

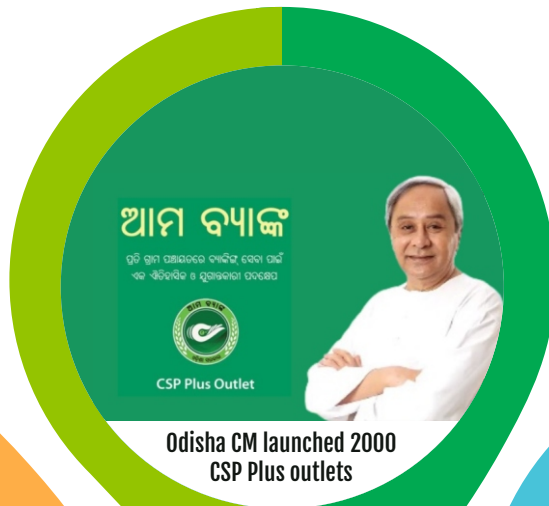
# APTI PLUS OAS GAZETTE

APRIL 2024



## APTI PLUS

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



Odisha CM launched 2000  
CSP Plus outlets



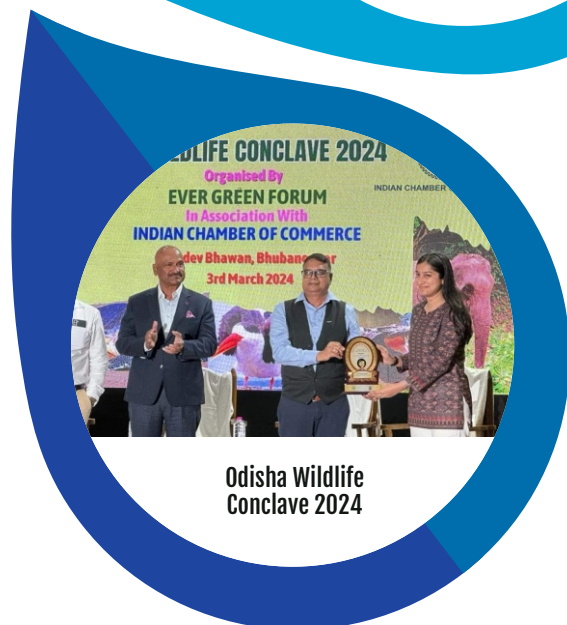
Bangali Nanda, honored with the  
Kendra Sahitya Akademi  
Translation Prize



Chandi Tarakasi get  
GI Tag



Mass nesting sites  
of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles



Odisha Wildlife  
Conclave 2024

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COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR ODISHA STATE CIVIL SERVICES EXAMS

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

Rising beyond limits: Our students shine in **OAS 2021**  
*Congratulations* You have made us all proud



**SUCHISMITA PANIGRAHI**  
**RANK 2**



**And many more...**

## Odisha Current Affairs

### **In a significant move towards financial inclusion, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 2000 CSP Plus outlets (Customer Service Points) under 'Ama Bank' to extend banking services to all unbanked panchayats in Odisha.**

- About 65% of total gram panchayats lack a physical bank branch, leading to difficulties in accessing banking services and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for most people in rural Odisha.
- To address this, the Government of Odisha, in collaboration with six public sector banks, launched the ambitious and people-centric scheme 'Ama Bank'.
- The scheme aims to provide banking services through CSP Plus banking outlets to every unbanked GP and is being implemented in phases to cover all unbanked GPs within the current financial year 2023-24.
- This initiative ensures that the rural population in Odisha no longer needs to travel long distances to avail benefits under different schemes, particularly KALIA, MAMTA, and old age Pension, or to apply for a small business loan.

### **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated 9 industrial projects and laid the foundation for 23 industrial units.**

- These projects, with a total investment of Rs 6992.94 Crore, are spread over 14 districts: Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Ganjam, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Khurda, Puri, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Subarnapur, and Sundergarh.
- The Chief Minister highlighted that the industrial portfolio of Odisha is expanding to include new-age and employment-intensive sectors such as green energy equipment manufacturing, textiles, and tourism.

### **The Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal at Baramunda in Odisha's capital, Bhubaneswar, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik**

- Named after BR Ambedkar, will offer improved facilities to passengers and become a significant landmark in the city and state.
- A gallery showcasing Ambedkar's contributions to the country has been established at the terminal.
- Built over 17 acres, the terminal can accommodate 30,000 passengers and 700-800 buses daily.

### **Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the I-Hub at IIM-Sambalpur during the 100 Cube Startup Conclave.**

- The 100 Cube Conclave, an initiative of the Ministry of Education, seeks to establish 100 startups at IIM-

S, each with an approximate value of ₹100 crore, by Odisha's centennial celebration in 2036.

- The I-Hub will support ventures in sectors such as textiles, arts and culture, agriculture, healthcare, financial and digital inclusivity, tribal entrepreneurship, and sustainability.
- IIM-Sambalpur aims to promote local art, culture, and intellectual industries, adding value to regions rich in mineral and mining resources and establishing Odisha as a startup and entrepreneurial hub.

### **Four railway stations from Odisha have been recognized as 'eat right' stations, a part of the Eat Right India movement by FSSAI, ensuring safe and nutritious food options for passengers across India.**

- The stations - Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack, and Jharsuguda - were evaluated on various parameters such as water quality, cleanliness, sanitation, pest control, register maintenance, and food item inspection.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) awards certifications to railway stations adhering to quality and hygiene standards.
- In addition to railway stations, 28 campuses in the state, including hospitals, educational institutions, state PSUs, and Aahar centers, have been certified as 'eat right campus'.

### **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) released a report stating a significant decrease in the leopard population in Odisha.**

- The leopard population in Odisha dropped to 568 in 2022 from 760 in 2018, marking a decrease of 192 leopards over four years.
- In contrast, the leopard population in India rose to 13,874 in 2022 from 12,852 in 2018, showing an increase of approximately 1,000 leopards over the same period.
- Madhya Pradesh had the highest leopard population in 2022 with 3,907 leopards, followed by Maharashtra (1,985), Karnataka (1,879), and Tamil Nadu (1,070), as per the report.

### **The Odisha Cabinet has approved the establishment of the State Water Informatics Centre (SWIC) to manage hydro-meteorological data for the state.**

- The initiative aims to improve water resource management, aid in decision-making, and streamline policy planning.
- SWIC will collaborate with the National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) to exchange hydro-meteorological data between the Centre and the

state government.

- The state government will provide ongoing funding for SWIC's operations beyond the national hydrology project period.

### **The renowned silver filigree craft, known as Chandi Tarakasi, hailing from Cuttack city in Odisha, has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.**

- The Odisha State Co-Operative Handicrafts Corporation Limited initiated the application process for the GI tag for Cuttack's filigree work on July 7, 2021.
- This accolade marks the 26th product from Odisha to receive the GI tag.
- The GI tag is expected to enhance the global recognition and demand for Cuttack's filigree work, consequently leading to improved financial prospects for the artisans involved.

### **Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district is implementing AI towers costing Rs 2.5 crore for early forest fire detection.**

- Five towers with high-resolution cameras will be installed to cover the entire sanctuary, detecting activity within a 15-kilometer range.
- Real-time forest fire data and transmission will be provided through this system.

### **President Murmu paid homage to Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi, emphasizing the universality of his teachings beyond Odisha.**

- Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi (1850–1895) was a 19th-century saint, poet, mystic, and social reformer from Odisha, India.
- He was a follower of Mahima Swami, and his teachings and poetry were deeply influenced by Mahima Dharma, a monotheistic religious movement in Odisha.
- Bhima Bhoi, like his guru Mahima Swami, primarily taught Ekaishwara Brahmvada or the belief in One God, who is indescribable (Aleka), formless (Arupa), shapeless (Nirakara), and pure (Niranjan).
- Bhima Bhoi is remembered for his mystical poetry, which was primarily in the Odia language, and his social reform efforts aimed at uplifting the marginalized sections of society.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to the veteran leader on his 108th birth anniversary ahead of his visit to the state.**

- Biju Patnaik, a revered figure in Odisha, remembered even decades after his passing.
- Known as "Kalinga Putra" and the "Big Daddy of Indian Politics."

- Biju Patnaik, born on March 5, 1916, was an Indian politician, aviator, and businessman. He served as the Chief Minister of Odisha twice, from 1961 to 1963 and from 1990 to 1995.
- He was also a member of Lok Sabha from Kendrapara from 1977 to 1985.
- Played a significant role in international diplomacy, including assisting the Soviet Army during World War II.

### **The state government announced a 'Research Fund' for medical colleges and institutes under the Health and Family Welfare Department to boost medical research**

- A provision of Rs 9 crore per annum has been made for the fund.
- Rs 1 crore each per annum for SCB Medical College and Hospital Cuttack, MKCG MCH Berhampur, and VIMSAR Burla; Rs 50 lakh each per annum for new government medical colleges and SCB Dental College, Cuttack; Rs 25 lakh each per annum for PG institutes.
- Its Objectives are to Enhancing the quality of medical education, facilitating research, publications, faculty, and student participation in seminars and conferences.
- Improved quality of research, medical education, and patient care in the state.

### **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Debidutta Biswal, inaugurated the Odisha Wildlife Conclave 2024, highlighting the crucial role of wildlife in maintaining ecological balance.**

- Organized by the Ever Green Forum and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the event showcased Odisha's achievements in wildlife conservation, research, and management.
- Odisha has made significant progress in wildlife management, with notable achievements including an increase in tiger populations and successful protection of Olive Ridley turtles.
- Efforts include revival plans for the Similipal Tiger Reserve, management of saltwater crocodiles at Bhitarkanika National Park, and conservation of blackbucks at Bhetnoi.

### **The Odisha government has announced a ban on single-use plastics inside protected areas, including sanctuaries, national parks, and tiger reserves, effective from April 1.**

- Visitors will not be allowed to use single-use plastics at Eco-Tour sites and nature camps. Food items in plastic wraps will need to be disposed of in designated places and garbage bins, not littered in protected areas.

- Violation of the ban may lead to arrest, jail term, and fines under section 33(C) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

### **Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the Nabin Odisha Magic Card from Malkangiri district in virtual mode, on the occasion of legendary Biju Patnaik's birth anniversary.**

- 'Nabin Magic Card' is designed for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- This initiative, aligned with the 5T framework, promises to revolutionize higher education and empower youth to pursue their aspirations.
- The Magic card will implement a point-based system, classifying students into Silver, Gold, and Platinum categories based on academic performance, discipline, extracurricular activities, and social contributions.

### **PM Modi inaugurated the Indian Oil Corporation Limited Mono Ethylene Glycol project in Paradip Refinery, aimed at reducing India's import dependency.**

- He also inaugurated a 344 km-long product pipeline from Paradip in Odisha to Haldia in West Bengal, enhancing the import infrastructure on the Eastern Coast.
- In the road infrastructure sector, Modi dedicated four-laning projects including Singhara to Binjabahal Section of NH-49, Binjabahal to Tileibani Section of NH-49, Balasore-Jharpokharia Section of NH-18, and Tangi-Bhubaneswar Section of NH-16. He also laid the foundation stone for the eight-laning of the Chandikhole-Paradip Section.
- The railway network saw expansion with the dedication of the 162 Km Bansapani - Daitari - Tomka - Jakhapura Rail Line, enhancing transportation of Iron and Manganese ore from Keonjhar District to ports and steel plants.
- Inauguration of the CONCOR Container Depot in Kalinga Nagar aims to boost domestic and international trade.
- PM Modi also inaugurated a 5 MLD capacity seawater desalination plant at Odisha Sands Complex of IREL(I) Ltd, a project developed with indigenous desalination technologies.

### **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik introduced the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) Nabin Card for rural residents.**

- Eligibility: All villagers, except government employees and income taxpayers, are eligible for the card.
- Scheme is part of the state's 5T initiative.
- Over one crore families (around 80% of the population) receive cashless medical benefits.

- Women get up to Rs 10 lakh for medical expenses, others get up to Rs 5 lakh.
- 130,000 beneficiaries receive treatment in 816 private hospitals monthly, costing the state over Rs 270 crore.

### **Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) entered into a collaboration with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), Bangkok and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kerala for disaster preparedness.**

- The collaboration will strengthen the state government's preparedness for managing disasters through impact based forecasting, early warning dissemination and last mile connectivity.
- This will also empower people to leverage technology to mainstream disaster preparedness.

### **In an effort to bring in transparency, the Transport department of Odisha has launched automated driving test stations (ADTS) in six regional transport offices (RTOs) in the state.**

- The new facility commenced at RTOs in Ganjam, Chandikhole, Rourkela, Angul, Sundargarh and Keonjhar. ADTS will be operational at all 38 RTOs of the state shortly.
- As part of this initiative, high-end advanced cameras will be deployed to meticulously record every aspect of an applicant's performance during their driving test. Utilising the data collected by these cameras, the software will objectively determine the results, granting either a pass or fail based on the applicant's driving skills.
- This innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered system aims to eliminate any human intervention, guaranteeing accurate and prompt outcomes for driving assessments.

### **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first Indoor Athletics Centre and Indoor Aquatic Centre at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar.**

- He also laid the foundation stone for an Indoor Diving Centre.
- The new indoor facilities aim to provide athletes with year-round training and competition opportunities, unaffected by external weather conditions.
- The Indoor Athletics Centre is India's first venue capable of hosting indoor continental and regional championships.
- It features a 10,000-square-meter track provided by the renowned Italian firm, Mondo SpA, which is used in the Olympics.
- The Indoor Aquatic Centre boasts a temperature-controlled 50m Olympic-size swimming pool and

a 25m warm-up pool.

### **Odisha's state government plans to establish the Biju Patnaik Aviation Centre (BPAC) at Birasal airstrip in Dhenkanal district.**

- The state Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has approved this proposal, with the government allocating Rs 562 crore for the project.
- BPAC will offer training for pilots, simulator operators, cabin crew, and other aviation roles, aligning with the state's Civil Aviation Policy-2022.
- This initiative aims to position Odisha as a key player in the aviation sector, fostering a pool of skilled workers for the industry.

### **Nandankanan Zoological Park in Odisha has initiated a night out programme for visitors.**

- Following the successful launch of a similar initiative in Bharatpur forests, the Forest department introduced the 'Night out at Zoo' in Nandankanan Zoological Park.
- The aim is to educate visitors about nocturnal species.
- Visitors are encouraged to embrace this opportunity for an educational and unique experience.

### **Bangali Nanda, a renowned Odia writer, has been honored with the prestigious Kendra Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize for 2023.**

- The award was announced by the Kendra Sahitya Akademi on Monday for Nanda's translation work titled 'Nelluri Keshavaswamyanka Shrestha Galpa,' which is a collection of Telugu short stories originally written by Nelluri Keshavaswamy and published by the National Book Trust (NBT) in 2019.
- Nanda, known for his contributions to Odia literature, has authored several books and translated numerous works from various languages.
- Nanda, who resides in Rayagada district, retired from his teaching career in 2005 after translating over 14 books into Odia.

### **Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'AMA BHOOMI' initiative in Bhubaneswar, inaugurating Ananda Bana at Shankarpur.**

- AMA BHOOMI' is a 5T initiative by BDA to enhance the quality of life in Bhubaneswar.
- It focuses on creating and maintaining open spaces to mitigate urban heat island impacts and increase the city's green cover and blueways.
- Bhubaneswar's growth has led to urban challenges, necessitating innovative solutions for

citizen's well-being.

- The initiative identifies five types of open spaces: parks, playfields, multipurpose grounds, blueways, and greenways.

### **Odisha CM, Naveen Patnaik, inaugurated 'Anandabana,' an urban forest in the capital city of Bhubaneswar.**

- Developed by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Forest department on 90 acres at Shankarpur in Kalinganagar.
- Features include 1,000m soil trail, 550m rock trail, and 3,830m bicycle trail.
- Houses 10,000 trees and plants, including medicinal varieties, along with three water bodies.

### **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik has declared a monthly honorarium of Rs 25,000 for Padma awardees from the state.**

- This amount will be granted to them each month starting from April this year.
- The announcement, is a recognition of their noteworthy contributions to society, as stated by the Chief Minister's Office.

### **Odisha was the first state in India to reserve 33% of government jobs for women in the 1990s.**

- Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik has announced a significant increase in annual casual leave for women government employees.
- Women employees will now be entitled to 25 days of casual leave annually, up from the previous 15 days of temporary leave.
- The decision was made considering the various responsibilities women have at home and elsewhere.

### **Mass nesting sites of Olive Ridley sea turtles in Odisha will be off-limits to visitors until the hatchlings emerge.**

- Mass nesting is expected to commence shortly after the mating season in the deep sea, which typically occurs between November and December.
- Olive Ridley sea turtles are protected under Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Activities such as observation, photography, and crowding at nesting sites are considered 'hunting' under Section-9 of the Act.
- In 2023, approximately 6.37 lakh Olive Ridley sea turtles nested at Rushikulya coast from February 23 to March 2, setting a new record for the beach in Odisha's Ganjam district.
- Another 503,719 turtles laid eggs on the tranquil beaches of the sanctuary in Kendrapada district, which is the world's largest rookery of sea turtles.



- The hatchlings emerge from these eggs after 45-60 days, a phenomenon known as 'arribada'.

### **A black panther, first seen in Odisha's Sundargarh district in 2018, has been captured on camera again.**

- They are primarily found in dense forested regions, with sightings reported in various areas including the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala, Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve, and Kabini Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, Achanakmar Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary in Goa, and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.

### **The Forest department in Odisha is set to introduce Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) technology at Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district to ensure satellite connectivity for its personnel.**

- This move, aimed at enhancing communication and surveillance, is part of the department's strategy to combat poaching and illegal activities at the reserve.
- VSAT stations will be set up at vantage points in Similipal and Satkosia Tiger Reserve in the first phase, with a total of 23 stations in Similipal and six in Satkosia.
- VSATs will facilitate communication among field personnel within the reserves and with external locations, improving the exchange of information to combat illegal activities.

### **The Odisha state government has launched a new initiative called the Nano Unicorn Scheme.**

- Aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and reducing unemployment in rural areas.
- Target: Supporting 1,200 mini-sized businesses (nano unicorns) by 2025-26.
- Rs 13.56 crore allocated by state government.

### **The Odisha Government, under the "Mo Jungle Jami Yojana (MJJM)," awarded habitat rights to 32 villages of the Paudi Bhuyan Community in Deogarh district.**

- Paudi Bhuyan is the first indigenous community from Odisha to receive such rights.
- This is the fourth such title awarded in India, following similar awards to other vulnerable tribal groups (PTVGs) like Bharia in Madhya Pradesh, and Kamar and Baiga in Chhattisgarh.

### **Odisha government has prohibited taking selfies with scheduled wildlife species.**

- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, now considers taking selfies with wild animals punishable, with

imprisonment up to seven years.

- Photos and selfies with wildlife posted on social media disrupt the animals' life cycle and violate the Wildlife Protection Act.

### **A Gupta-era stone sculpture was discovered during road work near Bhimkela village in Odisha.**

- The heavily eroded sculpture, measuring two-and-a-half feet in length and 30 cm wide, depicts a couple, with the female playing a musical instrument.

### **Odisha filmmakers Amartya Bhattacharyya and Swastik Choudhury achieved global recognition for their film "Son of Adam."**

- Their film won the prestigious 'Best Musical Film' award at the Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Madrid (FICIMAD) 2024.
- "Son of Adam" is a cinematic adaptation of Rupam Islam's album 'Aami,' released in 2020, in collaboration with guitar maestro Amyt Datta.

### **CM Naveen Patnaik aims to make Odisha the leading state by 2036, coinciding with its 100th anniversary.**

- He envisions a modern, dynamic, and responsive Odisha, particularly benefiting the youth, women, children, entrepreneurs, farmers, and tribals.
- The state's focus is on providing top-tier educational and employment opportunities to its youth to enable them to realize their aspirations and contribute to a prosperous Odisha.
- The last five years have been guided by the principles of 5T (Teamwork, Transparency, Technology, Time, Transformation), leading to visible changes across the state and among its populace.

### **A Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) has been spotted in Odisha's Sundargarh district after nearly twenty years.**

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) confirmed that the tiger has migrated from Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, as stated by the PCCF.
- IUCN Red List Status is Endangered

### **'Mita Didi' is the mascot for booth-level officers (BLOs) from Odisha and has gained national recognition.**

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) featured Mita Didi on the cover page of the 10th edition of its e-Patrika.
- Mita Didi, wearing a blue saree with a Pasapali motif, introduces herself as a representative of

BLOs from Odisha.

- She serves as an ambassador to promote electoral literacy and encourage citizens to exercise their voting rights.
- The BLO E-Patrika aims to provide cascading information for well-informed and motivated booth-level officers.
- BLOs play a crucial role in the election management process, starting from the revision of the voter list at the grassroots level.

### **Odisha has surged to the top of the country's malaria chart in 2023.**

- Five districts—Rayagada, Kalahandi, Malkangiri, Koraput, and Kandhamal—have reported the highest number of cases.
- Malaria cases in Odisha nearly doubled in 2023 compared to 2022, reaching 41,971 cases and four deaths.
- Odisha accounted for about 18.7% of the country's total malaria cases, followed by Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Rayagada reported the highest number of cases (9,925), followed by Kalahandi (7,543), Koraput (7,007), Kandhamal (5,062), and Malkangiri (3,888).
- The annual parasite index (API) increased from 0.52 in 2022 to 0.93 in 2023, exceeding four in five districts.

### **Anglia Ruskin University, NIWSASS, and Tata Coffee have joined forces with the Agriculture department to implement a project aimed at enhancing the Koraput coffee chain.**

- The project aims to empower tribal coffee growers by providing training in value addition, quality management, and market connectivity.

### **Odisha has seen a notable increase in its forest and tree cover, gaining 893 square kilometers over the past two years (2019-2021), according to the Forest Survey of India Report 2021**

- A book titled "Highlights of Odisha Forestry Sector-2024" was launched during the event.

### **Efforts by animal enthusiasts in Odisha's Ganjam district have significantly increased the house sparrow population.**

- The Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee (RSTPC) shifted focus to house sparrows, locally known as "Ghara Chatia," upon noticing their declining numbers.

### **Twenty-two hikers from 12 states participated in a 3-day expedition at Odisha's Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary.**

- Organized by Hiraikud Wildlife Division and India Hikes, the expedition focused on nature and wildlife.
- Established in 1985, the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Bargarh district of Odisha, India.
- Spanning an area of 346.91 km<sup>2</sup>, the sanctuary plays a vital role in conserving various local wildlife and their habitats.
- The Indian Gaur or Bison is one of the prominent animals in the protected area.



**OPSC Current Affairs**

**NATIONAL**

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched India's first hydrogen fuel cell ferry, a result of indigenous development and construction by Cochin Shipyard.

- Cochin Shipyard pioneers India's first hydrogen fuel cell ferry, showcasing green technology for maritime use.
- Zero-emission, noise-free, and energy-efficient, it combats global warming.
- Inauguration ignites the use of hydrogen in marine sectors, aligning with India's green mission.
- Embracing green hydrogen furthers India's goal of net-zero emissions by 2070.

## The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) with its headquarters based in India.

- The International Big Cat Alliance focuses on conserving big cats, including Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar, and Cheetah.
- Five out of these seven big cats are found in India, emphasizing the country's pivotal role in big cat conservation.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, recognizing India's significant role in conserving big cats and endangered species, called for the formation of an Alliance of Global Leaders to combat poaching in Asia during his speech on Global Tiger Day in 2019.
- This call was reiterated on the occasion of commemorating 50 years of India's Project Tiger on April 9, 2023, where the launch of the International Big Cat Alliance was formally announced.

## Shri Sarbananda Sonowal dedicates first-ever Made-in-India ASTDS tug

- The Tug 'Ocean Grace' is built by Cochin Shipyard Limited under MoPSW promoting Aatmanirbhar Bharat
- The Mobile Medical Unit dedicated will offer a wide range of healthcare services
- There are 53 Sagarmala Projects worth Rs. 54,500 Crores in the state of Odisha

- The goal of the Green Tug Transition Programme (GTTP) is to convert at least 50% of all tugs into Green Tugs by 2030
- Under the leadership of PM Modi Paradip Port has set a shining example of progress and growth: Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

## Geological Survey of India Celebrates 174th Foundation Day

- Founded: 4 March 1851
- Founder: Thomas Oldham
- Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal, India
- Formed: 4 March 1851; 172 years ago
- Government agency executive: Shri Janardan Prasad
- Parent Government agency: Ministry of Mines

## Union Minister of Steel inaugurates India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant in Stainless Steel Sector, paving the way for sustainable steel production

- This project to be the world's first off-grid Green Hydrogen plant for the stainless steel industry and the world's first Green Hydrogen plant with rooftop & floating solar
- India's rich history of environmentalism, deeply embedded in its traditions and practices, now being revitalized through modern strategies: Sh. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia
- Green growth and Green jobs to drive India's journey towards the target of net zero carbon emission by 2070
- Union Minister urges industry stakeholders to enthusiastically adopt clean technologies, & actively participate in India's transformative journey towards a greener economy
- The next era of growth belongs to India and within India, to the steel industry: Union Minister, Sh. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia

## PM witnesses the historic "Commencement of Core Loading" at India's first indigenous Fast Breeder Reactor (500 MWe) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu

- Upon completion of the core loading, the first approach to criticality will be achieved, leading to generation of power subsequently
- In spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, PFBR is

indigenously designed and constructed by BHAVINI with contribution from more than 200 Indian industries including MSMEs

- India's nuclear power program is aimed to meet the twin goals of energy security and sustainable development

## India's First Underwater Metro Train Service Launched in Kolkata by PM Modi

- Spanning a 4.8-kilometer stretch between Howrah Maidan and Esplanade, this section forms a vital segment of the East-West Metro corridor, connecting key areas like the IT hub Salt Lake Sector V.
- Of the total 16.6 kilometres of the East-West Metro, 10.8 kilometres consist of an underground corridor, including the groundbreaking tunnel beneath the Hooghly River.
- The section of the metro, featuring six stations, three of which are underground, promises improved accessibility for commuters, catering to the city's bustling areas strategically.
- As a Metro train is expected to traverse a 520-metre stretch under the river in just 45 seconds, it not only offers speed but also ensures a seamless and time-efficient mode of transportation, further enhancing Kolkata's connectivity and urban mobility.

## Minimum age to cast postal ballots hiked to 85 years.

- According to the electoral roll published on February 8, of the 96.88 crore electors in the country, 1.85 crore were above the age of 80.
- The rules enable postal ballot voting for a "notified class of electors", which includes essential services workers, persons with disabilities, Covid-19-infected or suspected cases and senior citizens.
- In Section 27(A) (e), senior citizens had been defined as those above 80 years.
- In the conduct of Elections Rules-1961, in rule 27A, in clause (e), for the words and figures—above 80 years, the words and figures—above 85 years shall be substituted.

## Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to Launch 'NITI For States' Platform

- The 'NITI for States' platform is a cornerstone initiative empowering states and UTs to contribute significantly to the collective vision of a developed India.
- This platform underscores NITI Aayog's commitment to fostering collaborative governance

and promoting good governance practices across the nation.

## Piyush Goyal launches 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' to ease farmers' warehousing logistics

- 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' attempts to prevent distress sales, which occur when farmers are forced to sell their harvest at lower rates due to inadequate post-harvest storage facilities.
- The minister emphasized the importance of the WDRA's role in maintaining the quality and security of warehouses.

## The Indian government has introduced rules for owning and breeding exotic wild animals in captivity.

- These rules are established under Section 49M of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, to ensure better regulation and control over the possession and breeding of endangered exotic animals.
- Anyone who owns an exotic animal species must apply for registration through the PARIVESH 2.0 portal within six months from the start of these rules. Additionally, within 30 days of acquiring an exotic animal, they must report this possession to their State Chief Wild Life Warden.
- The rules apply to exotic animal species listed in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) and included in Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. This mainly concerns highly protected animals worldwide
- The legal framework for these rules was established by the Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022, effective from April 1, 2023. This amendment requires exotic wild animal keepers to obtain a mandatory license for keeping and breeding animals listed in Appendix I of Schedule IV.

## Union Minister Shri Arjun Munda inaugurates Agriculture Integrated Command and Control Center.

- With the aim of empowering the farmers of the country by equipping them with information, services and facilities using digital technology, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda inaugurated the Agriculture Integrated Command and Control Center established at Krishi Bhawan, Delhi.
- Objective of the new initiative is to provide

farmers the information about the reality in the farm and also to find out what are the real challenges our agriculture sector is facing.

## Launch of Digital Exhibition “Subhash Abhinandan” on 134th Foundation Day of National Archives of India.

- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's personal records are preserved in the National Archives of India and can be accessed on Netaji Portal (<http://www.netajipapers.gov.in/>) and Abhilekh-Patal (<https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/>).
- In these records, letters written by him, diary of his father Shri Janaki Nath Bose, documents of Azad Hind Fauj and many government documents related to him are available.
- The exhibition comprises 16 sections covering the period from his birth to the present time.
- It provides a glimpse of his life through documents, showcasing significant items such as Janaki Nath Bose's diary, his birth, his civil service examination results and more.
- The decades of struggle from 1920 to 1940 are well documented, offering insights into his speeches, his adventurous journey and the struggle of Azad Hind Fauj.

## Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually dedicates to the nation Sela Tunnel from Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

- The tunnel to provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang & improve the ease of travel for the people
- Constructed by BRO at 13,000 feet, the tunnel to boost defence preparedness & augment socio-economic development of the border region
- The road connecting Tezpur, Assam to Tawang in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Sela Tunnel has been constructed using the new Austrian Tunnelling Method and incorporates safety features of the highest standards. The project will not only provide a faster and more efficient transport route in the region but is of strategic importance to the country.

## PM Modi Unveils Bronze Statue of Ahom General Lachit Borphukan in Assam's Jorhat

- He was a legendary army commander of the Ahom kingdom (1228-1826). He was known for his

leadership in the 1671 'Battle of Saraighat'.

- He defeated the Mughal forces, led by Raja Ramsingh-I, in this battle, and thwarted a drawn-out attempt by them to take back Assam.

## North India's First Government Homeopathic College to be Established in Kathua, J&K

- The Institution is being built in line with Modi Govt's healthcare approach of synergizing allopathic with Ayush streams of medicine, including Homoeopathy, Ayurveda and naturopathy
- Kathua all set to emerge as North India's cost-effective and state-of-the-art centre of medical facilities

## Union Minister Arjun Munda Inaugurates National Dairy Mela and Agricultural Exhibition in Jharkhand

- This fair is being organized for the all-round development of livestock and agriculture in the tribal area.
- Dairy mela is a platform where efforts have been made to bring the latest technologies of dairy science to the farmers.
- There is a need for the country's farmers and cattle rearers to adopt scientific methods to augment milk production.

## India Becomes Second-Largest Mobile Phone Producer Globally

- The mobile phone sector has transformed from being 78 percent import-dependent in 2014 to achieving 97 per cent self-sufficiency by 2024.
- Only 3 per cent of the total mobile phones sold in India are now imported.

## UGC Introduces SheRNI, Helping Female Scientists And Faculty Connect

- The primary goal of SheRNI is to establish a national-level expert platform for women faculty members.
- This platform facilitates the exchange of expertise, insights, and experiences across various domains, promoting collaboration and networking opportunities among women in academia.
- The SheRNI database currently hosts profiles of 81,818 women faculty members, showcasing their vast contributions to the field of science.
- Furthermore, it houses an impressive collection of 6,75,313 publications and 11,543 patents,

underscoring the significant role of women in advancing scientific knowledge and innovation.

## GOI Announces Implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act was passed by Parliament in 2019.
- Its purpose is to grant Indian citizenship to refugees belonging to six non-Muslim communities (Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis) who have fled religious persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan and entered India on or before December 31, 2014.

## Amit Shah Inaugurates Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan Projects

- The projects, totaling Rs 383 crore, aim to improve infrastructure and living standards in Delhi's rural areas, addressing issues such as water supply, roads, street lights, and sewage systems.
- The Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan focuses on enhancing the quality of life in urbanized villages and new urban areas by addressing infrastructure gaps and promoting community participation in decision-making processes.
- The inauguration also marked the start of PNG supply in 41 villages through a 100-kilometer pipeline network laid by Indraprastha Gas Limited, supporting the government's commitment to provide safe, affordable, and eco-friendly energy solutions in the national capital.

## Andaman & Nicobar Command carries out maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission

- A maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission was undertaken by the Andaman & Nicobar Command on the 40th anniversary of INAS 318 and International Women's Day on March 08, 2024. The crew based at INS Utkrosh comprised Lt Cdr Shubhangi Swaroop, Lt Cdr Divya Sharma and Lt Vaishali Mishra.
- The occasion highlighted the crucial role played by women combatants in all the walks of the Naval Air Arm, which included pre-flight briefing, meteorological briefing, medical check-up and Air Traffic Control (ATC) briefing, all of which were conducted by women officers.
- This milestone underscores the commitment of the Andaman & Nicobar Command towards providing equal opportunities to all genders and fostering gender neutrality within the Armed Forces.

- The successful completion of the mission affirms the capability of women to undertake independent operational tasks, highlighting their invaluable contributions towards the nation's defence and security.
- INAS 318 is the elite Naval Air squadron in the Andaman & Nicobar Command, continuously engaged in surveillance role since its commissioning on March 08, 1984.
- The squadron commenced its journey with the induction of Islander aircraft which were replaced by Dornier aircraft in 1999. The Dornier aircraft is capable of carrying out long range maritime surveillance using state-of-the-art Maritime Patrol Radars.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates India's First Automobile In-Plant Railway Siding

- The primary objectives of this in-plant railway siding are to reduce the carbon footprint in logistics, decrease fossil fuel consumption, and alleviate road congestion.
- Upon reaching full operational capacity, the Gujarat railway siding facility is poised to dispatch an impressive 300,000 cars annually to 15 destinations across India.
- The collaborative effort behind this project includes Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development (G-RIDE), a partnership between the Government of Gujarat and Indian Railways.
- Also involved in the collaboration are the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and MSIL.

## Electoral Bonds: BJP Tops the List with Highest Receipt

- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) encashed electoral bonds worth a staggering ₹6,060.5 crore between April 12, 2019, and January 24, 2024.
- This amount accounts for a whopping 47.5% of the total electoral bonds encashed during this period, making the BJP the largest recipient by a significant margin.
- Following the BJP, the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) received ₹1,609.5 crore (12.6% of the total), while the Indian National Congress (INC) received ₹1,421.9 crore (11.1%), securing the second and third positions, respectively.
- The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), Biju Janata Dal (BJD), and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) also received substantial amounts, with ₹1,214.7 crore (9.51%), ₹775.5 crore (6.07%), and ₹639 crore (5%), respectively.

## **ETHANOL 100 fuel launched by Petroleum Minister Hardeep S Puri**

- ETHANOL 100 stands as a cleaner, greener alternative to gasoline, boasting lower emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants, thus aiding in combating climate change and enhancing air quality in our communities.
- With its high-octane rating, typically between 100-105, ETHANOL100 proves ideal for high-performance engines, ensuring improved efficiency and power output all while minimizing environmental impact.
- Moreover, ETHANOL 100's versatility shines through, as it can be used in a wide array of vehicles, including flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) designed to run on gasoline, ethanol, or any blend of the two, showcasing its practicality and potential to become a mainstream fuel option with the right infrastructure in place.

## **Model Code of Conduct (MCC) Guidelines for Lok Sabha Elections 2024**

- The MCC serves as a set of conventions unanimously agreed upon by all stakeholders involved in the electoral process.
- Its primary objective is to ensure that campaigns, polling, and counting proceed in an orderly, transparent, and peaceful manner.
- Additionally, it serves as a mechanism to curb any misuse of state machinery and financial resources by the ruling party.
- Notably, the MCC does not possess any statutory backing but has been upheld by the Supreme Court on multiple occasions.

## **India's First Integrated Oil Palm Processing Unit in Arunachal Pradesh.**

- Despite significant potential, India currently struggles with achieving self-sufficiency in edible oils, importing 96% of its required palm oil, which makes up 67% of the country's edible oil import bill, totaling over Rs. 1 Lakh crore.
- This milestone marks a crucial step in India's quest for self-reliance in edible oils, bolstered by the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP).

## **India's First Battery Storage Gigafactory to Start Operations in J&K**

- GoodEnough Energy has announced plans to

launch India's first battery energy storage gigafactory in Jammu and Kashmir by October.

- The facility aims to reduce over 5 million tons of carbon emissions annually, supporting India's goal of achieving net zero by 2070. This reduction is equivalent to the Indian Railway's annual carbon reduction target of 4 million tonnes.
- With an initial investment of \$18.07 million, the 7 GWH plant will see a further 3 billion rupees injected by 2027 to scale up to 20 GWH, Reuters quoted the founder Akash Kaushik as saying.

## **India's First Ayurvedic Cafe Opens in Delhi**

- The Maharishi Ayurveda Hospital in Shalimar Bagh, Delhi, houses the first Ayurvedic Cafe in India, named Soma-The Ayurvedic Kitchen.
- Soma-The Ayurvedic Kitchen is garnering attention for its unique approach to dining, offering Ayurvedic cuisine that aligns with the principles of Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine.
- The opening of India's first Ayurvedic Cafe marks a significant milestone in promoting healthy eating habits and traditional wellness practices, catering to individuals seeking holistic well-being through food choices.

## **Election Commission Launches 'Know Your Candidate' App**

- The KYC app provides voters with the ability to access information about candidates with criminal antecedents.
- Candidates are required to disclose their criminal records in newspapers and on television three times. The parties nominating such candidates must explain their selection over other deserving candidates.

## **Election Commission launches 'Mission 414' campaign in Himachal Pradesh to boost voter turnout.**

- The main focus of the campaign -- "Mission 414" -- is increasing the vote percentage in 414 identified polling stations which registered less than 60 percent voting in the last Lok Sabha polls.

## **Election Commission's Saksham App Revolutionizes Voting Accessibility.**

- In a bid to provide accessibility to all and leave no voter behind, the Election Commission announced that the voters above 85 years of age and Persons-with-Disabilities (pwd) with 40 percent benchmark disability can vote from home.



- Further, volunteers and wheelchairs will be available at every polling station. The poll body is also arranging transport facilities for the persons-with-disabilities and elderly.
- The Commission launched the Saksham App to facilitate easier voting for PWDs and to avail facilities at Polling Stations.
- Further, it is pushing for permanent Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) in schools as a gift of election process to the students.
- Assured Minimum Facilities consist of drinking water, toilets, signage, a ramp or wheelchair, helpdesk, voter facilitation centre, sufficient light and shed.
- There will also be polling stations managed by persons-with-disabilities, and will exclusively be managed by women and Model Polling Stations.

## PM Modi Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Medical Facility in Thimphu

- The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck Mother and Child Hospital, a state-of-the-art health facility built in Thimphu with the assistance of the Indian government.
- The Indian government supported the development of the 150-bed hospital in two phases.
- The first phase was built at a cost of ₹22 crore and has been operational since 2019.

- The construction of the second phase, with a cost of ₹119 crore, began in 2019 as part of Bhutan's 12th five-year plan and was completed recently.

## cVIGIL: ECI's App to Monitor Elections

- The cVIGIL app of Election Commission has become an effective tool in the hands of people to flag election code violations. The citizens can report Model Code of Conduct and expenditure violations through this app.
- Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said that the cVIGIL empowers citizens to report model code of conduct violations and assured action within 100 minutes.
- cVIGIL is user-friendly and easy to operate application, which connects vigilant citizens with the District Control Room, Returning Officer and Flying Squads Teams.
- By using this app, the citizens can immediately report on incidents of political misconduct within minutes and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer.
- As soon as the complaint is sent on the cVigil app, the complainant will receive a unique ID through which the person will be able to track the complaint on their mobile.



## INTERNATIONAL

### Ghana's parliament passes anti-LGBTQ bill

- The bill would punish those who take part in LGBTQ sexual acts, as well as those who promote the rights of gay, lesbian or other non-conventional sexual or gender identities with time in prison.
- The bill, one of the harshest of its kind in Africa, still has to be validated by the president before entering into law, which observers believe is unlikely before a general election in December.
- Activist groups have called the "Human Sexual Rights and Family Values" bill a setback for human rights and urged President Nana Akufo-Addo's government to reject it.
- But the legislation is widely supported in Ghana, where Akufo-Addo has said gay marriage will never be allowed while he is in power.
- Commonly referred to as the anti-gay bill, it received sponsorship from a coalition comprising Christian, Muslim, and Ghanaian traditional leaders, finding substantial backing among

members of Parliament.

- Gay sex is already illegal in the religious West African nation, but while discrimination against LGBTQ people is common no one has ever been prosecuted under the colonial-era law.
- Under the provisions of the bill, those who take part in LGBTQ sexual acts could face imprisonment ranging from six months to three years.
- The bill also imposes a prison sentence of three to five years for the "willful promotion, sponsorship, or support of LGBTQ+ activities".

### France Becomes the First Country to Make Abortion a Constitutional Right

- A joint session of parliament at the Palace of Versailles ended with the lawmakers endorsing the Bill to anchor the woman's right to abortion in the French constitution.
- This will make France the first country to explicitly protect the right to terminate a pregnancy in its

basic legal articles.

- Whilst the right to an abortion is implicit in the constitution of other countries around the world – Slovenia, and others in the former Yugoslavia for example, states that everyone is “free to decide” whether to bear children – France is the only country to take it further and explicitly guarantee that right.

## India And South Korea To Boost Cooperation In New Tech And Semiconductors

- India aims to enhance its strategic partnership with South Korea by expanding cooperation into new and critical areas, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced during the 10th India-South Korea Joint Commission Meeting in Seoul.
- Co-chairing the meeting with his South Korean counterpart, Cho Tae-yul, Jaishankar highlighted the comprehensive and productive discussions held on various aspects, including defence, science and technology, trade, and people-to-people exchanges.

## Panama Officially Joins International Solar Alliance

- In a significant development for global renewable energy efforts, Panama has officially become the 97th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- This milestone was announced by Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

## Sea6 Energy Launches World’s First Large-Scale Mechanized Tropical Seaweed Farm

- The farm is located off Ekas, on the island of Lombok. Sea6 Energy is a Bangalore-based company that specializes in cultivating and processing tropical seaweed species.
- The company has developed a cultivation mechanism called the Sea Combine, which can harvest and replant seaweed in deep ocean waters.
- They also have technologies to convert seaweed into environmentally friendly products.

## China’s New Territorial Sea Baseline in Gulf of Tonkin Raises Concerns

- The announcement of China's new territorial sea baseline in the Gulf of Tonkin underscores the complex nature of maritime disputes in the South China Sea region.

- It highlights the importance of adhering to international laws and agreements to resolve disputes peacefully and maintain stability in the region.
- Efforts to clarify maritime boundaries and promote dialogue among concerned parties remain crucial for addressing tensions and ensuring the peaceful coexistence of nations in the South China Sea.

## India And Dominican Republic Sign Protocol To Establish Joint Economic And Trade Committee

- The protocol outlines a comprehensive framework aimed at strengthening and developing cooperation in various sectors including trade, services, and industrial technologies.
- It emphasizes collaboration through technical assistance, training programs, and capacity building initiatives.
- By addressing challenges faced by trade and industry, the protocol aims to create a platform for the exchange of knowledge and best practices between India and the Dominican Republic.

## Over 1500 Skeletons Discovered At Construction Site in Germany’s Nuremberg

- This is likely to be the largest mass burial of plague victims ever found in Europe.
- Though precise dating is pending, initial details claim that the eight plague pits were established around the first half of the 17th century.
- To a surprise, even a few bones show a green tint, maybe because the site was used to dispose of waste from a nearby copper mill.

## UK tests a laser weapon that can hit a coin from a kilometer and costs just Rs 1,000 for a single fire

- The UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) has successfully tested its first-ever laser weapon, named "DragonFire," designed to target and neutralize drones.
- The tests demonstrated the weapon's precision, with the ability to hit a coin from a kilometer away.
- DragonFire offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional missiles, with firing costs equivalent to using a heater for an hour, typically less than £10 per shot.
- While the weapon will not be immediately deployed, it marks a significant advancement in the UK's military technology and capabilities, with

potential future deployments enhancing air defense for both the Army and Royal Navy.

## NASA To Carry 'Message In Bottle' To Europa, One Of Jupiter's Moon In October.

- NASA's Europa Clipper mission, scheduled for October this year, aims to explore Jupiter's moon Europa for signs of life.
- The spacecraft will carry a triangular metal plate engraved with a poem by US Poet Laureate Ada Limón titled "In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa."
- Additionally, a silicon microchip onboard will contain over 2.6 million names submitted by the public.
- The metal plate will also feature etchings of 103 waveforms, representing the sound wave of the word "water" in 103 different languages, including Hindi.
- Last year, NASA conducted a "Message in a Bottle" campaign, allowing the public to submit their names to be included on the spacecraft.

## Nepal Declares Pokhara as Its Tourism Capital

- The Nepalese government recently proclaimed Pokhara, nestled in the stunning Gandaki province, as the premier tourism capital of the Himalayan nation.
- This formal announcement took place amid a special gathering at Barahi Ghat, which graces the tranquil shores of the breathtaking Phewa Lake.

## Vaughan Gething elected as first minister of Wales, UK's first black govt leader

- Gething was elected government leader by members of the Welsh parliament in Cardiff, four days after winning the contest to be leader of Wales' governing Labour Party. He secured 27 of 51 votes in the legislature, the Senedd, where Labour is the biggest party.
- Gething, the son of a Welsh father and a Zambian mother, said Wales is now "the first nation anywhere in Europe to be led by a Black person."

## New Zealand Bans Disposable E-Cigarettes and Vapes

- New Zealand will ban disposable e-cigarettes, or vapes, and raise financial penalties for those who sell such products to minors.
- The move comes less than a month after the government repealed a unique law enacted by the previous left-leaning government to phase out tobacco smoking by imposing a lifetime ban on young people buying cigarettes.

## Saudi Arabia Sends First Contestant to Miss Universe Pageant

- Rumi Alqahtani, a 27-year-old model and influencer from Saudi Arabia, announced on Instagram that she will be the first participant from the country in the Miss Universe competition.
- The Miss Universe pageant 2024 will be held in Mexico.
- Shennis Palacios of Nicaragua is the current Miss Universe.



## GEOGRAPHY and ENVIRONMENT

### The Brazilian flea toad may be the world's smallest vertebrate

- Scientists have bestowed the frog – which is native to Brazil but is neither a flea nor a toad – with two titles: The world's smallest known amphibian and smallest known vertebrate.
- From snout to rump, one *Brachycephalus pulex* measures just under 6.5 millimeters, herpetologist Mirco Solé and colleagues report February 7 in *Zoologica Scripta*.
- That's roughly half a millimeter shorter than the previous record holder and small enough to sit comfortably on a pinkie fingernail.

### On March 2rd, India inked an \$11 million grant project with Sri Lanka and a private partner to install hybrid renewable energy infrastructure across three islands off Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka.

- The initiative is the third India-backed energy project coming up in Sri Lanka's north and east. The National Thermal Power Corporation is spearheading a solar venture in the eastern Sampur town, while the Adani Group is setting up renewable energy projects in Mannar and Pooneryn in the north.

## World Wildlife Day, held annually on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- Celebrated to raising awareness about wildlife conservation.
- As designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, the date marks the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.
- The 2024 theme is “Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation”.

## India Post Promotes Rooftop Solar Scheme

- Recently, India Post has pitched in to promote the central government’s rooftop solar scheme that provides subsidies to households installing photovoltaic systems.
- This rooftop solar initiative was highlighted in the 2023 budget to accelerate India’s renewable energy adoption. Citizens can now approach their local post office to register for the program and utilize the subsidies on offer.
- The scheme offers central financial incentives to homes setting up small-scale solar power units to meet electricity needs and reduce grid dependence. Key highlights are as under:
- Subsidy of ₹30,000 per kW provided for systems up to 3 kW capacity
- Systems above 3kW get a subsidy of ₹18,000 per kW
- Consumers must register on the designated web portal to claim benefits
- Capacity can be installed through loans or own funds after subsidy approval

## Jupiter’s icy moon Europa has long been thought of as one of the most habitable worlds in the Solar System.

- Now the Juno mission to Jupiter has directly sampled its atmosphere in detail for the first time. The results, published in Nature Astronomy, show that Europa’s icy surface produces less oxygen than we thought.
- Europa is one of the largest of Jupiter’s more than 90 moons. It’s the sixth-closest moon to the planet. Europa and Jupiter’s three other largest moons – **Io, Ganymede, and Callisto** – were the first moons discovered beyond Earth.
- They are called the Galilean moons after Italian astronomer **Galileo Galilei**, who first observed them with a homemade telescope in January 1610.
- Europa is primarily made of silicate rock and has a

**water-ice crust** and probably an iron-nickel core.

- It has a very thin atmosphere, composed primarily of **oxygen**.
- Cracks and streaks striate its surface, but craters are relatively few.
- Scientists are almost certain that hidden beneath the icy surface of Europa is a saltwater ocean with about **twice as much water as Earth’s global ocean**.
- Europa may be one of the most promising places in our solar system to find present-day environments suitable for some form of life beyond Earth.
- Scientists believe a saltwater ocean lies beneath its icy shell, holding twice as much water as Earth’s global ocean, and possibly the chemical elements that are key ingredients to life.

## National Horticulture Fair 2024

- The Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) is hosting a three-day National Horticulture Fair at its Hessarghatta premises on the outskirts of Bengaluru from March 5 to 7, 2024.
- The theme of the fair, “Nextgen technology-led horticulture for sustainable development,” highlights the integration of cutting-edge technologies in horticultural practices to promote sustainability and boost farmers’ income.

## Coal India's Gevra mine set to become Asia's largest with expansion to 70 million tonnes capacity

- South Eastern Coalfield Limited’s (SECL) Gevra mine in Chhattisgarh, operated by Coal India, has received environmental clearance to expand its production capacity to 70 million tonnes annually, making it set to become Asia’s largest coal mine. The current capacity of the mine is 52.5 million tonnes per annum.
- This expansion comes after concerted efforts by the ministry of coal and the ministry of environment, forest, and climate change (MoEFCC) to secure the clearance in record time, underlining the mine’s strategic importance to India’s energy sector.

## 2023-24 El Niño - One of the Strongest on Record

- The World Meteorological Organization warned that despite a trend of diminishing, the El Nino that peaked in 2023–24 as one of the five strongest on record will still have an impact on the global climate in the months to come.

- El Nino events have a major impact on societies and economies. Accurate seasonal forecasts from the WMO community helped countries prepare in advance to try to limit the damage in climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, water resources and health. Early warnings of weather and climate extremes associated with El Nino have saved countless lives
- El Niño is a periodic warming of the ocean surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean that occurs every two to seven years on average and typically lasts nine to 12 months. It is associated with increased rainfall in the Horn of Africa and the southern United States, as well as unusually dry and warm conditions in Southeast Asia, Australia, and southern Africa.

### Cheetah Population in Kuno National Park Grows

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has recently announced that South African cheetah 'Gamini' has given birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur.
- This new litter brings the total number of Indian-born cheetah cubs to 13, and the overall cheetah population in the park to 26.
- Gamini's litter marks the fourth cheetah birth on Indian soil since the launch of 'Project Cheetah' in September 2022.
- It is also the first litter born to cheetahs brought from South Africa. Previously, Namibian cheetahs Jwala and Aasha had given birth in the park.

### Egg-Laying Amphibians Found to Feed "Milk" to Hatchlings

- These ringed caecilian moms feed their hatchlings a kind of "milk" brewed in the reproductive tract, researchers report in the March 8 Science.
- The long, cylindrical creatures are the first egg-laying amphibians known to feed hatchlings this way. The discovery suggests the evolution of parental care across animal life is more diverse than researchers thought.

### A new report published has uncovered the presence of at least 3,000 more chemicals in plastics than previously estimated by environmental agencies.

- The study, conducted by a team of European scientists and funded by the Norwegian Research Council, has identified over 16,000 chemicals in plastics, with a quarter of them thought to be

hazardous to human health and the environment.

- This finding has raised significant concerns about pollution and consumer safety, particularly as plastics are ubiquitous in everyday items such as food packaging, toys, and medical devices.
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had previously identified around 13,000 plastic chemicals.
- However, the recent report has revealed a staggering 16,000 chemicals in plastics, surpassing previous estimates by a considerable margin.
- This discovery underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to tackle the mounting plastic pollution crisis, as approximately 400 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced every year.

### The Union environment ministry recently notified Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024.

- It lays down the procedure to be followed for the transfer of captive elephants within a state or between two states.
- The notification authorises the CWW of states and UTs to permit or reject the transfer of captive elephants.
- The CWW shall permit the inter and intra-State transfers if the owner of the elephant is no longer in a position to maintain it or if the animal will have a better upkeep than in the present circumstances.
- The transfer of captive elephants won't be permissible unless the genetic profile of the animal has been entered in the electronic monitoring application of the MoEFCC (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change).
- The application for transfer of captive elephants should be made to the deputy conservator of forests (DCF), having jurisdiction over the area where the elephant is registered.
- The DCF will conduct an inquiry and physical verification of the facility where the elephant is presently housed, and also the facility where the elephant is proposed to be housed and obtain a certificate of a veterinary practitioner, and then forward the details to the CWW, who within seven days will accept or reject the transfer.

### Doomsday glacier

- West Antarctica's Thwaites Glacier — often known as the "doomsday glacier" due to the potentially catastrophic consequences of its hypothetical collapse — began rapidly retreating at an earlier date than scientists had previously known, according to a study.

- The study used new satellite technology to conclude the rapid melting of the glacier likely began in the 1940s.

## Iceland violent volcanic flare-up triggers state of emergency

- Iceland's southern region has gone into a state of emergency.
- This is due to the fourth volcanic eruption on the Reykjanes Peninsula since December. The eruption has forced the evacuation of the small town of Grindavik.
- There are concerns about the impact on critical infrastructure in the area. The lava flow was initially fast and intense but has slowed to a steady state by Sunday morning.
- Lava has managed to reach the eastern defenses of Grindavik, a town that has been largely evacuated due to volcanic activity.
- The lava was just 200 meters (650 feet) from the area's water pipes, a vital lifeline for residents of the Reykjanes peninsula.
- The pipe is located near the Svartsengi Power Plant, a geothermal facility that supplies hot water to most of the area

## The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released its State of the Global Climate Report 2023, confirming that 2023 was the warmest year on record.

- The report highlights the alarming trends in various climate indicators, including record-breaking greenhouse gas levels, surface temperatures, ocean heat and acidification, sea level rise, Antarctic sea ice cover, and glacier retreat.
- The global average near-surface temperature in 2023 was  $1.45 \pm 0.12$  °C above the pre-industrial (1850–1900) average, making it the warmest year in the 174-year observational record.
- The 10-year average (2014–2023) global temperature was  $1.20 \pm 0.12$  °C above the 1850–1900 average, making it the warmest 10-year period on record.
- Globally, every month from June to December was record warm for the respective month.

- The observed concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – reached record levels in 2022, with real-time data from specific locations showing a continued increase in 2023.
- Global average sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) were at a record high from April onward, with records in July, August, and September broken by a particularly wide margin. Exceptional warmth was recorded in various regions, including the eastern North Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, the North Pacific, and large areas of the Southern Ocean.

## Every year, March 22 is observed as World Water Day to raise awareness about the global water crisis and the importance of water.

- The day aims to inspire people to sustainably manage freshwater resources, address water-related issues and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Water and Sanitation for All by 2030.
- In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to observe World Water Day on March 22 every year. The first World Water Day was observed in 1993, and since then, the day has been celebrated globally to highlight the importance of water.

## International Day of Forests 2024

- The theme for International Day of Forests 2024 is Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World.
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests. Countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns.
- The organizers are the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations in the field.



## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Eco-Friendly wound dressing developed by Indian scientists using

### banana fibres

- An eco-friendly wound dressing material made using banana fibers presents a sustainable solution

for wound care.

- India, the world's largest banana-farming country, has an abundance of banana pseudo stems, discarded after harvest.
- In a pioneering effort, scientists at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have transformed banana pseudo stems, often considered agricultural waste, into an eco-friendly wound dressing material.
- Led by Prof. Devasish Chowdhury and Prof. (Retd) Rajlakshmi Devi, the research team, including Mridusmita Barman, a research scholar in the IASST-Deakin University Joint PhD programme, have ingeniously combined the banana fibres with biopolymers like chitosan and guar gum to create a multifunctional patch with excellent mechanical strength and antioxidant properties.
- The researchers loaded the patch with an extract from the Vitex negundo L. plant, demonstrating the capabilities of plant extract-loaded banana fibre-biopolymer composite patch in vitro drug release and as antibacterial agents. All the materials used in creating this innovative dressing material are natural and locally available, making the manufacturing process simple, cost-effective, and non-toxic.
- The wound dressing material presents a sustainable solution for wound care and suggests additional uses for the abundant banana plant, which may benefit farmers and minimize environmental impact.
- The banana fiber-biopolymer composite dressing could revolutionize wound care with its broad applications and positive impact on health and the environment.

## Google partners with Shakti to battle misinformation ahead of general elections

- With India preparing for its general elections, Google has announced a partnership to combat misinformation. The tech giant has partnered with Shakti, an Indian fact-checking collective, to help detect online misinformation, including deepfakes.
- Shakti comprises of major Indian news outlets along with independent fact-checkers. It aims to create a common repository that news publishers can use to tackle the challenges of misinformation at scale.
- Shakti will be driven by DataLEADS, in collaboration with the Misinformation Combat Alliance, The Quint, VishvasNews, Boom, Factly,

and Newschecker, with support from the Google News Initiative.

- Additionally, the project will provide news organisations and fact-checkers training in advanced fact-checking methodologies, deepfake detection, and the Google tools like the Fact Check Explorer, to streamline verification processes.
- The Fact-Checking collective will continue to onboard new partners and scale the effort to reach most parts of the country, prioritising publishers producing original news in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali and Marathi.

## L&T commissions first indigenously manufactured Hydrogen Electrolyser at Hazira

- Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has commissioned its first indigenously manufactured electrolyser at the Green Hydrogen Plant located at the A M Naik Heavy Engineering Complex in Hazira, Gujarat.
- This step marks L&T Electrolysers Limited's entrance into the domestic manufacturing of electrolysers, aligning with the company's focus on enhancing sustainable energy solutions.
- The electrolyser, with a rated power capacity of 1 MW, expandable to 2 MW, is capable of producing 200 Nm<sup>3</sup>/Hr of hydrogen.
- It features two stacks and an Electrolyser Processing Unit (EPU) ML-400, both developed and assembled in India, conforming to international standards.
- The focus now shifts to extensive testing over the upcoming weeks to refine its performance and enable large-scale manufacturing capabilities.

## Google unveils Genie AI which can create video games from text and image prompts

- Google's DeepMind team has unveiled "Genie" - a groundbreaking AI model poised to revolutionise the gaming industry and creative endeavours alike.
- Genie introduced as an innovative platform capable of crafting interactive 2D video games from a single image prompt or text description, marks a significant leap forward in the realm of artificial intelligence.
- Developed by Google DeepMind's Open-Endedness Team, this pioneering project signifies a fusion of cutting-edge technology and imaginative potential.

## Iran launches 'Pars 1' satellite into orbit from Russia

- The Pars 1 remote sensing and imaging satellite was launched on Thursday by a Russian Soyuz rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome and will scan Iran's topography from an orbit of 310 miles (500km).
- Moscow has sought to strengthen its alliances with other countries ostracised by the West, including Iran, which has been accused of supplying Moscow with armed drones for its offensive in Ukraine.

### **India launches Chakshu – a platform for reporting fraud calls and texts**

- Chakshu will allow Indian citizens to report fraudulent communication—whether received on call or SMS or social media like WhatsApp. Once such information is received, the platform will trigger re-verification, and failing re-verification the number will be disconnected.

### **Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the IN-SPACE Technical Centre at the headquarters of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) in Bopal area of Ahmedabad.**

- The IN-SPACE Technical Centre will help develop rockets and not just satellites
- The IN-SPACE offers a range of facilities including the Climate Simulation Test Facility (CSTF), Thermal and Vacuum Environment Simulation Facility (TVAC), Vibration Test Facility (VTF), the Space Systems Assembly Integration Testing and Checkout Laboratory, the RF and Opto-Electronics Laboratory and Clean Rooms for AIT activities.

### **Kerala to launch India's first government-backed OTT platform**

- Kerala Launches India's First Govt-Backed OTT Platform, 'CSpace'.
- The platform currently houses 42 films, including 35 feature films, 6 documentaries, and 1 short film and is available for download on both Android and iOS devices.

### **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and Meta join hands to establish Frontier Technology Labs in schools to democratize access to future technologies and innovation**

- The FTL is an advanced version of Atal Tinkering Lab equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure,

including all components of the Tinkering Lab to empower students to innovate using technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Augmented & Virtual Reality, Blockchain, Cybersecurity, Robotics, 3D Printing, and Internet of Things.

- The labs support the Government's focus on equipping youth with digital skills to succeed in the evolving landscape of technology and the global economy. The FTLs will be funded by Meta and Atal Innovation Mission will be the knowledge partner.
- The FTLs are a part of Meta's Education to Entrepreneurship initiative, launched in September 2023, to seamlessly connect students, youth, workforce, and micro-entrepreneurs with futuristic technologies, taking digital skilling to the grassroots. The initiative aims to advance the government's agenda of digital inclusion, skilling and growth.
- Establishing these labs aligns with the vision of the Atal Innovation Mission to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in schools across India, marking a significant step forward in building a skilled workforce to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future. Meanwhile, these labs will be managed by Meta's partner 1M1B (One Million for One Billion).

### **Cabinet approves India AI mission at an outlay of Rs 10,372 crore**

- Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced that the cabinet approved the India AI mission with a budget outlay of Rs 10,372 crore for five years as a significant step towards encouraging the Development of Artificial intelligence in India.
- The announcement aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's various references to AI developments in India and how India can be a huge contributor in the AI space. The approved corpus will be used to create a large computing infrastructure.
- The supercomputing capacity, comprising over 10,000 GPUs, will be made available to various stakeholders to create an AI ecosystem.
- startups, academia, researchers, and industry will be given access to the AI supercomputing infrastructure established under the India AI Mission.
- A National Data Management Officer will be set up under the mission to coordinate with various government departments and ministries to improve the quality of data and make it available for AI development and deployment.
- IndiaAI mission will further the vision of Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India.
- The mission seeks to showcase to the international



community the positive applications of cutting-edge technology for societal benefit, leading to India's global competitiveness.

## Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar Inaugurates Synopsys' Chip Design Centre in Noida

- Synopsys offers a diverse design portfolio, including silicon to software, which has played a pivotal role in generating \$5.9 billion in revenue.
- As a dominant force in EDA tools and Interface, Foundation, & Physical IPs, Synopsys has secured a prominent position within the industry.
- Demonstrating confidence in Indian design talent, Synopsys has established the second-largest design center in India, extending beyond its headquarters.
- This center is now the workplace for around 6,000 engineers from India, constituting 27% of their global design workforce.
- While it's a well-established fact that 20% of global VLSI/Chip designers originate from India, the expanding presence of Synopsys in Noida, initially hosting 1650 engineers, underscores the growing ecosystem of fabless chip design and innovation in India.
- Synopsys' Indian engineers play a pivotal role not only in every aspect of the semiconductor chip/IP Cores design cycle but also contribute significantly to the success stories of leading semiconductor companies.
- Virtually all chips designed by any company incorporate EDA/IP solutions in some capacity.

## Made in India: AI supercomputer with 10,000 GPUs to reduce dependence on foreign systems

- The Indian government has approved a funding package of ₹10,300 crore (\$1.24 billion) to strengthen the country's AI infrastructure. A planned supercomputer with at least 10,000 GPUs forms the core of this project
- Funds will also flow into three other initiatives:
- The IndiaAI Startup Funding Mechanism will facilitate funding to accelerate commercialization for both startups and industry-leading AI projects.
- The IndiaAI dataset platform will receive more funding to enhance public sector datasets so that local AI companies and the government have the required data for appropriate AI applications.
- The IndiaAI FutureSkills program will increase access to graduate and post-graduate AI programs and set up data and AI labs offering basic courses

in data and AI across India - especially outside major cities.

## Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates first of its kind 'National Speed Breeding Crop Facility, "DBT SPEEDY SEEDS" at National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Mohali.

- Biotechnology speedy seeds facility will cater to all the states of India but it will especially be useful for the north Indian states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and the UT of J&K.
- This facility will augment transformational changes in crop improvement programmes by accelerating the development of advanced crop varieties that could sustain climate change and contribute to the food and nutritional demand of the population with implementation of speed breeding cropping methods.

## Tamil Nadu creates history with India's second privately developed rocket

- The Chennai headquartered space start-up Agnikul Cosmos Private Limited will be launching its first rocket Agnibaan Sub Orbital Technology Demonstrator (SOrTeD) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota.
- Agnibaan SOrTeD - will be India's first launch from a private launchpad, India's first semi-cryogenic engine powered rocket launch and the world's first single piece 3D printed engine designed and built indigenously.
- Founded in 2017 by Srinath Ravichandran, Moin SPM, and Satya Chakravarthy, Agnikul Cosmos became the first company in the country to sign an agreement with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under the IN-SPACe initiative to have access to the space agency's expertise and its facilities to build Agnibaan in December 2020.

## SAKHI to be a friend in need for Gaganyaan crew.

- Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre has developed the multi-purpose app that will help astronauts on Gaganyaan space flight mission carry out a range of tasks.
- SAKHI provides astronauts with digital access to technical documents and training manuals, eliminating the need for cumbersome manual documentation.

- The app monitors astronauts' physical condition by tracking key parameters such as blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen saturation. It also alerts them about dietary schedules, hydration levels, and sleep patterns, ensuring their well-being throughout the mission.
- Astronauts can use SAKHI to maintain a detailed log of the mission, utilizing multiple formats including voice recordings, texts, and images for efficient documentation.
- SAKHI facilitates continuous communication between the crew, the onboard computer, and ground-based stations, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity with Earth.

### **ISRO's Successful Pushpak Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02 Landing Experiment**

- The Indian Space Research Organization successfully conducted the second landing test of its reusable launch vehicle (RLV), Pushpak, from the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Challakere near Chitradurga in Karnataka.
- The winged vehicle was lifted by the Chinook helicopter of the Indian Air Force and was released from an altitude of 4.5 km.
- RLV-LEX-02 demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of RLV from off-nominal initial conditions at release from helicopter. RLV was made to undertake more difficult manoeuvres with dispersions, correct both cross-range and down range and land on the runway in a fully autonomous mode

### **Scientists uncover Milky Way's ancient building blocks, Shakti and Shiva**

- Shakti and Shiva are comprised of stars with similar chemical compositions, formed 12-13 billion years ago, and each structure has a mass about 10 million times greater than our sun.
- Named after the Hindu deities Shakti and Shiva - that appear to be among the Milky Way's earliest building blocks, offering new insight into how our galaxy came together long ago.
- These structures, found using observations from the European Space Agency's Gaia space telescope, may be relics of two distinct galaxies that merged roughly 12 billion years ago with the Milky Way's primordial pieces during the galaxy's infancy, the scientists said.

### **New species of deep-sea isopod discovered off Kollam named after ISRO**

- This new species of isopod has been given a special name - Brucethoa isro. The name is a tribute to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which has achieved remarkable success in space missions. Brucethoa isro is only the second species within the Brucethoa genus to be discovered in India.

### **An asteroid is named after Indian professor Jayant Murthy**

- An asteroid has been named after Indian Professor and distinguished scientist Jayant Murthy. He is known for his work in space missions, ultraviolet astronomy, and interstellar medium.
- Previously cataloged as 2005 EX296, the asteroid has now been designated as (215884) Jayantmurthy.



## **DEFENCE & SECURITY**

### **India - Malaysia Bilateral Maritime EXERCISE SAMUDRA LAKSAMANA**

- Exercise Samudra Laksamana is underway from 28 Feb - 02 Mar 24 at/ off Visakhapatnam. Indian Naval Ship Kiltan and Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir are participating in the 3rd edition of this exercise which has harbour professional interactions followed by the operational phase at sea.
- At harbour, crew of both ships will have various

professional interactions, Subject Matter Expert Exchange on topics of mutual interest, sports fixtures, and other interactions. These interactions are aimed to enhance knowledge base, share best practices and further cooperation on maritime aspects.

- During sea phase, units would be jointly honing skills while conducting various operations at sea.
- The exercise aims to strengthen bonds and enhance interoperability between the Indian and Royal Malaysian Navy.

## Indian Navy commissions INS Jatayu at Minicoy

- INS Jatayu was commissioned at Minicoy, the southernmost island in Lakshadweep, strengthening the Indian Navy's foothold and extending operational reach in the region needed, with China increasingly exercising influence over Maldives.
- According to the Indian Navy, this milestone event strengthens its foothold in Lakshadweep Island while extending capacity building, operational reach, and sustenance in the region. The establishment of a naval base at Minicoy will augment connectivity with the mainland, focusing on the comprehensive development of the islands.
- INS Jatayu will be functioning under the operational control of the Naval Officer in Charge (Lakshadweep), Southern Naval Command.
- The commissioning ceremony was marked by the Chief of Naval Staff receiving a 50-man Guard of Honour. Commander Vrat Baghel, the first Commanding Officer of the unit, recited the invocation in Sanskrit, followed by the reading of the commissioning warrant.
- The crest of the INS Jatayu -- depicting a bird signifying Jatayu, a character in the Hindu epic Ramayana -- was hoisted after the unveiling of the commissioning plaque. President Droupadi Murmu approved the crest.
- This unit will also be a first responder if the need arises in this area. INS Jatayu will also be a unit which will provide a unit which will provide situational awareness.

## Indian Navy commissions first MH60R Seahawk chopper squadron

- The Indian Navy has commissioned the country's first MH60R Seahawk multirole helicopter squadron during a ceremony at INS Garuda in Kochi.
- The squadron has been commissioned as Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 334 Seahawks. Six MH 60R helicopters with the Navy, which are part of a 24-aircraft contract signed with the US govt in Feb 2020, will be part of the Navy's latest air squadron.

## Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh to Inaugurate The New State of The Art Admin-Cum-Training Building at Naval War College Goa

- The building of the Naval War College for academic instruction, research and wargaming is inspired by the Chola dynasty's maritime prowess.

- The central foyer of the structure features a tiled mural that depicts Rajendra Chola's expedition to the Srivijaya Empire across the high seas of the Indian Ocean in 1025 CE.
- The building's name bridges the past to the present by illuminating India's maritime influence in the past and its resurgence as a maritime power in the present.
- The building has been constructed in accordance with the GRIHA-III norms.
- The key features of the building include: in-house utilisation of excavated soil for environmental development initiatives; rainwater harvesting capacity of over 10 lakh litres; 100KW solar power generation; and green building standards.
- The aspects of sustainability and energy efficiency form the core of the building's design engineering philosophy, best exemplified by construction of the building around a 100 year old Banyan tree without uprooting it.

## Tri-service military exercise 'Bharat Shakti' to be held at Pokhran.

- 'Bharat Shakti' will demonstrate the prowess of indigenously manufactured defence equipment of the three services.
- It will showcase the "shock and awe" impact that the armed forces seek to achieve in an operational situation with manoeuvre and fighting capabilities.
- LCA Tejas, ALH Mk-IV, LCH Prachand, mobile anti-drone system, BMP-II and its variants, NAMICA (Nag Missile Carrier), T90 tanks, Dhanush, K9 Vajra and Pinaka rockets are among the platforms that will be demonstrated.

## India - U.S. Maritime Security Exercise 'Sea Defenders-2024' culminates at Port Blair

- The comprehensive maritime security exercise 'Sea Defenders-2024' between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) & United States Coast Guard (USCG) culminated at Port Blair on March 9, 2024. The exercise was aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation and interoperability between the two forces.
- The Exercise included a variety of scenarios including a Pollution Response Demonstration, in which Indian Coast Guard ships and aircraft showcased their expertise in responding to oil spills and other environmental hazards at sea.
- It also simulated Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) Operations for inspecting vessels suspected of illegal activity.
- During the exercise, the Indian Coast Guard

helicopter and Dornier aircraft conducted Search & Rescue and Pollution Response demonstrations, showcasing ICG's ability to undertake aerial surveillance and rescue missions.

- The exercise also included practice to neutralize asymmetric threats, akin to drone attacks on commercial merchant traffic.
- The exercise also provided a platform for both USCG and ICG personnel to hone their firefighting and damage control skills through a simulated scenario, where DCFF teams showcased capabilities to combat shipboard emergencies.
- These joint exercises provide valuable training opportunities for both Coast Guards, allowing them to refine their skills and improve their ability to work together in a coordinated manner. The visit of the USCGC Bertholf to Port Blair serves as a powerful symbol of the growing partnership between the US and Indian Coast Guard. Through collaborative efforts, both nations are working toward a safer and more secure maritime environment.

## DRDO Successfully Tests Agni-5 Missile with MIRV Technology, Mission Divyastra

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted first successful flight test of indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology.
- The flight test named Mission Divyastra was carried out from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

## Indian Navy at Exercise Cutlass Express 2024

- Exercise Cutlass Express is a multinational maritime exercise sponsored by the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet.
- The Indian Navy was represented by the ship INS Tir, which is the lead ship of the First Training Squadron. INS Tir was led by Senior Officer, First Training Squadron, Capt Anshul Kishore.
- The exercise was inaugurated by the President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan, in the presence of dignitaries from India, USA, and African countries.

## Launch Of 'Agray' And 'Akshay' fifth and sixth ship of asw swc (Grse) Project On 13 Mar 24 At M/S Grse Kolkata

- 'Agray' and 'Akshay', the 5th and 6th ships of 08 x ASW Shallow Water Craft (SWC) Project being built by M/S GRSE for Indian Navy, were launched on 13 Mar 24 at M/S GRSE, Kolkata. The ships have been rechristened as Agray and Akshay, named after erstwhile Abhay Class Corvettes Agray and Akshay of Indian Navy.
- The contract for building eight ASW SWC ships was signed between MOD and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata on 29 Apr 19. Arnala class of ships will replace the in-service Abhay class ASW Corvettes of Indian Navy and are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) and Mine Laying Operations.
- The ASW SWC ships are 77.6 m long & 105 m wide with a displacement of 900 tons and endurance of over 1800 NM
- The launch of two more ships of the project highlights the nation's resolve towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' in shipbuilding.
- The first ship of the project is planned to be delivered during the first half of 2024.
- The ASW SWC ships will have over 80% indigenous content, thereby ensuring that large scale defence production is executed by Indian manufacturing units, generating employment and capability enhancement within the country.

## RPF Leads In Female Personnel Among Central Paramilitary Forces

- Recognizing women as symbols of love, care, strength, and eternity, the RPF currently boasts the largest share of women personnel (9%) among Central Paramilitary Forces in India.
- Specially trained to ensure safety and provide assistance to female passengers in distress, they create a secure environment for travelers.

## Indian Army Contingent Departs For Seychelles For Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024"

- A contingent from the Indian Army today embarked on a journey to Seychelles to participate in the Tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024" alongside the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). Scheduled to take place from March 18th to 27th, this biennial training event holds significant importance in fostering cooperation between the two nations.
- The term 'LAMITIYE', translating to 'Friendship' in the Creole language, encapsulates the spirit of camaraderie underlying this exercise, which has been a tradition since its inception in 2001. With 45

personnel each from the renowned GORKHA RIFLES of the Indian Army and the Seychelles Defence Forces, the exercise aims to bolster interoperability in Sub-conventional Operations within Semi-Urban environments, aligning with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations.

- Central to the exercise is the goal of enhancing cooperation and interoperability during Peacekeeping Operations, while also strengthening bilateral military relations.
- Through the exchange of skills, experiences, and best practices, both armies seek to elevate their proficiency in tackling contemporary security challenges.
- Over the course of ten days, participants will engage in a diverse range of activities, including Field Training Exercises, combat discussions, lectures, demonstrations, and a Validation Exercise spanning two days.
- These activities are meticulously designed to simulate and address potential threats encountered in Semi-Urban environments, leveraging state-of-the-art equipment and technology.
- The Joint Exercise is anticipated to cultivate mutual understanding and foster jointness among the troops of both nations.
- Moreover, it aims to facilitate a collaborative partnership that transcends borders, promoting the sharing of best practices and further strengthening the bonds of friendship between India and Seychelles.

## India-US Joint Military Exercise “EX TIGER TRIUMPH – 24”

- In consonance with the established partnership between India and the US, a bilateral tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise between both countries, Tiger Triumph-24, is scheduled on the Eastern Seaboard from 18 to 31 Mar 24.
- Indian Navy Ships with integral helicopters and landing crafts embarked, Indian Navy aircraft, Indian Army personnel and vehicles and Indian Air Force aircraft and helicopters along with the Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT) would be participating in the exercise.
- The US would be represented by US Navy Ships with embarked troops of the US Marine Corps and US Army. The exercise is aimed at developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations and refine Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enable rapid and smooth coordination between forces of both countries.
- The Harbour Phase is scheduled from 18 to 25 Mar

24. Personnel from both navies would participate in Training Visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, Sports Events and Social interactions. On completion of the Harbour Phase, the ships, with the troops embarked, would sail for the Sea Phase and undertake Maritime, Amphibious and HADR operations in accordance with injected situations.

## Indian Army Inducts First Apache 451 Aviation Squadron

- India and the US signed a contract for the acquisition of six Apaches for the Indian Army during US President Donald Trump's visit to New Delhi in 2020.
- The Ministry of Defence had finalized its order for the production, training and support of 22 AH-64E Apache and 15 CH-47F (I) Chinook helicopters in September 2015.
- The US completed delivery of 22 Apache attack helicopters to the IAF in July 2020.

## India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise IMT Trilat- 2024

- INS Tir and INS Sujata will participate in the forthcoming second edition of India Mozambique Tanzania (IMT) Tri Lateral (TRILAT) Exercise, a joint maritime exercise scheduled from 21-29 Mar 24. The first edition of IMT TRILAT exercise conducted in Oct 22, saw participation of INS Tarkash with the Tanzanian and Mozambique Navies.
- The current edition of the exercise is planned in two phases. As part of the harbour phase scheduled from 21-24 Mar 24, Naval ships Tir and Sujata will engage with the respective Navies at the ports of Zanzibar (Tanzania) and Maputo (Mozambique).
- This phase would begin with a Planning Conference followed by conduct of joint harbour training activities like Damage Control, Fire Fighting, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, Medical Lectures, Casualty Evacuation and Diving operations.
- The sea phase of the exercise is scheduled from 24-27 Mar 24 covering practical aspects of countering asymmetric threats, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, boat handling, manoeuvres and firing exercise. A joint EEZ surveillance is also planned during the sea phase. The exercise will conclude with a joint debrief scheduled at Nacala (Mozambique).
- During the harbour stay, Indian Naval ships would be open for visitors and partake in sports &

cultural exchanges with host Navies. Training visits for sea trainees of 106 Integrated Officers Training Course are also planned at the respective ports.

## 'Operation Indravati' to Evacuate Indian Nationals from Haiti Begins

- Against the backdrop of new attacks being launched by armed gangs in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that the country has launched "Operation Indravati" to evacuate Indian nationals from Haiti. They are being evacuated to the Dominican Republic.



## SPORTS

### Juventus Midfielder Paul Pogba Banned for 4 Years for Doping

- Paul Pogba received a four-year ban from football following doping allegations, with Italy's sports prosecutors advocating for the suspension.
- Pogba's anti-doping hearing, initially scheduled for January 18, was postponed to a later date.
- Italy's anti-doping tribunal accepted the requests from Pogba's legal team, though no specific details were provided regarding the outcome of the hearing.

### Asian River Rafting Champions Take on the Sutlej River

- Approximately 20 national and international teams are competing, representing Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia.
- The Asian River Rafting Championships highlight not just the thrill and athleticism of the sport, but also the potential for adventure tourism to benefit economic development and community well-being in Shimla and beyond.

### Former WC Bronze Winner Sai Praneeth Announces Retirement from Badminton.

- World Championships bronze medallist B Sai Praneeth announced his retirement from international badminton, bringing down curtains on a successful career during which he won the Singapore Open and also represented India at the Tokyo Olympics.

### Spain Wins First UEFA Women's Nations League

- Spain's women's team secured a historic victory over France, winning the first-ever UEFA Women's Nations League with a convincing 2-0 triumph in Seville.

### Khelo India Medal Winners Now Eligible for Government Jobs

- Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, has announced that medal winners at the Khelo India Games – spanning Youth, University, Para, and Winter categories – are now eligible for government jobs.
- For the first time, athletes excelling in the Khelo India Games and those achieving in events organized by the School Games Federation of India will qualify for government employment opportunities.

### Santosh Trophy 2023-24: Services Beats Goa in Final

- In the final of the Santosh Trophy 2023-24, Services beat Goa by a solitary goal to lift the premier interstate senior men's competition for the seventh time in its long history.
- Shafeel P.P. scored the winning goal with a spectacular pile-driver in the 67th minute.

### Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sutherland Named ICC Players of the Month for February 2024

- Jaiswal's knocks of 219 in Vizag and another double century in Rajkot helped India fight back from a loss in the first Test of the series against England. In the process, he equaled the long-standing Test record for the most sixes (12) in a single innings during his Rajkot knock.
- At the tender age of 22 years and 49 days, Jaiswal became the third-youngest batter in the world to record two double centuries in Tests, after the legendary Sir Donald Bradman and Vinod Kambli.

### Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Programme Launched

- KIRTI will conduct 20 lakh assessments across the



country throughout the year to identify talent through notified Talent Assessment Centres.

- This scouting and training programme is the first of its kind in India, aimed at reaching the next level in global sports.
- KIRTI will use IT tools to identify talent from every corner of the country and provide a common platform to showcase their abilities.
- KIRTI's fundamental aim is to establish a hierarchical structure that begins at the grassroots level and leads to the cultivation of top-tier athletes capable of achieving excellence on the global stage.

### Mumbai Wins Ranji Trophy 2024 After Beating Vidarbha

- In addition to the ₹5 crore prize money announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the Ranji Trophy champions, the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has declared an additional ₹5 crore for the winning team.
- Tanush Kotian was named the Player of the Tournament, while Musheer Khan received the Player of the Match award for his outstanding performance in the final.

### 3rd Edition of North East Games 2024 Begins in Nagaland

- The North East Games, held every four years, is a major multi-sport event that brings together the best athletes from the eight Northeastern states of India - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.

- The games provide a platform for showcasing the sporting talent of the region and promoting a spirit of unity and sportsmanship among the participating states.

### Sharath Kamal to be Indian Flagbearer at Paris Olympics 2024

- Ranked World No. 88, Kamal has won the national table tennis championship a record 10 times.
- He has also claimed 13 medals at the Commonwealth Games (CWG), including seven golds, and has earned two medals at the Asian Games. The legendary player is a three-time bronze medalist at the World Championships.

### Virat Kohli Becomes First Indian to Score 12,000 T20 Runs

- Kohli's 12,000 runs include his scores for RCB in the IPL and the now-defunct Champions League, for Delhi in domestic Twenty-over cricket, and for India in T20 Internationals.
- Rohit Sharma is the second-highest Indian run-scorer in T20 cricket with a total of 11,156 runs.

### Historic Day-Night Women's Ashes Test at MCG

- In a historic move, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) will host a day-night Test match between the Australian and English women's cricket teams.
- This will be the first time a pink-ball Test is played at the iconic venue. The four-day match is scheduled from January 30 to February 2, 2025.



## APPOINTMENTS

### IPS Officer Daljit Singh Chaudhary Named NSG's New Director General

- The NSG operates under federal jurisdiction, specializing in counter-terrorism and anti-hijacking operations.
- Trained rigorously to handle high-risk situations, the NSG is deployed selectively for extraordinary circumstances sanctioned by the government.
- The NSG's swift and decisive actions during the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai garnered widespread recognition.
- Proficient leadership ensures swift responses to emergent threats, highlighting the importance of capable leadership within the NSG.

### Sub-Inspector Suman Kumari Makes

### History as BSF's First Female Sniper

- Her recent completion of an eight-week intensive sniper course at the Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT) in Indore not only showcases her exceptional abilities but also her pioneering spirit. Suman achieved the prestigious 'instructor grade', a testament to her proficiency and expertise.

### Devendra Jhajharia Becomes New President of Paralympic Committee of India

- Devendra Jhajharia, a javelin thrower, won gold medals in the 2004 Athens and 2016 Rio Paralympics in the F46 disability category.

- He was the only candidate for the post of PCI president.

## Kishor Makwana Assumes Charge as Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Castes

- Shri Kishor Makwana assumed charge as the Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Government of India, after being appointed by the President of India.
- National Commission for Scheduled Castes Founded: 19 February 2004. It is a constitutional body.

## Google Collaborates with ECI for Voter Information and Combats Misinformation Ahead of Elections

- Both Google and Shakti (a pan-India network) will work together to aid in the detection of online misinformation, including deepfakes, and to create a common repository that news publishers can use to tackle the challenges of misinformation at scale, said the Google blogpost. This is part of the tech giant's efforts to work with the wider ecosystem to counter misinformation.
- The Shakti project will also provide news organisations and fact-checkers with essential training in advanced fact-checking methodologies, deepfake detection, and the latest Google tools like the Fact Check Explorer to streamline verification processes, according to the latest blogpost.

## Gyanesh Kumar, Sukhbir Sandhu Appointed as New Election Commissioners

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led three-member committee has appointed Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu as new Election Commissioners.
- The appointments come in the wake of the recent resignation of Election Commissioner Arun Goel, just days ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- With the retirement of Anup Pandey in February and Goel's resignation, the three-member Election Commission panel was left with only the Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar.
- These appointments are the first to be made by the reconstituted selection panel, which now includes the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and a designated Union Cabinet minister.

## Vinay Kumar Appointed as New

## Indian Ambassador to Russia

- Vinay Kumar, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1992 batch, has been named as the next Ambassador of India to Russia. Kumar is currently serving as the Ambassador of India to Myanmar.

## M V Rao Elected as New Chairman of Indian Banks Association

- The IBA is a representative body of Indian banks, comprising public sector, private sector, foreign, cooperative, and regional rural banks.
- It plays a crucial role in shaping banking policies and promoting best practices in the Indian banking industry.

## Naveen Jindal Takes Over as President of Indian Steel Association

- The ISA is the apex body representing the interests of the Indian steel producers. It plays a vital role in promoting the growth and development of the steel industry in India, as well as addressing the challenges faced by the sector.

## Indian Diplomat Abhay Thakur Appointed as Next Envoy to Myanmar

- Abhay Thakur, in his role as Officer on Special Duty (G20), had participated in the G20 Development Working Group Meeting in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, which currently chairs the G20.
- Myanmar is one of India's strategic neighbours, and it shares a 1,640-km border with several northeastern states of India, including Nagaland and Manipur.

## Neeraj Chopra Named Eveready's New Brand Ambassador

- Chopra emerges as the perfect fit for Eveready, as his resolute determination and unparalleled dedication to his craft align seamlessly with the company's longstanding reputation as a trusted brand in the industry.
- Neeraj Chopra symbolizes a shared pursuit of continuous improvement, innovation, more power, and dedication towards excellence, bridging the worlds of sports and the spirit of the youth.

## Luis Montenegro Named Portugal's Prime Minister

- After eight years of Socialist rule in Portugal, Luis



Montenegro, leader of the centre-right Democratic Alliance (AD), has been appointed as the new prime minister.

- However, his minority government faces challenges due to his refusal to ally with the far-right Chega party.

### Hansha Mishra, an officer of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IA&AS) from the 2010 batch, has

### been appointed as Director in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

- According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on 21.03.2024, the central government has approved Mishra's appointment to the post under the central staffing scheme. Her tenure as Director in the UPSC will be for a period of five years or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

## AWARDS

### Honorary knighthood for Bharti's Sunil Mittal

- In a list of honorary British awards unveiled by the UK Cabinet Office, Mittal receives a KBE under the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire - one of the highest honours conferred by a British monarch.
- The KBE, conferred for a pre-eminent contribution in any field of activity, is awarded in an honorary capacity to foreign nationals.
- While the Knighthood conferred on UK nationals gives them the title of Sir or Dame, non-UK nationals awarded the honour add KBE (or DBE for women) after their name.
- Previous Indian recipients of the Honorary KBE include Ratan Tata (2009), Ravi Shankar (2001) and Jamshed Irani (1997).

### Yatin Bhaskar Duggal Wins First Prize in National Youth Parliament Festival 2024

- Yatin Bhaskar Duggal from Haryana wins the first prize; Vaishna Pitchai from Tamil Nadu and Kanishka Sharma from Rajasthan wins Second and Third prize respectively.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS) has been organizing Youth Parliament vzi.
- District Youth Parliament, State Youth Parliament and National Youth Parliament.
- These Youth Parliaments are aimed at strengthening the roots of democracy; inculcate healthy habits of discipline, tolerance of the view of others and to enable youths to know about practices and procedures of the Parliament.
- Youth Parliaments also helps in building awareness on the importance of an active citizenry and promote youth engagement and participation.
- It promotes leadership qualities among youth and enable them to realize their full potential and in the process, to contribute to the nation building.
- The National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) is based on the idea given by the Prime Minister in his Mann Ki Baat Address on 31 December 2017.

### Tiger Woods Honored with USGA's Prestigious Bob Jones Award

- his award goes beyond playing performance, recognizing the lasting impact of one person's journey that has forever changed the image and growth of golf.
- Woods was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2022, and he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Donald Trump in 2019. Woods is a nine-time USGA champion, winning three straight U.S.

### PM Narendra Modi Presents National Creators Award

Winner	Award
Jaya Kishori	Best Creator for Social Change
Kabita Singh (Kabita's Kitchen)	Best Creator in Food Category
Drew Hicks	Best International Creator
Kamiya Jani	Favourite Travel Creator
Ranveer Allahbadia (BeerBiceps)	Disruptor of the Year
RJ Raunac (Bauaa)	Most Creative Creator-Male
Shraddha Jain	Most Creative Creator (Female)

Winner	Award
Aridaman	Best Micro Creator
Nishchay	Best Creator in Gaming Category
Ankit Baiyanpuria	Best Health and Fitness Creator
Naman Deshmukh	Best Creator in Education Category
Jahnvi Singh	Heritage Fashion Icon
Malhar Kalambe	Swachhta Ambassador
Gaurav Chaudhary	Best Creator in Tech Category
Maithili Thakur	Cultural Ambassador of The Year
Pankhti Pandey	Favourite Green Champion
Keerthika Govindasamy	Best Storyteller
Aman Gupta	Celebrity Creator

## Oscars 2024 Announced.

Category	Winner
Best Supporting Actress	Da'Vine Joy Randolph, "The Holdovers"
Best Animated Short	"War Is Over!"
Best Animated Feature	"The Boy and the Heron"
Best Original Screenplay	"Anatomy of a Fall"
Best Adapted Screenplay	"American Fiction"
Best Makeup and Hairstyling	"Poor Things"
Best Production Design	"Poor Things"
Best Costume Design	"Poor Things"
Best International Feature	"The Zone of Interest"
Best Supporting Actor	Robert Downey Jr., "Oppenheimer"
Best Visual Effects	"Godzilla Minus One"
Best Film Editing	"Oppenheimer"
Best Documentary (Short Subject)	"The Last Repair Shop"
Best Documentary Feature	"20 Days in Mariupol"
Best Cinematography	"Oppenheimer"
Best Short Film (Live Action)	"The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar"
Best Sound	"The Zone of Interest"
Best Score	"Oppenheimer"
Best Song	"What Was I Made For?" from "Barbie"
Best Actor	Cillian Murphy, "Oppenheimer"
Best Director	Christopher Nolan, "Oppenheimer"
Best Actress	Emma Stone, "Poor Things"
Best Picture	"Oppenheimer"

## Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2023

Category	Awardees
Music	
Hindustani Vocal	Kalapini Komkali
Hindustani Vocal	Vinod Kumar Dwivedi
Hindustani Instrumental - Shahnai	Suman Yadav
Hindustani Instrumental - Sarangi	Sanjeev Jyotshi Ramnath
Hindustani Instrumental - Sitar	Barun Pal
Carnatic Vocal	S. Sowmya
Carnatic Vocal	Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Carnatic Vocal	Sriram Parasuram
Carnatic Instrumental - Violin	H.K. Venkatram
Carnatic Instrumental - Mridangam	S. Sekhar
Creative & Experimental Music	L.V. Revanth
Other Major Traditions of Music - Sugam Sangeet	Odissi Music
<b>DANCE</b>	
Category	Awardees
Bharatanatyam	Urmila Satyanarayanan
Kathakali	Jagdish Sundarani Ganani
Manipuri	Manju Dewi
<b>THEATRE</b>	
Category	Awardees
Playwriting	Asif Ali Haider Khan
Stage Design	Bapi Barinder Singh
Direction	Zuleikha Chaudhari
Acting	Anoop Joshi
Allied Theatre Arts - Lighting	Sayed Peerzada
Other Major Traditions of Theatre - Kudiattam	Sivan Namboothiri
<b>TRADITIONAL/FOLK/TRIBAL DANCE/MUSIC/THEATRE AND PUPPETRY</b>	
Category	Awardees
Folk Music, Goa	Kantha Kashinath Gaude
Folk Music, West Bengal	Ajoy Chakraborty
Folk Music, Uttar Pradesh	Kailash Kher
Folk Theatre, West Bengal	Dukhushyam Chitrakar
Folk Music, Jharkhand	Mukund Nayak
Folk & Traditional Music, Meghalaya	Helen Giri
Folk Theatre - Cham	Khekh Ram Chenda
Folk Music, Rajasthan	Anwar Khan Manganiyar
Kudiattam, Kerala	Madipur Gopal
Folk Music, Bihar	Jagdish Prasad
<b>OVERALL CONTRIBUTION/ SCHOLARSHIP</b>	
Category	Awardees
Overall contribution in Performing Arts	Gopalnarain Nenu (Ven. G)
Scholarship in performing arts	Gopalan Nair Venun

## Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person

- The prestigious Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year has been given jointly to two remarkable journalists:
- Greeshma Kuthar - Independent Journalist
- Ritika Chopra - Indian Express

## India Receives 'Measles and Rubella Champion' Award

- Government of India's proactive MR vaccination campaign in high-risk areas and innovative strategies to reach underserved populations, robust surveillance systems, and effective public-awareness initiatives have played a key role in

safeguarding the health and well-being of its population.

- The award is a testament to the dedication and hard work of country's frontline health workers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities across the nation.
- These efforts have resulted in 50 districts consistently not witnessing any measles case while 226 districts have not reported rubella cases over past 12 months.
- Measles and Rubella are vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) and MR Vaccine is part of India's Universal Immunization Programme since 2017. Government of India is working towards eliminating measles and rubella from the country.

## Miss World 2024, Krystyna Pyszkova from Czech Republic Wins the Crown

- Krystyna Pyszkova from the Czech Republic was crowned as the new Miss World 2024 at a grand event in Mumbai, India.
- The previous Miss World 2022, Karolina Bielawska from Poland, crowned her successor in a magnificent ceremony.

## Riken Yamamoto Wins 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize

- Riken Yamamoto, a Japanese architect from Yokohama, has been named the winner of the 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize, widely regarded as the highest honour in the field of architecture.

## Indian Writer Amitav Ghosh Awarded Prestigious Erasmus Prize 2024

- Launched in 1958 and awarded annually to a person or institution that has made an exceptional contribution to the humanities, the social sciences or the arts, in Europe and beyond, Erasmus Prize consists of a cash prize of 150,000 Euros.
- Kolkata-born Ghosh, who went to Delhi's St Stephen's College, is known for his novels such as The Shadow Lines, The Hungry tide and the Ibis Trilogy. His non-fiction work includes The Great Derangement. He received the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary prize in India, in 2018.

## Mr. Srinivasan Swamy Receives 2024 IAA Golden Compass Award

- The IAA Golden Compass Award is a symbol of excellence and innovation in the industry.
- Swamy is the first Indian industry leader to receive this prestigious honor.
- Previous recipients include renowned figures such as Shelly Lazarus, Paul Polman, and Andrew Robertson.

## President Murmu conferred with honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law by University of Mauritius

- She urged Mauritian youth to stay connected with India, expressed gratitude for enduring India-Mauritius relations, and emphasized the transformative power of education.

## The Madras Music Academy conferred TM Krishna with the Sangita Kalanidhi, the highest award

## in the Carnatic music scene

- The Music Academy has also named Prof Parassala Ravi (V Raveendran Nair) and Geetha Raja for the Sangita Kala Acharya award, and Thiruvayyaru Brothers (S Narasimhan and S Venkatesan) and H K Narasimhamurthy for the 'TTK Award'.
- The 'musicologist award' for 2024 goes to Dr Margaret Bastin, and the Nriitya Kalanidhi award (for dance) goes to Dr Neena Prasad, known for her proficiency in multiple classical dance forms.

## Prabha Varma bags Saraswati Samman

- Malayalam poem 'Roudra Sathwikam', penned by poet Prabha Varma has been chosen for the prestigious Saraswati Samman. The award instituted by K K Birla Foundation carried a purse of Rs 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque.
- Varma's 'Roudra Sathwikam' is a poetic work published in 2022 as a novel in poetic verse. "It probes the conflict between power and politics, individual and state, art and power in a unique manner.

## Raksha Mantri Trophy for Best AFMS Hospitals 2022

- The Command Hospital (Southern Command), Pune was judged as the Best Command Hospital, while the Command Hospital (Central Command), Lucknow was the Second Best for 2022.

## COP28 President Wins Award for Sustainable Energy Leadership

- Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, the President of COP28 (the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference), received the "CERAWeek Leadership Award for Building Global Consensus towards a Sustainable Energy Future" from CERAWeek by S&P Global.
- This prestigious award recognized his extraordinary leadership in delivering the UAE Consensus, a groundbreaking agreement that outlined concrete pathways for countries and industries to transition to sustainable energy systems and keep global warming within 1.5°C.

## PM Modi Honoured with Bhutan's 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' Award

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the Order of the Druk Gyalpo, Bhutan's highest honor, making him the first foreign government leader to receive this honour from the Himalayan nation.
- The Order of the Druk Gyalpo was bestowed upon PM Modi in recognition of "his outstanding

contribution to the growth of India-Bhutan relations and for his distinguished service to the Bhutanese nation and people".

## Bina Agarwal and James Boyce awarded the first "Global Inequality Research Award"

- Bina Agarwal and James Boyce have been awarded the first "Global Inequality Research

Award" for their significant contributions to understanding global inequalities, specifically in the areas of social and environmental inequalities.

- The laureates will be invited to receive their awards and present an overview of their work at conferences in Paris in the fall and spring of 2024. These conferences will be organized in conjunction with Sciences Po's Social-Ecological Transitions (SET) initiative.



## OBITUARIES

### Padma Shri Awardee Arun Sharma breathes his last at 91

- Dr. Sharma's 33-year tenure with the ASI was marked by exemplary service, culminating in his retirement as the Superintendent Archaeologist at the ASI Nagpur in 1992. His work during these years laid the foundation for several archaeological milestones and discoveries across India.
- As the senior-most team member, Dr. Sharma's excavation at the Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya site, ordered by the Allahabad High Court, was a defining moment in his career.

### Renowned Artisan and Padma Awardee Kapildev Prasad Passes Away

- His contributions to the handloom industry and the revival of Bababuti sarees.
- Bawan Booti, which literally translates to "52 motifs," is a unique weaving technique that involves intricate hand embroidery on cotton or tasar cloth.

### Paul Alexander, The Man In The Iron Lung, Passes Away At 78

- As one of the last individuals to rely on an iron lung for survival, Alexander's story serves as a poignant reminder of the impact of diseases like polio and the importance of medical advancements.
- Despite the availability of vaccines and alternative treatments, he chose to remain in the iron lung, defying medical expectations and charting his own path.
- Paul Alexander's legacy extends beyond his remarkable life. Recognized by Guinness World Records as the "longest iron lung patient," he leaves behind a legacy of courage, determination, and advocacy.

### Prominent Tribal Leader Lama Lobzang Passes Away at 94

- The former member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and prominent Buddhist Monk of Ladakh, popularly known as Lama Lobzang, passed away this morning at his residence in New Delhi. He was 94 years old.



## IMPORTANT DAYS

### March 1 - Zero Discrimination Day

- Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated globally on March 1 every year so that everyone lives life with dignity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, skin colour, height, weight, etc. The symbol of Zero Discrimination Day is the butterfly. Firstly, on March 1, 2014, the UN celebrated this day.

### March 1- World Civil Defence Day

- World Civil Defense Day is celebrated every year on March 1 to bring the attention of the world public to the importance of civil protection and to

pay tribute to the efforts, sacrifices, and accomplishments of all the services responsible for fighting against disasters. The International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) decided to celebrate this day in 1990.

### March 3 - World Wildlife Day

- This day is celebrated globally on 3rd March and is closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 12 that is Life without water, which focuses on marine species and highlights the problems, critical issues of marine wildlife to our everyday

life. The theme of World Wildlife Day 2023 is "Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration".

### March 3 - World Hearing Day

- World Hearing Day is observed on 3rd March every year to raise awareness about how to prevent deafness and to promote hearing across the world.

### March 4 - National Safety Day

- National Safety Day is celebrated in India on 4th March by the National Safety Council of India. This day is celebrated to make people get safe from several issues like financial loss, health problems, and also any other problems that people are facing in their life.

### March 4 - National Grammar Day

- Every year, National Grammar Day is celebrated on March 4. The day was established in 2008 by Martha Brockenbrough, the founder of the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar. This day celebrates the idiosyncrasies of the English language by studying common grammar mistakes, proofreading our correspondence, and delving into linguistic nuances.

### March 8 - International Women's Day

- This day is observed globally every year on 8 March to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Also, it is an action for accelerating gender parity. Purple is the colour that symbolizes women internationally. The combination of the purple, green and white colour is to symbolize the equality of women which is originated from the Women's Social and Political Union in the UK in 1908. Do you know that purple signifies justice and dignity, green symbolises hope and white purity?

### March 10 - CISF Raising Day

- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day is observed every year on 10 March. The CISF was set up in 1969 under the act of the Parliament of India. It works under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and its headquarter is in New Delhi. This organization works for seaways, airways, and some of the major installations in India. There are some reserved battalions in the CISF which work with the state police to protect law and orders.

### March 13 - No Smoking Day (Second Wednesday of March)

- No Smoking Day is observed every year on the

second Wednesday of March to raise awareness about the harmful health effects of tobacco via smoking and to encourage people all over the world to quit smoking.

### March 14 - International Day of Action for Rivers

- Every year on 14 March, the International Day of Action for Rivers is observed to raise voices to protect rivers and demand for improving the policies for Rivers. It is a day to educate one another about the threats facing our rivers and to find solutions.

### March 15 - World Consumer Rights Day

- It is observed on 15 March every year for raising global awareness about consumer rights and needs. This day is a chance to demand that the rights of all consumers are respected and protected and to protest against social injustices.

### March 15 - World Sleep Day

- World Sleep Day is held the Friday before the Spring Vernal Equinox of each year. This year, it will be observed on 15 March. It is a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects, and driving. The slogan of 'Sleep is essential for Health'.

### March 16 - National Vaccination Day

- On 16 March every year, National Vaccination Day is observed in India which is also known as National Immunisation Day (IMD). It was first observed on 16 March 1995 when the first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine was given. It is an attempt to increase awareness for the eradication of polio from the planet earth.

### March 18 - Ordnance Factories Day (India)

- On 18th March, Ordnance Factories Day is observed every year all over India. On this occasion, the Ordnance Factory, Field Gun Factory, Small Arms Factory, Ordnance Parachute Factory, and Ordnance Equipment Factory acknowledge the day.

### March 20 - International Day of Happiness

- International Day of Happiness is observed every year on 20 March. Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated this day to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The UN launched the 17

Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 to end poverty, reduce inequality and protect our planet which are the three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness.

### March 20 – World Sparrow Day

- World Sparrow Day is celebrated across the world on 20 March to raise awareness about the conservation of sparrows. This day also celebrates the relationship between people and sparrows; spreads a love for sparrows, awareness about their importance in our lives, etc.

### March 20: World Oral Health Day

- World Oral Health Day is celebrated on 20 March to raise awareness about oral health. The theme of World Oral Health day 2023 is "Be Proud Of Your Mouth". In other words, value and take care of it.

### March 21 - World Forestry Day

- On 21st March, World Forestry Day or International Day of Forests is celebrated every year to raise public awareness about the values, significance, and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle on the earth. In 1971, World Forestry Day was established at the 23rd General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture.

### March 21 - World Down Syndrome Day

- World Down Syndrome Day is observed every year on 21st March. Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement in human which results in variable effects on learning styles, physical characteristics or health. The General Assembly has declared 21st March in December 2011 as World Down Syndrome Day.

### March 21 - World Poetry Day

- On 21st March, World Poetry Day is celebrated every year to recognise the unique ability of poetry to capture the creative spirit of the human mind. To celebrate this day on 21st March was adopted during UNESCO's 30th session in Paris in 1999.

### March 22 – World Water Day

- On 22 March, World Water Day is observed annually to raise awareness about the importance of freshwater and advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. It was recommended to celebrate in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. And then, in 1993 the first World Water Day is celebrated.

### March 23 - World Meteorological Day

- World Meteorological Day is celebrated on 23rd March every year to attract attention towards weather and climate for the safety and well-being of the society. On 23rd March 1950, the World Meteorological Organisation came into force. The theme of World Meteorological Day 2023 is "Early Warning and Early Action. Hydrometeorological and Climate Information for Disaster Risk Reduction."

### March 23 - Martyr's Day

- Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas is observed in India on several dates. March 23 is remembered as the day when three brave freedom fighters, namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar, were hanged by the British. Also, January 30th is observed as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.

### March 24 - World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

- World TB Day is celebrated every year on 24 March annually to commemorate the date when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacillus that causes TB in 1882. This Day is observed to educate people about TB, its impact around the world.

### March 25 - International Day of the Unborn Child

- It is observed on 25th March. It is an annual commemoration of unborn fetuses and is observed as a day of opposition to abortion.

### March 25 - International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members

- Every year, it is observed on March 25 by the United Nation to commemorate the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, who was a journalist and died while working for the UN.

### March 27 - World Theatre Day

- World Theatre Day is celebrated on 27 March annually across the world since 1962 to raise the importance of the art form "theatre" and to act as a wakeup call for governments, politicians, and institutions that have not yet recognised its value to the people and also have not realised its potential for economic growth.



**OPSC MCQ**



1. **Who has become the first woman sniper of Border Security Force (BSF)?**
  - A. Suman Kumari
  - B. Radhika Nath
  - C. Sarmitha Mishra
  - D. Rgini Nanda
2. **'Melanochlamys Draupadi' which was in news recently is associated with which of the following?**
  - A. A plant species.
  - B. Geographical feature.
  - C. A marine species.
  - D. Anti Piratic drug.
3. **'Risa' is a tribal costume was recently granted GI tag belongs to which of the following state?**
  - A. Assam
  - B. Meghalaya
  - C. Mizoram
  - D. Tripura
4. **Union Minister Dr. Where did Mansukh Mandaviya recently launch the AYUSH-ICMR Advanced Centre at which of the following city?**
  - A. New Delhi
  - B. Mumbai
  - C. Noida
  - D. Bhopal
5. **Exercise 'Samudra Laksamana' was conducted between India and which of the following country?**
  - A. Malaysia
  - B. Myanmar
  - C. Philipins
  - D. Thailand
6. **Global Resources Outlook Report is released by which of the following organization ?**
  - A. UNDP
  - B. USAID
  - C. UNEP
  - D. World Bank
7. **"Aditi Scheme' is associated with which of the following sector?**
  - A. Higher education
  - B. Defense sector
  - C. Coal sector
  - D. Hydro power
8. **Union Steel and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia inaugurated India's first green hydrogen plant in the stainless steel sector located at which of the following?**
  - A. Duburi
  - B. Jamsedpur
  - C. Angul
  - D. Hisar
9. **On which of the following river Asian River Rafting Championship being organised?**
  - A. Sutlej
  - B. Brahmaputra
  - C. Tista
  - D. Kali
10. **Who took oath as the 24th Prime Minister of Pakistan?**
  - A. Shahbaz Sharif
  - B. Arif Alvi
  - C. Maryam Nawaz
  - D. Imran Khan
11. **On which island of Lakshadweep has the Indian Navy established its new base?**
  - A. Minicoy Island
  - B. Kavaratti
  - C. Agatti Island
  - D. Chetlat Island
12. **Where is 'Start-up Mahakumbh' being organised?**
  - A. Bengaluru
  - B. Mumbai
  - C. New Delhi
  - D. Kolkata
13. **Who has been appointed as the new Ambassador of India to Russia?**
  - A. Rishab Kanth
  - B. Ramesh Rana
  - C. Vinay Kumar
  - D. Vijay Bhora
14. **According to the World Happiness Report 2024, which is the happiest country in the world?**
  - A. Denmark
  - B. Finland
  - C. Sweden
  - D. Switzerland
15. **Which app has ISRO launched to assist the Gaganyaan crew?**
  - A. BYOMO
  - B. RAKSHAK
  - C. SAKHI
  - D. PUSPAK

16. On which date International Day of Happiness celebrated every year?
- A. 18 March  
B. 19 March  
C. 20 March  
D. 21 March
17. Who has been named as the new Ambassador of India to Myanmar?
- A. Manoj Sanghi  
B. Ajaya Mina  
C. Abhay Thakur  
D. Ritesh Kumar
18. Who led the Indian delegation to the 148th meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva recently?
- A. Rudra Narayan Deo  
B. Harivansh Narayan Singh  
C. Omm Birla  
D. Rajnath Singh
19. Who won the gold medal in the 59 kg youth category in the recent Para Powerlifting World Cup?
- A. Keshab sen  
B. Rajan Behera  
C. Rishabh Singh  
D. Vinay
20. Who has recently been appointed as the head of the National Investigation Agency?
- A. Debasish Ranakar  
B. Vinayananda Raje  
C. Keshabnath singh  
D. Sadanand Vasant Date
21. Saksham app recently seen in news is associated with which of the following ?
- A. Vocational education  
B. Scholarship  
C. Electoral process  
D. MSMEs
22. On which of the following date World Water Day celebrated every year?
- A. 20<sup>th</sup> March  
B. 21<sup>st</sup> March  
C. 22<sup>nd</sup> March  
D. 23<sup>rd</sup> March
23. Tamilisai Soundararajan resigned from her post, she was the Governor of which state?
- A. Tamil Nadu  
B. Telangana  
C. Kerala  
D. Karnataka
24. Who was awarded the PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award recently?
- A. Sradha Murthy  
B. Ratan Tata  
C. Mukesh Ambani  
D. Narayan Murthy
25. Who has recently been appointed as the new Chairman of Prasar Bharati?
- A. Ashok Khemka  
B. Sonal Goyal  
C. Navneet Kumar Sehgal  
D. Manoj Kumar Sharma
26. Union Minister Arjun Munda laid the foundation stone of 'Centre for Preservation and Promotion of Tribal Culture and Heritage' in which state?
- A. Madhya Pradesh  
B. Maharashtra  
C. Odisha  
D. Jharkhand
27. 'Majuli Mask' which recently got 'GI Tag' belongs to which of the following states?
- A. Assam  
B. Sikkim  
C. Arunachal Pradesh  
D. Mizoram
28. 'Yaunde Declaration' recently seen in news, it is associated with which of the following?
- A. Drug abuse  
B. Women and children trafficking  
C. Malaria disease  
D. AIDS
29. India's first automobile in-plant railway siding project was inaugurated in which state?
- A. Gujarat  
B. Rajasthan  
C. Telangana  
D. Haryana
30. With whose collaboration has NITI Aayog launched 'Frontier Technology Labs'?
- A. Meta  
B. Google  
C. Microsoft  
D. Infosys
31. India recently signed an agreement with which country to establish a Joint Economic and Trade Committee?

- A. Colombia  
B. Costarica  
C. Peru  
D. Dominican Republic
32. According to SIPRI report, which country is the world's top arms importer between 2019-2023?  
A. China  
B. Russia  
C. India  
D. Israel
33. PM Modi laid the foundation stone of India's first commercial semiconductor fabrication service in which state?  
A. Gujarat  
B. Maharashtra  
C. Rajasthan  
D. Tamil Nadu
34. Which of the following country recently became 32<sup>nd</sup> member of the military alliance NATO?  
A. Finland  
B. Sweden  
C. Switzerland  
D. Italy
35. With which of the following country the Indian Coast Guard organized 'Sea Defenders-2024'?  
A. UK  
B. USA  
C. Japan  
D. Myanmar
36. Who has been selected as the flag bearer for India at Paris Olympics 2024?  
A. Sharat Kamal  
B. Niraj Chopra  
C. Sushil Kumar  
D. Radhika Devi
37. 'Bharat-Shakti', the joint exercise between which of the following countries?  
A. India-Japan  
B. India- France  
C. India- USA  
D. None
38. Who has been chosen by the Election Commission of India as the National Disability Icon?  
A. Sheetal Devi  
B. Arunima Sinha  
C. Dev Rathi  
D. Jai Kumar
39. Who has recently become a Latest member of the International Solar Alliance?  
A. Costa Rica  
B. Haiti  
C. Panama  
D. Morocco
40. President Draupadi Murmu recently nominated which of the following person to Rajya Sabha?  
A. Narayan Murthy  
B. Sudha Murthy  
C. Ramesh Rastogi  
D. Kalyan Nath
41. On which of the following date International Women's Day celebrated every year?  
A. 7<sup>th</sup> March  
B. 8<sup>th</sup> March  
C. 9<sup>th</sup> March  
D. 10<sup>th</sup> March
42. Who among the following recently launched a platform called 'Niti for States'?  
A. Amit Shah  
B. Rajnath Singh  
C. Ashwini Vaishnav  
D. Anurag Thakur
43. Which of the following Institution has NPCI joined hands for cooperation in the field of Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence?  
A. IIT Mumbai  
B. IIT Delhi  
C. IISc, Bhubaneswar  
D. IISc, Bangalore
44. Who won the first prize in the National Youth Parliament Festival, 2024?  
A. Yatin Bhaskar Duggal  
B. Nitin Mukharjee  
C. Kartikeya panda  
D. Rajnish Patel
45. ISRO successfully tested the landing mission of the reusable launch vehicle, what is it called?  
A. Garuda  
B. Pushpak  
C. Chetak  
D. Falcan
46. Exercise 'Tiger Triumph-24' is between India and which of the following country?  
A. USA  
B. UK  
C. Russia  
D. Australia

47. Which state police recently launched the digital platform 'Trinetra' App 2.0?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Rajasthan

48. 'Kovind Committee' recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- A. Increase in Marriage Age
- B. Climate Action Policy
- C. simultaneous elections
- D. Uniform Civil Code

49. Which day is annually celebrated as „CISF Raising Day“?

- A. March 10
- B. March 12
- C. March 13
- D. March 14

50. Which of the following country was honored with the prestigious “Measles and Rubella Champion” global award?

- A. USA
- B. Kenya
- C. India
- D. South Africa

## ANSWERS

### 1. Answer A.

- Border Security Force (BSF) sub-inspector Suman Kumari has become the first woman sniper of the Border Security Force. Suman recently completed an eight-week sniper course at the Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT), Indore and achieved 'Instructor Grade'.

### 2. Answer C

- The Zoological Survey of India has named a new marine species of ruby red-spotted head-shield sea slug after Indian President Draupadi Murmu. This species belonging to the Melanochlamys genus was discovered from Digha on the West Bengal coast and Udaipur on the Odisha coast.

### 3. Answer D

- Tripura's tribal attire 'Risa' has also been given GI tag. Geographical Indication is mainly given to link a product to its region of origin. The famous silver Tarkashi of Cuttack (Odisha) has been given GI tag. Odisha State Cooperative Handicrafts Corporation Limited had requested the GI tag for the famous silver tarkashi on July 1, 2021.

### 4. Answer A

- Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the AYUSH-ICMR Advanced Center for Integrated Health Research at AIIMS in New Delhi. It aims to provide holistic health care to patients by using both traditional Indian knowledge and modern medicine together.

### 5. Answer A

- Exercise 'Samudra Laksamana' was recently conducted between the Indian and Malaysian navies off the coast of Visakhapatnam. It is a joint naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Navy. This was the third edition of this exercise.

### 6. Answer C

- The Global Resources Outlook 2024 report was launched during the Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) at the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. This is the flagship report of the International Resources Panel of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

### 7. Answer B

- Defense Minister Rajnath Singh launched 'ADITI scheme' to promote innovations in critical and strategic defense technologies during DefConnect 2024 in New Delhi. Under the scheme, start-ups will be eligible to receive grant assistance of up to Rs 25 crore for their research, development and innovation efforts in defense technology.

### 8. Answer D

- Union Steel and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia virtually inaugurated India's first green hydrogen plant in the stainless steel sector located at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar (Haryana).

### 9. Answer A

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated the Asian River Rafting Championship to be held from March 4 to March 9, 2024 on the Sutlej River near Basantpur (Sunni) in Shimla. More than 20 national and international teams from Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Indonesia are participating in this championship.

### 10. Answer A

- Shehbaz Sharif took oath as the 24th Prime Minister of Pakistan. President Arif Alvi administered the oath to 72-year-old Shehbaz at a ceremony held at the President's residence. This is the second time that he has become the Prime Minister of the country. Earlier, Shahbaz had served as the Prime Minister of the country from April 2022 to August 2023.

### 11. Answer A

- Indian Navy has established its new base "INS Jatayu" in Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep with an aim to enhance its operational capabilities in the Indian Ocean region. Earlier, the Navy had established INS 'Dweepprakshak' at Kavaratti, Lakshadweep. Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar inaugurated the second naval base in Lakshadweep.

### 12. Answer C

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Start-up Mahakumbh at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. On this occasion, he also visited the exhibition displayed. On this occasion, PM Modi said that India has the third largest startup ecosystem with 1.25 lakh startups, which includes 12 lakh youth.

### 13. Answer C

- The Ministry of External Affairs has appointed the country's senior diplomat Vinay Kumar as the next Ambassador of India to Russia. Vinay Kumar is currently serving as the Ambassador of India to Myanmar. Vinay Kumar is a 1992 batch IFS officer. India has long-term and extensive cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. India imports most of the weapons from Russia.

### 14. Answer B

- According to the World Happiness Report 2024, the European

country Finland is the happiest country in the world. Finland remains the happiest country in the world for the seventh consecutive year. Like last year, India remains at 126th position in the World Happiness Index. Whereas India's neighboring country Pakistan is at 108th place and Sri Lanka is at 128th place. America is at 23rd place.

**15. Answer C**

- Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) located at Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram has launched a multi-purpose app 'SAKHI' (Space-borne Assistant and Knowledge Hub for Crew Interaction-SAKHI) to assist the Gaganyaan crew. This app will help in monitoring the health of astronauts and maintaining communication with ISRO on Earth. ISRO can launch Gaganyaan human mission in the year 2025.

**16. Answer C**

- International Day of Happiness is a global event organized by the United Nations every year on 20 March. On July 12, 2012, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution declaring March 20 as the International Day of Happiness. The purpose of this day is to encourage people to lead a simple and happy life.

**17. Answer C**

- Veteran diplomat Abhay Thakur has recently been appointed as the new Ambassador of India to Myanmar. Abhay was a key member of the team guiding the talks during India's G20 presidency last year. Abhay is a 1992 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and is currently working in the Ministry of External Affairs.

**18. Answer B**

- Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh participated in the 148th meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, in Geneva, Switzerland. He led the Indian parliamentary delegation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an international organization of national parliaments. It was established in 1889.

**19. Answer D**

- India's Vinay performed brilliantly in the Para Powerlifting World Cup held in Egypt and won the gold medal by lifting 120 kg in the 59 kg youth category. 18 year old athlete Vinay is a resident of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. In the same event, Ahmed Abdelkader of Egypt won the silver medal.

**20. Answer D**

- Maharashtra cadre officer Sadanand Vasant Date has been appointed as the chief of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Piyush Anand has been appointed Director General of NDRF and Rajeev Kumar Sharma has been appointed Director General of Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD).

**21. Answer C**

- The Election Commission has launched the Saksham app to ensure accessibility and inclusivity in the electoral process. The Election Commission has announced that voters above 85 years of age and persons with disabilities with 40 percent benchmark disability can vote from home.

**22. Answer C**

- World Water Day is celebrated every year on 22 March with the aim of making people aware of the importance of fresh water in the world. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 1992 by which March 22 was declared World Water Day. In 1992, the first formal proposal for World Water Day was made under Agenda 21 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro.

**23. Answer B**

- Telangana Governor and Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Sundararajan have resigned from both their posts. He has sent his resignation to President Draupadi Murmu. Sundararajan served as the second Governor of Telangana state. He assumed charge on September 8, 2019.

**24. Answer B**

- Former Tata Sons Chairman Ratan Tata was honored with the prestigious PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for his outstanding philanthropic contributions. The PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award is named after the former Prime Minister of India. This award is given to people dedicated to social and humanitarian welfare.

**25. Answer C**

- Retired IAS officer Navneet Kumar Sehgal has been appointed as the new Chairman of Prasar Bharati, the post was vacant for four years. Sehgal replaced A Surya Prakash, whose tenure ended in February 2020. Prasar Bharati is India's largest public broadcasting agency. It was established in the year 1997.

**26. Answer D**

- Union Minister of Tribal Affairs; Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Arjun Munda recently laid the foundation stone of 'Centre for Preservation and Promotion of Tribal Culture and Heritage' in Kharsawan district of Jharkhand through virtual medium. A budget of Rs 10 crore has been allocated for the establishment of this centre.

**27. Answer A**

- The Government of India has recently granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Majuli Mask of Assam. Majuli state has been a unique repository of art, culture and tradition for centuries. These masks are often used during festivals like Durga Puja. GI tag is a special tag that is used to identify products originating from a specific geographical location.

**28. Answer C**

- Recently, the Yaounde Declaration has proved to be an important milestone in the fight against malaria. Under this, the health ministers of 11 African countries pledged to end deaths due to malaria. The objective of this declaration is to strengthen health infrastructure, expand capacity of personnel and enhance program implementation. Yaoundé is the capital of the African country Cameroon.

**29. Answer A**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first automobile in-plant railway siding project at Maruti Suzuki India's plant in Hansalpur, Gujarat. This railway siding project is a collaborative initiative between Maruti and Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development (G-RIDE).

**30. Answer A**

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog in collaboration with META has launched Frontier Technology Labs (FTL). Its objective is to empower the youth to innovate. So far, AIM has established 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) in schools in 722 districts of India.

**31. Answer D**

- India has recently signed the protocol for the establishment of Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) with the Dominican Republic. The Union Cabinet had approved the proposal to sign the said protocol for the establishment of JETCO on January 24 this year. The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean nation.

**32. Answer C**

- According to the latest data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India is the world's top arms importer between 2019-2023. Between 2019 and 2023, India imported 9.8% of total global arms imports. After India, there

are Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine, Pakistan, Japan, Egypt, Australia, South Korea and China. There is an international institute located in 'Sipri'. It was established in the year 1966.

**33. Answer A**

- PM Modi laid the foundation stone of Tata-Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp's chip fabrication unit in Dholera Rajasthan. This will be India's first commercial semiconductor fabrication service. This includes three projects worth more than Rs 1.25 lakh crore. The capacity of the Dholera unit will be 50,000 wafer starts per month.

**34. Answer B**

- Sweden becomes the 32nd country to join the NATO alliance.

**35. Answer B**

- Indian Coast Guard will conduct joint exercise 'Sea Defenders-2024' with the US Coast Guard to strengthen bilateral cooperation. This joint exercise will be conducted off the coast of Port Blair on 09-10 March 2024.

**36. Answer A**

- Khel Ratna Award winner and two-time Commonwealth Games champion table tennis player Sharath Kamal will be India's flag bearer in the upcoming Paris Olympics 2024. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has recently announced this. Sharath Kamal will be India's 19th flag bearer in the Olympics. Former Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and Mary Kom led India as flag bearers in the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

**37. Answer D**

- The joint exercise 'Bharat-Shakti' of the three defence forces of India (Army, Navy and Air Force) organized in Asia's largest field firing range located in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

**38. Answer A**

- Para archer and Arjuna Award winner Sheetal Devi has been appointed as the National Disability Icon by the Election Commission of India (ECI). In view of the Lok Sabha elections, ECI and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) organized an exhibition cricket match to promote voter education.

**39. Answer C**

- Central American country Panama has officially joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Panama has become the 97th member country of ISA. ISA was established as a joint effort of India and France. Currently, 116 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.

**40. Answer B**

- President Draupadi Murmu has nominated writer Sudha Murthy to Rajya Sabha. 73-year-old Murthy was also awarded the Padma Shri in 2006 and the Padma Bhushan in 2023. In January, the President had nominated Satnam Singh Sandhu as a Rajya Sabha member. The President can nominate 12 members to the Upper House.

**41. Answer B**

- International Women's Day is celebrated all over the world on 8 March. This day started in America about 115 years ago when

in 1908, women in America launched a big movement for their rights. The International Women's Day campaign for the year 2024 is based on "Inspire Inclusion" and this year's theme is "Invest in women: Accelerate progress".

**42. Answer C**

- Communications, Railways and Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav launched government think tank NITI Aayog's platform 'NITI For States', a digital public infrastructure. Along with this, he also inaugurated 'Viksit Bharat Strategy Room' in NITI Aayog.

**43. Answer D**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Wednesday entered into an agreement with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore to conduct joint research on blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) technology. Under this, focus will be on scalable blockchain platform and multi-modal analytics.

**44. Answer A**

- In the National Youth Parliament Mahotsav, 2024, Yatin Bhaskar Duggal of Haryana won the first prize, while Vaishna Pichai of Tamil Nadu won the second prize and Kanishka Sharma of Rajasthan won the third prize. 87 state-level winners gathered in New Delhi for the finals of the Youth Parliament.

**45. Answer B**

- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully tested the landing mission of its Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) named 'Pushpak' from the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Challakere, Karnataka. This was the third landing mission of RLV.

**46. Answer A**

- 'Tiger Triumph - 24', a bilateral tri-service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) military exercise between India and the USA, is being conducted from 18 to 31 March 2024. The 'Harbor Phase' of this military exercise is scheduled from 18 to 25 March 24.

**47. Answer A**

- Uttar Pradesh Police will now use the state-of-the-art digital platform Trinetra App 2.0, which has been designed to help in crime prevention and investigation.

**48. Answer C**

- A committee was formed under the leadership of former President Ram Nath Kovind to evaluate the feasibility of 'One Nation, One Election'. Recently the committee has submitted its report to President Draupadi Murmu.

**49. Answer A**

- The CISF Raising Day honours the founding of the paramilitary force. It was founded on March 10, 1969. This year, the nation will celebrate the 55th CISF raising day.

**50. Answer C**

- India has been honored with the esteemed Measles and Rubella Champion Award for its exceptional efforts in combating these infectious diseases.