

# WBCS GAZETTE

JAN  
2023



**APTI PLUS**  
Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.



Padma Vibhushan



Padma Shri



Padma Bhushan



- Norovirus
- World Hindi Day
- (T+1) Settlement cycle
- National Commission for Women
- Khadi Village Industries Commission

## INDEX

1.	WEST BENGAL SPECIAL	3
2.	NATIONAL	6
3.	INTERNATIONAL	19
4.	ECONOMICS	26
5.	BUDGET 2023-24	33
6.	ECONOMIC SURVEY 2022-23	50
7.	DEFENCE and SECURITY	55
8.	SCIENCE	57
9.	SPORTS	59
10.	OBITUARIES	62
11.	APPOINTMENTS	63
12.	AWARDS	65
13.	BOOKS & AUTHOR	67
14.	BOOSTER DOSE FOR EXAM	68
15.	PRACTICE QUESTIONS	74





# Our Super Achievers in WBCS 2020



**MONOJIT CHOWDHURY**  
**RANK 2**

**GROUP A**



**MRINMOY MAJI**  
**RANK 45**



**ABHIK PATLA**  
**RANK 46**



**ARGHYA BHATTACHARYA**  
**RANK 54**



**BANANI MAJUMDER**  
**RANK 83**



**CHANDAN SAHA**  
**RANK 101**



**DEBNATH MAHATA**  
**RANK 111**

**GROUP B**



**AMIT TAMANG**  
**RANK 115**



**JAGONNATH BISWAS**  
**RANK 161**



**SUBRATA DAS**  
**RANK 166**



**UDAYAN**  
**RANK 13**



**RAJARSHI**  
**RANK 22**

## Congratulation Toppers!

## WEST BENGAL SPECIAL

### SPM-NIWAS

- The Union Cabinet has given ex post facto approval for the **renaming of the National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality, Joka, Kolkata** as 'Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS)'.
  - The Institute has been set up on 8.72 acres of land at Joka, Diamond Harbor Road, Kolkata, and West Bengal.
- The Institute is envisaged as a premier institute to develop capacities in states/UTs in the field of public health engineering, drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene through training programs.
- Such capacities are envisaged not only for the front-line workforce engaged in the implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission but also for the representatives of local bodies, both rural and urban. Accordingly, suitable infrastructure has been developed, including training infrastructure, R&D Block and a residential complex.
- Working and miniature models of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) technologies are also installed to facilitate the training at the institute.

### Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN)

- The Union Ministry of Education has formed a Joint Review Mission to visit West Bengal to examine the performance of the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN).
- **The Joint Review Mission includes;**
  - Nutrition experts
  - Officers from the Union Government
  - Officers from the State Government.
- The team will review the implementation of the scheme at the State, district and school levels.
- **The Joint Review Mission to review:**
  - Fund transferred from State to Schools/implementing agencies.
  - Coverage of the Scheme.
  - Availability of Management Structure at the State, District, and Block level.
  - The delivery mechanism of food grains from State to Schools.
  - Creation of Capital Assets.
  - Construction of Kitchen-cum-stores.
  - Procurement/Replacement of Kitchen Devices.
  - Involvement of NGOs/Trust/Centralized kitchens in the Scheme.
  - The payment of the Cost of Food grains to the Food Corporation of India.
  - The Management Information System (MIS).
  - The implementation of an Automated Monitoring System

**CONGRATULATIONS MONOJIT!!!**

Our Mains Test Series Student  
has reached the sky

**Monojit Chowdhury**

RANK 2, WBCS 2020

You make us Proud. Best wishes for your future.



### PM-Poshan Schemes:

- The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide, the Ministry of Education.
- The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government-aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabs supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Child Labour Project schools run by the ministry of labour.
- Serving 120 million children in over 1.27 million schools and Education Guarantee Scheme centres, the Midday Meal Scheme is the largest of its kind in the world.
- The Midday Meal Scheme has been implemented in the Union Territory of Puducherry under the French Administration since 1930.
- In post-independent India, **the Midday meal Scheme was first launched in Tamil Nadu, during the early 60s.**
  - Union Government initiated the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) on 15 August 1995.
  - By 2002, the scheme was implemented in all of the states under the orders of the Supreme Court of India.
  - The name of the scheme was changed to PM-POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) Scheme, in September 2021, by the Ministry of Education, which is the nodal ministry for the scheme.
  - The Central Government also announced that an additional 24 lakh students receiving pre-primary education at government & government-aided schools would also be included under the scheme by 2022.
- **Key Features of PM-POSHAN Scheme;**
  - It will provide one hot cooked meal in Government and Government-aided schools from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
  - This is a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme which covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII in Government, Government-Aided Schools.
  - The concept of Tithi Bhojan will be encouraged extensively. Tithi Bhojan is a community participation programme in which people provide special food to children on special occasions/festivals.
  - Promoting Nutrition Gardens in schools to give children first-hand experience with nature and gardening. The harvest of these gardens is used in the scheme providing additional micronutrients.
  - Social Audit of the scheme is made mandatory in all the districts.
  - Special provision to provide supplementary nutrition items to children in aspirational districts and districts with a high prevalence of Anemia.
  - A nutrition expert is to be appointed in each school to measure and suggest health aspects such as Body Mass Index (BMI), weight, haemoglobin levels, etc.
  - The involvement of Farmers' Producer Organizations (FPO) and Women Self Help Groups in the implementation of the scheme will be encouraged.
  - The use of locally grown traditional food items to support local economic growth will be encouraged.
  - Government to switch to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system to provide payment under the scheme.

### Khadi Village Industries Commission

- The Chairman of the Khadi Village Industries Commission visited various Khadi institutions located in Murshidabad, West Bengal to review the Khadi activities carried out by the Khadi institutions.
  - The Chairman also instructed the officials to take appropriate action on the proposal to assist in the artisans' pension scheme.
- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body formed in April 1957 (During 2nd Five Year plan) by the Government of India, under the 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956'.
- It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, about khadi and village industries within India.
- It seeks to - "plan, promote, facilitate, organize and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary."



- **The commission has three main objectives:**
  - The Social Objective - Employing in rural areas
  - The Economic Objective - Providing saleable articles
  - The Wider Objective - Creating self-reliance amongst people and building up a strong rural community spirit.
- KVIC implements the following schemes:
  - Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).
  - Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate (ISEC) Scheme.

### Didir Suraksha Kavach

- West Bengal Chief Minister has launched two initiatives ahead of the panchayat elections 2023- 'Didir Suraksha Kawach' and an app 'Didir Doot' on 11th January 2023 and it will continue for 60 days.
- Didir Suraksha Kavach' (Didi's Protective Shield) is a mass outreach campaign to check and ensure that people get benefits from the pro-people projects of the state government.
  - The first phase of the campaign 'Anchale Ek Din/Nagare Ek Din' (One day in the area) started when state-level party leadership spent a day each at all gram panchayats and urban local bodies across the state.
- The campaign will focus on 15 state government schemes (Khadya Sathi, Banglar Awas Yojana, Nijo Griha Nijo Bhumi, Swasthya Sathi, Kanyashree, Sikshashree, Aikyashree, Student Credit Card, Lakshmir Bhandar, Krishak Bandhu, Samajik Suraksha Yojana, Manabik Pension, Jai Bangla Pension Scheme, Bidhaba Bhata).
  - These schemes cover various sectors such as food, housing, health, education, social security, income, and employment.
- During the campaign, about 3.5 lakh volunteers of the Trinamool Congress will reach out to all 2 crore households of the State in 60 days'.
- **Didir Doot: the app has been developed for people to register their problems.**

**Admissions open for**  
**WBCS**  
[Gr. A & Gr. B]  
**2023-24**

Our Top successful candidates in WBCS 2020

 ABHIK PATLA RANK 46	 MRINMOY MAJI RANK 45	 ARGHYA BHATTACHARYA RANK 54	 BANANI MAJUMDER RANK 83
 MONOJIT CHOWDHURY RANK 2	 CHIRANJIT SAHA RANK 101	 DEBNATH BHATTACHARYA RANK 111	 ANIT TAMANG RANK 115
 JYOTIRMOY BHOWMIK RANK 161	 SUBRATA DAS RANK 166		

## NATIONAL

### Parasnath Parvat

- Leaders of many faiths have joined hands to save a hill that the Jain community considers sacred. For over a week now, Jains across Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Delhi, have been organising peaceful protests.
- **The protest is against a Jharkhand government decision that could change the demographic of visitors to Sammed Sikharji at Parasnath Parvat (hill), Giridih district, taking it from a “place of pilgrimage” to a “religious tourist destination”.**
  - The protesters demand that the Jharkhand government revoke its decision to promote Parasnath Parvat “as a part of eco-tourism or any kind of tourism”. They feel this will disrupt the sanctity of the hill dotted with temples.
- Sammed Sikharji, or just Sikharji, as it is reverentially known locally, stands 1,350 metres tall, and is one of the most important pilgrimage sites for the Jains.
- It is believed that 20 of the 24 Tirthankaras (enlightened beings) attained moksha (salvation) here.
- The hill itself is named after Parasnath, the 23rd Tirthankara. Every year thousands of Jain pilgrims from across the world undertake a 27-km-long trek to reach the summit.

### Prajjwala Challenge

- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has launched the **Prajjwala Challenge intending to invite ideas, solutions and actions to transform the rural economy.**
  - Ideas are invited from individuals, Social Enterprises, startups, the Private Sector, Civil Society, Community Based organizations, Academic institutions, startups, Incubation centres, Investors etc having the potential to transform the rural economy.
- **The Prajjwala Challenge was launched under the Union Ministry of Rural Development to search for ideas and solutions around;**
  - Innovative Technology Solutions
  - Inclusive Growth
  - Value Chain Interventions
  - Enhanced Women Entrepreneurship
  - Cost-effective Solutions
  - Sustainability
  - Place-based employment
  - Localised models etc.
- Shortlisted ideas will be provided mentorship support from an expert panel and incubation support to scale up.
  - The top 5 ideas will be rewarded with Rs. 2 Lakh each.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**
  - It was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in June 2011 as a restructured version of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY).
    - In November 2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM).
  - DAY-NRLM aims to cover at least one woman member from each rural poor household (about 9-10 crore) under the fold of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
  - Under the DAY-NRLM interest, subvention is already being provided on loans taken by women Self Help Groups from Banks.

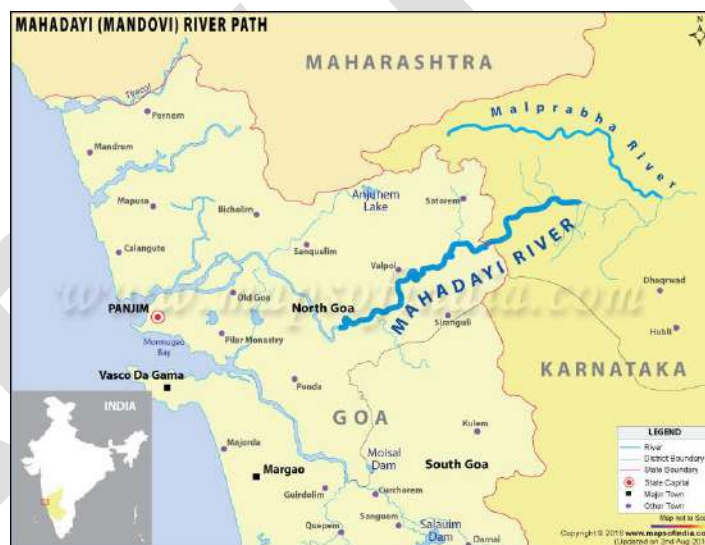
### Indian Science Congress

- The 108th session of the India Science Congress (ISC) was **inaugurated by the Prime Minister at Nagpur, Maharashtra.**
- **The event’s theme was ‘Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women’s Empowerment’.**
- Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) is a premier scientific organisation of India with **headquarters in Kolkata, West Bengal.**

- The association started in the year 1914 in Kolkata and it meets annually in the first week of January.
- It has a membership of more than 30,000 scientists.
- The first Indian Science Congress was held in 1914 at the Asiatic Society in Calcutta.
  - Several prominent Indian and foreign scientists, including Nobel laureates, attend and speak at the congress.
- **The Association was formed with the following objectives:**
  - To advance and promote the cause of science in India;
  - To hold an annual congress at a suitable place in India;
  - To publish such proceedings, journals, transactions and other publications as may be considered desirable;
  - To secure and manage funds and endowments for the promotion of science including the rights of disposing of or selling all or any portion of the properties of the Association;
  - To do and perform any or all other acts, matters and things as are conducive to, or incidental to, or necessary for, the above objects.

### Mahadayi River

- Karnataka's decision to go ahead with a water diversion project on river Mahadayi has escalated its long-standing dispute on the issue with neighbouring Goa.
- **The Mahadayi/Mandovi River is described as the lifeline of the Indian state of Goa.**
  - The Mandovi and the Zuari are the two primary rivers in the state of Goa.
  - Mandovi joins with the Zuari at a common creek at Cabo Aguada, forming the Mormugao Panaji, the state capital and Old Goa, the former capital of Goa, are both situated on the left bank of the Mandovi.
- **River course**
  - The river has a total length of 81 kilometres (50 miles); 35 kilometres in Karnataka, 1 kilometre in Maharashtra and 45 kilometres in Goa.
  - It originates from a cluster of 30 springs at Bhimgad in the Western Ghats in the Belagavi district of Karnataka.



### High-powered Ladhak committee

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has formed a high-powered committee to “ensure the protection of land and employment” for the people of Ladakh.
  - The committee is chaired by the Minister of State for Home Affairs.
  - The 17-member committee also includes Ladakh Lieutenant Governor.
- The committee will discuss measures;
  - To protect the region's unique culture and language taking into consideration its geographical location and its strategic importance.
  - To promote inclusive development in the region.
  - To ensure employment generation in the region.
  - To empower Ladakh Autonomous Hill District Councils of Leh and Kargil.



## Demonetization Verdict

- The Constitution bench of the Supreme Court in the majority opinion (4:1) **upheld the Union Government's demonetization order of 8th November 2016 to demonetize currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000.**
- The majority of judges (4:1) accepted all arguments of the Union Government
  - The majority view found that the word 'recommendation' would mean a consultative process between the Central Board and the Central Government."
  - The judges highlighted that it cannot be expected that the RBI and the Central Government acted in two isolated boxes. An element of interaction/consultation in such important matters cannot be denied.
- The majority verdict states that curbing fake currency, black money and terror funding are legitimate interests of the state and have a rational nexus with demonetization.
  - The court said that the Centre is the best judge since it has all the inputs about fake currency, black money, terror financing & drug trafficking.
- The majority stated that the court cannot determine the effectiveness of the economic policy. It agreed with the Centre's contention that the decision had to be made in secrecy and haste for it to be effective.
- Justice B V Nagarathna disagreed with the reasoning and conclusions in the majority opinion
  - The Justice stated that demonetization was a violation of Section 26(2) of the RBI Act as the recommendation for the demonetization originated from the Centre and not the RBI's Central Board.

## Prahari app

- The Union Home Minister has launched the **Prahari app for the Border Security Force (BSF).**
  - Through the app, jawans can get personal and service-related information, share information, and Information on various welfare schemes, etc
- The Minister highlighted that Indian borders can be permanently secured only when border villages are populated by patriotic citizens; he also asked the border-guarding forces to use the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) for the development of Border area villages.
  - The Programme was announced by the Union Finance Minister in her 2022 Union Budget speech.
- **The Vibrant Village Programme aims to;**
  - Improve infrastructure in border villages along India's border with China.
  - Improve infrastructure in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Arunachal Pradesh.
  - To construct residential and tourist centres.
  - Improve road connectivity.
  - Develop decentralized renewable energy sources.
  - Provide direct access to Doordarshan, education-related channels, and broadband connections.
  - Create employment and livelihood opportunities
  - Reduce poverty and ensure socio-economic development.

## Draft National Medical Commission Bill 2022

- The Union Health Ministry has introduced the draft National Medical Commission Bill 2022.
- The Draft proposed to merge the existing National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBES) as an autonomous board under the National Medical Commission.
- Amend the existing Act so that all cases by medical colleges in matters related to the National Medical Commission (NMC) should be under the jurisdiction of the high court of Delhi instead of the current practice of filing pleas in high courts in different states.
- Introduce amendment in the National Medical Commission Act 2019 to include provisions for setting up a 5th autonomous board; the Board of Examinations in the Medical Sciences under the NMC to conduct the National Exit Test for all post-graduation and super-speciality courses.
  - It will also conduct screening tests for foreign medical graduates.

## All India Annual States' Ministers Conference

- The **1st All India Annual States' Ministers Conference on the theme - "Water Vision@2047"** was held in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**. The two days conference began with the auspicious 'Jal Kalash' ceremony by the Chief Guest and Dignitaries.
- The Prime Minister informed that the country is constructing 75 Amrit Sarovar in every district wherein 25 thousand Amrit Sarovar have already been built so far.
- Prime Minister drew attention to the role of public and social organizations and civil societies and asked for their maximum participation in the campaigns related to water conservation. He said when the public is associated with a campaign; they also get to know the seriousness of the work.

## Village Defence Committee (VDC)

- Lt Governor Manoj Sinha assured the **Jammu and Kashmir people that they would get a Village Defence Committee (VDC)**.
  - People in Jammu and Kashmir are demanding that in the background of increasing militant attacks, they must be provided weapons to take on attackers.
- The VDCs were first formed in the mid-1990s to defend people against militant attacks.
  - The then Jammu and Kashmir's administrations had decided to provide residents of remote hilly villages with weapons and give them arms training to defend their people and village.
- The VDCs have now been renamed as the 'Village Defence Guards (VDG)'.
  - It is set up in vulnerable areas of J&K and was approved by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - Like a VDC member, each VDG will be provided with a gun and 100 rounds of ammunition.
- It is a group of civilians provided with guns and ammunition to tackle militants in case of attack until the arrival of security forces.
  - The persons leading the VDGs will be paid Rs 4,500 per month by the government, while others will get Rs 4,000 each.
- The VDGs will function under the direction of the SP/SSP of the district concerned.
- **Composition of VDCs**
  - A minimum of 10-15 ex-servicemen, ex-policemen and able-bodied local youth were enrolled in each VDC voluntarily.
- The VDCs also faced allegations of human rights violations and other crimes, including murder, rape and extortion.

## Purple Fest

- The state of Goa hosted the Purple Fest, the first-ever inclusive festival in the state for persons with disabilities (PwDs).
  - **The festival started in Panjim on 6th January 2023 and ended on 8th January.**
- The festival aims to show how to bring inclusivity in our society, and how to support one another.
- Thousands of entries have attended the festival, and delegates from all over the country participated in the festival.
- Recently the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has released a new draft of national policy on Persons with disabilities (PwD).
  - The draft stated that the current national programme on the prevention of disabilities focused only on "traditional causes", and was silent on other factors like malnourishment, medical negligence, socio-cultural factors and impairment caused by disasters.
- About 2.2% of India's population lives with some kind of physical or mental disability, as per the National Statistics Office (NSO) report.

## National Conference of Chief Secretaries

- The Prime Minister of India chaired the **2nd national conference of Chief Secretaries in New Delhi**.
- The objective is to promote cooperative federalism, through Central Ministries and Departments working together with States in seamless coordination, which is an essential pillar for the development and progress of New India.
  - It is an important forum to exchange views on important policy-related subjects and to strengthen team spirit to take India to newer heights.

- The conference focused on achieving rapid and sustained economic growth in partnership with the States.
- More than 200 people including representatives of the Union Government, Chief Secretaries, and other senior officials of States, Union Territories, and domain experts are participating in the conference.
- **The discussion during the conference will be held on six identified themes;**
  - Thrust on MSMEs
  - Infrastructure and Investment
  - Minimizing Compliances
  - Women's Empowerment
  - Health and Nutrition
  - Skill Development
- **Chief Secretary is the top-most executive official and senior-most civil servant of the state government.**
  - The Chief Secretary is the ex-officio head of the state Civil Services Board.
  - The Chief Secretary acts as the principal advisor to the chief minister on all matters of state administration.
  - The Chief Secretary is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).
  - The Chief Secretary is the senior-most cadre post in the state administration.

### Sagol Kangjei

- Home Minister Amit Shah in Manipur has inaugurated a **122-foot-tall statue of a polo player astride a Manipur Pony in Imphal.**
- It is believed that **Sagol Kangjei, the modern-day Polo game originated in Manipur.**
- Modern polo is said to have originated from Sagol Kangjei, a sport indigenous to Manipur, in which players ride horses, specifically the Manipur Ponies, which are referenced in records dating back to the 14th century.



### 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- The **17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was organized in partnership with the Madhya Pradesh government.**
  - The 2-day conference was started on 8th January 2023 with the inauguration of the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- **The Theme: "Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal".**
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) or Non-Resident Indian Day is observed by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is observed on 9th January because it is on this day in 1915 that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned from South Africa.
  - The celebration highlights the commitment of the Government of India to maintain and strengthen its ties with the overseas Indian community.



## All India Presiding Officers' Conference

- The Vice President of India to address the inaugural session of the **83rd All India Presiding Officers' Conference in Jaipur on 11th January 2023.**
- The All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) is the apex body of the Legislatures in India that completed its hundred years in 2021.
  - The first Conference was also held in Shimla in 1921.
- **The Conference focused on;**
  - The leadership of India in G-20 as the mother of democracy.
  - The need to make Parliament and Legislature more Effective, Accountable and Productive.
  - Integration of State Legislatures with Digital Parliament.
  - The need to maintain a harmonious relationship between the Legislature and the Judiciary in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution.

## India International Science Festival (IISF)

- The **8th edition of the India International Science Festival (IISF) was inaugurated at the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT), Bhopal.**
- IISF is a celebration to promote Science and Technology and demonstrate how science could lead India.
- This year's IISF will also witness "Vigyanika", the Science Literature Festival where several programs related to various genre is being organized.
- More than 2,500 school students from across India have been invited to attend the IISF festival. Additionally, the festival will feature Biotech and Agri-tech start-ups. Also, smart and knowledgeable toys made by local artisans at IISF will be on display.
- The theme of the four-day festival is Marching towards Amrit Kaal with Science, Technology, and Innovation.
- The theme of the mission is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to build a self-reliant India and is also aligned with the G20 vision, which is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or "One Earth · One Family · One Future"

## National Road Safety Week

- Every year, **National Road Safety Week is celebrated from January 11 to 17.**
- Organized by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the week intends to spread awareness around road safety, which is a major concern for authorities as well as the government.
- During National Road Safety Week, various organizations and groups come together to educate the public about the consequences of reckless or negligent driving.
- The method to communicate the message can range from putting up presentations and workshops in schools, community centres, and workplaces, to running campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting safe driving habits.
- National Road Safety Week was celebrated for the first time in 1989.

## National Youth Festival

- The **Prime Minister of India participated in the 26th National Youth Festival in Hubballi, Karnataka on 12th January 2023.**
  - The programme will be organised on National Youth Day, which is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand, to honour and cherish his ideals, teachings and contributions.
- The Theme of the 2023 Festival is "Viksit Yuva - Viksit Bharat".
- The main objective is to nourish talented youth at the national level and galvanize them towards nation-building.
- As part of the Festival, **Youth Summit will be organized based on 5 themes;**
  - Future of work, Industry, Innovation and 21st Century Skills.
  - Climate change and disaster risk reduction.
  - Peacebuilding and Reconciliation.
  - Shared future youth in democracy and governance.
  - Health & Well-being.

## MV Ganga Vilas

- The Prime Minister of India flagged off MV Ganga Vilas; World's Longest River Cruise on 13th January 2023.
- On the occasion, the Prime Minister also;
  - Inaugurated the tent City at Varanasi.
  - Laid the foundation stones for several inland waterways projects.
  - Inaugurated Haldia Multi-Modal Terminal in West Bengal.
  - Inaugurated Maritime Skill Development Centre at Guwahati, Assam.
  - Laid the foundation stone for a ship repair facility at Pandu Terminal, Guwahati, Assam.
- **MV Ganga Vilas:** The Cruise will start its journey from Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and reach Dibrugarh (Assam) via Bangladesh.
  - It will travel around 3,200 km in 51 days.
  - It will sail across 27 river systems in India and Bangladesh.
- It has accommodation for 36 tourists, with all the luxury facilities.
- The 51 days travel will cover 50 tourist spots including World Heritage Sites, National Parks, River Ghats, and major cities in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bangladesh and Assam.
- It will boost the tourism sector, provide employment opportunities and ensure the socio-economic development of the region.

## Vidisha district

- **Vidisha district in Madhya Pradesh has become the first district in India for deploying on-ground innovative 5G use offered by startups.**
- It was the result of a joint initiative between;
  - Vidisha District Administration and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
  - Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the guidance of the Additional Secretary (Telecom).
- It will promote Digital Transformation across socio-economic indicators.
- It will encourage Startups and user communities.
- It will support the working of State governments, Smart cities, Aspirational districts, vertical industries etc.
- It will provide innovative solutions for Health, Agriculture, Diary, Education & Skill Development, benefiting the Vidisha community at large.
- **Potential benefits;**
  - Smart health services for measuring vitals and performing tests almost instantaneously.
  - Eye Screening application using a smartphone for quick and effective screening of cataract disease
  - Experience kit for students for enhanced learning & teaching tool for innovative teaching methods.
  - Provide crop advisory for farmers to take informed decisions and connect with Mandis/Traders, state subsidies/insurance for crops
  - Integrating all the health suits enables Tele consultation and e-learning solution suits.



## India's first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming

- The Union Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship stated that the Digital India Startup Hub through the Software Technology Parks of India will set up **India's first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming at Shillong, Meghalaya by March 2023.**
  - He highlighted that the decision will boost startups and entrepreneurs in the North East Region to build the Next Generation Online gaming ecosystem.
- He announced to set of up a state-of-the-art facility under the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) to provide training on Digital Skills at Shillong.

## Army Day

- **India celebrates Army Day on January 15** every year to commemorate the achievements of the first Indian Commander in Chief of the Indian Army – General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa.
  - On this day, Cariappa, who led Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war, took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India.

## MAARG Portal

- **The Union Minister of Commerce and industry has launched the MAARG (Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth) Portal.**
  - The Portal will encourage mentorship between startups and entrepreneurs across different sectors, stages, and functions.
  - The portal has a unique matchmaking feature, which will allow startups to connect with mentors and discuss their mentorship needs.
- **Objectives of the MAARG Portal**
  - To provide guidance and support to startups throughout their lifecycle.
  - To establish a formalized and structured platform that facilitates intelligent matchmaking between mentors and startups across varied sectors at a scale.
  - To establish an outcome-oriented mechanism that allows tracking of the progress of the mentor-startup engagements.
- **Key Functions**
  - AI engine to match relevant mentors and startups.
  - Track mentor and startup interactions to deliver impact.
  - Enable video calls and communication via the platform.
  - Mobile-friendly interface for ease of use.
  - Recognition and benefits of mentor contribution.
  - Facilitate ecosystem enablers to host custom programs.
  - Provide feedback, query, and grievance mechanism.
- The MAARG Portal is a one-stop mentorship platform to facilitate mentorship for startups across diverse sectors, functions, stages, geographies, and backgrounds. Startups can connect with academicians, industry experts, successful founders, seasoned investors, and others to get personalized advice on growth strategy, seek clarity, and get practical advice.

## Guidelines for celebrities and social media influencers

- The Union Government has released guidelines for celebrities and social media influencers.
  - Under the guidelines, it is mandatory to disclose the material benefits of a product or a brand they are promoting through their social media platforms.
  - They should not promote any product or service in which due diligence has been done by them or that they have not personally used or experienced.
- The disclosures must be displayed in the endorsement and terms such as ‘advertisement’, ‘sponsored’ or ‘paid promotion’ should be used for all sorts of endorsements.
  - Endorsements must be made in simple, clear language and terms such as ‘advertisement,’ ‘sponsored,’ or ‘paid promotion’ can be used.
  - In the case of the live stream, disclosures should be displayed continuously and prominently during the entire stream.
- **The guidelines aim to ensure that;**
  - Individuals do not mislead their audiences when promoting products or services.
  - They comply with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guidelines.
- **Penalty for misleading advertisements;**
  - Under the Consumer Protection Act 2019, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) can impose a penalty of up to Rs 10 lakh on manufacturers, advertisers and endorsers and for repeated offences, a penalty of up to ₹ 50 lakhs can be imposed.



- The CCPA can also prohibit the endorser of a misleading advertisement from making any endorsement for up to one year and subsequent contravention, prohibition can extend up to three years.
- The increasing reach of digital platforms and social media resulted in a rise in the number of celebrities and social media influencers. This increased the risk of consumers being misled by advertisements and unfair trade practices by these individuals on social media platforms.
- The guidelines will ensure transparency and promote responsibility among social media influencers and save consumers from misleading or unfair practices.

### Hakku Patra

- The Prime Minister of India symbolically distributed Hakku Patra (land title deeds) to a few families of the Banjaras (Lambani) community, a nomadic Scheduled Caste group, in the Kalaburagi district, Karnataka.
  - More than 50,000 families got land titles during the programme.
  - The Lambanis are nomadic tribes with the majority of the population living in north Karnataka.
- **Hakku Patras or title deeds**
  - It is a property ownership document.
  - It enables owners to avail of bank loans with the said document. They will also be eligible to buy or sell land to which the title deed is granted by the government.
- The Banjaras are a key scheduled caste sub-group in Karnataka. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes together make up nearly 24% of the state population.
- In 2017, the state government of Karnataka passed a law to grant ownership of houses to agricultural labourers living in unrecorded habitations, the law was expected to benefit more than 2 lakh people living in the Lambani community and other settlements of different backward communities, such as Kurubarahattis, Haadis, and Palyas.

### Land Subsidence

- After cracks appeared in many roads and hundreds of houses in **Joshimath, Uttarakhand, authorities declared it a landslide and subsidence-hit zone.**
- Land subsidence is a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to the removal or displacement of subsurface earth materials. The principal causes include aquifer-system compaction associated with groundwater withdrawals drainage of organic soils.
- It can happen for a host of reasons, man-made or natural, such as the removal of water, oil, or natural resources, along with mining activities. Earthquakes, soil erosion, and soil compaction are also some of the well-known causes of subsidence.

### All-India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspectors General of Police

- The Prime Minister of India attended the 57th All-India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspectors General of Police in New Delhi.
- **Key points of the Prime Minister's speech;**
  - He suggested making the police forces more sensitive and training them in emerging technologies.
  - He highlighted the importance of the National Data Governance Framework for smoothening data exchange across agencies.
  - He suggested leveraging technological solutions like biometrics etc.
  - Need to strengthen traditional policing mechanisms like foot patrols further etc.
  - He recommended repealing obsolete criminal laws and building standards for police organizations across states.
  - He suggested prison reforms to improve jail management.
  - He discussed the need for strengthening the border as well as coastal security by organizing frequent visits of officials.
  - Improving cooperation between state police and central agencies to leverage capabilities and share best practices.
- The Conference covered various aspects of policing and national security, including Counter Terrorism, Counter Insurgency and Cyber Security.

## Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

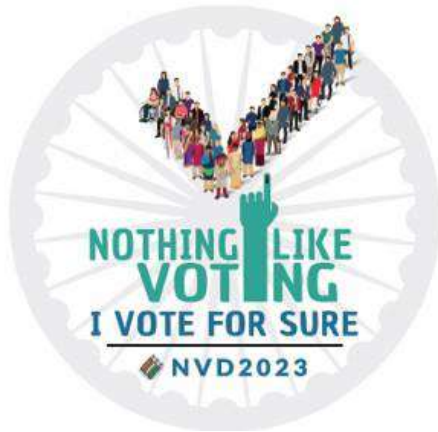
- Indian President has awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to 11 children at an Award ceremony in Delhi on 23rd January 2023.
  - The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar was awarded to children for their exceptional achievements.
- The awards are conferred to children in the age group of 5 to 18 years, for their excellence in 6 categories;
  - Art and Culture
  - Bravery
  - Innovation
  - Scholastic
  - Social Service
  - Sports.
- Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of one lakh rupees and a Certificate.
- The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (Prime Minister's National Award for Children) is a civilian honour in India.
- **The award has two categories:**
  - Bal Shakti Puraskar; It is awarded to citizens under the age of 18 for outstanding achievement in innovation, scholastic achievements, social service, arts and culture, bravery, or sports.
  - Bal Kalyan Puraskar; It is awarded to individuals or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to child development, child protection, or child welfare.
- It is administered by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development.

## National Girl Child Day

- **24th January is celebrated as National Girl Child Day.**
- In 2008, it was initiated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to spread public awareness about inequities that girls face in Indian society.
- The Government of India has not officially announced any theme for National Girl Child Day 2023. However, unofficial sources stated that this year's celebration will be around the slogan, "Digital Generation, Our Generation, Our Time is now – Our Rights, Our Future."
- **Objective:**
  - It is commemorated to promote public awareness of the inequality, prejudice, and exploitation that girls suffer in society.
  - Its goal is to raise awareness about a girl's rights and provide her with equal possibilities as everyone else, as well as to support the nation's female children and eliminate gender biases.

## National Voters' Day

- **The Election Commission of India celebrated 25th January 2023 as the 13th National Voters' Day.**
  - To mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (25th January 1950), National Voters' Day is celebrated on 25th January every year Since 2011.
- The main objective is to create electoral awareness amongst citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.
  - National Voters' Day is celebrated at the national, state, district, constituency and polling booth levels.
- The theme for National Voters' Day 2023 is 'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure'.
- On this occasion, a logo was designed to showcase the festivity and inclusivity of the electoral process.
  - Ashoka Chakra in the background represents the largest democracy in the world.
  - The inked finger represents the participation of every voter in the country.
  - The tick mark in the logo stands for informed decision-making by the voter.
- **During the event, the President presented the National Awards for the year 2022.**
  - National Awards for the Best Electoral Practices were presented to State and District level officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections during 2022.
  - National Awards were also given to important stakeholders like government departments and media organizations for their valuable contribution towards voters' awareness.
- An ECI song- "Main Bharat Hoon- Hum Bharat Ke Matdata Hain" produced by ECI in association with Subhash Ghai Foundation was screened during the event.



### Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

- Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations this year.
  - This is the first time that an Egyptian President has been invited as chief guest for the event.
- Welcoming Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the abuse of cyberspace by extremist forces was a "growing threat", and that both sides agreed to intensify cooperation in this regard.
- India and Egypt agreed to elevate their bilateral ties to a 'strategic partnership' that covers political, security, defence, energy and economic linkages.

### Green Railway Station Certification

- Visakhapatnam railway station of East Coast Railway has been awarded the 'Green Railway Station Certification with the highest rating of Platinum'.
- The Environment Directorate of Indian Railways, with the support of the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), has developed the Green Railway Station rating system. It addresses national priorities such as water conservation, handling of waste, energy efficiency, reduced use of fossil fuel, lesser dependence on usage of virgin materials and health and well-being of occupants.

### Monument Mitra Scheme

- The government will hand over around 1,000 monuments under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India to the private sector for their upkeep under the Monument Mitra Scheme
  - Corporate entities will take over these monuments as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. Under the scheme, monument amenities will be revamped by the private sector.
- The government has set the target to hand over 500 sites under the revamped Monument Mitra Scheme by the end of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav on 15 August 2023
- The Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Archeological Survey of India (ASI), State/ UT Governments and the Private/ Public sector companies/ Trusts/ NGOs/ Individuals, etc. envisages developing, upgrading and maintaining amenities at heritage sites, monuments and tourist sites.
  - This is to make the facilities/amenities tourist-friendly and increase the site's tourism potential by enhancing the tourist experience in a planned and phased manner.
- Public / Private sector companies etc. can partner in the project by putting forth a proposal for adopting heritage/ natural / tourist sites as per their interest and viability under the criteria provided in the project guidelines.



## Beating Retreat Ceremony

- The Beating Retreat Ceremony was held at the end of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations in Vijay Chowk, Delhi.
  - It is a military ceremony that was performed for the first time in India in the 1950s.
  - The ceremony consists of musical performances by the bands.
- According to the Union Ministry of Culture website “the origin of the Beating Retreat ceremony, traces its origin to the early 1950s when Major Roberts of the Indian Army indigenously developed this unique ceremony of display by the massed bands”.
  - The website mentioned that the idea was inspired by a centuries-old military tradition when the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield to return to their camps at sunset at the sound of the Retreat.
- **History:**
  - The earliest evidence of this ceremony was found in 17th-century England when King James II ordered his troops to beat drums, lower flags and organize a parade to announce the end of a day of combat.
  - The ceremony at that time was called ‘watch setting’ and took place at sunset after firing a single round from the evening gun.
- **The ceremony was attended by;**
  - The President of India, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.
  - Prime Minister of India.
  - Defense Minister of India.
  - The President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) president.



## National Commission for Women

- The **President of India** addressed the 31st Foundation Day of the National Commission for Women on **31st January 2023** in Delhi.
  - The theme of the programme was ‘Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat’.
- In 1992, the National Commission for Women was set up as a statutory body under the National Commission for Women Act, of 1990.
- **The commission was set up to;**
  - Review the Constitutional and legal safeguards available for women.
  - Recommend remedial legislative measures.
  - Facilitate redressal of grievances.
  - Advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.



- The Commission comprises a Chairperson, a Member Secretary and five other members that are nominated by the Union Government.
  - At least one member belongs to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.
- The commission aims to support women to achieve equality and equal participation in all spheres of life by;
  - Securing her due rights and entitlements through suitable policy formulation.
  - Legislative measures.
  - Effective enforcement of laws.
  - Implementation of schemes/policies.
  - Designing strategies for solutions to specific problems/situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women.
- Rekha Sharma is the current chairperson of the National Commission for Women.



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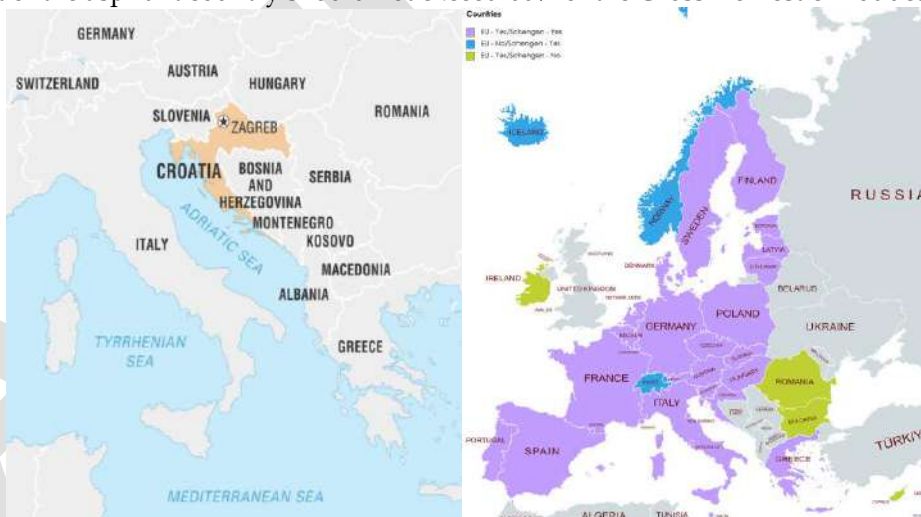
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## INTERNATIONAL

### Croatia

- **Croatia switched to the euro and entered Europe's passport-free zone** -- two major milestones for the country after joining the European Union nearly a decade ago.
  - It shifted from the kuna currency and became the 20th member of the eurozone.
- It is now the 27th nation in the passport-free Schengen zone, the world's largest, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely around its members.
  - Schengen Area signifies a zone where 27 European countries, abolished their internal borders, for the unrestricted movement of people, in harmony with common rules for controlling external borders and fighting criminality by strengthening the common judicial system and police cooperation.
  - Schengen Area covers most of the EU countries, except Ireland, and the countries that are soon to be part of the Schengen Area: are Romania, Bulgaria, and Cyprus. Although not members of the EU, countries like Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Lichtenstein are also part of the Schengen zone.
- The union of 27 member states located in Europe is called the European Union. Out of these only 20 countries have adopted Euro as their authorised currency. These countries are collectively known as the Eurozone.
  - The remaining countries of the European Union have not adopted the Euro, these countries have their separate currency.
- According to the Maastricht treaty, **if an EU country wants to join the Eurozone, then it will have to meet the 4 following conditions:**
  - Low Inflation: If a country wants to be in the Eurozone, its inflation should not exceed 1.5% of the top three lowest inflation-having countries of the Eurozone.
  - Low-Interest Rate: Interest rates should not exceed 2% as compared to the first three lowest-interest rate countries.
  - The annual budget deficit of the aspirant country should not exceed 3% of the Gross Domestic Product of its economy.
  - The debt of the aspirant country should not exceed 60% of the Gross Domestic Product of its economy.



### Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)

- India and Saudi Arabia **discussed signing a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to obtain formal assistance from each other in investigations related to criminal cases.**
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, MLAT is a mechanism whereby countries cooperate to provide and obtain formal assistance in the prevention, suppression, investigation and prosecution of crime to ensure that the criminals do not escape or sabotage the due process of law for want of evidence available in different countries.
  - The Ministry is the Central Authority of India for dealing with requests for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- India has so far signed MLATs with 45 countries.



### Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU)

- India takes over the leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) having its Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2023.
- Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asian-Pacific region.
- APPU is the only Restricted Union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- The goal of APPU is to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and to promote cooperation in the field of postal services.
- This is the first time an Indian is leading an international organization in the postal sector.

### Indo-French Strategic Dialogue

- National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval held the 36th round of the **Indo-French Strategic Dialogue with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Bonne in January.**
- The two sides held discussions on a variety of issues, including the current global security situation in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, regional security in the context of Afghanistan, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, besides other issues of mutual concern.
- The agenda covered all aspects of the Indo-French strategic partnership: defence and security cooperation. India is close to deciding on a fighter jet to fly off the Navy's aircraft carriers, for which Boeing's F-18 Super Hornet and Dassault Aviation's Rafal-M are in the race.
- In addition, Safran of France is competing with other global engine manufacturers to co-develop a fighter jet engine with the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

### World Braille Day

- **4th January is celebrated as World Braille Day** to raise awareness about the importance of Braille as a means of communication for visually impaired and partially sighted people.
  - The day marks the birth anniversary of French educator Louis Braille, who invented the Braille script in 1809.
- Braille is a system of reading and writing by touch used by the blind.
  - It consists of arrangements of dots that make up letters of the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation marks.
- Braille was first developed in the late 1820s by a young Frenchman named Louis Braille.
  - He created Braille by modifying a system of night writing which was intended for military use.

### Young Professionals Scheme

- The governments of **India and the U.K. marked Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 9th January by kicking off the Young Professionals Scheme.**
- It will permit up to 3,000 of their degree-holding citizens aged between 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for two years.
  - The scheme will run for three years initially.

### World Hindi Day

- World Hindi Day also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas, is celebrated on 10th January every year to mark the importance of Hindi as a language.
  - The day was started to honour the anniversary of the first time use of the Hindi language in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1949.
  - In 1975, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurated the first World Hindi Conference. Since then, conferences have been organised in different parts of the world.
  - On 10th January 2006, World Hindi Day was celebrated for the first time.
- The objective is to create awareness about the Indian language and promote it as a global language around the world.

- While World Hindi Day is celebrated on January 10 every year, Hindi Diwas is celebrated on September 14 annually.
  - World Hindi Day aims to promote global recognition of the Hindi Language around the world.
  - Hindi Diwas focuses on the recognition of the Hindi language in India.
- Hindi is the third most spoken language in the world and is written in Devanagari script
- **The 2011 linguistic census accounts for 121 mother tongues, including 22 languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.**
  - Hindi is the most widely spoken, with 52.8 crore individuals, or 43.6% of the population, declaring it as their mother tongue. The next highest is Bengali, the mother tongue for 9.7 crores (8%) – less than one-fifth of Hindi's count.
  - In terms of the number of people who know Hindi, the count crosses more than half the country. Nearly 13.9 crores (over 11%) reported Hindi as their second language, which makes it either the mother tongue or second language for nearly 55% of the population.

## Suriname

- The Prime Minister of India met the President of Suriname, Mr Chandrikapersad Santokhi, on the sidelines of the 17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on 9th January 2023.
  - President Santokhi is a Special Guest of Honour at the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas.
- They discussed several issues including cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence, maritime security, digital initiatives and ICT, and capacity building.
- **Suriname is officially known as the Republic of Suriname.**  
**It is bordered by;**
  - The Atlantic Ocean in the North.
  - French Guiana in the East.
  - Guyana in the West.
  - Brazil in the South.
- It is the smallest sovereign state in South America.
- Most of the country's population are the descendants of the slaves and labourers brought in from Africa and Asia.
- It is a tropical country and vegetation is dominated by rainforests.
- It is a developing country with a relatively high level of human development indicators.
- The economy is heavily dependent on its large natural resources, namely bauxite, gold, petroleum, and agricultural products.
- It is the only sovereign country outside of the European continent where Dutch is the official language of Government, administration, etc.



## Guyana

- The Prime Minister of India met the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, on the sidelines of the 17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on 9th January 2023.
  - President Irfaan Ali is the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas.
- They discussed several issues including cooperation in energy, infrastructure development, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology and innovation, and defence cooperation.
- **Guyana is officially known as the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. The country is bordered by;**
  - The Atlantic Ocean in the North.
  - Brazil in the South and Southwest.
  - Venezuela in the West.
  - Suriname in the East.



- It has a wide variety of natural habitats and very high biodiversity. It has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world.
- Nearly 41% of the population lives below the poverty line.
- The country's population is racially and ethnically heterogeneous, with ethnic groups originating from India, Africa, Europe and China, as well as indigenous or aboriginal peoples.
- It is the only South American nation in which English is the official language.
- The main economic activities are agriculture, bauxite and gold mining, timber, shrimp fishing and minerals.

### **"Chunyun" festival**

- **"Chunyun" festival in China is considered the largest annual human migration across the world to celebrate the Lunar New Year.**
- The Chinese Lunar New Year is the most widely celebrated festival in China.
  - It is also known as the Spring Festival.
  - It is based on the lunar calendar.
- The Chinese use the lunar calendar for festivals and other traditional days, However, they follow the Gregorian calendar for business purposes.
  - Each lunar year is represented by one of the 12 zodiac animals – rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig – 2023 is the Year of the Rabbit.
- The Lunar New Year is celebrated around a month after the first day of the Gregorian calendar.
  - Nearly 20% of the world's population celebrates the Lunar New Year, including people in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, and China.
- The Festival also marks the beginning of spring and the end of winter.
- During the holiday, people return to their hometowns and families for a joint celebration, leading to one of the largest movements of humans in the world – "chunyun", simply translated as "spring transportation".
  - Generally, the travel season begins 15 days before the New Year and celebrations last for around 40 days.
  - It ends after 15 days of country-wide festivities that include fireworks and dancing dragons.
  - During this time, airports and railway stations are usually overcrowded and there is heavy traffic on roads.

### **Henley Passport Index 2023**

- Henley Passport Index 2023 **puts India's passport ranked at 85th.**
- The Index is prepared based on data available from the International Air Transport Association.
- The index ranks passports of countries, "according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa."
  - With access to 193 countries, **Japan tops the list as the world's most powerful passport.**
  - Afghanistan is ranked last in the list, its passport giving access to only 27 countries.
- India's access to countries has decreased by one; in 2022 the Indian passport-holders enjoyed visa-free/visa-on-arrival travel to 60 countries, in 2023 this has come down to 59 countries.
- The index also assessed the passports based on how much of the global GDP can be accessed by the passport holder. "By combining Henley Passport Index data and World Bank GDP data, the new research ranks all 199 passports in the world in terms of their Henley Passport Power (HPP) score,"
  - The strongest passport (Japan) allows visa-free travel to 193 countries (85% of the world); a gateway to 98% of the global economy.
  - Afghanistan passport allows the passport holder to have visa-free access to only 1% of the world's economy.
- Despite having the world's fifth-largest economy Indian passport holders can access just 59 destinations worldwide and only 6.7% of the global GDP, of which the country's GDP accounts for around half.
- The report also analyzed the impact that Russia's attack on Ukraine has had on travel.



## Machu Picchu

- **Peru's Government decided to indefinitely shut down the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu.**
  - The Culture Ministry of Peru said that they decided to close the country's most famous tourist attraction to protect the safety of tourists and the population in general.
- Machu Picchu is an Incan citadel set high in the Andes Mountains in Peru, above the Urubamba River valley.
  - It is built in the 15th century and later abandoned.
  - It is famous for its sophisticated dry-stone walls that fuse huge blocks without the use of mortar, and intriguing buildings that play on astronomical alignments and panoramic views.
  - Its exact former use remains a mystery.
- **Peru is a country in western South America.** It lies wholly in the Southern Hemisphere. It is bordered by:
  - Ecuador and Colombia in the North.
  - Brazil in the East.
  - Bolivia in the Southeast.
  - Chile in the South.
- The Andes Mountains run parallel to the Pacific Ocean; they define the three regions traditionally used to describe the country geographically.
- The endorheic basin of Lake Titicaca and the Amazon basin in this region empties into the Atlantic Ocean.
  - Peru contains 4% of the planet's freshwater. The largest lake in Peru, Lake Titicaca between Peru and Bolivia high in the Andes, is also the largest in South America.



## Groningen Gas fields

- **The Netherlands is to close production at Groningen gas fields** by October due to the potential risk of earthquake.
  - The Netherlands for decades was one of Europe's main gas suppliers through the Groningen field until they decided to cut production to limit the seismic risks.
- The Groningen gas field is a natural gas field in Groningen province in the northeastern part of the Netherlands.
  - It is the largest natural gas field in Europe.
  - Revenue from natural gas production was an important source for the country.
- Since 1991 the area is experiencing continuous earthquakes. This led to damage to houses and unrest among residents.
  - Therefore, It was decided to phase out gas extraction from 2014 onwards.
  - The Groningen gas field is expected to be closed between 2025 and 2028.



- The Netherlands (Dutch) is a country located in Northwestern Europe with overseas territories in the Caribbean. The Netherlands borders;
  - Germany in the East
  - Belgium in the South
  - North Sea coastline in the North and West.
- It shares maritime borders with the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium in the North Sea.
- The country's official language is Dutch.
- Amsterdam is the country's most populous city and the nominal capital.
- It was the first country to legalize same-sex marriage in 2001.
- It ranks among the highest in international indices of press freedom, economic freedom, human development and quality of life, as well as happiness.

### Global Gender Gap Index

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) ensured the Union Women and Child Development Minister, Government of India that it will take into account the participation of women at the panchayat level to rank countries in its upcoming Global Gender Gap index.
- According to the ministry, the concern was raised that 'completely ignoring political participation at the panchayat level in India is an unjust view on women empowerment'.
  - The WEF has now agreed to include this for ranking. It will give a more factual picture of women's empowerment in India''.
- The WEF to establish a 'Skills and Gender Parity Accelerator' in India to identify and encourage targeted public-private initiatives to prepare the Indian workforce for the future.
- **The Global Gender Gap Index is released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).**
- The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender equality across 4 key dimensions:
  - Economic Participation and Opportunity.
  - Educational Attainment.
  - Health and Survival.
  - Political Empowerment.
- It measures scores on a 0-to-100 scale, and the score can be interpreted as the distance covered towards achieving gender equality.
- **India ranked 135 among 146 countries** in the recently released Global Gender Gap Index 2022.
  - Iceland ranked at the top and it is the only country to have closed more than 90% of its Gender gap.

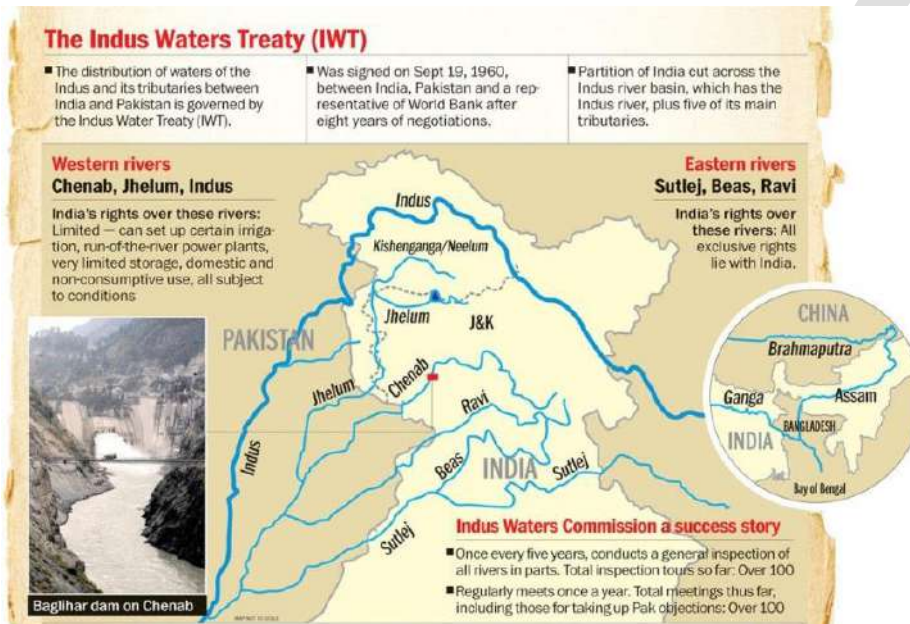
### India and South Africa

- India and South Africa have signed a long-pending agreement to **translocate 12 cheetahs to India.**
- The cheetahs will be transported to India by February-end and reintroduced at the **Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh**, where eight such cats were brought from Namibia in September last year under a similar agreement.
- The initial batch of cheetahs from South Africa will be followed by the transport of batches of 12 annually for the next "eight to 10 years".
- The Memorandum of Understanding on the reintroduction of Cheetahs to India facilitates cooperation between the parties to establish a viable and secure cheetah population in India; promotes conservation and ensures that expertise is shared and exchanged, and capacity is built, to promote cheetah conservation.

### Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- India announced that it wants to modify the 62-year-old Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan, citing what it called Pakistan's "intransigence" in resolving disputes over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects, both in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan, arranged and negotiated by the World Bank, to use the water available in the Indus River and its tributaries. It was signed in Karachi on 19 September 1960 by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistani President Ayub Khan.

- Under the **Indus Water Treaty (IWT) signed between India and Pakistan in 1960**, all the waters of the eastern rivers -- Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi -- amounting to around 33 million acre-feet (MAF) annually is allocated to India for unrestricted use.
- The waters of western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab - amounting to around 135 MAF annually have been assigned largely to Pakistan.
- India is permitted to construct the run of the river plants on western rivers with limited storage as per criteria specified in the treaty.
- Under the provisions of Article VIII(5) of the Indus Waters Treaty, the Permanent Indus Commission is required to meet at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan.
- The Indus is one of the most important drainage systems of the subcontinent of India. It has a length of 2880 Km, of which 709 km lies in India.



### India and Austria

- India and Austria signed several agreements, including in the areas of migration and mobility during **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Vienna**.
  - They also signed the Working Holiday Programme agreement.
- The migration and mobility partnership is set to encourage an increased exchange of students, academics, and researchers migrating for professional and economic reasons.
- A Working Holiday Programme agreement "will allow Indians on holiday in Austria to find employment and work without a work permit for up to six months."
- Austria (European country) is bordered to the north by the Czech Republic, to the northeast by Slovakia, to the east by Hungary, to the south by Slovenia, to the southwest by Italy, to the west by Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and the northwest by Germany.





## ECONOMICS

### Govt extends free import of tur, urad till March 2024

- Concerned with high food inflation, the Central Government allowed the import of tur and urad in 2021.
  - **India Imports these Pulses from Myanmar and Africa.**
- Earlier for the protection of Indian farmers cheap imports of these pulses were restricted with higher import duties.
- Cheap imports affected the Income of Indian farmers, therefore many farmers decided to leave the pulse for more lucrative crops like soybean and cotton.

### Unemployment rate

- **India's unemployment rate rose to 8.30% in December 2022**, the highest in 16 months, from 8.00% in the previous month, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy showed on January 1.
- The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09% in December from 8.96% in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44% from 7.55%, the data showed.
- In December, the unemployment rate rose to 37.4% in Haryana, followed by 28.5% in Rajasthan and 20.8% in Delhi.

### Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) Scheme

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the proposal of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting "Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development" (BIND) Scheme.
- **The Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development is a Central Sector scheme. It is the vehicle for providing financial support to Prasar Bharati** for expenses related to the expansion and upgradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civil work related to the organization.
  - Prasar Bharati, as the public broadcaster of the country, is the most important vehicle of information, education, entertainment and engagement for the people, especially in the remote areas of the country through Doordarshan and All India Radio.

**CABINET DECISION**  
04 JANUARY 2023

3/3

### Broadcasting Infrastructure & Network Development Scheme

Cabinet approves Central Sector Scheme 'Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development' (BIND) with outlay of **Rs. 2,539.61 crore**

**Benefits:**

- ✓ Development of high-quality content for both domestic and international audience
- ✓ Availability of diverse content by upgrading capacity of DTH platform to accommodate more channels
- ✓ Purchase of OB vans and digital upgradation of DD and AIR Studios to make them HD ready



### Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)

- The Union Government launched the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), a new initiative along the lines of the Aspirational District Programme.
  - The Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was announced by the Union Finance Minister in her 2022-23 Budget speech.
- Under the Programme, a total of 500 blocks across the country have been identified based on the recommendations of a four-member committee constituted by the government last year.
- The NITI Aayog, in partnership with the states, will release a quarterly ranking of these blocks based on their performance on development indicators covering sectors such as health, education and nutrition, among others.

### Green Bonds

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that it will, for the first time, issue Sovereign Green Bonds (SgrBs) worth Rs 16,000 crore.
- Green bonds are debt securities specifically destined for the funding or refunding of green projects, i.e. projects that are sustainable and socially responsible in areas as diverse as renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean transportation or responsible waste management.
- They commit the use of the funds obtained to an environmental project or one related to climate change.
- They are issued by any sovereign entity, inter-governmental groups or alliances and corporates.
- Green Bonds finance projects that help reduce the effects of climate change or protect the environment.
- Proceeds from these bonds are utilized for projects classified as environmentally sustainable.
- The very first green bond was issued in 2007 by multilateral institutions European Investment Bank (EIB) and World Bank.

## GREEN BONDS

### MAIN USES



Renewable energy



Energy efficiency



Clean transportation



Responsible waste management

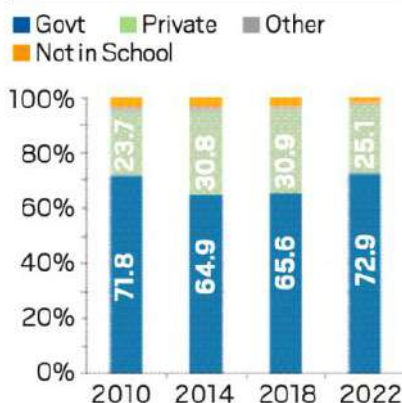
### National Startup Day

- January 16 is observed as National Startup Day every year in India. The event is being celebrated since 2022.
- Startup India was Launched on 16th January 2016, the Startup India Initiative is an initiative of the Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion (DPIIT). It strives to intend to support entrepreneurs, build a robust startup ecosystem and transform India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers.
- Under the Startup India Initiative, the key pillars include
  - Simplification and Handholding - Easier compliance, easier exit process for failed startups, legal support, fast tracking of patent applications and a website to reduce information asymmetry.
  - Funding & Incentives - Exemptions on Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax for eligible startups; a fund of funds to infuse more capital into the startup ecosystem and a credit guarantee scheme.
  - Incubation & Industry-Academia Partnerships - Creation of numerous incubators and innovation labs, events, competitions and grants.

## Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) Report

- Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) survey records trends in school enrollment, attendance, and reading and arithmetic abilities.
  - This year, nearly 7 lakh children in the age group of 6 to 14 across 616 districts were surveyed.
- Despite school closures during the pandemic, the overall enrolment rate for the 6 to 14 age group, increased from 97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022.
  - Attendance patterns haven't changed very much and there is a huge variation in attendance across the country.
- **Government schools have seen a sharp increase in children enrolled from 65.6% in 2018 to 72.9% in 2022.**
  - During Covid, the rural private schools couldn't do much because of their financial issues, but at the same time government schools distributed textbooks, and they often distributed midday meals, this worked as a pull factor in increasing enrolment in government schools.
- At the National level, the proportion of children in classes 1 to 8 taking paid private tuition classes increased from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022.
  - Bihar and Jharkhand are high-tuition states; 70% of children in Bihar and 45% in Jharkhand are taking tuition in 2022 as compared to only 10% of children in Himachal Pradesh and 15% in Maharashtra.
- The percentage of children in Class 3 in government or private schools who were able to read at the level of Class 2 dropped from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022.
  - This decline is visible in every State, and for children in both government and private schools.
- Almost 80% of the schools reported that they have received guidelines and teachers have been trained.
- There is a decline in learning levels since 2018, but again it varies across the country.
  - Drop in reading is more than in math.
- The report suggested integration between the Anganwadi system and the school system is urgently needed to ensure overall learning development.
- **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER):** ASER is an annual survey that aims to provide district-level information on children's enrolment and basic learning.
  - The Survey has been conducted every year since 2005 in all rural districts of India.
  - It is a household-based survey rather than a school-based survey. This enables all children to be included; those who have never been to school or have dropped out, as well as those who are in government schools, private schools, religious schools or anywhere else.
- Information on learning is collected from children in the age group 3-16.
  - Basic household information is also collected.
  - Recently, this has included household size, parental education, and some information on household assets.
- Children in the age group 5-16 are tested in basic reading and basic arithmetic.
- ASER standards have been adopted in several countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Pakistan, Mali and Senegal.

### ALMOST ALL RURAL CHILDREN OF AGES 6-14 ENROLLED IN SCHOOL



### PROPORTION OF KIDS TAKING PAID TUITION HAS INCREASED SINCE 2018

Except in Gujarat, Karnataka, TN, Kerala, Tripura

#### CHANGE > 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS

State	2018	2022	Change
Bihar	62.2%	71.7%	9.6%
Nagaland	25.4%	34.9%	9.4%
Jharkhand	36.9%	45.3%	8.4%
Manipur	45.1%	53.4%	8.3%
UP	15.9%	23.7%	7.9%
Assam	18.8%	25.3%	6.5%
All India	26.4%	30.5%	4.2%

### Survival of the Richest: The India story

- A new report by Oxfam India has again highlighted the sharp rich-poor divide in the country. The Report is titled “Survival of the Richest: The India story”.
- It has been stated that the richest 21 Indian billionaires have more wealth than 700 million Indians.
  - India’s 100 richest can fund the entire Union Budget for more than 18 months.

### Report on State Government Budgets for 2022-23

- The Reserve Bank of India released its report on State Government Budgets for 2022-23.
- The state debt-to-GDP ratio remains uncomfortably high. As per the report, the debt-to-GDP ratio has fallen from 31.1% in 2020-21 – a year when states had struggled to manage the economic fallout of the pandemic – to 29.5% in 2022-23.
- As per the report, interest payments by states rose to 2% of GDP in 2020-21, up from 1.7% in 2017-18. States expect this to come down to 1.8% in 2022-23.
- State governments have seen a significant expansion in their contingent liabilities. Contingent liabilities here refer to the obligations of a state government to repay the principal and interest payments in case a state-owned entity defaults on a loan.

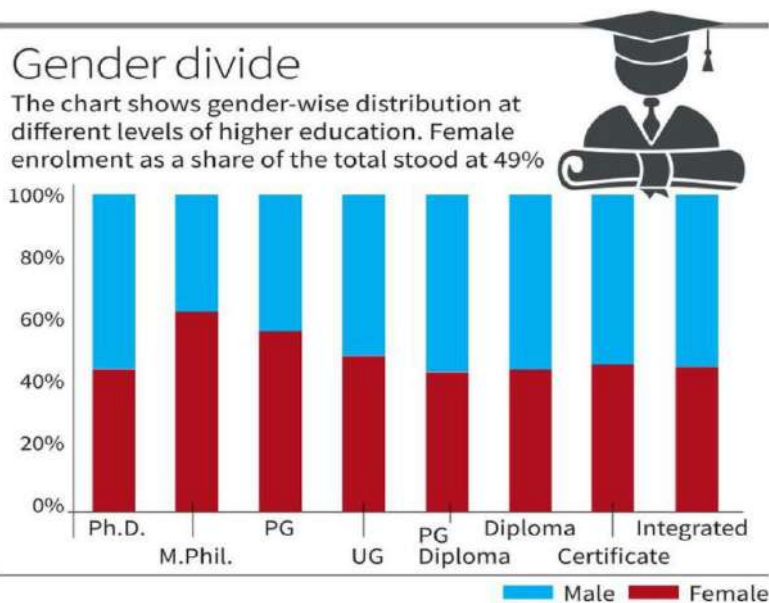
### (T+1) Settlement cycle

- After China, India will become the second country in the world to start the ‘trade-plus-one’ (T+1) settlement cycle in top-listed securities from January 27.
- This is for bringing operational efficiency, faster fund remittances, share delivery, and ease for stock market participants.
- Trade settlement is a two-way process wherein the purchased securities are delivered to the buyer, and the seller receives cash.
- As one buys or sells financial securities, the actual transfer of ownership occurs on the settlement date.
- T+1 (T+2, T+3) are abbreviations that refer to the settlement date of security transactions.
  - The "T" stands for transaction date, which is the day the transaction takes place.
  - The numbers 1, 2, or 3 denote how many days after the transaction date the settlement—or the transfer of money and security ownership—takes place.
  - For determining the T+1 (T+2, T+3) settlement date, the only days counted are those on which the stock market is open.
- The T+1 settlement cycle means that trade-related settlements must be done within a day, or 24 hours, of the completion of a transaction.
- For example, under T+1, if a customer bought shares on Wednesday, they would be credited to the customer’s demat account on Thursday. This is different from T+2, where they will be settled on Friday.
- As many as 25 large-cap and top mid-cap stocks, including Nifty and Sensex stocks, will come under the T+1 settlement.

### All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021

- The Union Ministry of Education has released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021.
  - The Ministry has been conducting the Survey since 2011, it covers higher educational institutions located in India.
  - The survey collects information on different parameters such as student enrollment, teacher data, infrastructural information, financial information etc.
  - In AISHE 2020-21, for the first time, the data was filled in using an entirely online data collection platform developed by the Department of Higher Education through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- In higher education, the total enrollment has increased to nearly 4.14 crore in 2020-21 from 3.85 crores in 2019-20.
- Female enrolment has increased to 2.01 crore from 1.88 crores in 2019-20.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the 18-23 years age group has increased to 27.3 % from 25.6 % in 2019-20.

- Gender Parity Index (GPI), the ratio of female GER to male GER, has increased from 1 in 2017-18 to 1.05 in 2020-21.
- The female enrolment in North East States is 6.14 lakh in 2020-21, higher than the male enrolment of 5.92 lakhs, For every 100 male students, there are 104 female students in North East Region.
- The enrolment in Distance Education is 45.71 Lakh, an increase of around 7% since 2019-20.
- Top 6 states in terms of the number of students enrolled; Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan.
- About 79.06% of the total students are enrolled in undergraduate-level courses and 11.5% are enrolled in postgraduate-level courses.
  - Among Disciplines at the undergraduate level, enrollment is highest in Arts (33.5%), followed by Science (15.5%), Commerce (13.9%) and Engineering & Technology (11.9%).
  - Among streams at the postgraduate level, the maximum number of students are enrolled in Social Science (20.56%) followed by science (14.83%).
- The total number of pass-outs has increased to 95.4 Lakh in 2020-21 as against 94 Lakh in 2019-20.
- **Availability of infrastructural facilities in HEIs in 2020-21:**
  - Libraries in 97%
  - Laboratories in 88%
  - Computer centres in 91%.
  - Skill Development Centre in 61%.
  - Connectivity to National Knowledge Network in 56%.
- During 2020-21, the number of Universities has increased by 70, and the number of Colleges has increased by 1,453.
  - Since 2014-15, an increase of 353 Universities (46.4%).
  - The Institutes of National Importance (INIs) have increased from 75 in 2014-15 to 149 in 2020-21.
- The highest number of Universities is in Rajasthan (92), Uttar Pradesh (84) and Gujarat (83).
- The College Density, the number of colleges per lakh eligible population (population in the age group 18-23 years) has been 31. This was 27 in 2014-15.
  - States with the Highest college density: Karnataka (62), Telangana (53), Kerala (50), and Himachal Pradesh (50).
- Top 8 Districts with the Highest number of Colleges: Bangalore Urban (1058), Jaipur (671), Hyderabad (488).
- The top States in terms of the number of colleges: are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu.
- 43% of universities and 61.4% of colleges are located in Rural Areas.
- Faculty/teachers; about 57.1% are male and 42.9% are female.





### Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

- The Union Cabinet has approved the extension for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase VII) for a further period of 3 months.
- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) is a food security welfare scheme announced by the Government of India in March 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic in India.
- The program is implemented by the Department of Food and Public Distribution under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) is a scheme as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat to supply free food grains to migrants and the poor.
- The objective of the Scheme is to support the poorest citizens of India by providing grain through the Public Distribution System.
- The scale of this welfare scheme makes it the largest food security program in the world.
- PMGKAY provides 5 kg of rice or wheat (according to regional dietary preferences) per person and 1 kg of pulses to each family holding a ration card.

### Grameen Udyami Scheme

- **Grameen Udyami Scheme was launched to expand skill training in tribal communities for their inclusive and sustainable growth.**
  - Under the programme, the initiative was taken to provide multiple skills to India's youth and impart practical skills to them for enabling livelihoods.
- **Main Objectives of the scheme;**
  - Increase in Rural/Local Economy.
  - Enhance employment opportunities.
  - Reduce forced migration due to a lack of local opportunities.
  - Conservation of natural resources.
- The overall aim is to expand the rural/local economy, enhance employment opportunities, reduce forced migration and also lead to the conservation of natural resources.
  - Transportation, boarding & lodging during the learning period is provided to candidates
  - The training under the project will be conducted in the Job roles which are relevant to the local economy.
- It is funded by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) that aims to train tribal students in 6 states: Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Gujarat.

### Short Selling

- Short seller Hindenburg Research has disclosed short positions in Adani Group, alleging stock manipulation and accounting fraud in its latest investigative report.
- **"Buy low, sell high" is the traditional investment strategy in which one buys a stock or security at a particular price and then sells it when the price is higher**, thereby booking a profit. This is referred to as a "long position", and is based on the view that the price of the stock or security will appreciate with time.
- Short selling, or shorting, on the other hand, is a trading strategy based on the expectation that the price of the security will fall. While fundamentally it is based on the "buy low, sell high" approach, the sequence of transactions is reversed in short selling – to sell high first and buy low later.
- Investors, who short-sell stocks, expect share prices to drop on a future date and aim to capitalize on this prediction.
- Since it depends on speculation and entails infinite risk theoretically, only seasoned investors partake in short selling.
- When prices drop, traders make a profit from the difference between the selling price and the purchasing price.
- Also, in short selling, the trader usually does not own the securities he sells, but merely borrows them.

- In the stock market, traders usually short stocks by selling shares they have borrowed from others through brokerages. When the price of the shares falls to the expected levels, the trader would purchase the shares at the lower price and return them to the owner, booking a profit in the process. If, however, the price of the shares appreciates instead of falling, the trader will be forced to buy shares at a higher price to return to the owner, thereby booking a loss.



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## BUDGET 2023-24

### Context

Union Budget 2023-24 presented by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs outlined the vision of Amrit Kaal which shall reflect an empowered and inclusive economy. The Budget anticipates a prosperous and inclusive India, in which the fruits of development reach all regions and citizens, especially the youth, women, farmers, OBCs, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

### PART-A

#### Resilience amidst multiple crises

- India's rising global profile is due to several accomplishments like unique World Class Digital Public Infrastructure namely, Aadhaar, Co-Win and UPI; the COVID-19 vaccination drive in unparalleled scale and speed; proactive roles in frontier areas such as achieving climate-related goals, mission LiFE, and National Hydrogen Mission.
- The Government is implementing, **from 1st January 2023, a scheme to supply free food grain to all Antyodaya and priority households for the next year, under PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).**
  - The entire expenditure of about Rs 2 lakh crore will be borne by the Central Government.
- In the 75th year of India's Independence, the World has recognized the Indian Economy as a 'bright star' as the Economic Growth is estimated at 7 per cent, which is the highest among all major economies, despite the massive global slowdown caused by COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine War.

#### Achievements since 2014: Leaving no one behind

- **Per capita income has more than doubled to Rs 1.97 lakh.**
- The Indian economy has increased in size from being 10th to 5th largest in the world.
- Moreover, the economy has become a lot more formalized as reflected in the EPFO membership, more than doubling to 27 crores, and 7,400 crore digital payments of Rs 126 lakh crore through UPI in 2022.
- The efficient implementation of many schemes, with the universalisation of targeted benefits, has resulted in inclusive development and listed some of the schemes such as;
  - 11.7 crore household toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
  - 9.6 crore LPG connections under Ujjawala.
  - 220 crore Covid vaccinations of 102 crore persons.
  - 47.8 crore PM Jan Dhan Bank Accounts.
  - Insurance cover for 44.6 crore persons under PM Suraksha Bima and PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana.
  - Cash transfer of Rs 2.2 lakh crore to over 11.4 crore farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.



#### VISION FOR AMRIT KAAL - AN EMPOWERED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

- Vision for Amrit Kaal includes a technology-driven and knowledge-based economy with strong public finances, and a robust financial sector. To achieve this, Jan Bhagidari through Sabka Saath Sabka Prayas is essential.
- **The economic agenda for achieving this vision would focus on three priorities:**
  - Facilitating ample opportunities for citizens, especially the youth, to fulfil their aspirations.
  - Providing a strong impetus to growth and job creation.
  - Strengthening macro-economic stability

## Vision for Amrit Kaal



To service these focus areas in the country's journey to India@100, the budget identifies four transformative opportunities:-

- **Economic Empowerment of Women through SHGs:** Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission has achieved remarkable success by mobilizing rural women into 81 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs).
  - We will enable these groups to reach the next stage of economic empowerment through the formation of large producer enterprises or collectives each having several thousand members and managed professionally.
  - They will be helped with the supply of raw materials and for better design, quality, branding and marketing of their products.
  - Through supporting policies, they will be enabled to scale up their operations to serve the large consumer markets, as has been the case with several start-ups growing into "Unicorns".
- **PM VishwakarmaKAushal Samman (PM VIKAS):** Union Finance Minister announced a new scheme for the traditional artisans and craftspeople, generally referred to as Vishwakarma. The new scheme will:
  - Enable them to improve the quality, scale and reach of their products, integrating them with the MSME value chain.
  - Include not only financial support but also access to advanced skill training, knowledge of modern digital techniques and efficient green technologies, brand promotion, linkage with local and global markets, digital payments, and social security.
  - Greatly benefit the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, women and people belonging to the weaker sections.
- **Tourism Promotion in Mission Mode:** The promotion of tourism will be taken up in mission mode, with the active participation of states, a convergence of government programmes and public-private partnerships.
- **Green Growth:** India is implementing many programmes for green fuel, green energy, green farming, green mobility, green buildings, and green equipment, and policies for efficient use of energy across various economic sectors.
  - These green growth efforts help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy and provide for largescale green job opportunities.



## SAPTARISHI: SEVEN GUIDING PRIORITIES OF BUDGET 2023-24

- The first budget in Amrit Kaal will be guided by seven priorities that complement each other and act as the "Saptarishi".



### PRIORITY 1: Inclusive Development

- Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas**
  - A key theme of Union Budget 2023-24 is the focus on inclusive development covering in specific; farmers, women, youth, OBCs, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, divyangjan and economically weaker sections, and overall priority for the underprivileged (vanchiton ko varyiyata). There has also been a sustained focus on Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and the Northeast.
- Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture**
  - Digital Public infrastructure for agriculture will be built as an open source, open standard and interoperable public good.
  - This will enable inclusive, farmer-centric solutions through relevant information services for crop planning and health, improved access to farm inputs, credit, and insurance, help for crop estimation, market intelligence, and support for the growth of the agri-tech industry and start-ups.
- Agriculture Accelerator Fund**
  - Agriculture Accelerator Fund will be set up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas, which will aim at bringing innovative and affordable solutions for challenges faced by farmers. It will also bring in modern technologies to transform agricultural practices and increase productivity and profitability.
- Enhancing the productivity of cotton crop**
  - To enhance the productivity of extra-long staple cotton, Government will adopt a cluster-based and value chain approach through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). This will mean collaboration between farmers, the state and industry for input supplies, extension services, and market linkages.
- Atmanirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme**
  - The Government will launch an Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme to boost the availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high-value horticultural crops at an outlay of Rs 2,200 crore.

• **Global Hub for Millets: ‘Shree Anna’**

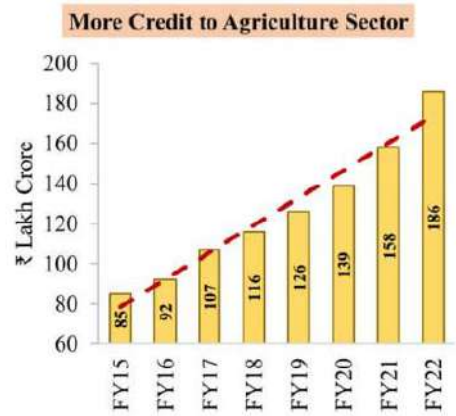
- India is the largest producer and second largest exporter of „Shree Anna“ in the world as it grows several types of 'Shree Anna' such as jowar, ragi, bajra, kuttu, ramdana, kangni, kutki, kodo, cheena, and sama.
- To make India a global hub for 'Shree Anna', the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level.

• **Agriculture Credit**

- The agriculture credit target will be increased to Rs 20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries.
- The government will launch a new sub-scheme of PM MatsyaSampada Yojana with a targeted investment of Rs 6,000 crore to further enable activities of fishermen, fish vendors, and micro & small enterprises, improve value chain efficiencies and expand the market.

• **Cooperation**

- For farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, and other marginalized sections, the government is promoting a cooperative-based economic development model. A new Ministry of Cooperation was formed with a mandate to realize the vision of “Sahakar Se Samriddhi”.
- To realise this vision, the government has already initiated the computerization of 63,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) with an investment of Rs 2,516 crore.
  - A national cooperative database is being prepared for the country-wide mapping of cooperative societies.
- The government will implement a plan to set up massive decentralized storage capacity, which will help farmers store their produce and realize remunerative prices through sales at appropriate times.
- The government will also facilitate the setting up of a large number of multipurpose cooperative societies, primary fishery societies and dairy cooperative societies in uncovered panchayats and villages in the next 5 years.



**Agriculture and Cooperatives**

**Building Digital Public Infrastructure**  
Building an accessible, inclusive and informative solution for Farmers



**Setting up Agriculture Accelerator Fund**  
For encouraging innovative start-ups in rural areas

**ANB\* Horticulture Clean Plant Program to be launched**  
To boost production of high value horticultural crops



**Targeted Funding**  
₹20 lakh crore agricultural credit targeted at Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries sector

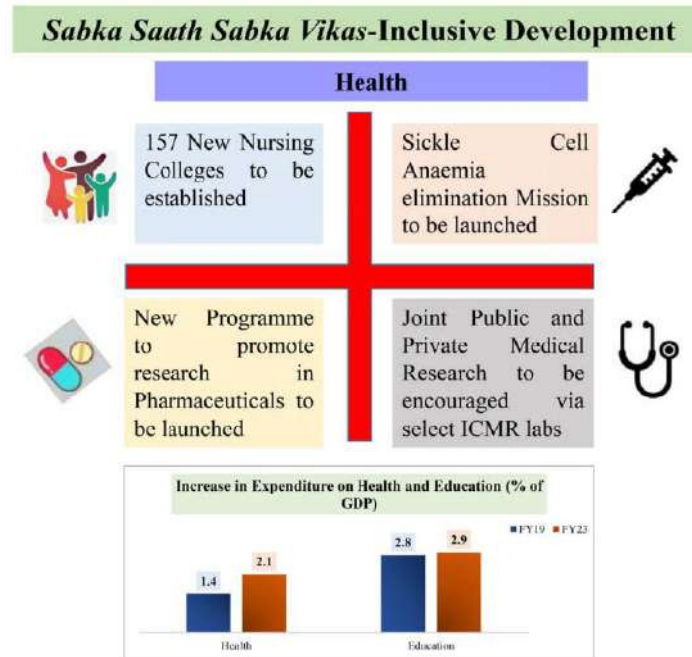
**Making India Global Hub For Millets: ‘Sree Anna’**  
Support to be given to IIMR^, Hyderabad for promoting research



**Setting-up of widely available storage capacity**  
Will enhance Farmers’ remuneration by enabling sale at appropriate times

• **Health, Education and Skilling**

- 157 new nursing colleges will be established in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established in 2014.
- A mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047 will be launched, which will entail awareness creation, universal screening of 7 crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas, and counselling through collaborative efforts of central ministries and state governments.
- Facilities in select ICMR Labs will be made available for research by public and private medical college faculty and private sector R&D teams for encouraging collaborative research and innovation.
- A new programme to promote research and innovation in pharmaceuticals will be taken up through centres of excellence.
- The government will also encourage the industry to invest in research and development in specific priority areas.



• **Teachers' Training**

- Teachers' training will be re-envisioned through innovative pedagogy, curriculum transaction, continuous professional development, dipstick surveys, and ICT implementation.
- District Institutes of Education and Training will be developed as vibrant institutes of excellence for this purpose.
- National Digital Library for Children and Adolescents will be set up for facilitating the availability of quality books across geographies, languages, genres and levels, and device-agnostic accessibility.
- States will be encouraged to set up physical libraries for them at panchayat and ward levels and provide infrastructure for accessing the National Digital Library resources.
- To build a culture of reading, and to make up for pandemic-time learning loss, the National Book Trust, Children's Book Trust and other sources will be encouraged to provide and replenish non-curricular titles in regional languages and English to these physical libraries.

**PRIORITY 2: Reaching the Last Mile**

• **Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme**

- The government has recently launched the Aspirational Blocks Programme covering 500 blocks for the saturation of essential government services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure.

• **Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission**

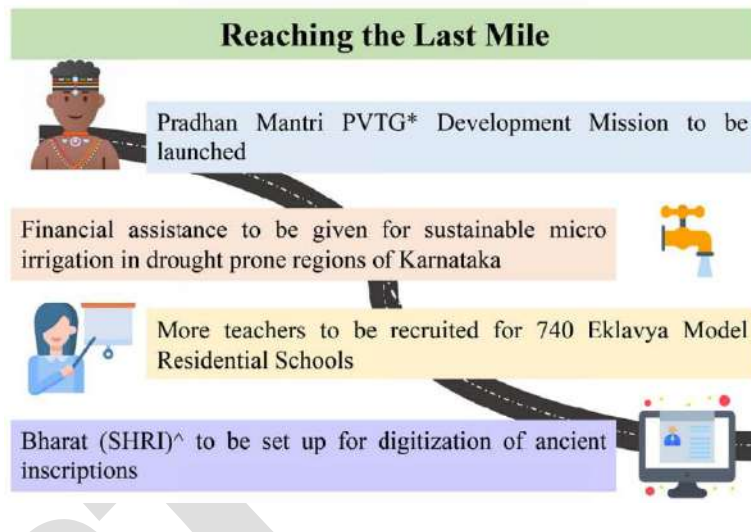
- Pradhan Mantri PVTG (Particularly vulnerable tribal group) Development Mission will be launched. This will saturate PVTG families and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- An amount of Rs 15,000 crore will be made available to implement the Mission in the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes.
- In the next three years, the centre will recruit 38,800 teachers and support staff for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, serving 3.5 lakh tribal students.

• **Water for Drought Prone Region**

- In the drought-prone central region of Karnataka, central assistance of Rs 5,300 crore will be given to Upper Bhadra Project to provide sustainable micro irrigation and filling up of surface tanks for drinking water.

• **PM Awas Yojana:** The outlay for PM Awas Yojana is being enhanced by 66 per cent to over Rs 79,000 crore.

• **Others:** “Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions” will be set up in a digital epigraphy museum, with the digitization of one lakh ancient inscriptions in the first stage.

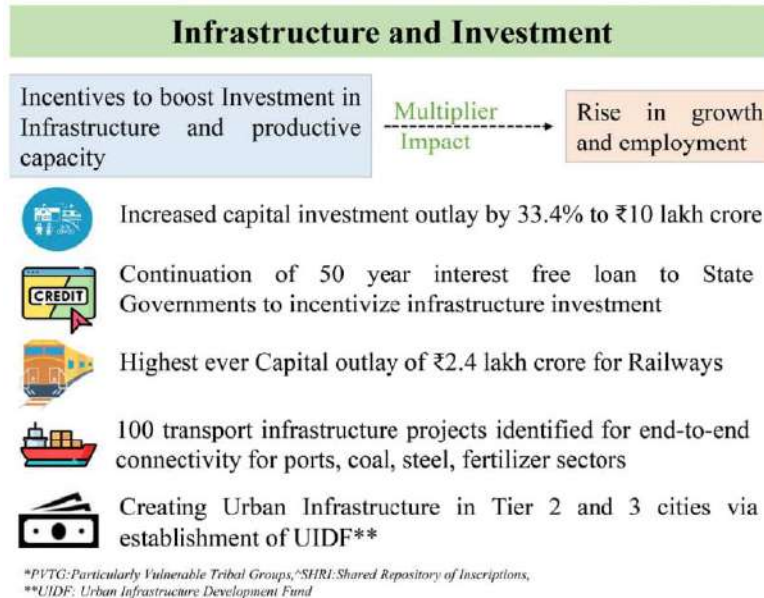


**PRIORITY 3: Infrastructure & Investment**

- Investments in Infrastructure and productive capacity have a large multiplier impact on growth and employment and in view of this capital investment outlay is being increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33% to Rs 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3% of GDP.
  - This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20. The “Effective Capital Expenditure” of the Centre is budgeted at Rs 13.7 lakh crore, which will be 4.5% of GDP.
- **Support to State Governments for Capital Investment**
  - The Government has decided to continue the 50-year interest-free loan to state governments for one more year to spur investment in infrastructure and to incentivize them for complementary policy actions, with a significantly enhanced outlay of Rs 1.3 lakh crore.
- **Railways**
  - A capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore has been provided for the Railways, which is the highest ever outlay and about 9 times the outlay made in 2013-14.
- **Others**
  - One hundred critical transport infrastructure projects, for last and first-mile connectivity for ports, coal, steel, fertilizer, and food grains sectors have been identified and they will be taken up on priority with an investment of Rs 75,000 crore, including Rs 15,000 crore from private sources.
  - Fifty additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advanced landing grounds will be revived for improving regional air connectivity.

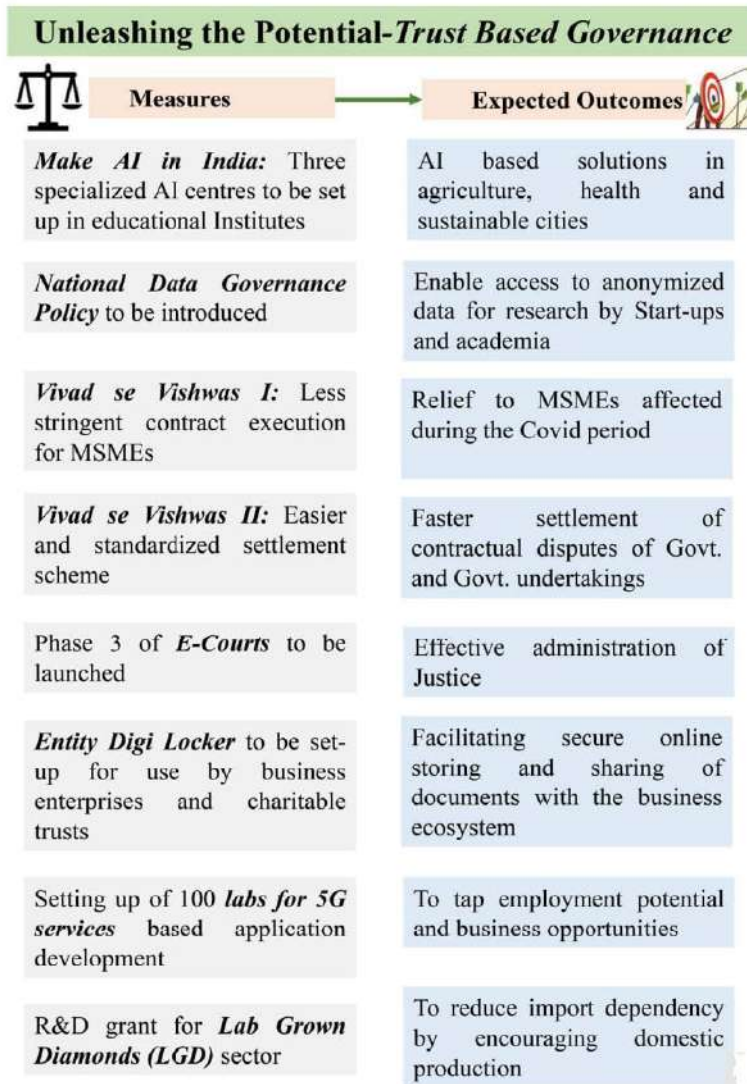


- Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) will be established through the use of priority sector lending the shortfall, which will be managed by the National Housing Bank and will be used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- States will be encouraged to leverage resources from the grants of the 15th Finance Commission, as well as existing schemes, to adopt appropriate user charges while accessing the UIDF.
- The Government will make available Rs 10,000 crore per annum for this purpose.



#### **PRIORITY 4: Unleashing the Potential**

- For enhancing the ease of doing business, more than 39,000 compliances have been reduced and more than 3,400 legal provisions have been decriminalized. For furthering trust-based governance, Government has introduced the Jan Vishwas Bill to amend 42 Central Acts.
- **Centres of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence**
  - For realizing the vision of “Make A-I in India and Make A-I work for India”, three centres of excellence for Artificial Intelligence will be set up in top educational institutions.
  - Leading industry players will partner in conducting interdisciplinary research, and develop cutting-edge applications and scalable problem solutions in the areas of agriculture, health, and sustainable cities, which will galvanize an effective A-I ecosystem and nurture quality human resources in the field.
- **National Data Governance Policy**
  - To unleash innovation and research by start-ups and academia, a National Data Governance Policy will be brought out, which will enable access to anonymized data.
  - An Entity DigiLocker will be set up for use by MSMEs, large businesses and charitable trusts for storing and sharing documents online securely, whenever needed, with various authorities, regulators, banks and other business entities.
  - One hundred labs for developing applications using 5G services will be set up in engineering institutions to realize a new range of opportunities, business models, and employment potential.
    - The labs will cover, among others, applications such as smart classrooms, precision farming, intelligent transport systems, and health care applications.



**PRIORITY 5: Green Growth**

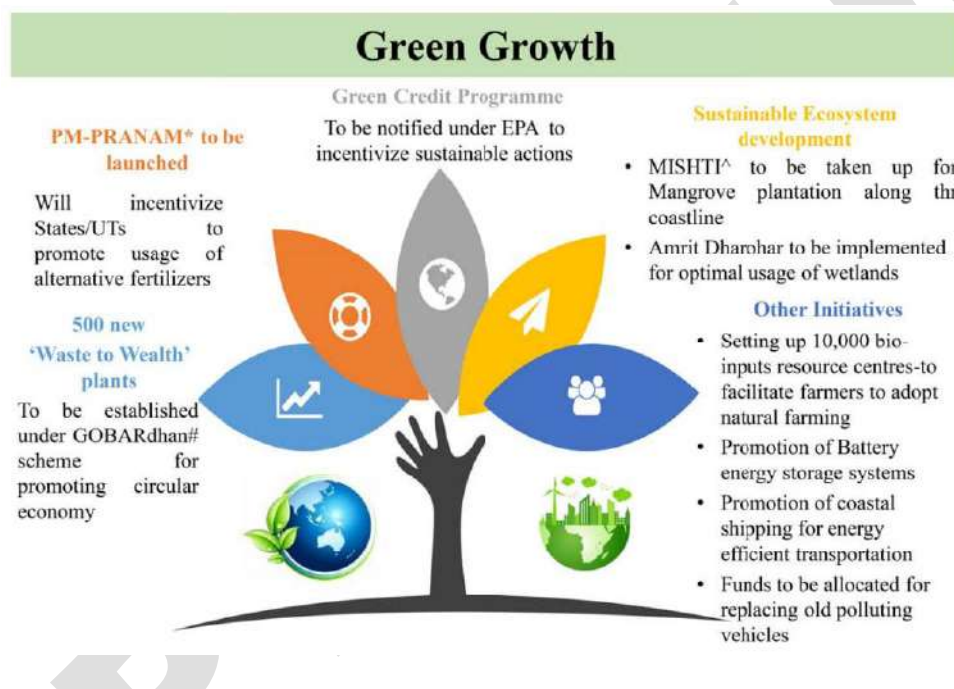
- Prime Minister has given a vision for “LiFE”, or Lifestyle for Environment, to spur a movement toward an environmentally conscious lifestyle. **India is moving forward firmly for the “panchamrit” and net-zero carbon emission by 2070 to usher in a green industrial and economic transition.**
- The recently launched National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of Rs 19,700 crores, will facilitate the transition of the economy to low carbon intensity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, and make the country assume technology and market leadership in this sunrise sector. The target is to reach an annual production of 5 MMT by 2030.
- The Budget also provides Rs 35,000 crore for priority capital investments towards energy transition and net zero objectives and energy security by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- To steer the economy on the sustainable development path, Battery Energy Storage Systems with a capacity of 4,000 MWH will be supported with Viability Gap Funding.
- The Inter-state transmission system for evacuation and grid integration of 13 GW of renewable energy from Ladakh will be constructed with an investment of Rs 20,700 crore including central support of Rs 8,300 crore.

## GOBARdhan scheme

- 500 new “waste to wealth” plants under GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme will be established for promoting a circular economy. These will include 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas, and 300 community or cluster-based plants a total investment of Rs 10,000 crore.
- A 5% CBG mandate will be introduced for all organizations marketing natural and biogas and for the collection of bio-mass and distribution of bio-manure, appropriate fiscal support will be provided.

## Bhartiya PrakritikKheti Bio-Input Resource Centres

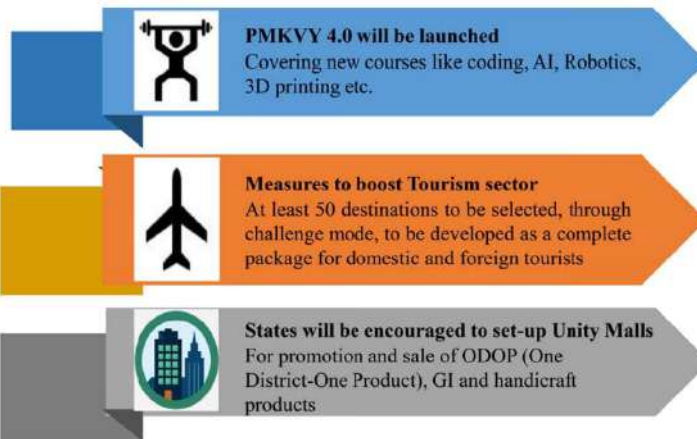
- Over the next 3 years, the Centre will facilitate one crore farmers to adopt natural farming. For this, 10,000 BioInput Resource Centres will be set up, creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.
- In furtherance of the vehicle scrapping policy mentioned in Budget 2021-22, she has allocated adequate funds to scrap old vehicles of the Central Government and States will also be supported in replacing old vehicles and ambulances.



## PRIORITY 6: Youth Power

- To empower the youth and help the “Amrit Peedhi” realize their dreams, Government has formulated the National Education Policy, focused on skills, adopted economic policies that facilitate job creation at scale, and supported business opportunities.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 will be launched to skill lakhs of youth within the next three years.
  - On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses with the needs of the industry will be emphasized.
  - The scheme will also cover new-age courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.
- To skill the youth for international opportunities, 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up across different States.
- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme**
  - To provide stipend support to 47 lakh youth in three years, Direct Benefit Transfer under a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme will be rolled out.
- **Unity Mall**
  - States will be encouraged to set up a Unity Mall in their state capital or most prominent tourism centre or the financial capital for the promotion and sale of their ODOPs (one district, one product), GI products and other handicraft products, and for providing space for such products of all other states.

### Amrit Peedhi - Youth Power



\* PRANAM: PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth  
^ MISHTI: Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes  
# GOBARdhan: Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro resources Dhan

### PRIORITY 7: Financial Sector

#### Credit Guarantee for MSMEs

- The Finance Minister said that last year, she proposed revamping the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs and announced that the revamped scheme will take effect from 1st April 2023 through the infusion of Rs 9,000 crore in the corpus.
  - This will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore. Further, the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1 per cent.
- A National Financial Information Registry will be set up to serve as the central repository of financial and ancillary information.
  - This will facilitate the efficient flow of credit, promote financial inclusion, and foster financial stability.
  - A new legislative framework will govern this credit public infrastructure, and it will be designed in consultation with the RBI.
- A Central Processing Centre will be set up for faster response to companies through centralized handling of various forms filed with field offices under the Companies Act.
- A one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be made available for two years up to March 2025.
  - This will offer a deposit facility of up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenor of 2 years at a fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with a partial withdrawal option.

### Financial Sector

#### Setting up of National Financial Information registry

To enable efficient lending, promote financial inclusion and enhance financial stability

#### Setting up of a Central Data processing Centre

For faster handling of administrative work under the Companies Act

#### Credit Guarantee scheme for MSMEs

Expanded corpus under a revamped scheme to enable additional collateral free guaranteed credit of ₹2 lakh crore

#### Mahila Samman Bachat Patra

One-time new small savings scheme for a 2-year period with a deposit facility of up to ₹2 lakh for women

#### Benefits for Senior Citizens

Enhanced maximum deposit limit for senior citizens savings scheme from ₹15 lakh to ₹30 lakh

#### Other Initiatives

- Initiatives to promote business activities in GIFT IFSC
- Create more trained professionals in Securities Markets via award of educational certificates

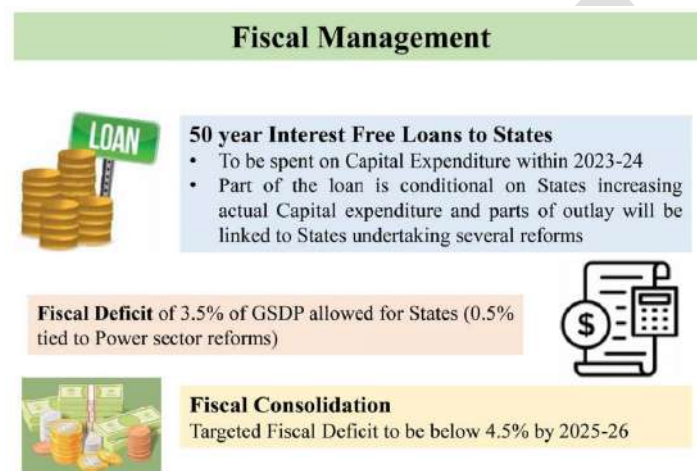


### Senior Citizens

- The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh.
- The maximum deposit limit for Monthly Income Account Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 4.5 lakh to Rs 9 lakh for a single account and from Rs 9 lakh to Rs 15 lakh for a joint account.

### Fiscal Management

- Fifty-year interest-free loan to States
- The entire fifty-year loan to states has to be spent on capital expenditure within 2023-24. Most of this will be at the discretion of states, but a part will be conditional on states increasing their actual capital expenditure.
- Parts of the outlay will also be linked to, or allocated for, the following purposes: Scrapping old government vehicles, Urban planning reforms and actions, Financing reforms in urban local bodies to make them, creditworthy for municipal bonds, Housing for police personnel above or as part of police stations, Constructing Unity Malls, Children and adolescents’ libraries and digital infrastructure and State share of capital expenditure of central schemes.



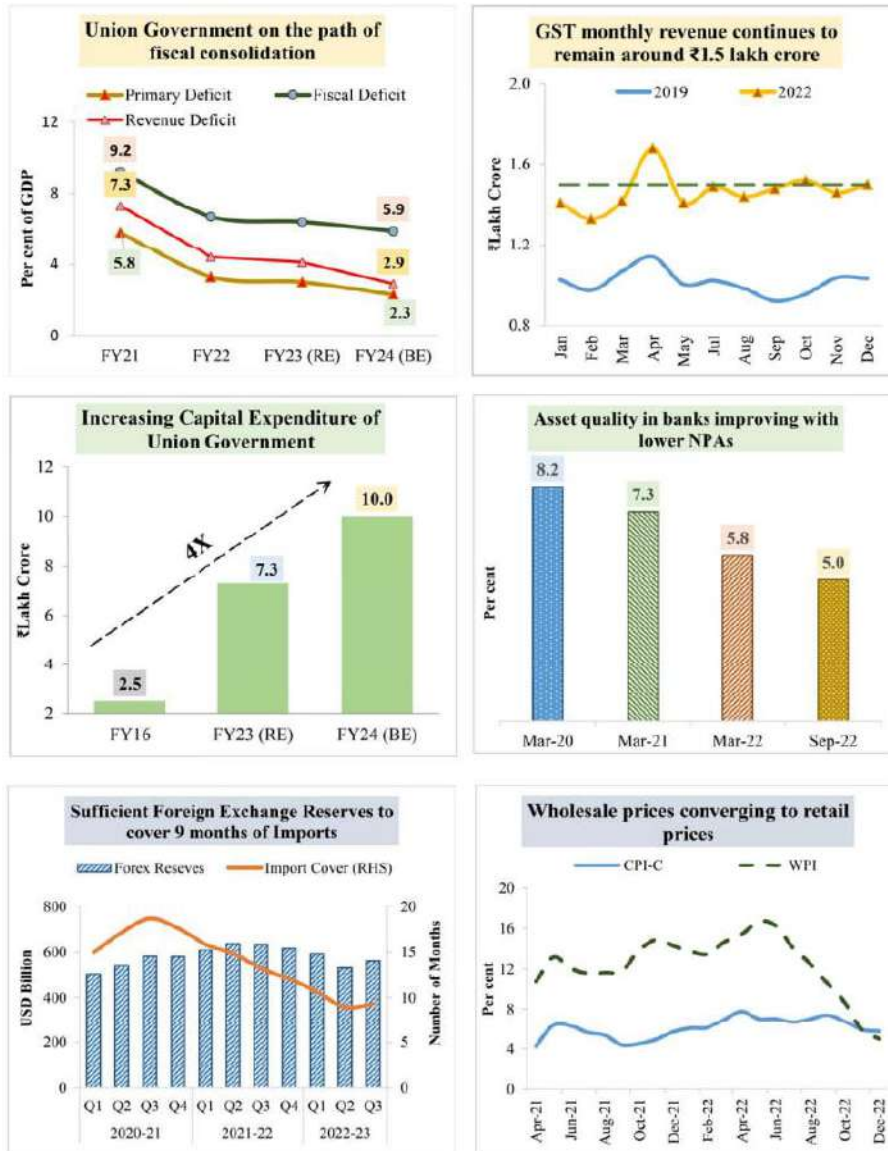
### Revised Estimates

- The Revised Estimate of the total receipts other than borrowings is Rs 24.3 lakh crore, of which the net tax receipts are Rs 20.9 lakh crore.
- The Revised Estimate of the total expenditure is Rs 41.9 lakh crore, of which the capital expenditure is about Rs 7.3 lakh crore.
- Similarly, the Revised Estimate of the fiscal deficit is 6.4% of GDP, adhering to the Budget Estimate.

### Budget Estimates

- The total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at Rs 27.2 lakh crore and Rs 45 lakh crore respectively. The net tax receipts are estimated at Rs 23.3 lakh crore.
- The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 5.9% of GDP.
- Government plans to continue the path of fiscal consolidation, reaching a fiscal deficit below 4.5% by 2025-26 with a fairly steady decline over the period.
- The Government has adhered to this path and reiterated to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26.
- To finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24, the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at Rs 11.8 lakh crore.
  - The balance financing is expected to come from small savings and other sources.
  - The gross market borrowings are estimated at Rs 15.4 lakh crore.

## Indian Economy backed by strong macroeconomic fundamentals

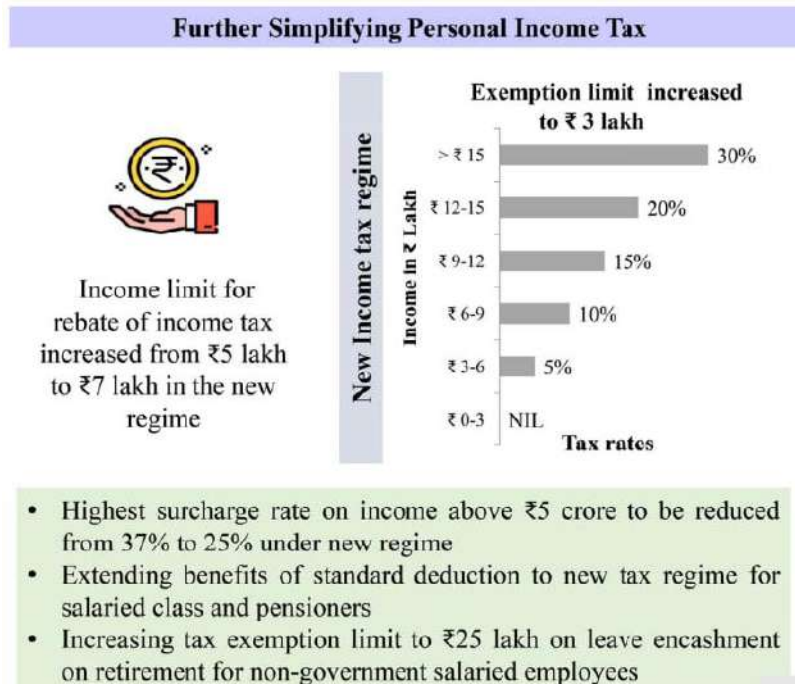


### PART B

**Personal Income Tax:** There are five major announcements relating to personal income tax.

- The rebate limit in the new tax regime has been increased to ₹ 7 lakhs, meaning that peons in the new tax regime with income up to ₹ 7 lakhs will not have to pay any tax.
- The tax structure in the new personal tax regime has been changed by reducing the number of slabs from 6 to 5 and increasing the tax exemption limit to ₹ 3 lakh.
  - This will provide major relief to all taxpayers in the new regime.
- The benefit of standard deduction has been extended to the salaried class and the pensioners including family pensioners under the new tax regime.
  - A salaried individual will get a standard deduction of ₹ 50,000 and a pensioner ₹ 15,000 as per the proposal.
  - Each salaried person with an income of ₹ 15.5 lakhs or more will thus gain ₹ 52,500, from the above proposals.
- The highest surcharge rate in personal income tax has been reduced from 37% to 25% in the new tax regime for income above ₹2 crores. This would result in the maximum tax rate of personal income tax coming down to 39% which was earlier 42.74%.

- The limit of tax exemption on leave encashment on the retirement of non-government salaried employees has been increased from ₹3 lakhs to ₹25 lakhs.
- The new income tax regime has been made the default tax regime. However, the citizens will continue to have the option to avail the benefit of the old tax regime.



### Indirect Tax Proposals

- The indirect tax proposals announced in the budget emphasized simplification of the tax structure with fewer tax rates to help in reducing the compliance burden and improving tax administration.
- The number of basic customs duty rates on goods, other than textiles and agriculture, has been reduced from 21 to 13.
- There are minor changes in the basic customs duties, cesses and surcharges on items including toys, bicycles, automobiles and naphtha.

### Common IT Return Form

- The Union Budget also proposes to roll out a next-generation common IT return form for taxpayer convenience.
- It also stipulates a plan to strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism for direct taxes.
- The Deployment of about 100 Joint Commissioners for disposals of small appeals indirect tax matters.

### Better targeting of tax concessions

- For better targeting of tax concessions and exemptions, deduction from capital gains on investment in the residential houses has been capped at ₹ 10 crores.
- Income tax exemption from proceeds of insurance policies with very high value will also have a limit.

### Proposals relating to MSMEs

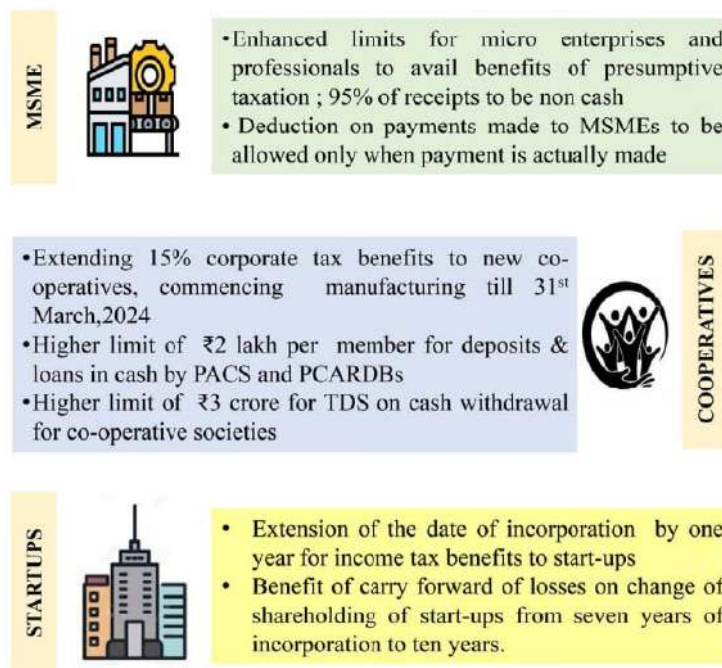
- Describing MSMEs as growth engines of our economy, the Budget proposes enhanced limits for micro-enterprises and certain professionals for availing the benefit of presumptive taxation.
- To support MSMEs in timely receipt of payments, the Budget allows a deduction for expenditure incurred on payments made to them only when payment is made.

## Cooperation

- New cooperatives that commence manufacturing activities by 31st March next year shall benefit from a lower tax rate of 15%.
- The Budget provides an opportunity for sugar cooperatives to claim payments made to sugarcane farmers for the period before the assessment year 2016-17 as an expenditure.
- A higher limit of ₹ 2 lakhs per member has been provided for cash deposits and loans in cash by Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks.
- The Budget proposes a higher limit of ₹ 3 crores for TDS on cash withdrawal for cooperative societies.

## Start-ups

- The Budget proposes to extend the date of incorporation for income tax benefits to start-ups from 31.03.2023 to 31.03.2024.
- It also provides the benefit of carrying forward losses on change of shareholding of start-ups from 7 years of incorporation to 10 years.



## Amendments in CGST Act

- The Budget provides for amending the CGST Act to raise the minimum threshold of tax amount for launching prosecution under GST from ₹ 1 crore to ₹ 2 crores, except for the offence of issuance of invoices without a supply of goods and services or both.
- The compounding amount will be reduced from the present range of 50 to 150% of the tax amount to the range of 25 to 100%.
- It will also decriminalize certain clauses of the Act like obstruction and preventing any officer from discharging his duties, deliberate tempering of evidence or failure to supply the information.

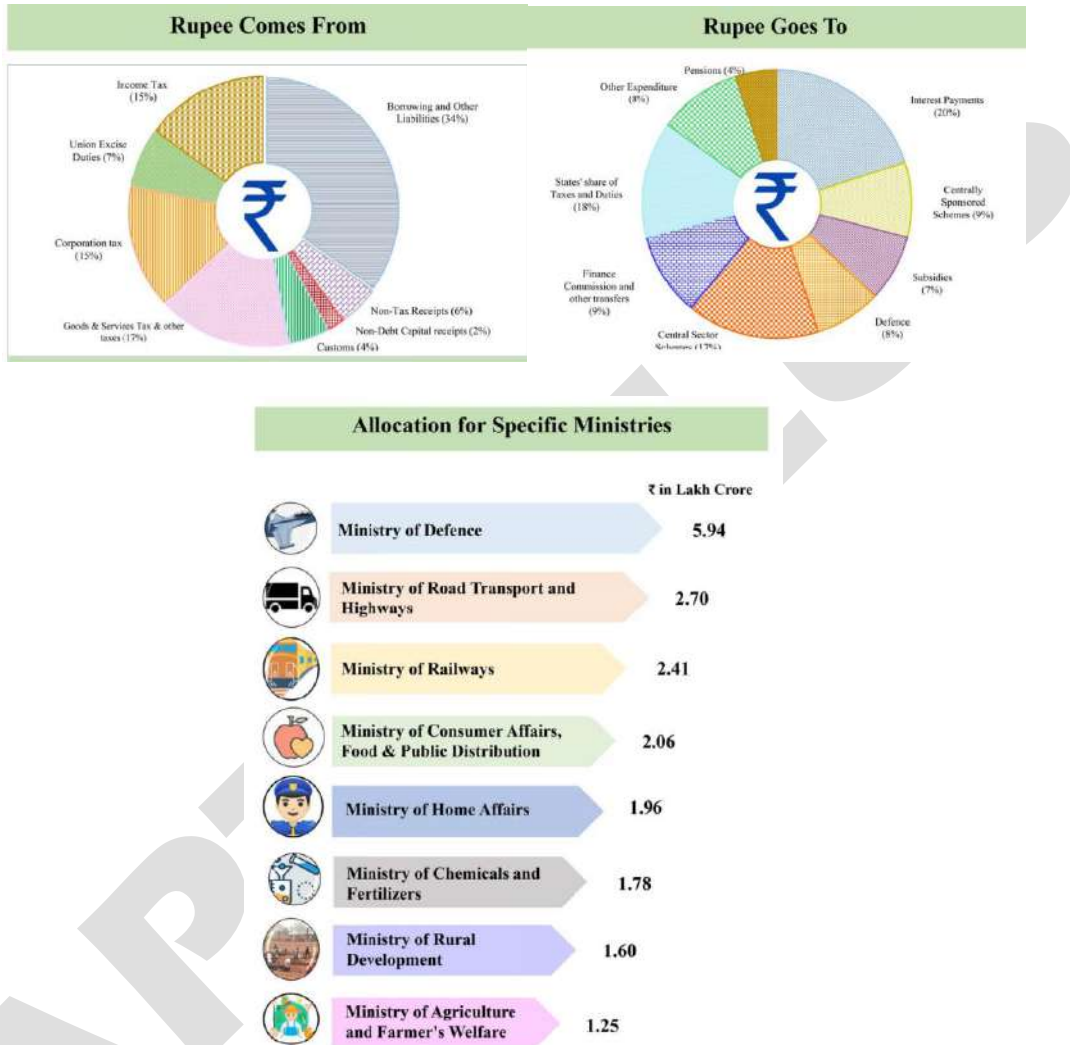
## Implications of tax changes

- Announcing the changes in the direct and indirect taxes, the Finance Minister said that revenue of about ₹ 38,000 crores will be foregone as a result of these proposals, while revenue of about ₹3,000 crores will be additionally mobilised.
- Thus the total revenue foregone is about ₹35,000 crores annually on account of these proposals.



### Budget Estimates 2023-24:

- The total receipts other than borrowings are estimated at Rs 27.2 lakh crore and the total expenditure is estimated at Rs 45 lakh crore.
- The net tax receipts are estimated at Rs 23.3 lakh crore.
- The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 5.9% of GDP.
- To finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24, the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at Rs 11.8 lakh crore.
- The gross market borrowings are estimated at Rs 15.4 lakh crore.



### Highlights of the Budget

- Per capita income has more than doubled to ₹1.97 lakhs in around nine years.
- The Indian economy has increased in size from being 10th to 5th largest in the world in the past nine years.
- Seven priorities of the budget 'Saptarishi' are; Inclusive development, reaching the last mile, infrastructure and investment, unleashing the potential, green growth, youth power and financial sector.
- Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program with an outlay of ₹2200 crore to be launched to boost the availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high-value horticultural crops.
- Centre to recruit 38,800 teachers and support staff for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, serving 3.5 lakh tribal students over the next three years.
- The outlay for PM Awas Yojana is being enhanced by 66% to over Rs. 79,000 crores (The highest budget among all schemes).













- Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) will be established through the use of priority Sector Lending shortfall, which will be managed by the national Housing Bank, and will be used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- 100 labs to be set up for 5G services-based application development to realize a new range of opportunities, business models, and employment potential.
- 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under the GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme to be established for promoting a circular economy at a total investment of Rs 10,000 crore.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, to be launched to skill lakhs of youth within the next three years covering new age courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.
- 30 Skill India International Centre to be set up across different States to skill the youth for international opportunities.
- The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme is to be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh.
- Agriculture Accelerator Fund to be set up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- To make India a global hub for 'Shree Anna', the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level.
- ₹20 lakh crore agricultural credit targeted at animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries
- A new sub-scheme of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana with a targeted investment of ₹6,000 crores is to be launched to further enable activities of fishermen, fish vendors, and micro & small enterprises, improve value chain efficiencies and expand the market.
- Sickle Cell Anaemia elimination mission to be launched.
- Aspirational Blocks Programme covering 500 blocks launched for saturation of essential government services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure.
- 15,000 crores for implementation of the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission over the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes.
- A National Digital Library for Children and Adolescents to be set-up for facilitating the availability of quality books across geographies, languages, genres and levels, and device-agnostic accessibility.
- Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions' to be set up in a digital epigraphy museum, with the digitization of one lakh ancient inscriptions in the first stage.
- Continuation of a 50-year interest-free loan to state governments for one more year to spur investment in infrastructure and to incentivize them for complementary policy actions.
- Encouragement to states and cities to undertake urban planning reforms and actions to transform our cities into 'sustainable cities of tomorrow'.
- The transition from manhole to machine-hole mode by enabling all cities and towns to undertake 100% mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers.
- iGOT Karmayogi, an integrated online training platform, was launched to provide continuous learning opportunities for lakhs of government employees to upgrade their skills and facilitate people-centric
- Jan Vishwas Bill to amend 42 Central Acts has been introduced to further trust-based governance.
- Three centres of excellence for Artificial Intelligence to be set-up in top educational institutions to realise the vision of "Make AI in India and Make AI work for India".
- National Data Governance Policy to be brought out to unleash innovation and research by start-ups and academia.
- PAN will be used as the common identifier for all digital systems of specified government agencies to bring Ease of Doing Business.
- Annual production of 5 MMT under the Green Hydrogen Mission is to be targeted by 2030 to facilitate the transition of the economy to low carbon intensity and to reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports.
- 20,700 crore outlay provided for renewable energy grid integration and evacuation from Ladakh.
- "PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth" (PM-PRANAM) to be launched to incentivize States and Union Territories to promote alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers.

- ‘Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes’, MISHTI, to be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands, through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources.
- Green Credit Programme to be notified under the Environment (Protection) Act to incentivize and mobilize additional resources for environmentally sustainable and responsive actions.
- Amrit Dharohar scheme to be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimal use of wetlands, enhance bio-diversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.
- A unified Skill India Digital platform to be launched for enabling demand-based formal skilling, linking with employers including MSMEs, and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes.
- At least 50 tourist destinations are to be selected through challenge mode; to be developed as a complete package for domestic and foreign tourists.
- Sector-specific skilling and entrepreneurship development to be dovetailed to achieve the objectives of the ‘Dekho Apna Desh’ initiative.
- Tourism infrastructure and amenities are to be facilitated in border villages through the Vibrant Villages Programme.
- States are to be encouraged to set up a Unity Mall for the promotion and sale of their own and also all other states’ ODOPs (One District, One Product), GI products and handicrafts.
- National Financial Information Registry to be set up to serve as the central repository of financial and ancillary information for facilitating the efficient flow of credit, promoting financial inclusion, and fostering financial stability. A new legislative framework is to be designed in consultation with RBI to govern this credit public infrastructure.

### Budget 2023: Top 10 takeaways

- India to grow at 7% in the current year
- Personal income tax slabs to be reduced to 5, tax exemption up to Rs 7 lakh per year
- Capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore for Indian Railways
- Allocation for PM Awaas Yojana increased to over INR 79,000 crore
- Green hydrogen, clean energy storage and transmission to be key drivers of government’s “Green Growth”
- Three centres of excellence in Artificial Intelligence will be set up in top educational institutions
- Outlay of Rs 4,795.24 crore for the Digital India Programme announced
- Open source digital infrastructure for agriculture and an agriculture accelerator fund announced
- Centre to provide free food grains to all antyodaya and priority households until December 2023.
- Subsidy for UPI expected to Rs 2,137 crore in FY23

## Our Super Achievers in WBCS 2020

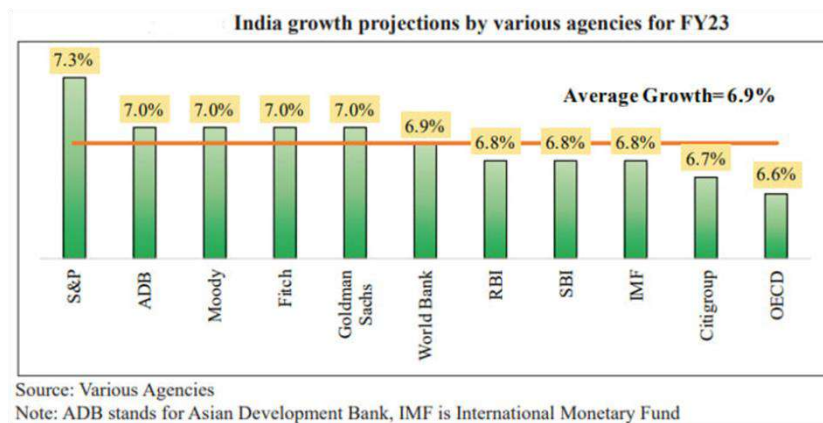
Gr. A					Gr. B	
 <b>MONOJIT CHOWDHURY</b> <b>RANK 2</b>	 <b>MRINMOY MAJHI</b> <b>RANK 45</b>	 <b>ABHIK PATLA</b> <b>RANK 46</b>	 <b>ARGHYA BHATTACHARYYA</b> <b>RANK 54</b>	 <b>BANANI MAJUMDER</b> <b>RANK 82</b>	 <b>UDAYAN SUBUDDHI</b> <b>RANK 13</b>	 <b>RAJARSHI SANKAR BANIK</b> <b>RANK 22</b>
 <b>CHANDAN SAHA</b> <b>RANK 101</b>	 <b>DEBNATH MAHATA</b> <b>RANK 111</b>	 <b>AMIT TAMANG</b> <b>RANK 115</b>	 <b>JAGONNATH BISWAS</b> <b>RANK 161</b>	 <b>SUBRATA DAS</b> <b>RANK 166</b>	<b>Congratulations Toppers!</b>	



# Economic Survey 2022-23

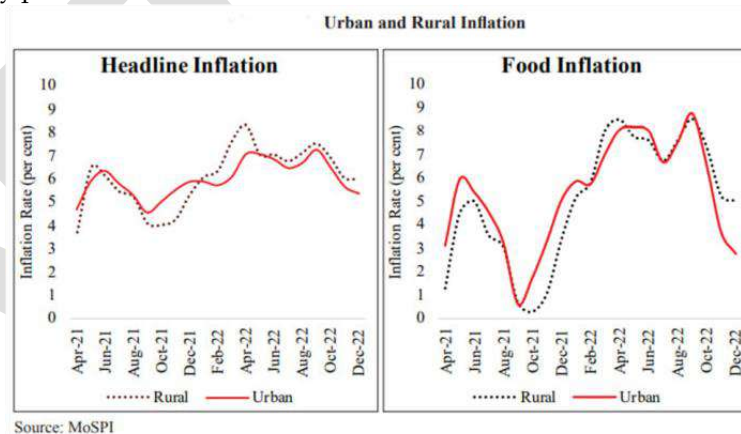
## Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

- The Survey has estimated real GDP growth in 2023-24 at 6.5%.
  - It observed that the actual growth rate would depend on the trajectory of economic and political developments globally.
- Growth in the upcoming year will be supported by domestic demand and an increase in investment.
  - However, developments around the world, such as increases in interest rates by central banks, prolonged strains in the supply chain, and geo-political conflict, pose a risk to economic growth.
- In 2022-23, GDP is estimated to grow at 7% in real terms.**



## Inflation

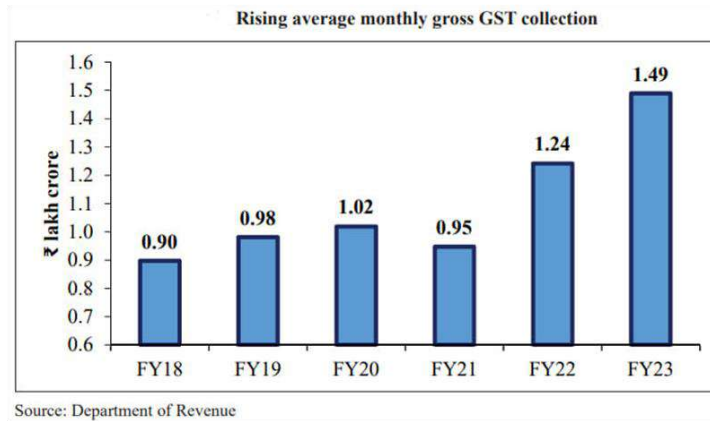
- In 2022-23, **retail inflation is estimated at 6.8%, higher than in 2021-22 (5.5%)**.
- The Survey noted that retail inflation was driven by international crude oil prices and food inflation (mainly vegetable, cereals, and edible oil prices).
- The Survey expects inflation in 2023-24 to be lower than in 2022-23 on the back of less economic uncertainties.
  - However, certain global events, such as supply chain disruptions due to the re-emergence of COVID-19 in China, may present risks to India’s domestic inflation.



## Current account balance

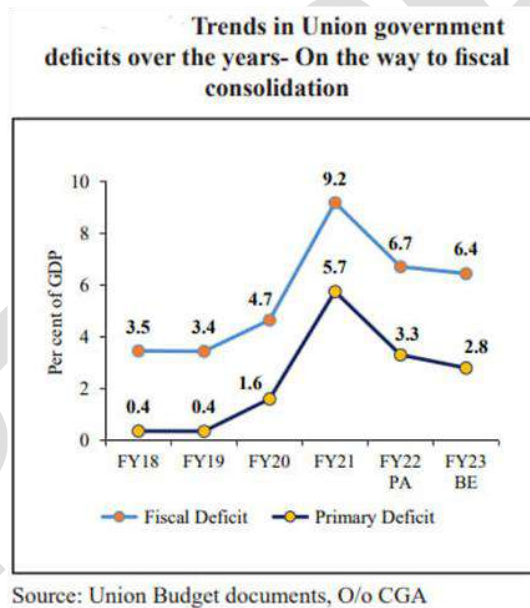
- India recorded a **current account deficit of USD 36.4 billion (4.4% of GDP)** in the second quarter of 2022-23 as compared to a deficit of USD 9.7 billion (1.3% of GDP) in the second quarter of 2021-22.
  - The Survey observed that the current account deficit needs to be closely monitored.
- Sharp rises in oil prices and foreign portfolio investment outflows due to a rise in interest rates abroad put pressure on India’s Balance of Payments in 2022.
- India’s export may be impacted by uncertainties around global growth.**
  - However, cushioned by a surplus in the export of services and remittances, the current account deficit would be within manageable limits.





### Fiscal deficit

- The central government's fiscal deficit moderated to 6.7% of GDP in 2021-22, after increasing to 9.2% of GDP in 2020-21.
- Increasing revenue collection over the last two years has helped in bringing down the fiscal deficit.
- In 2022-23, the general government deficit is estimated to be 9.4% of GDP, lower than in 2021-22 (10.3% of GDP).
- The Survey estimated that the central government is on track to meet its fiscal deficit target for 2022-23 (6.4% of GDP).



### Debt

- The total liabilities of the central government are estimated to decline from 59.2% of GDP in 2020-21 to 56.7% of GDP in 2021-22.
- Outstanding liabilities of the general government (Central + States) are estimated to be 86.5% in 2022-23.
- The Survey noted that India's public debt profile is relatively stable.
  - Most of it is held by residents and is denominated in rupees (95.1% of the total).
- External debt is entirely owed to official sources, which insulates it from changes in international capital markets.
- About 98% of the debt is contracted at fixed interest rates, insulating from changes in interest rates.
- Steady economic growth will accelerate debt consolidation.

## Agriculture and allied activities

- India's agriculture sector has grown at an average annual rate of 4.6% during the last six years.
- India has also emerged as a net exporter of agricultural products with exports reaching an all-time high of USD 50.2 billion in 2021-22.
  - This was driven by the promotion of farmer-producer organisations, crop diversification, and support provided for mechanisation and the creation of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.
- The Survey noted that the agriculture sector faces certain challenges in the form of climate change, fragmented land holdings, sub-optimal farm mechanisation, and low productivity.
- The production of foodgrains and oil seeds has been increasing year-on-year.
  - However, wheat production was adversely impacted in 2022 due to an early heat wave.
- Allied sectors of Indian agriculture, including livestock, forestry and logging, and fishing, are becoming a potential source of better farm incomes.
- The Survey observed that there has been a consistent increase in institutional agricultural credit.
  - The target for agricultural credit for 2022-23 is Rs 18.5 lakh crore.

## Industry

- Industry accounts for 31% of India's GDP and employs over 12.1 crore people.
- In 2022-23, the industrial sector is estimated to grow by 6.7%.
- In the current financial year, the sector faced high input costs for imports due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- The increase in the capital expenditure of the central government in the post-pandemic period has crowded in investment from the private sector, which has provided a stimulus to industrial growth.
- The importance of electronics manufacturing has been increasing.
  - India aims to achieve USD 300 billion in electronics manufacturing with USD 120 billion in exports by 2025-26.
- Production-linked incentive schemes will help attain economies of scale in the domestic production of electronic goods.
- The volatility in international commodity prices and disruptions in the supply of raw materials can adversely impact industrial growth.

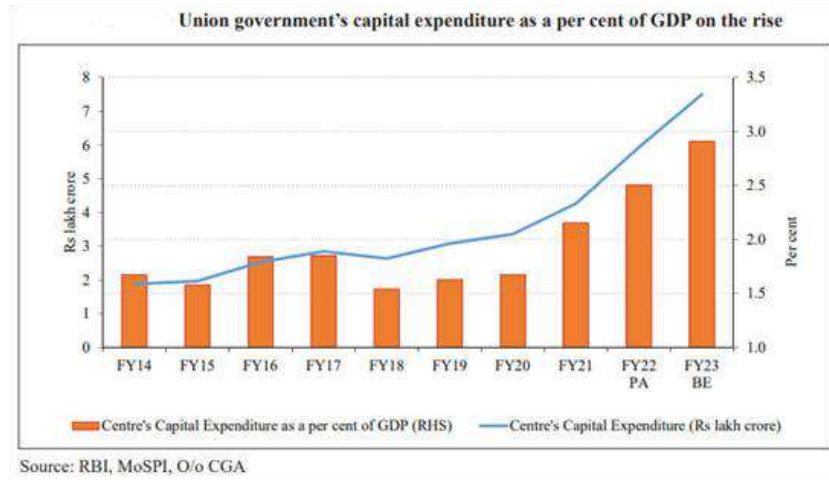
## Services sector

- The services sector recovered swiftly in 2021-22 after bearing the maximum burden of the pandemic.
  - In 2022-23, the services sector is estimated to grow by 9.1%.
- The contact-intensive services sub-sector recovered to its pre-pandemic level driven by pent-up demand, easing mobility restrictions, and near-universal vaccination.
- The Survey observed that the pandemic brought a change in individual home buyers' sentiment in favour of owning a house.
  - With the easing of curbs, there was an increase in interest in the residential housing sector.
- Improved affordability due to lower interest rates, reduction in circle rates, and cut in stamp duties on immovable property transactions have played an important role in the rebound of the real estate sector.
- The recent measure to reduce import duties on steel products, iron ore and steel intermediaries will help check the increase in housing prices.
- The e-commerce sector witnessed a sharp increase in penetration in the aftermath of the pandemic.
  - Lockdowns and mobility restrictions disrupted consumer behaviour and gave an impetus to online shopping.
  - There was also an increase in the adoption of digital solutions by MSMEs.

## Infrastructure

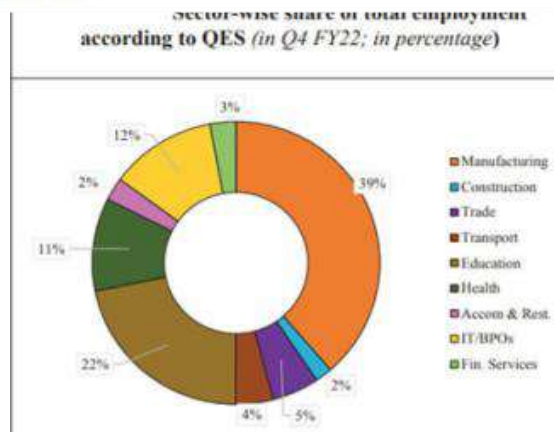
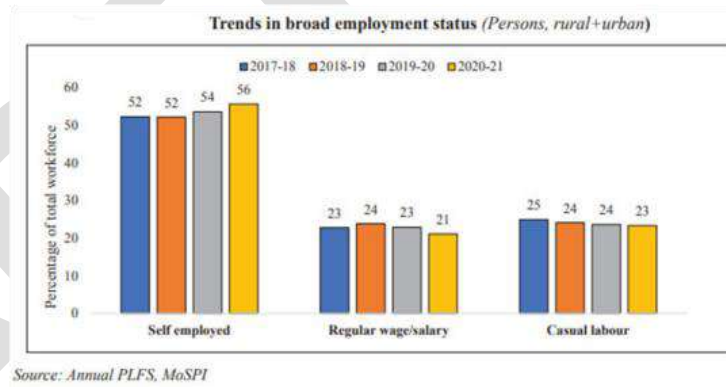
- An increase in infrastructure investment provides a critical push to the potential growth of the economy.
  - The central government has given increased impetus to infrastructure development and investment in recent years when capital expenditure by the private sector has been subdued.
- Capital expenditure in 2022-23 is targeted at 7.5 lakh crore, 35.4% higher than in 2021-22.
- To sustain the investment drive, the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) has provided a forward-looking roadmap of investible projects of around Rs 111 lakh crore between 2019-20 and 2024-2025.

- Currently, the NIP has 8,964 projects with a total investment of more than Rs 108 lakh crore under different stages of implementation.
- The transport sector constitutes more than half of these projects.



### Employment

- Labour markets have recovered beyond pre-COVID levels in both urban and rural areas.
  - The unemployment rate decreased from 5.8% in 2018-19 to 4.2% in 2020-21.
- There was also an increase in the rural female labour force participation rate from 19.7% in 2018-19 to 27.7% in 2020-21.
- The number of persons demanding work under MGNREGS was seen at levels similar to the pre-pandemic period. The decline in monthly demand for work under the scheme is driven by the normalisation of the rural economy.
  - The number of works done under MGNREGS steadily increased in animal sheds, farm ponds, and horticulture plantations have increased under the scheme which leads to a positive impact on agricultural productivity and income per household.



## Insurance and pension

- Insurance penetration (insurance premiums to GDP ratio) in India increased from 2.7% in 2000 to 4.2% in 2021.
- Government schemes and financial inclusion initiatives have driven insurance adoption and penetration across all segments.
- An increase in the FDI limit for insurance companies and digitisation of the insurance market is likely to facilitate growth.
- In 2015, the central government launched the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) with a focus on underprivileged and low-income individuals employed in the unorganised sector.
  - India's pension sector has expanded since the introduction of the National Pension Scheme (NPS) and APY.
  - The coverage of the population under NPS and APY as a share of the total population increased from 1.2% in 2016-17 to 3.7% in 2021-22.
- The Survey noted that there is significant scope for growth in India's pension sector as per capita income is expected to rise in the future.

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**ABHIK PATLA**  
**RANK 46 (Gr. A)**  
**WBCS 2020**

“ I am very much satisfied with the experience I had during my mock interview. The administration is quite competent and very helpful throughout the whole process. There was not any moment of uncomfart or problem throughout. I am very happy to be a part of it. ”

Abhik Patla

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## DEFENCE and SECURITY

### Veer Guardian-2023

- India and Japan conducted the joint Air Exercise, 'Veer Guardian-2023' involving the Indian Air Force and Japan Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) at Hyakuri Air Base, Japan from 12th to 26th January to promote Air Defence cooperation between the countries.
- The Indian contingent participated in the air exercise including four Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 aircraft, while the JASDF participated with four F-2 and four F-15 aircraft.

### Prithvi-II

- A successful training launch of a Short-Range Ballistic Missile, Prithvi-II was carried out from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha
- Prithvi is a tactical surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).
- The Prithvi missile project encompassed developing three variants for use by the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
  - Prithvi I (SS-150) – Army version (150 km) range with a payload of 1,000 kg.
  - Prithvi II (SS-250) – Air Force version (350 km) range with a payload of 500 kg.
  - Prithvi III (SS-350) – Naval version (350 km) range with a payload of 1,000 kg.

### Exercise Varuna

- The 21st Edition of the Bilateral Naval Exercise between India and France – Exercise Varuna commenced on the Western Seaboard.
- While the bilateral exercise between the two navies was initiated in 1993, it was named 'VARUNA' in 2001 and has become a hallmark of the India–France strategic bilateral relationship.
- The exercise was conducted over five days from 16 to 20 January 2023 and witnessed advanced air defence exercises, tactical manoeuvres, surface firings, underway replenishment and other maritime operations.
- The exercise facilitated operational-level interaction between the two navies to foster cooperation for good order at sea, underscoring the shared commitment of both nations to the security, safety and freedom of the global maritime commons.

### Exercise Cyclone-I

- The first-ever joint exercise between the special forces of the Indian Army and the Egyptian Army named "Exercise Cyclone-I" is in progress at Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.
- The exercise aims to strengthen defence cooperation between the two nations and focus on sharing professional skills and interoperability of Special Forces in desert terrain while undertaking counter-terrorism, reconnaissance, raids and other special operations.

### AMPHEX 2023

- The biennial Tri-Services Amphibious Exercise, AMPHEX 2023 was conducted at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh from 17 to 22 January 2023.
- AMPHEX is aimed at joint training of elements of all three services in various facets of amphibious operations to enhance interoperability and synergy.
- AMPHEX 2023 successfully demonstrated the amphibious capabilities and validated the excellent coordination that exists between the three Services to undertake the full spectrum of amphibious operations.

## TROPEX

- The 2023 edition of the Indian Navy's major maritime exercise TROPEX, is currently underway in the Indian Ocean Region.
  - TROPEX 23 is being conducted over three months from Jan - Mar 23.
- This operational level exercise is conducted biennially and witnesses participation not only by all Indian Navy units but also of Indian Army, Indian Airforce and Coast Guard assets.
- As part of the exercise, all surface combatants of the Indian Navy including Destroyers, Frigates, Corvettes as well as submarines and aircraft are put through complex maritime operational deployments to validate and refine the Navy's Concept of Operations including operational logistics and interoperability with other Services.
- The exercise is being conducted in different phases, both in the harbour and at sea, encompassing various facets of combat operations, including live weapon firings.
- The maritime exercise also facilitates operational-level interaction with the Indian Army, Indian Airforce and the Coast Guard, which will further strengthen interoperability and joint operations in a complex environment.

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**RAJARSHI BANIK**  
**RANK 13 (Gr. B)**  
**WBCS 2020**

“First of all, thank you APTI PLUS for giving me this opportunity to be present here. I came across about APTI PLUS from facebook and got to know they are taking personality test of WBCS free of cost. It is very appreciable. The ambience of APTI PLUS is very good and I was feeling the real interview experience here. The staffs and madams are also very cordial”

Rajarshi Sankar Banik

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## SCIENCE

### National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved National Green Hydrogen Mission.
- **The Mission will result in the following likely outcomes by 2030:**
  - Development of Green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in the country.
  - Over Rs. 8 lakh crore in total investments.
  - Creation of over 6 lakh jobs.
- The Union Ministry of New & Renewable Energy will be responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the Mission.
- **Types of Hydrogen:**
  - Brown Hydrogen: Most of the gas that is already widely used as an industrial chemical is either brown if it's made through the gasification of coal or lignite.
  - Grey Hydrogen: If it is made through steam methane reformation, which typically uses natural gas as the feedstock. Neither of these processes is exactly carbon-friendly.
  - Blue Hydrogen: Where the gas is produced by steam methane reformation but the emissions are curtailed using carbon capture and storage.
  - Green Hydrogen: Green hydrogen, in contrast, could almost eliminate emissions by using renewable energy – increasingly abundant and often generated at less-than-ideal times – to power the electrolysis of water.

### Virovore

- The first known "virovore" - an organism that eats viruses- has been found, researchers claimed.
- Virovores can sustain themselves with viruses, consuming many and growing in size.
- These virus-eating species of protists – which are their kingdom on the tree of life and are not an animal, plants, or fungi – are now classified as virovores.
- For the first time, the team's laboratory tests have also demonstrated that a virus-only diet, or "virovory," is sufficient to support an organism's physiological growth and even population increase.

### Lecanemab

- The Food and Drug Administration approved a new Alzheimer's drug called Lecanemab.
- Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking, and behaviour.
- The disease process is largely associated with amyloid plaques, neurofibrillary tangles, and loss of neuronal connections in the brain.
- As the disease advances, symptoms can include problems with language, disorientation (including easily getting lost), mood swings, loss of motivation, self-neglect, and behavioural issues.
- The disease usually occurs in people over the age of 65 years with a very small proportion getting early-onset.
- The Dementia in India report 2020 estimates that there are 5.3 million people over the age of 60 years living with dementia, with the prevalence projected to increase to 14 million by 2050.

### "One Week, One Lab" nationwide campaign

- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh, announced the **launching of the "One Week, One Lab" nationwide campaign.**
- In the "One Week One Lab" Campaign of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and each of its 37 laboratories, spread Nationwide, will showcase its legacy, exclusive innovations and technological breakthroughs every successive week.
- During the campaign each CSIR lab shall be organizing week-long events including industry and start-up meet, students connect, society connects, display of technologies, etc.
- The "One week, one lab" campaign will offer an opportunity for every Lab to showcase the work being done by it so that others can avail of it and stakeholders can learn about it.

## Countdown to 2023

- The Report is titled “Countdown to 2023” WHO report on global trans fat elimination.
  - Five billion people globally are exposed to harmful Trans fat, increasing their heart disease and death risk, according to a new report by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Trans fat, also called trans-unsaturated fatty acids, or Trans fatty acids are a type of unsaturated fat that occurs in foods.
- Trace concentrations of trans fats occur naturally, but large amounts are found in some processed foods. Since the consumption of trans fats is unhealthy.
- Most of the trans fat in the foods we eat is formed through a manufacturing process that adds hydrogen to vegetable oil, which converts the liquid into solid fat at room temperature. This process is called hydrogenation.
- Hydrogenation, which uses hydrogen gas and metal catalysts to reduce the degree of unsaturation and provide proper physical characteristics in oils since the 1890s, is a major process to generate trans fat in our daily diet.
- Artificial trans fat has been banned in many nations, but it is still widely consumed in developing nations, resulting in hundreds of thousands of excess deaths each year.



## Norovirus

- The Kerala Health Department confirmed two cases of gastrointestinal infection norovirus in Ernakulam district.
- Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that is also sometimes referred to as the ‘stomach flu’ or the ‘winter vomiting bug’.
- It causes diarrhoea and vomiting. As per the World Health Organisation, norovirus is a viral illness that is the most common cause of acute gastroenteritis globally.
- The disease is transmitted by direct contact with an infected person, contaminated food or touching a contaminated surface, and putting unwashed hands in the mouth. The infection is caused and spread through contaminated food and water.
- **The most common symptoms that a person infected with Norovirus has been:**
  - Diarrhoea
  - Vomiting
  - Nausea
  - Stomach pain
  - Headache
  - Body pain
- The norovirus infection generally lasts for one to two days. However, it can cause dehydration in very young and old people, and in some patients, their bodies will remain weak for one more week after contracting the infection.
- No vaccines are available for the disease.

## GJ 1002

- Astronomers have now found two planets that are as massive as Earth and could be habitable.
- Two temperate Earth-mass planets orbiting the nearby star GJ 1002.
- GJ 1002 b and c lie at a perfect distance from their star, which could allow liquid water to form on a planet’s surface if it has the right kind of atmosphere. This zone is known as the habitable zone, just like Earth is in from the Sun.
  - Planet b, which has a mass slightly higher than Earth’s, is the closer of the two and its year lasts only 10 days.
  - Meanwhile, planet c is about a third more massive than Earth and takes about 20 days to orbit the star.



## SPORTS

### Cristiano Ronaldo

- Star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal Captain) has joined Saudi Arabia's club Al-Nassr for a two-and-a-half-year contract (till 2025).
  - Ronaldo has agreed to sign a €500 million (£432m) contract with the Saudi Arabian club.
  - Ronaldo was searching for a new team after his former team Manchester United ended his contract.
- Cristiano Ronaldo **scored the most goals in international football in the men's game. He has scored more than 118 goals in 196 matches for his country.**
- **Ronaldo has won five Ballon d'Or awards and four European Golden Shoes, the most by a European player.**
- He has won 34 trophies in his career, including seven league titles, five UEFA Champions Leagues, the UEFA European Championship and the UEFA Nations League.

### Vaidehi Chowdhary

- Vaidehi Chowdhary (Indian) defeated Ksenia Laskutova (Russian) to win the title in the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the City Center Tennis Complex in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.
- It was her maiden singles title at the International level.
- She won the National women's title in October 2022.

### Popy Hazarika

- Railways' Popy Hazarika won the women's 59kg gold medal in the National weightlifting championships.

### Subham Todkar

- Subham T. Todkar had won Gold in the men's 61kg category of the National weightlifting championships.
- This was his maiden National gold after two silvers in Visakhapatnam (2019) and Patiala (2021).

### Harjinder Kaur

- Harjinder Kaur created a new record in clean and lifted (123 kg) for a total of 214 kg to bag the senior women's 71 kg gold in the National weightlifting championships.
  - She won a bronze medal in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games
- Amandeep Kaur finished second with a total of 201 kg.

### Ajay Singh Shekhawat

- Ajay Singh Shekhawat won the men's 81kg gold in the National weightlifting championships.

### Anahat Singh

- Indian squash player Anahat Singh won the girls' under-15 title at the prestigious British Junior open.
- The 14-year-old, who was India's youngest athlete at the Commonwealth Games 2022, beat Sohaila Hazem of Egypt 3-1 in the final.
- This was her third final at the British Junior Open.

### Divya Deshmukh

- Divya Deshmukh became the youngest player to retain the National women's chess champion title.
- Last year she became the youngest National women's chess champion,

### Hockey World Cup 2023

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) Men's World Cup Hockey 2023 was inaugurated at Barabati Stadium, Odisha.
  - Odisha hosting the 2023 men's Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.
- The Union Sports minister Anurag Thakur, and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik joined FIH President Tayab Bikram and Hockey India chairman Dilip Tirkey at the opening ceremony to welcome the members of all the 16 participating teams.
  - Hundreds of singers from Bollywood and local artists sang the Hockey World Cup theme song that was composed by music director Pritam.
- India finishes joint 9th in WC.

### Women's Premier League (WPL)

- Women's Premier League (WPL); a T20 tournament to be launched in March 2023 along with the men's IPL (Indian Premier League).
- Broadcast rights were bagged by Viacom for Rs 951 crore.
- The WPL's inaugural edition will have teams based in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi and Lucknow.
- A total of 22 games will be played in the inaugural season with the top-ranked team in the league stage qualifying directly for the final.
  - The second and third-placed teams will battle out for a place in the title clash.
- Each team will have a purse of ₹12 crores at the players' auction in February 2023 and will need to buy a minimum of 15 players and a maximum of 18.
  - Up to five overseas players, including one from associate, will be allowed in the playing eleven.

The owners		
Amount	City	Owner
1,289 cr.	Ahmedabad	Adani Group
912.99 cr.	Mumbai	IndiaWin Sports (Mumbai Indians)
901 cr.	Bengaluru	Royal Challengers Sports Pvt. Ltd.
810 cr.	Delhi	JSW-GMR Cricket Pvt. Ltd. (Delhi Capitals)
757 cr.	Lucknow	Capri Global

■ The first season will be played in Mumbai, and possibly Pune

■ The player auction is scheduled between February 1 and 10

■ Each team will play each other twice in the league. The top team will qualify for the final. The second- and third-placed teams will play the Eliminator

### HashimAmla

- South African batter Hashim Amla has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- He ended his 22-year playing career, with his legacy secure as one of South Africa's all-time cricketing greats.
- Amla holds the record for being the fastest ever to score 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000 and 7000 ODI runs.
- He also became the fastest cricketer to reach 10 ODI centuries.
- He was the 1st South African to score a triple century (311) in test cricket. It remains South Africa's only triple century in Tests.

### Mohammed Siraj

- India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Wednesday became the No. 1 in the ICC rankings for ODI bowlers.
- Siraj went past New Zealand's Trent Boult and Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood to become the top-ranked ODI bowler for the first time.

### Suryakumar Yadav

- Indian batter Suryakumar Yadav was named as the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year for his remarkable run in the shortest format of the game.
- He was ranked as the number one T20 International batsman in the world. Surya Yadav strikes at 180 while also having an average of 46.

### Renuka Singh

- Indian women fast bowler named as the ICC emerging Cricketer of the Year.
- The swing bowler claimed 40 international wickets during 2022; 18 in ODIs and 22 in T20Is.

### Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup 2023

- India won the women's Under-19 T20 World Cup 2023.
- India defeated England in the final by 7 wickets at Potchefstroom, South Africa.

### Nari Samagam & Spardha

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions has organized the "Nari Samagam & Spardha"; Women Sports Meet in New Delhi on 11th January 2023.
- Olympian and CWG Medalist Vinesh Phogat (Wrestler) interacted with women athletes.
  - Vinesh Phogat is the first Indian woman wrestler to win gold in both Commonwealth and Asian Games.
  - She is the only Indian woman wrestler to win multiple medals at the World Wrestling Championships.
- Objectives
  - To increase awareness and to enhance women's participation in sports and cultural activities.
  - To adopt healthier lifestyles and increase self-esteem, teamwork and confidence.
  - To improve social skills and positive mental health.

### Belinda Clark

- Former Australia captain Belinda Clark has become the first female cricketer to have a statue cast of her.
- Her bronze sculpture was unveiled at the Sydney Cricket Ground.
- She retired from the game in 2005 after winning two World Cups.
- She is still Australia's leading Test and ODI run-scorer in women's cricket.

## OBITUARIES

### Pele passed away

- The legendary Brazilian footballer “pele” passed away on 29th December 2022.
- Pele (1940-2022) is the only player in the history of the game to win three World Cups.
- He won his first FIFA World Cup title for Brazil in Sweden in 1958.
- Pele is the youngest scorer, youngest hat-trick scorer, youngest finalist and youngest player to score in a Final in World Cup history.
- He still holds the record as the youngest world champion of all time.
- Pele was once named by FIFA as the greatest player of the 20th century.

### Arata Isozaki Passed away

- A Pritzker-winning Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki Passed away at the age of 91 years.
- Arata Isozaki was a Japanese architect, urban designer, and theorist. His works also include philosophy, visual art, film, and theatre.
- He is known as a post-modern giant who blended the culture and history of the East and the West in his designs.

### Sharad Yadav passed away

- Former Union Minister and one of the country's most prominent socialist leaders, Sharad Yadav, Passed away at the age of 75 years.
- He was a three-time member of the Rajya Sabha.
- He was elected as Lok Sabha Member of Parliament for 7 times.

### Anita Pointer Passed away

- Grammy-winning American singer and songwriter Anita Marie Pointer Passed away at the age of 74 years.
- In 1987 Anita released her first solo album named, “Love for What It Is”.

### Prabhaben Shah passes away

- A social worker and Padma Shri awardee Prabhaben Shah passed away at the age of 92 years.
- She established a Gujarati medium primary school and also established a woman group named Mahila Mandal.
- She started sewing classes for women in Daman and also started the Women Cooperative Society and Women Credit Society.
- She helped needy people during the Kutch earthquake in 2001, and the Kerala flood in 2018.
- She received the Padma Shri award in the social work category for her altruistic services.



## APPOINTMENTS

### Dinesh Kumar Shukla

- Former Executive Director of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) “Dinesh Kumar Shukla” assumed the charge as Chairman of AERB.
  - He has been appointed for 3 years.
- **Mr Shukla is an expert in the field of Nuclear Safety.**
  - He joined the Bhabha Atomic Energy Research Centre (BARC) in 1981.
  - He has been associated with the commissioning of the high flux research reactor Dhruva and later held the position of Head, of the Reactor Operations Division (ROD), BARC.
  - In 2015, he joined AERB where he served in various capacities viz. Member of the Board, Executive Director and Chairman, of the Safety Review Committee for Operating Plants (SARCOP).
  - In February 2021, Mr Shukla superannuated from AERB and since then had been actively mentoring nuclear energy professionals on nuclear safety and regulations.
- The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board was established in 1983, by the President of India under the Atomic Energy Act, of 1962.
- The Mission of the AERB is to ensure the use of ionizing radiation and nuclear energy in India does not cause undue risk to the health of people and the environment.



**DINESH KUMAR SHUKLA  
ASSUMES THE CHARGE AS  
THE CHAIRMAN OF  
THE ATOMIC ENERGY  
REGULATORY BOARD**

### Benjamin Netanyahu

- Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as Israel's prime minister (PM) for the 6th time.
- He Succeeds Yair Lapid, who served as PM of Israel from July 2022 to Dec 2022.
- He is the longest-tenured prime minister in the country's history (served for more than 15 years).

### Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

- Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been sworn in as the 39th president of Brazil.
  - He was sworn in as President of Brazil for the 3rd time after defeating Jair Bolsonaro
- Lula is the first Brazilian president to have been elected to a third term in office.
  - He was first elected as president of Brazil in 2002.
  - Again he was re-elected for a second term as president of Brazil in 2006.

### Alain-Claude Bilie

- He was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Gabon.
  - He replaced Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda.

### Chris Hipkins

- New Zealand's ruling Labour Party selected Chris Hipkins to replace Jacinda Ardern as its new leader and as the new Prime minister of New Zealand.

### Justice N Kotiswar Singh

- Justice Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh was appointed as the acting chief justice of the Gauhati High Court, Assam.

### Inger Andersen

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) appointed Inger Andersen (Denmark) as executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- She will serve as a UNEP executive director for a second four-year term from June 2023 to June 2027.

### Raji Chari

- Indian-American astronaut Raja J Chari has been nominated by USA President Joe Biden for the appointment as the Air Force brigadier general.
  - The nomination will have to be confirmed by the Senate.
- The US Senate approves all senior civilian and military appointments

### Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda

- She became the 1st female vice president of Gabon.
- She served as Prime Minister of Gabon from July 2020 to January 2023
  - She was also the country's first female PM.

### Manpreet Monica Singh

- Indian-origin Manpreet Monica Singh has been sworn in as a judge, becoming the first female Sikh judge in the United States (US).



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**ARGHYA BHATTACHARYA**  
**RANK 54 (Gr. A)**  
**WBCS 2020**

“The organization was very good, very comfortable atmosphere, the guidance and study material was very helpful.”

*AB*

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## AWARDS

### Padma Award

- President of India conferred Padma awards 2023 at a civil investiture ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, are one of the highest civilian honours of India, announced annually on the eve of Republic Day.
- **The Awards are given in three categories:**
  - 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service.
  - 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of a high order.
  - 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.
- The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.
- The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities; art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.
- The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made.
- All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards. However, Government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these Awards.
- The award is normally not conferred posthumously. However, in highly deserving cases, the Government could consider giving an award posthumously.
- The awards are presented by the President of India usually in March/April every year where the awardees are presented a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion.
- The recipients are also given a small replica of the medallion, which they can wear during any ceremonial/State functions etc. if the awardees so desire.
- The total number of awards to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should not be more than 120.
  - For the year 2023, the President has approved the conferment of 106 Padma. The list comprises 6 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri Awards.
- The award does not amount to a title and cannot be used as a suffix or prefix to the awardees' name.
- **Important Personalities in the list of Padma Award 2023:**
  - Padma Vibhushan
    - Balkrishna Doshi (Posthumous) for Architecture.
    - Zakir Hussain for Art.
    - Mulayam Singh Yadav (Posthumous) for Public Affairs.
  - Padma Bhushan
    - Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla for Trade & Industry.
    - Sudha Murty for Social Work.
  - Padma Shri
    - Rakesh Radheshyam Jhunjhunwala (Posthumous) for Trade & Industry.
    - Raveena Ravi Tandon for Art.
- **Important Personalities in the list of Padma Award 2023 from west Bengal;**
  - Padma Vibhushan
    - Dilip Mahalanabis (Posthumous) in Medicine.
  - Padma Shri
    - Mangala Kanti Roy in Art.
    - Dhaniram Toto in Literature & Education.
    - Pritikana Goswami in Art.

### Golden Globe Awards 2023

- Golden Globe Award presented by the members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), recognizing excellence in film and television, both domestic and foreign.
- The 'Naatu Naatu' song from the Telugu film 'RRR' has been shortlisted for the 2023 Oscar Awards in the 'Best Original Song' category.
- The movie was directed by SS Rajamouli.

### Odisha

- **Odisha won the UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023 for Jaga Mission.**
- According to an official statement, the Jaga mission is the land titling and slum upgrading program that aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.

### Aparna Sen

- Actor-director Aparna Sen was honoured with the lifetime achievement award at the opening ceremony of the 15th edition of the Jaipur International Film Festival.

### R'Bonney Gabriel

- R'Bonney Gabriel (USA) has been chosen as Miss Universe 2022 on 15 January 2023.
- Amanda Dudamel of Venezuela got second and Andrina Martinez of the Dominican Republic go third position.
- On behalf of India, Divita Rai participated in the Miss Universe contest.
- The event of Miss Universe 2022 was organized in New Orleans city of America.
- Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu, who was Miss Universe 2021, was crowned the new Miss Universe.



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## BOOKS & AUTHOR

### Book 'The World: A Family History'

- The book titled "The World: A Family History of Humanity" was authored by British historian Simon Sebag Montefiore.
- The book focuses on the significance of families in shaping world history.

### Book "Breaking Barriers: The Story of a Dalit Chief Secretary"

- The book titled "Breaking Barriers: The Story of a Dalit Chief Secretary" was authored by former IAS officer Kaki Madhava Rao.
- The book examines the inner workings of the civil service at the grassroots level and throws insight into governance.

### Book 'COACHING BEYOND: My Days with the Indian Cricket Team'

- The book titled 'COACHING BEYOND: My Days with the Indian Cricket Team' was authored by R. Kaushik and R. Sridhar.
- The book focuses on R. Sridhar's 7-year term as fielding coach for the Indian cricket team.
- The book details Virat Kohli's journey, Rishabh Pant's development, and the team's ascent to the number one Test position.

### Book 'Human Anatomy'

- The book titled 'Human Anatomy' was authored by a Homeopathic Physician & teacher Dr AK Dwivedi.
- The book was released by the Governor of Madhya Pradesh Shri Mangubhai Patel.

### Book "Revolutionaries: The Other Story of How India Won Its Freedom"

- The book titled "Revolutionaries: The Other Story of How India Won Its Freedom" was authored by historian Sanjeev Sanyal.
- Sanyal has also authored famous books including "Land of the Seven Rivers," "The Ocean of Churn," "India in the Age of Ideas," and "The Indian Renaissance."

### Book "Ambedkar: A Life"

- The book titled "Ambedkar: A Life" was authored by Shashi Tharoor.
- Shashi Tharoor's book adds a new perspective to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's journey.

### Autobiography of Prof. K.K. Abdul Gaffar

- Professor K.K. Abdul Gaffar's autobiography, 'Njaan Sakshi' (me as the witness), was released by cricket legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

### Book "Jadunama"

- The book titled "Jadunama" was authored by Arvind Mandloi.
- The book is about the eminent poet-lyricist Javed Akhtar.

### Book "Roller Coaster: An Affair with Banking"

- The book titled "Roller Coaster: An Affair with Banking" was authored by Tamal Bandyopadhyay.
- The book gets into the stories and insights of the Indian banking business for over 25 years.

## BOOSTER DOSE FOR EXAM

- Scientists from South Korea have developed a new water purification system that can quickly and efficiently filter out microplastics. Crucially, the polymer used is relatively inexpensive with excellent adsorption performance and good photothermal properties.
- Tamil Nadu government launched an initiative for the conservation of the Nilgiri Tahr at Rs 25 crore.
- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, Tel Aviv University and Columbia University are studying a rare genetic brain disease called "GNB1 Encephalopathy"; It is a kind of brain disease or neurological disorder which affects individuals in the foetus stage. It is caused due to mutations in the GNB1 gene.
- The Chief Ministers of Haryana and Punjab discussed the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute in New Delhi in the Presence of the Union Jal Shakti Minister. The meeting remained inconclusive as no consensus was arrived at surrounding the construction of the SYL.
- Recently more than 270 members of the Kuki-Chin community from Bangladesh who entered Mizoram are being referred to as "officially displaced persons" in State government records.
- India's largest floating solar power project, spanning over 600 acres, is now fully operational at Ramagundam in the Peddapalli district of Telangana.
- January 12 this year marks the 161st birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, observed as National Youth Day.
- Rohit breaks Dhoni's record for most ODI sixes in India.
- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) celebrated its 18th Foundation Day on 12th January 2023.
- Recently released World Report 2023 by Human Rights Watch mentioned that Indian authorities had "intensified and broadened" their crackdown on social activist groups and the media.
- The Union Minister for Minority Affairs stated that the Union Government has decided to stop the Haj quota for pilgrims, in line with Prime Minister's vision to end the VIP culture in the country.
- For the violation of standards mandated by the Union Government for the sale of toys, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued notices to e-commerce entities; Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, etc.
- A team of the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) visited Andhra Pradesh to finalize collaboration between the DARPG and the state Government.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh kick-started the 'Soul of Steel' alpine challenge, an initiative to promote tourism in border areas, at an event in Dehradun.
- A meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime started on January 12. This meeting is being hosted by the Government of India in New Delhi and features participation from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

- Astronomers have detected in the stellar halo that represents the Milky Way's outer limits a group of stars more distant from Earth than any known within our galaxy - almost halfway to a neighbouring galaxy.
- The Government said that the entire Country will be covered by Doppler Weather Radar Network by 2025 to predict extreme weather events more accurately.
- Suryakumar Yadav bags ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022.
- "Chunyun" festival in China is considered the largest annual human migration across the world to celebrate the Lunar New Year.
- Virat Kohli became the fifth-highest run-scorer in the history of ODI cricket, overtaking Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene to enter the top five.
- Norwegian chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen wins all three world chess championship titles and he has won all three world chess championship titles for the third time in his career.
- The Union Minister of Commerce and industry has launched the MAARG (Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth) Portal.
- India sent financing assurances to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), becoming the first of Sri Lanka's creditors to officially back the crisis-hit island nation's debt restructuring programme.
- The World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting 2023, held in Davos, Switzerland. The theme this year was 'Cooperation in a Fragmented World'.
- Harmanpreet is Named as the Captain of The ICC Women's ODI Team of The Year.
- An Indo-Russian joint venture has started manufacturing Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi, a move that will lend greater firepower to the Indian armed forces.
- On Parakram Diwas, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi participated in a ceremony to name the 21 largest unnamed islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands after 21 Param Vir Chakra awardees.
- January 23, the birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose, will be celebrated as "Parakram Diwas" every year.
- Cristiano Ronaldo joins the Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr.
- A rapidly spreading disease, commonly known as yellow band disease, is killing coral over vast stretches of the sea floor in the beautiful Samsae San Island in eastern Thailand.
- Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations this year, landed in India. This is the first time that an Egyptian President has been invited as chief guest for the event.
- Koustav Chatterjee becomes India's 78th Grandmaster, 10th from West Bengal:
- Bharat Biotech launched its intranasal COVID-19 vaccine iNCOVACC, the first of its kind in India, on January 26.
- BharOS is an indigenous, or homegrown, mobile operating system (OS), like Android or iOS. These systems help smartphone users interact with their devices and access their features while ensuring safety.
- The first Pallas cat sighting on Mount Everest, in the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal, has been documented.

- The iconic Mughal Gardens at the Rashtrapati Bhavan (President's House) in Delhi have been renamed. The collective identity of all the gardens at Rashtrapati Bhavan will be 'Amrit Udyan'.
- India assumed the chairmanship of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), a multilateral technology control agreement, on 1st January 2023.
- Vice President inaugurates 83rd Conference of All India Presiding Officers in Jaipur.
- Trinamool Congress (TMC) Chief and West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, has launched two initiatives 'Didir Suraksha Kawach' and 'Didir Doot.' These schemes cover all sectors, such as food, housing, health, education, social security, income, and employment, which touch a person's life.
- PM flagged off the world's most extended river cruise – 'Ganga Vilas' – from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Bangladesh on 13th January.
- Road Safety Week was celebrated from 11th to 17th January 2023.
- Madhya Pradesh government launched Chief Minister's Residential Land Rights Scheme to provide free plots to the poor living in rural areas to build their houses.
- Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity held on January 6, 2023, in Goa. It is an inclusive event that aims to highlight how working together can make the world more welcoming and inclusive for everyone.
- World Day of War Orphans is observed on 6th January to spread awareness about the war orphans' plight and address their traumatic conditions.
- National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed annually in the United States on 11th January.
- According to Henley Passport Index, the Japanese passport is the most powerful among all passports in the World, as it allows visa-free access to as many as 193 countries. India ranked 85th on the index. An Indian passport holder, on the other hand, can visit 59 destinations without a visa.
- Uganda (African Nation) declares an end to the Ebola outbreak.
- ISRO 'Shukrayaan' mission to planet Venus reportedly shifted to 2031.
- World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Report highlighted the cost of living crisis as the biggest short-term risk facing the world right now, with climate change as the biggest long-term threat.
- The Rajasthan government has implemented a policy for blindness control with the objective of 'Right to Sight'.
- Kollam in Kerala has become India's first constitution-literate district.
- The United States will host the 2024 Copa America, which will feature 10 teams from South America and six from North and Central America and the Caribbean.
- India's second longest cable-stayed eight-lane Zuari Bridge opens in Goa.
- Bhopal Declaration was released after a discussion in a two-day meeting of Think-20 under G20.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched Utkarsh 2.0 for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms.
- The Chief Justice of India (CJI), D Y Chandrachudh has launched the electronic Supreme Court Reports (eSCR) project to provide free access to around 34,000 case judgements for the public.



- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has organised Startup India Innovation Week from January 10, 2023, to January 16, 2023, to celebrate the Indian Startup Ecosystem as well as National Startup Day (January 16, 2023).
- India's First Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming to be set up in Shillong, Meghalaya.
- The Union Minister of MSMEs launched the web portal for the World Bank-assisted central government scheme, Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP).
- Prime Minister Inaugurates Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation in Kolkata.
- Tamil Nadu Assembly passes a resolution asking the Centre to implement the Sethusamudram project to create a shipping route between India and Sri Lanka.
- Ministry of Shipping launches Bharat Pravah scheme to highlight the importance of rivers-ports-shipping in the common man's everyday life through literature, dialogue, and communication.
- The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets after being proposed by the Prime Minister of India.
- The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) have launched 'SMART' (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals) program aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.
- Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has formed a committee under Mary Kom to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) president.
- Europe's biggest deposit of rare earth metals was found in Sweden.
- Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates National Genome Editing & Training Centre (NGETC) at Mohali, Punjab.
- Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
- RE-HAB project of the Honey Mission Programme aims to reduce elephant attacks on humans and farmers' crops.
- Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann Launched the 'School of Eminence' Project.
- Orissa has won a prestigious Bronze World Habitat award for its Jaga Mission which aims to upgrade slums in the state.
- Ghaziabad-Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya section becomes India's longest rail track with an automatic signalling system.
- The Government of India sent a geologist team to Argentina to assess and find potential lithium deposits.
- The celebration of World Braille Day on January 4 is in honour of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system.
- Odisha CM inaugurates the 'International Craft Summit'.
- Indo-Egypt Joint Training Exercise 'Cyclone - I' held in Rajasthan.
- Former Australia captain Belinda Clark has become the first female cricketer to have a statue cast of her.

- The Odisha government has constructed the world's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela, named after legendary freedom fighter Birsa Munda.
- Centre to launch National Urban Technology Mission for municipal services.
- India to deploy a platoon of women peacekeepers in Sudan. This will be India's largest single unit of women peacekeepers in a UN Mission.
- India, U.K sign and exchange letters for Young Professionals Scheme. The scheme allows up to 3,000 degree-holding citizens aged 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for two years.
- World Hindi Day, also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas, is annually observed on January 10.
- Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh becomes the 1st Indian district to implement cutting-edge 5G use cases proposed by startups.
- To mark the occasion this year, the Women and Child Development Department will celebrate National Girl Child Week from 24 to January 30.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) is soon to launch the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) mission.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has named the State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), or banks that are too big to fail.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, addressed the 1st All India Annual State Ministers' Conference on Water. The theme of the conference is 'Water Vision @ 2047'.
- International Day of Education on January 24.
- BSF conducts an 'Ops Alert' exercise to step up security along the India-Pakistan border in Gujarat and Rajasthan ahead of Republic Day.
- National Girl Child Day is observed every year on January 24.
- National Voters Day 2023 is celebrated on the 25th of January 2023.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India (GoI) signed a \$300 million loan to upgrade over 300 kilometres of state highways and major district roads in Assam.
- GST collections stand at Rs 1.49 trillion in Dec 2022.
- Cheetah reintroduction programme: 12 big cats from South Africa to be brought to India
- Uttarakhand Governor approves Bill granting 30% women's reservation in government jobs.
- The Tripura government introduced a special education program titled 'Saharsh' to encourage social and emotional learning in schools.
- The government has launched Prajwala Challenge inviting ideas, solutions, and actions to transform the rural economy.
- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- PM Modi Inaugurates Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Convention 2023 In Indore, Madhya Pradesh. The theme of the PBD convention is 'Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal'.
- Himachal Pradesh targets to be the 1st Green Energy State by 2025.
- The Government of Rajasthan decided to provide drones on rent to low-income farmers to help them in spraying fertilizers and pesticides.
- Mr Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as Israel's Prime Minister (PM) for a sixth time.

- India and UAE Sign Agreement on Green Hydrogen Development and Undersea Cable Connectivity.
- Chris Hipkins replaced Jacinda Ardern as the new Prime minister of New Zealand.
- Rashtrapati Bhavan's Mughal Garden was renamed the Amrit Udyan.
- The Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) has discontinued the scheme of interest subsidy on education loans for overseas studies for students belonging to minority communities.
- India's first underwater tunnel is being built under the Hooghly River in West Bengal.
- Kerala becomes India's first state with a fully digital banking service.
- Chhattisgarh CM celebrates the traditional 'Cherchera' festival in Raipur.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates Siyom bridge in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Odisha became the first Indian state to have a separate registration process for vintage vehicles (both two and four-wheelers) that are more than 50 years old.
- India's electric intercity coach services brand, NueGo, has partnered with Paytm to launch a convenient bus ticket booking facility for its customers.
- World's First Palm-Leaf Manuscript Museum opens in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.
- Amazon is back as the world's most valued brand, and Apple is down to No 2.
- World Leprosy Day 2023 is observed on the 30th of January 2023.
- The 'Toolkit on Enabling Gender-Responsive Urban Mobility and Public Spaces in India' was launched at a session organized by the World Bank (WB).
- Croatia adopted the euro currency and enter Europe's passport-free Schengen zone.
- Under the PM-SHRI scheme, the Union Cabinet approved ₹ 27,360 crores for the upgradation of 14,500 schools across the country over the next five years.
- PM inaugurated the 26th National Youth Festival in Hubballi, Karnataka on 12th January.
- Kerala's Wayanad becomes the first district in the country to provide basic documents to all tribal people.
- PM Modi announced the 'Aarogya Maitri' project to provide essential medical supplies to developing countries affected by natural disasters or other humanitarian crises.
- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi was the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on 26th January.
- The largest biennial Tri-Services amphibious exercise - AMPHEX 2023 - involving the Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF), and the Indian Navy was conducted near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh from January 17 to January 22.
- National Tourism Day is celebrated on January 25.
- Captain Shiva Chouhan becomes the first woman officer to be deployed at Siachen.
- China launches Asia's first semi-high-speed hydrogen train with a range of 600 km.
- Canada to commercialize the world's 1st photonic-based quantum computer.
- Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh launches 'Soul of Steel' Alpine Challenge to promote tourism in border areas.
- Shiva Chauhan becomes the first women officer to be operationally deployed in Siachen.
- IIT Madras develops India's Indigenous Mobile Operating System 'BharOS'.

- The Japanese passport is the most powerful among all passports in the world, according to Henley Passport Index 2023.

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## PRACTICE TEST

- Q1. Which ministry has launched Prajjwala Challenge?**  
(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
(b) Ministry of Environment and Forests  
(c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy  
(d) Ministry of Rural Development
- Q2. Who has been nominated for the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022?**  
(a) Virat Kohli  
(b) Rohit Sharma  
(c) KL Rahul  
(d) Suryakumar Yadav
- Q3. The year 2023 is being observed all over the world as the International Year of the \_\_\_\_\_.**  
(a) Barley  
(b) Rice  
(c) Millets  
(d) Maize
- Q4. Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated the first phase of the New Zuari Bridge in which state?**  
(a) Goa  
(b) Gujarat  
(c) Rajasthan  
(d) Maharashtra
- Q5. Which of the following has launched Utkarsh 2.0, the second phase of the central bank's medium-term strategy for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms?**  
(a) NABARD  
(b) RBI  
(c) SEBI  
(d) SIDBI
- Q6. Which of the following famous footballer has joined the Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr on a two-and-a-half-year contract?**  
(a) Cristiano Ronaldo  
(b) Lionel Messi  
(c) Kylian Mbappé  
(d) Marcus Rashford
- Q7. Which of the following state has launched the 'Didir Suraksha Kawach' programme?**  
(a) Tripura  
(b) West Bengal  
(c) Assam  
(d) Chhattisgarh
- Q8. Which country has become the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered urban trains?**  
(a) Saudi Arabia  
(b) China  
(c) USA  
(d) Japan
- Q9. Who has assumed the charge as the Secretary General of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU)?**  
(a) Dr V. G. Somani  
(b) Dr S. Eswara Reddy  
(c) Dr. P.B.N. Prasad  
(d) Dr. Vinay Prakash Singh
- Q10. World Braille Day is celebrated every year on which day?**  
(a) 1 January  
(b) 2 January  
(c) 3 January  
(d) 4 January
- Q11. Which state has won the UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023 for Jaga Mission?**  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Tamil Nadu  
(c) Odisha  
(d) Kerala





- Q12. Who is the author of the book titled 'Ambedkar: A Life'?**  
(a) Amartya Sen  
(b) Arvind Subramanian  
(c) Shashi Tharoor  
(d) Chetan Bhagat
- Q13. In which state of India, the world's first palm-leaf manuscripts museum has been inaugurated?**  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Tamil Nadu  
(c) Odisha  
(d) Kerala
- Q14. Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr Virendra Kumar have inaugurated Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity in which state?**  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Tamil Nadu  
(c) Goa  
(d) Himachal Pradesh
- Q15. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has recently unveiled a 120 feet tall statue of a polo player in which state?**  
(a) Tripura  
(b) West Bengal  
(c) Assam  
(d) Manipur
- Q16. Who is the author of the book "Revolutionaries: The Other Story of How India Won Its Freedom"?**  
(a) Amartya Sen  
(b) Arvind Subramanian  
(c) Shashi Tharoor  
(d) Sanjeev Sanyal
- Q17. Which state has become the country's first fully digital banking state?**  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Tamil Nadu  
(c) Odisha  
(d) Kerala
- Q18. Sharad Yadav passed away recently at the age of 75 in Gurugram. He was related to which of the following fields?**  
(a) Law  
(b) Cricket  
(c) Politics  
(d) Social Worker
- Q19. Which of the following state has become the first state to implement a policy to control blindness, intending to ensure the "right to sight"?**  
(a) Uttar Pradesh  
(b) Gujarat  
(c) Rajasthan  
(d) Punjab
- Q20. Union government has announced to set up India's first centre of excellence for online gaming in which state?**  
(a) Tripura  
(b) West Bengal  
(c) Assam  
(d) Meghalaya
- Q21. National Startup Day is celebrated every year on which day?**  
(a) 16 January  
(b) 17 January  
(c) 18 January  
(d) 14 January
- Q22. Which state government will launch its first major education project, 'Schools of Eminence'?**  
(a) Uttar Pradesh  
(b) Himachal Pradesh  
(c) Rajasthan  
(d) Punjab
- Q23. Jacinda Ardern resigned as the Prime Minister of which country?**  
(a) England  
(b) New Zealand  
(c) Australia  
(d) South Africa
- Q24. The President of which country will be the Chief Guest for Republic Day 2023?**  
(a) Suriname  
(b) Saudi Arabia  
(c) Israel  
(d) Egypt
- Q25. Parakram Diwas is celebrated every year on which day?**  
(a) 23 January  
(b) 22 January  
(c) 24 January  
(d) 25 January



**Q26. Which of the following armed forces is conducting an 'Ops Alert' exercise?**

- (a) BSF
- (b) CRPF
- (c) CISF
- (d) SSB
- (e) ITBP

**Q27. National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India every year on which day?**

- (a) 22 January
- (b) 23 January
- (c) 24 January
- (d) 25 January

**Q28. Which country has announced to commercialisation of the world's first photonic-based, fault-tolerant quantum computer?**

- (a) France
- (b) Russia
- (c) UK
- (d) Canada

**Q29. India has defeated which country to win the first edition of the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup?**

- (a) England
- (b) New Zealand
- (c) Australia
- (d) South Africa

**Q30. As per the Union Budget 2023, what is the per capita income in India?**

- (a) Rs 4.15 lakh per annum
- (b) Rs 3.75 lakh per annum
- (c) Rs 2.55 lakh per annum
- (d) Rs 1.97 lakh per annum

**ANSWER KEY**

- |     |   |     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1.  | D | 11. | C | 21. | A |
| 2.  | D | 12. | C | 22. | D |
| 3.  | C | 13. | D | 23. | B |
| 4.  | A | 14. | C | 24. | D |
| 5.  | B | 15. | D | 25. | A |
| 6.  | A | 16. | D | 26. | A |
| 7.  | B | 17. | D | 27. | C |
| 8.  | B | 18. | C | 28. | D |
| 9.  | D | 19. | C | 29. | A |
| 10. | D | 20. | D | 30. | D |



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