

# ***Monthly Current Affairs***

**JANUARY – 2023**



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Banking**

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## **JANUARY – 2023**

### **NATIONAL NEWS**

#### **108<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 108<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress (ISC) on 03 January 2023 through video conferencing.
- ★ The 108 Indian national Science Congress is being organised by the Indian Science Congress Association from 03 January to 07 January 2023 at the Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University.
- ★ Theme of the 108<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress 2023: Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment.
- ★ The Congress will hold discussions on issues of sustainable development, women empowerment and the role of science and technology in achieving this.

#### **Election Commission Proposes Remote Voting**

- ★ The Election Commission of India has moved a proposal to all political parties to enable domestic migrants to vote for their home constituencies from their place of stay through a new remote EVM (RVM).
- ★ RVM has been developed with the help of Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL).
- ★ It is based on the currently used EVM system.
- ★ According to the Election Commission, the Multi Constituency Remote EVM for Domestic Overseas Voters can handle 72 constituencies from a single remote polling booth.
- ★ It will help in boosting voter turnout and strengthen the democratic process of India.

#### **India's First Underwater Metro**

- ★ According to the Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation, India's first underwater metro service, the East-West Metro Corridor project is to be completed by December 2023.
- ★ The metro line, which will connect Salt Lake to Howrah through Kolkata with a stretch below the Hooghly River, is currently operational between Sector V and Sealdah stations.
- ★ Of the total 16.55 km length of the project, 9.30 km length between Sector V and Sealdah is operational.
- ★ The remaining 7.25 km length is likely to be operational by December 2023.
- ★ The Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation is a Government of India company which is implementing the East-West Metro Corridor project.

## **Odisha Cabinet Approves ₹367 Crores**

- ★ The Odisha Cabinet headed by Chief Minister (CM) Shri Naveen Patnaik approved the provision of ₹367.19 crores for 5 years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 for implementation of the State Sector Scheme 'empowerment of women in agriculture-promotion of entrepreneurship for Women Self Help Group (WSHG).
- ★ The objective is to double the mushroom production across the State through area expansion involving women beneficiaries/WSHGs and to make the state self-sufficient in the production of button mushrooms and loose flowers.
- ★ The scheme will ensure sustainable income generation of women beneficiaries/WSHGs and the state shall emerge as the net exporter of mushrooms and high-value flowers over the mission period.

## **TN Government Sets up Nilgiri Tahr Conservation Project**

- ★ The Tamil Nadu (TN) government launched India's first Nilgiri Tahr (locally known as Varaiaadu) project to conserve the State animal of Tamil Nadu will be taken up for ₹14 crores.
- ★ The project would be implemented for 5 years from 2022-2027.
- ★ The Finance Minister announced that for the conservation of Tamil Nadu's State animal, expansion of its habitat and to spread awareness among the public, the government will implement the project the Nilgiri Tahr with an initial allocation of ₹10 crores.
- ★ The project will have 9 components, including bi-annual synchronized surveys across the division, diagnosis and treatment for affected individuals and the Shola grassland restoration pilot in Upper Bhavani.

## **CM's Sukhashray Sahayata Kosh**

- ★ Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched CM's Sukhashray Sahayata Kosh with an outlay of ₹101 crore.
- ★ The scheme will aim to provide the facility of higher education to needy children and destitute women.
- ★ The state government will bear the expenditure on skill development education, higher education and vocational training of such children.
- ★ They will also be given financial assistance as per their requirement so that they can lead a respectable life.
- ★ All the Ministers and Congress MLA will contribute their first salary to the fund.
- ★ There will be no requirement for any income certificate for availing these facilities.

## **India's First City with 100% Sewerage Facilities by May 2023**

- ★ According to the Minister of Municipal Administration and Urban Development, IT and Industries of Telangana, K.T. Rama Rao announced that Hyderabad will become the first city in India to have hundred per cent sewerage facilities by May 2023.
- ★ 31 new Sewage treatment plants (STP) are being built in the city with an investment of ₹3,866 crores.

- ★ Hyderabad will be the first city in India to have 100 per cent sewerage facilities by April-May.

### **Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates Zuari Bridge**

- ★ Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the first phase of the new Zuari bridge in Goa.
- ★ This bridge is the second largest cable-stayed bridge in India. The bridge is built over the famous Zuari river in the state and is eight lanes wide.
- ★ The new bridge in Goa is expected to improve connectivity between North Goa and South Goa.
- ★ This 640-meter-long bridge is being built in three phases.

### **Hydrogen Blended PNG Project**

- ★ India's largest power company NTPC Ltd has commissioned India's first green hydrogen blending project at Kawas, Gujarat.
- ★ The piped natural gas (PNG) blended with green hydrogen gas is being supplied through the Gujarat Gas limited piped natural gas (PNG) network in the NTPC Kawas township, Surat.
- ★ Green Hydrogen refers to the breaking down of the water molecule into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable sources of energy.
- ★ The Central government owned NTPC provides the green hydrogen produced at its 1 megawatt (MW) floating solar project of NTPC Kawas in the Surat district of Gujarat for blending purposes.
- ★ This is the first project of its kind in the country. This is seen as a first step toward the decarbonization of the cooking sector and self-sufficiency for the energy requirements of the nation.

### **International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023**

- ★ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM), a proposal sponsored by the Government of India (GoI) to promote these 'Nutri-cereal'.
- ★ The declaration will be helpful to the Government of India in articulating its goal of making IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' as well as presenting India as the 'Global Hub for Millets', as India produces one-fifth of the world's millets.
- ★ Millets were among the first crops to be domesticated in India with several evidence of their consumption during the Indus valley civilization.
- ★ India is the largest producer of millet in the world.
- ★ Currently, India is the fifth largest exporter of millets in the world, according to 2020 data.

### **Samvidhan Udyan in Jaipur**

- ★ The President of India, Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Samvidhan Udyan, Mayur Stambh, National Flag Post, statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Maharana Pratap at Raj Bhavan, Jaipur on 03 January 2023.
- ★ She virtually inaugurated the Transmission System for Solar Power Sectors in Rajasthan and laid the foundation stone of the 1000 MW Bikaner Solar Power Project of SJVN Limited.

- ★ The President also announced that women are continuously moving forward from Panchayat to Parliament House on their own.

## **50 Electric Buses Launched in Delhi**

- ★ 50 electric buses were launched in Delhi with support from the government under the FAME India Phase II scheme of the Ministry of Heavy Industry.
- ★ In 2019, the government approved ₹10,000 crore for a period of three years.
- ★ Union Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey said that the government has placed an order for 3,538 electric buses. Of these, a total of 1,716 buses have been deployed.
- ★ To improve the infrastructure required for the large-scale use of electric vehicles, the Government formulated a Scheme namely FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) in 2015.
- ★ The main objective of this scheme is to reduce pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## **NGEL and HPCL Signed an Agreement**

- ★ NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) has signed an agreement with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) for the development of renewable energy-based power projects for HPCL Refineries and other Business Units.
- ★ The agreement was signed in New Delhi by Mr Neeraj Sharma, Head of Finance, NGEL and Shri Shuvendu Gupta, Executive Director - BioFuels & Renewables, HPCL.
- ★ Under the agreement NGEL which is a subsidiary of NTPC will supply 400 MW renewable power to the HPCL
- ★ This MoU marks the first step for NGEL and HPCL to collaborate and cooperate in the field of development of Renewable Energy projects which shall help HPCL in meeting its Clean Energy Commitments.

## **Union Cabinet Approves Naming of Mopa Airport**

- ★ The Union cabinet in a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved for naming the Greenfield International Airport at Goa's Mopa as Manohar International Airport, after former Defence Minister and Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar.
- ★ Manohar Parrikar was the Chief Minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005, 2012 to 2014 and from 14 March 2017 until his death in March 2019.
- ★ Manohar Parrikar was also the union Defence Minister from October 2014-March 2017.
- ★ He was awarded Padma Bhushan posthumously in January 2020.

## **Central Sector Broadcasting Infrastructure & Network Development Scheme**

- ★ The Central Government has approved Central Sector Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) Scheme with an outlay of over two 2,539 crore rupees up to 2025-2026 on 04 January 2023.

- ★ The scheme will financially assist Prasar Bharati in expansion and upgradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civic works.
- ★ The scheme will enable the public broadcaster to upgrade facilities with better infrastructure.
- ★ This will enhance the reach of the scheme including Left Wing Extremism, Border and Strategic Sectors and provide high quality content to the viewers.

### **All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water**

- ★ First All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water to be held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 05 January and 06 January 2023.
- ★ The Government is to discuss on the preparation of the Action Plan and Vision Document of India@2047.
- ★ Water Vision@2047 is part of PM's India@2047 plan.
- ★ Thematic sessions will be organised at the conference to focus on water security, water use efficiency, water governance, water infrastructure and water quality.
- ★ The participants will have to prepare a blueprint of Water Vision @ 2047 and prepare a road map to overcome the water problems of the country.

### **State Food Security Scheme**

- ★ The Naveen Patnaik government in Odisha will provide free 5 Kg rice per month to the beneficiaries under the State Food Security Scheme for one year.
- ★ According to the Chief Minister's Office the total expenditure for the scheme will be ₹185 crore which will be given by the state government.
- ★ Under the National Food Security Act, the Antodaya Anna Yojana beneficiaries get 35 kg of food grains (rice or wheat or coarse cereals) per month and the Priority Household gets 5kg per person per month.

### **Meeting to Eliminate Kala-Azar**

- ★ Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a high-level meeting with four states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal governments to review the elimination of Kala Azar from the country by the year 2023.
- ★ India is committed to eliminate Kala-azar from the country by 2023.
- ★ All the activities related to this program are being implemented through the National Vector Borne Disease Control Program.
- ★ India signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bangladesh and Nepal to eliminate Kala-azar from the South-East Asia region.

### **Government Approved Loan to Andhra Pradesh**

- ★ Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal has approved ₹28.11 crore for giving a special interest-free loan of ₹10,000 to each member of Tobacco Board's Grower Welfare Schemes.

- ★ This will directly benefit over 28,000 tobacco farmers affected by Cyclone Mandus in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ FCV (Flu Cured Virginia) tobacco is a major commercial crop grown in 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh with an annual production of 121 million kg (2021-22) in an area of 66,000 hectares.
- ★ The interest-free loan to eligible FCV tobacco farmers will be administered by the Tobacco Board, a statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

### Separate Registration for Vintage Vehicles

- ★ Odisha became the first Indian state to have a separate registration process for vintage vehicles (both two and four-wheelers) that are more than 50 years old.
- ★ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has made provision under CMV Rule, 1989 for the registration process of Vintage Motor Vehicles intending to preserve and promote the heritage of vintage.
- ★ The new rules shall provide salient features such as the retention of old already registered vehicles with a new Vintage registration mark 'VA' series (Unique Registration Mark).
- ★ As per the rule, two-wheelers and four-wheelers (personal use) that are more than 50 years old from the date of their first registration (including imported vehicles) shall be defined as Vintage Motor Vehicles.
- ★ A vintage motor vehicle is allowed to run on Indian roads only for display.

### World's First Museum of Palm Leaf Manuscripts

- ★ Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala opened the world's first museum of palm leaf manuscripts, enriching the state culturally and educationally.
- ★ The museum has 187 manuscripts, based on primary sources.
- ★ These documents are written on clean and clear palm leaves, which are furnished in the record rooms.
- ★ In that period these palm leaves were treated before writing the description.
- ★ The museum houses a collection of popular tales of Travancore, the first kingdom in Asia to defeat European powers on Indian soil.
- ★ The museum gives a glimpse of the administrative, socio-cultural and economic aspects of the Kingdom of Travancore.

### Themes of The Y20 Summit, Logo and Website

- ★ Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur launches the themes of the Youth 20 summit, logo and website in New Delhi on 06 January 2022 in the event of Y20 Summit India.
- ★ India is hosting the Y20 summit for the first time.
- ★ In the Youth 20 Engagement Group, India's main focus is to bring together young leaders from around the world to discuss ideas for a better tomorrow and create an agenda for action.
- ★ Activities to be undertaken by Y20 during India's presidency will focus on global youth leadership and partnerships.



- ★ Youth 20 (Y20) is the official youth engagement group of the G20.
- ★ It provides a platform for youth to express their vision and views on G20 priorities.

### India's '2023 Science Vision'

- ★ On the occasion of the Indian Science Congress Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated '2023 Science Vision'.
- ★ The development of science, technology and innovation is the only way for sustainable development.
- ★ India has been supporter of promoting scientific temper in daily life. Science, technology and innovation will define India@100 in 2047.
- ★ The 108<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress is being held at Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj (RTM) Nagpur University in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the Indian Science Congress on 03 January 2023.

### National Genome Editing and Training Centre (NGETC)

- ★ Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated National Genome Editing and Training Centre (NGETC) at National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) Mohali in Punjab.
- ★ He also inaugurated the 4-day International Conference on Food and Nutrition Security 2023.
- ★ It is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and is a suitable platform for adoption of various genome editing methods including genome modification and to meet regional needs.
- ★ The center will also help in improving crops in present climate scenarios and making them more tolerant to changing environmental conditions.
- ★ NGETC will cater to the regional needs for adoption of various genome editing methods.
- ★ It will also empower young researchers by providing them training and guidance regarding its application in crops.

### International Kite Festival

- ★ The International Kite Festival 2023 began on 08 January 2023 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ★ The festival, which is being organised after a gap of two years, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.
- ★ The festival is being organised by Gujarat Tourism on the G20 theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'.
- ★ Apart from Ahmedabad, the International Kite Festival will also be organised in Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Dwarka, Somnath, Dhordo and Kevadia.
- ★ This year kite lovers from different countries will attempt to create a Guinness World Record for the maximum number of kite flyers at the same time.

## Voice of Global South Summit

- ★ India will host a special virtual Summit on 12 and 13 January 2023 called 'Voice of Global South Summit'.
- ★ The theme of the Summit is 'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose'.
- ★ The summit is to bring together the countries of the South and share their perspectives and priorities on various issues.
- ★ The summit is India's attempt to provide a common platform to discuss concerns affecting developing countries.
- ★ India will work to ensure that the valuable inputs generated by participating countries in the Voice of the Global South deliberations receive due cognizance globally.

## Global Centers of Research and Innovation

- ★ Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh announced that all 37 CSIR Labs in India will be turned into Global Centers of Research and Innovation in their fields of specialisation.
- ★ He also released the logo of CSIR's One Week One Lab campaign.
- ★ Each of the 37 CSIR laboratories is unique in itself and specialises in diverse areas such as genomes to geology, food to fuels, minerals to materials etc.
- ★ Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates workshop and exhibition on "Innovation and Sustainable Construction Materials and Technologies" organised by CSIR-Central Building Research Institute (CSIR-CBRI), Roorkee with the aim of moving towards Net Zero Emission and Zero Waste.

## Indian Army Inks Pact with Assam Government

- ★ The Indian Army signed an agreement with the Government of Assam to offer the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) at 8 medical colleges and hospitals in Assam.
- ★ The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare has approved the empanelment of government medical colleges in Assam with the ECHS.
- ★ It will facilitate the cashless and capless treatment of almost 12 lakh beneficiaries.
- ★ The Assam Cancer Care Foundation (ACCF), which is an Assam government and TATA Trust initiative, has also been impanelled with ECHS.

## Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

- ★ The 17<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention is being organised in Indore from 08 January to 10 January 2023 in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ The theme of the PBD Convention is "Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal".
- ★ Over 3,500 expatriate members from around 70 different countries have registered for the PBD Convention.
- ★ The Yuva Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be inaugurated on 08 January 2023 in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.



- ★ Ms. Zaneta Mascarenhas, Member of Parliament of Australia will be the guest of honour at the Yuva Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
- ★ A commemorative postage stamp 'Go Safe, Go Trained' will be released to underline the importance of safe, legal, orderly and efficient migration.

### **First Fully Digital Banking State**

- ★ Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared Kerala as the first state in the country to go fully digital in its banking service.
- ★ Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project is a joint venture between the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Ltd (KSITIL), Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and the state, in which the two companies hold 49% each and the state the remaining 2%.
- ★ A consortium led by Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) is executing the project and will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the 35,000-km-long network for the next seven years.
- ★ Kerala is the only State in India that has declared 'the right to Internet' as a basic right of its citizens.

### **Joshimath Declared 'Landslide-Subsidence Zone'**

- ★ Joshimath, the gateway to Hemkund Sahib and Badrinath, has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone.
- ★ Joshimath is a hill town located on the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway (NH-7) in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand.
- ★ The city is a tourist town as it serves as a rest stop for people visiting Badrinath, Auli, Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib.
- ★ Joshimath in Uttarakhand is currently facing landslides. Big cracks are being seen between people's houses and roads.
- ★ Here the natural factors have been imbalanced due to vibration caused by explosions, heavy traffic etc. Lack of proper drainage facilities is also a reason for landslides.

### **'Uttar Pradesh Global City' Campaign**

- ★ A 100-day 'Uttar Pradesh Global City' campaign has been launched by the 'Uttar Pradesh Government' ahead of the Global Investors Summit and G-20 Summit.
- ★ The campaign has been launched by the state's Urban Development and Energy Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma.
- ★ The campaign aims to bring urban areas in the state up to global standards, which includes improving urban amenities, air quality, cleanliness and beautification as well as proper waste disposal.
- ★ Uttar Pradesh government will also launch 'Brand UP' ahead of G20 summit.
- ★ The government will start a door-to-door garbage collection campaign from 01 February to 31 March 2023.

- ★ 'Swachh Virasat Abhiyan' will be launched by the state on 14 January 2023, which will focus on cleanliness of tourism, historical and religious places.

### **Global Investors Summit in Indore**

- ★ The two-day Global Investors Summit will begin on 11 January 2023 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurate the summit.
- ★ The theme of the Global Investors Summit is 'Madhya Pradesh – a future-ready state'.
- ★ Environmental protection has been taken care of in this summit which will be completely based on Carbon Neutral and Zero Waste.
- ★ More than 500 prominent industrialists in the country will also participate in this summit.

### **National Youth Festival**

- ★ The 26<sup>th</sup> Edition of the National Youth Festival will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.
- ★ The five days event to be held for five days till 16 January 2023 in Dharwad-Hubballi twin cities in Karnataka.
- ★ It will bring 7500 youngsters from different parts of the country to spend time and exchange thoughts and give expression to their talents.
- ★ The event will be friendly towards the environment and are planned for the five days.

### **Traditional 'Cherchera' Festival in Raipur**

- ★ Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel organised the traditional festival 'Chherchera' at Dudhadhari Math in capital Raipur.
- ★ It is meant to celebrate the joy of taking the harvest home after farming.
- ★ On this occasion people from every class donate food grains.
- ★ The amount donated in Chherchera is spent on public welfare. People of every class including farmers donate food grains.
- ★ In 2023, there has been a good production of paddy in the state and 85 lakh metric tonnes of paddy has been procured, which has been paid to the farmers immediately.

### **Punjabi will be Taught in Australian Schools**

- ★ Punjabi is all set to be the newest language to be taught in public schools of Western Australia. The Australian government has decided to include Punjabi language in schools.
- ★ The number of Punjabi speakers in Australia is continuously increasing.
- ★ Punjabi language has become the fastest growing language in this country.
- ★ In comparison to the year 2016, there has been an increase of 80 percent in the number of Punjabi speakers in Australia in the year 2021.

## **Anti-Misinformation Project in India**

- ★ American multinational technology company, Google's subsidiary Jigsaw is launching a new anti-misinformation project in India.
- ★ It is to prevent the misleading information that has been blamed for inciting violence and deaths.
- ★ The experiment in India will be bigger in scope as it will deal with multiple local languages Bengali, Hindi and Marathi and cover diverse sections of a country populated by over a billion people.
- ★ The initiative will use 'prebunking' videos, designed to counter false claims before they become widely circulated on the company's YouTube platform and other social media sites.

## **First G20 Health Working Group Meeting**

- ★ The first G-20 Health Working Group (HWG) meeting under India's G-20 presidency began at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.
- ★ This meeting will be held from 18 January to 20 January 2023.
- ★ These HWG meetings will be held in various places in the country including Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, Goa, Hyderabad in Telangana and Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- ★ It will highlight PM Modi's call to showcase India's rich and diverse cultures.
- ★ The meeting will be attended by representatives of G-20 member states.

## **First Constitution Literate District in India**

- ★ Kerala's Kollam district has become the first constitution literate district in the country.
- ★ This was announced by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at a function presided over by Finance Minister KN Balagopal in Kollam.
- ★ The Citizen Constitution Literacy campaign has been launched to educate the residents of Kollam district of Kerala about the basics of the Constitution.
- ★ Its objective is to make Kollam district a constitutionally literate district.
- ★ Under this campaign, more than seven lakh families of the district are being educated on the basic principles of the Constitution.
- ★ Under the campaign, about 20 to 25 persons from each municipality and 10 to 15 persons from each gram panchayat are selected for training and are called senators.

## **B-20 Inception Meeting to be Organized in Gandhinagar**

- ★ As part of India's G-20 presidency, a Business-20 (B-20) inception meeting will be organized at Gandhinagar in Gujarat between 22 January to 24 January.
- ★ The meeting will be held to formulate policy recommendations to be submitted to G-20 ahead of the leaders' Summit.
- ★ This will be the first of 15 events that the State is set to organize as part of India's G-20 presidency.

- ★ The inaugural ceremony of the B-20 inception meeting will be attended by Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnav, State Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, India's Sherpa to G-20 Amitabh Kant, and Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran.
- ★ More than 150 policy-makers, business executives, CEOs, and senior executives representing enterprises from G-20 countries will take part in the inaugural meeting.

### **India's First Centre of Excellence of Online Gaming**

- ★ The Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajeesh Chandrasekhar announced that India's first Centre of Excellence (CoE) of online gaming will be set up in Shillong, Meghalaya by March 2023.
- ★ The CoE will be set up under Digital India Startup Hub through the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).
- ★ The STPI was set up in 1991 as an autonomous society in the field of Science and Technology under the MeitY.
- ★ Digital Skills have become necessary to thrive in the post-Covid world. Understanding the significance of digital skills in today's era, MeitY is re-launching Skill India through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0.

### **India's First National Assessment Regulator**

- ★ The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) has notified India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH.
- ★ It will work on setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards in the country.
- ★ The regulator aims to set up assessment guidelines for all boards to help remove disparities in scores of students enrolled with different state boards.
- ★ PARAKH has been launched as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 which envisaged a standard-setting body to advise school boards regarding new assessment patterns and the latest research, and promote collaborations between them.
- ★ The Centre will also manage India's participation in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

### **First Indian Union Territory to Completely Shift to e-Governance**

- ★ Jammu and Kashmir has become the first Union Territory of India to go completely digital.
- ★ Presently all government and administrative services in Jammu and Kashmir are being provided digitally only.
- ★ Jammu and Kashmir is also emerging as a model of digital government in the country with a transparent and accountable governance system.
- ★ The main objective of making government services online is to make people online.

## First Global Tourism Investors Summit

- ★ The first Global Tourism Investors Summit will be organised by the Union Ministry of Tourism from 10 April to 12 April 2023 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- ★ The aim of the conference is to bring together global businesses, think tanks and policy makers to understand and explore tourism business opportunities in India.
- ★ The event focused on promoting India as an investment destination for travel, tourism and hospitality by identifying state-specific investment potential and discussing ways to promote sustainable tourism.

## Largest Human Red Ribbon Chain

- ★ Odisha State AIDS Control Society organised an awareness program on HIV AIDS in coordination with the Department of Sports and Youth Services and Hockey India under the leadership of National AIDS Control Organization (NACO).
- ★ The event created the 'Largest Human Red Ribbon Chain' at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ★ Sustainable Development Goal 3.3 has been set to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
- ★ Awareness activities are being strengthened among the general public as well as high-risk groups in Odisha about the services offered under the leadership of the National AIDS Control Programme.

## International Science Literature Festival – Vigyanika

- ★ The Science Literature Festival 'Vigyanika' is being organized at the Indian International Science Festival (IISF), Bhopal during the period 22 - 23 January, 2023.
- ★ The 'Science Literature Festival' is being organized as a part of the 8<sup>th</sup> India International Science Festival (IISF).
- ★ The 8<sup>th</sup> IISF is being jointly organized by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ministry of Science and Technology and Vigyan Bharati.
- ★ The theme of the edition of IISF is 'Moving towards Amrit Kaal with Science, Technology and Innovation'.
- ★ Vigyanika is being organized with the objective of promoting science through science poetry, multilingual scientific literature, science drama and folk art and showcasing the rich heritage of India by inculcating scientific temper among the masses.

## 'Bharat Pravah' Initiative

- ★ Shipping, Waterways and Ports Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has launched the initiative 'Bharat Pravah-India along its Shores'.
- ★ The objective of this initiative is to highlight the importance of rivers-ports-shipping in the everyday life of the common man through literature, dialogue and communication.
- ★ It will also highlight the challenges, policy issues and future goals related to the maritime sector.

- ★ The objective of this initiative is to highlight the importance of rivers-ports-shipping in the everyday life of the common man through literature, dialogue and communication.
- ★ India's share in global trade is only 2%. India ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in the Logistics Performance Index.

### **Punjab Government to Launch 'Schools of Eminence' Project**

- ★ The Punjab government launched its first major education project, 'Schools of Eminence' on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023 at the Indian School of Business (ISB), Mohali.
- ★ Under the project, the Punjab government will upgrade the existing government schools into the School of Eminence for the students of classes 9 to 12.
- ★ Under phase 1, the government plans to upgrade nearly 110 government schools as 'Schools of Eminence'.
- ★ The Punjab government had set aside a fund of ₹200 crore for this project.
- ★ This project is inspired by the Delhi model of the school of specialized excellence which conducts the admissions of Class 9 level.

### **Chief Guest at India's Republic Day Celebration**

- ★ According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi will be the Chief Guest at the 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day celebrations.
- ★ He will pay a state visit to India from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of this month.
- ★ This is the first time that the President of Egypt has been invited as the Chief Guest on the Republic Day 2023 of India.
- ★ A 180-member strong contingent of the Egyptian Army will also participate in the Republic Day parade.

### **India's Deepest Metro Station**

- ★ The city of Pune will soon hold the distinction of having the country's deepest underground metro station.
- ★ Pune's Civil Court interchange station will be 108.59 feet deep with a ceiling of 95 feet.
- ★ It will be used as an interchange facility for an underground station on the Pimpri-Chinchwad-Swargate route and one elevated route on Vanaz-Ramwadi route and Hinjewadi-Shivajinagar line.
- ★ The metro will be completed in February 2023.

### **SARAS Fair 2023**

- ★ The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is to host the Saras Mela 2023 from 04 February to 14 February for the first time.
- ★ The fair would be organised at Bagh-e-Bahu, Jammu.
- ★ In the fair artisans and women self-help groups from across the country will showcase their crafts, handcrafts, handloom and foods.



- ★ The national level food and cultural fair will showcase unique and famous indigenous products from different states and union territories of the country.
- ★ The event will provide a platform to the participants to sell and promote their self-made products.
- ★ The fair is organised jointly by the Centre-State Government as part of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM).

### **UNESCO World Heritage Site**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has selected the 'Pyramids of Assam' as the country's sole nomination for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.
- ★ The Ahom-era 'Moidams' (cemetery of the royal family) in Assam's Charaideo district will be India's only nomination for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- ★ 'Moidams' will be nominated in the category of cultural sites.
- ★ India currently has 40 World Heritage Sites.

### **PM-KISAN Handout to be raised to ₹8,000**

- ★ The Centre may enhance the income support to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme to ₹8,000 from ₹6,000 per year, in the upcoming Budget as it seeks to provide a modicum of consumption booster, despite the budgetary focus on macroeconomic stability.
- ★ An increase of ₹2,000 per farmer would entail an annual additional cost of around ₹22,000 crores to the government.
- ★ The enhancement in the PM-KISAN amount could be for a year and be reviewed thereafter.
- ★ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) was launched in February 2019.

### **Rajasthan Government to Rent Out Drones to Farmers**

- ★ The Government of Rajasthan will provide drones on rent to the low-income farmers of Rajasthan to help them in spraying fertilizers and pesticides.
- ★ Around 1,500 drones will be made available at custom hiring centers by the state government in two years.
- ★ In conventional agricultural practices, pesticides are sprayed either manually or with the help of tractor-mounted sprayers where high quantities of pesticides and water are used and where a sizable portion of spray goes waste in the environment.
- ★ Through drones, deficiency of nutrients in the standing crop can be determined and replenished easily.

### **Six-Day Mega Event 'Bharat Parv'**

- ★ The six-day mega event 'Bharat Parv' event was organised by the Government of India at the Lawns and Gyan Path in front of Red Fort, Delhi from 26 January to 31 January 2023, as part of the Republic Day Celebrations.
- ★ The Ministry of Tourism has been designated as the nodal Ministry for the event.

- ★ Bharat Parv was earlier held in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and 2021 (virtually) on the lawns in front of the Red Fort and on the Gyan Path.
- ★ This physical event is being organised after a gap of 2 years on the lawn and Gyan Path of the Red Fort.

### **First India Stack Developer Conference**

- ★ The first India Stack Developers Conference has been organised to focus on ways and means to ensure wider adoption of India's digital goods across the globe in New Delhi.
- ★ The conference will be attended by over 100 digital delegates from industry, government, start-ups and unicorns and academia.
- ★ Representatives of the G-20 countries and the G-20 Secretariat have also been invited to the conference.
- ★ The objective of the conference is to provide a platform to the industry and developer community to develop a strong start-up and innovation ecosystem and explore ways to take India's Stack products to the country as well as to other countries.
- ★ India Stack is a multi-layered suite of digital solutions such as Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, Co-WIN, GeM, GSTN, which have played a significant role in India's digital transformation.

### **First Green Energy State by 2025**

- ★ The Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced that HP targets to become 1<sup>st</sup> Green Energy State by 2025.
- ★ HP would harness hydro, hydrogen and solar energy and switch to green products which will enhance the premium and advantage in export.
- ★ The CM directed Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Ltd (HPSEBL), Himachal Pradesh Energy Development Agency (HIMURJA), Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) and the Department of Energy to take action in this direction.
- ★ He also directed the officers to open all the solar projects up to 5 MW capacity for allotment.
- ★ Himachal Pradesh government will install 500 MW solar projects during the year 2023-24.

### **G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure**

- ★ The Centre has set up a G20 task force on digital public infrastructure for economic transformation and financial inclusion.
- ★ It is to help India achieve its G20 presidency priorities for promoting digital identity, improved and innovative technology-based services, including digital payments such as UPI along with governance frameworks.
- ★ The task force will be headed by Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa and Nandan Nilekani, Infosys co-founder.
- ★ The task force will create a detailed map of India's digital infrastructure in finance, health, education, data, taxation, digital commerce and mobility and shortlist key infrastructure to be presented within various G20 tracks.



- ★ The task force's work will also facilitate the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII) working group in G20's finance track and the Digital Working Group (DEWG) in the Sherpa track.

### **National Summit on Quality of Biologicals**

- ★ Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the National Summit on Quality of Biologicals, organised by the National Institute of Biologicals (NIB), in New Delhi on 27 January.
- ★ The summit will act as a platform to bring together stakeholders, regulatory authorities and academia for dialogue on various aspects of the quality of biologicals.
- ★ The conclave will lead to capacity building, technology enhancement and new organic growth towards realising the government's dream of 'Healthy India'.
- ★ The summit will help in upgrading the infrastructure and technologies of the country's biopharmaceuticals and in-vitro diagnostic industry.
- ★ It is also to initiate studies using state-of-the-art analytical platforms to promote development of pharmacopoeial monographs for new biologicals made with updated technologies.

### **National Child Science Congress**

- ★ The 30<sup>th</sup> National Child Science Congress began at Science City in Ahmedabad on 27 January 2023.
- ★ The Gujarat Council on Science and Technology, Gujarat Council of Science City, and SAL Education are hosting the five-day Congress.
- ★ This program is supported by the National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Government of India.
- ★ It aims to transform the way science is taught and learned in schools by linking the learning process to the surrounding physical and social environment.

### **North India's Largest Floating Solar Plant**

- ★ North India's largest floating solar plant has been installed at Chandigarh's Water Works.
- ★ The solar plant with 2MWp capacity will generate 28 million units of electricity.
- ★ Also, due to the installation of panels on water, this project will reduce the evaporation of about 382 million litres annually.
- ★ The electricity generated from the solar panels installed on Dhansa Lake will be used by the Forest Department.
- ★ The forest department will light up all its offices with the electricity generated from this solar panel.

### **Khadi Fest-23**

- ★ Khadi and Village Industries Commission inaugurated the Khadi Fest-23 which will run from January 27 to February 24, 2023 at the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in Mumbai.

- ★ Events and exhibitions like Khadi Fest, Khadi Institutions, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program – PMEGP and Fund Scheme for Regeneration of Traditional Industries – SFURTI units provide a platform to bring thousands of artisan products directly to the customers.
- ★ The Khadi Village Industries Commission was established in 1957 under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act 1956.
- ★ It is under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

### **Indian Oil to Pump in ₹2,200-Cr Investment for Projects**

- ★ The Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has planned investments of around ₹2,200 crores in Tamil Nadu (TN) over the next two years, to take the major grassroots and expansion projects in TN.
- ★ The projects include a 'grass-roots terminal' at Asanur and Vallur, a 'captive petroleum' project, oil and lubricant-LPG jetty at Kamarajar port among others.
- ★ The IOCL has achieved 10% ethanol blending with petrol in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and was working towards increasing it to 20% in line with the Centre's mandate.

### **Jal Jeevan Mission Provides Tap Water to Rural Households**

- ★ The Jal Shakti Ministry the government had provided 11 crore rural households with a tap water connection.
- ★ Data from the Ministry's dashboard suggest that 56% of the targeted 19.3 crore households had been covered.
- ★ In September 2022, 53% of the households or 10.2 crore households, had been covered.
- ★ A fully functional tap water connection is defined as a household getting at least 55 liters of per capita per day of potable water all through the year.
- ★ The Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.

### **India's First Model G-20 Summit**

- ★ India's G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on 30 January inaugurated India's first Model G-20 Summit organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini's Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership.
- ★ The two-day model G-20 summit has been organised at the Uttan campus of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini near Mumbai to celebrate India's Chairmanship and to take the idea of G-20 to the youth.
- ★ Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership (IIDL) organises Model International Leaders Meet (MILM) every year to orient students towards international relations.
- ★ A total of 150 youth from across the country will participate in the program and will play the role of delegates representing G-20 countries.
- ★ The best two delegates will be awarded cash prizes of ₹15,000 and ₹10,000.

## Khelo India Youth Games Begins in Madhya Pradesh

- ★ The fifth edition of Khelo India Youth Games 2022 began on January 30 in Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ The Games will be hosted in Madhya Pradesh from 31 January 2023 to 11 February 2023.
- ★ For the first time water sports namely Kayaking Canoeing, Canoe Salaam and Fencing will be part of this edition of Khelo India Games.
- ★ It will be organised in eight different cities of the state.
- ★ The eight host cities designated are Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Ujjain, Maheshwar, Mandla and Balaghat.

## 75 Successful Years of NCC

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a special day cover and a commemorative specially minted coin of ₹75 denomination on the occasion of 75 successful years of the National Cadet Corps (NCC).
- ★ NCC rally was organised on the occasion of 75 years commemoration at Cariappa Maidan, Delhi on 28<sup>th</sup> January.
- ★ 196 officers and cadets from 19 foreign countries participated in the rally.
- ★ At the event, PM Modi released a specially minted coin of ₹75 denomination to commemorate 75 successful years of NCC.

## Orange Festival 2023

- ★ The third edition of annual Orange Festival 2023 has been organised at Rasoma village in Kohima district of Nagaland.
- ★ The festival is jointly organised by the Department of Horticulture, Agriculture, Rural Development, Land Resources and Kohima Smart City.
- ★ The festival is celebrated to highlight the hard work of orange growers and to facilitate them to connect with the market to sell their produce.
- ★ Presently Rusoma village has about 35,000 orange trees and this enables the two-day Orange Festival of the village to host handicrafts, organic vegetables and fruits, food items, sale of orange saplings, workshops on orange and coffee plantation.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### India and Austria to Sign 5 Agreements

- ★ External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced that India and Austria signed five agreements on 02 January 2023.
- ★ The two agreements would be in the interest of the Indian community:

- There is an agreement on 'Migration and Mobility' for people who want to work in Austria and who want to come to India for business, or who come here as students and professionals.
- Another agreement is on the 'Working Holiday' program that will enable Indian students in Austria to work for 6 months.

## Hydrogen Powered Train

- ★ China became the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered urban trains.
- ★ According to the Chinese officials, the operation of the train will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to diesel traction by 10 tons per year.
- ★ Chinese company CRRC Corporations ltd built a train that has a top speed of 160 KM per hour and can run without refuelling for 600 Km.
- ★ The hydrogen fuel cell uses hydrogen and air to generate electricity. The combination of air and hydrogen will produce water as a by-product which will be released by the Train.
- ★ Germany was the first country to introduce hydrogen powered trains in September 2022.

## Croatia Adopts Euro Currency

- ★ Croatia adopted the euro currency and also joined Europe's free passport club (Schengen area).
- ★ Croatia with a population of about 4 million said goodbye to its Kuna currency and became the 20<sup>th</sup> member of the Eurozone.
- ★ It will be the 27<sup>th</sup> country in the world's largest passport-free Schengen zone, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely within its member states.
- ★ It will also boost Croatia's major tourism industry, which accounts for 20 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP).
- ★ The Eurozone consists of 19 members of the European Union (EU), which uses the Euro as their official currency.
- ★ The border-free Schengen Area guarantees visa-free movement for over 400 million EU citizens, as well as tourists, students living in the EU and visiting the EU.

## Karnataka Transmission Project

- ★ According to the Norwegian embassy in India Norway's Climate Investment Fund, managed by Norfund, together with Norwegian pension fund KLP will invest ₹90 crore in a transmission project in Karnataka being developed by ReNew Power Company.
- ★ The Norwegian fund together will hold 49% stake in the ReNew's transmission project in Koppel, Karnataka.
- ★ The Norwegian investment in Karnataka will connect 2.5 GW of renewable capacity to the national grid.
- ★ ReNew is one of the largest renewable energy independent power producers globally. ReNew develops, builds, owns and operates utility-scale wind energy, solar energy and hydro projects.
- ★ This will be the third investment of the Climate investment fund in India.

### 36<sup>th</sup> Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi

- ★ India and France held the 36<sup>th</sup> Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi on 05 January 2023.
- ★ The two sides discussed a wide range of bilateral and global issues.
- ★ National Security Advisor Ajit Doval led the Indian delegation while the French delegation was led by Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President.
- ★ The last edition of the Strategic Dialogue was to be held in Paris in November 2021.
- ★ Both sides recognized the importance of discussing the India-EU Trade and Investment Agreement.
- ★ There has been an agreement between the Government of France and India for 36 Rafale aircraft.

### New British Indian Army Memorial to be Built in Scotland

- ★ A new British Indian Army memorial has been approved to be built in the Scottish city of Glasgow to commemorate the sacrifices of millions of Indian soldiers who fought alongside the British during the two world wars.
- ★ In this, the contribution of more than 40 lakh Indian soldiers who fought on behalf of Britain in both the world wars will be shown.
- ★ Scotland, the local council of Glasgow has approved plans to build a memorial.
- ★ Glaswegian City Council is now making the final preparations to build the memorial.
- ★ Therefore, it will give information about the contribution of all the soldiers of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian religions.

### India and Panama to Sign Agreement

- ★ External Affairs Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar signed an MoU to enhance cooperation in the training of diplomats during his bilateral meeting with Panamanian Foreign Minister Janaina Tevane Mencomo in Indore.
- ★ The agreement was signed during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Panama to participate in the 17<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference.
- ★ During the consultations, both sides comprehensively reviewed their bilateral relations covering issues such as trade and investment, pharmaceuticals, capacity building, space cooperation and consular.
- ★ Both countries also discussed cooperation in multilateral fora.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue

- ★ Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) made an official visit to South Korea and co-chaired the 5<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue (FPSD).
- ★ India and South Korea agreed to work to make global supply chains more resilient and robust.
- ★ Both the countries agreed to take bilateral trade to US\$ 50 billion by 2030 from an all-time high of US\$ 28 billion at present.
- ★ Both sides also discussed opportunities for cooperation in new and emerging technologies.

- ★ India has offered investment to Korean companies in manufacturing, infrastructure and other sectors.

## India and UAE Sign Agreement

- ★ India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed an agreement to collaborate on green hydrogen development and the laying of an undersea cable connecting India to the UAE’.
- ★ It was signed under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s ‘One Sun, One World, One Grid’ initiative.
- ★ India has undertaken the goal of becoming net zero by 2070 and is working on its way to fulfilling other commitments underlined under the Paris Climate Agreement.
- ★ India is also moving towards the Mission announced by Prime Minister Modi and the UN Secretary-General in October 2022 called Mission LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment.
- ★ RK Singh will be in charge of the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

## Education for Democracy

- ★ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution titled ‘Education for Democracy’, which reaffirms everyone’s right to an education.
- ★ The resolution, co-sponsored by India acknowledges that ‘education for all’ helps to strengthen democracy.
- ★ The resolution, adopted by consensus, will recognize the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- ★ The resolution also calls on member states to work on the challenges associated with access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills.
- ★ Earlier in 2015, a similar resolution was passed at the Assembly encouraging all UN entities to use education to promote peace and human rights.
- ★ The resolution aimed at encouraging member states to integrate education for democracy into their education standards.

## Marathon ‘Run for Life’

- ★ With the theme of ‘lifestyle for Environment’, 5 km marathon ‘Run for Life’ was organised by the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu.
- ★ The Run for Life Marathon celebrates the diplomatic relations between India and Nepal as well as 75 years of India’s independence.
- ★ The marathon started from Pashupatinath temple complex and covered 5 km back to Pashupatinath in a duration of one hour.
- ★ The Marathon winner was awarded a gold medal after completion of the marathon.
- ★ The event was attended by Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal and former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.



## Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Film Festival

- ★ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Film Festival will be organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in Mumbai from 27 January to 31 January 2023.
- ★ The SCO Film Festival is being organised during the Presidency of India in the SCO.
- ★ The festival aims to build cinematic partnership, act as a bridge between the cultures of different countries in the SCO and create harmony among the film communities of the SCO members through a collective cinematic experience.
- ★ A total of 57 films from SCO countries will be screened at the SCO Film Festival.
- ★ 14 feature films will be screened in the competition section and 43 films will be screened in the non-competition section.

## India-Egypt Signed MoU

- ★ India and Egypt on 25 January signed an MoU to facilitate content exchange, capacity building and Co-Productions between Prasar Bharati and the National Media Authority of Egypt.
- ★ Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur and Foreign Minister Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Government of Egypt signed the MoU.
- ★ Under this MoU, broadcasters of both the countries will exchange their programs on bilateral basis in different genres of sports, news, culture, entertainment and many other fields and these programs will be broadcast on their radio and television platforms.
- ★ The validity of this MoU will be for three years.

## India Signed MoU with South Africa

- ★ India and South Africa on 27 January signed a Memorandum of Understanding to introduce 12 African Cheetahs annually over the next eight to ten years.
- ★ As per the agreement, an initial batch of 12 cheetahs will be brought from South Africa to India during February 2023.
- ★ These cheetahs will be joined by eight cheetahs brought to India from Namibia during 2022.
- ★ Increasing the cheetah population is a priority for the Government of India and its conservation will have important and far-reaching consequences, aiming to achieve a number of ecological objectives.
- ★ Under the scheme, 50 cheetahs will be released in various national parks of the country over a period of 5 years.

## India Becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Nation to Extend Assurance to Sri Lanka

- ★ India has become the first creditor nation to extend assurance towards restructuring the debt of Sri Lanka with financial assistance worth \$4 billion.
- ★ India will encourage greater investment in core areas of energy, tourism and infrastructure.
- ★ Dr. Jaishankar's visit also witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the High Impact Community Development program on socio-economic development.

## **BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS**

### **ADB Provides Loan to Shriram Finance Limited**

- ★ India's largest Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) Shriram Finance Ltd has secured a \$100 million loan from the Manila based Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- ★ The loan amount will be used by the Shriram Finance to provide loans to customers to buy new or used BS VI compliant vehicles and electric vehicles”.
- ★ It also provides financial support to women entrepreneurs and under-developed states.
- ★ Shriram Finance Limited is the largest retail NBFC in India. It was formed after the merger of mainly Shriram City Union Finance and Shriram Transport Finance.

### **RBI Launches Utkarsh 2.0**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on 30 December 2022 launched the second phase of the central bank's medium-term strategy for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms called Utkarsh 2.0.
- ★ The first strategy framework (Utkarsh 2022) covering the period 2019-2022 was launched in July 2019.
- ★ It became a medium-term strategy document guiding the Bank's progress towards realization of the identified milestones.
- ★ Utkarsh 2.0 like the Utkarsh 2022 has six Vision statements as well as Core Purpose, Values and Mission statements.

### **Spice Money Partnered with Axis Bank**

- ★ Fintech player Spice Money has partnered with private sector lender Axis Bank to facilitate the opening of instant, zero-balance savings or current accounts for rural citizens through its Adhikari network.
- ★ The objective is to bridge the rural-urban divide and bring financial inclusivity by providing access to banking products at the doorstep, thereby financially empowering thousands of rural citizens living in the hinterlands of India.
- ★ A regulated entity under the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Fintech firm delivers various financial services such as cash deposits and withdrawals, insurance premiums, bill payments and loans to the rural masses.

### **Domestically Systemically Important Banks (D-SIB) List**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has retained SBI, ICICI bank and HDFC bank in the list of Domestically Systemically Important Banks (D-SIB) list for the year 2021.
- ★ The list was released by the RBI on 02 January 2023.
- ★ D-SIBs are those interconnected entities, whose failure can impact the whole of the financial system and create instability.



- ★ Systemically important banks attract closer supervision and regulation from the country's central bank as these entities are considered to be too big-to-fail banking companies.
- ★ RBI selects banks on their size and their overall contribution in the Indian economy.
- ★ D-SIBs will need to maintain additional Common Equity Tier-1 (CET1).
- ★ SBI has to maintain an additional Common Equity Tier-1 (CET1) of 0.60% as a percentage of their Risk Weighted Assets.
- ★ HDFC Bank and ICICI banks have to maintain an additional Common Equity Tier-1 (CET1) of 0.20% as a percentage of their Risk Weighted Assets.
- ★ Foreign Banks having branches in India are called Global-Systemically Important Banks (G-SIB).
- ★ At present no foreign bank has been put in the G-SIB category by RBI.

### **SBI Card Partners with Punjab and Sind Bank**

- ★ SBI Cards and Payment Services has partnered with Public sector bank Punjab and Sind Bank (PSB) to launch co-brand credit cards for the bank's customers.
- ★ The collaboration also marks the introduction of 'credit cards' as a new product segment under the bank's portfolio.
- ★ Both partners have rolled out 3 card variants namely PSB SBI Card ELITE, PSB SBI Card PRIME and PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card.
- ★ Both PSB SBI Card ELITE and PSB SBI Card PRIME will be available on the VISA platform and PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card on the RuPay platform.
- ★ PSB SBI Card ELITE and PSB SBI Card PRIME have been designed to offer lifestyle privileges and the best-in-class experience to premium and mass premium customers, respectively.

### **ADB To Provide Loan for Infrastructure Projects**

- ★ The Manila based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide a \$1.22 billion loan to the government of India for Infrastructure development in various states.
- ★ An agreement was signed between the Indian Government and ADB in New Delhi on 03 January 2023.
- ★ India is the largest borrower of ADB.
- ★ The agreements would cover projects for improving the power sector and highways in the North-Eastern states of Tripura and Assam, metro rail connectivity in the southern city of Chennai and improvement of key economic areas in the western state of Maharashtra.

### **Tripura Signs ₹2,275 Crore Agreement with ADB**

- ★ Tripura government has signed an agreement for an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-assisted project of ₹2,275 crore (US \$275 million) for the Improvement of Tripura's Power Distribution Strengthening and Generation Efficiency.
- ★ The project will be implemented in the next 3 years.
- ★ The ADB project will support the state government's efforts to strengthen its power sector by replacing inefficient power plants and strengthening the distribution system.

- ★ The project would have ₹1820 crore loan from ADB and ₹455 crore of direct investment by the State government to improve energy security, quality of supply, efficiency and resilience of the power sector in Tripura.

### **IDBI Mutual Fund to LIC Mutual Fund**

- ★ IDBI Bank signed an agreement to transfer schemes from IDBI Mutual Fund (IDBI MF) to LIC Mutual Fund (LIC MF).
- ★ The decision has been taken to comply with Section 7B of the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) Mutual Fund Regulations.
- ★ LIC completed the takeover of IDBI Bank, the sponsor of IDBI Mutual Fund, in January 2019.
- ★ SEBI rules restrict a single promoter to own more than a 10% stake in multiple asset management companies (AMCs).

### **Tata AIA Life Introduces Emerging Opportunities Fund**

- ★ Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched Emerging Opportunity Fund, and ULIP plans (Unit Linked Insurance Plans) which can spend money on mid-cap firms and rising market leaders with the potential to generate important future development.
- ★ The purposes for ULIP plans with the New Fund Offering (NFO) window will stay open until 31 December 2022.
- ★ Investments within the Fund might be made using Tata AIA's ULIP choices like Fortune Pro, Wealth Pro, Fortune Maxima and Wealth Maxima.

### **HDFC Bank Collaborates with Microsoft**

- ★ India's largest private sector bank- HDFC Bank partnered with Microsoft in the next phase of its digital transformation journey and unlocked business value by transforming the application portfolio, modernizing the data landscape and securing the enterprise with Microsoft Cloud.
- ★ The solution is powered by its unified architecture, collaborative engineering environment, industry-leading security and ecosystem of AI/ML-based deep learning capabilities.
- ★ The Bank will also leverage Microsoft Power Platform's industry-leading low code, no code capabilities to set up an App Innovation and Automation Factory.
- ★ The App Factory will enable the Bank to migrate, modernize and transform its application portfolio.

### **YES Bank Partners with Microsoft**

- ★ YES BANK has partnered with Microsoft to introduce a next-generation mobile application (app) to provide customers with a personalized banking experience.
- ★ YES Bank will leverage Microsoft's Azure platform to create the app which will offer customers a host of services such as online payments, shopping, rewards and offers, as well as customized dashboards.
- ★ The new app will run on Microsoft's enterprise-grade cloud platform.

- ★ With the support of the app, Yes Bank aims to scale up various services by bringing merchants and ecosystem partners onto a common platform.
- ★ This will empower the Bank to cater to the diverse financial needs of customers across loans, payments, deposits, investments and cards.

### India Accelerator Collaborates with ICICI Bank and Infosys Finacle

- ★ India Accelerator, a seed-stage accelerator program has launched the i3 Launchpad, a program created to support and co-innovate with the startup ecosystem.
- ★ This has been developed in collaboration with ICICI Bank and Infosys Finacle, part of EdgeVerve Systems, a wholly-owned product subsidiary of Infosys.
- ★ It is to support a community of entrepreneurs who are on a mission to create brands that can have a global impact.
- ★ It is designed to help startups accelerate their success by leveraging mentorship, resources, and opportunities from Infosys Finacle, ICICI Bank and India Accelerator (IA).

### RBI to Issue Green Bonds

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India on 06 January 2023 announced that maiden Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) would be issued in two tranches of ₹8,000 crore each on 25 January and 09 February 2023.
- ★ The central government is issuing these sovereign green bonds as part of its total market borrowing. These bonds are being issued to promote green infrastructure.
- ★ Sovereign green bonds worth ₹8000 crore will be issued on 25 January 2023. In this, green bonds worth ₹4000 crore will be issued for 5 years and sovereign green bonds worth ₹4000 crore will be issued for 10 years.
- ★ Sovereign Green Bonds worth ₹8000 crores will be issued as the next instalment on 09 February 2023.
- ★ Sovereign Green Bonds are bonds that are used by the government to finance projects that have a positive impact on the environment.
- ★ The Green Bond was launched in 2007 by the European Investment Bank and the World Bank.
- ★ A Green Bond is an instrument that helps in raising funds for green projects.

### Axis Bank Partners with OPEN

- ★ India's third largest private sector bank, Axis Bank has partnered with the world's fastest-growing digital banking enterprise, Open Financial Technologies Pvt Ltd (OPEN) to provide a fully native digital current account journey for its customers.
- ★ Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs), freelancers, homepreneurs, influencers and more would benefit from the fully digital current account.
- ★ This is Axis Bank's first-ever partnership with a Fintech player to launch a fully digital current account.

- ★ OPEN operates SME neo-banking platform Open Money, the embedded finance platform, Zwitch and the enterprise digital banking platform for banks, BankingStack.
- ★ The authentication process of the digital current account will be completely online using PAN (permanent account number) and Aadhaar followed by a Video KYC (know your customer).

### **Annapurna Finance Pvt Applies for a Universal Bank License**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has received an application from Odisha-based Annapurna Finance Pvt Ltd (AFPL), formerly known as Annapurna Microfinance Pvt Ltd under the Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Universal Banks in the Private Sector.
- ★ As per the RBI's 'on tap' licensing guidelines, the initial minimum paid-up voting equity capital for a universal bank should be ₹500 crore.
- ★ In 2021, the RBI announced a 5-member Standing External Advisory Committee, headed by former RBI deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath, for evaluating applications for universal banks and small finance banks.

### **SEBI Issues Debt Broker License to Goldenpi Technologies**

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a debt broker license to Bengaluru-based Fintech firm GoldenPi Technologies.
- ★ With this, GoldenPi became the first online bond platform provider to receive a debt brokerage license from SEBI.
- ★ In Nov 2022, SEBI introduced regulations for online debt trading platforms which stated that no company or individual shall act as an online bond platform provider (OBP) without the certificate of registration as a stock broker under the SEBI Regulations, 2021.
- ★ Currently, the Zerodha-backed company offers more than 100+ bonds and debentures on its online platform in the form of daily listings.

### **Third Largest Auto Market Globally**

- ★ According to the latest Nikkei Asia industry data, India has overtaken Japan to become the third largest auto market for the first time.
- ★ India sales volumes are expected to increase further with the inclusion of pending sales figures for the fourth quarter for commercial vehicles.
- ★ Most of the new autos sold in India last year consisted of vehicles powered by gasoline, including hybrid vehicles.
- ★ In 2021, China topped the global auto market with sales of 26.27 million vehicles.
- ★ The US stood second with 15.4 million vehicles sold, followed by Japan with 4.44 million units.

### **Relaxation on Dispatching Hard Copies of Financial Statements**

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) extended the relaxation to listed companies from dispatching physical copies of financial statements till 30 September 2023.
- ★ Earlier, the regulator had given similar relaxations to listed companies till December 2022.

- ★ The Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) rules require listed companies to dispatch a hard copy of the statement containing salient features of all the documents – financial statements, board’s report and auditor’s report to those shareholders who have not registered their email addresses.
- ★ The listed entities are required to send hard copies of full annual reports to those shareholders who request the same.
- ★ Separately, the SEBI has eased the rules for entities, which listed their non-convertible securities, from dispatching hard copies of annual reports to debenture holders.

### **DhanDelight and Mobile Banking App DhanSmart**

- ★ Dhanlaxmi Bank has launched all new retail internet banking DhanDelight and the retail mobile banking app DhanSmart.
- ★ The new services are built on an omnichannel platform having various features covering different banking needs of customers.
- ★ DhanDelight and DhanSmart have the latest information system security features to provide secure banking.
- ★ The latest UI (User Interface) and UX (User Experience) provide a refreshing user experience and will enable customers to do financial transactions more securely.
- ★ The mobile app also offers a dark theme to improve visual ergonomics, reduce eye strain and helps in conserving battery power.
- ★ The applications come with value-added features such as biometric authentication for mobile users, a dashboard for internet users, user-defined themes and soft token for transaction authentication.

### **IndusInd Bank Partners with British Airways and Qatar Airways**

- ★ IndusInd Bank, in a first-of-its-kind initiative, partnered with British Airways Executive Club and Qatar Airways Privilege Club to introduce the unique multi-branded credit card.
- ★ Unique multi-branded credit card will be powered by Visa.
- ★ The card was made available to consumers in the first quarter of the financial year 2023 – 2024.
- ★ The credit card will be available in the Infinite variant of Visa.
- ★ It will offer best-in-class rewards and benefits to elevate the international travel experience of customers.
- ★ At the time of application, this credit card will give customers the flexibility to choose their preferred airline loyalty program and select their preferred travel destination.

### **WDRA Signs MoU with SBI**

- ★ Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) signed a memorandum (MoU) of understanding with State Bank of India to help farmers in getting low interest rate loans.
- ★ The objective of the MoU is to provide information on the benefits to the depositors besides carrying out further activities to improve agricultural finance in India.

- ★ It is envisaged that the product will have far reaching consequences with regard to acceptance of e-NWRs (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt) among small and marginal farmers.
- ★ WDRA was constituted on 26 October 2010 under the Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2007.
- ★ It is a Statutory Authority under the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India.

### **SBI Launches e-Bank Guarantee Facility**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, has launched an e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) facility in association with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL).
- ★ The introduction of e-BG will replace this function with e-stamping and e-signature.
- ★ It is to enhance transparency and reduce turnaround time from days to minutes.
- ★ NeSL's Digital Document Execution (DDE) platform, which provides e-Stamp and e-Sign functions, will facilitate the e-Bank Guarantee process.
- ★ Beneficiaries will instantly receive an e-Bank Guarantee on NeSL's platform without further verification.
- ★ This facility will bring about a revolutionary change in the banking ecosystem, where bank guarantee is frequently used in large volumes.
- ★ Currently, the bank issues these guarantees with physical stamping and wet signatures.

### **Indian Bank to Hold Special Rupee Vostro Accounts**

- ★ Indian Bank has received the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulatory approval to hold special rupee Vostro accounts of 3 banks from Sri Lanka.
- ★ The public sector bank, which has had a long presence in the South Asian Island nation, is expected to activate the special Vostro accounts in about a week.
- ★ A Vostro account in local currency would allow Sri Lanka to import from India without dipping into its declining dollar supply.
- ★ The INR Vostro facility is part of the special trade settlement mechanism finalised by the RBI in July 2022.
- ★ The Vostro accounts would also help Sri Lanka to utilise the rupee lines extended by India.
- ★ It would contribute towards stabilising the Lankan economy.

### **Nuego Forms Strategic Partnership with Paytm**

- ★ India's first premium electric intercity coach services brand, NueGo, has partnered with Paytm, India's leading payments and financial services company launching a convenient bus ticket booking facility for its customers.
- ★ This partnership would allow commuters to digitally reserve the seat of their choice in all NueGo buses across India, providing a seamless digital booking experience.
- ★ Paytm will enable commuters to book tickets without being physically present inside the bus or at the ticket counter, making the travel experience even more seamless.



- ★ NueGo, the flagship inter-city electric mobility coach brand of GreenCell Mobility is currently playing across India primarily on the Bhopal-Indore, Delhi-Chandigarh and Delhi-Jaipur routes.

### **Amazon Pay Partners with TSSPDCL**

- ★ Amazon Pay announced an association with Telangana Southern State Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) to simplify electricity bill payments for TSSPDCL customers.
- ★ With this association, Amazon aims to make electricity bill payments instant, convenient, and rewarding for millions of customers.
- ★ Through this association, TSSPDCL customers can now pay their electricity bills on Amazon using Amazon Pay without any convenience fee and experience secure and seamless transactions without the hassle of standing in billing queues.
- ★ The customers also can earn cash backs on their first bill payment and exciting rewards on their future bill payments.
- ★ After filing the necessary details, customers can choose their preferred payment modes such as UPI, Amazon Pay Later, Credit Cards, Debit Cards, Amazon Pay Balance or Net-banking to instantly complete the transaction.

### **VTB Bank Launches Direct Payments in Rupees**

- ★ VTB – Russia’s second-largest bank has launched a mechanism to receive direct payments in Rupees discarding the conventional mechanism involving Dollars and Euros, in a major boost to the India-Russia trade.
- ★ With this, Russian SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) will now be able to transact in INR, thus simplifying the payments while dealing with their Indian trading partners.
- ★ The mechanism of direct settlements allows fixing the price of a product and the payment in the national currency and to receive individual quotes on market terms.
- ★ It also eliminates preliminary coordination of the VTB opened special Vostro accounts in India to facilitate Russian-Indian trade in November 2022.

### **Payment Aggregator License to Enkash**

- ★ Fintech startup EnKash has got in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a payment aggregator’s license.
- ★ The license will enable EnKash to broaden its product offerings to millions of businesses for digital transactions.
- ★ BharatPe and Hitachi Payment Services have also received in-principle authorization to operate as payment aggregators.
- ★ EnKash claims to have assisted 1 lakh businesses to digitize and decentralize their corporate payments.

### **India to Become \$26 Trillion Economy**

- ★ An EY report announced that the Indian economy is likely to reach \$26 trillion by the year 2047, which will also be the 100<sup>th</sup> year of India’s independence.



- ★ The report also pointed out that despite maintaining a steady but modest growth rate of 6% per annum, India would still be able to become a \$26 trillion economy by 2047–48, with per capita income six times higher than current levels.
- ★ According to the report certain factors have contributed to bring India to a position of high and sustainable growth.
- ★ These include accelerated pace of economic reforms in critical areas such as social inclusion, financial inclusion, fiscal, physical and digital infrastructure.

### **Credit Cards for FDs**

- ★ The Punjab National Bank (PNB) has become India's first Public Sector Bank (PSB) to launch credit cards for its Fixed Deposit (FD) digitally.
- ★ The customers of the bank will be able to get RuPay or VISA Credit Cards digitally against single or multiple FDs with a credit limit of 80%.
- ★ PNB has raised the interest rate on fixed deposits across all tenures by 50 basis points to draw in more deposits.
- ★ According to PNB, interest rates for term deposits under 2 crore held for 1 to 3 years have increased by 50 basis points to 6.75% from 6.25%
- ★ The rate on the PNB Uttam Scheme, which does not offer a premature withdrawal option, has been increased from 6.30 to 6.80%.
- ★ The bank will continue to provide fixed deposit terms of 666 days at an 8.1% annual interest rate.

### **South Indian Bank Partners with SAIL**

- ★ South Indian Bank (SIB) and Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide financial assistance to the dealers of SAIL across India.
- ★ The tie-up allows bank to offer SAIL's dealers financial assistance for working capital, especially steel procurement.
- ★ With a network of 928 branches, the bank will be able to serve the Micro Small & Medium Enterprise (MSME) and corporate customers of SAIL located in different geographies.
- ★ It will boost India's steel production, which aligns with the Central Government's infrastructure and industrial push.

### **SEBI Introduces Information Database on Municipal Bonds**

- ★ Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched an information database on municipal bonds.
- ★ Ashwani Bhatia, a whole-time member of SEBI, launched the database at a two-day outreach program on municipal bonds and municipal finance organized by the SEBI, in New Delhi as part of efforts to develop the bond markets.
- ★ A general obligation bond (GO) is issued by governmental entities and not backed by revenue from a specific project, such as a toll road.

- ★ Revenue bond secures principal and interest payments through the issuer or sales, fuel, hotel occupancy or other taxes.
- ★ It is a good alternative source of finance to fund projects undertaken by Municipal Corporations.

### **RBI Asks SBM Bank to Stop All Remittance Transactions under LRS**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed the SBM Bank (India) Ltd to stop all Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) transactions with immediate effect till further orders.
- ★ The RBI under sections 35A and 36(1)(a) of the Banking Regulation Act 1949, has directed SBM Bank to stop LRS transactions.
- ★ In December 2018, the RBI sanctioned the Scheme of amalgamation of the entire undertaking of SBM Bank (Mauritius) Limited, India with SBM Bank (India) Limited which was granted a license to carry on the business of banking in India through a wholly-owned subsidiary.

### **LIC Launches Guaranteed Return Life Insurance Plan**

- ★ The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has launched Jeevan Azad, aimed at individual savings and life insurance.
- ★ LIC Jeevan Azad is a limited-period payment endowment plan that provides financial support for the family in case of unfortunate death of the life assured during the policy term.
- ★ The plan addresses the liquidity needed through a loan facility.
- ★ It also provides a guaranteed lump sum amount to the surviving life assured on the date of maturity.
- ★ The minimum basic sum assured under LIC Jeevan Azad Plan is ₹2 lakh and the maximum basic sum assured is ₹5 lakh.
- ★ The policy can be taken for a term of 15 to 20 years.
- ★ The minimum age of entry is 90 days completed and the maximum age at entry is 50 years.

### **RBI Extends Time for Bank Locker Renewal Agreements**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the time for banks to renew their customer agreements for locker facilities to 31 December 2023, due to compliance delays.
- ★ The previous deadline was 01 January 2023, communicated through a circular on 18 August 2021.
- ★ In order to facilitate the execution of the revised agreements, the banks have been advised to make arrangements, like ensuring the availability of stamp papers, etc.
- ★ Also, there is a need for revision in the Model Agreement drafted by the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to fully comply with the revised instructions.

### **AU Small Finance Bank Launches 'Swipe Up'**

- ★ India's largest Small Finance Bank, AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB), launched the first-of-its-kind platform in the credit card industry – the 'Swipe Up' platform.

- ★ With the help of this platform, credit cardholders of any bank can get an upgraded card instantly.
- ★ Other bank credit cardholders can upgrade their card to one of AU credit cards.
- ★ Swipe Up platform primarily focuses on customers who hold Credit Cards from any other Bank and can benefit from an upgraded Credit Card matching their current lifestyle.
- ★ It allows cardholders to compare their existing credit cards within seconds.
- ★ These cards will have a higher credit limit, higher cashback, better reward points, zero membership fees and various other features that are an upgrade from their existing credit card.

### **Bank of Baroda Introduces Vikram Credit Card**

- ★ On the Occasion of 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day celebrations, Bank of Baroda's (BoB) subsidiary BOB Financial Solutions Limited (BFSL) has launched Vikram Credit Card.
- ★ It is the contactless RuPay credit card dedicated to Indian defense, paramilitary and police personnel.
- ★ Mr. Vikramaditya Singh Khichi, former Executive Director of Bank of Baroda, launched the Vikram Credit Card.
- ★ It is a lifetime-free credit card.
- ★ It has attractive reward points and an activation gift of a complimentary OTT (Over-The-Top) subscription.
- ★ It has an accidental death cover of ₹20 lakh.

### **NPCI's UPI 123PAY-HDFC Life**

- ★ HDFC Life has collaborated with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to enable policyholders to pay their premiums through a unique voice-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) service, called UPI 123PAY.
- ★ UPI 123PAY is a payment facility through a predefined IVR (Interactive Voice Response).
- ★ This platform will enable customers to make financial transactions with or without an internet connection.
- ★ A customer has to initiate a secure call from their phone using the UPI number 080 4516 3571 and complete the UPI on boarding formalities.

## **SPORTS**

### **77<sup>th</sup> Grand-Master of India**

- ★ Sixteen-year-old Aditya Mittal has become India's 77<sup>th</sup> chess Grand-Master during an ongoing tournament in Spain.
- ★ The Mumbai player, who had secured three GM norms, crossed the 2,500 ELO points mark during the sixth round of the ongoing Ellobregat Open tournament in Spain.
- ★ He drew the game against Spain's No.1 Francisco Vallejo Pons to achieve the feat.

- ★ To become a GM, a player has to secure three GM norms and cross the live rating of 2,500 ELO points.

## World Chess Blitz Championship

- ★ Former Indian World Rapid Chess champion Koneru Humpy won the silver medal in the women's section of the FIDE World Blitz Chess Championship that concluded in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- ★ She finished on 12.5 points, just half a point behind the winner Bibisara Balabayeva of Kazakhstan.
- ★ Koneru Humpy has won the World Rapid Chess Championship 2019.
- ★ The International Chess governing body FIDE organises World Rapid and Blitz chess championship at the end of the year.
- ★ It was held in Kazakhstan's capital Almaty from 26 December to 30 December 2022.

## BCCI Introduces New Selection Criteria for Team India

- ★ The BCCI announced a major change in the selection criteria of players on 01 January 2023.
- ★ To review the team's performance in 2022, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Roger Binny and Secretary Jay Shah met India captain Rohit Sharma, head coach Rahul Dravid and Chief Selector Chetan Sharma on 01 January.
- ★ The future of Indian cricket was discussed in the meeting, which was also attended by National Cricket Academy (NCA) director VVS Laxman.
- ★ The new criteria have been brought in to ensure the fitness of players before their selection as the team has been facing a serious injury crisis for the last one year.

## Khelo India Youth Games 2022

- ★ Hockey Haryana's women's team won the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 Women's Under 18 Qualifiers after defeating Madhya Pradesh 2-0 in the final at Bhubaneswar.
- ★ In the final match, Pooja and Gurmail Kaur scored a goal each for Haryana to end the contest in their favour.
- ★ Odisha stepped up to claim third place after beating Hockey Jharkhand 2-1 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place encounter.
- ★ Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand have qualified for the Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Madhya Pradesh 2023.
- ★ In Hockey, Madhya Pradesh defeated Odisha 6-5 to clinch the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 Men's Under-18 Qualifiers title in Bhubaneswar.

## 78<sup>th</sup> Chess Grandmaster

- ★ 19-year-old Koustav Chatterjee of West Bengal became India's 78<sup>th</sup> chess Grandmaster, securing the third and final GM norm at the MPL 59<sup>th</sup> National Senior Chess Championship 2022 being held in New Delhi.
- ★ He is the 10<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster from West Bengal.

- ★ This was the third GM norm for Koustav Chatterjee and he also crossed 2500 Elo rating points.
- ★ To become a GM a player has to secure three GM norms and 2500 live Elo rating points.
- ★ Chess rating system is used in chess to estimate the strength and skill of a player.
- ★ In chess, the Elo rating system is used to grade the players by international chess governing body FIDE.

### **Maharashtra Open Tennis Tournament in Pune**

- ★ The Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor defeated Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi to win his maiden ATP World Tour title.
- ★ Griekspoor won a thrilling 4-6 7-5 6-3 title against his French opponent in two hours and 16 minutes to clinch the fifth edition of Tata Open Maharashtra title.
- ★ It has been almost a decade since the Netherlands won a singles title on Tour.
- ★ South Asia's only ATP 250 was organised by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) in association with the Government of Maharashtra for the fifth year in Pune.

### **Welsh Footballer Gareth Bale Retires from Club Football**

- ★ Walsh legendary football player Gareth Bale announced his retirement. He was at the age of 33, has announced his retirement from club and international football.
- ★ Bale is one of Wales' greatest ever players. He played record matches for his country and also made many records in terms of scoring goals.
- ★ He was instrumental in helping Wales win two European Championships.
- ★ With this, he led his team to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 and also to the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

### **Sania Mirza has Announced her Retirement**

- ★ India's star female tennis player Sania Mirza has announced her retirement in January 2023. In 2023, Australian Open and Dubai Tennis Championships will be her last tournaments.
- ★ She will play in women's doubles at the Australian Open in January 2023 with Kazakhstan's Ana Danilina, which will be her last appearance at any Grand Slam.
- ★ Sania Mirza has won many titles and honours in her career. She has been awarded the Arjuna Award in 2004, Padma Shri in 2006, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in 2015 and Padma Bhushan in 2016.

### **Khelo India Youth Games Theme Song and Mascot Unveiled**

- ★ State Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the mascot and theme song for the fifth edition of Khelo India Youth Games to be hosted by Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ The mascot of Khelo India Youth Games 2022 is 'Asha'. While the theme song is 'Hindustan Ka Dil Dhadka Do...' sung by famous singer Shaan.

- ★ The torch of Khelo India Youth Games was named Amarkantak, on which the figure of Maa Narmada is also engraved.
- ★ The Games will be hosted in Madhya Pradesh from 31 January 2023 to 11 February 2023.
- ★ For the first time water sports namely Kayaking Canoeing, Canoe Salaam and Fencing will be part of this edition of Khelo India Games.

### **British Junior Open Tournament in Birmingham**

- ★ Indian squash prodigy Anahat Singh won the Girl's Under-15 Squash title at British Junior Open tournament in Birmingham.
- ★ The 14-year-old defeated Sohaila Hazem of Egypt, 3-1 in the final.
- ★ Despite the first set being closely contested, she took the lead and won the tournament.
- ★ The British Junior Open is held in January every year in the UK where all the best players from all over the world compete to win the coveted title.

### **Malaysia Open Badminton Title**

- ★ Two-time world champion and defending Olympic champion Victor Axelsen (Denmark) and world champion Akane Yamaguchi (Japan) have won the men's and women's singles titles respectively in Malaysia Open Badminton 2023.
- ★ Viktor Axelsen of Denmark won the tournament for the second time in a row by defeating Kodai Naraoka of Japan in the men's singles final.
- ★ Japan's Akane defeated world number four Ahn Se-young of South Korea to win the title.
- ★ Now these players will also present the title claim in the India Open to be held from the last week of January 2023.

### **India Open Badminton**

- ★ In the India Open Badminton Championship, Korean sensation An Seyoung wins Women's singles final at KD Jadhav Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.
- ★ In the finals, An Seyoung beat World No.1 Japanese Akane Yamaguchi 15-21, 21-16, 21-12.
- ★ Axelsen has earlier won the India Open in 2017 and 2019.

### **NSCI India Snooker Open Crown 2023**

- ★ Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB's) Laxman Rawat 'Boulkline' emerged winner at the NSCI All India Snooker Open.
- ★ Laxman defeated PSPB challenger Aditya Mehta (9-6) in a best-of-17-frame final.
- ★ The NSCI Snooker Open Crown is a snooker tournament organised by the National Sports Club of India (NSCI).
- ★ The tournament is open to players from all over India and consists of a best-of-17-frames final.
- ★ The tournament is considered a major title in Indian snooker and the champion of the tournament is awarded the NSCI Snooker Open Crown.



## Indian Open Badminton

- ★ Shuttler Kunlavut Vitidsarn from Thailand won the India Open Badminton title.
- ★ He defeated World No.1 Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles final of the India Open Badminton Championship 22-20, 10-21 and 21-12 at K.D. Jadhav Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

## Australian Open Tennis

- ★ In the Australian Open Tennis, the Brazilian duo of Luisa Stefani and Rafael Matos won the Mixed Doubles title on 27 January.
- ★ The Brazilian pair defeated the Indian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza 7-6, 6-2 at the Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne.
- ★ Mirza was the first Indian to win a WTA singles title in her hometown Hyderabad in 2005.

## Australian Open 2023

- ★ Novak Djokovic won the Australian Open title for the 10<sup>th</sup> time by defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 7-6, 7-6 in the first Grand Slam Australia Open of 2023.
- ★ With this victory, Novak Djokovic has equalled Spain's Rafael Nadal's record of winning 22 Grand Slam titles.
- ★ Djokovic won the first Australian Open title in the year 2008.
- ★ In the Australian Open 2023, Arina Sabalenka of Belarus has won the women's singles title by defeating Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan.
- ★ Sabalenka has won a Grand title for the first time.
- ★ Sabalenka defeated Elena Rybakina 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the final match.

## ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022

- ★ Swashbuckling India middle-order batsman Suryakumar Yadav, who had an outstanding run in the shortest format in the year 2022, was named the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year by the sport's global governing body.
- ★ Having already recorded a ton earlier in the year, Suryakumar continued his brilliant year after the multi-nation tournament, making his second hundred in T20Is in the year in the bilateral series in New Zealand.
- ★ Yadav also became the top-ranked MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings, achieving a career-high 890 rating points.

## Women's U-19 T20 World Cup

- ★ In the first edition of the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup, India defeated England by seven wickets to win the tournament.
- ★ England had set a target of 69 runs in front of India and Team India achieved it by losing three wickets.
- ★ For the first time the Indian women's team has been successful in winning any ICC tournament.

- ★ Indian player Shweta Sehrawat scored the most runs in the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023. She scored 292 runs in 6 matches.
- ★ Maggie Clarke was the top Wicket-taker in the tournament with 12 wickets in 5 matches.

## Hockey World Cup

- ★ Germany has won the Men's Hockey World Title 2023.
- ★ Germany defeated defending champions Belgium 5-4 in a shootout in the final played at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- ★ With this, Germany has won the World Cup three times, first in 2002 and second in 2006.

## RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

### Top 10 Best-Performing Global Airports of 2022

- ★ Tracking the performance of airports and airlines, Cirium issued a list of the top-performing global airports of 2022 in which Bangalore's Kempegowda International Airport won the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank and Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport acquired the 7<sup>th</sup> spot.
- ★ Kempegowda International Airport saw on-time departure for 84.08% of 201,897 flights and Delhi's IGI witnessed 81.84% on-time departure for 411,205 flights.
- ★ Haneda Airport from Tokyo, Japan secured top position in the list.

### Henley Passport Index 2023

- ★ According to the latest Henley Passport Index, Japan has retained its position as the most favourable passport in the world, which allows visa-free entry to 193 global destinations.
- ★ Japan is at the top for the fifth year in a row.
- ★ Singapore and South Korea are joint second in the ranking, followed by Germany and Spain and then several other European nations.
- ★ India, Mauritania, Uzbekistan secured the 85<sup>th</sup> position with 59 destinations.
- ★ Mauritius and Uzbekistan passports are as powerful as India's passports.
- ★ Compared to last year India's position has improved by two points. India is at 85<sup>th</sup> position in the ranking.

### Global Fire Power Index 2023

- ★ The Global Firepower Report 2023 has ranked India as the 4<sup>th</sup> most powerful army in the world.
- ★ 145 countries are ranked this year in the Global Firepower Report.
- ★ Global Firepower ranks countries based on troop strength, national resources, financial status, logistics and geographic scale.

- ★ The most powerful country in the world is the United States of America, followed by Russia, China and India.
- ★ According to the Global Firepower Military Index 2023, Turkey has once again emerged as the most powerful country in the Middle East and North African region. Turkey has been placed at the 11<sup>th</sup> position in the global ranking.

### **UN Report ‘Global Economic Situation and Prospects-2023’**

- ★ The United Nations has projected India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be 5.8 percent in FY 2023 in the report ‘Global Economic Situation and Prospects-2023’.
- ★ This is slightly lower than the 6.4 percent projected in 2022.
- ★ According to the United Nations, the decrease in India’s GDP growth rate is high interest rate, investment due to global economic slowdown, pressure on exports etc.
- ★ Whereas, the United Nations has projected India’s economic growth to remain ‘strong’ while the outlook for other South Asian countries is ‘more challenging’.

### **Top Global Cities for Women Entrepreneurs**

- ★ Delhi, Bengaluru, and Mumbai are among the top 50 cities providing a beneficial business environment for women entrepreneurs, according to the findings of Dell Technologies’ 2023 Women Entrepreneur Cities (WE Cities) Index.
- ★ According to the report, Delhi has demonstrated significant improvement over its score in 2017 by offering a skilled workforce and cost benefits, making it a preferred city for women-led businesses.
- ★ Mumbai is a new entrant to this list and Bengaluru is one of the top 10 cities in the world which provides accessibility and inclusive policies.
- ★ The report ranked 55 global cities based on their ability to attract and foster high-potential women entrepreneurs (HPWE) who want to start and scale a business.
- ★ This year’s index had 90 indicators across two categories and 5 pillars including an equality sub-pillar.

## **AWARDS & PRIZES**

### **World Habitat Award 2023**

- ★ Odisha government’s slum improvement and land titling programme, JAGA (Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission) has won the UN-Habitat’s World Habitat Awards 2023.
- ★ This year it was awarded the bronze medal.
- ★ This is the second time that the programme has received the UN-Habitat’s World Habitat Award.
- ★ In 2019, the project received the World Habitat Awards for its success in providing land tenure security to slum dwellers.

- ★ This award is given by World Habitat, a United Kingdom -based organization, in partnership with United Nation (UN)-Habitat, in recognition of innovative, outstanding and revolutionary ideas, projects and programmes from across the world.
- ★ The Government of Odisha in May 2018 launched JAGA Mission based on the Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act, 2017.
- ★ It is the world's largest slum titling and upgradation initiative.
- ★ It aims to make Odisha the first state in India to be slum free by the end of 2023.

### **International IACP Awards 2022**

- ★ The US-based international organisation International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has selected Chhattisgarh Police's anti-drug and illicit liquor campaign 'Nijat' for 'Leadership in Crime Prevention' in the institutional category.
- ★ Nijat was launched by the Chhattisgarh Police under the leadership of IPS Officer Santosh Kumar Singh, who launched an intensive drive against drug addiction and illicit liquor in the districts of Koriya, Rajnandgaon and presently Korba.
- ★ Under this campaign, a comprehensive awareness campaign is also being run among the people against drugs from city to village.
- ★ The campaign undertook to end the illegal trade of illegal drugs, narcotics and alcohol as well as prevent its smuggling.
- ★ IACP is the world's largest and most influential professional association for police leaders.

### **'Eat Right Station' with a 5-Star Rating Certification by FSSAI**

- ★ The Varanasi Cantt Railway Station of the Indian Railways has been awarded the 5-star 'Eat Right Station' certification for providing high quality nutritious food to the passengers.
- ★ The 'Eat Right Station' certification is provided by FSSAI to railway stations which set the standard in providing safe and nutritious food to the passengers.
- ★ This certificate is awarded based on the findings of an FSSAI-empanelled third-party audit agency with a rating of 1 to 5.
- ★ The 4-star rating indicates full compliance by the station to provide safe and hygienic food to the passengers.
- ★ This certification is part of the 'Eat Right India' initiative.

### **Odakkuzhal Award**

- ★ Writer Ambikasuthan Mangad has been selected for Odakkuzhal Award 2022 for his collection of short stories titled Pranavayu.
- ★ The award consists of ₹30,000, a citation, and a plaque.
- ★ Instituted by the Guruvayurappan Trust, the award is being given for the best collection of short stories in Malayalam.

- ★ The award will be presented on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Mahakavi G. Sankara Kurup, who established the Guruvayurappan Trust, at the Ernakulam Samastha Kerala Sahithya Parishad building here.
- ★ Literary critic M. Leelavathi will present the award to Ambikasuthan Mangad.

### **‘Best Police Units’ Award**

- ★ Nagpur, Jalna district police and Nagpur city police in Maharashtra have bagged the ‘Best Police Unit’ awards for 2021 in the state under different classes for maintaining law and order, use of modern technology, evolving community policing and administration.
- ★ The Jalna police got the award in ‘Class A’ and the Nagpur police in ‘Class B’, as per the winners announced by Additional Director General of Police (law and order) Kulwant Sarangal.
- ★ Police units with less than 6,100 Indian Penal Code cases are grouped in ‘Class A’, while those with more than 6,100 IPC cases are grouped in ‘Class B’, according to a police circular.

### **Award for Global Leadership**

- ★ Chief Justice of India Dr. DY Chandrachud was conferred as the 2022 recipient of ‘Award for Global Leadership’.
- ★ The award was given by the Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession.
- ★ Dhananjaya Yashwant Chandrachud is an Indian judge who is currently serving as the 50<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of India.
- ★ He is the former Ex-Officio Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority.
- ★ He is also the former Chief Justice of Allahabad Highcourt and former judge of Bombay High Court.

### **Oscars 2023**

- ★ Vivek Agnihotri’s film ‘The Kashmir Files’ has been shortlisted for Oscars 2023.
- ★ Actors Anupam Kher, Mithun Chakraborty, Darshan Kumar and Pallavi Joshi are also shortlisted for the best actor category.
- ★ Originally made in Kannada with a budget of less than ₹16 crore, ‘Kantara’ went on to become one of the highest-grossing Kannada films with ₹400 crore at the box office.
- ★ Marathi films Me Vasantao, Tujhysa Sathi Khai Hi, Kannada film ‘Vikrant Rona’ and R Madhavan’s ‘Rocketry: The Nambi Effect’ have also been shortlisted for Oscars 2023.

### **Golden Globe Awards 2023**

- ★ Indian film RRR’s super hit song Natu Natu has won the prestigious Golden Globe award for Best Original Song.
- ★ The history creating track from the director SS Rajamouli’s blockbuster movie is composed by MM Keeravani.
- ★ The singers are Kaala Bhairava and Rahul Sipligunj.

- ★ 'Naatu Naatu', which became an anthem of sorts for the Rajamouli fans is a dance number featuring Jr NTR and Ram Charan.
- ★ It created waves for its elaborate choreography and musical storytelling.
- ★ The historical epic, RRR has also been nominated in the Best Non-English Language Film category at the 80<sup>th</sup> Golden Globes. The awards are considered as a precursor for the Oscars.

### **Federal Bank Literary Award 2022**

- ★ Renowned author K Venu was awarded the Federal Bank Literary Award 2022 for his autobiography 'Oarnavashanthinte Katha'.
- ★ Mr. Venu received the award from Balagopal Chandrasekhar, Chairman and Independent Director of Federal Bank, at a special event organised as part of the Kerala Literature Festival.
- ★ This is the first literary award instituted by the Federal Bank.

### **'Golden Kailasha' Award**

- ★ A Rajasthani film 'Nanera' directed by Dipankar Prakash was awarded the 'Golden Kailasha' award for the best film at the Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival.
- ★ 'Nanera' has also received the award for Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Editing.
- ★ Under the award for the best film, 'Nanera' was given a trophy and a cash prize of one lakh rupees.
- ★ The eighth edition of the film festival was organised in Aurangabad from 11 January to 15 January 2023.
- ★ Akshata Pandavapura of Kannada film 'Koli Isru' (Chicken Curry) won the Best Child Artist and Best Actress award.
- ★ Jeetu Kamal was awarded the best actor award for the Bengali film 'Aparajito' at the film festival.

### **Miss Universe 2022**

- ★ America's R'Bonnie Gabriel won the Miss Universe 2022 title at the 71<sup>st</sup> Miss Universe Pageant.
- ★ Amanda Dudamel of Venezuela was declared the first runner up while Anderina Martinez of Dominican Republic became the second runner up.
- ★ R Bonnie Gabriel is a model, fashion designer and sewing instructor. She is the first American of Filipino descent to win Miss USA.
- ★ Divita Rai took part from India, who could only reach the semi-finals.
- ★ The 71<sup>st</sup> Miss Universe pageant was held in the city of New Orleans in the US state of Louisiana.

### **Bahrain's Isa Award for Service to Humanity**

- ★ Himalayan Cataract Project Co-Founder and noted Nepali ophthalmologist Dr Sanduk Ruit has won the Isa Award-2021-2022 for Service to Humanity, a top civilian award of Bahrain.
- ★ The award carries a cash prize of US\$1 million, a certificate of merit and a gold medallion.
- ★ Dr. Ruit is a pioneer in providing high quality microsurgical procedures in remote eye camps.



- ★ He has been instrumental in making modern eye care affordable and accessible to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- ★ He is a recipient of the Padma Shri award by the Government of India, the National Order of Merit of Bhutan as well as the Ramon Magsaysay Award.
- ★ The Government of Australia conferred on him 'The Order of Australia' in 2007.

### **Sustainable Greenfield Airport Award**

- ★ GMR Goa International Airport (GGIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure has won the 'Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport' award.
- ★ It was awarded under aviation sustainability and environment at ASSOCHAM's 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference-cum-Awards for Civil Aviation 2023.
- ★ The award was presented for 'excellent initiatives' taken by GGIAL in implementing sustainability as one of the core concepts.
- ★ During the conference, the Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia presented the award to the senior officials from GGIAL in the presence of industry dignitaries and participants.
- ★ The forum recognizes the companies engaged in civil aviation initiatives that adopt best practices and technological advancement in their daily operations.

### **Most Eminent Scientist of the Year 2022**

- ★ R. Vishnu Prasad has been conferred with the most prestigious scientific honour Indian Achievers Award for the year 2022.
- ★ It was awarded by Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.
- ★ The award is given for outstanding contributions in various fields including culture, science, sports and innovation.
- ★ Vishnu Prasad, who has contributed to smart cities, solid waste management, large scale water treatment, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, was selected by a jury headed by Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra.

### **Subhash Chandra Bose Disaster Management Award-2023**

- ★ Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and Lunglei Fire Station (LFS) Mizoram selected for Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023.
- ★ It was given for excellence in disaster management for the year 2023 on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23 January.
- ★ It is to recognize and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.
- ★ OSDMA was established in 1999 after the huge cyclone tragedy in Odisha.
- ★ OSDMA had worked effectively during various cyclones like Hudhud (2014), Fani (2019), Amphan (2020) and Odisha flood (2020).

- ★ Lunglei Fire Station efficiently and effectively controlled the massive fire that broke out in the uninhabited forest areas surrounding Lunglei town on 24 April 2021.

### **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2023**

- ★ President of India, Droupadi Murmu conferred the 'Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar' instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to 11 exceptional children on 23 January 2023.
- ★ This year the award has been given to 11 children from 11 States/UTs, who represent the diversity of the nation for their exceptional achievements.
- ★ This year's awardees include one in the category of bravery and social service, two in the category of innovation, three in sports and four in art and culture.
- ★ Out of 11 awardees, 5 are girls and 6 are boys.
- ★ Smriti Zubin Irani also released a book 'Young Heroes of India' on Bal Veer during the ceremony, who presented the first copy to the President of India.

### **ICC Cricketer of the Year 2022 Awards**

- ★ England Test captain Ben Stokes and all-rounder Nat Sciver have won ICC cricketer of the year 2022 awards.
- ★ All-rounder Stokes was named the Men's Test Cricketer of the Year, while Sciver won the Rachael Hayhoe Flint Trophy for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year.
- ★ Sciver is also named Women's one-day international (ODI) Cricketer of the Year.
- ★ Babar Azam has been given the Men's ODI Player of the Year award (Sobers Trophy).

### **Green Railway Station Certificate**

- ★ Visakhapatnam Railway Station under East Coast Railway has been awarded the 'Green Railway Station Certificate' with the highest Platinum rating by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) for adopting green concepts.
- ★ Visakhapatnam has joined some of the major railway stations in the country to receive this certificate. Visakhapatnam has scored 82 out of 100 in six categories of environment.
- ★ The Green Railway Station Rating System has been developed by the Environment Directorate of Indian Railways in collaboration with IGBC.
- ★ The system addresses national priorities such as water conservation, waste management, energy efficiency, limited use of fossil fuels, minimal reliance on the use of natural materials and health and well-being of users.

### **ESAF Bank Bags Inclusive Finance India Award 2022**

- ★ ESAF Small Finance Bank has bagged the prestigious Inclusive Finance India Awards 2022 for its contributions to advancing the goal of financial inclusion and supporting inclusive growth.
- ★ Paul Thomas, MD and CEO of ESAF Bank, received the award from Anantha Nageshwaran, Chief Economic Advisor at the 19<sup>th</sup> Inclusive Finance India Summit held in New Delhi.

- ★ The Inclusive Finance India Awards is an initiative of ACCESS Development Services constituted in 2009 in partnership with HSBC India.
- ★ The Inclusive Finance India Awards initiative aims to celebrate and encourage deserving institutions to continue to enhance outreach to the poor by way of motivating management.

## **APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

### **Head of the Maharashtra Government Advisory Council**

- ★ The Maharashtra government has appointed Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran as the head of the new Economic Advisory Council of Maharashtra.
- ★ The appointment was announced by the deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in the state Legislative Council in Nagpur.
- ★ The government has set up the Economic Advisory Council, to make Maharashtra a trillion-dollar economy.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of India becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25.
- ★ The Economic Advisory Council will function as a private research organization with focus on issues related to agriculture, banking, engineering and education.

### **Chief Executive Officer of FSSAI**

- ★ G Kamala Vardhana Rao was appointed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- ★ G Kamala Vardhana Rao is a 1990 batch IAS Officer from Kerala cadre.
- ★ He was previously the managing director of the Indian Tourism Development Corporation.
- ★ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been set up under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- ★ FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

### **Chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board**

- ★ Scientist and former Executive Director of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) Dinesh Kumar Shukla assumed the charge as Chairman, AERB on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.
- ★ He has been appointed to this post for a period of three years.
- ★ The regulatory authority of AERB is derived from the rules and notifications promulgated under the Atomic Energy Act and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- ★ The Mission of the AERB is to ensure the use of ionizing radiation and nuclear energy in India does not cause undue risk to the health of people and the environment.

### **Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao Gets the Second Term as NAARM Director**

- ★ Ch Srinivasa Rao assumed charge as director of the National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) for the second term.
- ★ He was selected again by the Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB).
- ★ He has been serving as the Director of the Hyderabad-based NAARM for the last 5 years.
- ★ Before this, he headed several ICAR institutes such as CRIDA (Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture).
- ★ He was on deputation to International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Patancheru from 2006-2008.

### **Secretary General of the Asian Pacific Postal Union**

- ★ Dr Vinay Prakash Singh assumed the charge as the Secretary General of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) on 01 January 2023.
- ★ This is the first time that an Indian is leading an international organization in the postal sector. Dr Singh will remain in office for 4 years.
- ★ Former Member (Personnel), Postal Services Board, Department of Post Dr Vinay Prakash Singh was elected as the Secretary General during the 13<sup>th</sup> APPU Congress held in Bangkok during August-September 2022.
- ★ Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32-member countries of the Asian-Pacific region.
- ★ APPU is the only Union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations.

### **First Women Officer to be appointed in Siachen**

- ★ Fire and Fury Corps Officer Captain Shiva Chauhan became the first woman Officer to be operationally deployed at the highest battleground in Kumar Post on the Siachen glacier.
- ★ The Siachen glacier lies in the Karakoram Range.
- ★ It is 75 km (47 miles) long, which makes it the second longest nonpolar glacier in the world.
- ★ The Siachen Glacier is the highest battleground on earth, where India and Pakistan have fought intermittently since 1984.

### **MD and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank**

- ★ The Centre has appointed Mr. Ajay Kumar Srivastava as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the public sector Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for 3 years.
- ★ He started his banking career as a probationary Officer in 1991 with Allahabad Bank.
- ★ He also served as Director on the Board of Regional Rural Bank in Allahabad Bank.
- ★ After serving for over 27 years, he joined IOB in October 2017.
- ★ He was the only Executive Director in the Bank for about 14 months during 2020-2021.

## Bihar's State Icon

- ★ Folk singer Maithili Thakur was appointed as the state icon for Bihar by the Election Commission (EC).
- ★ She will create awareness among the voters for their participation in the electoral process.
- ★ Recently, she was selected for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar of the Sangeet Natak Akademi for her contribution to the folk music of Bihar.

## Chairman of GJC

- ★ The members of the All India Gem and Jewelry Domestic Council (GJC) elected Sayam Mehra as the Chairman and Rajesh Rokade as the Vice-Chairman of the body for a period of two years (2023-24).
- ★ Saiyam Mehra, known for his vision to set benchmarks in the gold jewellery business, has been associated with GJC for the past several years.
- ★ The board also appointed Rajesh Rokade as the Vice Chairman, who is a thought leader and has been instrumental in promoting GJC initiatives.
- ★ All India Gem and Jewelry Domestic Council is a national trade association for the promotion and development of the gems and jewellery trade across the country.

## Central Government Extends Term of RBI Deputy Governor

- ★ The Central government has extended the tenure of Dr Michael Debabrata Patra as Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for one more year with effect from 15 January 2023.
- ★ Michael Debabrata Patra took over as Deputy Governor of the RBI on 15 January 2020.
- ★ He was an Executive Director of India's central bank before being elevated to the post of Deputy Governor.
- ★ Patra, a career central banker since 1985, has worked in various positions with the Reserve Bank of India.

## MD and CEO of Paytm Payments Bank

- ★ Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) has appointed veteran banker Surinder Chawla as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ The appointment has been approved by the Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years.
- ★ Chawla will replace Paytm Payments Bank CEO Satish Kumar Gupta.
- ★ Prior to joining PPBL, Chawla was working with RBL Bank, where he served as Head of Branch Banking and focused on expanding CASA base, fee revenue and cross-selling across channels.

## Deputy National Security Adviser in National Security Council Secretariat

- ★ Retired director general of the Border Security Force (BSF) Pankaj Kumar Singh was appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat for a period of two years.

- ★ Pankaj Kumar Singh, a 1988 batch IPS Officer of Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed on re-employment contract. He retired as the BSF Chief on 31 December 2022.
- ★ He had earlier served as Inspector General of CRPF in Chhattisgarh and IG (Operations) at CRPF Headquarters in Delhi.

### Lieutenant Governor of Maryland

- ★ Hyderabad-born Aruna Miller has become the first Indian-American politician to be elected as the lieutenant governor of the US state of Maryland.
- ★ Aruna Miller was sworn in as the 10<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant Governor of the State of Maryland.
- ★ Miller has been a two-term member of the Maryland House of Delegates from 2010 to 2018.
- ★ Aruna Miller got US citizenship in the year 2000.
- ★ Maryland is a state in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

### Director of National Health Authority

- ★ Praveen Sharma has been appointed as the Director in the National Health Authority (Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ★ Sharma has been appointed to the post under the Central Staffing Scheme for a period of five years.
- ★ Sharma is a 2005 batch Indian Defense Service of Engineers (IDSE) Officer.
- ★ The National Health Authority implements India's Public Health Insurance Scheme called "Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)".
- ★ NHA was established to implement PM-JAY at the national level.

### CEO of Vedanta Cairn Oil and Gas

- ★ Cairn Oil and Gas, a Vedanta group company appointed Nick Walker as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ Prior to this appointment, Nick Walker was President and CEO of Lundin Energy, one of Europe's leading independent E&P companies.
- ★ Walker has more than 30 years of international experience, serving as a technology, commercial and executive Officer in companies such as BP, Talisman Energy and Africa Oil.

### Acting Chairperson of CCI

- ★ The Central government has extended the tenure of Sangeeta Verma as the acting Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which has been functioning without a full-time Chairperson for three months now.
- ★ She was initially appointed as acting Chairperson of CCI in October 2022 for 3 months or until a new chairperson was appointed after the previous chairperson Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta demitted office.
- ★ At present CCI is working with only 2 members.



- ★ Dr. Sangeeta Verma, a 1981 batch of the Indian Economic Service (IES).

### **General Manager of Central Railway**

- ★ Naresh Lalwani appointed as the new General Manager of Central Railway.
- ★ He replaced Ashok Kumar Mishra, General Manager, Western Railway, who was also holding the additional charge of Central Railway.
- ★ He is a senior Indian Railway Service of Engineering Officer of 1985 batch.
- ★ Prior to taking over as General Manager, Central Railway, he was serving as Senior Deputy General Manager and Chief Vigilance Officer, Western Railway.

### **Chief Technology and Operations Officer of Standard Chartered Bank**

- ★ Standard Chartered Bank has appointed Sarabjit Anand as the Chief Technology and Operations Officer (CTOO) for India and South Asia.
- ★ Mr. SV Shivshanker has been appointed by the United Kingdom (UK)-based bank as Head of Human Resources for India and South Asia.
- ★ Mr. Sarabjit joined Standard Chartered Bank in 1991 in India.
- ★ Recently, he was the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Singapore and ASEAN markets.

### **President Election of The Czech Republic**

- ★ In the Czech Republic, retired army general Petr Pavel won the Presidential election, defeating billionaire businesswoman Andrej Babis.
- ★ Retired general Petr Pavel will replace controversial incumbent President Milos Zeman.
- ★ During the election, General Pavel got 58.2 percent of the votes while Andrzej Babis got 42.8 percent.
- ★ General Powell has been Chairman of the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

### **Vice-chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of FAO's ITWG**

- ★ During the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group (ITWG) on Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) in Rome, Italy, India was elected as Vice-Chair and represented the Asia and Pacific region.
- ★ The ITWG established by the Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO's) Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), functions to review technical issues, advise and make recommendations to the Commission and further implement the Commission's program related to AnGR at the global level.
- ★ In the 12<sup>th</sup> session of ITWG, implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, monitoring of AnGR diversity, and preparing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Country Report were reviewed.

## **BOOKS & AUTHORS**

### **Breaking Barriers: The Story of a Dalit Chief Secretary**

- ★ 'Breaking Barriers: The Story of a Dalit Chief Secretary', is a new book by former IAS Officer Kaki Madhava Rao,
- ★ The book examines the inner workings of the civil service at the grassroots level and throws insight into micro policies and governance.
- ★ The book was written by Rao, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official from the 1962 batch who retired as the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The book was published by Emesco Books Private Limited.
- ★ Rao's rural Andhra Pradesh background is covered in 'Village Days', which summarizes the entire book.
- ★ Rao's exposure to the national stage and development into an adult is described in depth in chapters two through five.

### **Shashi Tharoor New Book**

- ★ Parliamentarian and author, Shashi Tharoor's latest book Ambedkar: A Life was recently launched at the Kitaab Kolkata event organized by Prabha Khaitan Foundation (PKF) at the ITC Sonar presented by Shree Cement.
- ★ The event was attended by young and old bibliophiles, members of Ehsaas Women and FICCI FLO.
- ★ Kitab is a signature event of the Prabha Khaitan Foundation conceptualized by Sundeep Bhutoria which provides a forum for writers, poets, intellectuals and thinkers to launch their books and share their thoughts.
- ★ The biography of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is neither the first one nor the last, but Shashi Tharoor's meticulously-researched work adds a new perspective to one of India's most revered icons and an intellectual giant.

### **A Book Titled 'Chief Minister's Diary No. 1'**

- ★ Former Chief Justice of India and Rajya Sabha member Ranjan Gogoi released the book 'Chief Minister's Diary No. 1', a diary of Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma.
- ★ The diary has been written by the CM of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma himself.
- ★ Complete details of the first year of CM Biswa's tenure have been given in this diary.
- ★ The book describes day-to-day development activities as Chief Minister in this diary.
- ★ Hemant Biswa Sarma would also bring out further editions of his diary in the next four years.

## DEFENCE

### First 3D-Printed Dwelling Unit for Soldiers in Ahmedabad

- ★ The Indian Army inaugurated its first 3-D Printed House Dwelling Unit (with Ground plus One configuration) for soldiers at Ahmedabad Cantonment, Gujarat, India.
- ★ The dwelling unit has been constructed by the Military Engineering Services (MES) in collaboration with MiCoB Pvt Ltd incorporating the latest 3D Rapid Construction Technology.
- ★ The Construction work of the dwelling unit measuring 71 sqm with garage space was completed in just 12 weeks by utilizing the 3D printed foundation.
- ★ The disaster-resilient structures comply with Zone-3 earthquake specifications and green building norms.
- ★ The 3-D printed houses are symbolic of the modern-day rapid construction efforts to cater to the growing accommodation requirements of the Armed Forces personnel.

### Bilateral Air Exercise 'Veer Guardian-2023'

- ★ Exercise 'Veer Guardian 2023' between the Indian Air Force and the Japanese Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) will be conducted from 12 January to 26 January 2023, at Hyakuri air base and Iruma air base in Japan.
- ★ The aim of the exercise is to strengthen mutual understanding and defence ties between the two air forces.
- ★ The India will be represented by a contingent of around 150 personnel. India's 1 IL-78 mid-air refuelling and 4 Su-30MKI fighter aircraft will participate in it.
- ★ 4 F-15s and 4 F-2 fighter jets will be involved in this bilateral exercise from the Japanese side.

### Bilateral Naval Exercise 'Varuna' – 2023

- ★ The 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the bilateral naval exercise "Varuna" between India and France began at the western seaboard.
- ★ The exercise will be conducted for five days from 16 January to 20 January 2023.
- ★ The 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the exercise will involve Indian Navy's indigenous Guided Missile Stealth Destroyer Ship INS Chennai, Guided Missile Frigate INS Teg Nauka, Maritime Patrol Aircraft P-8I and Dornier, integral helicopters and MiG29.
- ★ The French Navy will be represented by aircraft carriers Charles de Gaulle, FS Forbin and Provence yachts, support ship FS Marne and maritime patrol aircraft Atlantique.
- ★ Enhanced air defence exercises, tactical manoeuvres, surface firing, replenishment and other maritime operational activities will be conducted during the exercise.

### Kalashnikov AK-203 Assault Rifles in India

- ★ The manufacturing of Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles has recently started in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh by an Indo-Russian joint venture.

- ★ Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited plans to ensure 100 percent production of AK-203 rifles in India.
- ★ India is the first country to start production of the world-famous brand AK-200-series assault rifles.
- ★ The first batch of 7.62 mm Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles has been produced by the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.
- ★ The AK-203 assault rifle is considered to be the latest and most advanced version of the AK-47 rifle.
- ★ It is a 7.62 × 39mm variant from the AK-100 rifle family.

### **‘Vagir’ Inducted into Navy**

- ★ The fifth Kalvari class submarine “Vagir” will be commissioned by the Indian Navy on 23 January 2023.
- ★ The 6 Kalvari class submarines are being built in India by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai in collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.
- ★ Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar will attend the event as the Chief Guest.
- ★ It is capable of attacking underwater or on the surface with torpedoes and tube-launched anti-ship missiles.

### **Maritime Exercise TROPEX 2023**

- ★ A maritime exercise called TROPEX is conducted by the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean region.
- ★ TROPEX-2023 is being organised over a period of three months from January to March.
- ★ The TROPEX exercise is held once every two years.
- ★ Apart from the Indian Navy the exercise will involve their participation with assets from the Indian Army, Air Force and Coast Guard.
- ★ The aim of the exercise is to test the combat readiness of the Navy and safeguard national interests in the maritime domain and promote stability and peace in the Indian Ocean region.

### **‘AMPEX’ 2023**

- ★ The biggest tri-services exercise ‘AMPEX’ 2023 was conducted from 17 January 17 to 22 January near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ Troops of the Indian Army, warships of the Indian Navy and aircraft of the Air Force participated during the five-day exercise.
- ★ The aim of this war exercise was to showcase India’s capabilities to protect the territorial integrity of its areas including better coordination between the three services and enhance joint war fighting capabilities.
- ★ The exercise included Air Entry of Naval Marine Commandos, Air Entry of Army Special Forces, Naval Gunfire Support, Follow up operations like landing of troops from land, air and water.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### DRDO Celebrated its 65<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day

- ★ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) celebrated its 65<sup>th</sup> foundation day on 01 January 2023.
- ★ It is a premier defence research and development agency under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- ★ It is working on several cutting-edge military technology areas, including aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, etc.
- ★ DRDO's first project for the Indian military was in surface-to-air missiles (SAM) known as Project Indigo.
- ★ It aims to make India self-reliant in critical defence technology and systems.

### Gaganyaan to be launched by 2024

- ★ Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh announced that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is ready to launch India's first Atmanirbhar human flight 'Gaganyaan' by the year 2024.
- ★ Gaganyaan' would be India's first human flight and it will also be an excellent symbol of self-reliance as it will increase the confidence of the nation.
- ★ The 1<sup>st</sup> launch will be unmanned, this experiment will be done to mark the routes because if the 'Gaganyaan' rocket goes into space then it should also return safely in the same way.
- ★ In the 2<sup>nd</sup> launch also, there will be no humans instead, a robot will be there as a human replica.
- ★ After the complete success of 2 tests, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> launch humans will be sent into space.

### World's First Vaccine for Honeybees

- ★ The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved the world's first insect vaccine, which has been developed to protect bees from a devastating bacterial disease.
- ★ US researchers have developed a vaccine to target a disease called American foulbrood.
- ★ The disease is caused by Paenibacillus larval bacteria and once it reaches a bee population, it has the potential to completely destroy the colony.
- ★ Dalil Freitak of the University of Helsinki and his colleagues discovered an important egg yolk protein called vitellogenin.
- ★ This fundamental discovery laid the groundwork for a new type of insect vaccine, and the team's first target was honey bees.

### Successful Training Launch of Prithvi-2

- ★ Prithvi-2 was successfully trained from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Odisha coast.

- ★ Prithvi-II is an indigenously developed surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) with a range of approximately 250-350 km and it can carry one ton payload.
- ★ The Prithvi-II class is a single-stage liquid-fueled missile with a payload of 500–1000 kg.
- ★ The state-of-the-art missile uses an advanced inertial guidance system with an efficient trajectory to hit its target.

### **DRDO Develops Unmanned Vehicle**

- ★ Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has developed an unmanned aerial vehicle with the aim of targeting logistics operations on the Himalayan border.
- ★ This aircraft has been displayed by DRDO at the 108<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress held in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- ★ This UAV can fly with a load of 5 to 25 kg and is also capable of dropping bombs in enemy territory.
- ★ The aircraft can conduct autonomous missions within a radius of five kilometres and automatically return to the origin after delivering the cargo to the designated location.

### **CMPDIL Invents New Dust Control Technology**

- ★ Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL), Ranchi (a consultancy subsidiary of Coal India Limited) has invented a ‘System and Method for Controlling Generation and Movement of Fugitive Dust’.
- ★ It is to minimize and control the fugitive dust in mining areas.
- ★ The system can be used in mines, thermal power plants, railway sidings, ports, and construction sites wherein coal or other minerals/fugitive materials are stored under the open sky.
- ★ Apart from reducing dust generation from open sources, it will also provide noise attenuation.
- ★ The invention relates to the synchronized application of windbreak (WB) and vertical greenery system (VGS) for reducing the generation and dispersion of fugitive dust.

### **Indigenous Mobile Operating System**

- ★ An IIT Madras incubated firm has developed an indigenous mobile operating system ‘Bharos’ that can benefit India’s 100 crore mobile phone users.
- ★ The software, named ‘Bharos’, can be installed on commercial off-the-shelf handsets.
- ★ It was developed by JandK Operations Pvt Ltd (JandKops), a company set up by the IIT Madras Innovative Technologies Foundation.
- ★ It provides a secure environment for the users and is a significant contribution towards ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’.
- ★ It provides access to trusted apps from organisation-specific Private App Store Services (PASS).
- ★ A PASS provides access to a curated list of apps that have been thoroughly tested and have met certain security and privacy standards of organisations.



## World's First Photonic based Quantum Computer

- ★ Canadian Prime Minister (PM) Mr. Justin Trudeau has announced a new federal investment of 40 million Canadian dollars (\$32 million), which will enable Xanadu Quantum Technologies Inc.
- ★ It is a Toronto-based Canadian quantum computing company to build and commercialize the world's first photonic-based, fault-tolerant quantum computer.
- ★ The Project is supported through the Canadian government's Strategic Innovation Fund with 177.8 million Canadian dollars (\$142 million).
- ★ The Project is expected to create 530 new highly skilled positions in the high-tech and quantum computing fields.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Global Family Day

- ★ Global Family Day is celebrated every year on 01 January to start the year positively and to promote peace, love and unity among people.
- ★ The Aim of the day is to strengthen familial ties.
- ★ The day creates a sense of unity and brotherhood among nations and cultures through families.
- ★ In 1999, the United Nations and its member states celebrated the Global Day of Families for the first time.

### World Braille Day

- ★ World Braille Day is celebrated every year on 04 January and it also marks the birth anniversary of Braille's inventor Louis Braille.
- ★ It was Louis Braille who gave birth to the Braille script, due to which today blind people are also able to read and write and are moving forward.
- ★ The day also recognizes that people with visual impairments are equally entitled to the same standards of human rights as all others.
- ★ World Braille Day was celebrated for the first time on 04 January 2019.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly decided to celebrate the birthday of Louis Braille, the father of Braille script.

### World Day of War Orphans

- ★ World Day of War Orphans is observed every year on 06 January.
- ★ Children who lose their parents in sudden, violent events like war are forced to live with a surviving relative or into the foster care system, where they must deal with horrible living conditions including starvation and disease.
- ★ About half of the casualties in wars over the past few centuries were civilians, a percentage that gradually rose until 2001.

- ★ According to UNICEF, there were almost 140 million orphans worldwide as of 2015.

## World Hindi Day

- ★ World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 10 January.
- ★ It is celebrated with the aim of spreading awareness about Hindi language among the people all over the world and presenting Hindi as an international language.
- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is 'Making Hindi the language of public opinion, without forgetting the importance of their mother tongue'.
- ★ The Hindi language derives its name from the Persian word 'Hind', which means 'the land of the Indus River'.
- ★ It is the official language of India, English being the other official language.
- ★ Hindi is also a language included in the Eighth Schedule.
- ★ According to Article 343, the official language of the Union will be Hindi in Devanagari script.

## National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- ★ National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed every year on 11 January.
- ★ The Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which was passed in 2000, was the first federal statute to address contemporary slavery.
- ★ The resolution designating January 11 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was approved by the US Senate in 2007.
- ★ The entire month of January 2010 was devoted by President Obama to raising awareness and preventing human trafficking.

## National Startup Day

- ★ National Startup Day is celebrated every year on 16 December.
- ★ In the year 2022, India celebrated the first 'National Startup Day'.
- ★ No specific theme has yet been chosen for the celebration of this day.
- ★ In order to promote and encourage new businesses in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on 15 January 2022 that every year 16 January will be celebrated as 'National Startup Day'.
- ★ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have organised 'Startup India Innovation Week' from 10 January to 16 January.

## Indian Army Day

- ★ Indian Army Day 2023 is observed every year on the 15 January.
- ★ One million Indians volunteered to serve in the British Army during World War I and almost 90,000 of them died in the war.

- ★ Although the British military continued to be 'Indianized' until after the country gained its independence, the ultimate transfer took place on 15 January 1949, and this is the day we commemorate.

### **National Disaster Response Force**

- ★ The Raising Day of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is celebrated every year on 19 January.
- ★ 18<sup>th</sup> edition of Raising Day of NDRF has been celebrated on 2023.
- ★ NDRF was established in the year 2006 under the 'Disaster Management Act, 2005' with 6 battalions.
- ★ The objective is to provide prompt assistance in natural and man-made calamities.
- ★ It will also establish coordination between different security agencies involved in relief and rescue operations.

### **International Education Day**

- ★ International Day of Education is celebrated every year on 24 January.
- ★ It is to spread awareness about education globally and to make education accessible to all.
- ★ The theme of the International Day of Education for the year 2023 is 'To Invest in People, Prioritise Education'.
- ★ This year is the fourth edition of International Education Day.
- ★ UNESCO has decided to dedicate the International Day of Education for the year 2023 to Afghan girls and women.

### **National Girl Child Day**

- ★ National Girl Child Day is celebrated every year on 24 January.
- ★ National Women Child Day aims to highlight the prejudice and injustice towards girls.
- ★ The day also encourages awareness of women's rights in our country.
- ★ The main objective of this day is to change the attitude of the society towards the girl child, reduce female feticide and create awareness about the declining sex ratio.
- ★ An event is being organised with the theme 'Self Defence Training for Girls'.

### **International Customs Day**

- ★ International Customs Day is celebrated every year on 26 January.
- ★ The role and contribution of customs agencies is remembered on this day.
- ★ The day marks the contribution of officers as well as their challenging working conditions.
- ★ Customs agencies play an important role in the smooth flow of goods across borders.
- ★ The theme of 2023 International Customs Day is 'Nurturing the next generation: promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional pride in Customs'.

- ★ The day was first established in 1953.

## National Voter's Day

- ★ 13<sup>th</sup> 'National Voters' Day' is being celebrated on 25 January 2023.
- ★ The theme of this year's National Voters' Day (NVD) is 'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure'.
- ★ The main objective of National Voters' Day is to create electoral awareness among the citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.
- ★ It was started in the year 2011 in the context of the establishment of the Election Commission of India.
- ★ The Election Commission came into existence on 25 January 1950, on the eve of the first Republic Day of Independent India.

## World Leprosy Day

- ★ World Leprosy Day 2023 is observed every year on 30 January.
- ★ The disease is also called Hansen's disease, named after the Norwegian doctor Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who is known for identifying the bacteria that causes Leprosy.
- ★ In order to honor Mahatma Gandhi's unwavering compassion for those suffering from the disease, the day is marked in India on January 30, the anniversary of his passing.
- ★ People who are infected are frequently subjected to prejudice and exclusion, which prevents them from receiving the proper medical attention, treatment and even basic human rights.

## OBITUTARY NEWS

### Brazil's Legendary Footballer Pele

- ★ Brazilian football legend Pele, who won a record three World Cups has passed away. He was at the age of 82.
- ★ He died of multiple organ failure as a result of progression of colon cancer.
- ★ He is credited with scoring a world record 1,281 goals in 1,363 appearances during a career spanning 21 years, including 77 goals in 92 appearances for his country.
- ★ He was the only player to win the World Cup three times, lifting the trophy in 1958, 1962 and 1970, Pele was named FIFA's Player of the Century in 2000.

### Eminent Scholar and Padma Shri Awardee Sribhashyam Vijayasarathi

- ★ Veteran Sanskrit scholar, Sribhashyam Vijayasarathi, who is known for his poetry, has passed away in Telangana. He was at the age of 86.
- ★ He was an Indian author, Sanskrit grammarian and Philosopher.
- ★ He has written over 100 books in Sanskrit and Telugu.

- ★ He introduced 'Seesam', a Telugu poetic form and he is the first man who introduced the epistolary form.
- ★ In 2020, he was honoured with India's highly prestigious award Padma Shri for his excellent work in the field of Literature and Education.

### **Pritzker-Winning Japanese Architect Arata Isozaki**

- ★ A Pritzker-winning Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki Passed away in Japan's Southern Island of Okinawa. He was at the age of 91.
- ★ Arata Isozaki was a Japanese architect, urban designer and theorist.
- ★ He was awarded the RIBA Gold Medal.
- ★ Isozaki won the Pritzker Architecture Prize, internationally the highest honour in the field, in 2019.
- ★ He is known as a post-modern giant who blended the culture and history of the East and the West in his designs.

### **NASA's Apollo 7 Astronaut Walter Cunningham**

- ★ Walter Cunningham, the last surviving astronaut from the first successful crewed space mission in NASA's Apollo program passed away. He was at the age of 90.
- ★ Walter Cunningham was the last surviving astronaut of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Apollo mission, the first successful manned space mission crew.
- ★ Cunningham was the lunar module pilot on the space flight, which launched from Cape Kennedy Air Force Station, Florida.
- ★ Walter Cunningham was one of the crew members of the Apollo-7 mission sent to space by NASA in 1968.
- ★ The mission was for a total of 11 days and its launch was telecast live.

### **Grammy-Winning Singer Anita Pointer**

- ★ Grammy-winning American singer and songwriter Anita Marie Pointer Passed away in Los Angeles. He was at the age of 74.
- ★ She was best known as a founding member of the vocal group the Pointer Sisters.
- ★ She was also the lead singer on many of their other hits, including 'Yes We Can Can', 'Fire', 'Slow Hand' and 'I'm So Excited'.
- ★ In 1987 Anita released her first solo album named, 'Love for What It Is', which got the single Overnight Success.
- ★ The Group's first musical album was Fairytale which won a Grammy Award for Best Country Vocal Performance.

### **Former Indian footballer Shyamal Ghosh**

- ★ Former Indian football player Shyamal Ghosh passed away in Kolkata, West Bengal (WB). He was at the age of 71.
- ★ Ghosh made his international debut in the Merdeka Cup against Thailand in 1974 and was part of the Indian team in the 1974 Asian Games.
- ★ At the domestic level, he represented both East Bengal and Mohun Bagan, winning several trophies, including Kolkata League, IFA Shield, Durand Cup, and Rovers Cup
- ★ He also found success in the Santosh Trophy, representing Bengal 5 times and winning the title thrice.
- ★ Ghosh was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award by East Bengal Club in 2016.

### **Veteran Sinologist Janaki Ballabh**

- ★ Veteran Sinologist Janaki Ballabh passed away. He was at the age of 94.
- ★ He was closely associated with India's Independence movement.
- ★ He was married to Shayma Ballabh, who worked as the first Hindi announcer at Radio Beijing.
- ★ He was also the first Indian to have been given long-term residency in China along with his wife.
- ★ He spent 5 years in Beijing working for Foreign Languages Press and stayed put in the country until 1961.
- ★ In 1961, he was given the Peace and Friendship Award by the then-Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai.

### **Former West Bengal Governor Keshri Nath Tripathi**

- ★ Senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and former West Bengal governor, Keshari Nath Tripathi passed away. He was at the age of 88.
- ★ A senior advocate of Allahabad high court, Tripathi served as a member of the UP Legislative Assembly six times.
- ★ On 14 July 2014, Tripathi was appointed as the governor of West Bengal. He had additional charge of Bihar as governor twice and additional charge as governor of Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- ★ Tripathi was also a senior advocate at the Allahabad High Court.

### **World's Oldest Person Lucile Randon**

- ★ World's oldest person, Lucile Randon passed away. He was at the age of 118.
- ★ She was born on 11 February 1904 in Southern France.
- ★ Guinness World Records had officially recognised her status in April 2022.

### **Renowned Assamese Poet Nilamani Phukan**

- ★ Renowned Assamese poet and Jnanpith awardee Nilamani Phukan passed away at Guwahati. He was at the age of 89.
- ★ He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981 for his poetry collection 'Kabita'.



- ★ He was conferred with the 56<sup>th</sup> Jnanpith Award 2020.
- ★ The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri in 1990.
- ★ His major works include Juria Henu Naami Aahe E Nodiyadi, Kabita and Gulapi Jamur Lagna.

### **Former Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Harjeet Singh Arora**

- ★ Former Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Harjeet Singh Arora passed away. He was at the age of 61.
- ★ Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora was commissioned as a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force (IAF) in December 1981.
- ★ He served as the former Vice Chief of the Air Staff from 01 October 2019 till 30 June 2021.
- ★ He was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in January 2011 and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in January 2020.

### **Renowned Architect Dr. B.V. Doshi**

- ★ Noted architect and Padma Bhushan awardee Balkrishna Doshi passed away. He was at the age of 95.
- ★ Doshi's major projects include CEPT University and Kanoria Kala Kendra in Ahmedabad, Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore and 'Aranya Low-Cost Housing', a township for low- and middle-income families in Indore.
- ★ Doshi was awarded the prestigious Aga Khan Award in the year 1995 for the architecture of 'Aranya Low-Cost Housing' township.
- ★ He was awarded the most prestigious award in the field of architecture "Pritzker" in the year 2018. He was the first Indian to receive this honour.
- ★ Doshi was also awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award in the year 2020.

### **Veteran Actress and Former MP Jamuna**

- ★ Veteran film actress and former Lok Sabha MP from Rajahmundry, Jamuna passed away in Hyderabad. She was at the age of 86.
- ★ She acted in about 200 films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi.
- ★ Started her career as a stage artist, debuting with Puttillu on Silver Screen.
- ★ She won the Lok Sabha from Rajahmundry in 1989 from the Congress.
- ★ She was identified with her role in 'Satyabhama' and became a household name for the mythological character.

### **Former Indian and Iron Man of India Sabir Ali**

- ★ Former Indian decathlete and Iron Man of India Sabir Ali passed away in New Delhi. He was at the age of 67.

- ★ He was an athlete who won 10 gold medals in the decathlon, including at the 1981 Asian Athletics Championships held in Tokyo, Japan.
- ★ He became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian to win the Asian Athletics Championships decathlon crown after VS Chauhan (1974) and Suresh Babu (1975).
- ★ He became the Captain of the Indian Athletics Team in the Asian track and field athletic meet held in Kuwait in 1983.
- ★ He was conferred with the Arjuna award by the President of India Zail Singh and the Bhim award by the government of Haryana in 1981.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Purple Fest Begins in Goa

- ★ Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr Virendra Kumar inaugurated 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity', India's first festival of inclusion, in Goa on 06 January 2023.
- ★ It aims to showcase how we can come together to create a welcoming and inclusive world for everyone.
- ★ Purple Fest will feature a variety of exciting live performances, sports events, grand exhibitions, immersive experience zones, accessible movie screenings and discussions on important topics such as inclusive education, tourism, employment and independent living.
- ★ Purple Fest is the first festival of its kind in Goa.
- ★ It is an inclusive event that aims to highlight how we can work together to make the world a welcoming and inclusive place for all.

