



# Shankar School of Banking

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## APRIL - 2023



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**APRIL – 2023**

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **First State in India to Have 100% Electrified Railway Network**

- ★ Indian Railways has successfully completed 100% electrification of railway network in the state of **Haryana** in March 2023.
- ★ The electrification project covers the existing broad-gauge network of 1,701 route kilometres in Haryana.
- ★ The completion of this project will **reduce the dependence** of Indian Railways on **imported crude oil** and also save foreign exchange.
- ★ Electrification of Railways will help **reduce carbon emissions** and contribute towards the goal of a sustainable and environment-friendly transport system in India.
- ★ Indian Railways is working towards achieving 100% electrification of its railway network in the country to increase efficiency, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote clean energy sources.

### **PAN and Aadhaar Card Linking Deadline Extended**

- ★ The Government has extended the last date for linking Permanent Account Number (PAN) and Aadhaar by 3 months to 30 June 2023, in order to provide some more time to the taxpayers.
- ★ Earlier the last date was 31 March 2023.
- ★ It must be noted that under the provisions of the **Income-tax Act, 1961** (the 'Act') every person who has been allotted a PAN as on July 01, 2017 and is eligible to obtain Aadhaar Number, is required to intimate his Aadhaar to the prescribed authority on or before 31 March 2023, on payment of a prescribed fee.

### **Kangra Tea Gets European GI Tag**

- ★ The **European Commission (EC)** has recently granted **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)** status to **Kangra tea**, a unique variety of tea grown in the **Kangra district** of **Himachal Pradesh** in India.
- ★ PGI status will be effective from 11 April 2023 and will help protect the authenticity and quality of Kangra tea in the European market.
- ★ It was first introduced in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Dr. Jameson, a British civil surgeon who sowed tea seeds in the Kangra Valley.
- ★ In 1882, the Kangra tea garden won a gold medal at the Calcutta Exhibition, further enhancing its prestige.

## PM Modi Flags off Bhopal-New Delhi Vande Bharat Express

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Vande Bharat Express** train service between **Rani Kamalapati Railway Station** in Madhya Pradesh and **Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station** in Delhi.
- ★ The train will cover a distance of 701 kilometres in 7 hours and 30 minutes and will operate on all days except Saturday. It will stop at Veerangana Laxmibai Jhansi, Gwalior, and Agra.
- ★ The Vande Bharat Express is a high-speed train service in India.
- ★ It is the country's first semi-high speed train service, with a maximum speed of **160 km/h**.
- ★ The train was designed and manufactured in India, with 80% of its components being indigenous.

## Eravikulam National Park Gets a Fernarium

- ★ Eravikulam National Park in **Munnar**, Kerala, which is home to the **Nilgiri tahr**, now features a new attraction: a **fernarium** located within the park.
- ★ This is the first instance of a fern collection being established in the hill station, according to officials.
- ★ The fern park is located close to the orchidarium and will be accessible to the public starting from 20 April.
- ★ The Eravikulam National Park is known for its diverse range of flora and fauna, and the introduction of the fernarium is a step towards educating visitors about the park's biodiversity.
- ★ These plants absorb water and nutrients by leaching them from trees. A significant number of ferns can be found growing on the trees within the park.

## Chhattisgarh's Nagri Dubraj Rice Variety to Get GI Tag

- ★ The Geographical Indications Registry has granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag to **Nagari Dubraj**, a fragrant rice from Chhattisgarh, to give a unique identity to the brand.
- ★ The **Morena** and **Rewa Mango** (both Madhya Pradesh) have also been given the GI Tag.
- ★ This will give a new identity to these products in the national and international market.
- ★ The origin of Dubraj is believed to be from Shringi Rishi Ashram area of Sihawa.
- ★ Its reference is found in Valmiki Ramayana. Sihawa area is considered to be the source of Dubraj in various research papers.
- ★ The rice is of local variety and its grains are small, the rice is very soft to eat after cooking.

## Va Tech Wabag Bags Order from Chennai Metro Water

- ★ **VA Tech Wabag Ltd**, a Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)-headquartered water technology focussed on municipal and industrial users, has bagged a Design, Build, Operate (DBO) order from **Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB)**.
- ★ It is for building a **400 million litres per day (MLD)** sea water reverse osmosis (SWRO) desalination plant at a total cost of about ₹4,400 crore.
- ★ The project will be executed by WABAG in a joint venture with Metito Overseas Ltd.

- ★ Once completed, the project will be **the largest desalination plant in South East Asia**.
- ★ The project makes Chennai “**Desalination Capital of India**” with a production of about **750 MLD of desalinated water**.

### Ministry of I&B Partnered with Amazon India

- ★ **Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur** announced a partnership between the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** and **Amazon India** in the field of media, entertainment and public awareness.
- ★ This partnership will help strengthen industry-academia ties through scholarships, internships, masterclasses for students at the Film and Television Institute of India and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of India.
- ★ This partnership will help in reducing the struggle period for talented artistes coming out of prestigious film institutes of India.
- ★ The partnership between the Ministry and Amazon will create opportunities for Indian talent at the national and international levels.

### Kerala Leads in GI Tags

- ★ According to data shared by the GI Registry, **Kerala** received **the highest number of Geographical Indication (GI) tags** for products among all states in India in the fiscal year 23 (FY23).
- ★ Several products from Kerala have been recognized with the GI tag, including **Attappadi Attucombu avara (beans), Attappadi thuvara (red gram), Onattukara elu (sesame), Kanthalloor vattavada veluthulli (garlic), and Kodungallur pottuvellari (snap melon)**.
- ★ It is the short form of Geographical Indication and it is a unique identification of any region, town or state.
- ★ The tag is given in the name of certain products or signs that symbolise the uniqueness of that particular region.

### Banarasi Paan to Get GI Tag from Varanasi

- ★ **Banarasi paan** has been awarded the GI tag, which signifies its unique identity and origin.
- ★ Three other foods from the Varanasi region, including **Banarasi Langda Mango, Ramnagar Bhanta (Brinjal), and Adamchini rice**, have also received the GI tag.
- ★ Banarasi paan is a popular mouth-freshener made from betel leaves, betel nut, slaked lime and many other ingredients.
- ★ Banarasi paan is an important part of the cultural heritage of the city of Varanasi, having its origins in the Mughal era.

### Education Ministry Shortlists 9,000 Schools for PM SHRI Scheme

- ★ Education Ministry selected 9000 schools for **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)** scheme.

- ★ These schools have been selected from 2.5 lakh government schools, including Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas.
- ★ The schools have been selected on six parameters.
- ★ PM SHRI scheme was approved by Union Cabinet on 05 September 2022.
- ★ The Centre will disburse **₹18,128 crore** to schools as its share under the PM SHRI scheme.

### 1000 Cities to Be Garbage-Free By 2024

- ★ Union Minister for Urban Housing and Urban Affairs **Shri Hardeep S. Puri** has said that by October 2024, a target has been set to make 1,000 cities in the country 3-star garbage-free cities.
- ★ Shri Puri was addressing an event organized on the occasion of **International Zero Waste Day 2023** in New Delhi.
- ★ Referring to the progress of the **GFC - Star Rating Protocol** launched in **January 2018** to encourage the spirit of competition and mission mode in the urban local bodies, he said that since its inception, the certification has picked up significantly.
- ★ Urban India has become open defecation free (ODF).
- ★ This has been achieved through 100 percent door-to-door waste collection in 97% wards and source segregation of waste by citizens in about 90% wards across all ULBs in the country.
- ★ The campaign seeks to promote women's participation and leadership in realizing the goals of waste-free cities.

### Third Edition of The Jammu Film Festival Begins

- ★ In Jammu and Kashmir, the third edition of **The Jammu Film Festival**, sponsored by the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department, began with a grand opening at Abhinav Theatre.
- ★ The inaugural section of the festival featured short films and a documentary from countries such as **Iran, India, France and the United States**.
- ★ The festival aims to promote tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and provide a platform to filmmakers to showcase their talent.

### Ladakh's Wood Carving Gets GI Tag

- ★ Exquisite **Ladakh wood carvings**, also known as '**Ladakh Shingskos**', have been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- ★ This is the **first time** in the history of GI registration that **Jammu region has got GI tag for handicrafts**.
- ★ Wood carving is a traditional art form in the handicraft sector and is part of the five major areas of knowledge in the traditional education system of Ladakh.
- ★ The craft of woodcarving is an integral part of the social and religious spheres of life.

## World's First Asian King Vulture Conservation and Breeding Center

- ★ **Uttar Pradesh** has set up a state-of-the-art **Jatayu Conservation and Breeding Center (JCBC)** for the **critically endangered Asian king vulture**, the first of its kind in the world.
- ★ It is located in the **Maharajganj** district of Uttar Pradesh and is spread over 1.5 hectares.
- ★ The JCBC is designed to maintain a sustainable population of Asian king vultures by breeding them in captivity and releasing them into the wild.
- ★ The Asian king vulture is protected under the Wildlife Protection Act and is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- ★ The Forest Department has partnered with the Bombay Natural History Society for technical guidance.

## IndiGrid Launches First Battery Energy Storage System

- ★ India's first listed power sector infrastructure investment trust, **India Grid Trust** has commissioned its **first battery energy storage system (BESS)** project coupled with its solar panels at the **Dhule substation in Maharashtra**.
- ★ The project will meet the substation's auxiliary consumption requirement.
- ★ The BESS solution, coupled with solar generation, also acts as a prototype for expanding its presence in energy transition opportunities in the sector.
- ★ IndiGrid is an Indian power sector infrastructure investment trust (InvIT), sponsored by KKR & Sterlite Power (SPTL).

## Anaivarukkum IIT M Initiative for Government School Students

- ★ Tamil Nadu (TN) Chief Minister (CM) Shri M.K. Stalin launched **Anaivarukkum IITM' (IIT-M for All)** the initiative of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Chennai, to connect the institution with one lakh government school students in TN studying in rural locations to electronic science.
- ★ He also announced a new talent support scheme, **Thiranari Thervu Thittam**, for state-run school students that carries a ₹1,000 monthly stipend.
- ★ Thiranari Thervu Thittam means a scheme to spot and nurture talent.
- ★ The objective is to encourage and help Tamil Nadu government schools students to continue their higher education without hurdles.
- ★ A stipend of ₹1,000 would be provided every month until the students complete Class 12.
- ★ They would also get ₹12,000 as stipend annually during their under-graduation and post-graduation.

## KSINC Launches Solar-Powered Tourist Vessel Sooryamshu

- ★ The **Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC)** has introduced its **first solar-powered tourist vessel** named '**Sooryamshu**' in **Kochi backwaters**, Kerala.
- ★ The ₹3.95-crore vessel that can carry up to 100 passengers was built at a yard in Sri Lanka and is among the few in Kochi whose safety and allied features are certified by the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).

- ★ The vessel will have a 6-hour day cruise priced at ₹799 per person in which it will operate in the **Marine Drive-Kadamakudy corridor** and later **10 km into the sea**.
- ★ KSINC is a Government of Kerala undertaking that oversees the shipping and inland navigation matters of the state.

### Central Bureau of Narcotics Launches Unified Portal

- ★ The **Central Bureau of Narcotics** launched the **Unified Portal** and the portal was inaugurated by **Shri Sanjay Malhotra, Revenue Secretary**.
- ★ The portal has been launched towards strengthening the vision of Digital India during the period of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- ★ This portal is a one-stop solution **for licensing and ExIM authorizations** issued by the Bureau.
- ★ The portal is designed to create efficiency, transparency and accountability among the users of the department to promote the growth of drugs and pharma sector, boost economy for 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat', and meet the needs of pharma and chemical industries.
- ★ The launch of the Unified Portal will ease the process of doing business with NDPS and Controlled Substances in the country with transparency and better compliance.

### Food Conclave-2023 in Hyderabad

- ★ The two-day '**Food Conclave-2023**' will be organized on 28 April and 29 April in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- ★ The objective of the Food Conclave is to identify the main challenges and opportunities for the development of the Indian agri-food sector in the current decade.
- ★ The event will consist of five thematic tracks covering various aspects of the agri-food sector.
- ★ The main focus areas will be agriculture (green), edible oils (yellow), dairy (white), meat and poultry (pink) and aquaculture (blue).
- ★ The Government of Telangana is collaborating with several organizations to organize this session.

### 'CM di Yogshala' Programme in Punjab

- ★ Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister (CM) **Mr Arvind Kejriwal** and his Punjab counterpart **Mr Bhagwant Mann** jointly launched the '**CM di Yogshala**' programme.
- ★ It is to create a mass movement to carve out a healthy and prosperous Punjab.
- ★ The initiative was initially launched for 4 cities of Punjab: **Patiala, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Phagwara**
- ★ Under this initiative, people will be able to **avail free yoga classes** in these 4 cities.
- ★ A '**CM di Yogshala**' portal was also launched on the occasion.
- ★ The formation of these Yogshalas will be under a pilot project.
- ★ Trained Yoga instructors will impart free Yoga training to people in open parks and other public places.

## Apple BKC to be the First Apple Store in India

- ★ Apple has officially announced its first-ever flagship retail store in Mumbai called 'Apple BKC'.
- ★ An official teaser has also surfaced on the Apple India Store website.
- ★ Apple has revealed the banner of its first retail store in India at Jio World Drive Mall, Mumbai, marking the opening of Apple BKC.
- ★ The store is inspired by the 'Kaali Peeli' taxis art popular in Mumbai.
- ★ The tech giant plans to open the gates of the store later this month.
- ★ Apple is expected to open its second store in India in New Delhi at a later date.
- ★ Description Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology company headquartered in Cupertino, California.
- ★ Timothy Donald Cook is an American business executive who has been the Chief Executive Officer of Apple Inc. since 2011.

## Solar Energy Corporation of India Gets 'Miniratna Category-I'

- ★ **Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI)** has been accorded the status of **Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**.
- ★ Its formal announcement has been issued by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India**.
- ★ SECI has achieved this feat in a short span of time due to its consistent performance, mobility and flexibility in operations.
- ★ SECI has played a central role in the rapid addition of RE generation capacity in the country and has contributed to the country's climate commitments, carbon reduction strategies and sustainable energy transition.
- ★ It is making steady progress towards achieving the **Prime Minister's 'Panchamrit' goals** and achieving 500 GW non-fossil fuel based non-fossil fuel-based capacity by 2030.

## International Conference on Defence Finance and Economics

- ★ Defense Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated **the three-day International Conference on Defense Finance and Economics** in **New Delhi** on 12 April 2023.
- ★ The conference is organized by **the Ministry of Defence**.
- ★ It will provide a platform to eminent policy makers, academicians and government officials from home and abroad to share their insights and experiences on defense finance and economics in the context of emerging security challenges and policies globally.
- ★ It is to promote dialogue and cooperation among the participants and contribute to the defense preparedness of the country with optimum financial resources and effective implementation of the defense budget.

## First Photographic Proof of Tigers

- ★ The recently released report on **the census of tigers** in the country states that **Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary** is a new area where **photographic evidence of tigers** has been recorded for the **first time**.
- ★ The sanctuary, located in **Shravasti, Balrampur** and **Gonda** districts of **Uttar Pradesh**.
- ★ It is spread over an area of **452 sq km**.

## Sanjeevani Project

- ★ To support small dairy farmers and cattle rearers, the **Himachal Pradesh government** launched a project called **Sanjeevani** to enhance their livelihood.
- ★ The Sanjeevani project uses telemedicine and technology to provide convenient and high-quality livestock care services to farmers' doorsteps, potentially preventing outbreaks and reducing turnaround time for services.
- ★ The **Animal Husbandry Department of Himachal Pradesh** collaborated with **Bharat Financial Inclusion Limited (BFIL)** for the **National Animal Disease Control Programme-Mobile Veterinary Van (NADCP-AHD-MVU) project**.
- ★ The objective of the NADCP-AHD-MVU project is to provide door-to-door livestock care services through a toll-free telephone number.

## SCO Millets Food Festival 2023

- ★ The **Union Ministry of Tourism** is organizing the fourth and final event of **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Millets Food Festival** at **Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai** from 13 April to 19 April 2023.
- ★ In this Millets Food Festival, chefs from SCO member countries (**Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan** and **Russia**) will participate in the nine-day event.
- ★ The Taj Mahal Palace will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Millets Food Festival to mark the **International Year of Millets (IYM 2023)**.
- ★ **India** is chairing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for the year **2023**.

## India's First Metro Train to Run Under River

- ★ The **Kolkata Metro** reached **Howrah from Kolkata** through a **river tunnel for the first time** in India, carrying only Officers and Engineers.
- ★ This tunnel is built across the **Hooghly River**.
- ★ The route from **Howrah to Esplanade** is about **4.8 km long**, of which 520m will be completed by tunneling under the Hooghly River.
- ★ It will take about 45 seconds to cross this tunnel built across the Hubli river.
- ★ The tunnel is 32 meters below the surface of the water.
- ★ The entire length of this tunnel is 10.8 km underground.



## Gond Painting of Madhya Pradesh Gets GI Tag

- ★ **Gond paintings** from **Madhya Pradesh** have bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, a recognition that protects and acknowledges the work of tribal artists.
- ★ **Patangarh village** in **Dindori district** is home to many Gond artists, one in every household whose artwork is popular in the state and recognized internationally.
- ★ A Geographical Indication (GI) is a name or sign given to products coming from a specific geographical location.

## Digital Health Summit 2023

- ★ The **Digital Health Summit 2023** was organized jointly by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** and **the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in **Goa**.
- ★ The theme of the event was '**Building One Health together – Improving Health equity**'.
- ★ The aim of the summit was to bring together policy makers, industry leaders and global health experts and thought leaders to deliberate on the key issues faced by the digital health sector.
- ★ The event aligns with the agenda of India's G20 health working group on digital health innovations.
- ★ It aims to assist in universal health coverage and improve healthcare delivery for One Earth, One Family, One Future.
- ★ Digital innovations including 3D printing, point-of-care diagnostics, robotics, bioinformatics, genomics are proving to be game changers in exponential medicine.

## NHAI Signs MoU with Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve

- ★ The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve** in **Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**.
- ★ The objective of the MoU is to improve the entry process for vehicles entering the forest area by facilitating a seamless and efficient system.
- ★ The initiative proposes a FASTag based payment system at forest entry points to avoid long queues and delays.
- ★ The benefit of collection of Ecosystem Management Coordination Fee through FASTag will be extended to various entry points of the Tiger Reserve.
- ★ The partnership between the Highways Management Company of India Limited and the Forest Department is an important step towards promoting sustainable tourism and conserving natural resources.
- ★ This partnership will help curb vehicular emissions at forest entry points, thereby contributing to environmental protection.

## 125 Feet Tall Ambedkar Statue Unveiled

- ★ Telangana Chief Minister **K Chandrasekhar Rao** unveiled a **125-foot tall bronze statue** of **BR Ambedkar** in **Hyderabad**.

- ★ The statue was unveiled to mark the **132<sup>nd</sup> birth anniversary of Ambedkar**, who is best known for his role in drafting the Indian Constitution.
- ★ It is now **the tallest statue of Ambedkar** in India with a height of 125 feet.
- ★ This statue is situated near the State Secretariat on the beautiful banks of **Hussain Sagar Lake**.
- ★ Ambedkar's statue is a symbol of social justice and equality. It commemorates the contribution of BR Ambedkar towards building a just and equal society for all.

### Cumbum Grapes Get Geographical Indication Tag

- ★ The famous **Cumbum Paneer Thratchai** from **Tamil Nadu**, commonly known as **Cumbum grapes** has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- ★ The **Cumbum valley** in **Tamil Nadu's Western Ghats**, is regarded as the '**Grapes City of South India**'.
- ★ The Paneer grapes were first introduced in Tamil Nadu by a French priest in 1832.
- ★ These grapes are high in vitamins, tartaric acid, and antioxidants, and they help to lower the risk of some chronic diseases.

### Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiatives

- ★ The '**Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)**' will be launched by the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, **Shri Parshottam Rupala**.
- ★ Shri Rupala will also launch the **World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH) project**.
- ★ Both will be launched under the aegis of the **National One Health Mission** at **India Habitat Center, New Delhi**.
- ★ The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has signed a collaborative project on AHSSOH with the World Bank.
- ★ It aims to create an ecosystem for a better animal health management system using the One Health approach.
- ★ The project will be rolled out in five states with the aim of enhancing the capacity building of stakeholders engaged in animal health and disease management.
- ★ Over the next five years, the collaborative project will be implemented as a Central sector scheme, with a budget of ₹1228.70 Cr.

### Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari Inspects Asia's Longest 'Zojila Tunnel'

- ★ Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Shri Nitin Gadkari** inspected **Zojila Tunnel**, **Asia's longest tunnel** which will establish **all-weather connectivity** between the Union Territories (UT) of **Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)**.
- ★ Currently the **average travel time** to cross the Zojila Pass sometimes takes **3 hours**, after the completion of this tunnel the travel time **will come down to 20 minutes**.
- ★ The reduction in travel time will ultimately result in fuel savings.

- ★ The Zojila tunnel will be **India's longest road tunnel** and is expected to be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel, boasting a length of **15 km**.
- ★ A connecting tunnel from Z-Morh on NH1 to the Zojila tunnel will be built in the Zojila Ghats between Sonmarg and Kargil.
- ★ The tunnel is being built at a cost of more than 4,600 crores.
- ★ It is expected to be completed by December 2023.

### Government Launches 'Sangathan Se Samridhi' Scheme

- ★ Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh launched the '**Organization to Prosperity**' campaign on 18 April.
- ★ It will empower marginal rural households by bringing all eligible rural women into Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- ★ The government is targeting to bring the existing 9 crore to 10 crore women under the ambit of SHGs.
- ★ The government has set a target that every woman associated with self-help groups should be able to earn one lakh rupees annually.
- ★ Self-help groups (SHGs) are informal associations of people who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions.

### Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches 'YUVA PORTAL'

- ★ Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh launched the **Youth Portal** in **New Delhi**.
- ★ It aims to connect and identify potential **youth start-ups**.
- ★ Science and Technology Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh also launched the **One Week - One Laboratory programme**.
- ★ The event emphasises the need for broad-based participation from stakeholders in the industry for startups to remain sustainable.
- ★ Each of the 37 CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) laboratories is dedicated to a different specialised area of work.
- ★ The One Week - One Lab program will provide an opportunity to CSIR laboratories to showcase their work.

### UGC Issues New Regulations for Students' Grievance Redressal

- ★ UGC released new regulations for the grievance redressal of students.
- ★ The new regulation proposed the establishment of the Students Grievances Redressal Committee(s) (SGRC) in all Higher Education institutions (HEIs).
- ★ As per the regulations, the Universities are requested to appoint Ombudsperson within 30 days of notifications.
- ★ The Vice-Chancellors/Principals have been requested to take necessary measures for the publicity of Regulations.

- ★ The regulations have a detailed mechanism for the constitution of SGRCs and their composition and the appointment of the Ombudsperson.
- ★ These regulations will be called the University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023.
- ★ The regulations will apply to all higher education institutions established under a Central Act or a State Act.
- ★ The main objective of the regulation is speedy redressal of grievances of the students enrolled in any institution.

### SATHI Portal and Mobile App

- ★ **Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** launched the **SATHI (Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory) Portal and Mobile App**.
- ★ It is to deal with the challenges of seed production, quality seed identification, and seed certification.
- ★ It has been created by **NIC** in collaboration with the **Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** on the theme of '**Best Seeds – Prosperous Farmer**'.
- ★ The Government of India is constantly trying to overcome the challenges and difficulties faced by agriculture through various schemes and programmes.
- ★ There will be a QR code under this system, through which the seeds can be traced.
- ★ All the states will be connected with the Seed Traceability System.

### India Approves National Quantum Mission

- ★ The government approved the **National Quantum Mission** to nurture and scale up scientific and industrial research and development in **quantum technology**.
- ★ The mission will cost ₹6,003.65 crore from **2023-24 to 2030-31**.
- ★ The Mission will accelerate quantum technology-led economic growth and nurture the ecosystem in the country.
- ★ The Mission will be implemented by the **Department of Science and Technology** in partnership with other departments.
- ★ **India** will be the **sixth country** to have a **dedicated quantum mission** after the **US, Austria, Finland, France and China**.
- ★ The mission will help develop high-sensitivity magnetometers in nuclear systems and atomic clocks for precise timing, communication and navigation.

### First State to Adopt 'Water Budget'

- ★ **Kerala** has adopted a **water budget**, the first of its kind in the country, to deal with the problem of **water scarcity in summer**.
- ★ Despite the abundance of rivers, streams, backwaters and rainfall, many parts of Kerala face severe water scarcity during summer.

- ★ The water budget will help the state to ascertain the demand and supply of water resources and apportion it accordingly.
- ★ The first phase of the water budget covers 94-gram panchayats in 15 block panchayats, and the details were unveiled by **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan**.
- ★ The water budget will be prepared by a committee of various experts along with officials from the Center for Water Resources Development and Management and the State Water Resources Department.

### **A-HELP Program Launched in the State of Uttarakhand**

- ★ The Chief Minister (CM) of Uttarakhand, Mr. Pushkar Singh Dhami launched '**A-HELP (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production)** programme at Survey of India Auditorium Dehradun, **Uttarakhand**.
- ★ Under this program trained A-HELPS will give their vital contribution in preventing various infectious diseases of animals, artificial insemination under Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM), tagging of animals and animal insurance.
- ★ Under RGM, livestock breed improvement programs will be conducted with the help of a large number of trained A-HELP workers who are interested in performing Artificial Insemination by providing them additional training.
- ★ The programme will ensure economic upliftment of livestock owners along with active participation and involvement of women power.
- ★ The A-HELP will serve as the organic link between the livestock farmers and the veterinary services and become 'first port of call' in times of need for the farmers.

### **Bhavanapadu Port in Srikakulam Renamed as Mulapeta Greenfield Port**

- ★ The Andhra Pradesh (AP) government has renamed the proposed Bhavanapadu port in the Srikakulam district as Mulapeta Greenfield port at the request of the locals.
- ★ Chief Minister (CM) Shri YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will lay a foundation stone for this nearly ₹4,000 crore project on April 19, 2023.
- ★ The state government took this decision as farmers from Mulapeta and Vishnuchakram villages requested for the name change since Bhavanapadu village has no scope in the proposed port area, considering all the lands of Mulapeta and some from Vishnuchakram have been earmarked for acquisition.

### **'Digital Highways' in India by 2025**

- ★ The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** is preparing to develop around **10,000 km of Optic Fibre Cable (OFC) infrastructure** across India by the financial year **2025**.
- ★ This move is aimed at providing internet connectivity to remote locations and expediting the roll-out of new-age telecom technologies like 5G and 6G.
- ★ The NHAI's fully-owned special purpose vehicle, the **National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML)**, will be implementing the network of digital highways by developing integrated utility corridors along the national highways to develop OFC infrastructure.

- ★ The pilot routes for the 'digital highway' development have been identified as **1,367 kilometres** on the **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway** and **512 km on the Hyderabad-Bangalore corridor**.
- ★ The creation of a 'Digital Highway' will not only have a positive impact on the country's growth and development, but will also contribute to its digital transformation.

### CSIR and OIL Sign MoU

- ★ **CSIR** and **Oil India Ltd. (OIL)** signed MoU to collaborate on **research in advanced technologies for energy security**.
- ★ The objective of the MoU is to establish a formal framework for collaboration between OIL and CSIR laboratories and conduct research in advanced technologies for energy security.
- ★ Both CSIR and OIL will work towards capacity building through training and skill development.
- ★ OIL will consider providing CSR funding support to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, Aspirational Districts, Rural Development, Government Missions/Initiatives etc.

### 'One Panchayat, One Playground' Project

- ★ Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched the '**One Panchayat, One Playground**' project in **Kallikkad** with the goal of reviving the sports culture in the state.
- ★ The project aims to establish **high-quality playgrounds in every panchayat**, a local self-government in India, to promote community gatherings and social interaction.
- ★ The playgrounds will be constructed within three years, with 113 panchayats identified for the initial phase of the project.
- ★ Each playground is expected to cost around ₹one crore, with the sports department covering half of the cost and the remaining funds raised from various sources such as legislative and local body funds, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and public-private partnerships.

### New Features in eShram Portal

- ★ Union Minister for Labour and Employment and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, launched new features in **eShram Portal**.
- ★ The new features added in eShram portal will enhance the utility of the portal and facilitate ease of registration for unorganised workers.
- ★ The eShram registered workers can now connect with Employment opportunities, Skilling, Apprenticeship, Pension Scheme, Digital Skilling and States' schemes through eShram portal.
- ★ The Union Minister also formally launched the **Data Sharing Portal (DSP)** for sharing of **eShram data with the State/UT Governments**.
- ★ The Ministry of Labor and Employment has developed an eSHRAM portal to create a national database of unorganised workers.

## G20 Tourism Expo in Jaipur

- ★ The **Ministry of Tourism, Government of India** in association with the **Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan**, organised **G20 Tourism Expo** in **Jaipur** from 23 April to 25 April 2023 to coincide with India's G20 Presidency and Amrit Kaal.
- ★ The Ministry of Tourism plans to develop **50 new tourist destinations** across India and launch promotions in foreign markets to promote tourism.
- ★ India to register **6.19 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2022**, a growth of **305%** as compared to 1.52 million in 2021, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- ★ The Ministry of Civil Aviation has made 51 of the 59 tourist routes recommended under the UDAN scheme operational.

## Vibrant Villages Programme to be integrated with PM Gati Shakti

- ★ **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)**, which aims to develop infrastructure and open up villages along the China border to tourists, will be **integrated** with the **Prime Minister's Gati Shakti mega project**.
- ★ The program will be integrated with the Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti mega project, which **brings together 16 ministries** for coordinated infrastructure planning.
- ★ The **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N)** will provide **satellite images and GIS mapping** of the projects for real-time monitoring.
- ★ The objective of VVP is to prevent migration of border population and to gather intelligence from the people of border villages.
- ★ The program will cover 2,967 villages in 46 border blocks of 19 districts in four states and one union territory.

## National Technology Center

- ★ **Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated the **Discovery Campus** of the National Technology Center for Ports, Waterways and Coasts at **IITM, Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.
- ★ The centre was created under the **Sagarmala scheme** of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to enable **research and development for the maritime sector** in India.
- ★ The centre has world-class capabilities for research and consultancy in all disciplines, including ocean modelling, sediment transport, and port and coastal engineering.
- ★ The Chennai facility houses 5 state-of-the-art laboratories, covering every aspect of design and development, simulation, analysis and production of marine and marine solutions, in line with the Atma Nirbhar Bharat vision.
- ★ The centre aims to support Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's **Atma Nirbhar Bharat** vision to **make India a self-reliant country** in the maritime sector.

## Union Cabinet approves National Medical Devices Policy, 2023

- ★ The Union Cabinet approved the **National Medical Devices Policy, 2023** and the Indian medical device sector has come into prominence due to its contribution in the fight against COVID-19.

- ★ The policy aims **to bring the medical device sector on an accelerated path of growth** with a **patient-centric approach** to meet the growing healthcare needs of the patients.
- ★ The market size of the medical device sector in India is estimated to be \$11 billion in 2020.
- ★ The policy is expected to help the medical device sector grow from the current \$11 billion to \$50 billion by 2030.
- ★ The policy outlines six strategies to boost the medical device sector: regulatory streamlining, enabling infrastructure, facilitating R&D and innovation, attracting investments into the sector, human resource development and brand positioning and awareness building.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Hun-Thadou Cultural Festival at Kangpokpi

- ★ **Manipur Chief Minister (CM) Shri N Biren Singh** inaugurated the **5<sup>th</sup> edition** of the state-level **HUN Thadou Cultural Festival**, at Thomas Ground in **Kangpokpi district of Manipur**.
- ★ HUN festival is an annual cultural festival and a civilising act of the **Thadous community** of Manipur.
- ★ It is celebrated at the arrival of **the New Year** according to the community.

### NSE Comes Up with New Migration Policy for SMEs

- ★ The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has revised the eligibility criteria for SMEs looking to switch from its SME platform to the main board.
- ★ The new guidelines require SMEs to list on the SME platform for at least three years along with a minimum net worth of ₹50 crore and at least 1,000 public shareholders on the last day of the preceding quarter from the date of application before moving to the main board.
- ★ Effective from April 20, the applicant company should also have positive cash accruals (earnings before interest, depreciation and tax) from operations for each of the three financial years preceding the migration application.
- ★ In addition, the company should have positive PAT (profit after tax) in the immediate financial year of making the migration application to the exchange.
- ★ Moreover, the paid-up equity capital (amount received by the company from shareholders in exchange for shares of stock) of the applicant should not be less than ₹10 crores and the market capitalisation shouldn't be less than ₹25 crores.

### PM Modi Inaugurates and Lays Foundation of Development Projects

- ★ PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of different projects in the Union Territory of **Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu**.
- ★ He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various projects worth 4 thousand 800 crore rupees at Silvassa.
- ★ He dedicated to the nation **NAMO Medical Education and Research Institute** in **Silvassa**.
- ★ He addressed a gathering at Sayli village near Silvassa.
- ★ He launched multiple developmental works.
- ★ He also held a 16-kilometer-long roadshow in Daman town of the UT.



- ★ He also inaugurated the **Devka Seafront** at **Daman**.

### **INOX Air Products Commissions 21.3 MWp Solar Power Plant**

- ★ INOX Air Products (INOXAP), India's largest manufacturer of industrial and medical gases, has commissioned a 21.3 MWp Open Access Captive Solar Power Plant at Bangarmau in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- ★ INOXAP's first dedicated Solar Power Plant is also the largest investment made by the Company in renewable energy.
- ★ The plant has been commissioned by one of India's leading solar energy power developers, Sunsure Energy.
- ★ It is built with an investment of ₹100 crore, the solar power plant will supply over 3.1 crore units of green power to INOXAP's units in Uttar Pradesh, enabling an offset of 28,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year, for the next 25 years.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Japan Commits ₹7,084 Crore for 3 Infrastructure Projects in India**

- ★ Japan has committed ₹7,084.5 crore to India for 3 infrastructure projects.
- ★ The projects include **Patna (Bihar) Metro Rail Construction Project, Rajasthan Water Sector Livelihood Improvement Project** and **Project for Forest and Biodiversity Conservation for Climate Change Response in West Bengal (WB)**.
- ★ Japan would fund the Patna Metro Rail Construction Project (I) of JPY 98.612 billion (about ₹5,509 crore).
- ★ Japan will fund JPY 18.894 billion (about ₹1,055.53 crore) for Rajasthan Water Sector Livelihood Improvement Project.
- ★ Japan will fund JPY 9.308 billion (about ₹520 crore) Biodiversity Conservation for Climate Change Response in West Bengal (WB).

### **31<sup>st</sup> Member of NATO**

- ★ **Finland** has become **the 31<sup>st</sup> member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** and Turkey's unanimous vote played a key role in Finland's acceptance as a NATO member.
- ★ **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, is a military alliance between **North American and European countries** formed in **1949** and headquartered in **Brussels, Belgium**.
- ★ Finland shares a border of more than **1,300 kilometres with Russia**, and their decision to join NATO was based on security concerns following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
- ★ With the accession of Finland, NATO now includes countries in most of Europe and North America.

## India and Malaysia to Trade in Indian Rupee

- ★ The **Ministry of External Affairs** announced that **India and Malaysia** have agreed to settle trade in the **Indian rupee**.
- ★ In **July 2022**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** allowed **settlement of international trade in Indian currency**.
- ★ According to the Ministry of External Affairs, **trade between India and Malaysia** can now be settled in **Indian Rupee (INR)** in addition to the existing methods of settlement in other currencies.
- ★ The RBI initiative is aimed at facilitating trade growth and supporting the interests of the global trading community in the Indian Rupee.
- ★ Kuala Lumpur-based **India International Bank of Malaysia (IIBM)** has introduced this system in India by opening a special **Rupee Vostro account** through **Union Bank of India**.

## PM Modi Invited to France for Bastille Day Parade

- ★ **France** has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Paris as a guest at the **annual Bastille Day parade** in **July**.
- ★ The **National Day of France**, also known as **Bastille Day**, is celebrated every year on **14 July**.
- ★ This day is considered as one of the most important days in the history of France.
- ★ It marks the fall of the Bastille, a military fortress and political prison, which was then considered a symbol of the monarchy and the Armory.

## Agreement for 'Practical Cooperation between Armed Forces'

- ★ **India** and **Romania** signed a **defence agreement** during a meeting between **Romania's Deputy Defense Minister Simona Cojocaru** and **India's Defense Secretary Giridhar Aramane** in **New Delhi**.
- ★ This agreement is the **first defence cooperation agreement between the two countries** and is a practical cooperation between the armed forces of India and Romania.
- ★ The defence pact represents the basis for the establishment and expansion of military relations between the two countries.
- ★ It will provide more opportunities to work together in various fields such as military education, training, cyber defence, military medicine, military history and other areas that can benefit both the countries.

## First US State to Pass Resolution Condemning Hinduphobia

- ★ The United States (US) Georgia Assembly has passed a resolution condemning Hinduphobia, making it the first American state to take such a legislative measure.
- ★ Condemning Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu bigotry, the resolution stated that Hinduism is one of the world's largest and oldest religions with over 1.2 billion adherents in over 100 countries.

- ★ The resolution was introduced by Representatives Lauren McDonald and Todd Jones from Forsyth County in the suburbs of Atlanta, home to one of the largest Hindu and Indian-American diaspora communities in Georgia
- ★ The resolution observed that the American-Hindu community has been a major contributor to diverse sectors such as medicine, science and engineering, information technology, hospitality, finance, academia, manufacturing, energy, and retail trade, among others.

### Saudi Arabia Launches New National Airline Riyadh Air

- ★ Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has announced the creation of a new national airline called Riyadh Air.
- ★ Riyadh Air will serve more than 100 destinations around the world by 2030.
- ★ Riyadh Air will be Saudi Arabia's second national carrier alongside Saudi.
- ★ Riyadh Air is wholly owned by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which has more than \$600 billion in assets.
- ★ The new airline is expected to add \$20 billion to Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP growth and create more than 200,000 jobs both directly and indirectly.

### India Elected to UN Statistical Commission

- ★ **India** has been elected as a **member** of the **UN Statistical Commission, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.**
- ★ India was elected to **the highest statistical body of the United Nations** for a term of **4 years** starting from **01 January 2024.**
- ★ India was elected as a member of this commission 20 years ago in 2004.
- ★ In the highly competitive election for membership of the Statistical Commission, India secured 46 out of 53 votes in a secret ballot.

### Spring Annual Meetings of IMF – World Bank

- ★ **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** is on a visit to the **USA** to attend the **Spring Annual Meetings** of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF) – World Bank.**
- ★ Finance Ministers and central bankers from around the world will participate in the meeting.
- ★ The meeting is scheduled to take place from **April 9** at the **IMF headquarters in Washington DC.**
- ★ On the sidelines of the Spring Annual Meetings, Sitharaman will hold bilateral talks with her respective counterparts from G20 countries and heads of other delegations.
- ★ **Sitharaman** and **Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das** will jointly chair the **2<sup>nd</sup> G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, FMCBG meeting** on **April 12.**
- ★ The focus will be on addressing food and energy insecurity, managing global debt vulnerabilities, strengthening multilateral development banks, etc.

## 'Kashi' Declared First Tourism and Cultural Capital of SCO

- ★ **'Kashi' (Varanasi)** has been declared **the first tourism and cultural capital** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- ★ The declaration was made by a meeting of the SCO heads of Tourism Administrations held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- ★ The initiative will garner more attention by highlighting the spiritualism, mysticism, and learning of Kashi which is also the cradle of Indian civilization.
- ★ The meeting also adopted the Action Plan for **"Year of Tourism Development in the SCO Space in 2023"**.
- ★ The next meeting of the **SCO Heads of Tourism Administrations** will be held in **Kazakhstan in 2024**.

## India Grants \$2 Million to African Union Transition Mission

- ★ **India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mr Ruchira Kamboj** handed over the contribution of **USD 2 million to the United Nations Trust Fund** in support of the **African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**.
- ★ With this, the Government of India (GoI) reiterates New Delhi's commitment to peace and stability in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.
- ★ Earlier, India had contributed USD 4 million to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).
- ★ It is to support the implementation of the Somali Transitional Plan towards a full handover of security responsibility to the Somali security forces and institutions by the end 2024.
- ★ The primary role of **ATMIS** is **to reduce the threat posed by the terrorist group Al-Shabaad**.

## New York City Appoints Its First 'Rat Czar'

- ★ New York City appointed Kathleen Corradi as its inaugural 'Rat Czar' to tackle the city's serious rodent issue.
- ★ Corradi was given the responsibility of reducing the rat population and creating a clean environment for the residents.
- ★ The Adams administration is dedicating \$3.5 million to the Harlem Rat Mitigation Zone, a new initiative to ramp up rat control measures throughout Harlem.

## Visa Application Center in Bangladesh

- ★ The High Commission of India opened its **16<sup>th</sup> Visa application center** in **Kushtia** town of **Southwestern Bangladesh** on 16<sup>th</sup> April.
- ★ The new **Indian Visa Application Center (IVAC)** was inaugurated by High Commissioner **Pranya Verma**.
- ★ This will provide greater ease and convenience to residents of Kushtia and its surrounding areas seeking visa services to visit India.
- ★ Continuous efforts are being made to improve visa facilities for the people of Bangladesh.

- ★ The new center will further strengthen people-to-people contact.
- ★ It will serve as a new platform to promote tourism, trade and people-to-people exchanges between India and Bangladesh.

### Founding Member of the International Big Cats Alliance

- ★ **Nepal** has become a **founding member** of the **International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA)** launched by **India**.
- ★ The IBCA aims to **conserve seven big cat species including tigers, lions, leopards, snow leopards, cheetahs, jaguars and pumas**.
- ★ Nepal's tiger population has seen a significant increase, increasing from 121 in 2010 to 335 in 2022.
- ★ Nepal successfully achieved its target of doubling the tiger population by 2022, as done during the first Tiger Summit in 2010 in St. Petersburg.
- ★ The **IBCA** was launched by the **Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi** on 09 April 2023.

### India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023

- ★ **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** and **Russian Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov** attended the inaugural session of '**India-Russia Business Dialogue**' 2023 in **New Delhi**.
- ★ The participants in the business forum discussed issues of further enhancing Russian-Indian practical cooperation, including the Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC).
- ★ The **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** announced that **India and Russia** have crossed the bilateral trade target of **30 billion dollars before** the target year of **2025**.
- ★ He also referred to the expansion of the network under the scheme of **settlement of international trade in Indian Rupees** through the **Special Rupee Vostro Account System**.
- ★ India and Russia are paying special attention to the issues of mutual access of products to the markets of both the countries.

### World's Largest 'Narco-State'

- ★ **Syria** has become the **world's largest 'narco-state'** and most of its foreign exchange earnings come from the production and export of **Captagon**, a highly addictive **amphetamine** commonly referred to as '**poor man's coke**'.
- ★ Drug trafficking, is especially Captagon, which is a significant part of Syria's economy.
- ★ It accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings according to criteria to be classified as a narco-state.

### EU-India Aviation Summit

- ★ The **two-day European Union (EU)-India Aviation Summit** began in **New Delhi**.
- ★ During the summit, a **declaration of intent** was signed by the **Airport Authority of India** with **Eurocontrol**.

- ★ A letter of intent memorandum of understanding was also signed by **DGCA** with the **European Union Aviation Safety** for closer cooperation.
- ★ The **Union Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia** addressed the summit virtually.
- ★ The summit focused on the EU-India air transport relationship and the mutually shared challenges and opportunities of the two regions.
- ★ The **theme** of the summit was **COVID recovery of air traffic, increasing sustainability, maintaining safety and development of unmanned aircraft systems.**

### Asia Pacific Malaria Leaders Conclave 2023

- ★ The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** organised the **Asia Pacific Leaders' Conclave on Malaria Elimination** in **New Delhi** on 24 April in partnership with the **Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA)**.
- ★ The purpose of the conclave is **to reaffirm political commitment to inspire action to eliminate malaria by 2030.**
- ★ The conclave will provide a forum for leaders from the Asia Pacific region to discuss ongoing efforts towards malaria elimination and revive national and regional momentum towards the goal of a malaria-free Asia Pacific by 2030.
- ★ The conclave was presided over by Dr. V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog.

### Air Services Agreement

- ★ India and Guyana signed an Air Services Agreement (ASA) to facilitate easier travel between the two nations.
- ★ The agreement's signing is consistent with the government's objective to establish ties between Guyana and the rest of the world.
- ★ It will also complement the more than 50 air service agreements Guyana has negotiated with other ICAO governments for the advancement of interstate air travel.
- ★ The agreement encourages the development of international air services between the two countries and the global airline market.
- ★ Air Services Agreement (ASA) provides the legal framework for air operations between two countries.

### India-UK NET Zero Innovation Virtual Centre

- ★ **India and the United Kingdom** have agreed to create an **India-UK Net Zero Innovation Virtual Centre.**
- ★ The center will provide **a platform** for stakeholders from both countries **to work together in areas such as manufacturing processes, transportation systems and decarbonization of green hydrogen as a renewable source.**
- ★ This was announced by **Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh** at a meeting of the India-UK Science and Innovation Council meeting in the presence of United Kingdom Minister George Freeman.

- ★ India is fast marching towards becoming an economic powerhouse driven by its extraordinary technology and innovation.
- ★ India is committed to achieve its climate change and environment goals.

## **BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS**

### **World Bank Loan for Clean Drinking Water in Rural Karnataka**

- ★ The **World Bank** has given a **\$363 million loan** to the state of **Karnataka** in India, which will help provide clean drinking water to two million rural households.
- ★ It aims to establish **piped water connections to households** across the state, including construction of drinking water distribution networks and installation of water metres, and the initiative is expected to benefit around 10 million people in all 31 districts of the state.
- ★ The loan is part of the Karnataka Sustainable Rural Water Supply programme, which aims to improve the operational efficiency of rural water supply services.
- ★ The World Bank loan has a special focus on promoting gender equality, as women typically bear the greatest burden of fetching water.
- ★ The program aims to revive 500 rural water reservoirs in seven water-stressed districts, which will help increase water storage capacity and groundwater recharge.

### **World Bank Approves Loan for Assam**

- ★ The **World Bank** has approved a loan of **USD 108 million (₹8,896,517,496)** for **Assam Integrated River Basin Management Project (AIRBMP)** to improve its **disaster preparedness and flood forecasting capabilities** in Assam.
- ★ The \$108 million loan from the **International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** has a maturity of 5 years and a grace period of 4 years.
- ★ This loan is part of a larger USD 500 (₹40,890,925,000) million investment program for the state and is expected to benefit approximately 6 million people by reducing the risks of floods and river erosion.
- ★ The Project will help the state reduce vulnerability to floods and river erosion by building green infrastructure in the Beki and Buridehing river basins, protecting around 100,000 people.
- ★ The Project will support Assam tackle the immediate challenges of floods and erosion while also helping manage its complex river systems.
- ★ The Project will also help strengthen the state's response to disasters through improved flood forecasting and accurate early warning systems, including mobile alerts.

### **Aditya Birla Health Insurance Partners with UCO Bank**

- ★ **Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Limited (ABHICL)** has entered into a partnership with **UCO Bank** to distribute **health insurance products** through the bank's branches across India.

- ★ Through the partnership, UCO Bank's customers and employees will have access to ABHICL's health-first insurance solutions, including incentive wellness benefits and chronic management programs.
- ★ UCO Bank's network of 3164 branches and over 40 million customers will allow ABHICL to expand its national footprint.

### Axis Bank Partners with Shriram Housing Finance

- ★ **Axis Bank** and **Shriram Housing Finance Limited (SHFL)** entered into a **strategic partnership** through the **Yubi Co. Lend platform** under the co-lending model.
- ★ The partnership aims to address the needs of unorganized sector customers, including self-employed or salaried borrowers, who have limited access to credit due to lack of sufficient income proof.
- ★ The partnership will provide **secured MSME loans and home loans to middle and low-income group borrowers in rural and semi-urban areas.**
- ★ The collaboration between Axis Bank and SHFL will address the credit gap faced by MSME and home loan borrowers by using their wide customer reach and rigorous credit underwriting and appraisal tools.
- ★ This partnership is in line with Axis Bank's India Banking mission of financial inclusion in rural and semi-urban areas in a seamless digital manner.

### IPPB Launches Whatsapp Banking Services

- ★ **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** has announced the launch of **WhatsApp Banking service** in collaboration with **Airtel**, a leading private sector telecom company.
- ★ According to the Ministry of Communications, with this new service of India Post Payments Bank, customers can now easily access various banking services from their WhatsApp account through their mobile phones.
- ★ Under this new arrangement, it will be delivered to customers through WhatsApp messaging solution Airtel IQ.
- ★ Airtel will enable IPPB customers to seamlessly connect with the bank on WhatsApp.
- ★ WhatsApp messaging will enhance the convenience of connecting with the bank directly at the customers' fingertips.
- ★ IPPB is a public sector bank which was launched in 2018 with the objective of providing banking services to the unbanked population of India.

### IMF Approves 15.6 billion Dollar Support Package for Ukraine

- ★ The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has approved a **\$15.6 billion support package** to aid the economic recovery of conflict-torn country **Ukraine.**
- ★ The Russian invasion has devastated Ukraine's economy, causing economic activity to shrink by about 30 percent last year, according to the IMF.
- ★ War has destroyed capital stock and promoted poverty.



- ★ The 48-month Extended Fund Facility program approved by the Fund's Board amounts to approximately \$15.6 billion.
- ★ It is part of the IMF's \$115 billion total support package, which includes debt relief, grants, and loans by multilateral and bilateral institutions.

### **PFRDA Raises Ombudsman's Age Limit to 70 Years**

- ★ The Centre has increased the upper age limit by 5 years of ombudsman of the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** to **70 years**.
- ★ As per the PFRDA (Redressal of Subscriber Grievance) Regulations 2015, the upper age limit was 65 years.
- ★ The ombudsman, which is appointed by PFRDA receives, considers and facilitates resolution of complaints or grievances, which fall within the ambit of the regulations.
- ★ A person appointed as an Ombudsman holds office for a period of 3 years and would be eligible for reappointment for another 2 years.
- ★ Recently, the Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA) has made the mandatory upload of withdrawal/ Know Your Customer (KYC) documents to enable seamless processing of exit and annuity for the benefit of National Pension System (NPS) subscribers.

### **SBI Announces Donation of ₹48 Lakh for Tree Plantation**

- ★ The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has announced a donation of **₹48 lakh** for the **plantation of 32,000 tree saplings at Garden City University, Bengaluru**, in association with an NGO, That's Eco Foundation, as part of its corporate social responsibility.
- ★ The project is being implemented under **Miyawaki Technique**.
- ★ The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between SBI, Garden City University, and the Eco Foundation for the project.
- ★ Miyawaki is a technique pioneered by Japanese botanist, Akira Miyawaki, that helps build dense, native forests.
- ★ This ensures that the plant growth is 10 times faster and the resulting plantation is 30 times denser than usual.
- ★ The plants that are grown under this method grow in 2-3 years and are self-sustaining.

### **DBS Bank India Launches 'DigiPortfolio'**

- ★ **DBS Bank India** has launched an innovative investment solution, '**digiPortfolio**', on its digibank platform.
- ★ DigiPortfolio uses both **technology and human expertise** to create a set of investment options curated by Morningstar that match the risk preferences of different investors.
- ★ The platform is an easy, **one-stop solution for users to invest money** with ready-made baskets of mutual funds.
- ★ The 'digiPortfolio' provides instant access to investors with two plans starting at a minimum investment of ₹10,000 and going up to ₹50,000.

- ★ These plans include features such as portfolio construction, monitoring, and rebalancing services, powered by Morningstar.
- ★ There are no extra charges, like sales or transaction fees.

### Government Sanctions Loans of More than 40,600 crore

- ★ The Government has sanctioned loans of more than 40,600 crore rupees to over 1.8 lakh women entrepreneurs under the Stand-Up India Scheme.
- ★ The scheme has created an eco-system which provides a supportive environment for setting up green field enterprises by availing loans from bank branches of all scheduled commercial banks.
- ★ It was launched on April 5, 2016, to promote entrepreneurship among women, Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories.
- ★ It has been launched to help them start a greenfield venture in manufacturing, services or business sector and agriculture allied activities.
- ★ The objective is to encourage all bank branches to extend loans to SC, ST and women for setting up their own greenfield enterprises.
- ★ The Stand-up India scheme is based on the third pillar of the National Mission for Financial Inclusion namely 'Funding the Unfunded'.

### Monetary Policy Committee

- ★ The **six-member Monetary Policy Committee**, headed by **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das**, announced the status quo on policy rates on 06 April.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India announced its **bi-monthly monetary policy** and kept the **repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent**.
- ★ In the MPC meeting held in February, the repo rate was increased by 0.25 percent to 6.50 percent.
- ★ The **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate** will remain **unchanged at 6.25 per cent**.
- ★ The **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate** and the **Bank Rate** at **6.75 per cent**.
- ★ **GDP growth in FY2024** could be **6.5%**. The **current account deficit** stood at **2.7%** of GDP in the **October-December quarter of FY23**.

### Global Trade Expected to Grow 1.7% in 2023

- ★ The **world trade organization (WTO)** revised its **global trade growth outlook for 2023** upwards to **1.7%** from last October's estimate of 1%.
- ★ The World Trade Organization announced in its forecast that **trade growth for 2024** is expected to be **3.2 percent**.
- ★ However, the WTO said the forecast is highly uncertain and at a downside risk given the impact of ongoing global tensions, food supply problems and monetary policy tightening.
- ★ Global trade growth in 2023 is still projected to be low, despite a slight increase in gross domestic product (GDP) estimates since last fall.

## Geojit Credits Launches Digital Loan Against Mutual Fund Holdings

- ★ Geojit Credits, a non-banking financial company, announced the launch of 'Loan against Mutual Fund' (LAMF).
- ★ Through this, investors can avail of quick and hassle-free loans starting from ₹10,000 in the 100% digital mode.
- ★ A LAMF allows investors to raise instant funds at attractive interest rates for their short-term liquidity requirements by keeping their mutual fund investments as collateral.
- ★ Investors can avail of the loan anytime, and the loan amount will be credited to their registered bank account within a few hours.
- ★ Investors can repay their loan amount without incurring any prepayment or foreclosure charges.

## Bank Of Maharashtra Opens Its First Dedicated Branch for Startups

- ★ **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)**, a premier public sector bank in the country, has inaugurated its **first dedicated Branch for start-ups** at **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- ★ The dedicated branch will provide all kinds of support to a startup during its growth journey.
- ★ Start-ups are an entrepreneur venture in the early stage of business operation, which if properly nurtured becomes an integral pillar of economic growth, employment generation while satisfying evolving needs of its clients with innovation.
- ★ During the event **Bank of Maharashtra** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** venture capital for proactive financing of start-ups.

## PhonePe Launches E-Commerce Consumer App 'Pincode'

- ★ **Walmart-owned fintech** company **PhonePe** has launched a **new consumer-facing application, Pincode**, which will be integrated into **India's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) framework**.
- ★ At present, Pincode is only available in **Bengaluru city** and will soon be launched in other cities.
- ★ Pincode is launching in 6 major categories, including grocery, food, pharma, electronics, home decor, and fashion.
- ★ The app, which will focus on **hyperlocal commerce**, is downloadable from Google Play and App store.
- ★ **Pincode** is built on the **ONDC network**, which allows us to generate demand for merchants digitised by various seller platforms in an inclusive manner, while creating new opportunities for growth and driving innovation at scale.

## World Bank Lowers India's FY24 Growth Forecast To 6.3%

- ★ The **World Bank** has **lowered** its forecast for **India's economic growth** in the current fiscal year that started on 01 April to **6.3%** from 6.6%.
- ★ Asia's third-largest economy recorded year-on-year growth of 4.4% in October-December, down from 11.2% a year back and 6.3% in the preceding quarter

- ★ The World Bank estimated a **6.9% growth** in **FY23**.
- ★ It projected the **current account deficit** to **narrow to 2.1%** of gross domestic product for the current fiscal year from an estimated 3% in the previous year, on the back of robust service exports and a narrowing merchandise trade deficit.

### Axis Bank Introduces 'Digital Dukaan'

- ★ **Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank**, in partnership with **Visa** announced the launch of an **app 'Digital Dukaan'**.
- ★ It is a comprehensive digital offering that will empower merchants to accept payments through various digital modes and also enable them to manage their day-to-day business digitally.
- ★ The Digital Dukaan' has been specifically designed to address business requirements such as accepting digital payments, inventory management and billing, among others.
- ★ It will also enable merchants to set up an online store and grow their business effortlessly by creating new channels.

### Canara Bank Launches Premium Payroll Account

- ★ **Canara Bank** has introduced '**Premium Payroll Package**' for the **Salary account holders** with competitive features.
- ★ The product has been designed to meet all Banking requirements of Salaried Customers.
- ★ Canara Bank's customers can avail this facility across all its branches in India.
- ★ Unique features include Free Term Life Insurance, Insta over Draft, Free Personal and Air Accident Insurance coverage and Premium Cards.

### SIB Partners with Cholamandalam MS General Insurance

- ★ **South Indian Bank Limited (SIB)** has announced partnership with **Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Company Ltd (Chola MS)** to offer **health and general insurance products**.
- ★ This partnership would enable customers of South Indian Bank to access the diverse range of insurance products offered by Cholamandalam MS General Insurance, thus fulfilling their need for protection against damage/loss.
- ★ The arrangement aims to enrich the bank's insurance offerings by enabling its customers to access the product via the wide network of bank branches PAN India.
- ★ The key product offerings include: personal accident cover, home and property insurance, farmer care, EMI insurance, home package and retail health.

### RBI Allows Pre-Sanctioned Credit Lines through UPI

- ★ The **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Governor Mr Shaktikanta Das** proposed to expand scope of **United Payments Interface (UPI)** by permitting operations of **pre-sanctioned credit lines** by banks **through UPI**.
- ★ UPI is a robust payment platform supporting an array of features.
- ★ Presently it handles 75% of the retail digital payments volume in India.

- ★ The UPI system has been leveraged to develop products and features aligned to India's payments digitisation goals.
- ★ In other words, the UPI network will facilitate payments financed by credit from banks.
- ★ This can reduce the cost of such offerings and help in the development of unique products for Indian markets.

## IIFL Finance Secures \$100 million from EDC and Deutsche Bank

- ★ Fairfax-backed, leading Mumbai-based non-banking financial company (NBFC), IIFL Finance Limited (IIFL), has secured USD 100 million in long-term funding, jointly, from Export Development Canada (EDC) and Deutsche Bank.
- ★ The NBFC secured USD 50 million from EDC and USD 50 million from Deutsche Bank, respectively.
- ★ The deal was structured under the aegis of Deutsche Bank as mandated lead arranger, book runner and co-financier.
- ★ This would also be IIFL's second loan from EDC. IIFL Finance had raised USD 400 million through its maiden dollar bond issue in February 2020.
- ★ It was able to buy back the maximum possible amount, as approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), with the remaining amount due for maturity in April 2023.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Most Popular Mode to Repay Digital Loans

- ★ The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** has emerged as **the second most preferred method of repaying digital loans**, coming at **27%**, only after **e-NACH** or electronic National Automated Clearing House which was **the preferred route for 36% of the borrowers**.
- ★ As per, the Financial Mood of the Millennials Report by financial services platform CASHe for FY23, **84% customers** prefer taking **a credit line over personal loans (14%) and BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later 2%)**.
- ★ Satchetised loans of less than ₹10,000 are preferred by 49% of millennials, the data showed adding that there is significant credit demand from bureau-based prime (44%) and near-prime (38%) millennials.

## RBI Excludes Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC from Second Schedule

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that the "Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC" (ADCB) has been excluded from the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934.
- ★ The Second Schedule to the Act lists the banks that are eligible to operate in India and outlines their respective regulatory requirements.
- ★ ADCB is a leading banking institution in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ★ However, as of recent times, the bank has been undergoing some significant changes that will affect its operations in India.
- ★ On February 2023, the RBI issued a notification announcing the cessation of ADCB as a banking company under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- ★ The ADCB would no longer be able to carry on banking business in India.
- ★ Now the ADCB will no longer be listed in the Second Schedule, and therefore, will not be able to operate in India as a banking company.

### IndusInd Bank Signs Loan Agreement with Citibank and JICA

- ★ IndusInd Bank signed a co-financing loan agreement with Citibank and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a funding line of \$125 million.
- ★ The funding line will be used by IndusInd Bank to provide credit to the agriculture sector.
- ★ The co-financing includes JPY 13 billion (about \$97.45 million) from JICA and a \$30 million loan from Citibank to IndusInd Bank.
- ★ The collaboration between the three entities aims to support the development of the agriculture sector in India by providing financial support to farmers and other related businesses.
- ★ IndusInd Bank is a leading private sector bank in India with a strong presence in retail banking, corporate banking and treasury operations.

### Reserve Bank of India to Launch Centralized Portal PRAVAAH

- ★ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has planned to launch a **secured web-based centralized portal** named '**PRAVAAH**' (**Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation And Authorization**) to *simplify and streamline application processes*.
- ★ The portal will **show time limits for deciding on the applications/approvals sought**.
- ★ The new system will bring greater efficiencies into regulatory processes and facilitate ease of doing business for the regulated entities of RBI.
- ★ The facility will be extended to all types of applications made to RBI across all functions.
- ★ Currently, the application and approval processes for the same take place in varied on-line and off-line modes.

### SBI to Launch New Current Accounts and Savings Accounts in FY24

- ★ The **State Bank of India (SBI)** is planning to launch new variants of **current account (with balances of ₹50,000 and ₹50 lakh)** and "**Parivar**" (**family**) **savings account** in FY24 *to minimise the gap between deposit growth and credit growth*.
- ★ The new plans come in the wake of deposit growth lagging credit growth over the last few quarters.
- ★ It is to increase its customer base and attract more deposits, particularly from retail customers.
- ★ To grow retail liabilities, the bank has placed more than 500 RMCAs (Relationship Managers for Current Accounts) in various Circles and launched CA product "Shubharambh" for start-ups.
- ★ The proposed Parivar Savings Bank Account will have additional features like insurance, health check-up and concession in locker rent.
- ★ With the launch of this account, the bank is expecting that customers will open bank accounts for their family members.

## Kotak General Insurance Partners with actyv.ai

- ★ **Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Co. Ltd (Kotak General Insurance)** has partnered with **actyv.ai** to offer **bite-sized insurance products** to **new-age Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) companies**.
- ★ Kotak General Insurance will leverage actyv.ai's Artificial Intelligence (AI)- powered platform to provide insurance solutions to support the business sustainability of small businesses.
- ★ Through this partnership with Kotak General Insurance, enterprises on actyv.ai's platform will now be able to offer group insurance to all of its distributors, retailers, and suppliers.

## ICICI Bank Introduces EMI Facility for UPI Payments

- ★ **ICICI Bank** has introduced **an easy EMI facility for UPI payments** made by scanning QR code.
- ★ Customers eligible for **PayLater**, the Bank's '**buy now, pay later**' service can avail of the EMI facility in an instant, easy and seamless manner.
- ★ This first-of-its-kind facility enhances the affordability of lakhs of the Bank's customers as they can now instantly buy products or services just by scanning the required merchant QR code at a store and making payments in EMIs.
- ★ Customers can pay a transaction amount above ₹10,000 in easy instalments in 3,6 or 9 months.
- ★ ICICI Bank was **the first bank to introduce PayLater facility in 2018** to enable customers to buy small ticket items immediately in a completely digital and paperless manner.
- ★ PayLater facility enables customers to shop online, pay bills and pay to any merchant UPI ID at physical stores instantly.

## DBS Bank India to Launch Proprietary Credit Card

- ★ **DBS Bank India Limited**, a 100% subsidiary of Singapore headquartered DBS Bank, will by June, 2023 roll out its **proprietary credit cards**.
- ★ This credit card offering will be targeted at mass affluent and above (premium segment, including HNIs).
- ★ Currently, DBS Bank India has a co-branded credit card with Bajaj Finserv and a customer base of 2,00,000.
- ★ DBS Bank India is also planning to foray into the affordable housing loans segment this fiscal.
- ★ It will look to target mostly customers in the Tier II and Tier III cities for selling this product.
- ★ Meanwhile, DBS Bank India has announced a partnership with India Filings, a leading platform for startups and small businesses in India.

## RBI Allows Karnataka Bank to Collect Direct and Indirect Taxes

- ★ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has authorised private sector lender **Karnataka Bank** to *collect direct and indirect taxes* on behalf of the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**.
- ★ The authorisation has been given on the recommendation from **the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.

- ★ Customers are already enjoying seamless online payments for custom duty by selecting Karnataka Bank in the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway 'ICEGATE' portal of CBIC.
- ★ The ICEGATE portal of the Central Board for Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) provides e-filing services to the trade, cargo carriers and other trading partners electronically.

### City Union Bank Launches Voice Biometric Authentication

- ★ **City Union Bank Limited (CUB)** has launched **India's first voice biometric authentication for logging into its mobile banking app.**
- ★ The voice biometric service was developed by Chennai-based deep tech start-up, Kaizen Secure Voiz Pvt Ltd, under the guidance of the 5G use case lab of the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an RBI established institution focussed on research in banking technologies.
- ★ Voice biometric will be one other option for the customer to log in, apart from existing modes like User ID/PIN, face ID, fingerprint authentication, etc.
- ★ CUB also clarified that the customers can choose any one of these authentication options as per their convenience.

### SEBI Unveils its New Logo on the 35<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day

- ★ Capital Market Regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) unveiled its new logo on its 35<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day at a ceremony conducted at the SEBI Head Office in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ The new SEBI logo retains its traditional blue colour palette.
- ★ The new logo reflects the combination of rich traditions of SEBI and new data and technology-based approach to all 3 areas of its mandate in the securities market.
- ★ These areas are the development and regulation of the securities market and investor protection.

### YES Bank Becomes First Indian Company with Over 50 Lakh Shareholders

- ★ **Private sector lender YES Bank** has become **the first Indian company to have over 50 lakh shareholders**, according to the shareholding pattern of the bank on March 2023.
- ★ **Tata Power** is at **number 2** in terms of maximum number of shareholders, with a total of 38.5 lakh people investing in its shares.
- ★ On the other hand, **Reliance Industries is at number 3** in this list with 33.6 lakh crore shareholders.
- ★ This was an increase from 1 lakh shareholders as of December 2022, most likely owing to the end of the 3-year lock-in period for shareholders that held equity shares of the bank when it underwent the reconstruction scheme in March 2020.

### First Private InVIT to Get Listed on National Stock Exchange

- ★ **IRB Infrastructure Trust**, sponsored by IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd was listed on the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** becoming **the first private InVIT to be listed.**



- ★ The move comes after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) listed guidelines on the listing framework for non-listed infrastructure investment trusts (InVIT).
- ★ The valuation of the trust units was determined based on third-party evaluation and further endorsed by the Trust's investors as well.
- ★ The value ascertained comes to around 16 times FY24 revenue, which will further keep appreciating with more projects coming in.
- ★ Infrastructure investment trusts, popularly known as InVITs, are a kind of hybrid securities.
- ★ They are technically defined as a collective investment scheme similar to a mutual fund, which allows individuals and institutional investors to directly invest in infrastructure projects.

### SIDBI Launches Pilot Scheme 'Mission 50K-EV4ECO'

- ★ **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched the *pilot financing scheme* called **the Mission 50K-EV4ECO** for *better financing terms in the electric vehicle space (EVS) and strengthening the whole ecosystem.*
- ★ It is to strengthen the EV ecosystem, including uptake for two, three and four-wheelers through direct and indirect lending.
- ★ The pilot scheme, which is the precursor to EVOLVE scheme by SIDBI-World Bank, has two components – direct lending and indirect lending.
- ★ This pilot will be followed by scaling up support to the ecosystem from multilateral support.
- ★ Under direct lending, **SIDBI will directly give loans to eligible Micro Small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for the purchase of electric vehicles.**
- ★ The indirect scheme targeted at NBFCs, including small unrated focused and emerging NBFCs, actively engaged in EV financing, will reach out to the last mile by inducing access to funds as also reducing landed cost.

### Singara Chennai Card

- ★ **Chennai Metro Rail Ltd** in association with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** launched the **Singara Chennai Card (NCCM – National Common Mobility Card).**
- ★ The technology for the RuPay NCCM cards has been developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).**
- ★ The card has a unique feature of a Stored Value Area which can be used to store a **maximum** amount of **2000 rupees** that can be used for ticket purchases in Offline mode
- ★ The Singara Chennai cards can be used in Chennai metro stations, and at other metros that accept RuPay NCCM cards.
- ★ In the future, consumers would be able to use the card for travel on buses, suburban railways, for toll, parking, smart city and retail shops, in many parts of the country.

## HDFC Capital Advisors Limited Receives SEBI Approval

- ★ HDFC Ltd stated that the market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cleared a proposal for change in control of HDFC Capital Advisors Limited (HCAL), a subsidiary of HDFC Limited and a co-investment portfolio manager subject to certain conditions.
- ★ As per the proposed composite scheme of amalgamation, HDFC Investments Limited and HDFC Holdings Limited, wholly-owned subsidiaries of Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited (HDFC Limited) would be first merged into HDFC Limited and subsequently into HDFC Bank.
- ★ Already, HDFC has received the required approvals from the SEBI, shareholders of HDFC and HDFC Bank, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- ★ The proposed entity will have a combined asset base of around ₹18 lakh crore.
- ★ Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be 100% owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41% of the bank.
- ★ Every HDFC shareholder will get 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares owned.

## Canara Bank Partners with NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd

- ★ **Canara Bank** in partnership with **NPCI Bharat BillPay (NBBL)** has launched **cross-border inward bill payment services** for **Indians** based in **Oman**.
- ★ **NRIs** can now leverage the robust platform offered by the **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)** to make bill payments on behalf of their families through the **Musandam Exchange**.
- ★ This initiative signifies a milestone for **Canara Bank** as **the first public sector bank in India to offer inbound cross-border bill payments through BBPS**.
- ★ **Musandam Exchange**, managed by Canara Bank, is also **the first exchange house in Oman to go live on cross-border inbound bill payments**.
- ★ The cross-border bill payment service is already live in Kuwait, facilitating inbound remittances across utilities like electricity, water, mobile phone, gas, credit card bills, and more.

## HDFC Bank Signs Agreement with Export Import Bank of Korea

- ★ **HDFC Bank** has signed a '**Master Inter Bank Credit Agreement**' with **Export Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM)** for a **USD 300 million line of credit**.
- ★ The pact was signed by the two entities at **GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec) City** in Gujarat's capital **Gandhinagar**.
- ★ This agreement will help *HDFC Bank raise foreign currency funds* which it would extend to *Korea-related businesses*.
- ★ This line of credit would be utilised by HDFC Bank towards funding requirements of companies having equity participation by Korean companies as well as companies having business relationship with Korean companies.
- ★ It will also be utilised towards funding requirements of consumers for the purchase of cars manufactured by Korea related companies.

## AIIB to Open its First Overseas Office in Abu Dhabi

- ★ The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** signed an **agreement** to set up its **first overseas office in Abu Dhabi Global Market**.
- ★ The AIIB is a multilateral development bank that prioritises financing infrastructure projects focused on sustainability.
- ★ The new foreign office in Abu Dhabi will support the AIIB's development agenda by funding sustainable economic development projects, primarily in areas where it is most needed.
- ★ The strategic location of the office in the Middle East will enable AIIB to make a global impact in achieving its goals.

## Federal Bank Signs Agreement with Agri Fintech Kivi

- ★ Federal Bank has entered into a Banking Correspondent agreement with Chennai-based KiVi, an Agri fintech start-up operated by Agrosperity Tech Solutions, with a view to scaling and expanding its Agri lending portfolio in Tamil Nadu (TN).
- ★ Federal Bank launched the instant KCC platform in September 2022.
- ★ It is claimed to be the first of its kind in agriculture lending, it offers farmers convenience and turnaround time.
- ★ It is to provide small-value loans to small and marginal farmers, and is designed to facilitate efficient credit flow to underserved rural populations.
- ★ In the initial phase of this partnership, KiVi aims to serve 10,000 farmers in Tamil Nadu.

## RBI Harmonises Provisioning Norms for Urban Cooperative Banks

- ★ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced that **it has unified the provisioning norms for standard assets across all categories of urban cooperative banks (UCBs)**.
- ★ In **December 2020**, the **RBI had classified UCBs into four tiers**, namely tier 1, 2, 3, and 4 for regulatory purposes.
- ★ Direct advances to agriculture and SME sectors that are standard would attract a uniform provisioning requirement of 0.25 per cent of the funded outstanding on a portfolio basis to all categories of UCBs under the revised framework.
- ★ Advances to the commercial real estate (CRE) sector that are standard would attract a uniform provisioning requirement of 1 per cent of the funded outstanding on a portfolio basis.
- ★ For the Commercial Real Estate-Residential Housing Sector (CRE-RH) and all other loans and advances, the provisioning requirements would be 0.75 per cent and 0.4 per cent, respectively.
- ★ The RBI has categorised all unit UCBs and salary earners' UCBs (irrespective of deposit size), and all other **UCBs having deposits up to ₹100 crore in tier 1**.
- ★ UCBs with deposits more than **₹100 crore and up to ₹1,000 crore** have been placed in **tier 2**.
- ★ Banks with deposits more than **₹1,000 crore and up to ₹10,000 crore** have been categorised in **tier 3**.
- ★ UCBs with deposits **more than ₹10,000 crore** have been categorised in **tier 4**.

## Emkay Global Gets SEBI's In-Principle Approval

- ★ Emkay Global Financial Services has received in-principle approval from the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to launch a mutual fund business in India.
- ★ It offers services such as institutional equity, portfolio management services, wealth management, investment banking and global investing.
- ★ At present, there are 44 MF players with total assets under management of about ₹40 lakh crore with top 10 players accounting for a lion's share of business.
- ★ MF sponsors subject to having a net-worth of ₹100 crore for contribution towards the net-worth of the Asset Management Company.
- ★ This net-worth of the AMC has to be maintained till the time it posts profit for 5 consecutive years.

## Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to Launch Gold-Pegged Digital Currency

- ★ The **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe**, or RBZ, plans to introduce a **gold-backed digital currency as legal tender in Zimbabwe**.
- ★ It is believed that the government took this step to stabilizing the local currency after its continuous devaluation in comparison to the United States (US) dollar.
- ★ This initiative taken by Zimbabwe will allow the exchange of Zimbabwean dollars with digital gold tokens and secure Zimbabweans against currency volatility.

## NPCI Bharat Billpay Introduces the NOCS Platform

- ★ **NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd (NBBL)** has launched the **NOCS platform** to provide *reconciliation and settlement services for transactions undertaken on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) network*.
- ★ The services, provided under the guidance of RBI, will serve as the foundation for the ONDC network and enable smooth, secure and timely transfer of funds to network participants.
- ★ The **NOCS platform is integrated with banks, fintechs and e-commerce players**, and will soon go live with the first set of 5 banks on ONDC-**AU Small Finance Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, IDFC First Bank and YES Bank**.
- ★ The ONDC platform was set up to facilitate the rapid adoption of e-commerce, and boost and strengthen the growth of startups in India by facilitating scalable and cost-effective e-commerce through the open protocol.

## Hindujas Get In-Principal Approval to Raise Stake in IndusInd Bank

- ★ Hinduja Group, Promoters of India's IndusInd Bank have received in-principal approval from the country's central bank Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to increase their stake in IndusInd Bank.
- ★ The promoters have filled out a form to increase the stake and the due diligence process takes about 90-180 days as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms.
- ★ IndusInd's promoters currently hold a stake of about 16.5% in the bank. In 2021, the RBI raised the cap on the stake promoters can hold in a bank to 26% from 15%.

- ★ IndusInd International Holdings Ltd, an entity belonging to promoters Hinduja Group, have a 12.57% stake in the lender, while IndusInd Ltd has a 3.93% stake as per the company's latest shareholding pattern available with the Indian stock exchange BSE.

## SPORTS

### ICC Cricket World Cup 2023

- ★ Sri Lanka failed to qualify directly for the ICC ODI World Cup after defeat by New Zealand in Hamilton on 31 March.
- ★ The New Zealand team had already qualified for the World Cup, but Sri Lanka had a special chance of making a direct entry to the World Cup by winning the last match of the three-match ODI series.
- ★ A total of 10 teams will participate in the World Cup 2023, out of which a total of 7 teams have qualified so far.
- ★ In the World Cup 2023, the top 8 teams in the points table were to get a chance to qualify.
- ★ The Sri Lankan team finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the points table after their loss to New Zealand on 31 March.

### Unity Cup Tennis Ball Cricket Tournament 2023

- ★ **Unity Cup Cricket Tournament 2023** organized jointly by **HUDCO and NBCC** at Siri Fort Sports Complex, **New Delhi**.
- ★ It aims to **encourage team building and promote the Fit India Movement of the Government of India**.
- ★ It was inaugurated by **Manoj Joshi, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- ★ The tournament was organized between the mega teams of MoHUA, CPWD, NBCC and HUDCO.
- ★ The series of exciting matches began with the opening match played between MoHUA and CPWD.
- ★ MoHUA won the final by 20 runs from NBCC in the finals.
- ★ Manoj Joshi lifted the winning Trophy on behalf of MoHUA Team.
- ★ The sporty event was followed by presenting 'Man of the Match' to Maninder from MoHUA.

### Miami Opens Title 2023

- ★ **Russian tennis star Daniil Medvedev** claimed his **fourth title of the year** by defeating **Jannik Sinner** in final match in Miami Opens 2023.
- ★ Medvedev, who was once the top-ranked player in the world, has now won 24 out of his last 25 matches, including his latest victory at the prestigious Miami Open.
- ★ The win marked his **first-ever title win at the Miami Open**.
- ★ Medvedev clinched his **fifth Masters 1000 title** and **19<sup>th</sup> title overall** by beating Sinner, with a scoreline of 7-5, 6-3.

## Financial Assistance for 12 Para Shuttlers

- ★ **Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of the Sports Ministry** has approved financial assistance to **12 Para-Badminton players including Pramod Bhagat and Manasi Joshi** to participate in the upcoming **Brazil Para-Badminton International Tournament**.
- ★ Brazil Para-Badminton International tournament is a **Level 2 event and part of the Paris Paralympics pathway for 2023**.
- ★ The funding has been approved under the Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and will provide financial assistance to athletes and their support staff.
- ★ The funding will include an out-of-pocket allowance (OPA) for athletes and support staff for travel, visas, insurance costs, boarding and lodging, their entry fees for competition and other daily financial needs.

## MCC Life Membership

- ★ The **prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)**, based at cricket's mecca **Lord's** conferred its **Honorary Life Membership** to **five Indian cricketers**, including former India captain **Mahendra Singh Dhoni**.
- ★ Apart from Dhoni, **Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami** have been given this honour.
- ★ **MCC CEO Guy Levander** gave this membership to a total of 19 cricketers keeping in mind their contribution to international cricket.
- ★ **South Africa's Dale Steyn, England's Kevin Pietersen, Morgan, Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez, Bangladesh's Mashrafe Mortaza and New Zealand's Ross Taylor** are among those who got membership.
- ★ As captain, Dhoni won the **T20 World Cup in 2007, the World Cup in 2011 and the Champions Trophy in 2013**.

## First Woman On-Field Umpire in Full-Member Men's T20Is

- ★ **New Zealand's Kim Cotton** became **the first woman on-field umpire in a full-member men's T20I during New Zealand's second match against Sri Lanka in Dunedin**.
- ★ The 48-year-old Cotton has officiated as both on-field and TV umpire since 2018, in addition to 24 women's ODIs and 54 women's T20Is.
- ★ Cotton first made an appearance in the men's game in 2020 as a TV umpire for the tied match between India and New Zealand in Hamilton.
- ★ Cotton has also officiated in three T20 World Cups and an ODI World Cup since 2018, including the finals in 2020, 2022 and 2023.

## Weightlifter Sanjita Chanu Banned for 4 Years by NADA

- ★ Indian weightlifter and two-time Commonwealth Games winner Sanjita Chanu has been banned for four years by India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).

- ★ The ban was imposed after Chanu tested positive for the anabolic-androgenic steroid Drostanolone, banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), during the National Games to be held in Gujarat in September-October 2022.
- ★ As a result of the ban, Chanu would be stripped of her silver medal from the National Games.

### Khelo India Games Certificates with Digilocker

- ★ **Sports Authority of India** has integrated **Khelo India Games certificates** with **DigiLocker** for the first time.
- ★ Athletes, support staff, Technical Officers, Mission Heads, Competition Managers, etc. can access their Khelo India certificates through the digital platform.
- ★ Athletes and other stakeholders participating in the Khelo India Games will now be able to collect their certificates of qualification and participation from the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 in Madhya Pradesh.
  - It aims to 'digitally empower' citizens.
  - It is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY).
  - It is a secure cloud-based platform for storage, which enables easy sharing and verification of documents and certificates.

### World Chess Armageddon Asia and Oceania Event

- ★ **Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh** emerged winner of the **World Chess Armageddon Asia and Oceania tournament** after defeating former World Rapid Champion Nodirbek Abdusatarov of Uzbekistan in the final.
- ★ The Armageddon game is a variant of blitz chess, used to determine a winner after a series of drawn games.
- ★ A drawn game in Armageddon is counted as a win for Black.
- ★ Both Gukesh and Abdusatrov have qualified for the Grand Finale of Armageddon, which is scheduled for September.

### Street Child Cricket World Cup in September

- ★ The city of Chennai has always welcomed the sport of cricket with open arms, and has played the perfect host to several national and international tournaments.
- ★ Coming **September, Chennai** will witness another cricket tournament, but one with a difference – the **Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023**.
- ★ Organised by Street Child United in partnership with Shree Dayaa Foundation, the tournament will take place at Amir Mahal, the official residence of the Nawab of Arcot from September 20 to 30.
- ★ This is the **second edition of the Street Child Cricket World Cup**.

### Asian Wrestling Championship 2023

- ★ The Asian Wrestling Championships is an annual wrestling competition organised by the Asian Wrestling Federation (AWF).

- ★ **India** participated in the **36<sup>th</sup> edition of Asian Wrestling Championship** to be held in **Astana, Kazakhstan from 09 to 14 April 2023**.
- ★ The event was originally planned to be held in New Delhi, India.
- ★ A total of 331 wrestlers from 22 countries participated in this competition, out of which 30 wrestlers were from India.
- ★ **India** got its **first gold medal** in the **Asian Wrestling Championship 2023**.
- ★ **Indian wrestlers** were successful in winning a total of **14 medals in the championship**. This includes one gold, three silver and ten bronze medals.
- ★ Indian Wrestler **Aman Sehrawat** won the Gold medal in the **men's 57 kg freestyle category** by defeating Almaz Samanbekov of Kyrgyzstan with a score of 9-4.
- ★ With these achievements, India secured the **7<sup>th</sup> position in the medal tally**.
- ★ The top three nations in the medal table based on gold medals were **Kazakhstan, Japan and Iran**.

### Wisden Cricketers 2022 List

- ★ Wisden Cricketers Almanack has released the **list of top-5 cricketers of the year 2022**.
- ★ It also includes India's women's team captain **Harmanpreet Kaur** and **Suryakumar Yadav** of the men's team.
- ★ Apart from Kaur, the list also includes the names of **Tom Blundell (New Zealand), Ben Foakes (England), Daryl Mitchell (New Zealand) and Matthew Potts (England)**.
- ★ **Suryakumar Yadav** has been selected as the T20 Cricketer of the Year.
- ★ **Harmanpreet Kaur** created history by becoming the first Indian woman to be named in Wisden Cricketers of the Year.

### Archery World Cup 2023

- ★ **Indian men's** recurve team comprising **Atanu Das, Dheeraj Bommadevra and Tarundeep Rai** won the **silver medal** at the **Archery World Cup 2023 Stage 1** held in **Antalya, Turkey**.
- ★ The Indian trio lost 4-5 to China's Li Zhongyuan, Qi Jiangshuo and Wei Shaoxuan in the final.
- ★ **Dheeraj Bommadevra** defeated Ilfat Abdullin of Kazakhstan 7-3 to win the **bronze medal in the men's individual recurve event**.
- ★ India ended the competition with **four medals**, including **two gold, one silver and one bronze**.

### Kiptom Wins London Marathon

- ★ **Kelvin Kiptum**, a 23-year-old Kenyan athlete, won **the London Marathon** and set **the second fastest time in history for the distance**.
- ★ Kiptum finished the race with a time of **2 hours, 1 minute and 25 seconds**, breaking the course record but only 16 seconds short of Eliud Kipchoge's world record.
- ★ It is an annual long distance running competition that takes place in London, UK. It was first organised in 1981.



## Barcelona Title

- ★ **Carlos Alcaraz** won his **second consecutive Barcelona title** defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets.
- ★ Alcaraz has won his **third trophy of 2023** and **ninth of his career** after victories in Buenos Aires and Indian Wells.
- ★ It was Alcaraz's fourth win in four meetings with Tsitsipas.
- ★ It is a professional **football** club based in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

## RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

### India Justice Report 2022

- ★ **India Justice Report 2022** was released in New Delhi. This study relies on overall statistics from four pillars of justice delivery, includes Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal aid.
- ★ **Karnataka ranks first** among 18 large and medium-sized states with a population of over one crore in terms of delivery of justice.
- ★ **Tamil Nadu is second** and **Telangana is third**. Uttar Pradesh is at the 18<sup>th</sup> position, which is at the bottom.
- ★ Among small states, **Sikkim** topped the list of **seven small states** with less than one crore population, followed by Arunachal Pradesh. Goa is at the bottom, at seventh position.
- ★ According to the report, as of December 2022, the high courts were functioning with only 778 judges as against the sanctioned strength of 1,108.

### IGIA Enters the Busiest Airports Club

- ★ **Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA)** ranks **ninth in the list of top ten busiest airports in the world**, according to data from the **Airports Council International (ACI)**.
- ★ For the *first time*, an Indian airport has made it to the list of top ten airports in terms of traffic.
- ★ As per ACI report, Delhi airport is expected to handle more than 5.94 crore passengers in 2022.
- ★ As a result of this achievement, IGIA has jumped from 17<sup>th</sup> position in pre-Covid 2019 to 9<sup>th</sup> position, according to ACI data.
- ★ **Mumbai** is *India's second busiest airport*.
- ★ In terms of traffic, five of the top ten airports are from the US.

### FIFA Rankings 2023

- ★ The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) released the latest rankings of international football teams.
- ★ **Argentina** topped the FIFA rankings for the *first time in six years*.

- ★ The top five teams in the FIFA rankings as of April 2023 are **Argentina, France, Brazil, Belgium and England.**
- ★ The next FIFA World Rankings will be published on 20 July 2023.
- ★ FIFA is the governing body for association football, beach soccer and futsal at the international level.
- ★ FIFA has 211 member associations, making it one of the largest international organisations in the world.

### Passport Index 2023

- ★ In the **Passport Index 2023 India** ranked at the **144<sup>th</sup> position in 2023**, with a mobility score of 70.
- ★ The Passport Index, released by financial advisory firm Arton Capital, determines the rankings on the basis of the mobility score of the countries, which is calculated on provisions like a visa-free visit, visa on arrival, an eVisa (if used within three days), and electronic travel authorisation.
- ★ The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has the **highest mobility score of 181**, and ranks number one.
- ★ It was followed by Sweden, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Austria, with a joint mobility score of 174.

### State Energy Efficiency Index 2021-22

- ★ **Union Minister for Power and Renewable Energy R.K. Singh** released the **State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22 report.**
- ★ The SEEI was released during the RPM (Review, Planning and Monitoring) meeting of states and state utility companies in New Delhi.
- ★ **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and Telangana** are among the top ranked states in the State Energy Efficiency Index-SEEI.
- ★ Four states Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra and Punjab are in the achiever category with scores between 50 and 60.
- ★ Besides, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Chandigarh are the top performing states in their respective state groups.
- ★ The index is designed to help monitor progress toward state goals for energy savings and emissions reductions.

### Freedom in the World Index 2023

- ★ Global watchdog Freedom House has released its 'Freedom in the World Index' for 2023, ranking Tibet as the "world's least free country" along with South Sudan and Syria.
- ★ This is the third annual report after the 2021 and 2022 Freedom House reports. According to the report, both Chinese and Tibetans living in Tibet lack basic rights.
- ★ A number of issues relating to the human rights of the Tibetan people require serious and urgent attention from the international community.

- ★ The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights raised the issue of serious human rights violations in Tibet in its third Periodic Review Report.

## World's 'Most Criminal Countries' Ranking

- ★ World of Statistics released the ranking of the world's "**most criminal countries**" in which **India** is ranked **77** positions.
- ★ **US** ranked at **55<sup>th</sup>** and the **UK** at **65<sup>th</sup>** position.
- ★ As per the ranking, **Venezuela** has been ranked **first** as **the most criminal country**, followed by **Papua New Guinea** in second place and **South Africa** in third place.
- ★ Turkey, Germany and Japan are among the least criminal countries, ranked 92<sup>nd</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> and 135<sup>th</sup> respectively.

## Second Strongest Tyre Brand in the World

- ★ MRF Ltd has emerged as the second-strongest tyre brand in the world according to the latest report by Brand Finance on the 'Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brands' in the world.
- ★ MRF has scored high in almost all parameters and is also recognized as the second fastest growing tire brand in the world.
- ★ It has scored 83.2 out of 100 in brand strength and has been awarded AAA-brand rating.
- ★ MRF scored high in the Sustainability Perception Value and is the only Indian tire manufacturer to feature in the top 10.
- ★ Brand Finance's annual report on the Most Valuable and Strongest Automobile, Auto Component, Tire and Mobility 2023 analyzes the value of brands across these industries.

## Second Largest Export Destination and Third Largest Source of Imports

- ★ According to the annual trade data released by the **Ministry of Commerce, Government of India**, **UAE** is the **second most important export destination of India**.
- ★ **The US and the UAE** retained their **first and second positions**, respectively, as India's top export destinations during the financial year **2022-23**.
- ★ India's total exports of goods and services grew by six per cent during the fiscal year that ended last month.
- ★ The commerce ministry also released India's trade data for March 2023, which showed UAE as second only to the US among India's export destinations.
- ★ The UAE ranked third among India's import sources in March 2023, after China and Russia.

## World's Most Populous Country

- ★ **India has overtaken China** as the **world's most populous country**, according to United Nations data.
- ★ According to UN data **India's population is 142.86 crore** while **China's population is 142.57 crores**.

- ★ According to a new report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), **25 per cent of India's population** is between the age group of **0-14 years**.
- ★ The population between the age group of **10-19 years is 18 percent**.
- ★ The population in the age group of **10-24 years is 26 percent**.
- ★ The population in the age group of **15-64 years is 68 percent** and the population above **65 years is 7 percent**.
- ★ According to experts, the demographics of India differ from state to state.
- ★ **Kerala and Punjab** have a **large elderly population**, while **Bihar and Uttar Pradesh** have a **large youth population**.

### World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI)

- ★ India secured **38<sup>th</sup> rank** in the **Logistics Performance Index (LPI)** released in 2023 by the **World Bank**.
- ★ India's improvement in ranking can be attributed to its significant investments in both hard and soft infrastructure, as well as technology.
- ★ India's current ranking shows a significant improvement from its 44<sup>th</sup> rank in 2018 and its 54<sup>th</sup> rank in 2014.
- ★ The Logistics Performance Index ranks 139 countries based on factors such as the efficiency of customs clearance processes, the quality of transportation infrastructure and the ease of arranging shipments.
- ★ Singapore and Finland have been identified as the most efficient and highest ranked countries in terms of logistics performance as per LPI 2023.

### First Ever Census on Water Bodies in India

- ★ For the first time in the country's history, the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** recently released **the first census report of water bodies**, providing important insights into the country's water resources.
- ★ The census provides a comprehensive list of India's water resources, which includes natural and man-made water bodies such as ponds, tanks, lakes, etc.
- ★ It has collected data on encroachment of water bodies.
- ★ The census also highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas and different levels of encroachment and revealed important insights into the country's water resources.
- ★ Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies – **West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam** which constitute around **63% of the total water bodies** in the country.
- ★ Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies in urban areas- **West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura**.
- ★ Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies in rural areas – **West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam**.

## India Ranks Fourth in Global Military Expenditure

- ★ According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, global military expenditure has reached a new record high of **\$2240 billion**, increasing by 3.7% in real terms in 2022.
- ★ **India's military expenditure** in 2022 amounted to **\$81.4 billion**, which is the **fourth-highest** in the world. This represents a 6% increase compared to the previous year's spending.
- ★ Europe witnessed its most substantial year-on-year increase in military spending in at least 30 years.
- ★ **The United States, China, and Russia**, which are the three largest military spenders, contributed 56% of the total global military expenditure in 2022.
- ★ These findings were released by SIPRI in its latest report on global military spending.

## AWARDS & PRIZES

### ICOMOS Water and Heritage Shield

- ★ A site **Sípàapu** located in **Arizona, United States** and sacred to the Hopi Native American Nation has been awarded a **'Water and Heritage Shield'** by the **International Committee On Monuments and Sites International Science Committee (ICOMOS)**
- ★ The Hopi are known as one of the oldest living cultures in documented history, having migrated north to Arizona in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- ★ The purpose of the Shield is to help the public become aware of the significance of water and indigenous sacred sites all over the world and the right to cultural and historical memory.
- ★ The Sípàapu is a rocky dome made of limestone as well as a spring located on the Little Colorado river, a tributary of Colorado.
- ★ International Committee On Monuments and Sites is a global non-governmental organization associated with UNESCO
- ★ Its mission is to promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, building complexes and sites.

### Olympic Gold Medal

- ★ More than a decade after the 2012 London Games, **Lashinda Demus**, a sprinter from the United States, was awarded an **Olympic gold medal** at the age of 40.
- ★ Czechia's Zuzana Hejnova and Jamaica's Kalisz Spencer was awarded a silver and a bronze Medal respectively.
- ★ London Olympics 2012 was held in London, UK from 27 July to 12 August 2012.
- ★ The International Olympic Committee stripped Natalya Antyukh, the original gold medalist in the 400 metres hurdles, of her title due to her involvement in the Russian doping scandal.

## Young Urologist of the Year Award

- ★ **Dr. Nitya Abraham**, an Indian-American physician and professor, has been honored with the **Young Urologist of the Year Award** by the **American Urological Association (AUA)**.
- ★ She is an Associate Professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Program Director for the Montefiore Urology residency programme.
- ★ Abraham has been chosen from the New York region for her accomplishments and contributions.
- ★ Abraham has done remarkable work for countless students, residents, fellows and junior faculty in the New York area and at his institution.
- ★ She is serving as the Chair of the Executive Curriculum Committee for the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

## Order of the White Eagle, Poland's Highest Honour

- ★ Ukraine's President **Volodymyr Zelensky** was awarded the **Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest award**.
- ★ The award was given to him for his exceptional services to protect security, resilience and human rights.
- ★ The Order of the White Eagle is a prestigious and highly regarded decoration of the Republic of Poland, awarded for outstanding civil and military contributions to the country.
- ★ It is considered the oldest and highest decoration in Poland, whose history dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- ★ In recent years, the award has been awarded to individuals who have made a significant contribution to Polish-Ukrainian relations and to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region.

## International Prize in Statistics 2023

- ★ **Kalyampudi Radhakrishna Rao**, an Indian-American statistician won **the 2023 International Prize in Statistics**.
- ★ Rao will be honoured with the award at the International Statistical Institute's World Statistics Congress in Ottawa, Canada in July.
- ★ The prize will be awarded for Rao's groundbreaking paper, 'The Information and Accuracy Obtained in the Estimation of Statistical Parameters', published in 1945 in the Bulletin of the Calcutta Mathematical Society.
- ★ The award recognizes individuals or teams who have made significant contributions to science, technology and human welfare through the use of statistics.
- ★ The award carries an **\$80,000 cash prize** and is presented **once every two years**.

## Maratha Udyog Ratna 2023

- ★ **Nilesh Bhagwan Sambre**, founder of Jijau Educational and Social Foundation, was recently awarded the 'Maratha Udyog Ratna' at the 'Maratha Entrepreneurs Conference 2023'.

- ★ It was organised by the “Maratha Entrepreneurs Development and Guidance Institute Maharashtra State”.
- ★ The award was given to Nilesh Sambre for his impressive achievements in the industry sector and his tireless work in remote areas like Palghar.
- ★ Nilesh Bhagwan Sambre is also known as Appa.
- ★ Jijau Educational and Social Organization is a non-profit organisation that focuses on the upliftment of underprivileged communities in 5 districts of India: Palghar, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.

### ‘Business Leader of the Decade’ Award

- ★ **Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla** was honoured with the ‘**Business Leader of the Decade Award**’ at the **13<sup>th</sup> Management India Awards ceremony** organised by the All-India Management Association (AIMA).
- ★ The award was presented to him in recognition of his contribution to Indian industry, especially in strengthening the operations of the Aditya Birla Group, and his leadership over the last ten years.
- ★ Tata’s T. Viren was also presented with the Workman- J Worker Partnership Award at the ceremony and ABB India won the ‘MNC in India of the Year’ award.
- ★ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which operates the retail payment and settlement system in India, was awarded the ‘Outstanding PSU of the Year’ award.
- ★ AIMA is a non-profit organisation that focuses on improving management skills and practices in India.
- ★ The organisation provides a platform for networking, knowledge sharing and career development for professionals in the field of management.

### ‘Maharashtra Bhushan’ for the year 2022

- ★ Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented the ‘Maharashtra Bhushan’ award for the year 2022 to **Dr. Appasaheb Dharmadhikari** at Raigarh, Maharashtra on 16<sup>th</sup> April.
- ★ Appasaheb Dharmadhikari is a famous social reformer.
- ★ Dr. Appasaheb Dharmadhikari established the Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari Foundation, Revdanda to expand the scope of social work.
- ★ In view of his work, Appasaheb was also honored with Padma Shri.
- ★ The work of tree plantation was done by the Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari Foundation keeping in view the effect of climate change and temperature.

### Nandini Gupta Crowned Femina Miss India 2023

- ★ **Nandini Gupta** of **Rajasthan** won the title of **Femina Miss India World 2023**.
- ★ The first runner-up of the competition was Shreya Poonja from Delhi and the second runner-up was Thounaojam Strela Luwang from Manipur.

- ★ The 59<sup>th</sup> edition of India's most prestigious pageant marked the Grand Finale of Femina Miss India World 2023.
- ★ Nandini Gupta will represent India at the 71<sup>st</sup> Miss World pageant, which is going to be held in the United Arab Emirates.

### Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023

- ★ Economist Utsa Patnaik was selected for the 2023 Malcolm Adiseshiah Award.
- ★ The award is given every year by the Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshia Trust.
- ★ The prestigious National Award is conferred on nominations received by outstanding social scientists selected by a national level jury specially constituted for the purpose.
- ★ The jury unanimously selected Professor Patnaik as the recipient of the award this year.
- ★ The previous winner of the prize was Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik, who won it in 2022.

### Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

- ★ **FedEx CEO Raj Subramaniam** received the **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, India's highest civilian honour for persons of Indian origin and the diaspora.**
- ★ Due to travel restrictions, Subramaniam was presented the award by India's ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, at a ceremony held at India House.
- ★ Subramaniam is a prominent Indian-American business leader.
- ★ It is an award given by the Government of India to persons of Indian origin and diaspora who have made significant contributions in their respective fields.
- ★ The award was instituted on 9 January 2003 coinciding with the celebrations of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, also known as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
- ★ Recipients of this award are selected on the basis of their achievements in various fields including science, business, arts and philanthropy.

### Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar Award

- ★ **Legendary singer Asha Bhosle** will be honoured with the **Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar Award** on April 24 and the award ceremony will coincide with her father's death anniversary.
- ★ The award was instituted by the Mangeshkar family and trust in the memory of Lata Mangeshkar, and is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to the nation, its people and society.
- ★ **Veteran Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas** will be honoured with the **Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Award** for his contribution to Indian music.
- ★ Gauri Theaters of Prashant Damle Fan Foundation will be given the Best Drama of the Year award for their play 'Niyam Va Ati Lagoo'.
- ★ Sadguru Seva Sangh Trust will be honoured for his social service.
- ★ Granthali Prakashan will receive the Vag Vilasini Award for his contribution to literature.



- ★ Actor-Director Prasad Oak and actor Vidya Balan will both be presented with special awards for their contribution to cinema and theatre.

### PM's Award for Excellence

- ★ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** conferred an award for excellence in public administration to **PM Gati Shakti national master plan (NMP) initiative**.
- ★ The award was presented to the Department for Promotion of Internal Trade (DPIIT) in the category 'Innovation-Central' for the successful implementation of the prestigious 'PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan' programme.
- ★ The Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration has been instituted to recognize the extraordinary and innovative work done by districts and organizations of the Central and State Governments for public welfare.
- ★ It is a transformative approach to economic growth and sustainable development.

### Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana Award

- ★ **Karnataka** received the **National Award for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** and the award was accepted by Shivayogi Kalasad, Secretary, Department of Agriculture.
- ★ Karnataka was recognized as the leading state in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) scheme during a national conference in Chhattisgarh.
- ★ According to agriculture department officials, an amount of ₹687.4 crore has been settled for 5.66 lakh farmers with pending claims since 2018.
- ★ In Karnataka, the PMFBY scheme is being implemented through a state designed and developed portal called 'SANRAKSHAN' created in collaboration with the National Informatics Center (NIC).

### First Woman IAF Officer to Get Gallantry Award

- ★ **Wing Commander Deepika Mishra** became **the First Woman Officer of the Indian Air Force to receive a Gallantry award**.
- ★ Wing Commander Mishra, a Rajasthan-based helicopter pilot, has been awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for 'extraordinary courage' displayed during a flood relief operation in Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhary presented **the Yudh Seva Medal** at Vayu Sena Auditorium Subroto Park New Delhi.
- ★ Two IAF Officers were awarded Yudh Seva Medal, 13 Officers and air warriors received Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), 13 Officers Vayu Sena Medal and 30 Vishisht Seva Medal.

### Santokba Humanitarian Award

- ★ The prestigious Santokba Humanitarian Award was presented to Sonam Wangchuk, a notable engineer, innovator, educationist, sustainable development reformist, and founder-director of the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL).
- ★ The award carries a cash prize of ₹1 crore and has been instituted in the memory of Late Santokba Dholakia, mother of SRK and SRKKF Founder President Govind Dholakia.

- ★ Wangchuk is the inventor of the Ice Stupa technique which creates artificial glaciers used to store winter water in the form of cone-shaped ice piles and solve the water crisis in Ladakh.
- ★ The SECMOL campus, designed by Wangchuk, runs on solar power and does not use fossil fuels for cooking, lighting or heating.

## India Gem and Jewellery Awards

- ★ Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal attended the 49<sup>th</sup> edition of India Gem and Jewellery Awards in Mumbai.
- ★ Organized by the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), the event felicitates top exporters from the sector.
- ★ The Union Minister felicitated 28 top exporters and facilitators during the award ceremony, which also had Frank Geerkens, Consul General of Belgium in Mumbai, as the guest of honour.
- ★ The GJEPC Chairman expressed hope that the free trade agreements with the UK, Canada and the European Union that are being negotiated will help exporters reach US\$1 trillion in exports.

## Dalai Lama Receives Ramon Magsaysay Award

- ★ Dalai Lama personally received the 1959 Ramon Magsaysay Award from members of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation.
- ★ President of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, Susanna B. Affan, along with Foundation Trustee Emily A. Abrera, presented the award to the Dalai Lama.
- ★ The award was given in August 1959 by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation in the Philippines.
- ★ It is an annual award that recognizes individuals and organisations in Asia for exceptional courage, integrity and service to their communities.
- ★ The award is given in six categories: government service, public service, community leadership, journalism, creative arts, and peace and international understanding.

## Global Gold Award for CSR Work

- ★ **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL)**, a Maharatna CPSU of the Ministry of Power, Government of India, has been conferred with **the Global Gold Award by The Green Organisation**.
- ★ The award was given at the Green World Awards 2023 ceremony held in Miami, USA.
- ★ Dr. V.K. Singh, Director (Personnel), POWERGRID received the award on behalf of the organization.
- ★ The award has been given to POWERGRID for improving agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods through watershed management, community participation and better crop management practices in 10 villages of Jayapatna block of Kalahandi district in Odisha.

## Highest Order of Merit of Germany

- ★ Former German chancellor Angela Merkel received the highest order of Merit of Germany.

- ★ She has been honoured with this award for her achievements in office, despite growing criticism of her decisions on Russia and her energy policy.
- ★ President Frank-Walter Steinmeier handed over her the Grand Cross award.
- ★ Former chancellors Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl have received this award twice.
- ★ Germany's Order of Merit is the only federal decoration of Germany.
- ★ It is given for special achievements in political, economic, cultural, intellectual or honorary fields.

### Australia's Highest Civilian Honour

- ★ **Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata** has received the **Order of Australia (AO)**, Australia's highest civilian honour.
- ★ The award was announced by Barry O'Farrell, Australia's High Commissioner to India.
- ★ The award was given to Ratan Tata for his contribution in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Australia.
- ★ Ratan Tata has been a strong supporter of the 2022 India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement.
- ★ Ratan Tata was recently named an Honorary Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) for his contribution to promoting trade, investment and philanthropy between India and Australia.
- ★ It is an honour awarded to Australian citizens and other individuals in recognition of their exceptional achievements and services.

### TAL Presents Lifetime Achievement Award

- ★ Breast surgeon Dr. Raghu Ram Pillarisetti was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Telugu Association of London.
- ★ Dr. Raghu Ram is one of the few persons to have received this prestigious award. He is also the only Indian living outside the UK to have been given this honour.
- ★ The Telugu Association of London (TAL) recognized the extraordinary achievements of Dr. Raghu Ram by presenting him with the award during the Ugadi 2023 celebrations.
- ★ TAL is the largest Telugu charity organisation in the UK and represents a Telugu speaking community of around 10,000 people in and around London.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### CEO of Hero MotoCorp

- ★ Hero MotoCorp's board appointed Niranjana Gupta as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company.
- ★ Niranjana Gupta has been instrumental in ensuring the financial stability of HeroCorp in a highly competitive and ever-subscribing landscape.

- ★ Gupta has over 25 years of leadership experience in diverse sectors such as consumer goods, metals and mining, and miscellaneous sectors with expertise in finance, M&A, supply chain and strategy.
- ★ It is an Indian multinational motorcycle and assembly manufacturer headquartered in New Delhi, India.

### CEO and MD of TATA Power

- ★ Tata Power approved the re-appointment of **Praveer Sinha** as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the company.
- ★ Sinha's reappointment is for a period of four years from 01 May 2023 to 30 April 2027, subject to the approval of the members of the company.
- ★ Under Sinha's leadership, Tata Power is transforming itself into a sustainable, technology-oriented and customer-centric green energy solutions company.
- ★ Sinha holds a PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and is a Visiting Research Associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, USA.

### MD of Hitachi Payment Services

- ★ Hitachi Payment Services has announced the appointment of Sumil Vikamse as the new Managing Director of the company.
- ★ Vikamse was earlier the CEO of Cash Business at Hitachi Payment Services.
- ★ He replaced Rustam Irani, who retires on March 30, 2023.
- ★ During his tenure at Hitachi Payment Services, Vikamse has been responsible for various functions including finance, strategy, development, analysis, white-label ATM program and allied business domains.

### Vice Chief of The Naval Staff

- ★ **Vice-Admiral Mr Sanjay Jasjit Singh** became **the new Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS)** of the Indian Navy.
- ★ Mr Sanjay Jasjit Singh succeeds Mr S N Ghormade.
- ★ Mr Sanjay Jasjit Singh was commissioned in 1986 in the Executive Branch of the Navy.
- ★ Prior to taking over as the Vice Chief of Naval Staff, he was Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations).
- ★ He was awarded the Nao Sena Medal in 2009, and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2020.

### National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)

- ★ **Sudha Shivakumar** has been appointed as **the 40<sup>th</sup> National President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization (FLO)**, a women-led and women-focused business chamber from South East Asia.
- ★ She is an investment banker and lawyer and his appointment was announced on 3 April.

- ★ As National President, Shivakumar's main focus will be on empowering women by creating an enabling environment that promotes entrepreneurship, industry participation and economic growth of women.
- ★ FLO is the women's wing of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), a non-profit organisation established in 1927 to promote trade and commerce in India.
- ★ Its mission is to empower women through entrepreneurship, leadership and economic independence.

### President of NRAI

- ★ Senior Vice President **Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo** assumed charge as **the President of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)**.
- ★ He replaced **Raninder Singh**.
- ★ NRAI was established in 1951 with the objective of promoting and popularizing shooting sports in India.
- ★ It is affiliated to the International Shooting Sport Federation, Asian Shooting Confederation, Commonwealth Shooting Federation, South Asian Shooting Confederation and Indian Olympic Association.

### President, CEO and MD of Honda Motors

- ★ Honda Motor Company Limited appointed Tsutsumu Otani as the new President, CEO and Managing Director of Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India.
- ★ Otani was serving as Vice President of Honda Motor in Japan and took over from Atsushi Ogata.
- ★ Otani began his career with Honda Japan in 1997 and has held several leadership positions within the company.
- ★ It is a multinational conglomerate manufacturer based in Japan and this company manufactures automobiles, motorcycles and power equipment.

### UEFA President

- ★ **Aleksandar Ceferin** was re-elected as the **President of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)**.
- ★ He was first time elected as the seventh President of UEFA in 2016, succeeding Michel Platini.
- ★ Ceferin's new term will last for another four years till 2027.
- ★ The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is responsible for governing association football, futsal and beach soccer in Europe.

### Indian Navy Conducts Offshore Security Exercise 'Prashthan'

- ★ Indian Navy conducted the offshore **biannual** security exercise '**Prashthan**' in the **offshore development area (ODA) off Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- ★ The current exercise was conducted on the Greatdrill Chaaya platform about 30 nm South West of Mumbai harbour.

- ★ It is to validate measures and procedures to address contingencies that may occur in oil production platforms.
- ★ The exercise is held every six months under the aegis of the Indian Navy and involves the participation of all stakeholders in the maritime domain.
- ★ This exercise is an important element of ensuring offshore security and aims to integrate the efforts of all maritime stakeholders involved in offshore defence.

### **New Chief Investment Officer of LIC**

- ★ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) appointed **Ratnakar Patnaik** as its **new Chief Investment Officer**.
- ★ Patnaik has replaced **PR Mishra** on this post.
- ★ Earlier, Patnaik had joined LIC in September 1990 as a Direct Recruit Officer.
- ★ It is the country's largest life insurance company as well as the largest investor company.
- ★ It provides health insurance, life insurance, mutual funds, investment related services as its products.

### **MD and CEO of AU Small Finance Bank**

- ★ **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the re-appointment of **Sanjay Agarwal** as **Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of Jaipur-headquartered AU Small Finance Bank for 3 years.
- ★ The central bank also approved the re-appointment of Uttam Tibrewal as Whole Time Director for 3 years'
- ★ The re-appointment of Agarwal and Tibrewal for second term was approved by the shareholders through postal ballot on 09 March 2022 for 4 years per the bank's annual report.

### **Interim CEO of Karnataka Bank**

- ★ Karnataka Bank has appointed Sekhar Rao as the interim Managing Director and CEO after the completion of the tenure of the current CEO.
- ★ Mahabaleshwar M S, the current Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD and CEO) of Karnataka Bank, left the office on 14 April after the successful completion of his second term of three years.
- ★ Rao takes over as interim MD and CEO with effect from 15 April 2023, subject to RBI approval on 12 April 2023.
- ★ He has been appointed for a period of three months or till the appointment of a regular MD and CEO, whichever is earlier.

### **Military Advisor to National Security Council**

- ★ **Former Vice Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Sandeep Singh (Retd)** has been appointed as the **new Military Advisor to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**.
- ★ He will replace **General Anil Chauhan, who was appointed Chief of Defense Staff**.

- ★ Sandeep Singh was commissioned into the Indian Air Force in December 1983 as a fighter pilot.
- ★ He has flown a number of aircraft, and has close to 4,900 hours of operational and test flying experience on Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, MiG-21, AN-32, Avro, Jaguar and Mirage 2000.
- ★ He also played a key role in the induction, production and arming of the Su-30 MKI aircraft in India.

## New Chairman of NTRO

- ★ **Arun Sinha** was appointed as the **new Chairman of the National Technical Research Organization (NTRO) by the Government of India.**
- ★ Arun Sinha, a 1984 batch IPS Officer of Kerala cadre, was the acting Chairman of NTRO before becoming the Chairman.
- ★ NTRO is a technical intelligence agency based in India.
- ★ It works under the National Security Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office and was established in 2004.
- ★ The agency follows the same "norms of conduct" as other intelligence agencies in India such as the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing.
- ★ As a technical intelligence agency, NTRO specialises in the interception and analysis of electronic communications.

## President of the Republic of Cuba

- ★ **Miguel Díaz-Canel** has been re-elected as **President of the Republic of Cuba** for a second five-year term by the National Assembly of the People's Power.
- ★ Salvador Valdés Mesa has also been re-elected as Vice President.
- ★ Díaz-Canel received 97.66% of the vote, while Valdés Mesa received 93.4%.
- ★ The leadership body of the National Assembly was re-elected by parliamentarians.

## Secretary of DPIIT

- ★ **Senior IAS Officer Rajesh Kumar Singh** was appointed as **Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).**
- ★ Singh has replaced Anurag Jain, who was appointed Secretary in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- ★ Prior to this, Singh was the Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- ★ Singh is an Indian Administrative Service Officer of 1989 Batch from Kerala cadre.
- ★ In the year 2019, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) was renamed as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

## President of Indian Cycling Federation

- ★ **Pankaj Singh** was elected as **the President of the Cycling Federation of India (CFI).**

- ★ The election was held during the Annual General Body meeting in Nainital, and Pankaj Singh was elected unopposed.
- ★ Maninder Pal Singh was elected General Secretary for the second time in a row.
- ★ Sudesh Kumar from Kerala was elected as the treasurer.
- ★ It is the national governing body for cycling in India and was established in 1946.
- ★ It is recognized by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the world governing body for the sport of cycling.
- ★ The main responsibilities of the CFI include promoting, developing and regulating cycling activities in India.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### Book Titled 'War and Women'

- ★ A new book titled '**War and Women**' was written by **Dr. M A Hasan** was launched during the **52<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- ★ The event was organised by the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters Parliament in Europe.
- ★ The book was released at the Serpentine Cafeteria inside the United Nations Building.
- ★ The book throws light on the suffering of Bengali women who were victims of sexual violence during the 1971 war.

### A New Book 'Gandhi: Siasat Aur Sampradaya'

- ★ A new Hindi book titled 'Gandhi: Siasat Aur Communalism' has been authored by journalist-turned-author Piyush Babele, who currently heads the media department of the Madhya Pradesh Congress.
- ★ The book quotes from Dr. Ambedkar's book Pakistan or the Partition of India and other sources to refer to the events leading up to the partition of India in 1947.
- ★ The book aims to break the myth spread by the Hindu right wing that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for the partition.
- ★ The book is published by New Delhi based Genuine Publications and Media Private Limited.

### A Book Titled 'The Great Bank Robbery'

- ★ A New Book Titled '**The Great Bank Robbery**' is authored by **V. Pattabhi Ram and Sabyasachee Dash.**
- ★ It was Co-authored by Pattabhi Ram and Published by Rupa Publications India
- ★ In 'The Great Bank Robbery', the authors, both chartered accountants, explore how a bank works, the scandals that have rocked the banking world and focus on the role played by auditors, bankers, credit raters and directors.
- ★ Set in 2036, the novel has been written in a conversational style.



- ★ Authors have cited eleven major financial scams in post-independent India to highlight how vast amounts of public money have vanished from banks over the last few decades.

### SBI Unveils Its Coffee Table Book

- ★ **State Bank of India (SBI)** launched a **coffee table book** titled **‘The Banker to Every Indian’** and the book celebrates **75 years of Indian independence** and **200 years of SBI’s history**.
- ★ The book aims to provide a detailed account of the history of SBI since India attained independence.
- ★ The Coffee Table Book is a tribute to the spirit of India’s independence and SBI’s contribution to nation building.
- ★ The book throws light upon the bank’s ethics, technological advancements and transformation through significant initiatives taken by the organisation.
- ★ This book is not only a celebration of SBI’s past but also a testimony to its commitment to the future.

### Vinod Rai Authored a New Book

- ★ **Vinod Rai** is the author of the book titled **‘Transforming the Steel Frame: Promise and Paradox of Civil Service Reform’**.
- ★ The book was published by Rupa Publication.
- ★ **Transforming the Steel Frame: Promise and Paradox of Civil Service Reform** examines the roles and responsibilities of the bureaucracy in modern times.
- ★ It sets forth a vision of the future through an analysis and review of past attempts at reform, in the process revisiting the strengths of the systems as well as the flaws that prevent its optimal functioning.

### Jaideep Mukherjee Launches his Autobiography ‘Crosscourt’

- ★ Renowned **tennis player Jaideep Mukherjee** released his autobiography titled **‘Crosscourt’** in the presence of prominent Indian tennis players such as Ramesh Krishnan and Somdev Devvarman.
- ★ The book provides an insight into Mukherjee’s life and describes his journey as a successful tennis player.
- ★ In addition to tennis, ‘Crosscourt’ also covers various aspects of Mukherjee’s personal life, including her successes, failures, relationships and behind-the-scenes moments.
- ★ Sharmin Mukherjee, Jaideep Mukherjee’s wife, was instrumental in encouraging and assisting him in writing the book.

### New Book Titled ‘Sachin@50 – Celebrating a Maestro’

- ★ Renowned sports historian and TV show host **Boria Majumdar** released a new book titled **‘Sachin@50 – Celebrating a Maestro’** on the occasion of Sachin Tendulkar’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

- ★ The book has been conceptually designed and curated by **Majumdar**, with a special back cover note penned by Gulzar.
- ★ The book traces Tendulkar's journey to success, starting from his teenage debut where he gained global recognition in 1989.
- ★ The book also includes contributions from eminent personalities from other fields such as Abhinav Bindra, Farhan Akhtar, Prahlad Kakkar and Viswanathan Anand.

### **Amitav Ghosh's Non-Fiction Book 'Smoke and Ashes'**

- ★ **Amitav Ghosh's** new non-fiction book, '**Smoke and Ashes: A Writer's Journey Through Opium's Hidden Histories**', will be published by HarperCollins Fourth Estate on 15 July 2023.
- ★ The book is a combination of memoir, travelogue, and cultural and economic history, which explores the often-overlooked effects of opium on society and history.
- ★ Based on Ghosh's extensive research conducted while writing his trilogy of novels between 2005 and 2015, 'Smoke and Ashes' takes a personal look at the author's engagement with the hidden history of opium.
- ★ This book explores how opium has shaped the modern world and continues to play an important role in making it now.

### **Ashish Kundra's New Book 'A Resurgent Northeast: Narratives of Change'**

- ★ A new book '**A Resurgent Northeast: Narratives of Change**' launched.
- ★ This book is written by **Ashish Kundra, who is an IAS Officer and senior bureaucrat.**
- ★ This book is on the history of Northeast India and its people.
- ★ The book was launched in the presence of Kiren Rijiju, Hardeep Singh Puri, Pema Khandu, Amitabh Kant and others.
- ★ The book was launched at an event in New Delhi.
- ★ The event began with a performance by the famous vocal quartet of Tetseo sisters.
- ★ In this book, senior bureaucrat-author Ashish Kundra has written about the transformational changes that are happening in the remotest parts of the Northeast.

## **DEFENCE**

### **Defense Ministry Signs Contract with Brahmos Aerospace**

- ★ The Defense Ministry signed a **₹1,700 crore contract** with **BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd (BAPL)** for the procurement of next generation marine mobile coastal batteries and BrahMos missiles.
- ★ The systems will be armed with supersonic BrahMos missiles, which are known for their speed and accuracy.
- ★ The deliveries of these batteries are scheduled to begin in 2027, indicating that the Ministry of Defense is making long-term plans to strengthen its military capabilities.

- ★ BAPL is a joint venture between India and Russia, highlighting the collaborative efforts of both countries in advancing defence technology.
- ★ BrahMos missiles are medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missiles that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircrafts or land.
- ★ These missiles are capable of travelling at a speed of Mach 2.8 and can carry conventional or nuclear warheads.

### Maritime Exercise SLINEX-2023

- ★ The **10<sup>th</sup> Edition** of the annual India - Sri Lanka Bilateral Maritime exercise SLINEX-2023 began in Colombo on 03 April.
- ★ The exercise is being conducted in two phases of three days each, the harbor phase and the sea phase.
- ★ The **Indian Navy** will be represented by **INS Kiltan and INS Savitri**, while the **Sri Lankan Navy** will be represented by **SLNS Vijayabahu and SLNS Samudura**.
- ★ In addition, **Chetak helicopters and Dornier maritime patrol aircraft** of the Indian Navy as well as **Dornier and BEL 412 helicopters** of the Sri Lanka Air Force will also participate in the exercise.
- ★ **Special forces** of both the navies will also participate in this exercise together.
- ★ The sea phase of the exercise will include exercises in multi-dimensions such as surface and anti-air firing exercises, seamanship evaluation, helicopter.

### India and U.S. Air Exercise 'Cope India' Begins

- ★ The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the **US Air Force (USAF)** are set to conduct the **Cope India exercise** from 10 April to 21 April 2023 at the **Kalaikunda airbase in West Bengal**.
- ★ The **Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF)** participated in Cope India as an observer for the first time in December 2018 based on the Agreement of Defence Ministerial Meeting on August 20, 2018.
- ★ The IAF is set to field its **frontline fighters SU-30MKI, Rafale** and the **indigenous Light Combat Aircraft** along with force multipliers, while the U.S. Air Force is expected to bring in **F-15 fighter jets**.
- ★ It is a bilateral joint exercise between Indian Air Force (IAF) and the United States Air Force (USAF).
- ★ Cope India began in 2004 as a fighter training exercise.
- ★ The exercise will enhance operational capability and interoperability between the two air forces.

### Joint Military Exercise 'Ex KAVACH'

- ★ The **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)** conducted a large-scale joint military exercise **'Ex Kavach'** involving assets of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.
- ★ The exercise was aimed at fine-tuning joint combat capabilities and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and enhancing interoperability and operational synergy between the armies.

- ★ Army's '**Shatrujit Brigade**', **Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD)**, Navy's **Special Forces and ANC's amphibious troops** carried out an exercise at a remote island in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ★ The exercise featured multi-domain exercises involving amphibious landings, airborne operations, heliborne operations and rapid entry of special forces off the coast.
- ★ It showcased the capabilities and preparedness of the Armed Forces to safeguard India's maritime interests and ensure the security of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

### International Air Exercise ORION in France

- ★ The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** arrived at the **Air Force Base Station of the French Air and Space Force (FASF) in Mont de Marsan, France** to participate in the **Orion exercise**.
- ★ The ORION exercise program is being conducted from 17 April to 05 May 2023.
- ★ The IAF contingent for the exercise includes **four Rafale aircraft, two C-17 and two Il-78 aircraft and 165 airmen**.
- ★ This will be the **first overseas exercise for the Rafale aircraft inducted into the IAF**.
- ★ The participation during this exercise will further enrich the working style of IAF with air forces of other countries.

### India-Thailand Defence Dialogue

- ★ The **8<sup>th</sup> India-Thailand Defence Dialogue** was held in **Bangkok on 20 April**.
- ★ They reviewed defence cooperation between the two countries and explored new initiatives to further strengthen bilateral ties.
- ★ The two sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common interest.
- ★ India and Thailand share a strategic partnership and defense is a major pillar of this co-operation.

### Exercise INIOCHOS-23

- ★ The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will be participating in Exercise **INIOCHOS-23**, a **multi-national air exercise hosted by the Hellenic Air Force, the air force of Greece**.
- ★ The exercise will be conducted at the Andravida Air Base in Greece from 24 Apr 2023 to 04 May 2023.
- ★ The Indian Air Force will be participating with **four Su-30 MKI and two C-17 aircraft**.
- ★ The exercise will be conducted in a realistic combat scenario involving a wide variety of air and surface assets.
- ★ It will also enable participating parties to engage in professional interactions, providing valuable insight into each other's best practices.
- ★ The exercise aims to enhance international cooperation, synergy and interoperability among the participating air forces.

## 'Locked Shields' Cyber-Defense Exercise 2023

- ★ The **2023 edition** of the **annual** exercise '**Locked Shields**' was hosted by the **NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence** in **Tallinn (Estonia)**.
- ★ More than 3000 participants from 38 countries including NATO allies and partners took part in the exercise.
- ★ The exercise simulates real-time attacks and tests strategic decision making in critical situations.
- ★ The exercise highlights the importance of international collaboration and cooperation in the field of cyber defence.
- ★ The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence helps participating countries and organisations improve their cyber defence capabilities.

## Bilateral Training Exercise 'Ajeya Warrior 2023'

- ★ **India** and **the United Kingdom** will start the **seventh edition** of the **bilateral training** exercise **Ajeya Warrior 2023**.
- ★ The exercise is part of an initiative to develop interoperability and share expertise with friendly foreign nations.
- ★ Military forces of both countries participate in this joint military exercise.
- ★ It is a bilateral training exercise between the armies of India and UK.
- ★ The exercise will see the participation of an infantry company from India and a unit of equal strength from the British Army.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ISRO Releases Images of Earth

- ★ The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has recently released **images of Earth** captured by the **EOS-06 satellite**.
- ★ The images are a **mosaic** generated by **ISRO's National Remote Sensing Center (NRSC)**.
- ★ The images have been captured by the **Ocean Color Monitor (OCM) payload** on board EOS-06 by NRSC.
- ★ **Earth Observation satellite (EOS-6)** is the **third-generation** satellite in the **Oceansat** series.
- ★ It provides continued services of Oceansat-2 with enhanced payload capability.
- ★ It was launched by ISRO onboard the PSLV-C54 along with eight Nano-satellites on 26 November 2022.

### Fish Vaccine Development

- ★ Hyderabad based **Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL)** entered into a partnership with the **Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar**, an Indian Council of

Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institute for the **commercial development of vaccines against Hemorrhagic Septicemia**, also called **Aeromonas Septicemia, Ulcer Disease or Red-Sore Disease** in **freshwater fish**.

- ★ Currently there are **no fish vaccines available in India** on a commercial scale to prevent aquaculture infections.
- ★ **IIL is the first in India to get fish vaccines.**
- ★ **Hemorrhagic Septicemia** in freshwater fishes is caused by **Aeromonas hydrophila**, an opportunistic pathogenic **bacterium**.
- ★ This infection is the scourge of fresh and brackish water fish farming worldwide.

### First of 3,000 Internet Satellites to Space in 2024

- ★ Amazon.com plans to launch its first internet satellites to space in the first half of 2024 as it prepares to vie with Elon Musk's SpaceX and others to provide broadband internet globally.
- ★ Amazon's satellite internet unit, Project Kuiper, will begin mass-producing the satellites later 2023.
- ★ This will be the first of over 3,000 satellites the technology giant plans to launch in low-Earth orbit in the next few years.
- ★ The 2024 deployment target would keep Amazon on track to fulfil a regulatory mandate to launch half its entire Kuiper network of 3,236 satellites by 2026.
- ★ With plans to pump more than \$10 billion into the Kuiper network, Amazon sees its experience producing millions of devices from its consumer electronics powerhouse as an edge over rival SpaceX.

### Indian Space Policy 2023

- ★ The Union government has approved **the Indian Space Policy 2023**.
- ★ Its aim is to boost the country's space department's role and give a larger participation to research, academia, startups, and industry.
- ★ The policy sets out **the roles and responsibilities of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and private sector entities**.
- ★ The policy will enhance the role of India's Department of Space, promote research, education, start-ups and industry.
- ★ The policy is expected to provide a framework for the country's space sector for the next decade.

### First Liquid-Fueled Commercial Rocket Tianlong-2

- ★ The **Chinese** space startup '**Space Pioneer**' successfully launched '**Tianlong-2 rocket (TL-2)**' into orbit from China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center located in the Gobi Desert, Inner Mongolia.
- ★ This is the **first time** that **a liquid fueled rocket was launched into orbit by a Chinese aerospace company**.

- ★ Also, it was **the first time that a startup company Space Pioneer successfully reached orbit on its first attempt.**
- ★ The Tianlong-2 rocket is also known as **Sky Dragon-2.**
- ★ Tianlong-2 is a three-stage rocket that is capable of carrying 2,000 kilograms (2 tons) to low Earth orbit or 1,500 kg (1,5 tons) to a 500-kilometer-altitude sun-synchronous orbit.
- ★ The 35-meter-wide, 32.8-meter-tall rocket is fueled by coal-based kerosene.

### European Space Agency Set to Launch Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer

- ★ The European Space Agency (ESA) is all set to launch the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, or Juice, mission from its spaceport in French Guiana on an Ariane 5 launcher.
- ★ Planned to reach Jupiter in 2031, the mission aims to carry out a detailed exploration of the Solar System's largest planet and its icy moons, which potentially have habitable environments.
- ★ NASA, the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the Israel Space Agency have also contributed to the JUICE mission.
- ★ ESA's Juice mission will make detailed observations of gas giant Jupiter and its 3 large ocean-bearing moons – Ganymede, Callisto and Europa.
- ★ JUICE will use a powerful suite of remote sensing, geophysical and in situ instruments.

### China Launched Fengyun-3 Satellite

- ★ China successfully launched the Fengyun-3 meteorological satellite using Chang Zheng-4B carrier rocket from Jiuquan Cosmodrome in Gansu Province.
- ★ The primary objective of the Fengyun-3 satellite is to monitor and provide information on severe weather conditions, especially heavy rainfall, which can cause natural disasters such as floods and landslides.
- ★ This was the 471<sup>st</sup> mission for the Chang Zheng rocket family.
- ★ CASC is a state-owned organisation that serves as the primary contractor for China's space program.
- ★ CASC has several subsidiaries that specialise in the design, development and manufacture of a variety of space-related technology, including spacecraft, launch vehicles, missile systems and ground equipment.

### First Operational Earth Observation Satellite 'Taifa-1'

- ★ Kenya launched its first operational Earth observation satellite 'Taifa-1' on a rocket of Elon Musk's rocket company 'SpaceX' from Vandenberg Base in California.
- ★ The launch rocket carried 50 payloads from various countries, including Turkey, under SpaceX's 'rideshare programme'.
- ★ Taifa-1 was designed and developed by SayariLabs and EnduroSat and the satellite was built over two years at a cost of 50 million Kenyan shillings (\$372,000).
- ★ The satellite's primary purpose is to collect agricultural and environmental data, including floods, droughts and wildfires, to help Kenya deal with disaster management and food insecurity.

## ISRO to Launch Singapore's Teleos-2 Satellite

- ★ **ISRO** will launch **Singapore's TeLEOS-2 satellite** using the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** from the **Satish Dhawan Space Center** in **Sriharikota**.
- ★ **TeLEOS-1, Singapore's first commercial Earth observation satellite**, was launched by **ISRO** in **2015** and since then, ISRO has launched **nine satellites** for **Singapore**.
- ★ TeLEOS-2 is an Earth observation satellite built by ST Engineering that will carry a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) capable of providing 1-metre resolution data.
- ★ The satellite will have a 500 GB onboard recorder and 800 Mbps downlink.
- ★ The satellite will provide valuable data to various sectors, including hotspot monitoring, haze management, aviation accidents, etc.

## Biofire Launches World's First Smart Gun with Fingerprint Unlock

- ★ **Biofire Technologies**, a Colorado-based company, has launched **the world's first-ever biometric handgun, the Biofire Smart Gun**.
- ★ The Biofire Smart Gun is **the first and only biometric firearm on the market**.
- ★ It is a **9 mm handgun** that uses fingerprint and facial recognition biometrics to ensure only authorised users can fire it.
- ★ Designed for home defense, the Biofire Smart Gun enables firearm owners to defend themselves against external threats while preventing unauthorised access and misuse.
- ★ Identification systems have been integrated with its firing mechanism.
- ★ The smart gun is powered by a battery.
- ★ Some recent models of smart guns were simply based on adding sensors to existing weapons.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### International Drug Checking Day

- ★ International Drug Checking Day is observed every year on **31 March**.
- ★ It is *to promote harm reduction initiatives to reduce the risks associated with drug use and educate people about drugs and their effects*.
- ★ The primary purpose of the day is to raise public awareness of the availability of drug testing services and organisations around the world and to emphasise the importance of drug-related harm reduction actions to reduce drug-related risks.
- ★ International Day of Drug Checking is an effort to collectively reduce drug abuse and create a drug free world.



## World Autism Awareness Day

- ★ World Autism Awareness Day is observed every year on **02 April**. It is to raise awareness about autism disorder.
- ★ The purpose of this day is to **make people aware of autism and to support those who are struggling with this disorder**.
- ★ According to the United Nations General Assembly, the day aims to “highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of autistic people so that they can live full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society”.
- ★ World Autism Awareness Day 2023 theme is **‘Transforming the narrative: Contributions at home, at work, in the arts and in policymaking’**.

## Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Foundation Day

- ★ The **Foundation Day of the Reserve Bank of India** is celebrated on **01 April every year**.
- ★ RBI was established on 01 April 1935 as per the provisions of the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- ★ It started functioning from 1 April 1935.
- ★ The central office of the Reserve Bank was established in Kolkata which was permanently shifted to Mumbai in the year 1937.
- ★ It has the power to **regulate Banks** under **the Banking Regulation Act 1949**.
- ★ It has the power to **regulate the Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** under the RBI act 1934.
- ★ RBI is also the regulator of the digital payment system under the Payment and settlement act 2007.

## National Maritime Day

- ★ National Maritime Day is celebrated every year on **05 April**.
- ★ It is a day celebrated to **show gratitude to the men who spend many months in the sea, carrying out the bulk of India’s trade and commerce at a global level**.
- ★ World Maritime theme for 2023 is **‘MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on’**.
- ★ India also became a member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1959.
- ★ IMO is responsible for maritime protection and preventing pollution from ships.

## International Day of Conscience

- ★ International Day of Conscience is observed each year on **5 April**.
- ★ It is to promote peace, justice and sustainable development, and the day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2019.
- ★ Conscience refers to the inner voice that guides our moral and ethical decisions, encouraging us to act with integrity and empathy toward others.

- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is '**Building a Culture of Peace**'.
- ★ The day emphasises the importance of promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, in which respect for diversity and human rights is given priority.

### International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

- ★ The **International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP)** is observed **every year** on **06 April**.
- ★ The day recognizes the importance of sport and physical activity in our individual lives and communities around the world.
- ★ The theme for the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 2023 is '**Scoring for People and the Planet**'.
- ★ The theme highlights the positive impact of sport on sustainable development and peace, stressing the importance of using sport as a tool to achieve these goals.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly, during its 67<sup>th</sup> session, adopted resolution 67/296 on **23 August 2013**, declaring 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

### World Health Day

- ★ World Health Day is observed every year on **07 April**.
- ★ It is to draw global attention to a specific health issue that affects people around the world.
- ★ The theme of World Health Day 2023 is "**Health for All**", reflecting the achievements of public health over the past seven decades in enhancing the quality of life of people.
- ★ The theme emphasises the need for the world to take necessary measures to deal with current and future health challenges.
- ★ World Health Day aims to promote awareness and draw global attention to a specific health issue that affects people around the world.

### Prevention of Blindness Week

- ★ Prevention of Blindness Week is organized from **01 April to 07 April 2023**.
- ★ The **Government of India** organizes it **to raise awareness about the blind**.
- ★ Blindness is a serious problem and only the blind can understand the pain.
- ★ This campaign is organized to raise awareness to remind all the citizens of the country about the value of eyes for the blind.
- ★ The aim of the week is to educate people about various eye injuries, and visual impairment and bring awareness about the ways to avoid them.
- ★ **WHO** is celebrating the week with the theme '**The Right to Sight**'.
- ★ It is celebrated in collaboration with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and other non-governmental organizations with the goal of eliminating preventable blindness.

## World Homeopathy Day

- ★ World Homeopathy Day is observed every year on **10 April**.
- ★ It is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of **Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of Homeopathy**.
- ★ The day is celebrated **to spread knowledge of homeopathy medicine in public health**.
- ★ The World Homeopathy Day 2023 theme is **'One Health, One Family'**.
- ★ The Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH) under the Ministry of AYUSH organized a scientific conference on the occasion in New Delhi.
- ★ The conference included sessions on policy aspects, advances in homeopathy, research evidence and clinical experiences in homeopathy.

## National Safe Motherhood Day

- ★ National Safe Motherhood Day is observed every year on **11 April**.
- ★ Its main objective is to raise awareness about maternal health, the need for proper medical care during pregnancy and postpartum.
- ★ This initiative was started by the **Government of India to reduce the number of maternal and neonatal deaths**.
- ★ The day serves as a reminder for both government and society to prioritise the health and safety of mothers and their newborns.
- ★ The primary objective of WRAI was to create awareness about healthy health care practices as well as the availability and accessibility of health care initiatives for women during pregnancy.

## International Day of Human Space Flight

- ★ The International Day of Human Space Flight is observed every year on **12 April**.
- ★ The **United Nations General Assembly** designated 12 April as the International Day of Human Space Flight through a resolution passed on **7 April 2011**.
- ★ The day is celebrated in honour of **Yuri Gagarin, a Russian cosmonaut, the first human to orbit the Earth on April 12, 1961**.
- ★ Space exploration has led to advances in many areas, including communications, navigation, and weather forecasting.

## World Chagas Disease Day

- ★ World Chagas Disease Day is observed every year on **14 April**.
- ★ It is **to raise awareness about the deadly disease caused by the Trypanosoma cruzi parasite**.
- ★ The theme for World Chagas Disease Day 2023 is **'Time to integrate Chagas disease into primary health care'** to encourage universal care and surveillance at the most decentralised level of the health system.
- ★ In **humans**, the disease is transmitted by the **triatomine bug**, commonly known as **the kissing bug**.

## Save the Elephant Day

- ★ Save the Elephant Day is observed every year on **16 April**.
- ★ The day aims to promote awareness of the issues faced by elephants and inspire efforts to protect these majestic animals.
- ★ The day provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of elephants, the challenges they face and the actions that can be taken to protect their existence.
- ★ The theme of Save the Elephant Day 2023 is 'Protecting Elephant Habitats for a Sustainable Tomorrow'.
- ★ The theme highlights the importance of conserving the environment on which the survival of elephants depends and underlines the important role they play in promoting a sustainable future for elephants and their habitat.
- ★ The event was first celebrated on 16 April 2012 and is now celebrated every year.

## World Hemophilia Day

- ★ World Hemophilia Day is observed every year on **17 April**.
- ★ It is to mark the **birth anniversary of Frank Schnabel**, who founded the **World Federation of Hemophilia**.
- ★ The main purpose of this day is **to raise awareness and provide information about hemophilia and other bleeding disorders**.
- ★ The theme for World Haemophilia Day 2023 is '**Access for All: Partnership, Policy, Progress – Engaging Governments to Integrate Inherited Bleeding Disorders into National Policy**'.
- ★ The theme emphasizes the importance of partnership and collaboration between various stakeholders, including governments, in ensuring access to appropriate care and treatment for individuals with hemophilia and other hereditary bleeding disorders.
- ★ The theme also highlights the need to integrate these conditions into national policies to improve the diagnosis, treatment and management of these disorders.
- ★ The **first** World Hemophilia Day was observed in **1989**.

## World Heritage Day

- ★ World Heritage Day, also known as the **International Day for Monuments and Sites** is **observed every year on 18 April**.
- ★ It aims **to celebrate the diversity of World Heritage and promote recognition of the value of preserving cultural heritage for future generations**.
- ★ The theme of World Heritage Day 2023 is '**Heritage of Change**', which addresses issues related to traditional knowledge and knowledge systems in the context of climate action.
- ★ The day emphasises the role of cultural heritage in supporting appropriate protections for vulnerable communities in climate action and responding to the United Nations Decade of Action.
- ★ The idea of celebrating World Heritage Day was proposed by the **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** in **1982**.

## World Liver Day

- ★ World Liver Day is observed every year on **19 April**.
- ★ It is celebrated **to raise awareness about liver health and related diseases**.
- ★ World Liver Day aims to educate people about **the importance of early detection, prevention and treatment of liver diseases**.
- ★ The theme of World Liver Day 2023 is 'Be alert, do regular liver check-ups, fatty liver can affect anyone'.
- ★ The day is celebrated in partnership with various local and international organisations that focus on promoting liver health.

## Chinese Language Day

- ★ **United Nations Chinese Language Day** is observed every year on **20 April**.
- ★ Its purpose is to celebrate the Chinese language, one of the six official languages of the United Nations.
- ★ The day also aims to create a platform for people around the world to learn the Chinese language.
- ★ The day creates general awareness about the Chinese language and promotes multilingual culture and diversity among the people.
- ★ The day also aims to remember the contribution of Cangzi, a mythological figure who is believed to have invented Chinese characters.

## World Earth Day

- ★ World Earth Day is celebrated every year on **22 April** to show support for environmental protection.
- ★ It aims **to create awareness among people about environmental protection**.
- ★ The **first Earth Day** was held on **April 22, 1970**.
- ★ The official theme for World Earth Day 2023 is '**Invest in our Planet**'.
- ★ The idea of Earth Day was proposed by peace activist John McConnell at a UNESCO conference in San Francisco in 1969.

## National Panchayati Raj Day

- ★ Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated every year on **24<sup>th</sup> April** to **commemorate the enactment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act, 1992 of the Constitution in the year 1993**.
- ★ The day is celebrated to acknowledge national local self-governance and democratic decentralisation.
- ★ The theme of National Panchayati Raj Day 2023 is '**Sustainable Panchayat: Building Healthy, Water Sufficient, Clean & Green Villages**'.
- ★ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is the nodal ministry responsible for empowering, enabling and ensuring accountability of Panchayati Raj Institutions for achieving inclusive growth with social justice and efficient service delivery.

## International Delegates Day

- ★ International Delegates Day is observed every year on **25 April**.
- ★ It is to **honour and recognize the important role played by delegates in the United Nations (UN)**.
- ★ The delegates are representatives of their respective governments and work towards solving global challenges through multilateral cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.
- ★ The United Nations would not be able to function effectively without the contributions and efforts of these representatives.
- ★ These representatives play an important role in resolving global issues and ensure that their governments' voices are heard internationally.
- ★ The celebration of International Delegates Day is a recognition of the dedication and commitment of these delegates to promote peace, security and prosperity around the world.

## World Day for Laboratory Animals

- ★ World Day for Laboratory Animals is observed every year on **24 April**.
- ★ The day serves as an opportunity to **remind people of the ethical and moral responsibilities to ensure the welfare of laboratory animals and the need to reduce their use**.
- ★ Laboratory animals are used for biomedical research to discover the causes, diagnoses, and treatments of diseases, in the cosmetics industry, and more.
- ★ The observance of this day highlights the need for greater investment in scientific research that uses alternative methods to animal testing, and supports the development of alternative testing methods to reduce the number of animals used in research.

## International Girls in ICT Day

- ★ International Girls in ICT Day is observed on **the fourth Thursday of April every year to encourage girls and young women to pursue careers in ICT**.
- ★ This year it is celebrated on **27 April**.
- ★ The day promotes gender equality and diversity in the tech industry by raising awareness of the gender gap and inspiring women to pursue ICT careers.
- ★ The theme for the year is **'Digital Skills for Life'**, which highlights the importance of digital skills in daily life.
- ★ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) proclaimed International Girls in ICT Day on **8 April 2011**, and has since been celebrated globally with thousands of events and hundreds of thousands of participants.

## World Intellectual Property Day

- ★ World Intellectual Property Day is observed every year on **26 April**.
- ★ It is to raise awareness about the role of patents, copyrights, trademarks and designs in our daily lives.

- ★ The theme for World Intellectual Property Day 2023 is '**Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity**'.
- ★ The 2023 theme aims to highlight **the importance of overcoming the challenges faced by women in the field of intellectual property and unlocking their full potential**.
- ★ Intellectual property refers to intangible assets that are generated by the mind, including literary and artistic works, designs, inventions, symbols, names and images used in commerce.

## World Day for Safety and Health at Work

- ★ World Day for **Safety and Health at Work** is observed every year **on 28 April**.
- ★ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of protecting workers against occupational hazards, diseases and accidents.
- ★ The **International Labor Organization (ILO)** selects the theme for the day each year, and the theme for 2023 is '**A safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and right at work**'.
- ★ The main goal of the event is to **find viable ways to implement this essential human right in workplaces around the world**.
- ★ The International Labor Organization (ILO) established the World Day for Safety and Health at Work in **2003**.

## OBITUTARY NEWS

### Former cricketer Salim Durani

- ★ Former India all-rounder cricketer **Salim Durani** passed away on **2 April** after a prolonged illness. He was at the age of 88.
- ★ He was known as a brilliant all-rounder.
- ★ He made a significant contribution in the series against England in 1961-62. In the last two Tests, Salim led India to victory.
- ★ He took 8 wickets in Kolkata and 10 wickets in Chennai Test. India won the 5 match test series 2-0.
- ★ He was the first cricketer to be **honored with the Arjuna Award**. He was given this honor in 1961.
- ★ Durani played 29 Tests for India and scored 1202 and took 75 wickets.
- ★ In first-class cricket, Durani has 8545 runs and 484 wickets in 170 matches.

### Malayalam novelist Sarah Thomas

- ★ Renowned Malayalam short story writer and novelist Sarah Thomas passed away.
- ★ She was a prolific writer, writing 17 novels and over 100 short stories.

- ★ Sarah Thomas was widely acclaimed for her literary contributions and received several awards throughout her career including the prestigious Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award.
- ★ One of his most popular novels, “Muripadukal” was adapted into a film titled “Manimuzhakkam” by PA Bakkar.
- ★ She has received several awards including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Vayalar Award and Padmarajan Award for his contribution to Malayalam literature.

### San Francisco Drag Performer Heklina

- ★ San Francisco drag performer Heklina passed away in London.
- ★ Heklina, whose real name was Stephen Grijelko, was a prominent member of the San Francisco drag community since 1996.
- ★ She was best known for hosting the weekly series “Mother”, which became a popular fixture in the city’s drag scene.
- ★ In 2015, Heklina co-opened Oasis, a popular drag venue in San Francisco, which became a centre for the city’s LGBTQ community.

### Jharkhand Education Minister Jagarnath Mahato

- ★ Jagarnath Mahto, the Minister for School Education and Literacy in Jharkhand, passed away. He was at the age of 56.
- ★ Jharkhand’s Education Minister was a four-time MLA from Dumri in Giridih district.
- ★ Jagarnath Mahato was also known as Tiger Mahato or Tiger Jagarnath Da.
- ★ Mahato had represented the Dumri assembly seat since 2000, which has been a stronghold of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha party.

### Renowned Theatre Actress Jalabala Vaidya

- ★ Noted theatre actress and co-founder of Akshara Theater **Jalabala Vaidya** passed away.
- ★ Jalabala Vaidya started her theatrical journey in 1968 with ‘Full Circle’.
- ★ Vaidya was awarded the **Sangeet Natak Akademi’s Tagore Award**, the Delhi Natya Sangh Award and the Andhra Pradesh Natya Akademi Award.
- ★ Vaidya’s passing is a great loss to the theatre community, and his legacy will continue to inspire and influence generations of theatre artists to come.

### Last Surviving Nazi Trial Lawyer Ben Ferencz

- ★ Ben Ferencz, the last surviving prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials passed away.
- ★ The Nuremberg Trials were held after World War-II to try Nazi leaders for war crimes, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity.
- ★ Ferencz was a key member of the prosecution team and helped secure convictions against high-ranking Nazis, including Einsatzgruppen leaders who oversaw mass murders of Jews and others.



- ★ Ferencz was also a witness to the atrocities committed in Nazi concentration and labour camps, and helped document these crimes in detail.

### **Keshab Mahindra Passed Away**

- ★ **Keshab Mahindra, Chairman Emeritus of Mahindra & Mahindra**, passed away. He was at the age of 99.
- ★ According to Forbes, he was **India's oldest billionaire at the time of his death** with a net worth of **\$1.2 billion**.
- ★ He retired in 2012 after serving as the Chairman for 48 years.
- ★ During his tenure, the Mahindra Group expanded beyond automobile manufacturing into other industries such as IT, real estate, financial services and hospitality.

### **Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhary Passed Away**

- ★ **Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhary** passed away in Dhaka. He was at the age of 81.
- ★ Dr. Zafarullah Chowdhury was a renowned **public health activist and vascular surgeon** and established the Gnosasthya Center in 1972 to provide affordable and quality treatment to the underprivileged in Bangladesh.
- ★ Dr. Zafarullah has received international acclaim for his work in the field of public health, having been awarded the **Ramon Magsaysay Award** in **1985** and the Right Livelihood Award in 1992.
- ★ He was known as the **'Poor People's Doctor'** for his excellent work in providing health services to the poor.

### **Renowned National Award-Winning Actress Uttara Baokar**

- ★ Noted actress and theatre artist **Uttara Baokar** passed away at the age of 79 in Pune city of Maharashtra.
- ★ She acted in several notable plays, such as Padmavati in Mukyhamantri, Mena in Mena Gurjari, Desdemona in Shakespeare's Othello.
- ★ She has appeared in popular TV shows like Udaan, Antaral, X Zone, Rishtey Kora Kaagaz, Nazarana, Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin, Kashmakash Zindagi Ki and Jabb Love Hua.
- ★ She won the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Acting** (Hindi theatre).
- ★ In **1988** she won the **National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress** for **Ek Din Achanak**.

### **Pakistani-Canadian Journalist Tarek Fatah**

- ★ Pakistani-Canadian journalist Tarek Fatah passed away of cancer. He was at the age of 73.
- ★ He was known for his criticisms of Islamic extremism and the Pakistani establishment, and was also a supporter of gay rights.
- ★ Tarek Fatah began his career in journalism in Pakistan in 1970 as a reporter for the Karachi Sun.
- ★ He later worked as an investigative reporter for Pakistan Television.

- ★ In 1977, Fatah was accused of treason by the Zia-ul-Haq government, which forced him to flee to Saudi Arabia.
- ★ Fatih has won several awards for his work, including the Donner Prize, the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Book Award.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Anjali Sharma Conquer Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa

- ★ **Dharamshala's daughter Anjali Sharma** has brought glory to Himachal and the country by **conquering South Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro peak** wearing a **Gaddi dress (Luanchadi)**.
- ★ She has become **the first girl from India to scale Mount Kilimanjaro in Gaddi costume**.
- ★ Anjali Sharma is working to promote Gaddi culture on the peaks of the mountains.
- ★ Earlier, at the age of 15, Anjali had conquered the peak of 5289 meters in the first attempt.
- ★ Lunachari is a traditional dress of Himachal Pradesh.
- ★ **Mount Kilimanjaro is Africa's tallest mountain and the world's largest free-standing mountain.**

### President of India Takes a Historic Sortie in a Sukhoi 30 MKI Fighter

- ★ **The President of India, Droupadi Murmu** took a historic sortie in a **Sukhoi 30 MKI fighter** aircraft at the Tezpur Air Force Station in **Assam**.
- ★ The President, who is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, flew for about 30 minutes.
- ★ The aircraft was flown by **Group Captain Naveen Kumar, Commanding Officer of 106 Squadron**.
- ★ The aircraft flew at an altitude of about two kilometers above sea level and at a speed of about 800 kilometers per hour.
- ★ The President's flight in the Sukhoi 30 MKI fighter aircraft is a part of his efforts to engage with the armed forces as the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces.

