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**MAY – 2023**

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **‘City Beauty Competition’ Portal Launched**

- ★ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches ‘City Beauty Competition’ portal.
- ★ In this competition, the country’s Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) can participate.
- ★ The competition aims to encourage and recognize the transformative efforts made by cities and wards across the country to create beautiful, innovative and inclusive public spaces.
- ★ Under this competition, the wards and public spaces of the cities will be assessed under five broad pillars viz (i) accessibility (ii) amenities (iii) activities (iv) aesthetics and (v) ecology.
- ★ The competition will help to honor the most beautiful wards and public spaces in towns and cities.
- ★ The selected wards will be awarded at the city and state levels under four categories viz. waterfronts, green spaces, tourist/heritage sites and market/commercial sites will be awarded at the state level first.
- ★ Thereafter some shortlisted entries will also be considered for national level awards.
- ★ The competition provides an exclusive opportunity for wards and cities to showcase their efforts towards creating beautiful public spaces.
- ★ The competition will promote heritage and culture, sustainable communities and ecological conservation, as well as encourage states and cities to learn friendly practices.

### **India’s First Dark Sky Reserve**

- ★ India’s first ‘dark sky reserve’ in Ladakh’s Hanle village is now ready and will be opened for the public soon.
- ★ Spread over 1,073 sq km across a cluster of six hamlets in the Hanle cold desert region at an elevation of 4,500 metres above sea level, the reserve is among a few of its kind in the world that will offer a spectacular view of the night sky.
- ★ Meanwhile, work is on in full swing to develop Benital in Uttarakhand as the first ‘astro village’ of India.
- ★ Located at an altitude of 2,600 metres above sea level, Benital, with its low light pollution and minimal human activity, offers an undisturbed view of the night sky, making it an ideal location for a dark sky park.
- ★ The department has estimated a total expense of ₹5 crore for the project and submitted a report to the administration.
- ★ It has entrusted the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam with the responsibility of developing Benital as an astro-village.

## Telangana Government Launches Agri Innovation Challenge

- ★ The Telangana Government has launched a Grand Challenge for Innovation to promote innovation in the food processing sector.
- ★ Telangana Agriculture Minister S Niranjan launched the Challenge at the inaugural of the Food Conclave 2023.
- ★ The Telangana government is organising a Food Conclave-2023 here on April 29, 2023 focussing on the opportunities in Green, White, Yellow, Blue, and Pink revolutions.
- ★ The theme of the conclave is “Envisioning India’s Decade in the Agri-Food Sector”.
- ★ The maiden event will have events around 5 themes — Agriculture (Green), Edible Oil (Yellow), Dairy (White), Meat and Poultry (Pink), and Aquaculture (Blue).
- ★ The government has roped in the World Economic Forum (India), Indian Vegetable Oil Producers Association (IVPA), Indian Dairy Association, Heifer International, and Society of Aquaculture Professionals to hold the panel discussions.

## India’s First Underwater Sea Tunnel

- ★ India’s First Undersea Tunnel in Mumbai Set to Open by November 2023.
- ★ The tunnels begin close to Girgaon (before Marine Drive), travel under the Arabian Sea, Girgaon Chowpatty, and Malabar Hill, and finally terminate at Breach Candy’s Priyadarshini Park.
- ★ The high-speed coastal route aims to reduce the 45-minute peak-time trip from Girgaon to Worli to only 10 minutes.
- ★ The diameter of the tunnels is 12.19 meters which is 17-20 meters below sea level. About 1 kilometer part is under the sea.
- ★ Construction of tunnels is a part of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP) being built by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

## Government Launches Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme

- ★ The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, has launched the scheme, ‘Vivad se Vishwas I – Relief to MSMEs’ for providing relief to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for COVID-19 period.
- ★ The scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24 by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- ★ The relief provided under this scheme is in continuation to the efforts of the government in promoting and sustaining the MSME sector.
- ★ Under the scheme, ministries have been asked to refund performance security, bid security and liquidated damages forfeited/deducted during the Covid pandemic.

## UGC Launches ‘CU-Chayan’

- ★ The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched a new portal named ‘CU-Chayan’ for faculty appointments in central varsities.

- ★ CU-Chosen is an integrated recruitment portal, specially designed and developed for faculty recruitment in Central Universities.
- ★ The portal is completely user friendly and caters to the needs of all the stakeholders in the recruitment process.
- ★ UGC has developed this portal to create an enabling environment for both universities and applicants.
- ★ The portal provides a common platform for listing of vacancies/advertisements/jobs across all Central Universities.
- ★ The portal makes the recruitment process completely online from application to screening.

### **Microsoft Launches Two New Initiatives to Support Indian SMBs**

- ★ Microsoft India launched two new initiatives to support small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) in their digital transformation journey.
- ★ These initiatives are aimed at helping Indian SMBs solve their business challenges, improve operations, drive efficiency and accelerate growth.
- ★ It is a dedicated website designed to bring together business owners and entrepreneurs in India to network with peers, enhance their skills and achieve holistic growth.
- ★ The website offers an SMB Academy, which provides digital skills training, and access to Microsoft's curated business and technology courses.
- ★ The website provides inspiring stories from businesses across the country, various Microsoft solutions to meet organisational needs and easy access to Microsoft's vast ecosystem of over 17,000 partners in the country.

### **The GS NIRNAY App was Launched**

- ★ The GS NIRNAY app was recently launched by the Union Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj during the National Panchayat Awards Week.
- ★ It stands for Gram Sabha National Initiative for Rural India to Navigate, InnovAte and Resolve PanchaYat.
- ★ The recordings made through this app will provide a means of verification of facts in case of queries that may arise regarding the resolutions undertaken during the Gram Sabha.
- ★ It will also serve as a valuable repository of information for future reference.
- ★ National Panchayat Awards Week Theme: Panchayat on ke Sankalpon ki Siddhi ka Utsav.

### **Gujarat Kicks-off Design for Hydrogen Valley Project**

- ★ India's Clean Hydrogen Mission Gets a Boost with Hydrogen Valley Project in Gujarat.
- ★ It is to develop a localised hydrogen value chain where it can serve more than one end-sector or application in mobility, industry, and energy.
- ★ The meeting was jointly organised by iCreate in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, and the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

- ★ The Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster in Gujarat will be a part of India's efforts to develop clean Hydrogen Valleys by 2030.
- ★ Gujarat Hydrogen Valley Consortium, which will be integral to meeting India's commitment to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030.

### **India's First International Multimodal Logistics Park**

- ★ Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal reviewed progress of India's first International Multi Modal Logistics Park in Jogighopa, Assam.
- ★ The park is likely to be completed within 2023.
- ★ The park is being developed under the ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojana.
- ★ The park will be connected to road, rail, air and waterways.
- ★ This is being developed in 317-acre land along the Brahmaputra.
- ★ The MMLP will have all the facilities like, warehouse, railway siding, cold storage, custom clearance house, yard facility, workshops, petrol pumps, truck parking, administrative building, boarding lodging, eating joints, water treatment plant, etc.

### **Electric Bus Service in Mumbai**

- ★ Maharashtra Chief Minister (CM) Shri Eknath Shinde launched electric Shivneri bus services between Mumbai and Pune.
- ★ The inaugural ceremony was held at Sahyadri Guest House in Mumbai's Malabar Hill.
- ★ He also launched a campaign, named after Bal Thackeray, for cleanliness and beautification of bus stands.
- ★ The new e-buses have a passenger-seating capacity of 43, besides seats for the driver and the co-driver.
- ★ The manufacturer, Olectra Greentech Limited, has claimed that the buses can travel up to 250 kilometres on a single charge.
- ★ Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) received a total of 8e-buses, with 6 yet to get clearance from the regional transport office (RTO).
- ★ In another development, actor Makarand Anaspure has been appointed as the 'goodwill ambassador' for MSRTC.

### **Reading Habit Among Children in Villages**

- ★ In a bid to encourage children in villages to promote the habit of reading, the Bihar government has started 'Didi ki library', established under Jeevika.
- ★ At least 100 libraries have been opened in 32 districts.
- ★ Community Library and Career Development Centres (CLCDCs) have also been set up in many blocks of Bihar.
- ★ There are a total of 12,318 members registered in all the 100 community libraries, of which about 80 per cent are girls.

- ★ Till now, 63 government buildings have been taken over for the purpose, while the remaining 37 are being developed in private houses hired by Jeevika.

### **First Pharma Park to be Built in Uttar Pradesh**

- ★ The state government has approved to the project of setting up a state's first Pharma Park in Lalitpur district of Bundelkhand.
- ★ The state government will transfer 1500 hectares of land in Lalitpur district to the Animal Husbandry Department.
- ★ The state government will spend ₹1560 crore for development works and providing necessary facilities to the investors in Lalitpur Pharma Park.
- ★ A proposal has been prepared to transfer the vacant land of the Animal Husbandry Department in Lalitpur to the Industrial Development Department.
- ★ The Detail Project Report (DPR) will be prepared soon after selecting a consultant for the development of the Pharma Park.

### **Centre Decides to Extend Smart Cities Mission Deadline**

- ★ The Centre has decided to extend the Smart Cities Mission deadline by one year, from June 2023 to June 2024.
- ★ The flagship mission was launched on June 25, 2015
- ★ It involves the development of 100 cities into smart cities.
- ★ The project aims to improve the quality of life for people living in India and drive economic growth.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Urban Development is responsible for implementing the mission.
- ★ Also, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in each state is created, headed by the CEO; they look after the implementation of the mission.
- ★ According to the officials, out of 100 cities, around 50 have completed close to 75 per cent of their projects and are on track to complete the remaining works by June 2023.
- ★ The ministry said that the government has released around ₹38,000 crore to 100 cities.
- ★ Combining this with state and urban local bodies releases, the cumulative amount of funds released to cities stands at ₹71,000 crore.

### **Project-SMART for Station Area Development**

- ★ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Ministry of Railways jointly signed an MoU with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for 'Station Area Development along Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail' (Project-SMART).
- ★ Project-SMART envisages developing areas around Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (MAHSR) stations to enhance accessibility and convenience for commuters and other stakeholders.
- ★ The project will facilitate institutional capacity of state governments, municipal corporations and urban development authorities for planning, development and management of areas around MAHSR stations.

- ★ MoUs were signed for four high speed rail stations – Sabarmati, Surat in Gujarat and Virar and Thane in Maharashtra.

### **Indian Air Force Heritage Center in Chandigarh**

- ★ Defense Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Indian Air Force Heritage Center in Chandigarh.
- ★ The Heritage Center displayed artefacts, simulators and interactive boards highlighting various aspects of operations in the Indian Air Force.
- ★ The centre also displayed vintage aircraft and underlined the important role played by the Air Force in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as its combat capabilities.
- ★ The Heritage Center aims to inspire the youth of Chandigarh to pursue a career in the Indian Air Force.
- ★ The inauguration of the Indian Air Force Heritage Center was a momentous event that celebrated the history, achievements and contribution of the Indian Air Force to the nation.

### **Indian Firm UPL to Establish Millets Model Farm**

- ★ UPL, an agrochemical and speciality chemicals company, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Republic of Guyana to establish a 200-acre 'Millets Model Farm'.
- ★ The company will study various millet varieties to identify those that are suitable for cultivation and consumption in Guyana.
- ★ UPL will provide technical expertise and select agriculture inputs, while Guyana will provide land for the local farm operation.
- ★ The year 2023 has been designated as the International Year of Millets, and the Indian government is making great efforts to establish India as the global centre for millets.
- ★ In New Delhi's Dilli Haat, the Millets Experience Centre (MEC) was recently opened by India's Minister of Agriculture, Narendra Singh Tomar.

### **India Post Signs MoU with CAIT and Tripta Technologies**

- ★ India Post has signed an MoU with Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and Tripta Technologies for logistics services.
- ★ The MoU will benefit small and medium traders as they will be able to use India Post as a single logistics service provider across the country.
- ★ The partnership between India Post, CAIT and Tripta Technologies will provide shipping and last mile delivery services to CAIT's strong merchant base and small and medium business in the unorganized sector.
- ★ The MoU is a significant milestone in taking e-commerce to smaller towns and rural areas and is expected to benefit thousands of merchants.

## Shree Anna in The Meals of Personnel of CAPFs and NDRF

- ★ The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently decided to introduce Millets, Shree Anna in the meals of personnel of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
- ★ The decision to introduce 30 per cent Millets in the meals.
- ★ The Ministry had asked all the forces to take action for the introduction of Millets based menu.
- ★ The Ministry informed that Millets will also be made available in Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar, Grocery Shops of the campuses and Ration Store by setting up dedicated counters and corners.
- ★ The forces will organize training of cooks in preparing millets-based dishes through reputed institutes in this field.
- ★ The United Nations had declared 2023 the International Year Millets as recognizing the importance of millets, and creating a domestic and global demand along with providing nutritious food to the people, at the behest of the Government of India.

## Zoom Gets Pan-India Telecom Licence

- ★ Zoom Video Communications (ZVC) has secured a pan-India telecom licence that will enable it to offer telephone services to enterprise customers.
- ★ US-based Zoom has been offering voice and video conference service through its website and app.
- ★ With these licences, the company will be able to offer its cloud-based private branch exchange (PBX) service 'Zoom Phone' to multinational corporations (MNCs) and businesses operating in India.
- ★ PBX works as a local telephone exchange for enterprises and helps them in managing conference call services.
- ★ Zoom partners with international telecommunication providers and offers phone numbers and calling plans in 47 countries and territories bundled with cloud PBX service.
- ★ Zoom, stylized as Zoom or Zoom Meetings, is a proprietary videotelephony software program developed by Zoom Video Communications.

## Rajasthan Government Launches Cattle Insurance Scheme

- ★ Looking at the importance of animal husbandry in the economy of Rajasthan, the state government is providing schemes, including recently launched insurance cover for milch cattle.
- ★ Livestock accounts for 8-9% of state GDP'.
- ★ In inflation-relief camps, or 'Mehangai Rahat" camps, a scheme of Rajasthan Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot, launched on April 2023 and slated to continue till 30 June 2023 those in cattle rearing are being provided insurance cover of ₹40,000 each for two milch cows under the Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Pashu Bima Yojana.
- ★ According to the scheme, ₹750 crore would be spent a year and more than 2 million cattle rearers would benefit from it.
- ★ The scheme is free for rearers with an annual income up to ₹8 lakh a year, while those earning more have to pay ₹200 per animal per annum.



## Union Health Ministry Launched SAKSHAM

- ★ Union Health Ministry launched the SAKSHAM Learning Management Information System and it was launched by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.
- ★ SAKSHAM stands for Stimulating Advanced Knowledge for Sustainable Health Management.
- ★ It aims to provide online training and medical education to all health professionals across the country.
- ★ This digital learning platform will facilitate comprehensive capacity building among health professionals.
- ★ Currently, it offers over 200 public health and 100 clinical courses in an online format.
- ★ SAKSHAM was developed by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare in New Delhi.

## Telangana Government Launches State Robotics Framework

- ★ Telangana government launches State Robotics Framework to establish self-sustaining robotics ecosystem and position the state as a leader in robotics in India.
- ★ This includes setting up a Robo Park with testing facilities and co-working spaces as well as a world-class robotics accelerator for startups.
- ★ It aims to support research and development, promote collaboration between academia and industry, and promote the adoption of robotics technology.
- ★ The framework focuses on leveraging robotics in agriculture, healthcare, industrial automation and consumer robotics to drive growth and development.

## PMJJBY, PMSBY And APY Completed 8 Years

- ★ Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) completed 8 years of providing social security cover.
- ★ PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY were launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 09 May 2015 from Kolkata, West Bengal.
- ★ The three schemes are dedicated to the welfare of the citizens, recognising the need for securing human life from unforeseen decentralisation and financial uncertainties.
- ★ PMJJBY is a one-year life insurance scheme renewable from year to year offering coverage for death due to any reason.
- ★ PMSBY is a one-year accidental insurance scheme renewable from year to year offering coverage for death or disability due to accident.
- ★ The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) was launched to create a universal social security system for all Indians, especially the poor, the under-privileged and the workers in the unorganised sector.

## Uttar Pradesh Government Plans to Develop a 'Ramaland' Theme Park

- ★ The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government is planning to develop a theme park 'Ramaland' modelled on:
  - It will be developed to narrate the story of Lord Ram and attract tourists.
  - It will attract children and adults to showcase the story of Ramayan.

- ★ Under 'Ayodhya Vision 2047', the planned transformation of Ayodhya is estimated to cost ₹30,000 crore.
- ★ The development plans include around 260 initiatives covering tourism, aviation, infrastructure, housing, medical, energy, culture, urban improvement, transport and more.

### **ICMR Signed MoU with Ministry of AYUSH**

- ★ Indian Council of Medical Research and AYUSH Ministry signed an MOU for collaborative and cooperative momentum on health research in the field of Integrated Medicine.
- ★ The MoU envisages collaboration in areas of convergence and synergy between the two organizations to strengthen integrated health research and research capacity.
- ★ The MoU also envisages exploring the possibility with the Ministry of AYUSH and ICMR to work on public health research initiatives to address diseases of national importance.
- ★ Both the institutes will formulate and implement joint research projects and programmes.

### **Ban on Diesel 4-Wheeler Vehicles by 2027**

- ★ A panel formed by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas suggested that India should ban the use of diesel-powered four-wheeler vehicles by 2027.
- ★ The Energy Transition Advisory Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Former Oil Secretary Tarun Kapoor.
- ★ It recommends switching to electric and gas-fuelled vehicles in cities with more than a million people and polluted towns for reducing carbon emissions.
- ★ India is one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases.
- ★ India has set a target to produce 40% of its electricity from renewable energy to achieve its net zero goal by 2070.
- ★ The panel suggested that no diesel buses should be added to city transport from 2024 onwards.
- ★ It recommends that no city bus should be added to city transport after 2030 which is not electric.

### **Indian Government Panel Proposes Measures for Net Zero Future**

- ★ As India moves towards securing a Net Zero future, it needs to construct gas storage reserves and, for this, it may allow foreign companies to have stakes in these reserves, an energy transition panel has recommended.
- ★ It also proposed that diesel-driven 4-wheelers be eliminated as soon as possible, starting with a ban on diesel-powered four-wheelers in all million-plus cities and all towns with high pollution by 2027.
- ★ Other major recommendations of the panel include raising energy needs met through power flowing from the grid from 18% to 40% by 2035.
- ★ It also includes 10% blending of the compressed bio-gas in natural gas by 2030 and use of electricity for electricity for cooking by 25% of households by 2030.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference

- ★ The 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) is taking place in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- ★ The sixth edition of the conference is being organized by the India Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- ★ The theme of this year's conference is 'Partnership for Peace, Prosperity and a Resilient Future'.
- ★ The IOC is expected to provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of issues related to the Indian Ocean including trade, security, climate change and regional connectivity.
- ★ The aim of the conference is to bring together high-level government delegations and think tanks from around 25 countries to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation among countries in the Indian Ocean region.

## PM Modi Lays Foundation Stone of LIGO-India Project

- ★ PM Modi laid the foundation stone of Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory – India (LIGO-India).
- ★ The LIGO-India facility is being constructed in the Hingoli district in Maharashtra.
- ★ LIGO-India will be an advanced gravitational-wave observatory to be located in India as part of a worldwide network.
- ★ The LIGO facility involves the construction of two 4-km-long vacuum chambers in an L-shape along with other structures.
- ★ The facility is set to become operational by 2030.
- ★ It is set to become the largest scientific facility in India.
- ★ This facility will be capable of sensing gravitational waves generated during the merger of massive astrophysical objects such as black holes, and neutron stars.

## Santiniketan Recommended for Inclusion in UNESCO

- ★ Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy announced Santiniketan, the place where Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore built Visva-Bharati over a century ago, has been recommended for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List by an international advisory body.
- ★ India has been striving for a long to get a UNESCO tag for this cultural site located in West Bengal's Birbhum district.
- ★ This will formally be announced in the World Heritage Committee meeting to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in September 2023.
- ★ The France-based International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is an international non-governmental organisation that comprises professionals, experts, and representatives from local authorities, companies and heritage organisations and is dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of architectural and landscape heritage around the world.
- ★ Santiniketan, over 160 km from Kolkata, was originally an ashram built by Tagore's father Debendranath Tagore, where anyone, irrespective of caste and creed, could come to meditate.

- ★ India has a total of 40 sites which enjoy the UNESCO World Heritage tag.
- ★ It also includes 52 sites in the Tentative List.

### **RINL Launches 'Open Challenge Program (OCP) 2.0'**

- ★ Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) launched 'Open Challenge Program (OCP) 2.0' as part of a series of OCP programs.
- ★ The objective of this program is to select startups specialising in Industry 4.0 technologies for collaboration with RINL.
- ★ The startups' technologies are expected to provide faster return on investment for RINL, contribute to energy savings and enhance process safety.
- ★ The 'Center of Excellence (CoE) on Industry 4.0' project involves collaboration between STPI (Software Technology Parks of India), MeitY (Ministry of Electronics & IT), RINL and Government of Andhra Pradesh.

### **ICMR Successfully Tests Blood Bag Delivery Under iDrone Initiative**

- ★ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently successfully tested the delivery of blood bags by drone under its iDrone initiative.
- ★ A drone carrying a blood bag weighing 500 grams flew for a distance of 12 kilometres and delivered it safely at the designated location.
- ★ The drone then returned to the base station with another blood bag.
- ★ Its objective is to address the challenges of blood transfusion services in rural and tribal areas, where access to blood banks and transportation facilities is limited.
- ★ It was launched by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

### **First North East SMB Outreach Program BizAmp**

- ★ Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched BizAmp.
- ★ It is the first outreach programme to empower MSMEs from the North-Eastern States and amplify their businesses utilizing benefits under Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund.
- ★ Organized by the Ministry of MSME in association with NSIC Venture Capital Fund Limited (NVCFL) under its SRI Fund.
- ★ It served as a platform for the empanelled daughter funds of SRI Fund to reach the MSMEs in the North East Region of India.
- ★ It focuses upon maximizing capital benefits through NVCFL's SRI Fund.
- ★ The Government of India, launched SRI Fund with an outlay corpus of ₹10,006 crore, concentrated towards financing an infusion of capital to MSMEs through Daughter Funds.
- ★ The SRI fund which is being managed by NVCFL, is an Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) providing growth capital to MSMEs through equity/quasi-equity/equity-like structured instruments.
- ★ As on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the fund has made a capital commitment of ₹5,120 crore to 42 empaneled daughter funds.

## G20 Culture Group (CWG) Meeting

- ★ Second G20 Culture Group meeting, also known as the CWG meeting, took place in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ★ The CWG meeting aims to facilitate discussion and cooperation among G20 member states on cultural issues, heritage conservation, creative industries and cultural diplomacy.
- ★ The meeting addressed the importance of preserving and protecting cultural heritage, including tangible and intangible cultural properties.
- ★ The discussions included topics such as heritage conservation, cultural tourism and promotion of cultural diversity.
- ★ The meeting explored the role of creative industries such as art, design, film, music and fashion in economic growth, job creation and innovation.

## National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited 'Jana Shakti Art exhibition' at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Delhi.
- ★ This is an exhibition of wonderful samples of art based on some episodes of Mann Ki Baat.
- ★ Amazing samples of art based on some episodes of Mann Ki Baat have been displayed in the exhibition.
- ★ NGMA aims to preserve, document, and promote modern and contemporary art in India.
- ★ It serves as a platform for showcasing and appreciating various forms of artistic expression.
- ★ NGMA houses an extensive collection of artworks, including paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs and installations.

## National Homoeopathic Convention 'Homocon 2023'

- ★ Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami inaugurated the National Homoeopathic Convention 'Homeocon 2023' at Doon University, Dehradun and launched a documentary on Homeopathy.
- ★ Homeopathy has been recognized as the second most practiced system of medicine in the world and its importance has been demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ★ The commitment of the state government to establish Uttarakhand as a major AYUSH region is due to the economic and effective nature of homeopathy.

## Kerala Institutional Ranking Framework

- ★ Higher Education Minister of Kerala Shri R. Bindu formally launched the Kerala Institutional Ranking Framework (KIRF), modelled on the lines of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), to assess the quality of higher education institutions.
- ★ Kerala has become the first in the country to establish a State-specific ranking framework for its higher education institutions by way of the initiative.
- ★ It is to introduce a more democratic and secular approach to the ranking system in Kerala.

- ★ The NIRF is a ranking system created by the Indian government in 2015 to evaluate higher education institutions across India.
- ★ The framework will assess the higher educational institutions based on 5 components.

### **Biological Control Laboratory in Hyderabad**

- ★ Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar officially inaugurated the Integrated Biological Control Laboratory located in Hyderabad.
- ★ This laboratory is an important milestone in promoting sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices.
- ★ The primary focus of the laboratory is on the use of biological control methods.
- ★ These methods involve the use of natural agents such as beneficial insects, predators and parasites for the management of pests and diseases in agricultural crops.
- ★ The laboratory serves as the center for research and development activities related to biological control.

### **Online Education Program 'Pahal'**

- ★ Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra inaugurated an online rural education programme 'Pahal' at Government UP Sainik Inter College, Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow.
- ★ This programme has been prepared by the department of secondary education in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.
- ★ The initiative aims to provide educational opportunities to rural children who have limited access to quality education.
- ★ 'Pahal' is designed to bridge the education gap between rural and urban areas.
- ★ Under this program, in the initial phase, free online education will be provided in 10 government secondary schools of the state.
- ★ Through these classes, students of rural areas will be able to get the latest information related to science and mathematics.

### **UP Holds 2<sup>nd</sup> Position in GI Tagged Products**

- ★ After getting GI tag for three more One District One Product (ODOP) crafts, Uttar Pradesh has now come second in the country in terms of maximum number of items with Geographical Indication tag.
- ★ The ODOP crafts which have got GI tag include Mainpuri Tarkashi, Mahoba Gaura Stone Craft and Sambhal Horn Craft.
- ★ Tamil Nadu leads with 55 GI-tags, followed by UP and Karnataka with 48 and 46 GI products, respectively.
- ★ However, UP ranks first in terms of GI-tagged handicrafts, with 36 crafts to its credit.
- ★ With this achievement, UP has overtaken Karnataka to become the second state with the highest number of GI-tags in the country.
- ★ Handicrafts in UP also have the highest number of GI tags.

## **National Ayush Mission Conclave in New Delhi**

- ★ Union Minister of AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the two-day National AYUSH Mission (NAM) Conclave in New Delhi.
- ★ The two-day conclave will pave the way for better coordination among stakeholders and strengthen the functioning of AYUSH health and wellness centres.
- ★ The objective of the mission is to increase the availability, reach and quality of AYUSH health services across the country through AYUSH Health Wellness Centers as part of the Ayushman Bharat scheme of the Government of India.
- ★ The government had approved operationalization of 12,500 AYUSH health wellness centres by upgrading existing AYUSH dispensaries and health sub-centres under the broad umbrella of NAM in a phased manner.
- ★ More than 8500 such centres have been established across the country and are serving the communities.

## **Production Linked Incentive Scheme – 2.0 for IT Hardware**

- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the Production Linked Incentive Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware with a budgetary outlay ₹17,000 crore.
- ★ It is an initiative that provides incentives to domestic industries to promote production at the local level.
- ★ Through this scheme, the government aims to incentivize companies to increase the sales of manufactured products in domestic units.
- ★ Electronics manufacturing in India has seen a steady growth with a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 17% in the last 8 years.
- ★ In 2023 it crossed a major benchmark in production of USD 105 billion (about ₹9 lakh crore).
- ★ India has become the second largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world.
- ★ Mobile phone exports have crossed a major milestone of US \$ 11 billion (about ₹90 thousand crore) in 2023.
- ★ The global electronics manufacturing ecosystem is coming to India, and India is emerging as a major electronics manufacturing country.

## **Flood Relief Exercise ‘Jal Rahat’**

- ★ Indian Army’s Gajraj Corps, along with other disaster management groups, conducted a joint flood relief drill, ‘Exercise Jal Rahat’, at Hagrama Bridge on Manas River in Assam.
- ★ Apart from Indian Army- SSB, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and Police representatives participated in the exercise.
- ★ The event included coordination and rehearsal for rescue missions of people from inundated areas by joint efforts of expert teams of Army, NDRF and SDRF.
- ★ It is to showcase the Indian Army’s preparedness and capabilities in responding to natural disasters, particularly floods.

## **Bhupendra Yadav Launched Meri LiFE App**

- ★ The Meri LiFE app was launched by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav.
- ★ The Meri LiFE app aims to revolutionise progress tracking for individuals and communities.
- ★ The app is part of a global mass movement inspired by the vision of the Prime Minister.
- ★ The Meri LiFE app encourages people to protect the environment and adopt a sustainable lifestyle.
- ★ This app empowers users to make a positive impact on the environment.
- ★ The Meri LiFE App promotes sustainable living practices.

## **Andhra Pradesh Launches 'e-Chits' App**

- ★ Andhra Pradesh (AP) Revenue Minister Shri Dharmana Prasada Rao launched 'E-chits' application of the Registration and Stamps Department.
- ★ It is to ensure better regulation of the chit fund businesses in AP.
- ★ All the chit-fund transactions will be done through the mobile app, which was developed by the Registration and Stamps Department, keeping in view the increasing number of fraud cases.
- ★ The E-chits application would usher in transparency in the chit fund business and prevent duping of customers.
- ★ This policy helps prevent fraud by chit fund companies and avoid loss to subscribers.
- ★ The app will also ensure that subscribers know which registered companies are operating in the chit fund business.

## **Asia Petrochemical Industry Conference 2023**

- ★ Union Minister of Health, Chemicals and Fertiliser Dr Mansukh Mandaviya presided over the Asia Petrochemical Industry Conference 2023 in New Delhi.
- ★ The Chemical and Petrochemicals Manufacturers Association (CPMA) of India hosted the 41<sup>st</sup> edition.
- ★ The theme of the event was 'Ushering in a Sustainable Future'.
- ★ India is determined to be a trusted partner in the global supply chain of chemicals and petrochemicals to the world.
- ★ The main objective of the conference is to spur discussion and co-operation on the issues of the day being faced by the industry related to growth, trade, investment, and sustainability, in Asia-Pacific and also around the world.
- ★ The conference aims to facilitate knowledge exchange, foster collaborations, and address challenges and opportunities in the petrochemical industry across the Asian region.

## **UGC Has Launched A Newly Designed Website and Portal**

- ★ University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched a newly designed website and portal to transform higher education in India.



- ★ In order to support universities and colleges in focusing on providing the younger generation with a high-quality education, the decision has been made to assist and facilitate these institutions.
- ★ The decision is aimed at enhancing the educational experience and ensuring that students get a high-quality education that prepares them for the future.
- ★ To make it more user friendly, informative and dynamic, UGC has redesigned the website.
- ★ In addition, UGC has launched two new portals: 'UTSAH' and 'Professor of Practice'.

### **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Inaugurates Skywalk Bridge**

- ★ Tamil Nadu (TN) Chief Minister (CM) MK Stalin inaugurated one of India's biggest Skywalk bridges.
- ★ The 570-metre long and 2-meter wide skywalk bridge connects the Mambalam railway station and T.Nagar bus terminus.
- ★ The skywalk, constructed at a cost of ₹28.45 crore, is the longest in TN.
- ★ As many as 20,000 pedestrians are expected to use the skywalk daily.
- ★ The skywalk has been built along Madley Road and Railway Market Road to ease congestion in stretches such as Ranganathan Street and Natesan Street in the commercial areas of T.Nagar.
- ★ It is expected to be used by around one lakh people on a daily basis.

### **International Conference on 'India Pharma and India Medical Devices'**

- ★ Department of Pharmaceuticals, International Conference on 'India Pharma and India Medical Devices' will be organised on 26 May 2023.
- ★ The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of this conference will be inaugurated by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers.
- ★ The Department of Pharmaceuticals is partnering with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the event.
- ★ The aim of the conference is to showcase India as a manufacturing hub for high quality medical products in the pharmaceutical and medical devices sector.
- ★ A new scheme called 'Medical Device Clusters for Common Facilities (AMD-CF)' will also be launched, focusing on strengthening or setting up of common infrastructure and testing facilities for medical devices.

### **Farmer Producer Organizations in Cooperative Sector**

- ★ The government has decided to form 1,100 new Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the cooperative sector.
- ★ The government has allocated these additional 1100 FPOs to National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC) under FPOs' Scheme.
- ★ Under the FPO Scheme, each FPO gets financial assistance of 33 lakh rupees.
- ★ Further, the Cluster-Based Business Organizations are provided the financial assistance of 25 lakh rupees per FPO.

- ★ The Ministry of Cooperation said Primary Agricultural Credit Societies can now engage in other economic activities including high-income generating activities such as bee-keeping and mushroom cultivation.
- ★ Primary Agricultural Credit Societies are primarily involved in short-term credit and distribution of seeds and fertilizers.

### **Farm Loan Interest Waiver Scheme**

- ★ Madhya Pradesh (MP) Chief Minister (CM), Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has launched a CM Farm Loan Interest Waiver Scheme namely Mukhyamantri Krishak Byaaj Maafi Yojana-2023 (Chief Minister Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme).
- ★ Under the scheme, the MP government will compensate defaulter farmers who have outstanding loans, including the principal and interest, of up to ₹2 lakh as of 31 March 2023, from Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACS).
- ★ The scheme covers short-term crop loans as well as loans that have been converted into medium-term loans due to natural calamities.
- ★ Chouhan assured farmers that the MP government would pay the interest amount for each defaulter farmer, allowing them to become eligible for the crop loan scheme with 0% interest.
- ★ A total of ₹2,123 crores in outstanding amounts will be waived off, benefiting approximately 11,19,000 farmers.

### **India to Host 44<sup>th</sup> ISO COPOLCO Plenary**

- ★ India will host the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual ISO COPOLCO Plenary by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- ★ The event to be held in New Delhi will be inaugurated by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.
- ★ Organized by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the grand event will include interactive sessions and workshops on relevant topics, apart from various activities aimed at enhancing consumer engagement in the standardization process.
- ★ ISO COPOLCO, known as the Committee on Consumer Policy, is a vital committee under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- ★ It is responsible for advocating consumer interests in the standardization process and ensuring that standards are developed with consumers' needs in mind.
- ★ It provides a forum for the exchange of information and experience on consumer involvement in ISO's international standardization work.

### **First State in the Country to Approve Good Governance Regulations**

- ★ Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde approved the first Good Governance Regulations in the country.
- ★ The purpose of the rules is to enhance accountability, accessibility, dynamism and transparency in state administration.
- ★ A separate cell will be set up to address the effects of climate change.

- ★ The rules also include expanding the scope of 'Aaple Sarkar Seva Kendra' for end-to-end online services to citizens within the prescribed time limit.
- ★ Citizens' complaints will be redressed at a speedy pace.
- ★ The rules were drawn up in consultation with ministerial officials, experts and NGOs.
- ★ 161 department-wise indices have been prepared to evaluate the performance of good governance.

### **Andhra Pradesh CM Launches Machilipatnam Port Project**

- ★ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy formally launched the Machilipatnam port works worth ₹5,156 crore recently.
- ★ The port, with an initial cargo capacity of 35 million tonnes, will be completed in two years.
- ★ The capacity of the 4-berth deep water port will be increased to 116 million tonnes as cargo traffic gradually increases.
- ★ The port will help develop Machilipatnam on the lines of developed port cities like Mumbai and Chennai as it will be connected by National Highway 216 and Gudivada-Machilipatnam railway line soon.
- ★ This will increase the reach of the port and improve connectivity.
- ★ The project is being implemented by the Machilipatnam Port Development Corporation Limited (MPDCL).
- ★ It will cater to exports of fertilizers, coal, cooking oil, containers, agricultural products, cement, granite, cement clinker, iron ore from Andhra Pradesh and neighboring Telangana.

### **Ministry of Education and PARAKH**

- ★ Ministry of Education organized a workshop in New Delhi to discuss the integration of 60 school examination boards operating in different states and union territories.
- ★ The key component of the scheme is PARAKH, a National Assessment Center set up under the National Council of Educational Research and Training.
- ★ The central government is planning for uniformity of boards to facilitate seamless transition for students in different boards or regions.
- ★ It aims to align curriculum standards, grading system and evaluation methods so as to enhance the credibility and recognition of certificates and grades obtained across all boards.
- ★ The workshop highlighted the need to re-evaluate the rote-examination culture prevalent in the education system.
- ★ PARAKH full name is "Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic" Development.
- ★ It will act as a constituent unit of the NCERT.

### **Withdraw AFSPA from Assam by December 2023**

- ★ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced that a target has been set to completely withdraw AFSPA from Assam by the end of 2023.

- ★ The government aims to address concerns of human rights violations and promote accountability and transparency.
- ★ AFSPA (Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act) provides additional powers to the armed forces to maintain law and order in areas affected by insurgency and internal disturbances.
- ★ Its goal is to enable the armed forces to deal with insurgency and maintain public order in areas affected by armed insurgency or insurgency.
- ★ AFSPA gives the armed forces wide powers including arrest, search and shoot on suspicion in 'disturbed' areas.

### **Government Makes Unique ID Mandatory for Doctors**

- ★ Doctors will now have to get a Unique Identification Number (UID) to be able to practice medicine in the country, as per the new regulations by the National Medical Commission (NMC).
- ★ NMC has been constituted by an act of Parliament known as the National Medical Commission Act, 2019.
- ★ It has replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI), constituted under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956).
- ★ NMC regulates medical education and medical professionals.
- ★ The Commission grants recognition of medical qualifications gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, monitors medical practice and assesses the medical infrastructure in India.

### **First Urban Climate Film Festival**

- ★ The first ever Urban Climate Film Festival is going to be held in New Town, Kolkata from 03 June to 05 June to sensitize the audience about the environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change on urban settlements.
- ★ The festival will highlight the environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change on urban settlements.
- ★ The audience will be able to see these scenarios through the film.
- ★ It aims to encourage citizens to 'behave environmentally responsible' in line with the call of the Hon'ble Prime Minister through the U-20 Priority Sectors and Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) Mission.
- ★ The festival will conclude with a special closing ceremony on 05 June, the occasion of World Environment Day.
- ★ The film festival is being organized by the National Institute of Urban Affairs.

### **Ministry of Civil Aviation Launches UDAN 5.1**

- ★ The Ministry of Civil Aviation in India has launched UDAN 5.1 on 24 May, a special edition of the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, with a special focus on helicopter routes.
- ★ For the first time under Regional Connectivity Scheme RCS-UDAN, this round is designed specifically for helicopter routes.

- ★ There will be an increase in the scope of operations for the operators, which will now also allow routes where one of the origin or destination points is in the priority zone.
- ★ The airfare ceiling has been reduced by 25% to make flying in helicopters more affordable for passengers.
- ★ Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) was launched in 2016 as a Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- ★ Its objective is to make affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes available to the common man even in small towns.

### **Chhattisgarh Launched 'Hamar Sughar Laika Abhiyan'**

- ★ Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel launched the 'Hamar Sughar Laik Abhiyan' in the 'Bharose Ka Sammelan' program at Sankra in Durg district.
- ★ The campaign aims to bring 1,800 malnourished children, identified through a survey, into the category of well-nourished children.
- ★ This is the first district level campaign of its kind in the state and focuses on managing the growth of children through hunger testing.

### **India's First Fully e-Governed State**

- ★ Kerala becomes India's first fully e-governed state.
- ★ The state has achieved this through policy initiatives aimed at transforming it into a digitally empowered society.
- ★ The government focused on setting up a knowledge-based economy and achieving 100% digital literacy.
- ★ Important services across various sectors were digitized to ensure transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility for all citizens.
- ★ e-governance in Kerala has streamlined service delivery, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks and delays.
- ★ Online portals and mobile applications have been launched for citizens to interact with government departments and access services easily.

### **Finance Ministry Announces Launch of ₹75 Special Coin**

- ★ The Center will launch a new ₹75 coin on May 28 to mark the inauguration of the new Parliament.
- ★ The coin is being issued to commemorate the inauguration of the new Parliament House of India.
- ★ The coin will be unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 28 and coincides with the celebration of 75 years of India's independence.
- ★ The obverse of this coin has the Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar and the words 'Satyamev Jayate' below it.
- ★ The coin also bears the inscription "Bharat" in Devanagari script on the left and 'India' in English on the right.

- ★ It displays the rupee symbol below the Lion Capital and the denomination value of 75 in International Numerals.
- ★ The obverse of the coin depicts the image of the Parliament Complex and the reverse bears the inscription “Sansad Sankul” in Devanagari script on the upper periphery and “Parliament Complex” in English on the lower periphery.

## **Mega ‘Yoga Festival’ in Hyderabad**

- ★ Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) under the Union Ministry of AYUSH organized a mega ‘Yoga Festival’ at NCC Parade Ground, Hyderabad.
- ★ Telangana Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan was the Chief Guest at the Yoga Festival being organized at NCC Parade Ground, Hyderabad on May 27.
- ★ This event was organized 25 days before the Yoga Festival to be held in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of ‘International Yoga Day’ on June 21, 2023.
- ★ Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal announced the theme of International Day of Yoga this year as ‘Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.
- ★ According to Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, on June 21, the ocean will become a ring of yoga when yoga exercises will be carried out on several ports and ships by the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- ★ Yoga will also be done in the region from Arctic to Antarctica, in which countries on or near the Prime Meridian line will also participate in Yoga.

## **Education Ministry Discontinues 2 Awards for Hindi Writers**

- ★ The Union Education Ministry has decided to discontinue ‘Shiksha Puraskar’ and the ‘Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar’.
- ★ ‘Shiksha Puraskar’ was launched by the Central Government in 1992 to encourage original writings in Hindi.
- ★ Five awards worth ₹1 lakh are given every year under the ‘Shiksha Puraskar’.
- ★ Writers from any part of India or publishers on their behalf may submit their books for this award.
- ★ Books originally written in Hindi by Hindi and non-Hindi-speaking authors are considered for this award.
- ★ The ‘Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar’ was started to promote writings in Hindi by writers from non-Hindi-speaking areas.
- ★ 19 awards of one lakh rupees every year are given under this award. Its main objective is to encourage Hindi writers from Hindi-speaking areas.

## **Kerala to Open International Labour Conclave**

- ★ A three-day international labour conclave was inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan.

- ★ The conclave has been organised by the Labour department in association with the State Planning Board.
- ★ Telangana Labor Minister Chamkura Malla Reddy, Bihar Labor Resources Minister Surendra Ram, and India head of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Satoshi Sasaki attended the inauguration.
- ★ It will pave the way for new policies and changes in the labour sector in Kerala.
- ★ About 150 people, including representatives of employers' and employees' organizations from across the country and abroad, experts from administrative and knowledge sectors and many more will participate in the three-day conclave.
- ★ On the second day of the conclave, various topics will be discussed in 7 sessions.
- ★ India is one of the founding members of the ILO and became a permanent member in 1922.

### **Telangana Achieves 100% Coverage of PMJDY**

- ★ The state of Telangana achieved 100 percent household coverage of banking services through the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).
- ★ According to the Social Security Administration survey, the state achieved 100 percent coverage of 135 welfare schemes and programs in 20 departments.
- ★ Telangana has more than 1 crore 11 lakh Jan Dhan bank account holders with a total balance of over ₹3 thousand crore.
- ★ Around 61 lakh people in rural areas have opened Jan Dhan accounts, while in urban areas around 50 lakh people have zero balance accounts.
- ★ Over 84 lakh Jan Dhan account holders in Telangana actively use RuPay cards, which provide additional benefits like credit facilities.

### **Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot Inaugurates 'Jungle Safari'**

- ★ Rajasthan Chief Minister (CM) Shri Ashok Gehlot virtually inaugurated 'Jungle Safari' at Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ★ He also addressed the inaugural function of the Peace and Non-violence Cell offices in all districts.
- ★ Peace and non-violence are the basis of culture, harmony, and brotherhood.
- ★ Rajasthan is the only state where Peace and Non-Violence Department exist.

### **Myntra Launches ChatGPT-Powered Search Feature**

- ★ Flipkart group-owned fashion commerce platform Myntra has rolled out 'MyFashionGPT', a search feature powered by ChatGPT.
- ★ The move aims to help shoppers with better product discovery and drive engagement on the retailer's app.
- ★ Customers can essentially look up curated looks on the app, say by typing keywords such as "airport looks", and the system is designed to showcase a host of products including apparel, footwear, bags and sunglasses that consumers can choose from.

- ★ Recently, the company also announced the launch of MyStylist, an AI-based stylist expert to provide customers with expert styling tips and vernacular search in 11 languages on its platform.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **International Climate Action in Civil Aviation**

- ★ India will join the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and Long-Term Aspirational Goals (LTAG) from 2027.
- ★ This announcement was made in the meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry of Civil Aviation under the Chairmanship of Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.
- ★ ICAO has adopted several key ambitious targets, including a two percent annual fuel efficiency improvement by 2050, carbon neutral development, and net zero by 2050, all covered under CORSIA and LTAG.
- ★ India's Ministry of Civil Aviation stated that joining these measures from 2027 would help airlines from developing countries like India to achieve greater growth and avoid adverse financial consequences due to CORSIA.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Visit Maldives**

- ★ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to embark on a three-day official visit to Maldives on 30 April.
- ★ During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with Maldivian Defense Minister Ms. Maria Ahmed Didi and Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid.
- ★ All aspects of defense relations between the two countries will be reviewed during the consultations.
- ★ India and Maldives are working together to effectively address common challenges including maritime security, terrorism, radicalism, piracy, smuggling, organized crime and natural disasters.
- ★ India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) along with its 'Neighbourhood First' policy as well as Maldives' 'India First' policy seek to work together to jointly develop the capabilities within the Indian Ocean Region.

### **World's First Robotic Check-In Assistant**

- ★ Dubai-based airline Emirates has unveiled the world's first robotic check-in assistant named 'Sara'.
- ★ The system is part of a new City Check-in and Travel Store that is set to launch in Dubai's Financial District.
- ★ In addition to the new check-in facility, Emirates passengers with a valid boarding pass will also have access to select lifestyle amenities at ICD Brookfield Place, as well as exclusive discounts and special offers at a range of restaurants, gyms and luxury stores.



- ★ This latest innovation from Emirates aims to enhance the customer experience and make the check-in process more seamless and efficient.
- ★ 'SARA' will match customers' faces with scanned passports, check in passengers and guide them to the baggage drop area.
- ★ This facility allows customers to drop off their luggage at the airport up to 24 hours in advance and up to 4 hours before their flight.

### **'Machines can See' - Summit on Artificial Intelligence**

- ★ The UAE government launched the 'Machines Can See 2023' summit in Dubai, one of the first international conferences in Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the region.
- ★ The conference is being held in partnership between Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications Office and 'Machines Can See' company.
- ★ The conference aims to bring together experts from around the world to discuss the future of AI and its potential to contribute to the UAE's vision of creating the next Silicon Valley.
- ★ The event was organized in collaboration with the Dubai Department of Economic and Tourism and the Dubai Future Foundation.
- ★ The summit included presentations and panel discussions from various experts in the field of AI.
- ★ The UAE is the only country with a state-level AI programme, which is a testament to its commitment to supporting the progress of AI technology.

### **MoU for Cooperation on Industrial Research and Development**

- ★ India and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance industrial research and development cooperation in high-tech areas such as AI, quantum, semiconductors, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture.
- ★ The MoU will focus on specific projects and will be monitored by a Joint Steering Committee to ensure effective implementation.
- ★ It is a type of agreement between two or more parties that expresses a shared intention to take a common line of action.
- ★ MOUs are often used by many companies and government agencies to define relationships between departments, agencies, or closely related companies.

### **Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mauritius**

- ★ Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mauritius.
- ★ The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth and members of the Mauritius Marathi Mandali Federation.
- ★ Fadnavis highlighted Maharashtra's potential as a major industrial and investment destination in India.
- ★ Fadnavis participated in the Indo-Mauritius Business Forum and signed an MoU to promote trade between Mauritius and Maharashtra.

- ★ He also announced a grant of Mauritius Rupees 44 million for the construction of a multi-purpose hall and a scholarship for 10 students.
- ★ Fadnavis also attended a cultural event with Prime Minister Jugnauth and interacted with members of the Maharashtrian community in Mauritius.

### **Japan to Train 1000 Indian Engineers for Bullet Train Project**

- ★ Japan has decided to provide specialized training to 1,000 Indian engineers ahead of starting work on the high-speed rail track system for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor (MAHSR).
- ★ National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has signed an MoU with Japan Railway Technical Service (JARTS) to operationalize bullet trains in the country.
- ★ Work on the high-speed rail track system will be started only under this agreement.
- ★ The bullet train being built between Mumbai and Ahmedabad will use a ballast less slab track system, similar to that used in the Japanese Shinkansen high-speed railway.

### **Petersberg Climate Dialogue 2023**

- ★ The Petersberg Dialogue on Climate Change was held in Berlin.
- ★ The Petersberg Climate Dialogue (PCD) was hosted by Germany and the United Arab Emirates, which is hosting the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- ★ Ministers from 40 countries attended the conference to discuss the way forward towards COP28.
- ★ The main topics of discussion at the event were renewable targets, climate finance and global stocktake.
- ★ The conference agreed to focus on phasing out fossil fuel emissions while phasing out viable, affordable zero-carbon alternatives.

### **India-Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment**

- ★ Sixth India- Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI) held in Ottawa.
- ★ The Ministers reviewed the India-Canada CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) negotiations.
- ★ Goyal participated in various events to promote trade and investment in Toronto from 9 to 10 May 2023.
- ★ Piyush Goyal inaugurated the India Pavilion at SIAL Canada-2023, the largest food innovation trade show in North America with participation of over 1000 national and international exhibitors from 50 countries.

### **World Health Organisation Chief Declares End to COVID-19**

- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) has ended the global emergency status of COVID-19.

- ★ According to WHO's Coronavirus Dashboard which has collated key statistics since early in the pandemic, the cumulative cases worldwide now stand at 765,222,932, with nearly 7 million deaths: the precise figure currently stands at 6,921,614.
- ★ As of 30 April 2023, a total of more than 3 billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide.
- ★ On 30 January 2020, after the recommendation of the Emergency Committee, WHO had declared Covid-19 as a global health emergency.
- ★ The WHO issued an updated Covid management plan on 03 May 2023.
- ★ It will guide countries to manage Covid for the next 2 years.

### **Monkeypox No Longer a Global Health Emergency**

- ★ The World Health Organization declared the end of a global health emergency for the rare but potentially serious disease mpox, formerly known as monkeypox.
- ★ According to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, countries have reported about 90% fewer cases in the past three months.
- ★ The emergency declaration was issued in July 2022 amid a major global surge in cases.
- ★ mpox belongs to the family of poxviruses, which also includes smallpox, and people with the disease often develop a rash on various parts of the body.

### **UAE's Sharjah Police Launches 'Stay in Your Lane' Campaign**

- ★ UAE's Sharjah Police launched a traffic campaign called 'Stay in Your Lane' to tackle road violations.
- ★ The campaign aims to improve traffic culture among drivers and other road users by increasing awareness and promoting adherence to traffic rules and instructions.
- ★ The campaign includes the dissemination of awareness messages in three different languages through the social networking sites of Sharjah Police.

### **London Stock Exchange Group to Set Up Technology Centre**

- ★ The London Stock Exchange Group PLC (LSEG) will set up a technology centre of excellence (CoE) in Hyderabad, which will create about 1,000 jobs a year.
- ★ The announcement was made after Telangana IT and Industries Minister Shri KT Rama Rao Meeting with LSE Group CIO Anthony McCarthy in London.
- ★ A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed by Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary of IT and Industries Departments (Govt of Telangana), and McCarthy.
- ★ The CoE will boost the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) ecosystem in the city.

### **India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**

- ★ India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states have recently taken important steps towards a new trade and partnership agreement.

- ★ At the ministerial meeting held in Brussels, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held discussions with representatives of EFTA to work towards a comprehensive new Trade and Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
- ★ The Ministerial meeting marked an important milestone in taking forward the negotiations on TEPA between India and the European Free Trade Association.
- ★ Both sides stressed the importance of principles of good faith and respect for each other's sensitivities in order to achieve a fair, just and balanced settlement.
- ★ EFTA has established bilateral relations and co-operation in the field of trade and commerce.
- ★ The objective of this cooperation is to strengthen economic ties and promote mutually beneficial trade between the two countries.
- ★ The EFTA is an intergovernmental organization consisting of four member states: Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

### **'50 Start-ups Exchange Programme'**

- ★ India and Bangladesh have recently jointly launched the '50 Start-up Exchange Programme' to promote collaboration and exchange between the start-up ecosystems of the two countries.
- ★ The objective of the program is to strengthen bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh by promoting cooperation in start-up and innovation sectors.
- ★ It provides a platform for entrepreneurs, investors and stakeholders from both the countries to connect and collaborate.
- ★ The '50 Start-up Exchange Program' facilitates knowledge sharing and learning opportunities between Indian and Bangladeshi start-ups.
- ★ It encourages exchange of ideas, best practices and expertise to foster innovation and growth.

### **International Museum Expo 2023**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the International Museum Expo 2023 in New Delhi.
- ★ The expo is part of the Amrit Mahotsav celebration of Independence and will be organised to mark the 47<sup>th</sup> International Museum Day.
- ★ PM Modi will inaugurate the virtual walkthrough of the upcoming National Museum in North and South Block.
- ★ The objective of the National Museum is to display and highlight important historical events, personalities, ideas and achievements that have shaped India's past and present.
- ★ The Prime Minister will unveil several items including the mascot of the International Museum Expo, "A Day at the Museum", Directory of Indian Museums, Pocket Map of Duty Path and Museum Card.
- ★ The mascot of the International Museum Expo is a modern representation of the Dancing Girl made in the Chennapatnam art style using wood.

## Direct International Flight Connecting Bhubaneswar-Dubai

- ★ First-ever direct international flight service from Bhubaneswar to Dubai has been started.
- ★ IndiGo's direct flight service shows the growing importance of Bhubaneswar as a major destination.
- ★ The inaugural flight, carrying a delegation of representatives from the Government of Odisha, civil society, and members of the business & sports community and self-help groups reached Dubai International Airport.
- ★ The travel to Dubai by the delegation coincides with the upcoming Odisha Dibasa program showcasing the state's rich culture and heritage
- ★ The Odisha Dibasa program is scheduled to be held on May 16 and 17, 2023.
- ★ Operating 3 times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the state-of-the-art Airbus A320 aircraft will ensure seamless travel between Bhubaneswar and Dubai, enhancing convenience for both business and leisure travellers.
- ★ The launch of the first international flight from Bhubaneswar to Dubai reduces the flying time from 12 to 4 hours.

## India Launches 'Operation Karuna'

- ★ India launched 'Operation Karuna' to provide humanitarian assistance for people in Myanmar, which is affected by Cyclone Mocha.
- ★ Three ships from India carrying relief material reached Yangon.
- ★ Indian Naval Ships Shivalik, Kamorta and Savitri were the first Naval ships to arrive at Yangon with relief material.
- ★ The ships are carrying emergency food supplies, tents, essential medicines, water pumps, portable generators, clothes, hygiene items, etc.
- ★ Indian Navy Committed to Ensuring Security and Growth for All in the Region.
- ★ Cyclone Mocha which recently hit Myanmar has been classified as an extremely severe cyclonic storm by the IMD.

## Oldest Tree in The World

- ★ A giant tree in southern Chile, known as the 'Great Grandfather' and this tree, a Patagonian cypress, located in the Alerce Costero National Park is the oldest tree in the world.
- ★ The trunk of the tree has a diameter of four metres (13 ft) and it is 28 metres tall.
- ★ It is over 5,000 years old, surpassing the oldest tree currently known as the Methuselah, which is 4,850 years old.

## 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly

- ★ Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will represent India in the 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly at Geneva, Switzerland.

- ★ In line with India's commitment to a healthier world, the union Health Minister will deliver the keynote address at the side events of 'Heal in India and Heal by India' as well as 'Together We Fight Against TB'.
- ★ During his stay till 24 May 2023, Mandaviya will participate in various bilateral meetings with countries across the world.
- ★ He will promote opportunities for health-related co-operation among the participating countries.
- ★ The bilateral meetings will engage representatives from Singapore, France, Netherlands, USA, Bangladesh, Argentina, Brazil, Qatar and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- ★ Additionally, a multilateral meeting is also scheduled with representatives from BRICS.

### **Nepal Designates 2025 as a 'Special tourism year'**

- ★ During the joint meeting of the federal parliament, President Ram Chandra Paudel announced that the decade of the 2080s in the Bikram Samvat calendar would be recognized as 'the Visit Nepal decade' and that the year 2025 will be designated as a special year for tourism.
- ★ These declarations were presented as part of the policies and programmes for the 2080/81 fiscal year.
- ★ The tourism sector in Nepal had experienced a significant decline due to the COVID-19 crisis, but is slowly bouncing back.
- ★ Recent statistics maintained by the Nepal Tourism Board show that nearly one lakh tourists have been visiting Nepal monthly since the start of 2023.
- ★ Over the first four months of that year, Nepal recorded the arrival of more than 3.26 lakh foreign tourists.
- ★ Nepal's tourist destinations will be promoted in the international community, and necessary infrastructure will be prepared accordingly.
- ★ New tourist destinations will be identified in all seven provinces of Nepal, and each province will be transformed into a cultural village.

### **FIPIC Summit in Papua New Guinea**

- ★ PM Modi attended the third India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit in Papua New Guinea.
- ★ 14 countries from the Pacific Islands (PICs) attended the summit.
- ★ The summit was led by Papua New Guinea's PM James Marape and PM Modi.
- ★ As part of India's Act East Policy, the Prime Minister of India announced a 12-point development plan for the Pacific Island Nations.
- ★ The 12-point development plan focuses on a number of areas including health care, renewable energy and cyber security.
- ★ The two leaders also launched a translation of the Tamil classic 'Thirukkural' to the Tok Pisin language of Papua New Guinea.
- ★ The translated book is co-authored by linguist Subha Sasindran and Sasindran Muthuvel, Governor of West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea.

## First Country to Introduce Health Warnings on Alcohol

- ★ Ireland's Health Minister, Stephen Donnelly, signed new regulations that will carry warnings about the health risks of drinking alcohol, as well as the product's calorie count.
- ★ This innovative step aims to raise awareness about the potential health risks associated with alcohol consumption.
- ★ The introduction of health warnings on alcohol bottles and cans will serve as a powerful tool for public health promotion and education.
- ★ The warnings will provide concise information about the health hazards linked to excessive alcohol consumption, encouraging individuals to make informed decisions.
- ★ Health warnings include liver disease, heart problems, increased risk of cancer, mental health problems and other associated risks.
- ★ By emphasizing the risks and potential harms associated with alcohol consumption on alcohol packaging, youth can be deterred from drinking at an early age.

## India and Australia Sign Agreements

- ★ The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged after a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese in Sydney.
- ★ India and Australia sign agreements in the field of migration, mobility partnership and green hydrogen.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi invited Prime Minister Albanese and Australian cricket fans to India for the Cricket World Cup.

## Second Hydroelectric Project in Nepal

- ★ The Government of Nepal has approved India's Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN) to develop the second hydroelectric project in the country.
- ★ SJVN is currently involved in the development of the Arun-III Hydroelectric Project in eastern Nepal with a capacity of 900 MW.
- ★ The Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, approved the draft Project Development Agreement (PDA) between Nepal and SJVN.
- ★ The PDA is for development of the Lower Arun Hydroelectric Project in eastern Nepal with a capacity of 669 MW.
- ★ The Lower Arun Hydroelectric Project is to be developed by SJVN.

## India Extends \$1 Billion Credit Line to Sri Lanka

- ★ India on May 30 extended its \$1 billion line of credit to Sri Lanka till March 2024 to help purchase essential food, medicine and other essential commodities as Sri Lanka grapples with an unprecedented economic crisis.
- ★ This agreement is an important step towards continuation of financial assistance provided by the Indian side to the Sri Lankan Government for procurement of essential items.

- ★ The signing ceremony took place in the presence of Sri Lanka's Minister of State for Finance, Shehan Semasinghe, senior officials from Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance and representatives of the Indian High Commission in Colombo.
- ★ The credit line was extended last year when Sri Lanka was passing through its worst economic crisis.
- ★ The facility has been instrumental in prompt procurement of critical supplies such as fuel, medicines, food items and industrial raw materials for the island nation.
- ★ This extension of financial assistance further underscores the strong commitment of the Government of India as it continues to assist Sri Lanka with a comprehensive package of approximately USD 4 billion in line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

## **BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS**

### **State Bank of India Raises USD 750 Million**

- ★ India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) has raised \$750 million via a 5-year bond issuance at a coupon rate of 8.75%.
- ★ The bonds are benchmarked against a 5-year US treasury and priced at a spread of 145 basis points (bps) over the benchmark.
- ★ The bonds will be issued through our London branch as of May 5, 2023 and shall be listed on Singapore Stock Exchange and India International Exchange, GIFT City.
- ★ The bonds were issued under SBI's MTN (medium-term note) Programme and will be listed on Singapore SGX and the India INX, Gift City.
- ★ The Notes are expected to carry a final rating of BBB- and BBB- from Standard & Poor's and Fitch, respectively.
- ★ Citigroup, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC, JP Morgan, MUFG, and Standard Chartered Bank acted as joint global coordinators and joint lead managers for this offering.

### **India and Russia to explore possibility of accepting RuPay and Mir cards**

- ★ India and Russia will explore the possibility of accepting RuPay and Mir cards in each other's country for hassle-free payments amid sanctions imposed by the West on Moscow.
- ★ The mutual acceptance of RuPay (India) and Mir cards (Russia) will help Indian and Russian citizens to make hassle-free payments in Indian rupees and Russian ruble in their respective countries
- ★ They agreed to explore the possibility of interaction with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of National Payment Corporation of India and the Faster Payments System (FPS) of the Bank of Russia.
- ★ The two countries agreed to adopt the Russian Financial Messaging System, the Service Bureau of the Bank of Russia's Financial Messaging System, for cross-border payments.



## **WYLD, World's 1<sup>st</sup> Social Currency Payment Card Launched**

- ★ WYLD, the world's first social currency payment card has launched in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ It is powered by Visa, the platform will allow everyday social media users to leverage their Instagram following to earn massive cashbacks on everyday spends.
- ★ The startup raised \$350,000 in pre-seed funding, led by Better Capital.
- ★ Currently, the platform is invite-only, and open to the first 5,000 users on their waitlist of 10,000 potential customers, for their beta-testing phase.
- ★ WYLD is a Fintech and Martech mobile app and payment card, riding on the idea that nano and micro social media users are the true disruptors of this market.
- ★ The app lets anyone with over 1000 followers on Instagram and a 'WYLD Score' of over 100, to apply for the WYLD payment card.

## **SBI General Insurance Launches Health Edge Insurance Plan**

- ★ SBI General Insurance has launched a new digital-only health product, Health Edge Insurance, where starting premium is less than ₹5,500 per annum for a ₹3 lakhs cover.
  - Entry age: 18-65 years (Adults), and 91 days to 30 years (Children).
  - Multiple Sum Insured ranges from INR 3 Lacs to 25 lakhs.
  - Long-term Policy options are available for up to 3 years.
- ★ The Health Edge plan includes 9 in-built covers; hospitalization, pre-hospitalization medical expenses, post-hospitalization medical expenses, day-care treatment, emergency road ambulance cover, bariatric surgery cover, modern treatment advance procedures, AYUSH treatment, and stay-fit health checkup.

## **UIDAI and NPCI Plan to Set Up an e-KYC Aggregator**

- ★ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) are planning to set up an aggregator platform for e-KYC (electronic know-your-customer).
- ★ Aadhaar-based e-KYC is used for paperless verification of a customer's credentials for new mobile connections and bank accounts.
- ★ It will enable the registration of entities regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) or any insurance and pension regulators.
- ★ Once implemented, the platform is expected to help several non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) reach out to consumers to offer loans apart from aiding fintech players and insurance intermediaries.
- ★ UIDAI is a statutory authority established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.

## **HDFC Bank Launches Digital Distribution Platform**

- ★ HDFC Bank introduced a Digital Distribution Platform (DDP) – 'HDFC Bank Smart Saathi', a state-of-the-art solution which is built on a robust and digitally enabled technology architecture that provides a secure and user-friendly experience to all its users.

- ★ This platform will use advanced technology solutions to connect Business Correspondents (BCs) and Business Facilitators (BFs) to the bank.
- ★ HDFC Bank Smart Saathi will contribute by making banking products and services available, especially credit for rural customers, which will help in the development of the country.
- ★ Over the next 12 to 18 months its plan is to reach 2 lakh villages through a combination of our branches and agent network.
- ★ HDFC Bank Smart Saathi will enable its agents to offer over 40 banking products and services, including loan products.

### **RBI Removes Restrictions on Interest-Earning FCA in India's IFSC**

- ★ In an effort to make India's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) more appealing, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed individuals to open interest-earning Foreign Currency Accounts (FCA) without restriction.
- ★ The RBI also removed the requirement to repatriate funds remaining idle in the FCA account for up to 15 days.
- ★ In February 2021, the RBI allowed resident individuals to make remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) to IFSCs set up in India.
- ★ Moreover, only a non-interest-bearing FCA was allowed in IFSCs under LRS.
- ★ Any funds lying idle in the account for a period up to 15 days from the date of its receipt were to be immediately transferred back to the domestic account of the investor in India.
- ★ Under the LRS, authorised dealers were allowed to facilitate remittances by resident individuals up to \$ 250,000 per financial year for any transactions permitted under the law.
- ★ This move by the RBI will also help banks at IFSC mobilise liabilities.
- ★ It will give them cheaper access to funds and in turn, allow them to lend at more competitive rates.

### **Face Authentication for Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS)**

- ★ Airtel Payments Bank in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) introduced face authentication for Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS).
- ★ The new facility will be available across five lakh Airtel banking points and will enhance the accessibility and security of Aadhaar-based transactions.
- ★ In the first phase, Airtel Payments Bank will enable non-financial transactions such as balance inquiry and mini-statement.
- ★ As per NPCI guidance, Airtel Payments Bank will enable the functionality for other bank customers and also for the bank's customers at other banking outlets.
- ★ Airtel Payments Bank has partnered with NPCI to test digital payments through feature phones and interactive voice response (IVR) for digital payments in Tier-II and Tier-III cities.
- ★ The bank offers a range of services including savings accounts, current accounts, money transfers, bill payments and digital banking services.

## **Pakistan Becomes Largest Recipient of ADB Funded Programmes in 2022**

- ★ According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Annual Report 2022, Pakistan became the largest recipient of the ADB-funded programmes/projects, receiving loans of USD 5.58 billion out of total loans of USD 31.8 billion to 40 countries.
- ★ Pakistan is facing a deep economic crisis and it received concessional funding of USD 2.67 billion from the bank.
- ★ The report highlighted the region's vulnerability to climate change as Pakistan was also hit by devastating floods that killed more than 1,700 people, directly affected 33 million people, caused damages in billions of dollars, and worsened an already fragile economic situation.
- ★ ADB committed \$3.7 billion from the programme in 2022, including essential food assistance for those in need, including women and girls, in Afghanistan (using UN systems), Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- ★ Afghanistan and Pakistan were severely impacted by rising food and energy prices.

## **G20 Techsprint Competition Launched by RBI and BIS**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) launched the G20 TechSprint 2023 competition for cross-border payments innovation.
- ★ The competition focuses on three problem statements: AML/CFT, sanctions technology and CBDC platform.
- ★ The competition is open to global innovators and aims to showcase innovative technology solutions for cross border payments.
- ★ TechSprint fosters collaboration between financial institutions, technology providers and stakeholders to develop innovative solutions for cross-border payments.

## **IPPB Ties up with Forum of Industry Academic Knowledge Sharing**

- ★ India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has partnered with the Forum of Industry Academic Knowledge Sharing (FIAKS) platform to provide digital literacy and spread awareness among postmen (or Gramin Dak Sevaks) to avoid digital frauds.
- ★ FIAKS, a cross-border platform comprising over 5,000 members, will carry out research, development, and designing of digital content under the programme FIAKS Digital Shiksha Prasaar Abhiyaan along with other partners.
- ★ The body will provide virtual and physical training to the postmen identified by IPPB.

## **Pine Labs Partners with ICICI Bank**

- ★ Pine Labs, a merchant commerce omni channel platform, has announced the acceptance of Digital Rupee (e Rupee) on its PoS (Point of Sale) terminals in partnership with ICICI Bank.
- ★ The technology integration between the two entities will now support e₹ acceptance at Pine Labs' point-of-sale terminals across key retail outlets in Mumbai, Maharashtra and Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ Pine Labs' execution of the Digital Rupee payment process is completely digital via dynamic QR built within its smart Android PoS terminals.

- ★ This would present a seamless payment option to the users and improve the operational efficiency of merchants with Pine Labs PoS terminals.

## Visa Introduces CVV-Free Payments for Tokenized Cards

- ★ Visa has launched a new feature CVV-free payments in India that allows users to make online payments without the need for a CVV number.
- ★ This facility is applicable on tokenized credit and debit cards and is available only for domestic transactions in India.
- ★ The card is tokenized by securing it with a unique code and transactions are completed using a two-factor authentication process that does not require the 16-digit card number or any other card details.
- ★ The two-factor authentication process ensures that the new authentication method protects users from cyber fraud as the token cannot be used on other platforms.
- ★ Tokenization is a security process that replaces sensitive data with unique codes called tokens.
- ★ It aims to protect sensitive data from cyber-attacks and frauds.

## SEBI Launches LEI System

- ★ SEBI introduced the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) system for issuers of non-convertible securities, securitized debt instruments and security receipts.
- ★ LEI is a unique global identifier for legal entities participating in financial transactions.
- ★ The system is primarily intended for issuers that have listed or plan to list non-convertible securities, securitized debt instruments and security receipts.
- ★ It aims to create a global reference data system that identifies each legal entity that is party to a financial transaction.
- ★ The LEI system will enable greater transparency and better risk management in the financial markets.
- ★ Companies planning to list non-convertible securities, securitized debt instruments, and security receipts will need to obtain an LEI from an authorised issuer.
- ★ The LEI system will also help prevent fraud and financial crimes by properly identifying and verifying legal entities participating in financial transactions.
- ★ Entity Identifier India Limited is a subsidiary of Clearing Corporation of India Limited.

## Axis Bank Partners with India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd

- ★ Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector Bank and India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd (India Shelter), a Gurgaon based Housing Finance Company, announced a strategic partnership under the co-lending model.
- ★ With this partnership, both lenders will be offering Secured Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) loans to middle and low-income segment borrowers based in the semi-urban regions.

- ★ The partnership will leverage the deep financial expertise of Axis Bank and the strong loan processing technology of India Shelter to assess the borrower's credit profile and offer them loans at optimal interest rates, ensuring a seamless banking experience.

### **South Indian Bank Enables Electronic Bank Guarantee Facility**

- ★ The South Indian Bank has introduced an e-BG (Electronic Bank Guarantee) facility for its customers in partnership with National E-Governance Service Limited (NeSL).
- ★ It facilitates API-based paperless issues of bank guarantees, thereby reducing the need for physical documentation and record maintenance.
- ★ South Indian Bank issued its First e-BG favouring a leading Public Sector Unit in April, 2023 for an amount of ₹4.57 crore through NeSL.
- ★ The facility replaces the existing manual and paper-based model of issuing Bank Guarantees.
- ★ Paper-based BGs involve manual intervention for stamping, signing and transferring the physical BGs while e-BGs are stamped electronically, eliminating the need for purchasing of physical stamp paper, printing the documents and physical signatures.
- ★ This initiative will reduce turnaround time and promote ease of doing business for business customers of the bank.
- ★ e-BG of NeSL has been developed in association with Indian Banks' Association in response to banks' requirements for a digital product.

### **HDFC Bank Launches Customised Relationship Program**

- ★ HDFC Bank launched its retail banking programme 'Vishesh' for customers in semi-urban and rural geographies wherein it plans to onboard around 1 lakh new customers.
- ★ As a part of this, the bank plans to add more branches and launch customised, tailor-made products and financial solutions for this market segment.
- ★ This move will help the bank meet some of its Priority Sector Lending (PSL) targets.
- ★ HDFC Bank will look to add 675 branches in semi-urban and rural geographies in FY24 to take the total number to nearly 5,000.

### **Max Life Partners with Capital Small Finance Bank**

- ★ Capital Small Finance Bank Limited and Max Life Insurance Company Limited entered into a partnership to offer life insurance offerings to Capital SFB's customers.
- ★ Through this tie-up, Max Life and Capital SFB will offer their customers a range of savings, protection, retirement, and group life insurance plans.
- ★ Max Life will pave the way for the bank customers across the branches and other partnership channels, to access and avail innovative, flexible and varied life insurance products.
- ★ Prior to Max Life, Capital Small Finance Bank has also partnered with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Limited and HDFC life insurance Limited to provide their life insurance products to its customers.

## Cashfree Payments Tie up with YES Bank

- ★ Cashfree Payments and YES Bank have partnered to offer 'Global Collections', an international collection service for exporters, who are account holders of YES Bank.
- ★ Under this partnership, the bank's account holders will be able to collect payments in over 30 foreign currencies using the Global Collections service.
- ★ The funds so received can then be converted into rupee and settled into their local bank account in India within one business day.
- ★ The products will also provide clients with dedicated facilities in 4 different currencies, United States dollar (USD), Euro (EUR), pound sterling (GBP), and Canadian Dollar (CAD).
- ★ Exporters will be able to share their payment collection details with their buyers over email, SMS or WhatsApp, and the buyers will be able to make payments using local rails like Automated Clearing House (ACH), Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), etc.
- ★ Exporters will receive their settlements in an INR format in their local bank accounts in India and will be able to get foreign inward remittances advice within 24 hours.
- ★ The launch of Global Collections will empower the exporters to have real-time access and control over their payments and collections journey.

## Ma-Money App

- ★ Tapping huge business opportunities in the digital lending platform, Manappuram Finance has ventured into the sector with the introduction of an app called Ma-Money to offer hassle-free loans at the click of a mouse.
- ★ The objective of introducing the new app, which will cover all the products of the company under one umbrella, is to make the loan process simpler, quicker, and more convenient.
- ★ The digital lending market is expected to touch \$350 billion by the end of 2023 at a growth rate of 11 to 12% annually.
- ★ The app will cater to all segments but will focus on tier 2 and 3 cities as that's where the growth is expected to come from.

## BharatPe Rebrands PAYBACK India as 'Zillion'

- ★ BharatPe Group, one of India's leading names in the fintech industry, announced that it will be rebranding PAYBACK India, the multi-brand loyalty program to 'Zillion'.
- ★ This new brand identity is in line with the company's vision to make Zillion ubiquitous to loyalty and rewards across the country.
- ★ The new brand identity intends to appeal to clients of all ages and give their overall shopping experience across brands and categories a new dimension.
- ★ Zillion will offer a wide range of options for customers to earn and redeem at a wide range of partners across India.
- ★ Customers will be able to earn Zillion coins across the network of offline and online partners, including groceries, fuel, entertainment, travel, apparel, and more.

## **HDFC to Sell Education Finance Arm Credila**

- ★ HDFC has decided to sell its student loan subsidiary ahead of its merger with HDFC Bank and has appointed an investment banker for the stake sale.
- ★ Company will be valued at ₹10,000 crore, approximately 4 times its net worth.
- ★ Currently, HDFC is in the process of merging with HDFC Bank and, as a condition of the merger, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has instructed HDFC to sell or merge Credila with either HDFC or HDFC Bank before the consolidation.
- ★ Until the stake sale, HDFC Credila has been disbarred from extending fresh loans.
- ★ Credila is India's largest education sector-focused Non-banking Finance Company (NBFC), specialising in providing education loans to students pursuing higher education in India and overseas.
- ★ Since its establishment in 2006, it has extended loans to 1.2 lakh customers.

## **Meeting of Board of Directors of Asian Development Bank in South Korea**

- ★ Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman will lead the Indian delegation to attend the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Board of Governors of Asian Development Bank (ADB) along with Investor/Bilateral and other associated meetings, in Incheon, the Republic of Korea.
- ★ The Meetings will be attended by official delegations of ADB members, observers, non-governmental and civil society organisations, media, financial institutions and banks and other private sector companies.
- ★ The engagements of Union Finance Minister will consist of the following components:
  - Interaction with Global Economists, Governors/Finance Ministers of the ADB member countries etc.
  - Bilateral engagements with countries and international organisations.
  - Interaction with global business leaders and investors in roundtables.
  - Engagement with Community Diaspora.

## **RBI Imposed Fine of ₹1.73 Crore on HSBC Bank**

- ★ HSBC Bank has been fined ₹1.73 crore by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for violating the Credit Information Companies Rules 2006.
- ★ The central bank has accused the bank of providing false information about its credit cards to credit information companies.
- ★ An investigation by the RBI has revealed that the bank had given wrong information about its expired credit cards.
- ★ The RBI has imposed a hefty fine of ₹1.73 crore on the bank for violating its rules.
- ★ Apart from HSBC Bank, RBI has also imposed penalties on two co-operative banks for violation of norms.
- ★ Thrissur Urban Cooperative Bank Ltd has been fined ₹2 lakh for flouting gold loan norms.

- ★ Bhilai Nagrik Sahakari Bank has been fined ₹1.25 lakh for not depositing unclaimed deposits in time under the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme (DEAF Scheme).

### **AU Small Finance Bank Launches Business Cashback RuPay Credit Card**

- ★ AU Small Finance Bank has partnered with RuPay to introduce the Business Cashback RuPay credit card, an innovative solution tailored to meet the financial requirements of self-employed customers.
- ★ The objective is to provide a diverse range of benefits to small businesses.
- ★ The RuPay Credit Card simplifies financial operations for businesses with benefits like up to 2% cashback, 48 days interest-free credit, and instant loans.
- ★ It also offers fire insurance, burglary, and housebreaking coverage, making it a one-stop solution for businesses.
- ★ The credit card also provides lifestyle and travel benefits.

### **FPI Licence to Alchemy India Long Term Fund Relocated to GIFT City**

- ★ Kotak Mahindra Bank has issued the first-ever foreign portfolio investor (FPI) licence to Alchemy's Fund for relocation to Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) City.
- ★ Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) involves an investor buying foreign financial assets.
- ★ It involves an array of financial assets like fixed deposits, stocks, and mutual funds.
- ★ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) operates the FPIs.
- ★ The bank has re-domiciled Alchemy India Long Term Fund from Mauritius to India's GIFT City.
- ★ In June 2023, Alchemy India Long Term Fund will complete 15 years of operation.

### **Max Life Partners with Indian Industries Association**

- ★ Max Life Insurance Company (Max Life), a private life insurer, has entered into a strategic partnership with the Indian Industries Association (IIA) to provide life insurance plans to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector's workforce in Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- ★ Under the recently announced Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) State insurance plan, Max Life aims to enhance accessibility and drive affordable insurance penetration across UP.
- ★ The collaboration with IIA aims to provide life insurance policies to underserved populations in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state.
- ★ Max Life is the appointed lead insurer for the state of Uttar Pradesh under IRDAI's State insurance plan.
- ★ These activities will be undertaken with Sana Insurance Brokers Pvt. Ltd. as the enrollment partner to engage with the MSME workforce.



## First Revenue Based Finance Start-Up to Get NBFC Licence

- ★ GetVantage, India's premier alternative financing fintech platform, has secured a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), becoming the first and only revenue-based financing and alternative funding platform in the country.
- ★ GetGrowth Capital, the NBFC arm of GetVantage will manage the lending operations.
- ★ GetVantage will capitalise the NBFC with ₹50 crore.
- ★ It aims to raise ₹200 crore in total to scale up its lending operations.

## Federal Bank and NeSL Partner to Offer Electronic Bank Guarantee

- ★ Indian private sector bank Federal Bank has partnered with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) to launch an electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) facility.
- ★ With this partnership, Federal Bank hopes to completely replace the traditional paper-based process 'in due course'.
- ★ A bank guarantee is an assurance a financial institute like a bank offers to the external party if the borrower is unable to pay the debt.
- ★ Electronic Bank Guarantee facilitates the issuance, invocation, amendment, and cancellation of Bank Guarantee in digital form and removes the need of printing any document/request thereof.
- ★ It is safe, secure, and fast, facilitating trade/business activities.
- ★ Individual, Sole Proprietor, Company, Partnership Firm, Govt. Agencies, Association of People, Body of Individuals are eligible to avail of this facility.
- ★ This is currently available only in states where e-stamping is available.

## Axis Bank Enables UPI for Rupay Credit Cards

- ★ India's third largest private sector bank, Axis Bank, has successfully enabled linkage of RuPay credit cards with Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ★ Axis Bank has become the latest entrant in the list of banks that offer customers to link their RuPay credit card with UPI, with other banks being Canara Bank, HDFC Bank, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Union Bank of India (UBI).
- ★ Bank customers can pay with their RuPay Credit Card when scanning UPI QR Codes or at the merchant's UPI checkout page.
- ★ The feature will allow bank customers to receive credit card rewards and the lender is rolling out the functionality in phases.
- ★ UPI transactions rose 43% year-on-year (y-o-y) to a record 14.1 trillion in value terms during April, 2023.

## YES Bank Launched 'YES KIRAN' Solar Financing Scheme

- ★ YES Bank, has launched a lending proposition called 'YES KIRAN' to provide financial assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) manufacturers who want to install solar panels at their premises.

- ★ It is to support the adoption of sustainable energy practices by MSMEs while also bringing cost efficiency by reducing their expenses towards power and fuel.
- ★ YES KIRAN offers a range of benefits to MSMEs, including less operational cost, end-to-end support, flexible loan tenure at competitive interest rates, etc.
- ★ The bank has also partnered with companies like Panasonic Solar Power System to help businesses transition to renewable energy solutions.
- ★ It also fulfils India's G20 vision of achieving a target of over 50% energy production from renewable sources by 2030.

### **RBI Invites Firms to Participate in Greenwashing TechSprint**

- ★ RBI has announced its participation in the Global Financial Innovation Network (GFIN) greenwashing techSprint.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has invited firms to participate in the Greenwashing TechSprint to develop technology solutions to detect incidents of greenwashing in financial products.
- ★ TechSprint is part of RBI's efforts to promote sustainable finance and ensure that financial products marketed as green or sustainable are actually aligned with environmental objectives.
- ★ TechSprint is open to firms and individuals who can provide innovative technology solutions to detect greenwashing in financial products using technologies such as natural language processing and artificial intelligence.
- ★ TechSprint can provide a platform for collaboration between tech firms, financial institutions and regulators to develop solutions that can increase transparency and trust in the market for sustainable finance.
- ★ Greenwashing refers to the practice of making false or misleading claims about the environmental benefits of a product or service.

### **First Agritech Firm to Receive NBFC License**

- ★ Unnati, a fintech-based agritech company, made an announcement regarding its subsidiary, Ora Finance, becoming the first-ever agritech firm to receive non-banking financial company (NBFC) license.
- ★ It will allow the company to meet the financial requirements of those in the agricultural sector, like farmers, retailers, traders, brands and food processors.
- ★ Unnati has a network of more than one lakh registered retailers and traders who use its uStore app to engage with the farmers and manage their agribusinesses on a day-to-day business.
- ★ These partners reach out to over 3 million farmers through its apps.
- ★ The company must be registered under the Companies Act 2013, or any other relevant law.
- ★ The company must have a minimum net owned funds of 2 crores.
- ★ The company must have a board of directors with at least one director having at least 10 years of experience in the banking or financial sector.

### **AIBEA is set to Launch 'Bank Clinic'**

- ★ The All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA), is the oldest and largest national trade union of bank employees in India plans to set up an online 'Bank Clinic' to assist bank customers with grievance redress.
- ★ Once a bank's retail customer lodges an online complaint with "Bank Clinic", ALBEA's team will take up the complaint with the Bank for redress.
- ★ The Bank Clinic will be one more channel through which a retail bank customer can get his grievances addressed besides the normal Banking Ombudsman channel.

### **Bank of Baroda Launches Electronic Bank Guarantee**

- ★ Bank of Baroda (BoB), one of India's leading public sector banks, has introduced Electronic Bank Guarantee (e-BG) on its BarodaINSTA platform, in partnership with National E-Governance Services Limited (NeSL), a platform that provides for the issuance of inland BGs through electronic mode.
- ★ The new facility will enable the public sector bank to issue inland bank guarantees electronically on its digital platform BarodaINSTA.
- ★ Being entirely digital, the system will reduce the turnaround time in the process and provide a safer and more accessible medium, claims the Bank.
- ★ The beneficiary can view the final digital BG on the NeSL portal immediately upon issuance.
- ★ Such an e-BG eliminates the need for a separate authentication from the BG issuing Bank.

### **RBI Mandates Rupee-Only Settlement of Fees for Certain Cards**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that certain fees/charges levied by 'Authorised Persons' on International Debit Cards, Store Value Cards, among others, and payable in India have to be denominated and settled in Rupees only.
- ★ This instruction comes in the wake of the RBI coming across a few Authorised Persons (in foreign exchange) levying certain fees/charges, payable in India on such instruments, in foreign currency.
- ★ The instruments also include Charge Cards/Smart Cards or any other instrument that can be used to create a financial liability as 'currency'.
- ★ Authorised Persons include banks authorised to deal in foreign exchange, full-fledged money changers, etc.

### **HDFC Bank Partners with Telangana Academy**

- ★ HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, and Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK), a not-for-profit organisation under the Department of ITE&C, Government of Telangana have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ★ It is to promote employment of fresh graduates.
- ★ As per the MoU, HDFC Bank will now be able access a large pool of talent across 700 institutions registered with 'TASK'.

- ★ The MoU was signed at Hyderabad by Shrikant Sinha, CEO – TASK and Ranga Subramanian, Head – Talent Acquisition, HDFC Bank.
- ★ Under the partnership, TASK will help HDFC Bank hire trained students.
- ★ Logistical support for placement drives and interviews will be provided by TASK.

## **RBI Asks Banks to Complete Transition Away from LIBOR**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued an advisory to banks and other RBI-regulated entities, emphasising the need to take steps to ensure a complete transition from the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) from 01 July 2023.
- ★ RBI has advised the “Banks/financial institutions (FIs) are advised to ensure that no new transactions undertaken by them or their customers rely on or are priced using the US\$ LIBOR or the Mumbai Interbank Forward Outright Rate (MIFOR).
- ★ RBI has advised the banks/FIs to take all necessary steps to ensure insertion of fallbacks at the earliest in all remaining legacy financial contracts that reference US\$ LIBOR.
- ★ RBI stated that Financial Benchmarks India Pvt. Ltd. (FBIL) will stop publishing the MIFOR after June 30, 2023.
- ★ RBI had issued an advisory on ‘Roadmap for LIBOR Transition’ in July 2021.
- ★ The banks/FIs were encouraged to carry out transactions using the widely accepted Alternative Reference Rate (ARR) by December 31, 2021.

## **RBI Launches ‘100 Days 100 Pays’ Campaign**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a ‘100 Days 100 Pays’ campaign for banks to trace and settle the top 100 unclaimed deposits of every bank in every district of the country within 100 days.
- ★ The banks will commence the campaign from 01 June 2023.
- ★ Balances in savings/current accounts which are not operated for 10 years, or term deposits not claimed within 10 years from date of maturity are classified as ‘unclaimed deposits’.
- ★ These amounts are transferred by banks to the ‘Depositor Education and Awareness’ (DEA) Fund maintained by the RBI.
- ★ The issues related to unclaimed deposits were also discussed during the meeting of the high-powered Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) headed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

## **World Bank Approves \$82 Million for India**

- ★ The Board of Executive Directors of World Bank (WB) approved an \$82 million loan for Animal Health System Support for One Health Programme (AHSSOH).
- ★ It is to support India’s Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme, towards to control animal diseases by adopting global best practices for animal health management and to prevent, detect, respond to endemic zoonotic, transboundary, and emerging infectious diseases.

- ★ It will mitigate the risks of animal disease outbreaks by enhancing disease surveillance and veterinary services in the livestock and wildlife sectors.
- ★ The \$82 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) uses the Program-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument that links the disbursement of funds directly to the achievement of specific program results.
- ★ The loan has a maturity period of 5 years, including a grace period of 4.5 years.
- ★ It will directly benefit approximately 9 million livestock farmers in the states of Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh (MP) by providing improved access to animal health services.
- ★ It will strengthen India's One Health approach, which recognises that people and animals are connected with their shared environment.

### **IRDAI Directs Insurers to Provide Full Insurance Coverage**

- ★ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has directed all insurers to comply with the provisions outlined in the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, and the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Act, 2021.
- ★ Surrogacy is a legal and regulated arrangement in which a woman (the surrogate mother) carries a pregnancy and gives birth to a child on behalf of another individual or couple (the intended parents).
- ★ The surrogate mother agrees to nurture the embryo or fetus until birth and transfer parental rights to the intended parents.
- ★ By incorporating surrogacy into health insurance policies, the IRDAI aims to enhance affordability and accessibility for prospective parents seeking to build their families through this method.

### **HDFC Mutual Fund Launches India's First Defence Fund**

- ★ HDFC Asset Management Company (AMC) Limited, investment manager of HDFC mutual fund (HDFC MF) has announced the launch of India's first mutual fund – HDFC Defence Fund focussed on defence sector.
- ★ The new fund offering (NFO) of HDFC Defence Fund, an open-ended equity scheme, would open on 19 2023 and close on 02 June 2023.
- ★ The new scheme follows a bottom-up approach of portfolio construction within the defence ecosystem.
- ★ The defence fund is suitable for investors who are seeking long-term capital appreciation/income.
- ★ The scheme will invest at least 80% of its Net Assets in Defence and allied sector Companies.
- ★ It will seek to invest in companies with good quality management with demonstrated track records and aim to achieve diversification by following a multi-cap strategy.

## Early Warning Signals Framework

- ★ Regulator for housing finance firms National Housing Bank (NHB) has asked housing finance companies with asset size of over ₹1,000 crore to adopt an early warning signals (EWS) framework to check financial frauds and also to prevent accounts from turning into non-performing assets.
- ★ The analysis of the frauds reported by the housing finance companies (HFCs) has revealed that the reasons behind accounts being identified as fraud accounts are seller impersonation, submission of fake income/employment documents, submission of fake title deeds, and collusion of the builder and borrower.
- ★ It has also been observed that such deficiencies are identified only when the borrower stops paying the EMIs after the disbursement of the loans.
- ★ Through the Early Warning Signals (EWS) framework, HFCs will be encouraged to take into account fraud risks in their risk management practices.
- ★ The mechanism needs to be put in place by April 1, 2024.
- ★ The NHB has provided an indicative list of EWS for individual borrowers (retail).
- ★ The NHB has also suggested an indicative list of EWS for corporate and project loans.

## Zomato Inks Partnership with ICICI Bank

- ★ Food aggregator platform Zomato has partnered with ICICI Bank to launch its own unified payments interface (UPI) offering called Zomato UPI.
- ★ Currently, Zomato UPI has been rolled out to select users only.
- ★ Further expansion of the service will hinge on the initial customer response.
- ★ With the introduction of Zomato UPI, customers can now sign up to create a new UPI ID after which they will be able to make payments by staying on the Zomato app itself.
- ★ Customers can make payments using various methods like net banking, cards or even UPI.

## CCI Approves Merger of Credit Suisse Group with UBS Group

- ★ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the proposed merger of Credit Suisse Group AG with UBS Group AG.
- ★ UBS Group AG (UBS) is a multinational investment bank and financial services company
- ★ It is a Switzerland based company and is active globally.
- ★ UBS's businesses include wealth management, asset management, investment banking services, and retail and corporate banking.
- ★ Credit Suisse Group AG (Credit Suisse) is a multinational investment bank and financial services company established in Switzerland.
- ★ Credit Suisse is active globally and its businesses include wealth management, asset management, investment banking services, and retail and corporate banking.

## **RBI Decided to Withdraw ₹2000 Note from Circulation**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to withdraw ₹2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation under the 'Clean Note Policy'.
- ★ ₹2,000 notes will continue to be legal tender.
- ★ Individuals can deposit the ₹2,000 banknotes into their bank accounts or exchange them for other denominations at any bank branch.
- ★ From 23 May 2023, ₹2,000 notes can be exchanged for other denominations up to a limit of ₹20,000 at a time at any bank branch.
- ★ RBI's 19 regional offices with issue departments will also provide the facility to exchange ₹2,000 banknotes up to a limit of ₹20,000 at a time from May 23.
- ★ All banks to offer deposit and/or exchange services for ₹2,000 notes by 30 September 2023.
- ★ The clean note policy was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 1999 to address the issue of soiled and mutilated notes.

## **IKEA India Ties up with HDFC Bank**

- ★ IKEA India has partnered with HDFC to launch a consumer financing scheme offering EMI options ranging from 3 to 30 months, with a mix of no-cost (0 per cent) and low-cost (up to 10 per cent).
- ★ With an EMI-based financing option, the company would be able to help customers purchase furniture and home decor products in instalments without facing any financial challenges.
- ★ The customers must provide their KYC information to the HDFC bank agent at the IKEA stores for financing option.
- ★ This is a long-term initiative for IKEA to strengthen its affordability agenda.
- ★ The new consumer financing option will be available at all IKEA stores in India starting from 06 May 2023, and will soon be accessible online as well.

## **IDBI, BOB and SBI Capital to Manage IREDA IPO**

- ★ The government has appointed IDBI Capital, BOB Capital and SBI Capital to manage the initial public offer (IPO) of the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA).
- ★ IDBI Capital is the lead banker for the transaction.
- ★ Separately, Saraf and Partners has been appointed as the legal adviser for the IPO.
- ★ The IPO, which is expected in FY24, will likely consist of a 10% stake sale by the government and 15% fresh equity issuance by the renewable energy project financier to fund its business growth.
- ★ On 17 March 2023 the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the IREDA IPO.
- ★ IREDA has financed more than 3,068 RE projects loan accounts with cumulative loan sanction and disbursement to the tune of ₹1.42 trillion and ₹0.9 trillion respectively and has supported RE capacity addition of 19,502 MW in the country.
- ★ The company's net profit rose 50% on year to ₹611 crore in the first nine months of FY23.

## **BSE Relaunches Sensex and Bankex Derivative Contracts**

- ★ The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Asia's oldest stock exchange, relaunched Sensex and Bankex derivative contracts in its bid to boost derivative trading.
- ★ The relaunch of derivative contracts comes with a reduced lot size of futures and options and a new expiry cycle of Friday from Thursday earlier.
- ★ Sensex is a well-known benchmark and a barometer of India's economy.
- ★ The lot size of futures and options has been reduced to 10 from 15 for Sensex, and to 15 from 20 in case of Bankex.
- ★ In 2000, BSE had launched Sensex-30 derivatives (options and futures) for the first time.
- ★ The Sensex-30 derivatives are made up of 30 of the largest and most liquid stocks listed on BSE.
- ★ A derivative is set between two or more parties that can trade on an exchange or over the counter (OTC).
- ★ Derivatives are the type of financial contracts whose value is dependent on an underlying asset, group of assets, or benchmark.

## **Mobile Trading Platform 'FLIP'**

- ★ Geojit Financial Services has launched its latest mobile trading platform, FLIP, that will replace the existing platform SELFIE.
- ★ The new platform will provide investors and traders a comprehensive and flexible trading experience, backed by a range of advanced features.
- ★ FLIP users will benefit from additional features set to be introduced over the next three months, including Split Order for Options, Roll Over for Futures, and Conditional Orders, Trading from Charts, Events Calendar, Market Overview, and Apply for IPO.
- ★ Clients can download FLIP, and all existing SELFIE users can upgrade to FLIP from Apple AppStore and Google Play Store.

## **JCB Partners with NPCI**

- ★ Japanese international payment brand, JCB International Co will partner with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to offer RuPay JCB cardholders 40% cashback on in-store purchases in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Thailand, Malaysia and
- ★ In-store purchases are in-person point-of-sale (PoS) transactions at a merchant location.
- ★ RuPay and JCB have announced the third phase of a limited-time cashback campaign for all RuPay JCB debit and credit cardholders.
- ★ The offer will be valid from May 15 to August 15 2023.
- ★ The maximum cashback amount per transaction during the promotion period is ₹3,000 and the total cashback is capped at ₹15,000 per card.



## **First Municipal Corporation to Use CBDC**

- ★ Patna Municipal Corporation in Bihar, India, has become the first municipal corporation in the country to adopt Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- ★ The digital currency called e-Rupee generated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will be used in the entire Patna Municipal Corporation area.
- ★ The launch event took place on May 23, 2023 with the participation of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Municipal Commissioner of Patna Municipal Corporation.
- ★ The implementation of the CBDC will start from the municipal headquarters in the Maurya Lok complex, and later extend to all regional offices and payment counters within the corporation.
- ★ A workshop was organised for the corporators to educate them about the benefits and applications of digital e-Rupee currency.
- ★ The online payment system will contribute to augmenting the revenue of Patna Municipal Corporation, as well as provide convenient facilities to individuals to make payments from the comfort of their homes.
- ★ Central bank digital currency (CBDC) differs from private digital currencies, such as cryptocurrencies, in that it is government-issued currency and represents a liability of the central bank.

## **Mumbai-Based Maratha Bank Merged with Cosmos Bank**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India approved the merger between Maratha Co-operative Bank and Cosmos Co-operative Bank.
- ★ The merger is a voluntary scheme of amalgamation and the merger will be effective from May 29, 2023.
- ★ Maratha Sahakari Bank is subject to regulatory directions by RBI with effect from August 31, 2016.
- ★ The merger has been approved under the authority of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ★ Maratha Sahakari Bank has seven branches in Mumbai and was established in 1946.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India closely monitored and regulated the operations of the Maratha Cooperative Bank.
- ★ The merger with Cosmos Co-operative Bank is aimed at ensuring the stability and continuity of services of Maratha Sahakari Bank.

## **SBI General Launches Surety Bond Bima Insurance Product**

- ★ SBI General Insurance, the non-life insurance arm of India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI), has announced the launch of the General Surety Bond Bima (Conditional & Unconditional) insurance product.
- ★ The Surety Bond Insurance will act as a security arrangement for infrastructure projects and will insure the contractor as well as the principal (contract awarding authority).
- ★ The product is designed to provide protection against breach of terms and conditions by the contractors either during the bidding stage or during the performance stage of a project.

- ★ The Surety Insurance product consists of a wide range of bonds, such as Bid bonds, Advance Payment bond, Performance bond, and Retention Money bond.
- ★ The product caters to the requirements of a diversified group of contractors.
- ★ Additionally, there are 2 variants available in the product i.e. Conditional & Unconditional.
- ★ In Conditional bond, a specified sum is paid to the beneficiary upon claim when specific conditions are met, while an Unconditional bond allows the beneficiary to claim the money almost without any conditions.

### **Paytm Launches UPI SDK**

- ★ One97 Communications Limited (OCL) that owns the brand Paytm, India's leading payments and financial services company and the pioneer of QR and mobile payments, announced that it has launched Paytm UPI SDK.
- ★ This new feature allows customers of online merchants to make UPI payments directly and in-line from the merchant's mobile app without getting redirected during checkout.
- ★ The new feature will allow customers to pay directly from their bank accounts by entering their UPI PIN without leaving the merchant app.
- ★ Paytm UPI SDK powered by the technology of Paytm Payments Bank and distributed to existing online merchants by Paytm Payments Services Ltd.
- ★ With Paytm UPI SDK, customers can enjoy 4X faster UPI payments through a 5X reduction in the number of taps and a 100% elimination of any external redirection, where customers have to switch between merchant and payment apps to complete transactions.
- ★ This is part of the existing UPI acquiring arrangement between Paytm Payments Services Ltd. and Paytm Payments Bank, under which Paytm Payments Services Ltd provides UPI acquisition service to merchants.

### **Japan Expresses Interest in Joining India's UPI**

- ★ Japan's Digital Minister Kono Taro has expressed keen interest in joining India's Unified Payments System (UPI), referring to the ongoing digital co-operation between the two countries.
- ★ It is to provide mutual recognition of e-IDs of both the countries and to expand digital transactions.
- ★ Japan and India aim to promote digital cooperation by creating interoperability through real-time funds transfer systems to facilitate digital payments.
- ★ Kono stated that UPI is a very convenient system of payment, where we can increase the interoperability of our payment system between Japan and India, or other countries like Singapore, Thailand.
- ★ Unified Payments Interface is an instant real-time payment system which has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

### **India Requests for Funding in First Call with Pandemic Fund**

- ★ India made a funding request of approximately \$55 million to the World Bank's Pandemic Fund in its first call in May 2023.

- ★ The Pandemic Fund was created in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic by the World Bank to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacities in low- and middle-income countries.
- ★ India has requested funding from the World Bank's Pandemic Fund to combat pandemics in humans.
- ★ Most zoonotic (animal-to-human and human-to-animal) diseases have been found to have their origins in animals, according to scientists.
- ★ The fund's website states that its governing board approved \$300 million for the first tranche of funding to assist developing nations in better preparing for upcoming global pandemics.
- ★ The World Bank serves as the trustee of the Pandemic Fund and hosts its Secretariat, which includes technical staff from the World Health Organization (WHO).

### **Paytm Money Launches Bonds Platform**

- ★ Paytm Money subsidiary of One97 Communications Limited (OCL) that owns the brand Paytm, has launched a bonds platform for retail investors in India.
- ★ Bonds are a safe option for investors who are looking at a steady income and fixed returns on their investments and can diversify their portfolio for good returns.
- ★ The platform enables investors to invest in government bonds, corporate bonds, and tax-free bonds, all in one place.
- ★ Bonds on the Paytm Money app presents investors with all relevant information in one place and convert everything to yield so that investors can analyse and understand the returns they can earn.
- ★ The bonds platform on the Paytm Money app provides investors with comprehensive information, converting it into yield to help them analyse and understand potential returns.
- ★ The bonds can be sold on the market at any time without any premature penalties or lock-ins, allowing investors to manage their investments flexibly.
- ★ As a Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)-registered broker, Paytm Money stated that it is leveraging the existing regulatory framework to innovate and bring a secure and transparent bond product to India.

### **Indian Bank Empanelled as Clearing and Settlement Bank**

- ★ Indian Bank has been empanelled as a Clearing and Settlement Bank with the Indian Clearing Corporation Ltd (ICCL).
- ★ Mahesh Kumar Bajaj, Executive Director, Indian Bank exchanged the agreement with Devika Shah, Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ICCL to formalise Bank's empanelment at a recently held event.
- ★ The public sector bank can now facilitate banking services to members of BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) for clearing and settlement operations.
- ★ The Indian Bank also launched the electronic term deposit receipt (e-TDR) product for online transmission of fixed term receipts (FDR) and margin with ICCL on behalf of the clearing members with its dedicated branch – Fort, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **MakeMyTrip Teams Up with Microsoft**

- ★ MakeMyTrip has tied up with Microsoft to make travel planning more inclusive and accessible by introducing voice-assisted booking in Indian languages.
- ★ Microsoft Azure Open AI Service and Azure Cognitive Services will converse with the user to offer personalised travel recommendation.
- ★ The beta version of this integration has been introduced in English and Hindi for flights and holiday customers.
- ★ The next stage of voice-assisted booking flow will cover other transport offerings.

## **SPORTS**

### **Badminton Asia Championships Gold Medal**

- ★ Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty created history by becoming the first Indian men's doubles pair to win a gold medal at the Badminton Asia Championships.
- ★ Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty defeated Malaysian pair of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yee in a three-game match.
- ★ This historic achievement is only the second gold medal India has won at the Badminton Asia Championships; the first gold medal being won by Dinesh Khanna in 1965 in the men's singles category.

### **Azerbaijan Grand Prix 2023**

- ★ Sergio Pérez won the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, the fourth round of the 2023 Formula 1 World Championship held in Baku.
- ★ Pérez won the race beating Red Bull teammate Max Verstappen.
- ★ The Azerbaijan Grand Prix is a Formula One race held annually since 2017 at the Baku City Circuit in the capital city of Azerbaijan.

### **ISSF Shotgun World Cup**

- ★ Shooters Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Ganemat Sekhon won India its first medal in the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.
- ★ They won the gold medal by defeating Mexicans Luis Raul Gallardo Oliveros and Gabriela Rodriguez 6-0 in the skeet mixed team event.
- ★ Italy took bronze through their crack pair of two-time world championship silver medallist Simona Scocchetti and Rio Olympic champion Gabrielle Rossetti.
- ★ Olympian Meraj Ahmad Khan shot 74/75 in the qualifying round to win his 5<sup>th</sup> Senior ISSF World Cup medal.

## Odisha Extends Indian Hockey Team Sponsorship Till 2033

- ★ The Odisha government decided to further extend its sponsorship for both the Men and Women Indian Hockey Teams (senior and junior) for another ten years from 2023 to 2033.
- ★ The decision in this regard was taken at the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
- ★ The cabinet on the day approved 15 different proposals submitted by various departments.
- ★ As Odisha has been the official sponsor of both the Men and Women National Hockey Teams since 2018, this support is going to be a significant step towards the growth and development of Hockey in India.
- ★ OMC has now committed to sponsor both the teams till January 31, 2033 and a total amount of ₹12 crores (excluding applicable taxes) will be released by OMC to Hockey India during this period.

## India Surpasses Australia to Become No. One Test Team

- ★ Rohit Sharma-led India overtook Australia to become the number one Test team in the latest rankings released by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- ★ India is currently on top with 121 points, while Australia are second with 116 points.
- ★ Earlier this year, India registered a 2-1 series win against Australia to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy for the fourth time in a row.
- ★ England (116 points), South Africa (104) and defending champions New Zealand (100) occupy the third, fourth and fifth places respectively in the rankings.

## China's First World Chess Champion

- ★ Ding Liren became China's first world chess champion after defeating Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi in a tie-breaker.
- ★ Ding Liren has become the 17<sup>th</sup> World Chess Champion.
- ★ He took over from Magnus Carlsen of Norway as the winner of the World Chess Championship.
- ★ The first stage of the World Chess Championship in Astana, Kazakhstan ended with Ding Liren and Nepomniachtchi with seven points, with three wins and eight draws.

## Global Chess League

- ★ The Global Chess League (GCL) announced Dubai as the inaugural edition of the world's largest and first franchise-based chess league.
- ★ The league is a joint venture between FIDE and Tech Mahindra, and will be organised in association with the Dubai Sports Council as the host partner.
- ★ The vision of the league is to bring the game of chess to new audiences and create an ecosystem for the game, providing a platform for champions from around the world to showcase their chess potential.

## Asia Cup Stage 2 Archery

- ★ India has bagged 14 medals at the Asia Cup Stage 2 World Ranking Tournament to top the event in Tashkent.
- ★ In 14 medals seven were gold, five were silver and two bronze.
- ★ India won gold medals in all the categories except women's individual recurve and mixed recurve and won silver medals in these two categories.
- ★ The Indian trio of Mrinal Chauhan, Partha Salunkhe and Juyel Sarkar defeated Bangladesh 5-1 in the final of the men's recurve team event to win the gold medal.

## Doha Diamond League Title

- ★ India's Neeraj Chopra has won the javelin throw title at the ongoing Diamond League in Doha.
- ★ The 25-year-old Chopra, who won the 2022 Diamond League Final trophy in Switzerland last September, won with a best throw of 88.67m.
- ★ Chopra struck his straps on his first attempt with a world-leading throw of 88.67 metres, which was the fourth best of his career.
- ★ He maintained the lead till the end to win the event in his second appearance at the Qatar Sports Club.
- ★ Czech Republic's Vadlejch finished second and Grenada's Peters finished third.

## Asian Weightlifting Championships

- ★ Indian weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga won the silver medal in the snatch event at the Asian Weightlifting Championship held in Jinju, Korea.
- ★ Jeremy Lalrinnunga, 20, won the silver medal in the snatch event with a lift of 141 kg in the 67 kg category.
- ★ He became the only Indian weightlifter to win a medal at the Asian Weightlifting Championship in 2023.
- ★ The gold medal in the 67 kg weight category went to China's He Yuji, who finished the event with a higher weight than Lalrinnunga.
- ★ It is an event focused on weightlifting and is organised by the Asian Weightlifting Federation.
- ★ This championship is specially designed for athletes from Asian countries.

## Chong Wei and Lin Dan elected to BWF Hall of Fame

- ★ China's Lin Dan and Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei have been elected to the 2023 Badminton World Federation (BWF) Hall of Fame.
- ★ Lee and Lin, who retired in 2019 and 2020 respectively after glorious careers, will be inducted at a ceremony on May 26 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in Malaysia.
- ★ Chong Wei and Lin Dan had dominated the men's singles for two decades until their retirements in 2019 and 2020 respectively.
- ★ Chong Wei finished with 47 World Tour titles and was ranked world No. 1 for 349 weeks.

- ★ Meanwhile, Lin Dan captured two Olympics gold medals and five world titles.

### **Badminton Asia Appoints Chairman of the Technical Officials Committee**

- ★ Badminton Asia appointed Umar Rasheed, Joint Secretary of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), as the Chairman of the Technical Officials Committee.
- ★ As Chairman of the technical officials' committee, Rasheed will oversee the development and implementation of rules and regulations to elevate officiating standards in badminton tournaments across the country.
- ★ Rashid is committed to strengthening the governance of badminton in India and the region, by upholding the integrity of the game and ensuring high quality officiating in all tournaments.
- ★ Rashid also serves as the General Secretary of the Assam Badminton Association, contributing significantly to the development of badminton in Assam and the Northeast region of India.

### **Cristiano Ronaldo Tops Forbes' 2023 Highest-Paid Athletes**

- ★ Cristiano Ronaldo became the world's highest-paid athlete after he signed a contract worth more than 200 million euros (\$219.98 million) with Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr.
- ★ After leaving Manchester United, Cristiano Ronaldo joined Saudi Football Club until 2025.
- ★ His annual playing salary has increased by \$75 million.
- ★ Lionel Messi is in the second spot with \$130 million while Kylian Mbappe is in third spot with \$120 million.
- ★ LeBron James (\$119.5 million) and Canelo Alvarez (\$110 million) are in the fourth and fifth spots respectively.

### **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)**

- ★ Olympian and World Championship silver medallist archer Atanu Das has been reincluded in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) following his impressive performances at the domestic circuit and the Archery World Cup in Antalya.
- ★ The other big name to feature in TOPS is rifle shooter Mehuli Ghosh, who won the 10m air rifle event at the National Shooting Trials this year.
- ★ Apart from this, 15-year-old Tilottama Sen has also been included.
- ★ Tilottama Sen had won a bronze medal in the 10m air rifle event at the Cairo World Cup, her debut in the senior circuit.
- ★ A total of 27 new names were added to the TOPS Core and Development lists, taking the total number of TOPS athletes to 270.
- ★ TOPS was created in July 2014 under the auspices of the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) with the objective of identifying and preparing potential medal prospects for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## Laureus Sportsman of the Year

- ★ Argentina's World Cup-winning captain Lionel Messi was named Laureus Sportsman of the Year at an award ceremony in Paris.
- ★ Messi also received an award on behalf of the Argentina men's soccer team, who were named the World Team of the Year following their victory at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.
- ★ Messi became the first athlete to receive both the World Sportsman of the Year award and the World Team of the Year award in the same year.
- ★ Sprint champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce bagged the top women's honour after an outstanding 2022, which included winning the 100m gold at the World Athletics Championships.
- ★ Tennis player Carlos Alcaraz, who won the 2022 U S Open and rose to number one in the ATP rankings, was named the Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year.
- ★ Christian Eriksen, who recovered from the cardiac arrest received the Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.

## ISSF World Cup 2023

- ★ Rhythm Sangwan, India won a bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol event at the ISSF World Cup 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- ★ Sangwan shot 219.1 in the final round to finish third on the podium.
- ★ Anna Korakiaki of Greece won the gold medal, while Olena Kostevich of Ukraine won the silver medal.
- ★ ISSF primary purpose is to provide a standardised qualification system for the Olympic shooting competitions.

## ISSF World Cup 2023

- ★ Indian shooters Hriday Hazarika and Nancy Mandotra won the silver medal in the 10m Air Rifle event at the ISSF World Cup 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- ★ It was the first ISSF World Cup medal for both Hriday Hazarika and Nancy Mandotra.
- ★ Hriday Hazarika qualified for the men's 10m air rifle final, where he won the silver medal.
- ★ ISSF World Cup was established in 1986 by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).
- ★ Its main objective is to establish a standardised qualification system for Olympic shooting competitions.

## BFAME Championships in Lahore

- ★ Sumit Mukherjee, a metro employee from Kolkata, won four gold medals at the Bridge Federation of Asia and Middle-East Championship (BFAME) held in Lahore, Pakistan.
- ★ Sumit Mukherjee was the only railway staff member in the 24-member Indian contingent.
- ★ The games were divided into four categories: Open, Women's, Mixed and Senior, and Sumit represented India in the Open category.



- ★ Sumit Mukherjee had earlier won a bronze medal at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games and the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Cup Bridge Championships to be held in Jakarta in 2022.

### India's 82<sup>nd</sup> Grandmaster

- ★ 15-year-old chess player Vuppala Praneeth from Telangana has become the 82<sup>nd</sup> Grandmaster of India.
- ★ Vuppala Praneeth defeated GM Hans Niem of USA during the final round of Baku Open 2023 to clinch the Grandmaster title.
- ★ Praneeth clinched his first GM-norm and International Master (IM) title at the tournament in March 2022.

### Italian Open

- ★ In Italian Open Tennis, Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan won the women's singles title defeating Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina 6-4, 1-0 at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia in Rome.
- ★ It was Rybakina's second title of the year.
- ★ With this, Rybakina won the fifth singles title of her career.
- ★ 7<sup>th</sup> seed Rybakina defeated 30<sup>th</sup> seed Kalinina to win the trophy.

### Seiko Golden Grand Prix

- ★ In her first major senior outdoor international event, long jumper Shaili Singh won a bronze at the Seiko Golden Grand Prix in Yokohama.
- ★ She finished third in the women's long jump with a creditable effort of 6.65m.
- ★ Shelly's first round jump of 6.65 m was the best ever at a World Athletics Continental Tour Gold level event.
- ★ Her attempt also saw a wind speed of +2.1 m/s, which is above the permissible limit of +2.0 m/s.
- ★ Maryse Luzolo of Germany took the gold with a jump of 6.79m, while Brooke Buschkuel of Australia was second with an effort of 6.77m.

### Italian Open

- ★ In the Italian Open final, world number three tennis star Daniil Medvedev defeated Holger Roon to win his first claycourt title.
- ★ This is Medvedev's fifth title of 2023 and the win has lifted him above Novak Djokovic to the second spot in the world rankings.
- ★ He won his 20<sup>th</sup> career title.
- ★ He will also be seeded second in the French Open, which begins on 28 May at Roland Garros.
- ★ The Australian-Belgian pair of Storm Hunter and Elise Mertens defeated top-seeded Americans Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula 6-4 6-4 to become the women's doubles champions.

## World No 1 in Men's Javelin Throw

- ★ Tokyo Olympics Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra achieved the number one ranking in men's javelin throw for the first time.
- ★ This is a major milestone in his career.
- ★ Neeraj Chopra is on top with 1455 points, 22 ahead of Anderson Peters of Granada.
- ★ Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic was third with 1416 points.
- ★ The Indian national record holder in men's javelin throw, took part in the season-opening Doha Diamond League on May 5 and finished first with a throw of 88.67m.
- ★ Anderson Peters finished third in Doha with a throw of 85.88m.

## BCCI Ropes in Adidas

- ★ The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced Adidas as the new kit sponsor of the Indian cricket team, replacing interim sponsor Kewal Kiran Clothing Limited. Adidas is a German multinational corporation best known for the design and manufacture of athletic footwear, apparel, and equipment.
- ★ It is the largest sportswear manufacturer globally and has a significant presence in cricket, serving as the kit sponsor for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA).
- ★ The partnership with Adidas marks the commitment of a prestigious sponsor to support the athletes of the Indian Cricket Team.

## McDonald's Delivers FIFA Sponsorship Renewal to 2026

- ★ McDonald's, the fast-food chain, has signed a new contract with FIFA to remain as a World Cup sponsor until the 2026 edition in the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- ★ The renewal gives McDonald's the title of 'Official Restaurant' sponsor of this year's Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand and the men's edition three years later.
- ★ McDonalds and FIFA have a shared passion for bringing people together through the power of football.
- ★ McDonald's is a proud supporter of football and has sponsored FIFA tournaments since 1994.

## International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup

- ★ India for the first time won two senior individual medals in women's skeet at International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup stage in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- ★ Ganemat Sekhon won the silver, his second ever individual World Cup medal.
- ★ Making her first appearance at the senior level, Darshana Rathore won the bronze medal and this was her debut performance.
- ★ Asem Orinbay of Kazakhstan won the gold medal through shoot-off.

### **International Jumping Meeting in Greece**

- ★ Indian Long jumper Murali Sreeshankar won gold at the International Jumping Meeting 2023 at Kallithea in Greece.
- ★ Kerala's Murali Sreesankar won the gold medal in the International Jumping Meet with a jump of 8.31 metres.
- ★ This was Murali Sreesankar's third competition of the year and also won the third gold medal.
- ★ Jeswin Aldrin claimed silver with an effort of 7.85m.

### **Malaysia Masters Badminton Championship 2023**

- ★ India's star shuttler HS Prannoy won the gold medal in the Malaysia Masters Badminton Championship 2023 played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- ★ Prannoy won the final by defeating China's Wang Hongyang in three games 21-19, 13-21 and 21-18.
- ★ The match between the two lasted for 94 minutes.
- ★ Prannoy became the third Indian after Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu to win the Malaysia Masters Championship.
- ★ Also became the first Indian to win in the men's singles category.
- ★ This is Pranay's first medal this season.
- ★ With Prannoy, India has won the championship 4 times.

### **Monaco Grand Prix 2023**

- ★ Red Bull's Max Verstappen has won the 2023 Monaco Grand Prix, his fourth win of the season.
- ★ He led all 78 laps from pole position.
- ★ The win extended his lead in the Drivers' Championship to 39 points.
- ★ Fernando Alonso finished second in the race.
- ★ Esteban Ocon took third place.
- ★ It is an annual Formula One motor racing event.
- ★ It has been held since 1929 and is considered to be one of the most important and prestigious automobile races globally.

### **Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2023**

- ★ Uttar Pradesh Hockey emerged as the champions of the 13<sup>th</sup> Hockey India Sub-Junior Men's National Championship 2023.
- ★ Its final was held at Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium, Odisha.
- ★ Uttar Pradesh Hockey defeated Odisha Hockey Association in the final.
- ★ Hockey Haryana defeated Hockey Madhya Pradesh to secure the third position.

## CAVA Women's Challenge Cup 2023

- ★ India won the NSC-CAVA Women's Volleyball Challenge Cup title held in Kathmandu.
- ★ The final match was held at the National Sports Council covered hall at Tripureshwor, Kathmandu.
- ★ India became the champion by defeating Kazakhstan in the final.
- ★ India won 3-0 over Kazakhstan.
- ★ India remained undefeated in the entire competition.
- ★ The tournament was organised by the Nepal Volleyball Association.

## RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

### World's Most Punctual Airport

- ★ According to a report by aviation analytical firm, Cirium, GMR Hyderabad International Airport is the most punctual airport in the world.
- ★ The airport has recorded 90.43 per cent on-time performance.
- ★ It is the only airport to surpass the 90% mark.
- ★ Hyderabad airport has topped the charts both in the 'Global Airports' and 'Large Airports' categories.
- ★ The latest technology innovations have been used in the Hyderabad airport for improving performance.
- ★ It has implemented the first-ever integrated and centralized Airport Operations Control Center (AOCC) and many modern passenger information systems and technological initiatives.

### Global Supercomputing List

- ★ The AI Supercomputer 'AIRAWAT', installed at C-DAC, Pune has been ranked 75<sup>th</sup> in the top 500 Global Supercomputing List.
- ★ The announcement was made during the 61<sup>st</sup> edition of the International Supercomputing Conference (ISC 2023) held in Germany.
- ★ The establishment of 'AIRAWAT' at C-DAC Pune is part of the National Program on AI initiated by the Government of India.
- ★ AIRAWAT is the name for an in-house cloud platform for big data.
- ★ The proposed AIRAWAT system is a 100+ petaflop AI-focused supercomputer.
- ★ This system is a 130-petaflop computer focused on providing compute for AI, ML and big data tasks.
- ★ The National Supercomputing Mission was launched in 2015.
- ★ The aim of the mission was to enhance the research capacities in the country to form a Supercomputing grid.

- ★ It supports the government's vision of 'Digital India' and 'Make in India' initiatives.

## AWARDS & PRIZES

### National Award for Real Estate

- ★ National Real Estate Award was presented to the Rajasthan Housing Board by the Central Government Agency National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO).
- ★ National Real Estate Development Council National President Rajan Bandelkar and RERA Delhi Chairman Anand Kumar presented the award to Rajasthan Housing Commissioner Pawan Arora at a national level function.
- ★ The Rajasthan Housing Board was honored with the award for registering the maximum number of housing projects in the country under RERA, selling the maximum number of houses and doing excellent work in the field of real estate.

### Immigrant Achievement Award

- ★ Indian-American citizen 'Neeli Bendapudi' (59) was conferred with the prestigious 'Immigrant Achievement Award' 2023 for her contribution in the field of higher education in the US.
- ★ Neeli Bendapudi is the President of Penn State University.
- ★ The award is given each year to an individual or organization for their commitment and dedication to American heritage.
- ★ For nearly 30 years, Dr. Bendapudi, President of 'Penn State University', has been working to foster student success, inclusive excellence in higher education, and create opportunities for students, faculty and staff.
- ★ She is the first black woman to serve as the President of Penn State University.

### Leipzig Book Prize 2023

- ★ Maria Stepanova, a Russian author has won the prestigious Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding in 2023.
- ★ Stepanova's novel, In Memory of Memory, which explores themes of Stalinism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, has earned her a nomination for the Booker Prize in 2021.
- ★ The Leipzig Book Prize was awarded to Stepanova for her poetry collection 'Girls Without Clothes', which sensitively addresses the issue of power dynamics that fuel violence and oppression against women.
- ★ The Leipzig Book Prize has been presented since 1994 for "Progress of Reconciliation" in Europe.
- ★ The prize aims to promote greater understanding between European cultures by recognizing outstanding works of fiction, non-fiction and poetry that contribute to this goal.

## BAFTA TV Fellowship

- ★ Meera Syal will be honored at the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) Television Awards on May 14 at the Royal Festival Hall.
- ★ It is the highest honor given to an individual for outstanding and extraordinary contribution in the field of film, sports or television.
- ★ Sanya is best known for her performances in 'Goodness Gracious Me' and 'The Kumars at No 42'.
- ★ As part of the fellowship, she will inspire and support interested candidates through BAFTA's year-long programmes.
- ★ Her work has garnered several BAFTA nominations and wins.
- ★ Syal has been awarded the Women in Film and TV Award for Creative Innovation, Honorary Doctorates from SOS, Manchester and Birmingham Universities.

## UN Press Freedom Prizes

- ★ The United Nations announced its premier prize for press freedom has been awarded to three imprisoned Iranian female journalists 'for their commitment to truth and accountability'.
- ★ Award winners include Niloufer Hamidi, Elaheh Mohammadi and Nargis Mohammadi.
- ★ The award is given to a person, organization or institution who, at the risk of life, has made an outstanding contribution to the defense and, or promotion of freedom of the press, anywhere in the world.
- ★ Niloufer had informed people about 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who had died in September 2022, through a news item.
- ★ Amini was arrested by the ethics police for not wearing a headscarf properly.
- ★ Elaheh wrote about Amini's funeral.
- ★ Amini's death triggered months of protests in Iran's cities.
- ★ The third winner, Nargis Mohammadi, worked for many years as a journalist and is one of Iran's most prominent activists.
- ★ The award is named in honor of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated on 17 December 1986.

## National Youth Parliament Competition, 2022-23

- ★ Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Nadia, West Bengal won the first prize in the 24<sup>th</sup> National Youth Parliament Competition, 2022-23.
- ★ Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has been organising Youth Parliament Competitions in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas for the past 26 years.
- ★ The Youth Parliament Scheme aims at inculcating among the younger generations the spirit of self-discipline, righteous expression of views, and other virtues of a democratic way of life.
- ★ 80 Vidyalayas spread over 8 regions of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti participated in the 24<sup>th</sup> National Youth Parliament Competition.

- ★ The main of the Youth Parliament Scheme is to inculcate the spirit of self-discipline, righteous expression of views, and other virtues of a democratic way of life among youths.

### Sagar Shreshta Award 2023

- ★ Cochin Port has been awarded the prestigious Sagar Shreshta award for the year 2023 by the Ministry of Shipping in recognition of its outstanding performance in the maritime sector.
- ★ The Sagar Shreshta award is given to Indian ports for achieving excellence in various categories, including efficiency, productivity, and environmental sustainability.
- ★ Cochin Port was selected for the award based on its impressive track record of achieving high standards of operational efficiency, safety, and environmental sustainability, as well as its contribution to the development of the maritime sector in India.
- ★ The port has implemented several innovative initiatives to enhance its operational capabilities and improve customer satisfaction, including the introduction of digital platforms for cargo tracking and real-time vessel monitoring.

### Astronomical Society of India Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award

- ★ Jayant Vishnu Narlikar received the first Astronomical Society of India Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ★ President of the ASI, Prof. Dipankar Banerjee presented the award to Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar.
- ★ The award was announced at the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ASI held at IIT Indore.
- ★ Narlikar has dedicated his life to the study of the Universe and contributed to understand various aspects of Astrophysics including the Narlikar-Hoyle theory.
- ★ He was one of the first who started cosmology research in India. He gave the idea to introduce the astronomy curriculum and research in Indian Universities.
- ★ He played a key role in the formation of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA).
- ★ Govind Swarup Lifetime Achievement Award was instituted by the Astronomical Society of India (ASI) in 2022 to honour eminent Indian astronomers for their valuable contributions.
- ★ The award carries a citation and plaque, and a cash prize.

### Highest Civilian Honours by Fiji, Papua New Guinea

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the highest honor by Fiji and Papua New Guinea on 21 May.
- ★ PM Modi was honored with the island nation's highest civilian award during his visit to Papua New Guinea to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) summit.
- ★ PM Modi was awarded "The Companion of the Order of Fiji" by his Fijian counterpart Sitweni Rabuka for his global leadership, a rare honor for a non-Fijian.
- ★ Papua New Guinea conferred its highest civilian honour, Grand Companion of the Order of Loghu (GCL) on PM Modi for his efforts towards unity of the Pacific Island nation.

## Eurovision 2023

- ★ Sweden's Loreen won Eurovision 2023 with the song 'Tattoo' in Liverpool, northern England, becoming the first woman to triumph for a second time in the contest.
- ★ Finland's Käärijä, a green-bolero-sleeved rapper, came second.
- ★ He won the viewer vote, but it was not enough to overtake Loreen's lead after the result from the juries in the 37 participating countries.
- ★ Loreen is the only person after Ireland's Johnny Logan to win the contest twice, and her victory puts Sweden level with Ireland as the most successful Eurovision countries.
- ★ The 67<sup>th</sup> edition of the musical festival was held in the 'City of Pop' on behalf of Ukraine, last year's winner, which was unable to host this year because of Russia's invasion.

## International Booker Prize 2023

- ★ Bulgarian author Georgi Gospodinov won the 2023 International Booker Prize for his novel 'Time Shelter'.
- ★ The novel was translated into English by Angela Rodel and is the first Bulgarian novel to win the International Booker Prize.
- ★ 'Time Shelter' is a captivating and remarkable literary work that explores themes of time, identity and the human experience.
- ★ It is an international literary award held in the United Kingdom.
- ★ The award recognizes outstanding works of fiction translated into English.

## National Water Award 2023

- ★ The Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti will organize the 4<sup>th</sup> National Water Awards Distribution Ceremony.
- ★ Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has been requested to be the Chief Guest at the function.
- ★ 41 winners including joint winners have been selected for the 4<sup>th</sup> National Water Awards, 2022.
- ★ The awards include 11 categories including 'Best State', 'Best District', 'Best Gram Panchayat', 'Best Urban Local Body'.
- ★ The award winners will be awarded a citation, trophy and cash prize.
- ★ An amount of ₹2 lakh has been kept for the first prize, ₹1.5 lakh for the second prize and ₹1 lakh for the third prize.
- ★ These awards will help in increasing public awareness about the importance of water and motivate them to adopt and promote best water use practices.

## Dag Hammarskjold Medal

- ★ Indian head constables Shishupal Singh and Sanwala Ram Vishnoi were posthumously awarded the Dag Hammarskjold Medal.
- ★ The Dag Hammarskjold Medal is the highest award given to United Nations peacekeepers.



- ★ The medals were received by Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations on behalf of the departed Head Constables.
- ★ The Dag Hammarskjold Medal is awarded posthumously to peacekeepers who have lost their lives during peacekeeping operations.
- ★ The award ceremony took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.
- ★ The medal is named after Dag Hammarskjold, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations.

### **Jnanpith Award**

- ★ Goan writer Damodar Maujo has been honoured with the 57<sup>th</sup> Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour.
- ★ He is a renowned short story writer, novelist, critic and screenwriter in Konkani language.
- ★ Damodar Maujo is the second Goan to receive the Jnanpith Award after Ravindra Kelekar in 2008.
- ★ He has written 25 books in Konkani and one in English, many of which have been translated into various languages.
- ★ Mauzo's famous novel 'Karmelin' received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983.
- ★ The award ceremony took place at the Raj Bhavan near Panaji, the capital of Goa.
- ★ It is the oldest and highest Indian literary award presented annually by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- ★ It recognizes outstanding contributions to literature by Indian authors writing in English as well as in the Indian languages listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

### **Skoch SILVER Award 2023**

- ★ Skoch SILVER Award 2023 presented to Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Chandigarh.
- ★ This award has been given to this department for e-governance in computerized medical records of cattle treatment by the department.
- ★ This is the first project of its kind in the country.
- ★ This web-based application software caters to the veterinary department of five government veterinary hospitals and nine animal husbandry sub-centres in Chandigarh.
- ★ The main objective of this application is to provide facility to the animal parents to register their animals online for services like treatment, vaccination and artificial insemination.
- ★ It also includes maintaining all records of veterinary hospitals and sub-centres like OPD, stock books, daily drug expenditure, and artificial insemination.
- ★ SKOCH Award was established in 2003.
- ★ It is the highest civilian honour of the country presented by an independent organization.

## **APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

### **MD and Chairman of Bank of India**

- ★ Rajneesh Karnataka has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chairman of Bank of India (BOI) by the Government of India.
- ★ Rajneesh Karnataka is currently serving as the Executive Director of Union Bank of India.
- ★ He will hold the role of MD & CEO of Bank of India for a period of three years, from the date he assumes charge or until further instructions.
- ★ With over 29 years of experience in the banking sector, Karnataka has served as the Chief General Manager of Punjab National Bank before being appointed as the Executive Director of Union Bank of India on October 2021.

### **Managing Director of Bank of Baroda**

- ★ Debdutt Chand was appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of Bank of Baroda (BoB).
- ★ Chand is currently serving as the Executive Director of the bank.
- ★ He will assume the position of MD for a period of three years with effect from 01 July 2023 or until further notice.
- ★ Chand started his career in 1994 as an Officer in Allahabad Bank.
- ★ He worked as a manager in Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) from 1998 to 2005.
- ★ He joined Punjab National Bank (PNB) in 2005 as Chief Manager and eventually rose to the rank of Chief General Manager.

### **Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission**

- ★ Ajit Kumar Mohanty has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy.
- ★ Mohanty is a renowned physicist and is currently serving as the Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC).
- ★ He will be responsible for overseeing India's nuclear program and exploring the use of nuclear energy for non-military purposes.
- ★ Mohanty will replace KN Vyas.
- ★ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Mohanty till the age of 66 years or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

### **President of World Bank**

- ★ Indian-origin Ajay Banga has been officially elected as the new President of the World Bank.
- ★ Ajay Banga was nominated for this post by US President Joe Biden in February.

- ★ The 25-member Executive Board of the World Bank elected Ajay Banga, who previously served as the CEO of Mastercard, to hold the position for a period of five years.
- ★ The World Bank provides loans and grants to low- and middle-income countries for capital projects.
- ★ It is made up of two institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).
- ★ Its lending strategy is guided by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and environmental and social safeguards.

### **President of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)**

- ★ Mark Nicholls has been elected as the next President of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).
- ★ His appointment was announced during the Annual General Meeting of the MCC.
- ★ Nicholls became a member of the MCC in 1981 and had a successful professional cricket career spanning over two decades, in which he scored over 25,000 runs and took 173 wickets.
- ★ He will take over from current Chairman Stephen Fry.

### **President of Paraguay**

- ★ Conservative Economist and former Finance Minister Santiago Pena won the Paraguay Presidential Election 2023.
- ★ Santiago Pena will be 52<sup>nd</sup> President of Paraguay on August 15, 2023.
- ★ He won 43% of the vote in the Presidential election & defeated opposition candidate Efraim Alegre who secured 28% votes.
- ★ He will replace Mario Abdo Benítez who is serving as the President of Paraguay since 2018.
- ★ The incumbent conservative Colorado Party had governed the country for 71 of the past 76 years.

### **CEO of Twitter**

- ★ Linda Yaccarino, Former Advertising Chief at NBC Universal, has been appointed as the new CEO of Twitter.
- ★ Yaccarino will primarily focus on business operations, while Elon Musk will focus on product design and new technology.
- ★ Yaccarino is credited with modernizing the advertising business of Comcast Corp's entertainment and media division.

### **Director of CBI**

- ★ Praveen Sood, a 1986 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer of the Karnataka cadre, has been appointed as the next director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- ★ Praveen Sood will replace current CBI Director Subodh Jaiswal when his term ends on May 25.
- ★ The Department of Personnel and Training approved the appointment of Sood as CBI Director for a period of two years.

- ★ CBI is the premier investigative agency of India.
- ★ It was established in 1941 as Special Police Establishment and later renamed as Central Bureau of Investigation in 1963.
- ★ Its primary objective is to maintain the integrity and credibility of administration, Ensure Justice and uphold the rule of law.

### Chairperson of CCI

- ★ The government has appointed Ravneet Kaur as the new chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- ★ She will replace CCI member Sangeeta Verma who has been serving as the interim chairperson since October last year after Ashok Kumar Gupta stepped down.
- ★ Kaur, a 1988 IAS Officer of Punjab cadre, will be appointed for a period of five years from the date of assuming charge or till the date of attaining the age of 65 years or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Kaur has held several positions in the government over the past two decades, besides serving as the chairperson of the India Tourism Development Corporation between 2017 and 2019.

### Vice Chief of the Air Staff

- ★ Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit was appointed as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff.
- ★ He has commanded the Mirage 2000 Squadron, a frontline fighter base in the Western Sector and a major fighter training base.
- ★ He has held various positions at Air Headquarters, including Principal Director Air Staff Requirements, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Projects) and Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Plans).
- ★ He has participated in missions like 'Safed Sagar' and 'Rakshak'.
- ★ Prior to this appointment, he was the Air Defense Commander of the Southern Air Command and the Senior Air Officer in the South Western Air Command.

### New Law and Justice Minister

- ★ Arjun Ram Meghwal was appointed as the new Law and Justice Minister and the previous Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju was assigned the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- ★ Meghwal will also continue in his current position as Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Culture.
- ★ Arjun Ram Meghwal will replace Kiren Rijiju in the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- ★ The Ministry of Law and Justice is a cabinet ministry in the Government of India.
- ★ It is responsible for the management of legal affairs, legislative activities and administration of justice in India.
- ★ The ministry consists of three departments: Legislative Department, Department of Legal Affairs and Department of Justice.

## **New Chairman of PNGRB**

- ★ AK Jain was appointed as the new Chairman of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) by the government.
- ★ The appointment was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet and the post of Chairman was lying vacant since December 2020.
- ★ AK Jain will replace former PNGRB Chief DK Saraf.
- ★ Former Coal Secretary AK Jain will serve as the Chairman of PNGRB for a period of five years.
- ★ PNGRB is responsible for promoting competitive markets and addressing matters related to the petroleum and natural gas sectors.

## **Chief Minister of Karnataka**

- ★ Congress leader Siddaramaiah was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Karnataka for his second term and Karnataka Congress President DK Shivakumar was sworn in as the deputy Chief Minister.
- ★ The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru, administered by Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot.
- ★ The ceremony was attended by Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi.

## **First Woman Director-General of The United Nations Migration Agency**

- ★ Amy Pope of the United States has been selected as the first female Director-General of the United Nations Migration Agency.
- ★ She will head the Geneva-based International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- ★ Pope is currently serving as deputy to Director General Antonio Vitorino.
- ★ Her five-year term as Director General will begin on 01 October 2023, replacing Vitorino.
- ★ It is an agency of the United Nations and provides services and advice related to migration.
- ★ The agency provides assistance to governments and expatriates.

## **President of The Executive Committee of India Taekwondo**

- ★ Namdev Shirgaonkar was elected unopposed as the President of the executive committee of India Taekwondo.
- ★ The election was held at 2 Hotel Sun City Residency, Andheri (East) in which 25 affiliated State Associations duly participated.
- ★ Namdev Shirgaonkar, President, India Taekwondo, who holds a black belt in Taekwondo, has accepted to be elected unopposed as the head of India Taekwondo.
- ★ Sharad D. Madakare (retd. Deputy Charity Commissioner) along with Bhagwatrao Gaikwad (retd. Judge) served as the Returning Officer.

## **Brand Ambassador of Tripura Tourism**

- ★ Former India cricket captain and former BCCI Chief Sourav Ganguly has been named as the brand ambassador for Tripura Tourism.
- ★ The Tripura government believes that Ganguly's popularity and charisma will draw attention to the state's unexplored tourist destinations.
- ★ The selection of Ganguly as the brand ambassador is expected to attract more visitors to Tripura and give a boost to the tourism industry.
- ★ Tripura has 19 different tribal communities with a majority Bengali population and Bengali, English and Kokborok are the official languages of the state.

## **President of Basketball Federation of India**

- ★ Dr. Govindraj has been elected as the President of the Basketball Federation of India.
- ★ He is a Congress MLC and holds the position of President of International Basketball Federation (FIBA), Asia and President of Karnataka Olympic Association.
- ★ Dr. Govindaraj is the first Indian to be unanimously nominated as the President of FIBA Asia.
- ★ The nomination was confirmed at the FIBA Asia Congress, making Dr. Govindaraj the first Indian to lead the International Basketball Federation in Asia, which comprises 44 countries.
- ★ He succeeds Sheikh Saud Ali Al Thani of Qatar, who served as the head of FIBA Asia for four consecutive terms since 2002.

## **Deputy Managing Director of IDBI Bank**

- ★ Jayakumar S Pillai was appointed as the Deputy Managing Director of IDBI Bank.
- ★ His appointment was announced by IDBI Bank through an official filing and the appointment was approved by the bank's board of directors.
- ★ The appointment is valid for a period of three years from the date of his assumption of charge.
- ★ The appointment has been authorised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ As Deputy Managing Director, Jayakumar S. Pillai will be involved in strategic decision making, overall management and operations.

## **MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank**

- ★ Karnataka Bank appointed Srikrishnan Harihar Sarma as its new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ Sarma has vast experience in commercial, retail and transactional banking, technology and payments.
- ★ The appointment is subject to the approval of the shareholders in the ensuing Annual General Meeting or within a period of three months from the date of joining, whichever is earlier.
- ★ The Karnataka Bank Limited was incorporated on 18 February 1924 and commenced business on 23 May 1924.

- ★ The bank was established in Mangalore, a coastal city in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.
- ★ BR Viceroy was one of the founders of the Pickle Bank, which aimed to serve the South Canara region.

### **New Central Vigilance Commissioner**

- ★ President Draupadi Murmu (President Draupadi Murmu) administered the oath of office to Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava as the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC).
- ★ Srivastava was serving as the acting Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) since December last year after the completion of Suresh N Patel's tenure as the Central Vigilance Commissioner.
- ★ The Commission is headed by the CVC and can have a maximum of two Vigilance Commissioners.
- ★ CVC is an apex vigilance institution, which is free from any executive authority.
- ★ It is an independent body whose accountability is only to the Parliament.

### **External Auditor of WHO**

- ★ CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) Girish Chandra Murmu has been re-elected as the external auditor of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a period of four years from 2024 to 2027.
- ★ He has held this position at the WHO since 2019, with his current term set to end in 2023.
- ★ The re-election took place during the 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in Geneva.
- ★ Mr. Murmu secured a massive majority of 114 votes out of 156 in the first round of voting.
- ★ The appointment of CAG Girish Chandra Murmu is a recognition of the position of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India among the international community.

## **BOOKS & AUTHORS**

### **Book Titled 'Reflections' Authored by Shri Narayanan Vaghul**

- ★ Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman released the book 'Reflections' authored by noted banker Shri Narayanan Vaghul in Mumbai.
- ★ The book is a vivid account of Mr. Vaghul's experiences in India's financial landscape over the decades.
- ★ He has been instrumental in mentoring several powerhouses of banking talent.

### **Book 'Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise'**

- ★ The book 'Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise' is written by Amitabh Kant.
- ★ It is published by Rupa Publications India.

- ★ The book coincides with India becoming the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, overtaking the United Kingdom after 75 years of independence.
- ★ This book presents a multidimensional survey of India's business heritage and culture to understand the country's remarkably strong and resilient growth story of Indian business and enterprise.
- ★ Through the book, Amitabh Kant aims to provide insight into the success of Indian businesses and enterprises and how they can move forward in the future.

### **PM Modi Launches 'Saurashtra-Tamil Sangamprashastih' Book**

- ★ Saurashtra-Tamil Sangamprashastih' book has been launched by PM Modi.
- ★ PM released the book during the closing ceremony of Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam.
- ★ Shri Somnath Sanskrit University, Veraval has composed the book.
- ★ The book marks the relationship between Saurashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam takes forward this vision by celebrating the shared culture and heritage between Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
- ★ It is based on the historical event of the auspicious confluence of the two holy places of Rameshwaram and Somnath.

### **Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai to Publish 12 Books**

- ★ Twelve books written by Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai, in English and Malayalam, are being released in Delhi, Goa and Kerala in April and May.
- ★ With the release of these books, the Governor will have authored 200 books in over five decades of public life.
- ★ The books will be exhibited at specific centres after the release.
- ★ The celebrations of completing 50 years of amazing writing will be done in Kozhikode.
- ★ Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will release two of these books in Kozhikode on April 28 and on May 02, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will release one of the books in Thiruvananthapuram.

### **Ruskin Bond Wrote A New Book Titled 'The Golden Years'**

- ★ Indian author Ruskin Bond wrote a book titled 'The Golden Years: The Many Joys of Living a Good Long Life'.
- ★ The Golden Years book is published by HarperCollins India
- ★ 'The Golden Years' focuses on Bond's experiences during the 60s, 70s and 80s.

### **A New Book by Aditya Bhushan**

- ★ Former Indian Test cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad released his semi-autobiographical book 'Guts Amidst Bloodbath: The Anshuman Gaekwad Narrative' at the Cricket Club of India (CCI).



- ★ The book launch event was attended by six former Indian cricket captains including Sachin Tendulkar, Gundapa Vishwanath, Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar, Ravi Shastri and Kapil Dev.
- ★ ‘Guts Amidst Bloodbath’ is a book that tells the story of Anshuman Gaikwad, including insights from teammates, opponents, administrators, selectors, umpires, friends and family members.
- ★ Gaikwad’s association with Indian cricket spans over 50 years, excelling as a batsman, administrator, selector, coach, media personality and a compassionate man.

### **A Book Titled ‘Just Aspire’ Authored by Ajai Chowdhry**

- ★ Ajai Chowdhry one of the co-founders of HCL also an entrepreneur, sportsman, and salesman authored a new book titled ‘Just Aspire’.
- ★ ‘Just Aspire’ which is a motivational book that focuses on the importance of having a positive mindset, setting goals, and taking action to achieve them.
- ★ Harper Business published the book.
- ★ This book talks about the journey of a small-town boy (Ajai) who turned into a CEO of a global company.
- ★ This easy-to-comprehend book is divided into three personas – ‘Aspire’, ‘Achieve’, and ‘Inspire’.

## **DEFENCE**

### **Maiden ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise**

- ★ The first ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) began on 02 May 2023 in Singapore.
- ★ The maiden exercise is being conducted off the coast of Singapore.
- ★ It aims to enhance interoperability and exchange of best practices among the participating navies.
- ★ INS Satpura and INS Delhi, accompanied by RADM Gurcharan Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, have reached Singapore to participate in the exercise.
- ★ AIME 2023 will provide an opportunity for Indian Navy and ASEAN navies to work together closely and conduct seamless operations in the maritime domain.
- ★ Indian Navy ships will also participate in the International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC) and the International Maritime Defense Exhibition (IMDEX-23).

### **Test Trial of Indigenous Air Droppable Container ‘ADC-150’**

- ★ The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy (IN) conducted the successful maiden test trial of ‘ADC-150’ from IL 38SD aircraft off the coast of Goa.
- ★ The trial was conducted to enhance the naval operational logistics capabilities by providing quick response to meet the requirement of critical engineering stores to ships, which are deployed more than 2,000 kms from the coast.
- ★ It reduces the requirement of ships to come close to the coast to collect spares and stores.

- ★ ADC-150 is an indigenously designed and developed Air Droppable Container with 150 kg payload capacity.
- ★ 3 DRDO laboratories – Naval Science & Technological Laboratory (NSTL), Visakhapatnam; Aerial Delivery Research & Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra and Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru – have been involved in the development of ADC-150 container.

### **Indian Navy Decommissioned INS Magar**

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Magar, Landing Ship Tank (Large) amphibious assault ship of the Indian Navy decommissioned after 36 years of exceptional service at the naval base in Kochi, Kerala.
- ★ The Chief Guest for the event was Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande.
- ★ The literal meaning of ‘Magar’ is a crocodile in English.
- ★ This ship was commissioned by Admiral RH Tahiliani, Chief of the Naval Staff, on July 15 1987.
- ★ INS Magar was built by the Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).
- ★ INS Magar is 120 metres long and has a beam of 17.5 metres.
- ★ It was deployed for milestone operations like Operation Pawan to support the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka.

### **Exercise Ajeya Warrior**

- ★ The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the joint military exercise ‘AJEYA WARRIOR-23’ between India and the United Kingdom was conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom from 27 April to 11 May 2023.
- ★ The exercise is part of an initiative to develop interoperability and share expertise with friendly foreign nations.
- ★ Military forces of both countries participate in this joint military exercise.
- ★ It is a bilateral training exercise between the armies of India and UK.
- ★ The exercise saw the participation of an infantry company from India and a unit of similar strength from the British Army.
- ★ The armies of both countries practiced each other’s weapons, battle tactics, equipment and procedures to conduct joint military operations under difficult conditions.

### **IAF Received 1<sup>st</sup> Batch of Indigenous Loitering Munitions**

- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) has received the first indigenously designed and developed loitering munitions named the TATA ALS 50.
- ★ The ALS 50, also known as the “suicide drone”, is a unique Vertical Take Off and Landing (VTOL) weapon that can operate in any terrain, including high-altitude areas, to take down targets at a range of over 50 km.
- ★ It is developed by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL).
- ★ The weapon’s autonomy and precision enable it to carry out precise strikes while minimising the exposure of personnel to risk.

- ★ The ALS 50's VTOL capability allows it to launch like a quadcopter and transition into fixed-wing mode during flight to cover long distances.
- ★ Moreover, it can operate in areas where space is limited, including narrow valleys, fortified mountain positions, small jungle clearings, and the decks of warships.

### **Indian Army to Have Common Uniform for Brigadier**

- ★ The Indian Army has decided that from 01 August 2023 officers of the rank of Brigadier and above will have a common uniform irrespective of their different parent cadre and appointment.
- ★ The decision was taken after detailed deliberations during the recently concluded Army Commanders' Conference.
- ★ As part of the decision, headgear, shoulder rank badges, gorget patches, belts and shoes of senior officers will be standardised.
- ★ There will be no change in the uniform worn by officers of the rank of Colonel and below.
- ★ The Indian Army has decided to adopt this common uniform to promote and strengthen common identity and approach in service matters amongst senior leadership, beyond the boundaries of regimentation.
- ★ The officers of brigadiers and above in the Indian Army are those who have already commanded units or battalions and are mostly posted at headquarters or establishments where officers from all arms and services work together.

### **India-Indonesia Exercise 'Samudra Shakti'**

- ★ INS Kavaratti, indigenously designed and built ASW Corvette, arrived at Batam, Indonesia to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Bilateral exercise Samudra Shakti-23.
- ★ Samudra Shakti-23 will showcase the high degree of interoperability between the two navies and their shared commitment to peace and stability in the region.
- ★ An Indian Navy Dornier maritime patrol aircraft and Chetak helicopter are also participating in the exercise.
- ★ The Indonesian Navy is represented by KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda, CN 235 Maritime Patrol Aircraft and AS565 Panther helicopters.
- ★ The Harbor Phase will include cross deck visits, professional interactions, subject matter expert exchanges and sports fixtures.
- ★ During the sea phase, weapons firing, helicopter operations, anti-submarine warfare and air defense exercises and boarding operations are planned.

### **AL-MOHED AL-HINDI 2023 Naval Exercise**

- ★ Indian Navy ships INS TARKASH and INS SUBHADRA arrived at Port Al-Jubail in Saudi Arabia.
- ★ The visit of these ships marks the beginning of the harbor phase of the second edition of the naval exercise between the two countries, known as 'Al-Mohad Al-Hindi 2023'.
- ★ This year the naval exercise also includes the participation of a Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

- ★ During the exercise, naval forces from both countries will engage in joint maneuvers, training activities, and exchange of expertise.
- ★ The exercise will focus on enhancing maritime security capabilities and promoting interoperability between the two navies.
- ★ The inaugural edition of the exercise was successfully conducted in 2021.
- ★ It aims to strengthen the defense ties between India and Saudi Arabia.
- ★ The exercise will provide an opportunity for both navies to learn from each other's experiences and improve their operational capabilities.

### **‘Sudarshan Shakti Exercise 2023’**

- ★ The Sapta Shakti Command of the Indian Army conducted exercise ‘Sudarshan Shakti 2023’ along the western borders in Rajasthan and Punjab.
- ★ The exercise aimed at transforming the forces into a modern, lean and agile combat combination capable of taking advantage of new age technologies.
- ★ It focused on validating operational plans in a network-centric environment, involving combat power, combat support and logistics support.
- ★ The exercise involved coordinated application of combat power, combat support and logistic support under all enemy threat zones including grey zone warfare.
- ★ “Sudarshan Shakti 2023” highlighted the commitment of the South Western Command and its attached units to maintain a high level of operational preparedness and capability to fight technology-intensive future conflicts.

### **Naval Exercise ‘Al Mohed Al Hindi 23’**

- ★ The sea phase of the second edition of the bilateral exercise ‘Al Mohed Al Hindi- 2023’ between the Indian Navy and the Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF) was conducted at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.
- ★ INS Tarkash, INS Subhadra and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) participated from the Indian side in the exercise.
- ★ Whereas, the Royal Saudi Naval Force was represented by HMS Badr and Abdul Aziz, MH60R Helo and UAVs.
- ★ The three-day exercise, conducted in the waters of the Arabian Sea, witnessed a wide range of maritime operations.
- ★ The successful conduct of ‘Al Mohed Al Hindi – 2023’ showcased the high level of professionalism, interoperability and exchange of best practices between the two navies.
- ★ The bilateral exercise has been successful in meeting all its set objectives.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ‘Solar Decathlon’ Build Challenge in US

- ★ A team of students from IIT Bombay secured second place in the prestigious Solar Decathlon contest in the US, for their innovative zero-energy house designed to address air quality challenges in Mumbai’s hot and humid climate.
- ★ The US Department of Energy’s (DOE) Solar Decathlon competition is the longest running student competition in the US.
- ★ In this, groups of students have to design and build highly efficient and innovative buildings powered by renewable energy.
- ★ Ball State University took almost two years to design and build their zero-energy home and won the ‘2023 Build Challenge’ competition.
- ★ The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and the University of British Columbia came second and third respectively in this year’s ‘Build Challenge’.
- ★ A team from IIT Bombay built a house in Mumbai with advanced technology solutions to help improve air quality in hot and humid climates.

### Elon Musk’s SpaceX Starship Explodes 4 minutes after take-off

- ★ The Elon Musk-owned SpaceX’s Starship, world’s biggest rocket, exploded during its first test-flight to space from Boca Chica in Texas.
- ★ The test was the first for the spacecraft manufacturer’s Starship spacecraft (the carrier) and Super Heavy rocket (the booster), collectively referred to as Starship.
- ★ The Starship rocket is the world’s most powerful rocket ever built.
- ★ The project comprises a rocket called Super Heavy Rocket and a spacecraft attached to its top called the Starship.
- ★ Starship is around 120 metres in height, with Super Heavy being 69 m tall and Starship being 50 m tall.
- ★ Starships represent a fully reusable transportation system designed to carry both crew and cargo to Earth orbit, the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

### ISRO Successfully Launched Star Berry Sense Payload

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a low-cost star sensor called Star Berry Sense on board its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-55 rocket.
- ★ The Star Berry Sense payload developed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), was launched.
- ★ The objective is to image the field of view, identify stars, and calculate the spacecraft’s pointing direction.
- ★ The Star Berry Sense sensor calculates the pointing direction by identifying the stars in its field of view.

- ★ The star sensor provides the most accurate information about a spacecraft's orientation.
- ★ Star Berry Sense was mounted on ISRO's PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM), which provides a stable platform for our payload to operate from.
- ★ POEM is a unique initiative by ISRO that utilises the spent 4<sup>th</sup> stage of the PSLV as an orbital platform for carrying out scientific experiments.

### **Artificial Intelligence Based Solution to Tackle Fraud Messages**

- ★ Bharti Airtel, one of India's largest telecommunications companies, has developed an artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning-based solution.
- ★ It is to proactively detect, prevent, and eliminate phishing, spam, and fraud through messaging, and is testing it in partnership with HDFC Bank, a leading Indian financial institution.
- ★ Direct connectivity has been established between Airtel and HDFC to help secure end-to-end SMS (short messaging service) connectivity and flagging any other route.
- ★ The solution uses an anti-spam filter that can detect and block up to two million messages per day.

### **IIT Madras Researchers Partner with DRDO**

- ★ IIT Madras researchers have partnered with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) scientists to develop sensor technology for underwater communications, which will be advantageous to defence applications, especially in the Navy.
- ★ 'Piezoelectric MEMS technology' is needed to develop high-performance thin films and to convert 'piezo-thin films' into future naval sensors and devices for underwater applications.
- ★ Piezo thin film is an important component of piezo MEMS devices and is considered for acoustics and vibration-sensing applications.
- ★ The installation of state-of-the-art Piezo MEMS technology enables India to advance defense efficiency and allows the nation to execute strategic operations of critical applications.

### **World's 1<sup>st</sup> Integrated Blood Collection Tube Manufacturing Machine**

- ★ Angamaly-based CML Biotech Ltd., one of the largest manufacturers of blood collection tubes in India, has installed the world's first integrated machine 'Husky-Ichor', for manufacturing of blood collection tubes.
- ★ The integrated machine comprises machine mould, hot runner, dowsers, dehumidifier, chiller, temperature controller and dryer.
- ★ Normally, these functions are carried out in different machines.
- ★ The machine is manufactured by Canada-based Husky Technologies, a global leader in injection moulds and moulding machines.
- ★ The machine, set up at a cost of ₹12 crore, is capable of manufacturing 8 lakh blood collection tubes per day.
- ★ The company currently has a manufacturing capacity of around 120 million vacuum blood collection tubes and 100 million non-vacuum blood collection tubes per annum.

## **IIM Kozhikode Partners with Kerala Police**

- ★ The Centre for Digital Innovation and Transformation (CDiT) at the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK) and the Kerala Police Cyberdome Project, inked an MoU to augment cyber security measures in new-age policing.
- ★ The MoU was signed between Lt. Col M Julius George, Chief Administrative Officer, IIMK and P. Prakash, Inspector General of Police & Nodal Officer Kerala Police Cyberdome.
- ★ Kerala Police Cyberdome Project is a PPP initiative of Kerala Police to work in the areas of cyber security, information security, cyber forensics, data analytics and other areas where Information Technology can be leveraged for new-age policing.

## **SpaceX Sends First Saudi Arabian Astronauts to ISS**

- ★ Saudi Arabia, the country's first astronauts in decades have embarked on a journey to the International Space Station (ISS).
- ★ Sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government, a female stem cell researcher named Rayyanah Barnawi and a Royal Saudi Air Force fighter pilot named Ali al-Qarni joined a crew led by a retired NASA astronaut from Kennedy Space Center.
- ★ The mission was organized by Axiom Space, a Houston-based company, and executed by SpaceX.
- ★ Saudi Arabia's Historic Space Mission Saudi Arabia's efforts to send astronauts to space after several decades mark a significant milestone in the country's space exploration ambitions.
- ★ The current mission, sponsored by the Saudi government, aims to showcase the nation's commitment to advancing scientific research and technological innovation.

## **Israel Ties up with IIT-M**

- ★ The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has entered into a partnership with Israel to establish the 'India-Israel Center of Water Technology' (CoWT).
- ★ This joint initiative aims to address the challenges in water resources management and water technologies in India.
- ★ The Letter of Intent (LoI) for the center was signed by representatives from both countries, highlighting the significance of this collaboration in ensuring water security for India.
- ★ The India-Israel Center of Water Technology will focus on building human capacity to implement Israel's advanced water technologies in the Indian context.
- ★ This collaboration will be instrumental in achieving the objectives of India's Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' (MoHUA) 'AMRUT' Mission.

## **ISRO to Launch Navigation Satellite**

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched its next-generation navigation satellite, NVS-1, from Sriharikota on 29 May 2023.
- ★ The spacecraft is part of the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) series.
- ★ NVS-1 weighs approximately 2,232 kg and will be launched by a GSLV F12 rocket from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

- ★ NVS-1 is the first of the second-generation satellites envisaged for the NavIC series.
- ★ The NVS series of satellites aims to maintain and enhance the NavIC system with advanced features.
- ★ NavIC provides two services: Standard Positioning Service for civilian users and Restricted Service for strategic users.
- ★ The satellite will carry an indigenously developed rubidium atomic clock for accurate GPS location timing.

## XPoSat

- ★ The X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) mission is a collaborative effort between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru.
- ★ XPoSat aims to develop and launch the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) later this year.
- ★ XPoSat aims to study the polarisation of X-rays emitted by celestial sources.
- ★ The study of X-ray polarisation can provide valuable insight into the nature and behaviour of astrophysical sources such as neutron stars, black holes and active galactic nuclei.
- ★ XPoSat is India's first and world's second polarimetry mission.
- ★ NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE), the only other major mission of its kind, is slated to launch in 2021.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Labour Day

- ★ Labor Day is celebrated every year on 01 May.
- ★ The day is recognized as a global holiday that commemorates the hard work and achievements of the labour movement.
- ★ It is known as International Workers' Day. It is observed as a public holiday in more than 80 countries around the world.
- ★ The purpose of Labor Day is to acknowledge the contribution of working individuals to society and to recognize the importance of work. It commemorates the steps taken by the labour movement to fight for workers' rights and improve working conditions.

### World Press Freedom Day

- ★ World Press Freedom Day is observed every year on 03 May.
- ★ The day is celebrated to increase understanding about the importance of a free press.
- ★ The theme for the year is 'Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of Expression as a Driver for All Other Human Rights', which highlights the important role of freedom of expression in the protection and promotion of other human rights.



- ★ World Press Freedom Day is a reminder of the important role of free and independent media in promoting democracy, human rights and sustainable development.
- ★ World Press Freedom Day was proposed by UNESCO's General Conference in 1991 to celebrate and promote press freedom.

## Coal Miners Day

- ★ Coal Miners Day is celebrated every year on 04 May.
- ★ It is to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and remarkable contribution of coal miners in the extraction of coal.
- ★ Many awareness programs are organised on this day to promote the health and safety requirements of the workers.
- ★ These initiatives attempt to educate workers about the various laws and regulations of the Government of India to enhance their working conditions and wages.
- ★ It aims to empower workers with knowledge about their rights so that they can work in a safe and healthy work environment.
- ★ Coal Miners Day was established in India to recognize and honour the contribution and sacrifice made by coal miners.
- ★ May 4 is an important day as the first underground coal mine in India was inaugurated in 1907 at Raniganj, West Bengal.

## World Laughter Day

- ★ Every year World Laughter Day is celebrated on the first Sunday of May and this year world laughter day falls on 07 May.
- ★ Every year on the first Sunday of May, world laughter day was observed to promote awareness about laughter and its health benefits.
- ★ World Laughter Day is celebrated in 1998 when Dr Madan Kataria announced the first celebration of this day on May 10.
- ★ Dr Madan Kataria, established World Laughter Day in 1998.
- ★ He is the founder of the Laughter Yoga Movement.
- ★ The main aim of this world laughter day is to make us aware of the countless benefits of laughter in leading a healthy and fulfilling life.

## World Athletics Day

- ★ World Athletics Day is celebrated every year on 07 May.
- ★ This Day is observed to raise awareness about the Athletics.
- ★ The theme for World Athletics Day 2023 is 'Athletics for All – A New Beginning'.
- ★ This day was launched to honor the sportsperson who is having the responsibility to pride the nation.

- ★ This day was first observed in 1996 and it was launched by International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) President Primo Nebiolo.
- ★ The World Athletics Federation and International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) organized sports events in all schools and colleges every year.

### World Thalassaemia Day

- ★ World Thalassaemia day is celebrated every year on 08 May.
- ★ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the struggles of patients suffering from genetic disorders and raise awareness about Thalassaemia.
- ★ The International Thalassaemia Day 2023 theme is 'Be Aware. Share. Care: Strengthening Education to Bridge the Thalassaemia Care Gap'.
- ★ In 1994, Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF) established 08 May as Thalassaemia Day.
- ★ This day was observed in the memory of George Englezos who was the son of Thalassaemia International Federation's (TIF) President and Founder.

### World Athletics Day

- ★ World Athletics Day is observed every year on 07 May.
- ★ The day was established by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF).
- ★ On this day, IAAF organizes several competitions and tournaments to engage people in sports and exercise.
- ★ The theme for World Athletics Day 2023 is 'Athletics for All – A New Beginning'.
- ★ It is to encourage people to take up sports and participate in various sports and athletic activities.
- ★ This day was celebrated for the first time in the year 1996.

### National Technology Day

- ★ National Technology Day is celebrated every year on 11 May.
- ★ On this day, various government organizations, institutes, schools and colleges organize events to honor the scientists of India and their achievements.
- ★ India is one of the fastest growing developing countries in the world and much of the credit goes to technological advancements.
- ★ India has made significant progress in science and research in the last three decades.
- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is 'School to Startups-Igniting Young Minds to innovate.'
- ★ Under the leadership of then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India conducted a series of five nuclear bomb tests at Pokhran in May 1998.
- ★ After the success of Pokhran-II, the government declared May 11 as National Technology Day in 1998.

## International Day of Plant Health

- ★ International Day of Plant Health is observed every year on 12 May.
- ★ The day was announced by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019 to raise awareness about the importance of protecting plant health for the well-being of people, the environment and the economy.
- ★ Plant health is important for ensuring food security, protecting biodiversity, and preventing the spread of pests and diseases that harm plants, animals, and humans.
- ★ The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is leading global efforts to promote plant health and prevent the spread of pests and diseases.
- ★ The theme for International Day of Plant Health 2023 is 'Plant Health for All: Protecting Plants, Protecting Life'.

## International Nurses Day

- ★ International Nurses Day is celebrated every year on 12 May.
- ★ The day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing and a renowned English social reformer and statistician.
- ★ Florence Nightingale is known as the 'Lady with the Lamp'.
- ★ The theme of International Nurses Day 2023 is 'Our Nurses, Our Future'.
- ★ International Nurses Week is celebrated from May 6 to May 12 in many hospitals around the world.
- ★ Various activities including yoga sessions and seminars are organised during this week to recognize and support nurses.

## World Migratory Bird Day

- ★ World Migratory Bird Day 2023 is observed every year on 13 May.
- ★ It is celebrated with an aim to focus on the conservation of migratory birds.
- ★ Migratory birds are those birds that migrate to other parts of the world other than their native places to escape the winter season.
- ★ Migratory birds travel thousands of miles each year, often facing numerous challenges such as habitat loss, climate change, and illegal hunting along their journey.
- ★ World Migratory Bird Day aims to promote international cooperation to conserve migratory birds and their habitats through awareness-raising, education, and conservation actions.
- ★ Theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2023 is 'Water and its importance for migratory birds'.
- ★ The day was first initiated in 2006 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

## International Day of Families

- ★ International Day of Families is observed every year on 15 May.

- ★ It is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of families and their role in society.
- ★ It is a global observance observed by countries around the world, including the United States.
- ★ The theme for International Day of Families 2023 is 'Demographic Trends and Families'.
- ★ This day was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.
- ★ It aims to promote awareness of the importance of families as the basic unit of society and to address issues related to the global family.

### World Hypertension Day

- ★ World Hypertension Day is observed every year on 17 May.
- ★ It is to raise awareness about hypertension (high blood pressure) and promote preventive measures, early detection, and management of this global health issue.
- ★ World Hypertension Day was first established in 2005 by the World Hypertension League (WHL).
- ★ Theme of 2023 is 'Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer'.
- ★ The day serves as a platform to educate individuals, communities, health professionals and policy makers about healthy blood pressure levels and the risks associated with high blood pressure.
- ★ The day plays a crucial role in raising awareness about hypertension, its causes, risk factors, and the importance of regular blood pressure monitoring.

### World Telecommunication and Information Society Day

- ★ World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is observed every year on 17 May.
- ★ It is organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- ★ The day emphasises the influence of the Internet and communication technologies.
- ★ It aims to address connectivity challenges in various regions.
- ★ The theme for 2023 is 'Enabling the least developed nations through information and communication technologies'.
- ★ The day highlights the transformative power of communication tools such as the Internet and mobile networks.

### World AIDS Vaccine Day

- ★ World AIDS Vaccine Day is observed every year on 18 May.
- ★ It emphasises the importance of making a vaccine for HIV, an incurable disease.
- ★ World AIDS Vaccine Day is also known as HIV Vaccine Awareness Day.
- ★ It pays tribute to the scientists and researchers working on the HIV/AIDS vaccine and raises awareness.
- ★ The first event of World AIDS Vaccine Day was held in 1998.

## International Museum Day

- ★ International Museum Day (IMD) is an annual international event organised by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) on 18 May.
- ★ Each year, IMD focuses on a different theme that reflects a relevant issue or theme affecting museums globally.
- ★ The theme for this year 2023 is Museums, Sustainability and Wellbeing.
- ★ IMD aims to raise public awareness of the important role museums play in the development of society.
- ★ The day encourages dialogue and exchange of ideas among museum professionals.
- ★ The first International Museum Day was organised by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1977.

## World Metrology Day

- ★ World Metrology Day is celebrated every year on 20 May.
- ★ It is celebrated to commemorate the signing of the Meter Convention on 20 May 1875.
- ★ The theme for World Metrology Day 2023 is 'Measurements supporting the global food system'.
- ★ The Meter Convention established a framework for international cooperation in the science of measurement and its applications in industry, commerce and society.
- ★ The purpose of the Meter Convention is to ensure global uniformity in measurement.
- ★ The World Metrology Day project is a joint effort of BIPM (International Bureau of Weights and Measures) and OIML (International Organization of Legal Metrology).

## World Bee Day

- ★ World Bee Day is observed every year on 20 May.
- ★ It is to raise awareness and recognition of the important role that bees and other pollinators play in our ecosystem.
- ★ Established by the United Nations, World Bee Day aims to emphasise the importance of bees in maintaining ecosystems and food production.
- ★ The celebration encourages efforts to protect bees and their habitats and highlights the importance of pollinators in conserving biodiversity and ensuring global food security.
- ★ The theme for World Bee Day 2023 is 'Engaging in Pollinator-Friendly Agricultural Production'.
- ★ The United Nations established World Bee Day in 2017 to raise awareness of the important role played by bees and other pollinators in the ecosystem.

## International Day for Biological Diversity

- ★ The International Day for Biological Diversity is observed every year on 22 May.
- ★ It aims to increase understanding of Earth's diverse ecosystems and encourage conservation.

- ★ The theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity 2023 is 'Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity'.
- ★ The United Nations designated 22 May as the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) to promote understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.
- ★ It provides essential services such as pollination, nutrient recycling, water purification and climate regulation.

### International Day to End Obstetric Fistula

- ★ International Day to End Obstetric Fistula is observed every year on 23 May.
- ★ Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal and it develops when a woman experiences obstructed labour for a long time without medical intervention.
- ★ Obstetric fistula causes lifelong physical and social problems for women.
- ★ International Day to End Obstetric Fistula was established on 23 May 2013.
- ★ It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly and the day aims to raise awareness about obstetric fistula.

### Indian Commonwealth Day

- ★ Commonwealth Day of India is celebrated every year on 24 May.
- ★ The theme for Commonwealth Day 2023 is 'Forging a Sustainable and Peaceful Common Future'.
- ★ In 2023, Commonwealth Day aims to promote a sense of shared humanity and solidarity.
- ★ The occasion aims to bring together the 2.5 billion citizens of the Commonwealth to recognize their shared values and principles.
- ★ Commonwealth Day provides an opportunity to recognize and acknowledge the achievements of the 54 Commonwealth countries.
- ★ Focus areas include addressing climate change and promoting gender equality.
- ★ The first commemoration of Commonwealth Day took place on May 24, 1902, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's birthday.

### World Turtle Day

- ★ World Turtle Day is celebrated every year on May 23, founded by American Turtle Rescue (ATR).
- ★ American Turtle Rescue (ATR) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and welfare of turtles.
- ★ The theme for this year's World Turtle Day is 'I Love Turtles', emphasising the critical need to protect these species and their future in the face of shrinking habitats.
- ★ The day aims to protect turtles, raise awareness of their disappearing habitats and encourage human action to support their survival.
- ★ American Turtle Rescue provides Turtle Day lesson plans and craft projects for classroom teaching.
- ★ World Turtle Day was established by ATR on 23 May 2000 and has its 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023.

## World Thyroid Awareness Day

- ★ World Thyroid Awareness Day is observed every year on 25 May.
- ★ The day aims to spread awareness about thyroid-related disorders, including their symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options.
- ★ It is dedicated to thyroid sufferers and those involved in the study and treatment of thyroid diseases.
- ★ World Thyroid Awareness Day aims to educate people about the importance of maintaining a healthy thyroid gland.
- ★ The day promotes collaboration among health professionals, organisations and individuals in the field of thyroid diseases.
- ★ The day was first proposed in 2007 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Thyroid Federation International and the meeting decided to celebrate World Thyroid Day on 25 May.

## International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

- ★ The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed annually on 29 May.
- ★ It is a day dedicated to honouring the contribution and sacrifice of United Nations (UN) peacekeepers.
- ★ The day recognizes the efforts of peacekeepers in maintaining peace and security around the world.
- ★ It also serves as a tribute to those who have lost their lives while serving as peacekeepers.
- ★ The theme for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers 2023 is 'Peace begins with me'.
- ★ The theme acknowledges the service and sacrifice of peacekeepers, both past and present.
- ★ It was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002.

## Goa Statehood Day

- ★ Goa Statehood Day is celebrated every year on 30 May.
- ★ On 30 May 1987, Goa was declared a separate state from Daman and Diu.
- ★ The official language of Goa is Konkani.
- ★ Goa is the smallest state of India in terms of area.

## OBITUTARY NEWS

### Renowned Scientist Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan

- ★ Renowned Scientist and Director of the Central Building Research Institute Dr N Gopalakrishnan passed away. He was at the age of 68.
- ★ He worked for 25 years from 1982 as Senior Scientist in CSIR, Government of India.

- ★ Dr N Gopalakrishnan was born in Kochi city of Ernakulam district, Kerala.
- ★ He received 9 National and International level awards from Science and Technology Scientific Societies.

### **Ranjit Guha Passed Away**

- ★ An eminent historian, Ranjit Guha passed away at the age of 100 in Austria.
- ★ Guha completed his post-graduation in history from the University of Calcutta after studying at a school in Kolkata.
- ★ He was associated with several renowned institutions during his career, including the Australian National University, from where he retired in 1988.
- ★ One of his famous contributions in the field of history is his book titled 'Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India'.

### **Olympic and World Title Winning Star Athlete 'Tori Bowie'**

- ★ Star athlete Tori Bowie's Management Company announced that the US sprinter and long jumper, who won three Olympic medals and two world titles, passed away. He was at the age of 32.
- ★ Bowie was raised by her grandmother in the rural environment of Mississippi (USA). She switched to long jump in 2014 and became the fastest woman in the world that year.
- ★ Bowie also took silver in the 100m, bronze in the 4 × 100m relay and gold in the 200m at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- ★ Bowie became world champion in 2017 by winning the world 100m title in London.
- ★ She finished fourth at the 2019 World Long Jump Championships in Doha, her last major competition.

### **Miss Universe Australia Finalist Sienna Weir**

- ★ Australian fashion model and 2022 Miss Universe finalist Sienna Weir passed away following a horse-riding accident.
- ★ Sienna Weir was one of 27 finalists in the 2022 Miss Universe Australia pageant.
- ★ The accident happened on 2 April at the Windsor Polo Grounds in Australia.

### **Tamil Actor – Director Manobala**

- ★ Veteran Tamil Actor, Comedian, Director, and Producer Manobala passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN). He was at the age of 69.
- ★ His official name was Balachander and Manobala was his stage name.
- ★ In his career spanning over 35 years, he acted in over 900 films.
- ★ He made his debut as a Director with Aagaya Gangai in 1982.
- ★ Some of his popular films include Pillai Nila, Oorkaavalan, En Purushanthaan Enakku Mattumthaan, Karuppu Vellai, Mallu Vetti Minor and Paarambariyam.



- ★ His last films were Ghosty and Kondraal Paavam.

### **Mexican Five-Time World Cup Veteran Antonio Carbajal**

- ★ Legendary Mexican goalkeeper Antonio Félix 'Tota' Carbajal Rodriguez, the first footballer to play in 5 Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) World Cups, passed away in Leon, Mexico. He was at the age of 93.
- ★ He was also called 'El Cinco Copas', in reference to his record of 5 World Cups played.
- ★ He played 47 games for the Mexican national team and appeared in World Cups in Brazil in 1950, Switzerland in 1954, Sweden in 1958, Chile in 1962 and England.

### **Eminent Singer Kalyani Kazi**

- ★ Eminent singer and the youngest daughter-in-law of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Kalyani Kazi passed away at the age of 87 in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- ★ She was a member of the advisory council of Poschimbongo Kazi Nazrul Islam Akademi.
- ★ The West Bengal government had conferred on her the Sangeet Mahasamman award.

### **Veteran Actor Sarath Babu**

- ★ Veteran actor Sarath Babu has passed away in Hyderabad. He passed away at the age of 71.
- ★ He started his career in films in 1973 with Rama Rajyam in Telugu but got a big break with K Balachander for the film Nizhal Nijamagiradu in 1978 which was remade into Idi kadha kaadu in Telugu.
- ★ He started acting in almost all the south Indian languages and became one of the busiest actors.
- ★ He has received eight state Nandi Awards.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Samajwadi Pandit Ramkishan Becomes 'Century Man'**

- ★ Pandit Ramkishan, a famous socialist leader, was honoured with the title of 'Shatabdi Purush' (Man of the Century) in New Delhi for his contribution to Indian socialism.
- ★ The award was presented to him during the birth centenary celebrations of renowned socialist thinker and parliamentarian Madhu Limaye.
- ★ Ramkishan is considered the most senior and distinguished figure in Indian socialism and has been recognized as the 'Socialist Centenary Man'.
- ★ Ramkishan took an active part in socialist movements led by other prominent leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Lohia and was jailed several times, including during the Emergency period.

## Pasang Dawa Sherpa Became the Second Person to Conquer Everest

- ★ 46-year-old Pasang Dawa Sherpa, has become the second person to climb Mount Everest for the 26<sup>th</sup> time.
- ★ The Himalayan database confirms that Pasang Dawa Sherpa has previously climbed Everest 25 times, including two in 2022.
- ★ He has been climbing Everest almost every year since his first successful climb in 1998.
- ★ Kami Rita, a climber who is a US Leading the team, and is the first person to conquer Mount Everest for the 26<sup>th</sup> time.

## Hari Buddha Magar Conquered Mount Everest

- ★ Hari Budha Magar, a double-amputee ex-British Gurkha soldier from Nepal, scaled Mount Everest with prosthetic legs.
- ★ Magar acknowledged the collective effort that made his achievement possible, including support from the Government of Nepal and people around the world.
- ★ Magar participated in Paralympic sporting activities to raise awareness of disability.
- ★ In the past decade, he accomplished numerous mountaineering feats, including the ascents of Ben Nevis (1,345 m), Mont Blanc (4,808.72 m), Kilimanjaro (5,895 m), Mera Peak (6,476 m), and Mount Toubkal (4,167 m).

## INSV Tarini Crew Back Home After 188 Days

- ★ The crew of INSV Tarini, who returned after an inter-continental voyage, were accorded a grand welcome at the flag-in ceremony in Goa.
- ★ The crew returned home after an arduous voyage of 17,000 nautical miles.
- ★ Two women officers, Lt Cdr Dilna K and Lt Cdr Roopa A, were involved in the entire operation.
- ★ Lt Cdr Dilna is a Logistics Officer in the Navy.
- ★ Both Dilna and Roopa are currently posted at INS Mandovi in Goa.
- ★ The historic voyage from Goa to Rio de Janeiro to Cape Town was completed by INSV Tarini in 188 days.
- ★ It reflects an exemplary display of gallantry, courage and tenacity by the crew and highlights the role of the Indian Navy as a pioneer in the country in ocean sailing.

## Longest Song in the World

- ★ Dr. Jagadish Pillai of Varanasi created a Guinness World Record by singing Shri Ramcharitmanas for 138 hours, 41 minutes and two seconds.
- ★ This achievement made Shri Ramcharitmanas the longest song in the world.
- ★ Dr. Jagadish Pillai has been credited with five years of broadcast of Sri Ramcharitmanas recitals on more than 100 official audio channels across the globe.
- ★ His rendition was streamed on official music platforms such as Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon Music and others.

- ★ The entire process of recording, editing and mixing took four years, 63 days and 295 hours to complete.
- ★ It is a 16<sup>th</sup> -century epic poem by the Indian poet Tulsidas in the Awadhi language.

