known as exobiology extant life surveyor (EELS), which can boost space exploration through its diverse adaptability to different terrains.



1. It is a mobile device platform conceived to explore interior structure structures, assess habitability, and ultimately search for evidence of life.
2. It is designed to be adaptable to sea-world-inspired terrain, liquefied media, enclosed maze environments and traversing fluids
3. It is a snake-like robot that can pass through rough terrain.
4. Its purpose is to examine the surface of Saturn's moon and determine if life exists. EELS uses the first of its kind rotating propulsion units that act as underwater tracks, recreational mechanisms and propeller units, allowing the robot to reach a plume vent exhaust and carry it to its ocean source.
5. It is composed of several, identical, segments that include both actuation and propulsion mechanisms as well as the power and communication electronics to drive them.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## AIIB to Open First Overseas Office in Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Why in news:** The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has recently signed an agreement to create its first interim operational hub in the Abu Dhabi Global Market, marking its initial entry into setting up a foreign office.



1. AIIB is a multilateral development bank focused on financing infrastructure projects that prioritize sustainability. As the host country for COP28 later this year, the UAE has stressed the importance of climate finance, a major concern for nations as they strive to step up their efforts and commitments towards climate action.
2. AIIB has set up its first interim operations centre in Abu Dhabi Global Market, which will serve as its initial overseas office.
3. The office will have a strategic location in the Middle East and the world, and will support the Bank's development agenda by financing infrastructure projects that prioritize sustainable economic growth, especially in areas where it is most needed.
4. AIIB is a multilateral development bank that was established in 2016 with the goal of financing infrastructure projects in Asia and beyond.



5. The bank is headquartered in Beijing, China, and has more than 100 member countries, including several major economies such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia.
6. AIIB's mission is to promote sustainable economic growth, generate wealth and improve infrastructure connectivity in Asia by investing in infrastructure and other productive sectors.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## India-CARICOM Ministerial Meeting

**Why in news:** India's External Affairs Minister co-chaired the 4<sup>th</sup> India-CARICOM ministerial meeting with his Jamaican counterpart.



1. CARICOM, which stands for Caribbean Community, is the oldest surviving integration movement in the developing world.
2. It is an organization of Caribbean countries and dependencies that was originally established in 1973 as the Caribbean Community and Commons Market by the Treaty of Chaguaramas.
3. **The Objectives are:**
  - a. To promote economic integration and cooperation among members.
  - b. To ensure that the benefits of integration are shared equally;
  - c. Coordinating foreign policy.
4. It has 15 members; Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands have the status of associate members.
5. The presidency of the community is rotated every six months between the heads of member states. The CARICOM Secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana, is the principal administrative organ of the community and is headed by a Secretary-General who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Community.
6. In 2007, CARICOM officially inaugurated the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which serves as the final court of appeal for CARICOM members and also handles regional trade disputes.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)





## Logistics Performance Index (LPI) 2023

**Why in news:** India's rank in the recently released World Bank's Logistics Performance Index 2023 has improved by six places.



1. It is issued by the World Bank. It is an interactive benchmarking tool that helps countries identify challenges and opportunities they face in their performance on business logistics.
2. It measures the ease of establishing reliable supply chain connections and structural factors that make this possible, such as the quality of logistics services, infrastructure related to trade and transportation, as well as border controls.
3. LPI 2023 allows comparisons across 139 countries.
4. LPI 2023, for the first time, measures trade speed with indicators derived from large datasets tracking shipments.
5. Singapore and Finland are the most efficient and highest ranked LPI countries according to the 2023 LPI.
6. India is ranked 38<sup>th</sup> out of 139 countries, up six places from the previous index.
7. The two key drivers of India's jump in the index could be modernisation and digitisation, which the report cited as the reason for emerging economies like India to overtake advanced countries

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings

**Why in news:** The Times Higher Education World University Rankings/THE Rankings are annually published by the UK-based Times Higher Education magazine.

1. It includes 1,799 universities in 104 countries and territories, making them the largest and most diverse university rankings ever.
2. It is based on 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance in four areas: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.
3. The University of Oxford has emerged as the best institution among 1,799 universities in 104 countries. India is the sixth most prestigious performer country with 75 universities in the 2023 rankings.
4. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is ranked top among Indian institutions for its performance score for teaching and research. Globally, IISc is placed in the 251-300 band. IISc is also the top-ranked Indian institution in the year 2022 rankings.



5. Himachal Pradesh's Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences (351-400 in total) has been ranked second among Indian institutions, which has been ranked for the first time.
6. IIT Ropar which was the second highest ranked Indian institute in the year 2022 rankings is ranked sixth. In third place is Alagappa University of Tamil Nadu which is a public institution.
7. IITs' response: It has been boycotted for the third consecutive year by most Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) over transparency concerns.
8. The last time premier IITs featured in the rankings was in the year 2019 when IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi were placed in the 401-500 overall band behind IIT Ropar and IIT Indore.

(SOURCE – CNN)

## Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project

**Why in news:** Recently, Prime Minister praised the completion of Bihar portion of Barauni- Guwahati pipeline under Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project.



1. The project is also known as Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline Project (JHBDPL) project.
2. It was launched in 2016 and will cater to the energy needs of five states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
3. The pipeline will connect six districts of Bihar to the national gas grid. The project will provide access to clean natural gas for industries, CNG for vehicles and PNG for homes, promoting a sustainable lifestyle.
4. The total length of the pipeline under the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project is 3,384 km, out of which 766 km pipeline is in the state of Odisha and the remaining 2,618 km is in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Assam.
5. The seven main stations include Varanasi, Patna, Bokaro, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack as major beneficiaries of the project.
6. The project is being implemented by GAIL

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## e-Gram Swaraj and GeM portal

**Why in news:** On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day and marking 30 years of Panchayati Raj in India, Prime Minister will inaugurate an integrated e-Gram



Swaraj and GeM portal for public procurement at the Panchayat level in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh.

1. The e-Gram Swaraj-GeM integration aims to enable panchayats to procure their goods and services through GeM by leveraging the e-Gram Swaraj platform.
2. This will help the entire buyer-seller ecosystem to flourish, thereby strengthening the Digital India programme as well as giving a major boost to the rural economy and entrepreneurship.
3. envisages increasing GeM's existing user base of around 60,000 to over 3 lakh in a phased manner. And bring transparency in procurement by panchayats by making the process digital.
4. Encouraging local vendors (proprietors, self-help groups, cooperatives, etc.) to register on GeM as panchayats largely procure from such vendors.
5. Panchayats will have access to doorstep delivery of quality-assured items at standardised and competitive rates.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

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(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## International day of multilateralism and diplomacy For peace

**Why in news:** On April 24, the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace is observed around the planet.

1. The day acknowledges the use of multilateral diplomacy and decision-making to achieve peaceful resolution of conflicts between countries.
2. This day is very important as it promotes international peace and the end of wars in the world through the use of international agreements, diplomacy and multilateral mechanisms.
3. The day was first declared by the UN Assembly keeping in mind that preserving the values of international cooperation and multilateralism is fundamental to the promotion and support of the three pillars of the United Nations:
  - Peace & Security



- Evolution
  - Human rights.
4. The day reaffirms the UN Charter and its principles for resolving disputes between the countries of the world by peaceful means. The day was first celebrated in the year 2019 after being established in 2018.
  5. This day has the aim of generating and spreading knowledge about the advantages of diplomacy and multilateralism for peace, including raising activities through public and educational awareness.
  6. objective of this day is to promote the United Nations' principle aim of saving future generations from the hardships of war and achieving this through dispute settlements in peaceful manner.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

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(SOURCE – CNN)





### WHO has launched the PRET initiative

**Why in news:** Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the PRET initiative to be better prepared for future outbreaks of a similar scale and devastation as the COVID-19 pandemic.



1. The Preparedness and Resilience to Emerging Threats (PRET) initiative aims to provide "guidance on an integrated plan to respond to any respiratory pathogen such as influenza or coronavirus.
2. It was announced at the Global Meeting for Future Respiratory Pathogen Epidemics held on 24-26 April 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.
3. The first module focuses on respiratory pathogens, including influenza, coronavirus, and respiratory syncytial viruses. It involves a three-dimensional approach that includes: Update preparation plans that confirm priority tasks and that have considered learning from past events. Increase connectivity among stakeholders in pandemic preparedness planning through systematic coordination and collaboration.
4. This includes the creation of equitable systems; Conduct joint exercises; And sharing information on good practices, challenges and opportunities.
5. It was established on April 7, 1948 with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

### Gulf of Oman

**Why in news:** Iran's navy recently seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker with 24 Indian crew members in the Gulf of Oman.

1. The Gulf of Oman or the Sea of Oman, also known as the Gulf of Makran or the Makran Sea, forms the sole gateway to the Persian Gulf from the Indian Ocean.
2. It connects the Arabian Sea to the Strait of Hormuz, which later empties into the Persian Gulf. And about a third of the world's oil is exported through the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.
3. The Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday amid wider tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme.
4. The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet identified the vessel as the Advantage Sweet.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



## INS Tarkash

**Why in news:** It was commissioned into Indian Navy service on 9 November 2012 at Kaliningrad and joined the Western Naval Command on 27 December 2012.



1. INS Tarkash from the Indian Navy recently reached Port Sudan to help in the evacuation of stranded Indians as part of "Operation Kaveri".
2. It is a state-of-the-art stealth frigate of the Indian Navy equipped with a versatile range of weapons.
3. Tarkash belongs to the Talwar class of guided missile frigates. These are modified Krivak III class frigates built by Russia. It was built by the Yantar shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia.
4. Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), that has reportedly left several hundred's dead.
5. It was triggered by disagreement over an internationally backed plan to form a new civilian government four years after the fall of autocrat Omar al-Bashir and two years after the military coup. Both sides accuse the other of thwarting the transition.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Emirates Unveils World's First Robotic Check-In Assistant

**Why in news:** Emirates, in its latest innovation, has unveiled the world's first robotic check-in assistant named Sara. The system is part of a new City check-in and travel store that is set to launch in Dubai's financial district.



1. Sarah will match customers' faces with scanned passports, check on passengers, and guide them to the area leaving luggage.
2. The robot is equipped with facial recognition technology and can print boarding passes, making the check-in process more efficient. Sarah is also portable and can turn around to help those who need help.
3. In addition to the new check-in facility, Emirates travellers with valid boarding passes will have complimentary access to select lifestyle facilities at ICD Brookfield Place, as well as special discounts and special offers at a range of restaurants, gyms and luxury stores.



4. Travelers can connect to the airport directly via taxi or Emirates chauffeur service or take a short 10-minute walk to the Financial Center metro station, which connects seamlessly to the airport's Terminal 3 metro station.
5. Emirates' latest innovation aims to enhance the customer experience and make the check-in process more seamless and efficient. The airline continues to lead in technology and innovation, setting new standards in the aviation industry.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

**Why in news:** Recently, the 22nd session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was held in New York.

1. It is a high-level advisory body for the Economic and Social Council. Which was established on July 28, 2000.
2. Objective: To deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights.
3. The first meeting of the Permanent Forum was held in May 2002, followed by annual sessions. It is one of the three bodies of the United Nations that are specifically mandated to deal with the issues of indigenous peoples.
4. Others are expert mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples and special rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples.
5. Indigenous peoples have a historical continuity with a given territory prior to colonization and a strong link to their land. They maintain, at least in part, specific social, economic political systems.
6. They have different languages, cultures, beliefs and knowledge systems. They are determined to maintain and develop their identity and distinctive institutions and they form a non-dominant sector of society.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Important News: National

### ICCR plans to build its brand ambassador programme

**Why in news:** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations plans to harness the power of over 48,000 foreign students in India as brand ambassadors of the country's heritage when they go back home .



1. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is aiming at expanding the country's artistic and creative footprint globally, by tapping into the experiences of foreign students studying here.
2. It hopes that the more than 48,000 foreign students here will be brand ambassadors of India's heritage, tourist destinations, textiles, yoga, ayurveda, and craft.
3. ICCR will start E-3, or Exit Engagement Evenings with foreign students, beginning three or four months before they finish their courses in various Central and State universities, institutes like the National Institutes of Technology, and agricultural colleges of the country.
4. The engagements would also include visits to places of national importance.
5. In April 2022, ICCR launched the India Alumni Portal, a platform to connect with foreign students worldwide who have studied in India.
6. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (est. 1950; Under the Ministry of External Affairs), is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India, involved in India's global cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their people.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## National Electricity Plan for 2022-27

**Why in news:** A new blueprint for the country's power sector planners – the National Electricity Plan for 2022-27 – marks a discernible reversal in the policy thrust from its last edition, where the focus was almost entirely on renewable energy for incremental capacity addition and fresh coal-fired capacity was virtually ruled out.



1. The fresh draft notes the need for an additional coal-based capacity of 28 GW by 2031-32, in addition to the 25 GW of coal-based capacity that is currently being built.
2. The Electricity Act 2003 stipulates that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) shall prepare a National Electricity Plan in accordance with the National Electricity Policy and notify such plan once in 5 years.
3. This is -
  - To formulate short-term (5-year) and perspective plans (15-year) to assess the demand for planning capacity addition
  - To coordinate the activities of various planning agencies for the optimal utilization of resources



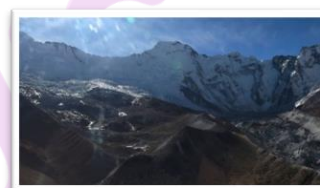


- To sub serve the interests of the national economy.
4. The draft cites the need for fresh coal-based capacity ranging from 17 GW to nearly 28 GW till 2031-32, over and above an under-construction coal based capacity of 25GW (1 giga watt or GW is equal to 1000 mega watts or MW)
  5. The 1st National Electricity Plan was published in 2007, the 2nd in 2013, and the third (2018) includes the detailed Plan for 2017–22 and the perspective Plan for 2022–27.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## House panel suggests study on impact of black carbon on Himalayan glacier

**Why in news:** A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources has recommended a detailed study on the impact of atmospheric pollution, including black carbon, on the Himalayan glacier system.



1. The committee, in its report on 'Glacier Management and Monitoring', called for an "urgent, coherent, and coordinated response to the evolving challenges posed by global warming and climate change".
2. It has also been stated that black carbon reportedly contributes (~4%) to near-surface composite aerosol mass concentrations and also absorbs more light and emits infrared radiation that increases the temperature. Hence, an increase in black carbon will contribute to faster melting of glaciers.
3. Black carbon particles consist of nearly pure elemental carbon with some oxygen and hydrogen bound into a layered, hexagonal structure which corresponds to a somewhat disordered graphitic crystal structure. Black carbon is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, wood and other fuels.
4. The committee suggested setting up a single nodal agency for bringing out synergies among various government departments involved in glaciological research and monitoring works.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## India Justice Report (IJR) 2022

**Why in news:** According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022 (3rd edition), the State of Karnataka emerged at the top among the 18 large and mid-sized States with populations of over one crore.



1. The state of Tamil Nadu has secured the second position in





the rankings, while Telangana has secured the third position. The State of Gujarat has got the fourth position and Andhra Pradesh is at slot five as per the report which was released on April 4 in New Delhi.

2. On the other hand, the state of Uttar Pradesh has been ranked at 18, which is the lowest among the states considered in the report. This report is based on 24-month quantitative research. The IJR 2022, like the previous two, has tracked the performance of States in capacitating their Justice delivery structures to effectively deliver mandated services.
3. This report is based on overall data of 4 pillars of justice delivery namely Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid.
4. Each pillar was analysed through the prism of budgets, human resources, workload, diversity, infrastructure, and trends against the state's own declared standards and benchmarks
5. This third IJR also separately assesses the capacity of the 25 State Human Rights Commissions in the country.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

### Crohn's disease.

**Why in news:** The disease is chronic inflammatory condition of the intestine and is of two main types: Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease. IBD is increasing in India and this increase is largely driven by changes in the diet and westernization of lifestyle.



1. Genetics, immune response, and changes in the dietary pattern also play a role in the causation of this disease. Also called Inflammatory Bowel Disease, it can affect any age or gender.
2. Usually, these patients have abdominal pain, diarrhoea, and bleeding in the stools. The diagnosis is often delayed because of the lack of awareness about the disease in the community, lack of access to colonoscopy, and confusion about other diseases like hemorrhoids, abdominal tuberculosis, and cancer.
3. There's no known cure for Crohn's disease, but therapies can greatly reduce its signs and symptoms.
4. It is a chronic, or long-term condition that causes inflammation in the digestive tract.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



## Sagar Setu Mobile App of National Logistics Portal Marine

**Why in news:** SAGAR-SETU app of the National Logistics Portal (Marine) would help custodians in easier access to functionalities on a handheld device. Mobile App will ensure data mobility such that approvals & monitoring shall be at the finger tips of port & ministry officials and stakeholders as well.



1. The app has been envisaged with deliverables covering features like Login Module, Service Catalogue, Common Application Format, Letter of Credit, Bank Guarantee, Certification, and Track & Trace etc.
2. It will provide real-time information of activities that are generally not in reach of the importer, exporter, and customs broker including vessel-related information, gate, container freight stations and transactions on fingertips. It also enables digital transactions for payments required for the clearance process of import and export like container freight station charges, shipping line charges, transportation charges, etc.
3. Benefits for Traders
  - Improve convenience with reduced turnaround time for approval and compliances.
  - Increase visibility of operations and tracking.
4. Benefits for Service Providers
  - Help in tracking of records and transactions offered
  - Receive notification of service requests.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## 1 lakh 60,000 farmers have received benefits during the Biotech-KISAN scheme in last one year

**Why in news:** Biotech-KISAN scheme has been launched to counsel and to provide solutions to the farmers on the problems related to water, soil, seeds and marketing.



1. Biotech-Krishi Innovation Science Application Network (Biotech-KISAN) is a Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology initiative that empowers farmers, especially women farmers. It aims to understand the problems of water, soil, seed and market faced by the farmers and provide simple solutions to them.



2. Under the scheme farmers are provided counselling and demonstrations on improved seed, planting stock of vegetable, interventions for use of plant growth-promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR's)/bio-fertilizers, irrigation & protected cultivation technologies, improved livestock (goat, pig), poultry and fishery as well as health management of livestock/poultry.
3. Establishment of Biotech - KISAN Hub in each of 15 agro-climatic zones of the country under the leadership of a champion, who will act as a Facilitator. Each Hub will create a network by developing strong linkages with top quality scientific institutions / State Agri cultural Universities (SAUs) / Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) / existing state agriculture extension services / system and other Farmers' organizations in the region as well as linkages with leading international institutions / organizations. Biotech-KISAN Hub will have a tinkering laboratory.
4. The Hub will get financial assistance for initially 2 years of Rs 60 lakhs per year and on the basis of a review for additional 3 years
5. Biotech-KISAN will connect farmers to best global practices; training workshops will be held in India and other countries. Farmers and Scientists will partner across the globe.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has just launched two fresh modern deep seas 'Slocum' gliders in the Bay of Bengal.

**Why in news:** The state of the art gliders are equipped with sensors to track temperature, salinity, chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, PAR – photosynthetic active radiation in the sea water among others.



1. Slocum gliders are a type of autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) that are capable of carrying out long-duration missions, spanning several months or even years, to collect scientific data from the ocean.
2. The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has just launched two fresh modern deep sea 'Slocum' gliders in the Bay of Bengal, one programmed towards the north and other towards the south to study the physical and biogeochemical parameters of the sea and get an insight into the climate change.
3. The gliders have been deployed from the Ocean Research Vehicle 'Sagar Manjusha' of the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) off the Chennai coast outside of the EEZ - exclusive economic zone boundary.
4. Objective: To study the physical and biogeochemical parameters of the sea and get an insight into climate change.



5. These gliders which run on the lithium-ion battery is they come with an extended battery life of nine months and more to cover both the north and south transect of the Bay of the Bengal.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## PARAKH: Govt plans cadre to set Board question papers for parity in assessment

**Why in news:** According to the proposal under consideration, the cadre will play an important role in addressing the differences in assessment, which results in disparities in scores of board exams, among various state boards and the CBSE.



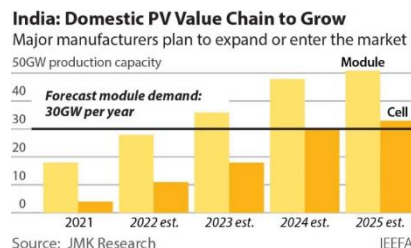
1. The government plans to form in each state a cadre of dedicated professionals, who will be drawn from the existing pool of teachers in schools and academics engaged with the SCERTs (State Council of Educational Research and Training), to set question papers of board exams and develop standard marking schemes to bring “equivalence” in assessment.
2. The National Education Policy 2020 proposed of developing a benchmark framework to ensure consistency between state and central boards.
3. The newly set-up body PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), is under the administrative control of NCERT.
4. While the NCERT is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education, the regulator - PARAKH - will act as a constituent unit of the NCERT and will be tasked with –
  - Setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation.
  - Holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS), etc.
  - Managing India's participation in international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), etc.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



## India could become the world's 2nd-largest solar PV manufacturer by 2026

**Why in news:** The report identifies some hurdles holding back the domestic photovoltaic manufacturing industry from realising its full growth potential, chief among them over-reliance on Chinese imports for upstream components of PV modules such as polysilicon and ingots/wafers.



1. With 110 gigawatts (GW) of solar photovoltaic (PV) module capacity set to come online in the next three years, India will become self-sufficient and will be the second-largest PV manufacturing country after China, says a new joint report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research and Analytics.
2. The report finds that India's cumulative module manufacturing nameplate capacity more than doubled from 18GW in March 2022 to 38GW in March 2023.
3. In terms of upcoming PV manufacturing installations, Gujarat (accounts for nearly 57%) is the leading state in India, due to cheaper industrial electricity prices and easy access to ports for imports/exports.
4. China has already achieved economies of scale by offering policy support – cheap credit, free land, cheap loans, research funds, tax rebates, etc.
5. India must aim to build enough PV capacity to satisfy local demand and maintain a healthy global presence to become a viable competitor to Chinese PV products.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## PM hails impact of Ujjwala Yojna on mothers and sisters

**Why in news:** The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a government scheme launched in 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



1. The scheme originally envisaged the distribution of 50 million LPG connections to women below the poverty line. Later, it aimed to provide LPG connections to eight crore women by March 2020. However, this target was achieved seven months prior, in September 2019.
2. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched for providing clean fuel to women below the poverty line. The use of unclean cooking fuel is harmful to human health. The aims of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana are given below:
  - To empower women and protect their health.





- To minimize health issues arising from the use of unclean fossil fuel and other fuel while cooking.
  - To control indoor pollution from the use of fossil fuel which causes respiratory issues.
  - To prevent degradation of the purity of the environment that is compromised by widespread usage of unclean cooking fuel.
3. The applicant must be a woman aged above 18 years. She must also be a citizen of India.
  4. She should belong to a family below the poverty line and no one else from the household should own an LPG connection.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## PM urges youngsters to register for second phase of Yuva Sangam

**Why in news:** An initiative of 'Yuva Sangam' under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat has been conceptualized as a collaborative effort of various ministries with an aim to strengthen people to people connect and build empathy among youth across the nation.



1. The Registrations for Yuva Sangam (Phase II) started today through an online portal. It envisages participation of 1000 youngsters from 23 States and UTs of India.
2. Under this initiative, the exposure tours will be conducted in the months of April and May 2023. They will travel in a group of 45 to 50 to the paired State.
3. It will provide an immersive, multidimensional experience of various facets under five broad areas of Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati (Development), Prodyogik (Technology) and Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect).
4. Interested youth in the age group of 18-30 years may register on the portal exclusively developed for the purpose.
5. The first round of Yuva Sangam was recently concluded with an overwhelming participation of approximately 1200 youngsters visiting 22 States of India through 29 tours with main focus on North Eastern Region during February-March 2023.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



## National Mission for Cultural Mapping

**Why in news:** In a bid to harness the unique cultural heritage of rural India, the government has identified and documented distinctive features of more than one lakh villages across the country.



1. In this cultural asset mapping, villages have been broadly divided into seven-eight categories based on whether they are important ecologically, developmentally and scholastically, if they produce a famous textile or product, and if they are connected to some historical or mythological events such as the Independence struggle or epics like the Mahabharata.
2. It was launched in 2017 by the Union Ministry of Culture
3. Aim: To develop a comprehensive database of art forms, artists and other resources across the country
4. The Culture Ministry had approved a budget of ₹469 crores for the mission in 2017 for a period of three years.
5. Detailed field surveys were carried out by joint teams of the Culture Ministry and the Common Services Centres (CSC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## RBI to launch centralised portal PRAVAAH for licencing, approval applications

**Why in news:** Reserve Bank of India will launch a secured web-based centralised portal named 'PRAVAAH' (Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation And AutHorisation) to simplify and streamline application processes.



1. The portal will show time limits for deciding on the applications/approvals sought. This measure will bring greater efficiencies into regulatory processes and facilitate ease of doing business for the regulated entities of RBI.
2. Gradually, it will be extended to all types of applications made to RBI across all functions, the central bank.
3. The step has also been taken to comply with the Union Budget 2023-24 announcement regarding the need to simplify, ease and reduce cost of compliance by financial sector regulators within laid down time limits to decide the applications under various regulations.



4. Various entities are required to obtain license/authorization to carry out activities regulated by RBI, and regulated entities are required to seek certain approvals under various statutes/regulations periodically.
5. Currently, the application and approval processes for the same take place in varied on-line and off-line modes.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Genome India Project

**Why in news:** Recently, the secretary of the Department of Biotechnology said that under the Genome India project, close to 7,000 genomes have been sequenced and 3,000 of these are already available for public access.



1. The Genome India Project, a Centre-backed initiative to sequence 10,000 Indian human genomes and create a database, is about two-thirds through.
2. It is a Pan India initiative focused on the Whole Genome Sequencing of representative populations across India.
3. Goal: The goal is to start with and executes whole genome sequencing and subsequent data analysis of 10,000 individuals representing the country's diverse population.
4. This is a mission-mode, multi-institution consortium project, the first of its kind in India supported by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.
5. A genome is the complete set of genetic information in an organism. A genome contains all the information needed for an individual to develop and function.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Govt Approves Revised Domestic Gas Pricing Guidelines

**Why in news:** The Union Cabinet has approved revised domestic gas pricing guidelines. The price of natural gas will be 10 per cent of the monthly average of the Indian crude basket.



1. The Union Cabinet approved significant changes in the pricing regime for domestic natural gas under the ambit of the Administered price mechanism (APM). Under the APM, the Indian government sets the price of natural gas produced by oil and gas companies.



2. The price of APM gas, which accounts for about two-thirds of India's natural gas production, has been determined as per the 'modified' Rangarajan formula since November 1, 2014.
3. These changes will mainly apply to gas produced by legacy fields, or nomination fields, of national oil companies Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Ltd and Oil India Ltd (OIL).
4. Earlier Much of the natural gas being produced in the country does not command a market-determined price — that is, it is not determined by buyers and sellers based on demand-supply dynamics in the market.
5. A formula is used to fix the price of the fuel every six months. As per this formula, the domestic gas price is the weighted average price of four global benchmarks:
  - US-based Henry Hub,
  - Canada-based Alberta gas,
  - UK-based NBP, and
  - Russian gas.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## PM inaugurates program 'Commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger' in Mysuru, Karnataka

**Why in news:** The PM recently launched the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA), inaugurated the programme 'Commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger', and released the summary report of All India Tiger Estimation (5th cycle).



1. International Big Cats Alliance is being launched which will focus on the protection and conservation of seven major big cats of the world, viz. Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar and Cheetah, with a membership of the range of countries harbouring these species.
2. Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in 1973 as a centrally sponsored scheme by the Government of India and administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
3. The monitoring system M-STrIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers - Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) - is a software-based monitoring system developed (by NTCA in 2010) to assist patrol and protect tiger habitats.



4. The 5th cycle of Tiger Census, an evaluation of tiger reserves in India released by the PM of India, has estimated the number of big cats in the country (interim figures) at 3,167 in 2022 (increased by 200 or 6.7% in the past four years).
5. NTCA in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), has conducted a national assessment for the "Status of Tigers, Co-predators, Prey and their Habitat" every four years.
6. Tiger occupancy has also declined in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana. The Western Ghats, which are home to the largest tiger population in the world, have shown a significant fall in the occupancy of tigers.
7. The north-western states such as Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh now have more tigers outside reserves, requiring officials to step up habitat conservation.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## National Party Status

**Why in news:** The EC's decision was based on a review of the parties' poll performances — the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls and 21 state assembly polls since 2014.



1. The Trinamool Congress (TMC), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Communist Party of India (CPI), however, lost their national party status.
2. Acting under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, which stipulates the criteria for recognition as a national or state party, AAP had fulfilled the requirement of being a recognised state party in four or more states.
3. According to the Election Commission, any of these three conditions need to be met if a party is to be called a "national party".
  - A party's candidates in a minimum of four states must get at least 6 per cent of the total votes polled in each of those states in the last national election. In addition to this, it should have won four seats in the Lok Sabha.
  - A party should win a minimum of 2 per cent of the total seats in the Lok Sabha. The party's candidates should have been elected from not less than three states.
  - A party is recognised as a "state party" in at least four states.
4. The EC has also removed state party status granted to Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) in Uttar Pradesh, Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) in Andhra Pradesh, People's Democratic Alliance in Manipur, Pattali Makkal Katchi in Puducherry,





Revolutionary Socialist Party in West Bengal and Mizoram People's Conference in Mizoram.

- Now the country has five national parties- Bahujan Samaj Party, Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## State Energy Efficiency Index Report 2021-22

**Why in news:** The Index improves data collection, enables cross-state collaboration, and develops energy efficiency program ideas. It helps states identify areas for improvement, learn from best practices, and adopt an economy-wide approach to energy efficiency implementation.



- In 2021-22, five states -- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and Telangana -- are in the Front Runner category while four states -- Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab -- are in the Achiever category.
- Further, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Chandigarh are the top-performing states in their respective state groups. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh showed the most improvement since the last index.
- The index developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), assesses the annual progress of states and UTs in energy efficiency implementation, for the financial year 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE, est. 2002, under Energy Conservation Act, 2001; HQ: New Delhi) to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles. The Energy Conservation Act provides for regulatory and promotional functions.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## Vibrant Village Programme

**Why in news:** Union home minister Amit Shah's visit to the border state comes days after China renamed 11 places in Arunchal Pradesh, inviting strong reaction from India



- Vibrant Village Programme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented over financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26.



2. The programme will provide funds for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities in 19 Districts and 46 Border blocks of 4 states and 1 UT along the northern land border of the country - Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and UT of Ladakh.
3. The programme will help in improving the quality of life of people living in identified border villages and encourage people to stay in their native locations thereby reversing the outmigration from these villages and adding to security of the border.
4. Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats and 100 % saturation of Central and state schemes will be ensured.
5. The VVP aims to develop the villages in 46 border blocks of 19 districts in four states and one Union territory viz Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Ladakh (UT) abutting the northern border.
6. A fund of ₹4,800 crore has been allocated for the programme for the Financial Year 2022-23 to 2025-26 for the comprehensive development of these border villages.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Global Engagement Scheme

**Why in news:** The Global Engagement Scheme, initiated by the Ministry of Culture, aims to promote Indian Folk Arts and Culture worldwide.



1. Under Global Engagement Scheme, Festivals of India are organized in other countries showcasing folk art and other cultural events as exhibitions, dance, music, theatre, food fest, literary fest, film fest, yoga etc.
2. Grants Under the Scheme: Grant-in-aid to Indo- Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies for organizing programmes and activities including folk art and other cultural activities for their promotion abroad.
3. The Components of the Scheme:
  - Global Engagement Scheme has following three components-
  - Festival of India
  - Grant-in-Aid Indian Foreign Cultural Societies Scheme
  - Contribution Grants ( Contribution to Indian Organizations and Delegations under CEP). This component is meant for-
  - Indian Contribution towards membership of International Organizations like ICROM, UNESCO, World Heritage Fund and
  - Facilitate Indian Participation and Hosting of International Meetings.



4. The Ministry of Culture offers grants to Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies for organizing various programmes and activities that aim to promote the rich and diverse culture of India, including that of North East India, across the globe

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Food conclave 2023

**Why in news:** The Government of Telangana, in collaboration with various organizations, is hosting the Food Conclave-2023 on 28 and 29 April to discuss and exchange ideas on expanding the Indian agri-food sector.



1. The Food Conclave-2023 will provide a platform for experts to share their knowledge and ideas, discuss challenges and opportunities, and explore ways to enhance the Indian agri-food industry's growth. It is an excellent opportunity for professionals, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and investors to connect and collaborate.
2. The event will encompass five theme-based sessions that will delve into different facets of the agri-food industry.
3. The focal points will revolve around agriculture (green), edible oils (yellow), dairy (white), meat and poultry (pink), and aquaculture (blue).
4. The event will feature 27 panel discussions, 5 roundtables, and more than 40 one-on-one meetings between government and industry leaders. The sessions are designed to encourage participants to exchange ideas and develop solutions that can drive growth in the agri-food sector. The government hopes that the conclave will provide a platform for stakeholders to collaborate and chart out a clear path to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the current global situation.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## NSE launches India's first Reits and InvITs Index.

**Why in news:** NSE Indices Ltd, a subsidiary of National Stock Exchange (NSE), has launched India's first ever Real Estate Investment Trusts (Reits) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) Index.



1. The new index— Nifty Reits and InvITs index—aims to track the performance of Reits and InvITs that are publicly listed and traded on the NSE. The weights of securities within the index are based on their free-float market capitalization,



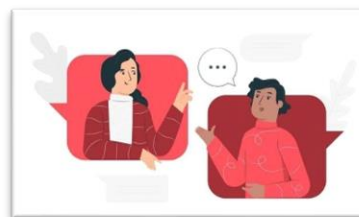
subject to a security cap of 33% each and aggregate weight of top-3 securities is capped at 72%.

2. The Nifty Reits & InvITs Index has a base date of 1 July 2019 and a base value of 1,000. The index will be reviewed and rebalanced on a quarterly basis.
3. Reits and InvITs are investment vehicles that own revenue-generating real estate and infrastructure assets, respectively. Reits and InvITs can be an option for investors looking for regular income generation through a diversified portfolio of real estate or infrastructure assets.
4. The top constituents of Nifty Reits & InvITs index include Embassy Office Parks Reit (32.9% weight), Powergrid Infrastructure Investment (20.2%), Mindspace Business Parks Reit (15.3%), India Grid Trust (15.3%).
5. InvITs are mutual fund-like institutions that enable investments into the infrastructure sector by pooling small sums of money from a multitude of individual investors for directly investing in infrastructure. These are set up as a trust and registered with SEBI.
6. REITs is a company that owns, operates, or finances income-generating real estate. It is modelled after mutual funds; REITs pool the capital of numerous investors.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## The Language Friendship Bridge

**Why in news:** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations plans to create a pool of experts in 10 languages from some neighbouring countries and others who share a cultural heritage with India.



1. The Project will create a pool of experts in languages spoken in countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Indonesia to facilitate better people-to-people exchanges.
2. It will train five to 10 people in the official languages of each of these countries.
3. As of now, the ICCR has zeroed in on 10 languages: Kazakh, Uzbek, Bhutanese, Ghoti (spoken in Tibet), Burmese, Khmer (spoken in Cambodia), Thai, Sinhalese and Bahasa (spoken in both Indonesia and Malaysia).
4. The project is significant for India's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy, as it will help deepen India's cultural and economic relations with these countries. By training language experts in the official languages of these countries, India will be able to communicate more effectively and build stronger cultural and economic ties with its neighbors.

### About ICCR-

5. It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.



6. To actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## Government to launch “Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)” under National One Health Mission

**Why in news:** Department of AHD inks a collaborative project on the Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH) with the World Bank aiming to create an ecosystem for a better animal health management system.



1. The project will cover 151 districts of five part States with a target of upgradation of 75 district/regional laboratories, upgradation/strengthening of 300 veterinary hospitals/dispensaries, training of 9000 semi-veterinary/clinical professionals and 5500 veterinary professionals. In addition to the above, awareness campaigns on prevention of zoonotic diseases and pandemic preparedness will be carried out at the community level by reaching out to six lakh households.
2. The project will be implemented over a period of five years with a financial provision of Rs 1228.70 crore in collaboration with the central government.
3. The project will develop an ecosystem for continuous training of veterinarians and para-veterinarians on innovative disease management practices besides networking laboratories and integrating disease reporting systems to enhance surveillance of zoonotic and other animal diseases. These basic activities will help in preparation for epidemic diseases affecting animals.
4. Major activities under APPI for future animal epidemics and pandemics which are at different stages of execution are as follows:
  - a. Defined joint investigation and outbreak response teams (National & state)
  - b. Design an overall integrated disease surveillance system (built on National Digital Livestock Mission)
  - c. Strengthening the Regulatory system (e.g., Nandi online portal and Field trial guidelines)
  - d. Creating disease modelling algorithms and early warning systems
  - e. Strategizing Disaster Mitigation with National Disaster Management Authority
  - f. Initiate targeted R&D to develop vaccines/diagnostics/therapies for priority diseases





- g. Build genomic and environmental surveillance methods to improve the timeliness and sensitivity of disease detection

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## Cost Inflation Index

**Why in news:** The Cost Inflation Index number for the current fiscal year 2023-24 is 348 as per a notification of the Central Board of Direct Taxes



1. The CII number is used to adjust the purchase price of assets based on inflation. CII number helps a person to find out the inflation-adjusted current value of an asset.
2. As inflation increases, the prices of goods increase too. Due to this, the purchasing power of money falls. Cost Inflation Index (CII) is a tool used in the calculation of an estimated yearly increase in an asset's price as a result of inflation.
3. Capital gains are the sale/purchase of any capital asset including land, property, stock, shares, trademarks, patents, etc. Refers to the profit obtained from the transfer.
4. The application of the cost inflation index to capital gains adjusts the purchase price of assets based on their selling price, resulting in lower income and lower tax amount.
5. CII has a base year concept, currently the base year is 2001 having CII of 100. CII for 2020-21 has been notified at 301.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Solar Energy Corporation of India gets Miniratna Category-I status

**Why in news:** Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) has been granted Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) status recently.



1. SECI, incorporated in 2011, is the primary implementing agency of the Ministry for renewable energy schemes/projects towards meeting India's international commitments.
2. SECI has provided RE project capacity of over 56 GW and is also active in setting up projects with its own investments as well as project management consultants (PMCs) for other public sector entities.
3. SECI has played a key role in the rapid increase in RE production capacity in the country and has contributed to the country's climate commitments, carbon



emission reduction strategies and sustainable energy transition. The 'Panchamrit' goal is to become an integral part in achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel based capacity by 2030.

4. SECI enjoys the highest credit rating of AAA by ICRA.
5. Miniratna central public sector enterprises are the ones where pre-tax profit incurred by the company is Rs. 30 crores or more in at least one of the three years and they also have a positive net worth eligible to be considered eligible for granting Miniratna status. As of Jan 2022, there are 74 miniratna companies in India.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Central Sponsored Schemes

**Why in news:** Recently, the central government has tightened the fund flow rulebook on Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) even further and for the first time has also brought in a 'penal interest' clause for delays in fund transfers by states.



1. Centrally sponsored scheme are funded partially by both the Central and State Governments. It is a channel which the central government uses to help the states run their plans financially. The amount of state participation varies from state to state.  
The Centre has tightened the fund flow rulebook on Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) even further and for the first time has also brought in a 'penal interest' clause for delays in fund transfers by states.
2. The flagship schemes of the central government are called Core of Core schemes or umbrella schemes. Examples: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA), National Social Assistance Programme etc. The funding pattern is usually 60:40. The central government takes up more share in these schemes and the states are expected to pitch in the remaining funds.
3. Optional schemes: Normally state governments plan the schemes and request the central government to fund some portion of the total outlay. The general funding pattern of the optional schemes is 50:50 (State: Center). However, the Central government may take up the task of funding more if the scheme is to be implemented in backward areas or difficult terrains.
4. States have been asked to ensure that their share of funds is transferred to the Single Nodal Agency (SNA) for the CSS scheme within 30 days of receiving central funding instead of 40 days, as allowed earlier. Any delay beyond 30 days would



attract a 'penal interest' of 7% per annum. This 'penal interest' by a state that delays prescribed fund flow will be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of India.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## Exercise ORION 2023

**Why in news:** a. An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent will participate in Exercise Orion at Mont-de-Marsan, an Air Force base of the French Air and Space Force from 17 April to 05 May 2023, with the IAF Contingent comprising four Rafale, two C-17, two Il-78 aircraft and 165 air warriors.



1. "Exercise ORION 2023" is the first exercise in what French Joint Forces Command hopes will be a triennial cycle of exercises aimed at reinforcing joint forces operational readiness.
2. This would be the first overseas exercise for the IAF's Rafale aircraft. This is -
3. Besides the IAF and the FASF, Air Forces from Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and United States of America would also be flying in this multilateral exercise.
4. The Rafale aircraft are the latest fighters to have been inducted into the Indian Air Force and are considered to be the most potent in the entire Asian region.
5. The 36 Rafales have been completely inducted and they have played a significant role in improving the country's operational preparedness along both the borders with Pakistan and China.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Bhu-Aadhaar

**Why in news:** It is a 14-digit identification number for every surveyed parcel of land in India, launched in 2021. This could help mitigate court cases involving land disputes & enhance efficiency in land markets.



1. ULPIN (Unique Land Parcel Identification Number) is a part of the DILRMP program of the Government of India. It is a unique 14-digit identification number given to a plot of land.
2. The ULPIN program will check the land fraud incidence, especially in areas where ambiguous or unclear land records are present or sometimes the land ownership is itself disputed.
3. "Once the digitisation process of land records and registration is completed, it will help reduce the massive pendency of court cases involving land disputes.



4. The gdp loss to the country's economy is about 1.3% due to stalled projects over lawsuits related to land disputes.
5. A study says that 66% of all civil suits in India relate to land or property disputes, and the average pendency of a land acquisition dispute is 20 years.
6. The Land parcel identification is based on the longitudinal and latitude coordinates of the land along with the detailed survey and geo-referenced cadastral maps. The ULPIN number is developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## United Nations Recognizes Namami Gange Initiative As One Of The Top 10 World Restoration Flagships To Revive The Natural World

**Why in news** - DG, NMCG Receives Award At A Function In 15th Conference Of Parties To The Convention On Biodiversity In Montreal, Canada



### Key Points:

1. The United Nations (UN) has recognized Namami Gange initiative to rejuvenate India's sacred River Ganga as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships to revive the natural world.
2. The Award was received by Shri G. Asok Kumar, Director General, Namami Gange at a function in the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada on 14th December 2022, the World Restoration Day.
3. Namami Gange selected from over 150 such initiatives from 70 countries across the globe.
4. They were selected under the banner of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global movement coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
5. It is designed to prevent and reverse the degradation of natural spaces across the planet. The recognized initiatives, Namami Gange, will now be eligible to receive UN support, funding or technical expertise.
6. Namami Gange Programme was started in 2014 after Shri Narendra Modi took over as the Prime Minister after recognizing the need to rejuvenate River Ganga and committed over 5 billion dollars to ensure that the river gets clean.

(SOURCE – PIB)





## Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Ko Kaam Karyakram (PMKKK) now named as Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) Scheme

**Why in news-** The integrated scheme converges five erstwhile schemes of the Ministry viz. Seekho aur Kamao, USTTAD, Hamari Dharohar, Nai Roshni and Nai Manzil.

### Key points :

1. The Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) seeks to facilitate opportunities for minority communities in education, skilling, and employment to ensure their inclusive development in the national fabric.
2. The integrated scheme converges five erstwhile schemes of the Ministry viz. Seekho aur Kamao, USTTAD, Hamari Dharohar, Nai Roshni and Nai Manzil. The scheme has been approved by the Cabinet for the period of 15th Finance Commission.
3. PM VIKAS aims to improve livelihoods of the minorities, particularly the artisan communities, using the components of skill development, education, women leadership & entrepreneurship.
4. These components compliment each other in the ultimate objective of the scheme to increase the incomes of the beneficiaries and provide support by facilitating credit and market linkages.

(SOURCE – PIB)



## Vande Metro Trains

**Why in news:** Vande Metro services, a mini version of the Vande Bharat Express trains, will soon be launched in the country.

1. The design and production of Vande Metro will be completed this year. The Vande Metro services will be launched with an aim to help people in big cities to travel to and fro comfort between their place of work and hometowns.
2. A sleeper version of the semi-high speed Vande Bharat trains is being developed by the railway department.
3. These trains will be of eight coaches and will be like a metro train.
4. Vande Bharat Metro will be like rapid shuttle-like experience for passengers.





5. Vande Metro" will operate on a short distance metro rail network that will connect major cities with a distance of less than 100 kilometers.
6. The Ministry of Railways has directed the General Managers (GMs) of Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) and Lucknow-based Research Design and Standard Organisation (RDSO) to roll out the rakes of eight-car Vande Bharat trains at the earliest.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence inaugurated at IIT Hyderabad

**Why in news:** DIA CoE IITH is the largest centre among all 15 CoEs in the country and DRDO team will work with IIT-H to identify the target projects in each of these domains and execute to complete in a period of 3-5 years.

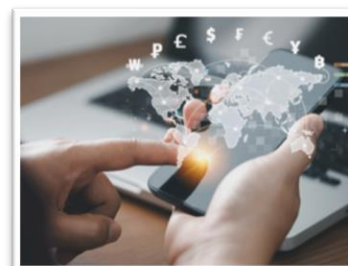


1. The centre will take up futuristic projects towards long-term directed research needed for DRDO.
2. The research cell, which marked the beginning of the collaboration between DRDO and IITH in 2020 has now been transformed into a Centre of Excellence.
3. There are seven verticals of technology projects that will be undertaken at DIA-CoE at IIT
  - Ultra-High Temperature materials
  - Additive manufacturing,
  - Space Technologies,
  - AI for defence,
  - Image processing,
  - Seekers and Homing Technologies,
  - Nano-ornithopter Technologies

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Canara Bank, Bharat BillPay tie up for cross border bill payments for Indian diaspora in Oman

**Why in news:** Canara Bank and NPCI Bharat BillPay (NBBL) have launched a cross-border inward bill payment service for Indians in Oman. Through the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) platform offered by



NBBL and Musandam Exchange, the platform will enable non-resident Indians (NRIs) to conveniently pay bills for their families back home.

1. Canara Bank is the first public sector bank in India to offer inbound cross-border bill payments via BBPS.
2. NRIs can now leverage the robust platform offered by the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) to make bill payments on behalf of their families through the Musandam Exchange,
3. The cross-border bill payment service is already live in Kuwait, facilitating inbound remittances across utilities like electricity, water, mobile phone, gas, credit card bills, and more.
4. Now Indians living in Oman will now be able to make quick, simple and secure payments of bills for services back home.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Trade data

**Why in news:** Trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry showed that India's May trade deficit widened to \$24.29 billion from \$6.53 billion a year ago.

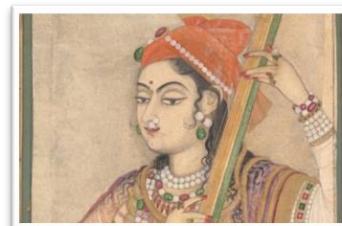
1. A.The trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday indicates adverse conditions for growth.
2. B.India's merchandise exports and imports have declined in three of the last four months as tightening of financial conditions across the world has dampened global and domestic demand.
3. C.According to the latest data, merchandise exports declined by about 14 per cent in March as global demand remained weak, while imports declined by about 8 per cent, pointing to a slowdown in domestic demand.
4. D.Considering the slowdown in the global economy this year — in its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund has pegged global growth at 2.8 per cent in 2023, down from 3.4 per cent in 2022 — exports are likely to come under further pressure. While the full extent of the slowdown will be clear only in the coming months,
5. E.Given the strong ties to the broader economy, a deeper contraction in merchandise exports will dampen the manufacturing sector in India, acting as a strain on overall domestic economic activity.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)



## Khayal Music

**Why in news:** NCERT has recently deleted chapters on the Mughal Empire from its Standard 12 history textbooks.



1. Khayal is a genre of Hindustani classical music, which originated in the late 16th century in Sufi communities in the region between Delhi and Jaunpur.
2. B. Its name comes from an Arabic/Persian word meaning "imagination". Origin of the music style 'Khayal' is attributed to Amir Khusrau.
3. D. There were also devotional forms such as Persian qaul and tarana sung in Sufi communities from the Amir Khusro (1253-1325) tradition.
4. E. Katkula was a regional form of Khayal that was used during the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur, who ruled from 1458 to 1505 and was a great music lover.
5. F. The members who played this style had close ties with Vaishnava sects. Later Niyamat Khan Sadarang (1670-1748), a famous Dhrupad singer played a key role in developing Khayal.
6. G. By the end of the 19th century, hereditary Khayal musicians, who were largely Muslim, began to teach the genre to people outside their respective families, including Hindus.
7. H. This eventually gave birth to famous Hindu musicians like Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, Kumar Gandharva etc.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## STABLECOINS

**Why in news:** The United States Congress recently made an attempt to create a legislative framework for the increasingly popular stablecoins.



1. They are cryptocurrencies whose value has been pegged to, or tied to, another currency, commodity or financial instrument.
2. Stablecoins aim to provide an alternative to the high volatility of the most popular cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin (BTC).
3. Unlike cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, the prices of stablecoins remain stable, whatever fiat currency supports them.
4. For example: USDC Stablecoin is backed by dollar-denominated assets.
5. They are open, global and accessible to anyone on the internet.
6. They are fast, cheap and safe to transmit.



Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption technologies are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds.

7. These currencies operate independently of a central bank.
8. Cryptocurrency underlying economic transactions are decentralized, distributed and distributed. The first and most famous cryptocurrency, Bitcoin was introduced in 2009. Most cryptocurrencies are built on blockchain technology.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Yuva portal

**Why in news:** In view of the significant impact of the first edition of PM-YUVA Scheme with large scale participation of young and budding authors in 22 Indian languages and English, PM-YUVA 2.0 is being launched on 2nd October 2022



1. The theme of PM-YUVA 2.0 is Democracy (Institutions, Events, People and Constitutional Values).
2. The scheme will also provide a window to the aspiring youth to articulate themselves and present a comprehensive view of Indian democratic values on domestic and international platforms.
3. Primary objective of PM-YOUTH 2.0 Mentorship Scheme The concept of development of democracy in India and its trajectory need to be studied under various sub-headings such as constitution, women, youth, religion, history, human rights, education, nationalism, culture etc.
4. Selection process for young writers  
A total of 75 authors will be selected through a pan-India competition held on the MyGov platform. <https://mygov.in> selection will be done by a committee to be constituted by the NBT.
5. The duration of the competition will be from October 2 to January 15, 2023.  
The contestants will be asked to submit a book proposal of 10,000 words.
6. The evaluation period of the proposals will be from 16 January 2023 to 31 March 2023. The national jury meeting will be held in April 2023
7. The names of the selected authors will be announced in May 2023
8. The mentorship period will be from June 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023 The publication of the first set of books will begin from February 1, 2024.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)



## National Panchayat Awards Week

**Why in news:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is celebrating the National Panchayat Awards Week from 17th to 21st April this year.



1. The festival aims to recognize the efforts of Panchayati Raj Institutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting good governance at the grassroots level.
2. The National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated every year on 24th April to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that institutionalized Panchayati Raj in India
3. The theme of National Panchayat Awards Week Celebrations 2023 is "Celebrating the Achievement of Panchayats' Resolves", which means "Celebrating the Success of Panchayats' Aspirations".
4. The National Conferences will be held on 18th, 19th and 20th April, 2023 at NASC Campus, New Delhi. The themes of these conferences are "Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihood Panchayat, Self-Reliant Infrastructure Panchayat and Panchayat with Good Governance", "Child-Friendly Panchayat, Women-Friendly Panchayat, and Socially Safe Panchayat", and "Water Adequate Panchayat, Clean and Green Panchayat and Healthy Panchayat" respectively.
5. Localization of SDGs can be achieved through Panchayati Raj Institutions.
6. Award winning Panchayats under various categories of National Panchayat Awards-2023
  - (i) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sustainable Development Award for performance under individual LSDG themes
  - (ii) Nanaji Deshmukh Best Panchayat Sustainable Development Award
  - (iii) Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Awards and
  - (iv) There will be carbon neutral special Panchayat awards. The award money will be digitally transferred to the awardee panchayats on the occasion.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## PTP-NER Scheme

**Why in news:** Shri Arjun Munda to launch "Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North -Eastern Region (PTP-NER)" scheme.

1. The scheme has been formulated to benefit the Scheduled Tribes living in the North Eastern Region by enhancing procurement, logistics and marketing efficiency of tribal products.





2. The scheme will be implemented in eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.
3. Under this scheme, the government is planning to enlist the tribal artisans of the North Eastern region by organizing 68 tribal artisan fairs starting today. These fairs will be held in various districts of the region and will provide a platform to the tribal artisans to showcase their products and skills.
4. The scheme aims to strengthen the livelihood opportunities of tribal artisans by promoting and showcasing their products from the North Eastern States.

(SOURCE – LIVEMINT)

## Mental health program named “NAMAN” (NIMHANS-AHT Comprehensive Mental-Health Action Program for Rural Communities)

1. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) and NGO Ashray Hast Trust (AHT) recently launched nationwide Naman program launched.
2. Naman envisions providing promotive, preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative care for the entire population of the target taluks using existing human resources in the community.
3. It will be implemented in 4 phases over 3 years. The first phase involves resource creation, which includes recruitment and training of staff. The second phase will involve conducting situational analysis to assess the mental health of the taluks concerned. The third phase is intervention, which includes therapeutic and rehabilitation services. The final step is evaluation.
4. The two taluks selected to implement NAMAN are Munsiyari in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand and Belur taluk in Hassan district of Karnataka.
5. NIMHANS will develop and implement the overall roadmap of the programme, and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh will collaborate with NIMHANS to deliver the programme in Uttarakhand. Other implementation partners include the State Governments of Karnataka and Uttarakhand.



(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## NHAI to develop 10,000 kms of ‘Digital Highways’ in India by 2025

**Why in news:** State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is working towards developing around 10,000 km of optic fibre cables (OFC) infrastructure across the country by fy 2024-25.



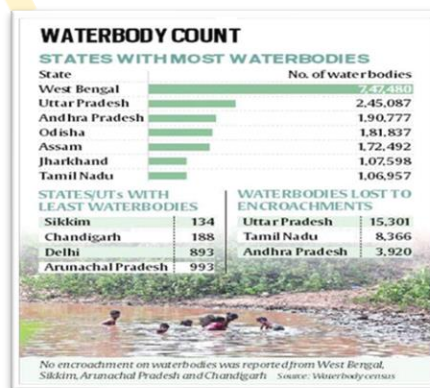
1. The National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML), a wholly-owned special purpose vehicle of NHAI, will implement a network of "digital highways" by developing integrated utility corridors along national highways to develop OFC infrastructure.
2. About 1,367 km on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and 512 km on the Hyderabad-Bangalore corridor have been identified as pilot routes for digital highway development
3. Providing internet connectivity to remote locations across the country will help accelerate the roll-out of new-age telecom technologies like OFC network 5G and 6G.
4. The recently inaugurated 246-km Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway has a three-metre dedicated utility corridor used for laying optical fibre cable, which will serve as the backbone for the roll-out of 5G networks in the region.
5. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) was set up under NHAI Act, 1988. It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

### First-ever census of water bodies:

**Why in news:** Bengal tops list of states with highest number of ponds and reservoirs in census of water bodies

1. The Union Jal Shakti Ministry has launched the first census of water bodies in convergence with the sixth minor irrigation census (reference year 2017-18) under the centrally sponsored scheme – "Irrigation Census".
2. The census aims to develop a national database for all water bodies by collecting information on all important aspects including their size, condition, encroachment status, usage, storage capacity etc.
3. The census defines a water body as all natural or man-made units bounded on all sides with some or no masonry work used for storing water for
  - Irrigation or
  - Other purposes (example industrial, pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, groundwater recharge, etc).
4. 59.5% of water bodies are ponds, followed by tanks, reservoirs, water conservation schemes/percolation tanks/check dams, lakes and others.



5. Of the 24,24,540 water bodies enumerated in the country, 97.1% (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only 2.9% (69,485) are in urban areas.
6. West Bengal accounts for the most (7.47 lakh) and Sikkim the least (134) number of water bodies.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Garbh-Ini programme

**Why in news:** Garbh-Ini is a cohort study of pregnant women initiated in May 2015 at the civil hospital in Gurugram, Haryana, India. Women are enrolled within 20 weeks of gestation and are followed until delivery and once postpartum. .

1. Garbh-ini (Interdisciplinary Group for Advanced Research on Birth Outcomes—DBT India Initiative) was initiated by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), in 2014 as a collaborative interdisciplinary program. This program is led by Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), NCR Biotech cluster, Faridabad.
2. The aim of which is (i) to gain in-depth fundamental knowledge on adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth (PTB) and fetal growth restriction (FGR)  
(ii) Apply this knowledge to identify efficient and sustainable solutions that will help in mitigation. Related mortality, immediate and long-term morbidity.
3. C.Partner Institutes  
Translational Health Science and Technology Institute  
National Institute of Biomedical Genomics  
Regional Centre for Biotechnology  
Gurugram Civil Hospital  
Safdarjung Hospital
4. In the long term this platform will serve as an important national resource for answering additional research questions as new hypotheses emerge around birth, maternal health during pregnancy and questions around fetal origin of adult disease.
5. Pregnant women are enrolled at the beginning of pregnancy and certainly before <20 weeks of pregnancy and are ready to continue their care until delivery at GCH.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



## Mission 50K-EV4ECO

**Why in news:** Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched Mission 50K-EV4ECO, the initiative will fund the procurement of 50,000 EVs in the country to boost the local ecosystem.



1. The pilot phase of 'Mission 50K-EV4ECO' will accelerate the growth for two, three and four wheelers through direct (MSME) and indirect loans (to NBFCs)
2. The scheme is a precursor to the Evolve scheme by SIDBI-World Bank
3. The Indian automobile industry is ranked fifth largest globally and is expected to become the third largest by 2030.
4. Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) (est. 1990 as a subsidiary of IDBI bank; statutory body under Ministry of Finance; HQ: Lucknow) is the apex regulatory body for overall licensing and regulation of micro, small and medium enterprise finance companies in India.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)

**Why in news:** The Central Government recently appointed former Special Protection Group (SPG) chief as the Chairman of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO).



1. It is a technical intelligence agency under the Prime Minister's Office, National Security Advisor in India. It was set up in 2004 as a technical wing of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the country's external intelligence agency.
2. It is under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office and works as an autonomous organization.
3. Primary Objective: Gather technical intelligence, including intercepting and analyzing communication signals, imagery intelligence, and cyber intelligence.
4. It also provides technical support to other intelligence agencies of the country including Intelligence Bureau and Research and Analysis Wing. It is responsible for maintaining a database of technology-related information and developing advanced tools and techniques for intelligence gathering.
5. The NTRO is headed by a chairman who reports directly to the Prime Minister of India.
6. It is headquartered in New Delhi, and has operational centres in different parts of the country.

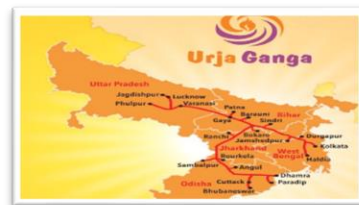
(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)





## Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project

**Why in news:** Recently, Prime Minister praised the completion of Bihar portion of Barauni- Guwahati pipeline under Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project.



1. The project is also known as Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline Project (JHBDPL) project.
2. It was launched in 2016 and will cater to the energy needs of five states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
3. The pipeline will connect six districts of Bihar to the national gas grid. The project will provide access to clean natural gas for industries, CNG for vehicles and PNG for homes, promoting a sustainable lifestyle.
4. The total length of the pipeline under the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project is 3,384 km, out of which 766 km pipeline is in the state of Odisha and the remaining 2,618 km is in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Assam.
5. The seven main stations include Varanasi, Patna, Bokaro, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack as major beneficiaries of the project.
6. The project is being implemented by GAIL

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## e-Gram Swaraj and GeM portal

**Why in news:** On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day and marking 30 years of Panchayati Raj in India, Prime Minister will inaugurate an integrated e-Gram Swaraj and GeM portal for public procurement at the Panchayat level in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh.



1. The e-Gram Swaraj-GeM integration aims to enable panchayats to procure their goods and services through GeM by leveraging the e-Gram Swaraj platform.
2. B.This will help the entire buyer-seller ecosystem to flourish, thereby strengthening the Digital India programme as well as giving a major boost to the rural economy and entrepreneurship.
3. It envisages increasing GeM's existing user base of around 60,000 to over 3 lakh in a phased manner. And bring transparency in procurement by panchayats by making the process digital.
4. Encouraging local vendors (proprietors, self-help groups, cooperatives, etc.) to register on GeM as panchayats largely procure from such vendors.
5. Panchayats will have access to doorstep delivery of quality-assured items at standardised and competitive rates.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)





## Indian Space Policy 2023

**Why in news:** The government has approved the Indian Space Policy (ISP) 2023, to boost private sector participation and increase investments in the space sector from private companies.



1. India currently accounts for about 2% of the global space economy (the United States has more than 50% share)
2. The Indian space industry was valued at \$7 billion in 2019 and aspires to grow to \$50 billion by 2024. India needs to use its cost-effectiveness in the space sector
3. The policy delineates the roles and responsibilities of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), space sector PSUNewSpace India Limited (NSIL), and Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe).
  - Strategic activities related to the space sector will be carried out by NSIL, which will work in a demand-driven mode.
  - IN-SPACe will be the interface between ISRO and non-governmental entities.
  - ISRO will focus its energies on developing new technologies, new systems and research and development.
  - The operational part of ISRO's missions will be moved to the NewSpace India Limited.
4. The policy will help India increase its share in the global space economy substantially from less than 2% to 10% in the future.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## PRAYAG Platform

**Why in news:** PRAYAG Platform For Real-Time Analysis Of Yamuna, Ganga & Their Tributaries Launched.



1. The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Prayag, a real-time monitoring centre for planning and monitoring projects, river water quality etc. during the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Empowered Task Force of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
2. Prayag (platform for real-time analysis of Yamuna, Ganga and their tributaries) monitors various projects through various online dashboards such as Ganga Tarang Portal, Ganga District Performance Monitoring System etc.
3. NMCG (2011; as a registered society) aims to rehabilitate and promote existing sewage treatment plants;



4. NMCG aims to rehabilitate and boost existing sewage treatment plants; curb pollution at exit points; maintain water flow without changing natural variations; restore surface and groundwater, etc. in Ganga and its tributary basins. It is being implemented by the National Ganga Council National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## SUPREME Initiative

**Why in news:** Recently, the Union Minister of Science and Technology launched the SUPREME initiative to provide financial support for the upgradation and maintenance of analytical instrumentation facilities (AIFs).

1. Assistance for Upgradation of Equipment Preventive Repair and Maintenance (Supreme), is the first of its kind programme by the Government.

It provides financial assistance for repair, upgrading, maintenance, retrofitting or obtaining additional attachments to enhance the functional capabilities of existing analytical instrumentation facilities.

2. Eligibility: Projects/projects created prior to the support of DST. Various facilities created under Analytical Instrumentation Facilities (AIFs) will be considered only for funding support under the scheme.
3. Such facilities in institutions recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) are eligible to apply for grants under this initiative. Duration: The period of support will not be for a period of more than 3 years.
4. Funding pattern: The funding pattern in the scheme will be 75:25 for all private and government-owned institutions (except state-funded institutions for which 100% funding will be considered).
5. In addition to the academic and research qualities of organizations, the scientific community/community is encouraged by the revival of the research facility to evaluate proposals. Msme/ The details of how the startup will benefit will be taken into account.
6. Other parameters such as proven record of analysed samples, publications, patents, various beneficiaries/stakeholders associated with the facility and scientific social responsibility/industrial R&D components will be considered for examination of the proposals.
7. The selection process will be through a peer review mechanism and, if necessary, visits to organizations. The expert committee will evaluate the proposals and assist the DST in making the final selection.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)



## Exercise Ajeya Warrior 2023

**Why in news:** Indian Army contingent will participate in the 7th edition of the bilateral training exercise 'Ajeya Warrior 2023'.

1. It is a bilateral training exercise between the armies of India and the UK. This is the 7th edition of the exercise.
2. It aims to improve interoperability between the two forces while conducting operations in accordance with the UN mandate. And this exercise will see the participation of an infantry company of India and a unit of equal strength of the British Army.
3. The troops of the two countries will practice using each other's weapons, combat tactics, equipment, combat strategies and procedures to conduct joint military operations in difficult conditions.
4. In addition, there will also be many expert academic discussions on many topics of common interest, such as joint weapons concept, operation logistics, joint force experience sharing, etc.
5. A foot soldier is a unit of the armed forces consisting of 100 to 250 soldiers and is headed by a captain or a major.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

## Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme

**Why in news:** A total of 6,448 schools from 28 states and Union territories have been selected for upgradation under the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme.

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme announced in 2022.
2. Objective: Development of more than 14500 schools across the country by strengthening selected existing schools being managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/Local Bodies.
3. The duration of the scheme is from 2022-23 to 2026-27, after which it will be the responsibility of the States/UTs to maintain the benchmarks achieved by these schools.
4. The selected schools will act as model schools showcasing all the components of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) and provide mentoring to other schools in their vicinity.
5. PM Shri Schools will be developed as Green Schools incorporating eco-friendly aspects. The pedagogy adopted in these schools is more experiential, holistic, integrated, sports/sports. Will be toy-based (especially in the foundational years),



inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible, and enjoyable.

6. Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge to real-life situations and will be competency-based.
7. Linkages with sector skill councils and local industry will be explored to enhance employability and provide better employment opportunities.
8. A School Quality Assessment Framework (SQA) specifying key performance indicators to measure outcomes is being developed. Quality assessment of these schools will be done at regular intervals to ensure desired standards.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

## International girls in ICT day

**Why in news:** International Girls ICT Day is an annual event celebrated on the fourth Thursday of April to encourage and empower girls and young women to pursue careers in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).

1. The day helps promote gender equality and diversity in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).
2. It raises awareness about the gender gap in the tech industry and inspires women to consider careers in ICT.
3. This year, it is being celebrated on April 27 with the theme "Digital Skills for Life".
4. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), despite the important role of ICT in our lives, a relatively small percentage of women globally opt for higher education in ICT-related fields.
5. The International Day of Girls in ICT was declared by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on April 8, 2011 to encourage women to pursue careers in information and communication technologies. More than 11,400 events were held in 171 countries and more than 3,77,000 girls and young women participated.

(SOURCE – PIB)

## UP on track to become first indian state with 100%Electric Vehicle in govt dept

**Why in news:** The Uttar Pradesh government has launched an ambitious scheme to promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the state. As part of this initiative, the government has set a target to convert all vehicles used by government departments to EVs in a phased manner by 2030.

1. The Uttar Pradesh government has issued instructions to all government departments to promote their use by purchasing electric vehicles (EVs) on a non-



tender enrolment basis. Departments can also spend more than the maximum limit to buy EVs as per their requirement.

2. By achieving the target of converting all government vehicles to EVs before 2030, Uttar Pradesh aims to become the first state in the country to have 100% EVs in its government departments.
3. To encourage the adoption of EVs, the Uttar Pradesh government has also notified the Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing and Mobility Policy 2022.
4. The policy includes the following incentives:
  - a. Tax and registration fee exemption for three years on the purchase of EVs.
  - b. Exemption from tax and registration fee for five years on purchase of EVs manufactured in the state.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Indian Space Policy 2023

**Why in news:** The government has approved the Indian Space Policy (ISP) 2023, to boost private sector participation and increase investments in the space sector from private companies.

1. India currently accounts for about 2% of the global space economy (the United States has more than 50% share)
2. The Indian space industry was valued at \$7 billion in 2019 and aspires to grow to \$50 billion by 2024.  
India needs to use its cost-effectiveness in the space sector
3. The size of the space economy in India is small and mostly government funded.
4. Increase private sector participation: The United States, Europe and Russia – all have space industries with big players like Boeing, SpaceX, Airbus, Virgin Galactic, etc.
5. The policy will provide a strategic roadmap for the growth and development of India's space program, to promote innovation, technological advancements, and international cooperation, and to ensure national security in the space domain.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## PRAYAG Platform

**Why in news:** PRAYAG Platform For Real-Time Analysis Of Yamuna, Ganga & Their Tributaries Launched.

1. A. The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Prayag, a real-time monitoring centre for planning and monitoring projects, river water quality etc. during the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Empowered Task Force of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).





2. B.Prayag (platform for real-time analysis of Yamuna, Ganga and their tributaries) monitors various projects through various online dashboards such as Ganga Tarang Portal, Ganga District Performance Monitoring System etc.
3. C.NMCG (2011; as a registered society) aims to rehabilitate and promote existing sewage treatment plants;
4. D.NMCG (est. 2011; as a registered society) aims to rehabilitate and boost existing sewage treatment plants; curb pollution at exit points; maintain water flow without changing natural variations; restore surface and groundwater, etc. in Ganga and its tributary basins. It is being implemented by the National Ganga Council National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

## Exercise Ajeya Warrior 2023

**Why in news:** Indian Army contingent will participate in the 7th edition of the bilateral training exercise 'Ajeya Warrior 2023.

1. It is a bilateral training exercise between the armies of India and the UK. This is the 7th edition of the exercise.
2. It aims to improve interoperability between the two forces while conducting operations in accordance with the UN mandate. And this exercise will see the participation of an infantry company of India and a unit of equal strength of the British Army.
3. The troops of the two countries will practice using each other's weapons, combat tactics, equipment, combat strategies and procedures to conduct joint military operations in difficult conditions.
4. In addition, there will also be many expert academic discussions on many topics of common interest, such as joint weapons concept, operation logistics, joint force experience sharing, etc.
5. A foot soldier is a unit of the armed forces consisting of 100 to 250 soldiers and is headed by a captain or a major.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)



## Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme

**Why in news:** A total of 6,448 schools from 28 states and Union territories have been selected for upgradation under the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme.

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme announced in 2022.



2. Objective: Development of more than 14500 schools across the country by strengthening selected existing schools being managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/Local Bodies.
3. The duration of the scheme is from 2022-23 to 2026-27, after which it will be the responsibility of the States/UTs to maintain the benchmarks achieved by these schools.
4. The selected schools will act as model schools showcasing all the components of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) and provide mentoring to other schools in their vicinity.
5. PM Shri Schools will be developed as Green Schools incorporating eco-friendly aspects. The pedagogy adopted in these schools is more experiential, holistic, integrated, sports/sports. Will be toy-based (especially in the foundational years), inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible, and enjoyable.
6. Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge to real-life situations and will be competency-based.
7. Linkages with sector skill councils and local industry will be explored to enhance employability and provide better employment opportunities.
8. A School Quality Assessment Framework (SQUAF) specifying key performance indicators to measure outcomes is being developed. Quality assessment of these schools will be done at regular intervals to ensure desired standards.

(SOURCE – THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Prime Minister virtually inaugurates 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of 'Advantage Healthcare India 2023'

**Why in news:** With the theme of 'One Earth, One Health', the purpose of the two-day AHCI event is to showcase India as the new hub of Medical Value Travel and its emergence as a major hub for world-class healthcare and wellness services.

1. The government organised the international summit on medical value travel to promote the export of Medical services from India. The two-day event aims to showcase India as the New Hub of Medical Value Travel and how it has emerged as a major hub for world-class healthcare and wellness services and its significance in medical potential, further creating and exploring opportunities for healthcare collaborations between the participating countries.

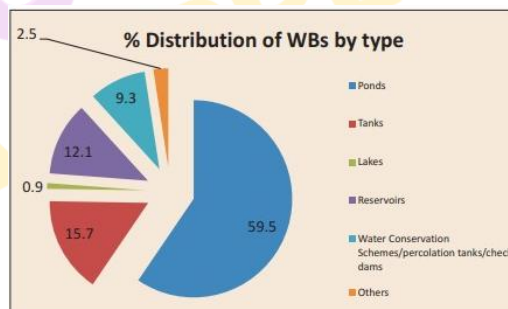


2. The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), has co-branded the 6th edition of Advantage Healthcare India 2023 (One Earth One Health) with Indian G20 Presidency and the event is now scheduled to be held from April 26 – 27, 2023 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
3. This summit will witness more than 200 exhibitors and 500+ hosted foreign delegates from 70+ countries of Africa, the Middle East, CIS, and SAARC.
4. The Health ministers from foreign countries like Bangladesh, Armenia, Bhutan, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Maldives, Nigeria, Russia and Somalia are expected to participate in the summit.
5. One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## India's first water bodies census released by Ministry of Jal Shakti

**Why in news:** The Ministry of Jal Shakti has released the report of India's first water bodies census, a comprehensive data base of ponds, tanks, lakes, and reservoirs in the country. The census was conducted in 2018-19, and enumerated more than 2.4 million water bodies across all states and Union Territories.



1. As per the report, 24,24,540 water bodies have been enumerated in the country, out of which 97.1% are in rural areas and only 2.9% are in urban areas.
2. 59.5% of water bodies are ponds, followed by tanks (15.7%), reservoirs (12.1%) Water conservation schemes/percolation tanks/check dams (9.3%), lakes (0.9%) and others (2.5%).
3. Maharashtra State is the leading state for water conservation schemes. Whereas West Bengal has highest number of ponds & reservoirs, whereas Andhra Pradesh has highest number of tanks, Tamil Nadu has highest number of lakes.
4. 99.7% water bodies are public owned whereas the remaining 0.3% are under private ownership. This reflects the dominance of public entities in ownership of water bodies.
5. All natural or man-made units bounded on all sides with some or no masonry work used for storing water for irrigation or other purposes (e.g. industrial,



pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc.) will be treated as water bodies in this Census.

(SOURCE – PIB)

## SUPREME INITIATIVE

**Why in news:** The Ministry of Science and Technology has launched the Support for Up-gradation Preventive Repair and Maintenance of Equipment (SUPREME) initiative to provide financial support for the upgradation and maintenance of analytical instrumentation facilities (AIFs).

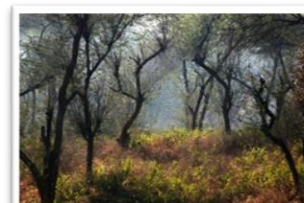


1. AIFs are specialized laboratories that provide advanced research infrastructure and technical expertise for scientific investigations in various fields such as physical sciences, life sciences, materials sciences, and engineering.
2. The SUPREME initiative aims to provide financial support for repair, upgradation, maintenance, retrofitting, or acquiring additional attachments to increase the functional capabilities of existing analytical instrumentation facilities.
3. The funding pattern in the scheme would be 75:25 for all private and government-owned institutions (except for state-funded institutions for which 100% funding would be considered).
4. The duration of support will be for a period not exceeding 3 years.
5. Eligibility:
  - Different facilities created under the projects/ Analytical instrumentation facilities (AIFs) created earlier from the support of DST, only will be considered for the funding support under this Scheme.
  - Such facilities at institutions recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) are eligible to apply for grants under this initiative.

(SOURCE – PIB)

## Eco-sensitive zone (ESZ): SC modifies order on ESZs around national parks, sanctuaries.

**Why in news:** The Supreme Court modified its 2022 order, which mandated a minimum 1-km eco-sensitive zone around national parks or wildlife sanctuaries.



1. Also known as Ecologically Fragile Areas (EFAs), these are notified and regulated by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate



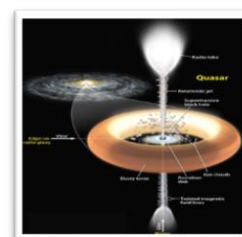
Change (MoEFCC) around protected areas, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India.

2. Objective: To create some kind of shock absorber in protected areas by regulating and managing activities around the areas. and act as transition zones from high security areas to low security areas.
3. According to the 2002 Wildlife Conservation Strategy, an ESZ can stretch up to 10 km around a protected area. In addition, sensitive corridors, connectivity and biologically important patches that are critical for landscape linkages should be included in the eco-sensitive zone if their width exceeds 10 km.
4. In June 2022, the Supreme Court directed all national parks and wildlife sanctuaries that fall under protected forests to set a minimum distance of one kilometre as ESZs.
5. As per this decision, prohibited activities including mining and setting up of any new permanent structure were not allowed in the area.
6. The purpose of declaring ESZs is not to disrupt the day-to-day activities of the local people or prevent the government from building strategic infrastructure in those areas, the apex court amended its earlier verdict.
7. But, the Supreme Court underlined that no mining will be allowed within national parks and sanctuaries or within a radius of 1 km.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## QUASARS

**Why in news:** Quasars are formed by the energy emitted by materials swirling around a blackhole right before being sucked into it.



1. According to a new study Quasars the brightest and the most powerful objects in the universe - have a violent origin story.
2. Semi-stellar radio sources (quasars) were first discovered six decades ago. These are very luminous objects in distant galaxies that emit jets at radio frequencies.
3. B.They are located in supermassive black holes, which sit at the center of galaxies. These are formed from the energy emitted by the materials moving around the black hole just before it is sucked into it.
4. Most quasars are larger than our solar system. A quasar is about 1 kg parsec in width. When galaxies collide, it pushes gas from the outer reaches of galaxies to the center.
5. As the supermassive black hole falls on the gas, it releases brutal fountains of energy in the form of radiation, causing quasars.



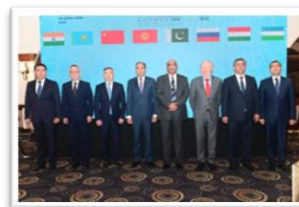


6. A black hole is a region with extremely intense gravity in space from which even light cannot escape. The death of a massive star can lead to the formation of a black hole.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## SCO INTER BANK CONSORTIUM

**Why in news:** Addressing the 19th SCO IBC meeting in South Goa district, Managing Director of the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) said the huge potential for cooperation between the banks of the member countries still remains untapped.



1. The main goals of the SCO are
  - strengthening mutual confidence and good-neighbourly relations among the member countries;
  - promoting effective cooperation in politics, trade and economy, science and technology, culture as well as education, energy, transportation, tourism, environmental protection and other fields;
  - making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region, moving towards the establishment of a new, democratic, just and rational political and economic international order.
2. About creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was proclaimed on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai (China) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.
3. SCOIBC was established on 26 October 2005 by the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It provides funds and bank services for investment projects sponsored by the governments of SCO member countries.
4. The main objective of the consortium is to provide financial services, promote trade and facilitate investment among member states. The SCO IBC Council meets ad-hoc at least once per year on the consensus of all parties. The Council is chaired on a rotational basis.
5. The members of the SCO IBC are the Development Bank of Kazakhstan, the State Development Bank of China, the Settlement & Savings Company of the Kyrgyz Republic "RSK Bank", the Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs of the Russian Federation "Vnesheconombank", the State Savings Bank of the Republic of Tajikistan "Amonatbank", and the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)



## National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22

**Why in news:** Recently, the secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (Ministry of Science & Technology) released the “National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22: Summary for Policymakers.



1. It is a joint study by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
2. Objective of the survey: To evaluate the innovation performance of manufacturing firms in India. Firm-level survey: It captured data related to the type of innovations and innovative measures taken by firms, including the process of innovation, access to finance, resources and information for innovation, etc.
3. Regional System of Innovation (SSI) Survey: It mapped the manufacturing innovation system and its enabling role in achieving innovations in firms.
4. The study of small scale industry measured the convergence or divergence of current policy instruments in select five key manufacturing sectors – textiles – critical to the Indian economy; Food and drink; Automotive; Pharma; and ICT.
5. The first National Innovation Survey was conducted in 2011. Key facts about the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations with a unique mandate to promote and accelerate industrial development.
6. It provides assistance to its 171 member states through four mandatory functions:
  1. Technical Cooperation
  2. Action-oriented research and policy-advisory services.
  3. Activities related to standard standards
  4. Promote partnerships for knowledge and technology transfer.
7. India is a member of this organization. National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22 findings released, can help increase competitiveness of Indian manufacturing

(SOURCE –The Hindu)

## Pygmy hog

**Why in news:** According to an article in the journal Science, African Swine Fever (ASF), the livestock illness that has decimated porcine populations across Asia since its advent in China in 2018, could deal a lethal blow to the pygmy hog.



1. It is the smallest and rarest species of wild boar in the world. It is one of the very few mammals that build their own house, or nest, complete with a 'roof'. It is an indicator species because its presence reflects the health of its primary habitat, long and wet grasslands.
2. Habitat: It prefers the undisturbed patch of grassland dominated by early successive river communities, which usually have dense tall grass with a variety of herbs, shrubs, and young trees.
3. Currently, the viable population of this pig in the wild is in Assam's Manas Tiger Reserve. and the IUCN Red List: Critically endangered.
4. It is a highly contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs, whose mortality rate can reach 100%.

The virus belongs to the Asfarviridae family.

5. Symptoms: Vomiting, diarrhea, redness or darkening of the skin, especially ears and snouts, swollen eyes, etc. It can spread through:
6. Direct contact with infected pigs, feces or body fluids Indirect contact through equipment, vehicles or those such as fomites that work with pigs between pig farms with ineffective biosecurity. Pigs eating infected pork or meat products.
7. It is endemic to sub-Saharan Africa but has spread to many other regions of the world, including Asia and Europe. It is not known to affect humans.

There is no cure or caution available for the infection and there is no approved vaccine.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Important News: States

### Basohli Painting GI Tag

**Why in news:** 'Basohli Painting', the famous Pahari miniature style of painting known for its use of bright and bold colours and peculiar facial forms, from Jammu's Kathua district, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



1. Basohli painting of Kathua district is the first independent GI tagged product of Jammu region.
2. This school of pahari painting received the patronage of King Kripal Pal, an artist named Devidas executed miniature paintings in the form of Rasmanjari paintings in 1694 AD.
3. The features of this painting include a change in the type of face that becomes a little heavier and also in tree forms that assume a somewhat natural character, which may be due to the influence of Mughal painting.



This miniature has the use of strong and contrasting colors, monochrome background, large eyes, bold drawing, use of beetle wings to show diamonds in jewelry, narrow sky and red border are viewable.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Chhattisgarh's Nagri Dubraj rice variety gets geographical indication tag

**Why in news:** A GI tag is given to an entrepreneur or a group of businessmen of a particular area, state, or country. The GI tags are issued as per the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, of 1999.

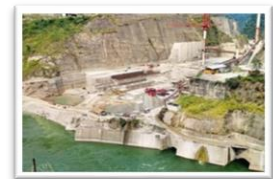


1. The Geographical Indication Registry has granted Chhattisgarh's aromatic rice, Nagri Dubraj, a geographical indication (GI) tag facilitating the brand to get a unique identity and a wide market.
2. It is produced by a women's self-help group "Maa Durga Swasahayata Samuh". The grain finds reference in Valmiki Ramayana.
3. It is an indigenous variety and has small grains, is very soft to eat after cooking, and is known as the Basmati of Chhattisgarh because of its fragrance.
4. Previously, Jeeraphool rice (also from Chhattisgarh) was granted a GI tag in 2019, Dubraj is the second brand to get the GI tag.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Subansiri dam project

**Why in news:** Recently, the contentious Subansiri Lower Dam project was hit by a landslide during pre-monsoon rain in the region.



1. It is the biggest hydroelectric project undertaken in India so far.
2. It is a run-of-river scheme on river Subansiri. The Project is located near North Lakhimpur on the border of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
3. Subansiri River - It originates in the Tibet Plateau and is the largest tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
4. The high topographic variation makes this river a potential zone for harnessing it for the hydropower.
5. It is a concrete gravity dam 116 m high from river bed level.
6. It is being developed by the state-run National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC).

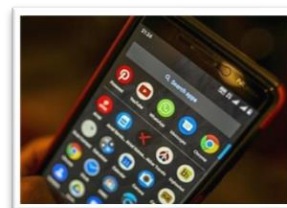
(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)





## 15 rare earth elements discovered in Andhra

**Why in news:** These elements are also used in clean energy, aerospace, defence, and in manufacturing permanent magnets- a key component in modern electronics- wind turbines, jet aircraft, and several other products.



1. These elements were found by the Hyderabad-based National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI).
2. According to the report, these elements are crucial components, which are used in a variety of daily-use and industrial applications, from cell phones and Televisions to computers and automobiles. They are also used in clean energy, aerospace, defence, and in manufacturing permanent magnets.
3. The discovery of the minerals in the lanthanide series was made when a survey was conducted by the scientists for non-traditional rocks, which included syenites. The elements that have been identified include allanite, ceriate, thorite, columbite among others.
4. Lithium falls in the critical resource category, which was not earlier available in India and we were dependent on its 100 per cent import. The G3 (advanced) study of the GSI shows the presence of best quality lithium in abundant quantity in the foothills of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine at Salal village (Reasi)

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Amit Shah inaugurates 54-foot tall Lord Hanuman statue in Gujarat

**Why in news:** On the auspicious day of Hanuman Jayanti, Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled a grand 54-foot tall statue of the Lord at Sarangpur temple in Botad district of Gujarat.



1. The magnificent statue, made up of Panchadhatu, is a wonderful example of Indian sculpture and craftsmanship. The statue will become a centre of reverence for the devotees visiting the place in the coming days.
2. The statue, which stands on a 48-foot-tall pedestal, has been built at a cost of around Rs 30 crore (\$4 million USD) by the Hanuman Seva Samiti, a trust associated with the temple. It is said to be one of the tallest statues of Lord Hanuman in the world.
3. The statue was installed with the help of a crane and the whole process took several hours to complete. The statue's face was unveiled first, followed by the body and the tail. The entire process was telecast live on television channels.





4. He also inaugurated Sri Kastabhanjandev Bhojnalaya at Salangpur, built at a cost of Rs 55 crore. In this hi-tech kitchen made of clay tiles from 25 pilgrimage centres, food will be prepared for more than 20 thousand people in an hour.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Bihar's aromatic 'Marcha Rice' gets GI tag

**Why in news:** Marcha is a short indigenous cultivar of rice found in West Champaran district of Bihar. By its size and shape, its grain appears like black pepper so it is known as 'Mircha' (pepper in Hindi) or 'Marcha Rice'.



1. Bihar's famous 'Marcha Rice' which is known for its aroma and palatability was awarded the Geographical Indication tag, according to the GI registry.
2. Marcha is a short indigenous cultivar of rice found in West Champaran district of Bihar. By its size and shape, its grain appears like black pepper so it is known as 'Mircha' (pepper in Hindi) or 'Marcha Rice'.
3. A GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
4. The major growing areas of Marcha rice include Mainatand, Gaunaha, Narkatiyaganj, Ramnagar and Chanpatiya blocks of West Champaran district.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## LIGO-India Project

**Why in news:** The Union Cabinet recently approved to set up a gravitational-wave detection facility in Maharashtra that will consist of a detector called the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO).



1. LIGO is the world's most powerful observatory that exploits the physical properties of light and of space itself to detect and understand the origins of gravitational waves.
2. At the moment, there are two such observatories in the US that are separated by a distance of 3000 kilometres that work in tandem to pick up these gravitational waves.
3. LIGO-India will be an advanced gravitational-wave observatory to be located in Maharashtra, India, as part of a worldwide network.



- Each LIGO detector consists of two arms, each 4 kilometres long, comprising 2-meter-wide steel vacuum tubes arranged in an "L" shape and covered by a 10-foot wide, 12-foot tall concrete shelter that protects the tubes from the environment.
- It is envisaged as a collaborative project between a consortium of Indian research institutions and the LIGO Laboratory in the USA, along with its international partners.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Country's first 3D-printed post office coming up in Bengaluru

**Why in news:** Bengaluru will soon have India's first post office constructed using 3D printing technology. The project at Cambridge Layout in Ulsoor is being implemented by Larsen & Toubro, which has experience in constructing 3D-printed buildings.



- The 1,100 sqft building is expected to cost 30-40 per cent less than conventional buildings because of the technological intervention. The post office is being built at a cost of Rs 23 lakh. The test was conducted at the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), Chitradurga, Karnataka.
- 3D printing or additive manufacturing is a process of making three-dimensional solid objects from a digital file.
- The creation of a 3D printed object is achieved using additive processes.
- In an additive process, an object is created by laying down successive layers of material until the object is created. Each of these layers can be seen as a thinly sliced cross-section of the object.
- 3D printing enables you to produce complex shapes using less material than traditional manufacturing methods.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Rare earth elements found in Andhra Pradesh

**Why in news:** Hyderabad-based National Geophysical Research Institute has found large deposits of 15 rare earth elements (REE) in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district.

- Scientists at the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research facility in Hyderabad, have reported the presence of lucrative rare-earth elements (REEs) in Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh.



2. These elements are key components in many electronic devices and whose industrial applications span sectors like imaging, aerospace, and defence.
3. The REEs are lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, yttrium, hafnium, tantalum, niobium, zirconium, and scandium.
4. The discovery was part of a study funded by the Council, under a project called 'Shallow subsurface imaging Of India for Resource Exploration', or SHORE.
5. China produces 60% of the world's rare earth. India has 6% of the world's rare earth reserves, but it only produces 1% of global output and imports most of its needs from China

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## Mumbai ranks in list of 'world's best' cities for public transport.

**Why in news:** Maharashtra's capital city Mumbai featured in the nineteenth rank on the list released by Time Out after polling 20,000 people.



1. Mumbai, Maharashtra's capital has featured in the list of top twenty cities with best public transport in the world. The city's Suburban Railways, which was the first passenger railway to be built by the British East India Company, forms the backbone of public transport for a population of 12.5 million.
2. The list that has been released by Time Out, the publisher of global city guides. The publisher polled 20,000 people in 50 cities to find out how they feel about their local mass transit systems.
3. The list showed a not-so-surprising pre-dominance of Asian cities in the list for best public transport system. European cities also took a chunk of the accolades, with Germany's capital city Berlin topping the list.
4. According to CNN, public transit is a broad term that includes subways, above-ground trains, buses, trams and even ferries.

(SOURCE – CNN)

## Nitin Gadkari inspects Asia's longest Zojila tunnel to establish all weather connectivity for Ladakh

**Why in news:** The terrain near Zojila Pass is extremely inhospitable, with many fatal accidents taking place here every year. After the completion of Zojila Tunnel, the chances of accidents will be zero.



1. The tunnel will provide logistics flexibility and operational mobility to the Indian Army as it will reduce the travel time on Zojila Pass from 3.5 hours to 15 minutes.
2. It creates inconveniences for civilians in Ladakh who have to stockpile the ration before winter sets in.
3. Zojila tunnel, which marks the end of the conifer-clad mountains of Kashmir Valley, will connect Sonamarg in Kashmir with Minamarg in cold desert Ladakh.
4. The project includes a Smart Tunnel (SCADA) system, which has been constructed using the New Austrian Tunneling Method. It is equipped with facilities like CCTV, radio control, uninterrupted power supply, ventilation. The use of modern technology in this project has saved the Government of India more than 5000 crore rupees.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Sanjeevani project of Himachal government

**Why in news:** The state government has launched a project named Sanjeevani to uplift the livelihood of small dairy farmers and cattle rearers. The project aims to improve the lives of farmers by providing convenient and high quality livestock care services at their doorsteps using telemedicine and technology. This will help reduce the turnaround time for services and contain potential outbreaks.



1. The Animal Husbandry Department of Himachal Pradesh has collaborated with Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd. (BFIL), a subsidiary of IndusInd Bank, for the National Animal Disease Control Programme-Mobile Veterinary Van (NADCP-AHD-MVU) project. The collaboration aims to provide doorstep livestock care through a toll-free telephone number that will be operational soon.
2. The project intends to ensure the timely delivery of quality treatment to livestock, saving farmers the additional expenses of traveling for availing veterinary services like artificial insemination, medicines, vaccination, surgery, and infertility testing.
3. This entails expenditure on travel and transport. Sometimes, livestock succumbs to ailment for want of timely treatment. To overcome these shortcomings, mobile veterinary clinics are proposed to be set up under the project. These clinics will deliver veterinary services at the
4. Himachal Pradesh's economy is largely banking on agriculture and animal husbandry. With a livestock population of about 4.41 million, their care is an essential part of every rural household.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



## A HELP Program launched in the State of Uttarakhand.

**Why in news:** The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Pushkar Singh Dhami launched the 'A-HELP' (Recognized Agent for Expansion of Health and Livestock Production) programme in the state of Uttarakhand.

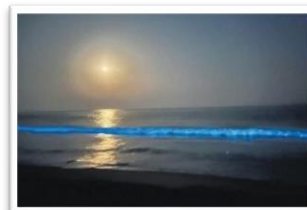


1. Named as Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production (A-HELP) has been formulated to fill the void between local veterinary institutions and livestock owner and provide primary services.
2. Under this programme, trained A-Helps will make significant contributions in preventing various infectious diseases of animals, artificial insemination under Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM), tagging of animals and animal insurance. It will be an incomparable example of the inclusion and participation of nari shakti for socio-economic upliftment.
3. A-HELP will play an important role in filling the gap between local veterinary institutions and livestock owner and providing primary services..
4. A-HELP will serve as an organic link between pastoralists and veterinary services and will become the "first port of call" in times of need for farmers.
5. The primary responsibility of an A-HELP worker is to address the healthcare needs of the livestock population in a village. The programme was successfully piloted in State of Madhya Pradesh and J&K (UT).

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Visakhapatnam beaches are glowing due to a phenomenon called bioluminescence.

**Why in news:** Bioluminescent waves at Bheemili Beach in Visakhapatnam have become the talk of the town, drawing in crowds of curious locals and tourists alike. The spectacular natural phenomenon, never witnessed in the area before, has left visitors enchanted by the beauty of nature.



1. Bioluminescence occurs when the movement of waves activates small marine organisms called phytoplankton, causing them to emit a bright blue light. Bioluminescence is emitted from the presence of diatoms, such as Noctiluca and Soresium.
2. It is likely to reappear depending on the nutrients present in the water. Since it is a natural phenomenon, exposure to it is not harmful.
3. While this is a rare and breathtaking sight, it is important to look at bioluminescence responsibly and protect the fragile ecosystem.





4. India is home to several beaches where bioluminescence can be observed, including the Lakshadweep Islands, Andaman and Nicobar's Havelock Island and Radhanagar Beach, and the Konkan region of Maharashtra. In addition, the same phenomenon was observed at Chennai's Marina Beach, where the waves glow with a blue-green light due to the phytoplankton.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Gond painting of Madhya Pradesh

**Why in news:** Gond paintings from Madhya Pradesh have got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, a recognition that protects and sanctifies the work of tribal artists.



1. A Geographical Indication (GI) is a name or sign given to products coming from a specific geographical location.
2. Patangarh village in Dindori district is home to several Gond artists, one in every household whose artwork is popular in the state and internationally recognised.
3. The famous Gond artist Bhajju Shyam has received Padma Shri award for it.
4. A geographical Indication (GI) tag is a sign used on products which have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. It is used for industrial products, foodstuff, agriculture products, spirit drinks, and handicrafts.
5. GI Tag ensures that no one other than the registered authorised user is allowed to use the name of the popular product.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## India's tallest Ambedkar statue

**Why in news:** The iconic structure of Ambedkar is claimed to be the tallest statue in the country ever built for the 'architect of Indian Constitution'.



1. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) will install a 125-feet tall statue of Ambedkar on the banks of Hussainsagar in Hyderabad on the 132nd birth anniversary of 'Father of Indian Constitution' Dr B R Ambedkar.
2. This project, the flagship project of the ruling government, this giant statue of Ambedkar atop the country's Parliament House has now come alive. It will be inaugurated on the birth anniversary of 132.
3. Touted as India's tallest Ambedkar statue, the project was completed at a cost of Rs 147 crore.
4. The Political parties/groups formed by Ambedkar:



- Depressed Classes Federation (DCF) in 1930
- Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1936
- Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) in 1942

**5. Key Literary works:**

- Annihilation of Caste
- Rande, Gandhi and Jinnah
- Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development
- The Buddha and His Dhamma
- Waiting for a Visa

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

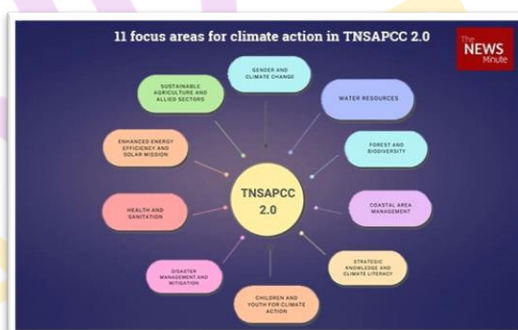
## Tamil Nadu releases climate change mission document: 13 goals set for 2030

**Why in news** - Tamil Nadu is the first state to launch its own climate change mission to make it a 'climate smart state'.

**Key points:**

1. Tamil Nadu is the first state to launch its own climate change mission to make it a 'climate smart state'. The state has proposed 13 goals for the mission, along with 11 focal areas for climate action as part of the Tamil Nadu State Action Plan on Climate Change 2.0 (TNSAPCC 2.0).
2. TNSAPCC was first implemented in the state in 2015 based on the National Action Plan for Climate Change for 2015-2020.
3. The Climate Change Mission also underlines the fact that Tamil Nadu accounts for 172.83 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) out of the 2953 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions at the national level, with the power sector contributing the maximum (67%).
4. The mission also proposes following a 'one health approach' to climate change to bring a better understanding of its impacts on environmental, animal, and human health.

(Source – lastminute news)



### Uttaramerur inscription

**Why in news:** Recently, the Prime Minister of India referred to the Uttaramerur inscription in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, while discussing India's democratic history.



1. While Uttaramerur has multiple inscriptions spanning centuries, the most famous one being referred to by the Prime Minister is from the reign of Parantaka I (907-953 AD) who belongs to the Chola dynasty.
2. The inscription gives details of the functioning of the local sabha, i.e. the village assembly. A sabha was an assembly exclusively of brahmins and had specialised committees tasked with different things. The Uttaramerur inscription details how members were selected, the required qualifications, their roles and responsibilities, and even the circumstances in which they could be removed.
3. There will be 30 wards. Everyone living in these 30 wards would assemble and select one representative for the village assembly.
4. The qualifications for such a representative must be.
  - ownership of a certain amount of land, having a house,
  - being between the age of 35 and 70 and
  - "knowing mantras and Brahmanas" (from the Vedic corpus).
  - An exception can be made on land ownership if the person has learnt at least "one Veda and four Bhashyas".
  - One must also be "well-versed in business" and "virtuous".
5. The inscription describes a number of important committees within the sabha with their own distinct functions. These include, the garden committee, the tank committee, the annual committee (an executive committee which required prior experience and knowledge to be a part of), the committee for supervision of justice (for supervising appointments and wrong doing), the gold committee (in charge of all the gold in the village temple) and the five-fold committee (its role is unclear in the inscription).

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

### Cumbum grapes GI tag

**Why in news:** Tamil Nadu's Kumbam grapes, also known as Kumbam Panneer Thrachai, have recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



1. These grapes account for 85 per cent of the grapes grown in Tamil Nadu.



2. The recognition of GI tag will help Kambam grape farmers to protect their product from being repeated by others and will help promote the product in national and international markets.
3. Located on the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu, the Kumbam Valley, also known as the Kambam Valley, is known as the 'Grape City of South India'.
4. The GI tag will help promote the product and protect the interests of farmers, leading to better prices and profits.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## UP on track to become first indian state with 100%Electric Vehicle in govt dept

**Why in news:** The Uttar Pradesh government has launched an ambitious scheme to promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the state. As part of this initiative, the government has set a target to convert all vehicles used by government departments to EVs in a phased manner by 2030.



1. The Uttar Pradesh government has issued instructions to all government departments to promote their use by purchasing electric vehicles (EVs) on a non-tender enrolment basis. Departments can also spend more than the maximum limit to buy EVs as per their requirement.
2. By achieving the target of converting all government vehicles to EVs before 2030, Uttar Pradesh aims to become the first state in the country to have 100% EVs in its government departments.
3. To encourage the adoption of EVs, the Uttar Pradesh government has also notified the Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing and Mobility Policy 2022.
4. The policy includes the following incentives:
  - a. Tax and registration fee exemption for three years on the purchase of EVs.
  - b. Exemption from tax and registration fee for five years on purchase of EVs manufactured in the state.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## India's first water body census

**Why in news:** The census prepares a database of water bodies, providing information about ponds, tanks, lakes and reservoirs in India. Conducted in 2018-19, the census is the first exercise of its kind in the country.



1. The Ministry of Jal Shakti has released the report of India's first water body census, which is a comprehensive data base of ponds, tanks, lakes and reservoirs in the country.
2. The census was conducted in 2018-19, and over 2.4 million water bodies were counted across all states and union territories.
3. Water bodies: First census report "focuses on irrigation or other purposes (e.g. industrial, fisheries, domestic/non-industrial activities)." It treats all natural or man-made units surrounded on all sides with few or no masonry work used for storing water for drinking, recreation, religious, groundwater recharge, etc.
4. Water bodies are "usually of different types known by different names such as tanks, reservoirs, ponds, etc."

(SOURCE –THE HINDU )

## SWAGAT initiative

**Why in news:** Prime Minister will participate in a programme marking 20 years of completion of the SWAGAT initiative in Gujarat.

1. The SWAGAT initiative (statewide focus on grievances by application of technology) started in the year 2003.
2. The objective is to act as a bridge between the citizens and the government by resolving their grievances and the components are State Reception, District Reception, Taluka Swagat, Gram Swagat, Lok Fariad programmes.
3. The unique feature helps the common man to communicate his grievances directly to the Chief Minister and its frequency is held on the fourth Thursday of every month
4. Complaint Rate More than 99% of the complaints submitted till date have been resolved and received the United Nations Public Service Award in 2010 for improving transparency

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Sinthan Snow Festival-2023 at Sinthan Maidan, Jammu and Kashmir.

**Why in news:** The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu and Kishtwar Tourism Development Authority (KTDA) organized a two-day Sinthan Snow Festival-2023 at Sinthan Ground, Kishtwar from today to April 30.



1. The snow festival is being organised in collaboration with





district administration Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) and the Army. There will be musical performances, adventure activities and various competitions.

2. The 2-day Synthon Snow Festival-2023 will host various activities like bike rally, paragliding, snow kayaking, fun snow activities, local cultural performances and more.
3. Elaborate arrangements have been made for conducting snow activities like skiing, sledding, snow kayaking, snow scooters etc. during the festival. Apart from this, a trekking expedition will be organized from Pathramodh to Sinthan Maidan jointly with the Forest Department. In addition, horseback riding, treasure hunting sports, volleyball, marathons and tug of war will be other attractions.
4. The festival will also feature Kishtwar Idol finale and inter-college group dance competition. The Sinthan Ground is becoming an important hub for skiers, trekkers, etc. and the festival is likely to bring this amazing tourist destination into the limelight with stunning natural surroundings and attract the attention of the visitors.
5. Sinthan Top is a mountain pass, a popular tourist destination located between the Brang Valley in Anantnag district of Kashmir division and Kishtwar district of Chenab Valley in Jammu division.
6. Synthon Top offers a 360-degree view of both Jammu and Kashmir regions. The tourism department expects enthusiastic participation from locals as well as tourists from across the country and the event has already received an overwhelming response from all.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and NAFED launched the first of its kind 'Millets Experience Centre (MEC)' in New Delhi.

**Why in news:** Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister and Managing Director of NAFED today launched the first-of-its-kind 'Millet Experience Centre (MEC)' at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi.



1. NAFED in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) set up the Millets Experience Centre with an aim to raise awareness on millets and encourage its adoption among the general public.
2. Acting on India's proposal supported by 72 countries, the United Nations General Assembly declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM 2023). And the Government of India is working on a 'mission mode' to present millets as a good crop for the farmer, environment and consumer.



3. The Ministry-led initiative to set up a consumer-oriented 'Millet Experience Centre' will not only boost the dietary benefits of ancient grains but also popularize Millet or Sri Anna as a nutritional powerhouse suitable for cooking a variety of dishes such as millet dosa, millet pasta etc.
4. Apart from a unique dining experience, customers can also purchase a variety of ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook products from local millet start-ups at MEC.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Anji Khad Bridge

**Why in news:** All 96 cables on the first cable-stayed bridge in India, the Anji Khad bridge, have been fully installed in a record time of 11 months.



1. It is an under-construction rail bridge in Jammu and Kashmir on the Indian Railways Jammu-Baramulla rail line. And the Union Territory will connect Kashmir with the rest of the country by train.
2. It has been constructed on the Anji River, a tributary of the Chenab river between Katra and Reasi. Anji Khad Bridge will be the country's first cable-stayed railway bridge.
3. It is a asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge balanced on the axis of a central pylon. The total length of the structure is 25 meters. It is situated at an altitude of 331 meters above the river level.
4. The bridge has a single line railway track and a 3.75-metre wide service road. The project is being executed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) and Hindustan Construction Company.

(SOURCE –NEWS ON AIR)

## Important News: Day

### International Day of Mine Awareness and Action 2023

**Why in news:** International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is observed every year on April 4 to raise awareness against explosive mines and gather assistance towards their eradication.



1. The theme for this year is "Mine Action Cannot Wait".
2. On this day, 12 UN Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialised agencies, funds, and programs come together to play a significant role in 30 countries and 3 territories to work on mine action program



3. The mine action community plays a significant role towards achieving the mine action goals and it is led by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).
4. The day also helps the peacekeepers to carry out patrols, assist humanitarian agencies, spread awareness among the ordinary citizens against mines and educate the ones living in dangerous environments on how to survive fearlessly and not worry about risking their life for one small mistake.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## National Maritime Day 2023

**Why in news:** In India, National Maritime Week begins on March 30 and ends in celebration of National Maritime Day on April 5. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the event.



1. To recognize India's significant contribution to the maritime industry and its history as a maritime nation. National Maritime Day plays an important role in promoting awareness of India's maritime heritage and playing the current role in supporting the country's economy. This day is an opportunity to express gratitude to the sailors who work tirelessly at sea, often months away from their families, to ensure the smooth functioning of the industry.
2. The theme of National Maritime Week 2023 is 'Amrit Kaal in Shipping'. Refers to the period of 25 years from the 75th to the 100th year of India's independence. The theme emphasizes the potential for significant progress and growth in the Indian maritime industry during this period, leading to a 'golden age' for the sector.
3. In modern times, National Maritime Day in India commemorates the maiden voyage of the first Indian steamship, the S.S. Loyalty, of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd. in 1919 from Mumbai to London. The Scindia dynasty of Gwalior owned the company, which was the second-oldest shipping company in India. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways started this day in 1964 to commemorate the sailing of India's first commercial vessel, SS loyalty.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## International Day of Conscience 2023

**Why in news:** International Conscience Day is celebrated on April 5 to promote peace. To lead a conscientious life, one must respect human rights and dignity as well as protect other living beings.



1. Conscience is the ability of a person to distinguish between what's right and what's wrong. The ability guides the person to be compassionate, and be thoughtful of one's actions.
2. Conscience allows people to have a moral backbone and to protect those who are weak. International Conscience Day is celebrated on April 5 to promote peace.
3. Dialogue and agreements between various international and national entities is essential to create a lasting culture of peace ruled by love, fellow-feeling and above all, conscience. The International Day of Conscience provides a public platform for this culture of leading a conscientious life.
4. The UNGA declaration also mentioned the necessity of maintaining peaceful relations irrespective of religion, language, race or sex and to protect future generations from the violence of wars.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 2023: Date, Theme, History and Significance

**Why in news:** The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) takes place on April 6 and is observed to celebrate the role of sports and physical activity in our individual lives and communities across the globe.



1. The day is observed to celebrate the role of sports and physical activity in our individual lives and communities across the globe
2. The theme for the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace for this year is "Scoring for People and the Planet."
3. The theme is applicable for celebrations of this event across the globe. Since the annual event is created by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), it ties with the Sustainable Development agenda of the United Nations (UN).
4. This theme, like the ones that came before, focuses on how sports impacts or influences sustainable development around the world and peace as well.
5. In its 67th session, the United Nations general Assembly adopted resolution 67/296, on August 23, 2013, by which it proclaimed April 6 as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. The resolution report was published on September 18 that year. The creation of this day was supported by the International Olympic Committee.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)



## World Health Day 2023

**Why in news:** This year, the theme for World Health Day 2023 is "Health For All," providing an opportunity to reflect on the public health successes that have contributed to improving people's quality of life over the past 70 years.



1. In 1948, the WHO held the First World Health Assembly. The Assembly decided to celebrate 7 April of each year, with effect from 1950, as the World Health Day.
2. The World Health Day is held to mark WHO's founding and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year.
3. World Health Day is celebrated on the 7th of April every year to raise awareness about global health and work towards improving it. It is an opportunity to focus on a specific health issue that affects people worldwide.
4. The theme for the World Health Day 2023 is "Health For All."

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## World Homeopathy Day 2023

**Why in news:** Homeopathy is a 200-year-old form of alternative medicine that claims to stimulate a healing response and strengthen the body's ability to heal itself.



1. The day honors the hard work of homeopathic professionals and helps people to understand the uses of homeopathic medicines.
2. Every year, World Homoeopathy Day is celebrated with a theme, and for 2023 the theme is "One Health, One Family."
3. The day is celebrated to increase awareness around homeopathic medicines and increase the rate its rate of success. World Homoeopathy Day also increases discussions around dealing with the difficulties and potential solutions for advancing homeopathy, as an alternative practice of medicine.
4. The 2023 edition of the day aims to push for evidence-based homeopathic treatment of the entire family through neighborhood family physicians. The event will be hosted by Central Council for Research in Homeopathy under the Ministry of AYUSH.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)





## National Safe Motherhood Day 2023

**Why in news:** India observes National Safe Motherhood Day on April 11 each year to promote maternal health and reduce maternal mortality rates in the country. The day was initiated by the White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI) and officially recognised by the Indian government in 2003.



1. National Safe Motherhood Day is an annual event that is celebrated on April 11 in India. The White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI) initiated this day to highlight the importance of maternal health and reduce maternal mortality rates in the country.
2. The Indian government officially recognised National Safe Motherhood Day in 2003, to emphasise the importance of ensuring that women have access to adequate care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.
3. The day was marked on April 11 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi, the wife of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who is considered the father of the Indian nation.
4. Through initiatives like National Safe Motherhood Day, women can gain access to the necessary care and support, which is critical for their health and well-being.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## International Day of Human Space Flight 2023

**Why in news:** It was on April 12, 1961, that Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen, became the first human to travel into outer space. His journey marked the start of a new chapter in human history, one that would open up endless possibilities for exploration and discovery. The United Nations recognized the importance of this milestone and, in 2011, declared April 12th as the International Day of Human Space Flight.



1. The history of human space exploration is marked by significant milestones, each one pushing the boundaries of what we thought was possible. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, the world's first man-made satellite, into outer space, marking the beginning of space exploration. This event sparked the Space Race between the Soviet Union and the United States.
2. On April 12, 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human to journey into outer space aboard the Vostok 1 spacecraft, completing a full orbit around the Earth.
3. This historic achievement opened up new possibilities for human exploration of space. Two years later, on June 16, 1963, Valentina Tereshkova became the first



woman to orbit the Earth aboard the Vostok 6 spacecraft. Her achievement paved the way for more women to participate in space exploration.

4. The International Day of Human Space Flight is a day to celebrate the spirit of exploration and the immense achievements that have been made in the field of space science and technology. It is a reminder that we are all connected and that our quest for knowledge and understanding knows no boundaries.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## World Chagas Disease Day

**Why in news:** Chagas disease, also known as "silent or silent disease", this disease progresses slowly and without treatment, Chagas disease can cause severe heart and digestive changes and can be fatal.



1. The theme for 2023 is 'Time to integrate Chagas disease into primary health care', so that universal care and surveillance start at the most decentralized level of the health system.
2. Every year on April 14, World Chagas Disease Day is observed to raise awareness about a life-threatening disease that can cause serious heart and digestive problems.
3. Trypanosoma is caused by the Cruzi parasite, which is spread to humans by the triatomine bug, commonly known as the kissing bug. The disease mainly affects individuals with poor sanitation conditions in rural areas, especially those who are poor. It is more common in regions such as Central America, Mexico, and South America.
4. World Chagas Disease Day was observed for the first time in 2020.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## World Hemophilia Day 2023

**Why in news:** World Hemophilia Day is a global healthcare event celebrated on the 17th of April every year.

1. World Hemophilia Day is a global healthcare event celebrated on the 17th of April every year, started by the World Federation of Haemophilia (WHF) with the intention to raise a call for the government authorities and local policymakers for the provision of a better treatment and care in addition to promote better control and prevention with haemophilia.



2. This year 2023, World Hemophilia Day 2023 Theme is "Access for All: Prevention of bleeds as the global standard of care",
3. World Hemophilia Day was first observed on April 17, 1989 by the World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) to honor the birthday of WFH founder Frank Schnabel.
4. Haemophilia is a medical condition, mostly inherited, in which the ability of blood to clot is severely reduced, so that even a minor injury can cause severe bleeding. Haemophilia is caused by a mutation or change, in one of the genes, that provides instructions for making the clotting factor proteins needed to form a blood clot.
5. The most common type of Haemophilia is called Haemophilia A. This means the person does not have enough clotting factor VIII (factor eight). Haemophilia B is less common. A person with Haemophilia B does not have enough factor IX (factor nine).

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## World Heritage Day 2023

**Why in news:** Every year, 18th April is celebrated Worldwide as World Heritage Day to create awareness about Heritage among communities.



1. Theme: The theme of this year's celebrations is 'Rural Landscapes', which is related to the theme of the 2019 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium on Rural Heritage which will take place in Marrakesh, Morocco in October.
2. There are 37 World Heritage Sites in India. These include 29 cultural sites, seven natural sites and one mixed site. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world.
3. In 1982, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced, 18 April as the "World Heritage Day", approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983, with the aim of enhancing awareness of the importance of the cultural heritage of humankind, and redouble efforts to protect and conserve the human heritage.
4. The rural landscape involves the increasing accumulation of tangible and intangible heritage that is in constant adaptation to environmental, cultural, social, political and economic conditions. They are the most common type of continuous cultural landscape.



5. These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO. UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Cumbum grapes GI tag

**Why in news:** Tamil Nadu's Kumbam grapes, also known as Kumbam Panneer Thrachai, have recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



1. These grapes account for 85 per cent of the grapes grown in Tamil Nadu.
2. The recognition of GI tag will help Kambam grape farmers to protect their product from being repeated by others and will help promote the product in national and international markets.
3. Located on the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu, the Kumbam Valley, also known as the Kambam Valley, is known as the 'Grape City of South India'.
4. The GI tag will help promote the product and protect the interests of farmers, leading to better prices and profits.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## World liver day

**Why in news:** World Liver Day (WLD) is celebrated every year on April 19 to raise awareness about the liver and its importance in the human body.



1. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), liver diseases are the 10th most common cause of death in India.
2. World Liver Day is celebrated to promote healthy living, discourage the consumption of fatty foods and raise public awareness about liver diseases.
3. The theme for World Liver Day 2023 is "Be Vigilant, Do Regular Liver Check-Up, Fatty Liver Can Affect Anyone."
4. It is important to prioritize liver health on World Liver Day. Hepatitis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer are examples of liver conditions that can be fatal.
5. The liver is one of the most complex organs in the human body. It plays an important role in our body's immunity, digestion and metabolism. In addition, it also carries out the filtration of toxins, stores vitamins and minerals, and produces bile, among other functions.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



## International day of multilateralism and diplomacy For peace

**Why in news:** On April 24, the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace is observed around the planet.



1. The day acknowledges the use of multilateral diplomacy and decision-making to achieve peaceful resolution of conflicts between countries.
2. This day is very important as it promotes international peace and the end of wars in the world through the use of international agreements, diplomacy and multilateral mechanisms.
3. The day was first declared by the UN Assembly keeping in mind that preserving the values of international cooperation and multilateralism is fundamental to the promotion and support of the three pillars of the United Nations:
  - Peace & Security
  - Evolution
  - Human rights.
4. The day reaffirms the UN Charter and its principles for resolving disputes between the countries of the world by peaceful means. The day was first celebrated in the year 2019 after being established in 2018.
5. This day has the aim of generating and spreading knowledge about the advantages of diplomacy and multilateralism for peace, including raising activities through public and educational awareness.
6. The objective of this day is to promote the United Nations' principle aim of saving future generations from the hardships of war and achieving this through dispute settlements in peaceful manner.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)

## International girls in ICT day

**Why in news:** International Girls ICT Day is an annual event celebrated on the fourth Thursday of April to encourage and empower girls and young women to pursue careers in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).



1. The day helps promote gender equality and diversity in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).
2. It raises awareness about the gender gap in the tech industry and inspires women to consider careers in ICT.
3. This year, it is being celebrated on April 27 with the theme "Digital Skills for Life".





4. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), despite the important role of ICT in our lives, a relatively small percentage of women globally opt for higher education in ICT-related fields.
5. The International Day of Girls in ICT was declared by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on April 8, 2011 to encourage women to pursue careers in information and communication technologies. More than 11,400 events were held in 171 countries and more than 3,77,000 girls and young women participated.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

## World Day for Safety and Health at Work

**Why in news:** April 28th is marked as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work annually to encourage the balance of safe, healthy, and appropriate working environments worldwide.

1. the year 2023, the chosen theme for the World Day for Safety and Health at Work is "A safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and right at work",
2. The aim is to increase consciousness about establishing a positive and healthy work environment and decreasing fatalities and injuries related to work.
3. To enhance awareness and encourage the implementation of secure protocols in the workplace.
4. To emphasize the significance of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and its role in the workplace.
5. To advocate for a work environment that prioritizes wellness and promotes a healthy culture. and The primary aim of this event is to explore practical ways in which this fundamental human right can be implemented in workplaces worldwide

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## World veterinary day

**Why in news:** World Veterinary Day is celebrated on the last Saturday of April. The day is observed to mark the importance of veterinary doctors who serve to protect animals.

1. The theme of World Veterinary Day for 2023 is 'Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness in the Veterinary Profession'.



2. The World Veterinary Association (WVA) established World Veterinary Day in 2000 to recognise and promote the role of veterinarians in safeguarding the health and well-being of animals, people, and the environment.
3. Veterinarians play an important role not only in animal and public health but also in environmental protection and sustainability. They work to ensure the welfare of animals in a variety of settings, including farms, zoos, and wildlife habitats.
4. They contribute to the conservation of endangered species and the protection of biodiversity by working with conservation organizations and wildlife management agencies. By addressing animal welfare issues and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, veterinarians are helping to create a more sustainable future for all of us.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Important News: Defense

### Andaman & Nicobar Command Conducts Large Scale Joint Military Exercise 'KAVACH'

**Why in news:** The exercise was a tri-service exercise and involved assets of Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. This exercise included tri-services operations.



1. Soldiers weapon systems of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force as well as the Coast Guard were deployed for 'EX-KAVACH'. The joint service exercise is aimed to finetune joint warfighting capabilities and operational synergy.
2. The exercise was previously conducted in 2021 known as AMPHEX-21. It was conducted from 21-25 Jan 2021 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Even during that exercise, all three services participated.
3. India's only tri-services Andaman & Nicobar command conducted a joint military exercise 'EX-KAVACH' on Wednesday, April 5, 2023.
4. During the exercise, various drills by soldiers were carried out, including amphibious landing, air landing operations, heliborne operations, and rapid insertion of special forces commandos.
5. The exercise aimed at validating India's capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrities of its island territories. The exercise involved multi-faceted maritime operations by deploying amphibious assault ships, naval gunfire support, amphibious landing forces and follow-on operations were part of the exercise.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)



## Prasthan Exercise

**Why in news:** The exercise is held every six months under the aegis of the Indian Navy and involves the participation of all stakeholders in the maritime domain.



1. Indian Navy conducts offshore security exercise 'Prasthan' in Mumbai. It was conducted on the Greatdrill Chaaya platform, about 30 nm South West of Mumbai Harbour.
2. A number of ships and helicopters from the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Indian Coast Guard, ONGC and Directorate General of Shipping were deployed for the exercise.
3. The recent exercise aims to validate measures and procedures to address contingencies that may occur in oil production platforms.
4. This exercise is an important element of ensuring offshore security and aims to integrate the efforts of all maritime stakeholders involved in offshore defence.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Nepal, India to hold joint military training exercise

**Why in news** - Indian Army chief General Manoj Pande visited Nepal in September.

### Key Points :

1. The 16th Edition of Indo-Nepal joint training Exercise "SURYA KIRAN-XVI" between India and Nepal will be conducted at Nepal Army Battle School, Saljhandi (Nepal), from 16 - 29 December 2022.
2. Exercise "SURYA KIRAN" is conducted annually between India and Nepal with the aim to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare & counter terrorism operations in mountainous terrain and HADR under UN mandate.
3. During the exercise, participants will be training together to develop interoperability and share their experience including Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorist operations and also on Humanitarian Relief operations. (SOURCE – The Hindu).
4. The joint exercise would focus on evolution of combined drills for planning and conduct of tactical operations at unit level in counter terrorism operations and disaster response mechanism in general and role of armed forces in management of disaster.



## India-Kazakhstan joint military exercise “KAZIND – 2022” begins in Umroi, Meghalaya

**Why in news** The 6th Edition of Indo - Kazakhstan joint training exercise “KAZIND-22” is conducted at Umroi (Meghalaya) from 15 to 28 December 2022.



### Key Points:

1. The 6th Edition of Indo – Kazakhstan joint training exercise “KAZIND-22” is conducted at Umroi (Meghalaya) from 15 to 28 December 2022.
2. The scope of this exercise involves a Command Post Exercise (CPX) at the Battalion level and Company level Field Training Exercise (FTX) on sub-conventional operations.
3. During the exercise, participants will engage in variety of missions ranging from joint planning, joint tactical drills, basics of special arms skills, HADR and raiding a hostile target.
4. Joint annual training exercise with the Kazakhstan Army was instituted in 2016 as Exercise Prabal Dostyk, which was later upgraded to a company level exercise and renamed as Ex Kazind in 2018.

(SOURCE – livemint)

## Important News: Reports

### World Development Report 2023

**Why in news:** The ‘World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies’ was recently released by the World Bank.



1. It is an annual report published by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or the World Bank since 1978. It provides an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of economic development.
2. The share of working-age adults in many (developed) countries will fall sharply over the next few decades. Spain, with a population of 47 million, is projected to shrink by more than a third by 2100, with people over the age of 65 growing from 20 to 39% of the population.
3. Diaspora transfers ideas, knowledge and technology, promotes job creation and modernisation – just as American Silicon Valley immigrants did when they helped nurture India's IT sector.



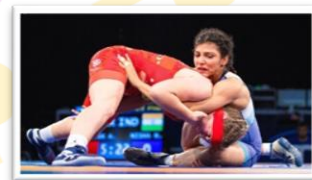
4. The WB proposed policies to exploit economic opportunities and better migration management in destination, transit and countries of origin (to reduce the risks faced by migrants). For example, countries of origin should make labour migration an explicit part of their development strategy.
5. Destination countries should facilitate their inclusion and address the social impacts that raise concerns among their citizens;
6. Match-Motive Framework: By combining "match" and "motive", the framework identified policy priorities for countries.
7. The report also urged international cooperation and multilateral efforts to strengthen the matching of migrants' skills with the needs of destination societies.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

## Important News: Sports

### Asian Wrestling Championships: Nisha wins silver

**Why in news:** The 68kg wrestler, on a fine injury comeback, reached the final in Astana, but fell to Japan's Ami Ishii 10-0. In Greco-Roman, Rupin won silver in 55kg division



1. Nisha Dahiya was posting tenacious victories till she ran into world championships silver medallist Ami Ishii of Japan in the 68kg final and finish as runner-up at the Asian wrestling championships in Astana, Kazakhstan on Tuesday. Ishii eased to a 10-0 win over Nisha.
2. India has won six medals so far. Greco-Roman wrestlers won four medals in the first two days of competition. Rupin won silver in 55kg and Neeraj (63kg), Sunil Kumar (87kg) and Vikas (72kg) won bronze.
3. With a world bronze medal at stake, Nisha fought against Linda Morais of Canada and was even leading when a leg attack from Morais left her in tears on the mat and she was unable to move. Then followed a tough two months of recovery before she made a comeback at the national championships last year. She then won the trials for the Asian meet earlier this month.
4. India won bronze in the women's 76kg where Priya edged past Mizuki Nagashima of Japan 2-1. In 50kg, Neelam lost her bronze medal bout 10-0 to Ziqi Feng of China.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)





## Important News: Schemes

### Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

**Why in news:** The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has recently been launched for development of Railway stations on Indian Railways.

1. The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has several broad objectives. These are:
  - The preparation and implementation of master plans for railway stations to enhance the facilities beyond the minimum essential amenities and creating roof plazas and city centers at the station premises in the long-term
  - Meet the needs of all stakeholders based on the funding availability and inter-se priority
  - The scheme will cater to the upgradation and replacement of existing amenities as well as the introduction of new amenities
  - It will cover stations that have undergone detailed techno-economic feasibility studies. However, the roof plazas in these stations will not be constructed in the near term as reallocation of structures and utilities is given higher priority.
2. The scheme will be implemented based on the needs and patronage of the railway stations. Infrastructural development will be ensured for more than 1,000 stations under this scheme.
3. The railway stations will have amenities to support the needs of Divyangjan. Sufficient number of toilets will be provided at all categories of stations for the Divyangjan. These toilets will be made in way that they are easily visible, and accessible.
4. Under this scheme, high-level platforms will be delivered for all categories of railway stations. Drainage facilities will be improved on these platforms, including the covering of drains with aesthetically designed theft-resistant covers.
5. Users of the railway stations will be provided with free Wi-Fi access. The master plan also covers 5G tower erections.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

### SWAGAT initiative

**Why in news:** Prime Minister will participate in a programme marking 20 years of completion of the SWAGAT initiative in Gujarat.

1. The SWAGAT initiative (statewide focus on grievances by application of technology) started in the year 2003.



2. The objective is to act as a bridge between the citizens and the government by resolving their grievances and the components are State Reception, District Reception, Taluka Swagat, Gram Swagat, Lok Fariad programmes.
3. The unique feature helps the common man to communicate his grievances directly to the Chief Minister and its frequency is held on the fourth Thursday of every month
4. Complaint Rate More than 99% of the complaints submitted till date have been resolved and received the United Nations Public Service Award in 2010 for improving transparency

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

## Prime Minister virtually inaugurates 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of 'Advantage Healthcare India 2023'

**Why in news :** With the theme of 'One Earth, One Health', the purpose of the two-day AHCI event is to showcase India as the new hub of Medical Value Travel and its emergence as a major hub for world-class healthcare and wellness services.

1. The government organised the international summit on medical value travel to promote the export of Medical services from India. The two-day event aims to showcase India as the New Hub of Medical Value Travel and how it has emerged as a major hub for world-class healthcare and wellness services and its significance in medical potential, further creating and exploring opportunities for healthcare collaborations between the participating countries.
2. The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), has co-branded the 6th edition of Advantage Healthcare India 2023 (One Earth One Health) with Indian G20 Presidency and the event is now scheduled to be held from April 26 – 27, 2023 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
3. This summit will witness more than 200 exhibitors and 500+ hosted foreign delegates from 70+ countries of Africa, the Middle East, CIS, and SAARC.
4. The Health ministers from foreign countries like Bangladesh, Armenia, Bhutan, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Maldives, Nigeria, Russia and Somalia are expected to participate in the summit.
5. One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)



## Important News: Science

### ISRO to Launch Singaporean Earth Observation Satellite TeLEOS-02

**Why in news:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch Singapore's TELEOS-2 satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on April 22.



1. TELEOS-2 is an earth observation satellite. The launch will be carried out by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
2. Earth observation satellite is also known as earth remote sensing satellite. These satellites observe the planet Earth from space.
3. The first EOS or remote sensing satellite was Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite sent into Earth's orbit by the Soviet Union in 1957.
4. EOS operate at a distance of about 500 to 600 kilometers from the earth's surface.
5. These satellites can be used for various purposes including environmental monitoring, cartography, navigation and more. The armies of various countries also use earth observation satellites for espionage and communication.
6. In November 2020, with EOS-01, ISRO shifted to a new naming system for its earth observation satellites. In February 2022, ISRO successfully launched EOS-04.

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

