# WBCS
# GAZETTE

## A House Journal APTI PLUS

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

**AUGUST 2024**

Charaideo Maidam

Appointment of Vice-Chancellors

Bhoj Wetland

NATO Summit

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee passed away

SIGHT Programme

Smriti Biswas passed away

A MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR ASPIRANTS OF WBCS EXAMINATION

## ✏️ CONTENT

## ✏️ CONTENT

## ✎ CONTENT

## WEST BENGAL SPECIAL

## Appointment of vice-chancellors

- The Supreme Court has appointed former Chief Justice of India, **Uday Umesh Lalit, as the chairman of the search and selection committee for appointing vice-chancellors in West Bengal's state-run universities.**
- The appointment was made following a special leave petition filed by the West Bengal government under Article 138 of the constitution.
- The six-member committee will prepare a panel of three names in alphabetical order for each vice-chancellor position, with recommended names presented to the Chief Minister.
- The Chief Minister can reject unsuitable names and suggest alternatives to the Chancellor (state Governor). If the Chancellor agrees with a name, the appointment must be made within one week. In case of disagreement between the Chancellor and Chief Minister, the Supreme Court will be the final authority.

## Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee

- Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, former Chief Minister of West Bengal and CPI (M) leader, passed away at the age of 80.
- Bhattacharjee served as the Chief Minister of West Bengal from 2000 to 2011.
- He was the **second and last CPI (M) leader to serve as the CM of West Bengal.**
- In the 2011 assembly polls, Bhattacharjee-led CPI (M) lost to Mamata Banerjee-led TMC, ending a 34-year communist rule in West Bengal.

## UNICEF and West Bengal Partner to Engage Fathers in Breastfeeding

- The West Bengal government has launched a new initiative in collaboration with UNICEF to actively involve fathers in promoting and supporting breastfeeding.
- This effort aims to improve breastfeeding rates and enhance family support for new mothers, thereby contributing to better infant health outcomes.
- **Awareness Campaign:**
  o **Method:** Anganwadi workers are educating fathers and other family members about the benefits of breastfeeding.
  o **Focus:** The campaign emphasizes starting discussions about breastfeeding from conception to build a supportive environment for new mothers.
- Dr. Basab Mukherjee, president of the Bengal Obstetric and Gynaecological Society, refers to breast milk as the baby's "first vaccine." It is rich in essential nutrients, and antibodies, and provides crucial early protection against diseases.
- UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) is a prominent global organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and mothers worldwide.
- UNICEF was **established in December 1946, by the United Nations** Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to address the immediate needs of children and mothers affected by World War II.

## Smriti Biswas

- Veteran **actor Smriti Biswas died** on July 3 at the age of 100.
- She was born into a Christian family as Smritirekha Biswas and worked in many Hindi, Marathi, and Bengali movies. She debuted in the film world as a child artist with the Bengali movie Sandhya in 1930.
- Biswas made her acting debut with the 1930 Bengali film Sandhya and appeared last in the 1960 movie Modern Girl (1961).

**NATIONAL**

## eSankhyiki Portal

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) launched the eSankhyiki Portal** to enhance user experience and data accessibility.
- This initiative seeks to align India's national statistical system with global standards and practices by leveraging advanced technologies.
- The **eSankhyiki Portal is designed to provide real-time data for planners, policy-makers, researchers, and the public**. It facilitates a comprehensive data management and sharing system for official statistics.
- The portal aims to improve data accessibility, streamline data management processes, and support decision-making with up-to-date information.

## Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

- The Union Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav and Smt. Anupriya Singh Patel unveiled three key initiatives at the Ayushman Bharat Quality Health event.
- The **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is a national public health insurance scheme in India that provides free health insurance coverage to low-income earners.**
- The scheme, which is part of the Indian government's National Health Policy, was means-tested and launched in September 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **The program offers services to 50 crore people**, making it the world's largest government-sponsored healthcare program.

## Mutual Evaluation Report of India

- India has been recognized for its successful performance in the Mutual Evaluation conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) during 2023-24.
- The evaluation report, adopted during the FATF plenary in Singapore, places India in the 'regular follow-up' category.
- This achievement highlights India's significant progress in combating money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF), marking a key milestone in the country's efforts to enhance its financial integrity.
- **About FATF:** Founded in 1989, it serves as an international watchdog against money laundering, terrorist financing, and related threats. India has been a member since 2010.

## Sampoornata Abhiyan Campaign

- **The Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign launched by the NITI Aayog aims to achieve comprehensive coverage of key performance indicators (KPIs) in 112 Aspirational Districts** and 500 Aspirational Blocks across India.
- The campaign operates under the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), focusing on improving various developmental indicators in targeted areas.
- **Aspirational Districts and Blocks:**
  o **Aspirational Districts:** These are districts identified as lagging in socio-economic development. They require focused attention to improve performance in various developmental parameters.
  o **Aspirational Blocks:** Similarly, these blocks are selected for their developmental needs, and efforts will be made to uplift their status in alignment with national goals.
- The campaign will run for approximately three months, during which intensive efforts will be made to achieve the desired outcomes across the targeted regions.
- **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) was established on January 1, 2015, to replace the Planning Commission**. It serves as the apex body for formulating and monitoring policies and programs of the Government of India.

# NITI Aayog

- The Union Government has reconstituted NITI Aayog, the think tank of the Union government, reflecting recent changes in the council of ministers.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** remains the chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- **Suman K Bery**, an economist, continues in his role as vice-chairperson.
- **Full-Time Members:** The reconstituted NITI Aayog includes **four full-time members**.
- There are **15 Union Ministers** who are part of the reconstituted body.
- The NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is a policy think tank of the Government of India established to promote cooperative federalism and sustainable development. It was formed on January 1, 2015, replacing the Planning Commission.

# Smart Cities Mission

- The **Smart Cities Mission (SCM) has been extended until March 31, 2025**, marking its third extension. Originally scheduled to end on June 30, 2024, this extension aims to provide additional time for completing and refining urban development projects under the mission.
- It was launched in June 2015, under the Ministry of Urban Development, to enhance urban infrastructure and service delivery through smart technology and innovative solutions.
- **Cities across India competed to be selected among the 100 smart cities**. This competitive process aimed to incentivize cities to develop and implement innovative solutions to urban challenges.
- Projects under the Smart Cities Mission were chosen based on extensive stakeholder input, ensuring that the needs and preferences of local communities were addressed.

# GPAI Ministerial Council

- The **6th meeting of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Ministerial Council was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.** The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, combining both physical and virtual participation.
- The GPAI aims to support and guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) globally. The organization fosters international cooperation on AI policy and research.

# Cabinet Committees

- The Indian Union government has reconstituted its eight key Cabinet committees.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA):** Deals with matters related to the economy, including policy formulation and economic strategies.
  - **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC):** Responsible for making senior appointments to various posts, including those in government departments and public sector enterprises.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS):** Focuses on matters related to national security, defence, and internal security issues.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Accommodation:** Handles issues related to the accommodation needs of ministers, senior officials, and other government employees.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs:** Manages parliamentary affairs, including the scheduling of parliamentary sessions and handling of legislative matters.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs:** Addresses political issues and strategies, including policy and electoral matters.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth:** Focuses on promoting investment and economic growth, and addressing related issues.
  - **Cabinet Committee on Skill, Employment, and Livelihood:** Deals with matters related to skill development, employment generation, and livelihood opportunities.
- The **Prime Minister chairs six of the eight committees**, reflecting the importance of economic, security, and political matters in the administration's focus.
- The Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are exceptions, with their leadership assigned to other senior ministers.

## SIGHT Programme

- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has issued new scheme guidelines for the implementation of the Green Hydrogen initiative under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Programme.**
- The scheme aims to incentivize and boost the production of green hydrogen, which is produced using renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, rather than fossil fuels.
- By providing financial support and incentives, the scheme is designed to encourage investments in green hydrogen technology, facilitate research and development, and support infrastructure development for green hydrogen production.

## NABARD Foundation Day

- July 12, 2024, marked the 43rd Foundation Day of NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development).
- NABARD was established on July 12, 1982.
- The creation of NABARD was based **on the recommendations of the B. Sivaraman Committee**, which was formed in 1979 to review and improve rural credit systems.
- NABARD aims to promote sustainable development in agriculture and rural areas through:
  - **Financial Support:** Providing loans and financial assistance to rural development projects and agricultural activities.
  - **Innovative Solutions:** Implementing innovative programs and solutions to address the challenges faced in rural development.

## Project Swasthya Nagaram

- **Telangana launched Project Swasthya Nagaram**, an ambitious initiative **aimed at creating TB-free municipalities.**
- The main goal of Project Swasthya Nagaram is to eliminate tuberculosis in select urban municipalities. The project aims to reduce TB incidence by one-third and decrease TB-related mortality within three years.
- The project will utilize a digital app for active TB screening. This modern approach aims to streamline the process of identifying individuals at risk.

## Bhoj Wetland

- **Bhoj Wetland in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, is at risk of being removed from the Ramsar Convention's list of Wetlands** of International Importance.
- Local citizens and environmental groups have voiced their worries about how the road project could harm the wetland's ecological balance and biodiversity.
- **The Ramsar Convention Secretariat, based in Switzerland**, has sought clarification from the Indian government regarding the proposed activities and their potential impact on Bhoj Wetland.
- Ramsar Convention is designed to protect wetlands around the world, recognizing their vital role in
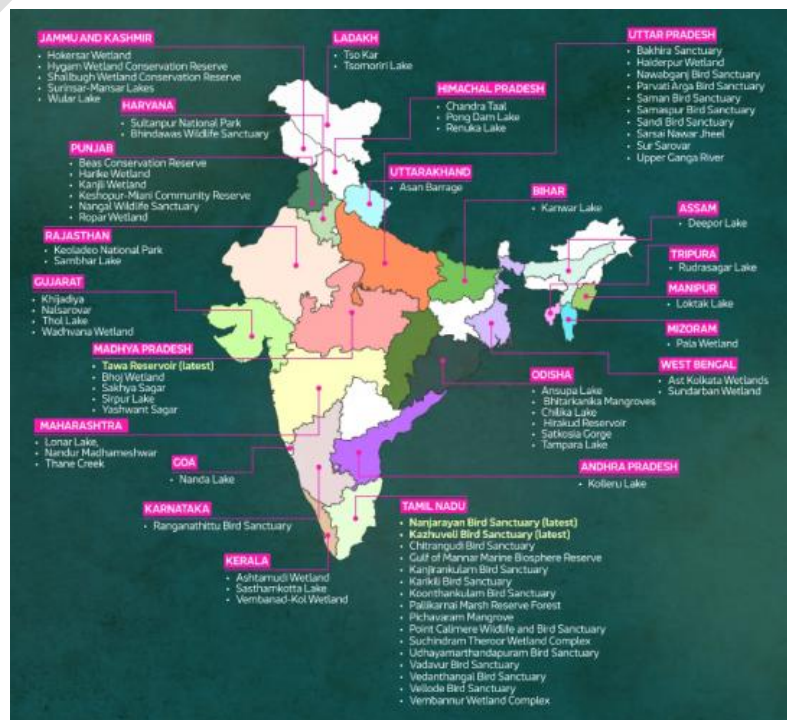
maintaining biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, and regulating the environment. **The convention was signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971.**

- **As of August 2024, India has designated 85 Ramsar Sites,** which are wetlands recognized for their international significance under the Ramsar Convention. These sites are crucial for biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, and supporting local communities.

## Operation Nanhe Farishtey

- Operation Nanhe Farishtey is an **initiative launched by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) to rescue children who are at risk while travelling or staying at railway stations across India.**
- The primary goal is to identify and rescue children who are in dangerous or vulnerable situations at railway stations and on trains.
- This initiative aims to protect children who may be runaways, missing, left behind, or otherwise in distress, ensuring their safety and providing them with appropriate care.
- After the rescue, children are handed over to the District Child Welfare Committee, which works to reunite them with their families.

## Hydropower Stations in Arunachal Pradesh

- India is investing $1 billion to accelerate the construction of 12 hydropower stations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The investment aims to boost the region's energy infrastructure and harness the hydroelectric potential of the northeastern Himalayan state.
- The federal finance ministry, led by Nirmala Sitharaman, has approved financial support of up to ₹7.5 billion for each hydropower project.

## Ladla Bhai Yojana

- The **Ladla Bhai Yojana** is a new initiative by the Maharashtra government, announced by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, designed to support young men in the state.
- **Benefits of Ladla Bhai Yojana: Monthly Stipend**
  o **12th Grade Pass Students:** ₹6,000 per month.
  o **Diploma Holders:** ₹8,000 per month.
  o **Graduates:** ₹10,000 per month.
- Beneficiaries will have the chance to undertake a one-year apprenticeship in a factory. This experience is aimed at enhancing their employability by providing practical work experience.
- The scheme aims to prepare a skilled workforce by offering financial support while the youth gain hands-on experience.

## One India-One Ticket Initiative

- Indian Railways, **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), and the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) have partnered to launch the initiative**.
- The One India-One Ticket initiative aims to simplify travel by integrating ticketing systems for both mainline rail and metro services.
- The initiative is designed to enhance convenience for travellers moving between trains and metros, particularly in the Delhi/NCR area.

## Haryana Announces Job Quota for Agniveers

- The **Haryana government announced that Agniveers will receive a 10% reservation in government posts** for constables, mining guards, forest guards, jail wardens, and special police officers.
- Industrial units hiring Agniveers at a salary of ₹30,000 per month will receive an annual subsidy of ₹60,000.

- **Agnipath Scheme was** launched in June 2022, it recruits personnel below the rank of officers for a four-year tenure in the Indian armed forces. After four years, up to 25% of Agniveers, may be offered a permanent commission based on merit.
  - Agniveers receive a lump sum of approximately ₹11.71 lakhs (with interest) from the Seva Nidhi upon completion of their tenure.
  - In case of death on duty, families receive ₹1 crore (including Seva Nidhi) and full pay for the unserved period.

## GAINS 2024

- On July 10, 2024, **Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth inaugurated the GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme (GAINS 2024) at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) in Kolkata.**
- This initiative is a significant step towards fostering technological solutions for shipyard challenges and promoting innovation through Indian start-ups.
- GAINS 2024 aims to encourage Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups to develop innovative solutions that enhance technological capabilities in ship design and construction.
- The scheme aligns with the broader national objectives of 'Make in India' and 'Start-up India,' leveraging the entrepreneurial ecosystem to address both current and future challenges within the shipbuilding industry.

## National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has released the National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024,** highlighting improvements and performance metrics related to the cargo clearance process in India.
- This study is an essential tool for assessing how efficiently cargo is processed through customs and aligns with global standards set by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- A Time Release Study (TRS) measures the time taken for cargo clearance in international trade. It evaluates the efficiency of the cargo release process from the moment the cargo arrives at a customs station until it is officially released for import or export.

## Kashmir City Receives World Craft City Certificate

- **Kashmir City was awarded the prestigious Certificate of World Craft City by the World Crafts Council International.**
- This honour, presented in a grand ceremony attended by notable figures such as Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Sa'ad Hani Al-Qaddumi, President of the World Crafts Council, marks a significant achievement for the region.
- **Kashmir City's new status as a World Craft City positions it as the fourth Indian city to receive this honour**. The other Indian cities recognized are Jaipur, Mamallapuram, and Mysore.

## Charaideo Maidam

- **Charaideo Maidam, a complex of over 90 royal burial mounds in Assam, has been officially recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site,** marking a significant milestone for the region.
- **It is often referred to as the "Pyramids of Assam,"** these majestic structures are the final resting places of Ahom kings and nobles who ruled the region for nearly six centuries.
- **The Ahom dynasty, which flourished from the 13th to the 18th century, left a legacy in Assam**. Their unique burial practices, exemplified by the Charaideo Maidam, provide invaluable insights into their culture, religion, and social structure.
- These mounds, constructed with meticulous care, are not mere burial sites but are revered as sacred places by the Ahom people.
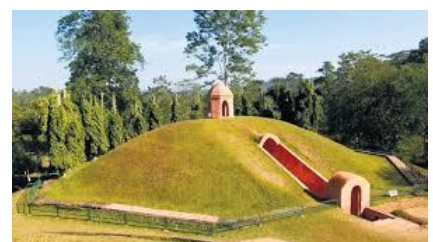
- **As of July 2024, there are 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India** with the recent inclusion of "Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty from Assam.

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

| S.No | Name of Sites | Year | Location |
|------|---------------|------|----------|
| 1 | Ajanta Caves | 1983 | Maharashtra |
| 2 | Ellora Caves | 1983 | Maharashtra |
| 3 | Agra Fort | 1983 | Agra |
| 4 | Taj Mahal | 1983 | Agra |
| 5 | Sun Temple | 1984 | Orissa |
| 6 | Mahabalipuram Monuments | 1984 | Tamil Nadu |
| 7 | Kaziranga National Park | 1985 | Assam |
| 8 | Keoladeo National Park | 1985 | Rajasthan |
| 9 | Manas Wildlife Sanctuary | 1985 | Assam |
| 10 | Churches and Convents of Goa | 1986 | Goa |
| 11 | Monuments of Khajuraho | 1986 | Madhya Pradesh |
| 12 | Monuments of Hampi | 1986 | Karnataka |
| 13 | Fatehpur Sikri | 1986 | Agra |
| 14 | Elephanta Caves | 1987 | Maharashtra |
| 15 | Great Living Chola Temples | 1987 | Tamil Nadu |
| 16 | Pattadakal Monuments | 1987 | Karnataka |
| 17 | Sundarbans National Park | 1987 | West Bengal |
| 18 | Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park | 1988 | Uttarakhand |
| 19 | Monuments of Buddha | 1989 | Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh |
| 20 | Humayun's Tomb | 1993 | Delhi |
| 21 | Qutub Minar and its Monuments | 1993 | Delhi |
| 22 | Mountain Railways of Darjeeling, Kalka Shimla & Nilgiri | 1999 | Darjeeling |
| 23 | Mahabodhi Temple | 2002 | Bihar |
| 24 | Bhimbetka Rock Shelters | 2003 | Madhya Pradesh |
| 25 | Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus | 2004 | Maharashtra |
| 26 | Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park | 2004 | Gujarat |
| 27 | Red Fort | 2007 | Delhi |
| 28 | Jantar Mantar | 2010 | Delhi |
| 29 | Western Ghats | 2012 | Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra |
| 30 | Hill Forts | 2013 | Rajasthan |
| 31 | Rani Ki Vav (The Queen's Stepwell) | 2014 | Gujarat |
| 32 | Great Himalayan National Park | 2014 | Himachal Pradesh |
| 33 | Nalanda | 2016 | Bihar |
| 34 | Khangchendzonga National Park | 2016 | Sikkim |
| 35 | Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (Capitol Complex) | 2016 | Chandigarh |
| 36 | The Historic City | 2017 | Ahmedabad |
| 37 | Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles | 2018 | Mumbai |
| 38 | The Pink City | 2019 | Jaipur |
| 39 | Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple | 2021 | Telangana |
| 40 | Dholavira | 2021 | Gujarat |
| 41 | Santiniketan | 2023 | West Bengal |
| 42 | Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and | 2023 | Karnataka |

| | Somananthpura | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 43 | Modiams | 2024 | Assam |

## Goem Vinamulya Vij Yevjan Scheme

- The **Chief Minister of Goa Pramod Sawant has launched the Goem Vinamulya Vij Yevjan scheme.**
- This initiative aligns with the Prime Minister's **Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**, focusing on increasing solar rooftop installations and empowering residential households to generate their electricity.
- The central Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana has an outlay of ₹75,021 crore, set to be implemented until FY 2026-27.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Japan

- **Japan is set to introduce new banknotes featuring advanced holography**, marking the first redesign in two decades.
- Japan was the first country to use holography that creates a 3D rotating effect on the portraits, significantly elevating the notes' security features. These features are part of Japan's ongoing efforts to combat counterfeiting.
- The currency of Japan is the **Japanese yen**. It is represented by the symbol ¥.
- **Holography is a technique used to create a three-dimensional image of an object, known as a hologram**. It relies on the principles of interference and diffraction of light to record and reconstruct the light field reflected off the object.



New Japanese banknotes feature 3D holographic portraits

## Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The **24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held on July 4, 2024, in Astana, Kazakhstan.**
- This meeting was an important gathering where leaders from various countries came together to discuss issues related to regional cooperation and security.
- The summit was attended by several key world leaders, including:
  - **Russian President Vladimir Putin**
  - **Chinese President Xi Jinping**
  - **Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**
  - **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres**
  - **India's Representative:** Dr S Jaishankar (India's External Affairs Minister), as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not attend the summit.
- Belarus was admitted as the 10th full member of the SCO during this summit. Previously, Belarus had been an observer in the organization.
- **The SCO, initially established in 2001 with five member countries,** has now expanded to include 10 full members.
- **India and Pakistan joined in 2017,** Iran became the 9th member in 2023, and Belarus was the latest addition in 2024.
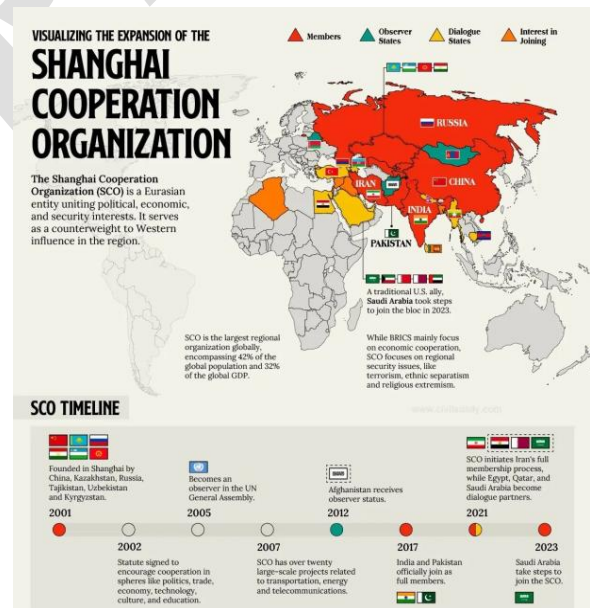
## Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a $60 million financing agreement with Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) to enhance housing affordability for women in India**.
  - This initiative targets low-income and affordable housing sectors, aiming to address financing gaps and promote home ownership among economically disadvantaged groups.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established in 1966 and headquartered in Manila, Philippines. The bank has grown from 31 to 68 members.
- It is modelled on the World Bank and has a weighted voting system. Japan and the United States hold the largest proportion of shares at 15.571%.

## NATO Summit

- The NATO summit, hosted by US President Joe Biden in Washington, DC from July 9 to 11, 2024, marks a historic event for the alliance.
- The summit is notable for **Sweden's inclusion as a new member** and aims to reinforce NATO's commitment to supporting Ukraine amidst ongoing global challenges.
- The summit also commemorates NATO's 75th anniversary, emphasizing the alliance's continued relevance in Euro-Atlantic security.
- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), also known as the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance **consisting of 32 member states**, including 30 European and 2 North American countries.
- NATO was established after World War II, NATO implemented the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in 1949. As a collective security system, its member states agree to defend each other against third-party attacks.

## World Network of Biosphere Reserves

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recently approved the designation of 11 new Biosphere Reserves across 11 countries.
- This expansion brings the total number of sites in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to 759, spanning 136 countries.
- Newly Designated Biosphere Reserves:
  - **Kempen-Broek Transboundary Biosphere Reserve** (Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands)
  - **Darién Norte Chocoano Biosphere Reserve** (Colombia)
  - **Madre de las Aguas Biosphere Reserve** (Dominican Republic)
  - **Niumi Biosphere Reserve** (Gambia)
  - **Colli Euganei Biosphere Reserve** (Italy)
  - **Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve** (Italy, Slovenia)
  - **Khar Us Lake Biosphere Reserve** (Mongolia)
  - **Apayaos Biosphere Reserve** (Philippines)
  - **Changnyeong Biosphere Reserve** (Republic of Korea)
  - **Val d'Aran Biosphere Reserve** (Spain)
  - **Irati Biosphere Reserve** (Spain)
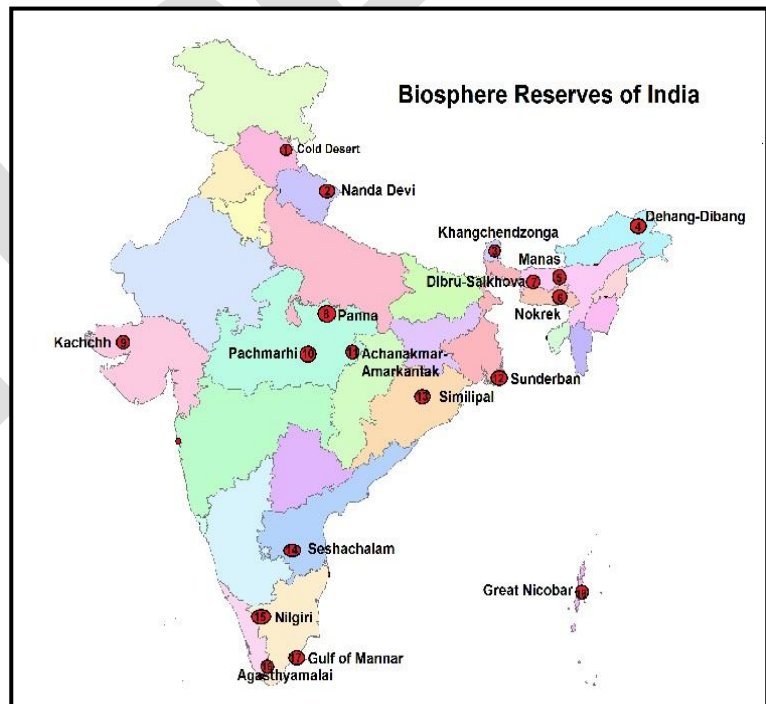
- As of 2024, India has 18 notified biosphere reserves, with 12 recognized by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme.

## World's Greatest Places of 2024

- **TIME magazine has included three Indian destinations in its prestigious list of 'World's Greatest Places of 2024,'** celebrating places that offer distinctive and enriching experiences:
- **Museum of Solutions (MuSo), Mumbai**
  - o It is an innovative children's museum designed to provide immersive and educational experiences. The 100,000-square-foot facility includes interactive labs focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) subjects, a 220-seat amphitheatre, a library, and a recycling centre.
- **Manam Chocolate, Hyderabad**
  - o It stands out for its commitment to Indian craft chocolates and features a variety of products, including unique flavours such as chai biscuit and pistachio fudge.
  - o **Notable Aspects:** The factory's dedication to using Indian-grown cacao has received international recognition, bringing Indian chocolate craftsmanship to a global audience.
- **NAAR, Himachal Pradesh**
- It is a fine dining restaurant that offers a refined take on Himalayan cuisine, with dishes that incorporate regional ingredients like Himachali yak cheese and Naga bamboo shoot pickles.

## MeDevIS Platform

- The **World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the Medical Devices Information System (MeDevIS)**, an innovative online platform designed to provide comprehensive, standardized information on medical devices.
- This initiative represents a significant advancement in global health technology management, offering a centralized resource for governments, regulators, healthcare providers, and users.
- The platform includes information on **2,301 types of medical devices**, addressing various health conditions such as reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health, noncommunicable diseases (e.g., cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes), and infectious diseases (e.g., COVID-19).
- **WHO: Key Points**
  - o **Establishment:** April 7, 1948
  - o **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
  - o **Parent Organization:** United Nations (UN)

## United Nations' World Population Prospects 2024 report

- According to the United Nations' World Population Prospects 2024 report, **India's population stands at approximately 1.45 billion.**
  - o It is expected to increase to 1.69 billion by 2054 and peak at around 1.7 billion in the early 2060s.
  - o After peaking, India's population is projected to decline by about 12%, reaching around 1.5 billion by 2100.
- China's population, currently 1.41 billion, is projected to decrease to 1.21 billion by 2054 and further decline to 633 million by 2100 due to its low fertility rate.
- The global population is anticipated to peak at 10.3 billion in the mid-2080s before slightly declining to 10.2 billion by 2100.
- The United States, currently the third most populous country, is expected to be overtaken by Pakistan by 2054.
- By the late 2070s, the number of people aged 65 and older will surpass the number of children under 18.

## Loss and Damage Fund

- The **Philippines has been chosen to host the board of the Loss and Damage fund, established through U.N. climate negotiations.**
- This fund aims to offer financial assistance to countries struggling to cope with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events like typhoons and floods.
- The **Philippines, an archipelago of over 7,600 islands, is particularly vulnerable to climate change-related disasters**. The country frequently experiences severe typhoons and other climate-induced events, highlighting the importance of the fund in supporting its resilience and recovery efforts.
- The **establishment of the fund at COP27 in Egypt in 2022** was a step forward, but detailed mechanisms for its implementation are still being discussed.



What is "loss and damage"?
The phrase refers to costs already being incurred from climate-fuelled weather extremes or impacts, like rising sea levels

- Climate funding so far has focused on cutting CO2 emissions, while a third of it went towards helping communities adapt to future impacts
- Loss and damage funding is expected to cover the cost of damage that countries cannot avoid or adapt to
- A report by 55 vulnerable countries estimated that their combined climate-linked losses in the last two decades totalled
- $525 billion, or 20% of their collective GDP. This could go upto $580 billion per year by 2030
- Vulnerable countries and campaigners argue that rich countries that caused the bulk of climate change with their historical greenhouse gas emissions should pay

Source: Reuters

## World's First 3D-Printed Electric Abra

- **Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has launched the world's first electric abra manufactured using 3D printing technology.**
- This innovative abra, designed to preserve the traditional abra identity while incorporating modern technology, is currently undergoing trial operations.
- The electric abra supports RTA's environmental sustainability strategy by introducing a cleaner, more efficient mode of transport.



World's First' 3D-Printed Electric Abra Begins Trial Voyage In Dubai

## Global Conference on Space Research

- The **45th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) took place in Busan, South Korea,** marking the first time the country has hosted this prestigious global space research conference.
- The event gathered 3,000 scientists and industry leaders from 60 nations, highlighting South Korea's increasing prominence in the space research community.

## Henley Passport Index 2024

- The Henley Passport Index ranks passports based on how many countries their holders can visit without needing a visa.
- **In 2024, Singapore holds the top spot for the most powerful passport, providing visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 195 destinations.**
- **India ranks 82nd, allowing visa-free entry to 58 countries**. This ranking reflects India's moderate level of global mobility compared to other countries.
- Afghanistan remains at the bottom of the index, with visa-free access to only 26 countries, indicating limited global mobility.

## Travel and Tourism Development Index

- **In the 2024, Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India has been ranked 39th out of 119 countries.**
- In 2021, India was ranked 54th, so moving up to 39th place is a significant improvement. This jump of 15 places in three years indicates progress in various aspects of the tourism sector.

- Globally, there were 975 million international tourist arrivals in 2022. India welcomed 14.3 million of these tourists, holding a 1.47% share of the global market. In the Asia & Pacific region, India's share was 15.66% in 2022.
- **The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international non-governmental organization based in Cologny, Geneva, Switzerland.** Founded by German engineer Klaus Schwab on January 24, 1971.

| Rank | Country | Score | Rank | Country | Score |
|------|---------|-------|------|---------|-------|
| 1 | United States | 5.24 | 7 | United Kingdom | 4.96 |
| 2 | Spain | 5.18 | 8 | China | 4.94 |
| 3 | Japan | 5.09 | 9 | Italy | 4.90 |
| 4 | France | 5.07 | 10 | Switzerland | 4.81 |
| 5 | Australia | 5.00 | 39 | India | 4.25 |
| 6 | Germany | 5.00 | | | |

# ECONOMICS

## Project Nexus

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), and the central banks of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand are collaborating on Project Nexus.** An agreement was signed in Basel, Switzerland.
- The platform is **expected to go live by 2026 and will interlink domestic fast payment systems (FPS) of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and India.**
- Project Nexus aims to make retail cross-border payments more efficient, faster, and cost-effective.

## MSME Sahaj Portal

- **State Bank of India (SBI) has launched the MSME Sahaj portal,** a 15-minute online loan solution for MSMEs.
- **The platform allows MSMEs to secure up to ₹1 lakh against GST invoices within 15 minutes**, using automated processing and data-driven credit assessments.
- The platform is available through SBI's digital platform Yono, targeting existing micro SME units and facilitating instant cash flow enhancements.

## Cleanest Country

- The **Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** measures the effectiveness of a country's environmental policies by evaluating various environmental outcomes.
- **Developed by Yale and Columbia Universities in collaboration with global institutions**, the EPI provides a comprehensive assessment of national sustainability efforts.

| Top-10 Cleanest Countries in the World 2024 | | | | | |
|------|---------|-----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Rank | Country | EPI Score | Rank | Country | EPI Score |
| 1. | Estonia | 75.3 | 6. | Sweden | 70.5 |
| 2. | Luxembourg | 75 | 7. | Norway | 70 |
| 3. | Germany | 74.6 | 8. | Austria | 69 |
| 4. | Finland | 73.7 | 9. | Switzerland | 68 |
| 5. | United Kingdom | 72.7 | 10. | Denmark | 67.9 |

## 'Safety Ring' Security Feature

- In response to the increasing incidents of cyber fraud**, Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched the 'Safety Ring' security feature.**

- This optional mechanism provides an added layer of protection against unauthorized access, specifically designed to minimize potential financial losses for users of PNB's internet and mobile banking services.
- The 'Safety Ring' feature allows customers to set a daily transaction limit for their term deposits (TDs), specifically focusing on online closure or overdraft facilities.

## AgriSURE

- The **Government of India is set to launch a new initiative, the 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE), aimed at boosting innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector.**
- This initiative is designed to support start-ups and agripreneurs through a mix of sector-specific and sector-agnostic investments in Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), along with direct equity support for start-ups in agriculture and allied sectors.
- The fund will have an initial value of ₹750 crore, with contributions from NABARD, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other institutions, each providing ₹250 crore.
- As part of the initiative, AgriSURE Greenathon 2024 was launched to promote innovation by addressing key challenges in agriculture through a hackathon.

## SDG India Index 2023-24

- The **SDG India Index 2023-24** released by **NITI Aayog** highlights significant progress in India's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The overall score for India has improved to **71**, up from **66 in 2020-21** and **57 in 2018**. Key advancements were observed in areas such as poverty alleviation, health, water, and sanitation
- **State-wise Progress:**
  - **32 States and Union Territories (UTs)** have achieved scores between **65 and 99**.
  - **Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and West Bengal** were notable for their significant improvements, positioning them as front runners in the SDG performance index.
- The score for Climate Action increased from **54 to 67**, reflecting enhanced disaster preparedness and greater adoption of renewable energy sources.
- The SDG India Index remains a crucial tool for evaluating progress and guiding policy decisions towards achieving the **2030 Agenda**. The continued focus will be on **inclusive growth** and **environmental sustainability**.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):
  - The SDGs comprise **17 goals** established by the United Nations.
  - The SDGs include **169 targets** across all goals to guide national and global efforts towards sustainable development.
  - The SDGs aim to address global challenges, including **poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice**.
  - The SDGs were adopted by all UN member states in **2015** as part of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

## Summary of Economic Survey 2023-24

- The Economic Survey for 2023-24, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 22, 2024, provides a comprehensive look at India's economic performance and future outlook.
- The Economic Survey is a comprehensive report that provides an overview of the Indian economy's performance over the past financial year. It is presented in Parliament every year just before the Union Budget.

- The Survey is **prepared under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser of India and presented by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance**. It is submitted to both Houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.

> **Background**
> - **Initial Presentation**: The first Economic Survey was presented in the financial year 1950-51, initially as part of the Union Budget.
> - **Separation from Budget**: In 1964, the Economic Survey was separated from the Union Budget. Since then, it has been presented each year during the Budget Session, before the presentation of the budget.
> - **Non-Binding Nature**: While the Economic Survey is a significant document, it is non-binding. This means that its recommendations and analyses do not have to be followed by the government, but it is constructed and presented each year due to their substantial value in economic planning and policy-making.

## State of the Economy

- **GDP Growth Projection:** The Economic Survey projects a real GDP growth of 6.5–7% for the upcoming period. This projection is conservative compared to higher market expectations, suggesting a cautious but positive outlook.
- **Momentum Maintenance:** India's economy has maintained its growth momentum from FY23 into FY24. This stability is attributed to macroeconomic stability, which has minimized the impact of external challenges.
- **Real GDP Growth:** In FY24, India's real GDP grew by 8.2%, surpassing the 8% mark in three out of four quarters. This performance indicates a robust economic expansion.
- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** GVA, a measure of the value of goods and services produced in the economy, grew by 7.2% (at 2011-12 prices). Net taxes, adjusted for constant prices, saw a significant increase of 19.1%, highlighting effective fiscal measures.
- **Inflation Management:** Retail inflation decreased from 6.7% in FY23 to 5.4% in FY24. This reduction was achieved through effective administrative and monetary policies, indicating successful inflation control measures.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** CAD improved to 0.7% of GDP in FY24 from 2.0% in FY23. This improvement reflects better external sector performance and effective management of trade and capital flows.
- **Post-Pandemic Recovery:** The real GDP in FY24 was 20% higher than in FY20, showcasing a significant recovery from the pandemic's economic impact, which few major economies have matched.
- **Tax Collection:** Tax collection was evenly split between direct taxes (55%) and indirect taxes (45%). This balanced tax structure reflects a diverse revenue base for the government.
- **Welfare Programs:** The government provided free food grains to 81.4 crore people and increased capital expenditure progressively, demonstrating a commitment to social welfare and infrastructure development.

## Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation

- **Banking Sector Performance:** India's banking and financial sectors performed exceptionally well in FY24, reflecting strong financial health and stability.
- **Policy Rate:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept the policy repo rate steady at 6.5%, maintaining stability in monetary policy.
- **Credit Growth:** Credit disbursal by Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) reached ₹164.3 lakh crore, growing by 20.2% by March 2024. This indicates credit expansion and financial sector dynamism.
- **Broad Money (M3) Growth:** M3, a measure of the money supply, grew by 11.2% year-over-year as of March 22, 2024, excluding the HDFC merger. This growth reflects increased liquidity in the economy.
- **Non-Performing Assets (NPA):** Both gross and net NPAs reached multi-year lows, indicating improved asset quality and risk management in the banking sector.

- **Agriculture Credit:** Agriculture and allied activities saw a double-digit credit growth, highlighting support for the agricultural sector.
- **Industrial Credit:** Industrial credit growth was 8.5%, up from 5.2% the previous year, indicating increased investment in the industrial sector.
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC):** 31,394 corporate debtors involving ₹13.9 lakh crore were resolved by March 2024, demonstrating the effectiveness of the IBC in addressing corporate insolvencies.
- **Capital Markets:** Primary capital markets facilitated capital formation of ₹10.9 lakh crore in FY24, reflecting active market participation and investment.
- **Market Capitalisation:** India's stock market capitalisation to GDP ratio is the fifth largest globally, indicating significant market depth and investor confidence.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI) is identified as a key challenge for sustainable economic growth, emphasizing the need for broadening access to financial services.

## Prices and Inflation

- **Retail Inflation:** Retail inflation was maintained at 5.4% in FY24, the lowest since the pandemic. Effective policy interventions contributed to this control.
- **Fuel Prices:** The central government reduced LPG cylinder prices by ₹200 in August 2023 and cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 per litre, helping to keep fuel inflation low.
- **LPG and Fuel Inflation:** Price reductions in LPG and fuels contributed to controlling inflation in these sectors.
- **Core Inflation:** Core services inflation eased to a nine-year low, and core goods inflation declined to a four-year low, reflecting reduced price pressures in non-food sectors.
- **Food Inflation:** Food inflation increased from 6.6% in FY23 to 7.5% in FY24 due to extreme weather events affecting farm output, indicating challenges in food price stability.
- **Inflation Management:** Measures such as dynamic stock management, open market operations, and subsidized food items helped mitigate the impact of rising food inflation.
- **State Inflation:** 29 states and UTs recorded inflation below 6% in FY24, reflecting regional variations in inflation control.

## External Sector

- **Geopolitical Challenges:** Despite geopolitical headwinds, India's external sector remained robust, indicating resilience in international economic relations.
- **Logistics Performance Index:** India improved its Logistics Performance Index rank from 44th in 2018 to 38th in 2023 out of 139 countries, reflecting better logistics and supply chain management.
- **Current Account Deficit:** CAD improved to 0.7% of GDP in FY24 due to moderated imports and rising services exports, demonstrating effective external sector management.
- **Global Export Share:** India's share in global goods exports was 1.8% in FY24, reflecting a significant but moderate presence in international markets.
- **Services Exports:** Services exports grew by 4.9% to USD 341.1 billion, driven by IT/software services and other business services, highlighting strength in the services sector.
- **Remittances:** India is the top global remittance recipient, with USD 120 billion in 2023, underscoring the importance of remittances in the economy.
- **External Debt:** The external debt to GDP ratio was 18.7% at the end of March 2024, indicating manageable external debt levels.

## Medium-Term Outlook

- **Policy Focus Areas:** Key areas include job and skill creation, leveraging agricultural potential, addressing MSME challenges, transitioning to green growth, managing China relations, expanding the corporate bond market, tackling inequality, and improving youth health.
- **Amrit Kaal Strategy:** The strategy focuses on six areas: boosting private investment, expanding MSMEs, utilizing agriculture as a growth engine, financing the green transition, bridging the education-employment gap, and enhancing state capacity.

- **Growth Compact:** To achieve 7%+ growth, a tripartite compact between the Union Government, State Governments, and the private sector is essential. This collaborative approach aims to sustain high growth rates and address economic challenges.

## Climate Change and Energy Transition

- **Climate Action Recognition:** India is notable for aligning with the global target of limiting warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, a commitment that underscores its leadership in climate action among G20 nations.
- **Renewable Energy:** As of May 31, 2024, non-fossil sources of energy constituted 45.4% of India's installed electricity generation capacity. This indicates significant progress in transitioning towards cleaner energy sources.
- **Emission Reduction:** India achieved a 33% reduction in the emission intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2019. This metric reflects the country's commitment to reducing emissions relative to economic output.
- **Energy Savings:** India saved 51 million tonnes of oil equivalent annually, translating to cost savings of ₹1,94,320 crore. This reflects the effectiveness of energy efficiency measures and conservation efforts.
- **Green Bonds:** India issued green bonds amounting to ₹16,000 crore in January-February 2023 and ₹20,000 crore in October-December 2023. These bonds support environmentally sustainable projects and investments.

## Social Sector

- **Welfare Impact:** Digitization has enhanced the effectiveness of spending on healthcare, education, and governance, ensuring more efficient use of resources.
- **Welfare Expenditure Growth:** From FY18 to FY24, welfare expenditure grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.8%, outpacing the nominal GDP growth of 9.5% CAGR, indicating a substantial increase in investment in social welfare.
- **Inequality Reduction:** The Gini coefficient, a measure of income inequality, decreased both in rural (from 0.283 to 0.266) and urban (from 0.363 to 0.314) areas, showing progress in reducing inequality.
- **Ayushman Bharat:** The Ayushman Bharat scheme has generated 34.7 crore cards and facilitated 7.37 crore hospital admissions, providing significant health coverage.
- **Mental Health Coverage:** The scheme covers 22 mental disorders under Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY, enhancing mental health support.
- **Early Childhood Education:** The 'Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi' program aims to create a large, high-quality preschool network at Anganwadi Centres, improving early childhood education.
- **Vidyanjali Initiative:** This initiative has enhanced educational experiences for 1.44 crore students through community engagement, promoting better learning environments.
- **Higher Education Enrolment:** Enrollment growth among underprivileged sections (SC, ST, OBC) increased by 31.6% since FY15, indicating improved access to higher education.
- **R&D Progress:** Nearly one lakh patents were granted in FY24, up from less than 25,000 in FY20, reflecting increased innovation and research activity.
- **Housing and Roads:** Under PM-AWAS-Gramin, 2.63 crore houses were constructed, and 15.14 lakh km of roads were completed under the Gram Sadak Yojana since 2014-15, enhancing infrastructure and housing.

## Employment and Skill Development

- **Labour Market Improvement:** The unemployment rate declined to 3.2% in 2022-23, indicating improvements in job availability.
- **Urban Unemployment:** Urban unemployment fell to 6.7% for the quarter ending March 2024, reflecting better job prospects in cities.
- **Workforce Distribution:** As of the latest data, 45% of the workforce is in agriculture, 11.4% in manufacturing, 28.9% in services, and 13% in construction.

- **Youth Unemployment:** Youth unemployment decreased from 17.8% in 2017-18 to 10% in 2022-23, showing progress in job creation for younger demographics.
- **EPFO Payroll:** Significant growth in new EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) subscribers, particularly in the 18-28 age group, indicates a rise in formal employment.
- **Female Labour Force Participation:** Female labour force participation has been rising steadily for six years, suggesting improved gender inclusion in the workforce.
- **Manufacturing Sector Recovery:** Employment in the organized manufacturing sector has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, signalling recovery and growth in this industry.
- **Wages Growth:** Rural wages grew at a CAGR of 6.9%, and urban wages grew at 6.1% CAGR, reflecting positive wage trends.
- **Factories Growth:** The number of factories employing over 100 workers increased by 11.8% from FY18 to FY22, indicating growth in large-scale industrial operations.
- **EPFO Membership:** EPFO membership grew at an 8.4% CAGR between FY15 and FY24, reflecting an expansion in the formal employment sector.
- **Job Generation Requirement:** An estimated 78.5 lakh jobs are needed annually in the non-farm sector until 2030 to meet employment demands.

## Agriculture and Food Management

- **Agriculture Growth:** Agriculture has grown at an average annual rate of 4.18% over the past five years, reflecting steady progress in the sector.
- **Agricultural Credit:** Total credit disbursed to agriculture amounted to ₹22.84 lakh crore as of January 31, 2024, showing substantial financial support for the sector.
- **Kisan Credit Cards:** 7.5 crore Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) have been issued, with a credit limit of ₹9.4 lakh crore, enhancing access to finance for farmers.
- **Micro Irrigation:** The 'Per drop more crop' initiative covered 90 lakh hectares from 2015-16 to 2023-24, promoting efficient water use in agriculture.

## Industry

- **Industrial Growth:** The industrial sector grew by 9.5%, supporting overall economic growth of 8.2% in FY24, indicating strong industrial performance.
- **Manufacturing Sector:** The manufacturing sector achieved an average annual growth rate of 5.2% over the last decade, reflecting consistent growth.
- **Coal Production:** Accelerated coal production has reduced import dependence, enhancing energy security.
- **Pharmaceutical Market:** India is the third largest pharmaceutical market by volume, valued at USD 50 billion, highlighting its global prominence in pharmaceuticals.
- **Clothing Manufacturing:** India is the second-largest clothing manufacturer globally and among the top five exporters, demonstrating its significant role in the global apparel market.
- **Electronics Manufacturing:** Electronics manufacturing accounts for 3.7% of the global market share as of FY22, indicating growth in this sector.
- **PLI Schemes:** Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes attracted over ₹1.28 lakh crore of investment until May 2024, leading to production/sales of ₹10.8 lakh crore and creating over 8.5 lakh jobs.

## Services

- **Services Sector Contribution:** The services sector contributed 55% of the overall Gross Value Added (GVA), returning to pre-pandemic levels and showing resilience.
- **Active Companies:** 65% of the highest number of active companies are in the services sector, reflecting its dominance in the corporate landscape.
- **Global Services Exports:** India's share of global commercial services exports was 4.4% in 2022, indicating its significant role in international services trade.

- **Computer and Business Services Exports:** Computer and business services exports constituted 73% of India's services exports, with a 9.6% year-over-year growth, highlighting strength in IT and business services.
- **Aviation Sector Growth:** The aviation sector saw a 15% year-over-year increase in total air passengers handled, reflecting a recovery and growth in travel.
- **Services Sector Credit:** Credit to the services sector reached ₹45.9 lakh crore in March 2024, with a 22.9% year-over-year growth, supporting sectoral expansion.

### Infrastructure

- **Public Sector Investment:** The public sector plays a crucial role in funding large-scale infrastructure projects, and driving economic development.
- **National Highway Construction:** The pace of national highway construction increased to around 34 km per day by FY24, improving road infrastructure.
- **Railway Capital Expenditure:** Railway capital expenditure increased by 77% over the past five years, reflecting significant investment in railway infrastructure.
- **Airport Infrastructure:** New terminal buildings at 21 airports have expanded passenger handling capacity by 62 million per annum, enhancing air travel infrastructure.
- **Clean Energy Investment:** ₹8.5 lakh crore (USD 102.4 billion) was invested in clean energy between 2014 and 2023, supporting the transition to sustainable energy sources.

### Climate Change and India

- **Global Climate Strategies:** The chapter critiques global climate strategies as flawed and not universally applicable, noting that overconsumption is not adequately addressed.
- **India's Ethos:** India emphasizes a harmonious relationship with nature, contrasting with overconsumption cultures prevalent in other parts of the world.
- **Sustainable Housing:** There is a shift towards traditional multi-generational households, reflecting a focus on sustainable living practices.
- **Mission LiFE:** The Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative promotes mindful consumption and a harmonious relationship with nature, aiming to address global climate change through behavioural changes.

## Union Budget 2024-2025

- On July 23, 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25. This marked her seventh consecutive Budget presentation, surpassing former Prime Minister Morarji Desai's record.
- **The budget focuses on five key areas:** Employment, Skilling, MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), and Middle Class.
- **Inflation Target:** Aiming for inflation to move towards a 4% target.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):** Extension of PMGKAY for five more years, benefiting over 80 crore people.

- According to Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the budget is referred to as the **Annual Financial Statement** of the government. This term encompasses the government's planned expenditures and projected revenues for a financial year.
- **Department of Economic Affairs**, Ministry of Finance, is responsible for preparing the budget. The **Budget Division** of this department creates the budget based on detailed estimates of expenditures and receipts from various departments and ministries.

**Types of Budgets:**

- **Revenue Budget:**
  o Includes all revenue receipts (tax and non-tax) and revenue expenditure (spending on day-to-day operations).
  o **Tax Revenue**: Income from taxes such as income tax, GST, etc.
  o **Non-Tax Revenue**: Income from sources other than taxes like fees, fines, and dividends from government-owned enterprises.
- **Capital Budget:**
  o Comprises capital receipts (funds received from borrowing, disinvestment, etc.) and capital expenditure (spending on infrastructure projects, long-term investments).
  o **Capital Receipts**: Include borrowings and loans.
  o **Capital Expenditure**: Includes spending on projects that create assets or reduce liabilities.

**Major Budget Documents:**

- **Annual Financial Statement**: Under Article 112, it outlines the government's planned receipts and expenditures.
- **Demands for Grants**: Under Article 113, these are requests from various government departments for budgetary allocations.
- **Finance Bill**: Under Article 110, it contains proposals for changes in taxation.

## PART A

### Key Figures

- **Total Receipts (excluding borrowings):** ₹32.07 lakh crore
  o This is the total revenue the government expects to receive, excluding any borrowing. It includes tax revenues, non-tax revenues, and other receipts.
- **Total Expenditure:** ₹48.21 lakh crore
  o This represents the total amount the government plans to spend. It includes both capital and revenue expenditure.
- **Net Tax Receipt:** ₹25.83 lakh crore
  o This is the total amount the government expects to collect in taxes after adjusting for refunds and other tax-related adjustments.
- **Fiscal Deficit:** 4.9% of GDP
  o The fiscal deficit is the difference between the government's total expenditure and total receipts (excluding borrowings). It reflects the extent to which the government is borrowing to meet its expenditure. The fiscal deficit is expected to be reduced to below 4.5% of GDP in the next fiscal year.
- **Inflation Rate:** Low and stable, targeting 4%, with core inflation at 3.1%
  o Inflation is currently stable and moving towards the target rate of 4%. Core inflation, which excludes food and fuel prices, is at 3.1%, indicating stable price levels for essential goods and services.

### Focus Areas

The budget highlights four key areas for development:

- Employment
- Skilling
- MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises)
- Middle Class

### Prime Minister's Package of 5 Schemes

These schemes aim to enhance employment opportunities and skill development for 4.1 crore youth over five years:

- **Scheme A – First Timers:** Provides a one-time payment of up to ₹15,000, distributed in three instalments, to first-time employees registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). This aims to ease the initial financial burden on new employees.
- **Scheme B – Job Creation in Manufacturing:** Offers incentives to both employees and employers based on EPFO contributions for the first four years of employment. This scheme encourages job creation in the manufacturing sector.
- **Scheme C – Support to Employers:** Reimburses up to ₹3,000 per month for two years towards EPFO contributions for each additional employee hired. This reduces the financial burden on employers and encourages hiring.
- **New Skilling Scheme:** Aims to skill 20 lakh youth over five years and upgrade 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). The ITIs will be upgraded using a hub-and-spoke model, which involves a central ITI (hub) supported by several smaller ITIs (spokes).
- **Internship Scheme:** Provides internship opportunities for 1 crore youth in 500 top companies over five years. This helps bridge the gap between education and employment by providing practical experience.

**Nine Budget Priorities for 'Viksit Bharat':**
**Priority 1: Productivity and Resilience in Agriculture**
- **Allocation:** ₹1.52 lakh crore
- **High-Yield Varieties:** Introduction of 109 new high-yielding and climate-resilient crop varieties to improve agricultural productivity and resilience.
- **Natural Farming:** Initiation of 1 crore farmers into natural farming practices, including certification and branding. This promotes sustainable agriculture.
- **Bio-Input Centres:** Establishment of 10,000 centres to provide bio-inputs for natural farming.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Development of DPI for agriculture to help farmers manage their lands and access resources more effectively over three years.

**Priority 2: Employment & Skilling**
- **Employment Schemes:** Implementation of the three schemes outlined in the Prime Minister's package.
- **Women Workforce:**
  o **Hostels and Crèches:** Establishment of hostels and crèches for working women to support their participation in the workforce.
  o **Women-Specific Skilling Programs:** Targeted skilling programs for women to enhance their employability.
  o **Market Access for SHG Enterprises:** Promoting market access for women-led Self-Help Group (SHG) enterprises to increase their economic participation.
- **Skill Development:**
  o **Centrally Sponsored Skilling Scheme:** For skilling 20 lakh youth over five years.
  o **Revised Model Skill Loan Scheme:** Facilitates loans up to ₹7.5 lakh for skill development.
  o **Higher Education Loans:** Financial support for loans up to ₹10 lakh for domestic higher education for youth not benefiting from other government schemes.

**Priority 3: Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice**
- **Purvodaya:** Development of an industrial node at Gaya and a new 2400 MW power plant at Pirpainti as part of the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor.
- **Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act:** Special financial support of ₹15,000 crore for industrial nodes and power projects in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Women-led Development:** Over ₹3 lakh crore allocated for schemes benefiting women and girls.
- **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan:** Socio-economic development of 63,000 tribal-majority villages, benefiting 5 crore tribal people.

- **Bank Branches in North-East:** Establishment of 100 branches of India Post Payment Bank in the North-Eastern region.

## Priority 4: Manufacturing & Services
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs:** Provides collateral-free term loans to MSMEs for purchasing machinery and equipment.
- **Support to MSMEs:** Continuation of bank credit during stress periods, enhanced Mudra loans, and financial support for food irradiation units.
- **E-Commerce Export Hubs:** Public-private partnerships to help MSMEs and traditional artisans sell products internationally.
- **Critical Mineral Mission:**
  o Focuses on domestic production, recycling, and overseas acquisition of critical minerals.
- **Offshore Mining:** Auction of offshore mining blocks for resource extraction.

## Priority 5: Urban Development
- **Transit-Oriented Development:** Formulation of plans for 14 large cities to integrate transit systems with urban development.
- **Urban Housing:** Investment of ₹10 lakh crore, including ₹2.2 lakh crore central assistance, to address the housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families.
- **Street Markets:** Development of 100 weekly 'haats' or street food hubs annually for five years to support local vendors and markets.

## Priority 6: Energy Security
- **Energy Transition Pathways:** Policy to balance employment, growth, and environmental sustainability.
- **Pumped Storage Policy:** Promotion of pumped storage projects for electricity storage.
- **Small Modular Reactors:** R&D and partnership for Bharat Small Modular Reactors.
- **Advanced Ultra Super Critical Thermal Power Plants:** Joint venture to set up a commercial plant using advanced technology.
- **Hard-to-Abate Industries:** Transition from 'Perform, Achieve, and Trade' mode to an Indian Carbon Market for difficult-to-abate industries.

## Priority 7: Infrastructure
- **Capital Expenditure:** ₹11,11,111 crore allocated for central infrastructure projects.
- **State Governments' Support:** ₹1.5 lakh crore in long-term interest-free loans for state infrastructure investments.
- **PMGSY Phase IV:** Connectivity for 25,000 rural habitations through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.
- **Irrigation and Flood Mitigation:** Financial support for major irrigation and flood mitigation projects, including assistance for flood-affected areas.

## Priority 8: Innovation, Research & Development
- **Anusandhan National Research Fund:** Funding for basic research and prototype development.
- **Financing Pool:** ₹1 lakh crore for private sector-driven research and innovation.
- **Space Economy:** ₹1,000 crore venture capital fund to expand the space economy.

## Priority 9: Next Generation Reforms
- **Rural Land-Related Actions:** Introduction of Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), digitization of land records, and establishment of a land registry.
- **Urban Land Records:** Digitization of urban land records with GIS mapping.
- **Labour Services:** Integration of the e-shram portal with other systems for a one-stop solution and development of open architecture databases for the labour market.

- **NPS Vatsalya:** Plan for contributions by parents and guardians for minors under the National Pension System (NPS).
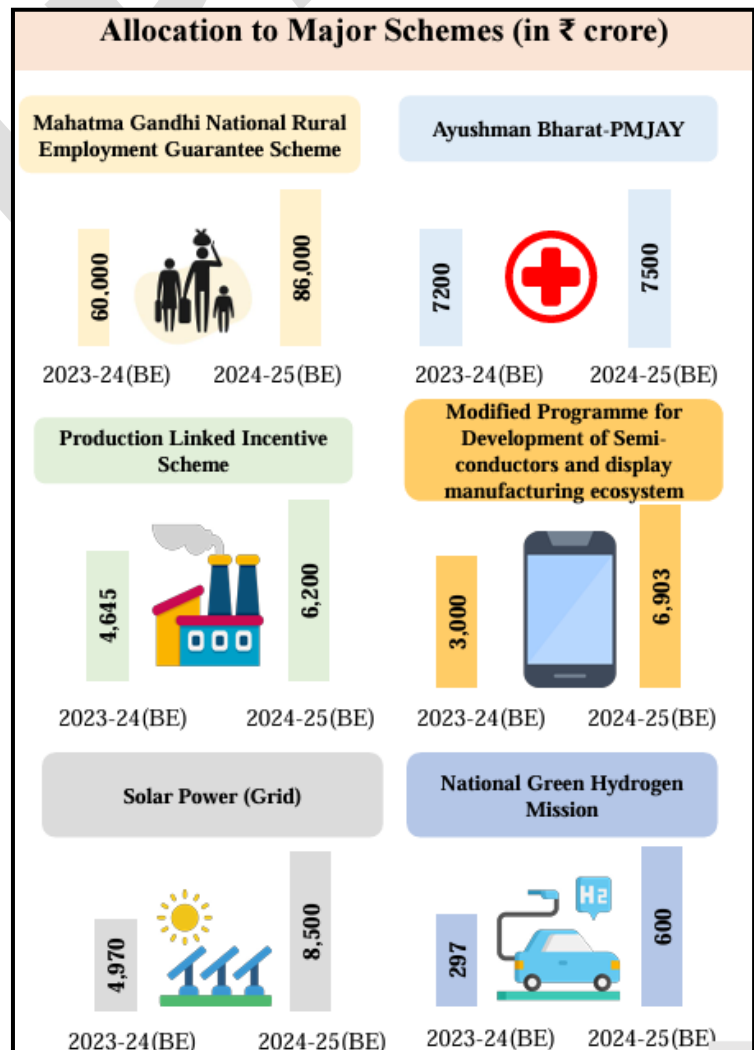
**PART B**
**Indirect Taxes**
- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** The government aims to simplify the GST structure further, expanding its coverage to the remaining sectors. This move is expected to streamline tax compliance and broaden the tax base.
- **Sector-Specific Customs Duty Proposals:**
  - **Cancer Drugs:** Trastuzumab-Deruxtecan, Osimertinib, and Durvalumab are now fully exempt from customs duties, making cancer treatment more affordable.
  - **Medical Equipment:** Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on x-ray tubes and flat panel detectors used in medical x-ray machines is adjusted as part of the Phased Manufacturing Programme, which aims to boost domestic manufacturing in this sector.
- **Mobile Phones and Related Parts:** The BCD on mobile phones, mobile Printed Circuit Board Assemblies (PCBA), and mobile chargers has been reduced to 15%. This reduction is intended to lower the cost of mobile phones and encourage domestic manufacturing.
- **Precious Metals:** Customs duties on gold and silver have been reduced to 6%, while the duty on platinum is reduced to 6.4%. This change is likely to affect the cost of these metals for both consumers and industries.
- **Other Metals:**
  - **Ferro Nickel and Blister Copper:** BCD on these metals is removed to encourage their use in domestic industries.
  - **Ferrous Scrap and Nickel Cathode:** Duties on these materials are also removed, which should lower costs for industries reliant on these inputs.
  - **Copper Scrap:** A concessional BCD of 2.5% is introduced to support the recycling industry.
- **Electronics:** BCD on oxygen-free copper used in manufacturing resistors is removed under specific conditions to support electronics manufacturing.
- **Chemicals and Petrochemicals:** BCD increased from 7.5% to 10% to adjust for market conditions and promote domestic production of fertilizers.
- **Plastics:** BCD increased from 10% to 25% to curb imports and promote local production.
- **Telecommunication Equipment:** BCD increased from 10% to 15% to support domestic telecom equipment manufacturing.
- **Trade Facilitation:** For promoting domestic aviation and boat/ship MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul), the period for exporting goods imported for repairs is extended from six months to one year. Similarly, the time limit for re-importing goods for repairs under warranty is extended from three to five years.
- **Critical Minerals:** 25 critical minerals are fully exempt from customs duties, supporting industries reliant on these resources. Additionally, BCD on two critical minerals has been reduced to facilitate their use in key sectors.
- **Solar Energy:** Capital goods used in the manufacture of solar cells and panels are exempt from customs duty to promote the solar energy sector.
- **Marine Products:** BCD on certain broodstock, polychaete worms, shrimp, and fish feed is reduced to 5%. Various inputs for shrimp and fish feed are also exempted from customs duty to support the aquaculture industry.
- **Leather and Textiles:**
  - **Down Filling Material:** BCD reduced on real downfilling material from duck or goose.
  - **MDI for Spandex Yarn:** BCD on methylene diphenyl diisocyanate (MDI) used for spandex yarn manufacture is reduced from 7.5% to 5%.

**Direct Taxes**

- **Simplification and Rationalization:** Efforts to simplify the tax regime, improve taxpayer services, and reduce litigation are ongoing. In FY23, 58% of corporate tax was collected under the simplified tax regime, and more than two-thirds of personal income taxpayers opted for the simplified tax regime in FY24.
- **Simplification for Charities and Tax Deducted at Source (TDS):**
  o **Charity Exemptions:** Two tax exemption regimes for charities are merged into one to simplify compliance.
  o **TDS Rate Changes:** The TDS rate on various payments is streamlined. The rate on many payments is reduced from 5% to 2%, while the 20% TDS rate on mutual fund repurchases is withdrawn. The TDS rate for e-commerce operators is reduced from 1% to 0.1%.
  o **TDS Payment Delays:** Delays in TDS payments up to the due date of filing the statement are decriminalized to reduce penal consequences for minor delays.
- **Simplification of Reassessment:** Assessments can be reopened up to five years from the end of the assessment year if the escaped income is ₹50 lakh or more. In search cases, the time limit is reduced from ten to six years before the search year.
- **Simplification and Rationalization of Capital Gains:**
  o **Short-Term Gains:** Short-term capital gains on certain financial assets will now attract a tax rate of 20%.
  o **Long-Term Gains:** Long-term capital gains on all financial and non-financial assets will attract a tax rate of 12.5%.
  o **Exemption Limit:** The exemption limit for capital gains on certain financial assets is increased to ₹1.25 lakh per year.
- **Taxpayer Services:** All remaining services of Customs and Income Tax, including rectifications and orders giving effect to appellate orders, will be digitalized over the next two years to improve efficiency.
- **Litigation and Appeals:**
  o **Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2024:** A scheme for resolving income tax disputes pending in appeal.
  o **Increased Appeal Limits:** Monetary limits for filing appeals in Tax Tribunals, High Courts, and Supreme Court are increased to ₹60 lakh, ₹2 crore, and ₹5 crore, respectively.
  o **Safe Harbour Rules:** Expanded to reduce litigation and provide certainty in international taxation.
- **Employment and Investment:**
  o **Angel Tax:** Abolished for all classes of investors to support the start-up ecosystem.
  o **Foreign Shipping Companies:** A simpler tax regime is introduced for foreign shipping companies operating domestic cruises to promote cruise tourism.
  o **Foreign Mining Companies:** Safe harbour rates for foreign mining companies selling raw diamonds in India are introduced.

**Allocation to Major Schemes (in ₹ crore)**

| Scheme | 2023-24 (BE) | 2024-25 (BE) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme | 60,000 | 86,000 |
| Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY | 7200 | 7500 |
| Production Linked Incentive Scheme | 4,645 | 6,200 |
| Modified Programme for Development of Semi-conductors and display manufacturing ecosystem | 3,000 | 6,903 |
| Solar Power (Grid) | 4,970 | 8,500 |
| National Green Hydrogen Mission | 297 | 600 |

- o **Corporate Tax Rate:** Reduced for foreign companies from 40% to 35%.
- **Social Security Benefits:**
  - o **NPS Deduction:** Deduction for employers contributing to the National Pension System (NPS) increased from 10% to 14% of the employee's salary.
  - o **Foreign Assets:** Non-reporting of small movable foreign assets up to ₹20 lakh is de-penalized.
- **Other Major Proposals in Finance Bill:**
  - o **Equalization Levy:** The 2% equalization levy on digital transactions is withdrawn.
  - o **Personal Income Tax:** Standard deduction for salaried employees increased from ₹50,000 to ₹75,000. Deduction on family pension for pensioners enhanced from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000.

## ✈ DEFENCE & SECURITY

## SEBEX 2

- India has developed **SEBEX 2, a powerful new explosive that is twice as lethal as the standard Trinitrotoluene (TNT), making it one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosives globally**.
- The explosive was developed by Economic Explosives Ltd (EEL), a subsidiary of Nagpur-based Solar Industries, under the Defence Export Promotion Scheme of the Indian Navy.
- The development of SEBEX 2 falls under the Make in India initiative, highlighting India's commitment to advancing its defence capabilities with indigenous technologies.


A LOOK AT SEBEX 2: INDIA'S MOST POTENT NON-NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE

## Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant'

- The **Joint Military Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' between India and Mongolia is an annual training event that aims to enhance interoperability between the two armies.**
- The 16th edition of the exercise was conducted in Meghalaya's Umroi from July 3-16, 2024.
- The exercise aims to improve the ability of both armies to conduct semi-conventional operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain.



## Maitree Exercise

- The **Maitree Exercise is a joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the Royal Thai Army, held in Tak Province, Thailand.**
- The exercise has been conducted annually since 2006.
- The exercise aims to boost military cooperation, improve skills in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, enhance joint planning and tactical drills, and promote physical fitness among troops.
- In addition to the Maitree Exercise, **India and Thailand conduct other joint military exercises, such as Ex-Ayutthaya (naval exercise) and Ex-SIAM BHARAT (air force exercise).**
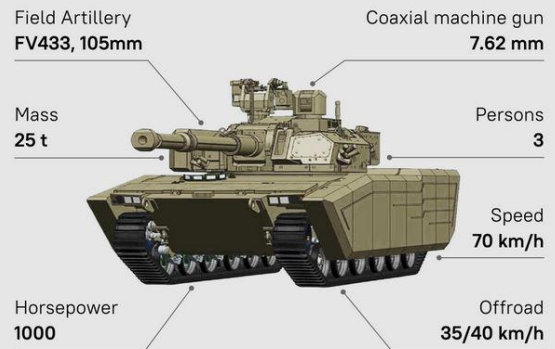
## Tank 'Zorawar'

- India unveils **'Zorawar' light tank, developed in collaboration with DRDO and Larsen & Toubro.**
- Designed for high-altitude operations, featuring advanced weaponry and protection systems.
- Named after General Zorawar Singh, the tank is slated for extensive trials before potential deployment in Ladakh, Sikkim, or Kashmir.
- Developed in response to the strategic needs identified during the Galwan Valley standoff, the 'Zorawar' aims to strengthen India's military presence in high-altitude areas like Ladakh, Sikkim, and Kashmir.



**Indigenous Zorawar Light Tank: Why is It Called 'Brave and Strong'?**
Developed by L&T in collaboration with DRDO

| | |
|---|---|
| Field Artillery FV433, 105mm | Coaxial machine gun 7.62 mm |
| Mass 25 t | Persons 3 |
| | Speed 70 km/h |
| Horsepower 1000 | Offroad 35/40 km/h |

Source: DRDO    SPUTNIK

## Exercise Pitch Black

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in Exercise Pitch Black 2024, an international military exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at Base Darwin, Australia.**
- This biennial, multinational exercise, held from July 12 to August 2, 2024, serves as a critical platform for enhancing global military cooperation and showcasing advanced air combat capabilities.
- The exercise supports the deployment of forces over large distances and strengthens aviation associations within the Indo-Pacific region, a strategically important area.

## Exercise KHAAN QUEST

- The **Indian Army contingent participated in the prestigious multinational military exercise, KHAAN QUEST 2024, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.**
- This event, which runs from July 27 to August 9, 2024, provides a valuable platform for military forces worldwide to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities.
- KHAAN QUEST began in 2003 as a bilateral exercise between the United States and Mongolia. By 2006, it evolved into a Multinational Peacekeeping Exercise, reflecting its growing scope and importance.

## Astra Mark 1 Missile

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has recently **approved the production of 200 Astra Mark 1 air-to-air missiles.**
- The clearance was **granted to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- The **Astra Mark 1 is a state-of-the-art air-to-air missile developed by DRDO.** It is designed to enhance the air combat capabilities of Indian fighter aircraft, including the Su-30 and LCA Tejas.
- The missile is equipped with a combination of active radar seekers and infrared homing systems for precise targeting and effective interception of enemy aircraft.



**ASTRA MISSILE A SNAPSHOT**

Meaning: **Weapon** (sanskrit)
Range: **70 km**
Speed: **Over 5,555 km/hr**

An all-weather Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air **missile (BVRAAM)**

The first-ever BVRAAM **developed in India**

Indigenously designed and **developed by DRDO**

Can locate and track targets **at different altitudes**

Source: DRDO website, PIB, news reports

# SCIENCE

## Xenophrys Apatani

- The **discovery of a new species of horned frog** in Arunachal Pradesh by a team of researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
- The newly discovered species is named **Xenophrys apatani**.
- The frog was found in the **Talle Wildlife Sanctuary in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.**
- The species is named after the Apatani community, which is known for its conservation efforts.

## R21/Matrix-M

- The **Serum Institute of India, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, has launched a new high-efficacy malaria vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, in Africa.**
- The R21/Matrix-M vaccine is now officially being administered in Africa, with Côte d'Ivoire becoming the first country in West Africa to start the rollout.
- The vaccine has been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) following rigorous regulatory and clinical evaluations.
- The R21/Matrix-M vaccine is highly effective and affordable. It is produced at a low cost and can be scaled up quickly, which is crucial for addressing malaria in large populations.
- Malaria is a deadly, mosquito-borne infectious disease caused by protozoan parasites of the Plasmodium genus. **It spreads through the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito.**

## Asia's First Pre-Clinical Network Facility

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated **Asia's first "Pre-Clinical Network Facility" at the Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI) in Faridabad, Haryana.**
- The facility is equipped to handle Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) pathogens, which require stringent safety measures due to their potential to cause serious or potentially lethal diseases.
- It has one of the largest small animal housing capacities in India, enabling research on immune-compromised mice and various other species.

## NASA Sends Missy Elliott's "The Rain" to Venus

- On July 12, 2024, **the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) achieved a historic milestone by transmitting Missy Elliott's song "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" to Venus.**
- This event marks the first time a hip-hop song has been sent into deep space, showcasing a unique blend of art and science.
- NASA's Venus exploration efforts involve international collaborations, including partnerships with the European Space Agency (ESA). These collaborative efforts reflect a new era in planetary exploration and emphasize global scientific cooperation.
- **NASA is a federal agency responsible for the civil space program, aeronautics research, and space research. Established in 1958**, it focuses on peaceful applications in space science and has led most of America's space exploration programs, including Project Mercury, Project Gemini, Apollo Moon landing missions, Skylab space station, and Space Shuttle.

**Venus**

- Venus, the **second planet from the Sun,** is a terrestrial planet known for its extreme atmospheric and surface conditions.
- It orbits the Sun at an average distance of 108 million kilometres, making it the closest terrestrial planet to Earth in terms of size and mass.
- **Venus's atmosphere is dense, mostly composed of carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), with thick clouds of sulfuric acid ($H_2SO_4$) covering the planet.** This dense atmosphere traps heat through the greenhouse effect, leading to extreme surface temperatures.
- The mean surface temperature of Venus is approximately 464 °C, making it the hottest planet in the Solar System.
- Venus has a rocky surface with mountains, valleys, and volcanic plains, with active volcanism contributing to surface resurfacing rather than plate tectonics.
- **Venus rotates slowly on its axis, taking about 243 Earth days to complete one rotation.**
- Venus is one of the brightest objects in the night sky, **often visible as either a "morning star" or "evening star," due to its thick atmosphere reflecting sunlight brightly.**

# Chandipura Virus Infection

- Gujarat has reported its first confirmed death due to Chandipura virus infection, affecting a four-year-old child.
- Chandipura virus (CHPV) **transmitted by sandflies (Phlebotomus papatasi) and mosquitoes (Aedes aegypti).**
- The virus resides in the salivary glands of these insects and is transmitted through their bites, leading to central nervous system infections and encephalitis.
- **Key points**
  - **Initial Symptoms:** Acute fever, body ache, and headache.
  - **Progressive Symptoms:** Rapid progression to altered sensorium, seizures, and encephalitis. Other symptoms may include respiratory distress, bleeding tendencies, or anaemia.
  - **Mortality:** The infection can lead to death within 24-48 hours of hospitalization due to its rapid progression.
  - **Current Treatments:** No specific antiretroviral therapy or vaccine is available.

# Discovery of Six New Exoplanets

- NASA recently announced the **discovery of six new exoplanets**, further expanding our knowledge of planets beyond our solar system.
- This latest discovery brings the total number of confirmed exoplanets to 5,502, showcasing significant progress in the search for extraterrestrial life and the understanding of planetary systems.
- **Newly Identified Exoplanets:**
  - **HD 36384 b:** A super Jupiter, an enormous gas giant orbiting an M giant star nearly 40 times the size of our Sun.
  - **TOI-198 b:** A potentially rocky exoplanet located on the inner edge of its star's habitable zone, where conditions might allow liquid water to exist.
  - **TOI-2095 b and TOI-2095 c:** Two hot super-Earths orbiting an M dwarf star, offering insights into the formation and characteristics of Earth-like planets.
  - **TOI-4860 b:** A rare "hot Jupiter," which completes an orbit around its host star in just 1.52 days, is a phenomenon seen around M dwarf stars.
  - **MWC 758 c:** A giant protoplanet orbiting a young star with a protoplanetary disk, providing valuable data on early planetary formation.
- Exoplanets are planets that exist outside of our solar system, orbiting stars other than our Sun.

## SPORTS

### Ravindra Jadeja

- Ravindra Jadeja, a star India all-rounder, announced his retirement from T20 internationals following India's T20 World Cup 2024 victory.
- Jadeja's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign was marked by highs and lows, with a mix of highs and lows.
- Career highlights include his T20I debut against Sri Lanka in February 2009, appearances in 74 T20I matches, and scoring 515 runs at an average of 21.45.
- Taken 54 wickets from 71 innings at an average of 29.85 and an economy rate of 7.13.

### Viswanathan Anand

- Viswanathan Anand, a former world chess champion from India, has won the Leon Masters chess championship for the 10th time, defeating Jaime Santos Latasa of Spain in the final.
- The Leon Masters is a prestigious chess tournament held in Leon, Spain.
- He became the National Sub-Junior Chess Champion at age 14.
- **Key Achievements:** India's first chess Grandmaster in 1988, a Five-time World Chess Champion, won the FIDE World Chess Championship in 2000 and became the undisputed World Champion in 2007.
- He received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award (now Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award) in 1991-92, and Padma Vibhushan in 2007.

### Asian Championships

- The Indian U23 wrestling team dominated the Asian Championships in Jordan, securing a total of 19 medals across women's wrestling, Greco-Roman, and freestyle categories.
- In women's wrestling; Meenakshi, Pushpa Yadav, and Priya Malik won three gold medals.
- The freestyle wrestling category saw India top the rankings with four gold, two silver, and two bronze medals.

### Abhinav Bindra

- Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual Olympic gold medallist, has been honoured with the prestigious Olympic Order by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- The Olympic Order is the IOC's highest award, recognizing distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement. It acknowledges individuals who have demonstrated exceptional merit in sports or provided significant service to the Olympic cause.
- Bindra won the gold medal in the men's 10-meter air rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, marking India's first individual Olympic gold.
- Since 2018, Bindra has served as a member of the IOC Athlete Commission.
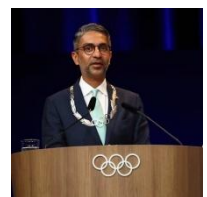
### Wimbledon 2024 Final

- Carlos Alcaraz defended his Wimbledon title, becoming the youngest player in open-era history to win men's singles at Wimbledon and Roland Garros in the same year.
- Barbora Krejcikova defeated Jasmine Paolini in the Women's Category at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London.

| Category | Winner(s) | Runner(s)-up |
|---|---|---|
| Men's Singles | Carlos Alcaraz | Novak Djokovic |
| Women's Singles | Barbora Krejčíková | Jasmine Paolini |

| Mixed Doubles | Hsieh Su-Wei & Jan Zielinski | Santiago Gonzalez & Giuliana Olmos |
| Women's Doubles | Taylor Townsend & Katerina Siniakova | Gabriela Dabrowski & Erin Routliffe |
| Men's Doubles | Patten & Heliovaara | Max Purcell & Jordan Thompson |

## James Anderson



- James Anderson, the legendary English fast bowler, has officially announced his retirement from Test cricket, marking the conclusion of an extraordinary 21-year career.
- Anderson, widely regarded as one of the greatest fast bowlers in cricket history, played his final Test match at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground, where his journey in international cricket began.
- He played his last Test match against the West Indies, where England secured a commanding victory by an innings and 114 runs on July 12th, 2024.
- Anderson retires as the leading wicket-taker among fast bowlers in Test cricket, with 704 wickets.
- Anderson took 32 five-wicket hauls in Test matches, ranking sixth on the all-time list.
- With 188 Test appearances, Anderson stands second only to Sachin Tendulkar's 200 Tests.

## Copa America Title

- Argentina secured its second consecutive Copa America championship, by defeating Colombia 1-0 in a match that extended into extra time.
- The match remained goalless until the 112th minute, when Lautaro Martínez, who had been substituted in the 97th minute, scored the crucial goal.
- With this victory, Argentina has won its 16th Copa America title, extending its record as the most successful team in the tournament's history.
- The win also ended Colombia's impressive 28-game unbeaten streak, which had been ongoing since a loss to Argentina in February 2022.

## Manu Bhaker



- Manu Bhaker made history at the Paris Olympics 2024 by winning a bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol event.
- This achievement marks a significant milestone for Indian sports, as Bhaker is the first Indian woman to secure a shooting medal at the Olympic Games.
- Manu Bhaker's bronze medal ends a 12-year wait for an Olympic medal in shooting for India. The previous successes were at the London Olympics 2012:
  o **Vijay Kumar**: Silver in rapid-fire pistol
  o **Gagan Narang**: Bronze in 10m air rifle
- At the 2018 Youth Olympics, Manu won gold in the women's 10m air pistol event, becoming the first Indian shooter and female athlete to achieve this.

## Paris Olympic Games 2024

- The 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, officially known as the XXXIII Olympiad, were held from July 26 to August 11. This edition was the largest event ever organized in France.
- More than 10,500 from over 200 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team participated.
- The Paris Olympics 2024 included a variety of new sports, returning sports, dropped sports, format changes, and environmental sustainability measures.

| Category | Sport/Event | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **New Sports and Events** | • Breaking (Breakdancing) | Sport Climbing |
| | • Skateboarding | Surfing |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Kayak Cross |
| **Returning Sports** | • 3×3 Basketball |
| **Dropped Sports** | • Baseball<br>• Softball<br>• Karate |
| **Format Changes** | • Artistic Swimming      Boxing<br>• Sailing               Shooting<br>• Track and Field      Volleyball<br>• Weightlifting |

## India at the 2024 Summer Olympics

- India competed at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, from July 26 to August 11, 2024. This was India's 26th appearance at the Summer Olympics since making its debut in 1900.
- The Indian contingent for this year's games consisted of 117 athletes.
- For the first time in Olympic history, India inaugurated its own house. The India House was established by the Reliance Foundation and the Indian Olympic Association.
- India won six medals in total including one silver and five bronze, three of which come from shooting.

| Medal | Name | Sport | Event |
|---|---|---|---|
| Silver | Neeraj Chopra | Athletics | Men's javelin throw |
| Bronze | Manu Bhaker | Shooting | Women's 10 m air pistol |
| Bronze | Manu Bhaker & Sarabjot Singh | Shooting | Mixed 10 m air pistol team |
| Bronze | Swapnil Kusale | Shooting | Men's 50 m rifle three positions |
| Bronze | India Men's National Field Hockey Team | Field Hockey | Men's tournament |
| Bronze | Aman Sehrawat | Wrestling | Men's freestyle 57 kg |

## All India Football Federation (AIFF)

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) recently held its annual awards ceremony for the 2023-24 season, celebrating exceptional contributions and achievements in Indian football.
- **Top Awards**
  - Men's Player of the Year: Lallianzuala Chhangte
  - Women's Player of the Year: Indumathi Kathiresan
  - Men's Promising Player of the Year: David Lalhlansanga
  - Women's Promising Player of the Year: Neha
  - Men's Coach of the Year: Khalid Jamil
  - Women's Coach of the Year: Sukla Dutta


AIFF awards 2024, Chhangte, Indumathi Win Top Male and Female Awards

## Manolo Marquez

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced the appointment of Manolo Marquez as the new head coach of the Indian men's football team.
- Marquez, currently the head coach of Indian Super League (ISL) side FC Goa, will take on his new role full-time after the conclusion of the ISL 2024-25 season.
- Marquez has an impressive coaching history in Spain with clubs such as Las Palmas, Las Palmas B, Espanyol B, Badalona, Prat, and Europa.
- In India, he has made a significant impact with Hyderabad FC and FC Goa, showcasing his ability to transform teams and achieve success.

## PR Sreejesh

- PR Sreejesh, the Indian hockey team goalkeeper, has announced his retirement from international hockey following the Paris Olympics 2024.
- **Career Highlights:**
  - **International Debut:** 2006
  - **Leadership:** Captained the Indian hockey team at the Rio 2016 Olympics.
  - **Tokyo Olympics 2021:** Played a crucial role in securing a bronze medal.
- **Achievements:**
  - **Asian Games:** Gold medals in 2014 and 2023.
  - **Commonwealth Games:** Silver medals in 2014 and 2022.
  - **Major Awards:** Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna (2021), Padma Shri (2017).
  - **Awards:** Back-to-back FIH Goalkeeper of the Year awards in 2021 and 2022.
  - **Asian Champions Trophy:** Four-time winner.
- He is known for his motivational role and leadership on and off the field.

## Women Asia Cup

- The Asia Cup, a cricket tournament held every two years in Asia, is organized by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- In 2024, Sri Lanka won their first Women's Asia Cup title, defeating India with a run-chase. This was the second time in their nine final appearances that India failed to win the Women's Asia Cup.
- Samarawickrama was the Player of the Match in the Final, while Chamari Athapaththu was the Player of the Tournament for her 304 runs and three wickets in the event.
- India has been the most successful in the tournament, winning seven times out of fifteen editions held so far.
- The Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup 2024 was organized from July 19 to July 28, 2024, the tournament was held at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Sri Lanka, with all matches available for free entry.

## PERSON IN NEWS

## Challa Sreenivasulu Setty

- The Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB) has approved Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as the next chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI).
- Setty will succeed Dinesh Khara, who will turn 63 in August 2024.
- Setty has worked at the bank for 35 years and has held key roles such as Chief General Manager, and General Manager in the Corporate Accounts Group.

## Ravi Agrawal

- Ravi Agrawal, a 1988-batch IRS officer, has been appointed as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), succeeding Nitin Gupta.
- His appointment extends until June 2025, with a reappointment on a contract basis to ensure continuity in CBDT's policy framework.
- The CBDT administers direct taxes such as income tax, corporate tax, and wealth tax. Its structure can have up to six members in the rank of special secretary.

## Books on the Life and Journey of Venkaiah Naidu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released three books on the life and journey of former Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, via video conferencing.
- The books include a biography of the former Vice President:
  - "Venkaiah Naidu: Life in Service," authored by Shri S Nagesh Kumar.

- o A photo chronicle, "Celebrating Bharat: The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice-President of India," compiled by Dr I.V. Subba Rao, Former Secretary to Vice-President of India.
- o A pictorial biography in Telugu, "Mahaneta: Life and Journey of Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu," authored by Shri Sanjay Kishore.

## Bhupinder Singh Rawat

- Bhupinder Singh Rawat, a former Indian midfielder, died at the age of 85 years after a brief illness in Surat, Gujarat, on June 29, 2024.
- Rawat was a speedy winger from the 1960s and 1970s who played for India in the 1969 Merdeka Cup in Malaysia.
- He was nicknamed "Scooter" by his fans for his speed and ability to cut through rival defences.

## Medusa Dress

- A Google employee, Christina Ernst, has created the world's first AI dress with robotic snakes attached to it.
- The "Medusa dress" is black with three golden-coloured snakes around her waist and one large robotic snake around her neck.
- Ernst coded an optional mode using artificial intelligence to detect faces and move the snake head towards the person looking at you.

## Dick Schoof

- Dick Schoof has been appointed as Prime Minister of the Netherlands to lead a right-wing coalition focused on implementing strict immigration policies.
- Schoof, a former spy chief, previously headed the Secret Service and took over the PM post from Mark Rutte, who served 14 years in power.

## Manoj Bajpayee

- **"Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography" by Piyush Pandey** is a portrayal of the life and career of one of India's most respected actors, Manoj Bajpayee.
- The book highlights Bajpayee's early struggles, from growing up in a small village in Bihar to overcoming numerous rejections in his pursuit of an acting career.
- Bajpayee's work, especially in films like "Satya," is credited with contributing to a shift in Bollywood towards more realistic and gritty storytelling.
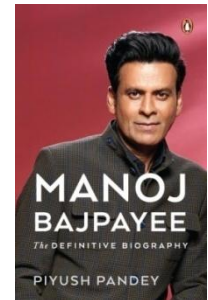
## Justice Aalia Neelum

- **Justice Aalia Neelum** made history by becoming the first woman to take oath as the **Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC)** in Pakistan.
- The oath was administered by **Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan**.
- **Maryam Nawaz**, the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab province, was also present at the ceremony.

## Robert Towne

- Robert Towne, the renowned screenwriter known for his impactful contributions to American cinema, passed away at the age of 89 at his home in Los Angeles, USA.
- Towne's most famous work is the 1974 film "Chinatown," for which he won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.
- Towne also wrote several other significant screenplays, including "The Last Detail" (1973), "Shampoo" (1975), and "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes"

(1984). These films earned him three additional Oscar nominations, solidifying his reputation as one of Hollywood's top screenwriters.

## Keir Starmer

- In the 2024 United Kingdom general election held on July 4, 2024, the Labour Party, led by Keir Starmer, achieved a decisive victory, marking the first time Labour won a general election since 2005.
- In the election **Labour Party won** 411 seats, and the **Conservative Party, the main opposition party won** 121 seats.
- Keir Starmer to become Britain's next Prime Minister, is known for his background in human rights law and his leadership within the Labour Party.
- Before entering politics, Starmer had a distinguished career as a human rights lawyer. His work included defending civil liberties and championing social justice.
- From 2008 to 2013, he served as the Director of Public Prosecutions, where he was noted for his handling of high-profile cases involving MPs and journalists.
- Starmer entered politics relatively late, becoming a Member of Parliament (MP) in 2015, representing the Labour Party.

## Kamala Pujari

- Kamala Pujari, a celebrated Padma Shri awardee and famous organic farmer, has passed away at the age of 74 due to kidney-related complications.
- **Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** announced that Pujari's funeral would be held with full state honours and expressed his grief over her loss.
- **Notable Achievements:**
  - **Padma Shri Award:** Conferred in 2019 in recognition of her exceptional work in organic farming.
  - **Equator Initiative Award (2002):** For her innovative contributions to sustainable agriculture.
  - **Best Farmer Award (2004):** Awarded by the Odisha government for her outstanding farming practices.
  - Successfully harvested 100 varieties of rice.

## Jon Landau

- Jon Landau, the renowned Oscar-winning producer known for his extraordinary collaborations with director James Cameron, has passed away at the age of 63.
- Landau received three Oscar nominations throughout his career. His most significant win came for "Titanic" in 1997, which won 11 Oscars, including Best Picture.
- Landau's work on "Avatar" utilized groundbreaking 3D technology, setting new standards in cinematic visuals and surpassing "Titanic" in box-office success. "Avatar" remains the highest-grossing film of all time.
- "Avatar: The Way of Water" (2022): The sequel to "Avatar" continued the legacy of innovation and success, further establishing Landau and Cameron's collaboration as one of the most successful in film history.

## Masoud Pezeshkian

- **Masoud Pezeshkian**, a reformist lawmaker and prominent cardiac surgeon, has been elected as Iran's president
- Under Pezeshkian, India's investment in the strategic Chabahar Port is likely to be reinforced. This port is crucial for enhancing trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.

- Iran remains a major source of crude oil for India. Pezeshkian's presidency could lead to increased oil exports to India, potentially providing a more stable and cost-effective source of energy.

## K.P. Sharma Oli

- On July 15, K.P. Sharma Oli was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time.
- His appointment by President Ram Chandra Paudel comes at a crucial time for Nepal, as it seeks to navigate the challenges of political instability and governance.
- He is the leader of Nepal's largest communist party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist).
- Oli succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' who lost a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives.
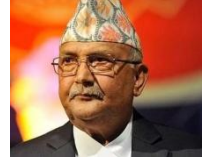
## Yamini Krishnamurthy

- Yamini Krishnamurthy, one of the best classical dancers passed away at the age of 83 at Apollo Hospital in New Delhi.
- She is known for her contributions to Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, and Odissi.
- At just five years old, she began her formal dance training at the prestigious Kalakshetra School of Dance in Chennai.
- In addition to her dance expertise, Krishnamurthy received training in Carnatic vocals and the veena, reflecting her multifaceted artistic talent.
- **Awards and Honors**
  - o **Padma Shri** (1968): Awarded at the age of 28, acknowledging her early contributions.
  - o **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award** (1977): Recognizing her excellence in performing arts.
  - o **Padma Bhushan** (2001): One of India's highest civilian honours, reflecting her significant impact on Indian culture.
  - o **Padma Vibhushan** (2016): The highest civilian honour, awarded for her exceptional contributions to classical dance.

## Anshuman Gaekwad

- On July 31, 2024, the former cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad passed away due to blood cancer.
- Gaekwad made his Test debut against the West Indies at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, in 1974.
- He first appeared in One-Day Internationals (ODIs) during the inaugural Cricket World Cup against England in 1975.
- His final Test match was against England at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, in the 1984-85 series.
- Played 40 matches, accumulating 1985 runs with a highest score of 201 against Pakistan in Jalandhar in 1982-83. He set the record for the slowest double-hundred in Test cricket, taking 671 minutes to achieve it.

## Dr Soumya Swaminathan

- Dr Soumya Swaminathan has been appointed as the Principal Adviser for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Dr Swaminathan's background includes her previous positions as Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- The National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme is India's comprehensive initiative aimed at eliminating TB as a public health problem in India and achieving the ambitious target of ending TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global Sustainable Development Goal target.

# Rajat Sharma

- Rajat Sharma, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of India TV, has been elected as the President of the News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA).
- The NBDA is the largest association of news broadcasters in India, it was founded in 2007.
- The NBDA plays a crucial role in shaping news broadcasting standards, advocating for members' interests, and promoting ethical journalism practices.

# Shekhar Kapur

- Veteran filmmaker Shekhar Kapur has been appointed as the festival director for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
- Kapur began his filmmaking journey with the family drama Masoom in 1983. He gained widespread acclaim with the 1987 hit Mr. India.
- His international breakthrough came with Bandit Queen (1994), which premiered at Cannes' Directors' Fortnight. Following this, he directed the acclaimed UK royal drama Elizabeth (1998), starring Cate Blanchett, which earned seven Oscar nominations.
- Kapur's notable works also include Elizabeth: The Golden Age, The Four Feathers, and the romantic comedy What's Love Got To Do With It (2022), which premiered in Toronto.

# Nicolás Maduro

- Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) announced that Nicolás Maduro has won the presidential election, securing his third term as President of Venezuela. He will govern from 2025 to 2031.
- Nicolás Maduro began his career as a bus driver before becoming a trade union leader.
  He was elected to Venezuela's National Assembly in 2000 and held several significant roles under President Hugo Chávez, including President of the National Assembly (2005-2006), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2006-2013), and Vice President (2012-2013).
- Following Chávez's death in March 2013, Maduro assumed the presidency.
- Maduro received 5,150,092 valid votes, amounting to 51.2% of the counted votes, with a voter turnout of 59%.

# Professor K. Chockalingam

- A retired professor K. Chockalingam from Tamil Nadu, has been awarded the Hans von Hentig award.
- The award recognition highlights his significant contributions to the field of victimology, bringing global attention to Indian scholarship in the study of crime victims and their experiences within the criminal justice system.
- The award is named after Hans von Hentig, a pioneering German criminologist who made significant contributions to victimology in the mid-20th century.
- The award recognizes outstanding contributions to victimology, including innovative research, theoretical advancements, and a significant impact on policy and practice related to victims' rights and support.

## Paul Kagame

- Paul Kagame won re-election for his fourth consecutive term as President of Rwanda with 99.15% of the vote.
- This victory continues Kagame's leadership since he first assumed office in 2000.
- Approximately 65% of Rwanda's population participated in the election. The electorate is predominantly under 35 years old.
- Kagame has been a prominent figure in Rwandan politics since the 1990s, coming to power in 2000 after ending the Rwandan Civil War.
- Rwanda is a landlocked country in East Central Africa, known as the "land of a thousand hills."

## Roberta Metsola

- Roberta Metsola has been re-elected as President of the European Parliament, making history as the first woman to secure a second term in this role.
- Metsola, a Maltese politician, received majority support, with 562 out of 623 votes cast in her favour.
- Metsola has emphasized the importance of the European Parliament's leadership, particularly in supporting Ukraine amid the ongoing conflict with Russia.
- **The European Parliament (EP)** is one of the two legislative bodies of the European Union (EU) and one of its seven key institutions.
- The European Union (EU) is a unique political and economic union comprising 27 member states, located in Europe. Abolishes passport controls among participating countries, enhancing travel and trade.

## Ursula von der Leyen

- Ursula von der Leyen was re-elected for a second five-year term as the President of the European Commission.
- The re-election took place in the European Parliament, where she secured a strong majority, ensuring continued leadership at a critical time for the European Union.
- Her leadership continuity is crucial for the 27-nation bloc, especially as it navigates complex challenges such as the ongoing war in Ukraine, climate change, and migration issues.

## Preeti Sudan

- **Preeti Sudan**, the former Union Health Secretary appointed as the Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- This appointment is made under Article 316 A of the Indian Constitution.
- **She will succeed Manoj Soni**, the outgoing Chairperson, who has resigned due to "personal reasons."
- Preeti Sudan's tenure as Chairperson is expected to last until April 2025, aligning with her reaching the age of 65, in accordance with the constitutional provisions governing UPSC leadership.
- The UPSC is established under Articles 315-323, Part XIV, Chapter II of the Indian Constitution, ensuring its autonomy.
- **Key Responsibilities:**
  - Conducting various examinations for the Union government.
  - Organizing the civil services examinations.
  - Recommending candidates for prestigious services like IAS, IFS, IPS, and Central Services – Group A and B.

## Parimal Nathwani

- Parimal Nathwani, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, recently presented the first copy of his new book, Call of the Gir, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a small family gathering at the PM's residence on July 31.
- The book, which captures the essence of the Gir forest and its iconic Asiatic lions, was dedicated to PM Modi as a tribute to his visionary leadership behind Project Lion and Lion@2047: Vision for Amrit Kaal.
- The book highlights the landscapes of the Gir forest, home to the majestic Asiatic lions. Through a combination of stunning photography and engaging narratives.

## Muhammad Yunus

- **Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was appointed to lead Bangladesh's interim government** following a dramatic political upheaval. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stepped down and fled the country amid widespread student-led protests.
- Muhammad Yunus, aged 83, is renowned for his work in microfinance. He founded Grameen Bank in 1983 to provide small loans to entrepreneurs who lacked access to traditional financial services. This initiative helped lift many out of poverty and inspired similar microfinancing efforts globally.
- Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his efforts to create economic and social development through microcredit. The Nobel Committee recognized him and Grameen Bank for their innovative approach to alleviating poverty.

## Shobhana Ranade

- Shobhana Ranade, a prominent Gandhian and Padma Bhushan awardee passed away at the age of 99 in Pune.
- At 18, Shobhana Ranade had a transformative encounter with Mahatma Gandhi, which deeply influenced her life's work. This meeting set her on a path of dedicated social service guided by Gandhian principles.
- Ranade focused on initiatives that provided education, skills, and opportunities to women and children, particularly in marginalized communities.
- **Key Projects:**
  o **Adim Jati Seva Sangh:** Empowered Naga women in the Northeast by teaching them traditional spinning techniques.
  o **Maitri Ashram:** A community development project in North Lakhimpur, Assam, aimed at improving local conditions.
  o **Bal Griha and Balsadan:** Institutions in Saswad, Pune, dedicated to the care of vulnerable girls.
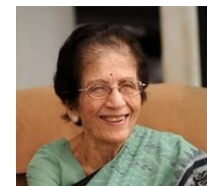
## AWARDS

## Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024

- The **Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF)** program, initiated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, has earned global recognition by winning the prestigious **Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024**.
- The announcement was made by **Dr Angela Merkel**, former Federal Chancellor of Germany and chair of the jury, during a ceremony held on **July 11th** in **Lisbon, Portugal**.
- The APCNF shares the **EURO 1 million** prize with **Dr Rattan Lal**, a renowned soil scientist from the USA, and **SEKEM**, an Egyptian network promoting biodynamic farming.
- The APCNF program was launched in **2016** by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The program aims to transition smallholder farmers from chemically intensive agriculture to natural farming practices.

## K. Saraswathi Amma Award

- P. Geetha, a writer, critic, and feminist activist, has been awarded the first K. Saraswathi Amma Award.
- The award, instituted by WINGS (Women's Integration and Growth Through Sports) Kerala, recognizes feminist contributions to literature and social discourse.
- The award is named after K. Saraswathi Amma, a feminist writer, who began her literary journey in 1938 with her first published short story.

## Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur

- **Roshni Nadar Malhotra, the Chairperson of HCLTech, has been honoured with the "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (Knight of the Legion of Honour), which is France's highest civilian award.**
- This award was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, and recognizes individuals for exceptional service to France, regardless of their nationality.
- The ceremony took place at the residence of France in Delhi and was presented by H.E. Mr Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, on behalf of the President of the French Republic.

## International Sand Sculpture Championship

- On July 12, renowned Indian **sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik was honoured with the Golden Sand Master award at the International Sand Sculpture Championship held in St. Petersburg, Russia.**
- Pattnaik is known for his large-scale sand sculptures. One of his notable creations includes a 12-foot sculpture of a chariot featuring Lord Jagannath and the 14th-century Odia poet Balaram Das.
- In 2014, Pattnaik was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honour, for his contributions to sand art.
- He was also the first Indian to win the Talian Sand Art award at the International Scorrano Sand Nativity event in Lecce, Italy.
- Sudarsan Pattnaik has participated in over 65 international sand art championships and festivals, earning widespread acclaim and bringing pride to India.

## COSPAR (Committee on Space Research) scientific assembly

- At the 45th COSPAR (Committee on Space Research) scientific assembly held in Busan, South Korea, two distinguished Indian space scientists were honoured for their remarkable contributions to space science.
- **Harrie Massey Award: Prahlad Chandra Agrawal**
  - o Prahlad Chandra Agrawal, a renowned space scientist and retired professor from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research's Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics.
  - o The Harrie Massey Award is given for outstanding contributions to space research, particularly recognizing leadership in the field.
  - o **Career Highlights:**
    - ✓ **X-ray Astronomy:** Agrawal is celebrated for his pioneering work in X-ray astronomy.
    - ✓ **AstroSat Program:** He led India's first multiwavelength astronomy satellite, AstroSat, launched in 2015. AstroSat has significantly impacted space research, being cited in over 300 research papers.
    - ✓ **Chandrayaan-1 Mission:** He also contributed to India's first lunar probe, Chandrayaan-1.
- **Vikram Sarabhai Medal: Anil Bhardwaj**
  - o Anil Bhardwaj, the director of the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad.
  - o The Vikram Sarabhai Medal, jointly awarded by COSPAR and ISRO, honours outstanding space science research in developing countries.
  - o **Career Specialization:**

✓ **Planetary Space Sciences and Solar System Exploration:** Bhardwaj has specialized in these areas, contributing significantly to India's space research.

## Gandhi Mandela Award 2020

- **Rigoberta Menchú Tum, a distinguished Guatemalan human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate was honoured with the Gandhi Mandela Award 2020.**
- The award was conferred on July 18, 2023, coinciding with Nelson Mandela's 106th birth anniversary.
- It was established by the Gandhi Mandela Foundation, the award honours those who uphold the ideals of Gandhi and Mandela.

## PM SVANidhi Scheme

- The recognition of **Madhya Pradesh as the 'Best Performing State' under the Prime Minister SVANidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme highlights the state's exemplary efforts in supporting urban street vendors.**
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme on June 1, 2020, to provide collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors to restart their businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The scheme aims to facilitate loans up to ₹10,000 with enhanced loans of ₹20,000 and ₹50,000 in the second and third tranches, incentivize regular repayment through a 7% per annum interest subsidy, and reward digital transactions with cashback of up to ₹1,200 per year.

## 📅 IMPORTANT DAYS

## GST Day

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Day is celebrated on July 1 each year,** 2024is the seventh anniversary of the GST system in India.
- The **concept of GST was introduced in the early 2000s by the Kelkar Task Force** to replace the existing framework hindering economic growth.
- The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act was enacted in August 2016, allowing the central government to charge and collect GST.
- Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan serves as the brand ambassador for GST in India.
- The Indian GST system has five tax slabs: 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%.
- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is often referred to as the father of GST in India.

## National Chartered Accountant (CA) Day

- CA Day 2024 marked the 76th anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).
- The **theme for 2024 is "Innovating For A Sustainable Future".**
- The day celebrates the establishment of the ICAI in 1949.
- The ICAI is now the world's second-largest professional organization for chartered accountants, highlighting the growth and importance of the accounting profession in India.
- The ICAI's headquarters are located in New Delhi.

## National Doctor's Day

- National Doctor's Day 2024 is an annual celebration, **observed on July 1st every year.**
- The **theme for 2024 is "Healing Hands, Caring Hearts."**
- The day was established to honour Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, a renowned physician and the second Chief Minister of West Bengal.

- Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy was born on July 1, 1882; he was a pioneering figure in Indian medicine and politics.

## World UFO Day

- **World UFO Day is celebrated on July 2,** to raise awareness about Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and the possibility of life beyond Earth.
- UFOs are anything flying in the sky that we can't easily explain, and they can be anything from weather balloons to satellites, unusual aircraft, or natural events in the sky.
- The date of World UFO Day was chosen on June 24, 1947, after a famous UFO sighting by Kenneth Arnold in 1947. The date was later changed to July 2, marking the anniversary of the Roswell incident in 1947.

## International Plastic Bag Free Day

- **International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on July 3 every year** to raise awareness about the harmful effects of plastic bags on our environment.
- Plastic bags are convenient but cause serious problems for our planet, take up to 500 years to break down in nature, harm wildlife and marine animals, clog drainage systems, pollute oceans, rivers, and soil, and disrupt recycling processes.



## World Zoonoses Day

- Every year on July 6th, World Zoonoses Day is observed to mark the anniversary of a significant milestone in the fight against zoonotic diseases.
- The day marks the anniversary of the first successful administration of a rabies vaccine by French biologist Louis Pasteur.
- The theme of the 2024 World Zoonoses Day is "One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses"
- It aims to increase public awareness about zoonotic diseases—diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. These include well-known diseases such as rabies, swine flu, bird flu, and foodborne infections.
- Approximately 60% of all known diseases are zoonotic, and about 70% of emerging infections originate from animals.

## World Kiswahili Language Day

- **World Kiswahili Language Day is celebrated annually on the 7th of July**, to recognize and promote Kiswahili, an important African language.
- The 2024 celebration marks the third observance of this day, focusing on Kiswahili's role in education and peace.
- **Theme for 2024: "Kiswahili: Education and Culture of Peace"**
- Kiswahili is one of the most widely spoken languages in Africa.
- In 2021, UNESCO's General Conference adopted a resolution to recognize Kiswahili's contributions to cultural diversity and dialogue. This resolution led to the establishment of World Kiswahili Language Day on July 7 each year.

## National Fish Farmers Day

- **On July 10th, India celebrates National Fish Farmers Day** to honour the contributions of fish farmers, aquaculture professionals, and stakeholders in the fisheries sector.
- On this day in 1957, Professor Dr. Hiralal Chaudhury and his colleague Dr. K. H. Alikunhi successfully demonstrated the induced breeding of Indian Major Carps using the hypophysation technique.
- Fish farmers are integral to India's economy, meeting the growing demand for fish protein, generating employment, and contributing to food security.

## World Population Day

- **World Population Day was established by the United Nations in 1989, marking the day on July 11, 1987**, when the global population reached 5 billion.
- Dr. KC Zachariah proposed the idea of this observance to address growing population challenges.
- World Population Day has evolved into a powerful tool for advocacy on issues such as reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, and sustainable development, influencing policies and public opinion.
- **The theme for World Population Day 2024, "Leave no one behind, count everyone,"** highlights the importance of inclusive data collection to ensure all communities are represented in population statistics and policy-making.



## World Malala Day 2024

- **World Malala Day is observed on the 12th of July** to honour Malala Yousafzai, a prominent advocate for girls' education and women's rights.
- The day focuses on raising awareness about education for girls and the broader issues of women's and children's rights globally.
- Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Pakistan.
- The United Nations declared July 12 as World Malala Day to commemorate Malala's birthday and her courageous efforts in advocating for education despite facing severe challenges.

## World Youth Skills Day 2024

- **World Youth Skills Day is celebrated on 15th July** to emphasize the importance of skill development among young people.
- The day aims to recognize and promote the role of skills in empowering youth and enhancing their future prospects.
- **Theme for 2024: "Youth Skills for Peace and Development"** – This theme highlights the role of skills development in contributing to peaceful societies and sustainable development.

## World Day for International Justice

- World Day for International Justice, also known as International Justice Day, is **celebrated annually on 17th July.**
- This day celebrates the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its mission to combat impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious offences, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

## Nelson Mandela International Day

- **Nelson Mandela International Day, observed on July 18**, honours the legacy of Nelson Mandela and his contributions to peace, democracy, and human rights.
- **The theme for 2024:** "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity" – This theme reflects Mandela's commitment to social justice and highlights the ongoing need for collective action to address these critical issues.

- The first Nelson Mandela International Day was held on July 18, 2009, in New York, marking the centenary of Mandela's birth.

## International Moon Day 2024

- **International Moon Day is celebrated annually on July 20th** to mark the historic Apollo 11 mission, during which Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the Moon.
- On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11's Lunar Module landed on the Moon, and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on its surface, marking a significant achievement in space exploration.
- The first global celebration of International Moon Day took place on July 20, 2022.

## World Chess Day 2024

- **World Chess Day is celebrated globally on July 20th** to mark the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) and to promote chess as an accessible and inclusive game for all.
- The International Chess Federation (FIDE) was founded on July 20, 1924, in Paris, France, by chess organizations from Argentina, Czechoslovakia, France, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia.
- The day aims to highlight the cultural and educational value of chess and its role in promoting intellectual development and international friendship.

## World Brain Day

- **World Brain Day is observed annually on July 22nd** to raise awareness about brain health, prevent brain-related disabilities, and improve treatment and rehabilitation methods.
- The World Federation of Neurology (WFN) established World Brain Day as a global event to focus on neurological health and the prevention of brain diseases.
- **The theme for 2024: "Brain Health and Prevention"** emphasizes the importance of maintaining brain health and preventing neurological disorders.
- The World Federation of Neurology was founded on July 22, 1957, in Belgium, and the establishment of World Brain Day aligns with this significant anniversary.

## National Broadcasting Day

- **National Broadcasting Day is celebrated in India on July 23rd** to commemorate the first-ever radio broadcast in the country, marking the beginning of broadcasting services in India.
- On July 23, 1927, India's first radio broadcast was conducted, marking the inception of radio broadcasting in the country.
- The Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) was established in 1927 to manage broadcasting services but faced financial difficulties and was shut down in 1930.
- The Government of India took over the broadcasting service, leading to the creation of the Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) in 1930, which later evolved into All India Radio (AIR).

## National Flag Day 2024

- **National Flag Day in India is observed annually on July 22** to honour the adoption of the Indian tricolour flag and the Ashoka Chakra, which represent the nation's freedom, unity, and sovereignty.
- On July 22, 1947, the Constituent Assembly of India officially adopted the national flag.
- It was introduced to symbolize the ideals of self-reliance and resistance, proposed by Badr-ud-Din Tyabji and supported by Mahatma Gandhi.
- In 2002, the Flag Code of India was amended to allow the national flag to be displayed on any day of the year, not just national holidays while maintaining respect and dignity as prescribed in the guidelines.

## Income Tax Day 2024

- **Income Tax Day, or Rashtriya Aaykar Divas, is observed annually in India on July 24th** to emphasize the importance of taxation in nation-building and responsible financial citizenship.

- The day marks the introduction of India's first Income Tax Act in 1860, introduced by Sir James Wilson. This marked the beginning of formal taxation in the country.
- The day aims to spread awareness about the taxation system in India and highlight its role in supporting government functions and public services.

## Samvidhaan Hatya Diva

- **June 25 has been officially declared "Samvidhaan Hatya Divas"** (Constitution Murder Day) by the central government.
- The day is designated to commemorate the victims of the Emergency period imposed on June 25, 1975, and to acknowledge the hardships faced by individuals who were imprisoned and suffered during this time.
- The Emergency in India, declared by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, lasted from June 25, 1975, to March 21, 1977. It was a period marked by significant political repression, suspension of civil liberties, and widespread human rights abuses.

## Kargil Vijay Diwas

- **Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on July 26** to honour and remember the soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the Kargil War and to celebrate the victory of the Indian Armed Forces in this conflict.
- The Kargil War occurred between May and July 1999 in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. It was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan, initiated when Pakistani troops infiltrated into Indian territory.
- The day marks the successful operation by the Indian military to reclaim the territory and defeat the Pakistani forces, marking a significant moment in India's military history.

## World Nature Conservation Day

- **World Nature Conservation Day is observed on July 28** to raise awareness about the importance of conserving nature and promoting sustainable practices.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), established on October 5, 1948, in Fontainebleau, France, plays a key role in global conservation efforts.

## International Tiger Day

- **International Tiger Day is celebrated annually on July** 29 to raise awareness about the conservation of tigers and their habitats.
- **Project Tiger (1973)** was launched by India, to protect and revive the tiger population, which had been dwindling due to poaching and habitat loss.

## World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

- **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is observed on July 30** to raise awareness about the plight of

human trafficking victims and to advocate for their rights and protection.

- **The theme for 2024:** "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking" focuses on the specific challenges faced by children in trafficking situations.
- The day aims to educate the public about human trafficking, promote preventive measures, and support victims by improving policies and practices globally.

## World Breastfeeding Week

- **World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is a global initiative observed every year from August 1st to 7th.**
- This week-long event is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and advocating for the rights of mothers to breastfeed anywhere, anytime.
- The **theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2024 is "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All."**
- Breast milk is made up of 87% water, 7% carbohydrates, 4% fats, and 1% protein, vitamins, and minerals. This unique blend provides all the necessary nutrients an infant needs in the first months of life.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of illnesses such as respiratory problems, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), diarrhoea, and ear infections. It also lowers the likelihood of obesity and type 1 diabetes later in life.

## World Lung Cancer Day

- **World Lung Cancer Day is observed annually on August 1st.**
- The **theme for World Lung Cancer Day 2024 is "Close the Care Gap: Everyone Deserves Access to Cancer Care."**
- World Lung Cancer Day was established in 2012 by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC).
- The day was created to draw attention to the devastating impact of lung cancer and to promote awareness, education, and preventive measures to combat the disease.
- In India, lung cancer incidence is particularly high due to a combination of widespread tobacco use and exposure to polluted air. Urban areas, with their high levels of industrial and vehicular emissions, are especially vulnerable.



**World Breastfeeding Week** is a global healthcare event celebrated annually in the first week of August (01st to 07th), promoting the importance of breastfeeding benefits to newborns and mothers. It also promotes, defends, and supports women's rights to breastfeed their babies anytime and anywhere.

## Hiroshima Day

- **Hiroshima Day, observed annually on August 6th,** 2024 marks the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima during World War II.
- **Historical Background**
- **The Manhattan Project**: During World War II, the United States initiated the Manhattan Project, a secret program aimed at developing the first nuclear weapons. This led to the creation of two atomic bombs, codenamed "Little Boy" and "Fat Man."
- **August 6, 1945**: On this date, the American B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped the atomic bomb "Little Boy" over Hiroshima at 8:15 AM local time. This event marked the first use of nuclear weapons in warfare.
- The explosion resulted in immediate and massive destruction. An estimated 39% of Hiroshima's population was killed instantly, with the total death toll ranging from 90,000 to 140,000. The bomb's blast, heat, and radiation caused widespread devastation, levelling the city and leaving deep physical and emotional scars.

## National Handloom Day

- **National Handloom Day is observed annually on August 7th** to honour India's rich handloom heritage.

- This year marks the 10th anniversary of National Handloom Day, which has been celebrated since 2015.
- The choice of August 7 as National Handloom Day is symbolic of India's struggle for independence. This date commemorates the launch of the Swadeshi Movement in Kolkata in 1905.
- Handlooms were a powerful symbol of resistance against colonial rule, promoting Indian crafts and empowering local artisans. The establishment of National Handloom Day in 2015 was a tribute to this historical significance, marking the centenary of the Swadeshi Movement.

## National Javelin Day 2024

- **August 7 marks National Javelin Day.** Established to commemorate Neeraj Chopra's monumental achievement, this day honours his Olympic gold medal win and celebrates the sport of javelin throwing.
- On August 7, 2021, Neeraj Chopra won India's first-ever Olympic gold medal in track and field with a javelin throw of 87.58 meters. This historic win made him the second Indian to secure an individual Olympic gold, following Abhinav Bindra.
- The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) declared August 7 as National Javelin Day to honour Chopra's achievement and celebrate javelin throwing's contribution to Indian athletics.

## International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

- **The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, observed annually on August 9th**, highlights the cultures, challenges, and contributions of indigenous communities worldwide.
- The 2024 celebration emphasizes "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact," focusing on safeguarding the rights and well-being of Indigenous groups with limited or no contact with the outside world.
- **Theme: "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact"**

## Nagasaki Day

- **Nagasaki Day is an annual observance held on August 9th** to commemorate the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, which took place on this date in 1945.
- On August 9, 1945, at 11:02 AM local time, a U.S. B-29 bomber named "Bockscar" dropped an atomic bomb called "Fat Man" on Nagasaki, Japan. This was the second atomic bombing during World War II, following Hiroshima's bombing three days earlier.
- Around 40,000 people were killed instantly. Another 35,000 to 40,000 died in the following months from injuries and radiation.

| Date | Important Days |
|---|---|
| July 1, 2024 | National Doctor's Day |
| July 01, 2024 | National Chartered Accountants Day |
| July 01, 2024 | GST Day |
| July 02, 2024 | World Sports Journalists Day |
| July 02, 2024 | World UFO Day |
| July 03, 2024 | International Plastic Bag Free Day |
| July 06, 2024 | World Zoonoses Day |
| July 06, 2024 | International Day of Cooperatives |
| July 07, 2024 | World Kiswahili Language Day |
| July 11, 2024 | World Population Day |
| July 11, 2024 | International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica |
| July 12, 2024 | Malala Day |
| July 12, 2024 | International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms |
| July 15, 2024 | World Youth Skills Day |
| Jul 17, 2024 | World Day for International Justice |
| July 18, 2024 | International Nelson Mandela Day |

| July 20, 2024 | World Chess Day |
| July 20, 2024 | International Moon Day |
| July 22, 2024 | National Mango Day |
| July 22, 2024 | World Brain Day |
| July 23, 2024 | National Broadcasting Day |
| July 24, 2024 | National Income Tax Day |
| July 25, 2024 | World Drowning Prevention Day |
| July 26, 2024 | Kargil Vijay Diwas |
| July 28, 2024 | World Hepatitis Day |
| July 29, 2024 | International Tiger Day |
| July 30, 2024 | International Day of Friendship |
| July 30, 2024 | World Day Against Trafficking in Persons |
| July 31, 2024 | World Ranger Day |
| August 1st -7th, 2024 | World Breastfeeding Week |
| August 1, 2024 | World Lung Cancer Day |
| August 6, 2024 | Hiroshima Day |
| August 7, 2024 | National Handloom Day |
| August 7, 2024 | National Javelin Day |
| August 9, 2024 | The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples |
| August 9, 2024 | Nagasaki Day |
| August 10th, 2024 | World Lion Day |

## BOOSTER DOSE

- **Tata Group's Valuation**: Tata Group, India's most valuable brand, is valued at $28.6 billion and is nearing the $30 billion milestone. It is on track to become the first Indian brand to reach this valuation.

- **World Bank Loan for Green Hydrogen:** The World Bank approved a $1.5 billion loan to support India's green hydrogen projects, aiming to boost production and enhance the use of renewable energy in India.

- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:** On July 1, 2024, The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, officially replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860, marking a major update in India's criminal justice system.

- **eSankhyiki Portal Launched:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) launched the eSankhyiki portal to enhance data accessibility and improve the user experience for accessing statistical information.

- **Dinesh Karthik:** Former Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik was appointed as the brand ambassador for the SA20 League to enhance its global appeal.

- **"Union Premier" Branches:** Union Bank of India introduced "Union Premier" branches in rural and semi-urban areas, offering personalized banking services and a comprehensive range of products.

- **World Sports Journalist Day:** World Sports Journalist Day was celebrated to acknowledge the contributions of sports journalists and to promote sports knowledge among the public.

- **Air India to Establish Flight Training School:** Air India announced plans to set up South Asia's largest flight training school in Amravati, Maharashtra, with an investment exceeding ₹200 crore.

- **FAO Report on Forest Areas:** The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that India, China, and Australia made significant progress in increasing their forest areas between 2010 and 2020.

- **Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) selected Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, to host the 2034 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games during its 142nd Session in Paris.

- **Hul Diwas Celebration:** Hul Diwas was celebrated to commemorate the Santhal Rebellion of 1855, an important anti-colonial uprising in present-day Jharkhand.

- **Annual World Congress:** The International Association of Stem Cell & Regenerative Medicine (IASRM) and the Anti-Ageing Foundation (India) hosted the 9th Annual World Congress on Longevity Revolution 2024 in New Delhi.

- **Cash Prize for T20 World Cup Squad:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has awarded a consolidated cash prize of Rs. 125 crore to the Indian men's T20 World Cup-winning squad.

- **Anti-Paper Leak Bill:** The Bihar Assembly passed the Anti-Paper Leak Bill, imposing a minimum 10-year prison sentence and up to ₹1 crore fine for those involved in exam malpractices.

- **Sapphiro Forex Card:** ICICI Bank introduced the 'Student Sapphiro Forex Card,' a premium forex prepaid card designed for international students pursuing higher education abroad.

- **PV Sindhu:** Olympic medalist PV Sindhu has become an investor and brand ambassador for Hoop, a wellness brand based in Gurugram.

- **Shah Rukh Khan:** Shah Rukh Khan will be honoured with the Pardo alla Carriera award at the Locarno Film Festival for his significant contributions to Indian cinema.

- **NTR Bharosa Pension Scheme:** The Andhra Pradesh government launched the NTR Bharosa Pension Scheme to provide financial support to vulnerable groups in the state.

- **Weapon Systems School in Hyderabad:** The Indian Air Force (IAF) inaugurated the Weapon Systems School (WSS) in Hyderabad, aimed at enhancing military training and capabilities.

- **CBDT Awards Taxnet 2.0 Project to Bharti Airtel:** The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) awarded Bharti Airtel Ltd. the Taxnet 2.0 project to upgrade the Income Tax Department's digital infrastructure.

- **Rohan Bopanna:** Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna announced his retirement from representing India in international competitions following his exit from the Paris 2024 Olympics.

- **Global IndiaAI Summit 2024**: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology hosted the Global IndiaAI Summit in New Delhi to advance responsible AI development and adoption.

- **Puma India Announces New Brand Ambassadors:** Puma India appointed Riyan Parag and Nitish Kumar Reddy as new brand ambassadors to support young cricket talent and connect with the youth.

- **Indian Women's Volleyball Team Wins CAVA Gold:** The Indian women's national volleyball team won gold at the 4th CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League, defeating Nepal 3-2 in the final.

- **NIRMAN Portal:** The NIRMAN portal, launched by Coal India Limited, aims to support UPSC aspirants from operational districts.

- **Dr. B.N. Gangadhar:** Dr. B.N. Gangadhar has been appointed as the Chairperson of the National Medical Commission.

- **Sampoornata Abhiyan:** NITI Aayog launched the "Sampoornata Abhiyan" initiative to promote holistic development in India's most challenging regions.

- **UNESCO World Heritage Committee Session**: India hosted the 46th session of the

UNESCO World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

- **AIIA Hosts Second National Seminar 'Saushrutam 2024':** The All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi hosted its Second National Seminar, 'Saushrutam 2024,' celebrating Sushruta Jayanti.

- Aditya-L1 Mission India's Aditya-L1 mission, its first solar observatory, successfully completed its halo orbit around the Sun-Earth L1 point.

- **George Russell Wins Austrian Grand Prix:** George Russell of Mercedes won the Austrian Grand Prix 2024.

- **India Chairs Colombo Process:** India has assumed the chairmanship of the Colombo Process, a regional initiative involving 12 Asian countries focused on improving overseas employment governance.

- **Sujata Saunik:** Sujata Saunik, an IAS officer from the 1987 batch, has been appointed as Maharashtra's first woman chief secretary.

- **Smart Cities Mission Extended Until 2025:** The Smart Cities Mission, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, has been extended until March 31, 2025, to continue improving urban living standards.

- **MA in Bhagavad Gita Studies:** Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) introduced a new Master of Arts (MA) program in Bhagavad Gita Studies for the 2024-2025 academic session.

- **Lokpath Mobile App:** Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Dr. Mohan Yadav launched the Lokpath Mobile App to enhance transparency and accountability in road management.

- **Justice Sheel Nagu:** Justice Sheel Nagu has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

- **Vinesh Phogat:** Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified from the Paris Olympics final for failing to meet the weight requirement for her 50 kg category. As per United World Wrestling (UWW) rules, Phogat will be ranked last and will not be eligible for any medals.

- **eSwasthya Dham:** The Uttarakhand government integrated its eSwasthya Dham portal with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) to improve health monitoring for Char Dham Yatra pilgrims and support broader digital health goals.

- **International Moon Day:** International Moon Day commemorates the achievements in lunar exploration, notably the Apollo 11 mission, and promotes sustainable space exploration.

- **India's GDP Growth Forecast:** The IMF has revised India's GDP growth forecast to 7% for the fiscal year 2024-25, reflecting improved rural consumption.

- **India's $2.5 Million Contribution to UNRWA:** India released the first $2.5 million of its $5 million annual contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support its efforts amid ongoing conflicts.

- **Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates INS Towers:** PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the INS Towers at the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) Secretariat in Mumbai, a development for the Indian media sector.

- **BPCL Partners with the Indian Olympic Association:** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has become the Principal Partner of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for the next four years, supporting the Olympics from Paris 2024 to Los Angeles 2028.

- **'Jeevan Samarth' Initiative:** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) introduced the 'Jeevan Samarth' initiative to modernize its agency network and align with customer and industry needs.

- **British Grand Prix:** Lewis Hamilton won the British Grand Prix for a record ninth time, extending his F1 career win record to 104 victories.

- **Project PARI:** The Ministry of Culture launched Project PARI to celebrate India's artistic heritage at the World Heritage Committee meeting in Delhi.

- **Elisa de Anda Madrazo:** Elisa de Anda Madrazo has taken over as president of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a key global body for combating financial crimes.

- **Reciprocal Access Agreement:** The Philippines and Japan signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) to ease military access, marking Japan's first such agreement in Asia.

- **Asian Billiards Championship 2024:** Held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Asian Billiards Championship showcased top talent in billiards and snooker from across Asia.

- **Shah Rukh Khan:** Shah Rukh Khan is the first Indian actor to receive customized gold coins from the Grevin Museum in Paris, recognizing his global impact.

- **Ajinkya Naik:** Ajinkya Naik has been elected as the youngest president of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) at age 37.

- **Project Swasthya Nagaram:** Telangana launched Project Swasthya Nagaram to create TB-free municipalities through a comprehensive urban approach.

- **Harmanpreet Kaur:** Harmanpreet Kaur surpassed Smriti Mandhana to become India's highest run-scorer in women's T20I cricket.

- **Esports Games in Saudi Arabia:** The International Olympic Committee announced that the inaugural Olympic Esports Games will be hosted in Saudi Arabia in 2025.

- **Best Agriculture State Award:** Maharashtra has been awarded the Best Agriculture State Award for 2024 by the Agriculture Leadership Awards Committee.

- **Asian Squash Doubles Championship:** Indian squash players secured titles in both men's doubles and mixed doubles categories at the Asian Squash Doubles Championship in Johor, Malaysia.

- **Dr. C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award:** Sivashankari, a prominent Tamil author, was honoured with the Dr C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award for her contributions to Indian literature.

- **Generative AI Innovations**: India ranks fifth globally in Generative AI innovations, behind China, the US, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. Despite this, India has demonstrated the highest annual growth rate in GenAI patent publications, indicating significant economic potential.

- **Rachel Reeves:** Rachel Reeves has been appointed as the first female Chancellor of the Exchequer in UK history, marking a significant milestone in gender representation in high-level government positions.

- **Prime Minister Modi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called, for his contributions to strengthening the strategic partnership between Russia and India.

- **Himachal Pradesh:** The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet approved a plan to rationalize the zero electricity bill scheme with a 'one family, one-meter' policy, linking power connections with ration cards to limit subsidies.

- **Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence in all 55 districts of Madhya Pradesh, aiming to improve higher education infrastructure.

- **Open University for Physically Challenged Students:** The Jharkhand government is preparing to open India's first university dedicated to physically challenged students in

Ranchi, catering to the educational needs of students with disabilities.

- **Aparna Vastarey:** Aparna Vastarey, a celebrated Kannada actress and iconic voice of Namma Metro announcements, passed away at the age of 57.

- **Lok Samvardhan Parv:** The Ministry of Minority Affairs organized Lok Samvardhan Parv as part of its 100-day program to highlight and celebrate its initiatives and achievements for minority communities.

- **MoHUA Event on PM SVANidhi and DAY-NULM Schemes:** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) held an event titled "Utkrishtata ki Ore Badhte Kadam" to acknowledge achievements of the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).

- **ICC Annual Conference in Sri Lanka:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) held its Annual Conference in Sri Lanka for the first time, highlighting the growing prominence of Asian cricket.

- **Subhash Dandekar:** Subhash Dandekar, founder of the iconic brand Camlin, passed away at the age of 86. His leadership significantly impacted the Indian stationery and art supplies industry.

- **Framework for Climate-Resilient Farming:** The Union government is developing a framework to support climate-resilient farming practices in 50,000 villages vulnerable to climate change, aiming to enhance agricultural resilience and sustainability.

- **Tata Power Solar's 'Ghar Ghar Solar' Initiative:** Tata Power Solar Systems Limited launched the 'Ghar Ghar Solar' initiative in Uttar Pradesh, starting in Varanasi, to promote rooftop solar solutions with significant subsidies.

- **Thomas Müller:** German footballer Thomas Müller announced his retirement from international football following Euro 2024, ending a distinguished international career.

- **Cost-of-Living Report:** Mercer's report lists Hong Kong, Singapore, and Zurich as the most expensive cities for international workers. Mumbai ranks highest among Indian cities at 136th.

- **Gautam Gambhir:** Gautam Gambhir has been appointed as the Head Coach of the Indian Senior Men's cricket team.

- **'Mitra Van' Initiative:** Uttar Pradesh launched the 'Mitra Van' initiative to enhance greenery along state and international borders, including with Nepal.

- **Flag Bearers for Paris 2024 Olympics:** PV Sindhu (badminton player) and Sharath Kamal (table tennis player) have been announced as the female and male flag bearers for India at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

- **India-Vietnam Joint Venture for Maritime Heritage:** India and Vietnam are collaborating on the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat, to celebrate and deepen cultural and strategic ties.

- **Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan 2024:** The conference, organized by CSIR-AMPRI Bhopal, advanced scientific research and communication in Hindi.

- **Conference of Governors:** President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the two-day Conference of Governors at Rashtrapati Bhavan, focusing on governance and development issues.

- **Turkey Blocks Instagram Access:** Turkey blocked access to Instagram for its 85 million citizens following a decision by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, with no reasons or duration disclosed.

- **NSDC's Women Entrepreneurship Program:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) launched a program to support

women entrepreneurs and address their unique challenges.

- **Swapnil Kusale:** Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale secured a bronze medal in the 50m rifle 3 positions event at the Paris Olympics, adding to his impressive career achievements.

- **Ministry of Minority Affairs:** The Ministry of Minority Affairs has replaced the Ministry of External Affairs as the nodal ministry for the Haj Committee. The Haj Committee (Amendment) Rules, 2024, reflect this change in the Haj Committee Rules, 2002.

- **BSF and SBI Plantation Drive:** The Border Security Force (BSF) partnered with the State Bank of India (SBI) to organize a plantation drive titled "Grow with the Trees" at the BSF Headquarters in Srinagar to promote a greener environment.

- **Nivahika Web Portal:** The National Institute of Technology Calicut (NITC) launched the Nivahika web portal, enhancing its data management practices with state-of-the-art technology.

- **Youngest Olympic Boxing Referee:** Lieutenant Colonel Kabilan Sai Ashok became the youngest Olympic boxing referee from India at the 2024 Paris Olympics, marking a significant achievement in sports.

- **Birlestik-2024 Joint Military Exercise:** The Birlestik-2024 exercise, a collaborative military drill, involved the Defense Ministries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to enhance regional cooperation and operational readiness.

- **Adani Group:** Gautam Adani and the Adani Group have become the principal sponsors of the Indian team for the 2024 Paris Olympics, showing their commitment to Indian sports.

- **Ariane 6 Rocket Launch:** Europe's Ariane 6 rocket successfully launched from Kourou, French Guiana, marking a milestone for European space efforts by deploying satellites into orbit. Observed as the International Day

of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica to honour victims and promote education about the genocide.

- **100 Million Followers:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi surpassed 100 million followers on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), becoming the most followed global leader on the platform.

- **World Championship of Legends 2024:** India Champions won the final of the World Championship of Legends 2024, defeating Pakistan Champions by five wickets.

- **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh was officially welcomed as the fifth member of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) during the 8th Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA) level meeting, hosted virtually by Mauritius.

- **Nagaland:** Nagaland was recognized as the best state in horticulture at the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024 for its innovative agricultural practices and rural development.

- **World Ranger Day:** Celebrated annually to honour and remember rangers who have been injured or killed while protecting natural and cultural heritage.

- **Vietnam:** Vietnam was named the most affordable destination for expatriates for the fourth consecutive year in a 2024 study by InterNations.

- **Nitish Singh:** International mountaineer Nitish Singh from Gorakhpur hoisted the Indian tricolour at the summit of Mount Kinabalu, achieving the feat in just 19 hours.

- **India's Low-Carbon Energy Development:** The World Bank approved $1.5 billion for India's second operation to advance low-carbon energy development, focusing on green hydrogen, renewable energy, and low-carbon investments.

- **Dr R Balasubramaniam:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Dr R Balasubramaniam and signed a copy of his latest book, "Power

Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi."

- **National Accounts Base Years:** India plans to update the base years for national accounts and macro-indicators starting from January to February 2026 to improve economic data accuracy.

- **MTNL and BSNL Operations Transfer:** The government is considering transferring MTNL's operations to BSNL instead of a full merger of the two telecom entities.

- **Inaugural Meeting of National One Health Mission:** Union Health Minister JP Nadda chaired the inaugural meeting of the National One Health Mission's executive committee, focusing on comprehensive health management across humans, animals, plants, and the environment.

- **Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel Inauguration:** The Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, represents a major urban infrastructure advancement in Mumbai.

- **ICAR's 'One Scientist-One Product' Program:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched the 'One Scientist-One Product' program to boost agricultural and animal husbandry research. Each scientist will focus on a specific product or crop to streamline research efforts and enhance productivity and innovation.

- **India's MANAS Helpline Launch:** India introduced MANAS, a national toll-free helpline dedicated to narcotics crimes, launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It provides a 24x7 platform for citizens to report drug-related activities.

- **India's Football Ranking:** India maintained its 124th place in international football rankings despite challenges, including recent losses in the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers.

- **Crop Loan Limits:** The Indian government is considering raising the upper limit for short-term crop loans under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh. This move aims to provide larger loans at concessional rates to farmers.

- **Mobile Broadband Speed:** Following the launch of 5G services, India's mobile broadband speed improved significantly, with the country advancing from 118th to 15th position internationally.

- **Rise in Teledensity:** India's teledensity increased from 75.2% in March 2014 to 85.7% in March 2024, reflecting the expanded reach of telecommunications services.

- **Renewable Energy Capacity:** India experienced a 165% growth in renewable energy capacity over the past decade, reaching 203.1 GW in 2024, making it the fourth-largest globally in renewable energy capacity.

- **Supreme Court Judgment on Reservations:** The Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark judgment reshaping the framework of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for the first time since the quotas were established in 1950.

- **Dr. V. Vedachalam Honored:** Tamil epigrapher and historian Dr. V. Vedachalam received the V Venkayya Epigraphy Award in 2024 for his exceptional contributions to epigraphy and Indian heritage.

- **Asian Cricket Council (ACC):** Mohsin Naqvi, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), is expected to become the ACC president later this year, marking a significant leadership shift.

- **"VIRAASAT" Exhibition:** The "VIRAASAT" exhibition celebrating the 10th National Handloom Day commenced at Handloom Haat, Janpath, New Delhi, organized by the National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd (NHDC).

- **International Tennis Hall of Fame Induction:** Asian men were inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame for the first

time, honouring their contributions to the sport.

- **Namo Drone Didi Scheme:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated ₹500 crore for the Namo Drone Didi scheme to provide drones to 15,000 women self-help groups (SHGs), aiming to enhance agricultural productivity and efficiency.

- **Shinku La Tunnel:** PM Modi will inaugurate the world's highest Shinku La Tunnel in Ladakh, providing all-weather connectivity from Manali to Leh. At 4.1 km long and 15,800 feet high, it surpasses China's Mila tunnel.

- **President Murmu's Diplomatic Visit:** President Droupadi Murmu's visit to Fiji, New Zealand, and Timor-Leste underscores India's growing diplomatic engagement in the Pacific region.

- **Bangladesh Prime Minister's Resignation:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned after 15 years in power, leading to significant political unrest and protests in Bangladesh.

- **Noah Lyles Wins Gold:** American sprinter Noah Lyles won the gold medal in the men's 100-meter sprint at the 2024 Paris Olympics, ending a two-decade drought for U.S. sprinters.

- **ICAE Conference Inauguration:** On August 3, 2024, PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) in New Delhi, with the theme "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems."

- **Viraat Ramayan Mandir Project:** The Viraat Ramayan Mandir project in East Champaran, Bihar, aims to create the world's largest Ramayan temple, surpassing the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

- **Haryana's IT Saksham Yuva Scheme:** The Haryana Cabinet introduced the IT Saksham Yuva Scheme under the 'Mission 60,000' initiative to provide employment to 60,000 youths from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Spain Named Healthiest Country:** According to the Bloomberg Global Health Index, Spain is recognized as the world's healthiest country for 2024 with a score of 92.7 out of 100.

- **Uttarakhand's First Bird Gallery:** The Uttarakhand Forest Department inaugurated the state's first bird gallery, aiming to showcase the region's avian diversity and promote bird conservation and education.

- **ICAR's 'One Scientist-One Product' Scheme:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched the 'One Scientist-One Product' scheme on its 96th foundation day, designed to enhance agricultural research and development by linking scientists with specific agricultural products.

- **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) Inflation Rate:** India's WPI showed a provisional annual inflation rate of 3.36%, influenced by rising prices in food articles, manufactured products, and fuel.

- **SYNCHN 2024 Industry Meet:** The Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) hosted the SYNCHN 2024 industry meet under the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC), focusing on advancements in health science and technology.

- **ASMITA Project:** The Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) launched the ASMITA project to develop 22,000 books in Indian languages over the next five years, enhancing higher education accessibility.

- **Azerbaijan's Climate Finance Action Fund (CFAF):** On November 11-22, 2024, Azerbaijan will host COP29 and has announced the Climate Finance Action Fund (CFAF) to support green projects and help countries achieve the 1.5°C temperature target of the Paris Agreement.

- **ADB's GDP Growth Forecast for India:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) maintained India's GDP growth forecast at 7% for FY2024 and 7.2% for FY2025, aligning with the IMF's revised forecast.

- **Defence Budget Allocation:** The Union Budget for FY 2024-25 allocated Rs 6.22 lakh crore to the Ministry of Defence, the highest budgetary allocation among ministries, focusing on enhancing defence capabilities and veteran support.

- **Mumbai's First Underground Metro:** On July 24, 2024, Mumbai's Aqua Line (Mumbai Metro Line 3) commenced operations, marking a major milestone in the city's public transportation system.

- **C.T. Kurien's Passing:** Economist and former Madras Christian College professor C.T. Kurien passed away at 93. His contributions to Indian economics remain influential.

- **Maharashtra's Ladla Bhai Yojana:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced the Ladla Bhai Yojana to support young men in the state, following the Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana for women's empowerment.

- **ADB Loan for Rooftop Solar Systems:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a $240.5 million loan for installing rooftop solar systems in India, supporting renewable energy expansion.

- **Electronics Manufacturing Goal:** India aims to achieve $500 billion in electronics production by 2030, as outlined in a NITI Aayog report.

- **Belarus:** Belarus introduced a visa-free regime for citizens from 35 European countries, allowing stays of up to 90 days per year, aiming to improve diplomatic relations.

- **Super Kings Academy:** The Chennai Super Kings (CSK) launched their third Super Kings Academy in Sydney, expanding their international presence.

- **Vinay Kwatra:** Former Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra has been appointed as India's new Ambassador to the United States, succeeding Taranjit Sandhu.

- **China's Carbon Fiber Passenger Train:** China unveiled the world's first passenger train primarily made from carbon fibre, enhancing energy efficiency and weight reduction. Named Cetrovo 1.0 or Carbon Star Rapid Transit, it was introduced in Qingdao.

- **Ivory Coast Joins UN Water Convention:** Ivory Coast became the 53rd Party to the 1992 UN Water Convention, focusing on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes.

- **Indian Institute of Spices Research Award:** The Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) received the Best Technology Award for its contributions to horticultural sciences during ICAR's 96th Foundation Day celebrations.

- **Novak Djokovic's Olympic Gold:** Novak Djokovic won his first Olympic gold medal at the age of 37, marking a historic achievement in tennis. His victory further solidifies his status as one of the sport's greatest players.

- **Inauguration of 6G Communications Centre:** AtIITM Research Park, Chennai, The Centre of Excellence on "Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G" was inaugurated. This centre, part of the Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCoE)-India initiative, will focus on advancing 6G technology, aiming for unprecedented speeds and connectivity.

- **Rajiv Gandhi Civils Abhayahastam Initiative:** Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy launched this initiative to support civil services aspirants from Telangana, providing financial assistance to candidates who pass the Civil Services Mains examination.

- **Manoj Soni:** Manoj Soni, Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), resigned due to personal reasons. His resignation comes five years before the end of his term, which was set to conclude in 2029.

- **Wagh Nakh:** The Wagh Nakh, a tiger claw-shaped weapon used by Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, has been returned to India from London after 350 years. It is now on display at the Satara Museum.

- **Gujarat's Shramik Basera Scheme 2024:** The Gujarat state government introduced this scheme to provide temporary housing for financially unstable labourers, particularly construction workers, to improve their living conditions in key cities.

- **Repeal of Assam Muslim Marriages and Divorce Registration Act:** The Assam Cabinet approved the repeal of the 1935 Act through the Assam Repealing Bill, 2024, aiming to address child marriages and modernize the marriage and divorce registration process.

- **Rahaab Allana Awarded by France:** Rahaab Allana, a curator and author, received the Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government for his contributions to contemporary South Asian photography.

- **Israeli Knesset Designates UNRWA as Terrorist Organization:** The Israeli Knesset approved a bill to label the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) as a terrorist organization, affecting the agency's operations.

- **Nita Ambani Re-Elected to IOC:** Nita Ambani was unanimously re-elected as an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from India during the 142nd IOC session, emphasizing her ongoing influence in the Olympic movement.

- **Renaming of Rashtrapati Bhavan Halls:** President Droupadi Murmu renamed Durbar Hall to 'Ganatantra Mandap' and Ashok Hall to 'Ashok Mandap' in Rashtrapati Bhavan to reflect Indian cultural values and ethos.

- **Discovery of Lithium Resources in Karnataka:** The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) identified 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the Marlagalla area of Mandya district, Karnataka.

- **Hamzah Haz Passes Away:** Hamzah Haz, former Vice-President of Indonesia, passed away at the age of 84. His death was confirmed by a politician from the Development Planning Party (PPP) in Jakarta.

- **Launch of Vriksharopan Abhiyan 2024:** On July 25, 2024, Union Minister Shri G. Kishan Reddy launched this environmental initiative at Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) in Dhanbad to enhance green cover in coalfield regions.

- **Department of Atomic Energy's ODOS Initiative:** The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) inaugurated the "One DAE One Subscription" (ODOS) initiative at Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai. This initiative aims to improve accessibility to scientific research and publications within the DAE community.

- **Launch of Ideas4LiFE Portal:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, launched the Ideas4LiFE portal at IIT Delhi on 6th August. This initiative promotes innovative, environment-friendly lifestyles in alignment with the global Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment).

- **Ismail Haniyeh:** On August 5, 2024, Ismail Haniyeh, the political chief of Hamas, was assassinated in Tehran, Iran, while attending the inauguration of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. Haniyeh's death, along with one of his bodyguards, occurred in a high-profile attack.

- **SEBI Unveils 'SEVA' Chatbot:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced 'SEVA,' an AI-powered chatbot designed to enhance investor engagement and support, modernizing investor services and improving information access.

- **E-SeHAT Module:** The Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) launched the Electronic Services e-Health Assistance and Tele-consultation (E-SeHAT) module, allowing veterans to receive online medical consultations and reducing the need for in-person visits.

- **Suvidha Software Version 1.0:** On July 30, 2024, The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) launched 'Suvidha Software Version 1.0' at the Annual Operational Sea Training Conference in Visakhapatnam. The software aims to enhance training protocols and ensure uniformity across ICG platforms.

- **Santosh Kumar Gangwar:** Former Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar was sworn in as the 12th Governor of Jharkhand, succeeding C.P. Radhakrishnan, who was appointed Governor of Maharashtra.

- **World Wide Web Day:** On August 1st Celebrated annually, World Wide Web Day honours Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web in 1989.

- **National Mountain Climbing Day:** On August 1st, this day celebrates the achievements of mountaineers, commemorating Bobby Matthews and Josh Madigan's successful ascent of all 46 peaks in the Adirondack Mountains.

- **Tsung-Dao Lee:** Nobel Prize-winning physicist Tsung-Dao Lee passed away at the age of 97. He was renowned for his contributions to particle physics.

- **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework:** India's election as Vice-Chair of the Supply Chain Council under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) highlights its growing influence in enhancing supply chain resilience in the region.

- **International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE):** India hosted the 32nd ICAE in New Delhi, an important event in agricultural economics, focusing on global agricultural and food system discussions.

- **ADB Loan for Waste Management:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) granted a $200 million loan to improve solid waste management and sanitation across 100 cities in India. This funding supports the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 – Comprehensive Municipal Waste Management in Indian Cities Program.

- **India's Agricultural Export Ranking (2023):** India remained the eighth-largest global exporter of agricultural products in 2023. Despite a decrease in export value from $55 billion in 2022 to $51 billion, the country held steady in global rankings.

- **Friendship Day:** In India, Friendship Day is observed on the first Sunday of August, which this year falls on August 4th. Globally, Friendship Day is recognized on July 30th as the International Day of Friendship, a designation made by the United Nations.

- **Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana Launch:** The government of Jharkhand, led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren, has launched the Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana to enhance the financial stability and empowerment of women in Jharkhand.

- **Organ Donation Day:** India observed its 14th Indian Organ Donation Day on 3rd August, focusing on raising awareness, honouring donors, and encouraging more people to consider organ donation.

- **Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Resignation:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh resigned after 15 years in power. Her resignation led to widespread protests and security breaches at the Prime Minister's official residence.

- **Inaugural BIMSTEC Business Summit:** on 6th August, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) hosted the inaugural BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi, aiming to strengthen business ties among BIMSTEC member countries.

- **President Droupadi Murmu Honored:** President Droupadi Murmu received the "Companion of the Order of Fiji" in Suva, Fiji. This high honour recognizes exceptional contributions and services to Fiji.

- **Graham Thorpe:** Former England cricketer and coach Graham Thorpe passed away at 55. His cricketing career from 1993 to 2005 established him as one of England's most reliable batsmen.

- **e-Sankhyiki Portal:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) launched the e-Sankhyiki portal to enhance data management and dissemination in India, aiming to improve access to and analysis of official statistics.

- **Vinesh Phogat:** Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat announced her retirement after being disqualified from the Paris 2024 Olympic final due to weight management issues.

- **RBI Monetary Policy Committee Meeting:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to keep the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.5% following its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.

- **Andhra Pradesh's Two-Child Norm Decision:** The Andhra Pradesh government, led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, has decided to abolish the two-child norm for candidates contesting local body elections, responding to changing demographic trends and a declining fertility rate.

- **'Parvat Prahaar' Exercise:** On August 8, 2024, the Indian Army conducted the 'Parvat Prahaar' exercise in Ladakh to enhance military readiness and operational capabilities in high-altitude terrain near the India-China border.

- **Neeraj Chopra at Paris 2024:** Neeraj Chopra won the silver medal in javelin throw at the Paris 2024 Olympics with a throw of 89.45 meters. He was narrowly beaten by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who set a new Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 meters.

- **"Million Designers, Billion Dreams" Initiative:** Launched by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), this initiative aims to empower individuals in rural India through systems design, promoting development and innovation.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q1. Which organization is collaborating with the West Bengal government in the breastfeeding initiative?**
A) WHO
B) UNICEF
C) UNDP
D) UNESCO

**Q2. What is the main objective of the eSankhyiki Portal?**
A) To provide free healthcare services
B) To enhance user experience and data accessibility
C) To regulate the banking sector
D) To launch new educational policies

**Q3. What is the primary focus of the Mutual Evaluation conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)?**
A) Economic growth
B) Environmental sustainability
C) Combating money laundering and terrorist financing
D) Promoting international trade

**Q4. What is the primary objective of the Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign launched by NITI Aayog?**
A) To promote tourism in India
B) To achieve comprehensive coverage of key performance indicators (KPIs) in Aspirational Districts and Blocks
C) To provide financial assistance to start-ups

D) To enhance higher education facilities in urban areas

**Q5. Where was the 6th meeting of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Ministerial Council held?**
A) Paris
B) New York
C) London
D) New Delhi

**Q6. What is the main objective of the SIGHT Programme under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)?**
A) To boost coal production
B) To incentivize the production of green hydrogen
C) To promote electric vehicle manufacturing
D) To increase the use of nuclear energy

**Q7. Which committee's recommendations led to the creation of NABARD?**
A) Narasimham Committee
B) Rangarajan Committee
C) B. Sivaraman Committee
D) Kelkar Committee

**Q8. Which Indian state has launched Project Swasthya Nagaram?**
A) Maharashtra
B) Tamil Nadu
C) Telangana
D) Karnataka

**Q9. Which international agreement seeks to protect wetlands?**
A) Kyoto Protocol
B) Paris Agreement
C) Ramsar Convention
D) Montreal Protocol

**Q10. In which Indian state is Bhoj Wetland located?**
A) Gujarat
B) Maharashtra
C) Madhya Pradesh
D) Rajasthan

**Q11. What is the primary goal of Operation Nanhe Farishtey?**
A) To provide free meals to children at railway stations

B) To rescue children who are in dangerous or vulnerable situations at railway stations.
C) To offer educational support to children at railway stations
D) To provide shelter to homeless adults at railway stations

**Q12. Which Indian state has launched the Ladla Bhai Yojana?**
A) Uttar Pradesh
B) Haryana
C) Madhya Pradesh
D) Maharashtra

**Q13. Under the Agnipath Scheme, what is the maximum percentage of Agniveers who may be offered a permanent commission?**
A) 10%
B) 15%
C) 20%
D) 25%

**Q14. Which of the following entities is responsible for releasing the National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024?**
A) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
B) Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)
C) World Customs Organization (WCO)
D) World Trade Organization (WTO)

**Q15. Which Indian city was recently awarded the Certificate of World Craft City by the World Crafts Council International in 2024?**
A) Lucknow
B) Kolkata
C) Kashmir
D) Ahmedabad

**Q16. How many UNESCO World Heritage Sites are there in India?**
A) 40
B) 43
C) 45
D) 50

**Q17. Which country introduced new banknotes with advanced holography to enhance security features and combat counterfeiting?**
A) Australia

B) Germany
C) Switzerland
D) Japan

**Q18. Which new country was admitted as the 10th full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in July 2024?**

A) Afghanistan
B) Nepal
C) Belarus
D) Myanmar

**Q19. How many countries are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?**

A) 30
B) 31
C) 32
D) 33

**Q20. What is the main objective of the MeDevIS platform launched by the World Health Organization (WHO)?**

A) To promote global health policies
B) To provide standardized information on medical devices
C) To track global disease outbreaks
D) To manage healthcare funding

**Q21. What is the primary purpose of the Loss and Damage Fund established through U.N. climate negotiations?**

A) To promote renewable energy projects worldwide
B) To offer financial assistance to countries struggling with climate change effects
C) To fund scientific research on climate change
D) To support global climate policy conferences

**Q22. Where did the 45th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) take place?**

A) Tokyo, Japan
B) Paris, France
C) Busan, South Korea
D) Cape Town, South Africa

**Q23. According to the Henley Passport Index 2024, which country holds the top position for the most powerful passport?**

A) United States

B) Japan
C) Singapore
D) Germany

**Q24. In the 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index, what is India's rank out of 119 countries?**

A) 45th
B) 39th
C) 50th
D) 60th

**Q25. In the Henley Passport Index 2024, what is India's rank?**

A) 78th
B) 82th
C) 88th
D) 93th

**Q26. What is the primary objective of Project Nexus?**

A) To integrate global financial markets
B) To enhance domestic payment systems
C) To interlink domestic fast payment systems of selected countries
D) To standardize banking regulations across Asia

**Q27. What is the maximum loan amount that can be secured through the MSME Sahaj portal?**

A) ₹50,000
B) ₹75,000
C) ₹1 lakh
D) ₹2 lakh

**Q28. Where was the 16th edition of the Joint Military Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' conducted in 2024?**

A) Ladakh
B) Sikkim
C) Kashmir
D) Meghalaya

**Q29. Which country hosts Exercise Pitch Black?**

A) India
B) United States
C) Australia
D) Mongolia

**Q30. Who won the Women's Singles title at Wimbledon 2024?**

A) Barbora Krejčíková
B) Jasmine Paolini
C) Serena Williams
D) Iga Świątek

**Q31. Which nation won the Copa America 2024 title?**

A) Brazil
B) Argentina
C) Colombia
D) Uruguay

**Q32. Which Indian goalkeeper announced his retirement from international hockey after the Paris Olympics 2024?**

A) Sreejesh Ravindran
B) Bharat Chetri
C) PR Sreejesh
D) Harjot Singh

**Q33. Which country won the Women's Asia Cup in 2024?**

A) India
B) Pakistan
C) Sri Lanka
D) Bangladesh

**Q34. Who has been approved as the next chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI) by the Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB)?**

A) Dinesh Khara
B) Challa Sreenivasulu Setty
C) Ravi Agrawal
D) Nitin Gupta

**Q35. Bhupinder Singh Rawat, who recently passed away, was a former Indian player in which sport?**

A) Cricket
B) Hockey
C) Football
D) Tennis

**Q36. What unique feature does the "Medusa dress" created by Google employee Christina Ernst have?**

A) It changes colors based on mood
B) It has robotic snakes that can move
C) It is made from recycled materials
D) It glows in the dark

**Q37. Who succeeded Mark Rutte as the Prime Minister of the Netherlands?**

A) Dick Schoof
B) Christina Ernst
C) Piyush Pandey
D) Nitin Gupta

**Q38. Who made history as the first woman to take oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC)in Pakistan?**

A) Maryam Nawaz
B) Justice Aalia Neelum
C) Fatima Jinnah
D) Benazir Bhutto

**Q39. In the 2024 United Kingdom general election, which political party, led by Keir Starmer, achieved a decisive victory?**

A) Conservative Party
B) Liberal Democrats
C) Labour Party
D) Green Party

**Q40. Kamala Pujari, who recently passed away, was recognized for her contributions to which field?**

A) Medicine
B) Organic Farming
C) Education
D) Literature

**Q41. Nicolás Maduro secured his third term as President of which country in 2024?**

A) Cuba
B) Venezuela
C) Colombia
D) Bolivia

**Q42. Roberta Metsola made history in 2024 by becoming the first woman to secure a second term as President of which institution?**

A) European Commission
B) United Nations
C) European Parliament
D) NATO

**Q43. Which state's program won the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024?**

A) Tamil Nadu
B) Maharashtra
C) Kerala

D) Andhra Pradesh

**Q44. Which state was recognized as the 'Best Performing State' under the Prime Minister SVANidhi Scheme?**

A) Gujarat
B) Maharashtra
C) Madhya Pradesh
D) Uttar Pradesh

**Q45. National Doctor's Day is observed on July 1st to honor which Indian physician?**

A) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
B) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
C) Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy
D) Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

**Q46. The theme for World Population Day 2024 is:**

A) "Sustainable Population Growth"
B) "Count Everyone: A Global Effort"
C) "Population Control for the Future"
D) "Leave no one behind, count everyone"

**Q47. The theme for World Youth Skills Day 2024 is:**

A) "Skills for a Digital Future"

B) "Youth Empowerment through Education"
C) "Youth Skills for Peace and Development"
D) "Building a Skilled Workforce for Tomorrow"

**Q48. Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on which date to commemorate the victory of the Indian Armed Forces in the Kargil War?**

A) July 26
B) July 28
C) July 30
D) August 7

**Q49. What is the theme for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2024?**

A) Combating Trafficking: A Global Challenge
B) Protecting the Vulnerable
C) Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
D) Ending Exploitation: A Joint Effort

**Q50. World Breastfeeding Week is observed during which dates?**

A) July 29 - August 4
B) August 1 - August 7
C) August 10 - August 16
D) August 5 - August 11

## ANSWERS

**1. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The West Bengal government and UNICEF have partnered to promote breastfeeding among fathers, aiming to improve breastfeeding rates and family support for new mothers. Breast milk is considered the baby's "first vaccine" due to its essential nutrients and antibodies. UNICEF, established in 1946, is dedicated to improving the lives of children and mothers worldwide.

**2. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has launched the eSankhyiki Portal, a digital platform designed to improve user experience and data accessibility. The portal aims to align India's national statistical system with global standards and practices, providing real-time data for planners, policy-makers, researchers, and the public, thereby streamlining data management processes and supporting decision-making with up-to-date information.

**3. Answer: C**
Explanation:
India has been awarded a regular follow-up' category in the Mutual Evaluation conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) during 2023-24. The report, adopted during the FATF plenary in Singapore, reflects India's significant progress in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, a significant milestone in its efforts to enhance its financial integrity. India has been a member of FATF since 2010.

**4. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign, launched by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), aims to improve key performance indicators in 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks across India. The campaign operates under the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), focusing on improving developmental indicators in targeted areas.
NITI Aayog, established in 2015, serves as the apex body for formulating and monitoring policies and programs of the Indian government.

**5. Answer: D**
Explanation:
The 6th meeting of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Ministerial Council took place in New Delhi, combining physical and virtual participation. The GPAI supports responsible AI development and promotes international cooperation on policy and research.

**6. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has released guidelines for the Green Hydrogen initiative under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Programme. The scheme aims to boost green hydrogen production using renewable energy sources like

solar or wind power, by providing financial support and incentives for investments in green hydrogen technology, research and development, and infrastructure development.

**7. Answer: C**
Explanation:
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was established in July 1982, it was created following the B. Sivaraman Committee's recommendations for improving rural credit systems. Its goal is to promote sustainable development in agriculture and rural areas by providing financial support for projects and implementing innovative solutions to address challenges faced in rural development.

**8. Answer: C**
Explanation:
Telangana has launched Project Swasthya Nagaram, a project aiming to create TB-free municipalities in select urban areas. The initiative aims to reduce TB incidence by one-third and TB-related mortality within three years. The project will use a digital app for active TB screening, streamlining the process of identifying at-risk individuals.

**9. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The Ramsar Convention, also known as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands worldwide. It was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and focuses on maintaining the ecological character of wetlands and ensuring their sustainable management.
As of August 2024, India has designated 85 Ramsar Sites, wetlands recognized for their international significance, crucial for biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, and community support.

**10. Answer: C**
Explanation:
Bhoj Wetland in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, is at risk of being removed from the Ramsar Convention's list of Wetlands of International Importance due to concerns about the road project's impact on the wetland's ecological balance and biodiversity. The Swiss-based Ramsar Convention Secretariat has requested clarification from the Indian government on the proposed activities and their potential impact on Bhoj Wetland.

**11. Answer: B**
Explanation:
Operation Nanhe Farishtey is an initiative by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) to rescue children in dangerous situations at railway stations across India. The primary goal is to identify and rescue children who may be runaways, missing, or in distress. The children are then handed over to the District Child Welfare Committee, who works to reunite them with their families.

**12. Answer: D**
Explanation:
The Ladla Bhai Yojana is a Maharashtra government initiative aimed at supporting young men in the state. It offers monthly stipends for 12th grade pass students, diploma holders, and graduates. Beneficiaries also have the opportunity to undertake a one-year apprenticeship in a factory, enhancing their employability and providing practical work experience. The scheme aims to prepare a skilled workforce by providing financial support.

**13. Answer: D**
Explanation:

Haryana has announced a 10% reservation for Agniveers in government posts, including constables, mining guards, forest guards, jail wardens, and special police officers. Industrial units hiring Agniveers at a monthly salary of ₹30,000 will receive an annual subsidy of ₹60,000.
The Scheme was launched in June 2022, recruits personnel below the rank of officers for a four-year tenure in the Indian armed forces. After four years, up to 25% of Agniveers may be offered a permanent commission based on merit.

**14. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has released the National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024, a tool to assess the efficiency of cargo clearance in India. The study measures the time taken for cargo clearance in international trade, from arrival at a customs station to official release for import or export. It aligns with global standards set by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

**15. Answer: C**
Explanation:
Kashmir City has been recognized as a World Craft City by the World Crafts Council International, joining Jaipur, Mamallapuram, and Mysore as the fourth Indian city to receive this prestigious honor. The certificate was presented during a ceremony attended by notable figures such as Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and World Crafts Council President Sa'ad Hani Al-Qaddumi, marking a significant achievement for the region.

**16. Answer: B**
Explanation:
India currently has 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the recent additions of the "Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty" from Assam and the "Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala" temples in Karnataka. India now ranks as the sixth country in the world with the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

**17. Answer: D**
Explanation:
Japan launched new banknotes with advanced holography, the first redesign in 20 years. They use holography to create a 3D rotating effect on portraits, enhancing security features to combat counterfeiting. The currency in Japan is the Japanese yen (¥). Holography is a method for creating 3D images known as holograms, utilizing light interference and diffraction to record and reconstruct the reflected light field from an object.

**18. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) took place on July 4, 2024, in Astana, Kazakhstan. The meeting was attended by key world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and India's Representative Dr S Jaishankar. Belarus was admitted as the 10th full member of the SCO.

**19. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The NATO Summit, hosted by US President Joe Biden in Washington, DC from July 9 to 11, 2024, includes Sweden as a new member to reinforce support for Ukraine amidst global challenges. The event also marks NATO's 75th anniversary, highlighting its importance in Euro-Atlantic security. NATO, an intergovernmental military alliance of 32 member states, was formed after WWII with the signing of the North Atlantic

Treaty in 1949. The alliance's members commit to collective defense against third-party attacks, highlighting its continued relevance in maintaining international security.

**20. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the Medical Devices Information System (MeDevIS), an online platform that provides comprehensive information on 2,301 types of medical devices. MeDevIS is a significant advancement in global health technology management, offering a centralized resource for governments, regulators, healthcare providers, and users. The platform addresses various health conditions, including reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health, noncommunicable diseases, and infectious diseases like COVID-19.

**21. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Loss and Damage Fund, established through U.N climate negotiations, aims to provide financial assistance to countries facing the impacts of climate change. The fund helps developing nations disproportionately affected by events like extreme weather, sea level rise, and slow-onset disasters like desertification. It offers support through emergency relief, reconstruction, adaptation projects, and compensation for unavoidable losses.

**22. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The 45th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) took place in Busan, South Korea, marking the first time the country has hosted this prestigious global space research conference.
The event gathered 3,000 scientists and industry leaders from 60 nations, highlighting South Korea's increasing prominence in the space research community.

**23. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The Henley Passport Index 2024 ranks passports based on the number of destinations they can access without a prior visa. Singapore is ranked as the world's most powerful passport in 2024, offering visa-free entry to an impressive 195 global destinations.

**24. Answer: B**
Explanation:
In the 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India improved its ranking to 39th out of 119 countries from 54th in 2021, showing significant progress in the tourism sector. Globally, there were 975 million international tourist arrivals in 2022, with India welcoming 14.3 million tourists, holding a 1.47% share.

**25. Answer: B**
Explanation:
The Henley Passport Index for 2024 ranks Singapore as having the most powerful passport, offering visa-free access to 195 destinations. India ranks 82nd with visa-free entry to 58 countries, reflecting its moderate global mobility. In contrast, Afghanistan remains at the bottom of the index with visa-free access to only 26 countries, highlighting its limited global mobility.

**26. Answer: C**
Explanation:
Project Nexus is a collaboration between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), and central banks of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Signed in Basel, Switzerland, the project aims to interlink fast payment systems in these countries by 2026. It aims to improve efficiency, speed, and cost-effectiveness in retail cross-border payments.

**27. Answer: C**
Explanation:
State Bank of India introduces MSME Sahaj Portal, offering MSMEs an online loan solution within 15 minutes. Businesses can get up to ₹1 lakh against GST invoices with automated processing and data-driven credit checks. Accessible through SBI's Yono digital platform, it aids existing micro SME units in improving cash flow instantly.

**28. Answer: D**
Explanation:
The annual 'Nomadic Elephant' Joint Military Exercise between India and Mongolia took place in Meghalaya's Umroi from July 3-16, 2024. The 16th edition of the exercise focused on enhancing interoperability and improving both armies' capability for semi-conventional operations in semi-urban and mountainous areas.

**29. Answer: C**
Explanation:
Exercise Pitch Black is a biennial warfare exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in Northern Australia. It aims to simulate Offensive Counter Air (OCA) and Defensive Counter Air (DCA) combat scenarios. The exercise involves a 'red team' and a 'blue team' based at different locations, engaging in attacks and defense strategies.

**30. Answer: A**
Explanation:
Carlos Alcaraz made history by winning both the Wimbledon and Roland Garros men's singles titles in the same year, becoming the youngest player to achieve this feat. Barbora Krejcikova emerged victorious in the women's category at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London.

**31. Answer: B**
Explanation:
Argentina won their second consecutive Copa America title by defeating Colombia 1-0 in extra time. The decisive goal was scored by Lautaro Martínez in the 112th minute, after being subbed on in the 97th minute. This victory marks Argentina's 16th Copa America title, solidifying their position as the most successful team in the tournament's history. The win also brought an end to Colombia's remarkable 28-game unbeaten streak.

**32. Answer: A**
Explanation:
Indian hockey team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh has announced retirement post Paris Olympics 2024. Career highlights include international debut in 2006, captaining team at Rio 2016 Olympics, Tokyo Olympics 2021 bronze medal. Achievements: Asian Games gold in 2014, 2023; Commonwealth Games silver in 2014,
Major awards include Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna (2021), Padma Shri (2017), four-time Asian Champions Trophy winner.

**33. Answer: C**
Explanation:
The Women's Asia Cup, a cricket tournament organized by the ICC every two years in Asia. Sri Lanka won their first title in 2024 by defeating India in a thrilling run-chase. The Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup 2024 took place from July 19 to July 28 at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Sri Lanka.

**34. Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty has been approved as the next chairman of State Bank of India by the Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB). Setty will succeed Dinesh Khara when he turns 63 in August 2024. With 35 years of experience at SBI, Setty has held important positions including Chief General Manager and General Manager in the Corporate Accounts Group.

**35. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

Former Indian midfielder Bhupinder Singh Rawat passed away at 85 in Surat, Gujarat, on June 29, 2024, after a brief illness. Rawat, known as "Scooter" for his speed, played for India in the 1969 Merdeka Cup. He was recognized for his pace and skill in breaking through opposing defenses in the 1960s and 1970s.

**36. Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

Google employee Christina Ernst created the world's first AI dress, the "Medusa dress," featuring robotic snakes. The black dress has three golden snakes around the waist and a large robotic snake around the neck. Ernst developed an AI mode that detects faces and moves the snake head towards the person looking at you.

**37. Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

Dick Schoof, former spy chief, is the new Prime Minister of the Netherlands, leading a right-wing coalition with a focus on stringent immigration policies. He succeeded Mark Rutte after his 14-year tenure.

**38. Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

Justice Aalia Neelum made history as the first female Chief Justice of Lahore High Court in Pakistan, with the oath administered by the Punjab Governor. Maryam Nawaz, the first female Chief Minister of Punjab, was present at the ceremony.

**39. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

Keir Starmer led the Labour Party to a decisive victory in the 2024 UK general election, marking their first win since 2005. The party secured 411 seats, while the Conservative Party won 121 seats. Starmer, a former human rights lawyer, is set to become the next Prime Minister.

**40. Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

Kamala Pujari, a renowned Padma Shri awardee and organic farmer, has passed away at 74 due to kidney complications. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced her funeral will be held with state honors, mourning her loss.

**41. Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

Nicolás Maduro has won Venezuela's presidential election for a third term, set to govern from 2025 to 2031. He started as a trade union leader and was elected to the National Assembly in 2000. Maduro held key roles under President Hugo Chávez before succeeding him in 2013. With 51.2% of the counted votes and 5,150,092 valid votes, Maduro secured his victory with a 59% voter turnout.

**42. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

Roberta Metsola has made history by being re-elected as President of the European Parliament, becoming the first woman to secure a second term in this position. The Maltese politician received strong support from 562 out of 623 votes cast.

The European Parliament is a key institution of the European Union, which is a political and economic union of 27 member states in Europe, promoting easier travel and trade among its participants.

**43. Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

The Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) program, initiated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, was awarded the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024. Dr Angela Merkel announced the win during a ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal on July 11th. The program shares the EURO 1 million award with Dr Rattan Lal and SEKEM. Launched in 2016, the APCNF program aims to shift smallholder farmers from chemical-intensive to natural farming practices.

**44. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

Madhya Pradesh has been recognized as the 'Best Performing State' under the PM SVANidhi Scheme, which supports urban street vendors. Launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on June 1, 2020, the scheme offers collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. I

**45. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

National Doctor's Day is observed annually on July 1st to honour Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, a prominent physician and former Chief Minister of West Bengal. The theme for 2024 is "Healing Hands, Caring Hearts" to celebrate the contributions of doctors in healthcare. Dr. Roy, born on July 1, 1882, was a significant figure in Indian medicine and politics.

**46. Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

World Population Day was established by the United Nations in 1989 to raise awareness about global population growth, starting from when the global population reached 5 billion on July 11, 1987. Over the years, it has become a platform for advocating reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, and sustainable development, shaping policies and public opinions. The theme for World Population Day 2024, "Leave no one behind, count everyone," highlights the importance of inclusive data collection to ensure all communities are represented in population statistics and policy-making.

**47. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

World Youth Skills Day is observed on 15th July to highlight the significance of skill development in youth. The day aims to acknowledge and support the importance of skills in empowering young people and improving their future opportunities. The theme for 2024 is "Youth Skills for Peace and Development," focusing on the contribution of skills in building peaceful and sustainable societies.

**48. Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on July 26 to honour soldiers who lost their lives during the Kargil War and celebrate the Indian Armed Forces' victory. The war took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir, involving a conflict between India and Pakistan due to Pakistani troops infiltrating Indian territory.

**49. Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, observed on July 30, raises awareness about human trafficking victims and advocates for their rights. The 2024 theme, "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking," focuses on challenges faced by children in trafficking situations. The day aims to educate the public, promote preventive measures, and support victims through improved global policies and practices.

**50. Answer: B**

Explanation:

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is celebrated globally from August 1st to 7th to promote breastfeeding and support mothers' rights to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2024 is "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All." Breastfeeding helps reduce the risk of respiratory problems, SIDS, diarrhoea, and ear infections, as well as lowers the chances of obesity and type 1 diabetes in the future.