

A MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR ASPIRANTS OF WBCS EXAMINATION



AUGUST 2023



WBCS GAZETTE

A House Journal of **APTI PLUS**



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CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION

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WEST BENGAL

West Bengal gets Centre's award

- West Bengal Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (WBMDFC) has been awarded the best-performing state channelizing agency (SCA) of the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- The award was presented at a review meeting of Central zone SCAs in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Chief minister Mamata Banerjee is in charge of the minority affairs department in West Bengal.
- WBMDFC was established in 1995 by the Government of West Bengal to promote the economic development of the minority communities in the state. The corporation provides soft loans to minorities for a variety of purposes, including education, business, and housing.
- In the past five years, WBMDFC has disbursed soft loans of over Rs 1,000 crore to minority communities in West Bengal. The corporation has also provided skill development training to over 10,000 minority youth.

Urbanization in West Bengal

- The rate of urbanization in West Bengal is higher than that of the country. According to the 2011 census, 31.89% of the state's population lives in urban areas, compared to the national average of 32%.
- Sushil Mohta, the chairman of Credai West Bengal, has said that the state's urbanization rate may go up to 42% in the next few years. He attributed this to the increasing number of people migrating from rural areas to urban areas in search of better opportunities.

Bengal's Suvidha portal bags award

- The Suvidha Vehicles Facilitation System initiative, a project to improve the traffic flow of trucks at the Petrapole border crossing between India and Bangladesh, has earned the Bengal government a gold award.
- The award was presented in the Government Process Reengineering for Digital Transformation category at the national conference of e-governance in Indore.
- The initiative aims to reduce the waiting time and congestion of trucks at the border by using digital technologies and processes.



NATIONAL

Rohini Commission

- The Rohini Commission, headed by retired Justice G Rohini has submitted its report to the President of India.
- It was established by the Union government in 2017 to examine the feasibility and criteria for sub-categorizing Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- The purpose of sub-categorization is to ensure equitable distribution of reservation benefits within OBCs, addressing the perception that a few affluent OBC communities disproportionately benefited from the existing 27% reservation quota.
- The commission aimed to analyze OBC representation in central government jobs and higher education, devise a scientific sub-categorization method, identify sub-castes, and rectify errors in the Central List of OBCs.

Delhi Services Act 2023

- The Delhi Services Act was passed in August 2023.
- The main provisions of the Delhi Services Act are:
 - The central government will have the power to make rules for the appointment, transfer, and posting of all civil servants in the NCT.
 - The Delhi government will no longer have the power to make rules for the appointment, transfer, and posting of civil servants.
 - The central government will have the power to supersede the Delhi government's decisions on the appointment, transfer, and posting of civil servants.

Unmesha

- The President of India inaugurated 'Unmesha' - International Literature Festival and 'Utkarsh' - Festival of Folk and Tribal Performing Arts in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- Unmesha is Asia's largest and India's most inclusive literature festival, featuring over 575 authors representing 102 languages, fostering cross-cultural interactions and international participation from 13 countries.
- Utkarsh celebrates and preserves India's folk and tribal performing arts, providing a platform for these traditional art forms, empowering artists, and recognizing their vital role in India's cultural identity.
- This festival pays homage to the nation's cultural legacy by showcasing the diversity and significance of indigenous arts.

Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme

- The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the ambitious project to transform 508 railway stations across the country through a virtual event as part of the Amrit Bharat Stations scheme.
- This initiative, with an estimated cost of ₹24,470 crores, aims to revamp nearly 1300 key railway stations with modern facilities and amenities. These selected stations span 27 states and union territories, including states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Maharashtra.
- The scheme focuses on improving connectivity, accessibility, security, cleanliness, aesthetics, and convenience for passengers while also boosting local employment opportunities and tourism.
- The project involves the installation of modern amenities, seamless inter-modal integration, and station designs inspired by local culture and heritage.

Committee of Parliament on Official Language

- The 38th meeting of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language was chaired by the Union Home Minister in New Delhi.
- This statutory body, established in 1976 under Article 344(4) of the Indian Constitution and The Official Languages Act 1963, primarily reviews the progress of Hindi as the official language of the Union and suggests measures for its development.
- The committee is composed of 30 members, with 20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha, appointed by their respective leaders.
- It monitors constitutional provisions regarding Hindi's use, recommends ways to enhance its adoption in government operations, assesses Hindi's implementation in various government departments, and addresses concerns of non-Hindi-speaking states and linguistic minorities, submitting reports to the President and Parliament.

BharatNet project

- The Indian Cabinet has approved an investment of ₹1,39,579 crore for the BharatNet project, aimed at expanding last-mile connectivity in rural India.
- To date, approximately 1.94 lakh villages have been connected under this initiative, with the remaining villages expected to be connected within the next 2.5 years.
- BharatNet is the world's largest broadband connectivity project, aiming to link over 6 lakh villages via optical fibre cables, offering a minimum of 100 Mbps speed to each gram panchayat.
- This project is pivotal to the Digital India initiative, bridging the urban-rural digital divide, fostering innovation, creating employment, and empowering rural communities through access to information and services.

Cott-Ally mobile app

- The Cott-Ally mobile app, developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, aids cotton farmers by offering MSP rates, procurement centre details, payment tracking, and farming tips.
- The government also supports the cotton sector through programs like the Cotton Development Programme and a fair MSP formula.
- The Cotton Corporation of India safeguards farmers' income, and the "Kasturi Cotton India" brand promotes Indian cotton.

ODOP Wall

- The 'ODOP Wall' is a collaborative effort between the One District One Product (ODOP) program and the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) in India.
- It aims to identify and promote products of cultural and historical significance from each district, spanning sectors like handicrafts, handlooms, and agriculture.
- This initiative showcases India's diverse craftsmanship and supports rural livelihoods while aligning with the ODOP program's goal of balanced regional development and self-reliance.
- It contributes to rural employment, inclusive growth, cultural heritage preservation, export promotion, and balanced regional development.

Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society

- The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) has been officially renamed the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society (PMML) as of August 14, 2023, to broaden its scope.
- PMML is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, located in Teen Murti Premises, New Delhi.
- It commemorates all the Prime Ministers of India and showcases their contributions to nation-building, emphasizing democratic traditions. Originally, Teen Murti House served as the official residence of

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and was dedicated to the nation in 1964, leading to the establishment of NMML in 1966.

In vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment

- Goa has become the first state in India to offer free in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, along with other services such as assisted reproductive technology (ART) and intrauterine insemination (IUI).
- This is a significant accomplishment for the state, which aims to support couples who face infertility issues and help them achieve their dream of parenthood. The state government has allocated a budget of Rs. 10 crore for this scheme, which will benefit around 500 couples every year.
- The scheme will cover the cost of consultation, medication, tests, and procedures for eligible couples who seek fertility treatment at empanelled hospitals and clinics. The scheme will also provide counselling and follow-up care for the couples and their children.

Tele-Law 2.0

- The Union Minister of Law and Justice launched Tele-Law 2.0, an upgraded version of the Tele-Law program, to offer free legal aid through video conferencing to rural and marginalized communities.
- The program reached a milestone of 5 million legal consultations, emphasizing its commitment to justice for all. It integrated with Nyaya Bandhu pro bono legal services, facilitating a direct link between individuals seeking legal help and volunteer lawyers.
- Tele-Law employs technology for remote access to legal advice, establishes Legal Aid Clinics with video conferencing facilities, encourages pro bono services, and promotes legal awareness.
- This initiative is backed by the government's Department of Justice and Ministry of Law & Justice, ensuring accessible legal services nationwide.

Zonal Council

- The 26th meeting of the Western Zonal Council was chaired by the Union Home Minister in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. This council comprises Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.
- Zonal Councils in India are essential bodies for fostering cooperation among states and union territories within specific geographic zones. They consist of the Union Home Minister as Chairman, Chief Ministers as Vice-Chairmen, and Chief Secretaries as Secretaries, along with representation from the Central Government, MPs, and MLAs of the respective zone.
- These councils serve several critical functions, including promoting cooperation, facilitating discussions and resolutions, resolving disputes peacefully, contributing to policy formulation, shaping regional development plans, addressing border disputes and transportation issues, and discussing matters of mutual interest.
- Zonal Councils are significant in promoting cooperative federalism, ensuring regional integration by tailoring policies to specific regional needs, resolving interstate disputes through dialogue, and coordinating policies to address challenges effectively while maintaining stability in inter-state relations.

Nabhmitra

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Space Applications Centre have developed 'Nabhmitra,' a satellite-based communication system for fishermen.
- It offers two-way messaging between fishing boats and onshore authorities, conveying localized weather and cyclone warnings in the local language.
- In distress or emergencies, fishermen can send alerts, and the device provides precise location information to control centres while ensuring a response to the crew.
- 'Nabhmitra' provides maritime information, enhancing safety, communication, and efficiency for fishermen at sea.

Sanchar Saathi

- The Union Minister for Telecommunications in India has introduced reforms to address cybercrimes and financial fraud, focusing on strengthening the citizen-centric portal called Sanchar Saathi.
- This portal allows citizens to verify, block stolen/lost phones, report fraudulent connections, and authenticate mobile devices.
- It has already made significant achievements, such as analyzing a large number of mobile connections and taking action against suspicious activities.
- It aims to bolster cybersecurity, curb fraud, and enhance accountability in India's telecommunications sector.

INTERNATIONAL

India- Malawi

- A meeting took place between a high-level parliamentary delegation from Malawi and the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on July 31, 2023.
- India and Malawi maintain strong diplomatic ties, grounded in shared democratic values and a history of friendly relations, fostering economic cooperation and development partnerships.
- Malawi, known as the "Warm Heart of Africa," boasts diverse landscapes, including Lake Malawi, a major tourist attraction, while facing challenges in food security and poverty.



BRICS Startup Forum

- India is set to launch a BRICS Startup Forum in 2023, as announced during the 7th BRICS Industry Ministers' meeting.
- The forum aims to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and best practices among investors, incubators, and emerging entrepreneurs within the BRICS nations. The meeting, chaired by South Africa, highlighted India's transformation and the success of its Startup India initiative, which has led to nearly 100,000 startups in the country.
- The BRICS ministers emphasized the importance of digitalization, industrialization, innovation, and investment, as well as the role of MSMEs and inclusive growth in global industrial and supply chains.

Global Initiative on Digital Health

- India, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health as part of the G-20 summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- It utilizes a 'network of networks' approach and includes a global digital health platform comprising an investment tracker, an ask tracker, and a library of digital health platforms.
- This initiative is crucial for advancing universal health convergence, data interoperability, and citizens' data ownership. It seeks to establish a Climate and Health Initiative in partnership with the Asian Development Bank and launch a mobility portal for patients and healthcare workers.

Sponge city

- China's "sponge city" initiative to combat urban flooding and enhance water management, is facing scrutiny as the country grapples with devastating floods.

- A sponge city is a concept of urban planning that aims to enhance the natural ability of a city to absorb, store and reuse water, especially rainwater.
- Sponge cities are designed to reduce the impact of floods, droughts and water pollution by using green infrastructure, such as permeable pavements, rain gardens, wetlands and green roofs.

Kampala Ministerial Declaration

- The Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change (KDMECC) has expanded its support to 48 African countries.
- This initiative aims to address climate-induced migration in Africa, where vulnerability to climate change impacts is high, leading to increased extreme weather events and migration patterns.
- This landmark declaration emerged from a conference in Kampala, Uganda, hosted by the President of Uganda and attended by high-level representatives from various African nations, UN agencies, and development partners.

Gandhinagar Declaration

- The Gandhinagar Declaration, adopted by the WHO South-East Asia Region, aims to accelerate efforts to end tuberculosis (TB) by 2030.
- It calls for the establishment of a high-level multisectoral commission to ensure collaboration among stakeholders and monitor progress in ending TB and other priority diseases.
- The South-East Asia Region, with 26% of the world's population, bears a 43% burden of TB incidence globally, with nearly 4.3 million TB cases and 700,000 deaths estimated in 2020.
- India alone accounts for 28% of all TB cases globally, with 3 million new cases and 494,000 deaths reported in 2021. The region includes six of the world's high TB burden countries.

White Shipping

- The Chief of the Naval Staff and Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard signed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the exchange of White Shipping Information on 23 August 2023.
- White shipping information is the exchange of advance details about non-military merchant vessels, vital for maritime security.
- It helps India by enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) to safeguard its coastal and offshore security. This proactive approach prevents potential threats, as seen in the 26/11 Mumbai attack.
- India has signed white shipping agreements with countries like the United States and Singapore, expanding its regional MDA network. Such agreements enable the sharing of vessel identity, destinations, and itineraries, promoting overall maritime safety and security.

15th BRICS Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for expanding the BRICS grouping during the recent 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- BRICS, originally BRIC, was formed in 2006 with Brazil, Russia, India, and China, aimed at highlighting their emerging economic prowess. South Africa joined in 2010, shifting the focus towards a more equitable and multi-polar world order.
- Despite economic disparities among members, BRICS collectively represent 41% of the world's population and 60% of the G7 countries' GDP.
- The summit discussed political and socioeconomic cooperation, with South Africa emphasizing the theme of 'BRICS and Africa' and priorities like climate change, education, African trade, post-pandemic recovery, and gender inclusion in peace processes.

ECONOMICS

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)

- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) was launched in 2015 for providing urban homes to the economically disadvantaged.
- Currently, 75.51 lakh residences have been completed, with 71.39 lakh occupied. Uttar Pradesh leads in the list of completed houses, followed by Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.
- The scheme, initially set for completion by 2022, has been extended to December 2024 without altering its funding or implementation methods.

UDGAM Portal

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced a centralized web portal called UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access inforMation) to simplify the process for the public in locating their unclaimed deposits across multiple banks from a single platform.
- The portal is designed to help users identify their unclaimed deposits or accounts and provides the option to claim the deposit amount or reactivate dormant accounts within their respective banks.
- The development of the portal is a collaborative effort involving Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt. Ltd. (ReBIT), Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), and participating banks.
- Initially, users can access unclaimed deposit details from seven banks on the portal, with the search feature expanding to cover more banks in phases by October 15, 2023.

PM-YASASVI

- The PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI) is an umbrella scheme aimed at providing scholarships to OBC, EBC, and DNT/SNT students.
- It comprises five sub-schemes, including pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, top-class school and college education support, and the construction of hostels for OBC boys and girls.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment oversees this initiative. Scholarships range from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1,25,000, and eligibility criteria require parents/guardians' annual income not to exceed Rs. 2.5 lakhs.
- It benefits students in Class IX and Class XI in identified schools nationwide. Selection is based on the YASASVI ENTRANCE TEST, conducted by the National Testing Agency.

Geographical Indication (GI) tags

- India has recently granted Geographical Indication (GI) tags to seven products, including four from Rajasthan, to protect their unique identity and heritage. GI tags recognize products with specific geographical origins and distinctive qualities.
- The products awarded GI tags include 'Jalesar Dhatu Shilp' (a metal craft), 'Goa Mankurad Mango,' 'Goan Bebinca,' 'Udaipur Koftgari Metal Craft,' 'Bikaner Kashidakari Craft,' 'Jodhpur Bandhej Craft,' and 'Bikaner Usta Kala Craft.'
- These tags not only safeguard the authenticity of these products but also promote local culture, provide economic opportunities, and preserve traditional knowledge and skills.
- India has been proactive in registering and protecting its GI products, contributing to their socio-economic development and global recognition.

Export duty on Parboiled Rice

- The Indian government has imposed a 20% export duty on parboiled rice to address concerns related to rice exports and domestic supply and demand dynamics.

- The duty is intended to restrict the outflow of rice from the country and potentially stabilize domestic rice prices.
- The 20% export duty on parboiled rice is set to be in effect until October 15, allowing the government to assess the rice production situation for the kharif season.
- The imposition of the export duty is expected to impact rice prices, causing Indian parboiled rice to become more expensive due to the added duty.

Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY)

- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) uncovered irregularities in the registration and validation of beneficiaries under the PMJAY scheme.
- PMJAY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched in 2018 to achieve Universal Health Coverage. It provides health insurance coverage of up to ₹5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 10.74 crores of economically disadvantaged families, benefiting around 50 crore beneficiaries.
- Eligibility is determined based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) criteria, and there are no restrictions on family size, age, or gender.
- The National Health Authority (NHA) oversees the program's implementation, formulates operational guidelines, enforces quality and data standards, and works towards strategic purchasing of healthcare services, among other responsibilities.

State of Elementary Education in Rural India report

- The State of Elementary Education in Rural India report, released by the Union Education Minister, is based on a survey conducted by the Development Intelligence Unit (DIU).
- It highlights that only 3% of rural students have access to smartphones, with the majority using them for gaming and entertainment. 36.8% of girls dropped out of school due to family financial needs, and 71.8% of boys dropped out due to a lack of interest in studies.
- The survey also indicates that 84% of parents regularly attend parent-teacher meetings, with reasons for non-attendance being short notice and unwillingness.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained the policy repo rate at 6.5%, citing concerns about rising inflation primarily due to increasing vegetable prices and factors like El Niño and global food prices.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a government-formed body within the RBI responsible for shaping the nation's monetary policy using tools like repo rate and reverse repo rate.
- Comprising six members, including three RBI officials and three government-nominated external members, the committee meets at least four times a year.

Incremental CRR

- The RBI Governor has introduced a temporary measure involving the Incremental Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), requiring Indian banks to maintain an additional 10% CRR on the increase in deposits between May 19 and July 28, effective from August 12.
- This step aims to manage the liquidity surplus resulting from the return of high-denomination notes, ensuring financial system stability. The measure is temporary, subject to review on September 8, and designed to be short-term, with the impounded funds set to return ahead of the festival season.
- The Incremental CRR is a monetary policy tool used for specific liquidity issues, applied over a defined period, and targets excess liquidity through graduated requirements, not intended as a long-term policy change.

Floating-rate loans

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is introducing a transparent framework to reset interest rates on floating-rate loans, addressing concerns about fairness and transparency for borrowers.
- This framework aims to ensure clear communication from lenders about rate adjustments, including advance notice to borrowers.
- Borrowers will have the option to switch between floating and fixed-rate loans and foreclose loans with full disclosure of associated charges.
- Lenders must follow objective and transparent mechanisms based on reference benchmarks for rate adjustments, reducing potential arbitrary changes.
- This framework will apply to all regulated entities and will be guided by detailed RBI guidelines, promoting consistency and fairness across the industry.

PUSHp portal

- The National Power Committee (NPC) in India is addressing low participation in the PUSHp portal, a platform for power transactions between states with surplus power and those with shortages.
- The NPC encourages states to suggest incentives for both buyers and sellers on the portal, with regional power committees (RPCs) tasked to propose attractive mechanisms, especially for units under reserve shutdown.
- The Portal for Utilization of Surplus Power (PUSHp) allows Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) to indicate surplus power availability, enabling DISCOMs in need to requisition power with regulated tariffs.
- Reassigning power shifts fixed costs to new beneficiaries, reducing DISCOMs' burden and optimizing generation capacity.

PM-USHA

- The PM-Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) is a centrally sponsored scheme in India, executed through the Ministry of Education.
- Its primary goals include enhancing access, equity, and quality in higher education, particularly at the state level.
- The scheme involves activities such as supporting State Higher Education Plans, bridging gaps, conducting research and evaluation, capacity building, coordination, monitoring, and logistical assistance.
- It also aims to create self-reliant academic institutions with a strong focus on research and relevance to both students and the nation.

Vishwakarma Yojana

- The Vishwakarma Yojana, announced by the Indian Prime Minister on August 15, 2023, is a comprehensive scheme with an initial allocation of ₹13,000 to ₹15,000 crore.
- It aims to empower and uplift traditional artisans and craftsmen, including those from the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), by providing skill development, financial assistance, market linkages, and social security.
- The scheme covers various sectors like textiles, leather, metal, wood, and more, offering skill training through multiple modes, financial support for raw materials and tools, and access to markets through e-commerce platforms and exhibitions.
- It is expected to boost income, preserve cultural heritage, and contribute to rural economic development.

'A-HELP' Programme

- As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration, the Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying has introduced the 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) program in Gujarat.

- This initiative is under the Pashudhan Jagrati Abhiyaan, focusing on empowering women to play a key role in livestock development by providing training in disease control, artificial insemination, animal tagging, and livestock insurance.
- It exemplifies the integration of women's power in the livestock sector and collaborates with experts and resources to enhance livestock health and productivity.
- These efforts are expected to have a positive socio-economic impact on rural communities and align with the broader goals of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative.

SAMUDRA app

- The 'SAMUDRA' mobile app, launched by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), offers real-time updates and critical alerts on oceanic disasters like tsunamis, storm surges, high waves, and swell surges.
- It is particularly beneficial for the fishing community, providing advisories on Potential Fishing Zones (PFZs).
- The app includes interactive maps, charts, and animations to enhance understanding of oceanic phenomena, promoting marine safety and profitable fishing.
- INCOIS, an autonomous organization headquartered in Hyderabad, plays a vital role in providing ocean data and advisory services, contributing to sustainable ocean activities and the Blue Economy. Plans include adding eight coastal languages to the app.

Matti banana

- The Matti banana, native to Kanniyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, has been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- This unique banana variety is also known as 'Baby Banana' due to its nipple-like appearance and wind-blown fingers. It holds cultural significance in local marriages and feasts. There are six known types of Matti bananas, each with distinct characteristics.
- A hybrid called Semmati (red) combines the Matti and Red banana traits, making it suitable for baby food with low sugar content and beneficial ascorbic acid.
- GI tags in India are used to identify products with unique regional characteristics and have a 10-year validity.

UDGAM portal

- The UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access inforMation) portal, launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), aims to simplify the process of identifying and claiming unclaimed deposits or reactivating dormant accounts.
- It provides a centralized platform for individuals to locate forgotten funds across multiple banks.
- This collaborative effort involves the RBI, and participating banks, to enhance transparency and convenience. Initially, it covers seven banks, gradually expanding to include more, with the goal of offering access to information about unclaimed deposits in all banks by October 15, 2023, ultimately empowering individuals to take action on their unclaimed funds.

ULLAS App

- ULLAS is a mobile app developed by the Government of India to help adults learn to read and write. The app is available in Hindi, English, and 12 other Indian languages.
- It is designed to be accessible to learners of all levels of literacy. The lessons are broken down into small, manageable steps, and the assessments are tailored to the individual learner's needs.
- It is a free resource that can be used by anyone who wants to learn to read and write. It is a valuable resource for adults who want to learn to read and write. The app is free, accessible, and engaging.

'Mera Bill Mera Adhikar' scheme

- The Indian Union Government is launching the 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikar' scheme to reward consumers for uploading legitimate GST invoices through a mobile app.
- This initiative aims to encourage consumers to request valid invoices from sellers during B2C transactions, promoting tax compliance.
- Users can win cash prizes ranging from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore on a monthly or quarterly basis by uploading invoices with essential details like GSTIN, invoice number, purchase amount, and tax amount. The app allows up to 25 invoice uploads per user each month, with a minimum purchase requirement of Rs 200.
- The scheme, developed by GST Network (GSTN), involves over 500 monthly lucky draws and two quarterly draws, offering substantial prize money.

GREAT Scheme

- The Indian government has launched the GREAT scheme to promote innovation in the technical textiles sector, offering grant-in-aid funding of up to Rs 50 lakh for startups and individuals.
- The scheme aims to nurture innovation, collaborate with leading institutions and incubators, and align with the National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM).
- It is expected to support 100-150 startups, with 10% of the grant going to incubators, and requires a 10% minimum investment from the startup recipients.
- This initiative serves as a catalyst for innovation in specialized areas of technical textiles, empowers startups with resources and mentorship, and has the potential to contribute to economic growth by bridging the gap between research and practical application.

Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP)

- The Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) in India, inspired by the Global New Car Assessment Programme (Global NCAP), aims to enhance vehicle safety standards.
- It applies to passenger vehicles with up to eight seats and a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of 3,500 kg or less, encompassing cars, SUVs, and smaller commercial vehicles.
- Manufacturers can voluntarily participate, subjecting their vehicles to crash tests and safety evaluations, resulting in safety star ratings from one to five stars.
- This empowers consumers to make informed choices, encourages competition among manufacturers to improve safety features, elevates overall vehicle safety standards, contributes to road safety, and aligns with India's aspirations as a global automobile manufacturing hub while safeguarding citizens' lives.

Project AMBER

- Project AMBER, a collaborative initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Generation India Foundation (GIF), and Amazon Web Services India (AWS India), aims to provide cloud skills training to 1,500 learners, with a focus on women and underprivileged groups, connecting them to tech industry jobs.
- The initiative offers AWS (re/Start) program participation, covering cloud skills, career insights, hands-on training in technologies like Linux, Python, and more, and AWS Cloud Practitioner Certification support.
- Its central objective is to promote gender diversification in the tech industry while receiving government support to empower India's youth with relevant Industry 4.0 and Web 3.0 skills.
- Cloud skills encompass expertise in working with cloud computing technologies and platforms, vital for the digital era.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Neerakshi

- The 'Neerakshi' Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV), a collaboration between Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd and AEPL, is designed for mine detection, disposal, and underwater surveys.
- The AUV's capabilities range from mine detection to underwater surveys. GRSE aims to expand its ventures into autonomous sea surface vehicles, drones, and green propulsion for ships.
- The AUV prototype has an endurance of four hours and can reach depths of up to 300 meters, with plans for increased endurance.

"David's Sling" anti-missile defence system

- Finland to acquire high-altitude air defence capability advances as the US State Department approves the export of the US-Israeli David's Sling system.
- Finland opted for David's Sling with the aim of enhancing air defence capabilities against various threats including rockets, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and drones.
- This makes Finland the first export customer for the system.

Exercise BRIGHT STAR-23

- An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent participated in Exercise BRIGHT STAR-23, this marks the first-ever participation of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in the Exercise.
- It is part of a series of biannual combined and joint military exercises led by the United States and Egypt.
- The primary purpose of the Exercise is to enhance the ability of the U.S. military to support its allies in the Middle East in the event of a conflict.
- The Exercise was held at Cairo (West) Air Base, Egypt.
- Participating nations include contingents from the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Qatar, underscoring its multinational nature.

Oron Aircraft

- The Oron aircraft is a state-of-the-art Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) mission aircraft developed by Israel.
- It is based on the Gulfstream G550 executive jet platform and has been extensively modified to carry a variety of ISR sensors, including electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) cameras, radar, and electronic intelligence (ELINT) systems.
- It can fly at an altitude of up to 40,000-50,000 feet and has a flight range of 1,000 km.
- It has real-time monitoring capabilities, which enable it to transmit data and imagery to ground stations and other platforms.

AUSINDEX

- The AUSINDEX maritime exercise is a biennial event that brings together the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) for a series of joint drills and manoeuvres.
- The 5th edition of the exercise took place from August 22-25, 2023, in Sydney, Australia.
- This joint exercise encompassed a wide range of complex operations across air, surface, and subsea domains with the aim of enhancing interoperability and cooperation between the two naval forces.
- The exercises encompassed various scenarios, such as air defence, anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, mine countermeasures, search and rescue, and theatre security cooperation.

INS Khanjar

- Indian Naval Ship Khanjar arrives in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, for an operational turnaround, strengthening ties. The visit includes mutual activities, professional exchanges, and sports events, promoting Indian Navy-Sri Lanka Navy cooperation.
- INS Khanjar is a Khukri-class corvette of the Indian Navy, equipped with modern weapons and sensors, serving in the Eastern Fleet.
- Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers, Kolkata, the class replaces older Petya II-class corvettes.
- Indigenous design and assembly by Mazagon Dock Limited and Garden Reach Shipbuilders, with about 65% indigenous content, including locally assembled diesel engines.

ZAYED TALWAR

- Exercise 'Zayed Talwar' is a bilateral naval exercise aimed at enhancing interoperability and synergy between the Indian Navy and the UAE Navy.
- INS Visakhapatnam and INS Trikand conducted the exercise in partnership with the UAE Navy at Dubai's Port Rashid.
- The exercise aims to enhance interoperability and synergy between the two navies through cross-training in tactics, techniques, and procedures while building stronger professional bonds.
- Both countries highlighted common challenges such as piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, and maritime security. They also emphasized joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, further strengthening cooperation.

Astra Missile

- The indigenous LCA Tejas successfully test-fired the ASTRA beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile near Goa, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- This missile is designed to engage aerial targets across different ranges and altitudes. With a length of 3.84 m, diameter of 178 mm, and weight of 154 kg, it uses a solid-fuel rocket motor to achieve a Mach 4.5 speed.
- The missile's range varies with 20 km in tail chase mode and 110 km in head-on chase mode. Its fire-and-forget feature eliminates the need for continuous aircraft guidance.
- The Astra missile is further fortified by its Electronic Counter-Countermeasures (ECCM) System, enhancing resistance against electronic countermeasures and enemy radar systems.

Testimonial



MONOJIT CHOWDHURY
RANK 2
WBCS (EXE.) 2020

Hello Everyone !!

I am Monojit Chowdhury and have qualified WBCS 2020 with rank 2 in my first attempt.

This journey was long and tough. I wish aspirants like me who are struggling their way to be able to account all the fees. APTI Plus is helping them in their journey in a big way through their intensive guidance programmes.

Good luck !!

Yours truly
Monojit Chowdhury

Spike NLOS Missiles

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has acquired Israeli Spike Non-Line of Sight (NLOS) anti-tank guided missiles, The missiles will be integrated with Mi-17V5 helicopters, allowing long-range strikes against targets behind mountains.
- The Spike missile developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, is a versatile anti-tank and anti-personnel weapon with a tandem-charge high-explosive warhead.
- Available in man-portable, vehicle-launched, and helicopter-launched variants, it is employed by defence forces in over 38 countries, including India, Israel, Germany, and the UK.
- With a range of up to 30 kilometres, it employs an electro-optical seeker and datalink for precise target engagement, allowing for adaptable warhead options for various combat scenarios.

Ocean Shield-2023

- Russia has commenced the Ocean Shield 2023 naval drills in the Baltic Sea, involving military vessels, support ships, aircraft, and personnel.
- The Objective is to safeguard national interests, maritime communication, transportation, and coastal defence.
- The exercise aims to evaluate naval readiness and coordination for safeguarding critical areas and maritime interests, encompassing over 200 combat scenarios.



EXERCISE YUDH ABHYAS

- The 18th edition of the annual Indo-US joint training exercise "YUDH ABHYAS 22" held in Uttarakhand, aimed to exchange best practices and techniques between the Indian and US armies.
- Indian Army soldiers from the ASSAM Regiment participated in the integrated battle group operations, peacekeeping, and disaster relief efforts.
- The exercise includes a Command Post Exercise, Academic Discussions, and Field Training Exercise covering various combat skills, aiming to enhance information exchange and skills sharing between the two armies.

INS Visakhapatnam

- INS Visakhapatnam arrives in Muscat to enhance India-Oman maritime collaboration, addressing regional security challenges with joint efforts between the Indian and Royal Oman Navy.
- INS Visakhapatnam commissioned in 2021, is the lead P15B guided missile stealth destroyer showcasing India's shipbuilding prowess. Its motto 'Yasho Labhasva' signifies determination for success.
- As part of the Western Naval Command Fleet, it's technologically advanced, equipped with BrahMos missiles, and indigenous systems.

Mahendragiri

- India's latest warship "Mahendragiri" launched at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders in Mumbai on September 1.
- Mahendragiri is the seventh ship of the Project 17A Frigates, named after a mountain peak in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.
- A significant 75% of equipment and systems for Project 17A ships have been sourced from indigenous firms, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Swathi Mountains

- The Indian Army has introduced the Swathi Mountains, a lighter and more compact version of the indigenously developed Weapon Locating Radar (WLR), enhancing battlefield surveillance and reconnaissance in mountainous and high-altitude regions.
- The WLR is critical for detecting and tracking hostile artillery, mortars, and rockets, as well as friendly fire trajectories for precise artillery strikes.
- The Swathi Mountains version is specifically designed for mountainous terrains and provides trajectory estimation, launch/impact point extrapolation, and automatic height correction for improved accuracy.

SCIENCE

Voyager 2 spacecraft

- Recently, Voyager 2 has stopped receiving any instructions or send back any data to Earth.
- Voyager 2, launched in 1977 as part of NASA's Voyager program, has explored all four giant outer planets in our solar system: Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.
- It made groundbreaking discoveries, including new moons, rings, and detailed images of these distant worlds, contributing significantly to our understanding of the outer solar system.
- Despite a recent antenna misalignment causing communication issues, NASA remains optimistic about resolving the problem and extending Voyager 2's incredible journey into space.

Akira ransomware

- The Computer Emergency Response Team – India (CERT-In) warned about the Akira ransomware, a potent threat targeting Windows and Linux devices.
- Akira encrypts data, adds a ".akira" extension, deletes backups, and exploits VPN services.
- It spreads via phishing, downloads, and insecure remote connections, demanding ransom and threatening data leaks. Protection measures involve backups, updates, security protocols, encryption, user education, and regular audits.
- CERT-In is India's cybersecurity agency under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, focusing on incident response, analysis, and preventive services.

Finger Minutiae Record – Finger Image Record (FMR-FIR) modality

- To combat rising fraud related to the Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS), India's UIDAI is leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) for fingerprinting and facial recognition.
- The AI-based Finger Minutiae Record – Finger Image Record (FMR-FIR) system detects cloned fingerprints during authentication.
- FMR captures fingerprint minutiae (unique features) for efficient matching, while FIR stores fingerprint images for detailed analysis and quality assessment in biometric systems.

Juice Jacking

- Charging mobile devices in public places like cafes or malls can lead to "juice jacking," a data theft risk.
- This involves infected USB charging stations compromising connected devices, potentially loading malware or stealing data. Attackers can tamper with cables or stations, gaining access to devices during charging.
- Protection measures include using personal chargers, avoiding public stations, utilizing USB data blockers, not unlocking devices while charging, and keeping software updated to prevent such attacks. Disabling auto-connect can also enhance security.

TRINETRA

- TRINETRA is a comprehensive cybersecurity solution launched by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) to enhance the cybersecurity posture of organizations.
- It incorporates Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) capabilities, to collect, analyze, and correlate security-related data from various sources within an organization's IT infrastructure. It can identify potential security incidents or breaches in near real-time.
- It can automatically trigger predefined actions or responses to address cyber threats, including viruses, malware, ransomware, spyware, and more, minimizing manual intervention and response time.

Smishing

- The government has issued a warning about a new scam called 'Smishing'.
- Smishing is a type of phishing scam that uses text messages (SMS) to trick people into giving away their personal information or clicking on a malicious link.
- Smishing scams are often very convincing. Scammers may use the logos and branding of legitimate companies to make their messages look authentic. They may also pose as government officials or law enforcement officers to create a sense of urgency.
- The goal of these messages is to get users to click on a link in the message.
- The best way to avoid smishing scams is to be vigilant and cautious. Do not click on any links in text messages from unknown senders. These links may lead to malicious websites that can steal personal information or infect devices with malware.

Bhu-Vision

- Bhu-Vision, also known as KRISHI-RASTAA Soil Testing System, is an innovative platform recently launched in India to revolutionize soil testing and agronomy advice.
- This portable device connects to a cloud-based server via IoT technology and performs 12 key soil parameter tests in just 30 minutes, including pH, nutrients, and organic content, generating a user-friendly soil health card with customized crop management recommendations.
- Farmers can access and track their soil data through a mobile app or web portal, empowering them to make informed decisions independently.
- This technology promotes sustainable farming practices, increases crop productivity, and contributes to national agricultural growth while reducing environmental impact.

Lymphatic Filariasis

- India aims to eradicate Lymphatic Filariasis by 2027, surpassing the global target by three years. Lymphatic Filariasis, a mosquito-borne parasitic infection, causes chronic swelling, hydroceles, and testicular masses, making it a leading cause of permanent deformity worldwide.
- The disease affects 120 million people in 72 countries, predominantly in tropical regions. In India, over 31 million individuals harbour microfilaria, with the highest endemicity in states like Bihar, Kerala, and Uttar Pradesh.
- The disease pathophysiology involves mosquitoes transmitting larvae into the bloodstream, leading to adult worm proliferation, lymphatic drainage disruption, and increased susceptibility to infections.

Eris

- A new variant of the COVID-19 virus called the 5.1 variant, code-named Eris, has been identified in the UK and has also been found in patients in the United States, Europe, and Asia.
- The symptoms associated with this variant include a runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing, and a sore throat. While there is a rise in COVID-19 cases in the UK, it's unclear if the EG.5.1 variant is contributing to it.
- The nature of the variant and India's past exposure to the virus suggest no immediate concern. Variants of SARS-CoV-2 continuously evolve due to genetic mutations.

SeamlessM4T

- Meta, formerly Facebook, has introduced 'SeamlessM4T,' an advanced multilingual AI translation and transcription model supporting nearly 100 languages.
- This versatile AI model combines speech recognition, translation, and synthesis, facilitating effective communication.
- Meta's commitment to multilingual capabilities is evident through previous initiatives like the No Language Left Behind (NLLB) project and the Universal Speech Translator.
- 'SeamlessM4T' builds on the Massively Multilingual Speech project, encompassing over 1,100 languages, and offers a comprehensive translation experience.
- Meta's focus on enhancing AI-driven translation aims to foster effective communication across diverse languages and cultures.

Chandrayaan-3

- Chandrayaan-3, launched on July 14, 2023, made history with a successful soft landing near the lunar south pole on August 23, 2023.
- It established India as the first country to achieve this feat and marked the fourth nation to land on the Moon. The mission included a lander named Vikram and a rover named Pragyan, with objectives to achieve a safe landing, demonstrate rover mobility, and conduct experiments on lunar surface materials.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) collaborated with ISRO for mission support, emphasizing global cooperation in space exploration.
- The mission featured advanced technology, including altimeters, velocimeters, inertial measurement, and hazard detection systems, showcasing India's determination and innovation in lunar exploration.



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SPORTS

Durand Cup

- The 132nd Durand Cup kicked off on August 5, 2023, in Kokrajhar, Assam, with the Union Defence Minister participating in the opening ceremony. It was organized by the Armed Forces and supported by the Assam government.
- The tournament featured 24 teams competing across three locations, including foreign teams from Nepal and Bangladesh, Indian Armed Forces teams, and Bodoland FC.
- Established in 1888 by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, the Durand Cup is India's oldest football tournament, originally military-focused and now including civilian and international teams.
- Mohun Bagan won the Durand Cup 2023 title after beating arch-rivals East Bengal in the final.

World Archery Championships 2023

- Aditi Gopichand Swami made history at the 2023 World Archery Championships in Berlin, Germany, becoming the first Indian to secure an individual gold medal in the women's compound event by defeating Mexico's Andrea Becerra.
- The Indian women's compound team, comprising Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Gopichand Swami, and Parneet Kaur, clinched the gold medal, marking their first world title win.
- The World Archery Championships, organized by the World Archery Federation, encompass various archery disciplines, including target archery (outdoor and indoor), field archery, and other categories like Youth, Para, University, and 3D Archery.

FIDE World Cup

- In the FIDE World Cup final, Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa from India secured the second-place position, while Magnus Carlsen emerged victorious.
- Pragganandhaa, aged 18, was the youngest-ever World Cup finalist and had achieved the Grandmaster (GM) title at the remarkable age of 12. He had previously set a record by defeating then-world champion Magnus Carlsen in 2022 at the age of 16.
- The Chess World Cup 2023 took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from July 30 to August 24, marking the 10th edition of this prestigious tournament.

BWF World Championships 2023

- Prannoy H. S. won a bronze medal at the BWF World Championships 2023
- The 2023 BWF World Championships held from August 21 to 27, 2023.
- The Badminton tournament was held at the Royal Arena in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Women's Singles Final: An Se-young (South Korea) defeated Carolina Marin (Spain).
- Men's Singles Final: Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand) became Thailand's first men's singles world champion. He won a marathon final against Naraoka Kodai (Japan)

IBSA World Games

- The Indian women's blind cricket team achieved a historic Gold medal victory at the IBSA World Games in Birmingham, England, by defeating Australia by nine wickets.
- This marked the debut of visually challenged cricket in the International Blind Sports Federation World Games.
- The 2023 IBSA World Games saw participation from around 1,250 blind and partially sighted athletes from 70 countries and aimed to promote inclusivity in sports through the 'See Sport Differently' initiative sponsored by the RNIB.

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Plastic Overshoot Day

- On July 28, 2023, Earth reached its first Plastic Overshoot Day, surpassing global waste management capacity, leading to 68,642,999 tonnes of additional plastic waste in nature.
- Plastic Overshoot Day underscores the environmental risks of short-life plastics, especially in developing countries like India, termed 'waste sponges' due to high pollution despite low consumption.
- Short-life plastics contribute 37% to global production, with predictions of tripled pollution by 2040, despite improved waste management.
- India, among 12 nations, is accountable for 52% of mismanaged plastic waste, ranking fourth in the Mismanaged Waste Index due to 98.55% of waste mismanagement.


Typhoon Doksuri

- Typhoon Doksuri has caused significant havoc in Beijing and Fujian province, China.
- This typhoon, considered the most powerful of 2023, is followed by Typhoon Khanun, highlighting the increasing climate-related challenges in the region.
- A typhoon is a type of tropical cyclone that forms in the western Pacific Ocean and has the same strength as a hurricane or cyclone elsewhere.
- Typhoons are powerful, spinning low-pressure weather phenomena with strong winds and heavy rainfall.

Hurricane Hilary

- Hurricane Hilary is a rare and dangerous phenomenon that threatens the west coast of Mexico.
- Hurricane Hilary is expected to hit Mexico's Baja peninsula with record rainfall, strong winds, and potential landslides and flooding. The storm could also affect Southern California, which has not experienced a hurricane-force storm since 1858.

Testimonial



CHANDAN SAHA
RANK 101
WBCS (EXE.) 2020

My self Chandan Saha, I have been selected in WBCS (EXE.) through WBCS (Executive) E.C. Examination, 2020. During my preparation I enrolled myself to APTI PLUS Academy for my preparation.

Chandan Saha
WBCS (Executive)
Rank - 101
19.02.2023.

OBITUARIES

Kandlakunta Alaha Singaracharyulu

- Renowned Telugu and Sanskrit scholar, Kandlakunta Alaha Singaracharyulu, has passed away at the age of 93 in Hyderabad due to age-related ailments.
- He leaves behind a legacy of scholarly contributions in Telugu and Sanskrit literature.
- Singaracharyulu's passing marks the end of an era in the world of Telugu and Sanskrit academia.

Bindeshwar Pathak

- Bindeshwar Pathak, the founder of 'Sulabh International', a social service organization that works to eradicate manual scavenging and promote sanitation, died of a cardiac arrest at AIIMS, Delhi.
- He was 80 years old. Pathak started the Sulabh movement in 1970 and dedicated his life to improving the lives and dignity of millions of marginalized people.
- He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award, in 1991 for his contributions to society.

Bikash Sinha Passed away

- Bikash Sinha, a prominent nuclear physicist and a recipient of the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards, died in Kolkata at the age of 78.
- He served as the director of the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre. He was an expert in nuclear physics, high energy physics, Quark Gluon Plasma, and early cosmology.
- He led the Indian team to join the experiments of the European Atomic Research Organization in Geneva for the first time. He was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2001.

Manchanahalli Rangaswamy Satyanarayana Rao Passed away

- The scientific community of India mourns the loss of Manchanahalli Rangaswamy Satyanarayana Rao, a renowned scientist and Padma Shri recipient, who died in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- He was a pioneer in the field of Chromatin Biology in India and made significant contributions to the understanding of gene regulation and epigenetics.
- He served as the president of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) in Bangalore, India, from 2003 to 2013.

Heath Streak Passed away

- Heath Streak, one of the greatest cricketers in Zimbabwe's history, has died at 49 years old after suffering from cancer for a long time.
- Streak was a fast bowler and a captain who represented his country in 65 Tests and 189 One Day Internationals.
- He was also a successful coach and mentor for many young players.

Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao Passed away

- The world of mathematics and statistics has lost a towering figure with the demise of Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao, or C. R. Rao, at the age of 102.
- He was an Indian-American scholar who made groundbreaking contributions to many fields of statistics, such as estimation theory, multivariate analysis, and differential geometry.

- His work has influenced diverse disciplines, from economics and biology to psychology and engineering. Some of his most well-known concepts are the Cramer-Rao inequality and Rao-Blackwellization, which are fundamental tools for statistical inference and optimization.

APPOINTMENTS

Prof Ganesan Kannabiran

- Prof Ganesan Kannabiran, a senior professor of Information Systems at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Tiruchirappalli, has been appointed as the new director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for a term of five years.
- The NAAC is an autonomous body funded by the University Grants Commission that evaluates and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. It was established in 1994 and is headquartered in Bangalore, Karnataka.
- The NAAC follows a rigorous process of assessment based on various parameters such as curriculum, teaching-learning, research, infrastructure, student support, governance, and social responsibility.
- The NAAC awards grades to institutions from 'A++' (highest) to 'C' (lowest) based on their performance. Institutions that fail to meet the minimum standards are given an 'Unaccredited' status.

Emmerson Mnangagwa

- According to the official results announced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Emmerson Mnangagwa has secured a second term as the president of Zimbabwe.
- He won 52.6% of the votes, while his main rival Nelson Chamisa of the Citizens' Coalition for Change (CCC) got 44%.
- The election was held 6 years after the former leader Robert Mugabe was ousted in a military coup. Mnangagwa will serve another 5-year term, from 2023 to 2028, as per the constitutional limit.

Hun Manet

- The Kingdom of Cambodia has a new prime minister - Dr Hun Manet, the son of former Prime Minister Hun Sen.
- He was appointed by King Norodom Sihamoni through a royal decree that was issued on August 18.
- Dr Hun Manet's appointment comes after his father, Hun Sen, decided to step down as the prime minister following his party's overwhelming victory in the Cambodian Elections 2023. Hun Sen has been the prime minister of Cambodia since 1998.

Justice Prakash Shrivastava

- Justice Prakash Shrivastava, who served as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, has taken oath as the new chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). He succeeded Justice Sheo Kumar Singh, who was the acting chairperson.
- The NGT is a statutory body established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act. It is responsible for speedy resolution of cases pertaining to environmental protection and conservation of natural resources.
- India is among the first three countries in the world, along with Australia and New Zealand, to have a dedicated tribunal for environmental matters.

Srettha Thavisin

- The Pheu Thai Party (PTP) has claimed victory in the Thai general election, with its leader Srettha Thavisin set to become the country's 30th prime minister.

- Srettha, a former real estate mogul who headed Sansiri Plc, one of Thailand's largest property developers, defeated the incumbent Prayuth Chan-Ocha, who stepped down from politics after serving two terms.
- Srettha campaigned on a platform of economic recovery, political reform and social justice, promising to end the military's influence on Thai politics and restore democracy.

AWARDS

Lokmanya Tilak National Award

- Prime Minister Modi has been honoured with the Lokmanya Tilak National Award for his exceptional leadership, significant contributions to the nation's progress, and his role in fostering patriotism among citizens.
- The award is presented annually on August 1, the death anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
- PM Modi, the 41st recipient, donated the award money to the Namami Gange Project, aligning with his name's association with the Ganga River.
- This prestigious award has previously been given to notable figures such as former Presidents, Prime Ministers, business leaders, and scientists, including Tessy Thomas, India's "missile woman," in the previous year.

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards

- The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards, India's top science honours for young scientists under 45, were suspended for the first time since their inception in 1958.
- The decision to withhold the awards was part of an effort to "rationalize" awards given by science ministries and departments, with no official word on their fate for 2022 or reinstatement.
- These prestigious awards aim to honour the achievements of young Indian scientists and engineers, offering recognition, a cash prize, and a monthly honorarium, serving as a source of inspiration for young researchers in the country's scientific community.

69th National Film Awards

- The 69th National Film Awards for the year 2021 were announced on 24 August 2023.
- "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect," directed by R. Madhavan, won the award for the best feature film.
- Allu Arjun received the Best Male Actor award for his performance in the Telugu film "Pushpa: The Rise-Part 1."
- Alia Bhatt and Kriti Sanon shared the Best Female Actor award for their roles in "Gangubai Kathiawadi" and "Mimi," respectively.
- Nikhil Mahajan won the best director award for the Marathi film "Godavari (The Holy Water)."
- "RRR" won six categories, including best popular film providing wholesome entertainment.
- Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Gangubai Kathiawadi" won awards for best screenplay-adapted and best dialogue.
- Pankaj Tripathi was awarded Best Supporting Male Actor for "Mimi," and Pallavi Joshi won Best Supporting Female Actor for "The Kashmir Files."
- "Ek Tha Gaon," directed by Srishti Lakhera, won the best non-feature film award.

India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) 2022

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs announced the winners of the India Smart Cities Award Contest 2022, recognizing exemplary practices in the Smart Cities Mission.
- Indore, Madhya Pradesh, secured the top spot, lauded for urban initiatives across various sectors.

- Madhya Pradesh emerged as the leading state with four cities, while Tamil Nadu ranked second, and Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh jointly claimed the third position.
- Chandigarh received recognition as the best Union Territory.
- The ISAC awards celebrate Smart Cities' success stories, promoting citizen engagement, technology, innovation, and sustainable urban development, aiming to inspire other cities to replicate these practices and improve citizens' quality of life.

BOOKS AND AUTHOR

Book titled "Let's Move Forward"

- The comic book "Let's Move Forward" is a joint initiative of NCERT and UNESCO New Delhi to promote school health and wellness among adolescents.
- The book covers 11 important topics that affect the physical, mental and social well-being of young learners, such as emotions, relationships, gender, nutrition, health, substance abuse, lifestyle, reproduction, and internet safety.
- The book aims to provide accurate and relevant information to help adolescents make informed choices and cope with the challenges of growing up.

Book title 'Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Memories Never Die'

- The book 'Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Memories Never Die' was launched by Union Home Minister, Amit Shah in Rameshwaram. It is an English translation of the Tamil book 'Ninaivugalukku Maranamillai', which means 'Memories Never Die'.
- The authors of the book are Dr Nazema Maraikayar, who is the niece of Dr Kalam, and Dr. Y.S. Rajan, who is a renowned ISRO scientist and a close friend of Dr. Kalam.
- The book narrates the life journey of Dr. Kalam, who rose from a humble background in Rameshwaram to become the President of India. It also covers the history of Indian rocketry, science, technology and innovation, as well as insights into the Indian political and administrative system.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wide Web Day

- World Wide Web Day is celebrated on August 1 every year to commemorate the invention of the World Wide Web by Sir Tim Berners-Lee in 1989.
- The World Wide Web is a global system of interconnected hypertext documents and other resources, which are identified by Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) and interlinked by hypertext links.

World Breastfeeding Week

- The first week of August (August 1 to 7) is celebrated as World Breastfeeding Week every year. This week aims to raise awareness and support for breastfeeding as a vital practice for the health and well-being of mothers and children.
- The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, has chosen the theme for 2023 as "Enabling breastfeeding: making a difference for working parents."

Hiroshima Day

- Hiroshima Day is a global commemoration of the devastating impact of nuclear weapons on human lives and the environment.
- On August 6, 1945, the US dropped an atomic bomb called "The Little Boy" on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, killing and injuring hundreds of thousands of civilians.
- The bomb destroyed 39 per cent of the city and caused long-term health and environmental consequences. Hiroshima Day 2023 aims to raise awareness of the horrors of nuclear warfare and to promote a peaceful and non-violent world.

National Handloom Day

- National Handloom Day is celebrated on August 7 every year, as a tribute to the Swadeshi movement that was launched on this day in 1905 in Calcutta Town Hall.
- The Swadeshi movement aimed to revive domestic production and promote handloom industries, as well as the spirit of self-reliance and nationalism.
- The first National Handloom Day was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, and since then, various events and activities have been organized by the Government and other stakeholders to raise awareness and honour the handloom weavers and their contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

Nagasaki Day

- Nagasaki Day is a day of remembrance and reflection for the victims and survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, by the United States on August 9, 1945. The bombing, which occurred during the final stages of World War II, killed an estimated 74,000 people and injured many more.
- The nuclear weapon used in the attack was nicknamed "Fat Man" and had a yield of about 21 kilotons. Nagasaki Day is marked by various events and ceremonies around the world, such as peace rallies, prayers, vigils, and exhibitions.

International Day of World's Indigenous People

- On August 9, we celebrate the International Day of World's Indigenous People, a day to honour the diverse cultures, languages, and traditions of indigenous peoples around the world.
- The theme for this year is 'Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination', highlighting the role of young indigenous leaders in advancing their rights and aspirations.
- The International Day of the World's Indigenous People was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1994, following the first meeting of the UN working group on indigenous people in Geneva in 1982.
- This day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities faced by indigenous peoples and to promote their full and effective participation in all spheres of life.

World Elephant Day

- World Elephant Day is a global celebration of elephants that takes place every year on August 12. The idea for this event was conceived in 2011 by Canadian filmmakers Patrica Sims and Michael Clark of Canazwest Pictures and Sivaporn Dardarananda, Secretary General of Elephant Reintroduction Foundation in Thailand.
- The event was officially launched in 2012 to raise awareness and support for elephant conservation around the world.

International Youth Day

- International Youth Day is a global celebration that takes place every year on August 12. It aims to raise awareness and address the challenges that young people face in different parts of the world.

- The theme of International Youth Day 2023 is 'Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World'. It highlights the importance of equipping young people with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to the environmental and social well-being of their communities.
- The International Youth Day was established by the United Nations in 1999, following a recommendation from the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth.

World Organ Donation Day

- World Organ Donation Day is an annual event that aims to spread awareness about the benefits of organ donation and motivate people to pledge their organs after death.
- The theme of World Organ Donation Day 2023 is "Step up to volunteer; need more organ donors to fill the lacunae". This theme highlights the urgent need for more organ donors to meet the demand for organ transplantation.
- World Organ Donation Day was initiated in 2005 by the Indian Society of Organ Transplantation.

World Photography Day

- World Photography Day is an annual event that celebrates the art and science of capturing images. It is observed on August 19, the date when the French government announced the invention of the daguerreotype, the first practical photographic process, in 1839.
- World Photography Day 2023 will mark the 13th edition of this global celebration, which aims to inspire people to share their stories and perspectives through photography. On this day, photographers of all levels and genres can showcase their work in online galleries, social media platforms, exhibitions, and competitions.

Sadbhavana Diwas

- Sadbhavana Diwas is a commemorative day that honours the legacy of former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, who was born on August 20, 1944.
- The word "sadbhavana" means goodwill or harmony in Hindi. Sadbhavana Diwas is observed to promote national integration, communal harmony, and peace among the people of India.
- Rajiv Gandhi was the youngest Prime Minister of India, who took office after the assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi, in 1984. He is credited with initiating several reforms in the fields of education, telecommunications, science and technology, and rural development.

International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition

- International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition is a global observance that takes place on 23 August each year.
- It was initiated by UNESCO in 1998 to honour the victims of the transatlantic slave trade and to celebrate the resistance and courage of those who fought for freedom.
- The date marks the anniversary of the 1791 revolt in Santo Domingo, Haiti, which was a turning point in the abolition movement. UNESCO aims to raise awareness and educate people about the history and consequences of slavery and its legacy.

Women's Equality Day

- Women's Equality Day is a national holiday in the United States that celebrates the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. It is observed on August 26 every year since 1973, when Congress passed a resolution to designate the day.
- The theme for Women's Equality Day in 2023 is #EmbraceEquity, which calls for action to achieve gender equality in all spheres of life.

National Sports Day

- National Sports Day or Rashtriya Khel Divas is an annual event in India that pays tribute to the legendary hockey player Dhyan Chand, who was born on 29 August 1905. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest hockey players of all time and won three Olympic gold medals for India.
- National Sports Day was first celebrated in 2012 to promote sports and physical fitness among the citizens. On this day, various sports events, awards ceremonies and awareness campaigns are organized across the country.

Small Industry Day

- Small Industry Day is a yearly celebration that recognizes the contribution of small businesses to the economic and social development of India. It was observed on 30 August 2017, when the Indian Parliament passed a resolution to declare the day.
- Small Industry Day aims to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and employment generation among the youth, especially women. It also highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by small industries in the competitive market.

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- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Bill 2023 seeks to establish a new body, the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF), to promote and fund research and innovation in science, technology, engineering and social sciences.
- The Ethiopian government has declared a state of emergency in response to escalating clashes between the military and local Fano militiamen in the Amhara region.
- ISRO has transferred the IMS-1 satellite bus technology to Bengaluru-based Alpha Design Technologies, bringing in a new era of increased private industry participation in India's space sector.
- The digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office in Pune was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation on August 6.
- The Zoological Survey of India's publication "75 Endemic Birds of India" sheds light on the significance of India's endemic bird species, accounting for 5% of the country's avian diversity.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) issued an alert over a batch of India-made common cold syrup sold in Iraq after it found the product "contaminated" and "unsafe" for consumption.
- Union Home Minister chaired the 38th meeting of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language in New Delhi.
- The talks on the Ukraine crisis concluded in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah.
- The Cabinet approved a fund of ₹1,39,579 crore for the BharatNet project, reflecting a substantial investment to expand last-mile connectivity in rural India.
- The United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) delegation visited India to launch the India-UK healthcare alliance.
- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) uncovered irregularities in the registration and validation of beneficiaries under the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY) scheme.
- India to initiate the BRICS Startup Forum in 2023: Announced in the 7th BRICS Industry Ministers' meeting.
- The State of Elementary Education in Rural India report was released by the Union Education Minister.
- The 5th meeting of the India-Vietnam Joint Trade Sub-Commission (JTSC) was held in New Delhi.
- India's Defence Ministry will install an indigenously developed operating system called Maya OS, replacing Microsoft's Windows, on all its computers by the end of this year.
- The Indian government has launched a contest to encourage developers to create a native web browser that can compete globally. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said that it will award cash prizes totalling ₹3.4 crores to the best browser ideas.
- The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) summit, held in Brazil, aimed to prevent the rainforest from reaching a "point of no return" and outlined a joint strategy to address deforestation.
- World Lion Day is observed on August 10 each year.
- The Cott-Ally mobile app has been developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to increase awareness about the minimum support price (MSP) rates.
- China's "sponge city" initiative and its efforts to address the challenges posed by urban flooding and water management.
- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recently unanimously opted to maintain the policy repo rate at 6.5% while raising its forecast for retail inflation in the current fiscal year by 30 basis points to 5.4%.
- The State Legislative Assembly of Kerala unanimously passed a resolution urging the Central government to officially change the name of the state from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam.'
- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Academy recently joined the Interpol Global Academy Network at a virtual event.

- The National Power Committee (NPC) in India has taken steps to address the lack of participation in the PUSHp portal, which is a mechanism for facilitating power transactions between states with surplus power and those facing power shortages.
- The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) has officially been renamed the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society recently.
- Union Health & Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya declared that India is committed to eradicating Lymphatic Filariasis by 2027.
- 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' or 'Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas' is observed on August 14 to remember all those who lost their lives due to partition.
- A project of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for gender sensitivity in Rajasthan has received support from the experts working for the elimination of customs promoting patriarchy.
- Punjab State Government has issued a warning to all pesticide sellers to stop selling and storing the herbicide glyphosate, which is known to cause cancer.
- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill 2023 aims to modernize and simplify the criminal law of India. It will replace the outdated and colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), which was enacted in 1860 and has been amended several times since then.
- On August 15, 2023, the Prime Minister of India announced the Vishwakarma Yojana, which aims to promote skill development and empowerment among the youth who are engaged in traditional artisan works such as weaving, goldsmithing, blacksmithing, laundry, barbering and others.
- The Union Cabinet approved a scheme to add 10,000 e-buses to city bus services across the country and to shore up urban infrastructure under green mobility initiatives with a focus on cities having no organised bus services.
- The Supreme Court has released a new handbook to guide the judiciary and the legal community on how to avoid using gender-unjust terms that are prevalent in Indian courts.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Sports between the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports of the Republic of India and the Department of Health and Aged Care of the Government of Australia.
- The Cabinet approved the signing of a MoU between India and Suriname in the field of the regulation of medicines.
- India, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health as part of the G-20 summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- First-ever WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- The Union Cabinet led by Prime Minister, has given its approval for the expansion of the Digital India program. This expansion is backed by a total budget of ₹14,903 crore.
- The 'ODOP Wall' was inaugurated as a result of the collaboration between One District One Product (ODOP) and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) to identify and promote products that have a cultural and historical significance for their place of origin.
- The Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST) is making groundbreaking advancements in aviation with the development of "Pibot," a humanoid robot designed to fly aircraft using its own dexterity and advanced AI capabilities.
- The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) has officially been renamed the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society.
- According to a recent NITI Aayog report on multidimensional poverty, the percentage of the poor has decreased from 25% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2019-21, with over 135 million people pulled out of poverty during this period.
- The recently released United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report for 2023 shows that the incidence of the multidimensional poverty index has decreased from 27.5% in 2015-16 to 16.2% in 2019-21.
- The launch of a mobile application called "FloodWatch" by the Chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC), Shri Kushvinder Vohra.

- As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative, the Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying has introduced the 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) along with an Infertility Camp program in Gujarat.
- The 'SAMUDRA' mobile app, launched by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), is designed to provide a range of ocean-related information and services.
- The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) launched the 'Graphene-Aurora Program' at a ceremony held in Maker Village Kochi, Kerala. This initiative aims to harness the potential of graphene, a remarkable material with diverse applications, by fostering innovation, research, and commercialization.
- Goa has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Indian state to offer free in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, in addition to assisted reproductive technology (ART) and intrauterine insemination (IUI).
- WHO South-East Asia Region, adopts Gandhinagar Declaration to further enhance efforts to end TB.
- Matti banana variety, native to Kanniyakumari district, was recently granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- Chennai-based space-tech startup Agnikul Cosmos has made strides in India's private space sector with the development of its rocket, Agnibaan.
- India marked a significant technological leap with the inauguration of its maiden 3D-printed post office in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout.
- The UDGM (Unclaimed Deposits - Gateway to Access inforMation) portal launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aims to provide the public with a centralized platform to search for unclaimed deposits across multiple banks.
- Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha announced plans to auction Sapphire mines in Jammu and Kashmir.
- NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Commission), the state-owned hydropower giant, to construct a railway siding for its 2,880 MW Dibang multipurpose project in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Chief of the Naval Staff and Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard signed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the exchange of White Shipping Information on 23 August 2023.
- Indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas successfully test-fired an indigenously developed ASTRA beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile off the coast of Goa.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for the expansion of the five-nation grouping while addressing the opening plenary session of the 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has reconstituted the Advisory Board on Banking and Financial Frauds (ABBFF) to examine bank frauds before involving investigative agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- The recent discovery of two ancient sculptures in Basrur, near Kundapura, Udupi district, has provided significant evidence for the existence of the ancient Mylara cult in the coastal region.
- The recent discovery of a "demon particle" by researchers at the University of Illinois has sparked excitement in the realm of materials science.
- Meta, formerly known as Facebook, has unveiled an advanced multilingual multimodal AI translation and transcription model named 'SeamlessM4T.'
- Union Government to launch 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikar' scheme, which will reward consumers for demanding and uploading legitimate GST invoices on a mobile app.
- Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa from India secured the second-place position, and Magnus Carlsen achieved victory in the FIDE World Cup final.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Greek capital, Athens, for a one-day visit, marking the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Greece in 40 years.
- The Indian government has announced the list of athletes who will represent the country in the upcoming Asian Games, which will be held in China from September 10 to 25.

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) recently organized a collaborative session involving stakeholders, including insurance companies, contractors, and industry experts, to accelerate the adoption of Insurance Surety Bonds for NHAI contracts.
- India and Iran have agreed not to seek commercial foreign arbitration for disputes between users and operators at Chabahar Port, paving the way for the two sides to sign a long-term deal for the development of the strategic port.
- The Union Minister of Law and Justice launched the Tele-Law 2.0 initiative, a revamped version of the Tele-Law programme that aims to provide free legal aid to the rural and marginalised sections of society through video conferencing.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has announced the winners of the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) 2022, which recognises and rewards the best practices and innovations in the Smart Cities Mission.
- Illegal coal mining is a serious threat to the environment and the economy of India. To combat this menace, the government has launched the Khanan Prahari App, which allows citizens to report any suspicious activities related to coal mining in their vicinity.
- Project AMBER is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Generation India Foundation (GIF) and Amazon Web Services India Private Limited (AWS India) that aims to provide cloud skills training to 1,500 learners.
- Prannoy H. S. won a bronze medal at the BWF World Championships 2023.
- The Indian women's blind cricket team has made history by winning the Gold medal at the IBSA World Games, held in Birmingham, England.
- The government imposed a 20% export duty on parboiled rice with immediate effect. This decision was made to curb the surge in rice shipments that occurred after July 20, when the government banned exports of non-basmati white rice. This duty is intended to restrict the outflow of rice from the country and potentially stabilize domestic rice prices.
- The Chinese navy is reportedly testing the planet's most powerful coil gun, a type of electromagnetic weapon capable of launching projectiles with extremely high speed in the blink of an eye.
- India to open a climate change and health hub in Delhi in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- The recent launch of the NASA SpaceX Crew-7 mission involved astronauts from the US, Denmark, Japan, and Russia.
- The Indian government has issued a warning about a new scam known as 'Smishing,' a combination of SMS and phishing. It employs deceptive wording to fool users into disclosing sensitive information.
- India and Bangladesh held the fifth Annual Defence Dialogue on 28 August 2023 in Dhaka.
- The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has been provisionally suspended by the United World Wrestling (UWW) for not holding its elections on time. The WFI was supposed to elect its office-bearers by April 2023, but it did not do so.
- The Union Home Minister chaired the 26th meeting of the Western Zonal Council in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The Western Zonal Council includes the states of Gujarat, Goa, and Maharashtra, as well as the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), in collaboration with the Space Applications Centre (Ahmedabad), has developed a revolutionary device named 'Nabhmitra' to enhance the safety of fishermen at sea.
- Chandrayaan-3 mission's rover, Pragyan, has made significant discoveries on the moon's surface near its south pole, according to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change (KDMECC) has garnered support from 48 African countries, highlighting the continent's collective commitment to tackling the interplay of human mobility and climate change.
- The Government of India and the Government of New Zealand have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost cooperation in civil aviation. This will cover the scheduling of new routes, codeshare services, traffic rights and capacity entitlement.

- General Tomas Miguel Mine Ribeiro Paiva, Commander of the Brazilian Army, is on a six-day visit to India from 28th August to 2nd September 2023.
- The union government has granted in-principal approval to import 470 aircraft to Air India Limited and 500 aircraft to Interglobe Aviation Limited (Indigo).
- On the occasion of the third anniversary of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, the Minister of Education and Skill Development, inaugurated the mobile app for ULLAS: Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off metro trains marking the inauguration of completed sections of Pune Metro.
- England pacer Stuart Broad has announced his retirement from international cricket.
- The Clean Ganga Mission has sanctioned seven new projects to improve the water quality and ecological health of the river. The total cost of these projects is Rs. 692 crores.
- The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu inaugurated 'Unmesha' - International Literature Festival and 'Utkarsh' - Festival of Folk and Tribal Performing Arts at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- The Union Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Union External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar jointly launched Study in India Portal in New Delhi.
- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) takes a significant stride towards improving the highway user experience with the launch of 'Rajmargyatra,' a citizen-centric unified mobile application.
- Under the waste-to-wealth concept given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Coimbatore Smart City Mission has taken the initiative of cleaning the waste accumulated over decades and earning from it.
- The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu inaugurated a conference on 'Aspiring for Supermind in the City of Evolving Consciousness' at Auroville.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for the redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the country through video conferencing.
- The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the 'Festival of Libraries' in New Delhi. This Festival is being organized by the Ministry of Culture to promote the development and digitization of Libraries and cultivate the culture of reading.
- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued its recommendations on 'Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider Authorization under Unified License (UL)'.
- Parliament passed the Govt of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2023, empowering the Centre to make rules for Delhi.
- The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved a bus scheme "PM-eBus Sewa" for augmenting city bus operation by 10,000 e-buses on the PPP model.
- A first-of-its-kind global summit on Traditional Medicine, organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Ayush held on August 17-18, 2023, at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- G20 Film Festival to begin in New Delhi with a screening of Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali.
- Central Water Commission Launches Mobile App 'Floodwatch' To Provide Real-Time Flood Forecasts to Public Using Interactive Maps.
- Cabinet approves Rs 13,000 crore for PM Vishwakarma scheme to support traditional artisans and craftspeople.
- Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate Mukhyamantri Seekho-Kamao yojna to facilitate on-the-job training along the lines of learning and earning along with skill Development.
- Road Transport and Highways Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari launched the world's first 100% Ethanol-fueled car in New Delhi.
- The Union Government has proposed to start a Tribal University in the Parvatipuram Manyam district of the northern region of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah chaired the 26th meeting of the Western Zonal Council at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was conferred with the prestigious Grand Cross of the Order of Honour by Greek President Katerina N Sakellaropoulou, a special honour reflecting the strength of the India-Greece partnership.

- The 15th BRICS summit was held from the 22nd to the 24th of August 2023 at the Sandton Convention Centre in South Africa.
- The government will provide a grant-in-aid of up to Rs 50 lakh for startups and individuals to promote innovation in the niche technical textiles segment.
- The Indian government has extended the deadline for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the automobile and auto component industry by another year, until 2027-28.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia Region announced that Bhutan and Timor-Leste have successfully eliminated rubella, a highly contagious viral infection that can cause severe illness and irreversible birth defects in newborns when contracted during pregnancy.
- India provides financial assistance of Rs 45 crore to support Sri Lanka's digital identity project.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), which works under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has facilitated the export of the first trial shipment of fresh pomegranate to the USA through an air route.
- The Saudi Environment Ministry has launched a program to combat desertification using artificial intelligence (AI).
- The government of Odisha announced interest-free ₹1 lakh crop loans for farmers to enhance Agricultural Growth.
- Shri Amit Shah will launch the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office in Pune.
- Nagaland has been officially declared as a Lumpy Skin Disease Positive State.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited Adichanallur, an ancient and historical Iron-age burial site located in Thoothukudi District Tamil Nadu, set along the banks of the Tamirabarani (Porunai) river and also laid the foundation stone for the 'Iconic Site Museum' at the Adichanallur site.
- Union Defense Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates the 132nd Durand Cup in Kokrajhar, Assam.
- Indian telecommunications major, Reliance Jio has completed the work related to connecting Maldives with a High-Speed Optic Fibre cable.
- The Telangana government has announced a farm loan waiver of up to 99 thousand 999 rupees. It will be cleared within the next 45 days.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after holding a meeting with Durga Puja committees announced an increase of ₹70,000 grant to puja committees in the state.
- The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government introduced the 'Manav Sampada Portal' with the objective of instilling transparency and accountability in the functioning of officers and employees across all 74 departments in the state.
- Kerala got its first Artificial Intelligence (AI) school at Santhigiri Vidyabhavan in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government has increased the financial assistance provided to women under the Ladli Behna scheme from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,250 per month.
- The government of India & Asian Development Bank signed a 200-million-dollar loan to enhance urban services in Rajasthan.
- As per the Finance Ministry, over 65% growth has been seen in 2022 from 2021 in the frauds reported for ATMs and others.
- Airtel Payments Bank Launched India's 1st Eco-Friendly Debit Card.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for the 3rd time in a row.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a centralised web portal to help citizens search for their unclaimed deposits, known as UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits to Gateway to access information).
- Tata Capital, a prominent financial services entity under the Tata Group, has announced the selection of Shubman Gill, as its brand ambassador.
- Haryana's Nuh secures 2nd position in Niti Aayog's Delta ranking under the Aspirational Districts Programme.
- The government of Goa has launched its flagship scheme "Gramin Mitra" to provide doorstep delivery of government services across the state and promote digital empowerment in rural areas.

- Five youths from India have been named among 17 teen environmental activists from across the globe to receive the 2023 International Young Eco-Hero Award who have taken initiatives to tackle the world's most pressing environmental challenges.
- Indian-American economist Raj Chetty has been awarded Harvard University's coveted George Ledlie Prize 2023 for wielding big data to break myths about who achieves the American Dream.
- Amul has been ranked as the world's strongest dairy brand by the Brand Finance Food and Drink Report 2023.
- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has launched the state government's Annapurna Food Packet Scheme which seeks to distribute food packets to more than 10.4 million families for free every month.
- In the FISU World University Games 2023 in Chengdu, India have won 26 medals including 11 gold, five silver, and 10 bronze.
- Russia's Moon mission failed its spacecraft, Luna-25 spun out of control and crashed into the moon.
- Aditi Swami created history by becoming the first-ever Indian to clinch the individual World Title at the World Archery Championships final in Berlin.
- The Indian women's team emerged victorious in the 100th Anniversary Spanish Hockey Federation International Tournament held in Terrassa.
- The state of Maharashtra will approve setting up Vertical University Campus (VUC) in Mumbai and Thane due to less space available in the city thus becoming the first state in the country to approve such campuses.
- Indian shooters and archers bagged six medals including four golds at the World University Games in Chengdu, China.
- The Indian hockey team on 12 August defeated Malaysia 4-3 to win for the fourth time at the Asian Champions Trophy 2023 final, at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai.
- President Smt Droupadi Murmu has approved 76 Gallantry awards to the Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel on Independence Day 2023.
- The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar has entered the World Book of Records (London) as Asia's largest such park.
- A recent archaeological salvage excavation conducted by the State Archaeology Department at Nagaparamba, Kuttippuram village, near Tirunavaya, Kerala, has led to the discovery of a large number of megalithic hat stones.
- The Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) was launched by the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways to enhance road safety in India.
- Sanchar Saathi is a citizen-centric portal introduced in India to combat cybercrimes and financial fraud related to mobile connections. The portal provides various services to citizens.
- The Union Health Ministry has announced an ambitious plan to boost research and innovation in the pharmaceutical and medtech sectors. To achieve this goal, they have introduced the Promotion of Research & Innovation in the Pharma-MedTech sector (PRIP) scheme.
- World Badminton Championships 2023 to begin at Copenhagen in Denmark.
- The Indian hockey team on 12 August defeated Malaysia 4-3 to win for the fourth time at the Asian Champions Trophy 2023 final, at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai.
- Former England pacer Steven Finn announces retirement from all forms of Cricket.
- Priya Malik won a Gold medal at the 2023 U20 World Wrestling Championships in Jordan.
- Sachin Tendulkar was declared as the National Icon of the Election Commission of India.
- The United World Wrestling (UWW) has suspended the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) with immediate effect for failing to conduct elections on time.
- In Chess, Magnus Carlsen of Norway beat India's R. Praggnanandhaa in tie-breaks to win the FIDE Chess World Cup 2023 title at Baku in Azerbaijan.
- Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian to win a Gold medal at the World Athletics Championships 2023 in Budapest, Hungary.

- In Cricket, the Indian men's visually impaired team settled for a silver medal after a defeat against Pakistan in the final of the men's T20 cricket event at the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) World Games 2023 at Edgbaston, Birmingham.
- India to celebrate 23rd August as National Space Day.
- Project director of Chandrayaan 3: P Veeramuthuveli and Mission Director: Mohana Kumar
- The landing point of Vikram Lander will be called Shivashakti Point.
- The theme for 77th Independence Day 2023- Nation First, Always First.
- Meri Mati Mera Desh campaign was launched to honour martyred bravehearts of the country.
- The redesigned logo of Air India - The Vista.
- The first-ever floating store of Amazon opened at Dal Lake in Srinagar.
- Iraq is officially recognised by WHO as the 18th country to successfully eliminate trachoma, a contagious bacterial eye infection.
- 5th World Coffee Conference to be held at Bengaluru.
- Brand ambassador of Indian Oil- Sanjeev Kapoor.
- Brand ambassador of Infosys- Iga Swiatek and Rafael Nadal.
- New chairperson of National Green Tribunal- Justice Prakash Srivastav.
- New MD of LIC- R Doraiswamy
- CFO of Tesla- Vaibhav Taneja
- Khelo India Women's League to be recognised as ASMITA Women's League. ASMITA stands for Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action.
- 2023 Women's FIFA World Cup winner- Spain defeating England.
- The first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit was held in Gujarat.
- 9th India Regional Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held at Udaipur.
- FBI's Field Office in Salt Lake to be headed by Indian American FBI agent Sohini Sinha.
- FIFA lifted ban on the Sri Lanka Football Federation. Ban was imposed due to government interference in federation affairs.
- India defeated Thailand to win the inaugural Women's Asian Hockey 5s World Cup qualifier.
- IDFC First Bank became the sponsor of BCCI for the home and international series for the coming 3 years.
- SEBI announced the establishment of the Corporate Debt Market Development Fund which will function as a backstop facility for providing support during stressed market conditions.
- 14th Indian Film festival of Melbourne-- best film(Agra). Best documentary (To Kill a Tiger). Best male actor Mohit Agarwal for Agra. Best female actor Rani Mukherjee for Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway.
- India to host first-ever global AI summit. India is the current chairholder of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Who has been appointed as the new director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)?

- (a) Ganesan Kannabiran
- (b) Neeraj Mondal
- (c) Parth Jindal
- (d) Rajiv Bansal

Answer: A

Explanation: Prof Ganesan Kannabiran, a senior professor of Information Systems at NIT Tiruchirappalli, has been appointed as the new director of NAAC. He has over 30 years of experience in the education sector and has served in various leadership roles at NIT Trichy and NIT Puducherry.

Q2. Indian President Droupadi Murmu has inaugurated 'Unmesha' - International Literature Festival and 'Utkarsh' - Festival of Folk and Tribal Performing Arts in which state?

- (a) Odisha
- (b) Jharkhand
- (c) Rajasthan
- (d) Madhya Pradesh

Answer: D

Explanation: The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, launched two festivals in Bhopal: Unmesha, an international literature festival, and Utkarsh, a festival of folk and tribal performing arts. The events were organized by the Culture Department of Madhya Pradesh and the Ministry of Culture's Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi. Unmesha is the largest literary convention in Asia.

Q3. India has handed over INR 450 million in advance to which country to fund its unique digital identity project.

- (a) Nepal
- (b) Maldives
- (c) Bhutan
- (d) Sri Lanka

Answer: D

Explanation: India has provided INR 450 million to Sri Lanka as a grant for its digital identity project, which will collect and store biometric data of its citizens. The project will help Sri Lanka meet the ICAO standards for identification cards and improve its public service delivery, poverty alleviation and financial inclusion.

Q4. The National Handloom Day is observed on ____.

- (a) 4 August
- (b) 5 August
- (c) 6 August
- (d) 7 August

Answer: D

Explanation: National Handloom Day is celebrated on August 7 to honour the handloom sector and the weavers who contribute to it. The day marks the anniversary of the Swadeshi Movement, which promoted the use of Indian-made goods, especially handlooms, to resist British colonialism. The first National Handloom Day was observed in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise awareness about the significance of the handloom industry.

Q5. Maharashtra government has decided to give the first 'Udyog Ratna' award to ____.

- (a) Ratan Tata
- (b) Gautam Adani
- (c) Mukesh Ambani
- (d) Azim Premji

Answer: A

Explanation: The Maharashtra government has announced that Ratan Tata, the chairman of Tata Sons, will be the first recipient of the 'Udyog Ratna' award. This award is the highest honour given by the state to eminent individuals in the industrial sector. Ratan Tata is being honoured for his remarkable achievements in leading one of the largest and most diversified business groups in India and the world.

Q6. Who has become the first-ever Indian to clinch the individual World Title at the World Archery Championships final 2023 in Berlin?

- (a) Deepika Kumari
- (b) Dola Banerjee
- (c) Tarundeep Rai
- (d) Aditi Swami

Answer: D

Explanation: Aditi Swami and Ojas Deotale made history at the World Archery Championships 2023 in Berlin, becoming the first Indians to win individual world titles in compound women's and men's events respectively. Swami, 17, beat Andrea Becerra of Mexico 149-147, while Deotale edged out Lukasz Przybylski of Poland 146-145 in thrilling finals.

Q7. How many railway stations are set to be redeveloped across the country as part of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme?

- (a) 508
- (b) 412
- (c) 558
- (d) 672

Answer: A

Explanation: The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) was inaugurated by PM Modi via video conference from Delhi. The scheme will transform 508 railway stations in India into modern and attractive travel hubs. The ABSS will enhance the passenger experience and showcase the rich cultural heritage of India.

Q8. The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has laid the foundation stone for the Adichanallur archaeological museum in which state?

- (a) Kerala
- (b) Tamil Nadu
- (c) Telangana
- (d) Andhra Pradesh

Answer: B

Explanation: A new museum for Adichanallur, a historic site in Tamil Nadu, has been inaugurated by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The site was chosen as one of the five 'Iconic Sites' to be developed by the central government. The museum will showcase the rich

cultural heritage of the Thamirabarani valley, where Adichanallur and other archaeological sites are located.

Q9. World Tribal Day is observed every year on August 9. What is the theme of World Tribal Day 2023?

- (a) The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge
- (b) Indigenous peoples' resilience
- (c) Leaving no one behind Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract
- (d) Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination

Answer: D

Explanation: The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples celebrates the diversity and resilience of Indigenous communities on August 9 every year. The day aims to raise awareness of their rights and challenges and to support their self-determination and empowerment. The theme for 2023 is Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination, highlighting the role of young indigenous leaders in advancing their cultures, languages and aspirations.

Q10. Who won a gold medal in men's 50-meter rifle for India at FISU World University Games 2023 in Chengdu, China?

- (a) Sanjeev Rajput
- (b) Saurabh Chaudhary
- (c) Aishwarya Pratap
- (d) Abhishek Verma

Answer: C

Explanation: India's shooter Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar won a gold medal in the men's 50-meter rifle three-positions event at the FISU World University Games 2023 in Chengdu, China. He scored 461.7 points in the final and also helped India secure a bronze medal in the team event along with Sartaj Singh Tiwana and Surya Pratap Singh. India also bagged a silver medal in the men's 25-meter pistol rapid-fire team event and a gold medal in the mixed compound archery team event.

Q11. The Union Cabinet has approved how many crores rupees for the modernization of the BharatNet project.

- (a) 1.39 lakh crore
- (b) 2.39 lakh crore
- (c) 3.39 lakh crore
- (d) 2.29 lakh crore

Answer: A

Explanation: The BharatNet project, which aims to connect all 640,000 villages with fibre optic cables, has received Rs 1.39 lakh crore from the Union Cabinet. The project will adopt a new strategy of partnering with village-level entrepreneurs or Udyamis, who will share the revenue from providing fibre connections to homes. The government expects to complete the project in two and a half years with this approach.

Q12. What is the current repo rate?

- (a) 6.0%
- (b) 6.25%
- (c) 6.5%
- (d) 6.75%

Answer: C

Explanation: The RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the third bi-monthly monetary policy for FY24 after a three-day meeting of the MPC. The repo rate remained unchanged at 6.5%, following a cumulative hike of 250 bps since May 2022.

Q13. Hun Manet has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of which country?

- (a) Kenya
- (b) Thailand
- (c) Oman
- (d) Cambodia

Answer: D

Explanation: The son of Cambodia's former Prime Minister Hun Sen, Hun Manet, has been named as the new head of the government by King Norodom Sihamoni. The King issued a royal decree appointing Dr. Hun Manet as the prime minister, following his father's resignation due to health reasons.

Q14. World Biofuel Day is observed every year on which day?

- (a) 9 August
- (b) 10 August
- (c) 11 August
- (d) 13 August

Answer: B

Explanation: World Biofuel Day, celebrated on 10 August every year, aims to raise awareness about the benefits of using non-fossil fuels for the energy sector. It also showcases the government's initiatives to support the biofuel industry. The date commemorates the day when Sir Rudolf Diesel ran a diesel engine on peanut oil in 1893, demonstrating the potential of renewable and sustainable energy sources.

Q15. Who has launched the book titled 'Dr APJ Abdul Kalam: Memories Never Die'?

- (a) Jagdeep Dhankhar
- (b) Amit Shah
- (c) Rajnath Singh
- (d) Droupadi Murmu

Answer: B

Explanation: The book 'Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Memories Never Die' is a tribute to the former President of India and his remarkable journey from Rameswaram to Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is written by his niece and a close associate, who share their personal and professional experiences with him. The book covers his contributions to Indian science, technology and politics, as well as his vision and dreams for the nation.

Q16. International Youth Day is observed every year on 12 August. What is the theme of International Youth Day 2023?

- (a) Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages"
- (b) Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health
- (c) Youth Engagement for Global Action
- (d) Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World

Answer: D

Explanation: International Youth Day, celebrated on 12 August, aims to highlight the issues and opportunities of young people in the world. The theme for 2023 is Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World, which focuses on the role of

youth in environmental action. The day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, following the recommendation of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998.

Q17. Which state has become the first Indian state to give free In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatment in government hospitals?

- (a) Maharashtra
- (b) Tamil Nadu
- (c) Goa
- (d) Himachal Pradesh

Answer: C

Explanation: Goa is the first state in India to provide free IVF treatment to couples who want to have children. The Chief Minister of Goa launched this service along with other reproductive technologies at the state-run GMC hospital. The cost of IVF in India can range from Rs 70,000 to Rs 3 lakh per cycle, but GMC offers it for free.

Q18. The Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) has organized a global summit on Traditional Medicine in which city?

- (a) Bengaluru
- (b) New Delhi
- (c) Hyderabad
- (d) Gandhi Nagar

Answer: D

Explanation: The first global summit on Traditional Medicine, organized by the Ministry of Ayush and WHO, was inaugurated in Gujarat by WHO Director-General and Indian Health and Ayush Ministers. The summit aims to promote scientific and evidence-based knowledge in the sector for universal health and well-being.

Q19. The Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying has unveiled the 'A-HELP' to empower women programme in Gujarat. What is the full form of the "A-HELP" Programme?

- (a) Accredited Agent for Health and Excessive Livestock Production
- (b) Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Premium
- (c) Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Protection

(d) Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production

Answer: D

Explanation: A new programme called 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) was launched in Gujarat by the Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala. The programme aims to empower women by training them as agents for various livestock services. The programme is part of the Pashudhan Jagrati Abhiyaan and aligns with the Prime Minister's vision of socio-economic development.

Q20. World Wide Web Day is observed on which day?

- (a) 20 July
- (b) 31 July
- (c) 1 August
- (d) 11 August

Answer: C

Explanation: World Wide Web Day is a day to celebrate the invention of the Web and its benefits for humanity. The Web was created by Sir Tim Berners-Lee at CERN in 1989 as a way to share and access information over the Internet. The first web server and browser were launched in 1990, and the Web has since grown to become a global platform for communication, education, commerce, and more.

Q21. Who has been conferred the Lokmanya Tilak National Award in 2023?

- a. Narendra Modi
- b. Manmohan Singh
- c. Amit Shah
- d. Rahul Gandhi

Answer: A

Explanation: The Lokmanya Tilak National Award is a prestigious honour that recognizes exemplary leadership, a remarkable contribution to the nation's development and the inspiring patriotism of its recipients. The award is given annually on August 1, the day of the demise of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, popularly known as Lokmanya Tilak. This year, the 41st award was conferred to PM Modi for his achievements and vision for the country.

Q22. What is the purpose of the Rohini Commission?

- a. A commission set up to examine the feasibility and criteria for the sub-categorisation of OBCs
- b. A commission set up to examine the feasibility and criteria for the sub-categorisation of SCs
- c. A commission was set up to examine the feasibility and criteria for the sub-categorisation of STs
- d. A commission was set up to examine the feasibility and criteria for the sub-categorisation of minorities

Answer: A

Explanation: The Rohini Commission is a commission set up to examine the feasibility and criteria for the sub-categorisation of OBCs. OBCs, or Other Backward Classes, are a group of socially and educationally disadvantaged castes in India. The commission was formed in 2017 by the central government to ensure a more equitable distribution of reservation benefits among the OBCs.

Q23. Who is implementing the PM-YASASVI scheme?

- a. Ministry of Education
- b. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- c. Ministry of Home Affairs
- d. Ministry of Minority Affairs

Answer: B

Explanation: The PM -YASASVI scheme is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to provide scholarships to meritorious students from OBC and other categories. The scheme aims to foster a culture of excellence and innovation among the youth and empower them to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country.

Q24. What is ZARTH, recently seen in the news?

- a. A mobile application that observes and interacts with the dynamic universe
- b. A new planet discovered by NASA
- c. A space telescope launched by ISRO
- d. A new theory about the origin of the universe

Answer: A

Explanation: ZARTH is a mobile app that enables users to experience and engage with the changing

cosmos. By using ZARTH, users can access real-time data from the Zwicky Transient Facility (ZTF), a powerful sky survey that detects transient and variable astronomical events. ZARTH allows users to explore the sky in augmented reality, discover new phenomena, and learn more about the fascinating universe we live in.

Q25. Which Indian state recently introduced free in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment?

- a) Kerala
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Goa
- d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: C

Explanation: Goa has become the first state in India to provide free in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment to its citizens, along with other services such as assisted reproductive technology (ART) and intrauterine insemination (IUI). This is a major achievement for the state, which aims to support couples who face infertility issues and help them realize their dream of parenthood.

Q26. Which state government has launched the Annapurna Food Packet Scheme?

- (a) Uttar Pradesh
- (b) Gujarat
- (c) Rajasthan
- (d) Maharashtra

Answer: C

Explanation: The Annapurna Food Packet Scheme is a new initiative by the Rajasthan government to provide free food packets to over 10.4 million families every month. The scheme aims to mitigate the impact of inflation on the common people. The food packets will include essential items such as chana dal, sugar, salt, oil, and spices.

Q27. Who developed the MASI App?

- a. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
- b. Ministry of Women and Child Development
- c. Ministry of Home Affairs
- d. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Answer: A

Explanation: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has launched a new app called 'MASI' - A monitoring App for Seamless Inspection. The app enables real-time monitoring of the Child Care Institutions (CCIs) and their inspection process across the country. The app aims to improve the quality of care and protection of children in the CCIs.

Q28. What is the purpose of Bhu-Vision?

- To provide automated soil testing and agronomy advisory services
- To provide financial assistance to farmers
- To provide legal assistance to farmers
- To provide education to farmers

Answer: A

Explanation: Bhu-Vision is a cutting-edge platform that combines IoT technology with soil analysis and agronomic advice. It was recently introduced in India to help farmers improve their crop productivity and profitability. Bhu-Vision, also known as KRISHI-RASTAA Soil Testing System, provides accurate and timely information on soil health and nutrient status, as well as customized recommendations on fertilizers, irrigation, and crop management.

Q29. What is Exercise Malabar?

- A naval exercise involving the United States, Japan and India as permanent partners
- A military exercise involving land, air and sea forces of India and the United States
- A joint exercise between India and Japan to combat terrorism
- A joint exercise between India and Australia to combat piracy

Answer: A

Explanation: Exercise Malabar is a joint naval drill that involves the United States, Japan and India as permanent partners. The exercise covers a wide range of activities, such as carrier-based fighter operations, maritime interdiction operations, anti-submarine warfare, diving salvage operations, amphibious operations, counter-piracy operations, cross-deck helicopter landings and anti-air warfare operations.

Q30. Which state has recently approved the concept of a vertical university campus?

- Madhya Pradesh

- Gujarat
- Rajasthan
- Maharashtra

Answer: D

Explanation: A vertical university campus (VUC) is a new concept in India that will be implemented in Mumbai and Thane, Maharashtra. VUCs are designed to save space and overcome land scarcity in urban areas. They are already popular in the US and other Western countries. The state government has relaxed the land requirement for private universities to set up VUCs. The buildings must be exclusively used for educational purposes and have provisions for future expansion.

Q31. Stuart Broad has recently announced his retirement from which sports?

- Hockey
- Baseball
- Cricket
- Football

Answer: C

Explanation: England pacer Stuart Broad has retired from international cricket after a stellar career spanning 15 years. He is the fifth-highest wicket-taker in Test history with 623 scalps and the second-fast bowler to achieve the feat. He has represented England in 167 Tests, 121 ODIs, and 56 T20Is, and is the only Englishman to claim two Test hat-tricks.

Q32. World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year from 1 to 7 August. What is the theme of World Breastfeeding Week 2023?

- Step up for Breastfeeding - Educate and Support
- Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility
- Support breastfeeding for a healthier planet!
- Let's make breastfeeding and work, work!

Answer: D

Explanation: World Breastfeeding Week is a global campaign to promote the benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies. It runs from 1-7 August every year. The theme for 2023 is "Let's make breastfeeding and work, work!" to encourage more support and flexibility for working mothers who want to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is vital for the health and

development of infants, as it provides them with optimal nutrition and immunity. However, only about 40% of infants worldwide are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, according to WHO.

Q33. India has signed a US\$ 200 million loan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to enhance urban services in which state?

- (a) Uttar Pradesh
- (b) Gujarat
- (c) Rajasthan
- (d) Maharashtra

Answer: C

Explanation: India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have agreed to a \$200 million loan to improve urban services in Rajasthan, especially water supply and sanitation. The loan will support innovative and climate-resilient solutions, such as nature-based rehabilitation of heritage structures and public-private partnerships. The loan will also help convert groundwater sources to surface water, replace leaking water pipes, install new water supply pipelines, provide water meter connections, and establish water treatment plants.

Q34. Which country will set up a governmental working group on sustainability with a focus on energy investments in biofuels in India?

- (a) Netherland
- (b) Scotland
- (c) Germany
- (d) Finland

Answer: D

Explanation: India and Finland have agreed to form a governmental working group on sustainability, with a special emphasis on energy investments in biofuels in India. The group will consist of representatives from the Ministries of Environment, Power & Renewable Energy, NITI Aayog from India, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment from Finland. The group will explore opportunities for cooperation in renewable energy, especially biofuels, and share best practices on power grid management.

Q35. Which ministry has launched the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)?

- (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (b) Ministry of Environment and Forests
- (c) Ministry of Ayush
- (d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Answer: D

Explanation: The NAPDDR is a new initiative by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to reduce drug abuse in India. It aims to educate and empower young people about the harmful effects of substance use and to provide them with healthy alternatives. The NAPDDR will target schools, colleges and universities as the key venues for awareness campaigns and interventions.