

CivilsTap

Quality & Affordable Education



CivilsTap Himachal

Current Affairs

Monthly Magazine

MAY 2024



By CivilsTap Himachal

For HPAS & Other Competitive
Exam in Himachal Pradesh

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1. POLITY

1.1 ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT (AFSPA)

- ❖ The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has extended the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** in parts of **Nagaland, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh** for another **six months**.
- ❖ The extension starts from **April 1, 2024**, and was determined after a review of the law and order situation in these northeastern states.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ As per the notification, **the AFSPA** has been extended in the whole of **eight districts** and 21 police stations in five other districts of **Nagaland**.
- ❖ In **Arunachal Pradesh**, it has been extended in three districts and areas falling under the jurisdiction of three police stations in **Namsai district**.
- ❖ Assam government issued a notification, stating that the **'Disturbed Area'** tag under the **AFSPA** has been extended in areas covering **Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo and Sivasagar** districts.

ABOUT AFSPA:

- ❖ The Act in its original form was promulgated by the British in response to the **Quit India movement in 1942**.
- ❖ After Independence, **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** decided to retain **the Act**, which was first brought in as an ordinance and then notified as an **Act in 1958**.
- ❖ **The Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958** is an act of Parliament that gives the armed forces the power to maintain public order in **“disturbed areas”**. It gives the armed forces the authority to use force or even open fire after warning a person who is found to be in contravention of the law.
- ❖ A disturbed area is one where the **“use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary”**. Under section 3 of **the AFSPA**, any area can be declared disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different **religious, racial, language, or regional** groups or castes or communities. The power to declare any territory **“disturbed”** initially lay with the states, but passed to the Centre in **1972**.
- ❖ The AFSPA empowers the **Army, para-military**, and other security forces to arrest a person without a warrant, enter or search premises without a warrant, along with some other actions.

JEEVAN REDDY COMMITTEE

- ❖ In **2005**, a Government-appointed **five-member committee** headed by retired **Supreme Court judge, B.P. Jeevan Reddy**, recommended that AFSPA be repealed.

It suggested that the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act** could be suitably amended to deal with **terrorism**.

1.2 VOTER VERIFIED PAPER AUDIT TRAIL (VVPAT)

Recently, the Supreme Court announced that it would soon address petitions for 100% verification of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips, just ahead of the first phase of voting on 19th April 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The VVPAT machine is attached to the ballot unit of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), and provides visual verification for the vote cast by a voter by printing a slip of paper with the voter's choice on it.
- ❖ The slip of paper with the candidate's details is briefly displayed for verification behind a glass window, giving the voter 7 seconds, before dropping into a compartment below.

- ❖ Voters are not allowed to take the VVPAT slip home as it is used to verify votes in five randomly selected polling booths.
- ❖ The concept aims to enhance trust in the voting process by enabling physical verification of electronically cast votes, reassuring both voters and political parties about the accuracy of their votes.
- ❖ Following prototype preparation, field trials were conducted in Ladakh, Thiruvananthapuram, Cherrapunjee, East Delhi, and Jaisalmer in July 2011.
- ❖ It led to the approval of VVPAT by an expert committee of the ECI in February 2013.

1.3 HOME VOTING - 18TH LOK SABHA ELECTION

- ❖ As a progressive initiative, ECI for the first time in a Lok Sabha election, has provided the facility of home voting for elderly citizens above **85 years** of age and Persons with **Disabilities (PwDs)** with a 40% benchmark disability.
- ❖ The initiative will help in ensuring an equitable, approachable and inclusive electoral process.
- ❖ This initiative marks a significant stride towards ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of the electoral process and in bolstering democratic participation.
- ❖ There are over 81 lakhs 85+ aged voters and 90 lakhs + PwD voters registered across the country.

OTHER STEPS TAKEN BY ECI:

Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) :

- ❖ The primary goal is to build a truly participative democracy in India by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections.

VOTER VERIFIED PAPER AUDIT TRAIL (VVPAT)

- ❖ **VVPAT** is an independent system attached with EVM that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended.
- ❖ When a vote is cast, a slip is printed containing the serial number, name and symbol of the candidate and remains exposed through a transparent window for 7 seconds.
- ❖ Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail with EVM was used for the first time in the by-election **to Noksen Assembly Constituency of Nagaland in 2013.**

cVIGIL App:

- ❖ **cVIGIL** is a mobile application developed by **the Election Commission of India (ECI)** to enable citizens to report violations of **the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** during elections.

1.4 CENTRE FORMS 6-MEMBER COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO ISSUES FACED BY QUEER COMMUNITY

- ❖ The Centre constituted a six-member committee to examine various issues relating to the queer community.
- ❖ The panel will be headed by the Cabinet secretary. The Secretary, Department of Home, Secretary of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Secretary of Department of Health and Family Welfare, Secretary of Legislative Department and Secretary of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment are among other members of the committee.
- ❖ The move comes months after the Supreme Court refused to grant legal recognition to same-sex marriages asserting the matter should be dealt by the Parliament.
- ❖ On October 17, 2023, the apex court directed the Centre to constitute a committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary to examine the issues related to the queer community.
- ❖ The committee will suggest measures to ensure that the queer community does not encounter any discrimination in accessing goods and services, social welfare schemes, or face threat of violence among others.

SUPRIYO VS UNION OF INDIA CASE

- ❖ The petitioners challenged the validity of Section 4 (c) of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 on that ground that the provision discriminates against same sex couple by denying them benefits such as adoption, surrogacy, employment and retirement benefits.

ABOUT LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY:

- ❖ The “L, G” and “B” refer to sexual orientation, meaning those to which one is attracted, most often referring to lesbian or gay.
- ❖ Bisexual is an attraction to both males and females.
- ❖ Transgender refers to one who identifies as a sex other than was named at birth.
- ❖ The Q indicates questioning and queer.
- ❖ Questioning is a label one might use to convey they are exploring their identity and may not want to label themselves while Queer is often used to identify oneself as a member of the LGBTQIA++ community.
- ❖ The “I” speaks to intersex in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- ❖ ‘A’ refers to asexual who do not have sexual feelings.
- ❖ ‘++’ suggests openness and inclusivity.

1.5 SC REJECTS PLEAS SEEKING 100% VERIFICATION OF EVM VOTES WITH VVPAT SLIPS

- ❖ The Supreme Court has rejected all petitions seeking 100 per cent verification of votes polled on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with their Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips. It, however, provided options for election candidates to seek EVM verification in case they suspect any anomaly.
- ❖ The Supreme Court's two-judge bench, including Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, have made a decision in the 'EVM case' of Association for Democratic Reforms vs Election Commission of India and Another.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The ADR, a non-governmental organization, had requested that the voting system by EVM should either be removed altogether or significantly changed.
- ❖ The petitioners argued that if EVMs were to continue, the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slip should be handed to the voter so that they could physically cast it into the ballot box, or all VVPAT slips in the country should be counted alongside the electronic tally.
- ❖ Presently, only the electronic counts from five randomly selected EVMs in each assembly segment are verified against the tally given by VVPAT slips.
- ❖ Additionally, the petitioners challenged the rule that only allows the voter to call for physical verification if they feel that there is a discrepancy between their vote as cast and the VVPAT slip. They argued that any elector, not just such a voter, should be able to call for a recount.

ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS (ADR):

- ❖ The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) was founded in 1999 by a group of professors from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad.
- ❖ Since 2003, ADR and the National Election Watch have conducted Election Watches for the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Elections, as well as most State Assembly Elections in the country.

1.6 HITACHI PAYMENT SERVICES INTRODUCES UPGRADABLE ATMS IN INDIA

- ❖ Hitachi Payment Services, India's leading payments and commerce solutions provider has announced the launch of the country's first Upgradable ATM. The Upgradable ATM can be transformed into a high-performance Cash Recycling Machine (CRM) at any point of time.
- ❖ Manufactured under the Make in India initiative, these new Upgradable ATMs provide more flexibility and efficiency to banks.
- ❖ These ATMs can be upgraded to a Cash Recycling Machine (CRM) at any time.
- ❖ Hitachi Payment Services claims that this is the first upgradable ATM in India.
- ❖ This new-age solution is designed to support UPI based cash withdrawal and cash deposit as well.
- ❖ In September 2023, the company also rolled out the first-of-its-kind UPI ATM on Android platform for card-less cash withdrawals.

1.7

DELOITTE PROJECTS INDIA'S FY25 GDP GROWTH AT 6.6%

- ❖ Deloitte India has estimates India's GDP growth at 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal helped by consumption expenditure, exports rebound and capital flows.
- ❖ It is estimated to be 6.75 per cent in FY26.
- ❖ The rapid growth of the middle-income class has led to rising purchasing power and even created demand for premium luxury products and services.
- ❖ Deloitte has revised India's economic growth prediction for last fiscal to a range of 7.6 to 7.8 per cent. In January, the firm had projected growth for 2023-24 fiscal in the range of 6.9-7.2 per cent.

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2. GOVERNANCE

2.1 SUVIDHA PORTAL

- ❖ **The Election Commission** recently said its **Suvidha portal** has received over **73,379 applications** since the Lok Sabha polls were announced.
- ❖ Maximum requests were received from **Tamil Nadu (23,239)** followed by **West Bengal (11,976)** and **Madhya Pradesh (10,636)**. Minimum requests received from **Chandigarh (17), Lakshadweep (18) and Manipur (20)**.

ABOUT PORTAL:

- ❖ **The Suvidha portal** is a technological solution developed by ECI to ensure a level playing-field upholding the democratic principles of free, fair and transparent elections.
- ❖ The Suvidha Portal streamlined the process of obtaining and acting upon requests for permissions and facilities from political parties and candidates during the election period.
- ❖ The Suvidha Portal caters to a diverse range of permission requests transparently on **the First in First Out principle**.
- ❖ It caters to permissions for organising rallies, opening temporary party offices, door-to-door canvassing, video vans, helicopters, obtaining vehicle permits, distributing pamphlets.
- ❖ It is supported by a robust IT platform, managed by nodal officers across various state departments. It also has a companion app that enables applicants to track the status of their requests in real time.

2.2 INTERGLOBE TO BRING AIR TAXIS IN 2026

- ❖ InterGlobe Enterprises, which owns India's largest airline IndiGo, will launch an all-electric air taxi service in India from Delhi's Connaught Place to Haryana's Gurugram by 2026.
- ❖ In November 2023, InterGlobe Enterprises entered into a deal with Archer Aviation to supply 200 eVTOL aircraft
- ❖ The electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft can carry the pilot in addition to four passengers.

2.3 GOVT TEAMS UP WITH SBI CARDS, TELCOS TO COMBAT OTP FRAUDS

- ❖ The Government of India, in collaboration with SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBI Card) and telecom operators, is developing an innovative solution to combat the growing threat of cyber fraud and phishing attacks involving stolen one-time passwords (OTPs).
- ❖ The Centre is testing a solution that will allow banks to track the registered address as well as geolocation of a customer and where an OTP is getting delivered. In case of any discrepancy between the two locations, the customer can be alerted of a possible phishing attack.

ABOUT INDIA'S CYBER SECURITY

- ❖ India has the second-largest telecom market in the world, with over 1.16 billion subscribers.
- ❖ The Government of India has taken several steps to strengthen cybersecurity, including the establishment of The National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) and The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY COORDINATOR (NCSC)

- ❖ Established in 2014 under the National Security Council Secretariat.
- ❖ It Coordinates with international partners to enhance global cyber security cooperation.

ABOUT THE INDIAN COMPUTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT-IN)

- ❖ Operational since 2004 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

- ❖ It Serves as the national nodal agency for responding to cyber security incidents.
- ❖ Monitors and analyses cyber threats, vulnerabilities, and incidents.
- ❖ Provides alerts, advisories, and guidelines to enhance cyber security preparedness.
- ❖ Conducts cyber security drills and training programs for government and critical sector organizations.

2.4 MISSION ISHAN

- ❖ In order to streamline and enhance air traffic management (ATM), India has initiated the process of consolidating its four airspace regions into a single entity spanning the entire nation -Indian Single Sky Harmonized Air Traffic Management (ISHAN) initiative, centered in Nagpur.
- ❖ The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has called for expressions of interest to prepare a detailed project report for it.
- ❖ Indian airspace is controlled through four flight information regions (FIRs) at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai, and a sub-flight information region at Guwahati.
- ❖ Expected benefits of ISHAN - seamless operations, reduced congestion, increased capacity, efficient routing, and reduced flight times.
- ❖ Once ISHAN is implemented, all coordination for domestic flights flying in upper airspace (above 25,000 ft) will be handled by air traffic controllers (ATCOs) in Nagpur. The ATCOs in every region or airport would only be required to guide the flights approaching or taking off from an airport until they enter the upper space.

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3. ECONOMY

3.1 WORLD'S 3RD LARGEST E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

- ❖ The procurement of goods and services through the **Government e-Market (GeM)** portal has witnessed a significant surge, doubling to over Rs 4 lakh crore in the current fiscal year compared to Rs 2 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.
- ❖ **GeM CEO PK Singh** announced that as of **March 28**, the procurement of services from GeM has notably increased from Rs 66,000 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 2.05 lakh crore, while goods worth Rs 1.95 lakh crore have been procured.

DEFENCE PROCUREMENT MAJOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF GEM:

- ❖ Defence procurement is one of the major business activities of this platform. The assembly of the **BrahMos missile** is being done through GeM as a service contract.
- ❖ In the defence sector, supplies ranging from eggs to missile parts are being made through the portal.
- ❖ GeM provides a level playing field to domestic businesses, especially small businesses, which are physically away from popular markets, to grow and flourish.
- ❖ The portal has collaborated with over **520,000 Common Service Centers (CSCs)** and over 150,000 Indian Post Offices to connect remote locations in the country for seamless purchases.
- ❖ GeM offers a wide range of goods and services. This includes hiring of office stationery, passenger vehicles, helicopter services, waste management and webcasting.

ABOUT GOVERNMENT E-MARKET (GEM) PORTAL:

- ❖ GeM was launched in the year 2016 to facilitate procurement of goods and services by many government departments and organizations. It is an online platform launched by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- ❖ GeM is open to all government departments, public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies and other organizations.
- ❖ Currently **South Korea's KONEPS** is the world's largest online platform. GeM is at third place after **Singapore's GeBIZ**.

3.2 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF RBI

- ❖ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the opening ceremony of **RBI@90 in Mumbai, Maharashtra on 1 April 2024**.
- ❖ The ceremony was organised to mark the **90 years** of the establishment of **India's central bank, Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. **The Prime Minister Modi** released a commemorative coin to mark 90 years of RBI on the occasion.

ABOUT RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was set up on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance also known as the **Hilton-Young Commission**.
- ❖ Accepting the recommendation of the **Hilton-Young Commission** the **Reserve Bank of India Act 1934** was passed.
- ❖ On **1 April 1935**, the Reserve Bank of India started its operation.
- ❖ The RBI was initially owned by a private person. It was nationalised in 1949 and is now owned by the Government of India.

3.3 SCORES 2.0

- ❖ **SEBI** recently launched the new version of the SEBI Complaint Redress System (**SCORES 2.0**).

ABOUT SCORES:

- ❖ **SCORES** is a web-based centralized grievance redress system of SEBI launched in 2011.
- ❖ SCORES enable investors to lodge and follow up on their complaints and track the status of redressal of such complaints online from anywhere.
- ❖ This enables market intermediaries and listed companies to receive complaints online from investors, redress such complaints, and report redressal online.
- ❖ An investor who is not familiar with SCORES or does not have access to SCORES can lodge complaints in physical form at any of the offices of SEBI.

KEY FEATURES OF SCORES 2.0

- ❖ It will feature reduced and uniform time lines for redressal of investor complaints, which is **21 calendar days** from the date of receipt of the complaint.
- ❖ An auto-routing of complaints to the concerned regulated entity will be facilitated to eliminate time lapses, if any, in the flow of complaints.
- ❖ **Designated bodies** will have to monitor the timely redressal of investors' complaints.
- ❖ There will be two levels of review. The first review will be by the '**designated body**' if the investor is dissatisfied with the resolution provided by the concerned regulated entity. The second review will be by SEBI if the investor is still dissatisfied after the first review.
- ❖ If there is non-adherence to the prescribed timelines by the regulated entity, then there would be auto-escalation of the complaint to the next level.
- ❖ **SCORES 2.0** will be integrated with the KYC Registration Agency database for easy registration of the investor on SCORES.

ABOUT SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA

- ❖ It is a statutory body established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992**.
- ❖ Before SEBI came into existence, Controller of Capital Issues was the regulatory authority; it derived authority from the Capital Issues (Control) Act, 1947.
- ❖ It is a quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial body which can draft regulations, conduct inquiries, pass rulings and impose penalties.

3.4 ONE VEHICLE, ONE FASTAG'

- ❖ **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has enforced the '**One Vehicle, One FASTag**' rule since April 1.
- ❖ This directive prohibits the use of a single FASTag across multiple vehicles or the association of several FASTags with one vehicle.

ABOUT FASTAG

- ❖ It is a device that employs **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** technology for making toll payments directly while the vehicle is in motion.
- ❖ It is a RFID passive tag used for making toll payments directly from the customers linked prepaid or savings/current account.
- ❖ It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle and enables the customer to drive through toll plazas, without stopping for any toll payments.
- ❖ The toll fare is directly deducted from the linked account of the customer.
- ❖ It is also vehicle specific and once it is affixed to a vehicle, it cannot be transferred to another vehicle.

3.5 INDIAN ECONOMY TO GROW AT 7.5% IN FY2024

- ❖ **The World Bank** has projected that the Indian economy will grow by **7.5% in FY2024**.
- ❖ **The World Bank** had earlier estimated a growth of **6.3%**.
- ❖ The overall economic growth in **South Asia**, which includes countries like **India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka** is expected to be strong at **6.0% in 2024**.

- ❖ **Pakistan's** economy is forecasted to grow by 2.3% in the fiscal year 2024/25 after a contraction in the previous year.
- ❖ The economy is expected to grow by 5.7% in Bangladesh in the fiscal year 2024/25.

3.6 BUNDELKHAND WHEAT

- ❖ The Bundelkhand region in **Uttar Pradesh** has received its first **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag for a farm produce.
- ❖ The indigenous farm produce wheat, popularly known as **Kathiya Gehu (wheat)**, has been conferred the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

ABOUT BUNDELKHAND KATHIYA GEHU

- ❖ It is Technically classified as "**Triticum Durum**".
- ❖ This particular wheat has high nutritional value and a high fibre content.
- ❖ It is usually sown in the last week of October or first week of November and is harvested between March and April.
- ❖ This wheat has several medicinal values.

ABOUT GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)

- ❖ A GI is an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- ❖ Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.
- ❖ It is a mark of authenticity and ensures that registered authorized users or at least those residing inside the geographic territory are allowed to use the popular product names.
- ❖ GI tag in India is governed by Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 which is issued by the Geographical Indications Registry (Chennai).
- ❖ The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years which can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.
- ❖ The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was **Darjeeling tea** in the year 2004-05.

3.7 RBI MONETARY POLICY 2024

- ❖ The **Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** has decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at **6.5 per cent** as retail inflation continues to be above its target of **4 per cent**.
- ❖ This is the **seventh** consecutive meeting that the MPC has maintained a status quo on the **repo rate**.
- ❖ This is the first monetary policy statement of the current financial year **2024-25**.
- ❖ The RBI has maintained India's fiscal year **2025 GDP** growth target at **7%**.
- ❖ The Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) **FY2025** forecast unchanged at **4.5%**.
- ❖ Policy Rates:
 - ✓ **Repo Rate: 6.5%**
 - ✓ **Standing Deposit Facility Rate: 6.25%**
 - ✓ **Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 6.75%**
 - ✓ **Bank Rate: 6.75%**
 - ✓ **Fixed Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%**

ABOUT MPC:

- ❖ The **Monetary Policy Committee** was constituted under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- ❖ **MPC is a six-member** committee comprising three members from RBI including **Governor Shaktikanta Das** and three members appointed by the Central government.

3.8 MIRAJ'S SITAR AND TANPURA RECEIVE GI TAGS

- ❖ **The sitars and tanpuras of Miraj**, a small town in **Maharashtra's Sangli** district known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments, have been awarded the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) tags.
- ❖ The tradition of making sitars and tanpuras in Miraj goes back more than **300 years**, with over seven generations of craftsmen having worked towards making these string instruments.
- ❖ On **March 30**, the government of India's intellectual property office issued GI tag to the Miraj Musical Instruments Cluster for its sitars and to the Souldune Musical Instrument Producer firm for tanpuras.
- ❖ The wood for making the sitars and tanpuras is procured from forests **in Karnataka**, while pumpkin gourds are sourced from **Mangalvedha** region of **Maharashtra's Solapur district**.
- ❖ The cluster manufactures 60 to 70 sitars and around 100 tanpuras in a month.

3.9 SILVER COIN OF RAM LALLA PRAN PRATISHTHA

- ❖ In a tribute to the historic **Pran Pratishtha** ceremony of **Ram Lalla in Ayodhya's Ram Mandir** earlier this year, the Government of India has introduced a limited-edition **50gm colored souvenir silver coin** for public sale.
- ❖ This release follows Finance **Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's** unveiling of three commemorative coins in February, including one celebrating the theme of Ram Lalla and the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Ayodhya.
- ❖ The inauguration ceremony took place during the 19th foundation day celebration of the state-owned **Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India (SPMCIL)**.
- ❖ Along with the coin honoring Ram Lalla, Sitharaman also revealed a bi-metallic clad souvenir coin representing the Enlightenment of Lord Buddha, featuring oxidised images of Buddha and Stupa, as well as a coin featuring the Greater one-horned Rhino, part of the Endangered Animals of India series.

ABOUT SPMCIL:

- ❖ **The Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India Ltd. (SPMCIL)** is a company under the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ It was incorporated on **13 January 2006** with its registered office at **New Delhi**.
- ❖ SPMCIL consists of two currency printing presses: **The Currency Note Press (CNP)** in Nashik and the **Bank Note Press (BNP)** in Dewas.

3.10 UNCTAD FORECASTS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH AT 6.5% IN 2024

- ❖ The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has raised India's GDP growth forecast by 30 basis points to 6.5% in 2024. India grew 6.7% in 2023, as per UNCTAD.
- ❖ Global growth is projected to be 2.6% in 2024, slightly slower than the 2.7% in 2023.
- ❖ This makes 2024 the third consecutive year in which the global economy will grow slower than before the pandemic when the average rate for 2015–2019 was 3.2%.

3.11 GI TAG TO UTTAR PRADESH'S 6 PRODUCTS

- ❖ The "Tirangi Barfi" of Kashi, a sweet treat regarded as the "sweet weapon" of freedom fighters during the Quit India Movement, has finally received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- ❖ The GI Registry awarded GI certification not only to the Banaras Tirangi Barfi but also to five other Uttar Pradesh products.
- ❖ These include Banaras Metal Casting Craft, Lakhimpur Kheri Tharu Embroidery, Bareilly Cane and Bamboo craft, Bareilly Zardozi Craft, and Pilkhuwa Hand Block Print Textile.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh now retains its position as the state with the most GI-tagged products in India, reaching a total of 75. Tamil Nadu follows behind with 58 GI products.

3.12 IMF FORECASTS INDIA'S ECONOMY TO GROW 6.8%

- ❖ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised India's growth forecast for 2024-25 to 6.8% from 6.5% on the back of strong domestic demand and a rising working-age population.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India, the country's central bank, estimates the economy to grow at 7% in the current financial year that started on April 1.
- ❖ The IMF estimates Asia's third largest economy's gross domestic product to grow at 6.5% in the next financial year.
- ❖ It projected global output growth in 2024 and 2025 at 3.2%, after bottoming out at 2.3% at the end of 2022.

3.13 HINDUSTAN ZINC LIMITED BECOMES WORLD'S THIRD-LARGEST SILVER PRODUCER

- ❖ **Hindustan Zinc Limited**, a Vedanta group company, became **the third-largest silver** producer globally, according to the World Silver Survey 2024 conducted by **'The Silver Institute', USA**.
- ❖ According to the Survey, the company's **Sindesar Khurd Mine (Rajasthan)** was now the world's second-largest silver-producing mine, moving up from last year's fourth position.
- ❖ Mexico-based Fresnillo is the world's largest silver producer. It has silver and gold mining operations across Mexico.
- ❖ Polish miner **KGHM Polska Miedz** is the second-largest producer of silver in the world.
- ❖ Hindustan Zinc, a Vedanta Group company in zinc, lead and silver businesses, is the world's second largest integrated zinc producer and now the third largest silver producer.
- ❖ Chairperson of Hindustan Zinc - **Priya Agarwal Hebbar**

3.14 IRDAI REMOVES AGE BAR FOR PURCHASING HEALTH INSURANCE

- ❖ **The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has removed the age limit for purchasing health insurance policies, with effect from **April 1**.
- ❖ Earlier, there was an age limit of **65 years** to buy new health insurance policies. The IRDAI's latest move is aimed at bringing in extended health benefits to senior citizens.
- ❖ The move will enhance the accessibility and affordability of healthcare coverage across all age groups.

ABOUT IRDAI: -

- ❖ The IRDAI is an autonomous and statutory body responsible for managing and regulating India's insurance and reinsurance industry.
- ❖ Nodal Ministry: - **Ministry of finance**.
- ❖ Composition: - **10 Member body**, five full-time and four part-time members appointed by the **government of India**.
- ❖ Chairperson: - **Debasish Panda**
- ❖ Headquarter: - **Hyderabad**

3.15 NET DIRECT TAX COLLECTIONS EXCEED 2023-24 TARGET

- ❖ India's net direct tax collections grew **17.7% in 2023-24** to hit **₹19.58 lakh crore**, marginally surpassing the revised estimates for the year, thanks to a surge in personal income tax whose share of the tax kitty rose to **53.3% from 50.06%** in the previous year while corporate taxes' contribution dipped to **46.5% from 49.6%**.
- ❖ **PIT and STT** receipts also grew at almost double the pace of corporate taxes last year.
- ❖ In the beginning of March, net direct taxes had risen **19.88% to ₹18.9 lakh crore**, with PIT and STT accounting for 51.4% of the receipts and corporate tax yielding ₹9.14 lakh crore.

- ❖ By the end of march, PIT and STT inflows had increased by **₹73,000 crores**, lifting their full-year tally to **₹10.44 lakh crore**.
- ❖ Although gross corporate tax collections increased from **₹10.98 lakh crore** as of March 17 to ₹11.32 lakh crore by the close of the financial year, the net tax receipts from corporates, calculated after adjusting for refunds, dropped from ₹9.14 lakh crore on March 17 to ₹9.11 lakh crore.
- ❖ The gross direct tax kitty for 2023-24 stood at ₹23.37 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 18.5% over the ₹19.72 lakh crore tally in 2022-23.

3.16 NABARD UNVEILS CLIMATE STRATEGY 2030 TO MOBILISE GREEN FINANCING

- ❖ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the occasion of Earth Day unveiled its Climate Strategy 2030 document which aims to address India's need for green financing.
- ❖ NABARD's Climate Strategy 2030 is structured around four key pillars which include:-
 - ✓ Accelerating green lending across sectors
 - ✓ Playing a broader market-making role
 - ✓ Internal green transformation
 - ✓ Strategic resource mobilisation
- ❖ According to NABARD, India requires approximately \$170 billion annually to reach a cumulative total of over \$2.5 trillion by 2030, the current green finance inflows are critically insufficient.

LEADING REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS: -

- ❖ DLF the only Indian real estate company featured in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for the past three years, it exemplified commitment to environmental, social, and governance excellence.
- ❖ Remsons Industries Ltd., an auto ancillary manufacturer had received Gold Medal in the Ecovadis Sustainability Assessment. This medal recognises Remsons Industries as one of the top 5% of all evaluated companies globally, reaffirming its commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) excellence.

3.17 NABARD PARTNERS WITH RBI INNOVATION HUB TO FAST-TRACK DIGITAL AGRI LENDING

- ❖ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has partnered with Reserve Bank's arm RBIH to put in place a system which will enable faster processing of agricultural loans.
- ❖ NABARD will integrate its e-KCC loan origination system portal with the Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit (PTPFC) of Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the RBI.
- ❖ NABARD has developed the loan origination system portal to facilitate digital Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loan processing for cooperative banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).
- ❖ The digitisation of agricultural lending will ensure instant doorstep delivery of credit to farmers while improving the efficiency of banks, advancing NABARD's mission of fostering rural prosperity.
- ❖ The partnership agreement was signed by the NABARD chairman and Rajesh Bansal, CEO, RBIH.
- ❖ Through the integration with PTPFC, about 351 district and state cooperative banks and 43 RRBs will gain access to a range of services including digital state land records, satellite data, KYC, credit history and transliteration for more effective credit underwriting.
- ❖ The collaboration will streamline the lending process and reduce the turnaround time for loans from three to four weeks to just five minutes for India's 120 million farmers.
- ❖ The pilot phase of the partnership will see implementation in select RRBs including the Karnataka Gramin Bank and Maharashtra Gramin Bank and cooperative banks in Andhra Pradesh, the goal is to scale the digital lending platform to cover about 5 crore KCC loans across all cooperative banks and RRBs nationwide.

3.18 E-COMMERCE MARKET IN INDIA TO BE WORLD'S THIRD-LARGEST BY 2030

- ❖ Invest India has forecasted a bright future for India's e-commerce industry, predicting a massive surge to \$325 billion by 2030. This growth coincides with a digital economy expected to reach a staggering \$800 billion in the same timeframe.
- ❖ According to Invest India, India has the world's second-largest internet user base, with a whopping 881 million users. India is in a good position to become the third-largest online retail market by 2030.
- ❖ The report suggests that this will happen due to the growth of the internet user base and the flourishing digital economy. According to the report, India is expected to have around 500 million online shoppers by 2030.
- ❖ This growth is attributed to various factors:
 - ✓ **Increased Internet Accessibility:** Invest India underscores the escalating internet penetration, forecasting that 87% of Indian households will have internet access by 2025. Notably, mobile internet usage witnesses a significant surge, with extended access duration.
 - ✓ **Expanding Online Shopper Base:** The report predicts a rise in the number of online shoppers, with robust growth rates expected in both rural and urban areas.
 - ✓ **Affordable Data Plans:** India's highly affordable data packages play a pivotal role in driving e-commerce adoption, facilitating broader online access.

3.19 6TH BIMA MANTHAN

- ❖ The sixth edition of Bima Manthan, a periodic meeting of industry and IRDAI, unfolded over two days on April 25th and 26th, 2024, at IRDAI Headquarters, Hyderabad.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The Bima manthan was attended by Debasish Panda, the chairman of IRDAI, and other members of the regulatory body.
- ❖ It was also attended by the chief executive officers (CEOs) of general Insurance, life insurance, and standalone health insurance companies.
- ❖ The Bima Manthan focused on the issues confronting the industry, especially on the recent steps taken by IRDAI for insurance sector reform.
- ❖ It also discussed IRDAI 's insurance trinity—Bima Sugam, Bima Vistaar, and Bima Vahak—which has been designed to make insurance accessible to all and increase insurance penetration in the country.
- ❖ 2024 also marks the silver jubilee year of the IRDAI.
- ❖ The IRDAI has set a target of achieving insurance for all by 2047 while promoting ease of doing business and the welfare of policyholders.

4. ART AND CULTURE

4.1 EXCAVATION UNEARTHED 5,200-YEAR-OLD HARAPPAN SETTLEMENT IN KACHCHH, GUJARAT

- ❖ Archaeologists from Kerala University, in collaboration with various institutions, have unearthed a significant Harappan settlement at Padta Bet in Gujarat.

DISCOVERY AND SIGNIFICANCE

- ❖ Excavation unearthed evidence of a Harappan settlement dating back to circa 3200 BCE to 1700 BCE.
- ❖ Structures included circular and rectangular buildings made of locally available sandstone and shales.
- ❖ Discoveries: Unique pottery traditions, semi-precious stone beads, terracotta spindle whorls, copper, lithic tools, and animal bone fragments.
- ❖ The site's strategic location atop a hillock, overlooking a valley, and with access to a nearby stream suggests significance in Harappan urban planning and resource management.

4.2 LONGTE FESTIVAL

- ❖ **The Nyishi community** celebrated Longte festival with traditional fervour in the capital complex.
- ❖ The Longte festival is a significant cultural event for the Nyishi tribe in **Arunachal Pradesh**. It is marked by its unique tradition of abstaining from animal sacrifice, opting instead for symbolic decorations using feathers and bamboo.
- ❖ **The Longte** is one of the oldest and agriculturally significant festivals of the **Nyishi tribe**.
- ❖ It is a harbinger of a new season after which the sowing of seeds begins on cultivated fields.

ABOUT NYISHI TRIBE

- ❖ The largest ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh is **the Nyishis community**. They have a rich tradition and culture, and are known for their courage and determination. They believe that they are descendants of Abutani, and are part of the Tani group of communities.
- ❖ Nyishis practise Jhoom cultivation and grow **rice, millet, maize, yams**, and different vegetables. They live in longhouses called **Namlo**, made of mud and locally-sourced cane and bamboo. The houses are built on stilts using bamboo and wooden pillars, with the floor and walls made of **split bamboo**.

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5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

5.1 EVI: WORLD'S FIRST CONVERSATIONAL AI WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- ❖ A New York-based research lab and technology company Hume, has introduced what can be called the '**first conversational AI with emotional intelligence**'.

ABOUT EVI:

- ❖ It is the **world's first emotionally intelligent** voice AI. It accepts live audio input and returns both generated audio and transcripts augmented with measures of vocal expression.
- ❖ It is essentially an API that is powered by its proprietary **empathic large language model (eLLM)**. This eLLM reportedly understands and emulates tones of voices, and word emphasis to optimise human-AI conversations.
- ❖ It is trained on human reactions to optimize for positive expressions like happiness and satisfaction. EVI will continue to learn from users' reactions.
- ❖ By processing the tune, rhythm, and timbre of speech, EVI unlocks a variety of new capabilities, like knowing when to speak and generating more empathic language with the right tone of voice.

5.2 KODAIKANAL SOLAR OBSERVATORY

- ❖ **The 125th anniversary** of the iconic **Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KSO)** was celebrated on **1 April 2024** by **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), to remember the history of KSO, felicitate its scientists, and honour its legacy was a milestone for astronomy in India.
- ❖ The KSO houses a digital repository of 1.2 lakh digitised solar images and thousands of other images of the Sun recorded every day since the start of the 20th century.

ABOUT KODAIKANAL SOLAR OBSERVATORY:

- ❖ It is a solar observatory owned and operated by the Indian **Institute of Astrophysics**.
- ❖ The concept of an Indian solar observatory began in the late 19th century, and the government approved the establishment of the **Solar Physics Observatory in Kodaikanal in August 1893**.
- ❖ Kodaikanal in the **Palani hills of Tamil Nadu** was picked for the observatory because of its good atmospheric conditions, based on surveys by **Charles Michie Smith** (a Professor of Physics at the Madras Christian College).
- ❖ **Lord Wenlock**, the Governor of Madras at the time, laid the foundation stone for KoSO in 1895.
- ❖ Systematic observations at KoSO commenced on **March 14, 1901**.
- ❖ Initially, KoSO had telescopes to study sunspots, prominences, and solar radiation. Now, it has advanced instruments like the H-alpha telescope and the White Light Active Region Monitor (WARM) for high solar imaging.

5.3 DIGITAL INDIA TRUST AGENCY

- ❖ **The Reserve Bank of India** is considering establishing a **Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA)** to combat cyber fraud and illegal lending apps.

ABOUT DIGITAL INDIA TRUST AGENCY

- ❖ It will be responsible for stopping **illegal lending apps** from popping up.
- ❖ It will enable the verification of these digital lending apps and will maintain a public register of these verified applications.
- ❖ Any app which will not carry the "**verified**" tag of DIGITA, will be considered unauthorized.
- ❖ This will create an important and much-needed checkpoint in the fight against online financial fraud.

5.4 STARGATE' AI SUPERCOMPUTER

- ❖ Tech giants Microsoft and OpenAI have revealed plans to construct an unprecedented artificial intelligence supercomputer known as **“Stargate.”**
- ❖ This ambitious endeavor, estimated to cost a staggering \$100 billion, represents a significant leap forward in AI infrastructure and capabilities.
- ❖ Microsoft is set to spearhead the financing of the project, with OpenAI contributing its expertise in AI research and development.
- ❖ The ambitious Stargate project aims for completion by 2028, marking the culmination of a series of supercomputers envisioned by the collaboration over the next **six years.**
- ❖ **Stargate** represents the pinnacle of this collaboration, positioned as the fifth and final phase of a meticulously planned endeavor.
- ❖ The monumental budget primarily encompasses the acquisition of, a necessity for powering the supercomputer's advanced capabilities.
- ❖ The surging demand for GPUs, driven by the explosive growth of generative AI, has resulted in a market bottleneck.
- ❖ Project aims to diversify its chip suppliers to mitigate scarcity and price volatility. Both Microsoft and Nvidia have announced custom-designed computing chips, indicating a strategic move towards self-sufficiency in chip technology and reducing reliance on external suppliers.

5.5 AGNIKUL 'AGNIBAAN SORTED' MISSION

- ❖ For the **second time**, the launch of **AgniKul 'Agnibaan SOrTeD'** has been postponed.
- ❖ The **IIT Madras-based Agnikul** Cosmos was to test-fire an **Agnibaan rocket** with **3D-printed engine**, aiming for suborbital flight trajectory control.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **The Agnibaan SOrTeD** is a customisable launch vehicle that could be launched in one or two stages. It is powered by AgniKul's patented Agnilet engine.
- ❖ The rocket, weighing 580 kilograms, aimed to reach an altitude of 20 kilometers above the Earth before descending into the Bay of Bengal, carrying up to 7 kg of payloads.
- ❖ Agnikul Cosmos has been at the forefront of India's burgeoning private space sector, with ambitions to provide customisable and transportable launch vehicles for small satellites to **Low Earth Orbits (LEO).**
- ❖ **The Agnibaan rocket**, capable of carrying up to 100kg to orbits around 700 km high, represents a significant step towards achieving this goal.
- ❖ Its unique propulsion system, powered by a semi-cryogenic engine using Aircraft Turbine Fuel and liquid oxygen, sets a new standard in the industry.

AGNILET ENGINE:

- ❖ **Agnilet engine**, a **3D-printed, single-piece, 6 kN semi-cryogenic marvel**, drives Agnibaan's propulsion. The engine employs a novel blend of liquid kerosene and supercold liquid oxygen as propellants.

5.6 US AND UK SIGN AGREEMENT ON AI SECURITY TESTING

- ❖ **The United States and the United Kingdom** have signed an agreement to work together on testing advanced **artificial intelligence (AI)** models.
- ❖ The agreement follows commitments made at the **Bletchley Park AI Security Summit** last year.

ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI):

- ❖ AI began in the 1950s. Artificial intelligence means intellectual ability developed artificially.

- ❖ Computer system or robotic systems are created through AI. An attempt is made to run it on the basis of the same logic on the basis of which the human brain works.
- ❖ According to **John McCarthy, the father of AI**, it is the science and engineering of creating intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs. That is, it is the intelligence displayed by machines.

5.7 TSAT-1A

- ❖ **Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL)** has announced the successful deployment in space of its sub-metre resolution optical satellite, **TSAT-1A, by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket**.
- ❖ The satellite was placed in space as part of **the Bandwagon-1 mission** and was launched from **Kennedy Space centre, Florida, U.S.**

ABOUT TSAT-1A:

- ❖ It is an **optical sub-metre-resolution Earth observation satellite**.
- ❖ It was built by **Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL)** in collaboration with **Latin American company Satellogic Inc**, following a collaboration agreement between the two companies in late 2023.
- ❖ TSAT-1A was assembled in **TASL's Assembly, Integration, and Testing (AIT)** plant at its Vemagal facility in **Karnataka**.
- ❖ It was launched by **SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket** from the **Kennedy Space Center, Florida, in the US**.
- ❖ TSAT-1A's core strength lies in its ability to capture military grade imagery of Earth's surface with sub-meter resolution.
- ❖ It is equipped with both multispectral and hyperspectral imaging capabilities. This technology allows TSAT-1A to collect data across a wide range of wavelengths within the electromagnetic spectrum, providing a deeper and more nuanced understanding of land, water, and various natural resources.
- ❖ TSAT-1A boasts greater collection capacity, a wider dynamic range (the ability to capture detail in both very bright and very dark areas), and low-latency delivery of data.

5.8 RUSSIA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES ANGARA A5 ROCKET

- ❖ **Russia** has successfully launched its **Angara A5 space rocket** from the **Vostochny Cosmodrome**.
- ❖ According to mission control that launched the rocket, it reached an altitude of **more than 25,000 kilometers (15,500 mi)** per hour within minutes as it blasted off into space. **Roscosmos**, Russia's space agency, confirmed that the rocket operated as expected.
- ❖ **The Angara rocket** is a 54.5 meter (178.81 ft) three-stage rocket. Its weight is about 773 tons, about 24.5 tons of which can be carried into space.

ABOUT RUSSIA'S ANGARA PROJECT:

- ❖ Russia launched the Angara project in 1991, shortly after the dissolution of the **Soviet Union**, with the goal of creating a domestically produced launch vehicle.
- ❖ **The first Angara-A5** test flight took place in 2014 and the second in 2020 from **Plesetsk** in northern Russia. In 2021, a partial test of the Angara project was carried out, but unfortunately, it was unsuccessful.
- ❖ **President Vladimir Putin** has touted Angara's role in national security, although the project has been plagued by significant delays and technical setbacks.
- ❖ **Angara A5** is designed to replace **Russia's Proton launcher**.
- ❖ Russia began work on the Angara rocket project to maintain access to space after the deal to lease Baikonur from Kazakhstan expires in 2050.

5.9 INDOOS

- ❖ **India and the US** have decided to reactivate the **Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS)**, a network of 36 moored buoys in the high seas to collect high-resolution ocean and atmospheric data for weather forecasts.
- ❖ **The IndOOS array** of buoys fell into neglect and disrepair during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to gaps in observational data considered crucial by weather forecasters, particularly since the links between the **Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon and monsoon** were established.
- ❖ The reactivation of IndOOS was discussed last month during a meeting of Earth Sciences Secretary **M Ravichandran** with Rick Spinrad, Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US.
- ❖ The moored buoys are part of the Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA) programme that was born out of a collaboration between **the Ministry of Earth Sciences and NOAA in 2008**.

5.10 BEL SIGNS MOU WITH IIT-MANDI

- ❖ **Navratna Defence PSU, Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL)** has signed an MoU with the Indian Institute of Technology, **Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)**, for co-operation in Research and Technology/Product Development — in the areas of Semiconductors, Quantum Technologies and Drones.
- ❖ The MoU aims at leveraging the complementary strengths and capabilities of BEL and IIT-Mandi.
- ❖ It will support indigenization of products/solutions being supplied by BEL to its customers and is in line with the Government of India's '**Make in India**' initiative.

5.11 INDIA'S FIRST MOBILE MEDICAL DEVICES CALIBRATION FACILITY

- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has launched India's First 'medical devices calibration facility on wheels.
- ❖ This has been developed by IIT Madras under its 'Anaivarukkum IITM' (IITM for all) Initiatives.
- ❖ This mobile facility will ensure pervasive quality healthcare irrespective of geographical locations across the country. This will help to test and maintain medical devices that are used in wide range of hospitals including those in villages at their doorsteps.
- ❖ This initiative boosts the United National Sustainable Development Goal 3, which calls for Health and well-being for all.
- ❖ The infrastructure available in this mobile unit include state-of-the-art equipment to test the safety of medical devices and their functionalities as per international standards.

5.12 META INTRODUCES NEW AI ASSISTANT POWERED BY LLAMA 3

- ❖ Meta announces its new AI assistant, Meta AI, powered by the advanced language model, **Llama 3**. This AI is being integrated across all major Meta apps and will soon be accessible on **Meta's VR headset and smart glasses**.

FEATURES OF META AI

- ❖ Meta AI is an **artificial intelligence laboratory** owned by Meta Platforms Inc. (**formerly known as Facebook, Inc.**).
- ❖ Meta AI develops various forms of artificial intelligence, including augmented and artificial reality technologies. Meta AI is also an academic research laboratory focused on generating knowledge for the AI community.
- ❖ Basically, Meta AI is a free virtual assistant which can be used **"to do everything from research, planning a trip with your group chat, writing a photo caption and more,"**

ABOUT LIMA 3

- ❖ It is the most advanced AI model, capable of understanding and generating human-like responses to a wide range of queries and prompts. The model runs on powerful chips designed by **Nvidia**, enabling it to process and analyze large volumes of data efficiently.

5.13 C-DOT AND IIT JODHPUR SIGN AGREEMENT

- ❖ C-DOT, the premier Telecom R&D Centre of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India and **Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur (IIT-J)** signed an agreement for “**Automated Service Management in 5G and Beyond Networks Using AI**”.
- ❖ The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) of the DoT, which is designed for providing funding support to domestic companies and institutions involved in technology design, development, commercialization of telecommunication products and solutions to enable affordable broadband and mobile services in rural and remote areas.
- ❖ The primary objective is to develop AI frameworks for automated network management, fault detection, and diagnostic techniques by utilizing continuous information generated within the network like 5G.
- ❖ The service will establish a real time 5G and Beyond testbed (in compliance with O-RAN) for the demonstration of the developed automated network management and slicing techniques in conjunction with specific application use-cases such as smart metering, remotely operated vehicles, etc.

5.14 IIT GUWAHATI UNVEILS 3D PRINTED DUMMY BALLOT UNIT

- ❖ The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation Cell (SVEEP) of Kamrup Election District has partnered with Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati to develop a innovative 3D printed dummy ballot unit to enhance voter awareness and engagement.
- ❖ It Crafted with the objective of acquainting citizens, particularly new voters, and senior citizens, with the intricacies of voting procedures.
- ❖ The 3D printed dummy ballot unit aims to dispel any apprehensions, anxiety or uncertainties associated with the voting process.
- ❖ The dummy ballot unit is designed and manufactured with cutting-edge 3D printing technology and PLA (polylactic acid), a biodegradable and eco-friendly material derived from corn starch.
- ❖ The researchers at IIT Guwahati designed and manufactured the device within just 48 hours, incorporating interactive features such as sound and light as output indicators to assist users during the voting process.

5.15 MICROSOFT LAUNCHES LIGHTWEIGHT AI MODEL PHI-3-MINI

- ❖ Microsoft has launched Phi-3 Mini, a freely available, lightweight small language AI model.
- ❖ The company plans to further release two other models in the same scale.
- ❖ The model is meant to be simpler and cheaper compared to other heavyweight large language models like OpenAI's GPT-4 Turbo.
- ❖ This is the smallest model that Microsoft has released yet and can be run locally, which means it can run for free on a smartphone without requiring an internet connection.
- ❖ The model can also run on the chips that power regular computer instead of the expensive and hard to find AI processors that Nvidia makes.
- ❖ Phi-3 mini has 3.8 billion parameters while the two other models that are yet to be released Phi-3 Small and Phi-3 Medium will have 7 billion parameters and 14 billion parameters respectively.
- ❖ The Phi-3 mini will be available on Azure, Hugging Face and Ollama.
- ❖ The company had released Phi-2 in December that performed on par with bigger models like Llama 2.
- ❖ According to Microsoft Phi-3 performs better than this older version and can respond to queries in a manner that is close to a model 10 times bigger its size.

6. RANKINGS

6.1 QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT 2024

- ❖ **The 2024 QS World University Rankings** by Subject, compiled by global higher education experts QS Quacquarelli Symonds, offer a detailed analysis of over 16,400 university programs from 1500+ universities in 95 countries.
- ❖ The rankings cover 56 academic disciplines and five faculty areas, showcasing India's remarkable progress in academia. This year, 69 Indian universities secured a position in the rankings with 424 entries, marking a significant 19.4% increase from the previous year.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **IIM-Ahmedabad, IIM-Bangalore, and IIM-Calcutta** secured places within the top 50 institutions worldwide for business and management studies.
- ❖ **Jawaharlal Nehru University** stands out, ranking 20th globally for development studies, marking it as India's highest-ranking university in this field.
- ❖ Globally, India holds the fourth position in terms of research volume, following **China, the US, and the UK**. However, its ranking drops to ninth place when considering research impact.
- ❖ **The Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences** in Chennai achieved the 24th position globally for dentistry studies, highlighting India's excellence in this domain on the international stage.

6.2 TIME 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE 2024

- ❖ **Time magazine** has released the list of **100 most influential personalities of the world**.
- ❖ At just 25 years of age, Palestinian photojournalist **Motaz Azaiza** is the youngest person on this year's TIME list.
- ❖ **Yulia Navalnaya**, wife of late Russian opposition leader **Alexei Navalny**, has also been included in this list.
- ❖ This time, 15 artists, 15 titans, 16 icons, 24 leaders, 15 innovators and 15 pioneers have been included in Time magazine.

INDIANS IN THE LIST:

- ❖ **Olympian Sakshi Malik**, Indian-origin actor **Dev Patel**, actor **Alia Bhatt**, Microsoft CEO **Satya Nadella** and **World Bank President Ajay Banga** were among the eight Indians named in the prestigious TIME's list of 100 most influential people in the world.

ALIA BHATT

- ❖ In his write-up for **Time** magazine, British film director Tom Harper described Alia Bhatt as a **"formidable talent."** Bhatt, who holds British citizenship, is based in India and works predominantly in the Hindi film industry. She is the recipient of a National Film Award, one of India's highest paid actresses and a brand ambassador for Gucci. She made her international debut with Netflix's **"Heart of Stone"** last year.

DEV PATEL

- ❖ A British actor of Indian descent – his parents are Indian Gujarati Hindus – **Dev Patel** made a crackling big screen debut with **"Slumdog Millionaire"**, a film that propelled him to international fame in 2008. He made his directorial debut with **"Monkey Man"** this year.

SAKSHI MALIK

- ❖ India's first and only female wrestler to win an Olympic medal, **Sakshi Malik** last year became the face of resistance against Brij Bhushan Singh, the Wrestling Federation of India chief who was accused of

sexually harassing athletes. **“This fight is no longer only for India’s female wrestlers,”** said Malik, **“it is for the daughters of India whose voices have been silenced time and again.”**

AJAY BANGA

- ❖ India-born **Ajay Banga** has ascended the ranks to serve as president of the World Bank today. In her write-up for Time, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen described Banga as a leader with the **“skill and drive to take on the monumental task of transforming an essential institution.”** Banga was born in Pune and graduated from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi with a bachelor’s degree in economics. He became a US citizen in 2007.

JIGAR SHAH

- ❖ Director of the US Department of Energy’s Loan Programs Office, Jigar **Shah** **“leads one of the largest economic-development programs the world has ever seen,”** says Richard Branson. He was born in India but moved to the United States when he was one-year-old.

ASMA KHAN

- ❖ An Indian-born British **restaurateur** and cookbook author, Asma Khan is the force behind the acclaimed London restaurant, Darjeeling Express, which is famous for its all-female kitchen. **“Asma’s food is surprising. It doesn’t taste like restaurant food—and that is the highest compliment,”** wrote Padma Lakshmi for Time.

PRIYAMVADA NATARAJAN

- ❖ **Priyamvada Natarajan** is a professor in the departments of astronomy and physics at Yale University. She is noted for her work in mapping dark matter and dark energy. Natarajan was born in Tamil Nadu and studied at Delhi Public School, RK Puram.

SATYA NADELLA

- ❖ He is the CEO of Microsoft, noted for his leadership in the technology sector and contributions to the global business community. **Nadella** started at Microsoft in 1992 as a Windows NT operating system developer.

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7. DEFENCE

7.1 DEFENCE EXPORT

- ❖ According to **Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** India's arms exports have surpassed **Rs 21,000 crore** for the first time.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ India has been expanding its exports of a wide variety of weapons, from **BrahMos** cruise missiles to artillery guns, in an effort to become self-reliant in the sector.
- ❖ The country has taken a significant step forward in becoming '**Aatmanirbhar**' or self-reliant in defence exports. The defence minister stated on April 1st that the arms exports reached Rs 21,083 crore in the financial year 2023-24, an impressive growth of **32.5%** compared to the previous fiscal year. In the financial year 2022-23, India's defence exports were nearly Rs 16,000 crore.
- ❖ This development comes as part of New Delhi's push to boost defence exports under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. India has set an ambitious target of taking annual defence exports to **Rs 35,000 crore by 2024-25**.

INDIA'S SUPPLIES TO ARMS:

- ❖ India supplies arms to more than 85 countries, including **Italy, the Maldives, Russia, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Egypt, Israel, Spain, Chile, and others**.
- ❖ India's defense exports have seen significant growth in recent years, from Rs 686 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 21,083 crore in 2023-24.
- ❖ Around 100 firms are exporting defence products in India and the Centre allocated Rs 6.21 lakh crore to the defence budget for 2024-25, a 4.3% increase from Rs 5.94 lakh crore allocated in the previous fiscal year.
- ❖ Despite India's "**aatmanirbharta**" push, it remains the **world's largest arms importer**, accounting for **9.8%** of all arms imports, according to the Swedish think-tank, **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**. The rise in India's arms imports has been driven by tensions with **Pakistan and China**.
- ❖ While Russia remains India's primary supplier of arms, its share of Indian arms imports has decreased from 76% in 2009-13 to 36% in 2019-23. The report said that India is now looking to Western suppliers, "**most notably France and the US,**" and "**its own arms industry**" to meet its military requirements.
- ❖ The report also revealed that arms imports by Pakistan jumped 43% between 2014-18 and 2019-23, accounting for 4.3% of the world total. Pakistan was the fifth-largest arms importer globally.
- ❖ The other countries in SIPRI's top five weapons list for 2019-23, Iran and Iran, were Saudi Arabia (second), Qatar (third) and Japanese (fourth).

7.2 'GAGAN SHAKTI-2024'

- ❖ **The Indian Air Force (IAF)** is being conducting the country's largest air military exercise in the name of '**Gagan Shakti-2024**'.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The exercise is held once in **five years**.
- ❖ It commenced on April 1, 2024, at Pokhran's field firing range in **Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan**.
- ❖ This exercise will continue till April 10 encompassing both western and northern fronts.
- ❖ The exercise is supported by the Indian Army, which is facilitating logistical operations to ensure the smooth movement of around 10,000 IAF personnel and ammunition across India.

- ❖ Various fighter planes and helicopters such as **Tejas, Rafale, Sukhoi 30, Jaguar, Globemaster, Chinook, Apache, and Prachanda** are participating in '**Gagan Shakti**,' validating the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Indian Air Force.
- ❖ It was last held in 2018, during which the IAF completed over 11,000 sorties during the two-phase air manoeuvres.

7.3 PROJECT AKASHTTEER

- ❖ The Indian Army has started the induction of control and reporting systems under '**Project Akashteer**' to bolster its air defence capabilities.

ABOUT PROJECT AKASHTTEER:

- ❖ **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** and **Ministry of Defence** had signed a contract for the procurement of Automated Air Defence Control & Reporting System '**Project Akashteer**' worth **Rs 1,982 crore** for the Indian Army in April 2023.
- ❖ It is designed and manufactured by **Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL)**.
- ❖ **Akash Teer** will integrate the Indian Army's sensors, and weapon systems.
- ❖ It will form a seamless master network, which will fully integrate the full spectrum of air operations by any of the forces.
- ❖ **Project Akashteer** will empower the Air Defence units of the **Indian Army** with an indigenous, state-of-the-art capability, to effectively operate in an integrated manner.
- ❖ **Akashteer** will enable monitoring of low-level airspace over the battle areas of the **Indian Army** and effectively control the **Ground Based Air Defence Weapon Systems**.
- ❖ The Army has declared the year 2024 as the '**Year of Technological Absorption**'.

7.4 ICG INAUGURATES NEW AQUATIC CENTRE IN MANDAPAM, TAMIL NADU

- ❖ **Indian Coast Guard Director General Rakesh Pal** inaugurated the Indian Coast Guard Aquatic Centre at **ICGS Mandapam near Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu**.
- ❖ The ICG Chief is on a four-day visit to the maritime force's bases in **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Puducherry** and made a maiden visit to Chennai for a review of operational preparedness and commensurate infrastructure development in the region.
- ❖ **The Indian Coast Guard, Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force** are the four forces under the **Defence Ministry** and are governed by their different acts.

7.5 TRI-SERVICE CONFERENCE 'PARIVARTAN CHINTAN'

- ❖ The first-ever **tri-service armed forces** planning conference called '**Parivartan Chintan**' was held in New Delhi on 8 April 2024.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The conference was organised by the **Union Ministry of Defence**.
- ❖ The first tri-service planning conference was chaired by the Chief of Defence Staff, **General Anil Chauhan**.
- ❖ Chief of the Indian Army General **Manoj Pande**, Air Marshal **Vivek Ram Chaudhary** of the **Indian Air Force** and Admiral **R.Hari Kumar** of the Indian Navy represented the three services.
- ❖ The meeting of the chief of the three-armed forces, the Army, Navy and Air Force, was held in the background of the attempt in the country to set up a unified, integrated theatre command, combining all the three wings of the armed forces.
- ❖ **The 'Chintan'** was curated as a brainstorming and idea incubation discussion to generate new and fresh ideas, initiatives and reforms to further propel Jointness and Integration in the Armed Forces.

- ❖ Jointness and Integration are the cornerstones of the transformation to Joint Structures which the Indian Armed forces are progressing towards with the intention of being **“Future Ready”**.

ABOUT THEATRE COMMAND:

- ❖ In the military, theatre means a specific geographical location, which could be on land, air or sea. These identified areas are or could become areas of conflict in the future.
- ❖ **The Lt. Gen (Retd) DB Shekatkar committee**, set up by the **Union Defence Ministry** in 2015, recommended setting up an integrated tri-service command in India.
- ❖ In India, there are 19 commands of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Only two commands, the Andaman and Nicobar Command and the Strategic Forces Command, which is in charge of the country's nuclear weapons, function as tri-service commands.
- ❖ The theatre system will provide India with an integrated warfighting capacity that can deter threats while also reducing operational costs.

7.6 INDIAN ARMY GETS PORTABLE IGLA-S AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

- ❖ The first shipment of 24 Iгла-S **Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS)** from Russia, along with 100 missiles, has been received by the Indian Army.
- ❖ The procurement of these systems is aimed at enhancing the Indian Army's Very Short-Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) capabilities, particularly in the high mountainous terrain along the northern border.
- ❖ India signed a contract with Russia in November last year for 120 launchers and 400 missiles. While the first batch has come from Russia, the rest of these systems will be made in India through Transfer of Technology (ToT) from Russia by an Indian company.

ABOUT IGLA-S:

- ❖ It is a **man-portable air defence system (MANPADS)** developed by **Russia**.
- ❖ It is known in the West as **SA-24 Grinch**.
- ❖ It entered service with the **Russian Army in 2004**.
- ❖ It can be fired by an individual or crew to bring down an enemy aircraft.
- ❖ It has the capability of bringing down low-flying aircraft. It can also identify and neutralise air targets, such as cruise missiles and drones.
- ❖ The Iгла-S system comprises of combat equipment, including the 9M342 missile and the 9P522 launching mechanism, along with maintenance equipment, including the 9V866-2 mobile test station and the 9F719-2 test set.
- ❖ It has an effective range upto 6 km.
- ❖ The limiting altitude of effective target destruction for the **"Iгла-S"** complex is 3.5 km.
- ❖ It has a heavier, more powerful warhead to maximize damage capabilities, as well as contact and timed fuzes for increased attack range.
- ❖ The warhead is a high-explosive fragmentation (HE-FRAG) and weighs 2.5 kg.

7.7 SAGAR KAVACH 2024

- ❖ The Indian Navy has conducted a maritime security exercise called **‘Sagar Kavach’** in the strategically important Lakshadweep Island.
- ❖ The exercise involved the participation of all maritime security agencies, including the **Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police, Fisheries, Customs, and other security agencies**.
- ❖ The exercise witnessed enhanced preparedness, response mechanism, surveillance capabilities and coordination between the coastal security stake holders.

7.8 C-DOME DEFENSE SYSTEM

- ❖ Israel deployed its ship-mounted defense system, C-Dome, for the first time. C-Dome, a naval adaptation of the Iron Dome, protects against rocket and missile threats.
- ❖ Utilizing radar detection and interceptors, it boasts high effectiveness. Mounted on Sa'ar 6-class corvettes, it integrates with ship radar for enhanced target detection.
- ❖ Operational since November 2022, C-Dome ensures comprehensive maritime defense against modern threats, showcasing Israel's advanced military technology

7.9 EXERCISE 'DUSTLIK'

- ❖ **The fifth edition of the 'Dustlik' Joint Military Exercise** between India and Uzbekistan is scheduled to begin in **Termez District, Uzbekistan, from April 15.**
- ❖ The Exercise is scheduled from **15 to 28 April 2024.**
- ❖ The participating contingents from the Indian Armed Forces and Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan will train together to cement the foundation for collaborations & future military interactions.
- ❖ **During the 14-day exercise,** soldiers from the Indian Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan will undergo comprehensive joint training sessions.

7.10 NAVAL INVESTITURE CEREMONY

- ❖ **Admiral R Hari Kumar, the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS),** oversaw a prestigious Naval Investiture Ceremony at INS Hansa, Goa on **April 14, 2024.**
- ❖ During the ceremony, Gallantry and Distinguished Service awards were bestowed upon Naval personnel by **the Hon'ble President of India,** acknowledging their **bravery, leadership, professional accomplishments, and outstanding service to the nation.**

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ During the ceremony, **Admiral R Hari Kumar** awarded **Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry)** to **Cdr Manish Singh Karki, Cdr Kaustab Banerjee, Lt Cdr Panneerselvam Vishnu Prasanna, and Lt Cdr Bhaskar.**
- ❖ Additionally, he presented **the Lt VK Jain Memorial Gold Medal** for pioneering research in Weapon Improvement and Electrical Engineering, along with the **Capt Ravi Dhir Memorial Gold Medal** for promoting Flight Safety.
- ❖ The CNS Trophy for Best Green Practices 2023 went to Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, and INS Valsura in industrial and non-industrial categories.

7.11 INDIA DELIVERS FIRST BATCH OF BRAHMOS TO PHILIPPINES

- ❖ This is **the first export order** for the supersonic cruise missile, a joint venture between **India and Russia.**
- ❖ In January 2022, **Philippines** concluded a \$375-million deal with India for three batteries of **shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos** becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between **India and Russia.**

ABOUT BRAHMOS MISSILE SYSTEM

- ❖ **The BrahMos** is a supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by **India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.**
- ❖ It possesses the capability to be deployed from several platforms, including air, sea, and land.
- ❖ BrahMos is named after the rivers **Brahmaputra and Moskva (Russia).**
- ❖ One special thing about this missile is that it can also change its path in the air, which makes it difficult to track.
- ❖ The speed of the missile handed over to the Philippines is 2.8 times more than the speed of sound.

- ❖ Each system of BrahMos has two missile launchers, a radar and a command and control center. Through this, **two BrahMos missiles** can be fired at the enemy within 10 seconds from submarine, ship, or aircraft.

7.12 AFMS WITH IIT KANPUR TO DEVELOP TECH FOR SOLDIERS' HEALTH ISSUES

- ❖ **The Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS)** signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for collaborative research and training with **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur**.
- ❖ **The MoU** was signed by **Director General Armed Forces Medical Services Lt Gen Daljit Singh** and Officiating Director, **IIT Kanpur Prof. S. Ganesh**.
- ❖ AFMS and IIT Kanpur will team up to undertake research and develop new technologies to address health problems faced by soldiers in difficult terrains.
- ❖ IIT Kanpur will also provide technical expertise for developing AI diagnostic models, at Armed Forces Centre for Computational Medicine established in Armed Forces Medical College, which is first of its kind amongst medical colleges in India.
- ❖ The faculty exchange program, joint academic activities and development of training modules will also be planned.

7.13 POORVI LEHER'

- ❖ **The Indian Navy** has conducted **Exercise Poorvi Lehar** on east coast under the Operational Control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command.
- ❖ The exercise was aimed at validation of procedures towards assessment of the Indian Navy's preparedness to meet maritime security challenges in the region.

7.14 SUCCESSFUL TEST OF NEW VERSION OF MEDIUM-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE

- ❖ India successfully launched a new version of Medium-Range Ballistic Missile capable of striking targets at distances exceeding 250 km.
- ❖ The new variant of a Medium-Range Ballistic Missile was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command.
- ❖ The user launch has proven the operational capability of the Command and validated new technologies.

ABOUT MEDIUM-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE

- ❖ A medium-range missile is defined by having a maximum range of between 1,000 and 3,000 kilometres.
- ❖ Agni-I is the medium range missile of India.

7.15 INDIA 4TH LARGEST MILITARY SPENDER IN 2023: SIPRI

- ❖ The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has published his report recently.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ According to SIPRI, the total global military expenditure increased by 6.8% to \$2443 billion in 2023. This was the highest annual percentage growth in global military expenditure since 2009.
- ❖ The military expenditure went up in all five geographical regions, with major spending increases recorded in Europe, Asia and Oceania and the Middle East.
- ❖ The report comes amid ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world such as the ones involving Israel-Hamas, Iran-Israel, Russian-Ukraine besides volatility in the Red Sea region.

- ❖ According to the report, India was the fourth largest military spender globally in 2023 with an expenditure of USD 83.6 billion, behind the US, China and Russia.
- ❖ The Indian expenditure on military 2023 was \$83.6 billion.
- ❖ According to SIPRI the largest percentage increase in military spending by any country in 2023 was seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (105 percent increase). The Government in Congo is engaged in conflict with various armed groups in the country.
- ❖ As per the report, Ukraine became the eighth largest military spender in 2023, increasing its spending by 51%.

FIVE BIGGEST SPENDERS IN 2023

- ❖ United States of America - The US spent \$916 billion on military in 2023, an increase of 2.3 per cent as compared to last year.
- ❖ China- Its military budget was estimated at \$296 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.0 per cent from 2022.
- ❖ Russia- Its military spending increased by 24 per cent to an estimated \$109 billion in 2023.
- ❖ India- India spent \$83.6 billion on its military in 2023 an increase of 4.2 per cent as compared to 2022.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia - Its estimated expenditure is \$75.8 billion.

ABOUT SIPRI:

- ❖ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is a research institute which was set up in 1966.
- ❖ Its main area of research is global or regional conflicts, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- ❖ Headquarters: Stockholm, Sweden

7.16 DRDO DEVELOPS INDIA'S LIGHTEST BULLET PROOF JACKET

- ❖ The Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur has successfully developed the lightest Bullet Proof Jacket in the country for protection against 7.62 x 54 R API (Level 6 of BIS 17051) ammunition.
- ❖ This bullet proof jacket was successfully tested at TBRL, Chandigarh as per BIS 17051-2018.
- ❖ This jacket is based upon new design approach, where novel material along with new processes have been used.
- ❖ The front Hard Armour Panel (HAP) of this jacket defeats multiple hits (06 shots) of 7.62 x 54 R API (Sniper rounds) in both ICW (In-conjunction with) and Standalone design.
- ❖ The ergonomically designed front HAP is made up of monolithic ceramic plate with polymer backing which enhances the wearability and comfort during the operation.
- ❖ The areal density of ICW Hard Armour Panel (HAP) and standalone HAP is less than 40 kg/m² and 43 kg/m² respectively.
- ❖ Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur is a unit of DRDO.

7.17 INDIAN NAVY LAUNCHES 6TH AMMUNITION BARGE BUILT BY LOCAL SHIPYARD

- ❖ India's Naval arm, the Indian Navy (IN), recently bolstered its capabilities with the launch of the LSAM 20, the sixth barge in its 11 x ACTCM Barge Project. The launch ceremony, held on April 29, 2024, took place at the M/s Suryadipta Project Pvt. Ltd. shipyard in Thane.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ LSAM 20 is an Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile Barge.
- ❖ It was constructed by M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt. Ltd., a MSME shipyard, showcasing India's Make in India initiative.
- ❖ The contract for building all 11 barges was signed between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt. Ltd. on March 5th, 2021.

BENEFITS OF THE ACTCM BARGES:

- ❖ These barges will significantly enhance the operational efficiency of the Indian Navy.
- ❖ They will facilitate the transportation, embarkation, and disembarkation of critical supplies, including ammunition, to Indian Navy ships at jetties and outer harbors.
- ❖ The barges are indigenously designed and built, adhering to the stringent standards of the Indian Register of Shipping.
- ❖ Model testing was conducted at the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory in Visakhapatnam during the design phase.

8. SPACE

8.1 PRATUSH

- ❖ **Astronomers** are looking forward to opening a new window on the universe by posting high-resolution **telescopes on the moon**, and in orbit around it.
- ❖ There are numerous proposals to do this from astronomers around the world — including one from India called **PRATUSH**.

ABOUT PRATUSH TELESCOPE:

- ❖ **Probing Reionization of the Universe using Signal from Hydrogen (PRATUSH)** is a radio telescope to be sited on the moon's far side.
- ❖ It is being built by the **Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru** with active collaboration from the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- ❖ It aims to uncover the Cosmic Dawn of the Universe, answering questions about the formation of the first stars, their nature, and the light they emitted.
- ❖ The project focuses on studying the **Cosmic Dawn and Epoch of Reionization (EoR)** using radiation from neutral hydrogen gas, which emits a signal at a 21-cm wavelength.
- ❖ This signal can provide insights into the early Universe's transition from neutral to ionized states.
- ❖ **PRATUSH** will carry instruments designed to detect this weak signal, operating over a frequency band of **30-250 MHz**.
- ❖ Its observations will be free from ground-based interference, enabling more accurate measurements.

8.2 ISRO PREPARING FOR NEXT LUNAR MISSION CHANDRAYAAN-4

- ❖ **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** Chief S Somnath announced that the upcoming phase of the Chandrayaan project is in progress.
- ❖ India's aspiration of landing an astronaut on the moon by **2040**.
- ❖ **Chandrayaan-4** is the first step in the direction-to step a craft on the moon and collect sample and bring it back to Earth. It demonstrates the full cycle of going to the moon and coming back to Earth.

8.3 GOVT NOTIFIES 100% FDI IN SPACE SECTOR

- ❖ Complete 100% FDI under automatic route is permitted to manufacture components and systems/sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user segment.
- ❖ At present, satellite manufacturing and operation, satellite data products and ground and user segment can get a 74% FDI. Beyond this, government route will be applicable.
- ❖ Up to 49% FDI is allowed in the creation of spaceports for launching and receiving spacecraft through automatic routes. Beyond this, government route is applicable on these activities.
- ❖ **Elon Musk** expected to announce the launch of Star link and investments worth \$2-\$3 billion.

WHAT IS STARLINK ?

- ❖ **Starlink** has a constellation of 4,000 low earth orbit satellites. Starlink is a satellite internet constellation operated by **Starlink Services, LLC**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of American aerospace company SpaceX, providing coverage to **over 70 countries**.

9. ENVIRONMENT

9.1 GOVT RAISED RS 16,507 CRORE VIA PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES DISINVESTMENT IN FY'24

- ❖ The government has **garnered Rs 16,507 crore** by selling minority stake in state-owned companies in 2023-24 fiscal, lower than what was projected in its revised estimates.
- ❖ During the **2023-24 fiscal, which ended March 31**, the government sold stakes in 10 central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) through offer for sale (OFS).
- ❖ Share sale in Coal India fetched **Rs 4,186 crore**, while in NHPC and NLC India it garnered **Rs 2,488 crore and Rs 2,129 crore**, respectively. The government raised **Rs 858 crore** through initial public offering of IREDA.
- ❖ The government also sold shares in **RVNL, SJVN, IRCON International, HUDCO** and earned remittances from SUUTI.
- ❖ The budget had pegged disinvestment proceeds **for 2023-24 fiscal at Rs 51,000 crore**. However, the revised estimates (RE) on February 1, 2024, did away with separate head for disinvestment receipts.

9.2 ADANI GREEN ENERGY BECOMES FIRST COMPANY TO SURPASS 10,000 MW RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY

- ❖ **Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL)**, India's largest and one of the world's leading renewable energy (RE) companies, has surpassed **10,000 megawatts (MW)** of operational portfolio, delivering reliable, affordable, and clean power to the national grid.
- ❖ AGEL's operational portfolio consists of **7,393 MW solar, 1,401 MW wind and 2,140 MW** wind-solar hybrid capacity.
- ❖ The milestone is a testament to AGEL and its development partners firmly moving towards the goal of **45,000 MW renewable energy by 2030**.
- ❖ AGEL's 10,934 MW operational portfolio will power more than 5.8 million homes and avoid about 21 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually.
- ❖ AGEL is developing the **world's largest renewable energy project of 30,000 MW** on barren land at **Khavda in Kutch, Gujarat**. Built across 538 sq km, it is five times the size of Paris and almost as large as Mumbai city.

9.3 JUSTICE NAJMI WAZIRI TO CHAIR COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTING FORESTS

- ❖ **The Delhi High Court** has appointed a former **Delhi High Court judge, Justice Najmi Waziri** as chairman of an internal departmental committee of city officials dealing with the protection of forests in the **National Capital Territory of Delhi**.
- ❖ The **Bench of Justice Tushar Rao Gedela** was considering an application filed through amicus curiae **Aditya Narayan Prasad**. The application sought a modification of **its December 21, 2023** order.

ABOUT COMMITTEE

- ❖ **The Delhi High Court** in December last year had ordered the setting up of an internal department on the protection of **Delhi's forest**. The committee was to consist of the chief conservator of forest, the

conservator of forest and deputy conservator of forest (protecting and monitoring) and the deputy conservator of forest concerned with the preservation of deemed forests.

- ❖ The Court directed the committee to take concrete steps **for preservation, protection, reclamation and enhancement** of both **protected and deemed forests**.
- ❖ The court ordered all the concerned departments of the **Delhi government** to cooperate with the committee and asked the Delhi government to provide secretarial facilities and assistance to **Justice Waziri**.

ABOUT JUSTICE NAJMI WAZIRI

- ❖ **Justice Waziri of Delhi High Court** was famous as the **green judge of Delhi**. During his tenure as a judge he passed several orders on increasing the green cover of Delhi. He issued at least **150 judgments** where the funds deposited by defaulting litigants as costs were used to plant trees.
- ❖ His order over **five years** in various cases led to the planting of **over 370,000 trees** in various parts of Delhi which also contributed in developing two parks in Delhi. He retired from the Delhi Court in July 2023.

FOREST IN NCT DELHI

- ❖ According to the **Forest Department of Delhi** the total recorded forest area in **Delhi is 85 sq. km** which is **5.73% of the geographic area Delhi**. The Reserved and Protected Forests constituted **91.76% and 8.24%** of the total forest area respectively.

9.4 THE MANOHAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MOPA, BECAME THE 14TH AIRPORT IN INDIA TO LAUNCH THE DIGI YATRA SYSTEM, WHICH MAKES THE TRAVELLING EXPERIENCE MORE SEAMLESS AND CONVENIENT.

ABOUT DIGITAL YATRA

- ❖ The Digi Yatra is a biometric-enabled system that uses facial recognition technology to establish the passengers' identities and link them to their boarding passes.

9.5 INDIA TO STOP IMPORTING UREA BY END OF 2025

- ❖ According to the **Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mansukh Mandaviya**, India will stop importing urea by the end of **2025** due to an increase in local production capacity with the commissioning of new fertilizer plants.
- ❖ India is a **big importer of Urea and meets** around 30% of its 35 million tonnes of annual urea requirement from imports.
- ❖ The urea production in the country increased from **225.08 lakh tonnes** in 2014-15 to 284.95 lakh tonnes in 2022-23.
- ❖ In 2022-23, the total import of Urea was 75.8 lakh tonnes, which is around 30% of the domestic demand. The main sources of urea imports are **Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE**.
- ❖ The government of India introduced the New Urea Policy 2015 with the aim of boosting indigenous urea production.
- ❖ Under the New Urea Policy, the government plans to revive closed fertilizer plants at **Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Ramagundam in Telangana, Talcher in Odisha, Barauni in Bihar, and Sindri in Jharkhand**. Four plants have already been revived, and the fifth will soon be revived.

9.6 KABIL AND CSIR-IIMT SIGNS MOU

- ❖ Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) for Technical & Knowledge cooperation for Critical Minerals.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ Under the MoU, KABIL will leverage the technical expertise and services of CSIR-IMMT to undertake various projects, including the design and analysis of metallurgical test work-plans, development and review of process flowsheets, and the selection of process technologies for mineral processing, beneficiation, and metal extraction.
- ❖ Furthermore, the agreement will also embark on joint research and facilitate the exchange of scientific information between the two entities.
- ❖ Advancing scientific research and technology development in the mineral and metallurgical sectors are essential to the growth and sustainability of the Indian mining industry and ultimately will play a pivotal role in meeting mineral security of the nation as well as domestic requirements.

ABOUT KABIL:

- ❖ KABIL is a JV company of three Indian public sector undertakings - National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL)
- ❖ It work under the aegis of Ministry of Mines, Government of India.
- ❖ Mandate of KABIL is to identify, explore, acquire, develop, mine, process and procure critical and strategic minerals to ensure supply side assurance and mineral security of the nation for meeting domestic requirements and give a big push to Make in India initiative.

9.7 GOVERNMENT SET COAL PRODUCTION TARGET

- ❖ The government has set a target of producing **170 million tonnes of coal** from captive and commercial coal blocks in the country during the financial year 2024-25. This target is 26 percent more than the 116 metric tons produced in 2023-24.
- ❖ For Coal India Limited, the target of coal production from the mines of Coal India Limited in **2024-25** has been set at one billion tonnes.
- ❖ The coal sector in India was nationalized under **the Coal Mines (Nationalization) Act, 1973**. The Indian government-owned Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries had a monopoly on coal production in India, but later allowed private sector participation.

COAL PRODUCTION IN INDIA-

- ❖ India has **the fourth largest coal reserves** in the world. It is estimated to be around **319.02 billion tonnes**.
- ❖ The top five states in terms of total coal reserves in India are:
 - ✓ Jharkhand
 - ✓ Odisha
 - ✓ Chhattisgarh
 - ✓ West Bengal
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh

9.8 IREDA OPENS NEW OFFICE AT GIFT CITY

- ❖ **The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)** has set up an office in **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gandhinagar**, to provide foreign currency-denominated debt financing for green hydrogen and renewable energy manufacturing projects.
- ❖ This move is particularly crucial in the context of **India's ambitious National Green Hydrogen Mission**, which aims to produce over 5 million metric tons per annum (MTPA) of hydrogen by 2030.

ABOUT IRDEA

- ❖ **IREDA** is a mini ratna company under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- ❖ It was set up in 1987 as a specialized non-banking finance agency for the renewable energy sector.
- ❖ IREDA plays a key role in renewable energy project financing which gives confidence to the financial institutions/banks to lend in the sector.

9.9 INDIA CHOOSES TO 'REGULATE', NOT BAN, SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

- ❖ India is in favour of **"regulating"**, and not eliminating, single-use plastic, ahead of week-long negotiations involving **192 countries** that are expected to begin in Toronto, Canada, next week on getting the globe to progress on **eliminating plastic pollution**.
- ❖ **In 2022**, India brought into effect the **Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules (2021)** that banned 19 categories of **'single-use plastics'**.
- ❖ India has opted for language in the current version of the negotiating document, called a **'zero draft'**, that vouches for **"regulating"** instead of **"not allowing"**, the production, sale, import and export of problematic and avoidable plastic goods. It has, however, agreed to **"science-based criteria"** for identifying such plastics.
- ❖ The aim of negotiating countries is to implement global and national measures such as removing these products from the market, reducing production through alternative practices or non-plastic substitutes, and redesigning problematic items to meet criteria for sustainable and safe product design.

SINGLE USE PLASTIC: -

- ❖ **Single-use plastics** are goods that are made primarily from **fossil fuel-based chemicals (petrochemicals)** and are meant to be disposed of right after use—often, in mere minutes.
- ❖ Have **huge carbon footprint**.
- ❖ Single-use plastics are most commonly used for packaging and service ware, such as bottles, wrappers, straws, and bags.
- ❖ **U.S Stand on this: -**
- ❖ **The United States** also has a position closer to that of India and is not in favour of an outright stoppage of single use and avoidable plastics.

9.10 INDIAN BANK TIES UP WITH TATA POWER SOLAR TO BOOST SOLAR ENERGY ADOPTION

- ❖ Indian Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with Tata Power Solar Systems Ltd. (TPSSL) to boost solar energy adoption by providing financial support to residential consumers for installations.
- ❖ The collaboration aims to provide financial support under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana scheme for installations up to 3 KW, and from 3-10 KW under the regular scheme.
- ❖ Residential consumers can avail loans up to ₹2 lakh at an annual interest rate of 7%, with a nominal margin money requirement of 10% and collateral-free financing. The repayment tenure is 10 years.
- ❖ For installations exceeding 3-10 KW, eligible applicants can avail loans up to ₹6 lakh with a margin money requirement of 20%. Interest rate ranges from 8.4% to 10.8% per annum.
- ❖ This initiative is poised to make a profound impact on the widespread adoption of solar solutions.

ABOUT PM SURYA GHAR MUFT BIJLI YOJANA SCHEME

- ❖ It aims to provide free electricity to households in India.
- ❖ The PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana provides a CFA of 60% of system cost for 2 kW systems and 40% of additional system cost for systems between 2 to 3 kW capacity.
- ❖ The scheme envisaged to generate up to 300 units of free electricity every month which would translate to benefits of ₹15,000-18,000 annually for households.
- ❖ India had aimed to install 40 GW of rooftop solar by 2022 but has only achieved approximately 12 GW thus far.

9.11 INDIA'S BIGGEST CLIMATE CLOCK

- ❖ The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) as a part of the Earth Day Celebrations, installed and activated India's biggest Climate Clock on the CSIR Headquarters Building in Rafi Marg, New Delhi.

ABOUT CLIMATE CLOCK

- ❖ The Climate Clock shows how much time is left before continued CO₂ emissions lock in at least 5 degrees of global warming, a key threshold for global climate goals under the Paris agreement.
- ❖ The planet is about 1.1 degrees Celsius hotter than it was before the Industrial Revolution due to carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels.

9.12 INDIA'S FIRST MULTI-PURPOSE GREEN HYDROGEN PILOT PROJECT

- ❖ Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN) has inaugurated India's first Multi-purpose Green Hydrogen Pilot Project at the 1500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Jhakri, Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The facility is designed to produce 14 kilograms of green hydrogen daily during its 8-hour operational window. It utilizes an alkaline electrolyzer of 20 Nm³/hour capacity, powered by renewable energy sourced from SJVN's 1.31 MW Solar Power Plant in Wadhal, Shimla.
- ❖ The hydrogen produced is stored at a pressure of 30 bars in six storage tanks, with a total capacity of 12 m³, and will be used to generate electricity through a 25-kW capacity fuel cell and for High Velocity Oxygen Fuel (HVOF) Coating of turbine underwater parts at NJHPS.
- ❖ Beyond electricity generation, the green hydrogen will cater to the High-Velocity Oxygen Fuel Coating requirements of turbine underwater parts, augmenting operational efficiency and sustainability.

10. POLICY AND PROGRAMME, SCHEME

10.1 NTPC LIMITED TO LAUNCH NEW EDITION OF GIRL CHILD EMPOWERMENT MISSION (GEM)

- ❖ NTPC Limited, India's largest power company, is set to unveil a new version of its flagship corporate social responsibility initiative, the Girl Child Empowerment Mission (GEM). This program aligns with the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) campaign launched by the Government of India.

10.2 PRERANA PROGRAM

- ❖ The first alumni meeting of **the Prerana Program** was addressed by **Shri Sanjay Kumar**, Secretary, **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL)**, Ministry of Education.
- ❖ The alumni meet was organized to assess and exchange insights among the participants.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

- ❖ **Prerana** is a week-long residential program for selected students of **class IX to XII**.
- ❖ Prerana program will run from a **Vernacular School**, established in **1888**, in one of the oldest living cities of **India, Vadnagar, district Mehsana, Gujarat**.
- ❖ **PRERANA** started the journey in the pilot phase from **15th January 2024 to 17th February 2024** in the Vernacular school at **Vadnagar, Mehsana, Gujarat**.

- ❖ In this phase, the Prerana program has been held for **five batches** of 20 participants each from **five states and one Union Territory: Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and UT of Daman and Diu.**
- ❖ **One hundred students** have participated in this experiential learning program that focuses on **9 value-based themes.**
- ❖ The curriculum of Prerana School prepared by **IIT Gandhi Nagar** is rooted in nine value based themes: **Swabhiman and Vinay, Shaurya and Sahas, Parishram and Samarpan, Karuna and Sewa, Vividhta and Ekta, Satyanishtha and Shuchita, Navachar and Jigyasa, Shraddha aur Vishwas, and Swatantrata and Kartavya.**
- ❖ The program aims to foster a sense of pride in Bharat's diverse unity and embrace the spirit of '**Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam**'.

11. INDEX AND REPORTS AND RANKING

11.1 INDIA EMPLOYMENT REPORT 2024

- ❖ **The International Labour Organisation (ILO)** and the **Institute of Human Development (IHD)** have released a report named "**India Employment Report 2024**".

KEY FINDINGS:

- ❖ Basic long-term feature of the employment situation in the country continues to be insufficient growth of the non-farm sectors and the ability of these sectors to absorb workers from agriculture.
- ❖ India's working-age population (**aged 15–59**) increased from 61% in 2011 to 64% in 2021 and is projected to reach 65% in 2036.
- ❖ About 7-8 million young people are added each year to the labour force.
- ❖ The authors warn that unemployment in the country is "**predominantly a problem among youth**", especially those with a secondary level of education or higher, and that it has intensified over time.
- ❖ In 2022, the share of unemployed youth in the total unemployed population was 82.9%," report noted, adding that the share of educated youth among all unemployed people also increased, from 54.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022.
- ❖ Also, among the educated (secondary level or higher) unemployed youth, women accounted for a larger share (76.7%) than men (62.2%).
- ❖ There is a significant gender gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation. The gender gap in the LFPR has remained almost consistent over the past two decades.
- ❖ In 2022, the LFPR of young men (at 61.2%) was almost three times higher than that of young women (at 21.7%), and the gender gap was similar in both rural and urban areas.
- ❖ The ILO and IHD stated that the jobs remained low-productive and low-earning. Real wages and earnings showed a decline or had stagnated.
- ❖ While India's large young workforce is a demographic dividend, the report noted that they don't appear to have the skills to deliver with 75% of youth unable to send emails with attachments, 60% unable to copy and paste files, and 90% unable to put a mathematical formula into a spreadsheet.

11.2 FORBES WORLD'S BILLIONAIRES LIST 2024

- ❖ American business magazine Forbes released its "**Forbes World's Billionaires List 2024: The Top 200**".
- ❖ Forbes has released its 2024 Billionaires List with record 2,781 individuals holding \$14.2 trillion of the wealth in the world.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ India too saw its billionaires soar to record high.
- ❖ The list features 200 Indians, up from 169 last year. They hold a combined wealth approaching a trillion dollars, with a record total of \$954 billion.
- ❖ Bernard Arnault and family, with a total net worth of \$233 billion, topped the list, followed by Elon Musk (\$195 billion), Jeff Bezos (\$194 billion), Mark Zuckerberg (\$177 billion), Larry Ellison (\$114 billion), Warren Buffett (\$133 billion), Bill Gates (\$128 billion), Steve Ballmer (\$121 billion), Mukesh Ambani (\$116 billion), and Larry Page (\$114 billion).
- ❖ Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, is at the top of the list in India with a net worth of \$116 billion, an increase of 39.76 per cent to \$83 billion last year, making him the first Asian to break into the \$100 billion club. Ambani retained his position as the ninth richest person in the world and both India's and Asia's richest person.
- ❖ **Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group**, is the second richest Indian, with a net worth of \$84 billion.
- ❖ The richest woman in India is **Savitri Jindal**, now the fourth richest Indian, up from sixth a year ago. She has a net worth of \$33.5 billion.
- ❖ The Forbes 2024 list also has 25 Indian billionaires who made their debut. These include **Naresh Trehan** (managing director of Medanta), **Ramesh Kunhikannan** (managing director of Kaynes Technology), and **Renuka Jagtiani** (chief executive officer of Landmark Group).
- ❖ Meanwhile, Byju **Raveendran and Rohiqa Mistry** have been dropped off this time.
- ❖ At the age of 37 years, **Nikhil Kamath**, co-founder of Zerodha, is the youngest Indian billionaire in the Forbes list.
- ❖ **India's 10 richest people in Forbes World's Billionaires List 2024: The Top 200**
 - ✓ Mukesh Ambani — net worth \$116 billion
 - ✓ Gautam Adani — net worth \$84 billion
 - ✓ Shiva Nadar — net worth \$36.9 billion
 - ✓ Savitri Jindal — net worth \$33.5 billion
 - ✓ Dilip Shanghvi- net worth \$26.7 billion
 - ✓ Cyrus Poonawalla — net worth \$21.3 billion
 - ✓ Kushal Pal Singh — net worth \$20.9 billion
 - ✓ Kumar Birla — net worth \$19.7 billion
 - ✓ Radhakishan Damani — net worth \$17.6 billion
 - ✓ Lakshmi Mittal — net worth \$16.4 billion

11.3 WORLD CYBERCRIME INDEX

- ❖ The Researchers from the Department of Sociology have compiled the first ever '**World Cybercrime Index**', which identifies the globe's major cybercrime hotspots by ranking the most significant sources of cybercrime at a national level.

ABOUT THE WORLD CYBERCRIME INDEX:

- ❖ **The World Cybercrime Index** has been developed as a joint partnership between the University of Oxford and University of **New South Wales, Sydney**.
- ❖ It has been funded by **CRIMGOV**, a European Union-supported project.
- ❖ The index was developed to identify major cybercrime hotspots globally by ranking countries based on the significant sources of cybercrime at a national level.
- ❖ The study 'Mapping the global geography of cybercrime with the **World Cybercrime Index**' has been published in the journal **PLOS ONE**.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

- ❖ India occupies the **10th position** in the cybercrime rankings, with scams involving advance fee payments being the most prevalent type.
- ❖ **Russia leads the index**, followed by **Ukraine, China, the US, Nigeria, and Romania, with North Korea, the UK, and Brazil** rounding out the top positions.

- ❖ **Russia and Ukraine** emerged as highly technical cybercrime hubs, while Nigerian cybercriminals primarily engaged in less technical forms of cybercrime.

THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF STUDY WERE:

1. Technical products/services (such as malware)
2. Attacks and extortion
3. Data/identity theft (such as hacking or phishing)
4. Scams (such as business email compromise or online auction fraud)
5. Cashing out/money laundering (such as credit card fraud)

11.4 DELHI AIRPORT AMONG TOP 10 BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN WORLD

- ❖ **Delhi airport** has been named among **the world's top 10 busiest airports** for 2023 in a list topped by **Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport**.
- ❖ **The Indira Gandhi International Airport** in the national capital is ranked tenth, according to the **Airports Council International (ACI) World**.
- ❖ Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is on top and it handled over 10.46 crore passengers last year. It is followed by Dubai International Airport, which saw more than 8.69 crore passengers, and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. The latter handled over 8.17 crore passengers in 2023.
- ❖ Others in the list are London's Heathrow airport (4th spot), Tokyo's Haneda airport (5th), Denver International Airport (6th), Istanbul airport (7th), Los Angeles International airport (8th) and Chicago's O'Hare International Airport (9th).

11.5 GLYCEMIC INDEX OF DIETS: IMPORTANCE BEYOND DIABETES CONTROL

- ❖ The concept of '**Glycemic Index**' was first proposed by **Prof. David Jenkins of the University of Toronto in 1981**.
- ❖ **The glycemic index (GI)** of a food refers to the property of the food to increase the blood glucose level and is a measure of the '**quality**' of carbohydrates.
- ❖ Glucose or white bread is used as the comparator. The GI of glucose is taken as 100 and the GI of other foods is given as a percentage of this. Thus, the GI of foods is classified as **low GI (less than 55), medium GI (56- 69) and high GI (over 70)**.
- ❖ The GI multiplied by the amount of the carbohydrate consumed, determines **the glycemic load (GL)**.
- ❖ Examples of diets with low GI include **brown rice, steel cut oats, legumes, pulses and beans, fruits like apple and guava, and vegetables like spinach, lettuce, brinjal, broccoli, tomatoes, paneer, soya, nuts and seeds**.
- ❖ Diets with high GI include sugar and sweets, white rice, Maida, potato, white bread, sweetened drinks, jaggery, cornflakes and cookies.
- ❖ If diets with high GI, i.e., the 'bad' carbohydrates, are replaced with 'good' carbs which have low GI and this is combined with adequate physical activity (exercise), it could help to curb the growing incidence of premature cardiovascular disease in India.

12. INTERNATIONAL, SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

12.1 UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK

- ❖ **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO)'s** Executive Board has approved the addition of 18 new sites situated in **Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Spain** to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network.
- ❖ The total number of geoparks in the network becomes **213 geoparks in 48 countries**.
- ❖ Newly designated UNESCO Global Geoparks:

S.No	UNESCO Global Geopark	Country	Details
1	Schelde Delta	Belgium and Kingdom of the Netherlands	Hold a unique geological position between the sinking North Sea Basin and the rising Brabant Massif.
2	Uberaba	Brazil	It is situated in southeast Brazil within South America's second-largest biome.
3	Enshi Grand Canyon-Tenglongdong Cave	China	The site, located in the southwest of Hubei Province, is a rich cultural heritage of the Tujia, Miao, and Dong ethnic minority groups.
4	Linxia	China	The geopark, located in Gansu Province, features a landscape characterised by mid-high mountains, hills, and basins.
5	Longyan	China	It offers a geological record of tectonic evolution in southeast China covering a period of approximately 300 million years
6	Mount Changbaishan	China	The site, located in the southeast Jilin Province, is one of the best-preserved composite volcanoes from the past several million year.
7	Wugongshan	China	It is located in the junction of three cities, Pingxiang, Yichun, and Ji'an.
8	Xingyi	China	The Wanfenglin site, located in Guizhou Province, displays more than 20,000 karst peaks
9	Biokovo-Imotski Lakes	Croatia	The Biokovo-Imotski Lakes are situated in central Dalmatia at the intersection of Mediterranean and Central European landscapes and cultures
10	The South Fyn Archipelago	Denmark	This includes both terrestrial and marine zones that transcribe approximately 800,000 years of geological history.

11	Impact Crater Lake – Lappajärvi	Finland	It is located in South Ostrobothnia in the west of Finland. It is recognised as Europe’s largest impact crater lake.
12	Armorique	France	This includes vertical cliffs of the Crozon Peninsula, the Arrée Mountains, Brest Bay, and the River Aulne estuary.
13	Normandie-Maine	France	This offers remnants of a geological history spanning 600 million years including ancient megalithic sites.
14	Meteora Pyli	Greece	The site located in the Thessaly region is known for towering Meteora sandstone columns that reach heights of up to 300 meters.
15	Bükk Region	Hungary	geological environments and comprises a near-continuous sedimentary sequence spanning more than 300 million years.
16	Land of Extinct Volcanoes	Poland	It is a geological environment and comprises a near-continuous sedimentary sequence spanning more than 300 million years
17	Oeste	Portugal	The site located along Portugal’s central west coast includes over 72 km of Atlantic coastline, with more than 15 km of sandy beaches
18	Calatrava Volcanoes. Ciudad Real	Spain	It is situated in the southwest of the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha, in central Spain.

ABOUT UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS (UGGPS):

- ❖ UGGPs are unique areas with global geological importance, managed with a focus on protection, education, and sustainable development.
- ❖ The UGGP concept started in the mid-1990s, officially **forming in 2015**.
- ❖ Governed by entities recognized legally under **national legislation**.
- ❖ The title of a geopark lasts four years before reassessment.
- ❖ Joining the **Global Geoparks Network (GGN)** is compulsory, promoting local pride, area identification, and geotourism revenue.

ABOUT GLOBAL GEOPARK NETWORK (GGN):

- ❖ Established in 2014 and governed by **French law**, the **Global Geopark Network (GGN)** is an NGO that encompasses all UNESCO Geoparks globally.
- ❖ Initially set up in 2004 as an international initiative under UNESCO, it now serves as UNESCO's official partner for geopark operations, comprising **213 geoparks across 48 countries**.

12.2 19TH MEETING OF SECRETARIES OF THE SECURITY COUNCILS OF SCO

- ❖ **The 19th annual** meeting of the secretaries of the security councils of the SCO member states was held in **Astana, Kazakhstan**, from **2 to 3 April 2024**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **The President of Kazakhstan ‘Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’**, is the current Chairman of **Shanghai Cooperation Organization**.
- ❖ Addressing the meeting, **Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** advocated adopting a Cooperation Programme to **counter terrorism**, separatism, and extremism for 2025-2027 and the SCO Anti-Drug Strategy for **2024-2029**.
- ❖ He mentioned that countering **“three evil forces”** – terrorism, separatism and extremism – along with transnational organised crime, drug trafficking and cybersecurity challenges remain priorities during Kazakhstan’s chairmanship in the SCO.

INDIA AT THE MEETING

- ❖ **The Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval** led the Indian delegation at the meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Councils of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- ❖ The Indian government has invested **\$3 Billion** in Afghanistan and supplied 50,000 MT of wheat, 250 Tons of medical aid, and 40,000 litres of Malathion pesticide to fight the locust menace in Afghanistan.
- ❖ However, the government of India does not recognize the present Taliban government in **Afghanistan**.
- ❖ **NSA Ajit Doval** strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall in **Moscow, Russia**, on **March 22**, which killed 144 people.

ABOUT SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

- ❖ **The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** was established as a regional organisation on June 15, 2001. It replaced the Shanghai Five organisation. The founding members of the SCO were **China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan**.
- ❖ Member of SCO: The SCO has two types of members: **permanent and observers**.
- ❖ There are 9 permanent members- **China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, India (Joined in 2017), Pakistan (Joined in 2017) and Iran (Joined in 2023)**.
- ❖ Observer Members (3) - **Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia**.
- ❖ Headquarters: **Beijing, China**
- ❖ Current Chairman of SCO: **Kazakhstan**

12.3 75 YEARS OF NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

- ❖ **The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** pompously celebrated the anniversary of its establishment on **April 4**, 75 years ago. On this day in **1949**, western nations gathered in **Washington, DC**, to commit their nations to one another’s defence.

ABOUT NATO:

- ❖ The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** was established on **April 4, 1949** by the **United States, Canada, and several Western European nations** to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- ❖ **The North Atlantic Treaty** also known as the **Washington Treaty** was the first peacetime military alliance between the United States and non-western countries.
- ❖ NATO's main headquarters are located in **Brussels, Belgium**.
- ❖ **NATO Member:**
 - ✓ The original 12 founding members of NATO were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
 - ✓ NATO has expanded since its founding, with new member countries joining in multiple rounds. The alliance currently consists of 32-member countries.

- ❖ NATO's primary mission is collective defence, as outlined in **Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty**. This article stipulates that an attack on one-member country will be considered an attack on all, and the members will respond collectively.
- ❖ NATO members have committed to spending at least **2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** every year on defence.

12.4 UAE TO HOST WORLD FUTURE ENERGY SUMMIT

- ❖ **Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC - Masdar**, the UAE's clean energy powerhouse, is set to host **the World Future Energy Summit (WFES)**.
- ❖ **The World Future Energy Summit (WFES)** will be organized from April 16 to 18 at the **Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC)**. This summit serves as a pivotal global event focusing on future energy, clean technology, and sustainability, featuring various discussions, forums, and activations.
- ❖ **Masdar's CEO Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi** emphasizes their commitment to advancing clean energy and accelerating the energy transition in alignment with The UAE Consensus agreed at COP28.
- ❖ Masdar will also host the annual Green Hydrogen Summit on **April 16**, which aims to accelerate the development of the global green hydrogen economy to support the energy transition.
- ❖ Masdar is aiming for a renewable energy portfolio capacity of 100GW by 2030, supporting the target set in The UAE Consensus to triple global renewables capacity by the end of this decade, and aims to be a leading producer of green hydrogen by the same year.

12.5 SOUTH KOREA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES SECOND MILITARY SPY SATELLITE

- ❖ **South Korea's** second domestically made **spy satellite** was successfully put into orbit.
- ❖ It was launched from an **American space centre** on a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket**.
- ❖ In **December 2023**, the South Korea successfully launched its **first military spy satellite** by one of **Elon Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets**.
- ❖ South Korea planned to launch a total of **five military spy satellites by 2025**.
- ❖ Also, North Korea successfully placed its **Malligyong-1 spy satellite** into orbit in **November 2023**.

12.6 JAGJIT PAVADIA RE-ELECTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOAR

- ❖ **Ms Jagjit Pavadia** of India has been re-elected to the **International Narcotics Board (INCB)** for a third term. She secured the highest number of votes amongst the contestants.
- ❖ **Jagjit Pavadia** was re-elected for a **third five-year term** starting from **March 2025- 2030**. She was first elected to the International Narcotics Control Board in 2015. Pavadia was again re-elected for a five-year term from 2020 to 2025.

INDIA ELECTED TO VARIOUS UN BODIES:

- ❖ Commission on the Status of Women (2025-2029);
- ❖ The United Nations Population Fund and
- ❖ The United Nations Office for Project Services (2025-2027)
- ❖ Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (2025-2027);
- ❖ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme,
- ❖ Executive Board of the World Food Programme (2025-2027),
- ❖ Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality,
- ❖ Empowerment of Women (2025-2027).

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

- ❖ **The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)** was set up in 1968 by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961.
- ❖ INCB has 13 members elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of five years. Ten members are elected from a list of government nominees. The other three members are experts in medical, pharmacological, or pharmaceutical experience from a list nominated by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ❖ Headquarters: **Vienna, Austria**

12.7 WORLD FUTURE ENERGY SUMMIT 2024

- ❖ The 16th World Future Energy Summit kicked off in **Abu Dhabi**, with a focus on discussions to facilitate the global energy transition, promote investment in clean and renewable energy, and create a sustainable future.
- ❖ The Summit is Organized by the UAE state-owned Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (**Masdar**).
- ❖ The energy summit is regarded as a major platform for addressing energy security, water security, climate change, and sustainable development in the Middle East.
- ❖ Francesco La Camera, director-general of the **International Renewable Energy Agency**, highlighted the critical need to accelerate renewable energy capacity to at least 11 terawatts (TW) by 2030.

12.8 FRANCE HOSTS CONFERENCE ON AID TO WAR-TORN SUDAN

- ❖ The conference, held on the first anniversary of **Sudan's civil war**, features representatives from its neighbors, Gulf states and western powers, all brought together to collect donations for an underfunded UN humanitarian aid appeal.
- ❖ France is seeking contributions from the international community, and attention to what officials say is a crisis crowded out of the global conversation by ongoing conflicts in **Ukraine and Gaza**.
- ❖ The ambassador of France to Sudan- The Ambassador of France to the Republic of the Sudan is **Ms Raja Rabia**. The Ambassador of the Sudan in France is **Mr Omar Bachir Manis**.

12.9 NEPAL LEADS INAUGURAL RAINBOW TOURISM CONFERENCE

- ❖ Nepal takes a pioneering step in tourism inclusivity with its first Rainbow Tourism Conference, affirming itself as a safe destination for **the LGBTQ+ community**.
- ❖ The single-day international conference was organized by **Mayako Pahichan Nepal**, a non-governmental organisation in collaboration with **Nepal Tourism Board**.
- ❖ The conference's main objective is to position Nepal as an **LGBT-friendly tourism destination**
- ❖ The conference saw participation from around 120 individuals, including representatives from sexual minorities, NGOs, activists, writers, and media personnel from various countries such as Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Germany, Spain, and the US.

ABOUT RAINBOW TOURISM:-

- ❖ Rainbow tourism, also known as **LGBT tourism or gay tourism**, caters to **lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) travelers**.
- ❖ It is a growing segment of the global tourism industry, with an estimated market value of over \$200 billion annually.
- ❖ The economic impact of Rainbow tourism can be significant, as LGBT travelers often have higher disposable incomes and tend to spend more on travel compared to other segments.

12.10 ISRAEL LAUNCHES FUND TO ENTICE INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT IN TECH FIRMS

- ❖ Israel's government has launched a new fund called Yozma 2.0 to encourage institutional investors to boost investments in high-tech companies.
- ❖ The tech sector is a key driver of Israel's economy, accounting for close to 20% of output, 12% of jobs, more than 50% of exports and 25% of tax income.
- ❖ The Yozma 2.0 fund is a significant initiative by the government of Israel to boost institutional investment in the country's tech sector. By providing returns, the fund aims to create a more diverse funding environment for Israel's startups.

12.11 TIGER CONSERVATION CONFERENCE 2024

- ❖ Bhutan is hosting the Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference on Earth Day 2024 to mobilize \$1 billion in new funding over the next decade for the preservation of tiger landscapes across Asia.
- ❖ The two-day conference will be hosted by Bhutan under the patronage of the country's queen, Jet sun Pema Wang chuck.
- ❖ It seeks to mobilise the aforementioned amount in new funding over 10 years for the preservation of tiger landscapes, which are vital to maintaining biodiversity, sequestering carbon, supplying resources to over 100 million people, and ensuring the overall health of the planet.
- ❖ Co-organized by the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Tiger Conservation Coalition.
- ❖ The conference will include expert panels leading insightful discussions on sustainable finance, linkages with the United Nations' Global Biodiversity Framework, and the role of public-private partnerships in safeguarding tiger landscapes.

ABOUT TIGER CONSERVATION COALITION

- ❖ It was formed ahead of the 2022 Year of the Tiger.
- ❖ It comprises a diverse group of tiger conservation organisations and multilateral agencies that support tiger range countries in realising their long-term tiger conservation ambitions and delivering impact for nature and people from the local to the global levels.

ROLE OF TIGERS IN BIODIVERSITY

- ❖ The tiger is the largest felid in the world. An apex predator, it plays a significant role in the structure and function of the ecosystems on which humans and wildlife rely.
- ❖ Tigers are a "landscape" species, needing large areas with diverse habitats, free from human disturbance and rich in prey.
- ❖ According to Tiger Conservation Coalition Chair and Lead of WWF Tigers Alive, Stuart Chapman, Landscapes with wild tigers are healthy and vibrant ecosystems which are critically important in a climate changing world. Securing these tiger landscapes through sustainable financing will bring multiple benefits to the people and wildlife across Asia.

GLOBAL TIGERS STATUS

- ❖ Data suggested a potential 40 per cent increase in tiger numbers, from 3,200 in 2015 to 4,500 in 2022, despite extreme threats. This represented the first potential climb in the species' numbers in decades.

TIGERS STATUS IN INDIA

- ❖ Tiger population rose to 3,167 in 2022, up from 2,967 in 2018.
- ❖ India hosts around 75% of the global tiger population.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tigers.

12.12 FIRST EVER HINDI RADIO BROADCAST STARTS IN KUWAIT

- ❖ The Indian Embassy lauded Kuwait's ministry of information for starting a Hindi programme in Kuwait Radio on FM 93.3 and AM 96.3 every Sunday.
- ❖ The Indian Embassy in Kuwait noted that this step taken will further strengthen the ties between the two nations.

INDIA & KUWAIT RELATIONS

- ❖ India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait, and until 1961, the Indian rupee was the legal tender in Kuwait.
- ❖ Kuwait remains a reliable supplier of crude oil & LPG to India, meeting our crucial energy needs.
- ❖ The year 2021-22 marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- ❖ Indian ambassador to Kuwait- Adarsh Swaika

12.13 6TH EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- ❖ The 6th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The theme of the conference is "**Investing today for a more resilient tomorrow**".

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ India holds the permanent co-chair position within the CDRI Governing Council and Executive Committee. Over the past two years, the United States, represented by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has held the rotating co-chair positions, actively contributing to CDRI's strategic direction.
- ❖ The **United States** has handed over the co-chairship of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) to **France**.
- ❖ The handover marks the culmination of India and the United States' collaborative leadership spanning from 2022 to 2024, aimed at establishing disaster-resilient infrastructure worldwide in partnership with CDRI's expanding membership.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE (ICDRI)

- ❖ The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure hosts an annual conference called the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI).
- ❖ This conference brings together governments, organizations, institutions, the media, and infrastructure stakeholders to discuss disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- ❖ The goal is to build a global community that is engaged in creating resilient infrastructure, which can withstand disasters and climate change. The conference is an opportunity to strengthen the global discourse on these important topics.

ABOUT CDRI:

- ❖ The Prime Minister of India launched **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** during his speech at the UN Climate Action Summit on **23rd September 2019**.
- ❖ It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- ❖ The Secretariat of the CDRI is located in **New Delhi, India**.
- ❖ **Members:** 39 countries and 7 organisations.
- ❖ **Thematic Areas:**
 - ✓ Governance & Policy
 - ✓ Risk Identification & Estimation
 - ✓ Standards and Certification
 - ✓ Capacity Building
 - ✓ Innovation & Emerging Technology
 - ✓ Recovery & Reconstruction
 - ✓ Finance
 - ✓ Community-based Approaches

12.14 WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS 2024

- ❖ India is showcasing its innovative technologies and power generation practices, at the **26th World Energy Congress, being held in Rotterdam, Netherlands**, from 22nd April, 2024 to 25th April, 2024.
- ❖ The India Pavilion at the Congress aims to be a hub for showcasing innovative technologies and power generation practices, reinforcing India's commitment to environmental conservation on the global stage.
- ❖ Central Public Sector Enterprises under the Ministry of Power, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Ministry of Coal and Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas are participating in the India Pavilion, giving a collective testimony to India's leadership in global energy transition.
- ❖ The Pavilion has been jointly inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of Power, Government of India, Shri Pankaj Agarwal and Ambassador of India to the Netherlands **Mrs. Reenat Sandhu**, on 22nd April, 2024.

ABOUT 26TH WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS

- ❖ The 26th World Energy Congress is expected to be a critical turning point for leadership on clean and inclusive energy transitions worldwide.
- ❖ Themed '**Redesigning Energy for People and Planet**', the four-day gathering marks the World Energy Council's centenary in world energy.

ABOUT WORLD ENERGY COUNCIL INDIA

- ❖ World Energy Council India is a country member of World Energy Council (WEC), a global body established in 1923, with the aim of promoting sustainable supply and use of energy.
- ❖ WEC India is one of the earliest country members of World Energy Council, having joined the Council **in 1924**. WEC India functions under the patronage of Ministry of Power, Government of India and with the support of the Ministries of Coal, New & Renewable Energy, Petroleum & Natural Gas and External Affairs.

12.15 SCO DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING

- ❖ Defense Secretary Giridhar Armane attended the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Defence Ministers in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- ❖ A protocol was signed by the defence ministers of all SCO member states.
- ❖ A Joint Communique was issued after the meeting, in which the SCO Defence Ministers agreed, amongst other initiatives, to developing the idea of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', which is rooted in the ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

ABOUT SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO):

- ❖ Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- ❖ Its creation was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- ❖ It was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism.
- ❖ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting in June 2002, and entered into force on 19 September 2003.
- ❖ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- ❖ Members countries of SCO
 - ✓ China
 - ✓ India
 - ✓ Kazakhstan
 - ✓ Kyrgyzstan
 - ✓ Russia
 - ✓ Pakistan

- ✓ Tajikistan
- ✓ Uzbekistan
- ✓ Iran

12.16 G7 SUMMIT

- ❖ Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Group of Seven (G7) Outreach session to be held in Borgo Egnazia, Apulia, Italy, from 13 to 15 June 2024. The 2024 G7 presidency is with Italy.
- ❖ Italy observes 25 April as Liberation Day to celebrate the liberation of the country from the Nazi occupation and the end of fascist rule.

G7 OUTREACH SESSION

- ❖ The first Indian prime minister to get an invitation to participate in the G7 Outreach session was Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003. France was, at the time, the host of the G7.
- ❖ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has attended five such meetings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attended the G7 outreach session in 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023 (four times). The 2020 G7 summit to be hosted by the US was cancelled due to the Covid.

ABOUT G7

- ❖ It is an intergovernmental organisation that was formed in 1975 by the top economies of the time as an informal forum to discuss pressing world issues.
- ❖ Canada joined the group in 1976, and the European Union began attending in 1977.
- ❖ The G-7 was known as the 'G-8' for several years after the original seven were joined by Russia in 1997. The Group returned to being called G-7 after Russia was expelled as a member in 2014 following the latter's annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.
- ❖ The members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

12.17 IRAN REVEALS NEW KAMIKAZE DRONE

- ❖ The Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claims to have produced a new kamikaze drone similar in structure to Russia's Lancet drone.
- ❖ The Iranian drone resembles the Russian-made ZALA Lancet drone.
- ❖ The IRGC's new drones, similar to Lancets, can fly for 30 to 60 minutes and carry a payload of 3 to 6 kg over a distance of up to 40 km.
- ❖ The Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has made significant investments in ammunition development.
- ❖ Iran is a manufacturer of Shahed-131/136 kamikaze drones, which Russian troops use in the war against Ukraine.

12.18 CHINA LAUNCHES SHENZHOU-18 MISSION

- ❖ China launched a three-member crew to its orbiting space station on April 25 as part of its ambitious program that aims to put astronauts on the moon by 2030.
- ❖ The Shenzhou-18 spacecraft lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China atop a Long March 2-F rocket.
- ❖ The Shenzhou-18 spacecraft is also known as the "Divine vessel"
- ❖ The trio is made of Commander Ye Guangfu, 43, a veteran astronaut who took part in the Shenzhou-13 mission in 2021, and fighter pilots Li Cong, 34, and Li Guangsu, 36, who are spaceflight rookies.

13. DAYS TO REMEMBER

13.1 CBI RAISING DAY

- ❖ **The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** is hosting the 20th D. P. Kohli Memorial Lecture to commemorate the Raising Day of the Investigation Agency.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ **Chief Justice of India, Justice D. Y. Chandrachud**, will deliver the lecture on the theme of **"Adopting Technology to Advance Criminal Justice"** at **Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi**.
- ❖ This annual event is held in honor of the late **Dharamnath Prasad Kohli**, the founder Director of CBI, who served the Police Service from **1931** onwards.
- ❖ Kohli headed the Delhi Special Police Establishment DSPE in 1955 to curb corruption in public services. He continued as the Director of CBI from its inception in 1963 until 1968.

ABOUT CBI

- ❖ **The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** was created by the Government of India in **1963**. Its primary function is to investigate cases of bribery and corruption as well as violations of central fiscal laws and serious crimes.
- ❖ The agency also collects intelligence to support its investigations. Over the last sixty years, the CBI has become the country's premier investigating and prosecuting agency. In addition to its domestic role, the CBI serves as the National Central Bureau for INTERPOL in India.
- ❖ This means it coordinates international cooperation in law enforcement. The CBI's power to investigate comes from the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**.
- ❖ The Act gives the CBI jurisdiction to investigate offenses in the Union Territories only.
- ❖ The CBI is not a statutory body, but it derives its power to investigate from the **DSPE Act**.
- ❖ The beginning of the establishment was initiated by the **Santhanam Committee from 1962-1964**.

13.2 WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY 2024

- ❖ **World Autism Awareness Day** is observed on **2nd April** every year around the world.
- ❖ This Day underscores the need to help improve the quality of life of persons afflicted with autism.
- ❖ It also promotes the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental rights for people afflicted with autism on an equal basis with other people.
- ❖ Designated by the UN General Assembly on **December 18, 2007**, **April 2** has been observed as World Autism Awareness Day since 2008.
- ❖ The theme of World Autism Awareness Day this year is **'Empowering Autistic Voices,'** aiming to provide more support and power to individuals with this condition to lead meaningful lives and pursue successful careers.

ABOUT AUTISM:

- ❖ **Autism or Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)** is a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain and is a lifelong condition. It mostly affects children and is manifested during the first three years of life. Autism spectrum disorder is also called a **developmental disorder**”.

13.3 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MINE AWARENESS & ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION 2024

- ❖ **The International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action** is observed on April 4, annually to raise public attention towards mine action activities, the land mines, its threats to the safety of mankind and how to work towards its elimination.
- ❖ The theme of International Mining Awareness Day 2024 is **"Protecting Lives. Building Peace."**

- ❖ On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April each year would be observed as the **UN Mine Awareness Day**. It was first celebrated on **4 April 2006**.
- ❖ It called for the establishment of national mine-operation capabilities in those countries with the assistance of the United Nations and related organizations.

13.4 NATIONAL MARITIME DAY 2024

- ❖ **National Maritime Day** is celebrated every year on **April 5** to honour the individuals for their lifetime distinguished and exceptional achievements in the Indian maritime sector.
- ❖ It also commemorates the inaugural voyage of the first Indian-owned ship. This year, the Government of India will celebrate the **National Maritime Day** alongside the **Merchant Navy Week** from March 30 to April 5.
- ❖ The theme for **National Maritime Day 2024** is "**Navigating the future: safety first!**"

HISTORY:

- ❖ On **5th April 1919**, **SS Loyalty** owned by **Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd**, started its journey marking India's historic move toward maritime trade and commerce. The merchant ship started its maiden voyage from the coasts of **Mumbai and sailed to London**.
- ❖ The growth of maritime commerce led to the establishment of the **Ministry of Shipping in 1962**. In 1964, the government declared April 5 as **National Maritime Day** to honour the historic **SS Loyalty**. India became a member of the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1949** strengthening its presence in waters.

13.5 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CONSCIENCE 2024

- ❖ '**International Conscience Day**' is celebrated every year on **5 April**. This day is celebrated to remind people to introspect, follow their conscience and do the right thing.
- ❖ The theme of International Day of Conscience this year 2024 is '**Promoting a Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience**'.
- ❖ The first '**International Day of Conscience**' was celebrated in **2020** by the United Nations General Assembly.

13.6 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE 2024

- ❖ Every year on April 6th, the world celebrates the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP).
- ❖ This day is dedicated to recognizing the positive impact that sports and physical activity can have on people's lives and communities around the globe.

THEME FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE 2024:

- ❖ The global theme for IDSDP 2024 is "Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies".
- ❖ This emphasizes the unique ability of sports to unite people, foster social change, and contribute to sustainable development and lasting peace.

13.7 WORLD HEALTH DAY 2024

- ❖ **The World Health Day** is celebrated annually on **April 7** to raise awareness towards global wellbeing.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is '**My Health, My Right**', which emphasizes on a fundamental human right to access quality health care, education and information.
- ❖ World Health Day is commemorated every year on the founding day of the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.

- ❖ The year 2024 marks the **76th anniversary of WHO**.

13.8 WORLD HOMOEOPATHY DAY 2024

- ❖ **World Homeopathy Day** is celebrated annually on **April 10**.
- ❖ The primary goal of **World Homeopathy Day** is to raise awareness about homeopathy by bringing practitioners, and supporters together from all around the world.
- ❖ The theme of **World Homeopathy Day 2024** is “**Homeoparivar: One Health, One Family**”.
- ❖ **World Homeopathy Day** traces its roots back to the birth of **Dr Samuel Hahnemann**, the founder of homeopathy. He was born on **April 10, 1755**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated a two-day Scientific Convention at **Yashobhoomi Conventional Centre Dwarka**, New Delhi organized by Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH).
- ❖ The theme of the convention will be “**Empowering Research, Enhancing Proficiency: A Homoeopathic Symposium**”.

13.9 CRPF BRAVERY DAY

- ❖ Every year **April 9** is celebrated as **Bravery Day (Valour Day)** to pay tribute to the brave soldiers of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**. This year (2024), CRPF is celebrating its 59th Bravery Day.
- ❖ CRPF Bravery Day remembers the bravery and sacrifice of CRPF personnel fighting against the **Pakistani invaders in 1965**.
- ❖ The day is significant as it honors the courage, dedication and sacrifice of CRPF personnel in protecting the security and integrity of the country.

HISTORY OF THE DAY:

- ❖ In 1965, a group of Pakistani soldiers attacked some other Indian soldiers near the **Rann of Kutch**. **The Indian soldiers** were unaware of this **sudden attack**, as they did not know that the attack was going to happen.
- ❖ During this attack, a CRPF officer named **Bhavana Ram** had saved a place called Sardar Post from infiltrators in a fight.
- ❖ This was the first time that a special group of police fought directly with Pakistani soldiers and they won. Six police officers died in this fight. To remember their bravery, every year we celebrate CRPF Bravery Day on 9th April.
- ❖ The Pakistani army wanted to capture the area protected by Indian troops at Sardar Post. Whereas there were only **150 CRPF soldiers**. At the time of the attack, the Pakistani army could not achieve its target despite being larger in numbers and stronger.
- ❖ The Pakistani army tried to capture Sardar Post at this place thrice. But **the CRPF jawans**, acting with indomitable courage and cleverness, forced them to return.
- ❖ In this retaliatory action by CRPF, 34 Pakistani soldiers were killed and four others were captured. Unfortunately, six CRPF soldiers were also martyred in this battle.
- ❖ CRPF fought the terrorists who attacked the Indian Parliament in 2001 and succeeded in foiling their plans.

ABOUT CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE (CRPF):

- ❖ **The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** is a prominent paramilitary force in India, established with the primary objective of maintaining internal security and peace within the country. Formed on **July 27, 1939**, as the Crown Representative Police during British rule, it underwent several transformations before being officially renamed the **Central Reserve Police Force on December 28, 1949**.

13.10 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

- ❖ **The International Day of Human Space Flight** is celebrated on **April 12**.
- ❖ The day is celebrated to **honour the first person, Yuri Gagarin**, to go to space.
- ❖ The day is also dedicated to the beginning of the space era for mankind, the contribution of space science and technology, and ensuring to conservation of outer space for peaceful purposes.
- ❖ The theme of this year's International Day of Human Space Flight is '**Encourage Scientific Curiosity**'.

HISTORY:

- ❖ **On April 7, 2011**, the United Nations General Assembly finalised April 12 as the International Day of Human Space Flight.
- ❖ On October 4, 1957, a human-made satellite named, **Sputnik I**, was sent to space.
- ❖ This was the first ever human effort to explore space. After understanding space and enhancing the technologies, on April 12, 1961, **Yuri Gagarin** from the **Soviet Union** became the first human to travel around the earth in space.
- ❖ Later, on June 20, 1969, **Neil Armstrong** became the first person on Earth to set foot on the moon.

13.11 DR. AMBEDKAR JAYANTI

- ❖ **The 134th Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti** was celebrated on **April 14, 2024** by **Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF)** on behalf of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India near the statue of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the Parliament House Lawn.

DR. AMBEDKAR FOUNDATION (DAF):

- ❖ **The Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF)**, an independent organization, was founded on March 24, 1992, under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Its purpose is to implement initiatives and events nationwide that promote the ideals and principles of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar.

ABOUT B.R. AMBEDKAR:

- ❖ **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, affectionately known as **Baba Saheb**, played a pivotal role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, earning him the title of the '**Father of the Indian Constitution**'.
- ❖ He initiated various social and educational reforms, founding organizations and launching agitations against untouchability. His efforts led to significant milestones such as **the Poona Pact**, which secured reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in the general electorate.

13.12 WORLD QUANTUM DAY

- ❖ India marks **World Quantum Day 2024 on April 14**, aiming to excel as a global frontrunner in diverse realms of Quantum Science and Technology.
- ❖ **The evolution of Quantum Mechanics**, delving into the intricacies of atoms and sub-atomic particles, has transcended theoretical realms to practical engineering applications. Researchers globally have harnessed its principles to innovate technologies like LEDs, lasers, and incredibly accurate atomic clocks crucial for Global Positioning Systems.
- ❖ **Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood**, serving as the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, underscored the worldwide significance of quantum technology

NATIONAL QUANTUM MISSION (NQM):

- ❖ **The National Quantum Mission (NQM)**, initiated by **the Prime Minister's Science Technology Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)**, was sanctioned by the Cabinet on **April 19, 2023**, with a budget of Rs **6003.65** Crore allocated for an eight-year duration.

- ❖ This mission endeavors to foster scientific and industrial research and development in Quantum Technology (QT), nurturing innovation and creating a dynamic ecosystem in this field.

13.13 SIACHEN DAY

- ❖ **Siachen Day**, observed on **April 13th**, honors the courage and selflessness of Indian Army soldiers stationed at the world's highest battlefield, the Siachen Glacier.

OPERATION MEGHDOOT:

- ❖ '**Operation Meghdoot**' was initiated on the same date in 1984 to safeguard the glacier, strategically situated near the Indo-Pak Line of Control. Positioned within the Karakoram range, the glacier holds significant strategic value as it shares borders with **Pakistan and China**, sparking contention over ownership due to unclear delineation. The conflict over Siachen commenced following India's partition, with both nations asserting their presence in the harsh terrain.

13.14 IPS OFFICER ANURAG KUMAR APPOINTED AS JOINT DIRECTOR OF CBI

- ❖ **Senior IPS officer Anurag Kumar** has been appointed as Joint Director in **the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment as the Joint Director (JD) in the CBI for a tenure upto **February 24, 2027**.
- ❖ Anurag Kumar, a 2004 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre, is currently working in the **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)**.

ABOUT CBI:

- ❖ The CBI was established as the **Special Police Establishment in 1941**, to investigate cases of corruption in the procurement during **the Second World War**.
- ❖ Later on, it was formalized as an agency of the Government of India to investigate into allegations of corruption in various wings of the Government of India by enacting **the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946**.
- ❖ The CBI is not a statutory body but derives its power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- ❖ The establishment of the CBI was recommended by **the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964)**.

13.15 SHEIKH AHMAD ABDULLAH AL SABAH AS PRIME MINISTER OF KUWAIT

- ❖ **Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah** has been appointed as **New Prime Minister of Kuwait**.
- ❖ He replaced **Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah**, who resigned in April.

ABOUT KUWAIT

- ❖ Kuwait is a **sovereign state** situated on the northern edge of the **Arabian Peninsula**, bordered by Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south.
- ❖ The country is framed by the northwestern part of the **Persian Gulf**, also known as the Arabian Gulf, and shares maritime boundaries with **Iran**. **Kuwait** consists of a landmass and several islets, the most prominent of which are **Bubiyah, Warbah, and Failaka**.

13.16 UK'S FIRST WOMAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO INDIA

- ❖ **The United Kingdom** has taken a historic step in its relationship with India by appointing **Lindy Cameron** as the **first woman High Commissioner** to the country. This landmark appointment comes 70 years after India appointed its first High Commissioner to London.
- ❖ Cameron is a highly respected figure with an impressive career trajectory. A distinguished graduate of Oxford University, she previously served as the CEO of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, demonstrating her expertise in critical national security matters.

13.17 NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY:

- ❖ It has been celebrated on **25th January every year** since 2011 to mark the formation of ECI.
- ❖ 2024 theme - '**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure**'

13.18 WORLD HEMOPHILIA DAY

- ❖ **World Hemophilia Day** is a global healthcare event observed on **April 17 every year**.
- ❖ This worldwide event is organised by **the World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH)**.
- ❖ The theme for **World Hemophilia Day 2024** is "**Equitable access for all: recognizing all bleeding disorders**".

HISTORY

- ❖ **World Haemophilia Day** was first celebrated on the 17th of April 1989. It marks the birthday of Frank Schnabel, the founder of **the World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH)**.
- ❖ **What is Hemophilia?**
- ❖ Hemophilia is an inherited bleeding disorder in which the blood does not clot properly, leading to spontaneous bleeding as well as bleeding following injuries or surgery. This happens due to a lack of or low levels of proteins called **clotting factors** that **help stop bleeding**.

13.19 WORLD HERITAGE DAY 2024

- ❖ **The International Day for Monuments and Sites**, also known as **World Heritage Day**, is observed on **April 18**.
- ❖ The day was first celebrated by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1983**.
- ❖ The aim is to promote awareness about the cultural heritage and diversity on the planet.
- ❖ The theme for World Heritage Day 2024 is '**Discover and Experience Diversity.**'

HISTORY OF WORLD HERITAGE DAY:

- ❖ **The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** proposed to UNESCO in 1982 that 18 April be designated as World Heritage Day. This idea was supported by UNESCO in its 22nd conference held in 1983.
- ❖ This day was organized for **the first time in 1983**.

13.20 WORLD EARTH DAY 2024

- ❖ **Earth Day** is celebrated every year on **April 22**. Founded by **American Senator Gaylord Nelson** in the form of environmental education, the day was first celebrated on **April 22, 1970**.
- ❖ The theme of the Earth Day 2024 is "**Planet vs. Plastics**".

13.21 NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICES DAY 2024

- ❖ **National Civil Services Day** is celebrated in India on **21 April** every year. This day is dedicated to the civil servants and provides an opportunity for them to rededicate themselves to the citizens' service.
- ❖ The first Civil Services Day was first held in **Vigyan Bhawan** on 21 April 2006.
- ❖ The origin of National Civil Service Day dates back to the speech by the first Home Minister of Independent India, **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**. On **April 21st, 1947**, Patel addressed the probationers of Administrative Services Officers at Metcalf House in Delhi and referred to the civil servants as the steel frame of India in **1947** and the newly created **Indian Administrative Service**.

13.22 WORLD CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION DAY

- ❖ World Creativity and Innovation Day is a global UN day celebrated on 21st April to raise awareness around the importance of creativity and innovation in problem solving with respect to advancing the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDG).
- ❖ The first World Creativity and Innovation Day was celebrated on April 21, 2018.

13.23 WORLD BOOK AND COPYRIGHT DAY 2024

- ❖ World Book and Copyright Day, also known as World Book Day, is celebrated every year on 23rd April in over 100 countries around the globe to honour the great works by authors around the world.
- ❖ The theme for World Book and Copyright Day 2024 is **"Read Your Way."**
- ❖ World Book and Copyright Day was first celebrated on 23 April in 1995. UNESCO chose this day on 23rd April specifically to honour literary figures like William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes.

13.24 ZERO SHADOW DAY IN BENGALURU ON APRIL 24.

- ❖ Bengaluru to witness Zero Shadow Day on April 24, a celestial event where the sun reaches its peak and casts no shadows.
- ❖ In the Silicon Valley of India, this unique astronomical event is expected to occur between 12:17 pm and 12:23 pm.
- ❖ The event spanning 6- 8 minutes involves the disappearance of shadows.

ABOUT ZERO SHADOW DAY

- ❖ Zero Shadow Day occurs when the sun is positioned directly overhead, resulting in objects casting no shadows at noon. This phenomenon typically occurs in regions located near the equator, where the sun's angle is almost perpendicular to the Earth's surface.

13.25 NATIONAL PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY 2024

- ❖ **National Panchayati Raj Day** is celebrated on April 24 to mark the passing of the Constitution (**73rd Amendment) Act, 1992**, that institutionalised Panchayati Raj.
- ❖ The Panchayati Raj system, a branch of the Indian Government, is a decentralised system of governance in which local bodies are empowered to self-governance.
- ❖ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj was created in **2004** to look after all matters relating to the Panchayati Raj and Panchayati Raj Institutions and is headed by a minister of cabinet rank.
- ❖ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj will host a national colloquium on '**Governance at the Grassroots after Three Decades of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment**' at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi

13.26 WORLD MALARIA DAY 2024

- ❖ **World Malaria Day** is observed across the globe on April 25 to spread awareness about the deadly mosquito-borne disease. The day highlights the efforts to end malaria and to educate people to prevent its spread.
- ❖ This year the World Malaria Day 2024 theme is "**Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world**".
- ❖ It was established by WHO Member States at the **World Health Assembly in 2007**.
- ❖ Malaria is caused by the **Plasmodium parasites** that spread to humans through the bites of infected female **Anopheles** mosquitoes. The disease is caused by five parasitic species, *P. falciparum*, *P. vivax*, *P. malariae*, *P. ovale* and *P. knowlesi*. The first four are specific for humans, while *P. knowlesi* causes malaria in macaque monkeys.

13.27 WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY 2024

- ❖ The World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated every year on April 26.
- ❖ The day aims to raise awareness about intellectual property (IP) rights and its role in encouraging innovation and creativity to make the world a better place.
- ❖ The day was first celebrated by the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) in 2000 with a focus on creating sustainable solutions.
- ❖ The official theme for 2024 is "IP and the SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity".

ABOUT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ❖ Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce.
- ❖ It primarily encompasses copyrights, patents and trademarks.

ABOUT WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION (WIPO):

- ❖ Established in 1967
- ❖ **Membership:** 193-member states,
- ❖ **Director General:** Daren Tang,
- ❖ **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- ❖ India joined WIPO in 1975.

13.28 WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK 2024

- ❖ World Immunization Week is an annual event observed in the last week of April. It aims to educate the public about why vaccines are necessary for the health of millions of people around the world.
- ❖ World Immunization Week 2024 is observed between 24 to 30 April.
- ❖ The theme for World Immunization Week 2024 is "**Humanly Possible: Immunization for All.**"
- ❖ The World Health Assembly established World Immunization Week in 2012.

13.29 WORLD VETERINARY DAY

- ❖ World Veterinary Day 2024 is celebrated on April 27th, recognizing veterinarians' pivotal role in maintaining animal and human health.
- ❖ World Veterinary Day is celebrated every year on the last Saturday of April.
- ❖ Through disease control, public health initiatives, and animal welfare efforts, veterinarians uphold the well-being of diverse ecosystems.
- ❖ The theme for 2024 is "**Veterinarians are Essential Health Workers**".

14. APPOINTMENTS

14.1 JOYSHREE DAS VERMA TAKES OVER AS FICCI LADIES ORGANISATION PRESIDENT

- ❖ **Joyshree Das Verma** took over as the **41st National president** of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), the oldest women-led and women-centric business chamber of **South East Asia for 2024-25**.
- ❖ She has been appointed by Israel as its **Honorary Consul for Northeast India**.
- ❖ Verma is also the Director of HR firm Kaapro Management Solutions Pvt Ltd.

14.2 JUDITH SUMINWA TULUKA AS FIRST WOMAN PRIME MINISTER

- ❖ The African country Congo has appointed **Judith Suminwa Tuluka** as the country's **first woman Prime Minister**.
- ❖ Tuluka's appointment has come at a time when there is an atmosphere of tension in the area bordering Rwanda.
- ❖ Congo is a Central African country, its capital is **Kinshasa**.

14.3 SANJAY NAYAR APPOINTED AS NEW ASSOCHAM PRESIDENT

- ❖ **Former KKR India Chief Executive Sanjay Nayar**, a well-known name in the global financial markets, has assumed charge as President of industry chamber Assocham.
- ❖ He has replaced **Ajay Singh**, Co-Founder of low-cost airline SpiceJet, who has completed his tenure at the apex industry chamber.

ABOUT ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF INDIA:

- ❖ **ASSOCHAM** is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in **New Delhi** (headquarters). This organization represents the interests of trade and commerce in India.
- ❖ The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India is one of the largest trade associations in India. ASSOCHAM was established in the year 1920 to create value for Indian industry.
- ❖ **ASSOCHAM** has more than **200 chambers** and trade organizations across India. It has more than **450,000 members**.
- ❖ **ASSOCHAM** has played an important role in shaping the business, commerce and industrial environment of the country.
- ❖ At the same time, ASSOCHAM has made a significant contribution in achieving a special place in international trade and the emergence of a new Indian corporate world with global ambitions.

14.4 SANTHOSH KUMAR JHA TO BE NEW CMD OF KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION

- ❖ **Santosh Kumar Jha**, an **Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS)** officer of 1992 batch, will take the charge as the **Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)** of Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., (KRCL).

ABOUT KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.

- ❖ The company started its full operations of trains on **26 January 1998**.
- ❖ The first passenger train which ran on Konkan railway tracks on **20 March 1993** between Udupi and **Mangalore**.
- ❖ Konkan Railway Corporation is at the forefront of research and development of new technologies and concepts for Indian railways.

14.5 ABDEL FATTAH AL-SISI SWORN IN AS EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT FOR HIS THIRD TERM

- ❖ **Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi** was sworn in as the president of Egypt for a third term. He will remain the president until 2030.
- ❖ The Egyptian President has a **six-year term**.
- ❖ **President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi** took the oath of office at the headquarters of the Egyptian Parliament in the New Administrative Capital.

14.6 MEENESH SHAH ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF NCDFI

- ❖ **The National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd. (NCDFI)** elected **Meenesh Shah** as the Chairman.
- ❖ The election process was conducted by **Praveen Chaudhary**, IAS, the District Collector of Anand, who served as the Returning Officer.
- ❖ About National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd:
- ❖ **NCDFI** is a national-level apex dairy cooperative registered on **December 7, 1970** and is governed under the provisions of the Multi State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) **Act, 2023**.
- ❖ It has 20 Regular Members, 14 Associate Members and **the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** as its Institutional Member.

14.7 MANOJ PANDA APPOINTED AS NEW MEMBER OF THE XVI FINANCE COMMISSION

- ❖ The government has appointed **Manoj Panda**, former director at the Institute of Economic Growth as the full-time member of the **16th Finance Commission**.
- ❖ He replaced the **Niranjan Rajadhyaksha**.
- ❖ The Sixteenth Finance Commission is expected to submit its report by October 31, 2025, outlining financial recommendations for the upcoming five-year period starting from April 1, 2026. The commission initiated its activities with its first meeting held on February 14, 2024.

MEMBERS OF THE 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION

- ❖ According to Article 280 of the constitution, the Finance Commission comprises a Chairman and four other members. The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951, enacted by the Parliament, mentions the qualifications of the Chairman and members of the Finance Commission.
- ❖ Chairman - **Dr Arvind Panagariya**, former vice-chairman of **the NITI Aayog**

OTHER MEMBERS

- ❖ **Ajay Narayan Jha** - former secretary of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance,
- ❖ **Annie George Mathew**- former special secretary of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance
- ❖ **Manoj Panda** - an eminent economist
- ❖ **Soumya Kanti Ghosh**- He has been appointed as a part-time member. He was the former group chief economic advisor of the State Bank of India.

14.8 PETER PELLEGRINI ELECTED AS SLOVAKIA PRESIDENT

- ❖ **Peter Pellegrini**, the candidate of the nationalist-left government, has won **Slovakia's presidential election**, beating liberal, pro-western opposition candidate Ivan Korčok.
- ❖ He succeeds **Zuzana Čaputová**, the country's first female head of state.

ABOUT SLOVAKIA

- ❖ Capital: **Bratislava**

- ❖ Currency: **Euro**

14.9 SIMON HARRIS BECOMES IRELAND'S NEW PRIME MINISTER

- ❖ **Simon Harris** has been elected the **youngest prime minister of the Republic of Ireland**.
- ❖ In Ireland, the prime minister is called **Taoiseach**.
- ❖ He will succeed **Leo Varadkar**, who resigned in **March 2024**.
- ❖ At the age of **37**, he is the **youngest prime minister in Ireland**.

14.10 SUSHIL SHARMA APPOINTED CMD OF SJVN LIMITED

- ❖ **Sushil Sharma** will be the **new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)** of SJVN Limited. Presently Sushil Sharma is the Director Project of SJVN.
- ❖ He has been recommended for the post by **the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB)** panel on April 8.
- ❖ Sharma currently serves as Director (Project) within the same organization, having previously held the position of General Manager (Mechanical) at the 1500 MW **Nathpa Jhakri Plant**.

ABOUT SJVN:

- ❖ It was incorporated in 1988 **as Nathpa Jhakri Power Corporation**, a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

14.11 CREW ON THE UPCOMING NEW SHEPARD MISSION

- ❖ Blue Origin, the space venture established by **Jeff Bezos**, has revealed that **Gopichand Thotakura**, an **Indian national**, will join a six-member crew on the upcoming **New Shepard mission**.
- ❖ If the mission is successful, Thotakura will become the second Indian citizen in space following wing commander **Rakesh Sharma** in 1984, and notably, **the first Indian civilian astronaut**.
- ❖ Although the date of the NS-25 suborbital mission has not been disclosed, it is anticipated to take place within the coming weeks. At 30 years old, Thotakura presently serves as the co-founder of Preserve Life, a wellness center in the US, while maintaining his Indian citizenship.

14.12 IPS OFFICER ANURAG KUMAR APPOINTED AS JOINT DIRECTOR OF CBI

- ❖ **Senior IPS officer Anurag Kumar** has been appointed as Joint Director in **the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment as the Joint Director (JD) in the CBI for a tenure upto **February 24, 2027**.
- ❖ Anurag Kumar, a 2004 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre, is currently working in the **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)**.

ABOUT CBI:

- ❖ The CBI was established as the **Special Police Establishment in 1941**, to investigate cases of corruption in the procurement during **the Second World War**.
- ❖ Later on, it was formalized as an agency of the Government of India to investigate into allegations of corruption in various wings of the Government of India by enacting **the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946**.
- ❖ The CBI is not a statutory body but derives its power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- ❖ The establishment of the CBI was recommended by **the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964)**.

14.13 SHEIKH AHMAD ABDULLAH AL SABAH AS PRIME MINISTER OF KUWAIT

- ❖ **Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah** has been appointed as **New Prime Minister of Kuwait**.
- ❖ He replaced **Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah**, who resigned in April.

ABOUT KUWAIT

- ❖ Kuwait is a **sovereign state** situated on the northern edge of the **Arabian Peninsula**, bordered by Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south.
- ❖ The country is framed by the northwestern part of the **Persian Gulf**, also known as the Arabian Gulf, and shares maritime boundaries with **Iran**. **Kuwait** consists of a landmass and several islets, the most prominent of which are **Bubiyan, Warbah, and Failaka**.

14.14 KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA RE-ELECTED AS IMF MANAGING DIRECTOR

- ❖ **The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has selected **Kristalina Georgieva** to serve as IMF Managing Director for a second five-year term starting on **October 1, 2024**.
- ❖ **Kristalina Georgieva of Bulgaria** has served as the MD of the IMF **since 2019**.
- ❖ She has previously served as **World Bank's CEO from January 2017**. She was also interim president for the World Bank Group between February and April, 2019.
- ❖ She has also served at the European Commission as Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response along with its **Vice President for Budget and Human Resources**.

ABOUT IMF:

- ❖ The IMF was **established in 1944** in the aftermath of the **Great Depression of the 1930s**.
- ❖ The IMF was founded by **44-member** countries that sought to build a framework for economic cooperation.
- ❖ The IMF is governed by and accountable to 190 countries that make up its near-global membership.
- ❖ The IMF is able to lend about \$1 trillion to its member countries.

14.15 SACHIDANANDA MOHANTY APPOINTED AS MEMBER OF UGC

- ❖ **Sachidananda Mohanty** has been appointed as a member of **the University Grants Commission (UGC)** for three Years.
- ❖ He is a **former Professor and Head of the Department of English**, University of Hyderabad and former Vice- Chancellor of Central University of Odisha.
- ❖ He was a member of India's Education Commission to **the UNESCO and Governing Board member of Auroville Foundation**.

ABOUT UGC:

- ❖ **The University Grants Commission (UGC)** was established by an Act of Parliament in 1956 to coordinate, determine, and maintain standards of teaching, examination, and research in university education.
- ❖ **Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar** is the current Chairman of UGC.
- ❖ **Deepak Kumar Srivastava** is the current Vice-Chairman of UGC.

14.16 SPACE INDIA APPOINTS SANJANA SANGHI AS ITS BRAND AMBASSADOR

- ❖ **Sanjana Sanghi**, a prominent Bollywood actress and UNDP Youth Champion, has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador for SPACE India, a leading space education organization.

ABOUT SPACE INDIA:

- ❖ Founded in 2001, SPACE India has inspired over 1.5 Million students and facilitated the integration of Astronomy and Space Science into the curriculum of 1,000 schools pan India.
- ❖ With a rich legacy spanning over 24 years in Astronomy, Space Science and STEM education, SPACE India has consistently pursued its purpose while keeping it aligned with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**.

14.17 VICE ADMIRAL DINESH KUMAR TRIPATHI APPOINTED AS THE NEXT CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF

- ❖ The Government has appointed Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, PVSM, AVSM, NM, as the next Chief of the Naval Staff with effect from the afternoon of April 30, 2024.
- ❖ The present Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM retires from service on April 30, 2024.
- ❖ The Vice Admiral DK Tripathi has commanded Indian Naval Ships Vinash, Kirch and Trishul. He has also held various important operational and staff appointments which include Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet; Director of Naval Operations; Principal Director, Network Centric Operations and Principal Director, Naval Plans at New Delhi.

14.18 CRPF ADG NALIN PRABHAT APPOINTED CHIEF OF NSG

- ❖ **Senior IPS officer Nalin Prabhat** has been appointed as **the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG)**.
- ❖ He has been appointed for a period up to **August 31, 2028**.
- ❖ He is a **1992 batch IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre**, is presently working as **Additional Director General in CRPF**.
- ❖ The ACC has also approved the appointment of **Intelligence Bureau Additional Director Sapna Tewari** as the Special Director in the agency. **Tewari** has been appointed for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the post or up to the date of her **superannuation i.e. April 30, 2026**.

14.19 CITROEN INDIA ROPES IN MS DHONI AS BRAND AMBASSADOR

- ❖ French carmaker Citroen has engaged cricketing legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador in India, according to people aware of the development, as the Stellantis Group company seeks to improve brand awareness and find a firm footing in a market where it's a relatively new entrant.

14.20 OPENAI HIRES FIRST INDIA-BASED OFFICIAL PRAGYA MISRA

- ❖ OpenAI has hired Pragya Misra, its first official in India, in order to handle government relations.
- ❖ OpenAI is a U.S.-based artificial intelligence (AI) research organization founded in December 2015, researching artificial intelligence with the goal of developing "safe and beneficial" artificial general intelligence.

14.21 PAPUA NEW GUINEA APPOINTS FIRST DEFENCE ADVISER TO INDIA

- ❖ Papua New Guinea (PNG) has appointed Colonel Edison Napyo as its first defence adviser to India.

- ❖ Col Napyo is the first to be deployed as a defence advisor to India and will serve as a link between the PNG Government and Military in the country.
- ❖ India and Papua New Guinea formalised diplomatic relations in 1976, and enjoy warm and friendly relations.
- ❖ The two countries have been working closely in international forums, including the Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations Organisation. This appointment will boost the present minimal military exchanges and relations.
- ❖ During the third summit of the Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) PM spoke in favour of free and open Indo-Pacific region and focused on India's commitment to assist the development goals of the member countries of FIPIC.

ABOUT FIPIC

- ❖ The FIPIC consists of Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, PNG, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

14.22 NAIMA KHATOON BECOMES FIRST WOMAN VICE-CHANCELLOR OF AMU.

- ❖ The President Droupadi Murmu has appointed professor Naima Khatoon as the first woman vice-chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).
- ❖ Prof Khatoon has been appointed for five years from the date on which she enters his office or the date on which she completes seventy years of age, whichever is earlier.

ABOUT AMU

- ❖ The founding chancellor of the university was Sultan Jahan, the Begum of Bhopal, and at least three alumnae of AMU went on to helm prestigious universities, it took more than 100 years for the university court to propose the name of a deserving woman from a modest family from Jaipur district in Odisha.
- ❖ The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is a major university in the town of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India.
- ❖ It was originally founded by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1875, as the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (better known as MAO College). It became a full university in 1920.

14.23 PRABOWO SUBIANTO ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA

- ❖ Indonesia's electoral commission formally declared **Prabowo Subianto** president-elect after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates.
- ❖ Subianto, who is currently defense minister, won the election with 58.6% of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by either of the other two candidates.
- ❖ Subianto will take office in October, succeeding the popular **Joko Widodo**, the country's first president from outside the Jakarta elite.

14.24 T RABI SANKAR RE-APPOINTED AS RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the re-appointment of RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar for one year from May 3, 2024.
- ❖ Rabi Sankar has a Master of Philosophy in Economics from the Jawaharlal Nehru University at Delhi, was appointed as RBI Deputy Governor in May 2021 for three years. He was an Executive Director of RBI before being elevated to the post of Deputy Governor in May 2021.
- ❖ Besides the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, the central bank has four Deputy Governors— M.D.Patra; M Rajeshwar Rao; J Swaminathan and T Rabi Sankar.

14.25 SECURITIES APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

- ❖ Justice (retired) Dinesh Kumar took charge as the Presiding Officer of the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on 29 April 2024. The government of India appointed Justice Dinesh Kumar for a four-year term.
- ❖ Before taking over as the presiding officer of SAT, Justice Dinesh Kumar was the chief justice of the Karnataka High Court. He retired from the post in February 2024.
- ❖ He replaced Tarun Aggarwal, who retired in December 2023.
- ❖ Dheeraj Bhatnagar also took charge as the technical member of the tribunal. He has been appointed for a term of four years or till he reaches the age of 67, whichever is earlier. Dheeraj Bhatnagar retired as principal chief commissioner of Income Tax Delhi.
- ❖ The other member of the three-member SAT is Meera Swarup.

ABOUT SAT:

- ❖ The Securities Appellate Tribunal is a statutory body established in 1992 under the provisions of the Securities Exchange Board of India Act 1992.
- ❖ The SAT consist of a Presiding Officer and other judicial and technical members.

FUNCTIONS OF SAT

- ❖ The Securities Appellate Tribunal was set up to replace the High Court. It hears appeals against the following financial regulators.
 - ✓ Orders and rulings of the capital market regulator, Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
 - ✓ Orders and rulings of the pension sector regulator Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
 - ✓ Orders and rulings of the Insurance sector regulator Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

15. AWARDS AND HONOURS

15.1 REC WINS SKOCH ESG AWARD 2024

- ❖ **REC Limited**, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been bestowed with the **SKOCH ESG Award 2024** in the '**Renewable Energy Financing**' category.
- ❖ The award underscores REC's dedication to sustainable financing, paving the way for a greener future and accelerating the transition to renewable energy.
- ❖ Executive Director, REC Limited, **Shri T.S.C. Bosh** received the award in **New Delhi**.

ABOUT THE AWARD:

- ❖ The SKOCH ESG Awards recognize organizations that demonstrate outstanding performance in **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** practices. The SKOCH ESG Award and Assessment serve as an important benchmark for evaluating organizations' commitment to India 2047. It focuses on the interplay between sustainable investments and processes in shaping a sustainable and growing business future.

ABOUT REC LTD:

- ❖ REC is a '**Maharatna**' Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, and is registered with RBI as **Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC)**, and **Infrastructure Financing Company (IFC)**.
- ❖ REC finances the entire Power-Infrastructure sector comprising Generation, Transmission, Distribution, Renewable Energy and new technologies like Electric Vehicles, Battery Storage, Pumped Storage Projects, Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia projects.

15.2 PROFESSOR MEENA CHARANDA HONORED WITH 'INTERNATIONAL CULTURE AWARD'

- ❖ **Professor Meena Charanda, Principal of Kalindi College, Delhi University**, was given the '**International Culture Award**' for the year 2024. **Prof. Meena Charanda** has been given this honor for her remarkable work in the field of education and social service.
- ❖ The selection for the '**International Culture Award**' was made by a 5-member committee headed by **K Yogesh**, Chairman of Socrates Social Research University (Trust).
- ❖ **Prof. Charanda** was also selected for this honor for his excellent research work in the field of political science.

15.3 SJVN AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- ❖ SJVN Limited, a leading public sector undertaking, has been honored with two prestigious awards at the 15th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2024.
- ❖ The awards were given by the Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) in recognition of SJVN's remarkable contributions to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

ABOUT SJVN:

- ❖ SJVN, formerly known as Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam, is an Indian public sector undertaking involved in hydroelectric power generation and transmission.
- ❖ It was incorporated in 1988 as Nathpa Jhakri Power Corporation, a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

15.4 GERMAN DEMOCRACY PRIZE

- ❖ The late Russian dissident **Alexei Navalny** and his wife **Yulia Navalnaya** will receive the "**Freedom Prize of the Media**" from a leading German forum.
- ❖ The prize is presented each year at the Ludwig Erhard Summit.
- ❖ Russian politician and former chess grandmaster **Garry Kasparov** received the award in 2023.
- ❖ **Volodymyr Zelensky** and former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev also received the award.

15.5 JOHN L. 'JACK' SWIGERT JR. AWARD

- ❖ India's Chandrayaan-3 mission team given 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award.
- ❖ The award, presented by the Space Foundation during the annual Space Symposium in Colorado, acknowledges the extraordinary achievements of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Chandrayaan-3 team in the realm of space exploration and discovery

ABOUT CHANDRAYAN-3 MISSION:

- ❖ Chandrayaan-3, launched by ISRO in July 2023, comprised a lander named Vikram and a rover called Pragyan. On August 23, 2023, the mission made history when Vikram successfully touched down on the lunar surface at the South Pole, an area that had remained unexplored by previous missions.
- ❖ By landing on the Moon's South Pole, India became the fourth country to master the technology of soft landing on the lunar surface, following the United States, China, and the former Soviet Union. This accomplishment has opened up new avenues for understanding the Moon's geology, potential water ice reserves, and other scientific revelations

AWARD BACKGROUND:

- ❖ The John L. "Jack" Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration is named after astronaut John L. Swigert Jr., who served on the famous Apollo 13 lunar mission. The award honors individuals or organizations

that have made extraordinary contributions to space exploration and discovery, embodying the spirit of accomplishment that the Apollo 13 crew exhibited in overcoming adversity.

15.6 KANNADA POET MAMTA G. SAGAR WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

- ❖ **Mamta G. Sagar**, a Bengaluru-based Kannada poet, writer, academic and activist, has recently won the World Literary Prize from the World Organization of Writers (WOW) for her contributions to the world of literature.
- ❖ Dr Sagar, a facilitator at **Srishti Manipal** Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, known for her involvement in diverse forms of transdisciplinary creative writing and cultural industries, received the award at a ceremony in Abuja, Nigeria.

NOTABLE WORKS BY MAMTA G. SAGAR:

- ❖ Authored four poetry collections, including "**Footsteps of the Wild Peacock**" (1992) and "**Hide & Seek**" (2014).
- ❖ Notable works also include the musical play for children "**Chukki Chukki Chandakki**" (1999) and the translation of the Kannada play "Mayye Bhaara Manave Bhaara" as "The Swing of Desire" (2004).

ABOUT WOW WORLD LITERARY PRIZE:

- ❖ Established by WOW as a successor to **the "Golden LIFFT"** literary award.
- ❖ WOW aims to encourage writers who have made significant contributions to world literature.
- ❖ Co-founded by the Eurasian Peoples' Assembly, the Pan-African Association of Writers and the LIFFT Foundation to promote cultural projects of Eurasian Peoples.
- ❖ The award accepts works in **Russian, English, Spanish and Arabic** with their translations.

15.7 AMITABH BACHCHAN TO BE HONOURED WITH LATA DEENANATH MANGESHKAR AWARD

- ❖ Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan will be honoured with the prestigious third Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award for his remarkable dedication to the nation, its people, and society.
- ❖ Music maestro A R Rahman will receive the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar for contribution to Indian music.
- ❖ The award will also be presented to non-profit organisation Deepstambh Foundation Manobal for services in the field of social service.
- ❖ The Ashtavinayak Prakashit's "Galib", produced by Malhar and Vajreshwari, will be recognised as the best drama of the year.
- ❖ Marathi writer Manjiri Phadke will receive Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar (Vagvilasini Puraskar) for contribution to literature, while actor Randeep Hooda will be feted with the Vishesh Puraskar for contribution to cinema.
- ❖ Veteran actors Ashok Saraf and Padmini Kolhapure will be honoured with Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar for their contribution to cinema.
- ❖ The recipients also include Roopkumar Rathod for his contribution to the field of music, Bhau Torsekar for editorial services and Atul Parchure for services to theatre and drama.

ABOUT AWARD:

- ❖ It was established by the Deenanath Mangeshkar Smriti Pratishthan in memory of the late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar on February 6, 2022.
- ❖ Previous recipients of this esteemed award include Prime Minister Narendra Modi and popular singer Asha Bhosale.

15.8 GMR HYDERABAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WINS AWARD FOR 'BEST AIRPORT STAFF'

- ❖ GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) has won the prestigious 'Best Airport Staff in India & South Asia 2024' award by Skytrax.
- ❖ The award was announced at a glittering ceremony held on 17th April at the Passenger Terminal EXPO 2024 in Frankfurt, Germany.
- ❖ Hyderabad Airport emerged as the number one airport among all participating airports in India and South Asia.

ABOUT SKYTRAX:

- ❖ Skytrax is a global air transport rating organisation, having evaluated airports and airlines worldwide since 1989.
- ❖ It assigns star ratings from 1 to 5 stars based on diverse assessments that significantly impact the passenger experience.

15.9 WEF RECOGNISES SEVEN INDIANS AS YOUNG GLOBAL LEADERS FOR 2024

- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced the 20th edition of its Young Global Leaders Community: The Class of 2024. The list includes nearly 90 individuals under the age of 40 from diverse fields, including politics, business, civil society, the arts, and academia.
- ❖ This year, five Indians have been selected for the Young Global Leaders program. They are:
 - ✓ Bhumi Pednekar (Art and Culture) – Bollywood actress known for films like “Dum Laga Ke Haisha”, “Toilet: Ek Prem Katha”, and “Badhaai Do”
 - ✓ Adwaita Nayar (Business) – Chief Executive Officer, Nyka Fashion
 - ✓ Arjun Bhartia (Business) – Director, Jubilant Group
 - ✓ Priya Aggarwal Hebbar (Business) – Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Limited
 - ✓ Sharad Vivek Sagar (Social Entrepreneurs) – Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Dexterity Global

ABOUT THE YOUNG GLOBAL LEADERS PROGRAM

- ❖ The WEF's Young Global Leaders program was launched in 2005 and aims to identify the future generation of leaders who can contribute to addressing the world's most pressing challenges. The program includes a three-year leadership development curriculum, executive education courses, learning journeys, and opportunities to collaborate with peers.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

- ❖ The World Economic Forum is an international non-profit organization headquartered in Cologny, Switzerland. It was established in 1971 by Klaus Schwab with the goal of promoting public-private cooperation to address global issues.

15.10 UNESCO NAMES STRASBOURG ITS WORLD BOOK CAPITAL 2024

- ❖ Recently, Strasbourg, France, was designated the World Book Capital for 2024, while Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will hold the title in 2025.
- ❖ A city designated as UNESCO World Book Capital must promote books and reading across national borders and organize activities for all ages and groups.

LIST OF UNESCO WORLD BOOK CAPITAL CITIES:

- ❖ Tbilisi (Georgia) in 2021
- ❖ Guadalajara (Mexico) in 2022
- ❖ Accra (Ghana) in 2023
- ❖ Strasbourg (France) in 2024

15.11 2024 WORLD PRESS PHOTO OF THE YEAR AWARD

- ❖ **Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem** won the prestigious **2024 World Press Photo of the Year award** for his image of a **Palestinian woman** cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ The picture was taken on Oct. 17, 2023, at Nasser hospital in **Khan Younis in southern Gaza**, where families were searching for relatives killed during Israeli bombing of the Palestinian enclave.
- ❖ Mr. Salem's winning image portrays **Inas Abu Maamar**, 36, sobbing while holding Saly's sheet-clad body in the hospital morgue.
- ❖ **Mr. Salem**, a Palestinian aged 39, has worked for Reuters since 2003. He also won an award in the **2010 World Press Photo competition**.

OTHER WINNERS:

- ❖ **GEO photographer Lee-Ann Olwage** of South Africa won the story of the year category with images documenting **dementia in Madagascar**.
- ❖ The long-term projects category was won by **Alejandro Cegarra of Venezuela** for the series "**The Two Walls**" for **The New York Times/Bloomberg**.
- ❖ **Ukrainian photographer Julia Kochetova** won the open format award with "**War is Personal**", which documented the war in her country by weaving together pictures, poetry, audio and music in documentary style.

15.12 SUNFLOWERS WERE THE FIRST ONES TO KNOW

- ❖ "**Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know**" a film by **Chidanand Naik**, a student of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), has been selected in the 'La Cinef' Competitive section of **77th Cannes Film Festival, France**. The festival is to be held from 15th to 24th May 2024.
- ❖ The section is an official section of the festival aimed at encouraging new talents and recognises films from film schools across the world.
- ❖ The film is among 18 shorts (14 live-action and 4 animated films) selected from a total of 2,263 films submitted by film schools all over the world. This is the only Indian film selected in the 'La Cinef' section of Cannes.
- ❖ The Jury will hand over La Cinef prizes at a ceremony preceding the screening of the awarded films on 23rd May in the Buñuel Theatre.
- ❖ This FTII film is a production of the TV Wing One-year program where four students from different disciplines i.e. Direction, Electronic Cinematography, Editing, and Sound worked together for one project as a year-end coordinated exercise.
- ❖ The film is **directed by Chidananda S Naik, shot by Suraj Thakur, edited by Manoj V and sound by Abhishek Kadam**.

15.13 PAVULURI SUBBA RAO GETS ARYABHATTA AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTION TO ASTRONAUTICS

- ❖ Ananth Technologies Founder, CEO and Chairman Pavuluri Subba Rao has been conferred with the 'Aryabhata Award' instituted by the Aeronautical Society of India (ASI). He was also presented with ASI's 'Distinguished Fellow' title.
- ❖ He received the award recognition of Rao's "tremendous lifetime contribution to the promotion of astronautics in India."
- ❖ A former ISRO scientist, Rao incorporated Ananth Technologies Limited in 1992 to indigenously design and develop some of the country's most sophisticated avionics for ISRO and the Defence sector.
- ❖ The Hyderabad-based company employs over 1,600 people across its three Centres of Excellence in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Thiruvananthapuram.

- ❖ ATL has supplied key components and technologies to 98 satellites and 78 launch vehicles for Indian space programmes.

ABOUT ARYABHATTA AWARD

- ❖ The Astronautical Society of India presents the Aryabhata Award to people who have made significant contributions in the field of astronautics and aerospace technology in India.
- ❖ The society was established in 1990 and is a member of the International Astronautical Federation since 1958.
- ❖ The award is named after Aryabhata, an Indian astronomer and mathematician from the fifth century.
- ❖ It commemorates Aryabhata, the first Indian satellite launched on 19th April 1975. The award is generally presented by the Minister of State of the Prime Minister's Office.

15.14 LAUREUS AWARDS 2024

- ❖ The 2024 Laureus Sports Awards ceremony held in Madrid. The event was a grand celebration of the world's best athletes and their achievements.
- ❖ **List of winners:**
 - ✓ World Sportswoman of the Year: **Aitana Bonmati**
 - ✓ World Sportsman of the Year: **Novak Djokovic**
 - ✓ World Team of the Year: **Spain Women's Football Team**
 - ✓ World Breakthrough of the Year: **Jude Bellingham**
 - ✓ World Comeback of the Year: **Simone Biles**
 - ✓ World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability: **Diede de Groot**
 - ✓ World Action Sportsperson of the Year: **Arisa Trew**
 - ✓ Laureus Sport for Good: **Rafael Nadal Foundation**

ABOUT THE AWARDS:

- ❖ The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual event that started in 2000. It celebrates great and inspiring sporting achievements and also showcases Laureus Sport for Good's initiatives.
- ❖ Shortlists for seven categories, which include Sportswoman, Sportsman, Team, Breakthrough, Comeback, Action and Sport for Good, are created by votes from over 1,000 sports media from more than 70 countries.
- ❖ The Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020).

15.15 PANDIT LACCHU MAHARAJ AWARD

- ❖ Noted Hindi film superstars Hema Malini and Saira Banu, along with other prominent personalities from the fields of art and culture, will be honoured with the prestigious Pandit Lacchu Maharaj Award.
- ❖ The award ceremony will take place on 31 August 2024 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

LIST OF WINNERS:

Winner	Award for Year	Belongs to Place	Exponent of Dance form
Uma Sharma	2015	New Delhi	Kathak
Rama Vaidyanathan	2016	New Delhi	Kathak
Uma Dogra	2017	Jaipur	Kathak
Hema Malini	2018	Mumbai	Kathak, Film actress

Saira Banu	2019	Mumbai	Kathak, Film actress
Sandhya Puricha	2018	Mumbai	Bharatanatyam Exponent
Dr. Malabika Mitra	2021	Kolkata	Kathak
Prachi Shah	2022	Mumbai	Kathak, Film actress
Ashim Bandhu Bhattacharya	2023	Mumbai	Kathak
Pandit Rajendra Gangani	2024	Jaipur	Kathak

15.16 GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

- ❖ Forest and tribal rights activist Alok Shukla will receive the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize – 2024 for successfully leading a community campaign that saved 4,45,000 (4.45 lakh) acres of biodiversity-rich forests from 21 planned coal mines in Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ Also known as the Green Nobel, the prize recognises grassroots environmental heroes from roughly the world's six inhabited continental regions — Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands & Island Nations, North America, and South & Central America.
- ❖ A statement from the Goldman Environmental Foundation mentioned that the government cancelled the auction of 21 proposed coal mines in Hasdeo Aranya, whose pristine forests — popularly known as the lungs of Chhattisgarh — are one of the largest intact forest areas in India.
- ❖ Spread across 657 square miles, the dense and biodiverse Hasdeo Aranya forests form one of India's most extensive contiguous forest tracts. They are also home to 25 endangered species, 92 bird species, and 167 rare and medicinal plant species.
- ❖ Nearly 15,000 tribals depend on the Hasdeo Aranya forests for their livelihood, cultural identity and sustenance.
- ❖ Meanwhile, the region contains one of India's largest coal reserves — an estimated five billion tons of coal sit under the Hasdeo forests.

LIST OF WINNERS:

Winner	Country	Region
Marcel Gomes	Brazil	South and Central America
Murrawah Maroochy Johnson	Australia	Islands & Island Nations
Alok Shukla	India	Asia
Teresa Vicente	Spain	Europe
Andrea Vidaurre	United States of America	North America
Nonhle Mbuthuma and Sinegugu Zukulu	South Africa	Africa

ABOUT GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

- ❖ The Goldman Environmental Prize was founded by American couple Richard and Rhoda Goldman in 1989.
- ❖ The prize aims to honour grassroots environmental leaders, draw the international community's attention to environmental problems, and encourage action.

16. SPORTS

16.1 ROHAN BOPANNA WINS MIAMI OPEN 2024 DOUBLES TITLE

- ❖ Ace Indian tennis player **Rohan Bopanna** rewrote his own record to continue to be the oldest ATP Masters 1000 champion as he and his Australian partner **Matt Ebden** clinched the men's doubles crown at the **Miami** Open here.
- ❖ The duo of **Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden** defeated the pair of Croatia's Ivan Dodig and American **Austin Krajicek** despite losing the first set. With this victory, the duo of Bopanna and Eden reclaimed their **world No.1 rank** in the **ATP men's double ranking**.
- ❖ At the **age of 44**, Bopanna also broke his own record to become the oldest player to win an ATP 1000 Masters Championship. Rohan Bopanna along with Ebden had won the Indian Wells tournament last year and at the age of 43 years, Bopanna set the world record of being the oldest player to win an ATP 1000 Master title.
- ❖ After **Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupati and Sania Mirza**, **Bopanna** became the **fourth Indian** to win the **Miami** Open title.

MIAMI OPEN 2024 TENNIS WINNERS

- ❖ Men's singles: **Jannik Sinner (Italy)**
- ❖ Men's doubles: **Rohan Bopanna (India)/Matthew Ebden (Australia)**
- ❖ Women's singles: **Danielle Collins (USA)**
- ❖ Women's doubles: **Sofia Kenin/Bethanie Mattek-Sands (USA)**

16.2 6TH SHAASTRA RAPID FIDE RATED CHESS TOURNAMENT

- ❖ An International Chess Federation (FIDE)-rated Rapid Chess Tournament will be hosted by **IIT Madras**.
- ❖ More than **35 players** from the institute will take part in the event.
- ❖ The '**6th Shaastra Rapid FIDE Rated Chess Tournament**' will witness the participation of six Grandmasters, sixteen International Masters, three Women Grandmasters and a Women International Master.
- ❖ The total prize fund of the tournament is **₹5,00,000** with the first prize being **₹65,000**. The tournament not only offers substantial prize funds but also attracts a diverse range of player.

16.3 HARDIK SINGH & SALIMA TETE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

- ❖ Hockey India announced the sixth Hockey India Awards 2023 on **31 March 2024** at a function in **New Delhi**.
- ❖ **Salima Tete and Hardik Singh** were named the women's and men's player of the year, respectively.
- ❖ Hockey India started the annual Hockey India Awards in 2014 to honour **India's best hockey players**, former players and officials.

HOCKEY INDIA AWARDS 2023 WINNERS

- ❖ Hockey India **Major Dhyan Chand** Lifetime Achievement Award: **Ashok Kumar**
- ❖ Hockey India **Balbir Singh Sr Award** for Player of The Year (Men): **Hardik Singh**

- ❖ Hockey India **Balbir Singh Sr Award** for Player of The Year (Women): **Salima Tete**
- ❖ Hockey India **Baljit Singh Award** for Goalkeeper of the Year: **PR Sreejesh**
- ❖ Hockey India **Pargat Singh Award** for Defender of the Year: **Harmanpreet Singh**
- ❖ Hockey India **Ajit Pal Singh Award** for Midfielder of the Year: **Hardik Singh**
- ❖ Hockey India **Dhanraj Pillay Award** for Forward of the Year: **Abhishek**
- ❖ Hockey India **Asunta Lakra Award** for Upcoming Player of the Year (Women – Under 21): **Deepika Soreng**
- ❖ Hockey India **Jugraj Singh Award** for Upcoming Player of the Year (Men – Under 21): **Araijeet Singh Hundal**

16.4 56TH NATIONAL KHO-KHO CHAMPIONSHIP

- ❖ The Maharashtra team made a clean sweep at the **56th National Kho Kho Championship 2023-24**. It won both the men's and women's titles, held at Delhi's **Karnail Singh Stadium** and the **Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium**.
- ❖ **Sumitra Mahajan, the former Speaker of Lok Sabha**, inaugurated the opening ceremony at **KD Jadhav Hall** in IG Sports Complex. Mahajan was the **chief guest** at the opening ceremony where the Kho Kho Federation of India unveiled the mascot 'Dhaakad' for a multi-team tournament.
- ❖ Men's Champion- The Maharashtra men's team defeated the Indian Railway team.
- ❖ Women's Champion - The Maharashtra team, led by **Sampada Maurya**, defeated the Airport Authority of India team.

ABOUT KHO-KHO:

- ❖ The first Kho Kho competition was organised in **1914**.
- ❖ The Kho-kho Federation of India organised the first National Championship at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, in 1959.
- ❖ Kho Kho Federation of India was setup **in 1955**.

16.5 NOVAK DJOKOVIC BECOMES THE OLDEST WORLD NO. 1 IN ATP RANKINGS

- ❖ The 24-time Grand Slam champion **Novak Djokovic** continued to set records on the ATP Tour as he began the week **ranked 419th as World No.1**. The Serbian icon is on the verge of making history by becoming the **oldest World No. 1** ever, surpassing **Roger Federer's record** as the oldest No. 1 in ATP Rankings, when he will be 36 years and 321 days old.
- ❖ **Carlos Alcaraz, Djokovic's** most recent competitor for the top place, became the youngest No. 1 in ATP Rankings history in September 2022, at the **age of 19**.

16.6 INDIAN WEIGHTLIFTER BINDYARANI DEVI WON A BRONZE MEDAL AT THE IWF WORLD CUP 2024 IN PHUKET, THAILAND.

ABOUT IWF WORLD CUP:

- ❖ The IWF World Cup in weightlifting is organised by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), as well as other weightlifting federations.

16.7 MEENESH SHAH ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF NCDFI

- ❖ **The National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd. (NCDFI)** elected **Meenesh Shah** as the Chairman.
- ❖ The election process was conducted by **Praveen Chaudhary**, IAS, the District Collector of Anand, who served as the Returning Officer.

- ❖ About National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd:
- ❖ **NCDFI** is a national-level apex dairy cooperative registered on **December 7, 1970** and is governed under the provisions of the Multi State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) **Act, 2023**.
- ❖ It has 20 Regular Members, 14 Associate Members and **the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** as its Institutional Member.

16.8 HARENDRA SINGH APPOINTED AS COACH OF INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

- ❖ Former Indian hockey player and Dronacharya awardee coach **Harendra Singh** has been appointed the new head coach of the Indian women's hockey team.
- ❖ He replaced Dutch coach **Janneke Schopman**.
- ❖ Harendra Singh started his career as a Hockey coach with French club HC Lyon's junior team in 1995.
- ❖ Currently, He is the Coach of United States men's national hockey team.

16.9 KAZAKHSTAN INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE

- ❖ **Anupama Upadhyaya** and **M. Tharun** clinched the women's and men's singles titles, respectively at the **Kazakhstan International Challenge** tournament in Astana.
- ❖ **The Kazakhstan International Challenge**
- ❖ **Srivatsa Dhanraj** and Maneesha K lost to Malaysia's Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien to sign off with a runner-up finish.

16.10 MOHAMMEDAN SPORTING WIN MAIDEN I-LEAGUE TITLE

- ❖ **Mohammedan Sporting** of Kolkata won **the I-League 2023-24** by defeating **Shillong Lajong Club** 2-1 at the SSA Ground in Shillong, Meghalaya.
- ❖ **Mohammedan Sporting** has also qualified for next year's AFC Cup, which will be organised by the Asian Football Federation.
- ❖ Since the start of the I-league in 2007-08, Mohammedan Sporting has never been able to win the I-league. It was the first I-league title for the **illustrious Kolkata football club**.

ABOUT 'I-LEAGUE'

- ❖ **The I-League** is a professional men's football league started in 2007-08 by **the All India Football Federation (AIFF)**. The I-League replaced the National Football League. **The National Football League** was started by the AIFF in 1996 to make Indian men's football professional, raise the standards of domestic football, and make the game popular across the country.
- ❖ **Dempo Sports Club** of Gao won the first I-League in **2007-08**. It is also the most successful team in the I-League history, **winning the title 3 times**.

16.11 WORLD ATHLETIC PRIZE FOR OLYMPICS

- ❖ **World Athletics** will award **\$50,000** cash prize to gold-winning track and field athletes at the Paris Olympics 2024.
- ❖ This marks the first instance of an international sports governing body offering prize money to Olympic gold medalists.
- ❖ A prize pot of \$2.4 million, sourced from the IOC's revenue share allocation, will fund the awards.
- ❖ The initiative aims to recognize athletes' contributions and empower them, according to **World Athletics President Sebastian Coe**.
- ❖ World Athletics plans to extend the bonus initiative to silver and bronze medalists at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

16.12 ASIAN WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

- ❖ Indian wrestlers finished the Asian Wrestling Championships 2024 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan with nine medals - **four silvers and five bronze.**
- ❖ **Indian medal winners:**
 - ✓ Udit (men's 57kg) - silver medal
 - ✓ Radhika (women's 68kg) - silver medal
 - ✓ Anju (women's 53kg) - silver medal
 - ✓ Harshita (women's 72kg) - silver medal
 - ✓ Abhimanyou (men's 70kg) - bronze medal
 - ✓ Vicky (men's 97kg) - bronze medal
 - ✓ Shivaneer Pawar (women's 50kg) - bronze medal
 - ✓ Antim (women's 65kg) - bronze medal
 - ✓ Manisha (women's 62kg) - bronze medal

16.13 WISDEN CRICKETER OF THE YEAR 2024

- ❖ The Five Wisden Cricketers of the Year have been announced in the 2024 edition of the Wisden **Cricketers' Almanack, with Mitchell Starc, Usman Khawaja, Ash Gardner, Harry Brook and Mark Wood this year's award winners.**
- ❖ **Travis Head (Australia)** has picked up the Wisden Trophy.
- ❖ **Hayley Matthews (West Indies)** has been named the Leading T20 Cricketer in the world.
- ❖ Wisden's Leading women Cricketer in the World - **Nat Sciver-Brunt**, becoming the first England player to be named.
- ❖ Men's Leading Cricketer in the World - **Australia's captain Pat Cummins**

ABOUT THE AWARD:

- ❖ The Wisden Cricketers of the Year are cricketers selected for the honor by the annual publication Wisden **Cricketers' Almanack**, based primarily on their "influence on the previous English season.
- ❖ **The award began in 1889.**

16.14 DHARAMSALA TO GET INDIA'S FIRST 'HYBRID PITCH'

- ❖ **The Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA)** stadium has become the first BCCI-accredited venue to install a **state-of-the-art 'hybrid pitch.**
- ❖ The Netherlands-based '**SISGrass**', a part of the SIS Pitches group of companies, has been roped in for the first-ever hybrid pitch installation.

16.15 ROHIT BECOMES FIRST INDIAN TO HIT 500 T20 SIXES

- ❖ India and Mumbai Indians star batter **Rohit Sharma** became the first Indian to smash **500 sixes** in T20 cricket.
- ❖ He achieved this milestone during **Indian Premier League (IPL)** match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at **Wankhede Stadium.**
- ❖ Rohit's six tally has gone up to **502 sixes.**
- ❖ Only **Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard, Andre Russell, Colin Munro** have more T20 sixes to their name.

16.16 NEPAL BATTER AIREE HITS SIX SIXES IN AN OVER

- ❖ Nepal all-rounder **Dipendra Singh Airee** smashed six sixes in an over to become the third batsman to ever achieve the feat in a T20 International.
- ❖ The 24-year-old joined India's **Yuvraj Singh** and West Indian Kieron Pollard after a sizzling knock against Qatar in the ACC Men's Premier Cup match in Al Amerat.
- ❖ Airee smashed medium pacer **Kamran Khan** for six sixes in the final over in his incendiary 64 not out from 21 balls and also took two wickets as Nepal beat Qatar by 32 runs.

16.17 ROHIT SHARMA BECOMES THE SECOND PLAYER TO PLAY 250 IPL MATCHES

- ❖ **Rohit Sharma** has played his **250th Indian Premier League match**, becoming only the second player to do so after MS Dhoni.
- ❖ Rohit reached this milestone in a match against **Punjab Kings in Mullanpur, Chandigarh.**
- ❖ Rohit Sharma through his IPL career has racked up 6472 runs at an average of 30.1 and strike rate of 131.22. He has hit 42 half-centuries and scored 2 tons in his IPL career. This makes him the fourth highest run-scorer in the tournament's history just behind the likes of **Virat Kohli** who is at the top followed by Shikhar Dhawan and David Warner respectively.

MOST MATCHES PLAYED IN IPL

- ❖ 256 - MS Dhoni (Chennai Super Kings & Rising Pune Supergiant)
- ❖ 249 - Rohit Sharma (Deccan Chargers & Mumbai Indians)
- ❖ 249 - Dinesh Karthik (Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians, Kolkata Knight Riders, Punjab Kings, Royal Challengers)

BENGALURU & GUJARAT LIONS)

- ❖ 244 - Virat Kohli (Royal Challengers Bengaluru)
- ❖ 232 - Ravindra Jadeja (Rajasthan Royals, Chennai Super Kings & Gujarat Lions)

16.18 PANWAR SECURES INDIA'S FIRST OLYMPICS QUOTA IN ROWING

- ❖ **Balraj Panwar** secured **India's first Paris Olympics quota** in rowing by finishing third in the men's single scull event of the 2024 World Asian and Oceanian Olympic and Paralympic Qualification **Regatta in Chungju, South Korea.**
- ❖ The 25-year-old Indian Army rower clocked 7:01.27 minutes to finish third in the 2000m race and seal the quota.

16.19 D GUKESH BECOMES YOUNGEST MAN TO WIN CANDIDATES, TO CHALLENGE FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

- ❖ India's Gukesh Dommaraju became the youngest-ever winner of Candidates.
- ❖ 17-year-old Gukesh will face Ding Liren in the match for World Championship title in 2024.
- ❖ Gukesh drew against Hikaru Nakamura of USA in the final round in Toronto.
- ❖ D Gukesh drew his final-round match in black pieces against Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura of the USA.
- ❖ He won a silver medal at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games.

16.20 SAURAV GHOSAL ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM PROFESSIONAL SQUASH

- ❖ Indian squash player Saurav Ghosal announced his retirement from professional squash.

- ❖ During his career, Ghosal won 12 Professional Squash Association (PSA) titles and multiple medals at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) and Asian Games.
- ❖ He was also a former top 10 athlete in world squash rankings in April 2019 and remained there for six months, the only Indian man to enter the top 10 in the World rankings.
- ❖ The nine-time Asian Games medallist played a significant role in leading India to gold medals in the team's event at 2014 and 2022 editions of the Asian Games.
- ❖ He also became the first Indian male player to secure a CWG squash medal in a singles competition.
- ❖ He has also won the World Doubles Championships gold medal after partnering compatriot Dipika Pallikal Karthik in the mixed event at the 2022 Glasgow competition.
- ❖ In 2007, Saurav Ghosal became the first ever squash player to be awarded country's second highest sport award, Arjuna Award.

ABOUT PSA

- ❖ The PSA World Tour is a professional circuit for squash players, similar to the ATP and WTA in tennis and BWF in badminton.
- ❖ Ghosal's final PSA title win was Malaysian Open Squash Championships back in November 2021, where he beat Colombia's Miguel Rodriguez.
- ❖ His final PSA Tour appearance was back in the 2024 Windy City Open where he lost to USA's Timothy Brownell in the round of 64.

16.21 YUZVENDRA CHAHAL FIRST BOWLER TO TAKE 200 WICKETS

- ❖ Rajasthan Royals spinner Yuzvendra Chahal took his 200th IPL wicket to become the first bowler to achieve the feat in the franchise tournament.
- ❖ Chahal dismissed Mumbai Indians all-rounder Mohammad Nabi caught and bowled for 23 with his leg-spin as he celebrated the achievement at Rajasthan's home ground in Jaipur.
- ❖ He has taken 13 wickets in IPL 2024 so far and is currently tied with Jasprit Bumrah and Harshal Patel at the top of the wicket-takers' list.

16.22 USAIN BOLT NAMED ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2024 AMBASSADOR

- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) have announced Olympic legend Usain Bolt as an ambassador for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which will be played in the West Indies and USA from 1-29 June 2024.

ABOUT USAIN BOLT

- ❖ Usain Bolt is a legend in track and field athletics. In 2017, he set the world record in the 100-metre race.
- ❖ In the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Bolt won gold in the men's 100-metre, 200 metres and 4x100 metres. He created a new world record in all three events.
- ❖ At the 2012 London Olympics, he again won gold medals in the 100 metres, 200 metres and 4x100 metres.
- ❖ Finally, in the 2016 Rio Olympics, he won gold in 100 metres, 200 metres and 4x100 metres.
- ❖ Bolt currently holds world records in the 100 metres, 200 metres and 4x100 metres with times of 9.58 seconds, 19.19 seconds and 36.84 seconds, respectively.

16.23 SAUDI ARAMCO SIGNS UP WITH FIFA AS WORLD CUP SPONSOR

- ❖ Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil producer, has signed a four-year global partnership with international football association Fifa.
- ❖ The energy giant will become Fifa's major worldwide partner with sponsorship rights for multiple events, including the Fifa World Cup 26, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico and the Fifa Women's World Cup 2027.

- ❖ Saudi Arabia was set to be formally declared as the host of the 2034 Fifa World Cup after Australia decided not to apply in October 2023.
- ❖ Saudi sponsorship will help fuel income for FIFA's 2023-26 commercial cycle which was conservatively budgeted to be \$11 billion.

16.24 UGANDA NAME ABHAY SHARMA AS HEAD COACH AHEAD OF T20 WORLD CUP

- ❖ The Uganda Cricket Association has named Indian former first-class cricketer Abhay Sharma as the new head coach of the men's national team in the run-up to the Twenty20 World Cup.
- ❖ Abhay Sharma has previous coaching stints with India A and India Under-19s, as well as the Indian women's cricket team and the Delhi Ranji Trophy team.
- ❖ The Cricket Cranes have booked their place in the competition for the first time and will be among 20 teams at the tournament being jointly hosted by the United States and the West Indies from June 1.

16.25 ICC NAMES YUVRAJ SINGH AS AMBASSADOR FOR MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2024

- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced India's famous former cricketer Yuvraj Singh as the ambassador for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 with 36 days to go for the commencement of the grand event.
- ❖ Yuvraj Singh hit six sixes in an over during India's successful Men's T20 World Cup 2007 campaign.
- ❖ The Men's T20 World Cup 2024 to be jointly hosted by the West Indies and the United States of America.
- ❖ Yuvraj Singh joins the list of West Indies icon Chris Gayle and eight-time Olympic Gold Medallist Usain Bolt.

16.26 INDIA'S VELAVAN SENTHILKUMAR WINS BATCH OPEN SQUASH

- ❖ Velavan Senthilkumar secured his eighth Professional Squash Association Tour title by winning the Batch Open Challenger event.
- ❖ This was the eighth PSA (Professional Squash Association) title for the US-based Indian Velavan Senthilkumar.
- ❖ The Batch Open was organised by the world squash governing body Professional Squash Association with the host French Squash Federation at Jeu de Paume, Paris, France, from 24-28 April 2024.

17. PERSON IN NEWS BOOKS AND AUTHORS

17.1 ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA ROPES IN AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

- ❖ **Actor Ayushmann Khurrana** has been roped in by the Election Commission of India to urge the youngsters to vote in the upcoming **Lok Sabha elections**.
- ❖ The 39-year-old actor features in the ECI's campaign video that encourages the youth to exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha polls are scheduled to be held in **seven phases** from April 19. The counting of votes will be taken up on **June 4**.

17.2 AAP LEADER DINESH VAGHELA PASSES AWAY IN GOA

- ❖ **Dinesh Vaghela**, one of the founding members of **the Aam Aadmi Party**, died at his residence in **Goa**.
- ❖ He was 72.
- ❖ Vaghela, popularly referred to as '**Babaji**' by colleagues, was a member of the national executive of the **Aam Aadmi Party** and was among the earliest members to join the party after the '**India Against Corruption**' that began in **2007**.

17.3 THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY'

- ❖ **Sam Pitroda launched 'The Idea of Democracy'**, expressed concern over democracy's state in the US and India, highlighting 2024's global elections.
- ❖ He discussed political challenges worldwide, including authoritarian regimes and social media's role in misinformation.
- ❖ Highlighted cycle of elite regimes falling to public dissent, suggesting the current political-business elite facing rejection.

17.4 BRITISH PHYSICIST PETER HIGGS PASSES AWAY AT THE AGE OF 94

- ❖ Peter Higgs gained fame for the discovery of 'Higgs-Boson Particle' i.e. 'God Particle'.
- ❖ Peter Higgs was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2013 for this groundbreaking discovery, which helped explain how the universe was created after the Big Bang.

17.5 LAW & SPIRITUALITY: RECONNECTING THE BOND

- ❖ The book "**The Law and Spirituality: Reconnecting the Bond**" by Prof. **Raman Mittal and Dr. Seema Singh** is released at the Vice President's Enclave.

17.6 PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI FEATURES ON NEWSWEEK COVER

- ❖ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** is set to become the first prime minister of India to feature on the cover of Newsweek after Indira Gandhi. Former **prime minister Indira Gandhi** featured on the cover of Newsweek's April 1966 issue.
- ❖ The New York-based magazine has interviewed PM Modi who addressed Newsweek's written questions and followed up with a **90-minute conversation**.

17.7 SALMAN RUSHDIE RELEASES HIS MEMOIR "KNIFE"

- ❖ **British-American author Salman Rushdie** releases his memoir "**Knife**", recounting the harrowing experience of being stabbed at a public event in 2022 and how he overcame the near-fatal ordeal.
- ❖ Rushdie lost sight in one eye after the attack by a knife-wielding assailant, who jumped on stage at an arts gathering in **New York state**.
- ❖ **The Indian-born author**, a naturalized American based in New York, has faced death threats since his 1988 novel "**The Satanic Verses**" was declared blasphemous by **Iran's supreme leader**.
- ❖ Rushdie was born in Mumbai but moved to England as a boy, was propelled into the spotlight with his second novel "**Midnight's Children**" in **1981**.

17.8 BOOK ON INDIA'S ROAD TO RENAISSANCE LAUNCHED IN HYDERABAD

- ❖ The Retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and former UN official **Bhimeswara Challa** has unveiled his latest book India—the Road to Renaissance: A Vision and an Agenda at an event at the **Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI)**, Bella Vista campus.

17.9 VETERAN AIR WARRIOR DALIP SINGH MAJITHIA PASSES AWAY AT 103

- ❖ Squadron Leader Dalip Singh Majithia, the oldest living pilot of the Indian Air Force, passed away at the age of 103.
- ❖ Majithia joined the Indian Air Force volunteer reserve in 1940 during World War II.
- ❖ He began his pilot training at the Karachi Flying Club and later continued at the No. 1 Flying Training School in Ambala.
- ❖ Throughout his career, Majithia exhibited exceptional skill and dedication, earning recognition such as the best pilot trophy during his training.
- ❖ His family had a distinguished history, with his father and grandfather being prominent figures in Punjab during British rule.

17.10 ASIAN U20 ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

- ❖ India clinched seven golds, 11 silvers and 11 bronze medals to finish second at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships 2024 held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates from April 24 to 27.
- ❖ The People's Republic of China topped the Asian U20 Athletics Championships 2024 medal tally with 16 golds, 10 silvers and 3 bronze.
- ❖ The Asian U20 Athletics Championships was also a qualifying event for the World U20 Athletics Championships which will be held in Lima, Peru from August 27 to 31.

18. SOCIAL ISSUES, HEALTH, EDUCATION

18.1 COVINET

- ❖ **The World Health Organization (WHO)** has established a new global laboratory network called **CoViNet**.
- ❖ This network aims to identify and monitor potentially dangerous new coronaviruses that could emerge in the future.

ABOUT CORONAVIRUS NETWORK (COVINET):

- ❖ **CoViNet** is designed to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for the early detection, monitoring, and assessment of various coronaviruses.
- ❖ Beyond focusing solely on **SARS-CoV-2**, **CoViNet** will also assess other coronaviruses, including **Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)** with a particular emphasis on enhancing laboratory capacity and surveillance.
- ❖ **MERS-CoV** is a **zoonotic virus (transmitted between animals and people)**. It has been identified and linked to human infections in dromedary camels in several Member States in the **Middle East, Africa and South Asia**.
- ❖ The establishment of CoViNet builds upon the foundation laid by the WHO Covid-19 reference laboratory network, initially set up during the early stages of the pandemic in January 2020.
- ❖ CoViNet includes 36 labs from 21 countries across all **six WHO regions**, with **three Indian labs**: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology **in Pune**, and **Translational Health Science and Technology Institute**.
- ❖ It emphasises a comprehensive One Health approach encompassing human, animal, and environmental health.
- ❖ The network's objective is to equip WHO Member States with enhanced capabilities for early detection, risk assessment, and response to coronavirus-related health challenges.

ABOUT WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION:

- ❖ **The World Health Organization (WHO)**, established in **1948**, is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- ❖ It connects nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health.
- ❖ Its headquarters are situated in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- ❖ There are **194 Member States, 150 country offices, six regional offices**.

18.2 EUVICHOL-S

- ❖ The WHO has approved a new, simpler version of an existing oral cholera vaccine, which should help increase the number of available doses as global cases surge.
- ❖ The **Euvichol-S** vaccine is a simplified formulation of Euvichol-Plus, with fewer components.
- ❖ It is produced by **EuBiologicals Co., Ltd, South Korea**.
- ❖ The liquid vaccine has a 24-month shelf life.

ABOUT CHOLERA:

- ❖ Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by eating or drinking food or water that is contaminated with the **bacterium Vibrio cholerae**.
- ❖ Cholera remains a global threat to public health and is an indicator of inequity and lack of social development.
- ❖ Researchers have estimated that every year, there are 1.3 to 4 million cases of cholera, and 21,000 to 143,000 deaths worldwide due to the infection.

- ❖ Cholera is an extremely serious disease that can cause severe acute watery diarrhoea with severe dehydration.
- ❖ It takes between 12 hours and five days for a person to show symptoms after consuming contaminated food or water.
- ❖ Cholera affects both children and adults and can kill within hours if untreated.
- ❖ Currently, 23 countries are reporting cholera outbreaks. The most severe impacts are being felt in the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

19. MISCELLANEOUS

19.1 INDIA'S FIRST AI-BASED FILM 'IRAH'

- ❖ The trailer and song launch of the first Hindi film on this subject, "IRAH," took place in **Mumbai**.
- ❖ The movie features **Rohit Bose Roy, Rajesh Sharma, Karishma Kotak, and Rakshith Bhandarry** in prominent roles.
- ❖ The movie is Produced by Big Films Media and directed by **Sam Bhattacharjee**. The film is set to release nationwide in theaters on **April 4th** through Iamplex Digital Theatrical Distribution.
- ❖ The trailer of the film "IRAH" showcases the misuse of AI technology, shedding light on its negative aspects.

19.2 VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

- ❖ Recently, "Vaikom Satyagraha," one of the most Supported and recognised protests in **India**, marked its **100th anniversary**.

ABOUT VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

- ❖ **Vaikom** is a serene town in **Kottayam, Kerala**.
- ❖ The **Vaikom Satyagraha** was launched on **March 30, 1924** against the ban imposed on members of marginalized communities in the surroundings of **Vaikom Mahadevar Temple**.
- ❖ It marked the dawn of temple entry movements across India.
- ❖ It was launched by leaders in **Kerala such as T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon and George Joseph, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi**.
- ❖ A march comprising of 'upper caste' Hindus who supported the reform commenced in **Vaikom** and ended at the capital of **Trivandrum**.
- ❖ They marched with 25,000 signatures of 'forward caste' Hindus, for opening the Vaikom's temple roads to all castes.
- ❖ Large-scale participation of women was witnessed for the first time during the Satyagraha, marking the passage of women into the socio-political consciousness of the country.
- ❖ The protest sustained itself for more than one and a half years, leading to many arrests and satyagrahis being jailed.
- ❖ Even the **Akalis** from Punjab travelled to Vaikom to supply food to the protesters.

19.3 NIGERIA INTRODUCES NEW 5-IN-1 VACCINE AGAINST MENINGITIS

- ❖ **Nigeria** has become **the first country in the world** to roll out **a new vaccine (called Men5CV)** recommended by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, which protects people against five strains of the meningococcus bacteria. The vaccine and emergency vaccination activities are funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which funds the global meningitis vaccine stockpile, and supports lower-income countries with routine vaccination against meningitis.

- ❖ Nigeria is one of the **26 meningitis hyper-endemic countries of Africa**, situated in the area known as the **African Meningitis Belt**. Last year, there was a 50% jump in annual meningitis cases reported across Africa.
- ❖ Between last October and mid-March this year, 1,742 cases were suspected in the country, with 153 deaths recorded in seven states in Nigeria.

ABOUT MENINGITIS:

- ❖ Meningitis is an infection and inflammation of the fluid and membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. These membranes are called meninges.
- ❖ The inflammation from meningitis typically triggers symptoms such as headache, fever and a stiff neck.

19.4 FIRST GLASS SKYWALK READY TO BE UNVEILED IN UTTAR PRADESH

- ❖ The state government of Uttar Pradesh has unveiled its first-ever glass skywalk bridge, located at the enchanting Tulsi (Shabari) Waterfall in Chitrakoot.
- ❖ The awe-inspiring bridge, fashioned to resemble Lord Rama's bow and arrow, was constructed in the Kodand forest area at a cost of Rs 3.70 crore.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ The Forest and Tourism Department, along with the Pawan Sut Construction Company of Ghazipur, led the construction of the Glass Skywalk Bridge. Last year, the state government renamed it Tulsi Water Falls.
- ❖ The site's significance as the birthplace of Goswami Tulsidas in Rajapur and the presence of Lord Shri Ram's shrine make it a popular tourist destination.
- ❖ The bridge's design is nothing short of magnificent, with the arrow's length towards the abyss measuring 25 meters and the width of the bow between the two pillars spanning 35 meters. The bridge is engineered to withstand a load capacity of 500 kg per square meter, ensuring visitors' safety and security.

19.5 FOSSIL OF 'LARGEST EVER SNAKE VASUKI INDICUS' FOUND IN GUJARAT

- ❖ Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have reported the discovery of fossils of one of the largest snakes that ever existed and likely lived 47 million years ago during a period called the Middle Eocene.
- ❖ The fossils were found in Kutch, Gujarat, and the reptile, named Vasuki Indicus, could have been anywhere between 11m (36ft) and 15m (49.22ft) in length, or as big as a modern-day school bus.
- ❖ It belonged to the now-extinct Madtsoiidae snake family but represents a unique lineage from India.
- ❖ Professor Sunil Bajpai and post-doctoral researcher Debajit Datta at the IIT Roorkee, stumbled upon 27 pieces of a "partial, well preserved" vertebral column of the snake at the Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch.
- ❖ The reptile existed at a time when the earth looked quite different from today, and Africa, India and South America were one, conjoined landmass.
- ❖ Vasuki Indicus likely had a broad and cylindrical body, hinting at a robust and powerful build and was as big as Titanoboa, a massive snake that once roamed the earth and is reportedly the longest ever known.
- ❖ The name "Vasuki" derives from the mythological snake depicted often encircling the neck of the Hindu deity Shiva.

20. HIMACHAL NEWS

20.1 EX-MLA TEK CHAND PASSES AWAY AT 77

- ❖ Tek Chand Dogra, former MLA from the Nachan Assembly constituency of Mandi district, died at his native Chhatar village after a prolonged illness.
- ❖ Dogra (77) was a staunch supporter of former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh.
- ❖ He started his political journey in 1985 after voluntary retirement as a drawing teacher. He contested first election on the Congress ticket and reached the Assembly.
- ❖ He was elected the MLA of the Nachan constituency four times. He had contested seven Assembly elections from 1985 to 2012.

20.2 NGO INSTALLS 2 KW SOLAR POWER SYSTEM AT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN PANGI VALLEY

- ❖ **Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's** Art of Living Foundation, under its Himalayan Development Mission, has installed a 2 kW solar power system at the Government Senior Secondary School, **Dharwas**, in the remote Pangi valley of Chamba district.
- ❖ The project was launched in a bid to equip schools in remote parts of the state with facilities under the Solar Smart Classroom programme. The solar power system has been integrated with a smart screen to provide better education to the students.
- ❖ Presently, 21 government senior secondary schools of the state have been included in this **programme** — **Eight schools** from Chamba, four from Solan and three each from Kullu, Lahaul and Una.

20.3 FOUR POLL ICONS APPOINTED

- ❖ The Chamba Deputy Commissioner-cum-District Election Officer Mukesh Repaswal has appointed four poll icons under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme.
- ❖ Padma Shri award winners Lalita Vakil, Musafir Ram, and Dr Vijay Sharma have been appointed icons in the art and culture category.
- ❖ Asian shooting championship bronze medallist Farhan Mirza has been appointed as the youth icon.

20.4 SAMEER RASTOGI APPOINTED AS JICA FORESTRY PROJECT CPD

- ❖ **Sameer Rastogi**, a 1988-batch **Indian Forest Service (IFS)** officer and **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF)** in the **Himachal Pradesh Forest Department**, has taken charge as Chief Project Director (CPD) at **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** Forestry Project.

ABOUT PROJECT:

- ❖ **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** assisted "**Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management and Livelihoods**" is being implemented in seven districts i.e. **Kinnaur, Shimla, Bilaspur, Mandi, Kullu, Kangra and Lahaul & Spiti**. The project period is 10 years from 2018-19 to 2027-28.

20.5 PULSE POLIO DRIVE IN KINNAUR

- ❖ **Kinnaur Deputy Commissioner Amit Kumar Sharma** has launched a two-day pulse polio campaign for children below the age of five in the district at Regional Hospital, Reckong Peo.
- ❖ Under the pulse polio campaign, a target had been set to administer polio vaccine to 4,600 children below the age of five in the district, for which 101 booths have been established in the entire district.
- ❖ **The Chief Medical Officer Dr Sonam Negi** provided detailed information about the campaign to locals present on the occasion.

20.6 CHAMBA-CHOWARI TUNNEL

- ❖ **The HP government** had proposed a tunnel project to improve the connectivity between Chowari town and district headquarters Chamba.
- ❖ A feasibility report for the project, expected to cost Rs 1,500 crore, was being prepared for the 7-km tunnel for which Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had approved an amount of Rs 4 crore.

20.7 LOKTANTRA PRAHARI SAMMAN RASHI

- ❖ **The Himachal Pradesh High Court** has ordered the state government to release **the withheld honorarium of democracy guards**.
- ❖ **Judge Sandeep Sharma**, accepting the petition of **Himachal Pradesh Loktantra Senani Sangh**, ordered the release of honorarium to the members of the Sangh.
- ❖ The court made it clear that as long as the law related to the **Loktantra Prahari Samman Rashi** is in force, the government cannot stop this amount.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh government has withheld the honorarium of democracy fighters from February 2023. Under this, about 80 people are given 12 to 20 thousand rupees every month.

ABOUT SCHEME:

- ❖ **The former BJP government** had made the **Himachal Pradesh Loktantra Prahari Samman Rashi Scheme** in 2019.
- ❖ To give legal recognition to the scheme, **Himachal Pradesh Loktantra Prahari Samman Act** was passed in 2021.
- ❖ Its objective is to provide **Samman Rashi to the people (democracy guards)** who were lodged in jails or police stations during the emergency imposed by **the Indira Gandhi government**.
- ❖ Emergency was declared in the country by **the Indira Gandhi government**. During the Emergency, between **25 June 1975 and 21 March 1977**, all the people of the state were imprisoned for political reasons. He is to be given an honorarium under the '**Loktantra Prahari Samman Rashi**' scheme.

20.8 PULSE POLIO DRIVE IN KINNAUR

- ❖ **Kinnaur Deputy Commissioner Amit Kumar Sharma** has launched a two-day pulse polio campaign for children below the age of five in the district at Regional Hospital, **Reckong Peo**.
- ❖ Under the pulse polio campaign, a target had been set to administer polio vaccine to 4,600 children below the age of five in the district, for which 101 booths have been established in the entire district.
- ❖ **The Chief Medical Officer Dr Sonam Negi** provided detailed information about the campaign to locals present on the occasion.

20.9 NURPUR BLOCK TOPS IN USE OF CENTRAL FUNDS

- ❖ Nurpur Block has Topped among 15 blocks in Kangra district by spending maximum funds earmarked under the 15th Finance Commission.

20.10 SUHI FAIR STARTS TODAY

- ❖ 3-day Suhi fair, which commemorates the sacrifice of Queen Sunayana, is set to kick off in Chamba town.
- ❖ The fair witnesses the participation of only women & kids.
- ❖ Fair commence with singing of traditional “Ghureri” songs.

20.11 RENUKAJI DAM OUSTEES UNHAPPY OVER LAND CHOSEN FOR REHABILITATION

- ❖ The district administration has declared 1,362 families as affected by the project, while 95 families were declared homeless by the District Collector last year in the first phase of the **Renukaji multipurpose dam project**.
- ❖ As per the relief and rehabilitation policy of the project, the displaced families will be given houses that are to be constructed on land acquired in the four villages — **Tokion, Sainwala, Amboa and Chakli**.
- ❖ **The Renukaji Dam Sangharsh Samiti (RDSS)**, unhappy with the rehabilitation sites at the four villages, has been repeatedly making representations to the district administration to move them to other places.

ABOUT RENUKA JI PROJECT:

- ❖ The project envisages the construction of a 148-m high rock fill dam on the Giri at Dadahu in Sirmaur district and a powerhouse
- ❖ The estimated cost of the project was Rs 6,947 crore in 2018. It will generate 40 MW power during the peak flow. **Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (HPPCL)** is executing the project
- ❖ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** had laid its foundation stone in 2021
- ❖ The acquisition of land for the project has been completed and Rs 2,800 crore has been set aside for the purpose.
- ❖ A sum of Rs 1,000 crore has been provided to the affected families while Rs 635 crore is being given to the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority

20.12 DPR FOR SAFEGUARDING KULLU-MANALI HIGHWAY

- ❖ **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has tasked a Pune-based firm with preparing a **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** to devise long-term strategies and measures aimed at safeguarding the **Kullu-Manali national highway (NH-03)** from potential flood devastation in the future.
- ❖ Last July, heavy rainfall caused extensive damage to the 37-km Kullu-Manali NH. Although repair work has been undertaken by the NHAI, several sections of the road remain significantly damaged, with portions washed away by floods.

20.13 HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION'S SILK ROUTE ULTRA TRAIL

- ❖ The fourth edition of the Himalayan Expedition's **Silk Route Ultra Trail concluded at Narkanda**, with **Rigzin Gyurmeth** emerging as the sole victor of the single-day 100-km ultra-trail marathon.
- ❖ **Gyurmeth** completed the race in **19 hours and 28 minutes** with non-stop pace over the explored, ancient and untamed terrains of the Silk Route from **Narkanda to Sarahan**.
- ❖ The event featured four categories – 100-km, 55-km, 33-km, and 15-km.
- ❖ Ankur Kumar won the 55-km race, while Stanzin Wangchuk won the 33-km race and Milan Halder won the 15-km race.

20.14 DEITY KALA KAMESHWAR GETS GOLD CHARIOT WORTH RS 4 CRORE

- ❖ **Deity Kala Kameshwar**, the presiding deity of Khelkothi of the Seraj area of Mandi district, was installed in a gold chariot.
- ❖ **Nok Singh Thakur, pradhan of Deity Kala Kameshwar** Committee said the followers of the deity had donated wholeheartedly to build the gold chariot. The chariot was prepared at a cost of nearly Rs 4 crore.

20.15 RAMPUR SET TO HOST INTERNATIONAL PRO-BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP

- ❖ Bushahr Boxing Club in Rampur of Shimla district is set to organize **an international-level pro-boxing championship in Rampur in October**.
- ❖ Apart from local boxers, boxers from Russia and the Philippines will also participate in the event.

20.16 GOVT RELEASES RS 100 CR TO CLEAR PENDING HIMCARE PAYMENTS

- ❖ The government has released Rs 100 crore to clear the mounting Himcare payments in hospitals.
- ❖ Due to the pending payments of over Rs 300 crore under the scheme, several hospitals were struggling to provide healthcare under the scheme to the Himcare cardholders.

ABOUT HIMCARE

- ❖ For providing the cashless treatment coverage on the analogy of Ayushman Bharat to the left-out families, the State is implementing Mukhya Mantri Himachal Health Care Scheme (HIMCARE) since 1st January, 2019.
- ❖ Under HIMCARE Scheme, cashless treatment coverage up to Rs. 5.00 lakh per year per family is being provided in the empanelled hospitals. In case of more than five members, the remaining members are being enrolled as a separate unit subject to the capping of five members for each such additional unit.

20.17 HIMACHAL GYAN VIGYAN SAMITI BEGINS ANTI-DRUG DRIVE

- ❖ The Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti began a campaign against drug abuse in the state. The campaign will go on till June 28.
- ❖ Under the campaign, the samiti has prepared a plan to run a state-wide drive against drug abuse.
- ❖ A two-day training workshop on the causes and effects of addiction, and prevention measures was organised at Saksharta Bhawan, Mandi, on April 21 and 22.
- ❖ In the workshop, 75 master-trainers were trained.
- ❖ The workshop was organised by the samiti in collaboration with District Child Protection Unit (Mandi), Gunjan Sanstha (Kangra), Saksharta Samiti (Mandi) and State Resource Center (Shimla).
- ❖ The workshop was inaugurated by Nela Ward, Mandi, Councillor Rajender Mohan.

20.18 CHAMBA ADMINISTRATION UNVEILS POLL MASCOT 'BHOLU'

- ❖ The Deputy Commissioner and District Electoral Officer, Mukesh Rapswal has launched an election mascot and a sticker under the SVEEP(Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation) campaign.
- ❖ Along with the delivery of the LPG cylinders, the residents would get an appeal to cast their votes through specially designed stickers.
- ❖ Stickers featuring a mascot named 'Bholu', based on the Himalayan brown bear found in the Kugti and Tundah wildlife sanctuaries in Bharmour and Pangi valleys of the district, with a message in the local Gaddi dialect, "Munh bhi gana vota pana" (I shall got to cast my vote), will be affixed on the gas cylinders throughout Chamba district.

- ❖ The stickers will also be placed on public transport vehicles and prominent places.

20.19 ASHOK RANJAN BASU NAMED IPSA PANEL CHIEF

- ❖ A retired IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, Ashok Ranjan Basu, has been elevated to the post of chairman of Research Committee No. 48 on Administrative Culture of International Political Science Association (IPSA), Montreal, Canada.
- ❖ He will remain on the post till 2028.
- ❖ The committee, which does research work in administrative systems, has members from all over the world.
- ❖ Basu had been a member of the Member of the Central Administrative Tribunal. After retirement, he took to writing and has published books on different aspects of administration and law.
- ❖ His book 'Transparency, Accountability, Open Government and e-governance', published in English, has recently been translated to six European languages — German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese.
- ❖ He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (FRAS), London.
- ❖ He has also been the Director of Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration, Fair Lawns, Shimla.

20.20 SANJAULI COLLEGE SIGNED MOU WITH SHOOLINI UNIVERSITY

- ❖ The Centre of Excellence, Government Post Graduate College, Sanjauli has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences.
- ❖ The Principal Dr Bharti Bhagra and her team visited the university to explore avenues for collaboration between the institutions and the MoU was signed, paving way for enhanced opportunities for students of both institutions.

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