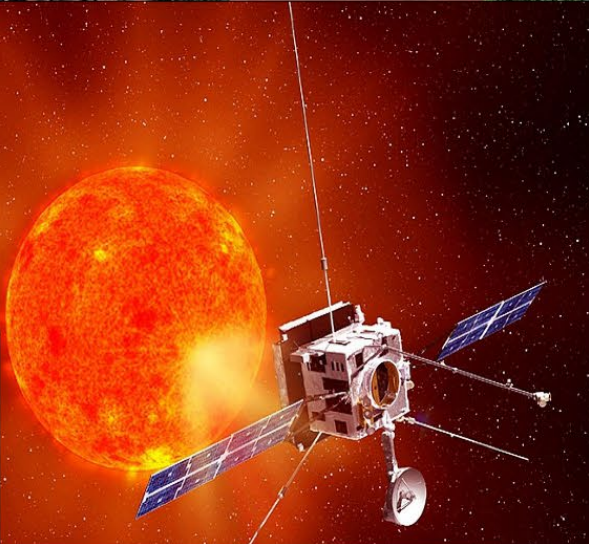




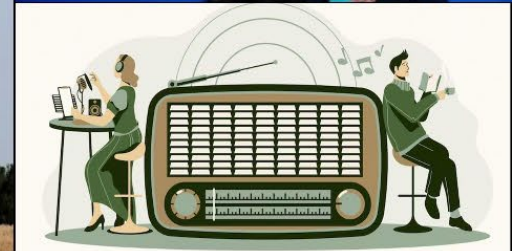
# Shankar School of Banking

## Current Affairs

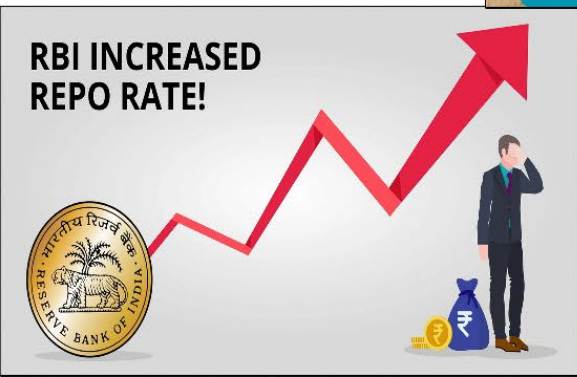
### February - 2023



First nuclear plant of North India in Haryana



WORLD RADIO DAY



RBI INCREASED REPO RATE!



AERO INDIA 2023  
The Runway to a Billion Opportunities



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## **FEBRUARY – 2023**

### **NATIONAL NEWS**

#### **‘Ladli Bahna’ Scheme**

- ★ Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the implementation of Ladli Bahna Yojana on the occasion of Narmada Jayanti.
- ★ Through this scheme, ₹1000 per month will be given to the sisters of poor and middle-class families of Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ In order to get the benefit of the scheme, the woman must be a resident of Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ The benefits of the scheme will be given to such sisters who are not income tax payers.
- ★ 65% sisters of Madhya Pradesh will be able to get the benefit of this scheme.
- ★ Through the scheme, an amount of ₹60000 will be added to each sister’s account by the government in 5 years.

#### **Assam’s Bioethanol Unit will be Set Up by October 2023**

- ★ The Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Rameswar Teli revealed that India’s first ever bio-refinery unit for production of bioethanol from bamboo is expected to be set up by October 2023 in Assam.
- ★ It will be the country’s first unit for producing ethanol from bamboo.
- ★ He mentioned this while addressing the ‘Evolve-2023’, an international e-mobility and alternative fuels conference organised by the Kerala Motor Vehicles Department.
- ★ Biofuels are liquid or gaseous transport fuels, such as biodiesel and bioethanol, made from biomass.
- ★ They serve as a renewable alternative to fossil fuels, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- ★ India has achieved the target of supplying 10% ethanol-blended petrol and is aiming to double the blend by 2025-26 in order to cut oil import dependence and address environmental issues.

#### **Visit India Year 2023 Initiative**

- ★ Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy launched the Visit India Year-2023 initiative in New Delhi and also unveiled its logo.
- ★ The Tourism Minister also unveiled the logo of the campaign which is inspired by the image of ‘Namaste’.
- ★ It imbibes the philosophy of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ along with the heritage of India to the art of cooking divine food and our rich wildlife.
- ★ The emblem depicts elements of India’s heritage and its monuments.

- ★ The campaign aims to encourage travel in the country that currently holds the G-20 presidency. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism.
- ★ Each foreign representative of the G20 will be a brand ambassador of India's culture, heritage and tourist destinations.

### **International Kolkata Book Fair**

- ★ Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated the 46<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Kolkata Book Fair.
- ★ The fair is being organised at Boimela Courtyard, Central Park Fair Ground, Karunamayee, Salt Lake Kolkata.
- ★ Mara José Galvez Salvador from the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports and Ambassador of Spain to India, Jose Maria Ridao Dominguez were present at the inauguration.
- ★ The fair will be open for visitors from January 31 to February 12.
- ★ Spain is the focal country for the second time this year.
- ★ Thailand is participating for the first time.
- ★ It is the largest book fair in Asia and the most attended book fair by the people.

### **G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill**

- ★ Alkesh Kumar Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, inaugurated the G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill.
- ★ It was inaugurated for over 400 domestic and international participants under India's G20 Presidency in New Delhi.
- ★ This cyber security exercise and drill was conducted in hybrid mode (physical and virtual) by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team.
- ★ International participants from more than 12 countries participated in it through online mode.
- ★ Domestic participants from various sectors such as Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy and IT/ITES participated in person as well as in virtual mode.
- ★ The first table top exercise focused on Crisis Management and Crisis Communication was conducted for the Board and Top Management on the theme 'Synergy to Counter Global Cyber Crisis'.

### **New Delhi to Host 5-Day PlastIndia Exhibition**

- ★ The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Plastics Exhibition, conference and convention – PlastIndia 2023 will be held at the revamped Pragati Maidan in New Delhi from 01 February to 05 February 2023.
- ★ PlastIndia 2023, organised by Plastindia Foundation which is devoted to promoting excellence in the field of plastics, will focus on innovation, sustainability and growth.
- ★ The 5-day event will provide an excellent opportunity for exhibitors to showcase their innovations in processing, machinery, moulds and dyes, auxiliary equipment, printing and packaging, raw material and more.

- ★ PlastIndia is usually held once in three years with the last one held in 2018.

### **Visakhapatnam to be Andhra Pradesh's New Capital**

- ★ Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister (CM) Shri YS Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that Visakhapatnam popularly known as Vizag will be the new capital of the AP at the International Diplomatic Alliance meeting in New Delhi.
- ★ The CM further announced that the AP government is organising the 'Global Investors Summit' in Visakhapatnam on 03 March and 04 March 2023.
- ★ The announcement of the new capital comes 9 years after the formation of Telangana state and Hyderabad being given as its capital.

### **First G20 Employment Working Group Meeting**

- ★ The first G20 Employment Working Group meeting began in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- ★ The Employment Working Group under the Indian Chairmanship of the G20 has a mandate to address priority labour, employment and social issues for strong, sustainable, balanced and sustainable employment for all.
- ★ G20 member states have also been invited to share their interventions on key areas.
- ★ India is hosting over 73 delegates from 19 countries, the European Union and 9 guest countries and 9 regional and international organisations.

### **Railways Gets First-Class Berth and H-Powered Trains**

- ★ The railways have received a record budgetary push of over ₹2.4 lakh crores to accelerate projects like introducing hydrogen-powered wagons and trains, laying of additional tracks, electrification of network and revamping stations with better amenities for passengers.
- ★ Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the first indigenously designed and developed hydrogen-fuelled train will be rolled out by December 2023.
- ★ The Budget documents show that the proposed allocation for the railways for 2023-24 is 48% more than the revised estimate (RE) for the current financial year and nearly 72% higher than the budget estimate (BE).
- ★ The revised spending of railways for 2021-22 has been pegged at ₹1.63 lakh crores compared to the budget estimate of ₹1.4 lakh crores.

### **Tamil Nadu Government Plans Museum**

- ★ The Tamil Nadu (TN) government has proposed to construct a museum for the late Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader and former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, in addition to the under-construction superstructure of the memorial on the Marina, TN.
- ★ It will be built over 1500 square metres and spread over 160 cents.
- ★ The memorial for Karunanidhi on the Marina beach is being constructed at a cost of ₹39 crore.
- ★ The entrance to the museum will be on the surface of the mainland and will come up adjacent to the main memorial pavilion.



- ★ The government is already working on a proposal for a 42-metre-tall pen monument on the sea, at a distance of 360 metres into the Bay of Bengal, at an estimated cost of ₹80 crore.

### **Green Energy Initiatives at India Energy Week**

- ★ Key energy initiatives will be unveiled by PM Modi during India Energy Week which will be held in Bengaluru from 06 February to 08 February 2023.
- ★ He will dedicate the HAL helicopter factory at Tumakuru to the nation and also lay the foundation stone for various development initiatives.
- ★ China, America, Russia, Brazil and many other countries will participate in this important event.
- ★ This is the first time that India is hosting such an event with a record number of CEOs from top energy companies.
- ★ According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), India will account for 25 percent of global energy demand by 2040.
- ★ An important initiative to be launched during the India Energy Week will be to increase blending of ethanol in the fuel.

### **SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2023**

- ★ Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2023 at Jammu.
- ★ The 11-day fair is the first of its kind in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ This mega event will provide a platform to rural SHG women to sell and promote their self-made products and build marketing tie-ups with various sales platforms.
- ★ It is an initiative of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Yojana of the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
- ★ It aims to provide an opportunity to rural women self-help groups to showcase their skills, sell products and make direct contact with bulk buyers.
- ★ This fair serves as an integrated approach for women empowerment. This has been linked with the Atmanirbhar Bharat approach.

### **Real Time Pollution Factors Gathering Mechanism**

- ★ Delhi Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal has inaugurated a 'super site' and a mobile van which will collect pollution data in real-time and tell its constituents.
- ★ Delhi would become the first city in the country to get a real-time source segmentation of air pollution.
- ★ It will identify factors that are responsible for the increase in air pollution in Delhi.
- ★ The project has been initiated by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, IIT Delhi and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- ★ Based on the data, this super site will also assist in forecasting air pollution levels enabling the government to deploy its resources to combat pollution.

## **PMAY-U Scheme Extended to Next Year**

- ★ Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri announced that the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) scheme has been extended up to next year, to complete all the houses sanctioned during the last financial year.
- ★ The central government has sanctioned ₹2 lakh crore under the scheme, out of which ₹1.36 lakh crore has been released so far.
- ★ The survey conducted by the States and Union Territories shows that there is a demand of 112 lakh houses under PMAY-U in the country.
- ★ It was launched on 25 June 2015 by the Government of India and it is being implemented by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- ★ The scheme aims to provide pucca houses to all the eligible beneficiaries by 2022.

## **Haryana Vigilance Bureau Renamed as Anti-Corruption Bureau**

- ★ The Haryana state vigilance bureau has been renamed as Anti-Corruption Bureau.
- ★ The change in name was announced by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar while chairing a meeting with the Deputy Inspectors General of Police (DIGs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs)
- ★ In 2022, Haryana's State Vigilance Bureau had registered 246 corruption cases, the highest annual figure in the past 10 years.
- ★ In 2022, Khattar had approved various initiatives of the bureau, including the setting up of a revolving fund to provide "trap money" to people lodging complaints against government officials who demand bribes.

## **Aarohini Training Programme for Girls**

- ★ Chief Minister (CM) of Uttar Pradesh (UP) Yogi Adityanath has launched the 'Aarohini Initiative Training Programme' for the safety and security of girls in all 746 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) in UP.
- ★ The training will start in Lucknow.
- ★ The campaign is being started to make the daughters of the underprivileged section capable and self-reliant.
- ★ The main objective is to enable the girls to raise their voice for their rights.
- ★ Training will be provided to full-time teachers of Kasturba Gandhi Schools.

## **DCPCR Launches Whatsapp Chatbot – Bal Mitra**

- ★ Delhi Deputy Chief Minister (CM) Manish Sisodia launched the WhatsApp chatbot named Bal Mitra.
- ★ The Chatbot was developed by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) which is an effort to enable two-way communication between people and the child rights panel.
- ★ It is to provide accurate information about children and their rights while maintaining the confidentiality of information reported to it.

- ★ The chatbot will provide authentic information on various issues related to children and their rights, while also ensuring the confidentiality of the cases reported through it.
- ★ It will help citizens and the commission interact more effectively and it is an important initiative to make governance citizen-friendly.

### **Atal Innovation Mission Inaugurates ACIC-CBIT Centre**

- ★ Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog inaugurated the ACIC-CBIT centre in Hyderabad.
- ★ The AIM team visited the centre to understand the different lab setups, technology and infrastructure for incubatees.
- ★ ACIC-CBIT has been established with the aim to build a community innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem to nurture innovators and startups in unserved and underserved regions.
- ★ ACIC CBIT focuses on Health-tech, Smart Engineering Products Renewable Energy and Environmental Sustainability.

### **Google Introduces AI Chatbot 'Bard'**

- ★ Google has launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot named "Google Bard" to compete with ChatGPT.
- ★ Bard is built on Google's existing language model LaMDA, the language model for the firm's Dialog Application System.
- ★ According to Google, it will be used by a group of testers first, after which Bard will be introduced to the general public.
- ★ Bard has been developed to compete with the currently fastest growing user application, ChatGPT, which has overtaken platforms such as Tik Tok and Instagram.
- ★ Through Bard, users can access complex information in simple language as before, not only that, but also get fresh, high-quality and accurate information from Google's chatbot.

### **Ladakh's First Biodiversity Heritage Site**

- ★ Yaya Tso has been declared as the first Biodiversity Heritage Site of Ladakh.
- ★ Yaya Tso is a lake situated at an altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh which is known as the paradise of birds.
- ★ It is a nesting site for birds and animals such as bar-headed goose, black-necked stork and Brahminy duck. It is one of the highest breeding grounds of black-necked stork in India.
- ★ Yaya Tso Lake has been declared as the first Biodiversity Heritage Site of Ladakh under Biodiversity Act by Chumathang Village Panchayat, Biodiversity Management Committee in association with Secure Himalaya Project.

### **Ministry Of Education Launched 'Yuva Sangam Portal'**

- ★ The Ministry of Education has launched a pilot project with the 'Yuva Sangam portal' under Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat.

- ★ Under the project, 1000 youth in the age group of 18 to 30 years will be sent to youth exchange programs in the North East and other states of the country.
- ★ Through Yuva Sangam, the youth of the North East will get an opportunity to know the tradition, culture, tourist places, food, language and diversity of the eight states of the country and the youth of other states of the country.
- ★ Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2015 on the occasion of Sardar Vallabh Patel's 140<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary and was launched by the Finance Minister in the budget for the financial year 2016-17.
- ★ It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.

### **Maritime India Vision 2030**

- ★ To boost the waterways network, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has planned several initiatives to develop ports in India.
- ★ This project has been made under the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030.
- ★ The ministry has planned an investment of ₹1,00,000 to ₹1,25,000 crore for capacity enhancement and development of world-class infrastructure at ports.
- ★ Under the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 the government aims to make world-class mega ports, transshipment hubs.
- ★ It is the plan to ensure coordinated and accelerated development of India's maritime sector over the next decade.

### **India's First Hydrogen-Powered Truck**

- ★ Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) and Ashok Leyland unveiled India's first Hydrogen Internal Combustion Engine (H2-ICE) powered truck at the India Energy Week.
- ★ RIL and Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship company of the Hinduja Group and India's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, were working on developing this technology over the past year.
- ★ Green hydrogen is the cleanest form of fuel when produced through renewable sources of energy.
- ★ According to June 2022 report by NITI Aayog on Harnessing Green Hydrogen, increasing consumption from steel and heavy-duty trucking sectors will be the long-term driver for hydrogen, with the demand of almost 11 million tonnes per year by 2030 and accounting for almost 52% of total demand by 2050.

### **UP Government Launches 'Family ID' Portal**

- ★ The UP government has launched an online portal, 'Family ID - One Family One Identity' to make access to government schemes easier for the families of the state.
- ★ Its objective is to provide free or subsidised ration to those families who do not have ration cards and are not eligible for the National Food Security Scheme.
- ★ Through the portal, families can create their ID and can avail the benefits of the schemes.
- ★ For those who already have an ID, the family ID will be the same as the ration card ID.
- ★ For others, ID will be generated through the portal and all the families will get a unique identity.



- ★ It will create a comprehensive database of households in Uttar Pradesh.

### **Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23**

- ★ Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj Singh inaugurated the Mission Antyodaya Survey (MAS) 2022-23 in New Delhi.
- ★ The Rural Development Department is conducting the Mission Antyodaya survey in all the Gram Panchayats of the country from 2017-18.
- ★ Survey will be done in all the 2,69,253 Gram Panchayats whose profiles have been created on e-Gram Swaraj.
- ★ It was initiated in the Union Budget 2017-18.
- ★ It aims to eradicate poverty in various dimensions of rural households.
- ★ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development are its nodal agencies.

### **Rajasthan Government iStart Scheme**

- ★ The Government of Rajasthan's iStart scheme is proving to be a boon for start-ups in the state.
- ★ Rajasthan has been one of the leading states in the country to start the start-up program.
- ★ The state government made a web portal, which is a one-stop gateway for all the promotions under the start-up policy.
- ★ iStart Rajasthan is the main program of the state government to promote innovation, generate employment and facilitate investment in Rajasthan.
- ★ In the start-up policy 2022, announced by the government, start-ups will be given assistance up to ₹35 lakh.
- ★ Moreover, subsidies of up to ₹15 lakh will be given under this policy to state government schools and colleges for opening e-cells.

### **Rajasthan Plans Zoo for Dolphins and Rhinos**

- ★ The Rajasthan state Forest Department has recently proposed to construct a zoo inside Keoladeo National Park.
- ★ The Keoladeo National Park formerly known as the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary hosts thousands of birds, especially during the winter season.
- ★ It is located in the eastern part of Rajasthan.
- ★ It is a Ramsar site and also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### **Save Wetlands Campaign**

- ★ Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav launched the Save Wetlands Campaign in Goa.
- ★ The campaign is structured on a 'whole of society' approach for wetlands conservation.
- ★ The campaign has been launched for wetlands conservation, and affirmative actions for wetlands conservation at all levels of society.

- ★ Under this campaign, citizen partnerships will be built for the conservation of wetlands.
- ★ The campaign will be conducted over the next one year.
- ★ The campaign will sensitise people about the value of wetlands and increase the coverage of wetland mitras.

### **AMRPTEX 2023**

- ★ The Minister for Communications, Electronics and Information Technology and Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated AMRITPEX 2023 - National Philatelic Exhibition on 11 February 2023 in New Delhi.
- ★ The themes of the exhibition include Amrit Mahotsav of Independence and New India, women power, youth power, nature and wildlife and culture and history of India.
- ★ The Department of Posts also released a commemorative postage stamp on the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence.
- ★ This stamp has been prepared from the best entries of the National Comprehensive Design Competition in which more than 4 lakh students participated.
- ★ The competition was organised on an all-India basis in collaboration with the Department of School Education and Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

### **India's First Drone-Air Traffic Management System**

- ★ The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari unveiled the country's first drone-air traffic management system 'Sky UTM'.
- ★ It is developed by 'Sky Air'.
- ★ Sky UTM is a cloud-based air traffic management system that integrates unmanned air traffic with manned aviation airspace.
- ★ The system is capable of handling 4,000 flights per hour and 96,000 flights per day.
- ★ Sky UTM is designed to provide situational awareness, autonomous navigation, risk assessment and traffic management to all drone/other aerial moving operators in the airspace.

### **India's First Glass Igloo Restaurant**

- ★ India's first glass igloo restaurant in the middle of the snow-covered mountains in Gulmarg has become the centre of attraction for tourists in the hill station in Kashmir.
- ★ This unique glass igloo restaurant is developed by Kolahoi Green Heights hotel of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.
- ★ In 2021, the same hotel built a snow igloo in Gulmarg which was the biggest snow igloo in Asia that also attracted tourists.

### **Asia's Biggest Air Show Aero India 2023**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of Aero India show in Bengaluru on 13 February.

- ★ The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of Aero India 2023 is being organised by the Indian Department of Defense Production from 13 February to 17 February at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ The theme of the five-day event is 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities'.
- ★ The main objective of the event is to promote indigenous production and exports of aerial platforms and attract foreign investment.
- ★ The event will promote the export of indigenous air platforms – Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas, HTT-40, Dornier Light Utility Helicopter (LUH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
- ★ The event will help integrate domestic MSMEs and start-ups into the global supply chain.

### **Digital Economy Working Group Meeting of G20**

- ★ As part of India's G20 Chairmanship, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will organise the first Digital Economy Working Group meeting in Lucknow from 13 February 13 to 15 February.
- ★ This year three defined areas will be discussed with representatives from all 20 countries.
- ★ The first is digital public infrastructure in which India has done a lot of work in this area with schemes like UPI, UIDAI, Diksha, eSanjeevani and other apps developed in the Covid era.
- ★ Cyber security will be another important aspect of the meeting.
- ★ The third issue that will be discussed is digital skilling.
- ★ The global digital economy is currently estimated at US\$11 trillion and is expected to reach US\$23 trillion by 2025.
- ★ Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) plays a critical role in shaping the global policy discourse in the digital space.

### **Bhopal's Historic Islam Nagar as Jagdishpur**

- ★ The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government announced that Islam Nagar village, situated in the Bhopal district, has been renamed Jagdishpur.
- ★ The name of Islam Nagar used to be Jagdishpur 308 years ago.
- ★ In 1719, Islam Nagar was made the capital of Bhopal and its control was held by the ruler Dost Mohammad Khan.
- ★ The name change comes amid protests and uproar about the alleged 'Hindufication' allegation in changing Mughal Garden's name in Rashtrapati Bhavan to Amrit Udyan.

### **'Khanan Prahari' Mobile App to Curb Illegal Mining**

- ★ The government launched a mobile app namely 'Khanan Prahari' and a web app Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System (CMSMS).
- ★ It has been launched to report unauthorised coal mining activities so that monitoring and appropriate action can be taken by the concerned law and order enforcing authority.

- ★ CMSMS has been developed to take transparent action to curb illegal mining and use of space technology as an e-governance initiative of Government of India.
- ★ 'Khanan Prahari' is a mobile app of the Ministry of Coal to report illegal coal mining.
- ★ It is a tool for geo-tagged photographs of any illegal coal mining incident as well as information to any citizen from the location of the incident'.

### **India's First Electric AC Double-Decker Bus**

- ★ The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST) inaugurated the country's first electric air-conditioned (AC) double-decker bus in Mumbai.
- ★ According to BEST, the regional transport agency in Mumbai is yet to complete the registration process for the electric bus.
- ★ After the approval of this bus, this bus will ply between Kurla Bus Depot and Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC).
- ★ The ticket price has been kept at a minimum of ₹6 for a distance of 5 km.
- ★ The seating capacity of the Electric Double Decker Bus is 73.
- ★ It is equipped with CCTV cameras and automatic doors and can be charged in 80 minutes.

### **M&M to Establish Electric Vehicle Manufacturing Facility**

- ★ The Telangana government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. for establishing a manufacturing facility, including development and production of electric three and four-wheelers, pertaining to its 'Last Mile Mobility' business.
- ★ The MoU was signed on the sidelines of the announcement of Telangana Mobility Valley, 'India's first new mobility-focused cluster', at the first edition of Mobility Next Hyderabad Summit.
- ★ The facility will involve an investment of about ₹1,000 crores, creating employment for about 800-1,000 persons.

### **Urban-20 City Sherpas Meeting**

- ★ A two-day Urban-20 City Sherpas meeting was held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ★ The purpose of the meeting was to focus on fostering solidarity between cities to find common solutions that are in line with the overall objectives of the G20.
- ★ It is the third of the G20 events being held in Gujarat as part of India's presidency of the Group of 20.
- ★ The U20 is one of the G20's engagement groups.
- ★ It provides a forum for cities in the G20 countries to discuss and propose collective solutions to key urban development issues, such as climate change, social inclusion, sustainable mobility, and affordable housing.
- ★ The U20 highlights six priority areas – eco-friendly behavior, water security, climate finance, local identity, urban planning and governance, and digitization of urban facilities.
- ★ More than 30 international cities are participating in this two-day event to discuss the sustainable development of cities.



## **DHARA – Annual Meeting of Members of the River Cities Alliance**

- ★ The yearly meeting of members of River Cities Alliance (RCA), DHARA was organised in Pune.
- ★ DHARA stands for Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers.
- ★ It was organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
- ★ DHARA 2023 provided a platform for senior officials of the 95-member river cities in India to co-learn and discuss solutions for managing local water bodies.
- ★ DHARA has strong synergies with Urban20 initiative under the ambit of India's G20 presidency.
- ★ River Cities Alliance (RCA) was launched by Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in November 2021.
- ★ It started with 30 cities and now has 95 cities as members.
- ★ It focuses on three broad themes: Networking, Capacity Building, Technical Support.

## **Agricultural Credit Societies**

- ★ In order to strengthen the cooperative sector, the Union Cabinet on 15 February approved the setting up of a new Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) in two lakh panchayats in the next five years.
- ★ According to the government, 25 different facilities will be made available through the Primary Agricultural Credit Society.
- ★ Dairy and fisheries will also be linked to agricultural cooperatives.
- ★ In the next 5 years, a target has been set to establish 2 lakh multipurpose packs, dairy, fisheries cooperatives.
- ★ The scheme will be implemented with convergence of various schemes.
- ★ PACS are registered under the Co-operative Societies Act and regulated by RBI.

## **Vibrant Villages Programme**

- ★ The Union Cabinet on 15 February approved the Centrally Sponsored Scheme- 'Vibrant Villages Programme' (VVP) for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26 with financial allocation of ₹4800 Crore.
- ★ This will help encourage people to stay in their native places in border areas.
- ★ This will stop migration from villages and improve border security.
- ★ Funds will be provided under the scheme for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities.
- ★ The focus areas of the programme are livelihood, road connectivity, housing, rural infrastructure, renewable energy, television and broadband connections.

## SPMCIL Signs MoU with TERI

- ★ The Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) and the Energy Resources Institute (TERI) have signed MoU with an estimated cost of ₹525.49 lakh for the integrated development of village Model.
- ★ This MoU has been entered into under the CSR initiative of SPMCIL for the development of Model Village.
- ★ TERI is engaged in research and development in the field of energy, environment, climate change and sustainability.
- ★ The Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) is a Mini Ratna, wholly owned by the Government of India.

## Jal Jan Abhiyan in Rajasthan

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the Jal Jan Abhiyan in Abu Road in Sirohi district of Rajasthan.
- ★ The main objective of this campaign is to plant trees along with water harvesting and motivate people for water conservation.
- ★ This campaign has been started by the Brahma Kumari organisation and the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- ★ The Jal-Jan campaign is being launched at a time when water scarcity is being seen as a future crisis all over the world.

## Indian Rice Congress in Cuttack

- ★ President inaugurates 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Indian Rice Congress in Cuttack.
- ★ The Indian Rice Congress-2023 at ICAR- National Rice Research Institute was inaugurated by President Smt. Draupadi Murmu.
- ★ Rice production in India has increased from 89 million tonnes in 2010 to 130 MT in 2022.
- ★ India is the second-largest producer of rice and the largest exporter of rice.
- ★ President announced that rice is the basis of food security in India and also a major factor for our economy.
- ★ West Bengal is the highest rice-producing state in India.

## TN Government Unveils New Electric Vehicle Policy

- ★ The Tamil Nadu (TN) Chief Minister (CM) M.K. Stalin released the 'Tamil Nadu Electric Vehicles (EV) Policy 2023'.
- ★ The objective is to attract ₹50,000 crore worth of investment in EV manufacturing during the policy period and generate 1.50 lakh jobs.
- ★ The new policy shall be valid for a period of 5 years.
- ★ Cities like Chennai, Coimbatore Tiruchirappalli Madurai, Salem and Tirunelveli are to be pilot cities for implementing e-mobility solutions.

- ★ According to the policy, TN has signed memorandum of understandings (MoUs) with companies committing investments of nearly ₹24,000 crore and employment potential of 48,000 jobs in the EV value chain.

### **KAVACH-2023**

- ★ A national level hackathon KAVACH-2023 was launched on 16 February to identify innovative ideas and technological solutions to address India's 21<sup>st</sup> century cyber security and cybercrime challenges.
- ★ KAVACH-2023 is a one-of-a-kind national hackathon jointly developed by AICTE, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.
- ★ It identifies innovative ideas and technological solutions to address 21<sup>st</sup> century cyber security and cybercrime challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and common citizens.

### **49<sup>th</sup> Meeting of GST Council**

- ★ The 49<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GST Council will be held in New Delhi.
- ★ Chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the meeting is likely to discuss setting up appellate tribunals and mechanisms to curb tax evasion in pan masala and gutkha business.
- ★ These tribunals will have one judicial and one technical member from either the Centre or the states to ensure equity in membership.

### **Economic Times Global Business Summit**

- ★ Addressing the Economic Times Global Business Summit in New Delhi, Mr. Modi announced that the government has re-imagined how to improve the delivery of services to the poor and the implementation of welfare schemes.
- ★ The government is focusing on the empowerment of the poor so that they can contribute to national development.
- ★ The government has transferred 28 lakh crore rupees under the Direct Benefit Transfer, with zero leakage.

### **Shinku La Tunnel Construction Approved by Union Cabinet**

- ★ Shinku La Tunnel construction was approved by Union Cabinet to provide all-weather connectivity in Ladakh.
- ★ Anurag Singh Thakur stated that this 1-kilometer-long tunnel would be completed by December 2025.
- ★ The estimated cost of this project will be around 1,681 crore rupees.
- ★ The tunnel will lead to the all-around development of the region and encourage tourism, health and education sectors.
- ★ This project is also important from the point of view of strategic and national security.

### **First State-Level ‘Shrimp Mela’**

- ★ Punjab’s first state level ‘Prawn Fair’ began at Enakheda village in Muktsar district.
- ★ This mela is an effort of the state government to create more awareness about shrimp farming.
- ★ This fair is being organised to make farmers aware of various schemes for fish farming and to encourage more and more people to participate in it.
- ★ In this, experts will help farmers understand about aquaculture.

### **Uttar Pradesh Sports Inks MoUs with HCL Foundation**

- ★ Uttar Pradesh Sports Inks MoUs with HCL Foundation To Strengthen The Grassroots Sports Ecosystem And Infrastructure And Build High-Performance Centre.
- ★ The sports-focused session titled ‘Harnessing opportunities in the sports sector in Uttar Pradesh’ at the Invest UP Summit saw MoUs being signed to strengthen the grassroots sports ecosystem of the state and create synergies with corporates and organizations to work on the PPP model to empower athlete training in the state.
- ★ HCL Foundation intends to work with 5,000 underserved children and youth and persons with a disability to identify and nurture talent in multiple sports with the vision of mainstreaming them in the existing sports ecosystem of India.
- ★ The proposed project will be implemented in the Lucknow, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Hardoi districts of Uttar Pradesh.

### **18<sup>th</sup> World Security Congress**

- ★ The 18<sup>th</sup> World Security Congress is being organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) from 21 February to 23 February in Jaipur.
- ★ The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of this Congress is focused on the theme of ‘Railway Safety Strategy: Responses and Vision for the Future’.
- ★ It will be attended by concerned officials from UIC, partner international organisations, Indian Railways, RPF and Senior Police Officers from India besides security heads from railway organisations across the globe.
- ★ The Congress is divided into 4 sessions, which include the topics ‘Safety of critical assets and goods’, ‘Human safety approaches’, ‘Best railway safety equipment and practices around the world’ and ‘Vision 2030’.

### **Khajuraho Dance Festival Begin in Madhya Pradesh**

- ★ The 49<sup>th</sup> Khajuraho Dance Festival began in Khajuraho.
- ★ Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel inaugurated ‘Khajuraho Dance Festival-2023’. The festival will end on February 26.
- ★ Madhya Pradesh State Rupankar Art Award will be given at the function and an exhibition of artefacts has also been organised at the venue.

- ★ Under the Department of Culture, this festival is being organised with the joint efforts of Ustad Alladin Khan Academy of Music and Arts, Department of Tourism, Archaeological Survey of India, World Dance Alliance and Chhatarpur District Administration.

### **Indian Railways and India Post**

- ★ Rail Post Gati Shakti Express Cargo Service has been launched by Indian Railways.
- ★ A Joint Parcel Product, Rail Post Gati Shakti Express Cargo Service, has formally been launched by Indian Railways and Indian Post.
- ★ It is an initiative to providing seamless logistics for the service sector in the country.
- ★ This is in compliance with the budget announcement for the financial year 2022-23.
- ★ It has been launched on four sectors – Delhi to Kolkata, Bengaluru to Guwahati, Surat to Muzaffarpur and Hyderabad to Hazrat Nizamuddin.
- ★ To take this initiative forward, a joint marketing team has been formed between Postal and Railways.

### **Northern India's First Nuclear Plant**

- ★ North India's first nuclear power plant is being set up in Gorakhpur, Haryana.
- ★ The Center has approved the setting up of 10 nuclear reactors to increase India's nuclear capacity.
- ★ The Department of Atomic Energy has also been permitted to form joint ventures with Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) for resources to set up nuclear power plants.
- ★ Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Project (GHAVP) consists of two units of 700 MW each.
- ★ Each of these has indigenously designed Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR).
- ★ It is under implementation near Gorakhpur village of Fatehabad district in Haryana.
- ★ An amount of ₹4,906 crore has been spent out of the total allocated amount of ₹20,594 crore.

### **India's Coal-Based Power Generation Likely to Fall to 69% in 2025**

- ★ As renewable energy sources gain prominence in India's power generation, the share of coal is projected to decline to 69 percent by 2025 from 74 percent at present.
- ★ Because of higher coal-fired generation, total power generation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are likely to rise by 8 percent from 2022 levels by 2025, despite falling CO<sub>2</sub> intensity.
- ★ At present, coal accounts for 50 percent of India's total installed power capacity of 410 gigawatts (GW).
- ★ Overall, the thermal power generation capacity is around 236 GW.
- ★ Besides, 52 GW is from hydro, 115 GW is from RE, and 6.8 GW is from nuclear power plants.

### **MEA Introduces 'mPassport Police App'**

- ★ In order to reduce the time taken for police verification of persons applying for passports in the national capital, the Ministry of External Affairs has introduced the 'mPassport Police App', which



will now digitize the process of sending the police verification report to the Regional Passport Office (RPO).

- ★ Home Minister Amit Shah made an announcement in this regard at Delhi Police's 76<sup>th</sup> Raising Day ceremony.
- ★ Anyone in Delhi who applies for a passport will not need to wait for 15 days for police verification 'mPassport Police App', expected to cut the time for police verification of passport applicants to five days.

## **Indigenously Developed Train Control and Supervision System**

- ★ India achieved another milestone by launching the first ever indigenously developed Train Control and Supervision System.
- ★ The i-ATS (Indigenous-Automatic Train Supervision) system has been launched by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on its first corridor.
- ★ With the launch of i-ATS, India becomes the sixth country which has its own ATS products after France, Germany, Japan, Canada and China.
- ★ The i-ATS (Indigenous-Automatic Train Supervision) has been launched from the Operations Control Centre (OCC).
- ★ This project is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's 'Make in India' and 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' initiatives for the Metro Rail Transit Systems.

## **21 More Airports Under Krishi Udan Scheme**

- ★ The government will soon add 21 more airports under the Krishi Udan scheme, aimed at facilitating faster movement of agricultural produce in north eastern, hilly and tribal regions of the country.
- ★ Currently At least 31 airports are under the Krishi Udan scheme.
- ★ To promote transportation of perishable agricultural produce from the north-eastern, hilly and tribal regions, under the Krishi Udan scheme 2.0 launched in October 2021.
- ★ In August 2021, the civil aviation ministry had notified the norms for drones to provide necessary regulatory framework for their commercial use.
- ★ The main objective of the Krishi Udan Scheme 2.0 is to increase share of air carriage in the modal mix for transportation of Agri-produce, which includes horticulture, fishery, livestock and processed products.

## **Ministry of Textiles' Flagship Event 'Technotex 2023'**

- ★ Textile Ministry will host 'Technotex 2023' in Mumbai to boost manufacturing and research in the technical textiles sector.
- ★ 'Technotex 2023: Envisioning Indian Technical Textiles@ 2047' will be a three-day exhibition and meet.
- ★ It will begin on February 22.

- ★ Over 150 technical textiles exhibitors and more than 250 buyers from 30 countries are likely to take part.
- ★ Technotex 2023 would help in exemplifying the potential for trade and investment between India and foreign countries in technical textiles sector.
- ★ Presently, Indian technical textiles market is the fifth largest in the world.

### **India First Hybrid Rocket**

- ★ India's first hybrid rocket made by the school students from various states launched as part of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission 2023 from Pattipulam Village in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The reusable rocket has been made by the selected top 100 students.
- ★ The rocket can be used for research into weather, atmospheric conditions and radiation.
- ★ Martin Foundation in association with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and Space Zone India successfully completed the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission 2023.
- ★ It is a bipropellant rocket engine that uses propellants that are in two different states.
- ★ These propellants are usually liquid and solid which react to form exhaust gases suitable for rocket propulsion.

### **MEA's Annual Flagship Event Asia Economic Dialogue**

- ★ External Affairs Ministry's annual flagship event on Geoeconomics, Asia Economic Dialogue began on 23 February in Pune, Maharashtra.
- ★ It is being hosted in association with the Pune International Center from 23 February to 25 February 2023.
- ★ The main theme of the dialogue is 'Asia and the Emerging World Order'.
- ★ The dialogue will also discuss topics such as Global Growth Prospects, How the Global South Will Shape the G20 Agenda and the Metaverse.
- ★ The Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) is the External Affairs ministry's annual event and is hosted in collaboration with the Pune International Centre.
- ★ It is the flagship geo-economics conference.
- ★ The dialogue focuses on the dynamics of trade and finance in Asia and its neighbouring countries.

### **Education Minister Launches Learning-Teaching Material**

- ★ Learning-Teaching Material called 'Jaadui Pitara' has been launched for Foundational Stages as envisaged under National Education Policy 2020 in New Delhi by Dharmendra Pradhan.
- ★ This unique initiative of the government will help foundational stage students to learn easily through play-way method under the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage – 2022.
- ★ It is launched by the Union Ministry of Education.

- ★ It has been designed on the motto of ‘learning through play’, as envisaged in the new National Education Policy (NEP).
- ★ ‘Jadui Pitara’ is a play-based teaching-learning material designed for children in the age group of 3-8 years.
- ★ The ‘Jadui Pitara’ includes playbooks, activity books, flash cards, posters depicting different stories, games, puzzles, puppets and many more items.

### **World’s Largest and Unique Divyang Park**

- ★ Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for the world’s largest Divyang Park — Anubhuti Inclusive Park — in Nagpur.
- ★ The park will have adapted facilities for all 21 types of disabilities like touch and smell garden, hydrotherapy unit, water therapy, independent room for mentally challenged children, mother.
- ★ In 2016, the Central government had passed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.
- ★ World’s first inclusive disabled park has been made from a provision of about ₹12 crore by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to built this park in an area of 90 thousand square feet.

### **Odisha Launched India’s First AI-Chatbot**

- ★ Governor of Odisha Shri Ganeshi Lal launched India’s first artificial intelligence (AI) driven ChatBot for agriculture named Ama KrushAI in Bhubaneswar at the annual Krushi Odisha event 2023.
- ★ It is to provide farmers with the best agronomic practices, government schemes and loan products from over 40 commercial and cooperative banks.
- ★ Ama KrushAI, which will run under a pilot project with above 10,000 farmers and will be implemented in full-fledged in next 2 months.
- ★ It is created using Bhashini, a language interpretation platform developed by Indian Institute of Technology IIT Madras.
- ★ This initiative is a game changer in terms of providing farmers with cutting-edge agricultural technologies and innovations.

### **Ellora – Ajanta International Festival 2023**

- ★ The three-day Ellora-Ajanta International Festival began on February 25 at the historic Sonari Palace in Maharashtra, located on the campus of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University.
- ★ Soneri Mahal is decorated with attractive replicas of Ellora and Ajanta. It reflects the rich tradition of Aurangabad.
- ★ The program started with Kathak dance by Mayur Vaidya and Mrinmoyee Deshpande.
- ★ Ellora Ajanta Festival An annual festival, where singers and dancers from across the country gather to showcase their talents.

- ★ The festival showcases the rich history of India and its cultural traditions to the world in the best possible way.

### **First State to Use Robotics Technology for Manhole Cleaning**

- ★ The Kerala government launched robotic scavenger, Bandicoot to clean sewages in temple town of Guruvayur, becoming the first state in the country to use robotic technology to clean all its commissioned manholes.
- ★ Water Resources Minister Roshi Augustine launched Bandicoot under Guruvayur sewerage project in Thrissur district by Kerala Water Authority.
- ★ Now Kerala has become the first state in the country to have robotic scavengers to clean manholes.
- ★ The robotic TRON unit, a key component of the Bandicoot, enters the manhole and removes sewage using robotic hands that resemble human limbs.
- ★ The machine has waterproof, HD vision cameras and sensors that can detect harmful gases inside.
- ★ Bandicoot, developed by Kerala-based Genrobotics, recently won the 'Kerala Pride' award at the Huddle Global 2022 Conclave organised by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM).

### **Churchgate Railway Station to be Renamed**

- ★ Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has passed a resolution to rename the Churchgate railway station in Mumbai after CD Deshmukh, the first Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ The name of the station will be 'Chintamanrao Deshmukh Station'.
- ★ As the Union Finance Minister from 1950 to 1956, CD Deshmukh contributed to the economic development of the country.
- ★ One of Deshmukh's notable achievements as Governor was the establishment of the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) in 1948.
- ★ He was knighted by the British government in 1944 and awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 1959.

### **India has joined the Agricultural Innovation Mission**

- ★ India has joined the Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate.
- ★ With an aim to accelerate investment and support for climate-smart agriculture and food systems innovation, the US and the UAE have launched this global platform.
- ★ India has joined the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM4C), which was launched by the two nations in November 2021.
- ★ The AIM4C climate-smart wants to increase investment and support for the innovation of agriculture and food systems.
- ★ The AIM4C initiative has successfully increased these investments to more than USD8 billion globally.

## JK Education Fair 2023

- ★ Union External Affairs Minister Shri S Jaishankar inaugurated Jammu and Kashmir's first-ever International Education Fair in New Delhi.
- ★ It is being organized in a collaborative effort of the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SKUAST-Kashmir) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- ★ Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State at PMO Jitendra Singh, Jammu, and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also attended the event held at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan.

## Life Sciences Industry Ecosystem by 2028

- ★ Telangana government is aiming to increase the size of the pharma-life sciences ecosystem in the State from \$50 billion to \$100 billion by 2028.
- ★ This was announced by the State Industries Minister KT Rama Rao at the inaugural session of the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of BioAsia, 2023 the flagship pharma-life sciences conference of the State.
- ★ The upcoming Hyderabad Pharma City with a life sciences university and B-Hub to encourage start-ups will further boost the pharma-life sciences industry in the State.
- ★ BioAsia 2023 will be the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of Telangana's annual flagship event is scheduled for 24 February-26 February 2023 at HICC Novotel, Hyderabad.
- ★ The United Kingdom (UK) is the country partner for BioAsia 2023.
- ★ Theme: 'Advancing for ONE – Shaping the next generation of humanized healthcare'.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### India Extends USD 40 Mn to Maldives

- ★ India's External Affairs Minister Shri S. Jaishankar has extended a concessional USD 40 million Line of Credit for developing sporting infrastructure in the Maldives.
- ★ This is part of New Delhi's efforts to bring PM Narendra Modi's flagship projects such as "Fit India" and "Khelo India" into the ambit of the 'Neighbourhood First Policy'.
- ★ Fit India and Khelo India were introduced by the Modi government to revive sporting and fitness culture at the grass root level in the country.
- ★ Jaishankar inaugurated the community centre with his Maldivian counterpart Abdulla Shahid.
- ★ Additionally, New Delhi was working with the Male to augment Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company's processing and cold storage capacities.

### South Africa to Host 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit

- ★ Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Foreign Minister of the State of Eritrea Osman Saleh announced that the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit is set to take place in South Africa's Durban in August 2023.



- ★ South Africa participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> BRICS summit in China for the first time in April 2011.
- ★ Earlier in 2013, the 5<sup>th</sup> annual BRICS summit was held in Durban, South Africa,

### **Congo into International Solar Alliance**

- ★ India has welcomed Congo into the International Solar Alliance.
- ★ It is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization whose primary function is to promote solar development by reducing the cost of financing and technology.
- ★ It is the nodal agency to implement 'One Sun, One World, One Grid'.
- ★ It aims to transfer the solar energy generated in a specific region to meet the electricity demand of another region.
- ★ Its key objectives include achieving a global potential of over 1000 GW of solar power generation capacity and mobilising about \$1000 billion to invest in solar energy by 2030.

### **Chairmanship of Audit Institutions of G20 Nations**

- ★ Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has taken over the Chairmanship of Supreme Audit Institutions 20 (SAI20) with India assuming the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022.
- ★ The SAI 20 Engagement Group of G20 nations recognizes the crucial role of SAI in fortifying governance.
- ★ The SAI20 Engagement Group under CAG of India aims to bring together an ecosystem wherein SAIs are active partners in governance, promoting transparency and accountability.
- ★ The CAG is the supreme audit institution of India, established under Article 148 of the Constitution of India.
- ★ The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India is appointed by the President of India.

### **India Provided 50 Buses to Sri Lanka**

- ★ India has supplied 50 buses to Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.
- ★ India provided 50 buses to Sri Lanka under the economic assistance scheme.
- ★ Commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland has bagged a contract for the supply of 500 buses from the Sri Lanka Transport Board.
- ★ Under the contract, 75 buses have been handed over to Sri Lanka in January 2023.
- ★ The Indian Import-Export Bank is providing loans for these buses.

### **India Signs Agreement with US**

- ★ The US Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) and India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) plan to strengthen public-private collaboration in the chip ecosystem by forming a private-sector task force.
- ★ It aims to develop a readiness assessment in order to identify near-term opportunities and help in the longer-term development of semiconductor ecosystems.

- ★ NSA Ajit Doval co-chaired the inaugural meeting of the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) with his US counterpart Jake Sullivan at the White House in Washington.
- ★ A new innovation Bridge will be established to connect defence startups on both sides.
- ★ India and the US agreed to launch a public-private dialogue that will cover 5G and 6G and Open Radio Access Network (ORAN).

### **CAG Signed Two MoUs with the Auditing Authorities**

- ★ The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with auditing authorities of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Supreme Audit Institutions (SCO SAI) Leaders' meeting.
- ★ The agreements are aimed at strengthening cooperation and exchange of expertise between the two nations in the field of auditing.
- ★ The agreements are a step forward in promoting closer ties and collaboration among the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of the three nations.
- ★ The Comptroller and Auditor General of India is the supreme audit institution of India, established under Article 148 of the Constitution of India.

### **Quad Countries Launch 'Quad Cyber Challenge'**

- ★ Quad countries India, Australia, America and Japan have recently launched Quad Cyber Challenge to strengthen cyber security.
- ★ Its main objective is to strengthen the cyber security system in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ★ With the help of the 'Quad Cyber Challenge', the four countries will jointly make efforts to improve cyber security.
- ★ The 'Quad Cyber Challenge' will help in practising safe and responsible cyber habits.
- ★ With its help, efforts will be made to promote a secure and resilient cyber ecosystem. Along with this, cyber security awareness and action plan will be prepared through 'Quad Cyber Challenge'.

### **Operation 'DOST'**

- ★ India is carrying out a rescue operation named 'Operation Dost' with National Disaster Response Force personnel, essential items and medical equipment to help after the earthquake in Turkey.
- ★ On 06 February 2023, an earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale affected Turkey and Syria, causing massive devastation along with loss of life and damage to infrastructure in both countries.
- ★ A field hospital has been set up by the Indian Army in Turkey's Hatay province under Operation Dost.
- ★ C17 Globemaster aircraft of the Indian Air Force has been put into operation.
- ★ Operation Dost is a symbol of the fact that India is a friend of Turkey, that is, both should strengthen their relations more.

## 12<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference

- ★ The three-day 12<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference will be held in Fiji from 15 February 2023.
- ★ The conference is being organised by the Ministry of External Affairs of India in collaboration with the Government of Fiji.
- ★ The main theme of the conference is 'Hindi – Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence'.
- ★ The Conference will be inaugurated by Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka along with External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar.
- ★ Representatives of 50 countries are likely to participate in the World Hindi Conference.
- ★ The event will be used to promote Hindi as a global language.

## India and US to Jointly Develop UAVs and Share IP Rights

- ★ India and the United States (US) have moved ahead to jointly develop air-launched unmanned aerial vehicles (ALUAV) that will be used for surveillance missions, in a massive boost to Indo-US defence ties.
- ★ This is the first UAV project under which common intellectual property (IP) rights will be generated, giving the Indian ecosystem a significant technology boost.
- ★ A Project Agreement (PA) for this was inked by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and US Department of Defence under the Joint Working Group Air Systems in the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) on July 2021.
- ★ The ALUAV prototype, being jointly developed by India and the US, could enter the flight-testing phase by September 2023.
- ★ It is being developed to be launched from an aircraft (C130J aircraft).

## MoU Between India and Chile

- ★ The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of India and the Government of Chile for cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors.
- ★ This MoU provides for cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors.
- ★ Under the MoU, a Chile-India Agricultural Working Group will be set up.
- ★ This group will be responsible for supervision, review and evaluation of the implementation of the MoU as well as for establishing frequent communication and coordination.
- ★ Thereafter it will be automatically renewed for a period of 5 years.

## India and Fiji Sign MoU on Visa Exemption

- ★ India and Fiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding on visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders in presence of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka.
- ★ Under this agreement, holders of diplomatic and official passports will be able to enter, transit and stay in each other's territory without a visa for a period of 90 days.

- ★ India and Fiji share close and long-standing relations and the two countries also reviewed bilateral relations.
- ★ The Visa Waiver Agreement will be helpful in encouraging greater travel between the two countries.

### **India and Spain Signed MoU**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez agreed to collaborate on issues such as digital infrastructure, climate action, clean energy and sustainable development.
- ★ They also discussed several bilateral and international issues of mutual interest.
- ★ They reviewed bilateral initiatives and expressed satisfaction at the growing cooperation in the defence, economic and commercial sectors.
- ★ Spain is India's 7<sup>th</sup> largest Trading Partner in the European Union.

### **India, US and Brazil to Establish a Global Biofuel Alliance**

- ★ India, Brazil and the US will work together to establish a global biofuel alliance along with other interested countries.
- ★ The aim of the global biofuel alliance will be to facilitate cooperation and intensify the use sustainable biofuels.
- ★ The global biofuel alliance will emphasize on strengthening markets, facilitating global biofuels trade, and provision of technical support for national biofuels programs worldwide.
- ★ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) said that the alliance will complement the relevant regional and international agencies, and initiatives in the bioenergy, bio-economy and energy transition fields.
- ★ The global biofuel alliance was announced by Oil Minister H.S. Puri during the India Energy Week 2023 in Bengaluru.

### **UAE Chapter of the Business Council**

- ★ The UAE and India launched the UAE India Business Council – UAE Chapter (UIBCUC) to strengthen economic ties and enhance bilateral trade and investment.
- ★ The UIBCUC aims to increase bilateral trade to \$100 billion and attract investments of \$75 billion from the UAE to India.
- ★ The council will bring together key partners and stakeholders from both countries and encourage innovative collaboration between Emirati and Indian businesses.
- ★ The Council will play a key role in supporting the two governments in their joint mission to promote bilateral trade and investment.
- ★ It will operate under the supervision of the Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- ★ It is registered with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce as a legal and financial entity.

## Sea Ice Cover Reaches Lowest Level in Antarctica

- ★ According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center in the United States, Antarctica's sea ice extent was recorded at 2.2 million square kilometres last week, down from 2.27 million square kilometres as of February 24, 2022, the previous record.
- ★ This is the lowest since records began in 1979.
- ★ According to scientists, this is the second consecutive year when snow has melted up to 20 lakh square km in a day.
- ★ The coldest region on Earth, 99 percent of Antarctica is covered with ice.

## India and Singapore Launch Joint Digital Payment Mechanism

- ★ India and Singapore on 21 February 2023 launched a joint digital payment mechanism to enable residents of both countries to make easier and faster cross-border transactions.
- ★ The facility was jointly launched by Shaktikanta Das, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and Ravi Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore.
- ★ India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow have entered into an agreement in this regard to facilitate these transactions.
- ★ This will add a new chapter in fintech connectivity. People can make cost effective and fast money transfers from their mobile phones.
- ★ This real-time payment system will help the Indian diaspora in Singapore, especially migrant workers and students.

## U.S. Presidential Campaign for 2024

- ★ Indian-origin Republican leader Nikki Haley formally launched her S. Presidential Campaign for 2024.
- ★ She has become the first Republican to challenge former US President Donald Trump to become her party's nominee for the White House in 2024.
- ★ If she wins the Republican Presidential nomination in 2024, she will be the first woman and first Asian-American at the top of the GOP ticket.
- ★ The next US Presidential election is scheduled to be held on 05 November 2024.
- ★ Nikki Haley served as the 116<sup>th</sup> Governor of South Carolina from 2011 to 2017 and she is the first female Governor of South Carolina.

## Italian PM Meloni Chief Guest at Raisina Dialogue

- ★ Europe's right-wing poster girl and Italy's Prime Minister (PM) Giorgia Meloni will be the chief guest in the next Raisina dialogue.
- ★ This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row that a major European leader will attend the talks as chief guest in the midst of the Ukraine war.
- ★ President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen was the chief guest in 2022.



- ★ Meloni, who formed Italy's most far-right government since the days of Mussolini following his election victory in 2022, is also Italy's first female Prime Minister.
- ★ The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier foreign policy conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.

### **Air Services Agreement between India and Guyana**

- ★ The Union Cabinet on 22 February approved the signing of the Air Services Agreement between the Government of India and Guyana.
- ★ The Air Services Agreement will come into force after the exchange of Diplomacy Notes.
- ★ The Diplomacy Notes shall confirm that both sides have completed the necessary internal procedures for the entry into force of this Agreement.
- ★ The signing of the Air Services Agreement with Guyana will create a framework for the provision of air services between the two countries.
- ★ The agreement will give a boost to the aviation market and aviation sector in India.

### **UAE to Host First I2U2 Vice-Ministerial Meeting**

- ★ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is set to host the first Vice-Ministerial meeting of the I2U2 in Abu Dhabi from 20 February to 26 February 2023.
- ★ Senior officials from India, Israel, the United States and the UAE will attend the meeting. During the meeting, opportunities to advance regional cooperation will be discussed.
- ★ Investment opportunities to build partnerships addressing the region's most pressing issues, including management of the energy crisis and food insecurity will also be discussed.
- ★ The aim is to cooperate on 'joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security'.

## **BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS**

### **PNB, Canara Bank and Bank of Baroda to 'Baa3'**

- ★ Global rating agency Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings of Bank of Baroda (BOB), Canara Bank, and Punjab National Bank (PNB) from "Ba1" to "Baa3", reflecting improving credit profile and macro-economic conditions.
- ★ The global credit ratings agency also upgraded the Baseline Credit Assessment (BCAs) of these 3 banks to ba3 from b1.
- ★ The upgrading of ratings and BCA reflects an improvement in India's macro profile to "Moderate" from "Moderate" and the improving credit metrics of the four banks.
- ★ The ratings upgrade of the four banks reflects their improved asset quality and profitability.
- ★ The rating agency flagged risks from rising interest rates and moderation in the pace of the country's economic growth.

## Paytm CITI Card

- ★ Citibank and payments platform Paytm (One97 Communications), have ended their partnership for a co-branded credit card Paytm CITI Card, ahead of the merger of Citibank's consumer banking business with Axis Bank.
- ★ Both Citibank and Paytm have written to cardholders informing them that the co-branded credit card will be shut down, and offering them other cards they could opt for.
- ★ For existing Citi Rewards Credit Card customers, the bank has offered to replace the Paytm Citi cards with Citi Cash Back Credit Card.

## Star Health and Allied Insurance and Punjab National Bank

- ★ Star Health and Allied Insurance, India's first standalone health insurance company, has renewed its strategic corporate agency tie-up with Punjab National Bank (PNB) for a long-term period.
- ★ Under this agreement, Star Health's health insurance products will be available through the bank's extensive distribution network of about 10,000 branches across the country, providing customers with a one-stop solution for all their health insurance needs.
- ★ The partnership will enable both PNB & Star Health, to further increase insurance penetration pan India while making health insurance easily accessible across regions.

## IMF Approves Loan for Bangladesh

- ★ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board on Monday approved a total of USD 4.7 billion loan for Bangladesh.
- ★ It includes USD 3.3 billion under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and USD 1.4 billion under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) for Bangladesh.
- ★ The fund will be disbursed to Bangladesh over a period of 42 months to support Bangladesh's economic policies.
- ★ Bangladesh is the first country in Asia to receive financing under the RSF.

## Finance Minister to Present Union Budget 2023-24

- ★ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the Financial Year 2023-24.
- ★ The copy of the Budget will be laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha soon thereafter.
- ★ A meeting of the Union Cabinet will be held in the morning to approve the Union Budget 2023-24.
- ★ After getting the nod from the Cabinet, Ms Sitharaman will present the Union Budget in Parliament.

## SBI raises ₹9,718 Crore in a Second Tranche

- ★ The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) has raised ₹9,718 crore through its second infrastructure bond issuance at a coupon rate of 7.70% per annum for the 15-year money.

- ★ The coupon rate of 7.70% represents a spread of 17 basis points over the corresponding government security yield curve (G-Sec curve) provided by the Financial Benchmarks of India Limited.
- ★ Prior to the latest bond sale, SBI had issued 10-year infrastructure bonds worth ₹10,000 crore at a coupon of 7.51% on 06 December 2022.
- ★ The fund proceeds will be utilised for enhancing long-term resources for funding infrastructure and affordable housing.
- ★ The coupon is the interest rate periodically paid out to investors.
- ★ Government Securities, popularly known as G-Sec Bonds, are debt instruments issued by the Central government to meet its fiscal needs.
- ★ The government sells the bonds and uses the funds to pay for daily projects, special infrastructure, or military operations.

### **Nigeria Launches Domestic Card Scheme AfriGo**

- ★ The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Godwin Emefiele launched a domestic card scheme AfriGo to boost the cashless economy and rival foreign cards like Mastercard and Visa.
- ★ In order to enhance its drive to make Africa's biggest economy a cashless society and save the country foreign transaction fees.
- ★ Nigeria was joining China, Russia, India and Turkey with a domestic card scheme.
- ★ AfriGo is owned by CBN and Nigerian banks.
- ★ AfriGo is meant to provide more options for domestic consumers in a 'cost-effective and competitive manner'.

### **Renewbuy Launches Customised Health Insurance Plan**

- ★ RenewBuy has launched its first line of customised health insurance products, the RenewBuy Health Wellness plan with a focus on the large uninsured segment beyond the tier 1 markets.
- ★ It is to bridge gap and has introduced multiple benefits in pre-hospitalization and Outpatient Department (OPD) treatment with the newly launched product.
- ★ The product offers new-age health insurance benefits, available in three variants: Gold Plan, Silver Plan and Wellness Plan ranging from coverage of 2-5 lakhs.
- ★ Up to 70% lower premium is offered for senior citizens, and up to 50% lower premium is offered for those up to 59 years of age, Maternity cover with a significantly shorter waiting period.

### **India's First Payments Platform to Process Retail CBDC Transactions**

- ★ Infibeam Avenues's flagship payments brand – CCAvenue, has become the first payment gateway player to process Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) or Digital Rupee transactions for online retail merchants.
- ★ CBDC, is a robust, efficient, trusted and legal tender based real-time payment option.

- ★ The aim of the Indian government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in launching the Digital Rupee is to reduce the ₹32 lakh crore of cash in circulation and to save costs associated with cash like currency printing, solve fake currency problems, avoid wear and tear, etc.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has identified 8 banks for phase-wise participation in the retail pilot project for CBDC.

### **ULIP Product ‘Wealth Edge’.**

- ★ Canara HSBC Life Insurance has launched ‘Wealth Edge’, a Unit-Linked Individual Savings Insurance Plan (ULIP).
- ★ Wealth Edge has been designed to help fulfil the life goals of an individual by providing utmost flexibility.
- ★ The policy also offers options of single pay and limited pay for all three plans, along with death and maturity benefits.
- ★ The product offers 3 different plans depending on an individual’s need and current requirements.
- ★ For Invest Plus, the minimum and maximum entry ages are 0 years and 70 years, respectively.
- ★ For Premium Plus and Life Plus, the minimum entry ages are 18 years, while the maximum entry ages are 50 years and 70 years, respectively.
- ★ The maturity ages for Premium Plus are minimum 28 and maximum 80 years, while for Life Plus, the maturity age is up to 100 years.

### **Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) in FY23**

- ★ As of 01 February 2023, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has achieved ₹1.5 lakh crore of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) in FY23 alone.
- ★ GeM is well positioned to cross its annual target of ₹1.75 lakh crore.
- ★ GeM has crossed a gross business value of ₹3 lakh crore since inception with the support of its stakeholders.
- ★ The total number of transactions on GeM has crossed 1.3 crore.
- ★ GeM has over 66,000 government buyer organisations and over 58 lakh sellers and service providers.
- ★ GeM portal features over 11,000 product categories with more than 29 lakh listed products.

### **New India Assurance (NIA) Launches ‘Pay As You Drive’**

- ★ New India Assurance (NIA) has launched a ‘Pay as You Drive’ (PAYD) policy, which offers a comprehensive motor insurance policy that charges a premium based on the usage of the vehicle.
- ★ The policy has two components – third-party cover and own-damage cover.
- ★ Discounts on renewals, coverage beyond distance limit and enhanced protections such as nil depreciation, roadside help, return to invoice, etc., are provided.
- ★ For instance, the customer can save money through discounts on renewal premiums, provided the vehicle runs within the specified kilometres.

- ★ Recently, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed insurance companies to launch telematics-based motor insurance covers, like PAYD and pay how you drive (PHYD), enabling vehicle owners to decide how much to spend on their car insurance.

### **BOB Launches 'Bank of Baroda Rashtrabhasha Samman'**

- ★ One of India's premier public sector banks, Bank of Baroda (BoB), announced the establishment of the 'Bank of Baroda Rashtrabhasha Samman'.
- ★ The Bank launched this award to stimulate and promote literary works in Indian languages.
- ★ The use of all Indian languages is crucial in a multilingual country like India since it adds to the nation's diversity and rich legacy.
- ★ The 'Bank of Baroda Rashtrabhasha Samman' aspires to encourage mutual exchange among Indian languages and make the best Indian literature available to the entire audience in Hindi.
- ★ The prize promotes literary translation in the country.
- ★ This prize will be given to both the original author of the selected literary works and the translator who translated the book from the original regional language into Hindi.
- ★ Every year, the original author and translator of the prize-winning book will receive ₹21.00 lakh and ₹15.00 lakh respectively, under this award.

### **RBI Imposes Monetary Penalty on North East Small Finance Bank Limited**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹39.50 lakhs on North East Small Finance Bank Limited.
- ★ For non-compliance with the directions issued by RBI on 'Prudential Norms on Income Recognition, Asset Classification and Provisioning about Advances – Divergence in NPA Accounts' and 'Prudential Guidelines on Capital Adequacy and Market Discipline – New Capital Adequacy Framework (NCAF)'.
- ★ This penalty has been imposed in the exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c) read with Section 46 (4) (i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

### **SEBI Strengthened Framework for Green Bonds**

- ★ Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) strengthened the framework for green bonds by introducing the concept of 'blue' and 'yellow' bonds as new modes of sustainable finance.
- ★ Blue bonds relate to water management and the marine sector, while yellow bonds pertain to solar energy.
- ★ These are sub-categories of green debt securities.
- ★ These measures have been taken in the backdrop of increasing interest in sustainable finance in India as well as around the globe, and with a view to align the extant framework for green debt securities with the updated Green Bond Principles (GBP) recognised by IOSCO.
- ★ SEBI defines Green Debt Securities as debt securities issued for raising funds that are to be utilised for projects or assets falling under certain categories.



- ★ The GBP seeks to support issuers in financing environmentally sound and sustainable projects that foster a net-zero emissions economy and protect the environment.

### **Instant Personal Loan Launched by Fi Money**

- ★ Money management platform Fi Money has launched its lending services to offer users instant credit in partnership with Federal Bank.
- ★ The instant personal loan service will provide borrowers with immediate access to credit through a paperless and pre-approved application process.
- ★ The instant loans will be rolled out in a phased manner, with a certain number of users gaining initial access to avail credit from ₹50,000 up to ₹5 lakh, followed by a full-scale launch for all users in the coming weeks.
- ★ Fi is a Neo Bank in India with a financial app that has a digital savings bank account with features that help you get better with your money.

### **Reserve Bank Increased the Repo Rate**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the policy repo rate by 0.25 percent in the bi-monthly monetary policy review with the aim of bringing inflation under control.
- ★ New repo rate has increased to 6.50 percent.
- ★ The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for the current financial year 2022-23 has been increased by RBI from 6.8 percent to 7 percent.
- ★ At the same time, in the next financial year 2023-24, the growth rate in gross domestic product (GDP) has been estimated to be 6.4 percent.
- ★ RBI has estimated retail inflation to be 6.5 per cent in the current financial year and 5.3 per cent in the next financial year.

### **Bajaj Allianz Launches Industry – First ‘Global Health Care’ Plan**

- ★ Bajaj Allianz General Insurance in collaboration with Allianz Partners has announced the launch of a new health insurance product ‘Global Health Care’.
- ★ It is a comprehensive health indemnity insurance product that provides seamless cover to the policyholder for planned as well as emergency treatment available for domestic and international usage.
- ★ The Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the product is that it allows insured members to plan any treatment abroad or in India availing the best medical facilities anywhere across the globe.
- ★ It is available with two plans namely, ‘Imperial Plan’ and ‘Imperial Plus Plan’ offering international and domestic Covers.
- ★ The primary differentiator between these plans is that the Imperial Plus is a high-end variant with higher sum insured options offered along with enhanced features.
- ★ The domestic cover for ‘Imperial Plan’ and ‘Imperial Plus Plan’ provides in-patient hospitalisation treatment, and the pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses.

## Indians Remitted Nearly USD 2 Billion under LRS Scheme

- ★ According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Indians remitted close to \$2 billion in November 2022 under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) liberalised remittance scheme (LRS).
- ★ Outward remittances under the scheme jumped 29% to \$1.99 billion compared to \$1.54 billion in November 2021.
- ★ Sequentially, outward remittances under the scheme were up about 3.5%.
- ★ The scheme was initially introduced on February 4, 2004, with a limit of USD 25,000.
- ★ LRS refers to external remittances by resident individuals for purposes like studies abroad, medical treatment, maintenance of close relatives, and investments and travel.
- ★ The LRS limit has been later revised in stages consistent with prevailing macro and micro economic conditions.

## 84 DBUs are Operational across the Country

- ★ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated 75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) to the service of the nation on October 2022.
- ★ As on date, 84 DBUs are operational across the country.
- ★ DBUs have been introduced to further the objective of improving the availability of digital infrastructure while accelerating and widening the reach of digital banking services.
- ★ DBUs are specialised fixed-point business units/hubs set up by commercial banks providing certain digital infrastructure for delivering digital banking products & services.
- ★ DBUs provide digital services in both self-service and assisted mode.
- ★ This enables customers to have 24\*7 convenient access and enhanced digital experience in an efficient, paperless, secured and connected environment.

## India's First App to Support Credit Cards on UPI

- ★ MobiKwik becomes the first fintech app to support RuPay Credit Card on UPI.
- ★ With RuPay credit cards now linked directly to UPI IDs, MobiKwik customers can easily make payments at merchants by scanning the UPI QR code and using the UPI PIN for payment authentication.
- ★ This facility will provide an easy and secure payment experience to MobiKwik customers.
- ★ It will also open up new opportunities for merchants to be part of the credit ecosystem, with the acceptance of credit cards using asset-light QR codes without the need for point-of-sale (POS) terminals.
- ★ RuPay credit cards are issued by all major banks (private and public sector) for both commercial and retail use.
- ★ The integration of RuPay Credit Card with UPI is in line with the vision of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and RBI.

## PhonePe Launches UPI International Service in 5 Countries

- ★ Fintech firm PhonePe stated that its users will now be able to pay to international merchant outlets in 5 countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, Mauritius, Nepal and Bhutan using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system.
- ★ PhonePe Users will be able to make payments in foreign currency directly from their Indian bank like international debit cards.
- ★ PhonePe is the first fintech app to launch this feature in India.
- ★ Currently, Indian customers need to use foreign currency, credit or forex cards to pay at international merchant outlets but with the 'UPI international' payments feature, PhonePe can now use their Indian Bank accounts to pay using UPI.

## Airtel Payments Bank Launches Bizkhata

- ★ Airtel Payments Bank has launched – BizKhata, a current account with unlimited transactions and instant activation for small merchants and business partners across India.
- ★ It brings all business transactions to one platform and allows them to maintain clear records while enjoying multiple banking benefits.
- ★ Unlimited transactions – Do Unlimited credit and debit transactions.
- ★ Instant Activation – Customers can start using the account within 5 minutes of opening it.
- ★ Zero Minimum Balance – The account has no minimum balance condition.
- ★ Safe and Seamless Payment digitization– Business owners can receive and make online payment transfers to any bank across India through Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Unified Payments Service (UPI), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and IFT.

## ADB Approves Loan to Promote Horticulture in HP

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$130 million (over ₹1,072 crore) loan.
- ★ It is to enhance agricultural productivity and farmers' income in Himachal Pradesh and promote horticulture agribusiness.
- ★ Through this, improving subtropical horticulture in the state will create a lot of economic opportunities for the farming families.
- ★ Supporting horticulture value chains will also enhance the contribution of this sub-sector to the development and food security of the country.

## RBI to Launch QR Code Based Coin Vending Machine

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is preparing a pilot project on QR code-based coin vending machines (QCVM).
- ★ The announcement was made by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das during the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.
- ★ The aim is to promote distribution of coins, and enhance the accessibility to coins.
- ★ The pilot project will roll out in 19 locations in 12 cities across the country.

- ★ These vending machines are planned to be installed at public places such as railway stations, shopping mall and marketplaces to enhance ease and accessibility.
- ★ The QCVN is a cashless coin dispensation machine which will dispense coins against debit to the customer's bank account using Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

## **SEBI Amends Rules Governing the Mode of Payment**

- ★ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has notified rules asking all market intermediaries and companies to make regulatory payments to it by way of direct credit into the bank account through digital payment systems.
- ★ Under the rules, market intermediaries and companies are required to pay various fees to the SEBI.
- ★ The fee can be paid to the regulator by way of direct credit into the bank account through digital payment systems NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer), RTGS (Real-Time Gross Settlement) and IMPS (Immediate Mobile Payment Service) or online payment using the SEBI Payment Gateway.
- ★ To give these effects, the regulator has notified SEBI (Payment of Fees and Mode of Pay).
- ★ In Jan 2023 the SEBI clarified that all payment mechanisms provided by banks and payment aggregators authorized by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will be used for the settlement of trades executed on the Request for Quote or RFQ platform.

## **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Launches Hello Ujjivan**

- ★ Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) launched Hello Ujjivan, India's first mobile banking application with 3 V's – voice, visual and vernacular-enabled features to provide banking access to individuals who have limited reading and writing skills.
- ★ The app is designed to instill banking habits in MicroBanking and Rural customers who are digitally challenged.
- ★ Customers can speak to the app in their native language to perform banking transactions and access services such as paying loan Equated Monthly Instalment (EMIs), opening Fixed Deposit (FD) and Recurring Deposit (RD) accounts, transferring funds, checking account balances, and updating passbooks, among others.
- ★ The app also provides a visual representation, along with a recorded voice guide in the user's preferred language.

## **Zuno General Insurance**

- ★ Edelweiss General Insurance has rebranded as Zuno General Insurance Limited (Zuno GI), a new-age digital insurer with an aspiration to reimagine and redefine Insurance to make it easy, friendly and transparent.
- ★ The name and identity represent the young, innovative, approachable, digital native and upbeat personality of the brand and resonates with the Millennial and GenZ audience.
- ★ Along with the new identity, the company has launched a consumer study titled 'Usage Based Insurance: Decoding Awareness, Perception, and Behaviour'.

- ★ The study was done to understand Millennials and GenZ's awareness, understanding, and consideration for UBI.

### **Bank of India Multicap Fund**

- ★ Bank of India Investment Managers Private Limited (Investment Manager of Bank of India Mutual Fund) has launched a New Fund Offer (NFO) – Bank of India Multi Cap Fund for investors looking to diversify their portfolio across large, mid and small cap categories.
- ★ The Scheme will be managed by Nitin Gosar.
- ★ The objective is to generate long term capital appreciation by investing in equity and equity-related securities across various market capitalization.
- ★ The multi cap allocation strategy includes a spread of minimum 25% of its total assets each in large, mid and small cap companies.
- ★ The minimum initial investment in the Scheme will be ₹5000 and ₹1 thereafter.

### **Bajaj Finance Launches Insurance Mall with Refined Products**

- ★ Bajaj Finance Limited has launched a new portal named Insurance Mall for its customers to ensure an Easy-buy experience.
- ★ It is to simplify all the inconveniences customers can face during their policy purchase.
- ★ The policies offered in the single platform for all policies include Health insurance, two-wheeler and four-wheeler insurance, application extended warranties, pocket insurance and subscriptions.

### **RBI's Financial Literacy Week**

- ★ Financial Literacy Week (FLW) is being organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from 13 February to 17 February 2023.
- ★ The theme selected for current year Financial Literacy Week (FLW) is 'Good Financial Behaviour – Your Saviour'.
- ★ Since 2016, the RBI has been organising Financial Literacy Week (FLW) every year to disseminate financial education messages on a particular theme among the public across the country.
- ★ The 2023 theme aligns with the overall strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education: 2020-2025 which aims at building financial resilience and well-being while creating awareness among members of the public.
- ★ Financial literacy refers to the ability to understand and apply different financial skills effectively, including personal financial management, budgeting and saving.

### **SBI Opens 3<sup>rd</sup> Specialised Startup Branch**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) has started its 3<sup>rd</sup> specialised branch for start-ups in the country at Gurugram to support and provide all banking services required by Start-ups under one roof.
- ★ Gurugram has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of unicorns – startups valued at \$100 billion or more in India, behind Bengaluru and Mumbai.

- ★ It is to provide end-to-end support to startups at every stage of their journey, starting from the formation of the entity till their IPOs and FPOs.
- ★ In addition to start-ups, the bank also aims to meet the needs of private equity (PE), venture capital (VC) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).
- ★ The startup branch in Gurugram has also entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) at IIT-Delhi and other entities.

### **BoM Launches Its Own Private Cloud Infrastructure**

- ★ Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has launched its own private cloud infrastructure, Mahabank Nakshatra, to facilitate high-performance cloud capabilities for digital infrastructure and hosting applications of the bank.
- ★ BoM also launched a mobile app, Arjun (Automated Remote Junction for Monitoring of Assets Under Stress), to give a snapshot of stressed asset (SMA & Slippages) portfolio to bank staff and feet on street (FOT).
- ★ The app will also give analysis to identify the daily variation in stressed asset portfolios with recovery suggestions.
- ★ The bank launched Mykase, a legal case tracking software which will be able to fetch all the cases in various courts of India which are online where BoM.
- ★ The Bank launched Video-know-your-customer (KYC), which allows customers to open an account digitally by providing KYC details online.
- ★ The bank has developed 'Pension slip facility' using Digi locker, which is a flagship initiative of Ministry of Electronics & IT under Digital India programme.

### **Paytm Payments Bank Becomes First to Launch UPI LITE Feature**

- ★ Paytm Payments Banks Limited (PPBL) has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI LITE), enabled by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for multiple small-value UPI transactions.
- ★ The PPBL is the first payments bank to launch such a UPI LITE feature.
- ★ The UPI LITE feature enables faster real-time transactions with a single click through Paytm as the bank aims to drive the adoption of digital payments across the country.
- ★ UPI LITE is a new payment solution that leverages the trusted NPCI Common Library (CL) application to process low-value transactions that have been set at below ₹200.
- ★ A maximum of ₹2,000 can be added twice a day to UPI LITE, making the cumulative daily usage up to ₹4,000.
- ★ Additionally, with UPI LITE, users can carry out a large number of small-value UPI payments in a superfast manner without worrying about the cap on the number of bank transactions.

### **SEBI Introduces ISD for Filing IPO Papers in XBRL Format**

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced the issue summary document (ISD) for filing papers about Initial Public Offer (IPO) and for further issue of securities in XBRL



(Extensible Business Reporting Language) format, a move that will help provide data to stakeholders in a structured manner.

- ★ The rollout of the ISD will be done in a phased manner starting 01 March 2023.
- ★ XBRL is a language for the electronic communication of business and financial data used for business reporting around the world.
- ★ It provides major benefits in the preparation, analysis and communication of business information.
- ★ As per the circular, the ISD should be filed in 2 stages:
  - In the 1<sup>st</sup> stage, the ISD will be filed with pre-issue fields
  - In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, the ISD will be filled with post-issue fields after allotment is completed.

### **European Investment Bank Joins India Hydrogen Alliance**

- ★ The European Investment Bank (EIB), the bank of the European Union, formally agreed to join the India Hydrogen Alliance (IH2A) and expand support for large-scale green hydrogen hubs and projects across India with indicative funding of €1 billion
- ★ However, the funding will be subject to approval from the Indian government and EIB clearances.
- ★ The new memorandum of agreement (MoU) with IH2A will enable the EIB to further promote clean energy investment and boost the growth of green hydrogen in India as a longstanding partner for renewable energy in India and the largest climate financier in the world.
- ★ The India Hydrogen Alliance is an industry coalition of global and Indian companies committed to the creation of a hydrogen value-chain and economy in India.

### **HDFC raises ₹25,000 Crore – India’s Largest Rupee Bond Sale**

- ★ Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) concluded a sale of 10-year non-convertible debentures (NCDs) worth ₹25,000 crore, marking the largest domestic rupee bond issuance by a corporate in India.
- ★ The housing financier’s bonds carry an annualised coupon or the rate of interest periodically paid out to investors of 7.97%.
- ★ The 10-year benchmark government bond yield closed at 7.35% in the secondary market.
- ★ The deal was arranged by ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and ICICI Securities Primary Dealership.
- ★ The issue was oversubscribed and received 92 bids amounting to 27,863 crores of which the company retained 55 investor bids totalling to ₹25,000 crores.

### **NSDC Partners with HDFC Life**

- ★ The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), working under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India (GoI) has entered into a partnership with HDFC Life, India’s life insurer, under the Skill India Mission, to support self-employment and augment entrepreneurial opportunities.
- ★ As part of this collaboration, NSDC will support HDFC Life in inducting trained (<https://www.hdfclife.com/>) life insurance advisors and strengthening the last mile reach.

- ★ The partnership will provide training to candidates undergoing the IC38 examination conducted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and drive skill enhancement.

### **DriveU Partners with SMC Insurance**

- ★ DriveU, a leading car driver service and a super-app for car owners, partnered with SMC Insurance Brokers Pvt. Ltd to provide car insurance for over 650,000 DriveU customers.
- ★ Through this partnership, all the new and existing customers of DriveU will be able to buy or renew their car insurance easily.
- ★ The collaboration will make the car insurance buying process simpler and more seamless for the customers.
- ★ DriveU, is one step closer to rewarding the entire car ownership journey with every transaction on the DriveU platform further reducing the cost of owning a car and consolidating the needs of car owners under one roof.

### **Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Launches ‘Anmol Suraksha Kawach’**

- ★ Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance (ABSLI), the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), has launched ‘ABSLI Anmol Suraksha Kawach’, to address the short-term protection needs of the policyholders.
- ★ It is a non-linked, non-participating individual, life, pure risk premium, term insurance solution for policyholders’ short-term protection needs offering a life cover for up to 5 years.
- ★ The plan offers a protection solution for people aged between 25-55 years.
- ★ Short-term protection- Policyholders will be eligible to avail of a short-term policy term between 2 to 5 years.
- ★ Choice of premium payment term- Policyholders get the flexibility to choose between making a one-time payment or paying for the entire policy term.

### **RBI Issues Final Guidelines on Interest Rate Risk in Banking Book**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released final guidelines on Interest Rate Risk in Banking Book (IRRBB), which require banks to measure, monitor, and disclose their exposure to IRRBB that may impact the capital base and future earnings of lenders.
- ★ The final guidelines on IRRBB are in alignment with the revised framework issued by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS).
- ★ RBI will communicate the date of implementation in due course.
- ★ IRRBB refers to the current or prospective risk to banks’ capital and earnings arising from adverse movements in interest rates that affect its banking book positions.
- ★ Excessive IRRBB can pose a significant risk to banks’ current capital base and future earnings.
- ★ As per the guidelines, the Board of the banks has the responsibility for understanding the nature and the level of the bank’s IRRBB exposure.

## Angel One Ltd Receives In-Principle Approval from SEBI

- ★ Stock broking company, Angel One has received in-principle approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for sponsoring a Mutual Fund.
- ★ Accordingly, the company would be setting up an asset management company and the trustee company, in accordance with applicable SEBI Regulations and other applicable laws.
- ★ Angel One Limited, formerly known as Angel Broking Limited, is an Indian stockbroker firm.

## India and Singapore Launch Joint Digital Payment Mechanism

- ★ The Prime Minister (PM) of India Shri Narendra Modi and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong launched cross-border connectivity between the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India and PayNow of Singapore through video conferencing.
- ★ The linkage of UPI and PayNow will make it possible for citizens of both nations to send remittances across borders more quickly and affordably.
- ★ A quick and inexpensive money transfer from Singapore to India will benefit the Indian community in Singapore, particularly migrant workers and students.
- ★ This allows apps' users to use their Indian bank accounts to pay at merchant outlets in the UAE, Singapore, Mauritius, Nepal and Bhutan.
- ★ The RBI, the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the NPCI International Payments Ltd, Banking Computer Services Pte Ltd, participating banks as well as non-bank financial institutions worked together to create the linkage.
- ★ Private transfer receipts primarily represent remittances by Indians employed overseas.

## Exim Bank's GOI-Supported LOC for USD 100 Million to GO-MDV

- ★ Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has entered into an agreement dated October 2022 with the Government of the Republic of Maldives.
- ★ Government of India supported Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 100 million is for financing new developmental projects and to meet spillover costs from developmental projects in Maldives already included under Lines of credit extended to GO-MDV by Exim Bank.
- ★ Out of the total credit by Exim Bank under the agreement, goods, works and services of the value of at least 75% of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India and the remaining 25% of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India.
- ★ Shipments under the LoC shall be declared in the Export Declaration Form/Shipping Bill as per instructions issued by the Reserve Bank from time to time.
- ★ No agency commission is payable for export under the above LoC.

## RBI Imposed Restrictions on 5 Co-Operative Banks

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed restrictions on five cooperative banks due to their deteriorating financial condition.

- ★ RBI has announced that the restrictions imposed on these co-operative banks will remain in effect for six months.
- ★ Eligible depositors of all five co-operative banks will receive deposit insurance claim amount of up to ₹5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation.
- ★ The move by the RBI is aimed at protecting the interests of depositors and ensuring the stability of the financial system.
- ★ Due to the current liquidity position of the following banks, customers will not be able to withdraw funds from their accounts which includes HCBL Co-operative Bank, Adarsh Mahila Nagari Sahakari Bank Maryadit and Shimsha Sahakara Bank Niyamitha.
- ★ Customers from following banks can withdraw up to ₹5,000 from accounts of Uravakonda Co-operative Town Bank and Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank.

### **State Bank of India Raises ₹4,544 crore**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) announced that it has raised ₹4,544 crore through allotment of Basel III compliant AT-1 bonds like debentures.
- ★ These non-convertibles, taxable, perpetual, subordinated, unsecured, fully paid-up Basel III compliant AT- 1 bonds like debentures have a coupon rate of 8.20% per annum.
- ★ The bonds are perpetual and there is no maturity date.
- ★ The AT-1 bonds are proposed to be listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) of India.
- ★ While AT1 bonds are a perpetual debt instrument used by banks to augment their core capital, issuers can redeem them through a call option after a specified period.

### **ADB to Support for India's Development Priorities**

- ★ Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masatsugu Asakawa announced ADB is to provide USD 20–25 billion in resources over 5 years to support India's ambitions for rapid, inclusive, and green growth.
- ★ ADB assistance to meet the country's priority development needs, and ADB's country partnership strategy (CPS) for India, 2023–2027.
- ★ ADB is now finalizing the new 5-year CPS following a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process.
- ★ ADB will provide multifaceted support for India's key priorities, including the important infrastructure push under the PM's Gati Shakti (National Master Plan for multimodal connectivity) initiative, building future cities, etc.

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **Surf Excel Becomes HUL's First \$1 billion Brand**

- ★ Hindustan Unilever's Surf Excel detergent brand crossed a billion dollars in annual sales in 2022, the first brand in India's home and personal care category to reach that mark.
- ★ Surf Excel posted more than ₹8,200 crore in annual sales last year, becoming also the first HUL brand to top that mark, driven by the company's increased focus towards premium products.
- ★ HUL's second largest brand is Brooke Bond at ₹5,000 crore annual sales.
- ★ Launched around six decades ago, Surf tasted success early and became a market leader soon after being launched.
- ★ HUL has introduced a number of other detergent brands in India to take on lower-priced products launched by rivals, but it always maintained the premium tag for Surf Excel.

### **Social Stock Exchange as a Separate Segment**

- ★ The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has received final approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to set up a Social Stock Exchange (SSE) as a separate segment of the NSE.
- ★ SSE is a novel idea in India, and a stock exchange of this kind is intended to benefit the private and non-profit sectors by directing more capital to them.
- ★ The SSE will function as a distinct division of the current stock exchanges under the new regulations.
- ★ Not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) and for-profit social enterprises with social intent and impact as their primary goal will be eligible to participate in the SSE.
- ★ According to SEBI's framework, a minimum issue size of ₹1 crore and a minimum application size for the subscription of ₹2 lakhs are currently required for SSE.

## **SPORTS**

### **Shane Warne Men's Test Player of The Year Award**

- ★ Australia's Usman Khawaja bagged the inaugural Shane Warne Men's Test Player of the Year award following brilliant performances in the last 12 months.
- ★ The left-hander has been Australia's leading run scorer in Tests since making a comeback in January 2022.
- ★ Khawaja amassed 1020 runs at an average of 78.46.
- ★ Khawaja was also part of the ICC Test Team of the Year alongside teammates Nathan Lyon, Pat Cummins and Marnus Labuschagne announced last week.

## Club Volleyball World Championship for Two Years

- ★ The Volleyball World and the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) have announced India as the host for the men's Club World Championship for two years.
- ★ The champions of the RuPay Prime Volleyball league will compete in the Club World Championship in 2023 and 2024 against some of the top teams from countries like Italy, Brazil and Iran.
- ★ The Club World Championship is scheduled from December 6 to 10 this year, and the host city would be announced later in the season.
- ★ The league will be staged in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi, featuring 31 games in all.
- ★ Sony Sports Network will telecast the matches.

## Football's 2027 Asian Cup

- ★ The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) won the hosting of the 2027 Asian Nations Cup, for the first time in its history, since its inception in 1956.
- ★ This came during the work of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in the Bahraini capital, Manama.
- ★ Saudi Arabia was the only bid presented at the Congress in Manama after India's withdrawal in December 2022.

## Khelo India Youth Games

- ★ Two national youth records were set in athletics events at the Khelo India Youth Games in Madhya Pradesh at the T.T. Nagar stadium in Bhopal.
- ★ Delhi's Sonam set a new record in 200m steeplechase with a timing of 6.45.71 minutes.
- ★ Siddharth Chaudhary of Rajasthan created a new record of 21.04 meters in shot put.
- ★ Madhya Pradesh won the overall championship in athletics in the boys category and Maharashtra in the girls category.
- ★ Maharashtra topped the medal table with 79 medals including 26 gold.
- ★ Haryana is second with a total of 53 medals including 22 gold and host Madhya Pradesh is third with 21 gold medals.

## National Ice Hockey Championship 2023

- ★ Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has won the National Ice Hockey Championship 2023 title.
- ★ The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the competition has been organized in Ladakh, Leh.
- ★ The championship was organized by the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI).
- ★ The ITBP team won the title for the third consecutive time by defeating Ladakh Scouts in the final with a score of 1-0.



## **Pakistani Wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal Announces Retirement**

- ★ Recently Pakistan's wicket-keeper batsman Kamran Akmal announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- ★ Kamran Akmal decided to retire after being made a part of the national selection committee by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).
- ★ Akmal was recently appointed as the batting consultant for the Babar Azam-led side Peshawar Zalmi for the upcoming edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).
- ★ Akmal made his Test match debut against Zimbabwe in November 2002 and he also made his ODI debut against Zimbabwe in November 2002.

## **Australia's Aaron Finch Announces Retirement**

- ★ Australia's T20 World Cup-winning captain Aaron Finch has announced his retirement from the T20 Internationals, this brings an end to his international cricket career for Australia spanning 12 years.
- ★ Finch captained Australia to their maiden ICC World T20 title in 2021.
- ★ Finch made his international debut in 2011 in a T20 International match against England. He made his ODI debut in 2013 against Sri Lanka.
- ★ He made his Test debut against Pakistan in 2018.

## **Century in All Three Formats of the Game**

- ★ Indian captain Rohit Sharma has become the first Indian captain to score a century in all three formats of cricket.
- ★ Rohit achieved this by playing an innings of 120 runs on the second day of the first test of the series being played in Nagpur against Australia.
- ★ This is Rohit Sharma's 9<sup>th</sup> century in Test cricket.
- ★ Rohit has scored three centuries as captain in ODIs and two in T20s. While Rohit has scored a total of 30 centuries in ODI cricket and 4 centuries in T20.
- ★ He is the only batsman to have scored three double hundreds in ODI history.

## **Third Khelo India Winter Games begins in Gulmarg**

- ★ Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg in Baramulla district, Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ The competition will be organised from 10 February to 14 February 2023.
- ★ In this, 1500 players from 29 states of the country will participate.
- ★ The Khelo India Winter Games is supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and is being organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council as well as the Winter Games Association, Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ This is the third edition of Khelo India Winter Games.

## Hyderabad E-Prix

- ★ Jean Eric Vergne of DS Penske automobiles won an action-packed Formula E Prix in Hyderabad on 11 February.
- ★ The fourth leg of the Formula E season of the year 2022-23 was held in Hyderabad.
- ★ This is the first Formula E race held in India.
- ★ The Formula E race marked the successful return of top-level motorsport competition to India.
- ★ The winner's trophy was presented by the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Thakur.
- ★ Nick Cassidy (Envision Racing) and Antonio Félix da Costa (TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team) finished second and third respectively.

## Former England Captain Eoin Morgan Retires

- ★ Former England captain Eoin Morgan announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- ★ He announced his retirement from all three formats of cricket.
- ★ Eoin Morgan captained the ODI World Cup played in England in the year 2019 and won his team the title. He also became the first captain to win the ODI World Cup for England.
- ★ Morgan has scored 2458 runs playing a total of 115 T20 matches. While playing 248 ODIs, he scored 7701 runs.
- ★ Morgan captained England in 126 ODIs and 72 T20Is, registering 118 wins as captain in both formats.

## India's First Frozen Lake Marathon

- ★ India's first frozen lake marathon is set to be held on February 20, with the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) tasked with executing a 'proper action plan' for the event in Ladakh's Pangong Tso.
- ★ The frozen lake marathon will take place at an altitude of 13,862 feet.
- ★ 75 selected athletes from India and abroad will be participating in the event, giving them an opportunity to set their names in the Guinness world record for the world's highest 'frozen-lake marathon'.
- ★ The 21 km run will start from Lukung and end at Maan village.
- ★ The marathon has been titled 'Last Run' to highlight the issue of climate change.
- ★ Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh (ASFL) will be organizing the event in collaboration with the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh, the Tourism Department and the Leh district administration.

## Ranji Trophy

- ★ Saurashtra defeated Bengal by nine wickets in the final at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.
- ★ Saurashtra fast bowler Jaydev Unadkat was declared player of the match.

- ★ Saurashtra has won the Ranji Trophy title for the second time.
- ★ Three years back also Saurashtra won their first title by defeating Bengal.
- ★ In 2022, Madhya Pradesh won its first Ranji Trophy by defeating Mumbai.
- ★ The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) annually organizes the Ranji Trophy, a domestic first-class cricket match between the country's state and regional cricket associations.

## ISSF World Cup

- ★ In Shooting, India's Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar claimed the gold medal in the men's individual 50m rifle 3 positions competition at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo.
- ★ The 22-year-old Tomar, who also won gold at the Chagwon World Cup last year, won 16-6 to beat Alexander Schmirf of Austria.
- ★ Earlier, India's Tilottama Sen had won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air rifle.
- ★ India continues to top the medal tally with four gold.
- ★ Hungary is second with two gold medals.

## Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship in Dubai

- ★ Indian team led by V. Sindhu won the bronze medal at Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship.
- ★ Indian Team faced a 2-3 defeat against China in the semifinals.
- ★ Prannoy and Sindhu lost their respective singles contest.
- ★ Men's doubles pair Dhruv Kapila and Chirag Shetty won their contest.
- ★ Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also won their match in Women's Doubles.
- ★ Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto faced defeat in the Mixed Doubles event.
- ★ China wins the gold medal while the silver medal was won by the South Korean team.

## Sergio Ramos Announces Retirement

- ★ Spain legend Sergio Ramos announced his retirement from international football, revealing that he is not part of head coach Luis de la Fuente's plans.
- ★ Ramos has played 180 international matches, a football career that spanned almost 18 years.
- ★ Ramos made his debut for the Spanish national team in 2005.
- ★ Ramos was part of the Spain squad that won the 2010 World Cup and the Euro Championships in 2008 and 2012.

## Argentina Open Title

- ★ Carlos Alcaraz recently produced a stellar performance to win the Argentina Open by defeating second seed Cameron Norrie in the final in Buenos Aires.
- ★ Carlos Alcaraz (Spain) won his seventh ATP Tour title by defeating last year's Wimbledon semi-finalist Cameron Norrie (Great Britain) 6-3, 7-5.

- ★ In addition, 19-year-old tennis player Alcaraz became the first Spaniard since Rafael Nadal in 2015 to win the Buenos Aires trophy.

## **RANKS, INDICES AND REPORTS**

### **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021**

- ★ The Union Ministry of Education has released the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021.
- ★ According to the report Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of colleges in the country, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- ★ The top 10 states in terms of number of colleges in India - Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana and Kerala, each having at least 29 or more colleges per lakh population.
- ★ The Ministry of Education has been conducting this survey since 2011, it includes higher educational institutions located in India.
- ★ The survey collects information on various parameters such as student enrolment, teacher data, infrastructural, financial etc.
- ★ In AISHE 2020-21, for the first-time data collection has been done using a completely online data collection platform developed by the Department of Higher Education through National Informatics Center (NIC).

### **World's Most Popular Leader**

- ★ According to a survey by US-based consulting firm 'Morning Consult', Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been rated as the world's most popular leader with an approval rating of 78 per cent.
- ★ According to the rating, PM Modi's rating is ahead of other leaders including US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.
- ★ The poll surveyed 22 global leaders for the ratings.
- ★ US based Morning Consult's "Global Leader Approval" survey is based on data collected from 26 January- 31 January 2023.
- ★ Surveys are weighted in each country by age, gender, region and in some countries by official government sources and education.

### **Global Milk Production**

- ★ India is the world's largest milk producer, contributing 24 per cent to global milk production in the year 2021-22, according to production data from the food and agriculture organization corporate statistics database.
- ★ India's milk production has registered a growth of 51 per cent during the last eight years - 2014-15 and 2021-22 and has increased to 220 million tonnes in the year 2021-22.

- ★ The department of animal husbandry and dairying runs various schemes to benefit the economically weaker farmers in the dairy sector.
- ★ The national program for dairy development aims to enhance the quality of milk and milk products and increase the share of organised procurement, processing, value addition and marketing.

### **Indore Municipal Corporation, Ranked Top in Cleanliness Survey**

- ★ Indore Municipal Corporation, ranked top in cleanliness survey for six consecutive years.
- ★ It has become the country's second civic body to launch green bonds, seeking to raise ₹244 crore for a 60 MW solar plant at its water pumping station.
- ★ The public issues of the green bonds will be open for subscription from February 10 to 14 February.
- ★ The issue will be listed on the National Stock Exchange.
- ★ Indore's green bonds, which have been rated AA+ by India Ratings and AA by Care Ratings, are in the form of four strips.
- ★ The strip format of bond issuances includes separate transferable and redeemable principal parts.
- ★ The proceeds from Indore's bond sale will be used for the installation of a 60 MW solar power plant in Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh.

### **Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021**

- ★ India's overall QI system ranking stood at 10<sup>th</sup> position in the released Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021.
- ★ India's national accreditation system under the Quality Council of India (QCI) has been ranked 5<sup>th</sup>.
- ★ It has been ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the standardisation system and 21<sup>st</sup> in the world in the metrology system (under NPL-CSIR).
- ★ The GQII lists 184 countries in the world based on the Quality of Infrastructure (QI).
- ★ Germany has topped the list.
- ★ It was followed by China, USA, UK, Japan and France at the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth places respectively.
- ★ The Quality Council of India (QCI) was established in 1996 as a national body for accreditation.

### **International IP Index**

- ★ India has been ranked 42 out of 55 countries in the latest International IP Index report by the US Chamber of Commerce.
- ★ The United States ranked first in the 2023 index, followed by the UK and France.
- ★ According to the report, India's size and economic influence is growing on the world stage.

- ★ India is poised to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economies through IP-driven innovation.
- ★ India has taken steps to improve enforcement against copyright-infringement and provides a best-in-class framework to promote better understanding and use of IP assets.

## **AWARDS & PRIZES**

### **Best Marching Contingents and Tableau of Republic Day Parade**

- ★ The best marching contingents and tableaux for the 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Parade have been announced.
- ★ Punjab Regiment was awarded the best marching contingent and Uttarakhand was awarded for the best tableau.
- ★ Uttarakhand (Manaskhand), Maharashtra (Sade Tin Shaktipeeth and Nari Shakti) and Uttar Pradesh (Ayodhya Deepotsav) have been selected for best three tableaux from States and Union Territories respectively.
- ★ A tableau based on the theme of wildlife and religious places of the state was displayed by the Uttarakhand government.
- ★ The Punjab Regiment has received the award for the best marching contingent in all the three services.
- ★ The special award was given to the 'Biodiversity Conservation and Vande Bharatam' dance group of the Central Public Works Department.

### **The Padma Award is awarded for the Etikoppaka Toy Craft**

- ★ The Union government conferred Padma Shri on C.V. Raju in the art category.
- ★ Shri C.V. Raju is a renowned artist of Etikoppaka Wooden Toy Craft in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ Raju is among the seven persons from Andhra Pradesh who have been selected for the Padma awards announced by the Union Home Ministry.
- ★ An agriculturist-turned-craftsman, Raju has his origins in Etikoppaka, a traditional craftsman village in the Visakhapatnam district in coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ He is involved in promoting the toy craft and usage of natural dyes for the past few decades.

### **Lifetime Achievement Honour in UK**

- ★ Former Prime Minister of India Dr Manmohan Singh was conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life.
- ★ The award will be handed over to Dr Singh in New Delhi by the National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK.



- ★ The India-UK Achievers Honors is organised by the National Association of Indian Students and Alumni UK in partnership with the British Council in India and the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT).
- ★ The 'Life Time Achievement Honor' recognizes Dr Manmohan Singh's contribution to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

### Grammy Award 2023

- ★ Indian music composer Ricky Kej has won his third Grammy Award at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Grammy Awards for his globally acclaimed album, Divine Tides with Rock-legend Stewart Copeland.
- ★ After winning his third Grammy, Ricky Kej has created history in India by becoming the only Indian to win 3 Grammy Awards.
- ★ The music album Divine Tides is a tribute to 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam – The World is one family'.
- ★ The album, which contains nine songs and eight music videos, was around the world from the exquisite beauty of the Indian Himalayas to the Icy forests of Spain.

### WAN-IFRA Digital Media South Asia Awards 2022

- ★ The Hindu Group has bagged four awards at the WAN-IFRA Digital Media South Asia Awards 2022 for its various products and services.
- ★ TH Newsletters won silver in Best Digital Subscription initiative and The Hindu e-paper bagged gold in Best e-Paper concept.
- ★ In the Best Use of Short Form Video category, Trending and Current Affairs, The Hindu won gold award.
- ★ World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) recognises outstanding digital media projects delivered by south Asian news publishers.

### ATD Best Awards 2023

- ★ Country's largest power generation company NTPC Limited has been conferred with 'ATD Best Awards 2023' by Association for Talent Development (ATD), USA.
- ★ The NTPC which was earlier known as National Thermal Power Corporation of India is owned by the Government of India.
- ★ NTPC Limited has won this award for the sixth time for showcasing enterprise success in the area of talent development.
- ★ The ATD Best Awards recognize organisations that demonstrate talent development across the enterprise.
- ★ NTPC has been successful in creating an ecosystem, which empowers the employees to enhance their skills.
- ★ The award includes small and large private, public and non-profit organizations from around the world.

- ★ Association for Talent Development, USA is the world's largest association in the field of talent development and ATD's Best of Award is considered the most prestigious award in learning and development.

### **Mathrubhumi Book of the Year' Award**

- ★ Author Dr Peggy Mohan has won the 'Mathrubhumi Book of the Year' award during the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL 2023).
- ★ He has been given this award for his book 'Wanderers, Kings and Merchants', which portrays the development of language as a result of migration.
- ★ In this award, he was given a statuette and two lakh rupees as a cash prize.
- ★ The award was presented to Dr Peggy Mohan by Nobel Laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah at the closing ceremony of MBIFL 2023.
- ★ She is a Trinidadian-born writer and a linguist.

### **Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Award**

- ★ The 'Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Award' will be given to the Veteran Journalist Dr. ABK Prasad.
- ★ He has been selected for the prestigious 'Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Award for Excellence in Journalism-2020' for his outstanding contribution to the field of journalism.
- ★ Annie Bhavani Koteswara Prasad's journalistic career spans over 75 years and he has the unique honor of being the editor of all the mainstream magazines of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ He also served as the Chairman of the Official Language Commission in the United Andhra Pradesh from 2004 to 2009.
- ★ On 28 February 2023, the award will be presented to him in New Delhi.

### **World's Most Admired Companies List by FORTUNE® Magazine**

- ★ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been named to FORTUNE® magazine's list of the World's Most Admired Companies.
- ★ Regarded as a barometer of corporate reputation, the list is based on a survey of business Executives, Directors and Analysts around the globe.
- ★ Companies are evaluated based on criteria such as innovation, social responsibility, quality of management, global competitiveness, talent management and quality of products/services.
- ★ TCS partners with some of the world's largest corporations in their innovation, growth and transformation initiatives.

### **Global Best M-GOV Awards**

- ★ 'M-Gov Award' and 'GovTech Award' are annual awards organised by the UAE government.
- ★ Egyptian President Abel Fattah Al-Sisi presented Niyati Totala and Neel Kapeshkumar Parikh of IIT Indore Global Best M-Gov Award.

- ★ The students won AED 1 million by winning the gold medal at the World Government Summit 2023 in Dubai.
- ★ These students created 'Blockbill' app.
- ★ Blockbill is a blockchain based receipt generation app that creates digital receipts for all transactions of users.
- ★ They are presented as part of the World Government Summit.

### **President's Colour Award to Haryana Police**

- ★ Union Home Minister will present the President's Colour Award to the state police at a ceremony at the Haryana Police Academy.
- ★ The President's Colour is one of the highest honour that can be awarded to any military unit, military training establishments, and state/UT Police Forces of India.
- ★ It is bestowed upon in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the Nation, both in peace and in war.
- ★ It is also known as 'Rashtrapati ka Nishaan' in Hindi.
- ★ The flag may also contain the motto, important achievements, and battle participation of those military units to which the award is bestowed.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Anthem Awards**

- ★ The 'Don't Choose Extinction' campaign, launched by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to raise awareness about the climate emergency, has won Gold and Silver in two different categories at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Anthem Awards.
- ★ This was announced by The International Academy of Digital Arts & Science (IADAS), which was launched by the Webby Awards in 2021.
- ★ The Awards are intended to celebrate mission-driven work and the social impact of individuals, corporations and organizations.
- ★ Its goal is to define a new benchmark for impactful work that inspires others to take action in their communities.
- ★ The Don't Choose Extinction campaign won Gold in the Category: Sustainability, Environment & Climate – Non-Profit Campaign and Silver in the Category: Sustainability, Environment & Climate – Global Awareness Campaign.
- ★ Anthem Winners were selected from 2,000 submissions from over 43 countries around the world.

### **Akbar Kakkattil Award**

- ★ A renowned writer Subhash Chandran bagged the Akbar Kakkattil award for his novel 'Samudrasila'.
- ★ Samudrashila was published by Mathrubhumi.
- ★ The award will be presented by writer M. Mukundan at an event on February 17.
- ★ Samudrasila has been picked by a jury comprising writer Sethu, Dr. Mini Prasad and KC Narayanan.

- ★ Subhash Chandran is a two-time recipient of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award.
- ★ Akbar Kakkattil Award was started by a trust in memory of the short story writer and novelist from Kozhikode.
- ★ The award comprises a cash prize of ₹50,000 and a sculpture.
- ★ Novels released in the last five years are eligible for this award.

### **National Geographic's 'Pictures of the Year' Contest**

- ★ Indian-origin engineer and photographer Karthik Subramaniam's beautiful photo has topped National Geographic's 'Photo of the Year' contest 2023.
- ★ His photograph, titled "Dance of the Eagles", was taken at the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve in Alaska.
- ★ The award was presented to him for a striking picture of an eagle struggling to settle on a tree branch.
- ★ The title of the picture is inspired by RRR Martin's popular novel 'A Dance with Dragons'.
- ★ His 'Dance of the Eagles' will be the cover page of the May edition of National Geographic.

### **BAFTA Awards 2023**

- ★ The 76<sup>th</sup> British Academy Film Awards, BAFTA (the British Academy of Film and Television Arts) Awards, were announced at an event held in London's Royal Festival Hall.
- ★ A German anti-war drama 'All Quiet on the Western Front', a screen adaptation of the 1928 novel by Erich Maria Remarque, won the most, including Best Picture and Best Director, with seven.
  - Best film – 'All Quiet on the Western Front'.
  - Outstanding British film – 'The Banshees of Inisherin'.
  - Best documentary – 'Navalny'.
  - Best animated film – 'Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio'.
  - Best lead actress – 'Cate Blanchett' for the film TAR.
  - Best lead actor – 'Austin Butler' for the film Elvis.

### **'Prathista Puraskar – Digidhan Award' from MeitY**

- ★ Karnataka Bank has won Prathista Puraskar under Digidhan Awards 2021-22.
- ★ The bank has won the award for highest percentage in BHIM-UPI transactions in private sector bank category.
- ★ The bank has won Prathista Puraskar under Digidhan Awards 2021-22 by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- ★ The bank is carrying out an accelerated digital drive under 'KBL VIKAAS 2.0'.
- ★ It is labelled as KBL-NxT.
- ★ Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology gave the award to Gokuldas Pai, Chief Business Officer of the bank and Jagadeesh KS, Deputy General Manager – Delhi region, Karnataka Bank.

## Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards

- ★ The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival awards were announced on 20 February.
- ★ The Kashmir Files won the Best Film award.
- ★ Alia Bhatt won the Best Actress award for Gangubai Kathiawadi and husband Ranbir Kapoor won the Best Actor award for Brahmastra.
- ★ Anupam Kher received the Most Versatile Actor of the Year award for The Kashmir Files.
- ★ Actor-filmmaker Rishab Shetty won the Most Promising Actor award for his Kannada film Kantara.
- ★ Varun Dhawan also won the Critics Best Actor Award for his film Bhediya.
- ★ In the television category, Rupali Ganguly-starrer Anupama won the Television Series of the Year award.

## Sansad Ratna Award

- ★ Sansad Ratna Awards were instituted on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to honour top performing Parliamentarians.
- ★ A total of thirteen Members of Parliament and two Parliamentary Committees have been honoured with this award.
- ★ The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the award ceremony will be held on 25 March 2023 in New Delhi.
- ★ Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Lifetime Achievement Award – T.K. Rangarajan, (Former Rajya Sabha MP for two terms and a Senior CPIM Leader).
- ★ So far, 90 top performing parliamentarians have been honoured and all of them have received the award individually.
- ★ K. Srinivasan is the Founder Chairman of the Sansad Ratna Award Committee and Ms. Priyadarshini Rahul is the Chairman.

## 2023 Marconi Prize

- ★ Computer Scientist Hari Balakrishnan has been awarded the 2023 Marconi Prize.
- ★ Dr. Balakrishnan is a professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- ★ The award is given in recognition of the broad impact on society of his fundamental discoveries in wired and wireless networking, mobile sensing and distributed systems.
- ★ The award is given annually to innovators who have made a significant contribution to enhancing digital inclusion through the advancement of information and communication technology.
- ★ The award is recommended by an independent selection committee of Marconi Prize recipients and approved by the Marconi Society Board.

## HCA Film Awards 2023

- ★ RRR has bagged three big awards at the Hollywood Critics Association (HCA) Film Awards 2023.

- ★ Directed by SS Rajamouli, the film has been given the HCA Film Award for Best Action Film, Best Stunts, Best International Film and Best Song for the song Natu Natu.
- ★ Ram Charan also presented the award at the Hollywood Critics Association Awards 2023. He was the only Indian actor in the list of presenters.
- ★ RRR's film song 'Natu Natu' made a record by winning the Grammy Award.

### Entrepreneur of the Year 2022

- ★ Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri honoured Indian industrialist Sajjan Jindal with the Best Entrepreneur of the Year Award for the year 2022.
- ★ Sajjan Jindal is the Chairman and Managing Director of the JSW Group of Companies.
- ★ It is because of his vision and foresight that the group has gained a distinct place in the business from steel to mining, energy, sports, infrastructure and software.
- ★ The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to KP Singh, Chairman, DLF Group.
- ★ Pratapaneni (Co-founder of MedGenome) was awarded in the startup category at the same event.
- ★ Similarly, Mahendra Shah, MD & CEO, IndusInd First Bank was also awarded in the Financial Services category.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### Vice Chief of the Air Force

- ★ Air Marshal Amanpreet Singh has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of the Air Staff.
- ★ He will replace Air Marshal Sandeep Singh.
- ★ Air Marshal AP Singh is currently serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Air Command, Prayagraj.
- ★ Air Marshal AP Singh was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force on 21 December 1984.
- ★ He has served as Project Director (Flight Test) at National Flight Test Centre.

### First Female Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea

- ★ Equatorial Guinea has appointed Manuela Roka Botey as Prime Minister.
- ★ She is the first woman in the country to reach this position.
- ★ She was appointed by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo who has ruled the country since 1979.
- ★ Botey, who was the Deputy Minister of Education in the West African country, replaced Francisco Pascual Obama Asue, who held the position of Prime Minister for nearly eight years.



## Men's Hockey Team Chief Coach Graham Reid Resigns

- ★ Indian men's hockey team head coach Graham Reid resigned from his post following the host nation's exit from the recently concluded World Cup.
- ★ The 58-year-old Australian coach submitted his resignation to Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey.
- ★ Reid, who was appointed India's coach in April 2019, led the team to a historic bronze medal win at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.
- ★ Under his leadership, the Indian men's hockey team was successful in winning the silver medal in the Commonwealth Games 2022 held in Birmingham and India finished third in the FIH Pro League 2021-22.

## CEO of Unilever

- ★ Consumer goods giant Unilever appointed Mr Hein Schumacher as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), set to take on the role on 01 July 2023.
- ★ This is the first time Unilever has appointed a CEO from outside the company.
- ★ Mr Hein will replace Mr Alan Jope, who announced in September 2022 his intention to retire from Unilever.
- ★ He joined Unilever in October, 2021 as Non-Executive Director and currently he is the CEO of Global Dairy and Nutrition business Royal FrieslandCampina.

## Member of Advisory Committee of Srei Group NBFCs

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Mr V. Ramachandra as a member of the Advisory Committee of Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd. (SIFL) and Srei Equipment Finance Ltd. (SEFL)
- ★ This follows the resignation of Mr Farokh N. Subedar from the Advisory Committee with effect from January 31, 2023.
- ★ The Advisory Committee will now comprise of following members
- ★ Shri Venkat Nageshwar Chalasani, former Deputy Managing Director, State Bank of India.
- ★ Shri T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, former Managing Director, Sundaram Finance Limited.
- ★ Shri V. Ramachandra, former Chief General Manager, Canara Bank.
- ★ The Advisory Committee shall advise the Administrator in the operations of the SIFL and SEFL during the corporate insolvency resolution process.

## Coach of Nepal Cricket Team

- ★ The Nepal Cricket Association has appointed former Indian cricketer Monty Desai as the head coach of the Nepal national cricket team.
- ★ Monty Desai will replace another former Indian cricketer Manoj Prabhakar, who resigned from his post in December 2022.
- ★ Nepal Cricket Association has signed a two-year deal with Monty Desai.
- ★ Monty has been the head coach of teams like West Indies, Canada, UAE.

- ★ Monty has also served as the head coach of the Rajasthan Royals team in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

### **MD and CEO of Canara Bank**

- ★ The Central Government has appointed K. Satyanarayana Raju as the new Managing Director and CEO of the state-owned Canara Bank.
- ★ He will replace LV Prabhakar, who resigned from his post on 31 December 2022.
- ★ He was working as Executive Director in Canara Bank since March 2021.
- ★ Satyanarayana Raju has vast experience in Branch Banking, Corporate Credit, Retail Credit etc.

### **Indian-American Woman Elected as President of Harvard Law Review**

- ★ Apsara A Iyer, a second-year student at Harvard Law School, has been elected as the President of the prestigious Harvard Law Review.
- ★ She has become the first woman to be named to the post in the prestigious publication's 136-year-long history.
- ★ Iyer will replace Priscilla Coronado.
- ★ Iyer was elected the 137<sup>th</sup> President of the Harvard Law Review, which was founded in 1887 and is one of the oldest student-run legal scholarship publications.
- ★ The Law Review, operated under the Harvard Law School, is an organisation that reviews and selects articles published in the legal field.

### **Executive Director of YES Bank**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Mr. Rajan Pental as the Executive Director of YES Bank for a period of 3 years.
- ★ He will continue to spearhead the YES bank's retail banking portfolio, apart from his appointment as an Executive Director.
- ★ He has been part of Yes Bank since November 2015.
- ★ Rajan Pental is currently the Global Head of Retail Banking of Yes bank.

### **President of Cyprus**

- ★ Former Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides was elected President of Cyprus.
- ★ Christodoulides won 51.9% of the vote, while his opponent Andreas Mavroyanis took 48.1%.
- ★ He was appointed Government Spokesperson in 2014 and Foreign Minister in 2018.
- ★ Christodoulides is supported by the Democratic Party, the Movement for Social Democracy and the Democratic Alignment.

### **President Droupadi Murmu Appoints 6 New Governors**

- ★ President of India Droupadi Murmu appointed Governors in 12 states and a Union Territory (UT).

- ★ These include the 6 new appointments:
  - Lt. General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik – Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.
  - Lakshman Prasad Acharya – Governor of Sikkim.
  - C.P. Radhakrishnan – Governor of Jharkhand.
  - Shiv Pratap Shukla – Governor of Himachal Pradesh.
  - Gulab Chand Kataria – Governor of Assam.
  - Justice (Retd.) S. Abdul Nazeer – Governor of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The Governor of a State is appointed by the President for a term of 5 years.

### President of Bangladesh

- ★ A former judge and freedom fighter, Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppu, has been declared as the next President-elect of Bangladesh by the country's Election Commission.
- ★ He will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> President of Bangladesh.
- ★ He was nominated for the post by the ruling Awami League (AL) party with all necessary seats, 302 out of 350 seats in the national parliament.
- ★ Chuppu will replace the longest-serving President of Bangladesh Mohammad Abdul Hamid, whose tenure ends on 24 April 2023.

### President and Vice President of ICAI

- ★ The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has elected Chartered Accountant (CA) Mr Aniket Sunil Talati as President of ICAI and CA Mr Ranjit Kumar Agaarwal as Vice President (VP) for the year 2023-24.
- ★ Both will be responsible for organising the three-tiered CA exam and looking after all administrative affairs.
- ★ Currently, Mr Aniket Sunil Talati is the Director of the ICAI Accounting Research Foundation (ICAI ARF), Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIPI) as well as Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) India.

### Chairman of West End Housing Finance

- ★ Mumbai-based affordable housing finance company, West End Housing Finance Ltd., has appointed reputed banker Mr. Jagdish Capoor as its Chairman.
- ★ The appointment was made by the board at its meeting held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ Jagdish has had an illustrious career in the finance sector, having served as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ He has also been the Chairman of HDFC Bank and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).
- ★ He has served on the boards of several leading banks like State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, National Housing Bank, NABARD and EXIM Bank, among others.

### CEO of YouTube

- ★ An Indian-American Neal Mohan will be the next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of YouTube.

- ★ He will replace Susan Wojcicki.
- ★ Neal Mohan is currently the Chief Product Officer of YouTube. Before joining YouTube, Mohan was the Senior Vice President, Display and Video Ads at Google.

### Vice Chief of Army

- ★ Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar has been named as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff, while incumbent Lt Gen B S Raju will take charge as South Western Army Commander.
- ★ Lt Gen Kumar has been promoted as Army Commander and appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff.
- ★ He is serving as the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) in the Army Headquarters.

### National Ambassador for Child Rights

- ★ Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana was appointed as the National Ambassador of Child Rights for UNICEF India.
- ★ The 38-year-old actor has previously worked as a 'celebrity advocate' for UNICEF-India.
- ★ Ayushmann was appointed as UNICEF India's Celebrity Advocate in September 2020 to advocate on ending violence against children and promoting child rights.
- ★ As a national ambassador, Khurran will help UNICEF ensure the rights of all children.
- ★ Recently, he focused on inclusiveness and non-discrimination through gender inclusive sports on World Children's Day 2022, along with Sachin Tendulkar, UNICEF South Asia Regional Ambassador.

### CEO of NITI Aayog

- ★ The government approved the appointment of BVR Subrahmanyam as the CEO of NITI Aayog.
- ★ He will be the fourth CEO of NITI Aayog.
- ★ Subrahmanyam will replace Parameswaran Iyer, who has been appointed as the Executive Director of the World Bank for a period of two years.
- ★ Prior to this, he was the former Commerce Secretary to the Government of India.
- ★ Subramaniam, a 1987 batch IAS Officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of ITPO on a two-year contract after his superannuation on September 30.
- ★ Subramaniam has also been the Personal Secretary of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

### World Bank Chief Mr. David Malpass to Resign

- ★ Mr. David Malpass would step down from the post of World Bank (WB) President by the end of June 2023, before his five-year term expires.
- ★ His five-year term was due to end in April 2024.
- ★ The United States (US), the World Bank's largest shareholder has always traditionally nominated a citizen of the United States to serve as the President of the World Bank.

- ★ Mr. David Malpass was selected as the 13<sup>th</sup> President of the World Bank Group by its Board of Executive Directors on 05 April 2019.

### Director General in Quality Assurance

- ★ Lt Gen RS Reen took over as Director General Quality Assurance.
- ★ The Director General Quality Assurance (DGQA) is an Inter-Service Organisation functioning under the Department of Defence Production in the Ministry of Defence.
- ★ It is responsible for second party quality assurance of defence stores and equipment, both imported and indigenous.
- ★ Lt Gen Reen, a 1986 batch Officer, is an alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.
- ★ He has served as a senior faculty at Defense Institute of Quality Assurance, Bengaluru.
- ★ He is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt from the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

### External Auditor of ILO in Geneva

- ★ Comptroller and Auditor General, Girish Chandra Murmu has been selected as the External Auditor of the International Labor Organization in Geneva for a period of four years from 2024 to 2027.
- ★ Girish Chandra Murmu will take over from the current External Auditor of the ILO, the Supreme Audit Institution of the Philippines.
- ★ His appointment enhances its high standards, global audit experience and strong national credibility with the international community.
- ★ Its main objective is to assist the ILO in meeting its strategic goals while maintaining the independence and oversight important in performing the external auditor's functions.
- ★ ILO is an agency of the United Nations, which brings together the governments, employers and workers of 187 member countries.

### President of World Bank

- ★ The Biden administration named Ajay Banga, former Chief Executive Officer of Mastercard, as the next President of the World Bank.
- ★ Banga is an Indian-American and currently serves as the Vice Chairman at equity firm General Atlantic.
- ★ He was previously the Chief Executive Officer at Mastercard.
- ★ Banga has significant experience in mobilising public-private resources to address the challenges of climate change.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### A New Book Titled 'Best of Satyajit Ray'

- ★ A new book titled 'Best of Satyajit Ray' has been released by Penguin India on Satyajit Ray.
- ★ The 'Best of Satyajit Ray' has 21 best short stories of Satyajit Ray.
- ★ It also has all eight stories that Satyajit Ray translated himself into English.
- ★ Satyajit Ray was one of the most eminent film directors.
- ★ He was the recipient of 36 National Film Awards.
- ★ He received many national awards including the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Padma Bhushan and the Bharat Ratna.

### Superstar Sridevi's Official Biography

- ★ Westland Books announced the publishing of the official biography of superstar Sridevi.
- ★ Titled 'Sridevi: The Life of a Legend', the book draws a complete portrait of the actor, who ruled the commercial cinema space in the '80s and '90s.
- ★ It is written by debutant author Dhiraj Kumar and will be released this year.

### Book 'Modi: Shaping a Global Order in Flux'

- ★ BJP National President J.P. Nadda launched a book 'Modi: Shaping a Global Order in Flux' in Chanakyapuri, Delhi.
- ★ In this book, an attempt has been made to tell how PM Modi has taken such decisions which have changed the image of India around the world.
- ★ It is important to understand what was the image of India before Modiji came to power.
- ★ The book has been forwarded by Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.
- ★ The editors are Sujan Chinoy, Vijay Chauthaiwala and Uttam Kumar Sinha.

## DEFENCE

### 'Exercise Topchi' 2023

- ★ The Indian Army's 'Exercise Topchi', annual firepower demonstration and training exercise of the Regiment of Artillery was conducted by the School of Artillery at Devlali Field Firing Ranges in Nashik's Devlali, Maharashtra.
- ★ It is to demonstrate the coordinated use of firepower and surveillance assets, including guns, mortars, rocket launchers, drones and aviation assets.
- ★ Indigenously manufactured weapon systems were the highlight of the exercise.
- ★ This year, the major focus has been on 'Atmanirbharata' (self-reliance).



- ★ The highlight of the exercise was display and firing by indigenously manufactured Artillery equipment viz K-9 Vajra, Dhanush, Indian Field Gun (IFG) / Light Field Gun (LFG) System and Pinaka Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers.

### **Indo-US Exercise TARKASH**

- ★ The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of joint exercise Tarkash was concluded in Chennai by the National Security Guard (NSG) and the US Special Operations Force (SOF).
- ★ ‘Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terror Response’ has been included in this exercise for the first time.
- ★ The objective of the exercise is to neutralize the terrorists, safe release of hostages and neutralization of chemical weapons being carried by the terrorists.
- ★ An exercise to deal with chemical and biological attacks by terrorists was also included in the exercise.

### **Joint Training Exercise ‘Dharma Guardian’**

- ★ The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the joint military exercise between India and Japan, ‘Dharma Guardians’ will be conducted from 17 February to 02 March 2023 at Camp Imazu, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.
- ★ Soldiers from the Garhwal Rifles Regiment of the Indian Army and an infantry regiment from the Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) are participating in the exercise this year.
- ★ They will share experiences gained during operations in order to enhance inter-operability in planning and execution.
- ★ The training will mainly focus on high level of physical fitness and sharing of exercises at tactical level.
- ★ During the exercise, the participants will engage in various missions including joint planning, joint tactical exercise, integrated surveillance grid.

### **IAF Develops ‘Vayulink’ Platform**

- ★ The Indian Air Force has developed an innovative solution ‘Vayulink’ that would aid pilots in dealing with bad weather and also provide jammer-proof uninterrupted communication with the base station.
- ★ The data link communication uses the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) that is also known as NAVIC, to send radio communication to the base station when the signals are low.
- ★ When the planes are flying close to any friendly forces on grounds during a combat situation, the aircraft display gives the position of such forces on the ground including tanks and troops beneath.
- ★ The IAF has put up a gallery on Vayulink to provide information about its platform at the India Pavilion in the ongoing Aero India 2023.

## Joint Military Exercise- 'Dustlik'

- ★ As part of the military-to-military exchange program between the Indian Army and the Uzbekistan Army, the fourth edition of the training exercise Dastlik (2023) began on 20 February.
- ★ The exercise will be held at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand till 05 March 2023.
- ★ The Indian contingent in this bilateral exercise will be represented by the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Garhwal Rifles, which is part of the Western Command.
- ★ The Uzbekistan Army will be represented by troops from the North Western Military District of the Uzbekistan Army.
- ★ Its purpose is to give impetus to the ever-growing military and diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- ★ This exercise shows the strong resolve of both the countries to combat terrorism.

## Exercise Desert Flag VIII

- ★ An Indian Air Force contingent of 110 Air Warriors reached Al Dahfra airbase of United Arab Emirates for participating in Exercise 'Desert Flag VIII'.
- ★ Tejas, the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) made in India, will make its first appearance at a multinational exercise in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ★ It is a multilateral air exercise in which air forces from the United Arab Emirates, France, Kuwait, Australia, United Kingdom, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea and the United States will also participate.
- ★ This exercise will run from 27 February to 17 March.
- ★ The objective of the exercise is to participate in multiple combat events and learn from best practices of air forces of different countries.

## Indian Submarine INS Sindhukesari Docks in Indonesia

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sindhukesari has become the first Indian submarine to dock in Indonesia, amid the conflict between China and Indonesia in the South China Sea.
- ★ It is an attempt to strengthen bilateral relations as part of diplomatic-military outreach to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- ★ INS Sindhukesari is part of the Russian-made Sindhughosh-class submarines.
- ★ It is a 3,000-tonne Kilo-class diesel-electric submarine.
- ★ It was designed as part of Project 877 and built under a contract between Rosvooruzhenie, Russia and the Ministry of Defence (India).
- ★ The Kilo Class is the NATO designation for a naval diesel-electric submarine made in Russia.

## Indian Air Force to Conduct Exercise Cobra Warrior

- ★ Indian Air Force departs for the British Royal Air Force to participate in Exercise Cobra Warrior at Waddington Air Force Base.
- ★ This exercise is proposed to be organised from 06 March 2023 to 24 March 2023.

- ★ Exercise Cobra Warrior is a multilateral air military exercise in which air forces from Finland, Sweden, South Africa, USA and Singapore are also participating along with the Royal Air Force and Indian Air Force.
- ★ The Indian Air Force is participating in the exercise this year with five Mirage 2000 fighter jets, two C-17 Globemaster III and one IL-78 midair refuelling aircraft.
- ★ The aim of the exercise is to engage in a variety of activities by different fighter aircraft and learn from the best practices of different air forces.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### India's First Mission to Study the Sun Aditya-L1

- ★ For the first time in the history of India, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch a scientific mission to study the sun – Aditya-L1 mission in June or July, 2023.
- ★ Aditya L1 is India's first space-based mission to observe the Sun and the solar corona.
- ★ It is to study the sun from a halo orbit around the Sun-Earth system's Lagrangian point 1 (L 1).
- ★ L1 refers to Lagrangian/Lagrange Point 1, one of 5 points in the orbital plane of the Earth-Sun system.
- ★ Lagrange Points are positions in space where the gravitational forces of a two-body system like the Sun and the Earth produce enhanced regions of attraction and repulsion.
- ★ Aditya L1 will be launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) with 7 payloads (instruments) on board.

### Research on Lab Grown Diamonds

- ★ The Indian Institute of Technology Madras will be provided a grant of ₹242 crore over a period of five years to carry out research on Lab Grown Diamonds (LGD).
- ★ It will encourage indigenous production of LGD seeds, machines and reduce import dependence.
- ★ The research will focus on indigenization of the LGD manufacturing process.
- ★ Presenting the Union Budget 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that Laboratory grown diamonds (LGD) is a technology and innovation-driven emerging sector with high employment potential.
- ★ The government has proposed to cut duty on import of 'seeds', used as raw material for lab-grown diamonds.
- ★ These eco-friendly diamonds have optically and chemically similar properties to natural diamonds.

### NASA Partners with IBM

- ★ IBM has partnered with NASA to gain new findings on Earth's climate through the power of AI technology. The two organizations will use AI tech developed by IBM.

- ★ IBM informed that the goal of the partnership is to provide an easier way for researchers to analyze and draw insights from these large data sets.
- ★ The company plans to apply its foundation AI models, which are trained on broad sets of data to speed up the analysis of this data.
- ★ By analyzing the satellite data, it is hoped this foundational model will identify changes in natural disasters, crop yields and wildlife habitats to help researchers analyze the Earth's environmental systems.

### **IIT Patna Partners with Drone Destination**

- ★ Delhi-based Drone Destination (DD) Private Limited, has signed a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna to open Bihar's first government-approved drone training hub.
- ★ DD is the state-run Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Academy (IGRUA)'s partner for drone training and has several centers across India.
- ★ IIT Patna has been at the forefront of being a technology-first institution and plans to develop a large Drone Centre of Excellence to propel the UAV ecosystem.
- ★ Drone Destination became the first Drone Training Organisation to certify over 1,200 DGCA-certified Drone Pilots in the country along with our training partners IGRUA and Sanskardham.
- ★ It became National Skill Development Corporation's (NSDC's) first Drone Training Partner and plans to jointly open 10 new drone hubs.

### **'NISAR' Satellite Made by ISRO-NASA**

- ★ The National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) handed over the payload for the NISAR (NASA-Isro Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ★ The mission will help study Earth's land and ice surfaces in greater detail than ever before.
- ★ This SUV-sized payload will be carried in a special cargo container for the 14,000 km flight to the UR Rao Satellite Center in Bengaluru.
- ★ This is an important step in better understanding the Earth and the changing climate.
- ★ It will provide important information on the Earth's crust, ice sheets and ecosystems.
- ★ The NISAR spacecraft will be integrated into the satellite bus at the UR Rao Satellite Center for launch.

### **ISRO Launches Its Smallest Rocket SSLV-D2**

- ★ Indian Space Research Organization has launched its smallest rocket SSLV-D2 into space from Satish Dhawan Space Center (Sriharikota).
- ★ ISRO's SSLV-D2 flew into space carrying three satellites with it.
- ★ These include ISRO's satellite EOS-07, Chennai-based space startup Spacekidz's satellite Azad SAT-2 and American company Antaris's satellite JANUS -1.
- ★ All these three satellites will be placed in circular orbit 450 km apart.
- ★ ISRO's smallest new rocket SSLV-D2 works on the technology of launch on demand.

- ★ It has the capability to cater to the launch of 500 kg satellites into low earth orbits.
- ★ SSLV-D2 is 34 metres in length while 2 metres in width. It can fly with a load of about 120 tonnes.

### **Key Trials for Gaganyaan Mission**

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), along with the Indian Navy has conducted an important trial for the Gaganyaan, human space flight mission.
- ★ The trials were performed in the Indian Navy's Water Survival Test Facility (WSTF) located in Kochi, Kerala
- ★ The first trial (uncrewed flight) for Gaganyaan is planned by the end of 2023 or early 2024, followed by sending Vyom Mitra, a humanoid and then with the crew onboard.
- ★ The Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability of India.
- ★ Gaganyaan will be launching a crew of 3 members for a 3-day mission.
- ★ The members will be launched to an orbit of 400 km and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.

### **Saudi Arabia to Send Its 1<sup>st</sup> Female Astronaut to Space**

- ★ Saudi Arabia's first female astronaut is set to go into space in 2023, in what is seen as a move to reform Saudi Arabia's ultra-conservative image.
- ★ Saudi female astronaut Rayna Barnawi will join Saudi Ali Al-Qarni on a 10-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- ★ Barnawi and al-Karni will fly to the ISS aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft as part of a mission by American privately funded space infrastructure developer private space company Axiom Space.
- ★ The Ax-2 will be launched by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, America.

### **Centre of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare**

- ★ The Centre has designated All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, also known as AIIMS Delhi as the centre of excellence (CoE) for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare.
- ★ It was announced by the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya to the Lok Sabha.
- ★ AI tools can support monitoring of physical and financial aspects of programmes including fraud detection, effective disease management, identifying early warning signals as part of surveillance, development of clinical decision support system (CDSS) supporting practitioners in providing quality care, etc
- ★ To detect suspicious transactions/potential frauds in Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojna (ABPM – JAY) the National Health Authority, has been using AI technologies.

## UIDAI Launched New AI Chatbot Aadhaar Mitra

- ★ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched a chatbot to help people get an answer to their queries related to the Aadhaar card named 'Aadhaar Mitra'.
- ★ The Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) based chatbot can answer queries related to Aadhaar enrolment number, PVC Card order status and complaint status, among other things.
- ★ It is available in both English and Hindi languages.
- ★ Aadhaar Chatbot is well-trained to answer queries on Aadhaar-related topics, provide information about Locate Aadhaar Center, Check Aadhaar Enrolment/ Update status.

## BEL and IISc Bengaluru Signed an MoU

- ★ Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru signed an MoU.
- ★ They have signed up to work together in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and other emerging technologies.
- ★ The MoU has been signed on the sidelines of the ongoing Aero India 2023 and aims to leverage the complementary strengths and capabilities of BEL and IISc.
- ★ The agreement will enable BEL and IISc to create a variety of products and services with AI incorporated and integrated.
- ★ IISc will provide specialized services in AI and ML for BEL to undertake various projects in terms of R&D solutions, development of algorithms and training of BEL engineers.

## IIT Delhi Builds 'Time Capsule'

- ★ The researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) – Delhi have designed and developed a time capsule that is scheduled to be opened in 2047.
- ★ The time capsule is meant to store written letters or postcards by the people on their vision for India in 2047.
- ★ IIT-D claims that the structure of Time Capsule is made of stainless steel, which weighs around 75 Kg and has 100 cm of height and 70 cm of base diameter.
- ★ People can store letters or postcards of over 750 words.
- ★ The Time Capsule has been designed as futuristic, mechanically superior, and protective of environmental degradation.
- ★ It will capture what the people of India think today about the country's future.
- ★ The capsule will be opened in 2047, which will also mark the 100<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, to see how things have turned out.
- ★ The technology will help match what people think today about the country's future.



## Russian Space Agency Launches Soyuz Spacecraft

- ★ Recently the Russian space agency, Roscosmos has successfully launched the Soyuz spacecraft to bring back three astronauts stranded on the International Space Station (ISS) following a leak in the cooling system in their Soyuz capsule.
- ★ Two Russian and one American astronaut will board the empty Soyuz spacecraft to return to Earth.
- ★ The Soyuz MS-23 spacecraft was launched from the Baikonur Space Center in Kazakhstan and placed in orbit.
- ★ According to the Russian space agency Roscosmos, all three Soyuz will return to Earth on the MS-23 vehicle in September.
- ★ The leak on the MS-22 spacecraft was caused by a small piece of a micrometeoroid hitting the capsule.

## NASA to Launch Israel's 1<sup>st</sup> Space Telescope Mission

- ★ The United States (US) National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Israel's Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology signed a partnership that will send Israel's first space telescope mission, the Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite (ULTRASAT) in early 2026.
- ★ The Israel Space Agency and the Weizmann Institute of Science are behind the premier project.
- ★ ULTRASAT is an ultraviolet observatory with a large field of view that will investigate the secrets of short-duration events in the universe, such as supernova explosions and mergers of neutron stars.
- ★ It is planned to launch into a geostationary orbit around Earth.
- ★ The geostationary orbit is a special case of the geosynchronous orbit, which is any orbit with a period equal to Earth's rotation period.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Indian Coast Guard Day

- ★ The ICG Day or Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated every year on 01 February.
- ★ The Indian Coast Guard is a multi-mission organization, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.
- ★ This year Indian Coast Guard celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> Raising Day on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023.
- ★ The Indian Coast Guard was initially established on 01 February 1977 due to an emergency.
- ★ The interim of the Indian Coast Guard was created in 1977 to prevent the smuggling of goods on the Sea.

### World Wetlands Day

- ★ World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 02 February.

- ★ It aims to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and the planet.
- ★ The World Wetlands Day 2023 theme of this year is 'It's Time for Wetlands Restoration', which highlights the urgent need to prioritize wetland Restoration.
- ★ This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 02 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

## World Cancer Day

- ★ World Cancer Day is observed every year on 04 February.
- ★ It is to create awareness about cancer as a public health issue and strengthen action towards improving quality care, screening, early detection and treatment.
- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is 'Close the Care Gap'.
- ★ This theme is about understanding the disparities in cancer care and taking action to make the progress needed to address them.
- ★ World Cancer Day originated in the year 2000 at the first World Summit against Cancer which was held in Paris (France).

## International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation

- ★ International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation is observed every year on 06 February.
- ★ The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting was initiated by UNFPA and UNICEF in 2007 to accelerate the abandonment of the practice.
- ★ In 2008, WHO and 9 other United Nations partners released a declaration titled "Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement" regarding the abolition of FGM.
- ★ The UN General Assembly in 2012 adopted a resolution A/RES/67/14 on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

## World Pulses Day

- ★ World Pulses Day is celebrated every year on February 10.
- ★ On December 2013, it was decided to celebrate International Pulses Day by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.
- ★ 'International Pulses Day' was celebrated for the first time in the year 2016.
- ★ Later, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to observe 10 February 2019 as World Pulses Day.
- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is 'Pulses for a sustainable future'.

## World Unani Day

- ★ World Unani Day is celebrated every year on 11 February.
- ★ It is celebrated with the aim of spreading public awareness about health care through Unani medicines.
- ★ The theme for World Unani Day 2023 is 'Unani Medicine for Public Health'.

- ★ The first World Unani Day was celebrated by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, in 2017 at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad.
- ★ The purpose of this day is to spread public awareness about healthcare through Unani medicines.
- ★ The day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan, a social reformer and great Indian Unani physician.

### **International Day for Women and Girls in Science**

- ★ International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed every year on 11 February.
- ★ It was announced by the United Nations General Assembly to celebrate this day on 22 December 2015.
- ★ It is celebrated to ensure the strong role of women in the field of science and technology as well as to increase gender empowerment.
- ★ This day is celebrated jointly by UNESCO and the United Nations Women's Association (UN Women).
- ★ Vigyan Jyoti Yojana has been launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- ★ The scheme aims to increase the percentage of women in the STEM education sector.

### **World Radio Day**

- ★ World Radio Day is celebrated every year on 13 February.
- ★ The day is observed every year to raise awareness among the public and media about the importance of radio and to encourage access to information through radio.
- ★ The theme for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of World Radio Day is 'Radio and Peace'.
- ★ The theme of this year focuses on the role of radio as an independent medium of peace making.
- ★ On 03 November 2011, UNESCO declared 13 February as World Radio Day as United Nations Radio was first established on this day in 1946.

### **National Productivity Day**

- ★ National Productivity Day is observed every year on 12 February.
- ★ The theme for the year 2023 is 'A chance to set goals'.
- ★ On 12 February 1958, the National Productivity Council of India got Registered under Societies Registration Act XXI, 1860.
- ★ To mark the council's establishment, its members decided to observe National Productivity Day every year on the same day.
- ★ Apart from encouraging people to be more productive in their work, National Productivity Day also celebrates the anniversary of the establishment of the National Productivity Council.

### **'Cow Hug Day' on February 14**

- ★ The Animal Welfare Board of India has issued a notice appealing to people to celebrate 'Cow Hug Day' on February 14 to spread 'positive energy' and encourage 'collective happiness'.

- ★ The notice said hugging cows will bring ‘emotional richness’ and increase ‘individual and collective happiness’.
- ★ The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) is a statutory advisory body on animal welfare laws and promotes animal welfare in the country.
- ★ AWBI was set up in 1962 by Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960.
- ★ The well-known humanitarian Rukmini Devi Arundale was the founder and chairperson of the Board.

## Global Tourism Resilience Day

- ★ The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution from Jamaica to declare the first-ever Global Tourism Resilience Day on 17 February 2023, in an effort to future-proof the sustainability of tourism.
- ★ The move to mark the day annually was supported by more than 90 countries.
- ★ The UNGA invites everyone to observe February 17 as a day to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism, in accordance with local, regional and national priorities and through education, activities and events.
- ★ The first Global Tourism Resilience Conference will be held in Jamaica on 15 February, culminating on Global Tourism Resilience Day.

## World Day of Social Justice

- ★ The United Nations (UN) World Day of Social Justice is annually observed on February 20 to encourage people to look at how Social Justice affects poverty eradication.
- ★ The theme this year of the World Day of Social Justice is ‘Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice’.
- ★ The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development were reviewed by the UN member states a decade later in New York in 2005.
- ★ Finally, 20<sup>th</sup> February was declared as the annual World Day of Social Justice by the United Nations on November 26, 2007.

## International Mother Language Day

- ★ International Mother Language Day is celebrated every year on 21 February.
- ★ It is to spread awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, and to promote multilingualism.
- ★ India is home to hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects, making its linguistic and cultural diversity one of the most unique in the world.
- ★ The theme for 2023 International Mother Language Day is ‘Multilingual Education – a necessity to transform education’.
- ★ This theme is in line with recommendations made during the Transforming Education Summit.
- ★ UNESCO announced this day on 17 November 1999 and since 2000, this day has been celebrated all over the world.

## World Scout Day

- ★ World Scout Day is celebrated every year on 22 February.
- ★ Each year on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, we honor Robert Baden-Powell's anniversary by celebrating World Scout Day.
- ★ In 1908, 'Scouting for Boys' was published by Baden Powell for the first time.
- ★ 'Scouting for Boys' has since been deciphered into many distinct vocabularies and lingoes.
- ★ Following this, the boys started to develop Scout Troops across the country.

## World Thinking Day

- ★ World Thinking Day is observed every year on the 22 February.
- ★ World Thinking Day 2023 Theme is 'Our World, Our Thriving Future: The environment and global poverty'.
- ★ In 1926, delegates from across the world met at Camp Edith Macy now named the Edith Macy Conference Center in New York for the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference and decided to create a day for guides and girl scouts.
- ★ They selected the joint birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the scout and guide movement, and his wife Olave as the Thinking Day.
- ★ In 1999, during the Dubai Conference, the name of Thinking Day was changed to 'World Thinking Day'.

## Central Excise Day

- ★ Central Excise Day is celebrated every year on 24 February.
- ★ The day is being celebrated to honor the service of the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) to the country.
- ★ The Central Excise Department was one of the oldest departments in India which was established in the year 1855, under the British Raj.
- ★ "The Central Excise Act" or "The Central Excise and Salt Act" was regulated in the year 1944, in which year for the first time Central Excise Day was celebrated but later in the year 1996 these acts got some changes.

## World NGO Day

- ★ World NGO Day is observed every year on February 27.
- ★ World NGO Day is a day set aside to recognize, celebrate and honor the fundamental contributions and profound impact that these independent organizations have had on the world.
- ★ World NGO Day was originally founded in 2009 by Marcis Liors Skadmanis, a social entrepreneur.
- ★ However, it was observed for the first time on February 27, 2014.
- ★ It's a day set aside to honor all non-governmental and nonprofit organizations, recognizing their impact on the world.

## National Protein Day

- ★ 'National Protein Day' is celebrated every year on 27 February.
- ★ The main purpose of organising this day is to spread awareness regarding the nutritional benefits of protein.
- ★ Right to Protein, a national level public health initiative, organised the first ever Protein Day in India on February 27, 2020.

## OBITUARY NEWS

### Pakistan's Former President Pervez Musharraf

- ★ Pervez Musharraf, former President of Pakistan, passed away in Dubai. He was at the age of 79.
- ★ Musharraf was a four-star general who ruled Pakistan for nearly a decade after seizing power in a 1999 coup.
- ★ Musharraf rose to power following a military takeover of the government in 1999 and became the tenth President of Pakistan in June 2001.
- ★ He resigned in August 2008, facing possible impeachment.

### Legendary Playback Singer Vani Jairam

- ★ Padma Bhushan awardee legendary playback singer Vani Jairam passed away.
- ★ Vani Jayaram has sung in more than a dozen languages including Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, Hindi and Bhojpuri.
- ★ She was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award, ahead of Republic Day this year.
- ★ Jairam started her singing career in Bollywood and got her first break in the Hindi film Guddi (1971) directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee.
- ★ She won the National Film Award for Best Female Playback Singer thrice.
- ★ She also won state government awards from the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

### Former Indian National Team Footballer Parimal Dey

- ★ Former Indian National Team footballer Parimal Dey passed away. He was at the age of 81.
- ★ At the domestic level, he fondly called Jangla had the honour of winning the Santosh Trophy twice in 1962 and 1969.
- ★ He made 5 appearances for India and scored a goal in the country's bronze medal finish in the 1966 edition of the Merdeka Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia & that was also his only goal for India.
- ★ He also won the Durand Cup (1967, 1970) and Rovers Cup (1967, 1969, 1973).



## **Legendary American Pop Composer Burt Bacharach**

- ★ Legendary American pop songwriter Burt Bacharach, whose work created a chart-topping soundtrack for the 1960s and 1970s passed away in Los Angeles. He was at the age of 94.
- ★ His compositions included rock classics such as 'Do You Know the Way to San Jose' and 'Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head'.
- ★ He has won three Oscars (including 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid'), an Emmy, eight Grammy Awards and two Golden Globes.
- ★ He studied and learned music at several American universities.

## **Noted Painter Lalitha Lajmi**

- ★ Noted painter Lalitha Lajmi, late actor-filmmaker Guru Dutt's sister passed away. He was at the age of 90.
- ★ Lajmi was very fond of classical dance and painting.
- ★ She has held several exhibitions in international art galleries in Paris, London and the Netherlands.
- ★ Lalita made a small appearance in the 2007 film Taare Zameen Par, starring Aamir Khan, in which she played an art teacher.

## **Yakshagana Bhagavat Balipa Narayana Bhagavatha**

- ★ Famous Yakshagana singer and screenwriter Balipa Narayan Bhagwat passed away in Karnataka.
- ★ He had mastered a unique style of singing, due to which fans have given it the name of 'Balipa Style'.
- ★ Rich in voice, Bhagwat has written more than 30 Yakshagana 'Prasanga' (scripts).
- ★ He was well versed in over 100 Yakshagana episodes, which he composed by heart.
- ★ He had served in the field of Yakshagana for about 60 years.
- ★ He was honoured with several other awards including the 'Karnataka Sri' award in 2002 for All India Kannada literature.

## **Indian Football Legend Tulsidas Balaram**

- ★ Tulsidas Balaram, one of the country's finest footballers and a member of the golden era of Indian football (1951-1962), passed away. He was at the age of 86.
- ★ Balaram made his mark playing football for the East Bengal of Kolkata, and captained the team in 1961-62.
- ★ He was one of the best players of the golden age of Indian football of the 1950s and 1960s.
- ★ His playing position was as a center forward or as a left winger.
- ★ In 1962, he received Arjuna Award from the Government of India.
- ★ The Government of West Bengal awarded him 'Banga Vibhushan' in 2013.

### Former Gujarat Governor O.P. Kohli

- ★ Former Gujarat Governor and Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Om Prakash Kohli passed away. He was at the age of 87.
- ★ He held the responsibility of many posts including the President of Delhi Pradesh BJP.
- ★ Apart from being a Rajya Sabha member, he was the 19<sup>th</sup> Governor of Gujarat from 2014 to 2019.
- ★ Kohli began his political career as a volunteer of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and held various positions with the ABVP, the Delhi University Students' Union and the Delhi University Teachers' Association.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon

- ★ The Frozen Lake Marathon at Pangong Tso Lake in the Union Territory of Ladakh has been included in the Guinness Book of World Records as the Highest Frozen Lake Marathon for the first time.
- ★ It was organised on 20 February at the world-famous Pangong Lake, situated at an altitude of 4,350 metres above sea level.
- ★ The Frozen Lake Marathon is being organised for the first time in the country and is considered to be one of the toughest because of the high altitude and cold.
- ★ The theme of this marathon is 'The Last Run' and it is organised with the aim of creating awareness about climate change in Ladakh and promoting border tourism.
- ★ It was organised under the Vibrant Village Program to accelerate the pace of development in border villages.
- ★ The 21 km long marathon that started at Luking village was organised by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council in association with the Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh.

