WBCS
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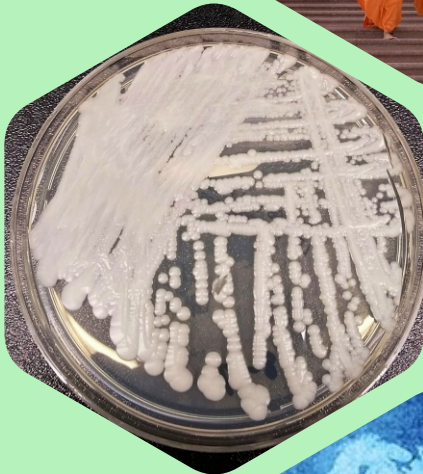
FEBRUARY 2024

APTI PLUS
Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.
CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION

WSDS

A MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR ASPIRANTS OF WBCS EXAMINATION

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WEST BENGAL SPECIAL

North 24 Parganas district: Sandeshkhali
- The island of Sandeshkhali in the Sundarbans of West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, about 75 km from Kolkata, recently has been in the news.
- In 1983, an administrative reform committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Ashok Mitra suggested splitting the district into two and as per the recommendation of the committee in 1986,1 March two districts—North 24 Parganas (24 PGS N) and South 24 Parganas (24 PGS S) were created.
- Barasat is the district headquarters of North 24 Parganas.
- **North 24 Parganas is West Bengal's most populous district and (following the splitting of the Thane district of Maharashtra in 2014) the most populated district in India.**
- It is home to the Bibhutibhushan Wildlife Sanctuary, which was established in 1985.

Shiksha Bandhus
- The salary of Shiksha Bandhus is being raised by about 40%, from Rs. 5,954 to Rs. 8,335. This translates to a raise of approximately Rs. 2,381 per month.
- This increase will be effective from April 1, 2024, ensuring that Shiksha Bandhus see a boost in their paychecks starting in the new financial year.
- Shiksha Bandhus play an important role in the state's education system and have been advocating for a salary increase for a long time. This decision by the West Bengal government acknowledges their contribution and helps address their financial concerns.

NATIONAL

Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR)
- The Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) is an innovative initiative **introduced by the Union Education Ministry in India.**
- **It assigns a 12-digit unique identification number to every student in India**, linking it with their Aadhaar number for accurate identification and reducing the chances of duplication.
- It creates a centralized database tracking a student's academic progress, offering a unified record system from early education to higher studies.
- It facilitates smoother transitions between institutions by providing the APAAR ID instead of physically transferring academic records.
- It eliminates the need for physical copies of academic records, reducing paperwork for both students and institutions.

Maratha Military Landscapes

- India nominated the "Maratha Military Landscapes" for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- The Maratha Military Landscapes encompass a network of forts strategically built across diverse terrains - hilltops, plateaus, coasts, and even islands. This nomination highlights the exceptional military architecture and planning of the Maratha rulers.
- **The 12 nominated components are located in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu**, showcasing the vast expanse of the Maratha Empire. Some of the included forts are Raigad, the capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and Gingee Fort, a strategically significant Tamil fort captured by the Marathas.
- **There are 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India**, ranking it sixth globally. Out of the 42 sites, 34 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1 is mixed.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India	State
Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra
Ellora Caves	Maharashtra
Agra Fort	Agra
Taj Mahal	Agra
Sun Temple	Orissa
Mahabalipuram Monuments	Tamil Nadu
Kaziranga National Park	Assam
Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan
Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	Assam
Churches and Convents of Goa	Goa
Monuments of Khajuraho	Madhya Pradesh
Monuments of Hampi	Karnataka
Fatehpur Sikri	Agra
Elephanta Caves	Maharashtra
Great Living Chola Temples	Tamil Nadu
Pattadakal Monuments	Karnataka
Sundarbans National Park	West Bengal
Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park	Uttarakhand
Monuments of Buddha	Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
Humayun's Tomb	Delhi
Qutub Minar and its Monuments	Delhi
Mountain Railways of Darjeeling, Kalka Shimla & Nilgiri	Darjeeling
Mahabodhi Temple	Bihar
Bhimbetka Rock Shelters	Madhya Pradesh
Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus	Maharashtra
ChampanerPavagadh Archaeological Park	Gujarat
Red Fort	Delhi
Jantar Mantar	Delhi
Western Ghats	Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra
Hill Forts	Rajasthan

Rani Ki Vav (The Queen's Stepwell)	Gujarat
Great Himalayan National Park	Himachal Pradesh
Nalanda	Bihar
Khangchendzonga National Park	Sikkim
Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (Capitol Complex)	Chandigarh
The Historic City	Ahmedabad
Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles	Mumbai
The Pink City	Jaipur
Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple	Telangana
Dholavira	Gujarat
Santiniketan	West Bengal
Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and Somananthpura	Karnataka

Swachhata Green Leaf Rating

- The Swachhata Green Leaf Rating initiative, launched **by the Union Tourism Ministry, aimed at ensuring hygiene standards in the hospitality sector.**
- By targeting hotels, lodges, homestays, and camps, it seeks to promote cleanliness and sanitation across various accommodation options.
- The initiative's focus on public participation underscores the importance of community involvement in maintaining cleaner and more sustainable tourism practices.

Deemed University Status

- The Union Education Ministry has conferred "deemed to be university" status to the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in New Delhi.
- In India, a "Deemed University" is an institution granted university status under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.
- This status is typically awarded to high-performing educational institutions and research organizations that meet specific criteria set by the UGC.
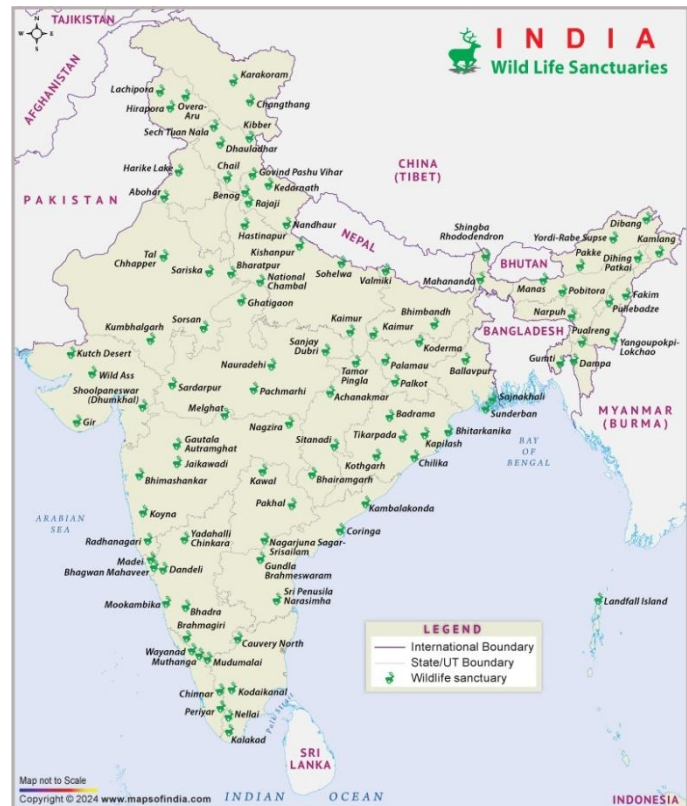
Operation AMRITH

- **Kerala has initiated "Operation AMRITH," which enforces the original H1 rule requiring a doctor's prescription for acquiring any class of antibiotics.** This move is aimed at combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by restricting over-the-counter sales of antibiotics without a prescription.

- The H1 rule was introduced by the Indian government in 2011 to address the growing concern of AMR. However, modifications were made in 2013 due to implementation challenges and concerns about access to life-saving antibiotics.
- Kerala's high doctor-patient ratio and high literacy rate support effective implementation and compliance with the rule. This enables stricter enforcement of the requirement for a doctor's prescription before purchasing antibiotics.

INTERNATIONAL

Abu Dhabi's first Temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple, emphasizing its significance as a symbol of shared heritage and global unity.
- **The temple, built by the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS),** was inaugurated in collaboration with the UAE government.
- The temple, constructed using ancient architectural methods and modern scientific techniques, features over 300 high-tech sensors for seismic monitoring.
- It is built without metal, using heat-resistant nano tiles, heavy glass panels, and fly ash to reduce its carbon footprint and withstand extreme temperatures.
- The land for the temple was donated by the UAE government, and the temple is expected to become the largest Hindu temple in the Gulf region.

Henley Passport Index 2024

- India ranked 85th in the Henley Passport Index (rank declined from 84th in 2023), and the number of countries granting visa-free access to Indian citizens increased from 60 to 62 compared to the previous year.
- France secured the top position in the index, as its passport provides visa-free access to 194 countries. Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and Spain are among the countries that are ranked alongside France at the top.
- A country's passport strength is a significant metric for measuring its soft power and global influence, as it allows citizens to travel freely across the globe without requiring a visa.
- Henley Passport Index is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and includes 199 passports and 227 travel destinations. It is updated monthly and is considered the standard reference tool for assessing global mobility.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

- The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranks countries based on perceived levels of public sector corruption.
- **India secured the 93rd position out of 180 countries in the CPI for 2023**, with a score of 39, slightly lower than its 2022 score of 40.
- Countries with high CPI scores included New Zealand (Rank: 3) and Singapore (Rank: 5).
- It is **published by Transparency International**, a global non-governmental organization that focuses on combating corruption.

International IP Index

- The US Chamber of Commerce released its 12th edition of the International IP Index.
- **India ranked 42nd out of 55 countries in the index**, with an overall score of 38.64%.
- The United States, the United Kingdom, and France emerged as the top three countries in the index.
- The index evaluated the IP framework of the world's top 55 economies, with 20 economies showing significant improvement.

H-1B Visa

- The US Department of State has launched the H-1B Visa Domestic Renewal Program as a pilot initiative.
- **The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that permits US companies** to employ foreign workers in specialized occupations requiring theoretical or technical expertise.
- Technology companies, in particular, heavily rely on the H-1B visa to hire thousands of employees annually from countries such as India and China.

World Sustainable Development Summit

- **The World Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi,** inaugurated by the Vice-President of India, offers an opportunity to discover sustainable living and the efficient use of natural resources.
- Organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), it is an annual event that brings together key stakeholders to tackle the complex challenges of sustainable development and climate justice.

- This year, the 23rd edition, held in New Delhi from February 7-9, 2024, focuses on the **theme "Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice."**
- The summit acts as a platform for diverse voices to be heard. Leading representatives from international organizations, governments, businesses, research institutions, civil society, and youth come together to share knowledge, experiences, and innovative solutions.

Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) 2024

- The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) 2024, formally known as the 7th Indian Ocean Conference, **was held on February 9-10, 2024, in Perth, Australia.**
- The Conference was attended by representatives from 40 countries, including Foreign Ministers from several regional nations.
- The Conference aimed to discuss cooperation and solutions for regional security, economic development, environmental protection, and maritime safety in the Indian Ocean region.

- The conference was sponsored by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- **The theme was "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean."**

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) was **held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from February 12-17, 2024.**
- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) is an international treaty that aims to conserve and protect migratory animals and their habitats across the world.
- It covers more than 500 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and invertebrates that cross national boundaries during their life cycles.
- The International Light Pollution Guidelines for migratory species, focusing on the impact of light pollution on various migratory species, were developed.
- It concluded with the **adoption of the Initiative for the Central Asian Flyway, led by India and supported by BirdLife International and 30 other governments.**

World Government Summit

- The World Government Summit 2024, held under the **theme of "Shaping Future Governments," took place in Dubai from February 12th to 14th, 2024.**
- The World Government Summit (WGS) is an annual event bringing together government leaders, thought leaders and private sector executives to discuss and explore innovative solutions for global challenges
- Türkiye, India, and Qatar were the guests of honour, highlighting the summit's emphasis on international cooperation. Renowned figures like Shah Rukh Khan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Nobel Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus participated in discussions.
- The Prime Minister of India emphasized the importance of "Ease of Living, Ease of Justice, Ease of Mobility, Ease of Innovation and Ease of Doing Business" in shaping future governments.
- The summit covered diverse topics like future economies, artificial intelligence, climate change, and healthcare, aiming to find solutions for a better future.

G-33

- **The G-33 countries, a coalition of developing nations within the World Trade Organization (WTO),** have issued a statement ahead of the 13th Ministerial Conference expressing their stance on agriculture trade negotiations.
- The G-33 includes countries like India, China, and Indonesia, totalling 47 nations. They advocate for flexibility in market opening for agriculture, focusing on special products that are crucial for their development.
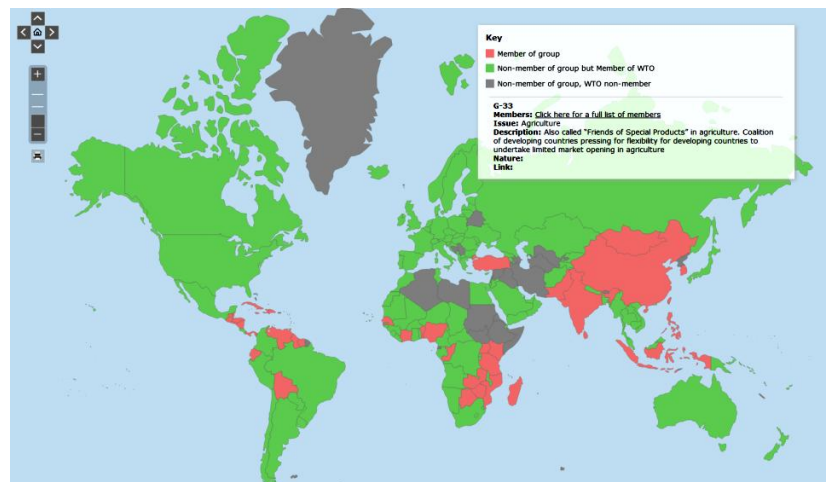
- **They are advocating for a permanent solution to public stockholding for food security**. Public stockholding plays a crucial role in ensuring food security, livelihood security, rural development, and support for low-income or resource-poor producers in developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) and net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs).

Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)

- Armenia freezes its participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).
- Armenia accuses the CSTO of failing to fulfil its obligations as a security alliance. Specifically, Armenia feels the CSTO did not provide adequate support during recent border clashes with Azerbaijan
- **It is a military alliance established by post-Soviet states in 2002.** The CSTO is led by Russia and promises its members collective defence in case of an attack.

Collective Security Organization (CSTO)

- Armenia, along with other former Soviet republics like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Belarus, joined the CSTO seeking security guarantees against potential external threats.

ECONOMICS

Indian Economy – A Review

- The decision not to present the Economic Survey in 2024 ahead of the Union Budget due to the election context has led the Ministry of Finance to release an alternative report titled "Indian Economy – A Review."
- This report, prepared by the office of Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran, serves as a valuable insight into the trajectory and prospects of the Indian economy over the past decade and its future outlook.
- The release of the "Indian Economy – A Review" report by the Ministry of Finance offers a comprehensive assessment of India's economic trajectory and prospects over the past decade, as well as insights into its future outlook.

Key Highlights

- <u>**Projected Economic Growth:**</u> India is projected to grow into a $5 trillion economy within the next three years, with the potential to reach $7 trillion by 2030.
- <u>**Focus on Structural Reforms**</u>: The report emphasizes the positive impact of structural reforms undertaken in the past decade on the Indian economy.

- **Cautionary Outlook**: While optimistic about India's growth prospects, the report also acknowledges global uncertainties and challenges, offering a cautious outlook on future growth and inflation.
- **Growth Rate in FY24**: India is expected to surpass a GDP growth rate of 7.2% in FY24, outpacing the global economy for the third consecutive year.
- **Strengthening Financial Sector**: The report notes a rise in public sector investment, a robust financial sector, and substantial non-food credit growth over the past decade.
- **Fintech and Stock Market Growth**: India has emerged as the third-largest fintech economy globally and the fourth-largest stock market worldwide, surpassing Hong Kong.
- **Financial Inclusion**: Initiatives like the PM Jan Dhan Yojana have significantly increased the percentage of women holding bank accounts, contributing to financial inclusion.
- **Female Labor Force Participation**: There has been a surge in the female labour force participation rate, supported by initiatives like the Skill India Mission, Start-Up India, and Stand-Up India.
- **Higher Education Enrollment**: The report highlights a significant increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for females in higher education.
- **MSME Sector Dynamics**: The MSME sector has shown dynamism due to government support, contributing to economic growth and employment generation.
- **GST Implementation**: The implementation of GST and the integration of domestic markets have improved economic efficiency and lowered logistics costs.

RBI Monetary Policy

- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has announced its decision to **maintain the repo rate at 6.5%.** This decision comes after the MPC's meeting on February 8, 2024, where five out of six members voted in favour of keeping the rate unchanged.
- **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das** emphasized the importance of a disinflationary stance in monetary policy to ensure inflation aligns progressively with the target.
- Inflation forecast maintained at 5.4% for FY 2023-2024, with a **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation projection of 4.5% for FY 2024-2025.**
- India's Forex Reserve stands at $622.5 billion, considered comfortable for meeting foreign obligations.
- **Rate Decision:**
  - Policy Repo Rate: 6.50%
  - Standing Deposit Facility (SDF): 6.25%
  - Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 6.75%
  - Bank Rate: 6.75%
  - Fixed Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%
  - CRR: 4.50%
  - SLR: 18.00%

Antyodya Anna Yojna (AAY)

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved an extension of the sugar subsidy scheme for Antyodya Anna Yojna (AAY) families through ration shops for an additional two

years. The extension of the scheme will last until March 31, 2026.
- The scheme aims to **provide support to 1.89 crore AAY families by distributing sugar through the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS).**
- Participating states will continue to receive a subsidy of ₹18.50 per kg of sugar for distribution to AAY families via PDS.
- Each family is entitled to receive one kg of sugar per month under this scheme.

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana
- The Yojana aims to **provide 300 free electricity units monthly to promote sustainable development.** It is designed to benefit 1 crore households across the country.
- The scheme involves a substantial government investment of ₹75,000 crores, demonstrating the commitment to providing essential services and improving the quality of life for citizens.
- **Indian citizens with an annual income below ₹1.5 lakh, no government employment, and a linked Aadhaar-linked bank account are eligible to apply** for reduced electricity bills and access income opportunities.
- The scheme offers various benefits including free electricity, reduced bills, income generation, and job opportunities in solar-related fields. These benefits not only alleviate the financial burden on households but also contribute to sustainable development and economic empowerment.

Interim Union Budget 2024-25
- The Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the Interim Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 on February 1, 2024.
- The Interim Budget serves as a provisional arrangement to ensure the continuity of government services and projects until the main budget is passed following the general elections.
- The Interim Budget allows for the allocation of funds to various sectors and facilitates the smooth operation of the government's financial responsibilities.

Budget Estimates for 2024-25
- **Total Expenditure:** The government plans to spend Rs 47,65,768 crore in 2024-25, reflecting a 6% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Expenditure Composition:** Revenue expenditure is anticipated to grow by 3.2%, while capital expenditure is projected to increase by 16.9%. This growth in revenue expenditure is restrained due to consistent allotments for pension, defence expenditure, subsidies, and major schemes (MGNREGS, Jal Jeevan Mission, and PM-KISAN), which together approximate the revised estimate for 2023-24.
- **Total Receipts:** Government receipts (excluding borrowings) are estimated at Rs 30,80,274 crore in 2024-25, showing an 11.8% increase compared to the revised estimates for 2023-24. Borrowings are budgeted to be Rs 16,85,494 crore, representing a 2.8% reduction from the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Transfer to States:** The Union government plans to transfer Rs 22,74,541 crore to states and union territories in 2024-25, marking an 8.4% increase over the revised estimates of 2023-24. This includes devolution of Rs 12,19,783 crore from the divisible pool of central taxes, grants worth Rs 8,90,858 crore, and special loans worth Rs 1,30,000 crore for capital expenditure.
- **Deficits:** The targeted revenue deficit for 2024-25 is 2% of GDP, lower than the 2.9% budgeted in 2023-24. The fiscal deficit is aimed at 5.1% of GDP in 2024-25, showing a decrease from the revised estimates for 2023-24 (5.9% of GDP). The reduction in the fiscal deficit is attributed to receipts growing at 11.8%, surpassing the expenditure growth of 6%.

- **GDP Growth Estimate:** The nominal GDP is estimated to grow at a rate of 10.5% in 2024-25, reflecting the government's optimistic outlook for economic expansion.
- **Capital Expenditure:** It brings about a change in the government's assets or liabilities, such as infrastructure projects like the construction of roads or investment in long-term assets. Expected to increase by approximately 17% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. This indicates a significant boost in investment in long-term projects.
- **Revenue Expenditure:** This includes expenses like payment of salaries, interest payments, and other day-to-day operational expenses. Expected to increase by 3.2% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. This suggests a moderate increase in operational expenses.
- **Disinvestment:** It involves the government selling its stakes in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to private entities. The disinvestment target for 2024-25 is set at Rs 50,000 crore, which is lower than the budget target of 2023-24 (Rs 61,000 crore).

Table 1: Budget at a Glance 2024-25 (Rs crore)

	Actuals 2022-23	Budgeted 2023-24	Revised 2023-24	Budgeted 2024-25	% change (2023-24 RE to 2024-25 BE)
Revenue Expenditure	34,53,132	35,02,136	35,40,239	36,54,657	3.2%
Capital Expenditure	7,40,025	10,00,961	9,50,246	11,11,111	16.9%
of which:					
Capital Outlay	6,24,757	8,37,127	8,07,053	9,39,584	16.4%
Loans and Advances	1,15,268	1,63,834	1,43,194	1,71,527	19.8%
Total Expenditure	**41,93,157**	**45,03,097**	**44,90,486**	**47,65,768**	**6.1%**
Revenue Receipts	23,83,206	26,32,281	26,99,713	30,01,275	11.2%
Capital Receipts	72,196	84,000	56,000	79,000	41.1%
of which:					
Recoveries of Loans	26,161	23,000	26,000	29,000	11.5%
Other receipts (including disinvestments)	46,035	61,000	30,000	50,000	
Total Receipts (excluding borrowings)	**24,55,402**	**27,16,281**	**27,55,713**	**30,80,274**	**11.8%**
Revenue Deficit	10,69,926	8,69,855	8,40,527	6,53,383	-22.3%
% of GDP	**3.9%**	**2.9%**	**2.8%**	**2.0%**	
Fiscal Deficit	17,37,755	17,86,816	17,34,773	16,85,494	-2.8%
% of GDP	**6.4%**	**5.9%**	**5.8%**	**5.1%**	
Primary Deficit	8,09,238	7,06,845	6,79,346	4,95,054	-27.1%
% of GDP	**3.0%**	**2.3%**	**2.3%**	**1.5%**	

Sources: Budget at a Glance, Union Budget Documents 2024-25; PRS.

Receipts for the fiscal year 2024-25

- **Total Receipts (excluding borrowings):** Estimated to be Rs 30,80,275 crore, marking an increase of 11.8% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. This growth is primarily driven by the centre's net tax revenue, which is expected to grow by 11.9%.
- **Gross Tax Revenue:** Budgeted to increase by 11.5% in 2024-25 over the revised estimates of 2023-24. Corporation tax and income tax are estimated to grow at about 13%, while GST revenue is expected to increase by 11.6%.
- **Devolution to States:** Estimated at Rs 12,19,783 crore in 2024-25, representing an increase of 10.4% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. In 2023-24, devolution to states was higher by Rs 83,045 crore compared to the initial estimate, reaching Rs 10,21,448 crore.
- **Net Tax Revenue:** Estimated to be Rs 26,01,574 crore in 2024-25, marking a 12% increase over the revised estimate for 2023-24. The revised estimate for net tax revenue in 2023-24 remains roughly the same as the budget estimate for the year.
- **Non-Tax Revenue:** Estimated at Rs 3,99,701 crore in 2024-25, showing a 6.4% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24. Non-tax revenue mainly includes interest receipts on loans, dividends, license fees, tolls, and charges for government services.
- **Capital Receipts (excluding borrowings):** Targeted at Rs 79,000 crore, marking a significant increase of 41% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. The 2023-24 revised estimate for capital receipts was 33% lower than the budgeted amount due to unmet disinvestment targets.

- **Indirect Taxes:** Total indirect tax collections estimated at Rs 16,17,840 crore in 2024-25. The government aims to raise Rs 10,67,650 crore from GST, with 86% expected to come from CGST and 14% from the GST compensation cess.
- **Corporation Tax and Income Tax:** Corporation tax collections are expected to increase by 13% in 2024-25. Income tax collections are also expected to rise to Rs 11,56,000 crore, representing a 13% increase over the previous fiscal year.
- **Non-Tax Receipts:** Estimated to increase by 6.4% over the revised estimates of 2023-24. The significant increase in non-tax revenue in 2023-24 was mainly due to higher dividend/surpluses from RBI, nationalized banks, and financial institutions.
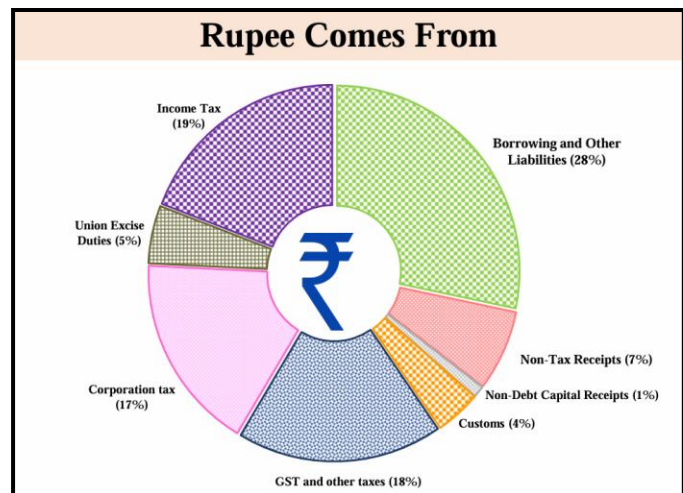
Expenditure Highlights for 2024-25

- **Total Expenditure:** Expected to be Rs 47,65,768 crore, indicating a 6.1% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24. Out of this, Rs 14,94,296 crore is proposed for central sector schemes (3.3% increase) and Rs 5,01,788 crore for centrally sponsored schemes (8.9% increase).
- **Key Expenditure Categories:** Expenditure on pension is estimated at Rs 2,39,612 crore, 0.7% higher than the revised estimate of 2023-24. Interest payments are estimated to be Rs 11,90,440 crore, representing 25% of the government's total expenditure. This marks a 12.8% increase over the revised estimates of 2023-24. Other grants, loans, and transfers amount to Rs 3,50,255 crore, including Rs 1,30,000 crore as special loans to states for capital expenditure.

- **Top Ministries by Allocations:** The top 13 ministries account for 54% of the estimated total expenditure. Ministry of Defence receives the highest allocation of Rs 6,21,541 crore, representing 13% of the total budgeted expenditure. Other ministries with significant allocations include Road Transport and Highways (5.8% of total expenditure), Railways (5.4%), and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (4.5%).
- **Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance):** Rs 70,449 crore was allocated to a new expenditure item called 'New Schemes', accounting for about 84% of the department's total allocation. This entire allocation is for capital expenditure.
- **Ministry of Communications:** Allocation expected to increase by Rs 14,507 crore (11.8%) in 2024-25, mainly due to capital infusion into BSNL, estimated at Rs 82,916 crore, a 28% increase over the revised estimates of 2023-24.
- **Ministry of Defence:** Allocation is estimated to decrease by Rs 2,348 crore (0.4%) in 2024-25, primarily due to a decrease in the allocation towards stores.

Aggregate allocation towards stores across services is estimated to be Rs 16,873 crore, a 26% decrease from the revised estimates of 2023-24.

Allocation for Specific Ministries

in ₹ Lakh Crore

Ministry	Allocation
Ministry of Defence	6.2
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	2.78
Ministry of Railways	2.55
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution	2.13
Ministry of Home Affairs	2.03
Ministry of Rural Development	1.77
Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers	1.68
Ministry of Communications	1.37
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare	1.27

Expenditure on Subsidies

- **Total Subsidies Expenditure:** Estimated to be Rs 4,09,723 crore, marking a 7% decrease from the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Food Subsidy:** Allocation for food subsidy is estimated at Rs 2,05,250 crore in 2024-25, representing a 3.3% decrease from the revised estimate of 2023-24. Higher levels of food subsidy were budgeted in 2021-22 and 2022-23 due to the PMGKAY initiative, which provided free additional foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries to mitigate the impact of COVID. This additional benefit ended in December 2022.
- **Fertiliser Subsidy:** Expenditure on fertiliser subsidy is estimated at Rs 1,64,000 crore in 2024-25, reflecting a decrease of Rs 24,894 crore (13.2%) from the revised estimate of 2023-24. Fertiliser subsidy was increased substantially in 2022-23 due to a sharp rise in international prices of raw materials used in manufacturing fertilisers.
- **Other Subsidies:** Expenditure on other subsidies, including interest subsidies for various government schemes and LPG subsidies, is estimated to increase by 3% over the revised estimate of 2023-24.

Key Welfare Schemes:

- **MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme):** Highest allocation in 2024-25 at Rs 86,000 crore, the same as the revised estimate for 2023-24. Allocation on the scheme is estimated to have increased by 43% over the budget estimate in 2023-24.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** Second-highest allocation in 2024-25 at Rs 80,671 crore, representing a 49.1% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24. Expenditure for the scheme in 2023-24 is expected

to be lower by 32% compared to the budget estimates, mainly due to the rural component falling short of original plans.

- **Jal Jeevan Mission:** Third-highest allocation in 2024-25 at Rs 70,163 crore, a 0.2% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **PM KISAN:** Allocated Rs 60,000 crore in 2024-25, the same as the revised estimate of 2023-24.

Loans to States for Capital Expenditure
- The Centre has allocated Rs 1,30,000 crore for special interest-free loans to states for capital expenditure in 2024-25.
- This amount remains the same as the budgeted allocation in 2023-24, which was reduced to Rs 1,05,551 crore in the revised estimates.

Programmes for the Welfare of Women and Children
- Allocated Rs 4,19,183 crore in 2024-25, reflecting an 18.6% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24. These allocations encompass programs implemented across all ministries.
- The increase in allocation towards the welfare of women is attributed to a higher allocation towards the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, where the female head of the family must be the owner or co-owner of the house.
- Allocation towards the welfare of children is also expected to rise due to a higher allocation towards school education.

Policy Highlights
- **Railways:** Three major economic railway corridor programs will be implemented, focusing on energy, mineral, and cement corridors, port connectivity corridors, and high-traffic density corridors. Upgradation of 40,000 normal rail bogies to Vande Bharat standards will enhance passenger safety and comfort.
- **Housing:** An ambitious target of building an additional two crore houses over the next five years under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Grameen. Introduction of a new scheme to assist middle-class individuals living in rented houses, slums, and unauthorized colonies to purchase or construct their own homes.

Rupee Goes To

- **Health:** Encouragement of cervical cancer vaccination for girls aged nine to 14 years. Rollout of the U-WIN platform for managing immunization efforts nationwide. Extension of healthcare coverage under the Ayushman Bharat scheme to ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers and helpers.
- **Energy:** Initiative to solarize one crore households through rooftop solar installations. Mandating the blending of compressed biogas in CNG and PNG to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. Installation of coal gasification and liquefaction capacity to the tune of 100 metric tonnes by 2030.
- **Environment:** Strengthening and expansion of EV manufacturing and charging infrastructure. Promotion of E-buses for public transport and the launch of the Blue Economy 2.0 scheme to revive
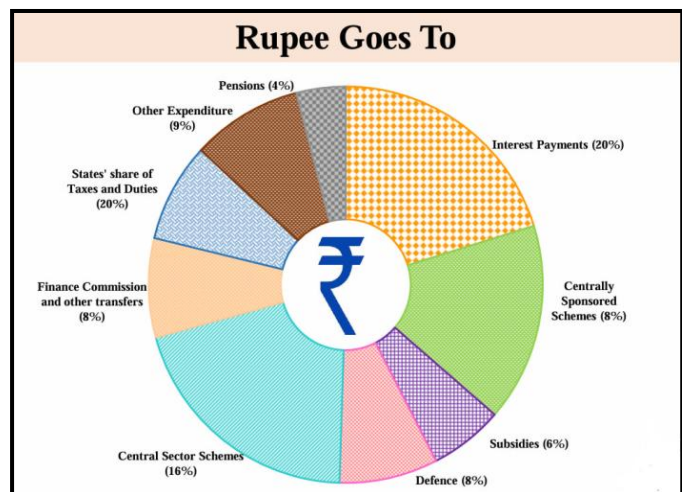
coastal aquaculture and mariculture. Introduction of a scheme to promote environment-friendly alternatives such as biodegradable polymers, bio-plastics, and bio-pharmaceuticals.
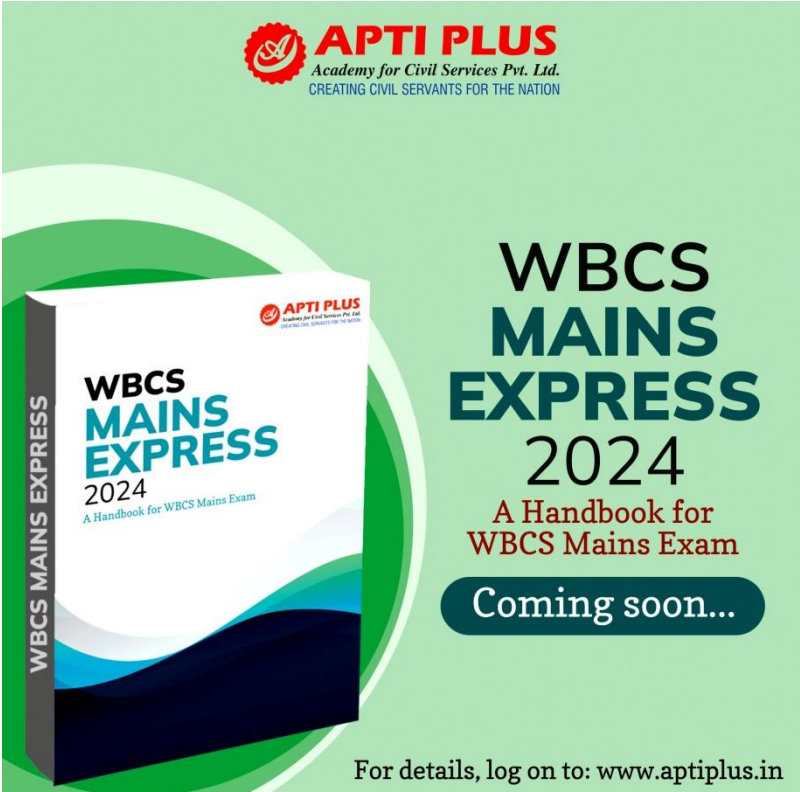
- **Agriculture:** Promotion of public and private investment in post-harvest activities, including aggregation, storage, supply chain, processing, and marketing. Expansion of Nano DAP fertilizer application across all agro-climatic zones. Formulation of a program to support dairy farmers and expansion of the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana to enhance aquaculture productivity, double seafood exports, and generate employment opportunities.
- **Demographic Changes:** Establishment of a high-powered committee to address challenges arising from rapid population growth and demographic changes.
- **Research:** Creation of a corpus of one lakh crore rupees to encourage private sector investment in research and innovation. This corpus will provide long-term loans at low or nil interest rates, incentivizing research and development activities in the private sector.

West Bengal Budget 2024-25

- Ms. Chandrima Bhattacharya, the Finance Minister of West Bengal, presented the Budget for the financial year 2024-25 on February 8, 2024.
- The Budget prioritized key sectors including health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, and social welfare. It introduced several new schemes and initiatives to foster economic growth and promote overall development in the state.
- The **projected Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of 10.5% for 2024-25** is promising, indicating a healthy economic expansion.

Budget Estimates for 2024-25

- **Total Expenditure:** The total expenditure (excluding debt repayment) for 2024-25 is targeted at Rs 3,04,689 crore. This reflects a 13% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Sources of Funding:** The expenditure is proposed to be met through receipts (excluding borrowings) of Rs 2,36,438 crore. Net borrowings are expected to be Rs 60,262 crore. The remaining amount will be funded through the public account and the contingency fund.
- **Total Receipts (Other than Borrowings):** Total receipts for 2024-25 (other than borrowings) are expected to increase by 13% over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Revenue Deficit:** The revenue

deficit in 2024-25 is estimated to be 1.7% of GSDP (Rs 31,952 crore). This is largely similar to the revised estimates for 2023-24 in terms of percentage but higher by Rs 3,699 crore in absolute terms.

- **Fiscal Deficit:** The fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is targeted at 3.6% of GSDP (Rs 68,250 crore). This is higher than the revised estimates for 2023-24, which stood at 3.5% of GSDP. States are allowed a fiscal deficit limit of 3.5% of GSDP for the same period, including 0.5% of GSDP for undertaking power sector reforms.

Table 1: Budget 2024-25 - Key figures (in Rs crore)

Items	2022-23 Actuals	2023-24 Budgeted	2023-24 Revised	% change from BE 23-24 to RE 23-24	2024-25 Budgeted	% change from RE 23-24 to BE 24-25
Total Expenditure	2,75,361	3,39,162	3,29,083	-3%	3,66,116	11%
(-) Repayment of debt	29,768	60,541	60,631	0%	61,427	1%
Net Expenditure (E)	**2,45,592**	**2,78,622**	**2,68,451**	**-4%**	**3,04,689**	**13%**
Total Receipts	2,65,869	3,32,823	3,21,948	-3%	3,58,127	11%
(-) Borrowings	70,243	1,20,040	1,12,803	-6%	1,21,689	8%
Net Receipts (R)	**1,95,626**	**2,12,783**	**2,09,145**	**-2%**	**2,36,438**	**13%**
Fiscal Deficit (E-R)	**49,966**	**65,839**	**59,306**	**-10%**	**68,250**	**15%**
as % of GSDP	3.3%	3.8%	3.5%		3.6%	
Revenue Deficit	**27,295**	**30,924**	**28,253**	**-9%**	**31,952**	**13%**
as % of GSDP	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%		1.7%	
Primary Deficit	**9,948**	**23,076**	**17,031**	**-26%**	**22,981**	**35%**
as % of GSDP	0.6%	1.3%	1.0%		1.2%	
GSDP	15,31,758	17,19,609	17,00,939	-1%	18,79,453	10%

Note: BE is Budget Estimates; RE is Revised Estimates. Total expenditure in 2022-23 includes transfer of Rs 180 crore to the contingency fund. Fiscal deficit figures are as reported by the state and have not been adjusted for loans given by the Centre for capital expenditure.
Sources: Annual Financial Statement, West Bengal Budget Documents 2024-25; PRS.

GSDP Growth Rate

- The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of West Bengal, at constant prices, is **estimated to be 8.4% in 2022-23 compared to the previous year.**
- In comparison, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to grow by 7.2% in the same period. West Bengal's growth rate is higher than the national average, indicating a relatively robust economic performance.

Sectoral Contribution (at current prices)

- **Agriculture:** West Bengal's agriculture sector is estimated to contribute 20% to the state's economy in 2022-23.
- **Manufacturing:** The manufacturing sector is expected to contribute 23% to the overall economy.
- **Services:** The services sector is projected to be the largest contributor, accounting for 57% of West Bengal's economy. This indicates a significant role played by industries such as finance, healthcare, education, and other service-oriented sectors.

Figure 1: Growth in West Bengal's GSDP at constant prices (2011-12)
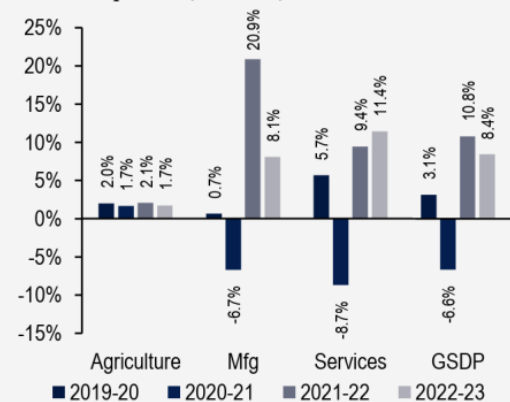
Note: These numbers are as per constant prices (2011-12) which implies that the growth rate is adjusted for inflation.
Sources: MoSPI; PRS.

Per Capita GSDP (at current prices):

- The **per capita GSDP for West Bengal is estimated to be Rs 1,57,254 in 2022-23.** This represents a 13% increase over the previous fiscal year (2021-22).
- The **per capita GDP for India is expected to increase by 15% over the same period,** reaching Rs 1,96,983. While West Bengal's per capita income is lower than the national average, the growth rate is still notable, suggesting positive economic development.

Revenue receipts 2024-25

- <u>Total Revenue Receipts:</u> The total revenue receipts for 2024-25 are estimated to be Rs 2,36,251 crore, which is an increase of 13% over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- <u>Sources of Revenue:</u> The state will raise Rs 1,08,666 crore (46% of total revenue) through its resources. The remaining Rs 1,27,585 crore (54% of total revenue) will come from the central government. This contribution will be in the form of the state's share in central taxes and grants.
- <u>Centre's Contribution Breakdown:</u> The state's share in central taxes for 2024-25 is estimated to be Rs 92,900 crore, representing a 12% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24. Grants from the centre are estimated to be Rs 34,684 crore, which is a 17% increase over the revised estimates for 2023-24.

State's Own Tax Revenue

- **West Bengal's total tax revenue is estimated to be Rs 1,02,349 crore in 2024-25**, marking a 10% increase over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- **Own tax revenue as a percentage of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is estimated to be 5.4% in 2024-25**, slightly lower than the revised estimates for 2023-24 (5.5%).
- The largest source of own tax revenue in 2024-25 is State GST, accounting for a 46% share and is estimated to increase by 10% over the revised estimates of 2023-24.
- Revenue from state excise is estimated to comprise 21% of West Bengal's tax revenue in 2024-25, with a projected increase of 16% over the revised estimate of 2023-24.
- Revenue from sales tax/VAT and stamp duty and registration fees is estimated to increase by 8% and 10% respectively in 2024-25 over the revised estimate of 2023-24.

Table 5: Break-up of the state government's receipts (in Rs crore)

Items	2022-23 Actuals	2023-24 Budgeted	2023-24 Revised	% change from BE 2023-24 to RE 2023-24	2024-25 Budgeted	% change from RE 2023-24 to BE 2024-25
State's Own Tax	83,609	88,596	92,742	5%	1,02,349	10%
State's Own Non-Tax	2,197	6,377	3,148	-51%	6,317	101%
Share in Central Taxes	71,435	76,844	83,193	8%	92,900	12%
Grants-in-aid from Centre	38,304	40,821	29,576	-28%	34,684	17%
Revenue Receipts	**1,95,544**	**2,12,637**	**2,08,659**	**-2%**	**2,36,251**	**13%**
Non-debt Capital Receipts	82	146	486	234%	187	-61%
Net Receipts	**1,95,626**	**2,12,783**	**2,09,145**	**-1.7%**	**2,36,438**	**13%**

Note: BE is Budget Estimates; RE is Revised Estimates.
Sources: Annual Financial Statement, West Bengal Budget Documents 2024-25; PRS.

> **Grants for Centrally Sponsored Schemes in West Bengal 2023-24**
> - **Overall Grants-in-Aid from the Centre (2023-24):** The revised estimate shows a 28% reduction compared to the budget estimate. This indicates that West Bengal received lower grants from the central government than initially anticipated.
> - **Budget Estimate for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):** The budget estimate for grants from the Centre for implementing CSS was Rs 24,214 crore. However, the revised estimate indicates a significant decrease, with grants estimated to be 45% lower at Rs 13,419 crore. This suggests that the actual funds received for CSS were considerably less than initially budgeted.
> - **Grants for MGNREGA (CSS):** The revised estimate for grants from the Centre for MGNREGA is Rs 1,901 crore, representing a 50% reduction compared to the initial budget estimate.
> - **Grants for PM Awas Yojana (CSS):** The revised estimate for grants from the Centre for PMAY is Rs 1,973 crore, which is 65% lower than the initially budgeted amount. This substantial decrease indicates a significant shortfall in the expected funds for housing-related initiatives.

Policy Highlights

Lakshmir Bhandar
- The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to women, particularly those from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. **The assistance has been increased to Rs 1,200 per month for women from SC/ST communities and Rs 1,000 per month for women from other categories.** This financial support is designed to aid in their economic well-being.
- Once the beneficiaries reach 60 years of age, they will **continue to receive the same financial assistance**, but it will be provided under the old age pension scheme. This ensures a continued support system for elderly individuals.

Karmasree Scheme
- The Karmasree scheme focuses on providing employment opportunities. **It guarantees at least 50 days of work for individuals holding job cards under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).** This initiative is set to begin implementation from May 2024 onwards, aiming to uplift the livelihoods of job cardholders.

Agriculture
- To modernize farming practices, the government plans to **establish 2,000 farm machinery hubs and custom hiring centres at the gram panchayat level** over the next two years. This includes an allocation of Rs 450 crore to set up these centres
- An allocation of Rs 200 crore has been made to establish 1,200 farmer-producer organizations. These organizations play a crucial role in supplying seeds and improving market connectivity for agricultural produce, contributing to the overall growth of the agricultural sector.

Taruner Swapno
- Under the Taruner Swapno scheme, **students in class 11 will receive a one-time financial assistance of Rs 10,000.** This support is specifically earmarked for purchasing smartphones or tablet computers, recognizing the importance of digital access for educational purposes. The scheme has a total allocation of Rs 900 crore.

Expenditure on key sectors

- **Education:** West Bengal has allocated 15.6% of its total expenditure to the education sector in 2024-25, which is higher than the average expenditure by states in the previous fiscal year. This includes significant amounts for non-government secondary and primary schools.

- **Health:** The health sector receives 6.6% of West Bengal's total expenditure in 2024-25, higher than the average expenditure by states in the previous fiscal year. Funds are allocated for both urban and rural health services.

- **Rural Development:** West Bengal allocates 6.2% of its total expenditure to rural development in 2024-25, higher

than the average expenditure by states in the previous fiscal year. This includes support for various panchayats and MGNREGA.

- **Roads and Bridges:** The allocation for roads and bridges in West Bengal's budget is 1.9% of the total expenditure in 2024-25, lower than the average allocation by states in the previous fiscal year. Funds are allocated for capital outlay on roads and bridges.

- **Agriculture:** West Bengal has allocated 7.4% of its total expenditure towards the agriculture sector in 2024-25, higher than the average expenditure by states in the previous fiscal year. This includes financial support to Krishak Bandhu and crop insurance.

- **Energy:** The energy sector receives 1.2% of West Bengal's total expenditure in 2024-25, lower than the average allocation by states in the previous fiscal year. Funds are allocated for setting up super-critical thermal power units.
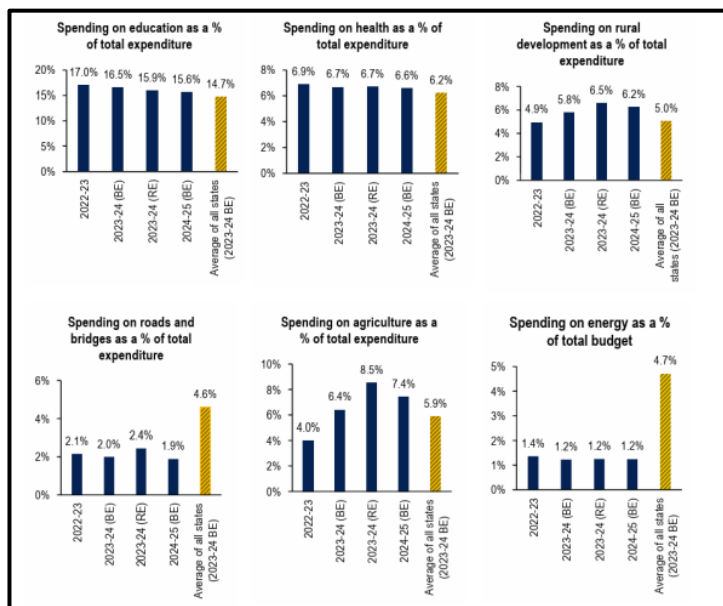
Budget Terms	Meaning
Halwa Ceremony	A customary ceremony where halwa is served to officers and staff involved in printing the budget, about a week before its presentation in Parliament. Symbolizes starting on a sweet note.
Union Budget	Annual presentation in Parliament detailing the government's plan for taxation and spending in the upcoming financial year, presented by the Finance Minister.
Interim Budget	Presented if there isn't time for a full budget or if General Lok Sabha elections are close.
Vote-on-account	Process for an incumbent government to obtain votes from Parliament to spend money for a part of the year.
Direct and Indirect Taxes	Direct taxes (on income) and indirect taxes (on goods and services). Examples include income tax, corporate tax (direct), and GST, Customs Duty (indirect).
GST & Excise duty	Excise Duty on goods manufactured for home consumption; GST on supply of goods and services. GST effective from July 1, 2017.

Customs duty	Tax imposed on the export and import of goods from or into the country passed on to the final consumer.
Fiscal Deficit	Occurs when government expenditures exceed revenue, excluding money from borrowings. Indicates a money shortage.
Revenue Deficit	Arises when government revenue expenditure exceeds its revenue receipts, indicating insufficient income for day-to-day functioning.
Primary Deficit	Difference between fiscal deficit and interest payments on previous borrowings. Reflects the current year's fiscal situation, excluding past interest payments.
Fiscal Policy	Government decisions on adjusting expenditure and revenue collection to achieve economic goals.
Monetary Policy	Action plan initiated by the monetary authority (RBI) to monitor and manage the demand and supply of money in the economy.
Inflation	A situation where prices of goods increase, and the purchasing value of money falls in an economy. Measured by an inflation rate.
Capital Budget	Estimated amount of capital receipts and payments, including investments in shares, loans, and advances.
Revenue Budget	Estimated amount for the growth, development, and infrastructure of the country.
Finance Bill	The proposal forwarded to Parliament for introducing or amending taxes, presented in Lok Sabha.
Excess Grants	Additional funds are sought from Parliament when the authorized grant falls short after the budget proposal.
Budget Estimates	Approximate expenses the government will incur and income through taxes in a financial year, covering spending on different sectors and nation-building.
Revised Estimates	Mid-year review of potential expenditures for the remainder of the financial year based on trends noticed in the first half.
Re-appropriations	Transfer of approved funds from one department to another for a specific purpose.
Outcome of Budget	Progress report on how Ministries and Departments have handled expenditures in the previous annual budget, assessing the success of government programs.
Consolidated fund of India	Includes revenues received and expenses incurred by the government, except exceptional expenses requiring Parliament approval.
Contingency Fund of India	Exists to meet unexpected expenses by the President, with Parliament approval required for additional funds. Contains around Rs. 500 crores.
Public Account	Government acts as a banker, holding money for account holders (e.g., Public Provident Fund, National Pension Scheme) and providing assured interest returns.
Corporate tax	Direct tax levied on a company's profits. Calculated based on operating earnings after expenses.
Minimum Alternate Tax	Levied on companies showing minimal income to avoid taxes, ensuring a minimum tax based on book profits.

Non-plan expenditure	Any expense incurred by the government other than plan expenditure. Includes interest payments, grants, and government employees' salaries.
Plan expenditure	Calculated after discussion with ministries and the Planning Commission, covering expenses for programs under the Five Year Plan.
Disinvestment	Selling or liquidating government assets or subsidiaries. Also known as divestment or divestiture.
Aggregate Demand	Total demand for all goods and services in the entire economy, detailing the relationship between goods/services and their respective prices.
Balanced Budget	A budget in which revenues equal expenditures, resulting in neither a deficit nor a surplus.
Annual Financial Statement	Required presentation of estimated receipts and expenditures for every financial year to Parliament, as per Article 112 of the Constitution.
Appropriation bill	Proposed law authorizing government fund expenditure, allowing withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of India. Also known as a supply or spending bill.
Budget at a glance	Document providing a brief overview of receipts, disbursements, tax revenues, and expenditure breakdowns (Non-Plan and Plan) and resource transfers to states and union territories.
Budget Cycle	The life cycle of a budget from creation to evaluation, involves stages of preparation, approval, execution, audit, and evaluation.
Balance of payments	A statistical representation of transactions in goods, services, and income between an economy and the rest of the world, detailing changes in monetary gold, SDRs, financial claims, and transfers.
Fiscal Year	The period used by governments for budget and accounting purposes is typically from April 1st to March 31st in India.
Gross Domestic Product	The final value of goods and services produced within a country's geographic boundaries in a given period indicates economic performance.
Net Domestic Product	Annual measure of economic output with adjustments for depreciation, equal to GDP minus depreciation of capital goods.
Household Income	The combined income of all individuals sharing a residence, including salary, wages, investment gains, retirement income, etc.
Macro-economic	Branch of economics studying aggregate behaviours in an economy, including inflation, growth rate, price levels, GDP, and changes in unemployment.
Micro-economic	Concerned with decisions made by individuals and firms regarding the allocation of scarce resources, affecting supply, demand, and prices in the goods market.
Resources	Economic inputs used in the creation of goods or services are categorized as human resources (labour, management) and non-human resources (financial, capital goods, land, technology).
Subvention	Grant or aid support by the government, such as asking financial institutions to grant loans at rates below the market.
Zero-based budgeting	Practice allocating all expenditures for a period and making revenue estimates anew, justifying every expense in the new period's budget creation.

DEFENCE & SECURITY

MQ-9B UAV

- The US State Department has notified Congress about a possible sale of 31 MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones to India, valued at $3.99 billion. This deal signifies a growing strategic partnership between the US and India in defence cooperation.
- These are high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) designed for maritime missions by General Atomics.
- They have a long flight time (up to 40 hours) and can operate at high altitudes (40,000 feet).
- Equipped with advanced sensors (EO/IR cameras, radar, maritime patrol radar) for surveillance of ships, submarines, and other threats.

Exercise Vayu Shakti-24

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 on 17 February 2024 at the Pokhran Air to Ground Range, near Jaisalmer.
- Ex Vayu Shakti demonstrated the offensive and defensive capabilities of the IAF, spanning across day and night. The exercise showcases joint operations with the Indian Army.
- Exercise Vayu Shakti demonstrated the IAF's capability to deliver weapons with long-range, precision capability as well as conventional weapons accurately, on time and with devastating effect, while operating from multiple air bases.

Dharma Guardian

- **The 5th edition of the joint military exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force** has commenced at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.
- The exercise involves contingents of 40 personnel each from both India and Japan. The Japanese contingent is represented by troops from the 34th Infantry Regiment, while the Indian Army contingent is represented by a Battalion from the Rajputana Rifles.
- The exercise aims to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations in semi-urban environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Joint Exercise	Participating Countries	Joint Exercise	Participating Countries
Mithra Shakti	India and Sri Lanka	Garuda	India and France
Hand-in-Hand	India and China	Avia Indra	India and Russia
Exercise Shakti	India and France	Exercise Red Flag	India and the U.S.
Exercise Nomadic Elephant	India and Mongolia	Siam Bharat	Indian Air Force and Royal Thai Air Force

Exercise Yuddh Abhyas	India and the United States	Desert Eagle	India and UAE
Surya Kiran	India and Nepal	Eastern Bridge	India and Oman
LAMITYE	India and Seychelles	Varuna	France and India
Prabal Dostyk	India and Kazakhstan	SLINEX	Sri Lanka and India
Al-Nagah	India and Oman	INDRA	India and Russia
Ajeya Warrior	India and UK	Exercise Malabar	United States, Japan, and India
SAMPRITI	India and Bangladesh	Simbex	India and Singapore
AUSTRA HIND	Australia and India	IBSAMAR	India, Brazil, and South Africa
Khanjar	India and Kyrgyzstan	KONKAN	Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Britain
Maitree Exercise	India and Thailand	AUSINDEX	Indian and Australian Navy
Garuda Shakti	India and Indonesia	Sahyog-Kaijin	Coast Guards of India and Japan
Dharma Guardian	India and Japan	Naseem Al Bahr	India and Oman
Ex Ekuverin	India and Maldives	IMCOR	India and Myanmar
VINBAX-2018	India and Vietnam	Sahyog HOP TAC	India and Vietnam
Ex HARIMAU SHAKTI	India and Malaysia	INDO CORPAT	India and Indonesia
Indradhanush/Rainbow	India and UK		

ABHYAS

- The successful flight trials of the High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) 'ABHYAS' **by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, Odisha**, mark a significant achievement in indigenous defence technology development.
- It features an auto-pilot system developed indigenously, enabling autonomous flying.
- **ABHYAS is equipped with a laptop-based Ground Control System for integration**, pre-flight checks, data recording, and post-flight analysis, minimizing logistics and cost compared to imported equivalents.

SCIENCE

iOncology.ai

- AIIMS Delhi and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, launched **iOncology.ai, an AI platform for early detection of breast and ovarian cancer.**
- **iOncology.ai utilizes deep-learning models and self-learning capabilities** to analyze complex medical data with high accuracy.

- **It focuses initially on breast and ovarian cancers, prevalent among women in India**, using a large dataset of radiological and histopathological images collected from patient cases at AIIMS.
- AIIMS plans to partner with additional cancer hospitals and research centres for the nationwide adoption of iOncology.ai, leveraging its status as an indigenously developed technology.

Artificial Intelligence in Oncology

Current Capabilities, Future Opportunities, and Ethical Considerations

The evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the field of oncology by providing new devices to detect cancer, individualize treatments, manage patients, and more.

Artificial intelligence (AI), a branch of computer science used for predictions and automation, has emerged as potential solution to improve the healthcare journey and to promote precision in healthcare.

Application of artificial intelligence against cancer

We can utilize the power of state-of-the-art machine learning to:
- Improve accuracy, speed and safety of cancer diagnosis
- Gain insights into cancer biology that drives disease initiation, progress and relapse
- Personalize treatment for the individual patient
- Connect data sources to leverage the power of big data in cancer research

Alzheimer

- A recent study published in the Nature Journal highlighted such instances where Alzheimer's was transmitted from one human to another.
- Alzheimer's disease is the leading cause of dementia, affecting memory, thinking, and behaviour to the extent of disrupting daily life.
- It primarily affects individuals over 65 but can occur in younger individuals, underscoring its complexity.
- Alzheimer's is a progressive neurodegenerative disease, resulting in the loss of brain cells over time.
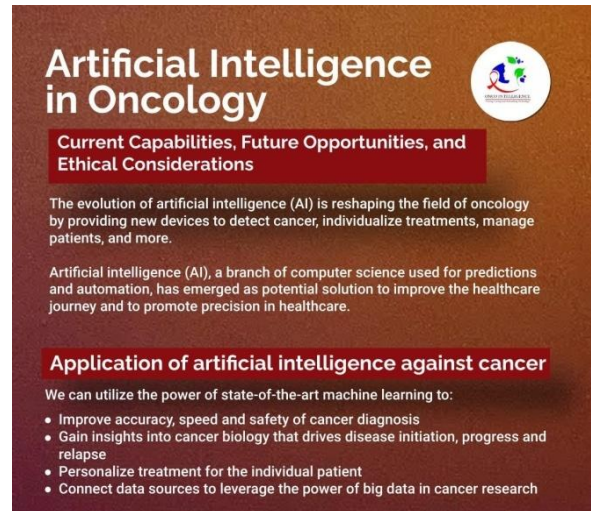
BioRescue project

- The primary aim of the BioRescue project is to prevent the extinction of the northern white rhinoceros subspecies by establishing a viable population through IVF and surrogacy.
- The northern white rhinoceros subspecies faced a dire situation following the death of the last male in 2018. Efforts to breed the remaining individuals in Kenya proved unsuccessful due to reproductive issues.
- **The BioRescue project is an international forum of scientists from various continents**. It receives funding from the German government and several other public and private donors, highlighting the global collaboration involved in this conservation effort.

> **In vitro fertilization (IVF)**
> In vitro fertilization (IVF) is a fertility treatment where fertilization occurs outside the body, typically in a laboratory setting. It involves the extraction of eggs from a woman's ovaries, which are then fertilized with sperm in a laboratory dish. The resulting embryos are then transferred back into the woman's uterus with the aim of establishing a successful pregnancy.

Garbhini-GA2

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute have collaborated to develop **Garbhini-GA2, the first India-specific AI model for accurately determining the gestational age (GA) of a fetus during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy.**
- Garbhini-GA2 is tailored specifically for the Indian population, considering variations in fetal growth that may not be accurately represented by models designed for Western populations. This ensures a more accurate estimation of gestational age for pregnant women in India.

- **Garbhini-GA2 is part of the GARBH-Ini program initiated by the Department of Biotechnology**, focusing on advanced research on birth outcomes. This program highlights the commitment to implementing advancements in healthcare across India.

Green Propulsion System

- The successful demonstration of the Green Propulsion System developed under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme of DRDO marks a significant milestone in the advancement of propulsion technology, particularly in the context of space exploration.

India's Green Propulsion System Thrusters Pass First Space Test will Power the Next-Gen Satellites

- The Green Propulsion System comprises various indigenously-developed components, highlighting India's capability in developing cutting-edge technology for space exploration. This indigenous development not only enhances self-reliance but also fosters innovation and technological advancement in the aerospace sector.
- **The use of non-toxic and environmentally friendly propulsion technology addresses concerns regarding the environmental impact of space missions.** By reducing the use of hazardous chemicals and minimizing pollution, green propulsion systems contribute to sustainable space exploration practices.
- The success of this project underscores the effectiveness of initiatives such as the Technology Development Fund (TDF), spearheaded by DRDO and aligned with the 'Make in India' initiative.

Candida auris

- Candida auris is an **emerging fungal pathogen** that poses significant challenges to public health due to its unique characteristics and potential for rapid spread.
- It can spread easily in healthcare settings, particularly among vulnerable populations such as those with weakened immune systems. It can be transmitted through direct contact with contaminated surfaces, medical equipment, or person-to-person contact.
- Candida auris can colonize the skin and other body sites without causing symptoms, allowing individuals to unknowingly carry and potentially transmit the fungus. This complicates efforts to identify and control outbreaks within healthcare facilities.

PERSON IN NEWS

Lochan Singh Pathania

- Vice Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania assumed the position of Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India on February 1, 2024.
- He was commissioned in the Executive branch of the Indian Navy in 1990 and specializes in Hydrography.
- Over more than three decades, he has conducted hydrographic surveys across India and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- He is an expert in International maritime laws, particularly maritime boundary

delimitation, and has made significant contributions to addressing related issues, including the settlement of the Extended Continental Shelf beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Jay Shah

- Jay Shah, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has been reappointed as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for a third consecutive term.
- The ACC was established in 1983 and is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It currently comprises 25 member associations and operates under the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Sultan Ibrahim

- Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar has officially assumed the role of Malaysia's 17th king.
- He succeeded Al-Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah and will lead Malaysia for a five-year term.
- Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar took the oath of office at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur in a ceremony attended by other royal families, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and cabinet members.

Geeta Batra

- Geeta Batra becomes the **First Female Director of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).**
- She has been appointed as the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF), becoming the first woman from a developing country to hold this position.
- She also served as the Chief Evaluator & Deputy Director for Evaluation at the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office.

Arvind Panagariya

- The Finance Ministry officially notified **Arvind Panagariya's appointment as the head of the 16th Finance Commission**, with the order signed by President Draupadi Murmu.
- This appointment solidifies his position to lead the Commission in recommending the tax revenue sharing formula between the Centre and the States for the upcoming five-year period starting from April 2026.
- Arvind Panagariya, a distinguished trade economist and former vice chairman of Niti Aayog, brings extensive experience to his new role. His previous tenure at Niti Aayog underscores his familiarity with India's economic policy landscape and his capability to lead such a crucial body.
- The 16th Finance Commission is expected to submit its recommendations by October 2025.
- The 15th Finance Commission was chaired by NK Singh.

Lal Krishna Advani

- Lal Krishna Advani, a veteran leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has been announced as the recipient of the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.
- He was born in 1927, in Karachi, which was then part of undivided India. He migrated to India during the Partition and settled in Bombay (now Mumbai), where he completed his education.
- He played a significant role in the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in
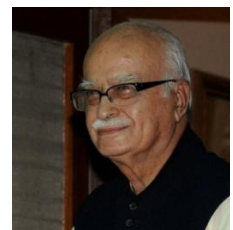
1980 alongside Atal Bihari Vajpayee and served as its president multiple times. He was elected to the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) for the first time in 1989 and served seven terms.

- He held several ministerial positions, including Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha after the Janata Party's victory in the 1977 general elections. He served as Minister of Home Affairs from 1998 to 2004 and Deputy Prime Minister from 2002 to 2004.

Karpoori Thakur

- Karpoori Thakur, former Bihar Chief Minister and socialist leader, has been posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.
- He served two terms as the Chief Minister of Bihar and was known as the Jannayak or People's Leader.
- As Chief Minister, he implemented the Mandal Commission recommendations, reserving 26% of government jobs for OBCs, and addressing historical inequalities.
- His emphasis on land reforms aimed to dismantle feudal structures and improve the lives of agricultural workers, while rural development initiatives bolstered social and economic well-being.
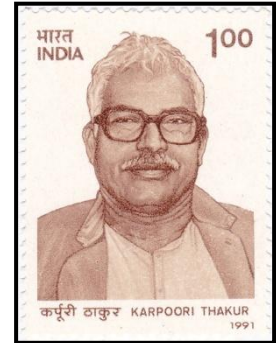
Chaudhary Charan Singh

- Chaudhary Charan Singh was awarded the Bharat Ratna for his contributions to the nation.
- He was born in 1902, and was deeply involved in the Indian freedom movement. He followed the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and participated in non-violent struggles against British rule.
- He served as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1970 before ascending to the position of India's Prime Minister from July 28, 1979, to January 14, 1980. Although initially a member of the Congress party, he later formed his political entity called Lokdal in 1980.
- **He earned the title of "Champion of India's peasants**" due to his relentless efforts in advocating for the welfare of farmers. He implemented radical land reform measures and introduced laws such as the Debt Redemption Bill, Land Holding Act, and Zamindari Abolition Act, aimed at liberating farmers from the exploitation of moneylenders.
- His birthday on December 23 celebrated as Kisan Diwas (Farmer's Day).
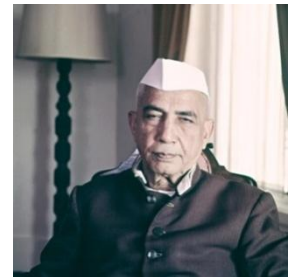
PV Narasimha Rao

- P. V. Narasimha Rao, who served as Prime Minister of India from 1991 to 1996, was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna.
- **He is credited with introducing a new era of economic reforms in India** during his tenure as Prime Minister (1991-1996).
- India's economy in the late 1980s was facing a severe balance of payments crisis. In response to this crisis, Rao, along with his Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, introduced bold initiatives for economic reforms.
- His economic reforms dismantled the socialist-era policies of import substitution and central planning and instead opened up the Indian economy to foreign investment and trade.
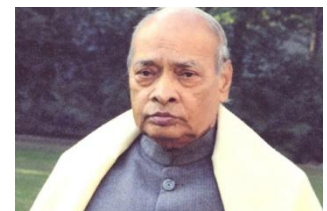
- Key economic measures included delicensing industries, reducing tariffs, reforming public sector undertakings, and promoting privatization. Rao's reforms are widely seen as a turning point in India's economic history.

MS Swaminathan

- Bharat Ratna for MS Swaminathan for his contributions to the field of agriculture, he is also **known as the "Father of the Green Revolution" in India**
- He was an Indian Agronomist, Agricultural Scientist, Geneticist, Administrator, and Humanitarian.
- He has been hailed as the main architect of the Green Revolution in India. His leadership and contributions in introducing high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice played a crucial role in averting famine-like conditions in India and Pakistan during the 1960s.
- His tenure as the Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines was instrumental in being awarded the first World Food Prize in 1987, a prestigious honour in the field of agriculture.
- **He chaired the National Commission on Farmers in 2004**, which proposed substantial reforms to improve India's farming system. Swaminathan was also nominated to the Parliament of India for one term between 2007 and 2013, during which he advocated for the recognition of women farmers in India.

A M Khanwilkar

- **Justice A M Khanwilkar has been appointed as the chairperson of the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal**. This appointment fills the vacancy that existed for nearly two years.
- Along with Justice Khanwilkar, six members have been appointed to the Lokpal. This includes three judicial members and three non-judicial members.
- Lokpal chairperson and members are appointed for a term of five years or until they reach the age of 70, whichever is earlier.
- **Former Supreme Court Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was the first Lokpal chairperson**, and since his retirement, former Jharkhand HC Chief Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty has been the acting Lokpal chairperson.

AWARDS

Changes in National Film Awards Categories:

- The names of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and late actor Nargis Dutt have been dropped from the National Film Awards categories.
- The 'Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director' is now renamed as 'Best Debut Film of a Director'.
- The 'Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration' is now named 'Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values'.

G D Birla Award

- Prof. Aditi Sen De has become the first woman scientist to win the G D Birla Award for Scientific Research for the year 2023.
- The award, established in 1991, recognizes exceptional scientific research conducted by Indian scientists below the age of 50.
- Prof. Aditi Sen De's achievement underscores her remarkable contributions to the scientific community, earning her a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs.

France's highest civilian honour

- **Shashi Tharoor has been honoured with France's highest civilian honour,** the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur France.
- The formal conferring of the award took place on 20 February 2024, following the initial announcement in August 2022.
- Shashi Tharoor, the current Chairman of the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers, has been recognized for his outstanding contributions.

Hyundai Filmfare Awards

- The 69th Hyundai Filmfare Awards 2024 took place in Gujarat in partnership with Gujarat Tourism.
- The awards recognized excellence in various categories of Hindi cinema.
- **Winners include:**
  o Best Film (Popular): "12th Fail"
  o Best Film (Critics): "Joram"
  o Best Director: Vidhu Vinod Chopra for "12th Fail"
  o Best Actor in Leading Role: Ranbir Kapoor for "Animal"
  o Best Actor (Critics): Vikrant Massey for "12th Fail"
  o Best Actress in Leading Role (Female): Alia Bhatt for "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani"
  o Best Actress (Critics): Shefali Shah for "Three Of Us", Rani Mukerji for "Mrs Chaterjee Vs Norway"
  o Best Actor in Supporting Role (Male): Vicky Kaushal for "Dunki"
  o Best Actress in Supporting Role: Shabana Azmi for "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani"

Bharat Ratna

- The Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the Republic of India. **Instituted in 1954**, the award is conferred in recognition of exceptional service towards the advancement of art, literature, science, and public service.
- The Bharat Ratna is awarded to individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields, including arts, literature, science, public service, and social work.

- **The award is not bound by any specific criteria**, and there are no formal recommendations or nominations for the award. The decision to confer the Bharat Ratna is made by the Prime Minister and the President of India.

- The award has been presented to a diverse group of individuals, including scientists, writers, social activists, and political leaders. Recipients come from various backgrounds and have made exceptional contributions to their respective fields.
- **The award can be awarded posthumously**, recognizing the contributions of individuals who have passed away.
- **The Bharat Ratna is presented in a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan** (the Presidential Palace) in New Delhi. The awardee receives a certificate of honour, a medallion, and a small monetary grant.

66th Annual Grammy Awards

- The event took place in Los Angeles, USA, on February 4, 2024.
- Trevor Noah hosted the Grammy Awards for the fourth consecutive time.
- The Grammy Awards recognize and celebrate the incredible talent and achievements within the music industry.
- Awards were presented across various categories, honouring artists, producers, songwriters, and other music professionals for their contributions to the industry.

Category	Winner
Song of the Year	Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
Best Pop Vocal Album	Taylor Swift – Midnights
Best Country Album	Lainey Wilson – Bell Bottom Country
Best Música Urbana Album	Karol G – Mañana Será Bonito
Best Pop Solo Performance	Miley Cyrus – Flowers
Best Folk Album	Joni Mitchell – Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live)
Best Pop Dance Recording	Kylie Minogue – Padam Padam
Best Rap Performance	Killer Mike featuring André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane – Scientists & Engineers
Best Rap Album	Killer Mike – Michael
Best Country Song	Chris Stapleton – White Horse
Best Song Written for Visual Media	Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
Best Comedy Album	Dave Chappelle – What's in a Name?
Best Global Music Album	**Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band 'Shakti'**
Best Rock Album	Paramore – This Is Why
Best Rock Song	Boygenius – Not Strong Enough

BAFTA Awards 2024

- The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards 2024, hosted by David Tennant, took place at London's Royal Festival Hall.
- The movie "Oppenheimer," directed by Christopher Nolan, emerged as the night's standout, receiving 13 nominations and securing seven BAFTAs, including the prestigious Best Film award.

Category	Winner
Best Film	Oppenheimer
Outstanding British Film	The Zone of Interest

Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, or Producer	Earth Mama – Savanah Leaf (Writer, Director, Producer), Shirley O'Connor (Producer), Medb Riordan (Producer)
Film Not in the English Language	The Zone of Interest
Documentary	20 Days in Mariupol
Animated Film	The Boy And The Heron
Director	Christopher Nolan, Oppenheimer
Leading Actress	Emma Stone, Poor Things
Leading Actor	Cillian Murphy, Oppenheimer
Supporting Actress	Da'Vine Joy Randolph, The Holdovers
Supporting Actor	Robert Downey Jr., Oppenheimer
Cinematography	Oppenheimer
Special Visual Effects	Poor Things

Jnanpith Award 2023

- The Jnanpith Award for the year 2023 has been conferred to renowned Urdu poet and Bollywood figure Gulzar, and Sanskrit scholar and spiritual leader Jagadguru Rambhadracharya.
- **Gulzar is known for his mastery of Urdu poetry** and his significant contributions to Hindi cinema as a writer and director. His versatile talent has earned him numerous awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, and the Padma Bhushan.
- **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya, a Sanskrit scholar and Hindu spirituality**, is the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Madhya Pradesh. He has authored over 240 books and texts, including four epics, and received the Padma Vibhushan in 2015 for his significant contributions to Indian culture and scholarship.
- The awardees were chosen by a committee chaired by Odia writer Pratibha Rai, with other members including eminent literary figures.
- The Jnanpith Award includes a cash prize of ₹11 lahks, a statue of Vagdevi, and a citation, symbolizing the highest honour in Indian literature.

Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024

- The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 took place in Mumbai.
- 40 individuals were honoured for their significant contributions to the advancement of Indian cinema.

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor	Shah Rukh Khan	Jawan
Best Actress	Rani Mukerji	Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway
Best Film	Jawan	
Best Director	Sandeep Reddy Vanga	Animal
Best Actor (Critics)	Vicky Kaushal	Sam Bahadur
Best Actress (Critics)	Kareena Kapoor	Jaane Jaan
Best Film (Critics)	12th Fail	
Best Director (Critics)	Atlee	Jawan

Best Actor in a Negative Role	Bobby Deol	Animal
Best Actress in a Comic Role	Sanya Malhotra	Kathal
Best Actor in a Comic Role	Ayushmann Khurana	Dream Girl 2
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Anil Kapoor	Animal
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Dimple Kapadia	Pathaan
Most Versatile Actress	Nayanthara	
Most Promising Actor	Vikrant Massey	12th Fail
Most Promising Actress	Adah Sharma	The Kerala Story
Best Music Director	Anirudh Ravichander	Jawan
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Varun Jain and Sachin Jigar	"Tere Vaste"
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shilpa Rao	"Besharam Rang"
Best Lyricist	Javed Akhtar	"Nikle The Kabhi Hum Ghar Se"
Best Short Film	Good Morning	
Best International Feature Film	Oppenheimer	

Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards for OTT

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor in a Web Series	Shahid Kapoor	Farzi
Best Actress in a Web Series	Sushmita Sen	Aarya 3
Best Actor in a Web Series (Critics)	Aditya Roy Kapur	Night Manager
Best Actress in a Web Series (Critics)	Karishma Tanna	Scoop
Best Web Series	Farzi	
Best Web Series (Critics)	The Railway Men	

IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Coast Guard Day

- The Indian Coast Guard celebrated **its 48th Raising Day on February 1, 2024**, in New Delhi, marking its journey from 1977.
- **The motto of the Indian Coast Guard is "Vayam Rakshamah" (We Protect),** reflecting its commitment to safety and security.
- It maintains a 24x7 vigil in the Maritime Zones of India, deploying 50 to 60 ships and 10 to 12 aircraft daily to ensure free and secure seas for sustainable progress in the blue economy and safe maritime transportation.
- It acts as the Central Coordinating Authority for Oil Spill Response in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and has ensured no major oil spill incidents in Indian waters in the past year.

World Wetlands Day 2024

- On the occasion of World Wetlands Day 2024, India added five new wetlands to its list of Ramsar sites, bringing the total number to 80.

- The World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on February 2nd around the world. The theme for World Wetlands Day 2024 is 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing,' which emphasizes the importance of wetlands in improving people's lives.

- **Three of the new Ramsar sites are located in Karnataka:** Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Aghanashini Estuary, and Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve. **Tamil Nadu has two sites:** the Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and the Longwood Shola Reserve Forest.

- **Tamil Nadu continues to have the most Ramsar Sites (16**), followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).

- The Ramsar Convention on Wetland was signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, and India is one of the Contracting Parties.

Ramsar Site in India			
State	**Ramsar Site**	**State**	**Ramsar Site**
Karnataka	Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve	Rajasthan	Sambhar lake
Karnataka	Aghanashini Estuary	Uttar Pradesh	Sandi Bird Sanctuary
Karnataka	Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve	Uttar Pradesh	Sarsai Nawar Jheel
Tamil Nadu	Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary	Kerala	Sasthamkotta lake
Tamil Nadu	Longwood Shola Reserve Forest	Jammu & Kashmir	Surinsar- Mansar lakes
Tamil Nadu	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	Ladakh	Tsomoriri Lake
Tamil Nadu	Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest	Uttar Pradesh	Upper Ganga river

Tamil Nadu	Pichavaram Mangrove	Kerala	Vembanad Kol Wetland
Madhya Pradesh	Sakhya Sagar	Jammu & Kashmir	Wular lake
Mizoram	Pala Wetlands	West Bengal	Sunderban Wetland
Gujarat	Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary	Uttarakhand	Asan Barrage
Uttar Pradesh	Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary	Bihar	Kanwar Lake or Kabal Taal
Uttar Pradesh	Haiderpur Wetland	Maharashtra	Lonar Lake
Haryana	Sultanpur National Park	Uttar Pradesh	Sur Sarovar
Haryana	Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary	Ladakh	Tso Kar Wetland Complex
Gujarat	Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary	Goa	Nanda Lake
Gujarat	Wadhvana Wetland	Gujarat	Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary
Kerala	Ashtamudi Wetland	Jammu & Kashmir	Hokersar Wetland
Punjab	Beas Conservation Reserve	Jammu & Kashmir	Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve
Odisha	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Jammu & Kashmir	Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve
Madhya Pradesh	Bhoj Wetlands	Jammu & Kashmir	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes
Himachal Pradesh	Chandra Taal	Karnataka	Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary
Odisha	Chilika Lake	Madhya Pradesh	Sirpur Lake
Assam	Deepor Beel	Madhya Pradesh	Yashwant Sagar
West Bengal	East Kolkata Wetlands	Maharashtra	Thane Creek
Punjab	Harike Wetlands	Odisha	Ansupa Lake
Jammu & Kashmir	Hokera Wetland	Odisha	Hirakud Reservoir
Punjab	Kanjli Wetland	Odisha	Satkosia Gorge
Rajasthan	Keoladeo National Park	Tamil Nadu	Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary
Andhra Pradesh	Kolleru lake	Tamil Nadu	Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve
Manipur	Loktak lake	Tamil Nadu	Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary
Gujarat	Nalsarovar Bird sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary
Maharashtra	Nandur Madhameshwar	Tamil Nadu	Pallikarnai Marsh Reserve Forest
Punjab	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex
Uttar Pradesh	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary
Uttar Pradesh	Parvati Agra Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Vadavur Bird Sanctuary
Tamil Nadu	Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary

Himachal Pradesh	Pong Dam lake	Tamil Nadu	Vellode Bird Sanctuary
Himachal Pradesh	Renuka lake	Tamil Nadu	Vembannur Wetland Complex
Punjab	Ropar Wetland	Tamil Nadu	Vellode Bird Sanctuary
Tripura	Rudrasagar Lake	Uttar Pradesh	Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary
Uttar Pradesh	Saman Bird Sanctuary	West Bengal	Sundarban Wetland
Uttar Pradesh	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary		

World Cancer Day

- World Cancer Day is observed on February 4th every year.
- The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) established World Cancer Day to promote the objectives specified in the World Cancer Declaration, which was published in 2008.
- **The theme for 2022-2024 is "Close the Care Gap: Everyone Deserves Access To Cancer Care,"** which emphasizes the importance of worldwide collaboration in the battle against cancer.
- The sub-theme, "Together, we challenge those in power," emphasizes leaders' accountability in allocating critical resources for cancer eradication.

Safer Internet Day

- Safer Internet Day, marked on February 6th, aims to promote a safer online environment, especially for children and young people.
- **The theme for 2024 "Together for a Better Internet**," emphasizes the collaborative effort required by all stakeholders to improve online safety.

National Deworming Day

- National Deworming Day is observed annually on February 10 in India, and it marks the world's largest deworming program.
- Initiative by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in India to ensure that every child is free from worm infections.
- Launched in 2015, the effort aims to combat soil-transmitted helminth infections in nearly 240 million children aged from 1 to 19. These infections are caused by roundworms, whipworms, and hookworms and they can lead to anaemia, malnutrition, and impaired physical and mental development.
- The government provides deworming pills at Anganwadi centres and schools in all states and union territories.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

- Every year on February 11th, the United Nations observes the International Day of Women and Girls in Science to encourage women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) sectors with full and equal access.
- The **theme for 2024 is "A New Era for Sustainability: Women and Girls in**

Science Leadership."
- The subtheme, "Think Science... Think Peace," highlights how science may help advance sustainability and peace.
- Through empowering women and girls in STEM, it aims to accelerate progress towards reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

National Productivity Day

- National Productivity Day is observed every year on February 12 as part of Indian Productivity Week, which lasts from February 12 to February 18.
- **The theme for National Productivity Day 2024 is "Artificial Intelligence (AI)-A Productivity Engine for Economic Growth."** This theme emphasises the importance of AI in boosting economic growth and productivity.
- National Productivity Day honours the establishment of the National Productivity Council (NPC) in 1958. The National Productivity Council, established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is a self-governing organisation dedicated to increasing productivity and efficiency in India.
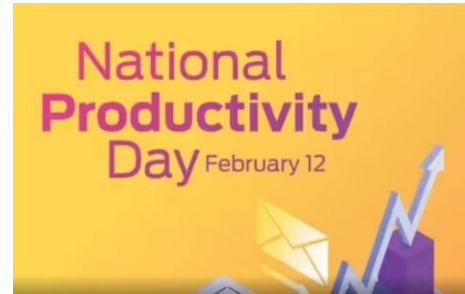
World Radio Day

- World Radio Day celebrated every year on February 13, 2024.
- The history of radio may be traced back to Guglielmo Marconi's first radio transmission in 1895. However, radio broadcasting for a larger audience began experimentally in 1905 and 1906.
- UNESCO declared February 13 to be World Radio Day in 2011, and the United Nations General Assembly approved the designation in 2013.
- **The theme for 2024 is "Radio: A Century Informing, Entertaining, and Educating."** This theme celebrates radio's long history and influence on news, drama, music, and sports.

World Day of Social Justice

- The World Day of Social Justice is observed every year on February 20.
- The **theme for 2024 is "Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice."** The theme underlines the importance of addressing global injustices and rebuilding trust in governments through increased global solidarity.
- The World Day of Social Justice originated from the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995.
- In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly designated February 20 as World Day of Social Justice. The first observance of this day occurred in 2009.

International Mother Language Day

- International Mother Language Day is observed on February 21 every year.
- It originated in Bangladesh, where four students were killed on February 21, 1952, while advocating for Bengali to be recognized as the official language. This campaign paved the way for the celebration of International Mother Language Day.
- The UNESCO General Conference declared February 21 as International Mother Language Day in 1999, a decision that ultimately was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

- **The theme for International Mother Language Day 2024 is "Multilingual Education - A Pillar of Learning and Intergenerational Learning."** The theme emphasizes the importance of multilingual education in improving academic performance, self-esteem, critical thinking abilities, and cultural preservation.

National Science Day

- National Science Day is observed yearly on February 28th.
- The Day honours the discovery of the "Raman Effect" by Indian scientist Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (C V Raman) on February 28, 1928. Raman received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930 for his remarkable discovery of light scattering by molecules.
- To pay homage to the achievement and raise scientific awareness, the Indian government declared February 28th National Science Day in 1986.
- **The theme for National Science Day in 2024 is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat."** This theme emphasizes the importance of indigenous inventions and technologies in achieving India's development objectives.

IMPORTANT GK FACTS IN NEWS

- **Interim Budget:** An interim budget is a temporary financial plan introduced by a government when it is approaching the end of its term or during a period of political transition. It ensures that essential government functions can continue to be funded during this interim period, preventing disruptions in public services and economic activity.

- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** A Bilateral Investment Treaty is an agreement between two countries that establishes the rules for private investment by companies and citizens of one country in the other.

- **Urea:** Urea is a nitrogen-rich fertilizer essential for plant growth. It helps plants utilize atmospheric nitrogen, which is an essential component they can't directly obtain from the air.

- **Public Distribution System (PDS):** The Public Distribution System is a network of fair-price shops throughout India that sell subsidized food and non-food items to eligible beneficiaries, ensuring food security for the population.

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PM-GKAY):** Launched in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, PM-GKAY provides free monthly rations of rice and wheat to approximately 80 crore beneficiaries identified under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

- **Sixteenth Finance Commission of India:** The Sixteenth Finance Commission of India was established with Arvind Panagariya as its Chairman. The commission is tasked with recommending the distribution of finances between the central government and the states.

- **Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM):** The World Health Organization established the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India, to promote traditional medicine practices and research.

- **PSLV C-58 mission:** PSLV C-58 is a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle flight conducted by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), aimed at deploying satellites into orbit for various purposes such as communication, navigation, and Earth observation.

- **Vyommitra:** Vyommitra is a female-looking spacefaring humanoid robot developed by ISRO. It is designed to function onboard Gaganyaan, India's crewed orbital spacecraft, assisting astronauts during their space missions.

- **Article 39A of the Constitution of India:** Article 39A emphasizes the provision of free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections, ensuring justice for all. Additionally, Articles 14 and 22(1) obligate the state to ensure equality before the law and a legal system promoting justice based on equal opportunity.

- **Weimar Triangle:** The Weimar Triangle is a cooperation platform between Poland, France, and Germany, aimed at strengthening cooperation and addressing common challenges in Europe.

- **Smishing:** Smishing is a type of cyberattack that uses text messages (SMS) to trick victims into revealing personal information, clicking on malicious links, or downloading malware. It's essentially phishing done via SMS instead of email.

- **Role of the Food Corporation of India (FCI):** The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. It was established to implement the food policy of the Government of India by ensuring food security through procurement, storage, and distribution of food grains.

- **Explanation of disinflation**: Disinflation refers to a decrease in the rate of inflation, not a decrease in prices themselves. It signifies a slowdown in the pace of price increases, which can have positive implications for an economy by curbing inflationary pressures and supporting consumer purchasing power.

- **Greenwashing:** Greenwashing refers to deceptive marketing tactics used by companies to mislead consumers about the environmental friendliness of their products or services, often through vague or misleading claims.

- **Article 142 of the Indian Constitution:** This article empowers the Supreme Court of India to deliver complete justice in cases where laws are inadequate or silent. It allows the court to fill gaps in legislation, issue orders to enforce fundamental rights, and provide justice in the absence of specific laws.

- **SMILE scheme**: The SMILE scheme, launched by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, aims to merge existing schemes for beggars and transgender individuals. It focuses on their rehabilitation and support, including medical care, counselling, education, skill development, and economic linkages.

- **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA):** Established in 2003 under the Ministry of Finance, PFRDA regulates and oversees pension-related matters in India.

- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** Also known as the World Court, the ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It is located at the Peace Palace in

The Hague, Netherlands, and is responsible for settling disputes between states.

- **Martand Sun Temple**: An ancient Hindu temple dedicated to the Sun God, located near Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir, India.

- **Shumang Leela**: A traditional performance art form originating from Manipur, India. It combines elements of drama, dance, music, and storytelling to portray various themes from Manipuri folklore, mythology, and contemporary social issues.

- **Wheat Blast**: A fungal disease caused by the pathogen Magnaporthe oryzae Triticum (MoT), affecting wheat crops.

- **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya scheme):** A government scheme launched in September 2017 to provide electricity to all households in India, implemented by the Ministry of Power.

- **Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD)**: A set of technologies used to remove sulfur dioxide (SO_2) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants and other sulfur oxide emitting processes.

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- **Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2024:** The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, inaugurated the Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2024 in Faridabad, Haryana. This event is a significant cultural and crafts fair that showcases traditional art, crafts, and culture from various parts of India and the world.

- **Udyan Utsav 2024:** The Udyan Utsav 2024 took place at the Amrit Udyan (formerly known as the Mughal Gardens) at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. This event celebrates the beauty of nature and the blooming of flowers in the gardens, offering visitors a chance to experience the rich flora of the region.

- **Foundation Stone for Shri Kalki Dham Temple:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Shri Kalki Dham temple in Uttar Pradesh on February 19, 2024. This temple is dedicated to Lord Kalki, an avatar of Lord Vishnu in Hindu mythology, and the ceremony marked the beginning of construction for this religious site.

- **Initiative for the Central Asian Flyway:** The 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 14) concluded with the adoption of the Initiative for the Central Asian Flyway. Led by India and supported by BirdLife International and 30 other governments, this initiative aims to conserve and protect migratory species along the Central Asian Flyway, highlighting the importance of international cooperation in wildlife conservation efforts.

- **Young Scientist Programme 2024 (YUVIKA):** ISRO announced the Young Scientist Programme 2024 (YUVIKA), aimed at nurturing young talent and fostering interest in space science and technology among students.

- **Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024:** The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 was a major mobility event held in New Delhi, India, showcasing the latest advancements and future trends in the transportation sector,

bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and enthusiasts from across the globe.

- **Indian Coast Guard Raising Day:** The 48th Raising Day of the Indian Coast Guard was celebrated on February 1st, 2024, highlighting their contributions to maritime safety and security under their motto "Vayam Rakshamah" (We Protect).

- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with UAE:** The Indian government approved the signing and ratification of a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with the UAE, aimed at improving the business environment in India for Emirati investors.

- **Extension of Subsidized Sugar Scheme**: The Union government extended the scheme providing subsidized sugar to Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) families through the Public Distribution System (PDS) for two more years, until March 31st, 2026.

- **Extension of RoSCTL Scheme:** The Government of India extended the Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) for exports of apparel, garments, and made-up articles until March 31, 2026.

- **AYUSH Fair Inauguration:** Ayush Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, inaugurated a fair in New Delhi showcasing Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) systems of medicine.

- **Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania:** Vice Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania assumed the role of Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India on February 1, 2024.

- **Indian Navy's 'Year of Naval Civilians':** The Indian Navy declared 2024 as the 'Year of Naval Civilians' to elevate the administration, efficiency, and well-being of Naval Civilians within the Indian Navy.

- **Defence Budget Allocation:** The Defence Budget reached ₹6,21,540.85 crore, constituting 13.04% of the total Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, with the Ministry of Defence receiving the highest allocation among ministries. Additionally, the 'Jai Anusandhan' scheme was announced with a corpus fund of ₹1 lakh crore, offering interest-free loans for 50 years to private entities.

- **Budget Allocation for Education:** The Budget Allocation for the Department of School Education & Literacy is ₹73,498 crore, the highest ever, with an increase of ₹12,024 crore (19.56%) from the previous fiscal year, aimed at improving the quality of education in India.

- **World Wetlands Day:** Celebrated globally on February 2nd each year, World Wetlands Day emphasizes the theme 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing,' highlighting the crucial role wetlands play in enhancing human lives and promoting sustainable development.

- **World Cancer Day:** Observed on February 4th each year, World Cancer Day is a global movement organized by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to raise awareness about cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.

- **International Development Week (IDW):** Observed annually during the first full week of February, International Development Week aims to raise awareness about global development challenges and the importance of international cooperation in addressing them.

- **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Observed on February 6th each year, this day raises awareness about the harmful practice of female genital mutilation and advocates for its elimination worldwide.

- **World Pulses Day:** Celebrated annually on February 10th, World Pulses Day recognizes the importance of pulses as a nutritious and sustainable food source, highlighting their role in global food security.

- **Darwin Day:** Observed annually on February 12th, Darwin Day commemorates the birth of Charles Darwin and celebrates his contributions to the field of biology, particularly his theory of evolution by natural selection.

- **International Epilepsy Day:** Observed on February 12th each year, International Epilepsy Day aims to raise awareness about epilepsy, a chronic neurological disorder, and reduce the stigma associated with it.

- **World Anthropology Day:** Commemorated annually on the third Thursday in February, falling on February 15th this year, World Anthropology Day highlights the importance of anthropology in understanding human societies and cultures.

- **Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary:** The Tamil Nadu government officially declared the Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary as the 18th wildlife sanctuary in the state, aiming to protect and conserve the diverse flora and fauna of the region.

- **Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar:** Supreme Court judge Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar is elected as the new chairperson of Lokpal, the apex anti-corruption ombudsman in India, tasked with addressing corruption at the highest levels of government.

- **Swachhata Green Leaf Rating Initiative:** The Union Tourism Ministry launched the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating initiative to ensure hygiene standards in the hospitality sector, promoting cleanliness and sanitation in tourist accommodations across the country.

- **Implementation of Safe City Project:** The Safe City Project, under the Nirbhaya Fund scheme by the Government of India, aims to enhance the safety and security of women and children in public spaces, deploying various measures and technologies to prevent crimes against them.

- **National Conference on APAAR:** The National Conference on APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, aiming to streamline student identification processes across the country through a unified ID card system.

- **Launch of Sangam:** Digital Twin Initiative: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in India launched the "Sangam: Digital Twin" initiative to revolutionize infrastructure planning and design using digital twin technology, enhancing efficiency and accuracy in development projects.

- **SWATI Portal:** The SWATI (Science, Women and Technology Interface) Portal offers a searchable database and a resource centre providing funding, career development, mentorship, and educational opportunities for women scientists, aiming to promote gender equality and empowerment in STEM fields.

- **Smart Gram Panchayat Pilot Project:** The pilot project 'Smart Gram Panchayat: Revolution towards Digitization of Gram Panchayat' was launched in Begusarai District, Bihar, by the Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, aiming to digitize and modernize rural governance.

- **Deemed University:** The declaration of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) as a deemed-to-be University marks a significant milestone in journalism and mass communication education, enhancing the institution's status and capabilities.

- **Lab-Grown Fish Meat Development:** The collaboration between the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and Neat Meatt Biotech aims to develop lab-grown fish meat, offering a sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fishing practices.

- **Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak:** The Union Ministry of Home Affairs introduced the Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak by merging four existing Home Minister's medals, recognizing outstanding contributions in various fields related to homeland security and public service.

- **BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship:** Union Minister Anurag Thakur inaugurated the first BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship in New Delhi, featuring seven member nations from South and Southeast Asia competing in distinct aquatic events, promoting sports diplomacy and regional cooperation.

- **World Peace and Understanding Day:** Observed every year on February 23rd, World Peace and Understanding Day aims to foster peace, empathy, and collaboration among people from various backgrounds and cultures, promoting harmony and mutual respect.

- **World Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Day:** Celebrated on February 27th each year, World NGO Day recognizes the contributions of non-governmental organizations worldwide in promoting social justice, human rights, and sustainable development.

- **Rare Disease Day:** Observed annually on the last day of February, Rare Disease Day raises awareness about rare diseases and their impact on individuals and families. In 2024, being a leap year, Rare Disease Day falls on February 29th.

- **C-CARES Web Portal:** The web portal, C-CARES, was inaugurated by Shri Pralhad Joshi, the Union Minister of Coal, Mines, and Parliamentary Affairs. Developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), the portal aims to facilitate efficient management and dissemination of information related to coal mines.

- **UPI Launch in France:** India launched its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in France on February 2nd, 2024, marking a significant milestone in expanding UPI as a global payment system, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision.

- **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**: The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill passed in Uttarakhand aims to establish a common set of laws governing various aspects of personal life, including marriage, divorce, inheritance, and live-in relationships, applicable to all citizens regardless of religion.

- **Lakhpati Didi Scheme:** The Union Finance Minister announced the expansion of the

Lakhpati Didi Scheme in the Interim Budget 2024–25. The scheme aims to empower women in rural areas and foster entrepreneurship among them.

- **Gender Budget:** The Indian government allocated ₹3 lakh crore for the gender budget in 2024-25, representing 6.5% of the total expenditure. This allocation marks the highest ever for gender-specific initiatives and signifies a significant increase over the previous year.

- **LABHA Yojana in Odisha:** The Odisha government launched the LABHA Yojana, a state-funded minimum support price (MSP) scheme for minor forest produce (MFP) collected by tribal communities, aiming to enhance their livelihoods and promote sustainable forest management.

- **National Museum of Epigraphy:** Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy inaugurated the foundation stone laying ceremony for India's first digital National Museum of Epigraphy in Hyderabad, to be established by the Archaeological Survey of India. The museum will house one lakh ancient inscriptions as part of the Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions initiative, preserving and showcasing India's rich epigraphic heritage.

- **India Energy Week 2024:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India Energy Week 2024 in Goa, the nation's largest and most comprehensive energy exhibition and conference. The event aims to accelerate India's energy transition goals by bringing together stakeholders from the energy sector to discuss innovations, policies, and strategies.

- **NH-913 Construction in Arunachal Pradesh:** Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has approved ₹2,248.94 crore for constructing the Lada-Sarli section of NH-913 in Arunachal Pradesh, spanning 105.59 km. This infrastructure development project aims to bolster communication for security forces and stimulate economic activities in border regions.

- **Commonwealth Legal Education Association Conference:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference in New Delhi. The conference focuses on addressing Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery, fostering collaboration among legal professionals from Commonwealth countries.

- **SUFALAM Startup Conclave:** Union Minister of Food Processing, Shri Pashupati Kumar Paras, launched 'SUFALAM: Start-Up Forum for Aspiring Leaders and Mentors Startup Conclave 2024.' This initiative highlights the vital role of startups in the food processing sector and aims to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the industry.

- **Global Initiative on Digital Health:** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya virtually launched the World Health Organization's Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH). This initiative, adopted by all G20 countries and international organizations, aims to leverage digital technologies for improving healthcare delivery and outcomes worldwide.

- **World Governments Summit:** India, along with Turkey and Qatar, has been named Guest of Honor at the 2024 World Governments Summit in Dubai. The event, themed 'Shaping Future Governments,' will witness participation from over 25 global

government and state heads, focusing on shaping the future of governance.

- **World Book Fair:** Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair at Bharat Mandapam, emphasizing the theme 'Multilingual India: A Living Tradition.' The fair celebrates linguistic diversity and promotes the National Digital Libraries for All app announced in the Budget 2023-24.

- **Microsoft's Plan to Train Individuals in AI Skills:** Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella announced plans to train over 2 million individuals in India in generative Artificial Intelligence skills by 2025, aiming to equip them with essential skills for the digital economy.

- **Expansion of UPI Services to Sri Lanka and Mauritius:** India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services have expanded to Sri Lanka and Mauritius, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, and Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth witnessing the launch. This expansion promotes digital payments and enhances financial inclusion in the region.

- **EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme:** Minister of Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan launched the EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme in New Delhi, aiming to provide scholarships to deserving students and promote education and skill development initiatives.

- **National Science Day Theme Unveiled:** Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled the theme "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat" for National Science Day 2024 in New Delhi.

This theme underscores the importance of indigenous technological development for the progress of India.

- **Sudarshan Setu in Gujarat:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Gujarat's Sudarshan Setu, the nation's longest cable-stayed bridge, spanning 4.77 km and connecting Okha town in Devbhumi Dwarka district with Bet Dwarka island in the Gulf of Kutch. This bridge enhances connectivity and infrastructure in the region.

- **India-Bangladesh Transboundary Tiger Conservation Initiative:** India and Bangladesh collaborate on a transboundary tiger conservation initiative in the Sunderbans, focusing on harmonious coexistence and biodiversity preservation, supported by IUCN and Germany's KfW Development Bank. This initiative aims to protect the endangered tiger population in the region.

- **GROW Initiative by NITI Aayog**: NITI Aayog launched the GROW initiative, utilizing remote sensing and GIS to assess agroforestry suitability across the country, resulting in the Agroforestry Suitability Index (ASI) for prioritization and support for government and industry greening projects. This initiative aims to promote sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.

- **Conversion to Hyperlocal Extreme Weather Forecasting:** The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is converting India to hyperlocal extreme weather forecasting via the Weather Information Network and Data System (WINDS), supplementing the Indian Meteorology Department's (IMD) role as the primary government meteorology agency. This initiative aims to enhance weather

forecasting accuracy and preparedness for extreme weather events.

- **Drop in Urban Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate in urban areas of India dropped from 7.2% to 6.5% between October–December 2022 and October–December 2023, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)'s Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). This decline indicates improved labour market conditions in urban areas.

- **Initiative to Increase Neem Trees**: The Indian government aims to increase the number of highly beneficial neem trees in the country from one tree for every 50 Indians to one tree for every 10 Indians. This initiative is driven by rising demand for neem oil across various sectors and aims to enhance environmental sustainability.

- **Approval for BrahMos Missile Acquisition**: The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved a deal worth ₹19,000 crore for acquiring over 200 BrahMos Extended Range (ER) supersonic cruise missiles for deployment on Indian Navy warships. This acquisition enhances India's defence capabilities and strengthens its naval firepower.

- **Launch of Automated Search Portal by CEIB:** The Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) launched an "Automated Search Portal" to assist public sector banks (PSBs) with the verification of prospective borrowers and non-performing assets (NPAs). This portal aims to streamline the process of verifying borrower information and managing NPAs in PSBs.

- **Golden Jubilee Celebration of GCMMF**: Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) at Narendra Modi Stadium in Motera, Ahmedabad. This event commemorates 50 years of the federation's contribution to the dairy industry and rural development in Gujarat.

- **Fourth Foreign Office Consultations between India and Portugal**: The fourth Foreign Office Consultations between India and Portugal took place in New Delhi, focusing on various aspects including political relations, trade, investment, defence, science, technology, and energy. These consultations aim to strengthen bilateral cooperation and relations between the two countries.

- **China Becomes Top Vehicle Exporter**: China surpassed Japan as the world's biggest vehicle exporter in 2023, primarily due to its dominance in electric cars. This achievement reflects China's growing influence in the global automotive industry and its focus on electric vehicle production and export.

- **India-Greece Mobility and Migration Partnership**: India and Greece agreed to sign a mobility and migration partnership agreement to facilitate skilled migration and aim to double bilateral trade by 2030. This partnership aims to strengthen economic ties and enhance cooperation in the field of migration between the two countries.

- **Philippines Ratifies ILO Violence and Harassment Convention:** The Philippines became the first Asian country to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This ratification demonstrates the country's commitment to promoting safe and healthy working environments and protecting workers' rights.

- **Malta Joins International Solar Alliance**: Malta became the 119th country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) by signing the ISA Framework Agreement. By joining the ISA, Malta aims to collaborate with other member countries to promote solar energy deployment and combat climate change.

- **Dubai's Multiple-Entry Visa for Indian Tourists:** Dubai introduced a five-year multiple-entry visa for Indian tourists to boost economic collaborations and encourage tourism and business ties between India and Dubai. This initiative aims to facilitate travel and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

- **WHO's Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH):** WHO launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH) jointly with the Government of India during the G20 Health Ministerial Meeting held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The initiative aims to foster collaboration and share digital health knowledge and products among countries, with components including a country needs tracker, resource portal, transformation toolbox, and knowledge exchange.

- **Karnataka's Digital Detox Campaign:** The Karnataka government, in partnership with the All India Game Developers Forum (AIGDF), unveiled a digital detox campaign to combat gaming and social media addiction. The campaign includes the establishment of online and offline Digital Detox Centres throughout Karnataka to provide counselling and support to individuals seeking to regulate their technology usage.

- **Tamil Nadu's 'Kalaignar Sports Kit' Initiative:** Tamil Nadu announced the launch of the 'Kalaignar Sports Kit' initiative to develop sports potential at the local level.

The project, commemorating the birth centennial of Kalaignar Karunanidhi, will offer athletic equipment to 12,000 local panchayats across the state, aiming to promote sports and fitness among youth.

- **Restoration of Old Pension System in Sikkim:** Sikkim's Chief Minister announced the restoration of the Old Pension System (OPS) for state government employees hired after April 1, 2006, making the state the first in the Northeast to make this adjustment. This decision aims to address concerns related to pension schemes and provide financial security to government employees.

- **Creation of Tadoba-Kawal Conservation Reserve in Telangana:** The Telangana State Board for Wildlife approved the creation of the Tadoba-Kawal Conservation Reserve, aiming to protect the corridor between the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and the Kawal Tiger Reserve. This reserve will contribute to wildlife conservation efforts and preserve ecological connectivity in the region.

- **Tamil Nadu's 'Smart Card' Project for MSMEs**: Tamil Nadu MSME Minister TM Anbarasan announced the 'Smart Card' project, providing reduced products and services tailored to startups in sectors such as legal, marketing, and finance. This initiative aims to support and promote the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the state.

- **Mahatari Vandan Yojana in Chhattisgarh:** The Chhattisgarh government launched the Mahatari Vandan Yojana, a monthly cash aid program for married women, aiming to eradicate prejudice, boost health and nutrition, and foster women's empowerment. This initiative reflects efforts to address

gender disparities and promote the well-being of women in the state.

- **NITISH gadget in Bihar:** The Bihar State Disaster Management Authority launched the NITISH gadget, named after the Chief Minister, to warn farmers and the public about natural disasters such as lightning, floods, heatwaves, and cold waves. This gadget aims to enhance disaster preparedness and reduce the impact of natural calamities on vulnerable communities.

- **Mukhyamantri Vayoshri Yojana in Maharashtra:** The Maharashtra government decided to start the 'Mukhyamantri Vayoshri Yojana' to benefit around 15 lakh elderly citizens with physical or mental disabilities by providing them with an annual financial aid of Rs 3,000. This scheme aims to support the elderly population and improve their quality of life through financial assistance.

- **Assam's state fruit designation**: The Assam government designated 'Kaji Nemu' (Citrus Lemon) as the state fruit, recognizing its cultural, traditional, and nutritional value, particularly through the Geographical Indication (GI) classification. This designation aims to promote the cultivation and conservation of this indigenous fruit variety.

- **Jal Jeevan Mission achievement in Arunachal Pradesh:** Arunachal Pradesh achieved 100% saturation in the Jal Jeevan Mission's 'Har Ghar Jal' plan, making it the first state in the northeast and the tenth in the country to do so. This milestone signifies the state's efforts to provide safe and sustainable drinking water to all rural households.

- **'Van Mitra' project in Haryana:** The Haryana Chief Minister introduced the 'Van Mitra'

project to encourage community engagement in tree-planting activities outside of forests, to increase forest cover and to involve local residents in environmental conservation efforts. This initiative aims to promote green initiatives and enhance ecological sustainability in the state.

- **'Swayam' scheme in Odisha:** Odisha Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain announced the 'Swayam' scheme, offering interest-free loans up to Rs 1 lakh to promote self-employment among youth in both rural and urban areas. This scheme aims to empower youth and stimulate entrepreneurship for economic development.

- **Integration of agricultural schemes in Karnataka:** Karnataka plans to integrate various agricultural schemes into the Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Yojane to promote sustainable and profitable agriculture. This initiative aims to streamline agricultural interventions and enhance the livelihoods of farmers in the state.

- **'Bagless school' day in Madhya Pradesh:** The Madhya Pradesh government announced a 'bagless school' day once a week for students to alleviate their burden, along with issuing guidelines on the maximum permissible weight of school bags. This measure aims to promote the well-being of students and reduce the physical strain associated with heavy school bags.

- **Medaram Jatara in Telangana:** Medaram Jatara, India's largest tribal festival dedicated to honouring goddesses, was held in Telangana, attracting millions of tribals from various states. This annual festival holds cultural and religious significance for tribal communities and promotes cultural heritage and traditions.

- **Fiscal deficit estimate for 2024-25:** The fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is estimated to be 5.1% of GDP, adhering to the path of fiscal consolidation to reduce it below 4.5% by 2025-26. This fiscal target reflects the government's commitment to maintaining fiscal discipline and ensuring macroeconomic stability.

- **Tesla's 'Redwood' electric vehicle production:** Tesla plans to commence production of its next-generation electric vehicle, codenamed 'Redwood,' in the second half of 2025 at its Texas factory. This move reflects Tesla's ongoing innovation in the electric vehicle market and its expansion of manufacturing capabilities.

- **Paytm Payments Bank Ltd. (PPBL):** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed Paytm Payments Bank Ltd. (PPBL) to halt onboarding new clients immediately and cease various transactions in customer accounts, prepaid cards, wallets, FASTags, etc., effective from March 1, 2024. This directive may be related to regulatory compliance or concerns regarding PPBL's operations.

- **Return of ₹2,000 banknotes**: The RBI reported that 97.50% of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have been returned as of January 31, 2024. This indicates a significant reduction in the circulation of ₹2,000 banknotes and may have implications for currency management policies.

- **NABARD's forecast for priority sector lending in West Bengal:** NABARD forecasts a robust double-digit growth in priority sector lending potential in West Bengal for the fiscal year 2024-25, projecting it to reach ₹3.15 lakh crore, marking a 16% increase from the previous fiscal year. This forecast reflects the expected growth and development initiatives in West Bengal's priority sectors.

- **Government's disinvestment target**: The government has set a disinvestment target of Rs 50,000 crore for the fiscal year 2024-25, an increase from Rs 30,000 crore in the revised estimate for the current financial year. This target indicates the government's intention to divest its stake in public sector enterprises to mobilize funds and promote private sector participation in various sectors.

- **LIC's 'Amritbaal' savings life insurance plan:** LIC introduced "Amritbaal," a traditional savings life insurance plan tailored for children to meet their higher education and other needs. This plan offers guaranteed additions and various policy terms and premium payment options, aiming to provide financial security for children's future.

- **'Bima Sugam':** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) introduced an exposure draft proposal for an insurance electronic marketplace named Bima Sugam. This marketplace aims to serve as a central hub for all insurance-related activities, facilitating easier access to insurance products and services for consumers.

- **RBI's Monetary Policy Committee decision:** The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.50%. This decision reflects the RBI's assessment of the current economic conditions and its stance on monetary policy to maintain price stability and support economic growth.

- **Supreme Court's directive on electoral bonds:** The Supreme Court directed the State Bank of India (SBI) to halt the issuance of electoral bonds immediately. Electoral bonds are interest-free bearer bonds or money instruments that can be purchased by companies and individuals in India from authorized branches of the SBI. This directive may have implications for political funding regulations and transparency in electoral finance.

- **Total value of electoral bonds issued**: Electoral bonds issued across 30 tranches have amassed a total value of ₹16,518 crore. These bonds aim to ensure clean tax-paid money in political funding through proper banking channels, reflecting efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in political finance.

- **Electoral Bond Sales:** Mumbai leads in electoral bond sales, contributing over ₹4,000 crore, while Delhi leads in encashment. A significant portion of the bonds sold was encashed in Delhi, indicating high political funding activity in these regions.

- **EPF Interest Rate Increase**: The Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has raised the interest rate on Employees Provident Fund (EPF) deposits to 8.25% for the financial year 2023-24. This marks the highest level in three years, benefitting millions of employees who contribute to the EPF scheme.

- **Tata Group's Market Capitalization**: Tata Group has become the first Indian conglomerate to surpass a combined market capitalization of Rs 30 lakh crore, achieving an overall valuation of Rs 30.6 lakh crore. This milestone solidifies Tata Group's position as the most valued conglomerate in India.

- **Sovereign Gold Bond Issue**: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) fixed the issue price of the next tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond at Rs 6,263 per gram and introduced a discount for online investors paying through digital mode. This initiative aims to promote digital transactions and encourage investments in gold bonds.

- **Flood and Erosion Threat Mitigation in Assam**: The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) finalized a $200 million loan agreement to address flood and erosion threats along the Brahmaputra River in Assam. This funding will support infrastructure projects aimed at mitigating the impact of natural disasters in the region.

- **HDFC Bank's Profitability**: HDFC Bank emerged as the most profitable company in the current fiscal year, surpassing SBI and IOC with a net profit of ₹44,300 crore. This highlights HDFC Bank's strong financial performance and dominance in the banking sector.

- **Contribution to Poverty Alleviation Fund:** India contributed $1 million to the Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund established by India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA). This fund aims to support poverty alleviation projects in developing countries, reflecting India's commitment to global development initiatives.

- **Grammy Award for Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain**: Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band Shakti won the Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album for their album "This Moment." This recognition showcases the talent and cultural richness of Indian music on the global stage.

- **Ranveer Singh as Brand Ambassador**: Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has been

named the brand ambassador of the leading audio wearable brand boAt. This partnership aims to leverage Ranveer Singh's popularity to promote boAt's products and expand its market reach.

- **Appointment of Lieutenant General Kavita Sahai**: Lieutenant General Kavita Sahai has become the first woman to be appointed as the Commandant of the Army Medical Corps Centre and College in Lucknow. This appointment is a significant milestone in gender representation and leadership in the Indian Army.

- **Shri Pawan Kumar**: Shri Pawan Kumar, an Indian Cost Accounts Service (ICoAS) officer, has assumed the role of Chief Adviser (Cost) at the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. His appointment underscores the importance of financial expertise in government decision-making processes.

- **Champai Soren**: Champai Soren, a senior leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), has taken oath as the seventh chief minister of Jharkhand, succeeding party chairperson Hemant Soren. This transition marks a change in leadership in the state of Jharkhand.

- **Lochan Singh Pathania:** Vice Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania has taken charge as the Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India on February 1, 2024. In this role, he will oversee hydrographic surveying and charting activities to support maritime navigation and safety.

- **Ajay Kumar Choudhary**: Ajay Kumar Choudhary has been appointed as the non-executive chairman of the Board and independent director of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for three years starting February 8, 2024. This

appointment brings his expertise to NPCI's governance and strategic decision-making processes.

- **Mio Oka:** Mio Oka has been appointed as the new Country Director for India by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), succeeding Takeo Konishi. This appointment signifies ADB's commitment to its operations and partnership with India in various development initiatives.

- **Sanjay Kumar Jain:** Sanjay Kumar Jain has taken charge as Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC). His leadership will guide IRCTC in its mission to provide efficient catering and tourism services to Indian Railways passengers.

- **Upendra Dwivedi:** Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has assumed the appointment of the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding Lieutenant General MV Suchindra Kumar. This appointment marks his elevation to a key leadership position in the Indian Army.

- **Maryam Nawaz:** Maryam Nawaz, a senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party and daughter of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has become the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab province in Pakistan. Her appointment represents a significant development in Pakistani politics and gender representation.

- **Geeta Batra:** Geeta Batra, born in India, has been appointed as the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF), becoming the first woman from a developing country to hold this position. Her appointment highlights the growing representation of women from developing

countries in leadership roles at international organizations.

- **Judge Nawaf Salam:** Judge Nawaf Salam of Lebanon has been elected as President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a term of 3 years. His appointment underscores Lebanon's contribution to international law and diplomacy.

- **MoU between NHAI and GSI:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to provide geotechnical consultancy services. This collaboration aims to enhance the quality and safety of national highways through informed geological assessments.

- **Agreements between the Philippines and Vietnam:** The Philippines and Vietnam have signed agreements to expand cooperation in the South China Sea, focusing on enhancing information sharing and training exchanges between their militaries. This collaboration aims to strengthen maritime security and promote regional stability in the disputed waters.

- **Cooperation in the field of Archives:** India and Oman have agreed to cooperate in the field of Archives, with a delegation from the National Archives of India (NAI) visiting the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) of Oman. This collaboration aims to facilitate knowledge exchange and preserve historical records for mutual benefit.

- **Commissioning of INS Sandhayak**: INS Sandhayak, the first Survey Vessel Large (SVL) ship, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam. Its primary role is to conduct comprehensive hydrographic surveys to ensure safe marine navigation,

demonstrating India's commitment to maritime security and infrastructure development.

- **Vayu Shakti 2024:** The Indian Air Force will conduct the Vayu Shakti 2024 exercise at the Pokharan Range in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. This exercise aims to demonstrate the IAF's combat capabilities and operational readiness through various aerial maneuvers and simulations.

- **Google rebrands its chatbot Bard to Gemini**: Google has rebranded its chatbot Bard to Gemini, offering advanced AI capabilities to users worldwide. Gemini models are available in over 230 countries and territories, engaging users in more than 40 languages, and enhancing user experience and accessibility.

- **MoU between India and Colombia:** India and Colombia have signed an MoU on Cooperation in Sharing Successful Digital Solutions for Digital Transformation. This MoU aims to foster collaboration between the two countries in sharing digital solutions and promoting digital transformation initiatives.

- **Harnessing Potential of Fisheries in Inland States:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, organized a National Workshop on Harnessing the Potential of Fisheries in Inland States in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. This workshop aims to explore opportunities and strategies for promoting fisheries development in inland states of India.

- **Logistics Performance Index Report 2023:** India has been ranked 38th out of 139 countries in the Logistics Performance Index Report 2023 by the World Bank. This ranking reflects India's performance in logistics

efficiency and infrastructure development on a global scale.

- **9th GovTech Prize to India:** India received the prestigious 9th GovTech Prize at the World Government Summit 2024 held in Dubai. The award recognizes India's efforts in AI-powered government services, particularly the 'iRASTE' project by the Ministry for Road Transport & Highways, showcasing India's innovation in digital governance.

- **India's projected growth in oil demand**: According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), India is projected to be the fastest-growing source of oil demand globally until 2030. This projection highlights India's increasing energy consumption and its impact on global oil markets.

- **Henley Passport Index:** India has slipped to the 85th position on the Henley Passport Index, down from 80th in January 2024. The index ranks passports based on visa-free access to destinations worldwide, reflecting changes in global mobility and visa policies.

- **Market cap ranking of Indian companies**: Reliance Industries (RIL) retains its position as the most valuable Indian company with a market cap of Rs 15.6 trillion, followed closely by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and HDFC Bank. This ranking reflects the market value and financial performance of leading Indian companies.

- **'Year of Naval Civilians' by the Indian Navy:** The Indian Navy has designated 2024 as the 'Year of Naval Civilians' to enhance the administration, efficiency, and welfare of Naval civilians. This initiative aims to recognize the contribution of naval civilians and improve their working environment and welfare.

- **High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) - ABHYAS by DRDO:** DRDO conducted four successful flight trials of the High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) - ABHYAS at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha. These trials demonstrated the versatility and effectiveness of ABHYAS in various mission scenarios, showcasing its potential for defence applications.

- **ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup:** Australia emerged victorious in the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup by defeating India by 79 runs in the final match held in South Africa. This victory highlights Australia's success in youth cricket and its talented cricketing prospects.

- **Deorbiting of ISRO's Cartosat-2 satellite:** After 17 years of service, the Cartosat-2 satellite has been intentionally brought down from orbit. It played a significant role in urban planning and data collection, providing high-resolution images for various applications.

- **Launch of 'Hanooman' AI model by BharatGPT group**: Supported by Reliance Industries and top engineering schools, the BharatGPT group is set to introduce 'Hanooman,' an AI model similar to ChatGPT. This initiative aims to leverage AI technology for various applications and advance India's capabilities in the field.

- **Japan and the US to launch LingoSat**: LingoSat, the world's first wooden satellite, is a joint project aimed at addressing space debris concerns. Constructed from magnolia wood, this innovative satellite design demonstrates sustainable practices in space exploration.

- **Intuitive Machines' spacecraft Odysseus on the Moon: Odysseus**, built by Intuitive Machines, marks the first US spacecraft landing on the Moon since 1972. This mission, carrying NASA payloads, signifies the growing role of private space companies in lunar exploration.

- **Khelo India Winter Games in Leh, Ladakh:** The fourth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, jointly hosted by Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, promotes sports and encourages youth participation in winter sports activities.

- **Abhinav Bindra**: Abhinav Bindra, an Olympic gold medalist, has been chosen to carry the Olympic torch, symbolizing the spirit of the Olympic Games and inspiring athletes around the world.

- **Tawangchu Tides International Kayaking Championship 2024:** Organized by the organization "SWYTCH," this championship in Tawang District, Arunachal Pradesh, promotes adventure sports and tourism in the region.

- **500 Test wickets by Ravichandran Ashwin:** Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin reached a historic milestone by claiming his 500th Test wicket during a match against England. This accomplishment highlights his skill and contribution to Indian cricket.

- **iOncology.ai by AIIMS Delhi and C-DAC Pune:** iOncology.ai is an AI platform aimed at early detection of breast and ovarian cancer. This collaboration between AIIMS Delhi and C-DAC Pune represents efforts to leverage AI technology for healthcare innovation and disease prevention.

- **Inauguration of Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi:** This event marks a significant milestone in cultural and diplomatic relations between India and the UAE. It underscores the importance of preserving cultural heritage and fostering unity among diverse communities.

- **Unveiling of 'Pahal,' journal of IREDA:** This initiative demonstrates IREDA's commitment to transparency and accountability in its operations, as well as its efforts to promote renewable energy initiatives and share knowledge within the sector.

- **India's Largest Electrolyser End Fuel Cell-based Green Hydrogen Pilot Project by THDC India Limited (THDCIL):** This project aligns with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and signifies a significant step towards achieving carbon neutrality and promoting clean energy technologies.

- **Partnership between GAIL and United Arab Emirates (UAE) ADNOC Gas for LNG procurement:** This partnership aims to address India's growing natural gas demand by securing a stable supply of LNG from the UAE, contributing to energy security and diversification of energy sources.

- **Toyota retaining its position as the world's top-selling automaker in 2023**: This achievement reflects Toyota's continued success and market leadership in the automotive industry, driven by its reputation for quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction.

- **India's GDP growth estimate to 6.7% for the current financial year by the IMF:** The upward revision indicates the resilience of India's economy and its recovery from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by robust public

investment and favourable labour market conditions.

- **Reduction in import duties on mobile phone components**: This policy measure aims to promote domestic manufacturing of mobile phones and attract investment in the electronics sector, contributing to India's economic growth and self-reliance in manufacturing.

- **'Bharat' brand rice by the Government of India:** This initiative aims to stabilize rice prices in the domestic market and ensure affordability for consumers, highlighting the government's efforts to address food security and market volatility.

- **Construction of the world's largest copper manufacturing plant by the Adani Group**: This project signifies a significant investment in India's industrial infrastructure, which could boost the country's copper production capacity and contribute to economic growth and employment generation in the region.

- **Victory of Prabowo Subianto in Indonesia's Presidential race:** Subianto's win reflects the political landscape of Indonesia and the preferences of the electorate. It may signal potential policy shifts or continuity in governance under his leadership.

- **Germany surpasses Japan as the world's third-largest economy**: This development underscores Germany's economic resilience and the challenges faced by Japan, possibly due to currency fluctuations and structural economic factors affecting both countries differently.

- **Legalization of same-sex marriage in Greece**: Greece's move toward marriage equality represents a significant step forward in recognizing LGBTQ+ rights and promoting inclusivity and social progress in the country.

- **Appointment of Olzhas Bektenov as Kazakhstan's new prime minister**: Bektenov's appointment signals potential changes in Kazakhstan's government leadership and policies under President Tokayev's administration.

- **Re-election of Nayib Bukele in El Salvador**: Bukele's reelection reflects public support for his policies aimed at addressing security challenges and implementing reforms in El Salvador.

- **Introduction of Saudi Arabia's first luxury train, the Dream of the Desert**: This initiative aims to boost tourism and showcase Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage and natural beauty, contributing to the diversification of the country's economy away from oil dependence.

- **Appointment of Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak as Yemen's new Prime Minister**: Mubarak's appointment comes at a critical time for Yemen, facing security challenges and ongoing conflict. His leadership will be instrumental in addressing these issues and promoting stability and development in the country.

- **Declaration of a health emergency in Peru due to escalating cases of dengue fever**: This decision reflects the government's proactive response to a public health crisis, aiming to mobilize resources and implement measures to control the spread of the disease and protect public health.

- **Appointment of Michelle O'Neill as Northern Ireland's First Minister**: O'Neill's appointment represents a significant political development in Northern Ireland, potentially

signalling shifts in power dynamics and policies within the region's government.

- **Tshering Tobgay's second term as Bhutan's prime minister:** Tobgay's re-election underscores the stability of Bhutan's democratic system and the electorate's confidence in his leadership and policies.

- **Installation of Sultan Ibrahim as Malaysia's 17th king**: Sultan Ibrahim's installation represents a traditional ceremony in Malaysia's constitutional monarchy system, maintaining the continuity of the country's royal institutions.

- **Withdrawal of military regimes from ECOWAS**: The decision of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to withdraw from ECOWAS reflects dissatisfaction with the organization's policies and governance, signalling potential shifts in regional alliances and dynamics.

- **WHO's issuance of certificates for eliminating trans fatty acids**: This recognition acknowledges the efforts of countries in promoting public health by reducing trans fats in food products, contributing to the global fight against non-communicable diseases.

- **Expansion of BRICS membership:** The inclusion of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia in the BRICS group reflects efforts to broaden cooperation and influence among emerging economies on the global stage.

- **Passage of the Quad Bill by the US House of Representatives**: The bill aims to strengthen strategic partnerships between the US, Australia, India, and Japan, signalling a commitment to enhancing security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **Swift removal of the UAE from the FATF "grey list":** This development signifies the UAE's progress in improving its regulatory framework and enforcement mechanisms to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

- **Grand opening of the Great Mosque of Algiers**: The inauguration of the mosque represents a significant cultural and architectural achievement for Algeria, showcasing the country's religious heritage and architectural prowess.

- **Representation of India as the 'Mother of Democracy' at the Republic Day Parade**: This tableau highlights India's commitment to democratic principles and celebrates its historical contributions to the global democratic movement.

- **Inauguration of 'Vividdhta ka Amrit Mahotsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan**: The event underscores the government's efforts to promote and preserve the cultural diversity of Northeast India, fostering national unity and pride in the region's heritage.

- **Inauguration of Dakshin Bharat Sanskritik Kendra in Hyderabad**: The establishment of this regional centre aims to promote and preserve the rich cultural heritage of South India under the auspices of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, fostering cultural exchange and development in the region.

- **Ruchira Kamboj chairing the 62nd Session of the Commission for Social Development**: This event signifies India's active participation in global discussions on social development issues, reflecting its commitment to international cooperation and addressing social challenges on a global scale.

- **Inauguration of Ayush Holistic Wellness Centre in the Supreme Court**: The opening of this centre within the Supreme Court premises highlights the importance of holistic wellness and alternative healthcare practices, promoting well-being among judicial staff and visitors.

- **Observance of Guru Ravidas Jayanti**: This occasion commemorates the birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas, a revered saint and social reformer, providing an opportunity for reflection on his teachings and contributions to society.

- **Launch of "Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril" scheme in Tamil Nadu**: This scheme aims to enhance public service delivery and ensure the effective implementation of government schemes at the grassroots level, promoting transparency and accountability in governance.

- **Increase in monthly pension amounts under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana in Odisha**: This announcement reflects the state government's commitment to social welfare by providing increased financial support to beneficiaries, improving their quality of life and ensuring their well-being.

- **Declaration of Gupteswar forest as a Biodiversity Heritage Site in Odisha**: This designation recognizes the ecological significance of the Gupteswar forest and underscores the state's efforts towards biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

- **Tamil Nadu Assembly's resolutions on electoral processes**: The adoption of these resolutions reflects the state's assertion of its autonomy in electoral matters and its opposition to certain proposals put forth by the Union government, highlighting the importance of state-level decision-making in democratic processes.

- **Approval of World Bank project for supporting Sikkim**: This project underscores the importance of international cooperation in promoting economic development and empowerment, particularly focusing on training, upskilling, and job creation for women and youth in Sikkim, contributing to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

- **Karnataka leading in EV infrastructure**: Karnataka's leadership in establishing the highest number of public charging stations reflects its proactive approach towards promoting electric vehicle adoption and sustainable mobility solutions.

- **'Sarkar Gaon Ke Dwar' program in Himachal Pradesh**: Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's initiative aims to bring governance and development directly to rural areas, addressing the socio-economic needs of rural communities.

- **'Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana' in Maharashtra**: This scheme demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting senior citizens with disabilities, providing them with financial assistance to improve their quality of life.

- **'Savera' program in Haryana**: The program focuses on early detection and prevention of breast cancer, utilizing visually impaired women to conduct screenings, thereby enhancing healthcare accessibility and awareness.

- **Karnataka winning Nagesh Trophy**: Karnataka's victory in the Men's National T20 Cricket Tournament for the Blind showcases the state's prowess and

commitment to inclusive sports and empowerment.

- **'Swayam' scheme in Odisha**: This initiative aims to empower young entrepreneurs by providing interest-free loans, fostering self-employment opportunities, and contributing to economic development.

- **Surat Airport recognized as an International Airport**: The recognition of Surat Airport as an International Airport signifies its enhanced infrastructure and capabilities to cater to international air travel, boosting connectivity and economic growth in the region.

- **'Bag-less school' policy in Madhya Pradesh**: This policy promotes innovative and student-centric approaches to education, emphasizing holistic development and reducing the burden of traditional schooling norms.

- **Launch of "Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)" Portal**: The portal aims to address gender disparity in science and technology fields, promoting women's participation and leadership in these domains.

- **Appointment of Nawaf Salam as ICJ President:** Nawaf Salam's election as the president of the International Court of Justice underscores his expertise and experience in international law and justice.

- **Appointment of Ajay Kumar Choudhary as NPCI Chairman**: Ajay Kumar Choudhary's appointment brings his leadership and expertise to the National Payments Corporation of India, contributing to the advancement of digital payment systems in the country.

- **Appointment of Narendra Kumar Yadav as Fit India Movement Ambassador**: As the new brand ambassador, Narendra Kumar Yadav will play a key role in promoting fitness and healthy lifestyles across India.

- **PT Usha's Lifetime Achievement award**: PT Usha's recognition highlights her outstanding contribution to Indian athletics and serves as a tribute to her illustrious career and achievements.

- **India's performance in FIH Hockey 5s Women's World Cup**: India's runner-up finish in the tournament showcases the team's talent and competitive spirit on the global stage, inspiring the nation and promoting hockey as a sport.

- **Naorem Roshibina Devi winning International Wushu Federation Female Athlete of the Year**: This recognition highlights her exceptional skills and achievements in the sport of wushu, bringing pride to Manipur and India on the international stage.

- **Sonam Maskar's silver medal in shooting World Cup:** Sonam Maskar's impressive debut and silver medal in the women's air rifle event at the shooting World Cup in Cairo demonstrate her talent and potential in the sport of shooting.

- **Divyansh Singh Panwar's fourth World Cup gold**: Divyansh Singh Panwar's consistent success in securing his fourth gold medal in the 10m air rifle event at the shooting World Cup underscores his mastery and dominance in the sport.

- **Khelo India Winter Games 2024 mascot - 'Sheen-e She'**: The selection of the snow leopard as the mascot symbolizes the spirit of the Khelo India Winter Games, representing

strength, agility, and the unique biodiversity of the Ladakh region.

- **India and Bangladesh declared joint winners of SAFF Women's Under-19 Football Championships**: This outcome reflects the competitive spirit and skill level of both teams, resulting in a shared victory in the championship.

- **Release of "The Economics of the Food System Transformation" report**: This report sheds light on the economic aspects of transforming the global food system, emphasizing the need to address challenges such as food insecurity, environmental sustainability, and public health through strategic economic interventions.

- **Release of data from eROSITA X-ray telescope's all-sky survey**: The release of data from the eROSITA X-ray telescope's survey marks a significant milestone in astronomy, providing valuable insights into celestial objects and phenomena through X-ray observations.

- **Declaration of Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary as the 18th wildlife sanctuary in Tamil Nadu**: This designation underscores the government's commitment to biodiversity conservation and habitat protection in Tamil Nadu, contributing to the preservation of the state's natural heritage.

- **Inauguration of CLEA - CASGC 2024**: The inauguration of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association – Commonwealth Attorney and Solicitors Generals Conference (CLEA – CASGC) 2024 highlights the importance of legal education and collaboration among Commonwealth countries.

- **Commissioning of INS Sandhayak (Yard 3025):** The commissioning of INS Sandhayak into the Indian Navy signifies the enhancement of maritime survey capabilities, further strengthening India's naval infrastructure and operational readiness.

- **Mapping of Villages under MGMD**: The Government of India's decision to map and document all villages under Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD) of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping aims to preserve and promote India's cultural heritage at the grassroots level. This initiative seeks to recognize and document the diverse cultural practices and traditions across Indian villages.

- **THIP joining Vaccine Safety Net:** The Healthy Indian Project (THIP) joining the Vaccine Safety Net of the WHO signifies a commitment to providing reliable and verified information on vaccine safety to the people of India. By contributing to global efforts on immunization, THIP aims to combat misinformation and promote confidence in vaccination.

- **Introduction of DigiReady Certification Portal:** The collaboration between the Quality Council of India (QCI) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to introduce the DigiReady Certification (DRC) portal aims to certify digital commerce platforms for compliance with quality standards. This initiative seeks to enhance trust and reliability in digital transactions.

- **Inauguration of Aadi Mahotsav 2024:** The inauguration of Aadi Mahotsav 2024, an annual National Tribal Festival organized by TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, highlights the rich diversity of India's tribal heritage. This event provides a platform for showcasing tribal culture, arts, and crafts,

promoting tribal livelihoods and empowerment.

- **SARATHI Portal**: The SARATHI Portal (Sandbox for Agriculture, Rural Security, Technology, and Insurance) aims to simplify the process for insurance companies to design and offer customized insurance products to farmers and rural communities. This initiative seeks to enhance risk management and financial protection in rural areas.

- **e-Jagriti Portal:** Developed by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, the e-Jagriti Portal serves as a platform for consumer commissions to enhance the customer experience. This initiative aims to streamline consumer grievance redressal and promote consumer rights.

- **Supreme Court's Decision on Electoral Bonds**: The Supreme Court's decision to strike down the electoral bonds scheme, which allowed anonymous donations to political parties, is based on constitutional grounds. This ruling aims to promote transparency and accountability in political funding, addressing concerns about the influence of undisclosed donations on electoral processes.

- **Identification of World Restoration Flagships**: The UNEP and FAO jointly identify seven initiatives worldwide as World Restoration Flagships underscore efforts to address ecosystem degradation caused by various factors. These initiatives aim to restore ecosystems affected by wildfires, drought, deforestation, and pollution, promoting biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability.

- **Development of International Light Pollution Guidelines**: The development of International Light Pollution Guidelines by the CMS during CMS COP14 aims to mitigate the impact of light pollution on migratory species. These guidelines provide a framework for addressing the adverse effects of artificial light on wildlife, supporting conservation efforts for migratory species worldwide.

- **European Parliament's new law on ecosystem restoration:** The European Parliament passed a new law aimed at restoring degraded ecosystems across the European Union. This legislation underscores the EU's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability by addressing issues such as deforestation, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline.

- **Recognition for C-DOT at the Aegis Graham Bell Awards**: The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), India's premier telecom Research and Development centre, received three awards at the 14th Annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards. This recognition highlights C-DOT's excellence and innovation in the field of telecommunications technology.

- **"Operation AMRITH" in Kerala:** Kerala is implementing "Operation AMRITH," which enforces the original H1 rule requiring a doctor's prescription for all antibiotics. This initiative aims to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by promoting responsible antibiotic use and preventing the misuse of antibiotics.

- **Ex 'DHARMA GUARDIAN'**: The 5th edition of the joint military exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' between the Indian Army and the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force has

commenced at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan. Such exercises enhance interoperability and cooperation between the armed forces of both countries.

- **EU's "Aspides" naval mission**: The European Union launched the "Aspides" naval mission to protect cargo ships from Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and surrounding waters. This mission aims to safeguard maritime trade routes and ensure the security of shipping lanes in the region.

- **NATO's Steadfast Defender 2024 exercise**: NATO commenced its largest military exercise in Europe, the Steadfast Defender 2024. This exercise involves member countries' armed forces and aims to enhance readiness, interoperability, and defence capabilities in response to evolving security challenges.

- **'INDUS-X' summit**: The 'INDUS-X' summit between India and the United States, organized by India's Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and the US Department of Defense, takes place in Delhi. This summit aims to promote defence cooperation, innovation, and technology collaboration between the two countries.

- **Leniency Plus system**: This system introduced by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs enables the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to adopt an innovative approach to uncover undisclosed cartels among companies. Cartels are arrangements between competing businesses to control prices or exclude competitors, and uncovering them is crucial for maintaining fair competition in markets.

- **Banihal-Sangaldan railway line:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Banihal-Sangaldan section of the railway line, aiming to connect Baramulla in North Kashmir to Udhampur in Jammu. This infrastructure project is significant for improving connectivity, promoting economic development, and enhancing accessibility to remote regions.

- **Raisina Dialogue 2024:** The ninth edition of the Raisina Dialogue, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, featured Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis as the chief guest during the opening session. The Raisina Dialogue is a prestigious global conference that brings together policymakers, thought leaders and experts to discuss pertinent issues related to geopolitics, security, and diplomacy.

- **Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP):** The Cabinet approved the continuation of the FMBAP, aimed at addressing critical aspects of flood control and anti-erosion measures, for the period spanning 2021-2026. This program is crucial for mitigating the adverse impacts of floods and erosion in vulnerable areas, enhancing disaster resilience, and safeguarding livelihoods and infrastructure.

- **Ban on cotton candy in Tamil Nadu:** The Tamil Nadu government banned the sale and production of cotton candy in the state due to the presence of the harmful chemical Rhodamine-B, as confirmed by samples tested by the food safety department. This decision aligns with food safety standards and regulations to protect public health and ensure the safety of consumers.

- **Exercise Dosti:** Exercise Dosti is a trilateral naval exercise conducted between the Indian Coast Guard, the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), and the Sri Lanka Coast Guard. Such exercises facilitate cooperation, interoperability, and coordination among

maritime security forces to address common security challenges and promote maritime safety and security in the region.

- **Diplomatic missions between India and Albania:** India and Albania announced plans to establish diplomatic missions in each other's capitals, indicating a desire to enhance bilateral relations, promote economic cooperation, and strengthen people-to-people ties between the two countries.

- **Visit of World Bank delegation to Goa:** A World Bank delegation visited Goa to discuss setting up India's first sub-national climate resilient green fund. This initiative aims to mobilize financing for climate-resilient infrastructure projects at the sub-national level, contributing to India's efforts to mitigate climate change impacts and build climate resilience.

- **Inauguration of Sudarshan Setu:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sudarshan Setu, formerly known as the Okha-Beyt Dwarka Signature Bridge, which is India's longest cable-stayed bridge spanning over the Gulf of Kutch. This infrastructure project is significant for enhancing connectivity, promoting tourism, and facilitating socio-economic development in the region.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Which of the following is NOT a Fundamental Right under the Indian Constitution?
A) Right to Equality
B) Right to Freedom
C) Right against Exploitation
D) Right to Property

Q2. Which state in India is known as the "Spice Garden of India"?
A) Kerala
B) Tamil Nadu
C) Karnataka
D) Goa

Q3. In which Indian state were the most snow leopards found?
A) Jammu and Kashmir
B) Sikkim
C) Uttarakhand
D) Ladakh

Q4. Which state government has launched the 'Sadak Suraksha Force' to improve traffic movement and reduce road accidents in the state?
A) Uttar Pradesh
B) Gujarat
C) Karnataka
D) Punjab

Q5. The concept of Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution is borrowed from the constitution of:
A) United Kingdom
B) United States of America
C) Ireland
D) Soviet Union

Q6. Who has been appointed as the Chairman of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC)?
A) Roger Binny
B) Rahul Dravid
C) Anil Kumble
D) Jay Shah

Q7. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI is responsible for:
A) Managing government finances

B)   Setting interest rates
C)   Printing new currency notes
D)   Supervising stock exchanges

Q8. The World Health Organization (WHO) was established in the year:
A)   1918
B)   1948
C)   1978
D)   2008

Q9. The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for:
A)   Sustainable fishing practices
B)   The conservation and wise use of wetlands
C)   Reducing water pollution
D)   Protecting endangered species

Q10. Which of the following is NOT a feature of the Indian Constitution?
A)   Federal System with a strong center
B)   Parliamentary Form of Government
C)   Single Citizenship
D)   Unitary System of Government

Q11. What is the full form of PM SVANidhi?
A)   Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor Nidhi Yojana
B)   Pradhan Mantri Street Vikas Nidhi Scheme
C)   Pradhan Mantri Swavalamban Nidhi Abhiyan
D)   Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi

Q12. Which state in India organised the Surajkund International Crafts Mela?
A)   Rajasthan
B)   Uttar Pradesh
C)   Haryana
D)   Gujarat

Q13. In which year was the Bharat Ratna instituted?
A)   1947
B)   1950

C)   1954
D)   1960

Q14. The World Economic Forum (WEF) headquarters are located in which city?
A)   Geneva, Switzerland
B)   New York City, USA
C)   Brussels, Belgium
D)   London, United Kingdom

Q15. The residuary power under the Indian Constitution lies with:
A)   The State Governments
B)   The Union Territories
C)   The Parliament
D)   The Judiciary

Q16. Which state government has launched a welfare scheme "Mahtari Vandan Yojana" to provide financial assistance for married women?
A)   Tripura
B)   West Bengal
C)   Assam
D)   Chhattisgarh

Q17. What is the current headquarters of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)?
A)   Tokyo, Japan
B)   Beijing, China
C)   Manila, Philippines
D)   Singapore

Q18. The basic unit of heredity is:
A)   Chromosome
B)   Gene
C)   Nucleus
D)   Cell

Q19. The process of splitting the nucleus of an atom to release a large amount of energy is called:
A)   Fission
B)   Fusion
C)   Isotope decay

D) Ionization

Q20. The power to declare war and conclude peace rests with:
A) Parliament
B) President
C) Prime Minister
D) Cabinet

Q21. Which of the following is the largest saltwater lake in India?
A) Chilika Lake
B) Sambhar Lake
C) Pangong Tso
D) Loktak Lake

Q22. Which of the following is NOT a vaccine-preventable disease?
A) Measles
B) Chickenpox
C) Common cold
D) Tetanus

Q23. The transfer of thermal energy through direct contact is called:
A) Conduction
B) Convection
C) Radiation
D) Sublimation

Q24. The outermost layer of the Sun is called the:
A) Core
B) Corona
C) Photosphere
D) Chromosphere

Q25. The writ of Habeas Corpus is issued to:
A) Enforce fundamental rights
B) Produce a person before the court
C) Punish a person for contempt of court
D) Transfer a case from one court to another

Q26. The Gir Forest National Park, known for its Asiatic lions, is located in:
A) Rajasthan
B) Gujarat
C) Maharashtra
D) Karnataka

Q27. The process by which a cell divides to produce two genetically identical daughter cells is called:
A) Mitosis
B) Meiosis
C) Fertilization
D) Differentiation

Q28. A neutral solution has a pH of:
A) 0
B) 7
C) 10
D) 14

Q29. Which of these is NOT a primary colour?
A) Red
B) Blue
C) Green
D) Purple

Q30. What is the significance of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) in the Indian Constitution?
A) They are fundamental rights enforceable by the courts.
B) They provide guidelines for the State to promote social welfare.
C) They can be directly invoked by citizens against the Government.
D) Violation of DPSPs can lead to the dissolution of the Government.

Q31. Who wrote the famous play "Hamlet"?
A) William Shakespeare
B) Charles Dickens
C) Jane Austen
D) J.K. Rowling

Q32. What is the capital of Australia?
A) Sydney
B) Melbourne

C) Canberra

D) Brisbane

Q33. What is the name of the world's driest desert by rainfall?

A) Sahara Desert

B) Atacama Desert

C) Gobi Desert

D) Australian Outback

Q34. What is the significance of the "Vote on Account" in the budgetary process?

A) It allows for voting on individual budget proposals

B) It is a temporary provision for essential expenditures

C) It authorizes supplementary budgets

D) It is a constitutional requirement for budget approval

Q35. What is the significance of the concept of "Collective Responsibility" in the Indian Parliamentary System?

A) It requires all Members of Parliament to vote together on all issues.

B) It ensures that the judiciary cannot review the actions of the Cabinet.

C) It holds the Council of Ministers accountable to the Lok Sabha.

D) It guarantees equal representation for all states in the Rajya Sabha.

Q36. The power to dissolve a Grama Panchayat rests with:

A) The Grama Sabha by a two-thirds majority vote.

B) The Collector of the district in case of gross mismanagement.

C) The State Government on the recommendation of the Zilla Parishad.

D) Any of the above, depending on the specific circumstances.

Q37. According to the Constitution, which article empowers the Governor of West Bengal to appoint the Advocate General for the state?

A) Article 215

B) Article 165

C) Article 163

D) Article 217

Q38. The Chief Minister's power to advise the Governor on the appointment of key officials:

A) Is absolute and the Governor is bound to follow it in all cases.

B) Is significant, but the Governor can ultimately reject the advice on valid grounds.

C) Is limited to certain positions as defined by the Constitution.

D) Does not exist, as the Governor appoints officials independently

Q39. In the legislative procedure, what does the term "guillotine" refer to in the context of state legislatures?

A) A type of voting system

B) The process of rejecting a bill

C) Time-limiting debate on demands for grants

D) A motion to dissolve the legislature

Q40. What is the difference between Reservation and Affirmative Action in the Indian context?

A) Reservation refers to quotas in jobs and education, while Affirmative Action is broader and includes social welfare schemes.

B) Affirmative Action is court-mandated, while Reservation is enshrined in the Constitution.

C) Reservation is only for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, while Affirmative Action benefits other backward classes.

D) There is no difference; both terms refer to the same concept.

Q41. What is the maximum strength of the Council of Ministers in a state as per the Indian Constitution?

A) 15% of the total strength of the state legislature

B) 10% of the total strength of the state legislature

C) 20% of the total strength of the state legislature

D) No specific limit

Q42. The minimum gap between two consecutive sessions of the State Legislature is:

A) No minimum gap is specified in the Constitution.

B) Six months, as stipulated by the Supreme Court.

C) Two months, as outlined in the state's legislative procedure rules.

D) One month, according to the Governor's discretion.

Q43. The original jurisdiction of a High Court encompasses:

A) All criminal cases under the Indian Penal Code.

B) Disputes between the state government and the central government.

C) Writs like habeas corpus and certiorari to protect fundamental rights.

D) Cases involving property disputes exceeding a certain monetary value.

Q44. Who is the ex-officio Chief Justice of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)?

A) The Chief Justice of India

B) The Senior-most Judge of the Supreme Court

C) The Chief Justice of the High Court

D) The Attorney General of India

Q45. Explain the concept of "Public Interest Litigation" (PIL) in India.

A) It allows only government officials to file lawsuits in the public interest.

B) It is a mechanism for any citizen to approach the court for violation of public rights.

C) It requires a specific financial stake in the matter to be eligible to file a PIL.

D) It is a substitute for criminal prosecution and focuses solely on punishment.

Q46. What is the largest bone in the human foot?

A) Talus

B) Calcaneus

C) Metatarsals

D) Phalanges

Q47. Which is the largest muscle in the human body?

A) Bicep

B) Gluteus Maximus

C) Quadriceps

D) Hamstring

Q48. What is the name of the world's first programmable computer?

A) ENIAC

B) Apple I

C) IBM PC

D) Commodore 64

Q49. The International Date Line mostly follows which line of longitude?

A) 90 degrees East

B) 0 degrees

C) 180 degrees

D) 45 degrees East

Q50. The largest freshwater lake by volume in the world is:

A) Lake Superior

B) Lake Victoria

C) Lake Baikal

D) Lake Titicaca

ANSWSERS

1. Answer: D

Explanation: The Right to Property, once a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution of India, underwent a significant change with the 44th Amendment in 1978. It was removed from the list of Fundamental Rights and reclassified as a legal right, now governed by Article 300A. This article states that no person shall be deprived of his property save by the authority of law, thus making it a constitutional right but not a fundamental one.

2. Answer: A

Explanation: Kerala, with its favourable climate and coastal location, has been a centre for spice cultivation for centuries. The state's warm temperatures, high humidity, and abundant rainfall create ideal conditions for the growth of a wide variety of spices, including black pepper, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and turmeric. Kerala's long coastline and network of canals facilitated trade with other parts of India and the world, further solidifying its reputation as a spice hub.

3. Answer: D

Explanation: The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India found approximately 718 snow leopards across the country, with Ladakh hosting the highest population. Snow leopards serve as apex predators in the Himalayan ecosystem, facing threats such as overgrazing, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, habitat degradation, and climate change impacts.

4. Answer: D

Explanation: The state government of Punjab has launched the 'Sadak Suraksha Force' initiative to improve traffic movement and reduce road accidents in the state. This force aims to protect people and streamline traffic movements with 144 vehicles and 5,000 employees deployed every 30 kilometers on the roads.

5. Answer: C

Explanation: The Directive Principles of State Policy are a set of guidelines for the Indian government to achieve a welfare state. While the concept of social and economic rights exists in other constitutions, Ireland's constitution directly inspired the inclusion of Directive Principles in India.

6. Answer: D

Explanation:

Jay Shah has been reappointed as the Chairman of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for a third consecutive term during the ACC Annual General Meeting in Bali. The ACC also announced upcoming tournaments including the Women's T20 Asia Cup scheduled for September 2024.

7. Answer: B

Explanation: The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was established in 2016. It is tasked with formulating monetary policy to maintain price stability and achieve the economic growth objective set by the Government of India. The MPC uses various tools to influence the money supply and interest rates in the economy. These tools include open market operations, repo rate, and cash reserve ratio. By adjusting these levers, the MPC aims to control inflation, promote economic growth, and ensure financial stability.

8. Answer: B

Explanation: The WHO was founded in 1948 following the devastation of World War II. This period witnessed widespread disease outbreaks and a general decline in public health conditions. In response, the international community recognized the need for a coordinated global effort to improve health and prevent future health crises. The WHO's constitution was adopted at the International Health Conference in San Francisco, officially establishing the organization.

9. Answer: B

Explanation: The Ramsar Convention is a global framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, it is the only international treaty that focuses specifically on wetlands. The Convention promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands through national action and international cooperation.

10. Answer: D

Explanation: India is a federal system, which means power is distributed between a central government (Union) and state governments. The Constitution outlines the division of powers between the Union List (subjects under the central government's purview), the State List (subjects under the state government's purview), and the Concurrent List (subjects where both the Union and state governments can make laws). This distribution of powers ensures a balance between national unity and regional diversity.

11. Answer: D

Explanation: The Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) is a central-sector micro-credit scheme launched on June 1, 2020, by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to provide handholding support to street vendors.

12. Answer: C

Explanation: Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of India, inaugurated the 37th Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Haryana, emphasizing its role in celebrating cultural diversity and connecting craftsmen with art lovers. She highlighted the significance of art and craft in building bridges of understanding and praised Gujarat as the partner state for its rich art tradition, with the North-Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation as the cultural partner.

13. Answer: C
Explanation: The Bharat Ratna was instituted in 1954. The decision to create the award came a few years after India gained independence in 1947. The government wanted to establish a prestigious award to recognize the achievements of individuals who had made significant contributions to the nation. The first recipients of the Bharat Ratna in 1954 were C. Rajagopalachari, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and C. V. Raman.

14. Answer: A
Explanation: The headquarters of the World Economic Forum are located in Geneva, Switzerland. The organization was established in 1971 as a non-profit foundation and has since grown into a global institution that convenes leaders from all walks of life to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world.

15. Answer: C
Explanation: The residuary power refers to the authority to make laws on any subject that is not expressly mentioned in either the Union List or the State List. The Parliament has the exclusive authority to enact legislation on any topic that is not explicitly included in the powers granted to the states or is not considered a common concern for both the central and state governments. This power is crucial for the effective functioning of a federal system as it ensures that there are no gaps in legislative authority and that the Parliament can address new and emerging issues that may not have been anticipated when the Constitution was drafted.

16. Answer: D
Explanation: The Chhattisgarh government launched the "Mahtari Vandan Yojana" to provide Rs 1,000 financial assistance per month to married women through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer). Eligible women, domiciled in Chhattisgarh and aged above 21 years as of January 1, 2024, will receive Rs 12,000 annually directly into their bank accounts.

17. Answer: C
Explanation: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is headquartered in Manila, Philippines, and was established in 1966. As a regional development bank, ADB focuses on reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through multilateral development financing. ADB's mission is to enhance the quality of life for people in the region by offering loans and technical assistance for a wide range of development projects and activities.

18. Answer: B
Explanation: Genes are the fundamental units of heredity, composed of DNA, which is the blueprint for life. Chromosomes are structures within cells that contain a long strand of DNA, which in turn is made up of numerous genes. Each gene contains a specific set of instructions that dictate a particular function or code for a protein. In general terms, genes are the carriers of hereditary traits from one generation to the next.

19. Answer: A
Explanation: Nuclear fission is a process that involves the division of a heavy atomic nucleus into two or more lighter nuclei. This reaction results in the release of a significant amount of energy, which is due to the conversion of mass into energy as described by Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$. The energy produced by nuclear fission is harnessed for various applications, including electricity generation in nuclear power plants.

20. Answer: B
Explanation: The President of India is the head of state and the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces. The Constitution vests the supreme command of the Defence Forces of the country in the President. This includes the power to declare war and conclude peace, deploy troops, and decide the operational use of the armed forces. The President doesn't exercise this power unilaterally. The President generally acts on the advice of the Union Cabinet, which is led by the Prime Minister.

21. Answer: A
Explanation: Chilika Lake is the largest saltwater lake in Odisha. Chilika Lake experiences unique ecological conditions. During the monsoon season, the lake receives freshwater inflows from rivers, turning it into a vast freshwater lake. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded at Chilika Lake, including flamingos, pelicans, ibises, and egrets.

22. Answer: C
Explanation: Vaccines are crucial tools in the fight against infectious diseases, offering protection against conditions such as measles, chickenpox, and tetanus. These immunizations work by stimulating the body's immune response, preparing it to fight off these illnesses effectively. On the other hand, the common cold presents a more complex challenge. It is caused by a multitude of viruses, making the development of a single vaccine for prevention elusive at this time.

23. Answer: A
Explanation: Conduction is the process of heat transfer through direct contact between materials at varying temperatures. This phenomenon can be observed when a metal spoon becomes hot after being left in a bowl of hot soup, as the heat travels from the soup to the spoon.

24. Answer: B
Explanation: Corona is the outermost layer of the Sun and plays a crucial role in solar phenomena. It extends millions of kilometres into space and is characterized by its high temperatures and low density compared to the Sun's interior layers. The corona is visible during a total solar eclipse as a pearly white crown surrounding the Sun. Studies of the corona help scientists understand solar wind, flares, and coronal mass ejections, which can have significant effects on space weather and satellite operations.

25. Answer: B

Explanation: The writ of Habeas Corpus is a powerful tool to safeguard against illegal detention. It translates to "you have the body" and empowers individuals to challenge their detention before a court. If the court finds the detention illegal, it can order the release of the person. This writ serves as a critical check on the power of the state to arrest and detain individuals. The Indian Constitution recognizes Habeas Corpus as a fundamental right under Article 32, ensuring that no citizen is deprived of their liberty arbitrarily.

26. Answer: B

Explanation: The Gir Forest National Park is situated in Gujarat. The park has a diverse ecosystem, including dry deciduous forests, grasslands, and rocky outcrops. Aside from Asiatic lions, the park provides habitat for a variety of other mammals, including leopards, sloth bears, hyenas, and chinkaras.

27. Answer: A

Explanation: The process by which a cell divides to produce two genetically identical daughter cells is called mitosis. This fundamental process is crucial for growth, development, and tissue repair in multicellular organisms. During mitosis, a single cell duplicates its chromosomes and allocates an equal set to each daughter cell, ensuring genetic consistency.

28. Answer: B

Explanation: A neutral solution is characterized by a pH value that is neither acidic nor basic. The pH scale, which ranges from 0 to 14, serves as a measure of the acidity or basicity of a solution. At the midpoint of this scale lies pH 7, which is considered neutral. This means that a solution with a pH of 7 has an equal concentration of hydrogen ions (H+) and hydroxide ions (OH-), resulting in no net acidity or basicity.

29. Answer: D

Explanation: Primary colours are sets of colours that can be combined to make a useful range of colours. For the additive colour system, which is used in lighting, monitors, and televisions, the primary colours are red, green, and blue. Therefore, purple is not a primary colour because it can be made by combining red and blue.

30. Answer: B

Explanation: The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs), enshrined in Part IV of the Constitution (Articles 36-51), are not justiciable, they serve as guiding principles for the State to frame laws and policies that promote social welfare, economic justice, and a welfare state. The DPSPs aim to establish a just and equitable society by laying down broad guidelines for the State to strive towards in various spheres such as securing a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people, securing an adequate livelihood, and striving to promote fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

31. Answer: A

Explanation: William Shakespeare, often hailed as the preeminent playwright of the English language, authored the tragic play "Hamlet." His works, including this profound tragedy, have transcended time and culture, continuing to resonate and inspire countless adaptations and scholarly discussions.

32. Answer: C

Explanation: Australia's designated capital city is Canberra. The city is home to many national monuments and institutions like the Australian War Memorial and the National Gallery of Australia, reflecting its status as the political and cultural heart of the nation.

33. Answer: B

Explanation: The Atacama Desert in South America receives an exceptionally low amount of rain, averaging less than 0.01 inches (0.25 mm) annually in some areas. This aridity is caused by several factors, including its location on the western coast of South America, where cold ocean currents suppress precipitation. Additionally, the Andes mountains block moisture-laden clouds from reaching the desert, creating a rain shadow effect. The Atacama's hyper-arid conditions make it one of the driest places on Earth, resembling the Martian landscape in some regions.

34. Answer: B

Explanation: The "Vote on Account" is a special procedure that allows the government to obtain the approval of the state legislature for its expenditures for a part of the financial year, usually until the full budget is passed. It is usually done when the regular budget session is delayed or when there is a need for interim funds due to unforeseen circumstances. The "Vote on Account" does not include any new schemes or policies, but only covers the existing and essential expenses of the government. Therefore, option b) is the correct answer.

35. Answer: C

Explanation: Collective responsibility is a principle implying that the Council of Ministers functions as a unit. All ministers are responsible for the decisions and actions of the government, even if they disagree with specific policies. This principle ensures the government's stability and accountability to the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) from where they derive their legitimacy. If the Lok Sabha loses confidence in the Council of Ministers through a no-confidence motion, the entire Council has to resign.

36. Answer: D

Explanation: The authority to dissolve a Grama Panchayat is vested in different entities based on various conditions. The Grama Sabha can initiate this action with a two-thirds majority vote. In instances of severe mismanagement, the Collector of the district may intervene. Additionally, the State Government holds the power to dissolve a Grama Panchayat upon the recommendation of the Zilla Parishad. Ultimately,

the decision-making power is contingent upon the specific situation at hand.

37. Answer: B
Explanation: The Advocate General is the chief legal officer of a state in India. He or she is appointed by the Governor of the state, as per Article 165 of the Constitution of India. The Advocate General advises the state government on legal matters and represents it in courts. The Advocate General also has the right to speak and take part in the proceedings of the state legislature, without being a member.

38. Answer: B
Explanation: In the context of the Indian constitutional framework, including the relationship between the Chief Minister and the Governor, the Chief Minister's power to advise the Governor on the appointment of key officials is significant but not absolute.

39. Answer: C
Explanation: The term "guillotine" in the context of state legislatures is associated with the process of time-limiting the debate on demands for grants during the budgetary proceedings. The demands for grants are a part of the annual budget presented by the government, specifying the amounts of money required for various ministries and their programs.

40. Answer: A
Explanation: Reservation refers to quotas in jobs and education for disadvantaged groups (SCs, STs, OBCs) to address historical inequalities. Affirmative action is broader, encompassing reservation and other programs to level the playing field for these groups.

41. Answer: A
Explanation: The Council of Ministers is the executive body of a state in India. It consists of the Chief Minister and other ministers who assist him or her in running the administration. The Indian Constitution does not specify any limit on the number of ministers in a state, but it restricts the maximum strength of the Council of Ministers. According to Article 164 (1A) of the Constitution, the total number of ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers of a state shall not exceed 15% of the total strength of the state legislature.

42. Answer: A
Explanation: The minimum gap between two consecutive sessions of the State Legislature is not explicitly specified in the Indian Constitution. Therefore, the correct answer is: (A) No minimum gap is specified in the Constitution. The Constitution does not prescribe a specific minimum gap between two consecutive sessions of the State Legislature. The scheduling and timing of sessions are typically determined by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers, keeping in mind the state's legislative business, requirements, and other practical considerations.

43. Answer: C
Explanation: The original jurisdiction of a High Court refers to the cases that can be directly heard by the High Court without being appealed from lower courts. The nature and scope of original jurisdiction may vary from one High Court to another, but one common aspect is the power to issue certain writs for the protection of fundamental rights.

44. Answer: A
Explanation: The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is a statutory body established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The main objective of NALSA is to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of society and to promote justice based on equal opportunity. According to Section 3 of the Act, the ex-officio Chief Justice of NALSA is the Chief Justice of India. The other members of NALSA include a serving or retired Judge of the Supreme Court as the Executive Chairman, nominated by the President of India in consultation with the Chief Justice of India, and the Chief Justices of the High Courts as ex-officio Patrons-in-Chief of the State Legal Services Authorities in their respective states.

45. Answer: B
Explanation: Public Interest Litigation (PIL) is a powerful tool for citizens to seek judicial intervention in matters pertaining to violation of fundamental rights or public interest. It allows anyone to file a petition in a High Court or the Supreme Court, irrespective of personal connection to the issue. PILs have played a crucial role in addressing social issues like environmental degradation, prison reforms, and human rights violations.

46. Answer: B
Explanation: The largest bone in the human foot is the calcaneus, also known as the heel bone. It forms the foundation of the rear part of the foot and bears most of the weight while standing. The calcaneus is connected to the talus and cuboid bones and provides attachment points for muscles and ligaments that move the foot.

47. Answer: B
Explanation: The largest muscle in the human body is the gluteus maximus. It is located in the buttocks and is responsible for the movement of the hip and thigh. Standing up from a sitting position, climbing stairs, and staying in an erect posture are all aided by the gluteus maximus.

48. Answer: A
Explanation: ENIAC, completed in 1945, was the first programmable, electronic, general-purpose digital computer. Designed by John Mauchly and J. Presper Eckert, it was used initially to study the feasibility of thermonuclear weapons. Costing $487,000, it boasted a speed approximately one thousand times faster than electro-mechanical machines and was formally accepted by the U.S. Army in July 1946, operating until 1955 at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

49. Answer: C

Explanation: The International Date Line is an imaginary line that mostly follows the 180-degree longitude line, although it deviates from it in several places to avoid crossing through certain territories and to accommodate practical considerations. This line serves as the boundary where each calendar day officially begins and ends.

50. Answer: C

Explanation: Lake Baikal, located in Siberia, Russia, is the largest freshwater lake by volume in the world. It holds approximately 20% of the world's unfrozen surface freshwater, making it an incredibly significant natural reservoir. It's not only vast in volume but also known for its stunning clarity and biodiversity, housing numerous unique species found nowhere else on Earth.